

**Return of High Skilled Migrants: An Empirical Investigation into
the Knowledge Transfer Process of Two Organizations
in New Delhi, India**

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Krishna D. Vijn, who inspired me to challenge not only myself, but also those around me. Her spirituality and unconditional love allowed me to see the world in a kaleidoscopic way. Thank you, Mom, for making the world a colorful place to live in. I will always cherish the memories you have given me.

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Research Abstract

The main objective of the thesis is to explore how and in which ways do returnees' transfer their newly acquired knowledge, skills and experiences from abroad in locally employing organizations. The scope of the examination is of returnees' transfer of overseas-acquired resources to others in Fortis Escorts Hospital and Research Centre and Tata Consultancy Services' Government Industry Solutions Unit. Though a range of migration theories are drawn upon, analysis of the role of returnees in intra-organizational knowledge transfers is embedded mainly in the management school version of social network theory (SNT) of organizations. A key hypothesis is that the strength of returnees' social ties is associated with the nature and type of knowledge transferred to stakeholders in the organizations.

Given that the theoretical and empirical focus is of returnees' knowledge transfers, McPherson et al.'s (2001) principle of homophily is pitted against Granovetter's (1983) weak ties hypothesis to illuminate their social ties, mechanisms, conversion of codified and tacit knowledge as well as transfer pathways to others in EHIRC and GISU. The survey data and case interviews delve deeper into returnees', stayers' and transnationals' social cliques, knowledge networks, work outcomes as well as the level of trust, norms and organizational culture in EHIRC and GISU. A comparative analysis of select dimensions across EHIRC and GISU proves useful for articulating similarities and differences of knowledge transfers, social contexts and dynamics that have intended benefits and unintended consequences for the organizations.

Moreover, to contextualize the analyses of knowledge transfers, consideration is also given to returnees initial intention for going abroad to highlight their return motives, choice of employer, issues they tend to face adjusting in their workplace and social surroundings in New Delhi. The results are expounded upon in terms of the implications of return migrants' knowledge transfers for the healthcare and IT-BPO sectors. Also, a public policy discussion is given on aspects related to regional growth as well as the prospects for economic development of India. The insights suggest high skilled returned migrants tend to be a tool for development that confers brain gain benefits to India. The contribution of this thesis is to shed light on the complexities and promises of such an interdisciplinary topic.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In the general brain drain-brain gain debate, earlier research described “return migration as the great unwritten chapter in the history of migration” (King, 2000: 7). The complicated return migration patterns of developing countries led to the common narrative that high skilled migrants decided to return to their country of origin due to their inability to secure suitable employment, expiration of work permits or difficulty assimilating into the foreign destination. More recently, mounting anecdotal evidence and a select group of formal studies have shown that some skilled migrants go home even after having accumulated wealth, obtained permanent residency or culturally integrated into their destination. These newer studies sparked my curiosity about why some skilled migrants return, what they experience living in their own societies and if they bring their overseas resources that contribute to progress in their countries of origin.

1.1 Context of the Research

One general problem with the brains literature is that the knowledge effects of return migration remain under-researched (Khadria, 1999; William and Balaz, 2008a; Conway and Potter, 2009; Tejada et al., 2014). Most available studies tend to reinforce the conventional myths about return migration by focusing on the “flows of goods and capital... instead of ideas, attitudes and augmented skills [of people] back to the home country (Thomas-Hope, 1985: 157). Given the recent theoretical and empirical developments, this thesis will study high skilled migrants who went abroad, accumulated knowledge capital, and then returned to India. The motives, occupational profiles and activities of high skilled returned migrants are considered to contextualize and better understanding the extent and ways in which such returnees’ transfer their overseas-acquired knowledge, skills and experiences to different stakeholders after they have returned home.

The brain drain-brain gain literature offers a general backdrop to situate return migration studies. The thesis considers high skilled Indian migrants' main motivation for returning, migration experiences and some of their adjustment issues with a view to try and understand if there is any association with transfer of their accumulated overseas knowledge resources after they return to India. The main theme explored throughout the thesis is the impact of high skilled Indian returned migrants on the transfer of their newly accumulated overseas knowledge resources after their return home. The central argument is that high skilled Indian returned migrants tend to be a distinct, highly effective and a novel conduit for transferring knowledge, skills, social experiences and/or other resources in their organizations, maybe to the healthcare and IT-BPO sectors and possibly across geographical regions. The theoretical and empirical work tends to resonate with Conway et al.'s (2005: 4) statement:

Today's brain gains are of considerable importance, especially since innovation, human skills and experiences are sought-for qualities. More needs to be detailed as well as conceptualized with regard to the growing volume and importance of [returnees], transnational movers, their networks, backward and forward linkages and the transfer of capital, information, culture and people that ebb and flow through them. Brain gains might counter brain drains, but of course, the relative authority and social power of these collectivities of human and social capital need to be factored into any assessment of consequential development outcomes.

Research on high skilled migrants that returned to India is scant compared to that on the Caribbean, Mexico, Italy and some African countries so existing studies offer only limited guidance on the matter. Moreover, the subject of the return of high skilled migrants is interdisciplinary: brains migration, international business and organizational management are all fields that need to be referenced to conduct a fruitful study. Any assessment of returned migrants' social networks, transnational ties and cross-border connections to show the ways in which knowledge, skills and work experiences are transferred is inter-related at three levels—individual, firm and regional (Khadria, 1999; Cassarino, 2004; Klagge et al, 2007; Williams and Balaz, 2008a). The remainder of this introduction lays out the main purpose of this thesis, central argument, a few key issues and then describes how I pursued my research on this vast topic and summarizes what I discovered.

1.2 Objectives and Significance of the Study

According to the UNDESA, about 20 million Indians reside in developed countries (Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and the United States) and a smaller but still substantial number in less developed nations (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Singapore). Indians migrated abroad to get a better education, improve their career prospects, meet financial and family obligations or pursue opportunities that were unavailable to them back home. The search for new job opportunities, family attachments and lifestyle, combined with the rapid rise of India's economy, has led to an increased incidence of return amongst high skilled migrants—especially to work in the booming healthcare and IT sectors of their home country (Findlay, 2001; Saxenian, 2002; Chanda and Sreenivasan, 2006).

Investigating the return migration of high skilled migrants to India is a subject riddled with theoretical and empirical caveats, which requires taking a concentrated approach to meet the goals of the thesis. Due to a shortage of theory on knowledge effects, limited data on the number of high skilled migrants that returned to India, the difficulty in disentangling diverse sets of returnees in the healthcare and IT sectors and problems in measuring the strength of social ties, the most practical way of undertaking the research seemed to be case studies. For these reasons, I chose to do a case analysis of two skill-intensive organizations: Fortis Escorts Hospital and Research Centre and the Tata Consultancy Services' Government Industry Solutions Unit in New Delhi.

While different migration theories including neoclassical economics, new economics of labor migration, transnationalism, human capital models and others offer valuable insights on why migrants might decide to return to India, the business management version of social network theory offers a useful theoretical framework for analyzing the role of high skilled returned migrants in intra-organizational knowledge transfers in locally employing institutions. Implementing a mixed methods approach—survey data and case interviews—was the most relevant way to obtain results on the interrelationship between returnees', stayers' and transnationals' social networks, knowledge activities and work outcomes at EHIRC and GISU. The framework and research design help to reveal how workers' knowledge resources are transferred to and amongst stakeholders in the organizations.

The main aim of the thesis is to examine high skilled returned migrants' potential impact on transferring their overseas-acquired knowledge resources once back in India. While the thesis is interested in analyzing high skilled migrants who returned to India to work in the healthcare or IT sectors, the focus will be on two organizations in the above industries. Given its scope, the core research question to be addressed is: "How and in which ways do returnees transfer their knowledge, skills and experiences within employing organizations?" The empirical chapters of the thesis further address additional three sub-questions that are:

1. Does the acquisition of overseas knowledge resources enable returned migrants to negotiate a wage premium from employing organizations?
2. To what extent are returned migrants' efforts and ultimately their success in transferring their overseas knowledge resources influenced by the strength of their social relationships in the workplace?
3. In what ways do returned migrants have intended and/or unintended impacts on the knowledge transfer process at work?

To get answers to the above questions, I concentrated my efforts on analyzing the role returned high skilled migrants play as a conduit for learning, sharing and transferring knowledge resources to non-migrants at work. To a lesser extent, returnees' and non-migrants' work interactions are compared with those of IT transnationals—workers deployed to foreign subsidiaries who later returned and joined the workplace. Disentangling returnees', stayers' and transnationals' social relations, I offer an explanation of their incentives for transferring knowledge capital, the composition of their social networks and differences in the organizational structures of the workplace. Also, I explain how the strength of migrants' social ties, the knowledge network structure and contextual issues moderate stakeholders' dealings within EHRC and GISU. Some evidence is also presented on the positive contributions migrants make to work performance, innovation and other work-related outcomes at EHRC and GISU. Overall, the results help to better elucidate the impact on the knowledge transfer processes of the organizations.

Investigation into the above subject holds theoretical relevance for the study of return migration as it may remedy “the lack of a common theoretical thread and much empirical work—especially from outside migration economics—which has remained isolated, scattered and theoretically underexplored” (De Haas, 2008: 46). Drawing inspiration from a number of theories in economics, migration and even international business management may help to expand and better understand migrants’ return to India (Khadria, 1999; Beaverstock, 2005; Ammassari, 2009). Though the focus of the thesis is not on migration decisions, its findings for India are consistent with theories that emphasize relatively short-term migration motivated by opportunities for acquiring knowledge that will secure a higher standard of living for the migrants after return to their country of origin.

The crux of the thesis and its novelty is the empirical research that tries to disentangle diverse sets of migrants working in the healthcare and IT sectors, and to show how returnees and to a limited extent transnationals are ‘agents for transferring expertise, knowledge, skills and work experiences’ from abroad to organizations. (Williams and Balaz, 2008a; Jackson, 2012; Wang, 2012) Unlike other empirical studies, quantitative as well as qualitative evidence on the work interactions, social exchanges and different knowledge transactions are analyzed to specify the ways in which returned migrants impact the knowledge transfer processes of their organizations. In this sense, the empirics explain the potential role returnees can play in facilitating intra-organizational knowledge transfers to different stakeholders in their respective organizations.

The most important and thus original contribution of my work is pitting McPherson et al.’s (2001) principle of homophily in social networks against Granovetter’s (1983) weak social ties hypothesis to specify the role of returned migrants in the knowledge transfer processes of organizations. In this regard, the evidence analyzed will show how returned migrants’ social ties—their direction and strength—affect the type and nature of knowledge transferred to and within the organizations. Taking into consideration different contextual issues applicable to EHRC and GISU, the evidence also highlights the similarities and differences between returnees’, stayers’ and transnationals’ knowledge exchanges, social ties and network configurations to provide insights on the impact they have on work performance, the units’ processes and overall functioning of the workplace.

The undertaking of the thesis is significant for theoretical, empirical and practical reasons as it helps to fill gaps in return migration studies. Most of the existing studies on India only examine the general motives for return among high skilled migrants and their effects (i.e. remittances, participation in the labor market and entrepreneurship for further developing the national economy), paying less attention to why certain kinds of migrants return and work for organizations in the service sectors of India. The research shows that returned migrants are able to facilitate the “distribution of a wide range of resources across social groups, to organizations and regions to broaden horizons” (Bentley, 1998: 157) that may help to further develop the knowledge economy of India. Notwithstanding the limitations in applying the evidence from the case studies to other organizations, sectors or outside of India, the research does hold insights that may contribute to understanding the possibility of a brain gain for India. In other words, insights are provided on returnees’ knowledge contributions to their workplace, the prospect for developing organizations in two skill-intensive sectors and, to a limited extent, my perspective on the possibility of brain gain for the home country.

1.3 Organization of the Thesis and Summary of the Results

The material in the thesis is organized in Parts I to V, whose chapters’ major findings are summarized in the remainder of this section. Chapter One provides a general introduction on the crux of the brain drain-brain gain debate in terms of context of the study, research objectives and significance of the study. It is profitable to clearly state that though the thesis explores return migration to the Indian healthcare and IT sectors, the evidence is drawn from two specific employing organizations. Examination of medical and IT migrants in EHIRC and GISU is focused on different sets of returnees, stayers and transnationals, work activities and other contextual issues like trust, pro-sharing norms, work culture and institutional setup of the organizations. The central findings in the upcoming chapters is that the strength of returnees social ties with others is associated with the nature and type of knowledge transferred and thus has intended as well as unintended consequences on the organizations.

In Part I: Chapter Two reviews the literature on brains migration, return migration, international business, organizational management and select studies on the transfer of knowledge resources back home. This chapter draws attention to these separate research strands not only to critique existing studies, but also to highlight a crucial missing link: the potential role returned migrants can play in intra-organizational knowledge transfers in the workplace. The contribution to the present state of knowledge is to provide a better understanding of returnees' impact on knowledge transfer processes within the workplace.

Chapter Three reviews leading international migration theories and their applicability in explaining migrants' decision for returning home. The chapter also includes an appraisal of international business, organizational management and resource-based theories to show the link of human mobility to the transfer of overseas-acquired knowledge back home. It is important to note that select tenets of neoclassicism, new economics of labor migration, transnationalism and human capital considerations serve only as an anchor to re-conceptualize return migrants as those who bring back new ideas, knowledge, skills, global networks and other capabilities that can boost innovation of local organizations. The theoretical ideas are embedded in management school version of social network theory to analyze the strength of returned migrants' social ties with others and its association with knowledge transfer processes in the organizations.

Chapter Four sets out definitions of key terms, concepts and ideas, so as to situate my research. It also explains the choice of location and the criteria used to select the case studies. The chapter discusses the research design and how the survey instruments were implemented—a random distribution of a structured questionnaire that generated a total sample size of 622, double-blinded selection of participants for 95 semi-structured interviews and elite interviews on a smaller scale of 38 from EHRC and GISU. An explanation is also provided of how obstacles related to sampling requirements, response rates and various forms of selection biases were tackled within the above organizations. The chapter further weighs the advantages and disadvantages of using the case study approach with mixed methods for analyzing the organizations. The chapter thus outlines some general methodology issues and management of the research process—essentially serving as a bridge to the application of the method to EHRC and GISU.

In Part II and Part III: Chapter Five and Chapter Eight are introductions to the case studies. These chapters offer some general facts and premises in terms of return migration to India. Select facts on India's healthcare and IT sectors are fused with some determinants of the growth of these sectors that might help to identify motives that lead migrants to return home. A further breakdown of the organization of the industries is also provided, along with the major Indian players operating in the domestic market. Furthermore, background of EHIRC and GISU and their relevance as cases is presented to explain how they may shed light on migrants that decided to return to India and are working in these organizations. An appraisal of some theories and literature, as well as the use of social network analysis, creates a theoretical nexus, which helps to explore the potential role that returnees play in transferring overseas-acquired knowledge resources to different stakeholders of their respective organizations. An explanation is also provided of how sampling of participants took place, the response rates and anonymisation of interviewees at EHIRC and GISU. The limitations of the findings are recognized before proceeding with the research project.

Chapter Six and Chapter Nine examine the decision to return and choice of employer in India. Migrants' personal characteristics, domestic circumstances and some macro conditions are associated with the decision to return to India, which varied in whether they stated family, financial or other reasons for returning home. The evidence also reveals that migrants' acquisition of overseas knowledge tends to be associated with the decision to return because it improved their employment prospects, occupational mobility and lifestyle in New Delhi. The chapters also analyze returnees' reasons for joining local organizations. Besides incorporating the organizations' responses, it seems that career mobility, financial incentives and family needs were among the reasons why migrants joined their organizations. Some of the returnees' and transnationals' social connections, industry ties and location preference also weighed in their decisions to join GISU. The findings reveal that returnees' knowledge capital led them to be rewarded more than stayers in EHIRC and GISU. The chapters further analyze issues returnees face settling into their new surroundings, particularly the workplace. The results suggest that over time returnees integrate into their surroundings, thus raising the potential for knowledge to be transferred to and within the organizations.

Chapter Seven and Chapter Ten examine post-return experiences and knowledge transfers at work. The chapters analyze migrants' interpersonal work relationships in EHIRC and GISU. Building intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity are shown to be important factors for forging social relationships between returnees, non-migrants and when applicable transnationals in EHIRC and GISU. The evidence shows that returnees and non-migrants maintain weak social ties that are better for the transfer of codified knowledge within EHIRC and GISU. But if returnees, non-migrants and transnationals can forge intermediate or strong social ties, then the possibility exists for improving their transfer of tacit or sticky knowledge to one another in their organizations.

The chapters also analyze workers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for improving their codification efforts in the workplace. While monetary and non-monetary rewards can prompt returnees and non-migrants to convert codifiable private knowledge for others, it is found that such rewards may also weaken existing social ties between these two groups in their workgroups, departments or units. The findings seem to suggest that returnees' and non-migrants' knowledge codification efforts might terminate existing social ties as they are moderated by contextual issues—trust, norm of cooperation and competitive work culture of EHIRC and GISU. While electronic knowledge repositories and transnationals are important intermediaries that improve knowledge transfers between returnees and non-migrants, EHIRC's and GISU's organizational setup, management-styles and the nature of work performed are shown to contribute to the varying impact on the circulation of knowledge resources in the organizations.

The chapters also analyze the existing knowledge structure of EHIRC and GISU. Drawing a further distinction between position-centered and person-related ties, returnees, non-migrants and transnationals are shown to use the "same sets of social ties" to transfer multiple contents—task advice, strategic support and social resources—to one another, other teams, departments or units. The results on network configurations reveal that the above groups of workers form separate social circles and mini-knowledge cliques that have a varying impact on work-related outcomes in the organizations. The broader implication of the organizations' knowledge policy—codification or personalization strategy—is outlined to explain its intended benefits and unintended consequences for the workplace.

In Part IV: Chapter Eleven is an introduction to the comparative case study. Some general facts and premises are offered on return migration. Available statistics, secondary sources and anecdotal evidence on India's healthcare and IT-BPO sectors are presented in discussion of the motives that may have pulled and/or pushed migrants to return home. The relevance of EHIRC and GISU as cases is articulated to explain the benefits of a comparative analysis of medical and IT migrants' return motives, choice of employer, adjustment issues and knowledge transfer processes in their organizations. Appraisal of theories and some literature, with emphasis on the social network analysis, is explained for contrasting returnees, knowledge activities and select dimensions in the workplace. The sampling frame, response rates, anonymisation of respondents and limitations of the findings are recognized for the project.

Chapter Twelve conducts a comparative analysis on the decision to return and the choice of employer in India. A comparison of EHIRC and GISU reveals that the findings are similar in many respects—age, stage of one's career and occupation held by migrants are in both cases strongly associated with returning home. But notable variations are observed, including the regions where medical migrants resided abroad being associated with their motive to return and work for EHIRC. The social networks and transnational ties of IT migrants were additional factors that drew them to GISU, as were the economic downturn, increase in outsourcing and different visa restrictions. After being employed, medics when compared to ITists received less organizational support, which led the latter group to acculturate and adjust to issues more quickly in their organization.

Chapter Thirteen compares the post-return experiences and knowledge transfer in EHIRC and GISU. Both medical and IT returnees exhibit a multiplex of ties that create dense cliques in the overall sparse network in their organizations. Because the social ties of returnees', stayers' and transnationals' tend to churn over time more in GISU than EHIRC, rewards, use of electronic knowledge repositories and existing work culture breaks down the knowledge hierarchy of EHIRC less than that of GISU. EHIRC has no clear knowledge management strategy, while GISU's codification approach limits ownership of work, tacit knowledge transfers, and pro-sharing norms and thus galvanizes a competitive culture in the firm. These and other differences in socialization, institutional barriers and contextual issues illustrate some of the benefits, challenges and complexities of knowledge flows of organizations.

In Part V: Chapter Fourteen presents the conclusions of the study. The chapter offers a summary of the main findings on migrants' decision to return and take up employment with a particular organization and on their re-negotiation of a sense of belonging in their new surroundings including the workplace. Both medical and IT migrants carefully weigh personal factors, career prospects, and the socio-economic climate both in the host and home country before deciding to return and work for Indian organizations. Though social and family factors remain important for some returnees, it seems that overseas-acquired knowledge, skills and work experiences tend to form some part of their migration plan to secure a better life. That is, most returnees hold expectations of being rewarded if they decide to return and work for their organizations.

The chapter further expounds on different returnees' socialization efforts, HRD practices, global recruitment strategies and larger market dynamics of New Delhi. Empirical evidence from EHIRC and GISU on returnees' transfer of knowledge, skills, social capital and resources, though not generalized to other organizations, is discussed as it might have useful implications for the Indian healthcare and IT-BPO industries. That is, returnees' overseas-acquired knowledge resources, if fully harnessed and harvested, can help develop Indian organizations in the healthcare and IT-BPO sectors. While recognizing the limitation of the research in terms of a public policy discussion, it seems that returnees are an investment vehicle that can potentially promote small and medium enterprises (SME), cross-border alliances and FDI for local growth and innovation systems of regions.

At the end, the chapter notes that returnees' additional human, financial and social capital places them in positions of responsibility and authority in public and private sectors, giving them greater capabilities to effect change in their home (Ammassari, 2009: 4). In addition to the private sectors, emphasis is placed on the potential impact overseas-acquired knowledge resources transferred can have on improving government-run institutions, urban employment, vertical expansion and entrepreneurial ventures for urban growth. However, this would tend to lead to uneven and underdevelopment of the rural areas. While return migration can be a 'tool for development' the explanation is couched in the broader migration and development discourse to show the possibility of a brain gain for India. The thesis hopefully offers a better understanding of this interdisciplinary topic.

Part I: Literature, Theory and Method

Chapter Two

Achievements and Limitations of Earlier Research

A general overview of the brain drain-brain gain literature reveals that several academic disciplines have analyzed migration and related flows of capital, goods and services from country to country. Given the breadth and depth of this literature, this review will concentrate on three major research strands—brains migration, international business and organizational management—that have analyzed knowledge flows among geographical locations. This literature review does not seek to reconcile the different views, but rather to relate work on return migration and transnational networks to the possibility of knowledge transfers to sectors of the home country. This chapter does not cover all of the relevant existing studies: empirical material on return migration, social relationships and knowledge transfers to the healthcare and IT industry is placed in the analytical chapters on India. It is more of a discussion and to a limited extent a critique of selected studies to highlight the missing link which is the focus of this thesis—high skilled return migrants' knowledge transfers to their employing organizations.

2.1 Brains Migration: Drain, Gain, Circulation and Waste

Brain drain refers to the large-scale emigration of educated, skilled and/or professional workers due to better pay, career opportunities as well as the living conditions in countries other than their own. The concern about brain drain is that the loss of skilled workers who have been educated and trained at the expense of the national government carries away human capital, valuable resources and other benefits to the destination—thus slowing down the economic growth of the home countries. But while the flight of human capital has been shown to benefit the destination, it has also been argued that emigration of skilled labor may increase investment in education and training of the existing workforce, the capital-labor ratio and international networks to the benefit of the home country.

Given the possibilities of a brain gain, “overinvestment in higher education [by national governments] casts doubt that the emigration of skilled workers [to destinations] would represent an automatic loss” (De Haas, 2007: 22) for sending countries. Many governments create a surplus of skilled workers to export them to destinations for the purpose of generating remittances for the home country. While remittances can alter the income distribution, reduce the poverty level or social inequalities back home, their impact is mixed across home countries. A much more positive effect of remittances has been detected in Egypt, the Philippines and Mexico in terms of investing in business activities, real estate and the domestic market back home (McCormick and Wahba, 2003; Lowell and de La Garza, 2000; Straubhaar, 1988).

Remittances have been demonstrated to raise unemployment and reduce labor force participation in Pakistan and the Caribbean Basin (Kozelt and Alderman, 1990; Itzigsohn, 1995), but this is not necessarily the case amongst people with higher levels of schooling in the home country. Remittances as an additional income stream not only increased the household’s expenditure on children’s education in the Philippines (Yang, 2006), but also decreased the likelihood of children not finishing their schooling in El Salvador (Cox and Ureta, 2003). And also provide the means for the migrants’ children, especially girls, to attend school in Morocco (De Haas 2006). The positive effect on human capital formation also occurred with the return migration of people improving youth literacy, health outcomes and community values at home (Beine et al., 2007).

While remittances have been shown to play a negligible role on changing gender roles, Fadloulah et al. (2000) mentioned that the migration of men gave women who stayed behind a new found independence in the home country (De Haas, 2006a). Return migration of people is also associated with social remittances that might have led to the gradual erosion of ethnic roles in Guatemala (Taylor et al., 2006), the diffusion of European-style marriage patterns in select countries in North Africa (Fargues, 2006) and various social transformations at home (Levitt, 1998; De Haas, 2007). The positive effect of social remittances is well established in return migration studies on entrepreneurship, family reunification and larger social dynamics back home. Yet, the overall impact of returnees will depend on contextual, structural and culture issues back home.

More recently, brain circulation and its variants brain exchange, brain bank and brain training have been used to explain the temporary migration of people and even their repeated return to sending countries. Commonly, returning students, technical workers and professionals are thought to create a “skill reservoir that eases resource constraints and helps to sustain economic expansion as the domestic labor market tightens in the home country” (Kapur and McHale, 2006: 11). The presumption is that there is no loss of human capital as migrants retain their family connections, business networks and transnational linkages that can be used to improve economic activity back home. Nanda and Khanna (2010) found that expatriates used their networks to access financial opportunities while abroad, but also tapped into the overseas diaspora to help boost India’s economic growth. In particular, Saxenian’s (2002) work on migrants’ local business networks in Silicon Valley and their diaspora links to India’s IT-BPO sector is seen as substantiating the benefits circular migration had on its national economy. While similar results on return and repeated migration have been shown to contribute to the economic success of China, Ghana and Ireland, other studies caution that not all developing economies are in a position to reap the benefits of circulatory movements from host to the home country (Kapur, 2001; Agunias and Newland, 2007). Essentially, conditions that push or pull migrants to return, migration policies and national issues must be considered for both the host and home country.

Still, brain waste could also be the reason for circulatory migration movements or the permanent return of students, technical workers and professionals to sending countries. Bauder (2006) found that foreign qualifications confined migrants to lower rung occupations in the labor market of their destinations, causing them to be deskilled. Chammartin (2008) explained that the devaluation of human capital resulted in a triple loss—destinations cannot fully stimulate their economy, the sending country receive less remittances to improve socio-economic development and migrants themselves do not acquire new knowledge, skills and experiences to be employed back home. The existing evidence offers insight on the deskilling of Chinese and Indian immigrants in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States (Sultana, 2012; Siar, 2013). These studies are less conclusive on whether return migrants would be considered a brain waste if they were to engage in the economic, social or political affairs of their home countries.

The different macro studies on brain drain, gain, circulation and waste offer a general view on the migratory movements of people between developing and developed countries. Specifically, emigration and subsequent return of high skilled migrants is conceptually linked to 'human capital and its re-distribution effects' on destination and sending countries (Williams and Balaz, 2008a). The financial costs incurred by governments to educate and train the workforce are weighed against potential benefits like remittances, business networks, diaspora links to growing industries and the return of knowledge migrants to the home country. Existing evidence explains the return of knowledge migrants mostly in terms of economic determinism, which does not take into account the heterogeneity among workers, motives for returning and a nuanced understanding of their knowledge transfer impacts back home. While some micro studies have proven helpful in highlighting migrants' knowledge transfers to sectors back home (Khadria, 2004; Kapur and McHale, 2005), the insights also suggest the need for further research.

2.2 Return Migration: Selectivity, Motivations and their Effects

Return migration is described as the temporary migration of workers to countries for the purpose of accumulating money, skills and/or resources that would make them better off upon their return home (Dustmann et al., 2010). An extension of the human capital argument is that migrants move to their desired destination to earn more money, acquire contacts and other resources which then make it advantageous—wage premium, higher purchasing power or plans for retirement—to return back home (Dustmann and Kirchmann, 2002). In view of these claims, Borjas and Bratsberg (1996) tested if the initial migration decision might be based on erroneous information about the economic opportunities available at the destination resulting in a failed migration experience forcing these workers to return home. And if the migration decision is an optimal life cycle location preference, then migrants who manage to acquire different forms of capital at the destination are thought to have a successful experience and thus return home. These studies show that motivation to return—whether migrants are considered to be failures or successes—depends on selectivity issues in host and home countries.

Migrants that decided to go abroad and return were self-selected amongst their migrant cohort group and not randomly drawn from the population of the host or home country. Jasso and Rosenzweig (1988) found positive selection among migrants insofar as high skilled workers were not only less likely to accept U.S. citizenship, but they also had a higher probability of returning home. Borjas (1989) found evidence of negative selection among migrants to the extent that the least successful foreign-born scientists and engineers left the United States and thus returned home. Lindstrom and Massey (1994) reported that Mexican migrants were negatively selected with respect to their low skills level that led them to return home. Interestingly, Ramos (1992) showed that though migrants were negatively selected from Puerto Rico to move to the United States, it was the most skilled amongst them that returned home. The conflicting results were reconciled in Borjas and Bratsberg (1996), who aptly explained that if migrants are originally positively (negatively) selected then those with lower (higher) skill levels return home. These studies while informative exclude the fact that the return process is often constrained by several issues that generate different migration patterns for different home countries.

Migrants are a heterogeneous group of people in terms of their observable and unobservable traits like ability, motivations to return, values, risk aversion and access to networks—which affects their propensity to leave their host country. Reagan and Olsen (2000) found that younger migrants with higher wages who were living in the United States for a considerable amount of time were more likely to return home. However, Velling (1994) found that higher education, gender, an extended duration of stay in Germany and migrants' nationality did not increase the likelihood to return home. While owning property and being married to a German citizen decreased migrants' likelihood to return, irregular employment and having children back home increased the probability to return to Eastern Europe (Constant and Massey, 2002). Bauer and Gang (1998) showed that access to social and informational networks shortened the duration of foreign trips and led migrants to return home. Other studies also show that even without changes in the wage differential, migrants would return to their home countries (King, 2000; Dustmann, 2003). Yet, empirical limitations tend to prevent an analysis of the different contexts of return migration to home countries.

With reference to migrants' attributes, the reason to return is also influenced by the expectations they have before moving back to the home country. Co et al. (2000) found that migrants, especially women with foreign experience—those who had acquired knowledge, skills and work experiences—increased the likelihood of their return as they could earn a wage premium in Hungary. However, Coulon and Piracha (2005) found that migrants, mostly males and unmarried, were not rewarded for their acquisition of human capital by the labor market of Albania. They observed that what increased the probability of return amongst these migrants was the prospect of their foreign experience being helpful in setting up their own businesses in Albania. And similar results were shown on human capital effects for Egypt, Ireland and Israel (Wahba and McCormick, 2003).

Though remittances loosen credit constraints that increase some migrants' likelihood to return, Dustmann and Kirchkamp (2002) found that younger mostly male migrants who have a high rate of savings are more likely to return to start a business back home. Intermediate aged female migrants that are married with children that gained additional skills or job training choose to return for better wage-employment opportunities in Turkey. Wahba and Zenou (2012) found that most mid-career return migrants wished to change their choice of occupational activity, but the loss of their social ties made it hard for them to enter the labor market of Egypt. Other empirical findings suggest that duration of stay abroad, incentives and national policies significantly impact the skills composition of the population of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Tani and Mahuteau, 2008).

Still, a rise in the unemployment rate among migrants working in industries like agriculture and construction may also lead to an increase in their probability of returning home. Less educated migrants who lost their jobs during the economic crisis, prompting their exit from Germany, Ireland and Spain to return home (Kim, 1998; Papademetriou et al., 2010). However, skilled migrants in the manufacturing sector of the United Kingdom did not experience a significant rise in unemployment rates because of reduction in working hours, labor hoarding and government-sponsored policies that avoided the need for them to return to EU member states (Rinne and Zimmermann, 2012). The deterioration of the national economy and favorable migration policies thus impacted returns to several EU member states (Ruhs, 2006; Zaiceva and Zimmermann, 2012).

Given the selectivity of migrants, some empirical work on migration initially assumed that people try to maximize their expected lifetime earnings. A cost-benefit analysis determined whether they moved to the desired host country or chose to stay back home. Sjaastad (1962) argued that migrants who decided to migrate were responding to higher wages offered by the host country. Modification of Harris and Todaro's (1970) model suggests that if expectations for higher wages are not met, difficulty in finding employment, chances of getting deported or psychic costs outweigh the benefits, then migrants would return home (Todaro and Maruszko, 1987; De Haas, 2008a). Those that decided to return are considered failures and the migration project is deemed to be an economic loss for the home country.

Other empirical studies have shown that despite a favorable wage differential offered in the host country migrants may nonetheless return home. Stark et al. (1997) found that though migrants earned higher wages abroad, they saved a part of their income that they sent home. Due to the higher purchasing power of their savings, migrants chose to return because they could meet their consumption needs and household expenditures at lower prices back home. Mesnard (2004) found that migrants took advantage of earning higher wages abroad in order to accumulate savings that helped them overcome market imperfections to start a business back home. Dustmann (2003) found evidence that an additional motive for migrants to return is the accumulation of human capital which would be rewarded in terms of higher wages than before they left, job promotions and even the choice of transitioning into new lines of work once they return home (McCormick and Wahba, 2001). In addition, non-economic life cycle factors have been reported to influence some migrants' motives for returning home. The difficulty in finding a suitable marriage prospect or a break-up with their life partner led Vietnamese men and Barbadian women to return home (Gmelch, 2004; Palriwala and Uberoi, 2005). Though caring for aging parents was an important motive for migrants to exit their destinations, Dustmann (2003) showed that parents who had a daughter were prompted to return because they wanted to infuse cultural values into her upbringing by living back at home. And migrants who decided it is time to retire might choose to live their remaining years back home (Massey et al., 1987; Samers, 2010; Percival, 2013). Therefore, return may not be a failed migration project but one of the migrants' life reasons to go home.

More recently, studies have shifted the focus away from individuals who are viewed as utility maximizers to the role of families, households and communities in migrants' decision to stay abroad or return. Migration decisions are based on income maximization and risk minimization concerns, which means that migrants remain abroad until they have accumulated sufficient savings that enables them to provide financial stability to their family and households back home. And once migrants have achieved their target-level of savings, they choose to return home (Stark, 1991; Dustmann, 1997; Mesnard, 2004; Yang, 2006). Those that have met their financial goals are considered to be successful migrants and thus the logical outcome is to return home.

Moreover, migrants might return due to their social networks, to join family that were left behind or transnational ties that create a sense of belonging. The social networks of migrants can be used to gain financial assistance, emotional support and access information pertinent for their return trip. Social connections of migrants' family, friends or former colleagues can also open up access to better housing, employment opportunities and even societal recognition, which further motivates migrants to return (Massey and Espana, 1987; DeWind and Holdaway, 2005). While Tiemoko (2003) found that the desire to re-join their family led migrants to return to Côte d'Ivoire, the evidence reinforces earlier findings that family and friends provide information on available opportunities, legal matters, social tensions and the security situation back home. Likewise, Brown (1997) and Lorenzo et al. (2007) found evidence that Jamaican and Filipino migrants' main motive for returning was to re-unite with their families—that is spend time with relatives, live in a join household and build a familial culture at home. Those that return for family reasons have nostalgic memories that lead them back home. Though unsatisfactory work conditions, xenophobia or failure to culturally adapt can prompt migrants to exit their destinations, Sanderson (2009) showed that memories, feelings of nostalgia, missing cultural festivals and even yearning for authentic food keeps an ongoing cultural connection that encourages migrants to return home. There are also several empirical studies that discuss assimilation, diaspora issues and integration policies of destination countries, which might push people to return home. Holistically, return amongst migrants may be the result of successful migration experiences that pulls them home.

Taking into consideration the heterogeneity of migrants, Thomas-Hope (1999) asserts that personal factors like age, the stage migrants are at in their careers, gender and marital relations have a varying impact on their decision to leave the host country. Migrants' domestic circumstances while abroad—employment opportunities, the cost of living and cultural acceptance—is weighed against the needs of their family or household, transnational ties to the community as well as national sentiment that prompts them to return home (Castles, 2000; Iredale et al., 2003; De Haas and Fokkema, 2010). That is migrants that sent remittances to their family or household may not immediately return home. There are various scenarios under which migrants may return, suggesting variations also in their influence, or none at all, on the economic, social or political development in their respective home countries.

In this sense, migrants might have varying impacts on the wage distribution, unemployment rate, labor force participation and possibly the economic growth of their countries of origin. Co et al. (2000) found that women who returned to Hungary earned a wage premium of 40% over those that stayed home. Those who returned to Hungary had obtained new knowledge, specific skills and work experience, which were highly valued by their country's labor market. Likewise, Barrett and O'Connell (2001) found that men who had returned home earned a significant wage premium compared to those that never left Ireland. Barrett and O'Connell (2001) as well as Reinhold and Thom (2009) found that having worked abroad for longer than 3 years resulted in a skill-upgrade, which was rewarded upon their return to Ireland and Mexico. However, Enchautegui (1993) found that migrants who returned to Puerto Rico did not realize a wage premium from their stay and work experiences in the United States. Those who returned to Puerto Rico mostly worked in relatively low skilled jobs in the United States. Because these migrants had not acquired the necessary or relevant human capital during their stay abroad, they did not reap any benefit in the labor market back home. A similar finding was reported by De Vreyer et al.'s (2008) research on a select group of returnees' efforts at accumulating human capital and its wage effects in capital cities of seven West African countries. Yet, Zachariah et al. (2001) and Lucas (2008) did show that migrants were able to secure a job within six months upon their return, suggesting that they might have a socio-economic impact back home.

The above studies do not support the findings of earlier studies that mostly analyzed low skilled migrants who experienced higher unemployment than non-migrants in local labor markets of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka (Mahmood, 1991; Nair, 1991; Arcinas, 1991; Gunatilleke, 1991; Arif, 1995). McCormick and Wahba (2003) as well as Piracha and Vadean (2009) found that returnees' remittances were used to establish family businesses that increased labor force participation, especially among women in Egypt and Albania. Others have shown that returnees' remittances might be substituted for the household's labor income, but the evidence does not fully explain its effects on the domestic labor market back home. Though returnees may impact economic growth, the studies are also inconclusive on their larger social and political effects back home.

Nonetheless, migrants' social network ties, diaspora links and connections with their transnational communities might influence aspects related to the socio-economic development of their country of origin. While Muschkin (1993) found migrants with weak network ties had difficulty transferring their new knowledge resources back to Puerto Rico, Nanda and Khanna (2010) presented evidence on returnees' diaspora links with business networks that were shown to facilitate the flow of knowledge and capital that helped to reduce location constraints in India. And migrants that return to their home may also contribute to its intellectual and social progression. As Saxenian (2005: 36) observed, "they [returnees] transfer first-hand knowledge...these individuals, often among the earliest returnees, serve as policymakers who are anxious to promote technology growth. As experienced engineers and managers return home...they bring worldwide views and identities that grow out of shared educational and professional experiences." Not only are returnees regarded as important players in MNCs, transnational communities and the domestic economy, but also they have the ability to diffuse practices, political values and cultural understandings that can transform their societies back home (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2010). Still, other studies have shown that integration policies—improved access to employment, relaxing visa restrictions and implementation of government programs for settlement—have had a mixed effect on returnees' impacts on socio-political situations back home. The various issues suggest that returnees could have a negative or possibly a positive impact on socio-economic and political outcomes back home.

The various return migration studies show that migrant's selectivity creates a heterogeneous group of people who have diverse motivations for returning and thus vary in their economic, social and political effects on their countries of origin. In addition to the accumulation of human capital as an important driver for skilled migrants to return, remittances, social network ties, transnational communities and migration policies can further pull skilled migrants; who may have a positive knowledge impact on their home country. With the exception of Williams (2006a, 2007, 2008), Khadria (2004, 2009), and Ammassari (2009), existing studies of migration say little about the actual role of high skilled migrants in disseminating knowledge resources once they are back home. Most research on the transfer of knowledge resources to local labor markets, sectors or organizations has been in the field of international business studies. The accompanying empirical analysis has focused on the mobility of professionals, nature of transnational work and the repatriation process of organizations. Because return migration is considered a type of mobility, linking the two research strands with relevant empirical findings may provide a better understanding of returned migrants' knowledge transfers to local sectors and employing organizations.

2.3 International Business: Mobility, Transnational Work and Repatriation

The creation of an international elite class is often attributed to the economic restructuring of global labor markets that raises the demand for skilled migrants in developed countries. The elite groups of workers "see their interests as best served by the interests of global capitalism" (Sklair, 2002: 9) and thus move from peripheral to advanced economic regions. The increased mobility of high skilled migrants is rationalized as the result of structural changes to global labor markets, but emphasis is also placed on the rise of transnational urbanism—connections to global cities that help migrants find employment, construct lifestyle images and get better cultural understandings of their new destination (Smith, 2005). High skilled migrants move to global cities with a high concentration of headquarters, clusters of knowledge-intensive industries and known sites of services to access employment opportunities at the destination. These opportunities may improve migrants' social and occupational mobility upon their return home.

According to economic geographers, globalization can cause or increase regional unevenness that might prompt people residing in peripheral or remote regions to seek out life opportunities elsewhere. Most of these people move out to core regions, that Fielding's (1992) called the escalator regions, to improve their socio-economic status by living in the new destination. Fielding (1992) used data from national censuses of 1971 and 1981 for England's South-East region so as to compare the socio-economic status of migrants moving into and out of the districts. In-migrants to the South-East region were often young adults whereas out-migrants were older persons from upper class households in the districts. This meant that older migrants or those close to retirement had achieved upward social mobility and economic progress and thus migrated out of the region.

Based on the above studies, Van Ham (2001), Fielding (2004) and Conradson and Latham (2005) extended the analysis of the escalator region hypothesis to explain why migrants are attracted to global locations. They found that escalator regions have a higher density of job opportunities that enable migrants to get ahead in life in terms of occupational mobility by working in global cities. Findlay et al. (2008, 2009) found that Scottish migrants experienced career acceleration because of the shortage of skilled labor in the service sector of London. Not only did working and living in London give the Scottish migrants a chance to pursue other life goals, but also those that chose to return were able to use their training and work experience to land senior positions in the same sectors in Edinburgh, Glasgow and other major cities.

Findlay et al.'s (2009) work further explained that an escalator region might lead to different types of mobility—escalator, elevator or travelator—suggesting that migrants are successful at managing boundaryless careers are able to move to several different global cities. Migrants with a boundaryless career trajectory can accept jobs in places like New York, London, Tokyo or any other major city. Migrants that spend time working abroad boost their credentials, which they can add to their CV and job profile that helps to differentiate them from domestically trained workers in up and coming techno-cities, sectors and even multinational corporations. In this sense, migrants if they chose to return home to work in such emerging cities might get promoted to senior positions, offered better wages and other non-work related benefits from locally employing organizations.

The presence of multinational corporations (MNCs) in core and peripheral regions has further increased the spatial mobility of skilled migrants engaged in transnational activities on behalf of their parent companies. Erten et al. (2006) mentioned that MNCs entering peripheral market economies shifted operations and internally recruited top-level executives to ensure that their foreign business divisions integrated with their parent company. Chacko (2007) also pointed out that when Dell Inc., General Electric, Motorola, Microsoft and Siemens decided to open R&D development sites, establish offshore call centers and shift back-end operations to Bangalore and Hyderabad, they relocated NRI managers within their business divisions to run their foreign subsidiaries. These companies wanted to implement their own 'operational philosophies and systems' (Perkins, 1997). And thus they preferred to send their transnational workers abroad to better promote their business interests in local enterprises.

In this sense, transnationals have bounded career mobility via their transfers within companies.¹ Migrants as intra-company transferees go to work for foreign subsidiaries, complete an offshore project or engage with potential clients from other locally run companies. "It is de rigueur for workers to be given international assignments" (McCall, 1997: 77), particularly when they are specialized or personally linked to clients—as they are in a better position to negotiate overseas contracts for the company. Though workers, especially managers and executives, perform professional tasks, it is their unique ability to manage different sets of social relations—foreign managers, overseas clients and rotating staff—that is of greater relevance for accumulating knowledge capital for companies. However, Beaverstock (2005) stressed that British expatriates working in New York's financial district accumulated knowledge capital not only in offices, but also in bars, restaurants and leisure areas, forming social networks for improved engagement in the locality. Transnational work thus entails going beyond the traditional work setting to learn about the people, local markets and culture of the locality.

¹ Findlay and Li (1998) found that laboratory technicians, nurses and physicians from Hong Kong who studied abroad used their private and professional networks to search for jobs in foreign markets. Additionally, Harms and Biocca (2002) showed that engineers and scientists directly contact employers, go on Internet sites and use global recruitment agencies to find jobs in overseas locations. While high skilled migrants use similar means to get a job back home, those working in management positions especially in the IT field are subject to intra-company transfers that tend to shuffle them between local, domestic and international cities.

Whether they are returnees or transnational, repatriates and their families have to cope with a reverse cultural shock once home. A repatriate and his/her family will have to learn to re-adjust to cultural changes that have taken place, the social dynamics of their local communities as well as people that they must interact with in their new job surroundings. More importantly, repatriates will need to re-establish business and other work relationships that are embedded in organizations or their work environment (Riusala and Suutari, 2000; Linehan and Scullion, 2002; Williams and Balaz, 2008a). They do not anticipate how much they or their homes, local communities or organizations may have changed during their absence, so they experience anxiety, depression and confusion upon their return home (Gmelch, 1980; Despande, 1992; Black et al., 1992).

While MNCs prepare workers about what to expect upon entering another country, they often lack well-developed repatriation programs for their return home. Bauer and Green (1994) found that in Wydham International only 15% of expatriates and their families received some sort of repatriation training from the company. McNutly and Tharenou's (2006) survey of MNCs in Asia revealed that nearly 44% of transnationals were unhappy with the repatriation practices of their company. MNCs' international units are considered separate businesses, with overseas and domestic operations 'decoupled within the operational system and structures' of the organizations (Tung and Lazarova, 1998; Allen and Alverez, 1998). So, this might make it even harder for those returning from their overseas trips to settle back into the company.

What emerges from these studies is that transnationals with international assignments may end up travelling to several global cities—acquiring knowledge, expanding their social networks and gaining transformational experiences that make them a source of premium intellectual and social capital for organizations. MNCs that properly integrate repatriate may be able to reap benefits from their human resource investment—increased loyalty, higher job commitment and better work performance in the organization (Varner and Palmer, 2002). These migrants receive career, financial and other personal payouts because of their overseas exposure to different work settings, while the company enriches itself by gaining international competencies, knowledge of local markets and competitors and a broader cultural understanding from workers' repatriation to the organization.

The selected international business studies reveal that the increased mobility of skilled migrants—spatial, social and occupational—is the result of globalization, the emergence of global cities as hubs for MNCS and the corporatization of services. Skilled migrants pursue boundaryless career trajectories, accepting job offers in different global cities around the world. Transnational workers are bounded by intra-company transfers, which relocate them to work for the parent company's subsidiary in a foreign locality. Those who are able to go abroad and work in an escalator region improve their career options, pay scale and personal lifestyle upon their return home. Poor repatriation practices may hinder the full use of workers' overseas knowledge to the benefit of employing organizations. Existing evidence explains that workers need time to develop their social networks, work transactions can be distanced and/or localized and opportunities to transfer new knowledge resources depend on the inherent structure and processes of the organizations (Ambos and Ambos, 2009; Duan et al., 2010). Nonetheless, the evidence does not provide a detailed understanding of how workers transfer their knowledge resources in the ebb and flow of organizational life (Tsai, 2001; Dyer and Hatch, 2006; Li et al., 2007). Therefore, presenting insights from some organizational management studies—employees' formation of a social identity, how they transfer knowledge resources and its social contexts—may help to better elucidate the knowledge transfer processes in the workplace.

2.4 Organizational Management: Identities, Knowledge Transfers and Other Issues

Social identity can be defined as a sense of belonging to a social aggregate like an organization, association or group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989 as cited in Kane et al., 2005: 57). Social identity consists of awareness by people that they belong to certain groups together with an emotional and value significance attached to membership of those groups (Tajfel, 1972: 31-32). There is considerable evidence that people who share a common social identity exhibit own-group favoritism, which increases the likelihood of in-group members being perceived as friends rather than strangers in social circles (Bartel, 2001; Dasgupta, 2004). Other studies suggest that sharing a social identity helps to forge relational ties among in-group members even when a subordinate relationship exists within the work setting.

Besides sharing a common social identity, Ibarra (1992) found that people with similar demographics will organize themselves—according to attitudes, attributes including age, sex, religion and occupational role; values or other homophilic ties that bind two employees, groups of workers or larger sets of people (Feld, 1981; Monge, 1985; Haythornthwaite, 2001; Monge and Contractor, 2003; Ruef et al., 2003). Ibarra's (1995) detailed case analysis of a New England Advertising and Public Relations Agency found that men maintained better work relations with other males considered to be part of the same racial minority at work. Also, they created social bonds with same-race friends even if they were not in the same or equivalent occupational grade for advice, mentoring and social support within the workplace. Linehan's (2000) analysis of European MNCs showed that women were more likely to engage other females with similar educational backgrounds, international management experience or executive position at work. The reason to do so was to improve their work performance, gain access to premium career opportunities and penetrate the 'old boys club' in the company.

Though the social organization of employees, teams and workgroups show considerable homophilia-related content (McPherson et al., 2001; Reagans and McEvily, 2003), it is the strength of workers' social relationships that determines their level of social connectivity. A common social identity helps to group different individuals with similar traits—increasing their emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity—thus generating strong social ties amongst them. "We are more likely to receive resources from those with whom we are strongly tied...because we trust, work closely with and even mutually share an endpoint [to complete tasks in a timely as well as conscientious fashion] in the workplace (Haythornthwaite, 2006 as cited in Carolan and Natriello, 2006: 2). However, task interdependence, staff rotation and virtual social networks can mediate interactions among workers creating intermediate social ties that can transfer knowledge to other subunits of a single company (Petroczi et al., 2007; Onnela et al., 2007; Borrego et al. 2007). Hansen's (1999) in-depth analysis of R&D managers showed that even weak social ties amongst them not only led to the transfer of codified knowledge to the nearly 120 project teams spread across 41 sub-units, but also significantly improved the speed of product development and services within the multinational electronics company.

Taking into consideration that there are different modes of interpersonal communications, Uzzi (1996), Coleman (1998) and Hansen (1999) independently found employees' strong social ties were effective at disseminating tacit-sticky information whereas intermediate to weak social ties were better for transferring codified knowledge to others at work. Even if employees use electronic or virtual exchanges, Kankanhalli et al. (2011) found evidence that the amount of effort, energy, time and resources expended to maintain strong social ties is higher and the benefits less than developing weak social ties for transferring knowledge to other workers in the workplace. "Time and energy are saved from maintaining a set of weak ties that bridge structural holes" (Burt, 2000: 422), which helps to connect parts of the social network so that something new can be learned from people in the firm. In this respect, several studies have shown that even weak social ties in a sparse network structure facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge, improve the implementation of innovative practices, build-up trust and create positive work culture norms in the organization.

With respect to co-learning, Reagans and McEvily's (2003) analysis revealed that employees may maintain strong social ties with members that make up a sparse social network or they could retain weak social ties in a dense network structure. While allying with centrally placed, well-linked and highly visible partners may open up knowledge brokering opportunities, Gabby and Zuckerman (1998) found that at the team level a sparse social network with multiple structural holes can reduce communication and coordination, which "diminishes their ability to diffuse knowledge gained through its intrafirm networks" (Walter et al., 2007: 703). At the intra-organizational level, Oh et al. (2004) found evidence that teams with an internally dense social network often created bridging ties—other team leaders, heads of departments, executives, workgroups and business units—that were much more efficient at transferring tacit knowledge through their intra-firm networks. While employees, teams and subunits may be able to make use of contacts, power distributions or social resources to take advantage of knowledge transfer opportunities, Tsai (2002) suggests that a rigid organizational hierarchy may reduce a business unit's incentives to form intrafirm ties in the workplace. Thus, the effects of intrafirm social networking need to be re-evaluated to understand if they confer intended or unintended benefits to the whole organization.

More importantly, it is unrealistic to assume that employees will “easily offer their knowledge [offer new ideas, be a part of task collaboration efforts with others or implement more efficient procedures] without considering what they may gain or lose as a result of their actions” (Al-Alawi et al., 2007: 25). Emmerik and Jawahar (2005) found that employees are altruistically motivated to lend a helping hand to others as they derive a sense of joy from improving self-efficacy, work performance and the professional development of their cohort in the workgroup. Along this line of reasoning, peer recognition, reputation, social obligation and other intrinsic motivations have also been shown to increase knowledge sharing efforts of teams in their respective units (Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Javernick-Will, 2011). However, Lin (2007) found that employees behave on the basis of self-interest, sharing their knowledge resources with other people for compensation—such as cash bonuses, career advancement or job security in the units. Not only does it take effort, time and resources to impart their knowledge to others, but also employees are afraid that in doing so will lead to loss of money, power and status in the workplace (Goh, 2002; Ho et al., 2011).

While some studies have argued that employees might also be prompted by hedonic motives for participating in co-creation, knowledge transfers and innovation diffusion (Van der Heijden, 2004), existing evidence is often interpreted as showing that extrinsic rewards crowd-out intrinsic motivations for sharing knowledge resources in the workplace (Osterloh and Frey, 2000; Benabou and Tirole, 2003). The crowding-out effect on employees’ intrinsic motivation to share their knowledge may give rise to a free-rider problem—those wanting to maximize their financial payout may gain undue benefits from others’ active contributions to electronic knowledge repositories (EKRs), hoard knowledge within the workgroup or refuse to participate in the intra-organizational transfer of knowledge resources to or within the firm. Javernick-Will’s (2012) case analysis of a few construction and engineering firms showed that the free-rider problem created a ‘real social dilemma’ highlighting that having a mix of extrinsic and intrinsic incentives might better facilitate knowledge transfer processes of organizations. The general consensus these studies reach is that developing a proper incentive system would improve work performance, create a supportive work culture and thus help to facilitate the knowledge transfer processes of organizations.

A few studies find that no relationship exists between employees' intention to share knowledge with offers of extrinsic rewards for their participation in product development (Kwok and Gao, 2005; Chang et al., 2007). These findings do not take into account that employees' knowledge-sharing behavior is influenced by the power senior managers exerted over the distribution of rewards for improved work performance. Lee et al. (2006) found evidence of an increase in employees' commitment to share knowledge when they felt that top management supported their work efforts in the firm. Notwithstanding its research limitations, most of the evidence generally shows that employees' willingness to share knowledge is significantly and positively correlated with the level of management support received in creating a cooperative culture in the workplace.

Furthermore, Kubo et al. (2001) found evidence that giving employees fluid job descriptions increased communication amongst not only employees, but also different teams in the units. Job descriptions are tied to the type of work and duties performed or to occupation and seniority, so rotating staff members may improve knowledge exchanges within the firm. But a recurring problem recognized by most researchers is that employees' social interactions are bound by their work functions, placement in a certain business units and/or the larger organizational hierarchy (Lam, 1996; Klien and Kozlowski, 2000). Even with the adaptation of interactive technologies, Tagliaventi and Mattarelli (2006) showed that it is probable that knowledge transfers might be inhibited by a centralized organizational structure (Jones, 2005; De Long and Fahey, 2000).

While Taylor and Wright (2004) found that employees who are encouraged to try new approaches to solve problems would have productive exchanges, Lee et al. (2006) provided evidence that a lack of loyalty, trust and reciprocity among workers would lead them to be rebuked for their failures in the workplace. The results suggest that knowledge contributions through either corporeal presence or electronic repositories are moderated by subjective norms, the work culture and social climate of the organization (McKinnon et al., 2003 Bock et al., 2005; Kankanhalli et al., 2005). Organizational climate and other contextual issues—including but not limited to a lack of knowledge management strategies, HRD policies, level of technology development and infrastructure—might be barriers that prevent the transfer of knowledge resources across organizations.

The selected organizational studies show that the way in which employees form an identity, forge social ties in existing or new networks and numerous institutional level issues can stimulate or hinder the knowledge transfer processes of organizations. Also, employees' motive for engaging other workers, incentives offered by departments to improve interactions of workgroups and the climate of the organization can affect the transfer of knowledge resources in the workplace. Existing evidence provides valuable glimpses into workers' interactions, their social engagement and the nature of knowledge exchanges in the workplace. Nevertheless, the results do not fully explain aspects related to human mobility and intra-organizational knowledge transfers in the workplace (Madsen, 2003; Williams and Balaz, 2008). The findings also do not explain the interplay between returnees', non-migrants' and transnationals' knowledge interactions—codified and tacit knowledge exchanges in the workplace. The various shortcomings suggest that a deeper understanding is needed of returnees' activities, their work-related outcomes and possible knowledge impacts in the workplace.

2.5 Missing Link: Returnees' Role in Intra-Organizational Knowledge Transfers

The brains migration literature sets the stage, on which globalization is perceived to intensify talent competition thus creating a demand driven 'migration-skills market' in developed and developing countries (Global Commission on International Migration, 2005). The presumption of brain gain is that migrants are able to overcome geographical distances to become a source of creative power for knowledge economies—especially in business, science and the technology sectors back home. Besides the importance accorded to the return migration of high skilled migrants to knowledge-intensive industries, the rise of MNCs points to the movement of mobile engineers, managers, researchers and scientists as possible conduits for collective learning, transfer of knowledge and other resources from foreign subsidiaries to parent companies. Though a few studies mention returnees as important knowledge carriers at the organizational level, most of the evidence only recognizes expatriates, intra-company transferees and elites as vital to the diffusion of knowledge in organizations. The collection of findings, while valuable, offers little insight on returnees' impact on knowledge flows of organizations.

While different research strands have examined facets related to the interplay between international migration and knowledge transfers (Cerase, 1974; Hugo, 2005; Saxenian, 2006; Ammassari, 2009), most of the evidence is restricted to probing certain knowledge-intensive sectors. Zucker and Darby (2007) found that mobile star scientists' newly accumulated knowledge helped to transform high-technology industries. Crespi et al. (2006) found evidence that mobile scientists' and engineers' acquired knowledge—as reflected in the number newly registered patents, creation of products and services or the value assigned to their innovative capabilities in regional markets—significantly improved their likelihood of getting employment in technology industries. Besides improvements in electronic and virtual communications, building of transnational networks and the ease in which people can travel for work, Bell et al. (2007) reasoned that skilled professionals' social proximity to local employers gives them access to employment opportunities offered by organizations. Still, the results do not explain under what circumstances returnees, their level of expertise, skills and/or social experiences can facilitate the knowledge transfer processes of organizations.

However, there are a few migration studies that assess multiple dimensions related to returnees' transfer of knowledge resources to and within organizations. Williams and Balaz (2008) analyzed migrants who had moved to the United Kingdom for a period no longer than 1 year and then returned to Slovakia. The results showed that returnees acquired a range of competences including better oral communications, technical skills and deeper social networks that could be transferred to stakeholders in employing organizations. Not only did the returnees' overseas exposure help to build expertise, confidence and the cultural understanding of staff members (Williams, 2006; 2007; 2008), but also they improved the overall functioning of departments and units of their organizations. Moreover, returnees often have institutional knowledge—familiarity with the latest technology, greater professionalism and better management practices—that enables them to “connect Chinese research to global R&D networks, thereby creating conduits for inward international knowledge flow that is...important for developing biotechnological innovation within organizations (Jonkers, 2004: 10-11). This evidence though helpful, only further reinforces the need to better understand the potential role returnees can play in the knowledge transfer process of organizations.

The thesis contextualizes its analysis of post-return knowledge transfers with a more limited exploration of why migrants decide to go abroad and return. While several studies have linked migration decisions to family obligations, a favorable wage differential or location preference, my research further suggests that overseas-acquired knowledge resources may be associated with their decision to return as it would enable them to secure a better life in India. My study also expands on reasons for returning to work in the healthcare or IT sectors and on how their knowledge resources might lead them to join certain organizations.

To elaborate, taking into consideration returnees' choice of employer and some of the challenges they face adjusting to their new surroundings, the doctoral thesis of Jackson (2012), Wang (2013) and my own work examine aspects related to returnees working in organizations. However, my thesis goes one step further by conducting two case studies and a comparison between them, in which returnees', non-migrants' and transnationals' different interactions are analyzed given their occupational positions, strength of social ties and knowledge network configurations within their organizations. Other issues like workers' socialization efforts, HRD policies and the organizational contexts are discussed to show how the returned workforce can have intended benefits and/or unintended consequences on the knowledge transfer processes of organizations.

Once migrants accept a job, less is known about "what actually happens to the knowledge they hold when they return and have the opportunity to transfer it in the organizations" (Jackson, 2012: 46). My contribution to the present state of knowledge is examining this crucial missing link: that is, the role returnees can play in intra-organizational knowledge transfers of employing organizations. The most original part of my empirical work is an analysis of returnees' transfer of knowledge within organizations. Returnees' interpersonal relations, knowledge codification efforts and resulting knowledge structure depend on the strength of their social ties with non-migrants and transnationals, which is associated with whether codified or tacit knowledge is transferred in the workplace. Other variables including the work culture, incentive system and organizational hierarchy can also alter the underlying social dynamics and thus knowledge transfer process of the workplace. The results will thus shed light on returnees' potential impact on the knowledge transfer processes of the workplace.

Chapter Three

Theorizing Return Migration and Knowledge Transfer

Theorists from different schools of thought have attempted to build a general migration theory, “but the subject cries out for an interdisciplinary approach” (Brettell and Hollifield, 2008: vi) to describe its complexities. Considering the scope of the thesis, an overview of dominant migration theories is provided, limiting the review to their applicability for the study of return migration to home countries. A select group of management, organizational and knowledge transfer theories are also reviewed that address the issue of human mobility in carrying overseas knowledge resources into home countries’ knowledge-intensive sectors and/or locally employing organizations. The reason for discussing the different migration theories is to try to re-conceptualize the return of high skilled workers and their transfer of overseas knowledge resources to the organizations. Based on this re-conceptualization, the theoretical embedding of SNT is central to the thesis to study the association of returnees’ social ties on the transfer of their knowledge resources to and within the organizations. The theoretical formulation and some hypotheses are tested in later empirical chapters on India. The following discussion is to present my own view on returnees’ role in intra-organizational knowledge transfers in the workplace.

3.1 Review of Dominant International Migration Theories

Neoclassical macroeconomic theory has traditionally explained migration as the result of geographical differences in the demand and supply of labor. Countries with large endowments of labor relative to capital are predicted to have low market wages and countries with less labor relative to capital high market wages (Massey et al., 1993: 433-434). The wage differentials cause workers to move from low-wage to high-wage countries and capital moves in the opposite direction (De Haas, 2008). Convergence of wages between the countries thus leads to an equilibrium that halts migration.

Corresponding to the macroeconomic theory, microeconomic models assume that migrants' cost-benefit calculation lead them to relocate to different geographical areas (Todaro, 1969; Harris and Todaro, 1970; Todaro and Maruszko, 1987). A potential migrant's decision to move to an international location is based on the calculation of the current wage rate in the community of origin compared to that of the destination and probability of finding a job in the new region. Various analyzes explain that as long as expected income differences remain high enough to outweigh the risk of losing existing earnings, becoming unemployed or facing possible deportation a steady stream of migration would persist to the region.

Furthermore, human capital theory can be applied to modify microeconomic models to argue that the migrant's decision to move is a form of investment that has costs but also yields returns like higher wages at the new destination (Becker, 1962; Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro, 1969). "People choose to move to where they can be most productive given their skills but before they can capture the higher wages associated with greater labor productivity" (Massey et al., 1993: 434) they must make certain investments that will often include psychological costs, travelling expenses, maintenance while moving and looking for work, difficulty in learning a new language, adapting to the labor market as well as to the culture of the new destination (Massey et al., 1998; Arango, 2004; King, 2012).

It is important to note that most human capital models operate according to the neoclassical theoretical logic that that a favorable wage differential pulls people to foreign destinations. Refinements to these economic models acknowledge that migrants vary in their personal and human capital characteristics—age, education, gender, occupation, race and so forth—which affect their expectations of rewards in terms of higher wages at the foreign destination (Rosen, 1976; Card, 1999; Acemoglu, 1996; Grogger et al., 2011). While migrants often incur psychological and material costs, the different economic analyses fail to fully incorporate constraints on migrants' decision-making processes—access to perfect information, market factors, barriers to entering the international immigration market, colonial-historical linkages to the region as well as the economic, social and political reality of the destination—that might prevent them from relocating to their desired host country (McNeil and Adams, 1978; Knights and King, 1998; Castles and Miller, 2009; King, 2012).

The general problem of neoclassical economic theories is that they tend to be grounded in “determinism, functionalism and ahistoricism, which renders this approach unworkable and remote from the migration reality” (King, 2012:14). “The Achilles heel of neoclassical theory is its failure to explain why so few people actually migrate, despite apparent incentives...and why some countries have high rates of out-migration whilst others have very low rates” (Arango, 2004: 19). And more specifically, the neoclassical stance suggests that migrants who move abroad permanently would return only as a consequence of failed migration experiences at the foreign destination (Cassarino, 2004). Neoclassical tenets applied to return migration imply that those who return must have miscalculated migration costs or did not reap the benefits of higher wages abroad for their human capital. Non-economic forces might also encourage migrants to return, but neoclassical analysis relies on wage-related factors that do not fully explain return migration. As a result, scholars have looked to other theoretical frameworks to better understand the return migration phenomenon.

Accordingly, the new economics of labor migration (NELM) emerged as a critical response to the challenges posed by the neoclassical economic theories of migration (Stark and Levhari, 1982; Stark and Bloom, 1985; Katz and Stark, 1986; Lauby and Stark, 1988; Massey, 1990; Stark, 1991). Central to NELM’s theoretical formulation is that internal and international migration decisions are made by “larger units of related people—typically the families or households—in which people act collectively not only to maximize expected income, but also to minimize risks and to loosen the constraints associated with a variety of market failures and [those not a part] of the labor market” (Massey et al., 1993: 436). More importantly, the decisions undertaken by migrants’ family or households are perceived to be part of a Pareto-superior household strategy to ensure its economic well-being in the future (Lucas and Stark. 1985; De Haas, 2008). The household by diversifying one of its most valuable assets, human labor—some family members work in the local economy while others go to work in foreign labor markets—can rely on migrants’ remittances to weather shocks to the family’s income, provide capital for entrepreneurial investments and even serve as a form of private insurance against deteriorating economic conditions in the country of origin (Massey, 1990; De Haas, 2008; King, 2012).

The NELM migration model has “striking, though as of yet unobserved, conceptual parallels with the livelihood approach” (De Haas, 2007: 6) which further suggests that “there is no a priori reason why the diversification through migration argument cannot be extended to [explain the decisions made by] urban households” (De Haas, 2008: 53). From the livelihood point of view, labor migration is not just a ‘flight from misery’ but a household strategy—based on family members’ aspirations, access to resources and perceptions of life opportunities—in which employment choices can help to reduce fluctuations in income, loosen financial constraints enabling investments and to weather different types of vagaries of the domestic market. Though households make decisions that they believe will give their family members a better life, the act of migration is often shaped by the prevailing institutional context. Meaning that rather than “an atomistic reaction to economic or environmental pressure...two kinds of institutions, migration networks and household’s structure...determine the contribution migration can make to improving livelihoods, but this link is by no means direct or simple” (De Haan et al., 2000: 1), especially in migrant-sending countries.

The main shortcoming of NELM and its extension to the livelihood approach is that it is “built on methodological individualism that optimizes rationality as the ‘old’ neoclassical theory: it just moves the latter’s schizophrenic worldview a step closer to reality” (Abreu, 2010: 11). Attempts to reconcile agency and structure fail to adequately show how labor migration is shaped by changes to larger macro contexts. It is limited to the supply side of labor migration and seems best when applied to poor, rural settings in places such as Botswana and Mexico (King, 2012: 23). The family or household is “treated as a ‘black box’ without acknowledging inherent conflicts—patriarchal practices, inter-sibling rivalry and so forth—which might lead to distorted [migration] decision-making process” (King, 2012: 23). Critics point out, “not only do we not understand how return strategies are planned and reshaped, but also returnees’ interactions beyond the family/household remain unaccounted for” (Cassarino, 2004: 257) in the migration process. While migrants who chose to return might not have respond to a wage differential as depicted by neoclassicists, NELM does not fully describe why migrants return home. Understanding the different economic, social and political conditions of host and home countries might help to theoretically explain reverse migratory movements.

Standing distinctly apart from the views of neoclassicism and the NELM are historical-structural theories of migration. The dual market theory argues that better pay, the chance for occupational mobility and upgrading of their social status tend to draw natives towards employment opportunities in the primary capital-intensive sector. “Whereas low wages, unstable working conditions and the lack of reasonable prospects for mobility” (Massey et al., 1993: 443) drive native workers away from the secondary labor-intensive sector. Native workers shun undesirable jobs thus creating demand for foreign workers in the secondary labor-intensive market. “Foreign workers accept these poor and deteriorating labor niches because they have no bargaining power and such wages and jobs are still preferable to the poverty and unemployment that await them at home” (King, 2012: 16-17). The segmented labor market is the result of capitalist forces inherent in economic structures, which generate a permanent demand for ‘cheap and flexible’ immigrant labor in advanced industrialized nations (Piore, 1979; Samers, 2010; Nieswand, 2011).

The dual market theory views the “bulges of high-income and very low-income inhabitants with the latter geared to serve the needs of the former” (King, 2012: 17-18) as a result of the structural needs of growing industrial economies (Sassen, 1988). The element of economic dualism as put forth by the ‘dualistic theorists’ coincides with the Neo-Marxist dependency (theory) school of thought insofar as migrants tend to move abroad to overcome structural inequalities—a disproportionate distribution of income or wealth, unequal access to education, the lack of employment opportunities, restrictive gender roles, racism and other welfare issues—that exist because of the periphery’s continued dependency on core regions (Frank, 1978; Taylor, 1992; Castles and Delgado-Wise, 2008).² The Neo-Marxist dependency theory is further reinforced by Myrdal’s (1957) notion of cumulative causation in that the migration of people is inevitable because “once differential growth had occurred, internal and external economies of scale will perpetuate and deepen the bipolar pattern characterized by the vicious cycle of poverty in the periphery and accelerated growth of core regions” (De Haas, 2007: 41).

² Dependency theory argues that the First World extracts raw materials, cheap labor and other resources from the Third World that prevents poor nations from growing independently.

This meshes with Wallerstein's (1974) world systems argument that the disruption and dislocation of people is due to the "pre-existing economic ties between past colonial powers and their former colonies...created transport and communication infrastructures, administrative links as well as linguistic and cultural commonalities" (Morawska 2007: 3)—causing variation in dependency and perpetuation of migration from periphery to core regions (Castles and Miller, 2009). World systems theory suggests that international migration is the result of "global geographic division of labor [due to asymmetric trade relations, high levels of capital penetration and subsequent migration of people] and of the historical process of subordinate incorporation of the underdeveloped world into major capitalist economies of core countries" (Morawska 2012: 60-61). The structure of post-industrial economies along with the expansion of the global capitalist system thus contributes to the 'development of underdevelopment' of poor nations by developed countries (Baran, 1973; De Haas, 2008).

The major limitation of historical-structural theories is that they offer versions of historical determinism: 'univocal, reductionist interpretations of history in which all countries pass through...as if following a grand script' (Arango 2004: 27). Migrants are viewed "as little more than passive pawns in the play of great powers and world processes presided over by the logic of capital accumulation" (Arango 2004: 27-28) that prompts them to relocate to other countries. While structuralists acknowledge that 'situations' must be taken into account to explain return motivations, most critics claim that, "little information and few exchanges exist between the two worlds" (Cassarino, 2004: 261). Theorists by-pass the issue of whether migrants have the necessary information to secure their return or truly understand the economic, social or political changes that have taken place since their departure to the new destination. They focus instead on the extent to which returnees negatively or positively impact their home country. Besides mirroring the theoretical fallacies of traditional models, structuralists' interpretation of return migration unconvincingly links various issues—motives to return, the migrants' expectations of opportunities and readjustment to local realities—to explain possible socio-economic development impacts on the home country. Therefore, further theoretical exploration is needed to gain insight on returned migrants' contributions to their home country.

More recent thinking has turned towards a transnational theory of migration (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Basch et al., 1994; Guarnizo et al. 2003). Transnational theory postulates, among other propositions, that technological developments have led to increased use of “telephone, fax, television...[different modes of transport], the internet to remit money...that enable migrants and their families to foster double loyalties, travel back and forth to work and do business...in distant places” (De Haas, 2007: 55)—thus improving the possibility of pursuing a transnational livelihood.³

The transnational view further theorizes migrants as income-bearers who remit a portion of their savings out of financial obligations, moral commitments and/or deep emotional attachments to their family or the household back in the origin community. While the empirical evidence is mixed, theorists argue that migrants who continue to send remittances to their family or household despite a prolonged stay overseas are committed to transnational marriages—refusing to abandon spouses after moving to their destination—or make frequent and periodic visits for business interests must have strong social ties to entities back at home (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002; Pribilsky, 2004; Faist, 2004). Over time, the migrant communities’ social interactions, circular movements and strong sense of national pride are institutionalized by state or parastatal bodies that aim to improve the economic and political security of the home country.

The transnational approach essentially conceptualizes migrants as those “[who] feel linked to one another by in-group solidarity and common ethnic origins” (Cassarino, 2004: 263) that results in “regular and sustained social contact that can reach across national borders” (Portes et al., 1999: 219). In this sense, migrants who have successfully assimilated into a host country do not necessarily ‘loosen their social ties’ or even ‘reduce their different commitments’ to the entities back home (De Haas, 2007). Nevertheless, Portes (2001: 187) mentions that immigrant transnationalism may not be driven by ideology but by the very logic of global capitalism. Castles (2010) and Faist (2010) re-inscribe international migration as part of a general transformation process of institutions and social structures within the global political economy thus providing a somewhat clearer picture of the possible developmental impacts in a globalized world.

³ The notion of transnationalism is often applied and extends to citizenship, communitarianism and socio-political transformation across various academic disciplines.

“If the transnational approach has a value in reformulating migration theory, it is that it questions the linear, push-pull, no-return model...it builds on the theories of migration networks; and it also places a big question-mark over the extensive body of literature devoted to the integration and assimilation of migrants in host countries” (King, 2012: 25). Unlike NELM and historical-structural theories, transnational theory views return migration as part and parcel of a complex circular system—transferring knowledge, conferring ethnic membership and facilitating reintegration via regular visits to home countries. Despite its valuable insights, critics of transnationals’ interpretation of return migration opine that it is difficult to understand how return migrants “generate a set of mutual expectations, obligations and opportunities stemming from a common ethnicity and kinship; or maintain strong linkages while abroad that allows returnees to cope with traditional vested interests and social pressures of their origin societies” (Cassarino, 2004: 265). Most transnationals’ models of migration focus less on fully explaining the possible ‘development effects’ of returnees’ cross-border mobility and more on their traumatic migratory experiences in host or home countries (Faist, 2000; Blunt, 2007; King, 2012). These theoretical inadequacies suggest that a further re-framing of issues is required to understand returnees’ potential economic, social and political contributions to home countries.

The rise of NELM and transnationalism has renewed interest in the network theory of migration. The network theory posits that actors make use of social capital—defined as the capacity of individuals to command scarce resources by virtue of their membership in networks or broader social structures—to maximize their utility (Portes, 1995: 12). “Network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to various kinds of financial capital: foreign employment, high wages and possibility of accumulating savings or sending remittances” (Massey et al., 1998: 42). And more generally, migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, non-migrants and former migrants in webs of kinship, friendship and shared origins (Banerjee, 1983; Boyd, 1989; Bagchi, 2001; Vertovec, 2002; Nannestad et al., 2008). “They again are considered a form of social capital stretched across space and therefore facilitate international movements because they provide information which lowers the costs and risks of migration” (Massey et al., 1998: 43) to host and home countries.

Most network migration models theorize that migrants after settling abroad become bridgeheads who help to reduce financial, non-material and psychological costs of those considering moving out of their place of origin (Lee, 1966; Appleyard, 1992; Bocker, 1994). “Through the assistance of friends and relatives, new migrants may more easily obtain information and receive active assistance in finding employment and a place to live... in arranging residence papers or in finding a marriage partner” (De Haas, 2007: 30) that enables them to quickly settle down at the destination. While migrants are linked to each other through feelings, norms and a shared history, such transnational relationships and ethnic networks differ substantially from social and/or economic networks developed by people living in separate national territories. Weber (1994) reasoned that ‘distinctiveness’ of networks is not irrelevant as it specifies attributes that identify members of the same equivalence class for purposes of articulating the exact nature of the relationship that binds those residing separately in the host and home countries (Church et al., 2002). Whether constructed on a communal or associative basis, cross-border social and economics networks are responsive to the economic, social and political contexts in host and home countries.

The network approach is often considered to “rank amongst the most important explanatory [frameworks] of migration” (Arango, 2004: 28). However, network theorists are unable to specify exactly which factors, linkages, processes or structural forces cause networks to perpetuate migration to a particular destination (Klaver, 1997). The networkists’ interpretation of return migration does not fully explain how migrants maintain ‘strong, cohesive and functional’ ethnic networks, which are susceptible to ‘weakening or crumbling’ due to changes in the economic, social or political conditions of the host and home country (De Haas, 2007). While migrants’ distinct membership to cross-border social or economic networks might provide resources, it remains unclear how financial assistance, social support and information on opportunities shape their return strategies to the home country. Depending on membership requirements of certain cross-border social or economic networks, it is possible that networks can be exclusionary especially if returnees are considered to be outsiders once back in their home country. These theoretical limitations tend to challenge the potentially positive network effects and impact of returnees on home countries.

Overall, the different migration theories offer valuable insights on the nexus between migration and development. “Because theories proposed to explain the origins and persistence of international migration posit causal mechanisms at many levels of aggregation, the various explanations are not necessarily contradictory” (Massey et al., 1993: 455-456) and may be seen as supplementary views of migration. Given the proposed theories and mixed confirmatory empirical evidence, Massey (1999: 47) made a valid observation that:

It is entirely possible for individuals to engage in cost-benefit calculations; for households to minimize risk or overcome barriers to capital and credit; for both individuals and households to draw on social capital to facilitate international movement; and for the socio-economic context within which migration decisions are made to be determined by structural factors operating at the national and international levels, often influenced by migration itself.

A critical review of the theoretical approaches reveals several shortcomings in fully explaining the causes and perpetuation of international migration, while even less mention is made of its consequences for some host and home countries (Greenwood, 1985; Cassarino, 2004). The theoretical inadequacies of existing migration concepts, accompanying models and conceptualizations also tend to limit their applicability for studying return migration, especially the potential impact high skilled returned migrants can have on home countries. While many theorists have helped in providing ‘theoretical familiarity’ for investigating return migration, particularly issues pertaining to remittances, accumulation of human capital and immigration policies, a clear articulation of why high skilled migrants return and the implications of the transfer of their overseas knowledge resources to home countries still remains under-researched (Cerase, 1974; Khadria, 1999; Brown, 2001; Newbold, 2001; Nagel, 2005; Ammassari, 2003; 2009; Dustmann, 1997; 2001; 2009; Williams and Balaz, 2008; 2008a). Understanding why high skilled migrants decide to return and their ability to contribute overseas-acquired knowledge resources to their home countries is only possible by reaching outside the ‘migration box’ and into other realms of study. So, infusing and integrating various theories and perspectives opens up the possibility of building a pluralistic framework that can address the complexities of this topic.

3.2 Insights from Management, Organizational and Knowledge Transfer Theories

“There are a number of links or theoretical bridges between economics and the international business field” (Buckley, 1996: 11). Internationalization theory is most often relied upon to explain the increasing presence of MNCs in the periphery region. This theory argues that MNCs aim at maximizing profit by trying to reduce transaction costs that arise due to market imperfections in the periphery region. “For MNCs, when natural market imperfections are high, a firm’s expansion across national boundaries may be an efficient way to internalize non-pecuniary externalities [like branding of products, streamlining line production that requires know-how and transfer of the latest technologies] in the foreign region” (Hennart, 2012: 131). MNCs thus organize and internalize international interdependencies by instituting a mix of hierarchical control systems (parent companies regulate their foreign subsidiaries, business facilities and operations), management of human resources (global recruitment and socialization of staff according to the needs of local employers) and determining final outputs (pricing of products to consumers in the domestic market) in the foreign region.

The general limitation of the internationalization theory—forming more or less Dunning’s (2001) OLI perspective—is its inability to explain firm-specific economic transactions in two different regions. The rationale for the need of MNCs to expand their operations fails to explain how these firms overcome “various forms of distance ‘cultural, economic, institutional and geographic’ to compete with rivals” (Rugman et al., 2011: 755) in foreign locations. Theoretical models presume that MNCs are better at organizing their interdependencies and reducing transaction costs, yet their parameters fail to specify variables like “information asymmetries between the buyers and sellers, lack of futures markets as well as government intervention in the form of trade barriers” (Rugman et al., 2011: 8) to substantiate claims of benefits to businesses in the foreign location (Verbeke and Brugman, 2009; Lee, 2010; Oh, 2010). Such theoretical paradigms are still in their infancy, which ultimately suggests that researchers need to look elsewhere to gain insight on firms’ ability to maintain a competitive advantage in an ever-more interconnected global geographical space (Buckley, 1983; Caves, 1996; Ghoshal and Moran, 1996; Andresen and Christensen, 2005).

While there are several organizational theories, most theorists agree that “transaction costs is the ground where economic thinking, strategic management and organizational theory meet” (Rumelt et al., 1991: 15).⁴ An alternate theory that has risen to challenge previous conceptualizations is the resource-based view (RBV) of organizations (Nelson and Winter, 1982; Wenerfelt, 1984). Central to the RBV’s theoretical formulation is that organizations possess resources “such as assets, capabilities, firm attributes, processes...[information and knowledge] that would enable them to conceive of strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness” (Barney, 1991: 101) for a sustained competitive advantage over other firms spread across a geographical space.

Furthermore, applying RBV to business models argues that organizations may possess a set of dynamic capabilities that can be leveraged to sustain firms’ competitive advantage in a rapidly changing environment. Eisenhardt and Martin (2000: 1110) posit that dynamic capabilities are organizational processes and/or routines by which firms achieve new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split and die to sustain their competitive advantage in an uncertain and changing environment (Hoskisson et al., 1999). The underlining rationale of dynamic capabilities is that organizations that face pressure from competitors and external forces can use their “bundles of resources that are valuable, rare and inimitable” (Dunford et al., 2001: 21) to implement value-creating strategies not easily duplicated by other firms in overseas marketplace.

Moreover, an extension of RBV to strategic human resource models narrow the focus of organizations’ set of dynamic capabilities to their HRM system as a way to not only ‘beat out the competition’ but also improve long-term economic performance of the firm (Cappelli and Singh, 1992; Wright et al.1994). These models reasoned that rather than assets, knowledge capabilities, routines and resources being used to craft and implement value-creating strategy, “it is much easier to rearrange existing complementary resources given a chosen HR practice” (Dunford et al., 2001: 6-7) to enhance the core competencies of the organization. This logic was applied by Boxall (1998) to show that developing the general core competencies of teams, subunits or departments can help build an organization capable of learning within industries in foreign markets.

⁴ Please refer to Spender and Scherer (2007) for a complete theoretical review.

Refinement of RBV and HRM models has recently been used to create a quasi-theory called the knowledge-based view (KBV)—in which knowledge is considered the most significant resource of firms. KBV bridges organizations' newly acquired capabilities with their human resources that have 'latent productive possibilities' to explain how the transfer of knowledge can improve economic performance of the firm (Grant, 1996; Snell et al., 1996). While the different models and concepts recognize the importance of managing the social as well as cultural environment of the firm, emphasis is placed on developing communication systems, building job-related content and offering incentives to employees to transfer their knowledge to the organization. The implication is that successfully transferring knowledge can enhance the organizations' capabilities, competencies and processes to become major players in global marketplace.

The main shortcoming of organizational theories, namely RBV and its extension to different business, human capital and knowledge models, is that they lack sufficient theoretical grounding to explain how resources are combined, re-arranged and deployed in rapidly changing environments to sustain competitive advantage over other firms in a locality (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2009). These theories claim that organizations possess dynamic capabilities that let them develop strategies to maintain 'total control over the production and productivity' of their businesses, but this model has no 'operational validity' as its explanations are *ex definito* due to unforeseen internal and external forces of foreign markets. Moreover, critics point out that the human capabilities embedded in organizations are not generic resources but often represent 'degrees of uniqueness' like level of education, skills and work experience that are not fully taken into account by theorists measuring the economic performance of firms (Gibbert, 2006; Levitas and Ndofor, 2006). And more importantly, no resource is more problematic than knowledge because of its intangibility—causally ambiguous, socially complex, historically evolved processes such as learning, cooperation and innovation (Boxall, 1996: 67)—which raises doubt about organizations' capacity to absorb and utilize new knowledge resources in the firm (Spender and Scherer, 2007). The inadequacies of traditional models to pragmatically address knowledge transfers suggest that a more narrow and specific theoretical understanding may help to highlight the possible knowledge transfer impacts on organizational development.

Recently, researchers have attempted to break away from the theoretical views underlining organizational thinking in order to create 'quasi-knowledge' theories of the firm. While accepting organizations as the unit of analysis and the importance of building human capital and developing HRM systems in which knowledge is seen as a vital resource in strategic planning, the quasi-knowledge theories shift the focus from resource management to socialization processes of the firm (Argote and Ingram, 2000). The different quasi-knowledge theories postulate that organizations are 'learning sites' which adjust to internal and external forces in which norms, values and processes are diffused to various stakeholders in the firm. Naturally, socialization is a process in which staging techniques—HR initiatives, management decisions and existing routines—enable organizations and their members to transfer knowledge within the firm.

Several theorists have used KBV to link social transactions that might facilitate knowledge circulation of organizations. Different knowledge models including the Triple Helix paradigm are derived from Nonaka's (1994) SECI model, which describes the complexities of the knowledge transfer processes of organizations. The SECI model has four phases—socialization, externalization, combination and internalization—that help to explain how knowledge spirals through the organization. "Socialization involves the sharing of tacit knowledge through joint activities...being together, spending time and living in the same environment" (Nonaka and Konno, 1998: 42-43) that enables the transferring of ideas to colleagues in the firm. Externalization is the conversion of tacit to explicit knowledge "by expressing ideas as words, concepts or figurative language" (Nonaka and Konno, 1998: 44), which helps in translating "highly professional knowledge of specialists into forms that is easy to understand" (Nonaka and Konno, 1998: 44) by people in the firm. Combination relies on collecting explicit knowledge, transferring it to personnel and processes the information into usable forms like plans, reports or strategies that people can access in the firm. Internalization occurs through HR learning initiatives, on-the-job training or self-realization that triggers learning-by-doing processes—role models, observations or mimicry—by people, teams and other social groups at the firm (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992). Essentially, knowledge is transferred in an ascending process from individuals and social groups to other stakeholders of the firm.

Apart from knowledge models, theorists have increasingly relied on social network theory (SNT) to articulate the link between social dynamics and the transfer of knowledge resources in organizations. This approach has produced a fragmented set of theories, models and hypotheses on the nature of 'interacting units' social ties in transferring knowledge resources in an organization. From personal mobility, group decision-making to innovation diffusion models, Granovetter (1983), Krackhardt (1992) as well as Retzer (2012) hypothesized that: "strong social ties can be found in densely socially interconnected networks in which knowledge transferred tends to be redundant...[So] weak social ties act as bridges between tightly knit cliques in which novel knowledge diffuses rapidly throughout the firm" (Schneider et al. 1997: 1205). While intermediate ties may also exist that connect social cliques for the purpose of transferring knowledge, their knowledge effects will depend on the underlying social context of the firm. The resulting strong, weak or intermediate ties will be contingent on network structures that can stimulate or stiffen the knowledge transfer process of firms.

Inspiration from Simmel (1955), Freeman (1977) and Granovetter (1983) led to Burt's (1992) social structural theory that explains network characteristics' effects on social relations in organizations. The most popular application of this approach is the network model of competition, formation of strategic business networks and the use of third-party interveners in organizations. "When individuals sitting in separate clusters possess distinct and non-redundant knowledge there is said to be a structural hole between them...even the most productive teams can be internally cohesive but have external networks full of structural holes" (Burt, 1992: 63)—causing social rifts in organizations. Reagans et al. (2004) hypothesized that a strong tie across a structural hole would enable people to access and ultimately share with each other a diverse set of knowledge resources resulting in higher productivity, greater creativity as well as rapid diffusion of innovation across the firm. Granovetter (1983) and Retzer (2012) state that intermediate or even weak ties could also help facilitate the transfer of knowledge resources across structural holes in a 'diverse, open and overall cohesive' network structure of the firm. This line of work has further expanded on the density, cohesion and range of networks to highlight knowledge transfer processes in firms (Cross et al., 2002; Reagans and McEvily, 2003; Burt, 2005).

Others have developed theoretical conceptualizations that do not fall into any traditional category of research as they concentrate on a host of issues related to the knowledge transfer processes of organizations. The eclectic models combine a nexus of ideas and concepts to reason out how, in which ways and why knowledge is transferred within organizations. Hansen (1999) hypothesized and successfully tested that weak ties are more efficient at transferring codified rather than tacit knowledge to teams which are spread across different units engaged in product development—thus highlighting that a HRD managers must choose whether to implement a personalization or a codification strategy in the organization. Wasko and Faraj (2000) rationalized that firms should increase their reliance on electronic networks as they facilitate knowledge transfer by improving a sense of community in the organization. Kankanhalli et al. (2004, 2005) showed that a firm's knowledge structure is moderated by trust, organizational rewards, social norms and other contextual variables of the workplace. Several case analyses also offer insights on knowledge transfer as it relates to work adjustment, repatriation process and cross-culture impacts of the workplace (Paik et al., 2002).

The major problem of the knowledge transfer perspective is that it does not in any meaningful sense constitute a knowledge-based theory of organizations (Foss, 1996; Phelan and Lewin, 2000). Even if different theorists claim to have at least a quasi-knowledge theory it is grounded in folk epistemology—ordinary, intuitive and untutored views about the nature of knowledge (Kitchener, 2002: 89)—resulting in haphazard descriptions of the knowledge transfer process of organizations. Theorists emphasize the importance of the socialization process, but accompanying models do not specify how knowledge is converted, translated and universally accepted by interacting units for its successful transfer to various stakeholders in the firm (Brown, 2001). While SNT and other analyses have produced useful conceptualizations and testable hypotheses on the strength of social ties and network characteristics, explanations fail to disentangle which mechanisms mediate knowledge exchanges amongst teams, units and other organizational levels of the firm. Critics point out that 'bridging structural holes of networks' will be subject to prevailing norms, cultural values and systems embedded in structures of the firm. Thus, re-framing relevant theoretical elements may help to explain how and in which ways knowledge is transferred in the workplace.

The different theories offer a perspective on MNCs' economic transaction costs, organizations' resource strategies and views on how firms might approach knowledge management that impact their ability to sustain a competitive advantage over other organizations. As a whole, existing theories viewed as collection of thoughts have greater explanatory power than the sum of the parts that is often used by theorists to describe aspects related to the management of resources for improving the development of organizations. Interestingly, social network theory and its analysis has emerged as a powerful investigative tool which Bentley (1998: 157) seems to suggest can be applied to explain knowledge transfer processes because:

Relationships that are distributed across geographical areas, organizations and large social groups connect us to a wide range of resources that broaden our horizons. From this perspective, it is the most surprising and unconventional relationships that are of most use [like those engendered by the return migration of talent to the place of origin]. If our relationships mirror the formal arrangements by which we tend to organize our lives—school classes, tiers of management and families—then our access to resources and information is determined by these structures.

A critical review of some of the proposed theoretical approaches reveals that there is a limited understanding of which organizational strategies, HRM processes or employees' socialization behaviors influence knowledge transfer processes of organizations (Saks and Ashforth, 1997; Powell and Snellman, 2004). While there is some theoretical overlap among knowledge transfer and socialization models that highlight the importance of international human mobility in further developing resources, capabilities and competences of organizations, most theorists have found it difficult to create a clear theoretical understanding of the knowledge transfer processes within organizations (Malhotra, 1998; Gourlay, 2006; Buono and Poulfelt, 2005). There are surprisingly few theoretical studies on the role of international human mobility—let alone return migration—that successfully explain how and in which ways the transfer of knowledge resources takes place amongst teams, units or other organizational levels in the firm. Most conceptualizations do not include return migrants in their research design and any general results are substantiated by mixed empirical evidence raising doubts about skilled workers' knowledge contributions in the workplace. Thus, a re-evaluation of theories and models may help to construct an appropriate framework given my area of research.

3.3 Re-conceptualizing Return Migration and Knowledge Transfers

A critical reflection on a few migration theories draws attention to the fact that in some cases, “neo-classical individual income maximizing motives may be more powerful in explaining relatively ‘unconstrained’ migration of high skilled workers, while risk spreading motives emphasized by NELM may be more valuable in migration of lower skilled migrants living under higher social and financial constraints [to other localities]” (De Haas, 2014: 13). NELM, transnationalism and the livelihood perspective hold that migration may be an integral part of transnational livelihood strategies pursued by households and other social groups in which “risks to economic well-being [can be controlled] by diversifying income-earning and livelihood resources into a ‘portfolio’ of activities, spreading labor resources across space and time” (King, 2012: 25) to other localities.

However, social network theory argues that the rationale for the creation and disposition of network and kinship capital is to provide information that reduces the uncertainty of the migration option itself, conditioned by market incompleteness and income distribution at the origin” (Abreu, 2010: 10). The human capital theory “[assumes] free choice and full access to information, [due to which migrants] are expected to go where they can be the most productive, that is, are able to earn the highest wages” (De Haas, 2008: 5), often opting to move abroad. If migrants are able to augment their human capital abroad, their expectation of being highly rewarded may motivate them to return home (Da Vanzo, 1983; Dustmann, 1997; Dustmann et al., 2011). Yet, psychological costs, emotional attachments and other sentiments may also compel people to return to their home.

Still, assimilation, dual market and historical structural theories tend to offer alternative views on migration to other regions. The range of perspectives assembled in various combinations seem to point in the direction that the decision to return shapes the propensity of migrants to not only exert greater work effort or save money, but also to gain additional skills or on-the-job training, and is associated with their level of socialization at the destination (Stark and Galor, 1990). It is, therefore, possible that accumulating skills, savings, social capital or other resources may be an additional motive encouraging people to return so as to reap financial or non-pecuniary benefits available in their home country.

With respect to the aforementioned migration theories, the point is that “the goal should be to develop an improved contextualized theorization of migration, which is systematic, precise, but eclectic...in analyzing their different levels and contexts of applicability” (De Haas, 2014: 13) of return migration. While returned migrants are “expected to play a positive role in accelerating spatial diffusion of modernization, stimulating economic growth and other sorts of development potential...there is a reciprocal relationship between migration [in which migrants act in the wider economic and social context that helps to assess their relationship] in the broader transformation processes” (De Haas, 2008: 27-28). Because of the heterogeneity of returnees, families and households as well as different contextual, temporal and spatial contingencies in which migration occurs, the decision to acquire knowledge resources could be based on their ‘access to assets, aspirations and perceptions of opportunities’ (De Haas, 2008) at home.

Expanding on the above idea, it could be re-conceptualized that migrants may return once they have accumulated sufficient overseas knowledge resources to better their economic wellbeing in the country of origin. Returned migrants who have accumulated knowledge, skills, capital or other resources will seek rewards that were denied at the destination or previously at home. Those who have acquired knowledge resources boost their worth as the demand for qualified personnel exceed the supply in domestic markets at home (Kapur and McHale, 2005; Davis, 2010). This claim is supported by some evidence that returnees in China, Egypt, India, Ireland and South Korea tend to earn a wage premium, achieve career advancement or upward social mobility upon their return home (Dayton-Johnson, 2007; Williams and Balaz, 2008a; Khadria, 2009; Findlay et al., 2009).

The rationale is further documented in that migrants’ boundaryless careers enable them to acquire knowledge resources that can improve their social status, life and employment prospects (Luo and Wang 2001; Saxenian, 2002; Ammassari, 2009). While returnees understand the potential benefits of their credentials, professional experience and industry worth, local employers also recognize them as an asset in improving brand value, business operations and functioning of organization in the domestic marketplace (Zweig, 2004). The strategic importance of human capital puts pressure on firms to recruit returnees, improve HRD practices and innovation capacity to sustain the competitive advantage of organizations back home.

The nexus of theories and above reasoning is only a 'conceptual anchor' to prepare the ground to plant management, organizational and knowledge transfer views pertinent to the interdisciplinary subject matter. Taking into consideration the organizational structure, HRM practices and other contextual factors, the theoretical embedding of the business management version of social network theory is central to my work on "knowing strengths, updating knowledge and skills as well as renewing networks" (Eby, 2001: 222) in organizations. The advantage of the social network perspective lies in its ability to abstract aspects of [interpersonal relations, networks, structures etc.], which tend to cut across institutions and boundaries of aggregated concepts such as class, kinship or other classification in the organizations (Rogers and Vertovec 1995: 15).

As a method of abstraction and analysis, the social network approach is employed to examine interpersonal social relations, clique formations, network composition and underlying knowledge structures of the organizations. Pitting McPherson et al.'s (2002) principle of homophily within social networks against Granovetter's (1983) weak social ties hypothesis help to analyze if migrants can be considered a new knowledge source and even possibly a conduit for transferring knowledge, skills, work experiences and overseas exposure to and within their organization (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1997; Williams and Balaz, 2008a). The analysis, among other tests, will measure the strength of different sets of migrants' social ties and association with knowledge transfer process of organizations (Krackhardt, 1992, Hansen, 1999; Retzer, 2012; Wang, 2012; Levin, 2013).

The analyses will try to disentangle returnees', stayers' and transnationals' social ties, and identify the 'contexts' as well as any moderating effects on the transfer of their knowledge resources to different stakeholders in their organizations. Because social networks may sustain, expand or collapse, strong social ties might get converted into intermediate or weak social ties or vice versa; and the varying effect of certain contextual factors (trust, norms, work culture etc.) that tend to moderate social contexts—returnees social interactions with transnationals and non-migrants will help to determine the nature and the type of knowledge transferred to and within the organization. Overall, the above theoretical embedding will specify the potential role of returnees in intra-organizational knowledge transfers and further elucidate ways to improve knowledge transfer processes in organizations.

3.4 High Skilled Returnees' Social Ties Effect on Knowledge Transfers

The theoretical framework is by no means intended to be a universal, holistic or singular perspective on international migration. The “causal process of international migration might operate on multiple levels [simultaneously] and that sorting out which of the explanations are useful is empirical and not only a logical task” (Massey et al., 1993: 455) for theorists researching the implications of return migration and knowledge transfers. The theoretical propositions are examined in the form of three previously presented sub-questions in the analytical chapters on India. A few hypotheses are also tested in the empirical analysis on the potential role of returnees as conduits for transferring knowledge to different stakeholders as follows:

1. If returned migrants lack emotional intimacy with non-migrants, then they will reduce their efforts at sharing content-information at work.
2. If returned migrants have infrequent contact with non-migrants, then they will reduce their efforts at sharing professional advice at work.
3. If returned migrants maintain non-reciprocal relations with non-migrants, then they will reduce their efforts for sharing codifiable and private knowledge at work.
4. If returned migrants lack emotional intimacy, have infrequent contact and maintain non-reciprocal relations with non-migrants, then the result will be weak social ties with stakeholders in the workplace.
5. If returnees and non-migrants are offered monetary incentives to raise their knowledge codification efforts, the result will be the further weakening of social ties within the knowledge network of the organization.

While conventional wisdom tends to accept that returnees would easily acculturate into employing organizations, the empirical analysis will test workers' socialization in the workplace. The results will elucidate the association of returnees' social ties with the nature and type of knowledge transferred—tacit or codified—and thus the intended benefits and/or unintended consequences on the workplace.

Chapter Four

Some General Methodological Issues

The study of migration as a social science in its own right...[is] strongly multidisciplinary in theory and methodology (Castles, 1993: 30). Due to previously stated theoretical and empirical caveats, some general methodological issues are presented to help ‘guide and frame the different socio-spatial levels and the relationship between structure and agency’ in examining certain facets related to return migration to India (Bonfiglio, 2011; Castles, 2012). A broad description of the research design—definitions, concepts, ideas, selection of location, case criteria and relevance—is followed by an explanation of how the survey instruments were implemented for a multi-level analysis of EHIRC and GISU. Advantages and disadvantages of an embedded case study approach with mixed methods are recognized to argue that it is good way for analyzing workers’ interactions and social contexts that influence the transfer of knowledge resources within EHIRC and GISU. The following discussion is a ‘methodological bridge’ that outlines the research process, while the chapters on India document the application of the methods to analyzing the role of returnees in intra-organizational knowledge transfers in the workplace.

4.1 Important Definitions, Concepts and Ideas

“There is little in the way of internationally comparable statistical information available on return migration. Attempts to measure the phenomenon, in effect, face two difficulties: data availability and the definition of return migration” (SOPEMI, 2008: 164). To operationalize the investigation, is it necessary to define returning migrants, stayers and transnationals as they are described in existing studies. Also, a list of other important terms is provided in order to disentangle migrants’ social interactions—strong, intermediate and weak social ties—as well as knowledge transferred—codified and tacit knowledge—in the organizations. The list of terms will help to categorize migrants, their strength of social ties and thus be useful in determining its effect on knowledge transfers in the organizations.

- Returning migrants or returnees are considered to be “persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants in another country (short-term or long-term) and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year” (UNSD, 1998: 95).
- Stayers or non-migrants are persons “who never left the country in which they were born” (De Vreyer et al., 2009: 5) except for a short-term holiday, visit their family or any other non-economic related activity in another country for less than one year (Gibson and McKenzie, 2013).
- Transnationals or transnational workers are “persons who migrated from one nation-state to another and tend to live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state” (Glick-Schiller, 2003: 104). Intra-company transfers are a common practice in transnational activity, whereby employees are shuffled between the parent company and its foreign subsidiaries, with specified periods of time abroad (Peixoto, 2001).
- Social networks are a set of actors or nodes linked by social ties that are of a specified type (colleague, friendship or membership based on mutual interest) and strength—a combination of the emotional intimacy, frequency of contact and reciprocity between people in a particular context. Networks can be dense, sparse, cohesive, or cluster-cliques, while social ties may be strong, intermediate or weak amongst the interacting units of that social setting (Kilduff and Tsai, 2003).
- Strong social ties of actors or nodes is characterized by a high level of emotional intimacy, frequency of interactions and reciprocal exchanges between them (Katz and Lazer, 2008). These ties are costly to maintain as they not only rely on corporeal presence—particularly sustained face-to face contact which is not easily supplemented by electronic exchanges—but also a substantial investment in terms of time, energy and resources to sustain such relationships over time in the organization.

- Intermediate social ties of actors or nodes is characterized by a medium level of emotional intimacy, frequency of interactions and reciprocal exchanges between them (Retzer, 2012). These ties are less costly to maintain because they can be engendered through corporeal presence and/or distanced channels—a mix of face-to-face contact and electronic exchanges—which reduces the amount of time, energy and resources expended to sustain such relationships over time in the organization.
- Weak social ties of actors or nodes is characterized by a low level of emotional intimacy, frequency of interactions and reciprocal exchanges between them (Granovetter, 1983). These ties are even less costly to maintain because they can be engendered through limited corporeal interaction and/or distanced channels—does not require periodic face-to-face contact or regular electronic exchanges—thus cutting down the amount of time, energy and resources expended to sustain such relationships over time in the organization.
- Knowledge transfer is the “exchange of knowledge between individuals, teams and organizational units. Knowledge transfer is when the ‘source’ tends to communicate information and the ‘recipient’ cognitively assimilates the contents applying and interpreting it in light of his or her own background” (Schwartz, 2006 as cited by Paulin and Suneson, 2012: 83). The role of employees in the transfer of intra-organizational knowledge can be seen as instituting practices, routines and systems that change the flow of knowledge, performance or the overall functioning of ‘recipients’ in the workplace.
- Codified knowledge is information that is “articulated into formal language, including grammatical statements, mathematical expressions, manuals and other documents” (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: viii). Codified knowledge can be stored in databases and transmitted electronically to others at work. Some of the knowledge held privately by individuals is potentially codifiable, and a key part of the knowledge transfer process in any organization is to encourage and induce individuals to codify such private information into “explicit knowledge that can be accessed by others” (Davenport and Prusak, 1998: 68) in the workplace.

- Tacit knowledge is information that is “embedded in an individual’s experiences and involves intangible factors such as personal beliefs, subjective insights, intuitions and hunches that are hard but not impossible to articulate into words, models or numbers” (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: viii). It is much harder to transfer tacit knowledge than codified knowledge, nonetheless organizations need to encourage and induce such transfers among their employees, a necessary condition for which is almost always face-to-face contact, and especially close and repeated contact in the workplace.

The above definitions and terms are important to operationalize my work that tests whether returnees’, stayers’ and transnationals’ strong, intermediate or weak social ties are associated with the nature and extent of knowledge transfers in the workplace. “Anything that facilitates individual or collective action by the networks of relationships” (Coleman, 1988: 101) will have “powerful implications for the information [migrants] receive, attitudes they form and the interactions they experience” (McPherson et al., 2001: 415) in organizations.⁵ Not only are the social ties of the different sets of migrants used to parse out how and in which ways they transfer knowledge, skills and other social practices, but further to better understand the process they embark upon to renegotiate and even integrate into various social setting such as the family or household, the organizations and the surrounding community. The idea is that once enough savings, skills, social capital or other resources have been accumulated migrants return to take up employment in the knowledge-intensive industries back home (Potts, 2013). In this sense, the various migration-development interactions need to be linked to the potential for development (De Haas, 2010). Development can thus be termed as changes in which, “what a person has, what a person can do with what they have, and how they think about what they have and can do” (McGregor, 2006: 1) to improve their standard of living and further may promote the economic, social or the political health of the home country (Todaro and Smith, 2011).

⁵ Strong homophilic relations amongst returnees will lead to ‘friendship, career support and discussing important matters’ that tend to result in ‘multiplex rather than simplex ties’ in the organizations (Verbrugge, 1977; Marsden, 1988; Ibarra, 1992). That considerable amount of effort, energy, time and resources must be invested to forge strong social ties between returnees and other overseas-trained workers. Intermediate to “weak social ties, by contrast, entail limited investment of intimacy and time with an array of social acquaintances” (Ruef, 2002: 429) such as non-migrants and transnationals in the organizations.

4.2 Selection of Location, Case Criteria and Relevance

New Delhi, India is the second most populous city in the world and the largest in terms of area (29,259.12/sq mi.). New Delhi has the special status of National Capital Region (NCR) and includes smaller neighboring cities of Alwar, Baghpat, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Noida and Greater Noida and Sonapat with 22.2 million residents living in the mega-metropolis. In 2001, the Economic Census and Planning Division of the State Government documented an increase of 215,000 in its natural population and an influx of 285,000 residents as a result of migration, which makes New Delhi one of the fastest growing Indian cities (Economic Survey of Delhi, 2006). The population density is 11,297 persons per square km, with a sex ratio of 866 women per 1000 men. Besides the fact that New Delhi is considered to have a reasonable physical infrastructure, transportation system and allotment of housing, the literacy rate is 81% with Hindi universally spoken but English being the principal written as well as instruction language in the city. New Delhi is increasingly recognized as an international destination whose diverse inhabitants make it a cosmopolitan place to live.

New Delhi also boasts a rapidly growing tertiary sector—also known as the service industry—which makes up 78% of the city's gross state domestic product (SDP) followed by the secondary and primary sectors that contribute 20% and 2%, respectively (Economic Survey of Delhi, 2006). There are a number of service industries operating in New Delhi like banking, healthcare, information technology, media, retail, telecommunications and tourism that have attracted foreign direct investment (FDI) to the metropolis. Not only does New Delhi have a large consumer market, but also the availability of skilled labor led to “a decrease in the unemployment rate from 12% in 1999-2000 to 4% in 2003 and an increase in employment by 52% between 1991-2001...with city's workforce constituting 37% of the total population” (Economic Survey of Delhi, 2006: 60-61). The total workforce employed in New Delhi's public sector is 6,120,000, while the private sector employs 2,109,000 people and 636,000 individuals are registered with various employment exchange programs mostly due to an increase in the demand for higher quality services in the city. New Delhi offers many economic opportunities that draw people to the city to work.

More importantly, New Delhi has increasingly become recognized as a 'global hub' for knowledge-intensive activities particularly in the area of healthcare and IT- BPO services (CII-Mckinsey, 2012; NASSCOM, 2011). Notably, Fortis Healthcare Limited is the second largest healthcare provider in India—a network of 29 super-specialty care centers providing 17,500 beds, employing 6,500 professionals and serving 100,000 patients every year—with its flagship institute Fortis Escorts Hospital and Research Center (EHIRC) operating in New Delhi. Tata Consultancy Services is the second largest outsourcing provider in India—92 business locations, consisting of 35 subsidiaries, employs 141,000 professionals and provides services worth \$1.7 billion per year—with its most prominent vertical/company division the Government Industry Solutions Unit (GISU) operating in New Delhi. The case criteria for choosing EHIRC and GISU is that they may be representative of Indian organizations engaged in knowledge activities with sizable overseas-trained workforces. The criteria thus help to narrow down the scope of the investigation so as to focus on why healthcare and IT migrants decide to return and take up a job with certain locally employing organizations.

In this sense, New Delhi's mixed demographic characteristics, its fast-growing tertiary service-sector availability of skilled labor and various employment exchange programs associated with the healthcare and IT-BPO industry makes it a suitable site to conduct my research. EHIRC and GISU are relevant cases partly because they are so different from most other Indian organizations—in existence for at least 10 years, but recognized for their modern physical infrastructure, known for 'good' management policies and employing large skilled workforces, many of whom are returnees—enabling the core interests of the thesis to be addressed by the research project. More importantly, EHIRC and GISU are relevant cases as they can empirically isolate and thus offer unique information on returnees—employee behaviors, work interactions and social experiences—engaged in a range of knowledge, innovation and research activities in the organization. Because not much is written about the return of high skilled migrants to India, studying two well-known organizations like EHIRC and GISU help to operationalize an investigation into the knowledge transfers processes of the organization, and hopefully elucidate the role returnees play in intra-organizational knowledge transfers to and within their respective organizations.

4.3 Research Design, Survey Instruments' Implementation and Analysis

The main aim of the research design is to probe 'empirical occurrences whose boundaries are not clearly discernible outside of their natural setting' as is often the case in migration studies (Berg, 2001; Thomas, 2011). The research design is constructed as an embedded case study to explore several facets related to high skilled migrants' decision to return to India and work for certain employing organizations. In the embedded case study approach the "unit of analysis is the organization as a whole, but also of interest is the intermediary unit [department, unit, workgroup, team or other social group]...with the smallest unit [individuals]" (Yin, 2009: 50) as the primary focus of the empirical analysis—how and in which ways returned healthcare and IT migrants transfer their overseas-acquired knowledge resources to various stakeholders, specifically non-migrants in their respective organizations. At each level of analysis, the different methods—quantitative and qualitative—are employed to sequentially collect, integrate and analyze streams of data to get an understanding of the role returnees play in intra-organizational knowledge transfers within EHIRC or GISU. And hopefully, this will reveal returnees' knowledge contributions and impacts in the workplace.

The units of analysis of interest in the embedded case studies are the different sets of employees working in departments, units, workgroups, teams and/or other social groupings in the organizations. After obtaining the total number of people that were working in the departments/units, workgroups/teams or other social groups, a sampling framework was constructed for each of the organizations. The total population was reduced to a sample frame of those considered to be 'eligible participants' in each of the organizations. The eligible workforce sample was stratified into returned migrants, stayers (non-migrants) and transnationals, with workers from within these strata being randomly sampled in both EHIRC and GISU. Returnees' stratum was sampled at 85% whereas the stayers' stratum was sampled at 50% and when applicable transnationals' stratum is sampled at 35%. The overall sample size was 597 people with 292 workers (149 returnees and 143 stayers) and 305 employees (150 returnees and 155 stayers) from EHIRC and GISU, respectively. The total and group samples meet the minimum threshold of 200 participants, which is necessary to conduct a fruitful study.

The survey instruments were initially piloted with the help of staff members at the International Migration and Diasporas Studies Project (IMDS), affiliated with the Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University. The structured questionnaires, semi-structured interview questions and elite interview questions were tested on a few people at IMDS, after which the questions were revised before being administered during my 9-month long and intense field investigation of the organizations. Additionally, the human resource departments of EHIRC and GISU provided 5 full-time personnel that not only helped to compile employee rosters, but also provided locked drop boxes in which the structured questionnaires could be deposited at the facility, and booked private conference rooms so that interviews could be conducted at the organizations. Needless to say, all eligible participants signed consent forms; the collected data was safely stored in a password-protected computer and the information was only utilized in a manner that adhered to the research guidelines laid out in the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) of Oxford University—thus maintaining the overall integrity of the study.

The survey instruments used in the embedded case studies were implemented in a sequential manner within the organizations. Besides randomly distributing the structured questionnaires, every third person in the mini-strata—a double-blinded selection—was sent an invitation to participate in the semi-structured interview sessions that would take place at the organizations. After reviewing the preliminary results from the collected structured questionnaires, an interview session schedule was created for EHIRC and GISU. A total of 95 semi-structured interviews were scheduled of which 50 workers (25 returnees and 25 stayers) and another 45 employees (20 returnees, 15 stayers and 10 transnationals) were interviewed from EHIRC and GISU, respectively. This was followed by an additional 40 elite interviews—a 20-20 split between the two organizations—mostly with upper-tier management (CEO, Vice-President, Executives, HRD managers, HODs, Supervisors, Team Leaders etc.) of EHIRC and GISU. All of the semi-structured interviews (45 to 60 minutes audio recorded session) and elite interviews (45 to 60 minute audio recorded session) took place in private and neutral settings on the premises of EHIRC and GISU. Essentially, importance was placed on obtaining a diverse group of participants that fit into the domain of the research project.

The collected quantitative data included demographic information (age, gender, marital status, occupation, years of education, duration of employment and migrants status as either a returnee, stayed or transnational), main motive for returning to India, reason for joining their organization, mapping social relationships (marking off names on an attached employee roster), and other variables deemed relevant for studying workers in the organizations. The collected qualitative data included knowledge transaction information (assignments, tasks, when is it necessary to share knowledge, the use of electronic knowledge repositories and the info-structure etc.), social networks, work environment and other issues to better understand returnees at the organization.

The data was analyzed—descriptive statistics, ANOVA model and social network analysis—using ATLAS, SPSS and UNCINET software programs. When possible the results were supplemented with secondary sources from the existing literature. The qualitative data was coded, themes were created and quotes extracted for a content analysis of the transcripts. The transcripts were tagged with an ID code that was referenced in the write-up as a combination of the following abbreviations: semi-structured interview (S), elite interview (E), overseas-trained (OT), home-trained (HT) and transnationally-trained (TT)—for example, SOT-4 (male and cardiac surgeon) means that I performed a semi-structured interview with an Indian overseas-trained medic who was the fourth person with whom I spoke to during the scheduled interview sessions at the organization.

Information from all three data sets is triangulated so as to highlight the attitudes, behaviors as well as values of returnees, stayers and when applicable transnationals in the workplace. The analysis helps to reveal similarities and/or differences in these groups of workers' activities, interactions and training as they relate to the discharge of their duties in EHIRC and GISU. Testing the strength of workers' social ties further shows how migrants' social interactions with different stakeholders could be improved by developing networks, management policies and the socialization processes of EHIRC and GISU. The most original contribution of my analysis is explaining the extent to which returnees are 'sources' of new knowledge and even a possible conduit for knowledge transfers, while taking into consideration various contextual variables of EHIRC and GISU, to reveal their impact on the knowledge contributions to and within the organizations.

4.4 Advantages, Disadvantages and Moving Past Issues of the Study

A major advantage of adopting the embedded case study approach is that it allows for an examination of several different aspects related to migrants' motivation to return to India and work for employing organizations. The case studies have the ability to focus on returned high skilled Indians, namely healthcare and IT migrants in certain employing organizations. A thick and rich analysis is offered of the possible effects of high skilled returned migrants' overseas-acquired knowledge resources on knowledge transfer processes of their organizations. As a result, the analyses create valuable narratives on the ebb and flow of organizational life.

Also, the use of mixed methods—data that is collected and analyzed from different levels and sources—enables a comparison of returnees to other groups of workers in the organizations (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2007). Quantitative data, especially the relational information, is used to test the strength of social ties between returnees and stayers and with transnationals in the organizations. The qualitative interviews elaborate on the relationships between returnees' efforts at transferring knowledge and contextual variables moderating its flow within the organizations. The results thus offer a clearer picture of the knowledge transfer processes of the organizations.

Additionally, the rationale for a multi-case study approach with mixed methods is that it strengthens the credibility—more than mere observations and opinions of a few subjects on an issue—of the research project. Dependability, validity and reliability of the case studies is also improved because the data is obtained from several sources and levels on a host of variables from the organizations (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2007). Triangulation of the data allows the empirical research “to map out or explain more fully, the richness and complexity” (Cohen and Manion, 2000: 254) of workers' interactions with the various stakeholder in different departments, units or teams within the organization. And a comparative analysis of the two case studies further increases the explanatory power of the results by offering a holistic understanding of the ways in which returnees transfer their overseas knowledge resources within EHRC and GISU. The study thus elucidates the role returnees may play in intra-organizational knowledge transfer process and their overall impact on the organizations.

The main disadvantage of the research design is that it does not include a sample of migrants that chose not to return to India. The difficulty of sampling migrants still residing abroad would have meant an arbitrary snowball selection of non-returnees in foreign destinations. Moreover, my data do not include comparative samples of returnees who came back to India but chose to work for organizations other than EHIRC and GISU. A similar objection could be raised about the absence of a comparative sample of transnationals who went abroad for more than four years and obtained permanent residency, allowing them to continue working for the foreign subsidiary, rather than returning to GISU-New Delhi. A lesser but still important caveat concerns transnationals who went abroad for less than three months and are thus wrongly self-identified as stayers in the organizations.

Furthermore, the embedded case studies are concerned with how and why things happen, with a focus on particular units of analysis, features or issues. But “there is a trade-off between looking at one or two variables in many cases and many variables in one or two cases” (Lewin, 1979: 286). Given that the research site was restricted to New Delhi, there is an inherent selection bias in terms of people who chose to return to live in New Delhi and work for local organizations. Additionally, the analyses are constrained to the extent to that only high skilled migrants that returned to New Delhi can be asked about whether their acquisition of overseas knowledge resources was an important reason for return, influenced the decision to join EHIRC and GISU as well as created problems adjusting to their new surroundings in the organizations.

Moreover, the empirical analysis relies heavily on mapping employees’ social ties in the different divisions and groupings within EHIRC and GISU. However, the lack of longitudinal data on the formation, changes and re-configuration of employees’ social networks makes it problematic to ascertain the exact pathways through which knowledge is transferred to the different stakeholders in the organizations. Because the analysis of employees’ knowledge networks is based on a static image taken at a specified period in time, the imperfect information might undercut an explanation of the potential role returnees play in intra-organizational knowledge transfers in organizations. It is difficult to infer that the results from EHIRC’s and GISU’s knowledge transfer activities can be generalized for other organizations. Thus, the results should be interpreted carefully with respect to the topic.

In weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the study, it is recognized there are a few empirical obstacles in my way that makes it difficult to conduct a thorough empirical analysis of certain aspects related to the return migration of high skilled workers to India. Additionally, the results obtained from the two case studies cannot be generalized to all such working populations of other Indian organizations. Moreover, the case study approach has been criticized by some as lacking reliability, scientific rigor and generalizability of the results. However, Duff (2008: 41) made the observation:

As with most empirical approaches, embedded case studies have their own inherent strengths and weaknesses. As long as one is fully aware of their potential as well as limitations...and presents claims accordingly...researchers can [thus] carry out a rigorous, informative and significant study.

Due to the above-mentioned empirical obstacles, the case studies shift the focus away from cross-country comparisons of migrants' selectivity to only those that returned to India and chose to work in EHIRC and GISU. The analysis does not make direct reference to migrants' overseas social, transnational or other ethnic networks with India, but rather concentrates on testing the strength of social ties between returnees, stayers and transnationals within EHIRC and GISU. More importantly, my analysis deals mostly with disentangling how returnees transfer their knowledge resources—to other returnees, stayers, transnationals, cross-industry groups or large units—given the underlying social contexts of EHIRC and GISU. While no claims of generalizability are made with respect to other Indian organizations, inferences are made on the effects of returnees' social ties on knowledge codification efforts, development of knowledge networks and overall knowledge structure of EHIRC and GISU. The two case studies offer a 'thick and rich' contextual understanding of motivations to return to India to work—which in turn reveals how returnees are not only 'sources of new knowledge' but also the ways in which they may act as effective conduits for knowledge transfer within the organizations. My empirical approach is similar to other migration researchers who have conducted analyses in a like manner, which is considered to be successful research (Khadria, 2004; Harvey, 2009; Williams and Balaz, 2008; 2008a). And so, the insights may offer a better understanding on the points of interest of the thesis.

Part II: Analysis of an Indian Tertiary Care Hospital

Chapter Five

Introduction to the Case Study

“India, the Republic of Moldova and Poland have reported an increase in the scale of return amongst certain categories of labor migrants” (WMR, 2010: 122). As more and more migrants return to India, it becomes important to consider how returnees assist the homeland beyond simply sending remittances to include the transfer of knowledge, skills and technology (Connell, 2010). General facts and premises on India’s healthcare sector, background of Fortis Escorts Heart Institute and Research Centre (EHIRC), its relevance as a case study and appraisal of some literature is offered to help situate my work on return motives, choice of employer adjustment issues and knowledge transfer in EHIRC.

This crux of the upcoming chapters is to point out that returned migrants tend to be understood as knowledge workers (Thompson et al. 2001; Williams and Balaz, 2008), even if they face different constraints in applying their accumulated knowledge, skills and work experiences in employing organizations. The purpose of this chapter is to offer material that will help with the examination of returnees’ social ties with non-migrants and its association with the transfer of knowledge, skills, experiences and other resources to stakeholders in EHIRC. Further, EHIRC’s responses, contextual and organizational issues will be incorporated to highlight the complexities of the knowledge transfer process of the hospital.

The aim of this chapter is to present the application of the mixed methods, descriptive statistics of the sampled population as well as some limitations of the results obtained from EHIRC. Because the results are drawn from multiple data points, their analysis, triangulation and interpretation may offer some analytical insights on returnees’ social interactions with non-migrants, their social circles, and knowledge network configurations in EHIRC. Further, differences between migrant sub-groups will be analyzed and the responses of EHIRC’s management will be incorporated to explain the knowledge transfer processes of the hospital. Thus, the case study hopes to offer a better understanding of returnees, knowledge transfers and the possible impact on work outcomes in organization.

5.1 General Facts and Premises

A striking feature of India's healthcare system is that both the public sector (whose health expenditure is 1% of GDP) and the private sector (which accounts for over 75% of the total healthcare spending) try to address the healthcare needs of the country (IDFC, 2010). Further, the Indian healthcare industry is fragmented into organized and unorganized components within the medical services market. In the private healthcare industry, organized corporate hospital chains account for 10% of the total market share (whereas 90% is held by unorganized privately run clinics in India). Interestingly, Apollo Group of Hospitals or Fortis Escorts are two reputed examples of establishments set up by physicians formerly practicing in developed countries that have induce the return of migrants through job offers, research opportunities and collaborative arrangements in New Delhi (Chanda and Sreenivasan, 2006: 233). Understanding this complex real-life phenomenon may shed light on whether migrants have learned something new from their overseas trip and if they can transfer their knowledge to the hospital

5.2 Background and Case Relevance

Established in 1988, Fortis Healthcare Limited and specifically its flagship Fortis Escorts Heart Institute and Research Center (EHIRC) is globally recognized for its state-of-the-art facilities, access to the latest medical technologies and offer an array of sub-specialty medical service for acute patient management. EHIRC has a total staff of 1600 employees (Fortis Escorts Medical Statistics, 2010). That the different sets of employees—laboratory technicians, staff nurses, physicians and non-medical workers—can be categorized into returnees or non-migrants at EHIRC. Importantly, several employees (includes staff nurses but refers specifically to physicians) have received some of their education, training or experience from overseas before returning to work for EHIRC (Chanda, 2002). The relevance of EHIRC as a case study is that “specifics of [returnees’ and non-migrants’] situation which in some way or the other is linked to unseen issues [can be studied to better understand their potential role in the knowledge transfers in EHIRC]” (Denscombe, 2007: 66) and processes of the hospital.

5.3 Appraisal of Theories and Literature

It seems that neoclassical economics and human capital considerations can describe the decision of migrants to return home. But some elements of NELM may be visible in migrants' motivation to return home. Not only is "there is no such thing as a genuine uncomplicated return to one's home" (Oxfeld and Long, 2004: 15), but further its discussion is ancillary in the case study. More importantly, the management's version of social network theory (SNT) is employed to examine the migrants' socialization efforts into EHIRC. Pitting McPherson et al.'s (2001) principle of homophilia against Granovetter's (1983) weak social ties hypothesis will enable a analysis on the "[dyadic relationship] that can be seen as representing either strong or weak social ties" (Katz and Lazer, 2008: 86) in the hospital. With the exception of Williams (2006, 2007, 2008), Khadria (2004, 2009), Ammassari (2009) and a few other researchers, there is a lack of empirical work that gives a detailed account of returnees' knowledge transfers, their intra-firm social networks and 'how it is socially situated in the workplace' (Williams and Balaz, 2008). The above theoretical lens furthers my empirical work to identify whether returnees are knowledge sources, traces linkages between stakeholders and further helps to detect any social, knowledge or organizational constraints in the workplace.

5.4 Research Methods and Limitations

An employee roster was obtained from the human resource department of EHIRC. From a numerical rundown of the employee roster, it was gathered that 1,600 employees were registered with EHIRC (excluding those employees that had taken up a permanent posting with its ancillary medical facilities in Noida-I and II, Gurgaon, Vasant Kunj and other areas in the NCR region). While there are 1,600 employees, only 650 employees were considered eligible to be sampled from EHIRC (after subtracting security guards, IT analysts, support staff and those voluntarily terminating their employment contract and thus scheduled to exit the medical facility). The 650 employees deemed to be eligible participants from EHIRC were further categorized and stratified into groups to develop an appropriate sampling framework of the hospital.

After establishing the sampling frame, the 650 employees were stratified into two groups called returned healthcare migrants (consisted of 250 employees) and non-migrants (consisted of 400 employees)—respectively. Returned healthcare migrant's stratum was randomly sampled at 85% (meaning 200 employee were given a structured questionnaire), whereas the non-migrants' stratum was only sampled at 50% (meaning 200 employees were given a structured questionnaire). These sampling rates were also applied across four additional mini-stratas in order to proportionately sample laboratory technicians, staff nurses, physicians and non-medical workers. Not only did a total of 292 employees participate in the study, but also given its breakdown of 149 returnees and 143 non-migrants translated into a 70% response rate from respondents at EHIRC.

The survey instrument was randomly distributed to employees who placed their completed structured questionnaire in a sealed manila envelope in a drop box located outside the HRD. Additionally, 50 semi-structured interviews were conducted randomly—every third employee was sent an invitation to take part in an interview session. This was followed by 20 elite interviews with management of the hospital. Of the respondents interviewed at EHIRC—25 are returned migrants (6 laboratory technicians, 9 staff nurses and 10 physicians), 25 are non-migrants (4 laboratory technicians, 9 staff nurses and 12 physicians) and 20 are an array of elites (supervisors, managers, HODs, executives and so forth) at the hospital.

The quantitative data was analyzed using different descriptive statistical methods including frequency tabulations, ANOVA etc. The social network analysis was used to test and essentially measures the strength of migrants' social ties and its association on transferring knowledge to others in their workgroup, department or units in EHIRC. The qualitative data was analyzed using content text analysis of respondents' transcripts, enabling a better interpretation of the social context of their transfer of knowledge resources in the hospital.⁶ These analytical techniques were applied in a consistent manner to provide a thick and rich explanation of the knowledge transfer processes of the organization.

⁶ Interviewees are referenced in the chapters as a combination of the abbreviations: semi-structured interview (S), elite interview (E), overseas-trained (OT) and home-trained (HT). Names of people referenced by others respondents was replaced with XXX-XXXX to maintain the ethical standards of the research project. Please note that quotations that contain round parentheses (...) are the respondents' words taken from a different part of their transcript, while the square brackets [...] are my own words to clarify the meaning of the text.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics of Sampled Populations at EHRC

Description Categories	Breakdown of Respondents (Each Category Adds up to N=292)	Breakdown of Percentages (%) (Each Category Adds up to 100.0)
Age		
20-29	41	14.0
30-39	86	29.4
40-49	110	37.6
50-59	39	13.5
> 60	16	5.5
Gender		
Male	133	45.5
Female	159	54.5
Marital Status		
Single	39	13.4
Married	248	84.9
Divorced	4	1.4
Widowed	1	0.3
Occupation		
Technician	31	10.6
Staff Nurse	108	37.0
Physician	144	49.3
Other	9	3.1
Education/Work Qualifications (Obtained by Region)		
Not India (Returned Migrants)	149	51.0
India (Stayed Non-Migrants)	143	49.0
Work Experience (Total Number of Years)		
1-5	113	38.7
6-10	38	13.0
11-15	70	24.0
16-20	29	10.0
>20	42	14.3
Duration of Employment (Total Number of Years)		
1-5	109	49.0
6-10	128	35.6
11-15	31	9.5
16-20	14	4.2
>20	10	1.7
Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)		
Note1: The total sample size is N=292.		

As previously stated, the survey instrument employed in this case study was randomly distributed so as to collect employee-level data from the sampled population at EHIRC. Based on the employee-level data, Table 5.1 is a summary table of descriptive statistics on ‘observations’ of the participants sampled from EHIRC. The descriptive statistics presented in the table are based on two forms of calculations: simple tabulation and frequency distribution of participants in the listed description categories. A simple tabulation of the respondents in each category adds up to 292, which is the sample size obtained from EHIRC. And the frequency distribution is the number of times the respondents were observed in each of the categories—expressed as a cumulative percentage—that adds up to 100% and thus matches the total sample size obtained from the hospital.

While Table 5.1 shows that the selected participants are for the most part representative of the hospital’s staff, the number of respondents within a few of the categories is quite low. Namely, there is only 1 respondent that is widow (less than 1%), 4 respondents that are divorced (1%), 16 respondents who are aged 60 or above (5%) and 9 respondents that are non-medical workers (3%) from EHIRC.⁷ With the exception of having only 1 respondent that is a widow and 4 respondents that are divorced, the rest of the cumulative percentages of the above respondents, albeit low, are not unreasonable considering that such people do not make up a substantial portion of personnel working for EHIRC. Because these respondents and others are not the core groups under investigation, their lack of prevalence in the sample does not significantly alter the empirical analyzes done at the hospital.

Thus, the respondents of interest in the important categories in the table like age, gender, occupation, education/work qualifications obtained by region and work experience in total number of years—are representative of the core groups under investigation. And those that are not represented equally in the sample was easily remedied by conducting semi-structured and elite interviews with such non-core groups, HRD executives or other individuals that could provide insights on them. Risks associated with selection bias have been reduced and inclusion of multiple perspectives helps to ensure the reliability of my work at the hospital.

⁷ Under the Category Occupation, the label ‘Other’ refers to non-medical workers. Non-medical workers are individuals working in administration positions, business-related field or research and development (R&D) area at EHIRC.

While several steps were taken to help ensure the soundness of the research project design, there are some shortcomings of the findings generated from my empirical work that need to be acknowledged. Medical migrants that decided not to return to India and continued to stay abroad were not sampled. Furthermore, the emergence of Apollo, Fortis Escorts, Max and other corporate hospitals is the result of a demand-supply gap in the tertiary care market, which suggests that the job trajectory of some returned migrants might be difficult to trace in New Delhi. Unlike the above-mentioned corporate chains, the FICCI (2008) reported that government-run hospitals lack infrastructure, there is an absence of medical personnel and the quality of medical care poor, which means that returnees would be deterred from joining them. In this case, analysis of the adjustments problems faced by returnees would be one-sided in EHIRC.

The strength of returned healthcare migrants' social ties are to some extent dependent on the nature of their work (task interdependence, shift rotations and fiduciary duties), which makes it difficult to capture the extent and even type of knowledge transferred in EHIRC. There were instances when it was difficult to differentiate the personal efficacy, learned work practices as well as cultural understandings of returnees developed in India from their newly acquired knowledge, skills and experiences from abroad that are shared in EHIRC. Some of these concerns were easily remedied with an analysis of returnees' and non-migrants' interpersonal relations, social cliques and knowledge networks, but unobservable contravening issues may have constrained the results obtained from EHIRC.

Lastly, though returnees and non-migrants were drawn from a reasonable and representative sample from EHIRC, some may argue that the small sample size and short observation period of social ties, their knowledge transfers and the lack of consideration of other contextual variables might make it difficult to make claims in the subject matter. The triangulation of data with secondary sources and available statistics seems to validate the results, but a possible objection can be raised that the results drawn from EHIRC cannot be generalized for all such tertiary care hospitals or even discuss its implications for the Indian healthcare industry. For these reasons, the empirical results and conclusions drawn from them should be interpreted cautiously (Yin, 2009). Overall, it is still hoped that the research will shed some light on the larger goals of the study.

Chapter Six

Decision to Return to India and Choice of Employer

Not only is it difficult to differentiate between migrants that intended to go abroad temporarily and those that went to stay abroad permanently, but also the actual length of time they intend to remain abroad is likely to change due to a myriad of personal factors, their domestic situation and macro circumstances of the host and home country (Bauer and Zimmerman, 1998; Castles and Miller, 2003; De Haas, 2008). Because the intention to return home does not reflect the actual behavior of migrants, attention should be focused on addressing their motives for returning home (Brettell, 1979; Connell, 2011). For these reasons, this chapter will investigate migrants' motives for returning to India. The reason migrants join certain organizations is examined in addition to the issues they face settling into their new surroundings back home. Central to the examination will be an analysis of whether or not returnees' overseas-acquired knowledge resources was a part of their reason to return home and work for institutions like EHIRC. Taking into consideration EHIRC's response to the importance of hiring returnees to work for the hospital, this chapter will also provide insight on the value of their overseas knowledge resources for the Indian tertiary care hospital.

6.1 Migrants' Motivation for Returning to India

Migrants' personal attributes like age, gender, marital status and the type of occupation held by them tend to be associated with their decision to return home. Constant and Massey (2002), Borjas (1990), Dustmann (1995) and several others have provided econometric analyzes of migrants' personal characteristics and their probability to return home. Previous studies suggest that remittances, a high rate of savings, and human capital investments are some of the reasons that might increase the probability to return home (Klinthäll, 2003; Dustmann, 2007). Yet, it remains unclear if any or all of the stated motives would compel medical migrants to return to their home country.

Table 6.1: Main Motivation to Return to India by Age at EHIRC

Main Motivations	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60	Total
Advancing Career Goals	-	3.9	10.6	40.9	0.0	12.0
Better Compensation Package	-	35.2	1.5	9.0	0.0	14.0
Children, Family and Friends	-	29.4	62.1	0.0	0.0	37.5
Finished Education and Training	-	27.4	9.0	4.5	0.0	14.0
Greater Social Standing	-	0.0	0.0	9.0	50.0	4.6
Higher Standard of Living	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	3.3
To Make a Meaningful Difference	-	3.9	16.6	27.2	0.0	12.7
Other Reasons	-	0.0	0.0	9.0	0.0	1.3
Total Percentages (%)	-	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Returned Respondents	0	51	66	22	10	149

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked returned respondents to select only one response from the above list of motivations. These respondents were categorized according to which age group they fell under in the sample to calculate the frequency distribution of their responses on their return motivations. The numbers presented in the columns of the table are the cumulative percentages of the responses by each age group to highlight that respondents stated different motivation to return to India. The purpose of the table is to show that the motivation to return to India varies amongst migrants by their age and to further analyze their decision to come back home.

Table 6.1 presents migrants most frequently cited motive for returning to India, which varied by their age groups: 35% of respondents aged 30 to 39 chose to return because they felt their newly acquired medical education, specialty training and overseas work qualifications would get them a better compensation package from local employers. And 62% of respondents aged 40 to 49 decided to return because the amount of money they managed to save was more than adequate to go back and settle their family. Even though 40% of respondents aged 50 to 59 stated that they returned to advance their career goals, it seems that the underlying implication was that their social network could be utilized to improve the delivery of medical services. SOT-2 (female and cath-lab technician) further elaborated:

I was 25 years old...I decided to move abroad to do a certificate course in advanced medical techniques, but really the point was to find a better paying job that would allow me to assist my ageing parents with their expenses, pay for my younger sister tuition and support the family. But then I turned 30 years old...I had been away for five years...and managed to send a lot of money that enabled us [the family or household] to become independent [financial secure] at least for the time being. I came back because I never really intended to stay in Russia...and I knew I could use my credentials to get paid more in one of the big cities in India. Some of the staff nurses and physicians I worked with also returned to India. All the people I knew who returned to India will tell you...it was part of their plan.

While younger migrants' remittance behavior might determine when they ultimately choose to come back home, these returnees often acknowledge that their overseas-acquired knowledge might be rewarded with an earnings premium from local employers in India. Mid-career migrants have not only saved enough money that would enable them to settle their family, but also "having gained experience in foreign hospitals is considered to be highly valued in the Indian labor market" (Khadria, 2004: 21-22). Mid-career migrants return due to the belief that the new knowledge they gained from their overseas stint would lead to better employment prospects from local employers. Older migrants, having expanded their social network, amassed quite of bit of money and gained a higher level of expertise, return to pursue their long-term professional goals with private hospitals. With the exception of some older migrants, it seems natural for healthcare migrants who had a successful migration experience while abroad to return back permanently.

In addition to age, migrants' gender and marital status may be associated with their decision to return to India. SOT-4 (female and staff nurse) asserted that, "I only had two holidays off when I could come visit my husband in Kerala...they [in-laws] were putting immense pressure on me to have a child, which meant I had to come back here." SOT-10 (female and anesthesiologist) said that, "My husband failed his USMLE tests [United States Medical Licensing Exams], not being able to legally practice medicine in New Jersey...we made the choice to move back in order to pursue our careers in our respective fields." Not only do female migrants have to take the time out to plan for a family, but also the need to play supportive daughter-in-law, spouse and mother roles for the family limited their overseas migration experience. It can be inferred from the above responses that female migrants' decision to return may be logical given their emotional attachments, family obligations and the general household context. While female healthcare migrants emigrate to secure their family's livelihood, their migration plans are constantly re-shaped by the stage they are at in their life cycle (Boyle, 2002; Ackers, 2004; Raghuram, 2004; Nair and Percot, 2008).

Moreover, the type of occupation held by migrants tends to be associated with their decision to return to India. Most migrants "intended duration of stay abroad... after the planned migration took place was expected to be 4 to 6 years" (Khadria, 2004: 22). SHT-8 (female and staff nurse) stated that, "I also wanted to go abroad like Mrs. XXX-XXXX but I had to have the paperwork...but everyone comes back once they get their pockets filled with money in Saudi Arabia." SOT-10 (male and neuroanesthesiologist) said, "Getting advanced training in preventive stroke care, knowledge about cerebrovascula diseases and showing that you have the ability to use ultrasound technology for performing surgery...will allow me to earn larger sums of money for my services." SHT-12 (male and cardiac surgeon) revealed that, "all of us are trying to get the most [money] we can so that our families can have a good life." These migrants initially go abroad as target earners—the date of return to their country of origin is based on when he or she achieves their planned savings level (RAND, 2011: 1)—but return because their level of savings or ability to maximize their earning power secures the family's financial stability in the future. So, these healthcare migrants might be motivated to return for purely economic reasons given their financial situation.

Table 6.2: Main Motivation to Return to India by Occupation at EHIRC

Main Motivations	Technicians	Staff Nurses	Physicians	Others	Total
Advancing Career Goals	0.0	1.6	25.3	20.0	12.0
Better Compensation Package	15.0	3.2	31.7	20.0	17.4
Children, Family and Friends	45.0	60.6	9.5	20.0	35.5
Finished Education and Training	20.0	16.3	11.1	0.0	14.0
Greater Social Standing	0.0	4.9	4.7	0.0	4.0
Higher Standard of Living	15.0	0.0	3.1	20.0	4.0
To Make a Meaningful Difference	5.0	11.4	14.2	0.0	11.4
Other Reasons	0.0	1.6	0.0	20.0	1.3
Total Percentages (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Returned Respondents	20	61	63	5	149

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked returned respondents to select only one response from the above list of motivations. These respondents were re-categorized according to which occupation group they fell under in the sample to calculate the frequency distribution of their responses on their return motivations. The numbers presented in the columns of the table are the cumulative percentages of the responses by each occupation group to highlight that respondents stated different motivation to return to India. The purpose of the table is to show that the motivation to return to India varies amongst migrants by their occupation and to further explain their decision to come back home.

However, Table 6.2 reveals that migrants' main motivation for returning to India varied considerable variation by their occupation groups: 35% of the respondents reported children, family and friends as their main motive for returning to India. This reason was most prevalent among laboratory technicians (45%) and staff nurses (60%) with the other responses being mixed on the motive for going back to India. Many of these migrants said that caring for elderly parents, getting married and husbands' dislike of their absence had led them to come back to India. Additionally, some migrants said that difficulties in raising their young children in a foreign atmosphere and emotional attachment to family members drew them home. And though family considerations are important, it seems that this is not the only factor that prompt migrants to return home (Iredale et al., 2003). SOT-6 (male and nuclear technologist) and SOT-7 (female and critical care nurse) excerpts elaborate on some of the other factors:

It was 2004...I went to go work for a small independent hospital in the United States. I had to clear the CNMT [Certified Nuclear Medicine Technologist] and BSNM [Board of Science in Nuclear Medicine], which are considered to be very prestigious qualifications in the field of nuclear medicine. I came back after three years to rejoin my wife and children in Tamil Nadu, India. (Under the H4 visa category, I could have brought my family to the United States.) But, I missed the little things like Indian food, the way people greet one another on the streets and celebrations that take place during the time of Diwali [national holiday] in India. The decision to return was not difficult. Meaning home is where the heart is and that will always remain. I knew that my overseas exposure [working with the latest medical technologies, getting on-the-job training and understanding a different healthcare systems] was going to improve my salary and career trajectory at home. My salary and career path is better now than when I left India for the United States. I think my trip has provided me with a brighter future in India.

It was 1991...I was only married for three years when I got my visa to go to Saudi Arabia. The thing that attracted me the most to Saudi Arabia was the money. I was earning 3,000 Saudi Riyals (SR) [equivalent to \$800 USD] per month. I stayed there for five years and then I came back to New Delhi, India. I came back because my elderly mother was looking after my son who was very small at the time. Plus, my husband was not happy that I was abroad for such a long period of time. I look at it this way...going abroad allowed me to make enough money to buy a nice house, pay off my debts [school loans, marriage expenses, property taxes] and settle my family. Moreover, I got the chance to learn the latest techniques on sophisticated ventilation machines...I was exposed to newer drug therapies and discovered the importance of being more process-oriented in the work setting. With this exposure I have a better job...the salary is less but still more than other workers at the hospital. Now, I also have the chance to use these new credentials to go to a Western country like the United States if I want to leave India.

In view of the above findings, the economic dimension may be more important than many of the returnees are willing to admit (Gmelch, 1980: 141). Referring back to Table 6.2 on migrants' main motivation to return to India by their occupation groups: 12% of the respondents reported advancing career goals and 17% stated receiving a better compensation package as their motives for going back to India. These responses are most frequent among physicians (25% and 31%) and non-medical workers (20%) with other responses being quite mixed on the motive for returning to India. Several of the physicians and non-medical workers stated that their decision was triggered by difficulties in the foreign destination—such as obtaining leadership occupational roles (senior grade, status-oriented and/or leadership position), lack of professional responsibility (autonomy to run their own clinical group, institute policies and help in developing the medical setting of the hospital) and work restrictions (only allowed to practice specialties like general, internal or family medicine, whereas those receiving specialty training were forced to work in hospitals in underserved areas—that would be remedied if they returned. SOT-2 (female and pediatric anesthesiologist) and SOT-5 (male and orthopedic surgeon) excerpts elaborate on their reasoning:

In 1993...I moved to the United States to attend the University of Pittsburgh. I was sure that I wanted to become a pediatric anesthesiologist but this specialty was not available in India. I did not want to look at my move abroad as completely settling down in United States. But I was not going to come back at all costs. It was a practical matter of finding the right opportunity. I was abroad for eleven years and then returned because my family would be better off at home. (By that I mean I now had the overseas qualifications that would provide me with great opportunities in India.) Coming back to India was the best decision I could have made...I hold a senior position with a profit-sharing scheme in a very prestigious corporate hospital. I feel vast improvements are happening that are translating into greater benefits to work for the Indian healthcare system.

In 1995...I left AIIMS [government hospital] because I realized that I needed to learn newer medical techniques, work with advanced technologies and expand my skill set in surgical medicine. There was a severe lack of training in surgical procedures like hip, knee and other joint replacements (which I knew in the next ten years were going to increase in India.) I was abroad for twelve years before I decided to come back to India. While I returned for family reasons, it is also easier to live in India. I will take a doubt out of your mind.... you get better jobs and definitely make more money in this country. (I also got the opportunity to set up a specialty unit that performs groundbreaking surgeries correcting handicaps in children from rural areas.) The medical scenario is changing...its only getting better with the rise of corporate hospitals in India.

Again, the accumulation of overseas knowledge resources is an important consideration that motivates migrants to return to India. Acquiring postgraduate qualifications, training or plain work experience earned elsewhere was believed to improve returnees' employment prospects in India's private healthcare industry. Physicians that returned with a postgraduate medical education, specialty training or overseas work experience expected to further their careers—due to an increased demand for super specialized practitioners in a growing private tertiary care market (Mullan, 2006; Chandra and Sreenivasan, 2006). In particular, physicians practicing rare specializations, having six to ten years of relevant work experience and knowing how to set up independent medical units—starting up medical units that cater to the rising demand for certain kinds of healthcare services—were factors that prompted them to return and work in New Delhi.

Like most of the physicians, non-medical workers that went abroad to acquire a postgraduate education, job training or work experience soon realized that a lack of highly qualified workers in India increased their chances for attaining suitable work within the domestic labor market. Strangely, for non-medical migrants their overseas exposure is less about skill enhancement and has more to do with having the right overseas credentials to get employment in New Delhi. As E-1 (female and HRD coordinator) stated, "it does not matter what you do over there. It is a nametag that is used to make someone a vice-president and justify his or her social place, increased pay and additional perks for working in the industry." Quite a few non-medical workers thus stressed that their overseas exposure would allow them to move forward in their professions and reap financial benefits back home.

While the value of migrants' newly acquired skills may be contested, Cockburn (1983) reminds us that the demand for returned migrants rests on the knowledge required to perform a particular job, function or task at work. Besides career related motivations, the respondents highlighted that their motivation to return to India was also driven by strong financial incentives that prompted them to return and work for an Indian corporate hospital. Kangasniemi et al.'s (2004) work corroborates that most migrants work in Indian corporate hospitals immediately after their return to further their careers and reap financial gains (Khadria, 2004b; Khadria, 2009; Murthy, 2010). These migrants may have decided to return because of the economic and professional opportunities they expect to find back in their home country.

Table 6.3: Tests of Significance of the Differences Among Medical Migrants' Motivations to Return to India by Personal Characteristics at EHRC

Tests of Significance	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Occupation	Region
Lambda Values	0.270	0.028	0.028	0.592	0.571
Significance Level	0.060	0.080	0.255	0.000*	0.000*
Uncertainty Values	0.360	0.075	0.067	0.440	0.494
Significance Level	0.055	0.058	0.211	0.000*	0.000*
Chi-square Values	48.997	65.545	63.723	24.536	58.703
Significance Level	0.081	0.588	0.868	0.000*	0.000*

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The above table is derived from five different contingency tables in which the frequency distributions are computed between respondents' stated motivation to return to India by their personal characteristics, which are converted into nominal variables to conduct a significance test. Three different tests of significance are conducted to analyze if there is an association among return motives and certain personal characteristics. Also, these tests measure the strength of association between return motives and certain variables and if the relationship is significant.

Note 2: The Lambda and Uncertainty values range from 0 to 1, with 0 signifying no association and 1 signifying perfect association between the cross-tabulated combinations of return motive and certain variables of the sample. The Chi-squared statistic, using Fisher's exact test, is also based on a cross tabulation of the combination of return motives and certain variables to show if there is an association and its significance in the sample. The Uncertainty and Chi-squared, specifically Fisher's exact test, is used due to the small sample size and zeros in some response cells in the data set of the sample. An (*) denotes that the numeric values are significant at $p < 0.05$.

Note 3: The generated values are used to show which variables—age, gender, marital status, occupation and the region in which they resided in the foreign destination—might be associated with the decision to return to India.

Note 4: A limitation that should be recognized is that there were no returnees in the age group 20 to 20, which most probably reduced the analysis's ability to find an overall association between migrant's age and their motivation to return to India. Also, the analyzes can only reveal whether there is an association and if it is significant amongst the motivations to return and certain personal characteristics—not which motivations to return to India are correlated with certain personal characteristics of migrants working in EHRC (i.e. The results show that there is a strong and significant association between migrants' occupation and the motivation to return and not that better compensation is correlated with laboratory technicians decision to return to India.) The results are combined with case interviews to explain differences among migrants' attributes and the motivation to return home.

Given the above discussion, Table 6.3 presents three tests of significance to see if there is an association between migrants stated motives and personal attributes associated with their decision to return to India. The tests of significance show that migrants' motive to return to India and certain variables—age, gender and marital status—are not only weakly associated but also insignificant in their decision to return home. But the table does show Lambda (0.592 and 0.571), Uncertainty (0.440 and 0.494) and Chi-squared (24.536 and 58.703) values which indicate a strong and significant association ($p < 0.05$) between the migrants' occupation and the foreign region in which they resided with their motivation to return to India.

For some laboratory technicians, it was necessary to pay an international recruiter to find them a job in Australia, Canada and the United States so that they could work and save enough money that would allow them to live comfortably in India. Because there are limited government-sponsored medical training programs, most laboratory technicians felt getting a scholarship to pursue higher education was the only way to gain overseas credentials, work experience and resources to raise their employment probability in India's competitive labor market.

However, most staff nurses went abroad to Gulf countries like Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to work—remitting a portion of their income to secure the family's livelihood. Staff nurses that chose to work for the Middle East's healthcare system parlayed this opportunity to expand their know-how, skills and learn new work processes that they believed would boost their professional value in Indian hospitals. SOT-5 (female and nursing supervisor) substantiated, "[when] I worked in Obeid hospital I got advance certifications...and learned new SOPs of the hospital." The respondent goes on to say that the having overseas exposure proved to be beneficial when she decided to return to India to work for the private medical industry.

While most physicians migrated to Western countries for postgraduate work, they left with an open mind about returning to India. Mullan (2006) pointed out that NRI physicians remit a considerable amount of money to financially support the needs of their family members, invest in medical enterprises and save up for early retirement. Physicians are motivated to return because their newly acquired knowledge, clinical training and resources generously rewarded at home. Also, working for an Indian tertiary care hospital allows them to live a comfortable lifestyle while making a meaningful difference in their local communities.

The above-mentioned return motivations should not discount the fact that the inability to find suitable employment, visa restrictions and problems related to cultural integration also trigger migrants to leave foreign destinations. In addition to the prospect of being unemployed, migrants can be restricted to work in designated areas in foreign destinations. SOT-1 (male and cardiologist) explained:

I went to the United States to do a fellowship in cardiology. After I finished, I was given a J-1 visa waiver as a foreign-born physician...but under the provision that I work for three years in a medically underserved community. I ended up working on the outskirts of Wautoma [a rural city in the state of Wisconsin] for a community hospital. (You will not believe it but the hospital's manager thought I was a Native American Indian.) When my visa expired they [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services] told me I had to exit the United States and return to India for two years before I could change my work status. Then the economic recession happened.

The respondent noted that initially he did face incidences of discrimination, but over the duration of his stay such occurrences were not common at work. More importantly, an analysis of the responses revealed that migrants found it difficult to extend their J-1 visas in the United States due to restrictions regarding employment sponsored medical work. And SOT-3 (male and critical care specialist) echoed a similar sentiment when he stated that, “migrants are only allowed to work for a fixed term, they usually do not get permanent residency in Saudi Arabia...there are no exceptions to the rules.” More recently, Dr. Ramesh Metha (President of the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin) stated that several Indian migrants in the United Kingdom would have to return to India due to amendments made to existing immigration laws. It is plausible that during times of economic downturn migrants are considered to be redundant workers—work they perform can be easily done by locals, the job is no longer offered or maybe deemed unnecessary in the industry—because of their marginal and unprotected status in the destination country. In other words, economic recession leads to an increase in the unemployment rate of migrants that may fuel their nationalistic sentiment to return home. Though it is more often the case that destination countries force migrants to return home (Castles and Miller, 2009). And so, whether migrants actually end up returning to India may depend to a considerable extent on the prevailing social, economic and political environments in the destination and home country.

In sum, after taking into consideration migrants' personal characteristics, their different circumstances for returning and acknowledging certain push or pull factors the decision to return to India is seen a calculated choice. Like most of the respondents, E-14 (male and executive) summarized that the decision to return to India was part of the migration plan:

Almost all migrants international trip is planned. They return after a couple of years with some sort of credentials that increases their employability in India. And some migrants bring back ideas, skills and job experience that increase their productivity. (Usually, those with overseas exposure display a higher level of job competency than those that did not have the chance to study or work in a Western country.) It's a strategy...getting a super-specialization...knowledge about new techniques or broadening their [medical] perspective is going to have career and monetary benefits. (When I decided to return, I was aware that my skills set would allow me to earn at least \$300,000 per year in the Indian private sector.) I guess looking back at why I returned...it made [economic] sense to come back home.

It is accurate to say that migrants go abroad for a limited period of time to earn enough money that gives greater liquidity to the family or household. Equally, it seems that migrants go abroad to accumulate overseas knowledge resources to increase their employment opportunities in India's labor market. In addition to saving money, the evidence seems to indicate that migrants make an effort to acquire knowledge, additional skills and work experience which may in fact be part of their migration plan to better secure their future back home. Awases et al. (2003), Khadria (2004, 2004a), Williams and Balaz (2008a) and several other studies stress the importance of acquiring new knowledge, skills and work experience to boost migrants' careers, potential earnings and their lifestyle back home (Ilahi, 1999). While migrants' accumulated knowledge capital can explain to some extent their motivation to return to India, E-9 (male and HRD manager) stated, "people may want come home...but family circumstance might prevent them from going back to India or it's their sense of belonging that makes them return home. The thing is that plans tend to change over time." My results thus confirms the general findings of Iredale et al. (2003) on the migration of highly skilled migrants in four Asian Pacific countries which showed that migrants return after they have carefully weighed personal factors, career prospects and the prevailing economic, social or political environment of the home country.

Overall, return migration is a complicated process in which several issues tend to be associated with migrants' decision to come back to their country of origin. Similarly to other studies, variation among migrants' motivations to return home is largely due to their personal attributes, migration experiences and larger push and/or pull forces in response to specific institutional, economic and political conditions back in India (Khadria, 1999; Hazarika et. al., 2011). While there is an array of factors, circumstances and issues that must be carefully weighed in the decision to return, the results show that neoclassical economics, the human capital theory with hints of NELM may help to explain why migrants go home (Klinthäll, 2003; Dustmann, 2007; Dustmann and Mestres, 2009; De Haas, 2014). The decision to return to India is a strategic choice in which migrants—laboratory technicians, staff nurses, physicians and non-medical workers—recognize that their newly acquired knowledge, skills, work experiences as well as cultural insights from abroad will be generously rewarded upon their return, which in turn, will lead to a better life back in their home country.

6.2 Returned Migrants' Reasons for Joining EHIRC

Once migrants return home, they can resettle into the residential location from which they originated or they can choose to relocate to another community. Migrants that move into the residential location from where they had originally left is considered a U-turn migration (Wiltshire, 1979), which is taken to mean that returnees prefer to live and work in locally familiar surroundings. And migrants that relocate to a different residential community represent a J-migration (King et al., 2008), which is taken to mean that returnees prefer to move to localities that have the greatest economic opportunities. Given the scope of this chapter, I will only highlight a few select group of empirical studies that makes the logical link that economic forces may drive returnees—in light of their newly acquired overseas knowledge resources—to seek employment in large cities. However, I mostly concentrate my efforts on analyzing the main reasons that prompt returnees to join EHIRC in New Delhi. Hopefully, analyzing the returnees' reasons for joining EHIRC will shed some light on the importance and potential for transferring their knowledge resources to the hospital.

Table 6.4: Main Reason for Joining the Organization by Occupation at EHIRC

Main Reasons	Technicians	Staff Nurses	Physicians	Others	Total
Advancing Career Goals	15.0	6.5	15.8	40.0	12.7
Better Compensation Package	0.0	29.5	34.9	0.0	26.8
Children, Family and Friends	25.0	22.9	7.9	20.0	16.7
Finished Education and Training	10.0	3.2	4.7	20.0	5.3
Greater Social Standing	0.0	0.0	7.9	0.0	3.3
Higher Standard of Living	25.0	6.5	6.3	0.0	8.7
To Make a Meaningful Difference	0.0	16.3	20.6	20.0	16.1
Other Reasons	25.0	14.7	1.5	0.0	10.0
Total Percentages (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Returned Respondents	20	61	63	5	149

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked returned respondents to select only one response from the above list of reasons. These respondents were re-categorized according to which occupation group they fell under in the sample to calculate the frequency distribution of their responses on their motive to join EHIRC. The numbers presented in the columns of the table are the cumulative percentages of the responses by each occupation group to highlight that respondents stated different motives for joining EHIRC. The purpose of the table is to show that the motive to join EHIRC varies amongst migrants by their occupation and to further explain their decision to work for the organization.

While migrants may decide to return to India and live in New Delhi, they can be motivated by different reason for choosing their employer in the tertiary care market. Table 6.4 presents migrants' main motivation to join EHIRC over other local employers. Migrants' most frequently cited motive for joining EHIRC varied by their occupation groups: 26% of the respondents reported that receiving a better compensation offer—not only exceeded their reservation wage, but also was higher than compensation offers received from other local employers—was the reason they chose to work for EHIRC. This reason was important primarily among returned staff nurses (29%) and physicians (34%) at EHIRC. Most of the returned staff nurses and physicians stated that they were induced by EHIRC's compensation offer as it allowed them to satisfy their consumption needs like paying their daily bills, children's tuition fees, elderly parents' hospice care and other expenses of the household. Some of these returnees also said that their salary package enabled them to invest in small entrepreneurial ventures, take up leisure or recreational activities and other social interests that essentially gave them a comfortable lifestyle. SOT-4 (female and nursing supervisor) and SOT-9 (male and cardiac surgeon) further elaborated:

I interviewed at Apollo, Batra, Fortis Escorts and Max hospitals. After about three months of intensive negotiations I decided to join Fortis Escorts hospital because they offered to compensate me more than other private places. In comparison, I got a 30% hike in my salary, twelve paid personal days and other benefits. The reason is that I had been in a similar setup (Obeid hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia). I worked there for ten years...I learned to monitor vital signs, do IV placements, perform phlebotomy and administer newer tests to critically ill patients. My clinical knowledge and skills exceeds that of most nurses...they [domestically trained personnel] do not have the specialty training needed to work on the ICU ward at this hospital. I am satisfied...I live a normal but not a luxurious life.

I was employed as a principal consultant with Apollo hospital. My compensation consisted of a very low salary with the promise of bonuses throughout the year. I was working there for three years until I received a call from a good friend (and former colleague) telling me there was a job opening at Fortis Escorts hospital. Basically, I got recruited but I told them my conditions...a better job role, 15% increase in my base salary and put me on a profit-sharing scheme. I was one of the few physicians with specialty training in laparoscopic surgery from overseas (Ninewells hospital in London, the United Kingdom). I am able to perform very complicated medical procedures like atrial septal defect correction, coronary catheterization and MIDCAB...which can drastically improve the patients' quality of life. I am more than satisfied...I have a great standard of living.

Table 6.5: Analysis of Variance Between Returned and Stayed Employees' Annual Earnings with Interaction Effects at EHIRC

Sources	DF	Mean Square	F-Statistic	Significance
Corrected Model	8	3.34	51.38	0.022
Intercept	1	8.28	127.23	0.048
Type of Employee	3	8.71	13.38	0.000*
Occupation	4	6.08	93.45	0.000*
Type of Employee* Occupation	3	5.45	8.38	0.000*
Corrected Total	312	-	-	-

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: In the ANOVA model, the dependent variable (DV) is the annual earnings and the independent variables (IVs) are type of employee (returned or stayed) and occupation (laboratory technicians, staff nurses, physicians or other workers). The ANOVA model also incorporates the interaction effect of the two IVs (Type of Employee* Occupation). Given the proposed model, the adjusted R-Squared=0.62 which mean that 62% of the variance can be explained by its parameters. A (*) shows that the relationship is significant at $p < 0.001$.

Note 2: The ANOVA model tests three null hypotheses: 1) There is no difference between returned employees and non-migrants in their annual earnings in EHIRC. 2) There is no difference between laboratory technicians, staff nurses, physicians and non-medical workers in their annual earnings in EHIRC. 3) There is no interaction between the type of employee and occupation in annual earnings in EHIRC. The ANOVA analysis shows that all three null hypotheses can be rejected—suggesting that there is a difference between returned employees and non-migrants, those holding different occupations (laboratory technicians, staff nurses, physicians and non-medical workers) and the interaction effect of the two variables (Type of Employee and Occupation) on their earned wages in the hospital.

Note 3: A limitation that should be recognized is that the analysis only shows if there is a variation between the Type of Employee, Occupation and the interaction effect of the two variables on annual earning in EHIRC. The above results were therefore checked against the mean income calculated on different occupation groups of returned and non-migrant employees, which reveals that the overseas-trained earn higher wages than home-trained workers in EHIRC. The findings are triangulated with case interviews and presented in the forthcoming discussion to better explain the differences in compensation amongst them in the organization.

While migrants choose to join EHIRC because they are offered an attractive pay package, a more relevant point to note is that returned healthcare migrants' acquisition of overseas accreditations, specialty training and/or work qualifications enables them to negotiate a wage premium from the tertiary care facility. E-20 (male and HRD executive) emphasized that:

The actual ICU observation, procedure, treatment is contingent on the patient's ability to incur these medical costs. I believe that any employee who has gone abroad for educational instruction or specialty training can give his or her patients a lot more treatment options, which probably leads to an increase in their earning power with this hospital. It's very simple...returnees choose Fortis Escorts hospital because they are given terms of employment [salary, vacation allotments, job perks and facilities] that are better than most of the other employing hospitals.

Table 6.5 presents a two-way ANOVA analysis of the type of employee, occupation and the interaction effect of the two variables on annual earnings at EHIRC. The table shows that the interaction between type of employee (returned and non-migrants employees) and occupation has an F-statistic (8.38), which is significant ($p < 0.001$) meaning there is a difference between their annual earnings at EHIRC. A further analysis of the data revealed that returnees, given their occupations, are paid higher than non-migrants in EHIRC. A possible reason why returnees are paid higher than others is because they can convince HRD managers that their knowledge, clinical skills and experience in offering a range of treatment options will improve patient care at EHIRC. Returnees are not only considered an asset in terms of their efficiency, productivity and innovative capabilities, but also their presence adds to EHIRC's brand equity value which is associated with the delivery of high quality tertiary care at the hospital (Zweig, 2006). More importantly, returnees are hired because they are considered to be an added value given their potential for expanding the customer base for certain kinds of expensive tertiary care services offered at the hospital. The point being that returnees are high in demand and short in supply in the tertiary medical market, which not only increases their negotiating power with EHIRC but often leads to them getting financially rewarded above the labor market standards of New Delhi (Hazarika et al., 2011). Overall, those who chose to work for EHIRC or similar kinds of organizations may benefit economically from employment-related opportunities in the national capital region.

Alternatively, migrants may also accept job offers that allow them to advance in their current job roles, grow professionally or broaden their career outlook (KPMG, 2012). Referring back to Table 6.4 on migrants' main motivation to join EHIRC by their occupation groups: 12% of the respondents reported that the opportunity to further career goals was the main reason they chose to work for EHIRC. This reason was mostly cited among physicians (15%) and non-medical workers (40%), while other respondents gave different reasons for joining EHIRC. Returned physicians and non-medical workers expected their overseas-acquired knowledge would pay off in terms of gaining seniority in their respective professions at EHIRC. Others were persuaded to join because they could choose alternative career options at EHIRC. As was made evident by SOT-8 (male and emergency medicine), SOT-13 (male and cardiologist) and E-11 (male and HRD executive) when they remarked:

I am 32 years old...I completed my BS/MD from St. Petersburg, Russia. I came over to Fortis Escorts hospital because they have great physicians like Dr. XXX-XXX who is the HOD, newer medical equipment and a large volume of emergency cases (50 to 60 per day). I am resident but only for another two months. I am being fast-tracked [employees that go beyond what is expected from their age and experience are promoted to senior positions in a short period of time] to a consultant in the ward. I knew HRD would promote me...because most of my overseas colleagues got the same opportunity. I can move forward in my career and have a secure future.

I am 62 years old...I received my MD and did a post-graduate fellowship in cardiology from Melbourne, Australia. I was working at AIIMS but left to take up a job post with Apollo hospital for monetary reasons. At Apollo hospital, I spent my time attending patients, researching and tutoring incoming residents to pass the DNB [National Board Examination]. I decided to continue my career with Fortis Escorts hospital. I wanted to be involved with the administration side of things. I was put in-charge of developing onsite multi-centric research services to (CROs) and helping to expand medical services [setting up more cardiac labs] across the NCR region. I am not a businessman but they did acknowledge my seniority in the medical field. It's a lot of work and responsibility that brings me closer to my long-term goals.

I am 44 years old...I have an MBA and CTH [diploma in hotel management] from London, United Kingdom. I was employed with Oberoi Hotel Group. I was a senior manager but after ten years it became stagnant so I decided to join Fortis Escorts hospital to start a new career. I always wanted to be in the medical line of work. I have a structured career path that will allow me to go from director, executive and maybe even CEO. They look at educational qualifications and work experience [that is oriented towards Western-style of customer service] to fill positions. I believe this opportunity will broaden my career outlook to get ahead in life.

Table 6.6: The Proportion of Returned and Stayed Employees in Senior Occupational Positions by Age at EHRC

Breakdown of Employees by their Occupation	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60	Total
Technicians						
Returned	-	62.5	70.0	50.0	-	-
Stayed	-	33.3	50.0	25.0	-	-
Staff Nurses						
Returned	-	65.0	70.5	42.8	-	-
Stayed	-	16.6	33.3	25.0	-	-
Physicians						
Returned	-	54.5	65.0	81.8	90.0	-
Stayed	-	25.0	34.7	42.8	50.0	-
Others						
Returned	-	-	100.0	100.0	-	-
Stayed	-	-	50.0	50.0	-	-
Percentages of Returned Respondents (%)	-	60.7	54.5	68.1	90.0	61.0
Percentages of Stayed Respondents (%)	-	22.8	36.3	35.2	50.0	23.0
Total Number of Returned Respondents	-	51	66	22	10	149
Total Number of Stayed Respondents	41	35	44	17	6	143

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: Senior grade positions are defined as follows: Technicians (Senior, Supervisor or Superintendent), Staff Nurses (Senior, Head or Superintendent), Physicians (Senior, Principal Consultant or Attending Professional) and Others (Executive, Director or Chief Officer).

Note 2: The respondents were categorized according to which occupation and age group they fell under for each cell in the above table. The number of respondents with a senior grade position was divided by the total number of migrants in their occupation and age group for each cell in the table. (For example, 5 out of 8 returned laboratory technicians in the age group 30 to 39 have a senior grade position, which was calculated to show 62.5% of them are holding senior occupational positions at EHRC.) The percentage of returned and stayed respondents in senior occupational positions along with the total number of migrants in their respective age groups is presented at the bottom of the column in the table. A (-) signifies that there are no respondents, only one or both returned and non-migrant respondents are not in the age groups and/or neither of them may be in a senior occupational position in EHRC.

Note 3: The purpose of this table is to show the proportion of returnees and stayers who are in senior occupational positions from the sampled population to further analyze the reason for differences in their career mobility within the organization.

Table 6.6 presents the proportion of returned and stayed employees in senior occupational positions by their age groups at EHIRC. The total column shows that a larger percentage of returned employees (61%) hold senior positions compared to non-migrants (23%) within EHIRC. The young returned laboratory technicians, staff nurses and physicians said that they were able to consistently apply their postgraduate medical education, training and practical skill set to a large number of admitted patients to gain clinical exposure that was necessary to move up to senior grades—from resident, junior consultant up to senior consultant and so forth—in their chosen professions in their respective medical department.

Middle-aged laboratory technicians returned staff nurses conveyed that their knowledge, specialty training and work experience elevate them to senior medical faculty members in their medical department. These returned staff nurses not only felt that their overseas accreditation contributed to their seniority status, but also improved the possibility of further career growth in the medical unit. Likewise, middle-aged returned physicians' newly acquired know-how not only led to their accelerated or leapfrog promotions to senior grades in the medical unit, but also their exposure to Western healthcare systems enabled them to move away from practicing purely clinical aspects of medicine to take on administrative duties and responsibilities related to running their own medical unit.

Older returned physicians' and some non-medical workers' overseas-acquired knowledge, management skills and work qualifications combined with their domestic labor market experience earned them a high formal status, seniority rights and non-pecuniary concessions from EHIRC. The interviews also revealed that older returned physicians' and non-medical workers' overseas exposure and 10 years of work experience in the domestic labor market was important for transitioning into new work roles at EHIRC. Richman et al. (2008) showed that physicians who were working for another tertiary care medical facility and managers employed in other service industries left their employers to take up executive roles at the hospital. Recognizing the value of returnees' knowledge, brand equity and potential impact on business growth, efforts are made to promote them to fill vacancies in EHIRC. MOHFW (2005) further mentioned that labor force changes in the healthcare industry have led to an expansion in career choices in New Delhi. So, returned migrants may benefit from professional development opportunities available in the metropolis.

Whether or not employees who returned from abroad decide to join EHIRC can depend on a number of reasons that may not be mutually exclusive. Employees who returned from abroad chose to join EHIRC because they were able to use their newly acquired knowledge, skills and work experience to not only negotiate for a higher salary, but also enhance their current job roles, grow professionally and even transition into new lines of work in EHIRC. But E-7 (male and executive) also stated that “many overseas trained employees join us because they want to make a difference in patient welfare...and they get that chance here to satisfy those expectations, but not at the cost of their lifestyle.” In this sense, returned employees mentioned that the amenities offered at EHIRC, functioning of the facility and its convenient location made it a better healthcare provider to work for than other hospitals. SOT-3 (male and radiologist) put it best when he stated:

All things considered everything has to fit together with the surroundings of the new place. Apollo, Batra, Moolchand and the other hospitals are farther from the mall, shopping areas, restaurants and nightlife. Max hospital is next to everything, but there is no housing available. Fortis Escorts hospital is located near all the main markets, affordable housing is available [in Taimur Nagar] and there are good public schools in the vicinity. I can walk to Nizamuddin Railway Station or take any of the local buses to go see family, friends or have an outing in the city.

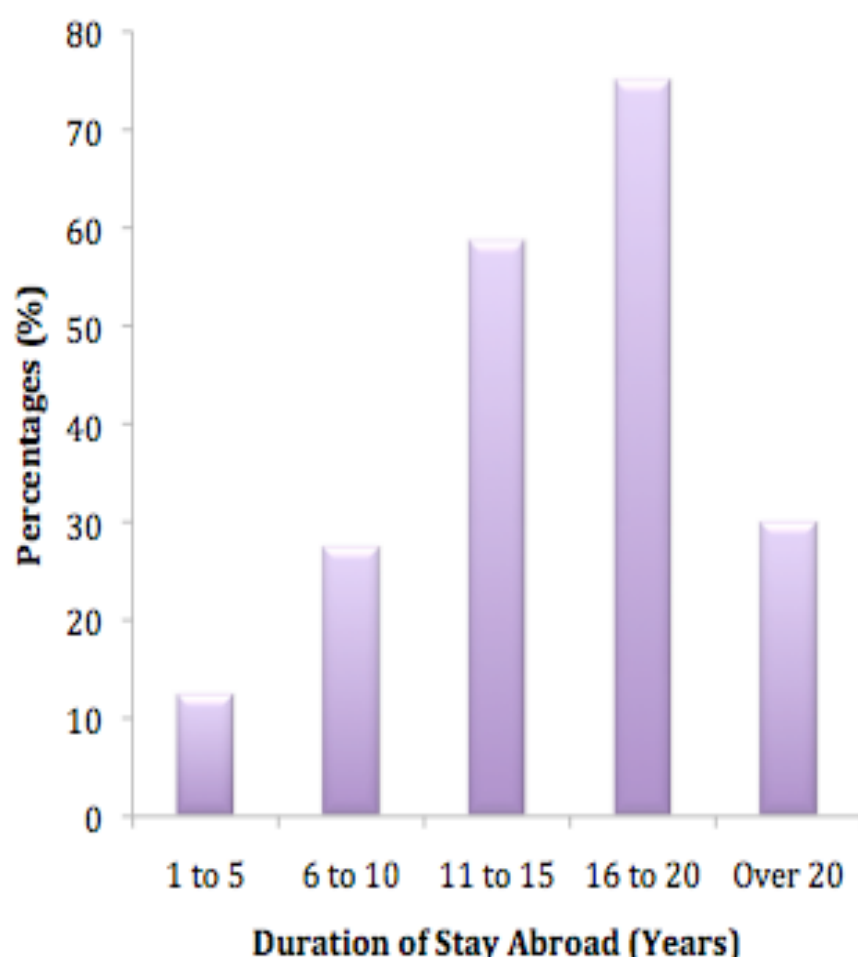
It would seem that most returned migrants try to maintain the economic and social position they have acquired from their time spent abroad (Muschkin, 1993; Arif, 1998) by only working for medical facilities that provided the greatest economic opportunities. This claim is compatible with Findlay et al. (2009) escalator region hypothesis insofar as returned migrants will be drawn to locations where their overseas exposure enables them to find suitable employment, achieve greater socio-occupational advancement and access to better life opportunities. In other words, the job search behavior of returned migrants predicts that they will migrate to places that not only provide economic benefits, but also where they can truly enjoy a high quality of life (Florida, 2008). Similar to other findings, the results suggest that the employment decisions of returned migrants rely to a varying extent on location-specific conditions (Champion, 2004; Mulder and Van Ham, 2004; Connell, 2011a). Thus, returned migrants will consider several aspects related to the overall environment before they settle down to work in a specific locality.

So, the motivation to return to India and take up employment with EHIRC might be the result of several overlapping issues. Given the tenets of neoclassical economics, human capital theory and a close reading of Findlay's (2009) escalator region hypothesis, the presumption is that after medical migrants acquire the necessary expertise, clinical knowledge, skills and experiences from abroad, they returned to India to work in New Delhi. It is pertinent to mention that in my empirical analysis there are some very subtle hints that a few returned physicians and non-medical workers were recruited by people in their social network to work at EHIRC. Nonetheless, the major point is that not only do returned migrants earn a wage premium, but also they achieve faster career progression and other benefits for working at EHIRC. Overall, healthcare migrants return for economic reason and to some extent social forces may draw them towards EHIRC as it affords them the means to secure a better life.

6.3 Issues Returnees Face Settling into the Workplace

While there are different motives for returning, migrating to a new locality and choosing to work for EHIRC, a common theme that emerged from the above discussions is that migrants tend to hold certain expectations regarding their home. It seems that migrants expect everything to remain the same—community relations, people taking part in each other's lives and continuing to be a support system. They may not realize how much they or their communities might have changed during their absence (Gmelch, 1980: 143). Returned migrants might face a reverse culture shock requiring them to embark on a process of re-connecting with their surroundings including the workplace. Paying particular attention to the issues returnees face settling into their new workplace, I will now analyze if returnees' overseas trip is associated with their attitude, behavior and perception towards non-migrants, the job itself and the general work conditions of EHIRC. This will provide some clarity into whether or not new ideas, expertise, knowledge, skills and experiences that returnees have gained from abroad can be applied within EHIRC. This analysis helps to address SHT-1's (male and radiationist) concern that, "if they can't cope, then how can they transfer knowledge to us" so as to better situate returnees within the knowledge transfer processes of the hospital.

Figure 6.1: Proportion of Returned Medical Migrants with Adjustment Problems by their Duration of Stay Abroad



Source: Author's results based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked the respondents "Did you have problems adjusting to the workplace?" The response, either a Yes or No, was cross tabulated by the number of years the respondents stayed abroad before they decided to return to India. The frequency distributions of migrants' responses binned by the number of years they spent abroad is expressed as percentages in the above histogram. The figure only shows the percentage of returned medical migrants who experienced difficulties adjusting in EHRC. The purpose of this figure is to highlight if long absences from India affected returnees' social integration and thus their potential impact on the knowledge transfer processes at work.

In terms of attitude, professionalism and work ethics, returned employees believed that they did not have much in common with non-migrants at work. In echoing the sentiments of returned employees, SOT-2 (female and anesthesiologist) affirmed, “the attitude of my Indian trained coworkers is very frustrating. They are not at all punctual, lack professionalism and often impolite to women.” When asked about the kinds of difficulties they experienced, most of the returned employees, particularly staff nurses and physicians, mentioned verbal abuse doled out by the patients’ family members, being pressured by hospital managers to admit patients from affluent families into the ICU and negotiating medical costs with the billing department after the delivery of medical services. Though most returnees worked long hours, it was the inadequate lighting, level of noise and overcrowding in the wards that were cited as frequent problems at EHRC. SOT-10 (male and OT nurse) stated that, “It’s not easy to go back to the old ways, while trying to live up to the expectations of modern day care. The irony is coping with how it was like in the past and what it ought to be now.”

The above responses stress that employees who returned to India to work faced personal adjustment issues at EHRC. Figure 6.1 shows the proportion of returned migrants that admitted difficulties adjusting at least professionally at EHRC. The percentage of returned employees that stated they faced problems at dropped substantially from 75% among migrants who had been away for 16 to 20 years to 25% of those who had been gone for 6 to 10 years. The percentage of respondents that said they found it hard to adjust to their new working lives was less than 15% among those who had been abroad for less than 5 years. E-16 (male and executive) explained that, “the gap between those who return later in life to employees that went for short medical training stints is the crux of the argument because now they [returnees who had been away for a long duration of time] have to learn how to re-adapt to our work processes, SOP’s or other kinds of protocols mandated by the Medical Council of India.” The findings, similar to other studies, show that that migrants, especially those who had spent more than 10 years abroad, held unrealistic expectations about the work scenario in India (Gmelch, 1980). Yet, the field survey also revealed that returned healthcare migrants tend to readjust within 6 months to 1 year to the behavior of people, the cultural attributes and changes to the social dynamics inside the workplace.

More importantly, returned employees who had been abroad asserted that they enhanced their ability to think critically, which boosted their confidence in collaborating with other team members. Recalling the days she worked for the NHS, SOT-7 (female and critical care nurse) conveyed that, “it was not good enough to say the patient needs 25 milligrams of chloroquine. I needed to really explain why its alternative pyrimethamine-sulphadoxin could not be prescribed for treating malaria. It was this kind of prodding that gave me a lot of courage to take charge, correct and also consult the on-duty resident on how to properly care for my patient in the ward.” Employees who had spent time abroad also expressed that they developed a greater appreciation for adhering to medical protocols, which increased their sense of accountability not only towards team members, but also patients under their direct management. Remembering the experiences he had working for Medicare, SOT-6 (male and neurologist) said, “the protocol-based way of practicing emergency medicine taught me important lessons regarding my moral and fiduciary responsibilities to the patients, staff and most of all to the hospital.”

In sum, employees who had gone overseas said they realized and gained a new outlook on the cultural values placed on helping out others in EHIRC. This intensified their desire to train Indian residents, impart knowledge to their team members and share social experiences with the management of EHIRC—thus making an effort to improve the quality of medical care delivered to people in the local community. Reiterating the thoughts that came to his mind when thinking about the work he did in the U.S. healthcare system, SOT-4 (male and cardiac surgeon) said that, “in the course of treating sick patients it was natural to mentor, teach and exchange knowledge with others. The whole point was to pass the torch on to those wanting to make a difference in patient welfare in the community.” Even though returned employees felt what they learned during their overseas duration enables them to work differently, only after these migrants have settled into EHIRC will they be able to make full use of their overseas knowledge resources in the workplace. As Ammassari (2003) reminds us, migrants’ ability to make use of their overseas knowledge resources will depend greatly on the openness of other workers, the organizational culture and infrastructure of the organization. Hence, returned migrants can only make an impact on the knowledge transfer processes upon fully integrating into the hospital.

Chapter Seven

Post-Return Experiences and Knowledge Transfers

The post-return experiences of migrants in India tend to be associated and embedded in their socialization efforts in EHIRC. This chapter investigates returned medical migrants' social ties and its association with their transfer of overseas-acquired knowledge resources in EHIRC. The strength of returned and non-migrant employees' social ties is examined to explain its possible affect on their interpersonal knowledge relations at the hospital. EHIRC's incentive system is also examined to explain the knowledge codification efforts of employees to explain the possible affect on the underlying social dynamics of the hospital. A further analysis of EHIRC's knowledge structure helps to explain the knowledge transfer process of the hospital. This chapter delimits the diverse sets of interrelationships and contextual issues to specify the role of returnees in intra-organizational knowledge transfers—in relation to how and in which ways information is communicated, perceived and translated among stakeholders—thus offering insight on their intended benefits and unintended consequences for the knowledge transfer process of the workplace.

7.1 Interpersonal Knowledge Relations at Work

After officially joining the job, newcomers come to realize that they may not hold the same attitudes, beliefs and perceptions as those employed in their place of work. Naturally, newcomers tend to build social bonds with employees who have similar attitudes, attributes, values and/or other homophilic ties that binds them together at work (McPherson et al., 2001; Ruef et al., 2003). Newcomers that socialize with employees akin to themselves should lead to the formation of social bonds that eases the transition from being seen as an outsider to an insider in social circles at work. Newcomers, particularly returnees will use their social connections with other foreign-trained employees, rather than their ties with non-migrants, to organize their personal and/or work relationships in the workplace (Ibarra and Andrews, 1993; Ibarra, 1995; McPherson et al., 2001).

Conventional wisdom suggests that the display of emotional intimacy, having frequent interactions and reciprocal exchanges tends to create strong social relations between employees at work (Katz and Lazer, 2008; Krackhardt, 1992). The lack of an emotional intimacy, infrequent contact and non-reciprocal exchanges will create weak social relations between employees at work (Granovetter, 1983). While strong social ties may be the result of homophilic ties between employees, Hussler and Ronde (2007) argued that considerable amounts of time, effort and resources must be expended to maintain strong social ties—helping to foster trust-based relationships, shared understandings and to achieve common work goals in the social setting. Vice versa employees will spend less time, energy and resources to maintain their weak social ties—that may nonetheless help to change the norms, values and culture of the workplace.

More importantly, the ways in which employees forge strong or weak social ties—those who are inside and others that are outside of the social circle—might be associated with their efforts to transfer knowledge resources in the workplace.⁸ Employees with strong social ties move in the same social circles, which leads to the transfer of out-dated information, known perspectives and general understandings of issues within the workplace (Carolan and Natriello, 2006). And employees with weak social ties tend to move in different social circles, which result in the transfer of new information, novel insights and valuable experiences in the organization (Kilduff and Tsai, 2003; Levin and Cross, 2004).

These claims are very much compatible with Uzzi's (1996) and Hansen's (1999) research that further showed strong social ties between employees ease the transfer of tacit knowledge critical to the generation of ideas, dissemination of solutions to complex problems and sustaining knowledge exchanges at work. In line with Granovetter (1983), weak social ties between employees lead to the efficient transfer of codified rather than tacit knowledge in the workplace. Other studies show that electronic networking also affect employees' social ties that might improve the transfer of codified or tacit knowledge in the organization (Kankanhalli et al., 2004; Wickramasinghe et al., 2005; Jih et al., 2008).

⁸ Carolan and Natriello (2006) argue that the advantages and limitations of strong or weak social ties in terms of learning are not visible unless social ties and interrelationships between various actors [or nodes] are examined.

Table 7.1: Social Network Analysis of Returned and Stayed Employees' Interpersonal Knowledge Relationships at EHIRC

Breakdown of Employees by their Occupation	Intimacy	Frequency of Contact	Reciprocity	Strength of Social Ties	Total
Technicians					
Returned-Stayed	Friendship	Rarely	No	Weak	-
Staff Nurses					
Returned-Stayed	Acquaintance	Rarely	No	Weak	-
Physicians					
Returned-Stayed	Acquaintance	Rarely	No	Weak	-
Others					
Returned-Stayed	Acquaintance	Rarely	No	Weak	-
Total Number of Returned Respondents	-	-	-	-	149
Total Number of Stayed Respondents	-	-	-	-	143
Total Sample Size	-	-	-	-	292

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The respondents were asked, "How emotionally close are you to employees in the following workgroups, departments or units in EHIRC?" "How often do you interact with employees in the following workgroups, departments or units in EHIRC?" and "How would you define the extent of your reciprocal exchanges with employees in the following workgroups, departments or units in EHIRC?" The respondents used a five-point Likert scale to rate their responses and marked their scores on the staff roster attached to the back of the survey.

Note 2: The collected valued data on employees' emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity which was averaged into a score on the overall strength of their social ties was organized into block matrices to analyze the level of socialization of returned employees and stayers within and between each of their occupational groups at EHIRC.

Note 3: The social network data was analyzed using the UCINET v.6 to calculate the closeness centrality for emotional closeness, betweenness for frequency of interaction, cohesion for reciprocity and network homophily for the strength of social ties within and between returned employees and non-migrants in their occupational groups at EHIRC. The analyses generated descriptive statistics (mean, std., sum, variance, sum of squares, mean-centered sum of squares, Euclidian norm, the minimum and maximum path distances), numerical values and network index numbers as percentages on the level of social connectivity within and between the different groups of workers at EHIRC. How the data was analyzed and the numerical values are given below, but the above table presents the necessary information descriptively to discuss the affect of worker's social interactions on their interpersonal knowledge relationships in the hospital.

Note 4: The purpose of this table is to show the level of socialization between returned employees and non-migrants within each occupational group so as to better triangulate the information with case interviews to explain the effects of their social ties on the knowledge transfer processes in the organization.

Note 5: In the dialog drop box of UCINET v. 6, NETWORK >CENTRALITY >CLOSENESS was clicked to calculate the sum of the nodes' reciprocal paths (those paths that are both incoming and outgoing), which is normalized by dividing by the maximum number of paths in the ego-network (i.e. For a given network with vertices $v_1, \dots, v_n$ and maximum closeness centrality c_{max} , the network closeness centralization measure is $S(c_{max} - c(v_i))$ divided by the maximum value possible, where $c(v_i)$ is the closeness centrality of vertex v_i). NETWORK >CENTRALITY>FLOW BETWEENNESS was clicked to calculate the geodesic distance between the vertex of two or more nodes, which is normalized by dividing the total number of vertices in the ego-network (i.e. For a given network with vertices $v_1, \dots, v_n$ and maximum flow betweenness centrality c_{max} , the network flow betweenness centralization measure is $S(c_{max} - c(v_i))$ divided by the maximum value possible, where $c(v_i)$ is the flow betweenness centrality of vertex v_i). NETWORK> COHESION>RECIPROCITY was clicked to calculate the number of nodes with a reciprocated tie as proportion of all dyadic relationships in the ego-network (i.e. The total number of reciprocated ties involving a node divided by the number of ties to and from that node expressed as percentage of existing mutual ties, which shows if there is reciprocity within the ego-network). Furthermore, NETWORK> COHESION>HOMOPHILY was clicked to calculate the number of ties external to the groups minus the number of ties that are internal to the group divided by the total number of ties in the ego-network. This value can range from +1 to -1 and can be seen as a measure of the extent a group chooses themselves, meaning that a value of +1 shows homophilia and a value of -1 showing heterophilia. For valued data it is the sum of the tie strengths instead of the number of ties (Krackhardt and Stern, 1988: 125). In other words, inserting into corresponding matrices the average score from data obtained on the different groups of employees' stated level of emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity generates a numerical value for strength of the social ties of same group, not same group and between the two groups in the ego-network.

Note 6: For the sake of brevity only the network index numbers as percentages are presented as follows: Returned laboratory technicians' closeness centrality is 73.0, the flow betweenness centrality is 68.0, cohesion reciprocity is 85.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.90 amongst themselves in their workgroup. Returned staff nurses' closeness centrality is 65.0, flow betweenness centrality is 65.0, cohesion reciprocity is 88.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.75 amongst themselves in their workgroup. Returned physicians' closeness centrality is 65.0, flow betweenness centrality is 64.5, cohesion reciprocity is 62.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.82 amongst themselves in their workgroup. Returned non-medical workers' closeness centrality is 78.0, flow betweenness centrality is 58.5, cohesion reciprocity is 66.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.77 amongst themselves in their workgroup. Non-migrant laboratory technicians' closeness centrality is 65.5, flow betweenness centrality is 66.0, cohesion reciprocity is 75.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.80 at work. Non-migrant staff nurses' closeness centrality is 85.5, the flow betweenness centrality is 74.0, cohesion reciprocity is 68.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.70 at work. Non-migrant physicians' closeness centrality is 90.0, the flow betweenness centrality is 72.4, cohesion reciprocity is 84.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.85 at work. Non-migrant non-medical workers' closeness centrality is 72.0, the flow betweenness centrality is 68.2, cohesion reciprocity is 65.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.60 at work. More importantly, between returned and non-migrant laboratory technicians the closeness centrality is 88.0, flow betweenness centrality is 40.0, cohesion reciprocity is 23.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.35 in the workplace. Between returned and non-migrant staff nurses the closeness centrality is 35.0, flow betweenness centrality is 55.0, cohesion reciprocity is 44.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.40 in the workplace. Between returned and non-migrant physicians the closeness centrality is 20.0, the flow betweenness centrality is 35.0, cohesion reciprocity is 55.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.25 in the workplace. Between returned and non-migrant non-medical workers the closeness centrality is 48.0, the flow betweenness centrality is 50.0, cohesion reciprocity is 45.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.40 in the workplace.

Note 7: While the different analyzes produced a host of numerical values that can be used to isolate which returned employees are more influential, prestigious and socially connected than non-migrants, the empirics focused on a group-level analysis to understand the level of social connectivity between them. In this sense, the different numerical values were used to label returned employees social relationship with their non-migrant counterparts at work. For the given network index numbers any percentage above 55.0 denotes Friendship, Frequent Interaction, Reciprocity and/or Strong Social Tie between returned employees and non-migrants in each of their occupational groups at EHRC. And vice versa any percentage below 55.0 denotes Acquaintance, Rare Interaction, No Reciprocity and/or Weak Social Tie between returned laboratory technicians, staff nurses, physicians and non-medicalists and their non-migrant counterparts at the hospital.

Note 8: It is a common practice to not only use a cut-off point or threshold when interpreting social network data, but also label the actors/nodes' social relationships to ease the amount of technical terminology needed to explain the different interactions, multiplex of ties and social context of a setting (Scott, 2000; Burt, 2014).

Note 9: A limitation of this table is that the results do not control for differences among occupational groups within the returned and stayed categories, which means the description of the nature of the workers' social interactions and their affect on knowledge transfers will be restricted to specific contexts in the hospital.

A number of empirical studies adequately describe the steps through which new employees are introduced, familiarized and integrated into the hospital during the first few days on the job (Feldman, 1977). On the first day, newly hired employees are required to fill out paperwork, retrieve their identification card and attend an orientation session. Furthermore, E-12 (male and HRD manager) conveyed that, “all hirees receive on-the-job training that can range anywhere from four days up to three months.” In this time period, new employees are expected to adjust to their fellow colleagues, learn what the job demands and be able to socialize into their workgroup, department or medical unit in EHIRC. Table 7.1 presents the level of socialization between returnees and stayers within each of the occupational groups in EHIRC. With the exception of laboratory technicians, there is a low level of socialization between returned employees and their non-migrants counterpart in EHIRC. SOT-1 (male and nuclear pharmacologist), SOT-12 (female and critical care nurse) and SOT-10 (male and neuro-anesthesiologist) offer what they believe to be possible reasons for the lack of emotional closeness at work in the following excerpts:

I started this job 12 weeks ago...the people are very helpful in answering all my questions. Usually, one of the senior technologists (who has trained at the Cleveland Clinic) will check in to make sure I have the necessary information and the most up-to-date safety guidelines. (I do think that returnees are more open and friendly than Indian trained workers.) Still, I would say that the NMD [nuclear medicine department] is a tight-knit bunch...we are like a family.

I have been employed for 5 years...I feel alienated from the girls in my group. When we go on nursing rounds, I will try to have a light conversation with some of them. (Once I asked the nursing aide what she liked to do on her days off she responded back with ‘nothing’ which was followed by a very long awkward pause until we left the ward.) Since then I socialize with a few people (mostly nurses that also worked in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) in my unit.

I just completed 8 years with EHIRC. One thing that really stands out is the lack of teamwork. (Those of us who have spent some time abroad like Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and United States really understand the true value of working together.) You cannot trust a lot of these local Indian physicians because they bring their excess baggage (the desire to do a specialty fellowship abroad, family problems or other issues) into the workplace.

The attitude of returned laboratory technicians was an important factor that affected their fairly quick assimilation into the workgroup. Not only did the returned laboratory technicians do the assignment, task and projects as requested, but also the non-migrant nuclear medicine technologists may have felt that the newcomers were quite competent at doing their work. While staff nurses that returned from abroad were considered to be open and friendly, the specialty nursing knowledge they brought into the workgroup could have intimidated the non-migrant pediatric critical care nurses in the department. Returned physicians expressed the desire to work as a team, which was probably met with some resistance from the non-migrant physicians who resented their inferior status in the medical unit. As SIT-6 (male and cardiologist) made the observation that:

It's complicated...anyone that stayed back in India and continued to work for EHIRC is not going to be emotionally attached to returnees that were dropped into their daily work lives. Even though Indian trained workers are receptive to these newcomers there is not that much verbal communication...because the two groups are not comfortable working together. At the same time, almost every Indian trained worker will say that they want to learn different approaches, ideas, techniques and new processes from returnees.... but they are intimidated by them. [These people are expected to be knowledge practitioners, so seeking guidance could negatively impact their reputation.] The Indian trained workers end up being very resistant towards returnees. Whenever I take a look around it's noticeable that Indian trained and the returned workers are socially distant in the various workgroups, departments and medical units in the hospital.

The non-migrant employees recognize that they do not fully extend themselves to make incoming returnees feel accepted when they came to them. More specifically, the initial encounters of non-migrant staff nurses and physicians with returnees are typically cold, standoffish and often unfriendly. King (2000) cited several anthropological studies that suggest the non-migrants find it difficult to relate to returnees, which reduced their efforts to provide socio-emotional support to them. It turns out that the inability to socio-emotionally connect contributes to the diminished level of intimacy between Indian non-migrants and returnees within EHIRC. And more importantly, E-1 (female and HRD coordinator) revealed that, "workers have to develop good [social] ties before they can be welcoming of others' presence." As a result, a welcoming atmosphere is essential for workers to gather and disseminate knowledge in the workplace.

Still, a diverse group of employees often come together to address the needs of the admitted patients. Employees that frequently interact with one another get a chance to learn new approaches, conventions and practices that were unknown to them. E-14 (male and executive) conveyed that, “to increase work interactions between different kinds of employees...HRD tries to adhere to a 20:80 returnee to non-migrant mix ratio in order to circulate the clinical knowledge from abroad to all members within their immediate workgroup.” Referring back to Table 7.1 on the level of socialization between returnees and stayers within each of the occupational groups shows that: returned employees and non-migrants interact intermittently to exchange medical knowledge at work. SIT-2 (male and nuclear technologist) and SIT-8 (female and staff nurse) explain why they believe there are infrequent interactions between them at work in the following excerpts:

At the start of my shift, I am told the number of patients and their appointment timings for the day. I review each patient’s chart, medical history and additional notes to prepare the proper dosage of radiopharmaceuticals.... for performing bone scans, MUGA and stress-rest tests. I inject the drug into the patient, calibrate the machine and use the gamma camera to take images of their internal organs. Sometimes I get a negative output reading...meaning the isotopes are configured wrong. I will contact the senior technologist to reset the isotope configuration and adjust the control setting. (The returned senior technologist has his own caseload plus duties of general supervision of junior technologists ensuring that all members follow the radiation safety guidelines and serves as a liaison to intra-hospital groups.) While I can observe and try to learn the practical bits...it’s the random run-ins with the senior technologist in the corridors, examining rooms and sometimes the canteen when I can get a full explanation on sequencing, radiation sourcing and certain imaging techniques to better my own work. Otherwise, there is absolutely no time to intermingle in the workday.

A normal shift is 8 hours long...I do not get to choose my patient assignments because of the rotating floor schedule. Before I relieve the on-duty staff nurse, I will inquire about the patient’s condition and obtain his/her case file. I frequently refer to medical charts (details how many glucose bags to give the patient, what time to adjust their D5W drip and when to empty out the foley-catheter vessel), lab reports and above all the vital statistics of the patient under treatment...when caring for them. If my patient goes into cardiac arrest or worse becomes unresponsive, then the senior nurse will rush into the patient’s room to stabilize the situation. Afterward, I will find the senior nurse and discuss why the patient relapsed and the proper procedure for bedside monitoring. (The returned senior nurse looks after 5 staff nurses, is in charge of delegating tasks to the group and must conduct hourly nursing rounds of the ward.) I always gain tons of technical knowledge from the returned senior nurse during those moments in the ICU...probably more than the voluntary weekly classes offered by the HRD. Understandably, there are not too many opportunities to really socialize in the workplace.

Most returned employees are hired for executive, administrative or senior positions and thus are responsible for supervising non-migrants in their workgroup. Because returned employees have a busy work schedule, interaction with non-migrants is infrequent and relies on non-oral modes of communication—email, patients' health records, personal memos left at the ward and the notice board in the department (Coiera et al., 2002). The responses imply that most returned employees interact with non-migrant laboratory technicians and staff nurses passively and only when difficulties arise with their patients in the medical ward.

During those instances, returned employees meet face-to-face with the non-migrant laboratory technicians and staff nurses to orally communicate the technical protocols, procedures or processes that ensure the patient's health. Weinberg et al. (2008) found that most senior physicians hardly ever interact with other employees in their clinical group except during emergency cases to relay test orders, treatment plans or the patient's overall prognosis. It is not so much the frequency of employee social interactions but rather the timing of their oral communications that creates learning opportunities (Becker et al., 2001: 21) during the workday. Moreover, the responses suggest that the times when non-migrants are unable to manage their patients can create new opportunities to observe as well as learn from the experiences of returnees—resolving task-oriented problems such as calibrating medical equipment, interpreting patients' test results and even stabilizing a crisis situation regarding those admitted to the emergency ward, ICU or other medical units in EHIRC.

A subtle but important point to note is that most non-migrants make a concerted effort to engage returned employees in impromptu conversations in the break room, faculty medical lounge and around their work stations. They seek the guidance of returned employees because they consider them to be medically knowledgeable due to the advanced training they received from overseas in subspecialties in their medical field. Non-migrants perceive there to be a difference between those that never went abroad and returnees in terms of the quality of clinical knowledge—thus hoping to learn how they go about diagnosing their patients, apply medical techniques or deviate from pre-established routines and processes in EHIRC. Yet, these informal and unplanned work interactions may help to pass along knowledge resources in the workplace.

It also stands to reason that employees will hold certain opinions about whether or not they should actively cooperate with fellow co-workers at work. Buunk (1990) argued that employees who assist others are more likely to receive emotional, social and work-related support from them. Referring back to Table 7.1 on the level of socialization between returnees and stayers within each of the occupational groups shows that: returned employees and non-migrants do not have any sort of reciprocity when it comes to knowledge exchanges at work. The reason for the one-way knowledge transfers could also be that returnees think non-migrants are unable to provide clinical insight into patient cases that require advanced medical care. SHT-1 (male and neurosurgeon) stated that, “they are not withholding knowledge but we [non-migrants] have to make the effort to learn from them.” Williams and Balaz’s (2008a: 171) interviews with non-migrants echoed a similar sentiment, “I feel I am here to learn and not for them to learn from me.” While the transfers of knowledge will depend on the willingness of non-migrants to engage returnees, the lack of reciprocity may not necessarily be an obstacle to the flow of knowledge in the hospital.

In view of the above discussion, employees’ social ties are a function of time, emotional intimacy, frequency of interactions and reciprocity at work (Levin et al., 2004). Referring to Table 7.1 on the level of socialization between returnees and stayers within each of the occupational groups shows that: returnees and non-migrants maintain weak social ties—lack of emotional connection, infrequent interaction and no reciprocity in knowledge exchanges at work. Because weak social ties are often less costly to maintain returnees are able to quickly transfer codified knowledge to non-migrants at work. It turns out that weak social ties are advantageous for the practice of evidence-based medicine, which often requires the transfer of mostly codified knowledge in the department. SHT-9 (female and anesthesiologist) stated, “weak social ties trickles down important information on intubation procedures that prevents [employees] from breaking patients’ teeth, puncturing lungs or worsening any respiratory illness.” The results suggest that weak social ties might be a more efficient way for employees to tap into the different streams of knowledge embedded in workgroups, departments and units in EHIRC. Therefore, employees’ weak social ties are a complex network arrangement that might be better at facilitating knowledge transfers at the hospital.

Furthermore, E-1 (female and HRD coordinator) expressed that, “When I get anyone new, especially [returned] employees I try to make sure that they get along with other people: it comes down to building staff relations.” My research shows that returned employees socialized with employees who had traits similar to their own—homophilic ties that led to the formation of a close friendship marked by an increase in emotional intimacy, frequency of face-to-face interactions and time spent discussing complex medical cases. In contrast, most returned employees’ lack of emotional attachment, sporadic interaction and non-reciprocal relations with non-migrants led to a social relationship that revolved around solving work-related problems. But returned employees’ weak social ties with non-migrants helped in transferring useful codified information more than tacit knowledge in EHIRC. Nonetheless, SHT-4 (male and cardiologist) does acknowledge that some transfer of tacit knowledge is possible when he stated:

Dr. XXX-XXX [returned physician] is known to be the clinical brains behind the multi-level vessel bypass surgery on a fully awake patient. (The CCSVI procedure is done under conscious sedation, which means you will be able to respond to certain verbal commands but have an altered level of consciousness.) Dr. XXX-XXX and I had never seen such a technique applied in a real life scenario because it’s not commonly practiced in India.

Despite the weak social ties between the returned employees and non-migrants, the above response implies that returnees’ expertise, clinical skills and work experiences can to some extent be imparted—tacit information, clinical observation and the watch-and-learn method—to non-migrants at work. Though most returned employees and non-migrants engage in collaborative work practices, the locally trained employees felt that the medical knowledge embedded in non-migrants did not translate into any new learning opportunities for them at work. E-15 (female and HRD analyst) expressed a similar sentiment when she remarked, “those that come back from places like Australia, United Kingdom and the United States are sought after by Indian workers within their respective workgroups, departments and medical units.” Therefore, better socialization of employees into various work-related areas—workforce, medical system and the institutional structure—is key to facilitating knowledge transfers at the hospital.

7.2 Knowledge Codification Efforts in the Workplace

Although most newcomers get acclimated to the job position within the first 3 months, these employees are scrutinized for an additional 9 months to ensure they are carrying out duties, supervisor functions and professional responsibilities of their jobs. After 12 months, the employees' progress is carefully reviewed to determine "who will get what in terms of awards and rewards" (Smith, 2001: 317-318). The distribution of awards, rewards and other kinds of incentives is meant to increase the social interaction between the employees at work.

However, giving out monetary and non-monetary rewards may also affect employees' motivation to share their knowledge resource with others at work (Ryu et al., 2003). Intrinsically motivated employees will derive enjoyment, a sense of purpose or job satisfaction from making their ideas, expertise and even work experiences available for other people to learn from at work. But those who are extrinsically motivated will seek out cash bonuses, promotion opportunities or work recognition for parting with their privately held information, knowledge and understanding to people in their team, department or medical unit. However, both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are deemed important, as employees will be motivated by different rewards to "write up personal stories, document their insights and use diagrams to illustrate how to solve complex problems, improve work processes and knowledge-base" (Smith, 2001: 318) of EHIRC.

Moreover, monetary and other sorts of rewards also may be associated with employees' efforts in participating in the knowledge codification process at work. Those who put in effort to convert their codifiable private knowledge into an accessible format expect to be rewarded by the workgroup, department or units in EHIRC. Intrinsically or extrinsically rewarding employees should prompt them to exert more of their time, energy and resources to transfer their privately held knowledge—either face-to face contact, using digital communications or interactive technologies in EHIRC (Von Hippel and Von Krogh, 2003; Argote et al., 2003; De Liu et al., 2010). With this in mind, E-17 (male and HRD executive) stated that it is important to understand how "the rewards and recognition system modifies the way workers think about transferring their knowledge which in all probability impacts network relationships in the hospital."

In view of the above assertions, knowledge codification may affect employees' interpersonal knowledge relationships just as "some drugs tend to interfere with the positive effects of other drugs" (Huber, 2001: 75-76). E-1 (female and HRD coordinator) further elaborates on the interrelationship when she stated:

I try to grab the employees' tacit clinical knowledge by asking them to document rare patient cases, taking their opinions into account when revising the training materials, rebuilding the intranets, websites and knowledge-based platforms. Whatever clinical know-how employees impart is carefully codified and stored in knowledge repositories...so everyone can go and obtain it. (We have an online catalog of case reviews, videos of surgeries and ongoing CRT research projects.) Obviously, it is much easier to calculate and measure who is putting in more [effort at codifying medical wisdom] or less [into the codification process] at work. We will try to repay in-kind, reward or officially recognize the volume of posting entering the domain for public viewing as well as its value for improving work performance. (I strongly agree that giving out more prizes, rewards and trophies will drastically change returnees' and other employees' response to the codification process.) Employees free up a lot more of their time and resources using the existing knowledge objects, databases and repositories. Sure, some of them will take their free time and catch up on personal things...while others utilize it to reconnect or expand their professional network. The whole point is that the transfer of knowledge may be improved with the bending, merging or terminating of certain social ties in the hospital's current network structure.

Given the enormous costs (lost time, expended efforts, energy and resources) most employees will have to bear to convert their codifiable private knowledge, it only seems logical that compensating employees will increase their willingness to do so for their 'network partners' at work (Coleman, 1990; Wasko and Faraj, 2005). Nevertheless, rewarding employees for their knowledge codification efforts may influence existing social ties at work (Bock and Kim, 2002). Expanding on this line of reasoning, I will now analyze whether or not returned and non-migrant workers respond differently to certain inducements offered for their participation in the knowledge codification process in EHIRC. And more importantly, whether offering incentives to participate in the knowledge codification process would in some way change the social ties between them in EHIRC (Kim and Lee, 2006).⁹ A deeper understanding of the incentive system will help to map out some of the ways the knowledge transfer process could be better developed over time in the hospital.

⁹ It should be noted that the results do not explain if returnees and non-migrants will be able to sustain their social ties over time in the workplace.

A number of factors have been identified from related studies that are said to increase collaboration amongst employees. One of the factors is altruism, which is the selfless behavior of employees driven by a genuine interest to help fellow colleagues overcome difficulties arising during the workday. Employees' acts of kindness are in some way connected to their empathetic concern for the well-being of other workers, which prompts them to transmit information using actions, signs or words to complete assigned tasks. Having empathy for employees with whom you work may raise the level of effort you are willing to put forth in easing the transmission of information to them. Given this intrinsic motivation, some employees will make the effort to convert their potentially codifiable private knowledge into an explicit form to be used by their workgroups. A major theme that emerged from the interviewees' transcripts is that returned employees tend to codify their private know-how out of the desire to help team members in their workgroup. SOT-2 (female and radiation therapist), SOT-11 (female and OT nurse), SOT-8 (male and emergency medicine) and E-4 (female and executive) confirmed:

I do assist my colleagues...I enjoy demonstrating to them imaging procedures for detecting cancerous cells, finding concave tumors and metastasized growths in the body. (I often hand out memos on crafting the optimal dosimetry treatment program.) It makes me happy that I can share my know-how with those who can use it to better themselves.

I do help out my coworkers...I feel it is my duty to illustrate to others the insertion of chest staples, resuscitating a failed heart and the dispensing of organ wastage. (Also, I give regular presentations on managing patient's physical and emotional needs throughout their recovery.) It gives me great joy to share my tacit knowledge with members, which improves their work performance.

I make a concerted effort to lend a hand...swelling up with pride when I am able to teach the new internists methods to stop bacterial infections, increase IV fluid absorption and respiratory flow in trauma victims. (I normally participate in online forums where ER specialists including myself review the most complex trauma cases.) The sharing of clinical knowledge brings a sense of fulfillment...that the staff is delivering the best possible patient care.

I make every effort to be supportive...It's something to do with self-respect that triggers me to provide my peers with tips on cost cutting, investment goals and expansion strategies. (I usually send e-reports on EHRC's outlook for the future.) While difficult, I like the challenge of transferring organizational knowledge to everyone to better develop our services.

The intention of returned laboratory technicians who gave onsite illustrations to team members was to show them imaging techniques that could be used to achieve personal work goals. Not only did returned laboratory technicians mentor those who were trying to master advance imaging techniques, but they also provided memos on dosimetry planning to expand their group's clinical skill set. The reasons returned staff nurses gave bedside instructions, patient case reviews and presentations were to offer practical examples to improve their team members' overall work performance. In comparison, returned physicians' and non-medical workers' motivation to formally instruct new internists, post online clinical case reviews and send e-reports was to build a stronger knowledge base among team members in their respective departments. A further analysis of the respondents' responses revealed that returnees often experienced greater job satisfaction and thus would go beyond simple documentation of patients' illnesses to writing down responses on matters pertaining to the better care of patient in the medical units (e.g. calibrating medical equipment, how to spot signs of a congenital heart disease and conveying the sad news of a death to family sitting in the CCU of EHIRC.)

Moreover, several returned employees especially physicians stated that they try to share their privately held knowledge by taking the time to submit case reviews on EHIRC's learning and development web portals. E-8 (female and HRD administrator) explained that, "returnees with higher levels of job satisfaction actively contribute to our electronic knowledge repositories [EKRs] because they feel morally and socially obligated...to share what they learned from working abroad with the clinic itself." The amount of time and energy put by returnees into the knowledge codification process can be seen as fulfilling a meaningful purpose—sharing what they gained working abroad to find practical solutions to problems, improve workflow and make a positive impact on health outcomes in EHIRC. The challenge of delivering the highest possible quality of tertiary care is perceived to be the most rewarding aspect of their work in EHIRC. This means that intrinsic rewards are closely tied to the level of knowledge sharing and the quality of work performed in EHIRC. Osterloh et al.'s (2002) study supports the findings that intrinsic rewards are often positively correlated with knowledge sharing "and there is no expectation of a real return" (Wasko and Faraj, 2005: 156) except for the work done in the workplace.

However, external factors may also be associated with employees' motive to increase their interaction with others at work. A common external factor is economic self-interest, which is when employees seek to materially profit from engaging in work activities that requires them to impart their knowledge to other workers. Economic self-interest is linked to personal ambition to the extent that employees who seek to fulfill their material desires will be eager to convert their know-how into oral and non-oral messages, which can be easily disseminated to employees at work. Given this extrinsic motivation, some employees will make the effort to convert their potentially codifiable private knowledge into an explicit form to be used by others at work. Another major theme that emerged from interviewees' transcripts is that compared to returned employees, non-migrants tend to codify their private know-how if they receive cash bonuses at work. SHT-7 (female and OT nurse) further explained:

The difference is that most of the overseas trained [returned] nurses are already getting paid a much better salary for bringing in their ideas, nursing skills and work experiences into the CCU. As an Indian trained [non-migrant] nurse...I want more money if they want me give up everything I possibly know about cardiac patient care. I am not going to teach everything to the junior workers unless management promises to compensate me. (I strongly believe that I have clinical experience dealing with all kinds of work problems. Because I have worked here for so long, I have seen a lot of patient cases that will seem new to others.) Think about it: there has to be something [reward] that will make it worthwhile for me to share.

In addition to cash bonuses, the qualitative data also revealed that granting longer lunch breaks, flexibility in choosing a work schedule and unlimited use of EHRC's wellness facilities will improve non-migrant physicians willingness to provide guidelines, video logs and telemedical help on performing routine bypasses in the surgical department. Whereas exercising more administrative control over hospital management issues motivates non-migrant physicians as well as non-medicalists to write manuals, protocols and SOPs on best practices for clinical governance for their medical units. While not explicitly discussed, SHT-7 (female and cardiac surgeon) pointed out, "[non-migrants] electronically parcel out their clinical savoir faire to gain a reputation as a know-it-all which gives them a celebrity-like status." These workers thus codify, deposit and disseminate knowledge if they can build up a level of prestige, personal status and economic gain in the workplace.

Interestingly, a content analysis of the interview transcripts also revealed that some employees, particularly non-migrants would not codify their knowledge when they believed that their peers were not going to contribute to the existing electronic knowledge repository. This means that non-migrants' extrinsic motivation to share their private knowledge is determined by their perceived level of trust that all team members will duly uphold reciprocal relations at work. In this way, extrinsic rewards as a motivation for sharing knowledge heavily depends on the expectation of reciprocity—with the specific condition that economic benefits to the knowledge recipient are larger than the cost to the knowledge source. As E-19 (male and HRD manager) substantiated:

Nobody will outright share their thoughts, techniques or tactics...if it is going to result in a loss of status, power and money in front of team members in their own clinical workgroup. Rather, codification and sharing of Indian medical knowledge requires trust that workers will reciprocate and that management will recognize the added value of their knowledge input with cash rewards. (I support the decision to reward employees because it motivates them to work hard.) From the HRD perspective, we understand that employees need rewards so they can cope with work pressures [fighting for pay raises, promotions, job security or visibility] and the intense competition from the overseas trained workers to raise the standard of medical care services provided. Generally speaking, rewards are viewed as a means to achieving an end insofar as bettering tertiary services.

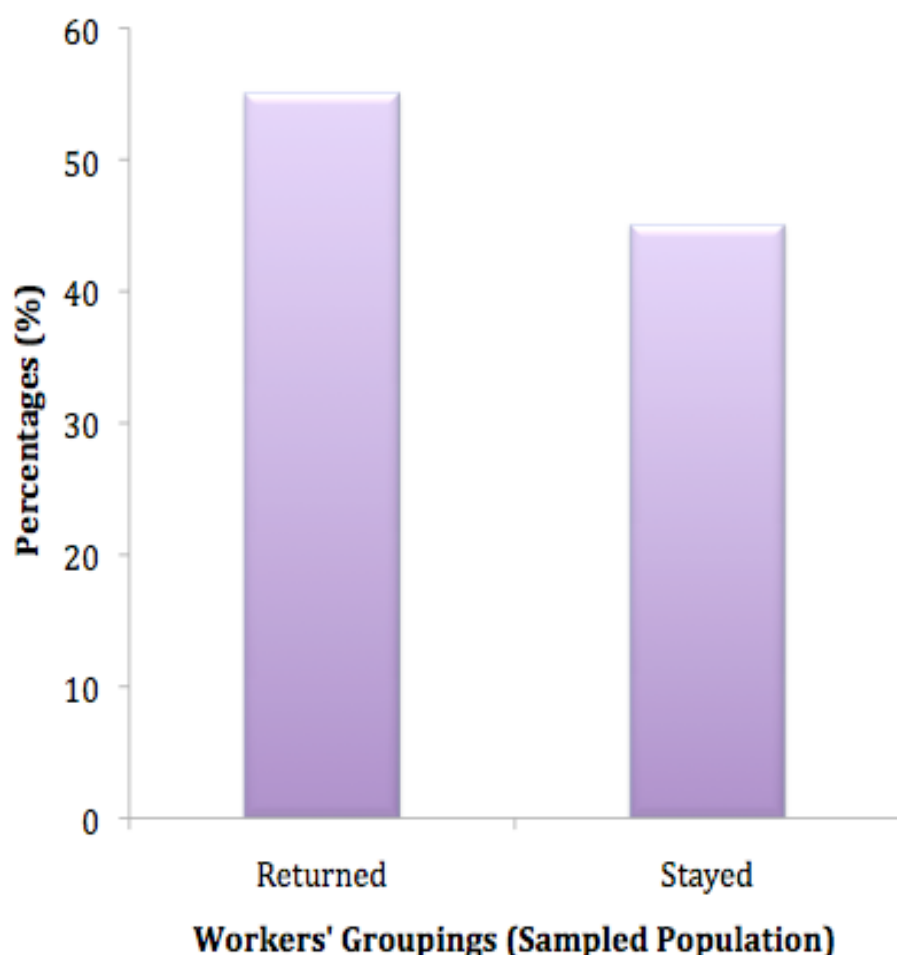
The respondent highlights that non-migrants' expertise, knowledge and experiences are directly related to the 'uniqueness' of what they are perceived to know compared to other team members in their workgroup. Unless non-migrants are generously compensated, they are reluctant to share what they know because they perceive the loss of power as a possible threat to their influence, social status and economic value—instead preferring to preserve the status quo in favor of the old ways of delivering patient care at work. This means that non-migrants will be motivated to share knowledge with other people only if it does not reduce the overall value of the work they do in EHIRC. For these workers, the anticipation of rewards—if the rewards generate a greater benefit from sharing than hoarding knowledge—will be an important external motivator for transferring knowledge resources within EHIRC. So, incorporating various kinds of extrinsic rewards into the incentive system may be beneficial to the knowledge transfer process at the hospital.

Still, returned employees' and non-migrants' internal or external reasons for advising each other by different electronic means is contingent to some extent on task interdependence at work. SOT-5 (female and cardiologist) asserted that, "I am continuously emailing my technical assistants, nurses and senior consultants to gather information to make certain this drug does not adversely affect the functioning of the mitral heart valve." However, SHT-11 (male and pediatric cardiac surgeon) conveyed that, "I would not electronically contribute to the repository because the information cannot be applied without my direct expertise. It's better to encourage our staff to do independent research on such matters." This suggests that certain issues will "moderate codification efforts of employees that contribute to EKR" at work (Kankanhalli et al., 2005: 116).

Most returnees want to load their codifiable know-how into EKR to help others deliver better patient outcomes. Returnees also trust that their input into EKR will be not only appreciated, but also recognized by other employees insofar as it improves their work performance within the medical unit. E-2 (male and HRD manager) goes on to express that, "those that went abroad to study, to train or work brought back with them this spirit of working together, which for whatever reason rubs many people the wrong way around here." In other words, infusing inter-subjectively beliefs amongst workers about teamwork, tolerance for failure and the value of openness might help to improve pro-sharing norms that stimulate contributions to EKR in the workplace.

Yet, there are many non-migrants that do not identify with the philosophy of clinical standardization of patient care. Several non-migrants do not trust that the upper-tier management will recognize their participation in the EKR or that it adds value for improving medical services. E-2 (male and HRD executive) stated, "non-NRIs exhibit the not-invented-here mentality which stops them from giving their full cooperation [participating in electronic knowledge transfers] at work." In this sense, Orlikowski (1993) reasoned that when a weak norm of cooperation prevails potential knowledge contributors will be hindered by the effort and time required to put their insights into EKR in EHRC. Similarly, a deeper analytical review of my qualitative evidence showed that because the norm of cooperation is weak—while the underlying norm of a competitive work culture is strong—less value is placed on contributing knowledge to EKR in the hospital.

Figure 7.1: Proportion of Employees Who Believe that Knowledge Codification Weakens their Social Relations



Source: Author's results based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked the respondents "Do you think knowledge codification would weaken your social relations in the workplace?" The response, either a Yes or No, was cross tabulated by the type of employee—returned and non-migrant—working for EHRC. The frequency distributions of the employees' responses is expressed as percentages in the above bar graph. The figure only shows the percentages of returned and non-migrant employees who felt knowledge codification weakens their social ties with other team members, workgroups, departments or medical units in the hospital. The purpose of this figure is to highlight how increasing knowledge codification efforts of employees potentially affects the strength of their existing social ties with stakeholders in the hospital. The results are used to explain how knowledge codification may impact the knowledge transfer processes of the workplace.

Intuitively, the effort most employees expend on knowledge codification (also understood as expressing themselves cognitively, emotionally or physically in the job role), albeit for extrinsic reasons, could also affect their attitude towards cooperative exchanges at work. The reason is that extrinsic rewards motivate most employees to codify their knowledge for other workers to copy and re-use (Grey and Meister, 2001). Making codified knowledge readily available diminishes the incentive to cooperate—face-to-face interaction, problem-solving meetings and partaking in HR-sponsored forums—for the purpose of sharing knowledge with staff members who are spread across the different medical units. De Liu et al. (2010) reasoned that after a certain point an increase in the codification level decreases the amount of time, energy and resources expended for knowledge acquisition and thus may provide several benefits—granting access to a larger pool of employees by further expanding the knowledge network at work.

Still, an increase in the codification level may decrease the interconnectedness between employees due to the expansion of the knowledge network. Figure 7.1 shows that 55% of returned employees and 45% of non-migrants thought that increasing their knowledge codification efforts would weaken their social relations at work. One possible explanation of the results could be that returnees are sought after by non-migrants in hopes of engaging them on matters pertinent to their work—thus knowledge codification reduces employee engagement that further socially distances the two set of workers in EHIRC. Moreover, many non-migrants stated that they already had difficulties connecting with returnees, most of who are often rotated to different multi-specialty groups, differentiation in their sub-specializations and SOPS of EHIRC. E-2 (male and HRD executive) stated that, “most of our Indian staff are placed in core medical groups while returnees with sub-specialties are working on several complex medical cases, put in charge of starting a new department or take up research activities with our partner-sponsored hospitals.” While knowledge codification breaks downs the knowledge-based hierarchy amongst workers, departments and medical units, it also holds a strong possibility of terminating several strong and even weak ties within the existing knowledge network of EHIRC (Griffith et al., 2005). The knowledge codification process may promote the transfer of knowledge resources to different stakeholders, but it might also stimulate changes to the larger knowledge network in the hospital.

Overall, there are two interrelated issues at stake when discussing employees' codification efforts at work. The first issue: identifying which incentives would induce employees to not only take out time from their busy work schedule to convert their potentially codifiable private knowledge "into a form that makes it accessible to all those who need it" (Davenport and Prusak, 1998: 68) at work. The second issue: trying to understand employees' knowledge codification efforts and its influence on their social relations at work. The evidence suggests that offering non-migrants extrinsic rewards for improving their knowledge codification efforts when the norm of cooperation is weak will only weaken their social ties—at the expense of fostering strong social ties with workers spread across the different workgroups, departments or medical units within EHIRC. The issues of employee incentives, increasing knowledge codification efforts and their effect on existing social relationships are tightly bundled together at EHIRC. Therefore, designing an incentive system that takes into consideration these various issues may help to develop stronger social networks that are more supportive to the knowledge transfer processes of the hospital.

7.3 The Knowledge Structure of the Hospital

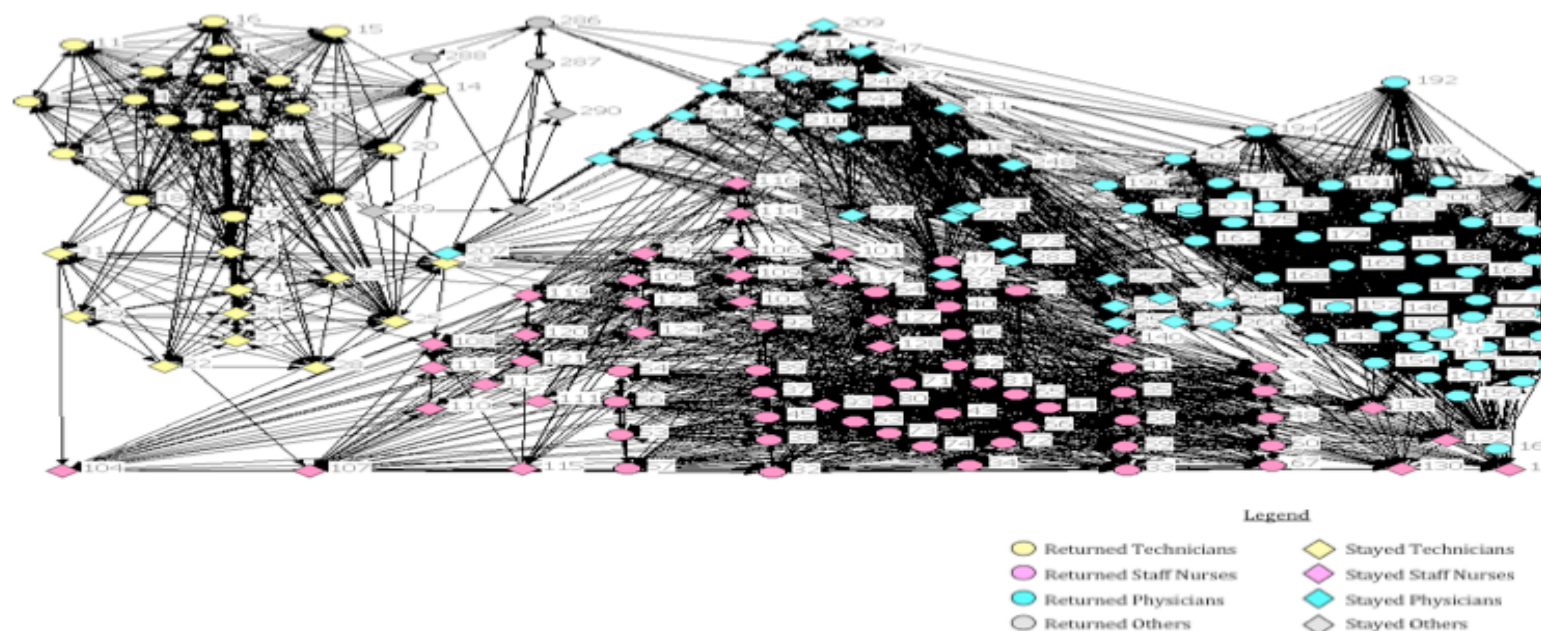
As newcomers adjust to their colleagues, they gradually transition from passive participants to active employees within their workgroups (Kok, 2006; Taber et al., 2008). "That is to say newcomers' adjustment to employees in their workgroups tends to increase their capability to relate to others in organizationally acceptable ways when carrying out work duties" (Myers, 2011: 288-289) in their respective departments. Bearing in mind that the empirical focus thus far has been on how and with whom employees interact to obtain knowledge to perform their work, E-20 (male and HRD executive) made an important observation, "though overseas-trained people are a good strategic asset, we are still trying to figure out better ways to utilize and diffuse their knowledge resources" across the workgroups, departments and medical units in EHIRC. Considering the general social ties pattern amongst returnees and non-migrants may help to better elucidate the underlying social dynamics and the existing knowledge structure for some insight into the intended benefits or unintended consequences for the hospital.

Besides the fact that newcomers eventually become experienced employees in their workgroups over time, it is commonly known that employees frequently move in-and-out of workgroups. Employees are assigned different organizational roles, work duties and responsibilities that essentially lead them to foster to some extent position-centered ties with several staff members in different workgroups, departments and medical units. But Podolny and Baron's (2011) work cautioned that changes to employees' organizational role is likely to disrupt their position-centered ties that can terminate the underlying social tie with those individuals once they have left to take up a position in another workgroup, department or medical unit—and thus undercuts the continuous transfer of knowledge from the potential knowledge sources to recipients at work.

However, employees who have forged person-related ties—synonymous with homophilic connections that are based on their educational background, training, professional or personal values—are like to stay in contact with others even if they move to some other workgroup, department or medical unit. The reason being that person-related ties are grounded in emotional connections that socially bind individuals together to maintain a social relationship that can surpass obstacles created by physical distance in the workplace. More importantly, person-related ties, either strong or weak, are less easily terminated than position-centered ties attached purely to the job role, work functions and other activities, which makes them preferable for transferring knowledge resources in EHIRC.

Given these premises and claims, returned employees are more likely to forge and maintain their social ties with other overseas-trained workers and vice versa non-migrants with other Indian-trained staff members at work. The different sets of returned employees and non-migrant workers are likely to create strong or weak social ties amongst themselves for the transfer of knowledge resources in workplace. What is more interesting is that the above rationale suggests that most returned employees' and non-migrants' personal social ties—especially if they are strong social ties—will facilitate the transfer of information on non-work related matters in EHIRC. The implication is that even if the knowledge network of EHIRC is riddled with structural holes, weak social ties may enable staff workers to learn from each other within EHIRC. So, studying such social complexities will help to understand the knowledge structure of the hospital.

Figure 7.2: A Visualization of Employees' Knowledge Network Structure



Source: Author's results based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: Along with the previously discussed sample items in Table 7.1, the respondents were also asked, "How often do you consult employees to get task advice, knowledge and resources or work-related purposed in the following workgroups, departments or units in EHIRC?" The respondents used a five-point Likert scale to rate their responses and marked their responses on the staff roster attached to the back of the survey.

Note 2: UCINET v.6, specifically NETDRAW>PROPERTIES>NODES-ATTRIBUTES was used to create a sociogram derived from the valued data on returned employees' and non-migrants' social ties (emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity scores tallied for an average value for tie-strength) and their knowledge interactions (the frequency in which they consult others for task advice, knowledge or to gain access to resources converted into a final score) to highlight their ties, sub-networks and the existing knowledge structure of EHIRC.

Note 3: The numbers in the figure above are the employee IDs, the arrows present the direction of the relationship, thicker lines mean the tie-strength is strong or vice versa and the different shapes help to differentiate returned employee and non-migrants by their occupation groups in EHIRC.

Note 4: The purpose of this figure is to highlight returned employees' and non-migrants' ties, sub-networks and overall knowledge structure so as to better triangulate the information with case interviews to explain the knowledge transfer process of the hospital.

Note 5: In the dialog drop box of UCINET v. 6, NETWORK> COHESION>HOMOPHILY was clicked to calculate the number of ties external to the groups minus the number of ties that are internal to the group divided by the total number of ties in the ego-network. This value can range from +1 to -1 and can be seen as a measure of the extent a group chooses themselves, meaning that a value of +1 shows homophilia and a value of -1 showing heterophilia. For valued data it is the sum of the tie strengths instead of the number of ties (Krackhardt and Stern, 1988: 125). In other words, inserting into corresponding matrices the average score from data obtained on the different groups of employees' stated level of emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity generates a numerical value for strength of the social ties of same group, not same group and between the two groups in the ego-network. NETWORK>COHESION>DENSITY>DENSITY BY GROUPS was clicked to calculate the total number of ties divided by the total number of possible ties. For a valued network it is the total of all values divided by the number of possible ties. Because the data matrix was partitioned, the algorithm finds the densities within and between the subgroups in the network. NETWORK> SUBGROUPS> CLIQUES was clicked which runs Bron and Kerbosch's (1973) algorithm to find all cliques greater than a specified size. The algorithm generates information on the number of times each pair of actors are in the same clique, the number of actors a pair of cliques has in common as well as calculates a clique participation score which measures the extent to which an actor is in any of the cliques to reveal its overlapping structure in the network. Also, CENTRALITY>GROUP>CENTRALITY> OPTIMIZE was clicked to run a simple "greedy algorithm" to measure the degree of centrality for a fixed size group compared to other subgroups in the network. And lastly, NETWORKS >EGO NETWORKS>STRUCTURAL HOLES was clicked run a complex algorithm based on Burt's (1992) equations to calculate effective size (the number of alters that an actors has minus the average number of ties that each alter has to other alters), efficiency (the proportion of actors' ties directed towards its "neighborhood" that are non-redundant), constraint (the extent to which an actor's ties constrains their social interactions) and hierarchy (the actual inequality in the distribution of constraints across groups) in the whole network.

Note 6: Because the above analyzes generate a host of numerical values, statistics, matrices and figures, I will provide the necessary information in this note. NETWORK> COHESION>HOMOPHILY values are provided in Table 7.1 (Note 6) and thus are not reproduced in this note. NETWORK> SUBGROUPS> CLIQUES provides information on the number of cliques and a list of actors that belong to it. The analysis also provides a dendrogram and a clique-by-clique co-membership matrix that scores each block of data to show the extent to which employees are a part of overlapping cliques in the network. The CENTRALITY>>GROUP>CENTRALITY> OPTIMIZE gives the percentage of actors within and outside adjacent groups. The final number of actors connected to the group is followed by a list of the members of the group with the highest group degree centrality in the network. And similarly, NETWORK>COHESION>DENSITY>DENSITY BY GROUPS displays a matrix of densities, average tie strengths of the blocks and the standard deviations of each partitioned groups in the network. These analyzes require reviewing the different numerical values, matrices and figures—at times manually circling certain associations in the output sheets—to map out the social interactions of employees within their occupation groups in the network. While the above results are informative, the NETWORKS >EGO NETWORKS>STRUCTURAL HOLES computational numbers are more useful in showing the structural characteristics of returned and non-migrants' social networks which are as follows: Returned employees' average effective network size is 130.5, average network efficiency is 0.82, network constraint is 0.67 and network hierarchy is 0.50, whereas non-migrants average effective network size is 115.5, average network efficiency is 0.65, network constraint is 0.77 and network hierarchy is 0.85 in EHRC.

Note 7: More importantly, the operation TRANSFORM>MULTIPLEX performed the following computation (i.e. $G(V, \{R_i\})$ is a multi-relational graph with vertex set V and relations $\{R_i\}$, if v and w are two vertices of G then the bundle of relations connecting v to w , B_{vw} , is defined as $B_{vw} = \{R_i: vR_iw\}$. Let M_k be the set of all bundles. The multiplex graph is the valued graph with valued adjacency matrix $X_{i,j} = k$ where k is the M_k bundle of relations connecting i to j . Non-technically the algorithm determines how many different distinct patterns of relations (the bundles) link any pair of vertices and assigns each of these a numerical label in the multiplex adjacency matrix. Once the matrix is generated the function NETDRAW>PROPERTIES>NODES-ATTRIBUTES creates a sociogram derived from the valued data on returned employees' and non-migrants' social ties (emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity scores tallied for an average value for tie-strength) and their knowledge interactions (the frequency in which they consult others for task advice, knowledge or to gain access to resources converted into a final score) to show the multiplicity of ties, sub-networks and the existing knowledge structure of EHRC.

Note 8: It is important to note that the generated percentages, correlation values, average tie strength of blocks, matrix of densities and the structural characteristics (i.e. effective size, efficiency, constraint and hierarchy) derived from the social network data is useful only to the extent that any claims made in the upcoming discussion are well-informed. And the reduction of the statistical material into a sociogram is necessary to focus the discussion on explaining the complexities of the existing knowledge structure and the underlying social dynamics of EHRC.

Note 9: While a major limitation of this figure is the amount of information it can display on the above material, this is not necessarily a shortcoming as the results need to be triangulated with case interviews to better explain the knowledge transfer processes of the hospital.

Considering that it is easier to absorb new ideas, knowledge and skills in areas where there is some previous familiarity (Reagans and McEvily, 2003), employees will find it difficult to learn anything that is not in their immediate field of expertise. Employees with similar backgrounds and training will find it easier to share not only their expertise, but also experiences with one another to build their individual pools of clinical expertise about matters relating to their work. Figure 7.2 reveals that employees in different occupational groups form separate social circles in which returned employees and non-migrants maintain their own mini-knowledge cliques at work. Also, the connecting lines show that employees exchange expertise primarily with peers that are engaged in the same kind of medical work. SOT-14 (female and nuclear technologist), SOT-15 (female and critical care nurse), SOT-16 (male and pediatric cardiac surgeon), SHT-3 (male and perfusionist), SHT-9 (female and staff nurse) and SHT-8 (female and neurologist) offer their reasons for what they believe could have led to the creation of these mini-knowledge cliques at work:

I always asked Mrs. XXX-XXXX my questions on calibrating the MRI machines in the technology lab. We both had certifications from the United Kingdom...and we would discuss how things here were so different than working over there.

I met Mrs. XXX-XXX and Mr. XXX-XXXX during our bi-annual workshop. After that we would call each other if we need answers to some problems. We had worked together at Obeid hospital so there was this personal relationship at work.

I reach out to my overseas-trained friends because they are most likely to give me the right second opinion on complex medical cases and good advice on other issues. It does not matter in which medical group they are sitting in at work.

I go to Indian colleagues for assistance on finishing my tasks. (Returnees in senior positions have more responsibilities, there is turnover of managers and overlap in workgroups.) This requires us to become more self-sufficient in the hospital.

I have [returned] coworkers, but that does not mean much if they are unable to help me deal with things at work. (Many times I have found recovering cardiac patients collapsed on the bathroom floor in the middle of the night.) It's my own people that give me support to handle such situations at work.

We feel comfortable with Indian specialists even if they are not in our area of work. (Some of us were in the same entering cohort who joined forces to exert more influence in EHIRC.) The hospital's management has made a hierarchal system that fuels a competitive work environment at EHIRC.

Despite most returned laboratory technicians, staff nurses and physicians holding senior positions in their workgroups, an analysis of their responses revealed that sharing of medical facts, case studies and research within the mentioned groups of workers is not exclusively linked to their work content. SOT-9 (male and cardiac surgeon) expressed, “Dr. XXX-XXXX, Dr. XXX-XXXX and Dr. XXX-XXXX and I are senior interventional cardiac specialists that have collaborated with each other to figure out options for patients electing to undergo an invasive surgical procedure. But we have been together through thick and thin long before our current standing in the surgical ward.” Likewise, most of the non-migrants’ job positions are correlated to some extent to their knowledge sharing efforts with other employees in their occupational groups; yet knowledge sharing between employees is not solely tied to the work they perform. The images in Figure 7.2 combined with a closer reading of the above respondents’ interview transcripts conveys that position-centered ties are not only difficult to maintain, but also their value for transferring knowledge substantially declines after returned and non-migrant workers have left their immediate workgroups, departments and medical units (Podolny and Baron, 2011).

For this reason, person-related ties are endogenously developed for learning, social support and other kinds of resources as they are able to overcome physical distance while continuing to retain their value for transferring knowledge to the different cliques of returned employees and non-migrants in the workplace. The point being that the above mentioned employees seem to rely on the same sets of social ties for multiple contents—task advice, strategic information and even social support—that may constrain their ability to expand their own personal knowledge networks at work. Also, it seems that workers’ social ties may serve as an open channel for transmitting multiple contents that can be instrumental in exerting social influence, power or control in competitive situations (Burt, 1992; 1995; 2000). The various interpretations converge to explain that workers’ social ties overlap to offer multiple contents that might be better at intra-organizational knowledge transfers in a highly competitive work environment—that is marked by frequent staff turnover, autocratic management style and/or an unresponsive organizational hierarchy (Simsek, 2009). This suggests that the underlying social structure is quite static when it comes to knowledge transfers at the hospital.

Taking into consideration that familiarity with an area of medical expertise and occupation held by employees, it seems that returned employees' position-centered ties spur interaction with non-migrants at work. Whereas their lack of person-related ties—confirmed by their lack of emotional intimacy, frequency of social interaction and reciprocal relations—leads non-homophilic bonds towards others in the workplace. This seems to be counter-intuitive, as returnees should be able to socially re-connect with non-migrants in the workplace. But it also reveals an important insight into why returnees do not maintain strong but rather weak social ties with non-migrants in EHIRC.

The embedded images displayed in Figure 7.2 shows that most of returned employees' interpersonal relations amongst themselves leads to the creation of internally cohesive knowledge cliques that tend to transmit information regarding the patients' treatment plans, medical protocols, various department regulations and other cultural-related issues. Non-migrant employees' interactions amongst their workgroup also leads to the creation of internally cohesive knowledge, social and cultural support groups that are better at addressing various professional, personal and even social matters. The network configurations reveal that returnees have formed a dense, decentralized and somewhat less hierarchical network within their knowledge cliques, whereas non-migrants have formed a dense, centralized and somewhat more hierarchical knowledge network in EHIRC.

Because returnees and non-migrants maintain separate knowledge cliques, there is limited interaction with one another, which generates an overall sparse knowledge network. The implication being that returnees and non-migrants are productive in their small yet dense workgroups, but they will function less efficiently because the larger knowledge network is full of structural holes—requiring senior managers, HODs and directors to build stronger social ties in order to unite groups of workers standing on the opposite sides of structural holes in EHIRC. A possible explanation of the results could be that employees who are at the top of the organization's hierarchy are responsible for transferring knowledge, which “gives them considerable power to endorse norms, control the flow of resources and strategically support workers” (Greenhalgh et al., 2005: 116) in EHIRC. Thus, EHIRC's management, given its organizational hierarchy, could improve the flow of knowledge and limited its unintended consequences for the hospital.

In general, the social interactions between and among returnees and non-migrants are also independently affected by some of the basic characteristics that make up their current knowledge circles. This is not to say that the sporadic bursts, multi-directional and far flung ways in which the returned employees' overseas knowledge resources is pushed through different sorts of channels, networks and process do not have benefits. This raises the strong possibility that the existing knowledge structure may have an overall limited impact on work outcomes. E-14 (male and executive) explained that:

Yes! Our employees meet face-to-face and virtually to share experience, insights and best practices at work. But so far it has not worked...virtual communications has led to delayed timelines, missed targets and knowledge transfer opportunities. We have stepped up our efforts at knowledge codification while simultaneously pursuing a people-centric policy. (They think that having a half-half strategy will improve the learning curve of the workplace.) What else...there needs to be a clear written strategy towards managing the knowledge processes of the hospital. This organization is still growing and we need to learn better ways to stay ahead of our competitors in the market.

The empirical results suggest that EHIRC's inability to fully implement either a codification or personalized approach to knowledge management is one of the reasons for an unresponsive hierarchical network configuration in the workplace. There is an implicit acknowledgement that straddling two approaches runs the risk of failing to implement a strategy that ultimately meets the needs and goals of EHIRC. Hansen et al. (1999) cited several examples including Access Health, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Center and other non-medical establishments that also straddled opposing knowledge strategies—showing that these organizations too were often unsuccessful at achieving their larger organizational goals. E-14 (male and executive) further substantiated that, “we have no real strategy to harness their knowledge [to create long lasting organizational knowledge] and transfer it” to improve norms, values and all around processes of the hospital.” Having a well-developed knowledge management strategy is key for leveraging the acquisition of overseas knowledge, strengthening the organization's capacity and innovation to generate intended and possible unintended benefits or hospital (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Hansen et al., 1999; West et al., 1999; Wyatt, 2001).

Part III: Analysis of an Indian IT Consultancy Firm

Chapter Eight

Introduction to the Case Study

“India has experienced an increased incidence of return migration in the IT and BPO sectors. These trends have been spurred by the phenomenal growth of these sectors in India in the past five to ten years, including the presence of MNCS and growing employment opportunities” (Chanda and Sreenivasan, 2006: 215). Some general facts and premises on India’s IT sectors, brief background of Tata Consultancy Services’ Government Industry Solution Unit (GISU), its relevance as a case study and a limited appraisal of literature is offered to anchor the forthcoming chapters that examine migrants’ motives to return, choice of employer, their adjustment issues and the transfer of knowledge resources to and within GISU.

The forthcoming chapters will delve into the complexities of return of IT migrants to show their growing presence in India’s IT sectors, but also highlight that Indian companies recognize them as a strategic asset that enable them to take on foreign competitors in the domestic and global IT market (NASSCOM, 2009; 2011; 2012). The chapters will take into account various contextual and organizational issues of GISU to analyze migrants’ socialization efforts, formation of networks and the possible impact on work outcomes in the firm. Given the difference between returnees, transnationals and non-migrants, the aforesaid inter-related factors will be used to elucidate the knowledge transfer process of the firm.

Ultimately, the purpose of this chapter is to offer the requisite material used in later sections. In particular, this chapter provides details of the application of the mixed methods approach, the ways the anonymity of those sampled was preserved, descriptive statistics and some limitations of the findings on GISU. Keeping in mind that the data is drawn from multiple data sources, the analysis, triangulation and interpretation of results may offer insights on the differences between the migrant sub-groups—returnees, transnationals and non-migrants—and thus the way in which people, procedures and [knowledge] processes are structured” (Teece, 2006: 397) in GISU. This study hopes to offer a better understanding of migrants, their knowledge flows and its impact on the organization.

8.1 General Facts and Premises

India's IT sector is primarily a private industry dominated by multinational corporations (25% of IT firms are controlled by Indian conglomerates and 10% are subsidiaries of foreign firms). The Indian IT-BPO industry consists of 5,000 companies that are split up into 7 large integrated companies, 193 medium-capacity firms and 4,800 smaller startups (NASSCOM, 2009; 2011; 2012). Of the 7 large integrated Indian companies, the most notable are HCL, Infosys Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro, that provide 85% of India's domestic IT services and employ 30% of the total Indian IT workforce (Asian Courier, 2010). The return of IT migrants is often considered as contributing to the rapid expansion of the IT-BPO industries by promoting it as a safe destination for foreign direct investment, helping Indian IT companies procure outsourcing contracts from abroad and boost the organization capacity of employing firms. These premises form part of the larger deliberations that question returnees' social ties, ability to transfer knowledge and the potential impact on the work processes of their organization.

8.2 Background and Case Relevance

TCS was founded in 1968, but its business vertical the Government Industry Solutions Unit (GISU) evolved later to aid the national government update and develop the ICT infrastructure of their agencies. Headquartered in New Delhi, GISU is renowned for its physical infrastructure, facilities and highly developed ICT platform compared to other IT firms. Given that GISU's setup varies along several dimensions—transnational business activities, outsourcing projects and body shopping—that creates a very dynamic ebb and flow of organizational life. Excluding specialists hired in the client's country, GISU has a total domestic staff of 2,000 employees (TCS Annual Report, 2010). This helps to further substantiate the relevance of this case study insofar as migrants can be easily isolated to learn about, "those who have returned [including transnationals] with financial capital, global networks and international sensibilities...and if it has any bearing whatsoever on where they choose to live, their vision, expectations, outcomes as well as [work and knowledge] processes of the firm" (Chacko, 2007: 134).

8.3 Appraisal of Theories and Literature

It is evident that neoclassical economics, human capital considerations and to a varying extent transnationalism aptly address the determinants of IT migration, but their discussion is supplementary in the chapters and useful only to further examine aspects related to the acquisition and transfer of overseas-acquired knowledge resources in organizations (Gardner, 2000; Chakravartty, 2001; Beaverstock, 2005; Williams, 2007). That is how do returnees “built up alliances with professionals, local businesses and agencies result in transnational [or social] ties...and further the transfer of new social contacts, practices and technological innovation” (Saxenian, 2005: 2) to organizations. Given the above claims, the social network theory (SNT) is far more central and important to examine migrants’ socialization, knowledge transfers and work-related outcomes in the organization (Nonaka, 1994; Varner and Palmer, 2002; Kilduff and Tsai, 2003). McPherson et al.’s (2001) principle of homophily is pitted against Granovetter’s (1983) weak social ties hypothesis to map the different groups of migrants’ attitudes, behaviors, values, strength of social ties and their knowledge transactions with stakeholders in the firm. And further migrants’ distanced relations via their use of electronic communications, social media and web-based learning portals for transferring their knowledge to teams, departments or units in the firm. The theoretical apparatus will thus help to disentangle returnees’, transnationals’ and non-migrants’ social ties, knowledge transactions, trust, norms and other contextual issues to elucidate the knowledge transfer processes of the organization.

8.4 Research Methods and Limitations

After a careful review of the employee roster provided by GISU’s human resource department, it was gathered that 2,000 employees were registered at the firm. While there are 2,000 employees, only 750 employees were considered eligible to be sampled from the population of GISU (after subtracting employees hired on a temporary basis, short-term rotations, deployed to onshore sites etc.). The 750 employees deemed to be eligible participants were further categorized and stratified to develop a sampling framework of the firm.

From the sampling frame, the 750 employees were stratified into three groups called returned IT migrants (consisted of 235 employees), non-migrants (consisted of 410 employees) and transnationals (consisted of 105 employees). The returnees' stratum was randomly sampled at 85% (meaning 200 employees were given a survey) and non-migrants' stratum was sampled at 50% (meaning 205 employees were given a survey), while transnationals' stratum was sampled at 35% (meaning 36 employees were given a survey). That 305 people participate in the study with a breakdown of 150 returnees, 155 non-migrants and 25 transnationals, which translated into a 75% response rate at GISU.

The structured questionnaire was randomly distributed to employees at GISU. That 45 semi-structured interviews (45 to 60 minutes audio recorded) were conducted randomly—every third employee was sent an invitation to take part in scheduled interview session in GISU. This was followed by 20 elite interviews (45 to 60 minutes audio recorded) with top tier management at GISU. Of the respondents interviewed—20 are returnees (5 code programmers, 7 software engineers and 8 network systemists), 15 are non-migrants (4 code programmers, 5 software engineers and 6 network systemists), 10 are transnationals (3 code programmers, 3 software engineers and 4 network systemists) and 20 interviewees are elites (a mix of supervisors, HRD managers, executives etc.) at the firm.¹⁰

The quantitative data was analyzed using different descriptive statistical methods like tabulations, frequency distributions tests of significance and ANOVA etc. A statistical software program called UICNET was used to conduct clique, centrality, density and degree analysis on the above-mentioned employees' to map networks, measure the strength of their social ties and tests various constraints on the transfer of knowledge resources to others in their team, department or unit in GISU. The qualitative data was analyzed using content text analysis to find emerging themes, create truth-logic tables and thus extract excerpts to explain the moderating effects of different 'social, contextual and organization contexts' on the knowledge transfer processes of the organization.

¹⁰ Interviewees are referenced in the chapters as a combination of the abbreviations: semi-structured interview (S), elite interview (E), overseas-trained (OT), home-trained (HT) as well as transnationally-trained (TT). Names of people referenced by others respondents was replaced with XXX-XXXX to maintain the ethical standards of the research project. Please note that quotations that contain round parentheses (...) are the respondents' words taken from a different part of their transcript, while the square brackets [...] are my own words to clarify the meaning of the text.

Table 8.1: Descriptive Statistics of Sampled Populations at GISU

Description Categories	Breakdown of Respondents (Each Category Adds up to N=305)	Breakdown of Percentages (%) (Each Category Adds up to 100.0)
Age		
20-29	48	15.7
30-39	87	28.5
40-49	96	31.4
50-59	59	19.3
> 60	15	5.1
Gender		
Male	141	46.2
Female	164	53.8
Marital Status		
Single	102	33.4
Married	191	62.6
Divorced	10	3.3
Widowed	2	0.7
Occupation		
Code Programmer	51	16.7
Software Engineer	110	36.1
Network Systemist	126	41.3
Other	18	5.9
Education/Work Qualifications (Obtained by Region)		
Not India (Returned Migrants)	150	49.2
India (Stayed Non-Migrants)	155	50.8
Other (Transnational Migrants)*	25	-
Work Experience (Total Number of Years)		
1-5	118	38.6
6-10	88	28.8
11-15	55	18.1
16-20	32	10.5
>20	12	4.0
Duration of Employment (Total Number of Years)		
1-5	111	36.4
6-10	100	32.7
11-15	48	15.7
16-20	36	11.8
>20	10	3.4
Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)		
Note 1: A (*) denotes that the transnationals were randomly chosen as a discretionary sample.		
Note 2: Unless otherwise stated the total sample size is N=305 for this study.		

Table 8.1 is a summary of the descriptive statistics with respect to the listed categories—age, gender, marital status, occupation, education and work qualifications obtained by regions, work experience and duration of employments by number of years at GISU. A tabulation of the respondents in each of the aforesaid categories adds up to 305 participants, which is the sample size obtained from GISU. Furthermore, the number of times the respondents were observed in each of the categories—expressed as a cumulative percentage—adds up to 100% and thus matches the total sample size obtained from GISU.

With exception to respondents in core groups in the listed categories, there seems to be a small selection bias of those in non-core groups at GISU. There are only 2 respondents that are widows (less than 1%), 10 respondents are divorced (3%), 15 respondents who are aged 60 or above (5%), 12 respondents that have greater than 20 years of work experience (4%) and 10 respondents that have been employed for more than 20 years (3%) with GISU.¹¹ Importantly, there are only 25 respondents that are transnationals, which were randomly chosen as a discretionary sample from GISU. The above-mentioned respondents, particularly transnationals, lack of prevalence was partly remedied with follow-up semi-structured and elite interviews with such individuals, HRD executives and others to balance any loss of data of empirical relevance needed to interpret the results from GISU.

While acknowledging the above concerns, for the most part there does not seem to be distortion—overestimation or underestimation of coefficients—as the respondents were not included as variables in any meaningful sense. Neither were these respondents tested in the ANOVA, tests of significance or other statistical models. When deemed necessary a Fisher exact test was performed on contingency tables and other empirical analysis to generate results that do not misrepresent the association of such respondents with variables in the analytical chapters on GISU (Fisher, 1945; Metha and Senchaudhari, 2009). For the social network analysis, transnationals were partitioned and their ties valued in the firm. This combined with a triangulation of multiple data streams bolstered the empirical work as credible and dependable for gaining insight on complex issues at the firm.

¹¹ Under the Category Occupation, the label 'Other' refers to non-IT workers. Non-IT workers are individuals working in administration positions, business-related field or client services at GISU.

Though rigorous attention was paid to each step of the [project] design, implementation of research and their safeguards (Frankel and Devers, 2000: 260), there are limitations to my work. In addition to not sampling IT migrants that were abroad, those that traveled on a H1-B visa but decided not to permanently settle in India were not investigated. Further, returnees are “conceptualized as ‘free agents’ whose ‘boundaryless careers’ constitute a sequence of different jobs across national boundaries” (Williams and Balaz, 2008a: 188) whereas transnationals’ mobility is dependent on the employing organization. This means differentiating returnees’ and transnationals’ choice of employer can create an empirical caveat, especially if they are job-hopping to GISU from other IT firms. Ensuing, returnees’ adjustment problems tend to get muddled with the repatriation processes of the firm.

Given that contextual and contravening variables tend to moderate knowledge transfers, a number of difficulties arise when trying to test whether IT returnees can serve as a novel and effective conduit for knowledge transfers in the workplace. That is heavy reliance on computer-based interactions, electronic networks and virtual communities as knowledge transfer mechanisms meant that returnees’ and transnationals’ knowledge transfers had to be situate more so in ‘time and space’ rather than purely in an organizational context of GISU. It was not always possible to clearly disentangle social and distanced work ties of returnees’, transnationals and non-migrants’ within their knowledge networks in GISU. Because of constant job rotations, knowledge cliques and networks may have crumbled and thus escaped the notice of the larger analysis on the knowledge dynamics of the firm.

Finally, the knowledge transactions of returnees, transnationals and non-migrants tend to become moot, without longitudinal data, especially because they operate predominantly in a mechanically driven environment. Moreover, short observation periods of the IT migrants, unobservable variables and the fact that the results are drawn from only one Indian IT consultancy firm suggests that the findings generalizability may not be extended to other settings or organizations. Importantly, without more data on factors, ties and meso-level forces renders inferences made returnees, transnational ties and the Indian IT-BPO industry incomplete. While available statistics, secondary sources and triangulation of data help to limit claims made on the IT-BPO industry, any conclusions drawn from the case study should be interpreted in light of the general goals of the thesis.

Chapter Nine

Decision to Return to India and Choice of Employer

While migrants' decision to return to India may depend on their initial intentions, household factors or other macro reasons, transnationals' mobility is bounded by the parent company's economic activities that extend across national boundaries. Given the above distinction, this chapter will only investigate migrants' motivation for returning home. Additionally, the reason these migrants join certain organizations is examined along with the issues they face setting into their new surroundings including the workplace. Importantly, the examination will highlight whether or not IT returnees' overseas-acquired knowledge resources was a part of their reason to return home and work for GISU. Taking into consideration GISU's response to the importance of hiring returnees to work for the firm, the various organizational and contextual issues will be incorporated to explain the potential value of overseas-acquired knowledge for the firm.

9.1 Migrants' Motivations for Returning to India

The decision to migrate tends to be associated with the migrants' personal characteristics, domestic circumstances and other structural issues. This means that migrants may be motivated by different reasons for returning to India. While financial incentives may encourage some migrants to return, transnationals might believe that MNCs offer better employment opportunities back in India. Though the acquisition of overseas knowledge resources and the recognition of India as an IT hub plays some part in the decision to return to India, family obligations, desire to invest in entrepreneurial activities and other reasons may also motivate migrants to go home. Those that return may not be inclined to stay permanently due to economic or social conditions that constrain their lifestyle back home (Iredale et al., 2003). It remains unclear if any or all of the above stated motives compel IT migrants to return to India. Therefore, a better understanding of various issues is needed to grasp why IT migrants decide to return to their home country.

Table 9.1: Main Motivation to Return to India by Age at GISU

Main Motivations	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60	Total
Advancing Career Goals	9.0	13.9	19.5	16.6	0.0	14.6
Better Compensation Package	31.8	46.5	21.7	26.6	0.0	30.0
Children, Family and Friends	22.7	34.8	58.6	26.6	0.0	36.6
Finished Education and Training	36.3	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.6
Greater Social Standing	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.6	0.0	3.3
Higher Standard of Living	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	33.3	2.6
To Make a Meaningful Difference	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.6	55.5	4.6
Other Reasons	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	11.1	1.3
Total Percentages (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Returned Respondents	22	43	46	30	9	150

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked returned respondents to select only one response from the above list of motivations. These respondents were categorized according to which age group they fell under in the sample to calculate the frequency distribution of their responses on their return motivations. The numbers presented in the columns of the table are the cumulative percentages of the responses by each age group to highlight that respondents stated different motivation to return to India. The purpose of the table is to show that the motivation to return to India varies amongst migrants by their age and to further analyze their decision to come back home.

The age of migrants tends to be associated with their decision to return to India. Table 9.1 shows that migrants' most frequently cited motive for returning varied by their age groups: 36% of respondents aged 20 to 29 decided to return after receiving a postgraduate degree, training or accreditation because they believed their credentials would increase their employment prospects in India. And 46% of respondents aged 30 to 39 returned as they felt their overseas professional experience would enable them to secure a better compensation package in the labor market of India. While 58% of the respondents aged 40 to 49 returned due to family reasons, 26% of those aged 50 to 59 stated family and a mix of other motives that would let them settle down in India. Lastly, 55% of respondents aged 60 and older felt their overseas resources could be used to make a meaningful difference in India.

That several younger and mid-career migrants believed their acquisition of expertise, knowledge, IT work experiences and other resources while abroad would be rewarded better by the IT industry (Chakravartty, 2001; Khadria, 2004). While some older migrants believed that their accumulation of financial and knowledge capital would enable them to settle their families in New Delhi, others expected to use their overseas knowledge resources to promote modernization of the IT-BPO sectors (Ganguly, 2003). Despite the fact that several older migrants had been away for a prolonged period of time, they maintained their transnational ties with friends, family and the household in India. These migrants emphasized that their motivation for returning was driven by the acquisition of overseas knowledge resources, but their transnational ties enabled them to come back home.

It seems that migrants in their 20s, 30s, 40s and older felt that their overseas-acquired knowledge, with some emphasizing the importance of their transnational ties with corporate entities, would enable them to be rewarded higher in terms of their personal and professional life upon return (Conway et al., 2009; Dustmann, 2009). E-6 (male and talent manager) stressed that, "money, power and improved social status have become synonymous with their [migrants] definition of a better life." Further, SOT-1 (male and analyst of UNIX applications) explained, "we are not struggling but trying to better ourselves as the status of India as a IT hub rises...because we love our country and want it to succeed." Migrants thus tended to return once they have gathered enough overseas resources, made appropriate preparations and when favorable conditions ensue in the home country.

For some migrants, gender and their marital status are factors associated with their decision to go back to India. Some male migrants asserted that after completing their postgraduate education from the West they could ask for larger dowries from fathers proposing marriage to them upon their return to India (Biao, 2005). Some female migrants stated that they missed their husband, young children and extended family members that pulled them back to India. Most of the female migrants said that they wanted to remain abroad. But the inability of their male spouses to obtain a work permit, their children experiencing problems at school and the difficulty in maintaining an emotional and social support system prompted their return home. More interestingly, female migrants that dominated a transnationally split household became the family's breadwinners "[while] the husbands attended to bills, children and other domestic matters" (Piper, 2007: 45). This caused marital conflicts that forced some female migrants to return home. STT-1 (female and analyst of JAVA applications) confirmed:

At first, I jumped at the chance to work on foreign assignments because that was the only way someone like me could get to explore San Francisco, Singapore, Seoul and other exotic cities. I got married and had three children...the short-term onsite IT projects turned into a great opportunity to make a lot of money that enabled me to be a better provider for my family in India. (Culturally, women are supposed to be cooking, cleaning and taking care of in-laws in an Indian house.) Eventually, the family pressure [women's role in society] got too much so I got up and moved back.

While the acquisition of knowledge and skills increases most men's social status amongst potential suitors, it could also decrease the social mobility of women bound to live a traditional family life (Ackers, 2004; Hardill, 2004; Raghuram, 2004a). Not only do remittances sent by women challenge the masculinity of men as providers for their family or household, but also increased mobility of women causes a reversal in marital roles that threatens the Indian patriarchal structure—especially if their husbands are unemployed back home (Faist, 2007; Desai, 2008; Mahapatro, 2010). The findings suggest that migrants' return patterns share some similarities with the mobility plans of transnationals to the extent that they are strategic choices based on their socioeconomic status back home. It is possible that these workers' migration strategies depend on their socio-economic status, which may ultimately determine when they return to the home country.

Table 9.2: Main Motivation to Return to India by Occupation at GISU

Main Motivations	Code Programmers	Software Engineers	Network Systemists	Others	Total
Advancing Career Goals	20.0	10.9	15.0	10.0	14.0
Better Compensation Package	52.0	72.7	38.3	10.0	51.3
Children, Family and Friends	16.0	16.3	16.6	0.0	15.3
Finished Education and Training	12.0	0.0	6.6	10.0	5.3
Greater Social Standing	0.0	0.0	6.6	10.0	3.3
Higher Standard of Living	0.0	0.0	3.3	20.0	2.6
To Make a Meaningful Difference	0.0	0.0	10.0	40.0	6.6
Other Reasons	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	1.3
Total Percentages (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Returned Respondents	25	55	60	10	150

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked returned respondents to select only one response from the above list of motivations. These respondents were re-categorized according to which occupation group they fell under in the sample to calculate the frequency distribution of their responses on their return motivations. The numbers presented in the columns of the table are the cumulative percentages of the responses by each occupation group to highlight that respondents stated different motivation to return to India. The purpose of the table is to show that the motivation to return to India varies amongst migrants by their occupation and to further explain their decision to come back home.

Further, migrants' occupation may also be associated with their decision to return to India. Table 9.2 shows that 51% of the respondents reported that their expectations of receiving a better compensation package was their main motive for returning to India. This reason was prevalent amongst code programmers (52%), software engineers (72%) and network systemists (38%) as their motive for returning to India. Most of the code programmers consistently stated that they believed their overseas credentials, job training and work experience would enable them to bargain for a better compensation package from local employers in India. Some software engineers and network systemists contended that though they were paid a generous salary package from Western IT companies, they returned because of the likelihood of upgrading their occupational role in India.

Several code programmers disclosed that after they felt enough overseas know-how was acquired they returned as they were 'fed up' with the long working hours and believed such conditions would reduce if they worked for an Indian IT company. In contrast, software engineers expressed that the rise in outsourcing, their high rate of savings combined with the low cost of living in India would enable them to find suitable jobs with reputable Indian IT companies. SOT-2 (male and consultant of software designs) stated that, "it was natural to leave with my money, knowledge and social network to go work for a local firm in Hyderabad, India." That network systemists further stated that at the very least they could use their knowledge, savings and social capital to establish a start-up firm in the IT-BPO industry back home (Saxenian et al., 2002; Saxenian, 2007).

Interestingly, [because returnees] are considered vehicles for the transfer of technical and organizational know-how" (Saxenian et al., 2002: 55), several Indian IT companies promise them money, new opportunities to run spin-offs, travel and other sort of incentives to work for their firm. Returned IT migrants are seen as strategic assets for building stronger network capabilities improving organizational performance and brand value that has led to aggressive recruitment efforts by Indian IT companies and foreign subsidiaries of MNCs to sustain themselves in the competitive IT market (Chacko, 2007). Still, these migrants also reveal that they can choose to become entrepreneurs upon their return home. This combined with the recognition of India as a rising global IT-BPO powerhouse and its strong economic resurgence might have led migrants to return to their home country.

Table 9.3: Tests of Significance of the Differences Among IT Migrants' Motivations to Return to India by Personal Characteristics at GISU

Tests of Significance	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Occupation	Region
Lambda Values	0.622	0.688	0.010	0.775	0.025
Significance Level	0.000*	0.000*	0.544	0.000*	0.645
Uncertainty Values	0.705	0.752	0.416	0.840	0.055
Significance Level	0.000*	0.001*	0.767	0.002*	0.777
Chi-square Values	18.348	11.156	49.668	91.899	55.808
Significance Level	0.020*	0.040*	0.659	0.045*	0.885

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The above table is derived from five different contingency tables in which the frequency distributions are computed between respondents' stated motivation to return to India by their personal characteristics, which are converted into nominal variables to conduct a significance test. Three different tests of significance are conducted to analyze if there is an association among return motives and certain personal characteristics. Also, these tests measure the strength of association between return motives and certain variables and if the relationship is significant.

Note 2: The Lambda and Uncertainty values range from 0 to 1, with 0 signifying no association and 1 signifying perfect association between the cross-tabulated combinations of return motive and certain variables of the sample. The Chi-squared statistic, using Fisher's exact test, is also based on a cross tabulation of the combination of return motives and certain variables to show if there is an association and its significance in the sample. The Uncertainty and Chi-squared, specifically Fisher's exact test, is used due to the small sample size and zeros in some response cells in the data set of the sample. An (*) denotes that the numeric values are significant at $p < 0.05$.

Note 3: The generated values are used to show which variables—age, gender, marital status, occupation and the region in which they resided in the foreign destination—might be associated with the decision to return to India.

Note 4: A limitation that should be recognized is that the analyzes can only reveal whether there is an association and if it is significant amongst the motivations to return and personal characteristics—not which motivations to return to India are correlated with certain personal attributes of migrants working in GISU (i.e. The results show that there is a strong and significant association between migrants' age and the motivation to return and not that younger code programmers decision to return is correlated with the expectation of receiving a better compensation from local employers in India.) That is why results are combined with case interviews to explain differences among migrants' attributes and the motivation to return home.

Accordingly, Table 9.3 presents three tests of significance to see if there is an association between migrants' stated motives and personal attributes on their decision to return to India. The tests of significance show that migrants' motive to return and variables—age, gender and occupation—are strongly associated and significant with the decision to return home. But from the table it can be seen that the Lambda (0.010 and 0.025), Uncertainty (0.416 and 0.055) and Chi-squared (49.668 and 55.808) values indicate a weak and insignificant association ($p < 0.05$) between the migrants' marital status and the foreign region in which they resided with their motivation to return to India.

While migrants' age, gender and occupation are important factors in the decision to return, marital status and the region in which they resided abroad are weakly associated as E-11 (female and overseas deployment manager) explained, "most people use email, phone and Internet to communicate with others [carrying on with marital relations, family obligations and household activities] until they obtain their residency permit that allow them to freely travel to India." The point being that migrants' economic success does not depend on their assimilation into the foreign destination, but perhaps on cultivating cross-border ties that facilitate their entry into the Indian IT-BPO sectors. The hard data combined with the responses could be interpreted to mean that migrants return due to certain meso-forces—outsourcing, increase in transnational economic activity of organizations or the emergence of India as an IT hub due to globalization (Tejada et al., 2013).

Similar observations were made for not only transnational migrants that left the United States and returned to the ICT sector of Germany, but also there has been a wave of return migration from Australia, the United Kingdom and United States to countries like Ireland, India and China—which for all intents and purpose may have occurred in the context of globalization (Faist, 1997; Castles, 2000; Ammassari, 2009). E-18 (female and HRD executive) substantiated that, "globalization has triggered tremendous growth in IT-BPO industries in Asian countries." The existing evidence suggests that migrants understand there is a high possibility of reaping economic, social and political benefits by returning to their respective homes. Taking a wider perspective of globalization shows the complicated reality of return movements to home countries (Iredale et al., 2003; Potter et al., 2005; Khadria, 2012).

It seems that the IT migrants go abroad to build their CV, acquire relevant skills, work experiences and other resources, but they also make an effort to maintain family, professional and transnational ties in order to facilitate their initial plans of returning to India (Brettell, 2000; Chakravartty, 2006). That E-20 (male and executive) remarks illustrate the effort, decision and preparations undertaken by returnees might be a part of their overall migration strategy:

I knew that acquiring know-how, skills and social tools from abroad would give me the exposure I needed to improve my career, income and job status in New Delhi. I decided to take on onsite IT projects (that led to my promotion to director of the Business Development Unit, upgrade in pay and social recognition) that required me to travel from New Delhi to London, New York, San Francisco, Singapore and other big cities. But I also knew colleagues who decided to get an MBA (or pay a recruiter to find them a H1-B visa placement with any IT company in the United States) to do the same. (Going back for holidays, keeping in contact with family, friends and business associates and sending money to invest in different types of IT ventures to secure a better future back in India.) The strategy bit was more than just gathering up overseas resources...but figuring out when [preparations have to be made in a certain time frame]...to come back to India. Well, I always thought it is a normal thing for people to eventually return home.

Besides acquiring on-the-job training, skills and work experiences, IT migrants send remittances, making periodic visits and maintaining different sorts of socio-emotional links as part of their preparations to return home (Stark and Galor, 1991; Stark, 1991; Portes et al., 1999; Kapur and McHale, 2006). It is important to note that once enough knowledge, financial and social resources have been gathered by migrants they may return regardless of their employment status, visa exemptions or successful cultural integration into the foreign destination; yet the decision to return will be contingent on certain contextual conditions in India. The results are similar to the findings of Cerase (1974), Gmelch (1980) and Colton (1993) insofar as the decisions of Italian, Barbadian and Yemeni migrants to return depends on their expectations and migration experiences as well as the economic, social and political environment in their respective home countries. Other research works also suggest that multiple issues are associated with the return migration process, which must be reconciled with the global realities impacting the countries of origin. The insights suggest that return migration is a complicated process that should be considered in light of the prevailing conditions back home.

In general, IT migrants' including transnationals' motive to return to India is not only diverse but may also overlap. The variation among IT migrants' return motives is due largely to their personal expectations, migration experiences as well as their engendered socio-economic relationships in response to specific institutional, economic and political conditions back home. Given the diversity of return motives, domestic circumstances and other issues involved in migrants' decisions, my empirical work suggests that a combination of human capital and transnationalism theory may be able to provide a better understanding of return migration—strategic choices, linkages between receiving and sending countries and the impact of globalization on countries of origin (Cassarino, 2004; De Haas, 2008). Therefore, the return migration process should be understood as complex and dynamic movements to their countries of origin.

9.2 Returned Migrants' Reasons for Joining GISU

After migrants return to India, they could move back to their original local community or resettle in a different location within the country. While migrants that return to India may decide to settle into the local community, neighborhood or town from which they previously left, most of the transnationals' choice of where they can reside might be constrained by the Indian company's parent-base location. The reason being that most transnationals who rotate back to India after working at the parent company's foreign subsidiary might be placed in a branch office in a different city. For all intents and purposes, only those returnees and transnationals that relocated to New Delhi are examined in order to logically link their location preference to major Indian cities that have the most employment opportunities (Findlay et al., 2009). Given the scope of this chapter, I will mostly concentrate on analyzing the different reasons and to a limited extent certain personal factors, circumstances and local issues that may prompt migrants to join GISU in New Delhi. Additionally, I will try and highlight but to a limited extent transnationals' motivation for continuing to work for GISU or the reason they hop over from other firm in New Delhi. Understanding why IT migrants take up employment with GISU will help to shed light on the potential for transferring their overseas-acquired knowledge resources to the firm.

Table 9.4: Main Reason for Joining the Organization by Occupation at GISU

Main Reasons	Code Programmers	Software Engineers	Network Systemists	Others	Total
Advancing Career Goals	12.0	29.0	28.3	20.0	25.3
Better Compensation Package	8.0	63.6	23.3	20.0	35.3
Children, Family and Friends	20.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	8.6
Finished Education and Training	32.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	6.0
Greater Social Standing	20.0	1.8	0.0	10.0	4.6
Higher Standard of Living	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	3.3
To Make a Meaningful Difference	8.0	5.4	21.6	40.0	14.6
Other Reasons	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	2.0
Total Percentages (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Returned Respondents	25	55	60	10	150

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked returned respondents to select only one response from the above list of reasons. These respondents were re-categorized according to which occupation group they fell under in the sample to calculate the frequency distribution of their responses on their motive to join GISU. The numbers presented in the columns of the table are the cumulative percentages of the responses by each occupation group to highlight that respondents stated different motives for joining GISU. The purpose of the table is to show that the motive to join GISU varies amongst migrants by their occupation and to further explain their decision to work for the organization.

An employee will often accept foreign assignments because he or she gets a chance to earn extra money, increase their general pay and the savings are tax-free for work done during onsite IT projects. STT-3 (male and analyst of UNIX applications) asserted, “[after] we finish the onsite client projects...the employee bond is altered to reflect the new compensation, conditions and terms of our contract” at GISU. Like some transnationals, migrants returning from abroad may also respond to monetary incentives offered by GISU. Table 9.4 presents migrants’ main motivation for joining GISU, which varied by their occupation groups: 35% of the respondents reported that a better compensation package offer was the main reason they joined GISU. Software engineers (63%) and network systemists (23%) most frequently mentioned that being offered a better compensation package by GISU and other personal benefits played a decisive role in their decision not to go work for other locally employing IT firms. SOT-3 (female and consultant of software designs) elaborated:

I acquired a post-graduate education in creating designer applications that could be embedded in e-governance IT projects. I was appointed by GISU to enhance the efficiency, functionality and user rating of e-governance projects that catered to municipal, local and state agencies. (I received 56 lakhs per annum [equivalent to \$102,860 USD], bonuses, career perks and other social rewards...regular office hours and a Western work culture. Also, I could choose to work out of any of the office branches in New Delhi with the option of going abroad to San Francisco later on which made it a better place to work than anywhere else). I had also interviewed at HCL, IBM, Infosys and Wipro for openings in their finance, tax and treasury division of the government solutions unit, but the pay was 30% lower, the workload 50% higher and getting deployed abroad 0% chance in the next five years. (I knew Mr. XXX-XXXX, Mr. XXX-XXXX and Mr. XXX-XXXX when they were on H-1B temporary work visas for my team back in San Francisco.) I had reached out to them when I was in New Delhi visiting my family to see if they could get me a job with one of the ‘Big’ Indian IT consultancy firms. They had serious connections because I received numerous job offers. I decided to take up an offer and return to India because most of the work was already getting offshored to the Indian IT-BPO industry. Even if I was working for Microsoft in Silicon Valley, they were already outsourcing 70% of their work to Indian IT firms in Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad. (I think the bursting of the dot.com bubble, a stagnant American IT industry and the economic recession made it preferable to relocate operations overseas and for workers to take advantage of this shift by following suit to work for an Indian IT firm.) NRIs are constantly in demand by Indian IT firms because they are a great value-add to their brand equity, transforming domestic IT services and helping firms stay buoyant in the global market. I thoughtfully considered if it was worthwhile to move given the wage differential amongst Indian IT firms, the expected growth of the Indian IT-BPO industry and other economic and social opportunities...all of which pointed towards a promising future back home.

Table 9.5: Analysis of Variance Between Returned and Stayed Employees' Annual Earnings with Interaction Effects at GISU

Sources	DF	Mean Square	F-Statistic	Significance
Corrected Model	7	17.97	41.38	0.017
Intercept	1	10.23	85.77	0.021
Type of Employee	3	15.81	53.55	0.000*
Occupation	4	9.74	72.69	0.000*
Type of Employee* Occupation	2	12.68	68.88	0.000*
Corrected Total	330	-	-	-

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: In the ANOVA model, the dependent variable (DV) is the annual earnings and the independent variables (IVs) are type of employee (returned or stayed) and occupation (code programmers, software engineers, network systemists or other workers). The ANOVA model also incorporates the interaction effect of the two IVs (Type of Employee* Occupation). Given the proposed model, the adjusted R-Squared=0.68 which mean that 68% of the variance can be explained by its parameters. A (*) shows that the relationship is significant at $p < 0.001$.

Note 2: The ANOVA model tests three null hypotheses: 1) There is no difference between returned employees and non-migrants in their annual earnings in GISU. 2) There is no difference between code programmers, software engineers, network systemists and non-IT workers in their annual earnings in GISU. 3) There is no interaction between the type of employee and occupation in annual earnings in GISU. The ANOVA analysis shows that all three null hypotheses can be rejected—suggesting that there is a difference between returned employees and non-migrants, those holding different occupations (code programmers, software engineers, network systemists or other workers) and the interaction effect of the two variables (Type of Employee and Occupation) on their earned wages in the IT consultancy firm.

Note 3: A limitation that should be recognized is that the analysis only shows if there is a variation between the Type of Employee, Occupation and the interaction effect of the two variables on annual earnings in GISU. The above results were therefore checked against the mean income calculated for the different occupation groups of returned and non-migrant employees, which reveals that the overseas-trained earn higher wages than home-trained workers in GISU. The findings are triangulated with case interviews and presented in the upcoming discussion to help better explain the differences in compensation amongst them in the organization.

Table 9.5 presents a two-way ANOVA analysis of the type of employee, occupation and the interaction effect of the two variables on annual earnings in GISU. The table shows that the interaction between type of employee (returned and non-migrants employees) and occupation has an F-statistic (68.88), which is significant ($p < 0.001$) meaning there is a difference between their annual earnings at GISU. A further analysis of the data revealed that returnees, given their occupations, are paid higher than non-migrants in GISU. The returned employees earn more money than non-migrants because their domain specific knowledge rather than a generic skill set are needed to produce e-governance services at GISU.

Most of the employees who received a better compensation package had to show that they possessed a high-level of expertise, technical skills and project management experience that could be employed in their work. The returned IT employees' acquisition of knowledge, skills, experiences and resources enabled them to negotiate for a higher salary package from the HRD. Along with receiving career benefits, returned employees believed they would be socially rewarded because their IT knowledge capabilities is seen as an inventive force for producing e-governance solutions at GISU. In other words, the hiring of returned employees is a strategic investment for improving business growth at GISU.

Furthermore, the presumption is that money, resources and time will be saved by hiring returned IT employees to work for GISU. E-17 (male and HRD executive) substantiated that, "the overseas-trained can identify IT projects that we need, re-work domestic products and help streamline the work processes for a much more efficient global delivery system in GISU." In this sense, returned IT employees are considered a value-add for which SOT-4 (male and engineer of software systems) stated that, "monetary, social and other perks are important" to draw and retain them in GISU. HRD managers thus deemed it paramount to give returned employees the option to work out of any employing branch and relocation preferences if they decided to move overseas to work for one of the subsidiaries of GISU. While incentives, desire for social recognition and possibly other kinds of perks pull returnees towards GISU, the economic rationale is that these migrants are highly valued because the labor supply in the Indian IT sectors is inelastic and it is hard to expand the workforce in a short period of time in the face of raising demand for software services in the market.

Interestingly, former coworkers, friends and family members sometimes relay salary offers from GISU. SOT-5 (female and engineer of software systems) noted that, “returnees have influential colleagues, friends and relatives that push on their behalf for salary benefits at GISU.” In conjunction with an expansive social circle, Chacko (2007) reasoned that returned IT migrants’ salary package offers may be the result of HRD aggressive recruitment efforts, which raises income levels of such workers among local employers. That is NRIs are courted by Indian IT players like Infosys Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro Limited to further expand their operations in the domestic and international software services market. And equally, they are pursued by foreign subsidiaries like Dell Inc., General Electric Motors Limited and the Microsoft Corporation to run their offshore locations so as to stay competitive in the global IT-BPO market. This underscores the importance of New Delhi as burgeoning techno-city and the satellite areas of the metropolis (Faridabad, Gurgaon and Noida-I, Noida-II etc).

So, it seems that migrants who are considered to have knowledge, skills, work experiences or social contacts necessary to fill employment vacancies are enticed with good salary offers from GISU, HCL, Infosys, Wipro and even foreign subsidiaries operating in New Delhi. Returned migrants’ salary packages are somewhat dependent on the extent to which they have maintained strong socio-economic links with people in these Indian IT companies in order to return and work on a temporary or permanent basis in New Delhi. In this sense, returnees will reap a wage premium if they can leverage their overseas-acquired resources, which entail the building of a strong socio-economic bridge to successfully cross over to Indian IT companies in New Delhi or its surrounding techno-cities. Like many other studies, Saxenian and Hsu’s (2001) research highlighted a similar finding for returned migrants in semiconductor firms operating in the Hsinchu-Taipei region. E-10’s (female and recruitment manager) remark aptly sums up the reason that employees tend to join GISU when she stated that, “returnees are responding to a wage premium that has come into existence due to the demand-supply forces that has increasingly intensified competition in the Indian IT-BPO sectors.” The growing economic opportunities in the NCR region and “recognition of India as an emerging global IT power” (Khadria, 2004 as cited in OECD, 2008: 93) may stimulate return movements back home.

For most employees that completes a foreign assignment, he or she comes back to assume the lead position, duties and responsibilities of that client project in the office. STT-1 (male and consultant of software applications) conveyed that, “once we are back from client sites...we are offered leadership positions that give us the right to delegate duties, responsibilities and timelines to those working on offshore IT projects managed by the head office.” Like most transnationals, migrants returning from abroad may also respond to career incentives offered at GISU. Referring back to Table 9.4 on migrants’ main motive for joining GISU by their occupation groups: 25% of the respondents reported that the chance to advance their career goals was the reason they joined GISU. Software engineers (29%) and network systemists (28%) mostly cited enhancing career plans as their reason for joining GISU. SOT-4 (male and engineer of software systems) and SOT-5 (male and systems engineer for global networking services) emphasized this when they stated:

I learned the requisite expertise needed to write codes, create feedback tools and build retracing mechanism to enable the compatibility of software modules with internal components of any IT system. I was brought into GISU to increase their organization performance so as to attract more contracts from local government agencies. (I was hired as an L-3 level Associate IT Consultant with markers for moving on to becoming an E-1 level Manager, Director, Vice-President and beyond in the GISU.) I interviewed with HCL, Infosys and Wipro who did not give me either the same designation, job role or occupational responsibilities...and they had a very high attrition rate compared to the known benchmark. (No! XXX-XXXX, XXX-XXXX and I worked together at IBM Corporation in New Delhi before we came over here. A lot of personnel swapping take place between these firms in the Indian IT-BPO industry.) I returned back to India when I was 35 years old because after working for 5 years at an IT firm in New York it was obvious the chances to further my goals were far greater as part of a global workforce.

I gained the relevant domain knowledge, configuration standards and beta testing systems to run software programs given hardware requirements of a platform. I was taken into GISU to raise the level of integration of its e-governance services to support state-by-state access to the central government of India. (I was recruited as an L-4 level Principal IT Consultant but then I became an E-3 level Director and hopefully my story will be like that of Mr. XXX-XXXX who is the Vice-President of the GISU.) I interviewed with Dell, HCL, Oracle and Wipro all of whom did offer me similar titles, work responsibilities and career plans...but it seemed their promises hinged on what has going to happen in the future in the Indian IT industry. (There is this circulation of workers coming in-and-out of the Indian IT-BPO sectors that reaches across the global industry.) I ultimately returned to India when I was 40 years old because after 15 years of working in different IT firms in Quebec, London and Melbourne it made sense that there would be a lot more opportunities to grow professionally by rolling with the changing international scenario.

Table 9.6: The Proportion of Returned and Stayed Employees in Senior Occupational Positions by Age at GISU

Breakdown of Employees by their Occupation	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60	Total
Code Programmers						
Returned	37.5	50.0	60.0	75.0	-	-
Stayed	30.0	33.3	50.0	25.0	-	-
Software Engineers						
Returned	40.0	46.6	50.5	66.6	100.0	-
Stayed	20.0	38.8	40.0	40.0	50.0	-
Network Systemists						
Returned	50.0	60.0	71.4	70.0	60.0	-
Stayed	20.0	25.0	40.0	30.0	100.0	-
Others						
Returned	-	-	-	71.4	66.6	-
Stayed	-	-	-	40.0	25.0	-
Transnationals						
Others	80.0	70.0	90.0	-	-	-
Percentages of Returned Respondents (%)	40.9	53.4	60.8	70.0	66.6	58.0
Percentages of Stayed Respondents (%)	23.0	31.8	42.0	34.4	50.0	34.8
Percentages of Transnational Respondents (%)	80.0	70.0	90.0	0.0	0.0	80.0
Total Number of Returned Respondents	22	43	46	30	9	150
Total Number of Stayed Respondents	26	44	50	29	6	155
Total Number of Transnational Respondents	5	10	10	0	0	25

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: Senior grade positions are defined as follows: Code Programmers (Lead, Senior or Supervisor), Software Engineers (Senior, Supervisor or Manager) and Network Systemists (Senior, Supervisor or Manager) and Others (Executive, Director or Chief Officer).

Note 2: The number of respondents with a senior grade position was divided by the total number of migrants in their occupation and age group for each cell in the table. The percentage of returned, stayed and transnational respondents in senior occupational positions along with the total number of migrants in their respective age groups is presented at the bottom of the column in the table. With the exception of transnationals, a (-) signifies that there are no respondents, only one or both returned and non-migrant respondents are not in the age groups and/or neither of them may be in a senior occupational position in GISU.

Note 3: The purpose of this table is to show the proportion of returnees, stayers and transnationals who are in senior occupational positions from the sampled population to further analyze the reason for differences in their career mobility within the organization.

Table 9.6 presents the proportion of returned, stayed and transnationals in senior occupational positions by their age groups in GISU. The total column of the table shows that a larger percentage of returned IT employees (58%) hold senior positions compared to non-migrants (34%) in GISU. That is a large percentage of returned employees hold a senior position at work. The younger returned code programmers said that to get a senior title they had to demonstrate proficiency in different programming languages, coding skills and integration methods for system processors at work. Middle-aged software engineers and network systemists said that they received a senior position because they had domain specific knowledge and relevant work experience to take up duties and responsibilities of managing project teams in GISU. Older non-IT workers with overseas exposure gained a seniority rank because they not only improved the efficiency, functioning and productivity of the units, but also ensured that the highest possible quality of IT solutions, industry services and government-related technologies were delivered by GISU. While the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and overseas exposure enabled returnees to gain seniority at work, most non-migrants' ascent was tied to whether they fit the position description in GISU.

Most returned employees were promoted to upper-tier positions because they could guide other employees on how to build IT services. Transnationals rose to middle-tier positions because they could relay the requirements of clients to teammates on the IT projects. Non-migrants rose within low-tier positions as they could resolve technical issues that dealt mostly with customer satisfaction. The difference between returned, stayed and transnationals ascent in their job positions was overseas-trained employees' knowledge capabilities whereas the home-trained workers' labor market experience that enabled them to move ahead in their careers at work. SOT-8 (male and chief technologist for global IT services) made the observation that, "NRIs that I personally knew came over because they had a shot at getting a high ranking decision-making role at GISU." In this sense, returned migrants wanting to move ahead in their career saw working for GISU as a way to leverage their overseas-acquired resources that would enable them to achieve professional success in such a reputable MNC (Lieten, 1987). Therefore, returned migrants' views on professional opportunities in the IT field may have driven them to work for a multinational corporation.

Moreover, it was observed that respondents who “ran into difficulties due to technical biases in their education, language barriers, discrimination and subtle forms of institutional restrictions abroad” (Saxenian, 2006: 54) sought upper-tier positions with GISU. Returnees’ distinctive contacts, external networks and their business relationships made it easier to get career placements with GISU. And SOT-4 (male and engineer of software systems) pointed out that, “We [returnees] know each other, probably worked together or have the same social network... that is why it’s not so uncommon for us to swap between HCL, IBM, Infosys and other IT-tech firms.” This means that as ‘freely mobile agents’ returnees build, maintain and renew their social networks with Indian entities—because they tend to have low job security in Silicon Valley so fostering ‘boundaryless careers’ will allow them to take advantage of several professional opportunities made possible by their transnational ties to certain IT firms in New Delhi. As a result, migrants’ transnational networks assist in the search for professional opportunities that will draw them to the metropolis and its surrounding areas.

Essentially, what emerged is that the respondents’ enhanced employability is due to them being in possession of knowledge, skills, work experience and social contacts that not only make it relatively easy in change employers, but also the basis on which they were able to secure upper-tier positions with GISU—swapping out of HCL, IBM, Infosys, Oracle and Microsoft among other IT firms in New Delhi. More importantly, returnees’ enhanced employability leads them to chase certain career alternatives with Indian IT firms or the mere fear of not having long-term job security abroad further prompts them to return and work in New Delhi. Most returned migrants excluding transnationals pursue ‘boundaryless careers’ in a non-linear fashion by taking up a sequence of jobs with firms across New Delhi or even national boundaries (Hardill, 2004; Opengart and Short, 2002; Barley and Kunda, 2004; Bigliardi et al., 2005). Interestingly, returned migrants who continue to experience limits to their professional opportunities also have the option of starting their own consultancy firm in the IT sector. As SHT-1 (male and systems analyst) substantiates, “coming from overseas helps them get into IT-BPO game because it is a global market.” So, returned migrants may be pulled by prospects of professional growth in the changing business environment due to the widespread impact of globalization on the home country.

It seems that employees take up foreign assignments to earn extra income, improve career choices or to fulfill the desire to make a change given their line of work. STT-2 (female and systems engineer of network IT servers) disclosed, “we see getting better income and more career options as enabling us [to improve our situation]...but making a practical difference is an important driver for joining GISU.” Like the transnationals, some returned migrants emphasized that financial and professional incentives make it easier to accept a job offer with the GISU. But practicality of their work, family or household considerations and social issues drive them to work for GISU. And several of the respondents’ family, professional and transnational networks was critical for job offers, their global recruitment and placement with GISU. As E-20 (male and executive) put it:

It’s the brains story...they will return for the money, opportunities and respect. But giving back to the community and nostalgic sentiments are there too. (They are two-sides of the same coin whose value is recognized by IT firms.) These reason are tied together [via people, relations and culture] that brings them to work for the Indian IT-BPO industry, which leads to their permanent settlement in India.

The response draws on the points that returned employees who end up working for GISU will take note of various factors—children’s schooling, lifestyle, and cultural adjustment issues—before joining GISU. While upward social mobility is an important consideration, returned migrants’ socio-economic networks seem to determine and thus facilitate their entry into GISU, moves between firms or to foreign subsidiaries in New Delhi. Further, those who return will weigh their preferences—gender relations, social progress or economic viability—before they decide to step-off escalator cities and work for IT firms in New Delhi. In this sense, Findlay et al. (2009) and Florida (2003) showed that returned migrants preferred “open to creativity, diverse and tolerant places to live...[as] they are clear signs of a metropolitan’s high-technology success” (Florida and Gates 2001: 2) of any global city. In other words, returnees may have decided to work in New Delhi because of its better physical infrastructure—buildings, IT parks and location to ICT industries—and the clustering of several key players in the IT-BPO industry. The insights are couched broadly in terms of transnationalism to accommodate migrants’ social mobility, location decision and the larger impact of globalization on their decision to work, settle down and help improve their home country.

Overall, a parallel can be drawn between transnationals and returned IT migrants to the extent that financial incentives, professional opportunities and other life goals prompt them to join the GISU—or continue to stay with GISU, hop-over from other IT firms in New Delhi or global cities to India. While most of the transnationals and returned IT migrants tend to maintain socio-economic networks with people in the Indian IT-BPO industry, the nexus between migrants' occupational mobility and the motivation to return may depend to some degree on their social connections with influential players, business networks and exposure to overseas markets (Ammassari and Black, 2001; Stanek and Veira, 2009). But it is the latter group of migrants' emotional and cultural attachments that encourage them to settle down in New Delhi. The insights suggest that migrants weigh various issues before settling down in their country of origin.

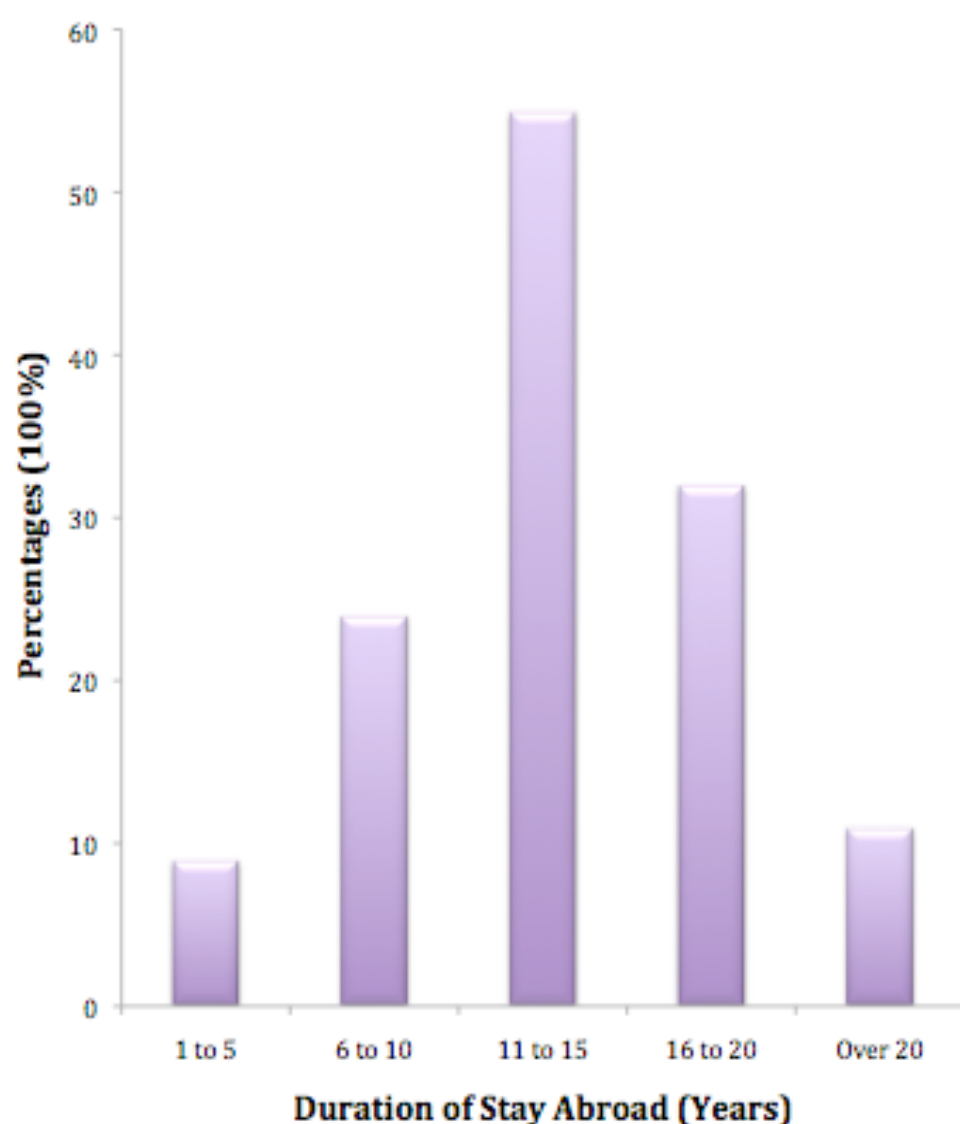
9.3 Issues Returnees Face Settling into the Workplace

Returned IT employees' newly acquired expertise, skills, work experiences and other social resources can change their attitudes, behaviors and perceptions towards non-migrants, the job itself and the general work conditions of GISU. And furthermore, the potential of returned employees' overseas-acquired knowledge resources to be shared with people also depend on existing work processes, the management structure and overall environment of GISU. For these reasons, an analysis of some of the adjustment issues returned migrants face trying to settle in at work will clarify how their overseas-acquired knowledge can be "harvested [and harnessed] after they have repatriated" (Arman, 2009: 110-111) to GISU. But SHT-9 (male and systems engineer) stressed, "it is a difficult thing to do...for those coming from abroad and then going back to work in our company." E-15 (female and HRD analyst) further stated, "remember it's not just about them but their families...social complexities and the New Delhi culture that make people feel their world has turned upside down and that they need to get their feet on the ground." Given that migrants including transnationals will experience a reverse culture shock, the analysis is extended to elucidate how they can negotiate their 'social place' at work and their new surroundings. These broader insights may help to gain an understanding of the benefits and challenges of working in their locality.

Some code programmers asserted that they were not able to communicate basic syntax information to non-migrant colleagues assigned to their IT project. SOT-1 (female and JAVA code specialist) recalled that, “I remember asking one of the ‘techies’ if the source line of the written code gave a ‘blue screen of death’ and he frantically began to Google the term...disrupting the debugging brief of the entire team.” Several software engineers also conveyed that they could not pass along application specifications requested by foreign clients to non-migrants in their unit. SOT-6 (male and systems engineer of software-enabled technologies) explained that, “these kinds of workers will know which commands to use, what order to use them in the coding scheme and when to implement it in the source file, but they often struggle to figure out ways to integrate their work with what the rest of us are doing in the unit.” Quite a few network systemists also disclosed that they did not share IT rollout plans with non-migrants in the unit. SOT-9 (female and engineer of IT services) said that, “[non-migrants] have usually been on the lower end of building network range so the intellectual input is just not there to develop domestic IT services as mandated by GISU.”

Most returned IT employees found it somewhat difficult to have productive knowledge exchanges on problem-solving techniques, complex logical reasoning or strategic planning with non-migrants in their IT project group. However, IT returnees found it was much easier to discuss these matters with transnationals at work. Interestingly, several of the non-migrants also stated that the technical vocabulary, sense of professionalism and work culture displayed by transnationals made it easier for them to discuss work matters with them. Despite the gap in IT knowledge, skills and work experiences between returnees and stayers, both of these groups are socially connected to transnationals—thus creating learning opportunities for such workers in GISU. E-6 (male and talent manager) explained that, “[returnees, stayers and transnationals] each have their own unique set of experiences, talents and ways of doing things that they learn to share in different [social] contexts.” The interactions of returnees and stayers with transnationals also illustrates that, “[workers] learn to be connected with others in the form of artifacts, routines and work experiences that are based on memories, values and a vision” (Bathelt et al., 2004: 34) that need to be merged for there to be a shared understanding of work being done at GISU.

Figure 9.1: Proportion of Returned IT Migrants with Adjustment Problems by their Duration of Stay Abroad



Source: Author's results based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked the respondents "Did you have problems adjusting to the workplace?" The response, either a Yes or No, was cross tabulated by the number of years the respondents stayed abroad before they decided to return to India. The frequency distributions of migrants' responses binned by the number of years they spent abroad is expressed as percentages in the above histogram. The figure only shows the percentage of returned IT migrants who experienced difficulties adjusting in GISU. The purpose of this figure is to highlight if long absences from India affected returnees' social integration and thus their potential impact on the knowledge transfer processes at work.

But the fact remains that most returnees believed that as carriers of ideas, skills and work experiences, they were not accepted as heroes by non-migrants in their IT project teams (Andreason and Kinneer, 2005). Even though returned employees had autonomy, personal discretion and decision-making abilities, they nonetheless expressed resentment towards the lessening of their social status amongst colleagues at work. This is followed by a sense of disappointment by returned employees who had to deal with their feelings of being underappreciated, underutilized and undervalued in their unit. After taking up occupational roles in the IT project team, returned employees sought the assistance of transnationals to re-negotiate their social status among staff members at work; but also to serve as social intermediaries to promote better working relationships—that may also help to reverse their sentiments of being underappreciated, underutilized and undervalued in their unit. SOT-3 (male and engineer for network systems) stated that, “returnees are usually enrolled in a buddy program to further help them get adjusted to the situations” of the workplace.

Figure 9.1 shows the proportion of returned IT employees that expressed difficulties adjusting at least professionally at work. The percentages of returned employees that stated they had adjustment issues was less than 25% for those who had been away for less than 10 years at GISU. While migrants that felt they had difficulties adjustment problems spiked to 55% for those who had been gone for 11 to 15 years at GISU, the number dropped to 35% for those who had been abroad for over 16 years working in the IT-BPO industry in London, New York, San Francisco and other global cities. Migrants who had been away for less than 10 years kept in contact with friends, family and some recruiters and thus were well informed of work conditions back in India. Those that had gone away for 11 to 15 years held unrealistic expectations of living and working back in India given their previous life in Australia, the United Kingdom and United States (Watkins, 2013). And those that had been abroad for over 16 to 20 years also misunderstood how life would be in India, but their periodic visits for work and leisure probably contributed to their ability to re-adjust to the situation at GISU. E-8 (females and welfare officer) substantiated, “there is difference in people’s re-adjustment time mostly because it’s about if they truly understand...what they have come to do here.” Thus, there are challenges to the repatriation process of the firm.

Concomitantly, some returnees also “got anxious, depressed and insecure whenever they thought whether this is what they really wanted to do” (Aggarwal, 2008; 17)—because they were not experiencing the excitement, satisfaction and utility that they had expected from returning to work for GISU. Additionally, most of the returnees’ teenage children were not able to cope with their new schooling curriculum. Their spouses felt a loss of independence from not being able to get basic items needed in the household. And constantly dealing with different family members’ health problems affected their efforts at settling down in New Delhi. E-8 (female and welfare officer) put it best when she stated:

They are getting phone calls that the kids need tuition for classes, the wife does not know where to go to shop (also trouble finding a job) and everyone is always sick from the heat, water or New Delhi’s air. They are not happy with their flat, public infrastructure or living in a crowded city (raising concerns about moving around, safety and lifestyle) in India. There is a lot of getting used to life back home.

With respect to the interviews and collected survey data, returnees complained about the lack of amenities, suitable housing, public infrastructure and security issues as influencing their work performance. Returned IT migrants’ ability to fully readjust to their new work life thus depended on the extent of their return preparations, duration of stay abroad and transnational ties to the Indian IT-BPO industry. More importantly, transnationals and HRD’s buddy program facilitate the readjustment of most returned IT migrants to their new work life in India. Transnationals also helped returned IT migrants’ families cope with the ‘cultural realities’ which often involved a reverse culture shock, tending to cause, magnify and at times even prolong their efforts to permanently settle down in New Delhi. Even though most of the IT migrants faced difficulties that extended beyond the work realm of GISU into their personal, family and social life in New Delhi, these challenges were usually overcome within 1 to 2 years, which eventually led to their permanent settlement in the locality. In this sense, IT migrants will often have to overcome a very broad set of adjustment issues in their locality (Gmelch, 1980; Sekher, 1993; Singh, 2003; Khadria, 2004; ILO, 2013). Overall, reintegration of migrants not only into GISU, but also their local surroundings is important and vital to realizing their potential knowledge benefits for the firm.

Chapter Ten

Post-Return Experiences and Knowledge Transfers

The post-return experiences of transnationals and IT returnees tend to be intimately related to their socialization into the firm. With this mind, this chapter examines the strength of the migrants' social ties—level of intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity—and its association with their transfer of knowledge resources to non-migrants in GISU. Further, migrants' social ties are examined to explain their knowledge codification efforts and if offering certain monetary or non-monetary rewards might affect returned employees and non-migrants transfer of their knowledge resources to different stakeholders within GISU. Additionally, an analysis of GISU's knowledge structure will help to explain the potential role that returned employees play in intra-organizational knowledge transfers in the firm. This chapter thus delimits the diverse sets of interrelationships and contextual issues to specify the role of returnees—in relation to localized and/or distanced knowledge transfers, how it is possibly perceived, translated as well as transferred to others—thus offering some insight on their intended benefits and unintended consequences for the knowledge transfer processes of the workplace.

10.1 Interpersonal Knowledge Relations at Work

Employees bonds of friendship exhibit in-group favoritism, “whereas their interaction with members [transnationals, returnees and non-migrants] that had coexisted more or less peacefully can be transformed into two hostile factions, never losing the opportunity to deride the out-group” (Brown, 1996: 538). The social interactions between transnationals, returnees and non-migrants can affect their desire to share know-how, routines, practices and resources at work (McPherson et al., 2001; Ruef et al., 2003; Kilduff and Brass, 2010). Thus, understanding such workers' interpersonal knowledge relations, that are bound by the work context, intra-company transfer cycles and institutional barriers, can help to elucidate the knowledge transfer processes of the workplace.

Transnationals who have done a stint abroad—either for training, short-term assignments or to work for a longer duration of time—will not maintain a high level of intimacy, face-to-face contact or mutual exchanges with non-migrants on their IT project team. Transnationals engage in IT work that results in their brief, circular and temporary physical presence within GISU. And returnees are thought to have a low level of emotional attachment, frequency of interaction and reciprocity with non-migrants in GISU—due to their extended physical absence from India. Whether it is transnationals or those who have returned from abroad, they engage non-migrants in a formal, responsive-oriented and often structured manner resulting in loosely connected, distant and fragmented social ties within GISU. But transnationals and returnees who engage one another in a relaxed, proactive and non-structured manner may be able to create close, tight-knit and cohesive social networks in the workplace (Tsai, 2001; Kilduff and Tsai, 2003). The ways in which such workers constitute their social ties ultimately determines the ensuing work dynamics of the workplace.

Transnationals, returnees and non-migrants communicate electronically to transfer codified information or they use face-to-face meetings to transfer private and/or tacit knowledge. Amin (2000) found workers who electronically communicate and those that prefer face-to-face meetings can at times be interwoven to transfer codified and tacit knowledge. These claims are compatible with Granovetter's (1983) weak social ties hypothesis to the extent that employees who are emotionally disconnected, have limited social interactions and maintain non-reciprocal ties will transfer codified rather than tacit knowledge in their units. In order to build stronger social ties, employees will have to invest a considerable amount of time, effort and resources to go beyond simple codification to transfer complex private or tacit knowledge in GISU. Under special circumstances, employees may be able to forge intermediate social relations—in between weak and strong social ties—for transferring knowledge to achieve common goals in GISU. Differences in workers' social relationships are due to the mix of homophilic ties, the work context and shared understandings in the workplace. The ways in which GISU's workers forge social relationships will have implications for knowledge transfer processes of the firm. Therefore, a better understanding of interpersonal work relationships may elucidate the knowledge transfer processes of the firm.

Table 10.1: Social Network Analysis of Returned and Stayed Employees' Interpersonal Knowledge Relationships at GISU

Breakdown of Employees by their Occupation	Intimacy	Frequency of Contact	Reciprocity	Strength of Social Ties	Total
Code Programmers Returned-Stayed	Acquaintance	Rarely	No	Weak	-
Software Engineers Returned-Stayed	Acquaintance	Rarely	No	Weak	-
Network Systemists Returned-Stayed	Acquaintance	Rarely	No	Weak	-
Others Returned-Stayed	Acquaintance	Rarely	No	Weak	-
Transnationals Returned-Stayed-Transnational	Close Acquaintance	Occasionally	Yes	Intermediate	
Total Number of Returned Respondents	-	-	-	-	150
Total Number of Stayed Respondents	-	-	-	-	155
Total Number of Transnational Respondents	-	-	-	-	25
Total Sample Size	-	-	-	-	330

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The respondents were asked, "How emotionally close are you to employees in the following teams, departments or units in GISU?" "How often do you interact with employees in the following teams, departments or units in GISU?" and "How would you define the extent of your reciprocal exchanges with employees in the following teams, departments or units in GISU?" The respondents used a five-point Likert scale to rate their responses and marked their scores on the staff roster attached to the back of the survey.

Note 2: The collected valued data on employees' emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity which was averaged into a score on the overall strength of their social ties was organized into block matrices to analyze the level of socialization of returnees, stayers and transnationals within and between each of their occupational groups at GISU.

Note 3: The social network data was analyzed using the UCINET v.6 to calculate the closeness centrality for emotional closeness, betweenness for frequency of interaction, cohesion for reciprocity and network homophily for the strength of social ties within and between returned, stayers and transnationals in their occupational groups at GISU. The analyses generated descriptive statistics (mean, std., sum, variance, sum of squares, mean-centered sum of squares, Euclidian norm, the minimum and maximum path distances), numerical values and network index numbers as percentages on the level of social connectivity within and between the different groups of workers at GISU. How the data was analyzed and the numerical values are given below, but the above table presents the necessary information descriptively to discuss the affect of worker's social interactions on their interpersonal knowledge relationships in the firm.

Note 4: The purpose of this table is to show the level of socialization between returnees, stayers and to a limited extent transnationals within each occupational group so as to better triangulate the information with case interviews to explain the effect of their social ties on the knowledge transfer processes in the organization.

Note 5: In the dialog drop box of UCINET v. 6, NETWORK >CENTRALITY >CLOSENESS, NETWORK >CENTRALITY >FLOW BETWEENNESS, NETWORK >COHESION >RECIPROCITY and NETWORK >COHESION >HOMOPHILY was clicked to run operations as in the previous case study so their details are not repeated. In addition, to the above computations, NETWORK >TRIAD CENSUS was clicked to calculate the number of times each type of triad is present in an ego-network. The triads are labeled as A,B,C and Z where A is the number of reciprocated ties, B is the number of unreciprocated ties and C is the number of null ties while the Z term is a letter (U,C,D or T) used to differentiate between different triads in which the numbers of ties are the same in the ego-network (i.e. The LOG FILE generates an output sheet that provide codes on the different types of triads and a simple count on how many times each kind of triad appeared in the data. The codes are as follows: 003=A,B,C empty triad, 01=A->B, C, triad with a single directed edge, 102=A<->B, C triad with a reciprocated connection between two vertices, 021D=<-B->C, triadic out-star, 021U=A->B<-C triadic in-star, 021C=A->B->C, directed line, 111D=A<->B<-C, 111U=A<->B->C, 030T=A->B<-C, A->C, 030C=A<-B<-C, A->C, 201=A<->B<->C, 120D=A<-B->C, A<->C, 120U=A->B<-C, A<->C, 120C=A->B->C, A<->C, 210=A->B<->C, A<->C and 300=A<->B<->C, A<->C, complete triad. In this sense, the data might show 003=0, 102=10, 300=2 and so forth on the triads that exist in the directed ego-network.) Furthermore, NETWORKS >COHESION >TRANSITIVITY was clicked to calculate the number of triples which are transitive divided by the total number of triples in the ego-network. However, for valued data NETWORKS > COHESION >TRANSITIVITY runs an algorithm based on the Granovetter Method to calculate the strength of the transitivity among an actors' triad in the ego-network (i.e. A triple x_{ik}, x_{ij}, x_{jk} is transitive if whenever $\min(x_{ij}, x_{jk})^3 \leq x_{ik}$ then $x_{ik} \geq g$ where $v=0$ and $g=1$ which means that a strong transitivity is one in which there are connections AB, BC, and AC and the connection AC is stronger than the Min value of Strong tie. Intermediate transitivity is one in which there are connections AB, BC and AC and the value of AC is less than the threshold for a strong tie, but greater than the threshold Min value of Weak tie. Weak transitivity is one in which there are connections AB, BC and AC and the value of AC is equal to or less than the threshold for Min value of Weak tie in the network.)

Note 6: For the sake of brevity only the network index numbers and the transitivity of order triples as percentages are presented below: Returned code programmers' closeness centrality is 70.0, the flow betweenness centrality is 65.0, cohesion reciprocity is 75.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.70 amongst themselves in their team. Returned software engineers' closeness centrality is 82.0, flow betweenness centrality is 74.0, cohesion reciprocity is 68.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.65 amongst themselves in their team. Returned network systemists' closeness centrality is 90.0, flow betweenness centrality is 82.0, cohesion reciprocity is 77.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.80 amongst themselves in their team. Returned non-IT workers' closeness centrality is 60.0, flow betweenness centrality is 55.0, cohesion reciprocity is 68.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.65 amongst themselves in their team. Non-migrant code programmers' closeness centrality is 71.0, flow betweenness centrality is 60.0, cohesion reciprocity is 65.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.60 at work. Non-migrant software engineers' closeness centrality is 68.4, the flow betweenness centrality is 72.5, cohesion reciprocity is 88.5 and cohesion homophilia is +0.65 at work. Non-migrant network systemists' closeness centrality is 74.2, the flow betweenness centrality is 80.5, cohesion reciprocity is 80.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.74 at work. Non-migrant non-IT workers' closeness centrality is 65.0, the flow betweenness centrality is 68.0, cohesion reciprocity is 70.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.80 at work. More importantly, between returned and non-migrant code programmers the closeness centrality is 24.4, flow betweenness centrality is 50.5, cohesion reciprocity is 12.8 and cohesion homophilia is +0.25 in the workplace. Between returned and non-migrant software engineers the closeness centrality is 48.5, flow betweenness centrality is 30.5, cohesion reciprocity is 15.0 and cohesion homophilia is +0.33 in the workplace. Between returned and non-migrant network systemists the closeness centrality is 48.0, the flow betweenness centrality is 40.4, cohesion reciprocity is 18.2 and cohesion homophilia is +0.22 in the workplace. Between returned and non-migrant non-IT workers the closeness centrality is 10.0, the flow betweenness centrality is 12.0, cohesion reciprocity is 9.8 and cohesion homophilia is +0.11 in the workplace. And between returned, stayed and transnationals the closeness centrality is 53.5, flow betweenness centrality is 55.0, cohesion reciprocity is 66.7 and cohesion homophilia is +0.55 in the workplace. Lastly, the triad of returned-stayed-transnational's transitivity was 77.8 in GISU.

Note 7: The different numerical values were used to label returned employees' social relationship with transnationals and their non-migrant counterparts at work. For the given network index numbers any percentage above 55.0 denotes Friendship, Frequent Interaction, Reciprocity and/or Strong Social Tie between returned employees and non-migrants in each of their occupational groups at GISU. And vice versa any percentage below 55.0 denotes an Acquaintance, Rare Interaction, No Reciprocity and/or Weak Social Tie between returned employees and their non-migrant counterparts in GISU. Because the numerical values on the triad of returned-stayed-transnationals is harder to interpret their transitivity which is expressed as the percentage of triples (77.8) whose connections had a value greater than the threshold Min value of Weak tie but less than the Min value of strong tie was used as evidence to show their tie-strength in the firm (Granovetter, 1983; Louch, 2000; Shi et al., 2006).

Note 8: It is a common practice to not only use a cut-off point or threshold when interpreting social network data, but also label the actors/nodes' social relationships to ease the amount of technical terminology needed to explain the different interactions, multiplex of ties and the social context of a setting.

Note 9: A limitation of this table is that the results do not control for differences among occupational groups within the returned and stayed categories, which means the description of the nature of the workers' social interactions and their affect on knowledge transfers will be restricted to specific contexts in the organization.

Most of the code programmers communicated syntax corrections, application configuration details and compatibility specifications of their IT client's assignments electronically to non-migrants on the project team. Likewise, software engineers sent open-source code files, computer models and systems integration methods on projects to non-migrants in their unit. And network systemists sent cloud computing matrices, Intel requirements on hardware processors and new systems design to non-migrants at work. These returned employees transferred codified information by connecting with non-migrants on different tasks, client projects, processes and other work purposes at GISU. Returnees that transferred codified information "through connections cannot be taken to mean they are close to others" (Dutton and Heaphy, 2003: 270) in GISU. Table 10.1 presents the level of employee socialization across the different occupational groups in GISU. Returnees tend to be acquaintances with non-migrants because they do not feel close to them in GISU. SOT-2 (female and UNIX specialist), SHT-3 (male and consultant of IT devices) and STT-4 (male and team lead for onshore IT development) explained:

I get emails with the subject heading 'Request to Fix' from my colleagues. (No! I have to re-write code blocks for Mr. XXX-XXXX who is on our team to make sure the client's project does not get completely derailed.) I sit behind a computer screen, which makes me faceless so typing out 'thank you' is more of a formality on their part than anything else. (No! I am always analyzing IT bugs, coming up with plug-ins or re-configuring components to get it to work.) The impression I get is that I am invisible.

When they do personally speak to us it is in a cold manner. (Yes! It is obvious that Mr. XXX-XXXX and Mr. XXX XXXX talk British English to give me this image of how they are responsible for what needs to be done on projects.) Returned software engineers use their know-how from their job in London's Banking Services, but that is different to 'what we have to do' in GISU. (Yes! It's unfair to give NRI employees a superiority status just for working on IT content, graphics and voice interface services.) Usually, workers in my unit see this as a structural problem.

We are told to have a communiqué trail as a precaution. (Not sure? There is Ms. XXX-XXXX, Ms. XXX-XXXX and Mr. XXX-XXXX who I was in touch with to create the ITR-5 forms for the U.S. Internal Revenue Services. But when I rotated back to work for GISU they seemed familiarly awkward at work.) Having an overseas experience refined my social etiquettes, sense of professionalism and work ethics that caused non-migrants discomfort in the unit. (It is not possible for Indians to get special preference because it comes down to meeting our set deadlines and performance targets.) Well, I think it is an organizational culture issue.

The lack of gratitude that code programmers tend to feel could be attributed to their perception of being isolated by non-migrants—who most probably perceived these returnees as strangers that were a threat to their current position on the IT project team. The cold mannerism bothered software engineers as they expressed feeling meaningless in the presence of returned employees—who most probably also perceived these non-migrants not as friends but rather as bosses within the project team. Also, there was an overpowering sense of ‘familiarily awkwardness’ that network systemists felt towards non-migrants—who most probably also perceived these transnationals as distant family members at work. This suggests blurring the lines of social distinction might have led to cultural clashes in GISU. As STT-3 (male and team lead for offshore IT operations) revealed:

All of us [returned employees, stayed and transnationals] will mostly engage each other from our PCs, sometimes through personal contact but rarely in both ways. Which is why there is this huge emotional distance between ‘most of us’ even within the same IT project team. When everything is at your fingertips [emailing, electronic discussions, intranet, video-conferencing and world-wide web] there is no need to walk over to someone’s cubicle to exchange ideas, learn about their experiences or get exposed to new areas to know what is out there.

There is virtually no emotional bond between returnees and non-migrants, who are driven apart by social ethics of individualization in which these workers focus on achieving personal goals in a very competitive manner. Transnationals and non-migrants seem to be socially segregated on the basis of being either technical or professional workers in GISU’s IT workflow. More interestingly, the triad of returnees, stayers and transnationals suggests that these workers are socially disjointed in their units, which might be due to what seems to be a lack of core organizational culture within GISU.¹² Bridging the emotional distance between these workers requires promoting informal work interactions, building an inclusive work structure and developing a stronger value-oriented organizational culture at GISU. So, bettering intimacy amongst the workers is an essential part of their socialization that may foster an integrated workplace.

¹² Returnees have a low-level emotional connection with stayers and both these groups of workers have moderate-level intimacy with transnationals at work. And the transitivity of 77.8 (48 links between returnees and transnationals and 29 links between them and stayers) suggests that there is uneven break in the social connectivity between these workers in GISU.

There were occasions when code programmers had to communicate face-to-face with non-migrants to figure out how to fix coding errors, application malware and net servers that went down. There were also instances when software engineers had to have face-to-face conversations with non-migrants to relay new application features that needed to be built into open source files, cache capabilities of the script and JAVA extensions to run their programs for projects. Network systemists sometimes also had to engage in face-to-face talks with their non-migrant counterparts on encryption requirements to enable access to IT clients' user accounts, reset the security firewall on software programs and modify the operating systems of the projects. Returned employees transferred tacit information to non-migrants "through face-to-face meetings...intermittently and only when time permitted and planned in advance with teams in the cross-distributed groups" (Ramesh, 2004: 21) within GISU. Referring back to Table 10.1 on the level of employee socialization across different occupational groups shows that: returnees rarely had face-to-face interaction with non-migrants except when it pertained to work matters in GISU. SHT-5 (male and IT engineer of computer hardware) elaborated:

Every piece of information and my knowledge on it cannot be emailed...If I believe the difficulty, technicality and the intricacies of the tasks is leading to a lot of email exchanges without a clear convergence on an exact answer to the problems...The next thing is to request for a telephone call to try and discuss my concerns on tasks on-hand with the team leader Mr. XXX-XXXX in conference with his IT group for a concrete resolution on the issues. After that it might come to arranging a face-to-face meeting. I will prepare a brief on the tasks, exact concerns, progress sheets filed by the team leaders that is Ms. XXX XXXX, Mr. XXX XXXX, Mr. XXX XXXX and Mr. XXX XXXX and project timelines to give to the assembled IT groups so that they can arrive at a solution on NeGp [National E-Governance Plan] issues. These face-to-face meetings are formally organized because most IT team leaders are busy, members on the IT project team could be out on sick leave, people like Ms. XXX XXXX, and Mr. XXX XXXX [who are returned migrants] might have been sent on a 10-day job rotation to Gurgaon, Lucknow and the Mumbai offices to work on cross-industry e-projects. And then there are those working on enabling IT-IETS services onsite. The management of our work interactions is usually under strict departmental guidelines. Really! We have to interact like this because there is too much to do for IT projects under the NeGp. Not really! The personal work interactions have more to do with respect, trust and being good-natured. Nobody like Ms. XXX XXXX, Mrs. XXX XXXX, Mr. XXX XXXX, Mr. XXX XXXX or Mr. XXX XXXX [from the group of returned people] is going to pay me mind. Particularly, about how I can become a good IT performer, the right career moves to make in GISU or helping to facilitate an overseas trip to get important work experience. This is the real-deal situation at GISU. Well, it is just how it works when you live, work and end up remaining in this place.

Returned employees often receive requests for face-to-face talks from junior-level and non-migrant coders so as to get client's details, the necessary domain-specific knowledge and guidance on appurtenances to resolve difficult problems. Transnationals have "short, selective, sporadic and informal discussions" (Oshiri et al., 2007: 55) with mid-level and returned software engineers to improve work interdependence on NeGp (National E-Governance Plan) IT projects among the departments across the unit. Non-migrants had to complete formalities associated with pre-arranging supervisory meetings with senior-level IT personnel—most of whom were returnees or transnationals that are fiduciarily liable for work done in GISU. SOT-17 (male and engineer for network services) substantiated that, "tasks, deadlines and processes determine work interactions in GISU."

The returned employees rarely had face-to-face dealings with non-migrants as they do not have to achieve collective work goals on NeGp IT projects. Occasional face-to-face and regular electronic interactions did take place among several IT returnees and transnationals on cross-industry groups in the unit. The reason could be that returnees and transnationals might have established trust-based relationships, which in turn, created a shared understanding of what it means 'working together' that transcends the boundaries of their unit. E-11 (female and overseas deployment manager) further stated that, "it is difficult for our Indians to interact with the IT specialists and cross-staffers because these people are usually separated into local, domestic and globally-based deployment teams...there is no single physical space that they all share in the workplace."

While the triad of returnees, stayers and transnationals have some personal, work and virtual exchanges, they are unable to develop an emotional bond, deep personal connections and strong social relations that tie them together within their teams, across cross-groups of teams and inter-units. Part of the reason is that these workers operate mostly in the virtual world and thus there is no physical space that creates an interactive environment in GISU. Moreover, HRD reduces the workers' social and work interactions due to very strict work processes that are in place to maintain control over IT operations, maintain fiduciary responsibility to customers and adhere to regulation mandates of the IT-BPO industry (Oshiri et al., 2007). Thus, better socialization of the workers is integral to an interactive work environment in the firm.

Several code programmers, software engineers and network systemists used electronic forums, groupware, and social media tools to coordinate tasks with their non-migrant counterparts on different IT project teams (Constant et al., 1996). These returned employees' electronic exchanges enabled the transmission of only codified information to non-migrants that is less likely to be reciprocated at work. Referring back to Table 10.1 on the level of employee socialization across the different occupational groups shows: returnees and non-migrants do not often maintain exchanges based on reciprocity in GISU. SHT-2 (female and IT analyst) highlighted:

Of course! It was expected that I should do everything from my work computer. (Mr. XXX-XXXX who is the team leader of the IT project called SWAN-III posts online instructions on what to do, when to do it and also why it has to be done before everything else.) It's all machine-to-machine exchanges. (Mr. XXX-XXXX who is a returnee does not care what we want to do, which time we are free to do it and what priorities we have for our own work.) Without giving us 'ownership' of the e-project there is not going to be real interactions or reciprocation because people do not want to risk failing at work. There is not a unified purpose, practice or [social] process that is bringing us together to build up the unit.

Despite there being regular virtual exchanges between returned employees and non-migrants on NeGp projects, they are not really known to each other at work. The virtual exchanges enabled returned employees and non-migrants to contact one another "but they have little reciprocity since team members do not interact to any significant degree" (Rosen et al., 2007: 262-263) in their units. However, the triad of returnees, stayers and transnationals did have person-to-person social exchanges, albeit occasionally, that generated feelings and often obligations of reciprocity amongst them. E-5 (male and IT manager) explained that, "our workers need to feel they are doing something that somehow makes a difference in the NeGp project. We do give them a lot of freedom but those that truly get involved tell us they are accountable for what they do and in a way expressing ownership over the work process. They are committed to make it work with others to reach their goals by getting fully invested into the job." Taking ownership of the NeGp project, sharing experiences, memories and personal stories improve workers socialization. Overall, having balanced interpersonal work relations encourages workers to transcend set boundaries of the work setting.

Returned employees tend to connect with non-migrants mostly through electronic means. Most returnees will transmit knowledge-informing data to non-migrants—not tacit knowledge and thought process that often has to be interpreted, converted and disseminated for it be useful for project teams in the workplace. For a number of practical reasons returnees rarely transfer private or tacit knowledge to non-migrants at work. SOT-1 (female and consultant of IT applications) asserted, “I have the know-how but then you are telling me to take on the mental pressure to explain my approach to engineering to those who I barely know in the unit.” SHT-4 (female and engineer of software programs) said that, “modifications are done and instructions are sent to the different teams because it is impossible to know everybody working in the unit.” STT-1 (male and consultant of software applications) stated that, “once our part is done they dissolve us into other NeGp projects in the unit.” Given the mental stress associated with NeGp projects, time constraints and the constant job rotations to different groups, units and offshore locations, it is difficult to socially interact and transfer knowledge in GISU.

Again, Table 10.1 on the level of employee socialization across the different occupational groups shows that: returnees and non-migrants tend to maintain weak social ties—lack of emotional connection, infrequent contact and non-reciprocity in exchanges at work. Returnees and non-migrants use their weak social ties to initiate contact with other persons, expand their social reach to personnel whose corporeal presence had been removed from the teams and maintain cordial, even if superficial, relations with a greater number of staffers in the unit. Interestingly, returnees, non-migrants and transnationals were able to create intermediate social ties—informal meetings, talks and conferences—to promote greater connectivity and work ownership within their respective team, department or unit. Returnees, non-migrants’ and transnationals’ intermediate social ties helped to improve the transmission of complex codifiable knowledge in the unit. The analysis further suggest that the triad of returnees, stayers and transnationals will be able to transfer private and/or tacit knowledge if they develop strong social ties “that inspires creativity, confidence, shared social understandings or a good reputation” (Davenport and Prusak, 1998: 36) across the units. While the socialization of some workers can raise the innovation capacity of units, GISU’s organizational structure may further impact knowledge transfers within the firm.

Essentially, active communication by electronic modes, passive face-to-face encounters and even virtual channels can bring returnees and non-migrants together. However, E-20 (male and executive) made the observation:

The use of PCs can be disruptive to knowledge transfers if not supplemented with a personal touch. (Because I am a management executive I can honestly tell you that once the NeGp project is completed most employees' work interactions begin to decline in the unit.) We are trying to get our employees [returnees, Indians and other people] to work together outside their unit. The difference is that employees with good social ties.... (Like those that have returned from abroad have done so through their business contacts, co-workers they previously know from outsourced projects and friends they met while working abroad that are now based in GISU)... have to become integrated in the workplace. We understand that we are not dealing with PC machines but human beings, which is why it's imperative to develop a sense of community in the firm.

Non-migrants prefer face-to-face interactions with returnees and transnationals, as they believe this is the only genuine way to receive high-quality knowledge input to improve capabilities at work. While non-migrants acknowledged the importance of face-to-face interactions with returnees and transnationals for transferring high-quality knowledge, employees with overseas exposure insisted on maintaining close and friendly social relations amongst themselves, as they believed it would raise their own work performance in GISU. Most of the employees recognized that face-to-face interactions and not electronic exchanges are best for building close, frequent and reciprocal ties—given its potential for transferring tacit, creative and innovative IT knowledge to the unit. While employees found that it is cognitively easier to transfer sticky knowledge through intermediate social ties, Hansen et al (1999) reasoned that strong social ties increased group cohesion and thus the willingness to adopt innovations among 120 project teams across 41 sub-units in an electronics company. Similarly, Pannirselvam et al. (2011) showed that strong social ties not only increased group cohesion, but also tends to quicken enculturation—cooperative knowledge exchanges that are based on hard work, professionalism, ethical standards and communitarian values—of team members temporarily relocated to client sites and those stationed at the parent firm (Oshiri, 2009). Therefore, establishing a strong sense of community may help to facilitate knowledge transfer processes of the firm.

Overall, returned employees tend to socialize with employees who had traits similar to their own—homophilic ties that led to the formation of a close friendship marked by an increase in intimacy, frequency of face-to-face interactions and time spent discussing complex IT matters. In contrast, returned employees' lack of emotional attachment, sporadic interaction and non-reciprocal relations with non-migrants led to interpersonal relationships that revolved around solving work problems. But returnees', stayers' and transnationals' mixed emotional and social connections led to the transfer of knowledge content that at times went beyond work to personal issues. Returnees' weak social ties with non-migrants are useful for disseminating simple codified information, but their intermediate social ties with transnationals were observed to transfer complex codified knowledge amongst one another at work. Nonetheless, these workers need to forge strong social ties to transfer their private and/or tacit knowledge to different IT teams that can help to build up the innovation capacity of the unit. The above-mentioned workers will need to supplement their electronic and virtual exchanges with more face-to-face interactions that are less disruptive to the transfer of overseas knowledge resources within the workplace. Nevertheless, GISU's organizational structure, which separates functions, people, teams and work processes, requires a greater sense of community to be kindled within the firm. Therefore, striking the right balance in terms of use of technologies amongst workers, socialization efforts and organizational processes can improve knowledge flows within the firm.

10.2 Knowledge Codification Efforts in the Workplace

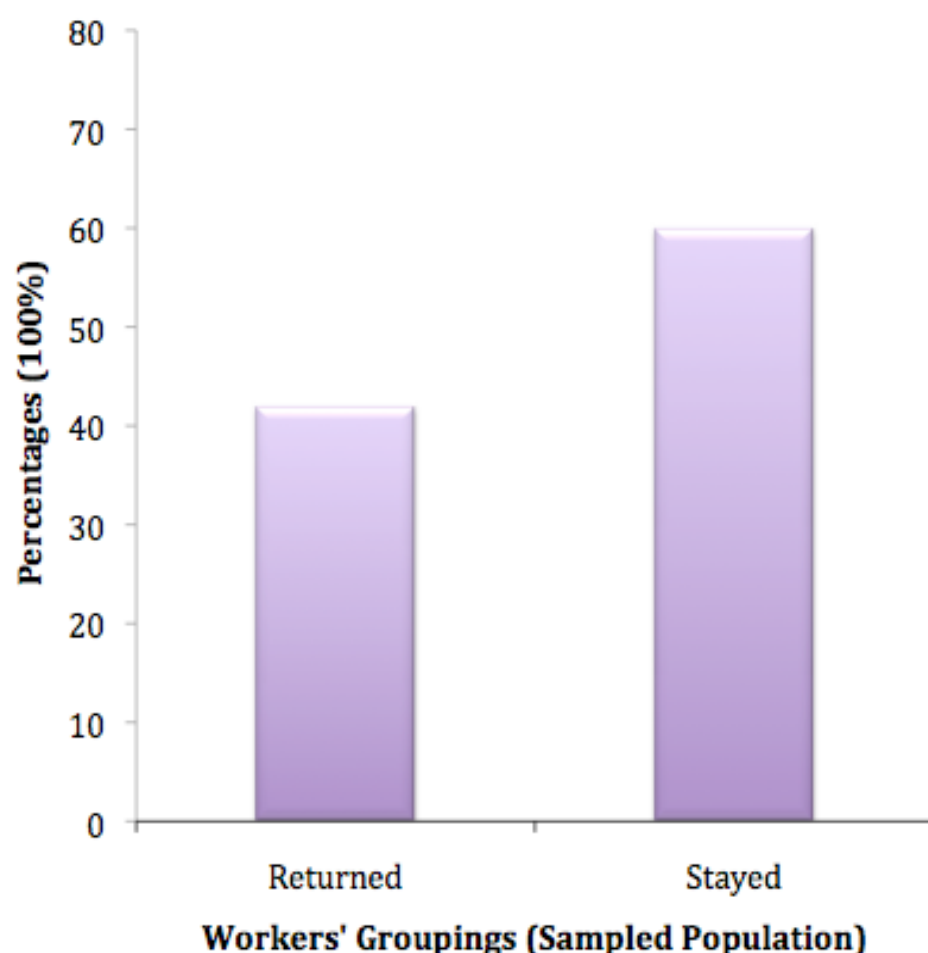
Because employees tend to primarily use digital, electronic and interactive technologies to communicate with one another, it might also influence the amount of time, energy and resources they expend sharing their knowledge in the units. Not only can employees' codification efforts alter their work interactions due to the pervasiveness of using information technologies, but also their existing social ties that affects the transfer of tacit or their potentially codifiable private knowledge at work. While offering rewards might improve employees' social interactions and further their knowledge codification efforts, other contravening issues also need to be considered jointly as it may impact the knowledge transfer processes of the firm.

Often employees will impart some amount of tacit information to fellow colleagues involved with automation, building servers or even installing hardware components into computers for customers. SHT-1 (male and C++ code specialist) confirmed that, “some tacit information is given to clear the air but explicit work orders sets the assembly line into motion [defining IT concepts, designs, coding programs, running tests and systems integration] so that the work can get done for their clients.” Furthermore, employees are individually responsible for timely dissemination of information that needs to be codified for staff in order to complete IT projects. Because employees are either rotated to other IT projects, sent to different cross-industry groups or even offshore sites, knowledge codification is essentially for streamlining work being done in the units.

Importantly, it has been observed that most of the IT returnees tend to be mere acquaintances with their non-migrant counterparts at work. IT returnees and transnationals predominately have computer-based interactions and thus they tend to have less face-to-face meetings with non-migrants on their teams at work. As IT returnees, transnationals and non-migrants often use digital, electronic and virtual networks to communicate with one another on their projects, such modes of exchanges become the primary way employees convert their potentially codifiable private knowledge in the units. A great deal of returnees, transnationals and non-migrants private knowledge is linked to their expertise, experience and exposure, that even if uploaded to EKR, has to be extracted, codified and stored for it to be accessible to people, teams and units in GISU.

Interestingly, HRD makes every effort to try and harness the competencies, skills and innovative solutions of returnees, transnationals and non-migrants as most of their tasks tend to be repetitive, routinized and the outputs can be reused for different projects. That highly attenuated versions of groupware, virtual media and information technologies can reduce transaction costs, enlarge the pool of knowledge resources and improve co-specialization of returnees and non-migrants in their units. While EKR can help to convert potentially codifiable private knowledge, it might also affect returnees and non-migrants social relationships and thus the amount of time, energy and resources expended transferring knowledge in GISU. Therefore, evaluating the linkage between returnees’ social ties with other issues can better elucidate the knowledge transfer process of the firm

Figure 10.1: Proportion of Employees Who Believe that Knowledge Codification Efforts Weaken their Social Relations



Source: Author's results based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked the respondents "Do you think knowledge codification would weaken your social relations in the workplace?" The response, either a Yes or No, was cross tabulated by the type of employee—returned and non-migrant—working for GISU. The frequency distributions of the employees' responses is expressed as percentages in the above bar graph. The figure only shows the percentages of returned and non-migrant employees who felt knowledge codification weakens their social ties with team members, workgroups, departments or units in the firm. The purpose of this figure is to highlight how increasing knowledge codification efforts of employees potentially affects the strength of their existing social ties with stakeholders in the firm. The results are used to explain how knowledge codification may impact the knowledge transfer processes of the workplace.

Figure 10.1 shows the proportion of employees who believe codification would weaken their social relations: 42% of returnees stated codification would weaken their social ties with non-migrants on their teams. These IT returnees believed that codification would weaken their social ties with non-migrants who would not need to approach them to extract private knowledge as it would readily be available in the units. E-18 (male and HRD manager) explained that, “codification increases reliance on EKR and reduces engagement to computer-based interactions” that results in returnees maintaining weak social ties with non-migrants, teams and cross-industry groups at work. Codification tends to terminate existing weak social ties between returnees, non-migrants and other stakeholders in the workplace.

Interestingly, the figure reveals that 60% of non-migrants reported codification would weaken their social ties with returnees on their teams. These non-migrants felt that codification would weaken their social ties with returnees as the latter group would be more likely to refuse to impart private knowledge and refer them to EKR for project solutions in the unit. SHT-8 (male and troubleshooter for network servers) explained, “codification hampers creativity and the transfer of tacit knowledge” so returnees to maintain their competitive edge will only sustain weak social ties with non-migrants in the units. Some non-migrants reasoned codification would reduce their strong social ties to weak ones with returnees who want to preserve their economic value, social status and the power they wield in GISU.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the figure, the presence of transnationals and EKR tended to “foster biographical orientations that strengthened weak social ties” (Każmierska et al., 2011: 7) into intermediate social relations with some returnees and non-migrants at work. Importantly, transnationals and virtual exchanges serve as knowledge intermediaries that enable returnees and non-migrants to go back and forth with each other, with lesser social constraints, for the dissemination of knowledge in the units. However, STT-2 (male and engineer of network servers) pointed out that, “when anybody can ‘virtually’ reach everybody, grant them access to organizational resources and make opportunities available...this and [transnationals who are constantly circulating from project to project, groups and units] prevents strong social [ties] and networks from forming across the units in GISU.” The results suggest that migrants’ knowledge transfers tend to be impacted by the ‘social context’ in which they occur in the organization.

Accordingly, a number of factors tend to be associated with the extent to which an employee codifies his or her aptitude, skills and prior achievements to assist co-workers to build custom application tools, intranet sites or web protocols for customers. One of the factors is altruism that gives some employees enjoyment from codifying their expertise, know-how and work experiences that enable co-workers to learn how to design custom or generic software programs for their clients. The desire to help others in their project team might also evoke feelings of excitement and a sense of accomplishment when they contribute to the different phases of IT development. Given these intrinsic motivations, some employees might make the effort to convert their potentially codifiable private knowledge into an accessible format to be used by others at GISU. A major theme that emerged from the transcripts is that non-migrants more so than returnees tend to codify their private know-how because they felt a sense of accomplishment when others used their insights to improve functioning in the unit. SHT-1 (male and C++ specialist), SHT-3 (male and analyst of applications), SHT-6 (male and troubleshooter for networks) and SHT-4 (female and coordinator for IT systems integration) highlighted intrinsic rewards as driving their knowledge codification efforts when they said:

I do get emails from my colleagues asking for answers to really complicated work problems. (Mostly it is Mr. XXX-XXXX who is a technician in our IT application support team downstairs.) There is always this level of excitement to figure out, solve and essential close issued tickets.

I carry out online workshops for co-workers that want to learn layering methods. (I usually conduct these workshops for Mr. XXX-XXXX and his domestic IT team in our building.) I get immense pleasure in teaching my thought process to them in developing new IT products, solutions and services.

We invest our knowledge in dictionaries, databases and IT directories so that employees can grab codes, software programs and IT designs. (Perhaps it makes IT learning objects accessible to cross-industry teams in the unit.) I feel proud when my efforts can better GISU's output.

We use ICALMS to track the employees' activities, competency ratings and even progress made on e-governance projects. (It quantifies the efforts, knowledge deposits and performance of onshore and offshore teams in the unit.) At least for me, it is satisfying to get official recognition for IT work.

The non-migrant computer programmers answer email queries regarding user accounts because they derive a certain amount of excitement from assisting fellow employees to close issued maintenance tickets at work. Most non-migrant software engineers choose to give lectures on IT layering, hashing and caching for embedded programs because of the thrill of teaching other employees how to build better network systems at work. Non-migrant network systemists also get great joy from sharing their personal insights via uploading them into internally accessible databases so that their team members can reuse the IT knowledge for their own e-governance projects at work. And non-migrant non-IT workers choose to codify technical knowledge by using different electronic modes of exchange with their team members because they find it professionally fulfilling to chip in and do a good job in the unit (e.g. creating plug-in extensions that stream news feeds to officers on patrol in subways, over radar scanners installed at police check points and updated into control rooms of traffic sub-stations to prevent jams during peak hours in the metros of New Delhi).

The software engineers, non-IT employees and some returnees find internal rewards to be sufficient to continue to codify their private IT knowledge for team members in the unit. Insofar as “these employees believe the source of information posted to be credible, there is a critical mass of users and that free-riding does not occur...suggesting they will openly share it with other teams by making deposits to the e-knowledge database of the unit” (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002: 692-693). SOT-10 (male and troubleshooter for IT networkers) stated, “I take part in the discussion threads because most of us on the web forum want to learn from one another to make our life easier.” SHIT-10 (male and systems engineer for domestic IT operations) further substantiated, “Forget who is dissatisfied, I know that a lot of my time and energy is saved using EKR.” The interviews corroborate Davenport’s (1997) findings that even if employees have low levels of job satisfaction, intrinsic rewards are sufficient to prompt the codification of private IT knowledge and its deposit into the electronic knowledge repository—merely for the reason that it can lessen transactions costs associated with IT project management and other work-related practices of the units (Hackman and Wageman, 1995). Intrinsic rewards are sufficient to encourage some employees to undertake codification and share knowledge, which may also reduce various costs in the workplace.

There are also non-internal factors that could be associated with employees' efforts to codify his or abilities, knowledge and personal experiences for certain co-workers assigned to the project. The most influential factor is the self-interest of the employees to codify their expertise, skills and exposure to new technologies for co-workers "to attain plus points, vouchers and a promotion for cooperating" (Agarwal, 2001: 294) on IT projects for different or even the same clientele. The self-interest of employees drives them to codify their personal IT creativity for other employees because they "expect to receive monies, perks and recognition" (APQC, 2012: 10) from their unit. Given these extrinsic motivations, some employees might make the effort to codify their private knowledge into an explicit form to be used by others in GISU. Another major theme that emerged from the interviewees' transcripts is that returnees more so than non-migrants sought cash bonuses to codify their personal creativity to be reused by teams in their units. SOT-6 (male and analyst of JAVA coded applications), SOT-2 (male and consultant of software designs), SOT-8 (female and troubleshooter IT networks) and SOT-12 (female and coordinator for systems integration) stressed that extrinsic rewards motivated them to increase the amount of time, energy as well as resources they expended on knowledge codification when they said:

I reply to emails that request details, relay client's requirements or send updates on the e-project. (I will definitely give Ms. XXX-XXXX technical IT data but that does not mean I have to share my own knowledge.) Why should I not be compensated for NeGp's success?

We are told to have e-chats, attend seminars and enroll ourselves in HRD's buddy program. (But what happens if Ms. XXX-XXXX is an idea-snatcher and exploits my personal creativity?) That is the basis for GISU's pay-for-performance scheme!

We were contacted by HRD to archive our casework, help build the e-library and give suggestions on how to further develop TCS's online resource centre. (Yes! I got involved after they created IdeaMax, which records our 'inventiveness' that HRD uses to give out rewards in the unit.)

Everyone likes TCS's GEMS Rewards Program because it captures all the intellectual contributions of employees working at GISU. (And at the same time it also gives us access to knowledge, resources and a global network.) It helps to promote healthy competition in the workplace.

The returned computer programmers do not seek cash bonuses for giving task-related information needed to finish up a particular aspect of an IT project. But rather for giving written instructions that impart private knowledge to other employees for which they expect a 'token of appreciation' for their work. That most returned software engineers want cash bonuses for divulging critical advice—in meetings, seminars or during mentorships—to other team members in their unit. The reason being it quells concerns about making their 'secrets of IT creativity' publicly known and also it provides assurance that they will retain their financial standing even if they eventually get outperformed in their IT unit. Even though returned network systemists and non-IT workers are satisfied with portraying a positive peer-image of themselves and with on-the-job privileges, anticipation of cash bonuses is by far the most important motivator to get them to codify their personal creativity (e.g. going beyond informative lessons to actually revealing insight that help to improve the overall inventiveness of other workers, different IT teams and cross-industry units in GISU.)

Even more interesting is that most returned employees and non-migrant workers are unaffected by offers of praise from their peers, receiving a higher informal status by team members or formally acknowledging their involvement in the decision-making process by IT managers of their unit. E-10 (female and recruitment manager) explained that, "our overseas-trained workers have an air of confidence, high level of self-efficacy and determined to achieve their goals...they understand all too well what they bring to the table." It is necessary to distribute external rewards, specifically monetary compensation to raise returnees' level of knowledge codification efforts in the unit. Extrinsic rewards can help overcome the free-riding problem so that these employees openly contribute to IdeaMax, Innoverse, TQMS and other electronic knowledge repositories in the unit. That triangulating the responses collectively substantiate Kankanhalli et al.'s (2005) findings that extrinsic rewards necessary to get most employees to codify and contribute their knowledge to electronic knowledge repositories.¹³ So, it seems that GISU's rewards system may help facilitate codification and knowledge transfers because stakeholders are able to accrue benefits in the workplace.

¹³ However, Beer and Nohria (2000) noted that task difficulty, nature of their work, job circumstances and other mitigating issues might hinder knowledge codification in units.

Both internal and external factors seem to be associated with employees' efforts to codify his or her expertise, knowledge and work experiences for peers on project teams. An important consideration is what sorts of situations would make it necessary for employees to codify know-how for co-workers they interact with on projects in the unit. A minor theme that emerged from the interviewees' transcripts is that some non-migrants and returnees codify private knowledge out of fear of getting rebuked by team members at work. Interestingly, STT-1 (female and coordinator of technical support) underlined that intrinsic and/or extrinsic rewards might get crowded-out due to hedonic motives that prompt them to participate in knowledge codification when she said:¹⁴

That nobody wants to be labeled as a 'Non-Team Player' for refusing to give up what they know, have learned or comprehend for the sake of the NeGp project. (This is going to cause a lot of bad feelings to erupt with Indians and NRIs that are working against timelines, strict IT guidelines and immense work pressures at in the unit.) I do not think it is wise to put one's good reputation in jeopardy in such a reputable global IT firm.

Non-migrant computer programmers and software engineers might codify their private know-how because they do not want to be termed as 'Non-Team Players' by returnees and transnationals on their project team. Non-migrants believe they will be considered disloyal workers who are trying to achieve personal goals while sabotaging the project in their unit. Returned network systemists and non-IT workers seem to codify knowledge so as not to be perceived as 'Knowledge Hoarders' by non-migrants and transnationals on the NeGp team in their unit. Returnees do not want to be thought of as untrustworthy workers that are trying to secure extrinsic rewards at the risk of the NeGp project failing to be completed on time in GISU. Many transnationals stated that not codifying knowledge might be countered with threats of punishment or result in a loss of reputation in the eyes of upper-tier management of GISU. It seems that workers' codification efforts are moderated by who they trust, organizational rewards, social norms and other contextual variables of the workplace. These contravening issues, if managed effectively, may improve the knowledge transfer processes of the firm.

¹⁴ Hedonic motivation means that an employee will act in a certain manner to avoid painful situations out of fear, being hated or getting rebuked at work.

On the whole, returnees and non-migrants lack of face-to-face interactions tends to prevent feelings, intuition and sensory clues to be relayed, which is necessary for the transfer of tacit knowledge within project teams. Because returnees and non-migrants predominantly have computer-based interactions, codification is perceived as sustaining their weak social ties that hampers them from transferring their potentially codifiable private knowledge—new ideas, domain-specific knowledge and work experiences—to different project teams in the units. In some instances, returnees and non-migrants felt that knowledge codification would further weaken or even terminate their existing weak social ties with other stakeholders in GISU. It seems that transnationals and the use of EKR can potentially serves as knowledge intermediaries whose ability to forge intermediate social ties with some returnees and non-migrants that can help to circulate overseas-acquired knowledge resources to and within units of GISU. While offering intrinsic and extrinsic rewards might raise returnees', transnationals' and non-migrants' knowledge codification efforts, it seems that hedonic motives tend to play some role in knowledge transfers, closing idiosyncratic social gaps and adaptation of new procedures that might help to galvanize innovation in the firm. Still, knowledge codification, albeit its benefits, is moderated by trust, transnational work practices, pro-sharing social norms, cross-cultural understanding etc. of the firm. Thus, GISU's incentive system and other issues can have a varying impact on the knowledge transfer processes of the firm.

10.3 The Knowledge Structure of the Firm

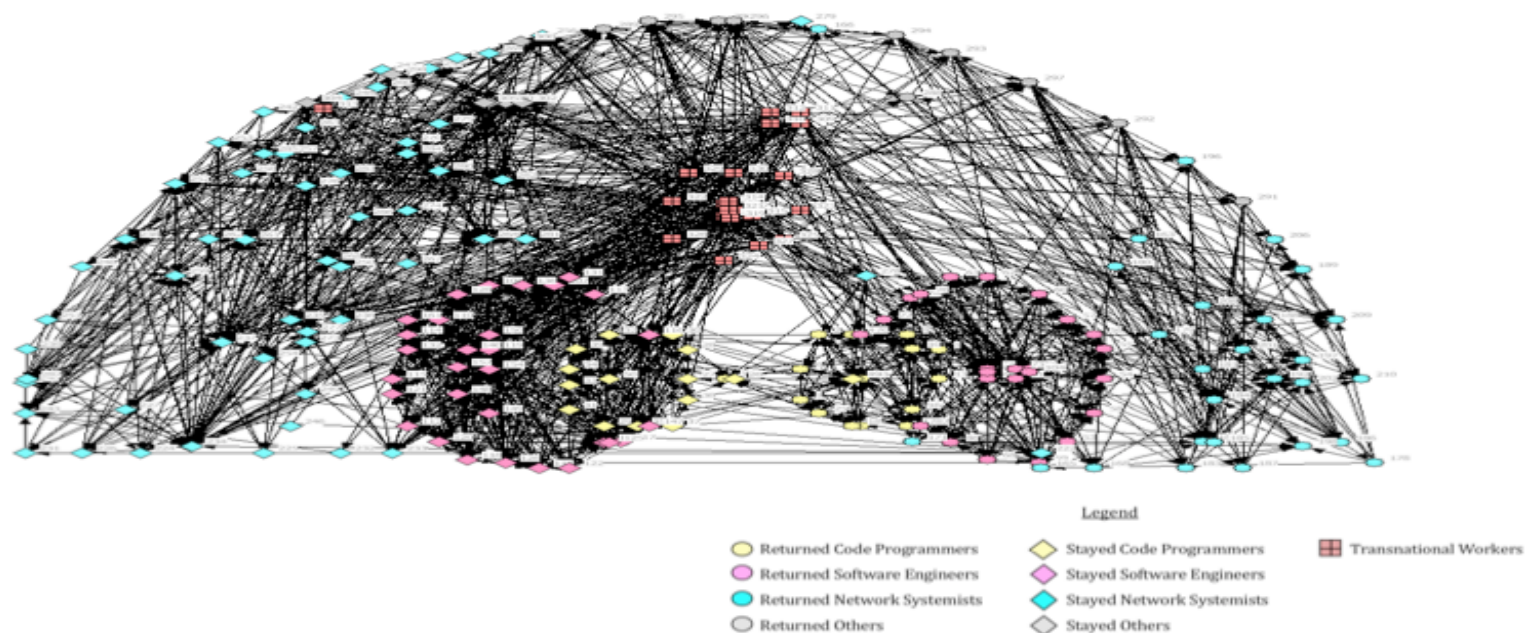
Transnationals, returnees and non-migrants at times must collaborate to deal with multiplicity of content and are tied together by task interdependence and the integrated function of outsourced projects in the units. However, "it is important to acknowledge that [transnationals, returnees and non-migrants] knowledge, skills, work experiences and resources obtained through their interactions with other people will be worth very little if it does not become internalized into organizational knowledge" (Myers, 2011: 289) in GISU. Considering the 'relational, collective and general social patterns' of the stakeholders might help to reveal the underlying networks, configuration and thus knowledge structure of GISU. And thus, provide a fuller perspective on the knowledge transfers processes of the firm.

If task information that was emailed, faxed or telephonically relayed to code programmers “has a low level of tacit codification it will make it harder to uproot the stand-alone component’s functions and thus piece it together without having knowledge on other parts of the [distinct software module] in the project.” (Hansen, 1999: 87). This means that task information that tends to have high levels of tacitness and interdependence makes it more onerous for employees to copy, deposit or reuse material posted in EKR of the unit. Nonetheless, task-oriented objects that require modification before being incorporated into existing or new IT technologies could be resolved by mining the EKR of the unit. The point being that knowledge codification might enable a quicker search-transfer of answers, solutions and outputs by teammates within the unit.

Most task-oriented objects needed to build software applications will involve electronic exchanges between code programmers, software engineers and network systemists on the project. It can be assumed that these employees’ information-seeking behavior will be tied to their formal position on the IT project, cross-industry group or unit. But STT-3 (male and analyst of UNIX coded applications) pointed out that, “the instant we have done our part on the module, they [HRD managers] zip us off to another team to work on that NeGp project for the unit.” Rotating employees tend to sever their position-centered ties—once an individual changes positions they are not required to report to old supervisors, teams or subunits—and thus reduce portability of knowledge in the workplace.

Inevitably, employees that fulfill their tasks, project role or work functions will be shifted to another NeGp IT project. For this reason, employees that forge person-related ties—synonymous with homophilic connections based on their background, training, professional or personal values—are more likely to stay in contact with others even if they are circulating among IT projects, cross-industry groups or re-located onsite to work. Employees’ person-related ties socially bind them to one another and thus tend to generate high quality interactions, trust-based relations and reciprocal exchanges that can overcome obstacles created by social or physical distances in the workplace (Roby, 1952; Lincoln and Miller, 1979; Guzzo and Shea, 1992; Myers, 2011). More importantly, personal-related ties can be strong, intermediate or weak and thus may be able to better facilitate the transfer of knowledge resources to stakeholder across different contexts in GISU.

Figure 10.2: A Visualization of Employees' Knowledge Network Structure



Source: Author's results based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: Along with the previously discussed sample items in Table 10.1, the respondents were also asked, "How often do you consult employees to get task advice, knowledge and resources or work-related purposed in the following teams, departments or units in GISU?" The respondents used a five-point Likert scale to rate their responses and marked their responses on the staff roster attached to the back of the survey.

Note 2: UCINET v.6, specifically NETDRAW>PROPERTIES>NODES-ATTRIBUTES was used to create a sociogram derived from the valued data on returned, stayed and transnationals' social ties (emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity scores tallied for an average value for tie-strength) and their knowledge interactions (the frequency in which they consult others for task advice, knowledge or to gain access to resources converted into a final score) to highlight their ties, sub-networks and the existing knowledge structure of GISU.

Note 3: The numbers in the figure above are the employee IDs, the arrows present the direction of the relationship, thicker lines mean the tie-strength is strong or vice versa and the different shapes help to differentiate returnees, stayers and transnationals by their occupation groups in GISU.

Note 4: The purpose of this figure is to highlight returnees', non-migrants' and transnationals' ties, sub-networks and overall knowledge structure so as to better triangulate the information with case interviews to explain the knowledge transfer process of the firm.

Note 5: How the above figure was derived and its limitations are detailed in the notes of guidance on Figure 7.2 and thus not repeated for the sake of brevity.

Figure 10.2 is a sociogram in which the two-edged arrows reveal the direction, value and thus the connectivity between the nodes and surrounding nodal ties in the presented graph. That computational intense analyses of the nodes indicate that code programmers, software engineers and network systemists mostly interact with individuals in their own occupational group to share task advice, knowledge input and resources to successfully complete NeGp projects. Furthermore, the position these employees occupy on the NeGp projects is correlated to their knowledge sharing efforts and thus is tied to the work they perform. But “[employees] who are novices connect with the average skilled and those who are average skilled attempt to retrieve knowledge resources from the experts on their team in the unit” (Dong, 2013: 2). Otherwise, it would take a substantial amount of effort, energy and time to transmit knowledge to novices and thus pull experts away from high-valued projects in the unit. “Because efficiency mixes poorly with friendship” (Burt, 1992: 24), most employees will transmit knowledge in “short, frequent bursts with those in similar levels” (Dong, 2013: 3) in their units.

It is important to note that even though employees rely heavily on electronic mediated exchanges, they do have passive face-to-face interactions with different members on their IT project. As SHT-6 (male and Passport Seva Project liaison) pointed out, “we have a Level-3 code programmer, Level-1 software engineer, and Level-2 network systems analyst and all report to the E-2 manager under which the IT group falls in the unit.” However, E-3 (male and IT manager) disclosed that, “everybody does their part on the NeGp project...but once they get re-assigned to another project [or rotated to a different IT team] that cord is cut...and it becomes stressful because they have no obligation to talk to us and give their knowledge input for meeting work deadlines on projects in the unit.” E-13 (male and IT project coordinator) substantiated, “the problem is that [transnationals and returned IT employees] with high aptitudes get shifted to another NeGp project...and that means there goes the knowledge out of our team to somewhere else that is nearly impossible get back to the units.” That position-centered ties—attached purely to daily activities, IT role or other work functions—are not only difficult to maintain, but also their value for transferring knowledge resources substantially declines after transnationals, returnees and non-migrants have left their IT project, teams, cross-industry groups or units in GISU.

The figure is based on a social network analysis that reveals within each occupational group, employees tend to form their very own work social cliques in their units.¹⁵ Transnationals with similar duties, tied work or overseas experiences tended to collaborate with one another and thus created a self-functioning social clique in their units. STT-9 (male and engineer for software services) stated, “Mr. XXX-XXXX and I were onsite engineers. After rotating back we were placed other modules. We would meet up during our lunch breaks at work. We always helped each other out [task advice, strategic information and work support] at work.

Just like transnationals, returned employees tended to primarily share their expertise, knowledge and work experiences with other overseas-trained peers engaged in the same kind of work in their units. SOT-20 (female and systems engineer for integration services) revealed that, “most of us who had been abroad and then came to work for GISU faced difficulties at work. Because there are not many of us we kind of banded together to share personal experiences [that went beyond the workplace].” While many non-migrants wanted to connect with transnationals and returnees, they relied on other Indian-trained workers to deal with their work issues. SHT-15 (male and IT analyst) explained, “Indians feel comfortable with Indians because they understand the situation.” These workers forged strong social ties to not only organize themselves, but also to gain further insights into how they could achieve a better work-life balance at GISU.

That transnationals, returnees and non-migrants electronic exchanges tend to lack of emotional intimacy, high quality frequency of interaction and reciprocity for two-way knowledge transfers in the units. For the most part, employees rely on their person-related ties—an intersection between occupational ties and engendered friendships—to disseminate multiple contents that include solve complicating work problems, gaining insights on how to deal with other colleagues and further have the ability to offer advice on issues on non-work matters in GISU (Koput, 2010). Also, it seems that person-related ties can overcome physical distance while retaining their value for transferring knowledge resources within GISU. Practically speaking, such overlapping social ties might be better for intra-organizational knowledge transfer due to the temporary nature of NeGp projects, constant changes to team membership and other complexities of the work processes in the firm.

¹⁵ Please see technical notes in the bottom of the figure.

More interestingly, a clique and degree analysis of the presented images reveals that returnees display very strong homophilic bonds with overseas-trained employees in their units. Returnees tend to focus on their interactions more than on the content of their knowledge to be transferred in the unit. SOT-3 (male and talent manager) explained, “returnee-to-returnees interactions are strong because they do not need to have formal meetings, group discussion or waste their time convincing each other that they are right. They are socially synced so knowledge is free-moving...there is dissent without conflict in the unit.”

Furthermore, it seems that most transnationals function as ‘intermediary knowledge brokers’ who have the social ability to go-between returnees and non-migrants at work. STT-3 (male and team lead for offshore operations) corroborates the role of transnationals as intermediary knowledge brokers when he stated that, “I am ‘in’ with the newcomers [returnees] and Indian guys that are sent ‘out’ to all kinds of projects from the unit.” Transnationals are constantly crossing paths with returnees via face-to-face dealings, real time knowledge sharing and their periodic joint visits to offshore client sites mandated by the unit. They keep contact with non-migrants over the years via their electronic means, virtual exchanges and offshore rotations to the unit. Transnationals are able to serve as a social cohesive agent in the existing social network of GISU, which enables them to tap into their own, returnees’ and non-migrants’ knowledge streams in the workplace.

That McPherson et al.’s (2001) principle of homophily helps to explain why returnees do not maintain strong social ties, but rather intermediate social ties with transnationals and weak social ties with non-migrants in GISU. E-15 (male and HRD manager) explicates that, “the basis of returnees’ friendships is their social status, easier communication and acculturation-related experiences in GISU.” Further, transnationals’ and non-migrants’ intermediate and/or weak social ties discourage transactions making it less likely to accept knowledge at face value in GISU. Despite transnationals potential role as knowledge brokers that can forge intermediate social ties with returnees and non-migrants, the latter groups’ weak social ties often become overlaid with social content regarding expectations of trust and knowledge opportunism in the firm (Granovetter, 1985). While weak social ties are deemed efficient for transferring knowledge, strengthening such ties can help to connect the different social cliques into a cohesive knowledge network in the firm.

While electronic-mediated exchanges are quite common between returnees, transnationals and non-migrants, the mix of homophilic and occupational bonds can at times strengthen weak social ties into intermediate relations that might be a better conduit for transferring newly acquired knowledge, skills and resources at work. E-14 (female and HRD manager) further elaborated:

If he [non-migrant code programmer] posts a request for an answer to a problem, then getting back numerous replies increases the chances finding a solution to that specific part of the IT modulation. And the electronic broadcast can also elicit group replies [non-migrant software engineer, returned network systemist or returned project manager] that can provide a multi-part solution to repair the software program. There would be no point of receiving electronic computer responses from 'techies' that are in their own friendship circle... because it is the same recycled knowledge, which they are unlikely to re-use (or be rewarded for by managers) in GISU. The electronic computer networks are inadequate for employees that need a rich medium to harness creativity, evoke inspiration and develop their resources at work. We are staying away from growing our list of contacts on ICALMS...and trying to socially stretch our employees to get that diversity! By all means we see global connectivity as the key to the future.

The embedded images and their analysis indicate that returnees offer one another trust capital, strategic support as well as other social resources through their close person-centered ties thus establishing a dense but somewhat centralized knowledge clique within GISU. Even though transnational and non-migrants also sought task information, advice and emotional support through their person-centered ties, their network configuration indicates a dense and somewhat less centralized knowledge clique in the units. It seems that returnees and non-migrants sit on opposite sides of the knowledge bridge mostly due their different homophilic relations—educational background, traits, social status, temperament and cultural values—and thus sustain weak social ties due to the gaping structural holes in the knowledge network of GISU. Transnationals' ability to forge intermediate social ties with returnees and non-migrants—partly due to person-related and position-centered ties overlapping—allows them to travel through the structural holes in the knowledge network of GISU. While non-migrants, returnees and transnationals maintain separate social cliques, which in turn, results in the formation of mini-knowledge networks in GISU, improving the overall social structure may increase knowledge flows in the firm.

An overwhelming issue with understanding returnees', transnationals' and non-migrants' interactions is the extent to which electronic-mediated exchanges are useful in disseminating task advice, strategic information and accessing new resources at work. The presumption is that electronic and/or virtual networks offer a thin medium that can only transfer between these employees codified and some complex technical knowledge for work being performed in the unit. Though employees can easily access information simultaneously from "lower-downs" and "higher-ups" on NeGp projects, EKR's do not allow for the transmission of personal creativity, tapping into multi-level skill sets of teams or accessing resources of specialty groups in subunits. This was made evident by E-12 (male and resource manager) when he stated:

We are looking to find avenues for interrelating domain IT knowledge, computer skills and social resources of returnees [also referring to transnationals] with Indians at work. The best way is to vigorously apply ICT codification to develop software technologies...along with getting IT employees to execute a 'touch-and-go move which...leaves indelible footprints that point in the direction of good practices, routines and organizational processes...that can be followed by workers, industry IT groups and subunits in GISU. In doing so, an intrapreneurship management style gives us corporate flexibility to thrive in the global IT-BPO environment.

Besides promoting a codification approach, managers try to get their employees to execute "touch-and-go" moves at work. This can be inferred as HRD managers' attempt at strengthening weak social ties into intermediate relations thought to be better for producing higher-quality knowledge interactions, work cooperation between teams and a stronger social support system in the unit. Additionally, teams, cross-industry groups and subunits that could forge intermediate social ties might be able to improve collective decision-making, reduce conflicts for greater shared leadership and institutionalize a sense of intrapreneurship. Even though a personalization IT knowledge management strategy can generate strong social ties amongst the various entities, it may not be suitable for navigating the chaotic, fast-paced and non-hierarchical work environment of GISU. These results when compared to case studies on HCL, Infosys and Wipro are remarkably similar in terms of knowledge governance in firms. Therefore, GISU's knowledge management strategy is successful given the nature of work performed at a globalized IT firm.

Part IV: Comparison of Two Indian Organizations

Chapter Eleven

Introduction to the Comparison Study

“India’s health and IT-BPO sectors brain drain has turned into brain training by increasing levels of return migration” (Zweig, 2006 as cited by Williams and Balaz, 2008a: 129). “Indian diaspora are not only the biggest investors in healthcare, but they stand behind much of the FDI in the country’s emerging technology hubs [Bangalore, Hyderabad and New Delhi]...because of the opportunities and rewards offered by its private industries” (Mahroum et al., 2006: 29). As these quotations suggest, the two sectors from which the case studies of this thesis are drawn are often paired in terms of the contribution of return migrants back home.

The next three chapters probe “return migrants as they are often perceived as a source of remittances, technology transfer and market development” (Kale et. al., 2008: 417). The chapters follow a similar structure of the parts presented for the two case studies. Besides the motives of the two groups of migrants returning to India, reason for joining their organization and adjustments issues, the final chapter analyzes medical and IT migrants’ interpersonal ties, codification efforts, knowledge transfers, and contrasts both sorts of returnees with stayers and transnationals in terms of the strength of their social ties, formation of cliques and resulting knowledge networks in their respective organizations.

This chapter provides an introduction, relevance for comparing the two sectors and organizations, the descriptive statistics of returnees and other employees in EHIRC and GISU. Notwithstanding the limitations of the comparative study, the material in this chapter will help to analyze both the similarities and the differences between medical and IT returnees, stayers and transnationals in terms of the nature of their work, skills, structures and policies of the two organizations. Going beyond a simple description, this final part of the thesis looks more closely at the role of returnees in intra-organizational knowledge transfers to reveal in what ways are there common patterns and processes that might apply across the organizations. And thus yield lessons that suggest the need for caution in generalizing and for an organization or sector-specific approach to returnees’ knowledge transfers and its process.

11.1 General Facts and Premises

Official industry statistics indicate that India's service sector has been a major contributor to its GDP and thus economic growth (Bhattacharya and Mitra, 1990). The two most prominent service industries in India are healthcare and IT-BPO, whose output accounts for 20% of GDP (CII-McKinsey, 2012). Expansion of India's healthcare and IT has further led to a dramatic increase in the number of indigenous corporate entities. Indian corporate chains have actively tried to tap into the overseas diaspora, recruit migrants and pull back transnationals to harness their overseas-acquired knowledge resources to sustain a competitive market edge in the domestic market or leave their footprints across the global market (Zweig, 2006; Chacko, 2007; Williams and Balaz, 2008a). Based on my research on EHRC and GISU, a comparison of different medical and IT migrants may prove useful for a further analysis of returnees' overseas-acquired knowledge, social ties with stakeholders and other issues to elucidate the possible impact on knowledge transfer process of their organizations.

11.2 Background and Case Relevance

Despite EHRC and GISU operating in totally different service-related fields, a comparative analysis along several dimensions—including migrants 'likes and dislikes' of the organizations, infrastructure, governance, corporate policies, human resource management etc.—might be a unique opportunity to further examine 'naturally occurring interactions that are difficult to see outside the boundaries of settings' (Merriam, 2003). Comparing similarities and differences between medics and IT migrants can help to isolate factors, characteristics and contextual issues—related to their return motives, choice of employer, adjustment problems, work performance, formation of social networks and knowledge transfers in the organizations. The empirical material can be utilized as a 'theory-informing practice' to learn about these returnees and the potential role they can play in transferring their knowledge resources to different stakeholders in the organizations (Sultana, 2005; Williams and Balaz, 2008a). The results and its implications may provide a better understanding of the knowledge flows in the organizations.

11.3 Appraisal of Theories and Literature

Neoclassical economics, NELM, transnationalism, life cycle and human capital models are valuable theories to describe return migration. While the determinants of migration are an ancillary discussion in the chapters, it is nonetheless necessary to satisfy the reader that, “the acquisition of knowledge and capital might be an additional reason for their return home” (Williams and Balaz, 2008a: 94). Due to the shortage of theoretical and empirical literature, the social network theory is employed to examine returnees’ knowledge transfer that is “situated in the culture, work environment and personal context...and developed through social interactions” (Hokinson et al., 2004: 11) back home. The comparative analysis, though of EHIRC and GISU, is aimed at showing that the healthcare and IT sectors in which returnees’ transfer their knowledge via their employment in their respective organizations, can mediate and negotiate change in India. Across EHIRC and GISU, contrasting medics and ITists, I will explain the empirical differences between returnees in terms of their knowledge transfers, the norms and practices of their organizations and growth of their industries. Unraveling various issues, the results will be used later to explain that returnees can foster development if they can play a critical role in the knowledge transfer process of their sectors, organizations and the workplace.

11.4 Research Methods and Limitations

As stated earlier, employee rosters were obtained from HRD of EHIRC and GISU. Combining the rosters indicates that a total of 3,600 employees are duly registered with EHIRC and GISU. While there are 3,600 employees, only 1,400 employees were considered eligible to be sampled from EHIRC and GISU. These employees were already proportionally sampled from the total population during the two previous case studies. Stratification of employees as returned, stayed and transnationals, random selection (85% for the returnees’ stratum, 50% for the stayers’ stratum and 35% for the transnationals’ stratum) and an average 70% response rate shows the methodological similarities in the case studies. Thus, the ‘logic of inquiry’ is for the most part justified to conduct a comparative analysis of medics and ITists, albeit they are from different organizations.

Given that a sampling frame was already established during the two previous case studies, a total of 597 employees (299 returnees, 298 stayers and when applicable 25 transnationals) who completed the structured questionnaire were re-assembled to create a quantitative data set of the organizations. Also, 95 semi-structured interviews (45 returnees, 35 stayers and 10 transnationals) along with another 40 elite interviews that were conducted were re-compiled to create a qualitative data set of the organizations. That an average 70% response rate had been achieved in EHIRC and GISU, which suggests there was no need to re-pool groups of people from their respective organizations.

The quantitative data presented in the tables and figures was analyzed using statistical methods like frequency distributions, ANOVA and social network analysis. Each table is partitioned between an 'average' panel and a 'difference' panel. The average panel shows the weighted averages of medical and IT migrants' responses, while the difference panel shows the differences in percentage points between the responses in EHIRC and in GISU. Exceptions apply to some of the tables that are detailed in the notes of the illustrations in the analytical chapters on EHIRC and GISU. The qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis of medical and IT migrants' interview transcripts to explain the ideological, social and institutional contexts of knowledge transfers in the organizations.¹⁶

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are incorporated into the inquiry [because the investigator] can collect and analyze data, integrate findings and draw inferences pertinent to the subject (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007: 4). The comparative analysis is further strengthened by a mixed method approach because it "authorizes some objects of study and methods of analysis while at the same time excluding others" (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997:4) on issues. In line with mixed method research, comparing and contrasting medics and ITists, EHIRC and GISU and a host of other variables as well as contextual issues through triangulation makes it possible to explain the knowledge transfer processes of organizations and possibly implications that go beyond the organizations.

¹⁶ The interviewees are referenced in the write-up as a combination of abbreviations: EHIRC (E), GISU (G), semi-structured interview (S), elite interview (E), overseas-trained (OT), home-trained (HT) and transnationally-trained (TT). Names of people referenced by others are replaced with XXX-XXXX to maintain the ethical standards of the project. Please note that quotations that contain round parentheses (...) are the respondents' words taken from a different part of their transcript, while the square brackets [...] are my own words to clarify the meaning of the text.

Table 11.1: Descriptive Statistics of Sampled Populations from EHIRC and GISU

Breakdown of Categories	Average: EHIRC plus GISU (Each category sums to 100%)	Difference: EHIRC minus GISU (Each category sums to 0%)
Age		
20-29	14.9	-1.7
30-39	28.9	0.9
40-49	34.5	6.2
50-59	16.4	-6.0
> 60	5.1	0.3
Gender		
Male	45.8	-0.7
Female	54.2	0.7
Marital Status		
Single	23.6	-20.0
Married	73.5	22.3
Divorced	2.4	-1.9
Widowed	0.5	-0.4
Occupation		
Category 1 (Technicians and Code Programmers)	13.7	-6.1
Category 2 (Staff Nurses and Software Engineers)	36.5	0.9
Category 3 (Physicians and Network Systemists)	45.2	8.0
Category 4 (Others)	4.6	-2.8
Education/Work Qualifications (Obtained by Region)		
Not India (Returned Migrants)	48.0	1.8
India (Stayed Non-Migrants)	47.9	-1.8
Other (Transnational Migrants only in GISU)	4.0	n/a
Work Experience in the Industry (Years)		
1-5	38.6	0.1
6-10	21.1	-15.8
11-15	21.0	5.9
16-20	10.2	-0.5
>20	9.1	10.3
Employment in the Organization (Years)		
1-5	36.8	12.6
6-10	38.1	2.9
11-15	13.5	-6.2
16-20	8.3	-7.6
>20	3.3	-1.7

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The sample size for both organizations together on which most of the percentages in this and later tables are based is N=597. An additional sample of 25 transnationals was also surveyed in GISU and the percentages for the category education/work qualifications in this table are thus calculated on the basis of N=622.

Note 2: The average panel in this table shows the average weighted percentages for each sub-category, the respondents or their responses derived from tables used in the two previous case studies. And the difference panel displays the arithmetic difference in percentage points of respondents' responses between EHIRC and GISU.

Note 3: A large difference is defined as ten or more percentage points, which is highlighted in this and later tables for a comparative analysis of the two organizations.

Table 11.1 is a summary table of the generated descriptive statistics of the listed categories that show the observations of the participants sampled from EHIRC and GISU. The above table and those presented in the upcoming chapters are split into an average (EHIRC plus GISU) and difference (EHIRC minus GISU) panel to show the numerical values needed to compare respondents across EHIRC and GISU. In the average panel, the tabulations in the each of the category adds up to 100% whereas differences between them sum up to 0%—signifying that the computations are correct and a successful merger of the two samples sizes of the organizations.

The averages panel indicates that the spread of respondents across the listed categories is mostly representative of those working in EHIRC and GISU. However, the difference panel shows that there are notable differences in the marital status, work experiences and length of employment between employees in EHIRC and GISU. In the sub-category of marital status, a difference of -20 and 22 percentage points indicates that there are fewer employees that are single in EHIRC than in GISU while there are more employees that are married in GISU than in EHIRC. For the sub-category of work experience in the industry, a difference of -15 and 10 percentage points indicates that there are fewer employees with 6 to 10 years of work experience in EHIRC than GISU whereas there are more employees with over 20 years of work experience in GISU than EHIRC. The share of employees with 1 to 5 years of employment history is significantly larger in EHIRC than in GISU. These and other more minor differences between the above-mentioned employees may further the comparative analysis of the organizations.¹⁷

Overall, the average and difference panels indicates that the employees in EHIRC and GISU vary to a considerable extent, which suggests that conducting a cross-comparison of medical and IT migrants may offer interesting observations on a host of variables across the organizations. Comparing and contrasting the different sets of returnees, stayers and transnationals will show the extent and direction of responses that may better explain knowledge transfers in EHIRC and GISU. While claims and inferences might be constrained due to data restrictions, the study can help to draw some conclusions on the larger goals of the thesis.

¹⁷ Some of the reason for these differences may be that medical migrants travel abroad is not as restricted than that of IT migrants due to visa requirements, medical trainings tends to be longer than IT training, medical practices are locally entrenched whereas IT work is transnational etc.

While a scientifically meticulous research design with a clear ‘checks and balances system’ was carried out, “there is a trade-off between looking at one or two variables in many cases and many variables in one or two cases” (Lewin, 1979: 286) that will pose limitations. “A [comparative analysis] might not offer a solution to problems not because of any general logical defects, but because we simply do not have enough analogous cases” (Mann, 1986: 503). As the data was derived from only EHIRC and GISU it becomes arduous to identify mechanisms, describe interplay of factors and arrive at a definitive explanation on return motives, taking up employment and adjustment issues faced in the organizations.

Taking into consideration that employees were proportionally sampled from EHIRC’s and GISU’s total population, it seems that ‘comparison units’ is a critical and tricky issue. The degree to which medical and IT migrants can be ‘selection of objects of comparisons’ is difficult as they are different types of knowledge workers operating in separate fields. Beside the lack of longitudinal data on social ties, transnational networks and changes to the organizational setup, selecting returnees, stayers and transnationals as ‘units’ means abstracting them from their ‘embedded contexts’ in EHIRC and GISU. From task interdependence, global nature of IT work to other contravening variables, without greater attention to these issues imposes restrictions on analyzing knowledge transfer processes of organizations.

That, needless to say, the results from EHIRC and GISU are “confined to a small number of [migrants] and to a few cases which constitutes an inherent bias in the structure of comparison, with far reaching implications for the validity of the outcomes [on India’s knowledge economy and its organizations] with regard to their generality” (Azarian, 2011: 121). Having a discourse beyond the organizations might be possible by comparing EHIRC and GISU and aptly triangulating the data, incorporating secondary data and statistics, but reflecting on returnees’, stayers’ and transnationals’ social ties association with knowledge transfers ought to be done in a meaningful way on the organizations. Keeping in mind the benefits and challenges of a comparative analysis might help with a general understanding of the subject and address practical issues of migration-interactions of organizations.¹⁸

¹⁸ A comparative case study is considered to be informative because it enables claims to be made of ‘societal significance’ due to the development of ideas that tend to be of theoretical and practical importance for the topic (Burawoy, 1991; Vargas-Silva, 2012).

Chapter Twelve

Decision to Return to India and Choice of Employer

It is well established that the decision to return tends to be affected by migrants' personal attributes, their domestic circumstances as well as changes in the economic, social and political environment in the host and home country. In addition to global market forces, companies engaged in transnational activities and the variation amongst medics and IT migrants suggest that it is vital to better understand the return journey to India. Taking into consideration various issues, this chapter examines medics' and ITists' different return motivations, reasons for taking up employment and problems they tend to face settling into their new surroundings in New Delhi. The purpose of this chapter is to conduct a comparison of medics and ITists and thus analyze similarities, differences and to a limited extent the possible implications of their overseas-acquired knowledge resources in their return and choice of employer in New Delhi. The comparative analyses further incorporate EHIRC's and GISU's responses and returnees' views to explain the value of overseas-acquired knowledge for their respective organizations.

12.1 Migrants' Motivations for Returning to India

It has been observed that age, gender, marital status, occupation and even foreign region in which migrants resides tends to be associated with their motivation to return to India. Additionally, knowledge, skills, training, experiences, expectations and other observable traits are also associated with migrants' motives for returning to India. While medics and ITists motives to return may be due to marriage, family and/or household considerations, such life cycle factors should be analyzed in their different domestic circumstances because it likely shapes returnees' plans to come home. Notwithstanding medics and ITists who had successful migration experiences while abroad, their return decision can also be constrained by macro conditions of the host and home country. Thus, comparing and contrasting medics and ITists will offer some insight into the complexities of the return journey home.

Table 12.1: Main Motivation to Return to India by Age at EHRC and GISU

Main Motivations	Averages: EHRC plus GISU					Differences: EHRC minus GISU				
	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60	Total	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60	Total
Advancing Career Goals	8.5	14.2	26.9	0.0	13.3	-10.0	-8.9	24.3	0.0	-2.6
Better Compensation Package	40.4	9.8	19.2	0.0	22.0	-11.3	-20.2	-17.6	0.0	-16.0
Children, Family and Friends	31.9	60.7	15.3	0.0	37.1	-5.4	3.5	-26.6	0.0	0.9
Finished Education and Training	17.0	5.3	1.9	0.0	10.3	22.8	9.0	4.5	0.0	7.4
Greater Social Standing	0.0	0.0	13.4	26.3	4.0	0.0	0.0	-7.6	50.0	1.3
Higher Standard of Living	0.0	0.0	1.9	42.1	3.0	0.0	0.0	-3.3	16.7	0.7
To Make a Meaningful Difference	2.1	9.8	15.3	26.3	8.6	3.9	16.6	20.6	-55.5	8.1
Other Reasons	0.0	0.0	5.7	5.2	1.3	0.0	0.0	5.7	-11.1	0.0
Total for age group (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Returnees by age group (%)	31.4	37.4	17.3	6.3	100.0	2.6	6.6	-2.6	0.3	0.0

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The average panel shows the weighted average percentages for the respondents' responses derived from tables used in the two previous case studies. The difference panel displays the arithmetic difference in percentage points in the responses between EHRC and GISU.

Note 2: The numbers listed in cells across the rows do not sum to 100% or 0%, as they are the weighted averages and differences in percentages for the age groups given the share of total returned respondents used in the overall tabulation of this table.

Note 3: The 20-29 age group is not shown because there were no returnees in this age group in EHRC and relatively few in GISU, but respondents in this age group are included in the total columns in this table.

Note 4: A large difference is defined as ten or more percentage points, which is highlighted in this table.

In Table 12.1, the averages panel indicates that a total of 37% of respondents reported family considerations for returning to India. However, the differences panel reveals that medics' and ITists' return motives varied significantly by their age groups: a difference of 22 percentage points of those aged 30 to 39 means more medics than ITists reported that finishing their education/training was the reason for their return to India. A difference of -20 percentage points of those aged 40 to 49 means more ITists than medics reported a better compensation package prompted their return home. And a difference of 24 and 20 percentage of those aged 50 to 59 means more medics stated career goals and making a meaningful difference compared to ITists who sought higher pay and to settle their family in India. Those age 60 year or older desire for a better quality of life after retirement pulled them home.

Comparing medics to ITists reveals that the former group was more likely to return because their parents, spouses or other dependents were left behind at home. Medics have a lower tendency to stay abroad, relative to ITists who migrate earlier in their careers and thus have weaker family attachments to their households in India. Relatively more medics are married with children compared to ITists who are single and at the beginning stages of their careers, due to which the former group return for reasons associated with costs of living, purchasing power of savings and residential choice. Though a common factor is that returnees expect to be highly rewarded for their overseas knowledge resources, for ITists when compared to medics, income level, employment opportunities and labor market conditions tend to matter much more than for those in EHRC in their decision to return home.

In EHRC, it seems that a wage differential is associated less with their return motive because most medics go abroad to attain super-specialty training so as to better fulfill their professional duties and goals back home. Further, medics when compared to ITists often choose to return more so for family reasons and to improve the state of affairs in the medical industry in India (Ganguly, 2003). In GISU, ITists' mobility tends to be constrained less by family considerations and the prospects of financial gains and improving career trajectory are more important considerations as they work in a field attuned to a capitalist way of thinking on when to return home. Contrasting EHRC and GISU, life-cycle factors are more prevalent in medics' motivations to return while economic incentives, the demand for labor and job prospects tend to shape ITists' plans to come back to India.

Table 12.2: Main Motivation to Return to India by Occupation at EHIRC and GISU

Main Motivations	Averages: EHIRC plus GISU				Differences: EHIRC minus GISU			
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Total	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Total
Advancing Career Goals	11.1	6.0	20.3	13.0	-20.0	-9.3	10.3	-2.0
Better Compensation Package	35.5	36.2	34.9	34.4	-37.0	-69.5	-6.6	-33.9
Children, Family and Friends	28.8	39.6	13.0	25.4	29.0	44.3	-7.1	20.2
Finished Education and Training	15.5	8.6	8.9	9.6	8.0	16.3	4.5	8.7
Greater Social Standing	0.0	2.5	5.6	3.6	0.0	4.9	-1.9	0.7
Higher Standard of Living	6.6	0.0	3.2	3.3	15.0	0.0	-0.2	1.4
To Make a Meaningful Difference	2.2	6.0	12.1	9.0	5.0	11.4	4.2	4.8
Other Reasons	0.0	0.8	1.6	1.3	0.0	1.6	-3.3	0.0
Total for occupation group (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Returnees by occupation (%)	15.0	38.7	41.1	100.0	-1.6	2.0	1.0	0.0

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The average panel shows the weighted average percentages for the respondents' responses derived from tables used in the two previous case studies. The difference panel displays the arithmetic difference in percentage points in the responses between EHIRC and GISU.

Note 2: The numbers listed in cells across the rows do not sum to 100% or 0%, as they are the weighted averages and differences in percentages for the above categories given the share of total returned respondents used in the overall tabulation of this table.

Note 3: The occupation Category 4 is not shown because there were no returnees in this category in EHIRC and relatively few in GISU, but respondents in this category are included in the total columns in this table.

Note 4: A large difference is defined as ten or more percentage points, which is highlighted in this table.

While the averages panel in Table 12.2 indicates that a total of 34% of respondents reported better compensation as their motive for returning to India. Interestingly, over 30% of those in Category 1, 2 and 3 reported a better compensation as their motive for going home. The differences panel reveals that medics' and ITists' return motives varied considerably by their occupation groups: a difference of -37 and -69 percentage points in Category 1 and 2 means that fewer medics than ITists reported better compensation as their reason for returning to India. With the exception of physicians, a difference of 29 and 44 percentage points in the opposite directions in Category 1 and 2 means more medics than ITists stated family considerations for returning home. In Category 3, a difference of 10 percentage points means that more medics than ITists reported advancing careers goals for decision to return home.

Medics in contrast to ITists are less likely to return for a higher wages alone because they were often paid well by hospitals at the destination. Fewer medics than ITists returned due to a higher wages because their pre-migration occupation is often the same as their post-return occupational choice and further it is difficult for returnees to predict their income levels after they return home. That ITists, by stark contrast, sought higher wage as they could negotiate a premium from GISU or become self-employed as they could establish their own start-up in India. ITists' mobility and ability to take up a series of jobs across organizations, relative to medics, who worked in undeserved or restrictive areas posed limits to their 'up-skilling' and career mobility probably led them to return to India. Overseas knowledge while an important return factor thus depends on prevailing context back at home

In both EHIRC and GISU, returnees were the primary breadwinners for their families, but ITists tended to be from transnationally split households in which receiving higher wages motivated return as it would enable them to settle down in India. A marked difference between EHIRC and GISU is that medics' length of stay abroad tends to be longer, relative to ITists, due to their period of training, which suggests occupational mobility is an decisive motive for returning to India. Those in EHIRC are motivated by occupational mobility, compared to those in GISU who expect a wage premium, but both motives are associated with social mobility for which they return so that they can enjoy higher standards of living in India. This explanation mainly applies to EHIRC and GISU, but it may also have some relevance for other such skilled migrants in general due to various push-pull factors that stimulate their return home.

Table 12.3: Tests of Significance on the Differences Among Migrants' Motivations to Return to India by Personal Characteristics at EHIRC and GISU

Tests of Significance	Averages: EHIRC plus GISU					Differences: EHIRC minus GISU				
	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Occupation	Region	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Occupation	Region
Lambda Values	0.646	0.358	0.019	0.683	0.798	-0.352	-0.660	0.018	-0.183	0.546
Significance	0.030*	0.060	0.599	0.000*	0.322*	GISU	GISU	Neither	Both	EHIRC
Uncertainty Values	0.632	0.413	0.241	0.640	0.674	-0.345	-0.677	-0.349	-0.400	0.439
Significance	0.027*	0.069	0.589	0.001*	0.388*	GISU	GISU	Neither	Both	EHIRC
Chi-square Values	33.672	38.350	56.695	58.217	57.255	30.649	54.389	14.055	-67.363	2.895
Significance	0.050*	0.614	0.763	0.022*	0.442*	GISU	GISU	Neither	Both	EHIRC

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: In the above table, the averages panel combined the data used in the different contingency tables in EHIRC and GISU. The frequency distributions are computed between respondents' stated motivation to return to India by their personal characteristics, which are converted into nominal variables to conduct a significance test. Three different tests of significance are conducted to analyze if there is an association among return motives and certain personal characteristics. Also, these tests measure the strength of association between return motives and certain variables and if the relationship is significant.

Note 2: The Lambda and Uncertainty values range from 0 to 1, with 0 signifying no association and 1 signifying perfect association between the cross-tabulated combinations of return motive and certain variables of the sample. The Chi-squared statistic, using Fisher's exact test, is also based on a cross tabulation of the combination of return motives and certain variables to show if there is an association and its significance in the sample. The Uncertainty and Chi-squared, specifically Fisher's exact test, is used due to the small sample size and zeros in some response cells in the data set of the sample.

Note 3: However, the difference panel calculates the arithmetic difference between the generated numerical values for each variable—age, gender, marital status, occupation and region—that were derived separately for similar tables in EHIRC and GISU. The numerical values are used to only show the difference between the generated statistics and thus are interpreted as being a high value or low value to compare the dataset obtained from the previous case studies.

Note 4: Given the above treatment of numerical values, in the averages panel an (*) denotes that the numeric values are significant at $p < 0.05$. But, in the differences panel the words both, neither or name of the institution indicates if the numerical values shown in the rows were significant in each of the organizations.

Note 5: A large difference between the two organizations is defined as one where the difference is ten or more percent of the numerical values in the averages panel and the numeric values were significant in both organizations, which is highlighted in this table.

Note 6: A limitation that should be recognized is that the difference panel presents numerical values that are significant if they are ten percent or more of the numerical values in the averages panel and were significant in similar tables in EHIRC and GISU. In other words, the difference panel does not give 'integrated numerical values' and thus the analyses are triangulated with case interviews to explain differences, if any, in medical and IT migrants' decision to return home.

In view of the above discussion, Table 12.3 presents three tests of significance to see if medics and ITists stated motives and personal attributes is associated with their return to India. From the averages panel, it can be seen that the Lambda (0.646, 0.683 and 0.798), Uncertainty (0.632, 0.640 and 0.674) and Chi-squared (33.672, 58.217 and 57.255) values indicate a strong and significant association ($p < 0.05$) between migrants' age, occupation and the foreign region in which they resided with their decision to return to India. Further, the Lambda (0.358 and 0.019), Uncertainty (0.413 and 0.241) and Chi-squared (38.350 and 56.695) values indicate a weak and insignificant association ($p < 0.05$) between the gender and marital status of returnees with their motive for coming back to India.

The age and gender of ITists, relative to medics, is associated more with their motives, which is surprising given the previous tables on their migration decision. This means that life cycle factors are important for ITists, and not just for medics, as many ITists are young and single with a marked increase of women in the IT labor force (Raghuram, 2004). Marital status is not an important variable in EHIRC or GISU as access to telecommunications and cheap air travel enable medics and ITists to stay connected with their families or households back home. In both EHIRC and GISU, occupation had the most significant association on the medics' and ITists' return motives as it is linked to their expectation of social mobility, standard of living and quality of life at home. A notable difference between EHIRC and GISU is that the foreign region in which medics resided is associated more with their return motives, compared to ITists, who often worked in the West that gave them career flexibility, imposed less visa restrictions and had greater economic prospects than back in India.

Striking differences are revealed between EHIRC and GISU insofar as ITists' motive to return largely depends on their age and gender as it is linked to factors like higher paying jobs, holding positions of authority and the chance to start their own IT firm, which is geared towards securing a better life. In EHIRC, occupation and foreign region in which medics resided was linked to factors like feeling homesick, prospects of enhanced career status and social mobility that tended to pull them to India. In this case, the acquisition of overseas knowledge would be associated less with medics than ITists return migration to India. Not discounting the proposition that returnees who met their pre-set targets simply chose to return, EHIRC compared to GISU, suggests macro issues are the overarching grounds for going home.

All in all, the human capital, NELM and neoclassical explanations are not necessarily contradictory, but rather supplementary views of the return migration phenomenon (Massey et al., 1993).¹⁹ Further, human capital, NELM and neoclassical explanations can be neatly categorized as a micro-level, meso-level and macro-level analysis which may help to better explain medics' and ITists' return decisions. At the micro-level, medics and ITists conduct a cost-benefit analysis in which the acquisition of overseas knowledge resources tends to be associated with their decision to return to India. However, at the meso-level it can be argued that EHIRC compared to GISU, shows that most female medics and transnationals, emphasis on family considerations, social ties and other attachments seems to imply that return is a joint household decision for coming home. But at the macro-level, EHIRC contrasted with GISU reveals that ITists, relative to medics, are more attuned to capitalizing on the wage differential prompting their return home. While there seems to be a checkered pattern in the decision to return, EHIRC when contrasted with GISU, confirms that differences in personal characteristics, life cycle reasons, domestic situations, both at the destination and at home, as well as economic, social and political issues tend to impact medics' and ITists' motivations to return to their country of origin.

12.2 Returned Migrants' Reasons for Joining EHIRC and GISU

Medics and ITists that decided to return to India to work will most likely have different reasons for joining certain locally employing organizations. But transnationals' mobility is often bounded to activities of their parent firm that may limit their options of joining an organization. Given this empirical distinction, a comparison of medics and ITists will show the intersection between individual reasons, social networks and HRD efforts that tend to pull returnees towards EHIRC and GISU and not other organizations in their respective industries. While returnees' overseas-acquired knowledge resources is an important factor, it must be analyzed alongside the 'likes and dislikes' of organizations as well as larger market dynamics so as to better understand returnees' choice of employer in New Delhi.

¹⁹ One should be skeptical of atomistic theories that deny the importance of structural constraints in individual decisions and of structural theories that deny agency to individual and families in migration decisions (Massey et al., 1993: 455).

Table 12.4: Main Reason for Joining the Organization by Occupation at EHIRC and GISU

Main Reasons	Averages: EHIRC plus GISU				Differences: EHIRC minus GISU			
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Total	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Total
Advancing Career Goals	13.3	17.2	21.9	19.0	3.0	-22.5	-12.5	-12.6
Better Compensation Package	4.4	45.6	29.2	31.1	-8.0	-34.1	11.6	-8.5
Children, Family and Friends	22.2	12.0	10.5	12.7	5.0	22.9	-5.4	8.1
Finished Education and Training	22.2	1.7	2.4	5.6	-22.0	3.2	4.7	-0.7
Greater Social Standing	11.1	0.8	4.0	4.0	-20.0	-1.8	7.9	-1.3
Higher Standard of Living	11.1	3.4	7.3	6.0	25.0	6.5	-2.0	5.4
To Make a Meaningful Difference	4.4	11.2	21.1	15.3	-8.0	10.9	-1.0	1.5
Other Reasons	11.1	7.7	3.2	6.0	25.0	14.7	-3.5	8.0
Total for occupation group (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Returnees by occupation (%)	15.0	38.7	41.1	100.0	-1.6	2.0	1.0	0.0

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The average panel shows the weighted average percentages for the respondents' responses derived from tables used in the two previous case studies. The difference panel displays the arithmetic difference in percentage points in the responses between EHIRC and GISU.

Note 2: The numbers listed in cells across the rows do not sum to 100% or 0%, as they are the weighted averages and differences in percentages for the above categories given the share of total returned respondents used in the overall tabulation of this table.

Note 3: The occupation Category 4 is not shown because there were no returnees in this category in EHIRC and relatively few in GISU, but respondents in this category are included in the total columns in this table.

Note 4: A large difference is defined as ten or more percentage points, which is highlighted in this table.

Table 12.4's averages panel indicates that a total of 31% of respondents reported that receiving a better compensation package was the main reason for joining EHIRC or GISU. The differences panel reveals that medics' and ITists' reasons for choosing to join EHIRC or GISU varied by their occupation groups: a difference of -22 percentage points in Category 1 means fewer medics than ITists reported finishing their education or training for choosing their organization. A difference of -22 and -34 percentage points in Category 2 means fewer medics than ITists reported career goals or better compensation, but relative to ITists, more often stated family considerations for choosing EHIRC. Further, a difference of -12 percentage points in Category 3 means fewer medics stated career goals compared to ITists who said better compensation for deciding to work for GISU.

The differences between medics and ITists is interesting in that the former group, after finishing their education or training, is a sufficient but not a necessary reason for joining EHIRC. Though acquiring education training is a prerequisite for gaining a position at a super-specialty hospital, medics relative to ITists tend to consider access personnel, technologies and other amenities to do serious medical work that may be limited in other organizations. In contrast, ITists more so than medics' decision to join GISU for financial motives is because of the sense of prestige, Western style of corporate governance and HRD policies aimed at a better work-life balance that would be unattainable if they worked for some other organization. These subtle differences suggest that specific 'likes and dislikes' of EHIRC and GISU affect why such returnees take up employment with their respective organizations.

While medics stressed the importance of family considerations for choosing EHIRC, those in GISU were often swayed by financial and career incentives offered by the organization. The differences between medics and ITists, can be understood in view of their personal contexts, that go beyond specific 'likes and dislikes' of EHIRC and GISU. In EHIRC, medics were concerned with finding a good school for their children, being close to relatives, access to public transportation that reduced their commuting time in the congested city. In GISU, ITists mentioned the importance of leisure activities and personal safety, but explained that receiving higher wages was linked to their ability to securing housing in the metropolis. EHIRC compared to GISU, the select differences in choice of employer depends, at least partially, on fulfilling their professional duties and settling down comfortably in New Delhi.

Table 12.5: Analysis of Variance Between Returned and Stayed Employees' Annual Earnings with Interaction Effects at EHIRC and GISU

Sources	Averages: EHIRC plus GISU				Differences: EHIRC minus GISU			
	DF	Mean Square	F-Statistic	Significance	DF	Mean Square	F-Statistic	Significance
Corrected Model	9	11.67	45.78	0.044	-	14.63	10.00	-
	2	10.55	156.54	0.057	-	1.95	41.46	-
Type of Employee	4	12.62	34.64	0.000*	-	7.10	-40.17	Both
	3	8.27	80.07	0.000*	-	3.63	20.76	Both
Occupation								
Type of Employee * Occupation	2	9.88	48.12	0.000*	-	7.23	-60.50	Both
Corrected Total	620	-	-	-				

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: In the ANOVA model, the dependent variable is the annual earnings and the independent variables are the type of employee (returned, stayed or transnational employee) and their occupation (Categories 1, 2, 3 and 4) along with the application of certain control variables to ensure the robustness of the model. The ANOVA model also tests the interaction effect between type of employee and occupation in this model. The model's adjusted R-squared=0.62 where an (*) denotes that the numeric value is significant at $p < 0.01$ in this table.

Note 2: In the averages panel, three null hypotheses were tested as explained in similar tables presented on EHIRC and GISU.

Note 3: In the difference panel, Degrees of Freedom are omitted because the differences in these numbers are uninformative but the difference in the numerical values on mean squares and F-statistic are included to show only the arithmetic difference between the generated numerical values that were derived for similar tables in EHIRC and GISU.

Note 4: A large difference between the two organizations are defined as one where the difference is ten or more percent of the numerical values shown in the averages panel and the numerical values are significant in both organizations. The words both, neither or the name of the institution indicates if the numerical values shown in the last column were significant in each of the organizations, which is highlighted in this table.

Note 5: A limitation that should be recognized is that the analysis only shows if there is a variation between the Type of Employee, Occupation and the interaction effect of the two variables on annual earnings in the organizations. The above results were therefore checked against the mean income calculated for different occupation groups of returned, stayed and transnationals, which reveals that the overseas-trained earn higher wages than home-trained workers in their respective organizations. Because the difference panel only shows the arithmetic difference between the generated statistics obtained from EHIRC and GISU, the numerical values are interpreted as being a high value or low value to compare the two organizations. The above findings are triangulated with case interviews and presented in the upcoming discussion to better explain differences in compensation amongst medical and IT migrants and their non-migrant counterparts in the two organizations.

Interestingly, the averages panel in Table 12.5 indicates that type of employee (returnee, non-migrant or transnational), their occupation (Category 1, 2, 3 and 4) the interaction of the two variables exhibit variation in annual earnings in EHIRC and GISU. The differences panel reveals that the type of employee has an F-statistic (-40.17) that is interpreted to mean that fewer medics than ITists' migrant status' as returnees is associated with their annual earnings in the organization. For the variable occupation, an F-statistic (20.76) in the opposite direction is interpreted to mean that more medics' than ITists' occupational role is associated with income earned in EHIRC. Interaction of type of employee and occupation has an F-statistic (-60.50) is interpreted to mean fewer medics than ITists status as a returnee and their job role is associated with income earned in the organizations.

Medics' status as a returnee or non-migrant, relative to ITists, tends to be of less consideration than their occupational role—due to the fact there is a much higher level of differentiation in expertise, skill sets and experiences that affects their earnings in EHIRC. ITists status as a returnee, non-migrant or transnational, when compared to medics, is of greater consideration because job designations are more fluid that can be upgraded, switched or discontinued which tends to compress wages and improve earning of returnees in GISU (Frazis and Lowenstein, 2006). Though returnees and the occupation role they hold tends to be associated with receiving a wage premium, EHIRC in contrast with GISU, reveals that the marked difference is that medics' earnings depends on their knowledge capital more so than ITists whose income is tied to the demand for IT service in the organization.

In EHIRC, medics who returned from abroad earned a wage premium compared to non-migrants because their knowledge, specialization and experiences are associated with their expected productivity, affect on patient outcomes and the brand value of EHIRC. For GISU, IT returnees receive higher wages, even though they might not be more productive than non-migrants holding the same job, because of their overseas credentials, institutional contacts and exposure to foreign markets which suggests that training natives would be cost prohibitive to improve organizational growth. Across EHIRC and GISU, the different rental rates of human capital of returnees is the result of the organization's ability to recruit returnees, but for GISU it is also the inelastic supply of IT labor in the market. The economic rent of returnees' human capital thus depends on market forces of the two different service industries.

Table 12.6: Proportion of Returned and Stayed Employees in Senior Occupational Positions by Age at EHIRC and GISU

Occupational Groups	Averages: EHIRC plus GISU				Differences: EHIRC minus GISU			
	30-39	40-49	50-59	Total	30-39	40-49	50-59	Total
Category 1								
Returned	56.2	66.6	66.6	-	12.5	10.0	-25.0	-
Stayed	33.3	50.0	25.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Category 2								
Returned	57.1	62.9	56.2	-	18.4	20.0	-23.8	-
Stayed	30.0	36.6	35.7	-	-22.2	-6.7	-15.0	-
Category 3								
Returned	57.1	68.2	76.1	-	-5.5	-6.4	11.8	-
Stayed	25.0	37.3	35.2	-	0.0	-5.3	12.8	-
Category 4								
Returned	-	-	77.7	-	-	-	28.6	-
Stayed	-	-	42.8	-	-	-	10.0	-
Category 4A								
Transnationals only in GISU	70.0	90.0	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	-
Percentages of Returnees (%)	56.9	65.4	69.2	61.8	7.3	-6.3	-1.9	3.0
Percentages of Stayers (%)	27.8	38.7	34.7	28.8	-9.0	-5.7	0.8	-11.8
Percentages of Transnationals (%)	70.0	90.0	-	80.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: Senior grade positions are defined as follows: Category 1 (Lead, Supervisor, Superintendent or Senior), Category 2 (Supervisor, Superintendent, Manager or Head), Category 3 (Senior, Principal Consultant, Attending Professional, Senior IT analyst, Supervisor of Department or Manager of Unit), Category 4 (Executive, Director or Chief Officer) and Category 4A (a combination of the above classifications).

Note 2: The number of respondents with a senior grade position was divided by the total number of migrants in their occupation and age group for each cell in the table. The percentage of returned, stayed and transnational respondents in senior occupational positions in their respective age groups are presented at the bottom of the column in the table. A (-) signifies that there are no respondents, only one or both returned (including transnationals) and non-migrant respondents are not in the age groups and/or neither of them may be in a senior occupational position in the organizations.

Note 3: The 20-29 and the >60 age groups are not shown because there were no returnees in this age group in EHIRC and very few in GISU, but respondents in this age group are included in the total columns in this table. Transnationals are shown separately as Category 4A and omitted from the differences panel because there are few respondents in this category and that only in GISU.

Note 4: A large difference is defined as ten or more percentage points, which is highlighted in this table.

Concomitantly, Table 12.6's averages panel indicates that a larger proportion of returnees (61%) than non-migrants (28%) hold a senior occupational position in EHIRC and GISU. The differences panel reveals that in Category 1 and 2 in the age groups 30 to 39 and 40 to 49 more returned medics than ITists are in senior roles EHIRC and GISU. In the same occupational categories but for the age group 50 to 59, a difference of -25 and -23 percentage points indicate that fewer returned medics than ITists have seniority positions in the organizations. In Category 3 and 4 for the age group 50 to 59, a difference of 11 and 28 percentage points means that more returned medics than ITists have a senior status in their organizations. However, in Category 2, 3 and 4 the differences between returnees and non-migrants seniority seem to vary indiscriminately among the age groups in EHIRC and GISU.

The difference between returnees' and non-migrants' seniority tends to be attributed to the former groups' knowledge and skills acquired abroad and not formal education or their work experience in EHIRC or GISU. Besides the knowledge gap between returnees and non-migrants, younger medics relative to ITists, are more likely to maintain a consistent tenure that leads to their quicker career ascension in EHIRC. In contrast, middle-aged ITists and transnationals engage in work activities that tend to increase their mobility and create longer career paths in GISU. Medics' career mobility depends partly on HRD procedures for filling vacancies whereas ITists leapfrog into positions of authority by job swapping into GISU. EHIRC compared to GISU, differences in career mobility is mostly due medics' longer duration of stay abroad, relative to ITists, weakened industry ties to their organizations.

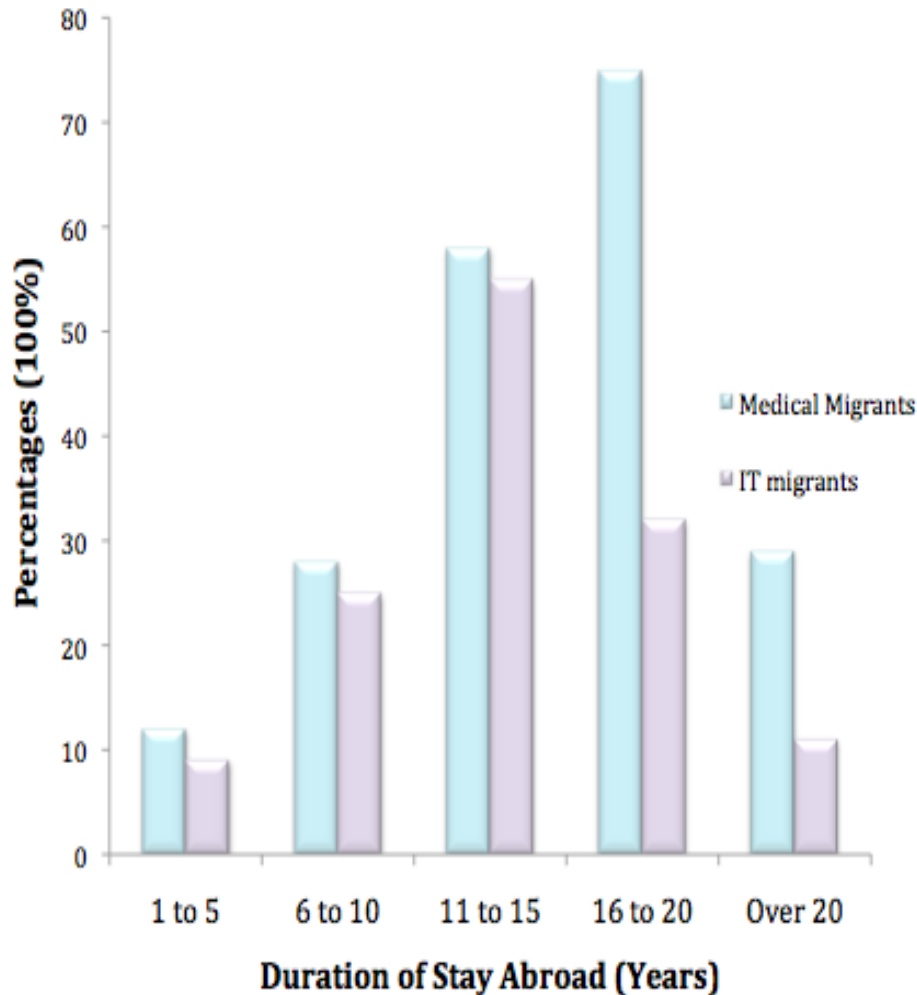
In EHIRC, there was a mismatch between medics' overseas qualification and occupation returning later in life, which stunted their career progress in the hospital. In GISU, most ITists earlier or in the middle of their working lives stepped off the escalator that enabled them to achieve upward career mobility in their firm. Older IT returnees in GISU more so than medical returnees in EHIRC choose to limit their work involvement in GISU so as to transition into becoming self-employed and start their own IT firm. EHIRC contrasted with GISU helps to explain that ITists tend to have business contacts, industries ties and cross-border network with the IT-BPO sector that further their professional life in New Delhi. The different underlying reasons support Saxenian's (2006: 81) view that, "limits to professional advancement meant the alternative was to return [and work for organizations] back home."

In general, human capital consideration and the social network theory in part and parcel of different migration theories address migrants' return reasons and working for employing organizations. Findlay et al.'s (2009) escalator region hypothesis offer a compelling explanation to the extent that medics and ITists, after acquiring knowledge, skills and experiences abroad, is associated with their choice of employer and ability to negotiate remuneration and occupational status at EHIRC and GISU. However, Constant and Massey (2002) showed that higher wages and occupational status alone does not fully explain return, which is evident from the observations that more medics than ITists tend to state family considerations as their reason for joining EHIRC. While more ITists than medics stated financial incentives, ITists' network ties with friends, family and former colleagues were important for joining GISU and was further linked to their career mobility in the IT industry. Along with specific 'likes and dislikes' of EHIRC and GISU, HRD efforts, strong labor employment ties and market dynamics are also factors of return that pull returnees towards EHIRC and GISU and not other organizations of their respective industries (Chacko, 2007; Shima, 2010). Comparing EHIRC to GISU, it seems that returnees' reasons are compounded and weighed differently for working for their organizations in the healthcare and IT-BPO industries. Therefore, across EHIRC and GISU, different sectoral and organizational-specific contexts have a varying impact on returnees' decision to work and settle down in New Delhi.

12.3 Issues Returnees Face Settling into the Workplace

Medics and ITists might experience a range of problems—inculcation of attitudes, professional conflicts, work pressures and at times even family-related concerns—that might affect their work performance, functioning and possibly their socialization efforts in EHIRC and GISU. That medics' and ITists' duration of stay abroad tends to be linked to the above-mentioned issues that may extend to their surroundings beyond the organizations. A comparison of medics and ITists by their duration of stay abroad will reveal similarities, differences and the extent to which they faced problems adjusting to their organizations. Hopefully, comparing returnees and analyzing their difference will highlight if the possibility exists that they can facilitate the knowledge transfer processes of their organizations.

Figure 12.1: Proportion of Returned Medical and IT Migrants with Adjustment Problems by their Duration of Stay Abroad



Source: Author's results based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked the respondents "Did you have problems adjusting to the workplace?" The response, either a Yes or No, was cross tabulated by the number of years the respondents stayed abroad before they decided to return to India. The frequency distributions of migrants' responses binned by the number of years they spent abroad is expressed as percentages in the above histogram. The figure only shows the percentage of returned medical and IT migrants who experienced difficulties adjusting in their organizations. The purpose of this figure is to highlight if long absences from India affected returnees' social integration and thus their potential impact on the knowledge transfer processes at work.

Figure 12.1 is a bar graph showing the proportions of medics and ITists that experienced adjustment problems in EHIRC and GISU. Based on the bar graph, a total average calculation indicates that 40% of medics and 25% of ITists stated that they faced adjustment problems in EHIRC and GISU. While a higher percentage of medics than ITists faced adjustment problems, the differences between medics' and ITists' responses are small but vary more for particular durations of stay abroad: 11% of medics compared to 8% of ITists away for 1 to 5 years, 28% of medics compared to 24% of ITists away for 6 to 10 years, 58% of medics compared to 55% away for 11 to 15 years, 75% of medics compared to 30% of ITists away for 16 to 20 years and 28% of medics compared to 10% of ITists away for over 20 years reported adjustment issues in their respective organizations.

Medics and ITists who were away for 1 to 5 years when contrasted with those who returned after 6 to 10 years faced less difficulty than as the latter group found the attitude, beliefs and values of non-migrants stifled their ability to socially maneuver within their organization. Both medics and ITists who returned after 11 to 15 years further reported that improper training, lack of professionalism and poor work ethics of non-migrants created professional conflicts in the organizations. In EHIRC, medics who returned after 16 to 20 years said that power outages, underdeveloped SOPs and the chaotic way patient care is delivered made it difficult to work in the hospital. In GISU, ITists in the same group and returnees who returned after more than 20 years complained significantly less probably because they had anticipated and were willing to face such challenges in their organizations.

In EHIRC, medics' duration abroad was more isolated compared to ITists who did not completely break away from non-migrants as they had integrated work process and periodic visits to offshore sites. For medics, there are no transnationals that served as intermediaries as they did in GISU to help IT returnees cope with work pressures in the firm. Medics received less organizational social support, which made ITists more apt at establishing work relations and renewing networks in GISU. EHIRC did not have repatriation policies, which stifled medics' re-adjustment in terms of their personal, family and social life in New Delhi. EHIRC is oriented less towards global life than GISU, which explains why ITists must deal with a broader set of issues at home. Medics' and ITists' acculturation, though different in EHIRC and GISU, suggests they can make knowledge contributions once they integrate back home.

Chapter Thirteen

Post-Return Experiences and Knowledge Transfers

Because post-return experiences vary across different migrants, it is vital to understand how they negotiate their social place in EHIRC and GISU. Given migrants' socialization efforts, this chapter offers a comparative analysis on medical and IT migrants' social ties—level of emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity—and its association with the transfer of knowledge to stakeholders in EHIRC and GISU. Also, a comparison of medical and IT migrants' codification efforts helps to show whether there are any differences in the motivation to transfer knowledge, given the incentives offered by the organizations. Comparing medical and IT migrants, the analyses will examine the role of returnees, transnationals and non-migrants in intra-organizational knowledge transfers and the results will better explain the knowledge structure of the organizations. Taking into account the difference between returnees, transnationals and non-migrants, contextual as well as organizational issues, this chapter will draw out lessons on the intended benefits and possibly unintended consequences of knowledge transfers at the organizations.

13.1 Interpersonal Knowledge Relations at Work

The attitude, behavior and characteristics of medics and ITists tend to be associated with their level of intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity of knowledge exchanges with non-migrants and transnationals at work. Medics and ITists must “achieve an optimal social distinctiveness from incumbent group members because by extension it matters as it informs their interpersonal interactions [that might ease the transfer of their expertise, competency and work experiences to and within their organizations]” (Wang, 2015: 137). Comparing EHIRC to GISU, the differences between medics and ITists will illuminate their interpersonal interactions that help to specify the role of returnees in intra-organizational knowledge transfers which is embedded and depends on network of people, resources that belong to that environment and practices of organizations (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005).

Table 13.1: Social Network Analysis of Returned and Stayed Employees' Interpersonal Knowledge Relationships at EHIRC and GISU

Occupational Groups	Averages: EHIRC plus GISU				Differences: EHIRC minus GISU			
	Intimacy	Contact	Reciprocity	Social Ties	Intimacy	Contact	Reciprocity	Social Ties
Category 1 Returned-Stayed	Neither	Rarely	No	Weak	More	Same	Same	Same
Category 2 Returned-Stayed	Acquaintance	Rarely	No	Weak	Same	Same	Same	Same
Category 3 Returned-Stayed	Acquaintance	Rarely	No	Weak	Same	Same	Same	Same
Category 4 Returned-Stayed-Transnational	Close Acquaintance	Occasionally	Yes	Intermediate	Less	Less	Less	Weaker

Source: Author's calculations based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The collected employee-level data on emotional intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity from EHIRC and GISU was used to construct the above table.

Note 2: The averages panel is derived from computations performed on similar tables on EHIRC and GISU that are not re-compiled but rather arithmetically averaged to show the socialization of returnees, stayers and transnationals within each of their occupational groups in the organizations.

Note 3: The difference panel also arithmetically calculates the difference of the values generated for similar tables on EHIRC and GISU to find, if any, differences in the level of social connectivity between the different sets of workers in the organizations.

Note 4: While a large difference is defined as one where the generated values are 10 percent or more than the average numerical values, this table follows a similar format as in the previous chapters by presenting the necessary information descriptively to better explain the results on the organizations. Differences in the values are shown as being relatively more or less for the same category of workers in the two organizations. For example, in Category 1 laboratory technicians display more intimacy with others in EHIRC than code programmers do towards workers in GISU.

Note 5: A limitation of this table is that relational data is from two different organizations which means the actual numerical values derived for the listed categories will not be informative to the extent that differences among and between workers cannot be controlled, their social relationships are restricted to specific contexts and other contravening issues of the workplace. Thus, the purpose of this table is to juxtapose the results and triangulate the information with case interviews to try and gain insight on the effect of workers' social ties on the knowledge transfer processes at work.

Table 13.1 is a social network analysis of respondents at EHRC and GISU. With the exception of Category 1 (laboratory technicians and code programmers), the averages panel in the table shows that in Categories 2, 3 and 4 returnees' level of intimacy with non-migrants is low and can be characterized as acquaintances in EHRC and GISU. Not only do these returnees rarely interact with non-migrants for personal advice, knowledge input or joint collaboration, but also their interactions are of a non-reciprocal nature at their respective organization. This finding is of no surprise as returnees' interactions are contingent on traits and characteristics that are initially dissimilar to non-migrants and reinforced by their social and professional experiences with other staff members in the workplace.

The difference panel shows a very slight variation between the respondents across EHRC and GISU. Returned laboratory technicians in Category 1 have a higher level of intimacy that is characterized as a friendship whereas code programmers are mere acquaintances with non-migrants in their organizations. Transnationals in Category 4 have a higher level of intimacy, interaction and reciprocity, relative to returnees in EHRC and GISU, with non-migrants in their organizations. There is a stark difference is that returnees in both EHRC and GISU have minimal work interaction with non-migrants in their organizations. The reason for these anomalies is that transnationals, compared to returnees in both EHRC and GISU, tend to have an altruistic outlook, work interactions require a personalized touch and reciprocation is critical for their job in GISU. In contrast, returnees in EHRC and GISU have professional conflicts with non-migrants that limit their dealings in the workplace.

The averages and differences panels show that respondents' social ties affect their work interactions with others in EHRC and GISU. Social ties between returnees and non-migrants are fewer and weaker, mainly significantly so, in EHRC than GISU. While returnees' interactions result in mostly weak social ties being formed with non-migrants in EHRC and GISU, the returned-stayed-transnationals' triad shows that they forge intermediate ties with stakeholders in GISU. The reasons for this marked difference in that medics, relative to ITists, weaker ties is the result of their interactions being focused on patients and not on staff members in the hospital. In contrast, ITists' intermediate ties with non-migrants are because of integrated work processes in GISU. That comparing EHRC and GISU reveals that barriers to stronger interpersonal relations is due to the nature of one's job and different work contexts of the organizations.

In view of the above discussion, analysis of the interviewees' transcripts reveals that returned medical migrants mostly practiced evidence-based medicine, transferring codified rather than tacit knowledge, which means that face-to-face interactions tended to be limited with non-migrants at work. In contrast, though IT returnees had computer interactions, transnationals made it easier to transfer potentially codifiable tacit knowledge, because returnees via transnationals had face-to-face interactions, albeit sporadic with non-migrants in GISU. While non-parity in knowledge partly explains the limited face-to-face interactions between returnees and non-migrants in EHIRC and GISU, medics are less task-interdependent than ITists, which contributes to differences in ties and variations in knowledge transfers in the organizations.

Comparing EHIRC and GISU, it seems that the two groups of returnees transfer mostly codified knowledge to non-migrants, as they are not fully embedded in the social networks at work. In EHIRC, medical returnees are unable to transfer tacit knowledge to non-migrants because they no longer have command over the cultural vocabulary, familiarity with social cues and deeper sense of commitment to networks, which facilitate the transfer of knowledge in the hospital. In GISU, most IT returnees and transnational, relative to medics, are stronger knowledge brokers because of the higher level of task interdependence, ability to gain the trust of their coworkers and they hold senior position in a non-hierarchical structure, all of which helps to cut across social-specific contexts in the firm. These differences, though more significant for EHIRC than GISU, point to organizational barriers that tend to impact the knowledge transfer processes of the organizations.

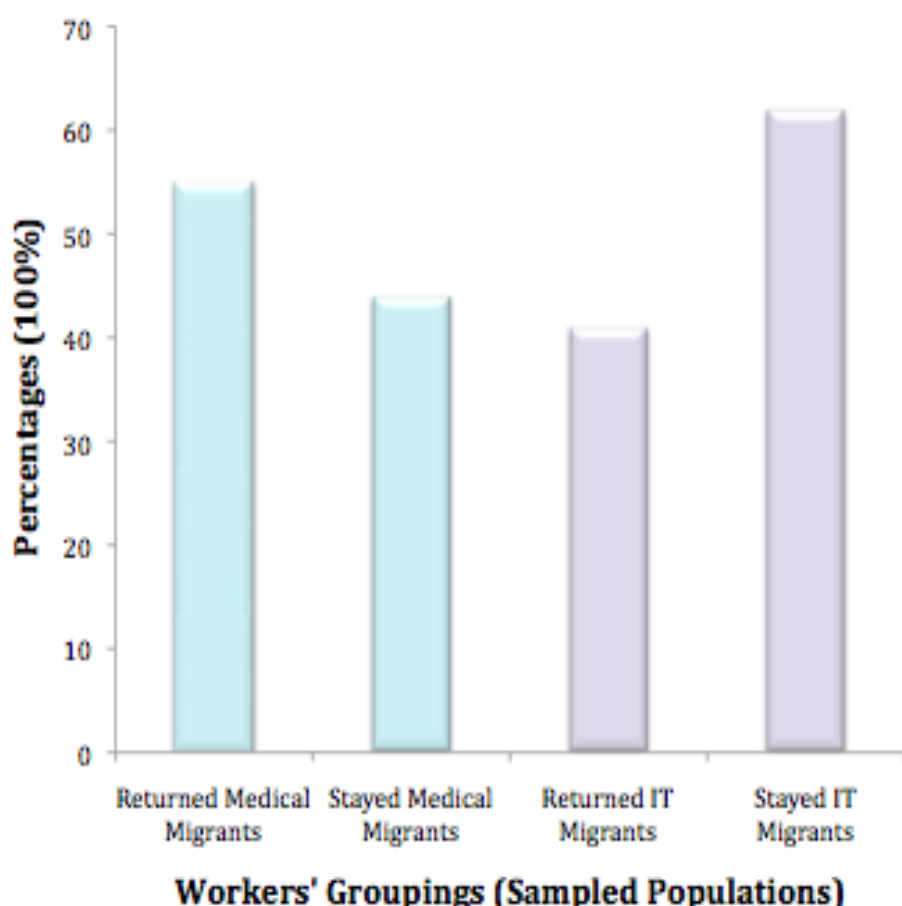
Across EHIRC and GISU, returnees find it easier to transfer codified knowledge to non-migrants because of the knowledge gap that results in weak social networks and is sustained by different work assignments, occupational roles as well as operating procedures of their workplace. Medics and IT returnees are unable to forge stronger social networks, like transnationals with non-migrants in GISU. This difference offers a valuable insight in that transnationals, though there are none in EHIRC and only in GISU, show that transnationals more so than returnees are deeply embedded in both foreign and local networks in the IT industry that perhaps improves their social engagements with others and thus intra-organizational knowledge transfers in GISU. This suggests that knowledge flows, though moderated by institutional barriers of EHIRC and GISU, can be overcome by improving the social dynamics of organizations.

The comparative analysis of EHIRC and GISU reveals a slight, but important variation, that medics more than IT migrants only in Category 1, transfer codified and potentially tacit knowledge, as they are more than mere acquaintances with non-migrants at work. Albeit there are hardly any differences between EHIRC and GISU in terms of currently employed medics and IT migrants in Categories 1, 2 and 3, the transfer of mostly codified rather than tacit knowledge tends to be associated with less intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity between returnees and non-migrants in the workplace. Both in EHIRC and GISU the transfer of codified knowledge is associated with above individual factors that engender the formation of weak social ties in the workplace. However, IT transnationals' intermediate social ties can transfer sticky and non-routinized types of understanding in GISU. What emerges from juxtaposing the empirical data and responses obtained from EHIRC to GISU is that knowledge exchanges are associated with the strength of social ties engendered among employees in their respective organizations. Importantly, medic's duration of stay abroad is longer than ITists, and relatively shorter for transnationals, which helps to explain why those in GISU are able to renew refresh their social networks, which tends to improve their social engagements with others in the workplace. Managing social struggles by easing constraints, through stronger networks and better HR initiatives can help to facilitate the knowledge transfer process of these organizations.

13.2 Knowledge Codification Efforts in the Workplace

Because returnees' potentially codifiable private knowledge that may raise non-migrants' performance, knowledge codification is seen as one way to improve the strengthen of social interactions, the quality of content as well as to ensure transfer of resources in the workplace. Medical and ITists' efforts in converting their private knowledge into an accessible format—electronic or corporeal exchanges—to be shared by workers, teams and units will depend on incentives offered in their workplace. With respect to these claim, I will conduct a comparative analysis of EHIRC and GISU in terms of respondents' response to knowledge codification on their social ties and its link to which incentives would motivate them to improve their codification efforts in the organizations. Contrasting EHIRC and GISU will isolate, if any, anomalies and highlight differences in knowledge transfers in the organizations.

Figure 13.1: Proportion of Employees Who Believe Knowledge Codification Efforts Weakens their Social Relations



Source: Author's results based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The structured questionnaire asked the respondents "Do you think knowledge codification would weaken your social relations in the workplace?" The response, either a Yes or No, was cross tabulated by the type of employee—returned and non-migrant—working for the organization. The frequency distributions of the employees' responses are expressed as percentages in the above bar graph. The figure only shows the percentages of returned and non-migrant employees who felt knowledge codification weakens their social ties with other team members, workgroups, departments or units in their organization. The purpose of this figure is to compare how increasing knowledge codification efforts of employees potentially affects the strength of their existing social ties with stakeholders in the workplace. The results are used to explain how knowledge codification may impact the knowledge transfer processes of the workplace.

Figure 13.1 shows that 55% of returned medics and 44% of non-migrants believed that codifying their private know-how would weaken their social ties with others. Returned medics, more so than non-migrants, felt that codifying their private know-how is difficult as their tasks are highly specialized and contingent on patients' well-being and thus any effort to do so would take away time they have allocated to mentor, teach and train staff in their departments. In the same vein, non-migrants felt that knowledge codification tends to create 'conflicts of interest' and would reduce informal exchanges between those holding different occupational positions and fiduciary responsibilities in the workplace. Differences between returnees' and non-migrants' responses, although negligible, reflect the nature of medical work in which weak social ties are deemed efficient for performing duties at EHRC.

In contrast, only 40% of IT returnees and 60% of non-migrants believed that codifying their private knowledge would weaken their social ties with others. IT returnees, less than non-migrants, felt that codifying their private know-how would weaken their social ties as interactions are mostly computer-based and tailored to client projects in which codification may improve team members' work performance and targets set by the unit. In contrast, non-migrants maintained that knowledge codification is already excessive so further efforts would undermine their autonomy to forge functional ties, access alternate knowledge sources and avail themselves of new learning opportunities in the workplace. Differences between returnees' and non-migrants' responses, that display higher variation, suggest the strength of social relations is tethered to the workflow process of GISU.

Comparing medical and IT migrants reveal that they held divergent views on whether codifying private knowledge would weaken their social ties with others at work. The differences can be attributed to medical returnees desire to maintain relationship-specific knowledge investments that correspond to non-migrants belief that codification would undermine the diversity of knowledge and thus diminish its value in EHRC. While IT returnees felt that increased codification can trigger transaction-saving routines, non-migrants expressed that they would be locked-out of new learning opportunities in GISU. As a result 'knowledge exchange conditions' in EHRC or GISU must be matched to the tie strength of returnees and non-migrants in order to create a 'shared interpretive social context' to facilitate the knowledge transfer processes of the organizations.

The respondents' interviews transcripts reveal that one of the obstacles to converting medical returnees' and non-migrants' potentially codifiable private knowledge is that, beside patient history charts and notes, there is a lack of written communication because the staff tends to enjoy high levels of autonomy at work. Even though IT returnees and non-migrants are required to document their written and oral communications as a matter of protocol, their actions do not always translate into codifying private knowledge in the workplace. For these reasons, both EHIRC and GISU offer cash bonuses, job perks and non-pecuniary rewards, that tend to have varying effects, to increase medics' and ITists' efforts to convert their codifiable private knowledge via face-to-face contact, electronic knowledge repositories and virtual communities to improve work-related outcomes in the workplace.

In comparing EHIRC and GISU, medical returnees and non-migrants, relative to IT migrants and their counterparts, tend to display a higher degree of altruism in their efforts to codify their private knowledge at work. In GISU, ITists are galvanized less by intrinsic rewards compared to medics in EHIRC and often seek monetary gains, job promotions and increased social visibility for participating in the codification process of GISU. In EHIRC, medics seem to be satisfied with intrinsic rewards for their codification efforts due to "a sense of righteousness, felt commitments and other reasons with moral over-tones" (Sergiovanni, 1992: 58) for ensuring admitted patients' welfare at the hospital. GISU, in contrast, must offer extrinsic incentives to alter ITists' lack of commitment to the codification processes due to pressures for improving their performance, competitive culture and working in a profit-oriented environment.

Contrasting EHIRC and GISU, medics' intrinsic motives to codify their private knowledge are less likely to get crowded-out by extrinsic rewards than for ITists in their firm. The clear difference is that in EHIRC medics' sense of professional duties and 'finding what they do to be personally significant' contributes to belief that their codification efforts will improve the delivery of medical services. In GISU, it seems that intellectual capital is more closely linked to wages than for EHIRC, which means ITists will not raise their codification efforts 'if it is going to result in a loss of status, power and money' in the firm. EHIRC pro-sharing practices, norms and work culture compared to GISU is partly due to ITists' industry expectations for profiting from the rise in demand for info-structure development. So, incentives must be placed in the institutional and industry context to improve knowledge transfers of organizations.

The comparisons reveal that in EHIRC, a clear differentiation in positions, duties and social status between returnees and non-migrant led to the formation of weak social ties that diminished their willingness to codify private knowledge as there was a low expectation of cooperative transactions in the hospital. In GISU, the dominance of computer-based interactions between IT returnees and non-migrants reduces co-specializations and social attachments, thus fostering weak social ties, which increases the cost of codifying private know-how in the firm. Increasing codification efforts of returnees and non-migrants in EHIRC is more likely to weaken or terminate their ties than in GISU. Returnees in GISU, relative to those in EHIRC, social ties with non-migrants are neither permanently weak nor strong, as job rotations and pre-established electronic networks cause churning of social and knowledge networks in the firm. "To combine the autonomy-based advantages of weak ties and cooperation-based advantages of strong ties" (Lazzarini and Zenger, 2002: 10), EHIRC and GISU, offer rewards to employees for raising codification efforts in the organizations. While employees respond differently to inducements, it seems that the lack of pro-sharing norms and a competitive work culture combined with expectations of profit sharing is linked to the codification process in GISU more so than EHIRC. Organizational barriers and the sectoral context should be considered in developing an incentive structure to improve the knowledge transfer processes of the organizations.

13.3 The Knowledge Structure of the Organizations

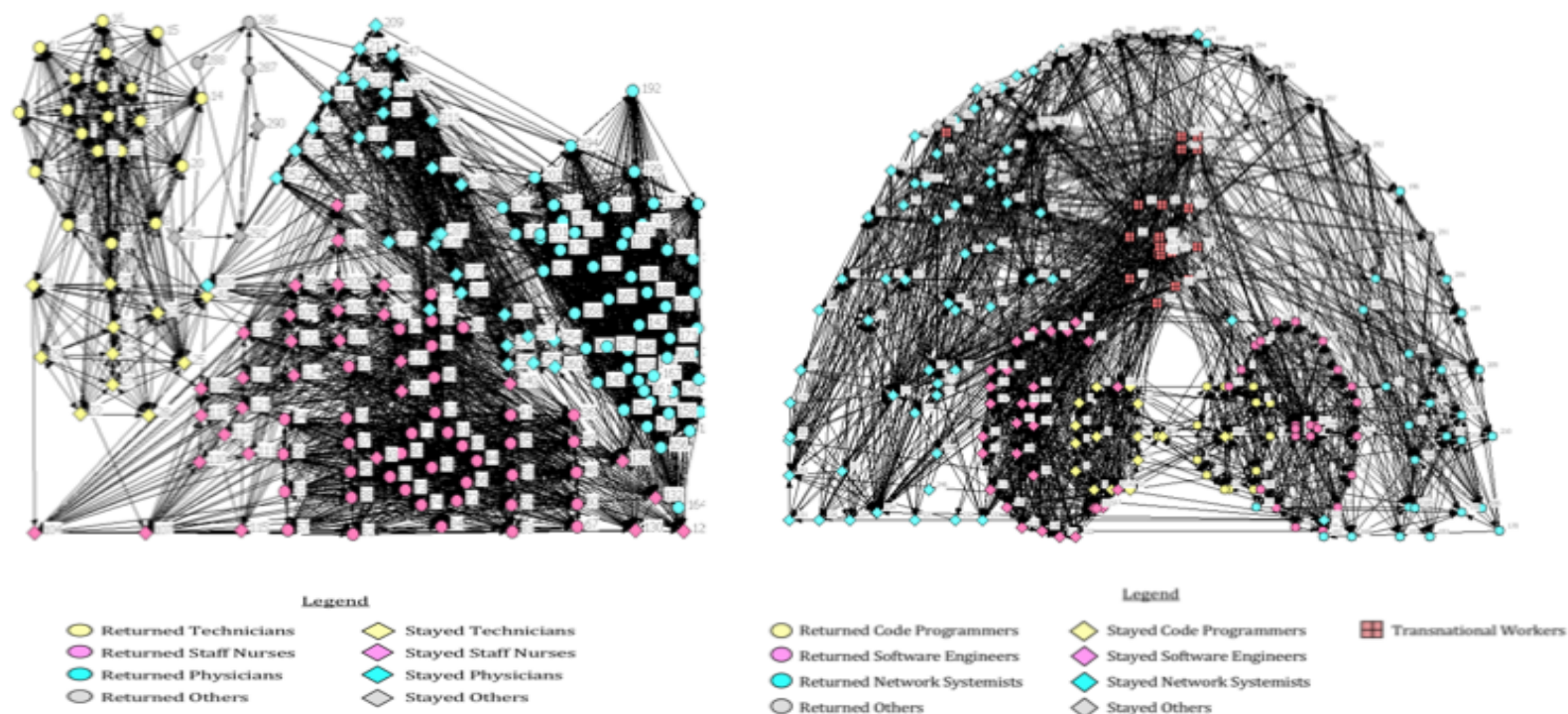
An important difference between EHIRC and GISU is how medical and IT migrants' social identities affect the way they re-negotiate not only their sense of belonging, but also orient themselves in the ebb and flow of their organizations. Both in EHIRC to GISU, medical and IT migrants have engendered mixed social ties that tend to serve different functions to deal with co-workers, manage their tasks and cope with environmental stresses in their organizations. Furthermore, there are clear differences between EHIRC and GISU in the way medics' and ITists' social ties are used to relay content, modes of exchanges and transfer resources that lead to the creation of weak, intermediate or strongly interconnected knowledge networks in their organizations. Analyzing EHIRC's and GISU's underlying social dynamics may offer insight into the knowledge structure of the organizations.

Both in EHIRC and GISU, medical and IT returnees had a 'friendship' with other overseas-trained employees, who socially bind together due to similarity in their traits, characteristics and values, thus forging an identity that is distinct from non-migrants at work. GE-6 (male and talent manager) explained that, "[medical and IT returnees] search for 'friendly faces' to get social resources not available or denied by Indians to get acclimated around here." Returnees in EHIRC and GISU consider non-migrants as merely 'acquaintances' as most oversea-trained employees hold senior occupational roles, are engaged in complex task assignments and often given administrative duties in the workplace. The reason most non-migrants held junior positions, given less responsibilities or duties, is because they did not have the knowledge, training or skills to meet the job criteria in their units.

But there are differences between EHIRC and GISU in terms of the type of corporeal and electronic exchanges that take place between medics and ITists with non-migrants at work. In EHIRC, medical returnees had infrequent face-to-face meetings and limited of written exchanges with non-migrants who were their juniors, on someone else's team or rotated in from a different medical unit. In GISU, by contrast, IT returnees engaged in regular electronic transactions with non-migrants who were assigned to their team, part of another project or re-located to the onshore site. It seems that medical returnees in EHIRC have less coordinated activities with non-migrants, relative to GISU, probably because IT work tend to heavily integrated in their workplace. This finding is of no surprise as EHIRC and GISU differ in the nature of their jobs, work processes and SOPs of their organizations.

Though medical and IT returnees including their Indian counterparts in EHIRC and GISU made use of endogenously developed personal social ties to transmit their innermost feelings, intuition and sensor-related perceptions, there positional ties were restricted to conveying information relating to tasks, procedures and protocols to members in their units. Returnees and non-migrants tend to rely on the 'same sets of social ties' to transfer multiple contents that build up trust, interactions and reciprocity in EHIRC and GISU. The mix of homophilic and occupational ties led to the dominance of weaker social ties more so in EHIRC relative to GISU that impacted knowledge network configurations in the organizations. Thus, the comparisons further show that differences in knowledge transfers are the result of the interplay of social constraints, institutional barriers and management policies in the organizations.

Figure 13.2: A Comparative Visualization of Employees' Knowledge Network Structure at EHIRC and GISU



Source: Author's results based on Field Survey (2010)

Note 1: The numbers in the figures above are the employee IDs, the arrows present the direction of the relationship, thicker lines mean the tie-strength is strong or vice versa and the different shapes help to differentiate returnees, stayers and transnationals by their occupation groups in EHIRC and GISU.

Note 2: The purpose of juxtaposing the figures is to highlight returnees', non-migrants' and transnationals' ties, sub-networks and overall knowledge structure so as to better triangulate the information with case interviews to explain the knowledge transfer processes of the organizations.

Note 3: A limitation of the sociogram is that the extent to which the visualization can offer the detailed information on employee's multiple ties, knowledge network configurations and resulting knowledge structure of the organizations.

Figure 13.2 compares EHIRC and GISU in terms of the directions and the extent to which information is transmitted between as well as within nodes in the organizations. The embedded illustrations, lines connecting the nodes, reveals that in EHIRC information flows between returned medics and other overseas-trained employees are continuous, streamed through the shortest pathways and indicative of strong social ties in the workgroup. In contrast, it seems that not only is information 'bottle-necked' amongst returned laboratory technicians, staff nurses and physicians, but transmitted across longer pathways most through weak social ties to non-migrants in the workplace. Task advice, professional tips and strategic input is exchanged between returnees and overseas-trained, whereas there is only one-way knowledge transfers to non-migrants occur just to perform duties in EHIRC.

In GISU, similarly, information transmitted between IT returnees and other overseas-trained employees is constant, streamed through the shortest pathways and reflects the strong social ties of the workgroup. Most information transmitted between IT returnees and transnationals is continuous, but at times it is disrupted due to reliance on emails, EKR's and digital communications, meaning that knowledge travels along slightly longer pathways as reflected in the forging of intermediate social ties amongst members in their department. Interestingly, information is 'ballooned' amongst returned code programmers, software engineers and network systemists and circulated across longer pathways through weak social ties to non-migrants at work. While emotional and professional support is offered from returnees to transnationals, knowledge transferred to non-migrants is for work purposes at GISU.

Juxtaposing the results pits McPherson et al.'s (2002) principle of homophily against Granovetter's (1979) weak social ties hypothesis to show that in EHIRC and GISU medics or IT returnees readily bond with other overseas-trained employees and forge strong social ties to transfer multiple contents at work. Notwithstanding the anomaly of transnationals in GISU whose intermediate social ties lends itself to transfer mixed content, overseas-trained employees' weak social ties with non-migrants restrict transfers to mostly codified and often non-private knowledge that can be copied, reused and dispersed in the workplace. Comparisons between EHIRC and GISU are informative in that returnees' social identification with other overseas-trained employees is important, but even their weak social ties with non-migrants is beneficial for knowledge transfers in their respective organizations.

In EHIRC, despite the predominance of weak social ties and holding different occupational positions, the figure also reveals that returned medics and their non-migrant counterparts formed their own mini-knowledge cliques. Weak social ties connected returnees to non-migrants, whose engagement with one another was mostly for completing tasks, ensuring proper patient management and adhering to their fiduciary responsibilities, yet, paradoxically bifurcated them into separate mini-knowledge cliques within their workgroups. The reason is attributed to specialty knowledge acquired by more returnees than non-migrants, which leads to the creation of tiered response teams depending on complexity of the medical care required in the ward. Such team specializations create diversity of knowledge that tends to enhance learning opportunities amongst workers at the hospital.

In GISU, too, the figure shows that weak social ties between individuals holding different job roles were pervasive between IT returnees and their non-migrant counterparts, which was further marked by the creation of their own mini-knowledge cliques at work. However, weak social ties seem to be strengthened to intermediate social ties, especially between the triad of returnees, transnationals and non-migrant counterparts with slightly less delineable min-knowledge cliques amongst the departments. For the most part, weak social ties connected most IT returnees and non-migrants for tasks, projects and client work. Weak social ties were strengthened to intermediate ties with transnationals because “routines emerging from repeated interactions tend to create less idiosyncratic language and procedures” (Lazzarini and Zenger, 2002: 7) for joint learning at the IT firm.

Comparing EHIRC to GISU, the embedded illustrations and their accompanying analyses reveal that returned medics and non-migrants created cohesive mini-knowledge cliques, but nonetheless functioned less efficiently because their weak social ties were stretched across a very sparse social network in EHIRC. Contrarily, IT returnees and non-migrants, despite their use of EKR, generated centralized knowledge cliques in which their weak social ties were constricted in a relatively denser social network in GISU. Transnationals were able to strengthen their own weak social ties into intermediate relations and thus travel through structural holes in the social network—initiating dialogues to establish trust, implement value-oriented goals and promote norms of cultural understandings in GISU. Thus, GISU relative to EHIRC, flexible knowledge structure facilitates transfers in the organization.

It seems that simply increasing the amount of physical encounters or the use of EKR's does not necessarily improve strength, quality or functioning of employees' ties in EHIRC or GISU. Raising knowledge codification efforts of returnees and non-migrants in EHIRC would improve in-group interactions that would only increase the density of their individual min-knowledge networks in the hospital. In contrast, given that GISU already uses electronic repositories, networks and virtual communities, raising the codification level would in all likelihood improve returnees', non-migrants' and transnationals' interactions, but at the cost of reducing the quality of knowledge content transferred in the firm. Both in EHIRC and GISU, trying to convert potentially codifiable knowledge would not necessarily improve group performance due to the poor connectivity of knowledge networks in the workplace.

It is evident that, "the search for an optimal network configuration, as a static exercise, says little about how they adjust in the context of changing social networks" (Lazzarini and Zenger, 2002: 26). Qualifying what constitutes an optimal knowledge network is difficult, but it was observed that EKRs "forces non-routine activities into regular patterns interrupting flows and [networks] in hospital life" (Zerubavel, 1979: 20). In GISU, EKRs enable knowledge networks to be stretched across units more so than in EHIRC, but access to a large pool of people reduces self-efficacy, trust and pro-sharing norms that moderate knowledge transfers in the firm. Differences between the organizations, while important, is more profound for GISU as its knowledge networks tend to churn more so than in EHIRC due to social constraints, frequent staff turnovers and IT work is often carried in virtual space in the organization.

What emerges from the comparisons is that differences exist in the type of corporeal and electronic exchanges that can expand, collapse or re-constitute networks. The sociogram reveals that social maneuvering and/or prowess is more restrictive in EHIRC than of GISU. Whereas the social network in GISU enable ITists to exert social power and exploit third-party interactions in competitive situations. The reason for this difference is that those 'higher up' in EHIRC are responsible for knowledge transfers to manage tasks, control the flow of resources and strategically invest in the hospital. In GISU, those who are 'higher up' and 'lower-down' transfer knowledge giving them the power to endorse norms of reciprocity, sharing and trust in the firm. The result is that EHIRC has a hierarchical and GISU a non-hierarchical knowledge structure, which suggests management policies are critical in transfers in the organizations.

In line with the above comparative discussion, Gottschalk (2005: 34) noted that knowledge transfers occurs in one of two ways:

Person-to-person interaction implied developing networks for linking people so that tacit knowledge can be shared. People-to-documents exchange implies developing an electronic document system that codifies, store, disseminates and allows reuse of knowledge. By personalization, the company invests moderately in IT, where the goal is to facilitate conversations and exchanges of tacit knowledge. Alternatively, in codification the human approach will be concerned more with training people in groups and through computer-based distance learning. The basic criteria for a competitive strategy in terms of personalization is to provide creative, analytically rigorous advice on high-level strategy problems by channeling individual expertise. And for codification it is to provide high quality, reliable and fast information systems by reusing codified knowledge in the organization.

In EHIRC, medical returnees' and non-migrants' knowledge transfers is geared towards providing individual expertise, albeit in response teams, in which forging strong sub-knowledge networks is meant to improve patient management in the hospital. In GISU, IT returnees and non-migrants transfer of knowledge is primarily through computer-based interactions to meet performance goals of projects in the firm. However, EHIRC attempts to mix the personalization and the codification approach to knowledge transfers reduces the role returnees' play in the knowledge hierarchy and networks thus stifling performance and growth of the hospital. GISU focus and further investment in their codification process, with one-one training and continuous education programs, opens up the possibility of for returnees to have a positive effect on work outcomes, innovative-capacity and competitiveness of the firm.

Comparisons of EHIRC and GISU approaches to knowledge transfers must be placed in context of their overall organizational goals. EE-3 (male and vice-president of operations) stated that HRD pursue a personalization approach, but have increased their investment in IT technologies so, "our delivery of medical service will be seen as the McDonalds of the healthcare industry." GE-12 (male and resource manager) stated that HRD takes a codification approach with "touch-and go policy to deal with turmoil, meet project deadlines and manage their units so as to stay competitive in the industry. " While EHIRC and GISU combine their existing pool of human capital with technological advances and organizational resources, Hansen et al. (1999) warns that 'straddling personalization and codification strategies' causes a loss to resource-based advantages, EHIRC more so than GISU, against others in their industries.

Overall, across EHIRC and GISU, the comparisons reveal that whether they are medics or ITists, returnees are in possession of individualized knowledge, skill sets and work experiences that they transfer through mostly weak social ties to non-migrants, groups and units at work. Though increasing medics and IT returnees' intimacy, frequency of interaction and reciprocity with non-migrants can improve tie strength, building up such an 'inertia' does not always promote cooperation in the workplace. Even if investments into technologies, codification processes and other formal mechanism reduce transaction costs, returnees' intra-organizational knowledge transfers tend to be moderated by trust, pro-sharing norms and other issues specific to the operation of the firms.

Both in EHIRC and GISU, the transfer of overseas-acquired knowledge by returnees to non-migrants, through mostly codified knowledge and through weak social ties, was advantageous for creating new learning opportunities, improving productivity and innovation capabilities in the workplace. Even though returnees and non-migrants formed separate social circles and min-knowledge networks in EHIRC and GISU, the diffusion of knowledge, albeit through longer pathways, generally tended to be conducive for bettering several work-related outcomes in the organization. That EHIRC's hierarchal and GISU's non-hierarchal knowledge structure is the cumulative effect of the above factors in addition to differences in work processes, personalization or codification approach to knowledge management and the vary contexts in which the transfer of knowledge occurs in organizations.

Though in EHIRC and GISU returnees knowledge transfers are beneficial to the stakeholders, the results suggest that their knowledge cliques, if not fully integrated into the existing knowledge structure might prevent the re-combination of resources to meet goals and organizational growth trajectories in the future. As an unintended consequences this would cause EHIRC and to a limited extent GISU from implementing the best possible organizational strategies to retain their competitive advantage against organizations in the industry. EE-6 (male and executive) explained, "talent acquisition [returnees] and investment in knowledge transfers in needed to improve delivery of services, strategic alliances, support subsidiaries and expand the business to capture market share in the industries." The lesson that emerges from the comparisons of EHIRC and GISU is that returnees' knowledge, if harnessed and harvested, can make significant contributions to organizations and industries back home.

Part V: Conclusion and Implications

Chapter Fourteen

Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the thesis that includes migrants' overseas-acquired knowledge resources and its links to negotiating a wage premium, improving their career trajectory, upward social mobility and lifestyle. The most original contribution to the study of return migration are my findings from the case studies that are used to explain high skilled returned migrants' socialization to their surroundings and its association with the transfer of knowledge resources after they return home. Though the explanations are applicable mostly to the two skill intensive organizations, the implications of the role returnees tend to play intra-organizational knowledge transfers in EHIRC and GISU are of particular relevance to understanding their potential positive or negative impact on the transfer process of other such institutions and thus the healthcare and IT-BPO industries in India. For this reason, this chapter articulates the significance of returnees' knowledge transfers and further offers a small but relevant public policy discussion, linkages to return migration and development as well as areas of future research. Besides offering my personal view on the possibility of a brain-gain for India, the thesis as whole hopefully adds another 'chapter in the unwritten history of return migration' to help continue the return migration story.

14.1 Main Findings

Although the neoclassical economic theory, with emphasis on human capital considerations, and to varying extent NELM as well as transnationalism offer insight into the migration decision, its theoretical tenets are used to re-conceptualize return migration, not as closure of the migration cycle, but as a part of the ongoing migration process (Ammassari, 2009). Embedding the social network theory help to shows that returnees are knowledge workers and to argue that the transfer of their overseas knowledge resources, though dependent on their interactions, the social context and contextual issues, can confer benefits to the workplace and possibly to their home.

Migrants' main motive for returning to India varied with age, occupation and the region in which they had resided while abroad. Young migrants felt that their acquisition of overseas knowledge resources would translate into better opportunities—advancing career goals and receiving a wage premium—in the tertiary sector in India. Middle-aged migrants acknowledged that not only had they enhanced their CV by working abroad, but also they had enough savings that enabled them to settle their family in India. Older migrants said they had amassed knowledge, wealth and social resources that they wanted to use to improve the state of affairs—delivery of medical services or technological governance—in India. And live peacefully after retiring from the workforce back home.

While some migrants frequently cited children, family and friends as their main motive for returning to India, a breakdown of the responses by the different occupation groups revealed that the acquisition of expertise, knowledge and work experience was tied to migrants' expectation of earning a wage premium in India. Even migrants who had done a relatively short stint of 1 to 5 years abroad believed they had accumulated knowledge resources that they could leverage to negotiate higher wages in the healthcare or IT-BPO sectors in India. Most medical and IT migrants successfully bargained for higher wages from local employers, but some IT returnees also stated they would use their knowledge capital to start a business back home. Either way, these migrants decided to return because they expected to be rewarded generously in the home country.

My empirical findings suggest that the overseas-acquired knowledge, skills and experiences is the primary motive for some migrants to emigrate, “but for others it something which happens as a side-effect of, say, the pursuit of higher wages or being taken as trailing family members” (Williams and Balaz, 2008a: 193)—and thus a key reason for their return to India. It is plausible also that migrants' emotional attachment to their families, affinity towards their culture and/or a sense of national pride may prompt them to return to India. In addition, most medical migrants working in the Gulf States were unable to obtain citizenship and many IT workers lost their jobs due to the economic downturn in the United States, both of which added to their other motives to return home. The rapid economic growth of India compared to recession-hit Western nations encouraged several migrants to return to take advantage of opportunities in their country of origin.

It seems that migrants who return, intending to be economically active, are likely to be drawn to those regions where the economic dynamism offers the greatest return to their foreign learning and these may not be the regions where they originated (Williams and Balaz, 2008a: 199). Migrants chose to re-locate to New Delhi because of its high concentration of headquarters, clusters of skills-intensive industries and known sites of services that raised their chances of gaining employment in the metropolis. While most medical migrants stated that the best tertiary care facilities were located in New Delhi, IT workers' transnational ties to MNCs, these firms' aggressive recruitment efforts and returnees' social networks that can help in job-swapping pulls them towards the locality.

Though New Delhi tends to have a better physical infrastructure than other Indian cities, relatively affordable housing and other amenities, "returnees who are prepared to make use of all the means and skills they acquired during their [overseas] migratory experiences" (Cerase, 1974: 251) will choose to work where they can make a positive impact on society. Moreover, Ammassari's (2003) work reminds us that returnees' ability to make use of their newly acquired knowledge resources will greatly depend on various contextual issues including those of the employing organizations. Analogous to the perspective of Voydanoff (2001), my results show that returnees' "seemingly separate lives in the workplace, family and community are in fact interlinked" (Williams and Balaz, 2008a: 196) that requires them to re-adjust to a broad set of issues back home.

The findings suggest that medical and IT migrants went abroad in part to accumulate new knowledge, develop their skill set and gain work experiences that they could use to better their life. Those migrants who already had a tertiary degree went abroad to improve their personal or professional opportunities. During their time abroad these migrants achieve some degree of social and occupational mobility, which they want to further capitalize on by returning to India. This perspective resonates with Findlay's et al. (2008, 2009) works to the extent that migrants who achieved accelerated social and occupational mobility—or in some cases limits to their professional advancement meant the alternative was to return (Saxenian, 2006: 81) to fulfill their life goals in India. While migrants that returned were placed among the upper echelon of society, some said they were often viewed as a symbol of progress due to the growing social and economics opportunities in India.

The decision to return and take up employment in the Indian healthcare and IT sectors is contingent on whether migrants can secure employment that will give them better futures back home. Medical migrants joined EHIRC because they were offered a higher remuneration package than from Apollo, Batra, Max and other locally employing private tertiary care medical facilities. Besides the financial incentives, returned medics had increased career mobility—quickly moving up the corporate ladder to achieve seniority status and positions in the medical facility. Some medics, especially physicians and non-medical workers, were able to transition into other lines of work in the hospital. Though not decisive factors, family reasons, making a meaningful difference and work-life balance also lured returnees to EHIRC.

Similarly, returned IT migrants joined GISU because they were offered a better salary than that proposed by HCL, Infosys, Wipro and other IT consultancy firms. Also, career incentives—becoming project lead, senior manager or even an executive—could be achieved more quickly if they worked for GISU. Some IT migrants, particularly software engineers and network systemists joined GISU so they could transition from waged laborers to starting up their own IT firms. Most transnationals that were sent abroad via intra-company transfers had to return and work for GISU. And some transnationals that job-hopped among local firms were able to better re-negotiate their employee contracts with GISU. The work amenities, reputation of the firm as well as being able to make a contribution towards technology governance drew some returnees to GISU.

The empirical results revealed that medical and IT migrants' decision to join EHIRC and GISU was related to their ability to leverage their newly acquired expertise, knowledge and insights from abroad—to gain jobs that would give them higher pay, better career trajectories and social status within the organizations. "Returnees seem to be of higher quality than people who have not gone abroad" (Zweig, 2006: 203-204) and thus are better rewarded than non-migrants in their organizations. While returnees in the medical field applied directly to EHIRC, most IT returnees used family connections, professional ties and cross-border social networks to gain entry into the organization. EHIRC and GISU recognize returnees as a strategic asset and thus tried to aggressively recruit them in New Delhi's tight labor market—as a way to stay competitive against other local organizations.

The post-return experiences of migrants revealed that returnees socialized with employees who had traits—attitudes, educational background, professional ethics and cultural insight—similar to their very own in EHIRC and GISU. Returnees' homophilic ties with other overseas-trained employees led to the transfer of personal information that helped them to better cope with life in New Delhi, but also led to the formation of a close friendship marked by an increase in emotional intimacy, frequency of face-to-face interactions and time spent discussing work issues in EHIRC and GISU. Besides the lack of homophilic ties, returnees' job position, specialty knowledge and overseas exposure led to the formation of weak ties with non-migrants and thus affected the transfer of knowledge in the organizations.

Though returnees' homophilic ties naturally connect them to each other, an unexpected finding was that returnees are unable to forge strong social ties with non-migrants. Also, unexpected was that transnationals forge intermediate social ties with both returnees and non-migrants in GISU, even though returnees and non-migrants have only weak social ties with each other at work. Disparity in the social relations, both in EHIRC and GISU, is primarily due to returnees' acquisition of new knowledge, skills and cultural understandings that drives a wedge and thus leads to the creation of weak social ties between workers in their organizations. Interestingly, the different groups of workers rely on the same sets of social ties for accessing multiple contents—task advice, strategic information as well as social support—constraining the transfer of knowledge within the organizations.

Pitting McPherson et al.'s (2001) principle of homophily in social networks against Granovetter's (1983) weak social ties hypothesis reveals an original finding on the association of workers' social ties on knowledge transfers within and to EHIRC and GISU. It seems that returnees, transnationals and non-migrants homophilic ties within their own reference groups serve as an open channel for transmitting multiple contents that is instrumental in exerting social influence, power and/or control in competitive situations in EHIRC and GISU. Though forging strong social ties between workers can ease the transmission of tacit knowledge, returnees and transnationals who are able to forge intermediate social ties can transfer at the very least complex codified knowledge to others in the workplace. Yet, returnees' weak social ties with non-migrants were adequate for transferring codified, procedural and process knowledge to the benefit of the organizations.

Hiring talented workers not only boosts EHIRC and GISU's reputation, brand value and confers other intangible benefits, but they are also "carriers of knowledge resources" that are otherwise unavailable or severely limited at work. Bringing talented workers into EHIRC and GISU will be worth very little if their insights do not become internalized into organizational knowledge and diffused across the different stakeholders—people, teams, workgroups, departments and units—in the workplace (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Myers, 2011). While HRD attempts to improve the knowledge codification efforts of their employees to make knowledge accessible to others, offering certain rewards may terminate, expand or change existing social ties in the organization.

Several employees stated that were intrinsically motivated to participate in knowledge codification efforts at work. In comparing medical and IT migrants, the results suggest that returned medics would be motivated by intrinsic rewards more so than non-migrants to convert their potentially codifiable private know-how and thus share it with people, workgroups and departments in EHIRC. On the contrary, IT returnees would be motivated by extrinsic rewards more so than non-migrants to convert potentially codifiable private knowledge so it can be copied, reused and shared amongst co-workers, teams and units in GISU. However, the case interviews revealed that offering extrinsic rewards to employees might crowd-out their intrinsic motivation to expend time, energy and the effort to improve their knowledge codification efforts in EHIRC and GISU.

Still, a deeper look at the empirical results reveal that returned medics derive a sense of job satisfaction from improving their knowledge codification efforts whereas non-migrants felt converting their potentially codifiable knowledge would lead to a loss of power that undermines their influence, social status and economic value within EHIRC. However, IT returnees want cash bonuses to raise their codification efforts as sharing their knowledge and creativity might lead to them being outperformed in GISU. Non-migrants stated they shared their knowledge via EKR partly out of feelings of professional accomplishment, but also for fear of getting rebuked by their team, unit and upper-tier management of GISU. The mixed results suggest that returned medics, IT returnees and their Indian non-migrant counterparts respond differently to incentives that are also moderated by trust, norms and other contextual issues of the workplace.

Intuitively, the effort most employees expend on knowledge codification, albeit for extrinsic reasons, could also affect their attitude towards cooperative exchanges in EHIRC and GISU. Making codified knowledge readily available might diminish the incentive to cooperate—face-to-face interactions, problem-solving meetings and partaking in HR sponsored forums—for the purpose of sharing knowledge with staff members who are spread across different teams, workgroups, departments and units in their respective organizations.

For the most part, an increase in the codification level of EHIRC and GISU will substantially decrease the socially interconnectedness between existing employees on work-related matters. Returned medics are often sought after by non-migrants in hopes of engaging them on matters pertinent to their work—thus knowledge codification tends to reduce employee engagement that socially distances the two sets of workers in EHIRC. Furthermore, non-migrants stated that they already had difficulties socially connecting with returnees most of whom are rotated to different multi-specialty groups, separated due to differentiation in their specializations and SOPs of EHIRC. Though most IT returnees, transnationals and non-migrants in GISU maintained regular contact via electronic exchanges, these workers tend to be socially disjointed due to the heavy reliance of virtual exchanges, global mobility of key personnel and transnational business practices of the firm.

After a certain point codification seems to weaken and/or terminate social ties between employees at work. Simultaneously, knowledge codification reduces transaction costs associated with social exchanges by improving access to a larger pool of employees and to their competencies, knowledge and cultural insights in EHIRC and GISU. A strong possibility exists that knowledge codification terminates several strong, intermediate and even weak ties between employees because it breaks down the knowledge-based hierarchy in EHIRC (Khanna et al., 1998; Cummings, 2003; Kaźmierska, 2011). In contrast raising the knowledge codification level when there is lack of collective work goals, distrust and a weak norm of cooperation weaken the social ties between returnees, transnationals and non-migrants in GISU, resulting in unstable knowledge networks in the workplace (Burt, 2005). Thus, knowledge codification may promote learning and create new knowledge opportunities, but it will also induce changes to the existing social network and impact the knowledge transfer processes of the workplace.

It is evident that employees in EHIRC and GISU tend to be assigned job roles based on their expertise, skills and work experiences so as to successfully complete tasks, discharge duties and responsibilities at work. Most employees by virtue of the work they perform have strong position-centered ties to others for relaying task-related information, meeting project deadlines and maintaining their fiduciary responsibilities at work. The value of migrants' position-centered ties for transferring knowledge resources substantially declines after they leave their group, department or unit. For this reason, returnees, transnationals and non-migrants endogenously develop strong person-related ties for learning, social support and transfer resources to overcome timing differences, physical distance or other social barriers in the organizations.

Needless to say, both in EHIRC and GISU, person-related ties are those that result from interpersonal attraction, trust and reciprocity between employees at work. But returnees, transnationals and non-migrants have forged personal-related ties that are strong within their own reference groups. A mix of positional and personal ties that can be characterized as intermediate social ties with transnationals exists in GISU, while mostly position-centered ties that are weak social connections between returnees and non-migrants exist in both EHIRC and GISU. This differentiation helps to disentangle ties induced by task interdependence, workflow and structure of the organization from those due to migrants' socialization in the workplace.

The empirical results reveal that returnees, transnationals and non-migrants in EHIRC and GISU form their own very knowledge cliques at work. While most transnationals functioned as "knowledge brokers" between returnees' and non-migrants' social circles in GISU, the configurations show that their knowledge networks tend to be riddled with structural holes in EHIRC and GISU. Though transnationals have the unique ability to travel through structural holes in the knowledge network of GISU, most returnees and non-migrants are loosely joined interest groups that constrain the transfer of knowledge resources in EHIRC and GISU. The only difference is that the knowledge network of EHIRC is less dense, sparse and centralized while GISU is more dense, cohesive and de-centralized. This difference is partly due to EHIRC's hierarchical and GISU being a non-hierarchical knowledge structure combined with specific issues. Thus, organizational factors and barriers impact knowledge transfer processes of the workplace.

Comparisons between EHIRC and GISU revealed that the findings are similar in many respects—medical and IT returnees via their strong social ties were able to transfer tacit “sticky” knowledge to other overseas-trained workers. However, these returnees via the predominance of weak social ties transferred mostly codified knowledge to non-migrants, workgroups and their units. An important empirical anomaly was that transnationals who functioned as ‘knowledge brokers’ via their intermediate social ties could transfer various forms of complex codified knowledge to and between returnees and non-migrants in GISU. The results suggest that though returnees serve as ‘knowledge carriers’ via their different social ties and thus are a conduit for intra-organizational knowledge transfers to stakeholders, it depends on creating a ‘shared interpretative context’ in their workplace.

Importantly, differences between EHIRC and GISU are reflected in medics’ and IT returnees’ mixed homophilic relations formation of sub-knowledge cliques and the flow of knowledge in the workplace. EHIRC’s knowledge networks constrained collaboration, was patient-centric and marked by a resistance to change work culture that resulted in a hierarchal knowledge structure of the hospital. In contrast, GISU’s constantly churning knowledge networks, due to EKR, frequent staff turnovers and global work processes, though unstable and promoted competitive situations, led to a non-hierarchal knowledge structure of the firm. The findings show that the knowledge structures are the result of practices, norms and culture specific to the organizations.

In EHIRC, the personalization approach is implemented by HRD whereas GISU pursues a codification strategy to facilitate knowledge transfers in the firm. EHIRC compared to GISU attempt to ‘straddle the personalization and codification strategy’ can be detrimental to achieving its long-term organizational goals. Because EHIRC has different resource-based advantages than other hospitals, reduce the role of its human capital in favor of cost-saving business practices diminishes its quality of services, brand value and thus organizational performance than that of its competitors in the market. GISU’s foresight to match its talent pool with effective technological governance improves its competitive advantage against MNCs and foreign subsidiaries as it must re-combine its resources to the rapid, changing and more dynamic global IT market. Not only are EHIRC and GISU endowed with different resources, but also they operate in separate fields, which suggest that KM strategies tend to be industry specific in which market dynamics are vital to the performance and growth of the organizations.

In conclusion, the findings are consistent with theory and earlier evidence that migrants who return with newly acquired knowledge resources believe that it will help them secure a better life in India. These high skilled migrants use their newly acquired knowledge, skills and experiences to bargain for higher wages, achieve occupational mobility and social recognition in the medical and IT field back home. Importantly, once returnees have adjusted to their new surroundings in New Delhi including their organizations, they are able to successfully transfer their knowledge resources in their workplace. While EHIRC and GISU hire migrants to carry new knowledge resources into the organization, the manner in which returnees socialize with stakeholders impacts the knowledge flow in their organizations. The lesson learnt from EHIRC and GISU is that the strength of returnees' different social tie tends to be associated with the nature and type of knowledge transferred to stakeholders, the resulting knowledge configurations, knowledge structure and transfer process are further moderated by institutional and contextual issues which leads to the varying impact on knowledge transfer processes of organizations. The challenge becomes to harvest and harness returnees' knowledge resources by developing KM strategies that are organizationally-specific, but general enough to adapt to the changing contexts, resources are combined to stay competitive in the market and overall improve the quality of services, innovation-capacity and growth of the industries.

14.2 Public Policy Discussion

If returnees' overseas-acquired expertise, knowledge, skills and experience are successfully transferred it can have a positive influence on the work performance of non-migrants in EHIRC and GISU. Returnees can function as conduits for intra-organizational knowledge transfers, which improve EHIRC's and GISU's human resource capabilities, innovation capacity and competitive advantage over other Indian organizations. They are also able to expand the stock of knowledge and sophisticated human capital in private organizations and become a valuable source of expertise in AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences), Engineer India Limited (EIL) and other government-run organizations. Therefore, returned migrants are often seen as strategic assets—with embodied knowledge, abilities to spur skill-creation and a diaspora network—that can be used to develop all sorts of Indian organizations.

Returnees can help with the wider circulation of competencies, skills and resources beyond their employment in hospitals or IT consultancy firms. Besides returned medical and IT migrants forming a sort of “knowledge pipeline” that feeds directly into their firms, those that job-hop or are boundary-spanners create the possibility of knowledge spillovers to other employing organizations. If these returnees can be re-routed to both private and government-run entities, then knowledge spillovers may be able to improve the delivery of medical services, technology governance and competition among organizations. And so, there exists the strong possibility of knowledge spillovers generating a positive externality for other Indian organizations in the city.

Not only do returned medical migrants help to transfer the latest medical equipment and technology to Indian hospitals, but also those returning from the Middle East, the United Kingdom and United States have set up clinics and world-class private hospitals (Williams and Balaz, 2008a). Several IT migrants from Silicon Valley in the United States returned in the capacity of consultants to the government, procured business contracts with American firms and started up their own IT companies. Medical and IT migrants that return to India are considered to be investment vehicles that promote growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the healthcare and IT field. And returnees have the ability to create institutional tie-ups, business alliances and cross-border networks that can further attract FDI to the Indian healthcare and IT sectors.

In this sense, why high skilled migrants return, HR strategies of organizations and the level of economic dynamism of the locality will determine the corporate winners and losers in the Indian healthcare and IT sectors. While returned medical and IT migrants transfer knowledge through their social networks, use of advanced technologies and employment in organizations, their remittances, investments and physical presence can attract FDI to the service industry of India. The return of such high skilled migrants can be viewed to some extent as impacting the re-distribution of knowledge resources by settling in global cities. Channeling return migration to diffuse their financial, human and social resources can lead to job creation, reduce urban unemployment and increase labor force participation in New Delhi. Given the link between return migration and the economic re-structuring of markets, reverse flows might confer other benefits that promote the knowledge economy.

Beyond the organizations, returnees through education institutes have trained nurses in general and family medicine due to the shortage of physicians and their accessibility by patients in urban areas.²⁰ After completing their training, nurses and physician assistants are involved in telemedicine, connecting returnees most of whom are specialists in private hospitals with patients in satellite-run rural clinics, but are also increasingly employed by the State to run medical help lines for those unable to get medical treatment in remote areas. As nurses and physician assistants are professions dominated by females, returnees' make use of their remittances to invest in small clinics, which has increased the labor force participation of women who were often relegated to jobs as domestic workers, sales clerks in small retail shops or as hard laborers in textile plants in the city.

At the institutional level, though the number of returnees is small, the few who return are responsible for establishing Apollo, Fortis, Medanta and other corporate hospital chains in high-income areas. Besides building facilities these corporate entities have invested in their localities' infrastructure—roads, sewer distribution, electricity plants, schools and parks—to attract other businesses, people and resources to the area. Infusion of private capital from returnees has also been used to further build nursing homes. The mushrooming of such facilities has not only helped improve access to specialty care for the urban poor, but more directly absorbed a portion of graduates from Indian medical colleges, workers from the hospitality sector and those struggling to find work—accountants, security guards and other support staff—thus reducing urban unemployment in New Delhi.

Taking into consideration the sectoral dimension, some returnees, mostly those who had held executive positions in the United Kingdom, United States or Canada, served as government consultants to create public-private partnerships with foreign hospitals, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies. Although several of these partnerships become defunct due to the lack of profitability, they opened up a dialogue for easing licensing requirements, JCCI accreditation of facilities, regulating services in rural areas as well as increasing expenditures to vitalize growth of the healthcare industry in India.

²⁰ According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) report, India has 0.7 physicians per 1,000 people and patients must often travel at least 20 kilometers to reach a hospital. Having direct interaction with specialist doctors is nearly impossible as most of them work in cities and 70% of India's population lives in rural areas.

In a slightly different organizational context, most returned scientists and engineers tend to be involved with the development of technologies and solutions to help local firms shift from lower-end production services to higher value added activities in the market. Because returnees work mostly on technology projects, they transfer skills, domain know-how and cultural insights that are needed in local firms operating on a global platform. Returnees' ability to procure outsourced projects, fulfill government contracts and help rollout ICT plans increases business and the need to hire locally trained personnel both in India and at the client-site. As a result, an indirect effect of returnees is that they can assist in job creation for local workers, albeit this leads to compressed wages in the market. The locals earn less than the industry standard, but gain relevant work experiences that translate into transnational work assignments and job-hopping to other cities.

In relation to the IT sector, the Indian diaspora and their links to physical return have often been cited as boosting local entrepreneurship by providing locals with business leads and financing "[which] is associated with these firms performing better, especially those that are based in smaller cities with weaker financial environments (Tejada et al., 2014: 14). Migrants that have returned home, even if temporarily, invest their savings into their very own start-up firms. Not only are 52% of IT start-ups in Bangalore established by returnee entrepreneurs, but also they are recognized as attracting venture capital more so than FDI to help build IT parks, regulate trade networks and hire locals to meet the rising demand for services (Wadhwa, 2014). The labor market effects like job creation and increase in tax revenues benefits the expansion of the IT-BPO industries.

At the policy level, the Indian government looks to returnees to implement their new initiatives like the Digital India Plan of 2016. "The plan would drive up e-commerce business, re-build electronics manufacturing and provide IT jobs in villages and thus alleviate poverty" (Express News Service, 2014). But there are a number of obstacles such as a lengthy bureaucratic process, lack of infrastructure and corruption, which suggests the need to better manage the flow of people, resources as well as government initiatives to drive the knowledge economy of India.²¹

²¹ India's industrial policy, for example, the 'Make in India' campaign, focuses on assigning prominent Indian residing abroad as brand ambassadors while luring the return of businessmen, professionals and students to investing their capital, use their global contacts and transfer know-how to the manufacturing and other sectors to increase GDP growth.

Thus, the implication and evidence shown tend to point out that, “gains in the form of reverse flow of expertise, investment and business leads, knowledge and technology and financial remittances have resulted in a more positive view of the influence that [returned high skilled migrants] can have on the economic progress of India (Tejada et al., 2014: 20). For this very reason, the Indian government established the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) in hopes of facilitating return migration for improving local and national development of India. The Indian government has instituted advisory panels councils, programs as well as centers—Overseas Indian Facilitation Center, the National Knowledge Commission and a Global Indian Network of Knowledge—to seek input and expertise into drafting incentive-based return migration policies, but “they are not mainstreamed into a development policy on a government-wide basis” (MOIA Strategic Plan, 2012: 6) in the country. Notwithstanding issues related to environmental and structural impediments to migration, linking return migration to development may offer some insight on ways in which they can be a ‘development tool’ for India.

14.3 Return Migration and Development

The main point is that highly skilled returned migrants, due to their newly acquired knowledge, skills and expertise, are considered to add value in terms of improving capabilities of locals, better utilization of organizational resources and the foresight to effect change on their temporary or permanent return to the workplace. Additionally, returned migrants are more likely than natives to “gain positions of responsibility and authority in the private and public sectors after their return, and therefore,” (Ammassari, 2009: 4), this elite cadre are viewed as strategic assets to ensure the firm’s ‘survival’ and to some extent help to increase its profit-earnings in the competitive marketplace (Obukhova, 2012). From the transfer of knowledge to social capital given the strength of network relationships, returnees not only invest their own savings/remittances, but also their global connections with venture capital firms and parastatal bodies help attract foreign direct investment to the knowledge-intensive industries. The modernization of such sectors is associated with urban life that has affected social values of the population, but more importantly, stimulated changes to socio-economic contexts and thus policies.

It is evident that most returned highly skilled migrants are induced by emerging opportunities that pull them towards select Indian cities “because these cities offer superior educational and research opportunities and provide a better cosmopolitan environment commensurable with the cities of their destination countries” (CODEV-EPFL, 2013: 35). Further, globalization and new technologies attract returnees to big cities, by increasing the return to their overseas-acquired knowledge, social resources and networks due to urban proximity (Glaeser, 2009). Returnees want to be in urban proximity of industry clusters and vice versa most organizations try to attract migrants, because in order to improve the production function of firms, their spatially sticky knowledge must be applied locally, which in turn spurs innovation, economic diversification and vertical expansion of industries.²²

It seems that highly skilled migrants, especially those considered to be the return of innovation, are ambitious and driven which implies that innovation will be associated with the location preference of such migrants belonging to the creative class. And, therefore, explains higher wages of returnees, as part of the creative class, the effects of gentrification and regional productivity of most metropolises (Florida, 2003; 2005; Glaeser, 2009). As returned migrants have often played a vital role in driving investment, boosting entrepreneurship and building strategic alliances with businesses, at least in the healthcare and IT sectors, the agglomeration of such industries promotes ‘lateralized’ urban growth.

Though the number of high skilled migrants is small, they are often at the top of the human capital distribution and thus tend to play a greater role than those at the bottom. Besides the fact that India is the world’s largest remittance receiving country, returnees’ money, material, skills and vision is channeled into businesses, emerging industries, infrastructure and human capital formation whose effects are observed in changes to industrial policies. Importantly, “China, India and Israel did not have high-income levels and good infrastructure from the start, but experienced significant high skilled return migration” (Zakharenko, 2008: 5), which suggests a correlation with economic growth.

²² One of the key requirements for economic diversification is innovation, which is the ability to achieve change that creates a new dimension of performance, at least new to the national economy, if not new to the world. This does not just mean inventions or R&D, but the capacity to absorb, implement and exploit innovation within industrial sectors in order to build competitive strength and generate added value for the economy (Nair et al., 2009: 49).

Because high skilled returnees tend to be people who have attained higher education, occupation status, wealth and power, they do not seek to live or work in rural areas. Few migrants who have acquired technical and industrial skills can apply it in rural settings due to the lack of infrastructure, technologies needed for value added activities, staggering crime rates and indifferent social attitudes of natives that would leave a meaningful impact on society (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Piore, 1979; Gmelch, 1980). Even amongst those that return to villages, their long duration of stay abroad has weakened their family and political network ties, local constraints discourages entrepreneurial ventures and other sorts of inequalities, which stifles transitioning from a predominantly agrarian economy to industrial production, perpetuates poverty and creates a vicious cycle of underdevelopment.

Furthermore, migrants who return to India tend to play a minimal role in the neediest sectors like agriculture, mining and manufacturing as remittances, knowledge transfers and social connections do not directly benefit 70% of the population that live in rural areas.²³ While acknowledging the different linkages and effects of rural-urban migration and vice versa (Bakewell and De Hass, 2007), the fact remains that it is difficult for high skilled returnees to transfer their resources to significantly improve the economic conditions of the urban and rural poor, change the cultural mindset of communalism, caste politics and women's rights for more balanced regional growth and socio-economic development.

That India's strong economic growth of 5%-7% becomes a moot point as the very logic is that an increase in GDP should be judged in terms of the impact it has on peoples' quality of life, reduction in social disparities, improving human capabilities and liberties back home (Sen, 1999; Dreze and Sen, 2013). Contingent on existing structural, environmental and policy impediments, it has been shown that returning to West African and Asian countries with knowledge, financial capital and social resources will generate positive and negative externalities that lead to uneven development. Various multidimensional issues need to be considered to improve return migration's development potential for home countries.

²³ The Human Development Index (HDI) Gender Inequality Index (GII) indicates that India's current index positions are 136th and 138th out of 187 countries worldwide, respectively. These indexes suggest that India performs worse than other rapidly emerging economics such as Brail, China, Russia and South Africa, in terms of life expectancy, health, educational attainment, women empowerment, GNP and economic activity, for broad-based development.

There is a clear dichotomy between urban and rural areas insofar as returned high skilled migrants' knowledge, financial capital and social resources lead to vertical expansion of high-end industries and in turn can be an engine for lateral urban growth. But returnees can have a spiraling downward effect on improving public works projects, driving investments and infrastructure needed for rural and more local development. Evidence from India, Ghana, and the Caribbean, albeit sparse, suggests that returnees, municipal bodies and NGOs have helped offset these negative effects by promoting better integration of rural markets into the national economy, health standards and social norms that raise gender, racial and political consciousness and its antecedents to economic, social and political development (Ammassari, 2009, Levitt and Lambda-Nieves, 2013; Tejada et al., 2014).

Though difficult to assess the general impact on regional growth, state-level administrators have granted returnee enterprises a reduction in payroll taxes to their municipalities. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and other States have encouraged returnees to invest their knowledge and capital into manufacturing, commercial activities and rural construction by offering tax subsidies, cheap loans and lower collateral requirements for local development. While wages subsidies are given to those in farming, the Indian government wants to transfer rural labor out of agriculture and into other sectors to alleviate poverty and improve their livelihoods. "Make in India", "Digital Plan of 2016" and the 'National Skill Development Scheme' are aimed at national development and thus far India's policies are similar to South Korea and China so that economic growth includes development (Yoon, 1992; Song, 1992).

While India specifically benefits from the development potential of return flows, at least in areas with diversified economic activities, regulations of natural resources and a progressive culture, their pro-return migration initiatives (e.g. PIO visa cards, tax incentive schemes to invest into emerging sectors and transferring of knowledge into organizations) have failed to connect these 'agents of change' for any meaningful improvement for the poor, rural areas or their localized development (MOIA, 2013). The Indian government's action plans and initiatives, that tend to include return migration as the new development mantra, have not lay out their impact on development outcomes for the country. Yet, India, China and several other developing countries see return migration as an important link to the development outcomes of their home countries (Ammassari, 2009; Williams and Balaz, 2008a).

It seems that how high skilled return migrants affect local development is mostly through the roles they assume in the public and private sectors, varying effects on urban and rural areas and the benefits or consequences that tend to materialize over time and space that impact regional growth. However, why the return of such Indians matter for national development is that they can help expand human capabilities and liberties, which are linked to institutions that shape preferences, redistribute power and transform the cultural context of governance back home. And therefore what returning home of skilled migrants means for the development of India, but holds relevance for other developing countries, is that they propagate newly acquired norms, values and practices, help to change economic policies and push for social reforms that create fertile grounds for development (Sumner and Tribe, 2008).

In this sense, the return flow of migrants must be understood as those who tend to help ‘constitute’ development—knowledge, cultural insights and pro-liberal thoughts they bring to their roles or generally back home about modernization, quality of life, self-empowerment and basic rights that question, germinate and might lead to a change in existing norms, values and practices on serving citizens and governing society. Returnees’ development potential is different from acts meant to ‘institute’ development, which refers to the actions of policymakers that promote adoption of technologies, human capital formation, regional competitiveness, health, safety, literacy in the country. Because returnees ‘constitute’ development and the way the India chooses to ‘institute’ policies to achieve outcomes depend on people, structural and spatial contingencies, which reflect the varying impact of reverse movements on development in other parts of the world.

What emerges is that return migration “[in which migrants act in the wider economic, social and political contexts] there is a reciprocal relationship between migration and transformation development processes” (De Haas, 2008: 27). Given the “full multiplicity and variety of the rich, social, ethnic, religious and cultural tapestry of the land of its origins” (HLCID, 2001: 3), “return has potential as a development factor (Nyberg-Sorensen et al., 2002: 56) as long as contributions are placed in the wider structural context, adaptation of policies and reforms back home (Lowell, 2002; Ammassari, 2009; De Hass, 2012). Though India, China, Senegal and some EU countries have focused on migration policies their impact on economic growth differ significantly as do the development outcomes, which reveals the complex nexus between migration and development.

So, “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” is one of the ways to frame whether development policies encourage return migration or vice versa. For India, it seems that high skilled migrants were the chickens that returned to lay golden eggs of development as observed in the Indian healthcare and IT sectors. With India’s strong economic growth comes economic and social disparities, uneven as well as underdevelopment of rural areas, which suggests that the manner in which the Indian government incubates and hatches these golden eggs through various measures, policies and reforms impacts poverty levels, the rate of unemployment, literacy and its intrinsic link to expanding human capabilities as well as liberties (Seer, 1972; Sen, 1999; Tejada et al., 2014). While the return of talent, knowledge, skills and other resources to India was a ‘development factor’ that enabled it to reap some, albeit varying benefits, for some developing countries, “the industrial countries benefited from a readymade workforce at the sending societies’ expenses. And when workers were no longer productive, through illness, accident or old age, they returned home with their maintenance costs again being absorbed by the sending society” (Gmelch, 1980: 154). It is also conceivable that in the future return migration and its differing development outcomes might increase out-migration, limit the poor from moving to urban areas, reduce remittances, impose stricter policies etc. that might be further compounded by trade, globalization, the social milieu or new sorts of unfavorable conditions in home countries (Oberai, 1983; Lucas, 1997; De Haas, 2008b). Therefore, a better understanding of return flows within the broader migration and development processes is essential to the future outlook of home countries.

14.4 Future Challenges and Research Possibilities

High skilled returnees transfer of overseas-acquired knowledge can affect attitudes, behaviors and work activities due to a complex set of social ties that explain the extent and type of knowledge transferred in the workplace. Even though the decision to return is associated with age, occupation profiles and the field of practice, the results suggest that returnees assume critical roles in the public or private sectors in which the transfer of knowledge, capital and global connections depends on a host of contingencies that benefit urban areas but have unintended consequences in other parts of the country, which results in varying socio-economic impacts back home.

Special attention is given to the role that high skilled migrants play in intra-organizational knowledge transfers, but the results highlight the importance and the need to further document the transfer of knowledge, financial capital, investments and global connections, specifically its economic and social effects on the family or households, different sectors and the urban as well as rural areas back home. The reason being that the existing theoretical and empirical evidence stemming from the return migration of highly skilled workers, particularly their positive benefits and even consequences of the transfer of expertise, investments and cultural insights, is “too fragmentary for us to draw clear conclusions and devise concrete policies” (Ammassari, 2009: 4). The challenge thus becomes to grasp different linkages of return as a development factor and its impact for home countries.

In this sense, return is an important and relevant step within the migration cycle (Ammassari, 2009:296) not only because of migrants association, in some cases, on tangible measures like GDP, labor force participation, educational attainment, women empowerment and life expectancy, but also the way in which their newly acquired norms, values and practices “constitute the necessary premises of lasting development” (Ammassari, 2009: 309). Despite the manner in which the government chooses to ‘institute’ its development policies, return migration has led to some very visible micro-brain gains for the Indian knowledge economy. So, return migration as a ‘tool for development tool’ holds the possibility of conferring micro, meso and macro brain gain benefits that require a nuanced understanding of its economic, social and political development for developing countries.

While the widely resonating theme is that, “the problem of brain drain has been converted happily into the opportunity of brain gain. Today, we in India are experiencing the benefits of the reverse flow of income, investment and expertise from the global Indian diaspora” (Government of India, 2010: 2), return migration and the transfer of such resources has varying development implications that are contingent on a number of issues in host and home countries (Cassarino, 2004; Agunias, 2006; De Haas, 2008). Conducting similar studies might help to shed further light on such return flows within the wider migration and development process and thus the potential of brain gains for developing countries. Hopefully, the thesis was able to show not only the need for such interdisciplinary studies, but also the research possibilities for exploring such a topic.

IMAGE BLOCKED

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