1. Introduction

The paper aims at illustrating the results of a wider Ph.D. research entitled “Rebuilding institutions through diaspora engagement: the impact of skilled migration on domestic change” which investigates, through a qualitative analysis, the potential impact of diasporas on the development of home countries’ institutions, and frames the main criticisms of migration and development policies and practices in terms of “legitimacy” and “effectiveness”.

The study focuses on two sets of case studies named, following Smith and Guarnizo’s categorisation, “transnationalism from above” and “transnationalism from below” which identify two different modalities of diaspora engagement. The “transnationalism from above” refers to the projects and initiatives led by the International Organisation on Migration (IOM), and framed in a definite policy programme; the “transnationalism from below” projects are managed by diaspora civil society organisations. The organisations involved in the research are based in London and Wales, and have been met during the research fieldwork in London in the first half of 2015.

The reason of working in the UK lays in the relevance of the presence of Diaspora – in particular the high skilled - in the country.

According to the UK Office for National Statistics, a fifth of the total non-UK born population in England and Wales (1.3 Million people) come from Africa. The highest proportion of Black/black British comes from Nigeria and Ghana (89%). The analysis reports that the most relevant migration flow is dated back in the ’60 until 1981, when the majority of East and South African population settled in England and Wales.

Looking at the data on education and employment of the African Population collected by David Owen in the paper “African Population to the UK” (2008) nearly a quarter of Africans have a degree or similar qualification, in particular west Africans, which are most likely to get high education degrees.

The research has been build around the three factors of diaspora contribution identified by Wescott and Birkenhoff, which are: the ability to mobilise, the opportunity structures and the consequent motivations. Those factors are considered as the basis to reply to the research question, which focuses on Lipset’s definition of legitimacy and effectiveness, reformulated as following:

a) Perceived legitimacy of diaspora presence and action in home country context: the legitimacy is understood as the capacity of the actors to engage and maintain relationship in the home country context which are legitimate because recognised as appropriate for the context of reception from local civil society and local authorities.

b) Perceived effectiveness of diaspora action in home country context: for effectiveness is meant the actual performance of the intervention in object, and the actual success in satisfying the needs and the expectations of the receiving societies and institutions, and the ability to contribute to the resolution of problems related to institutional rebuilding and strengthening.

The research may be contextualised in the area of studies which investigates the relationship between migration and development, through the employment of remittances, both economic and social.

1 Birkenhoff J. Wescott C., Converting migration drains into gain – Harnessing the resources of overseas professionals, Asian Development Bank, 2006
2 It is fundamental to underline that the definitions of “legitimacy” and “effectiveness” have been formulated from Lipset’s article “Some social requisites of Democracy: economic development and Political Legitimacy”, where the definitions are elaborated as following: “by effectiveness is meant the actual performance of a political system, the extent to which it satisfies the basic functions of government as defined by the expectations of most members of a society, and the expectations of powerful groups within it which might threaten the system, such as armed forces. […] Legitimacy involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society.” (1959).
The impact of economic remittances on home country economy, the role of “migrant enterprise” and the positive link between migration and home country development is a well-known topic. The present research goes beyond the economic impact, trying to analyse the migration and development linkage using the instruments of political science, opening the floor to the discussion of the role of Diasporas for international anchoring in democratisation processes (Morlino, 2011). To this aim, the theoretical base of the research lays in the constructivist theories of International relations. The constructivist approach allows to “focus on the role of ideas, norms, knowledge, culture, and argument in politics, stressing in particular the role of collectively held or “intersubjective” ideas and understandings on social life” (Finnemore, Sikkink, 2005).

In this vein, diaspora contribution in institutional development may be seen as an element of the process of Socialisation, which “aims to facilitate the internalisation of democratic norms, policies and institutions through the establishment and intensification of linkages between liberal international fora and states actors and transnational communities” (Morlino, 2001).

According to the object of study, it is important to clarify the notion of “social remittances” used in this context. Although it will recall the general idea which define social remittances as “ideas, know-how, practices, and skills”, it is also recognised that any kind of measurement or definition of social remittances is quite impossible, because their variety of shapes and understanding from academic literature. For this reason, it was necessary to narrow the object of the research, focusing on a definite typology which include the following elements:

- is not an economic support, but includes knowledge, skills and capabilities sharing
- The intervention is: a) delimited in time and space; b)is systematic, because referable to the wider concept of “migration and development”;

It would help to reduce one of the principal bias in the study of social remittances, which may be addressed as “volatility”.

As mentioned, the present paper will recall the structure of the Ph.D. research with a wider look at legitimacy ad effectiveness. After the research contextualisation, through the definition of the theoretical framework and research methodology, the empirical analysis will start from a summed up analysis on the case studies, which will open the floor to a discussion on legitimacy and effectiveness in the attempt to interpret the results through the “diaspora perspective”.

A focus on diaspora actors, both at individual and organisational level, wants to provide a cognitive model on the topic which is different from the current in use, mainly influenced by International Organisations, NGOs, and governments. It will allow, in my view, to contribute in identifying the criticisms and the gaps both in policies and practices, and find out a new inclusive policy perspective which, modifying the current pattern, considers diaspora as an actor with a leading voice in the debate on the migration and development potentialities.

2. The “theoretical space” of the research: Transnational Diasporas as epistemic communities

According to the purposes of the research, the classical definition of “diaspora” provided in literature by Clifford, has been implemented with further characteristics, which enable to highlight the activities of diaspora in the receiving context and the different patterns of action for the development of sending countries.

In the paper “Diasporas” (1994), Clifford argues that the modern concept of Diaspora has to be enriched with the idea of the transnationality of migrant communities, highlighting that the “borders” of diaspora are rarely founded on a nation-state dimension. In this vein, Diasporas maintain connections with their native home because “transnational connections break the binary relation of minority communities with majority societies”.

To this aim, it is appropriate to refer to the taxonomy elaborated by Milton J. Esman through which he identifies three “classes”: Settler, labour and entrepreneurial diaspora.

The purpose of Esman’s taxonomy is to make a distinction between the reasons for migrating and the function assumed by the person in the receiving context. The three classes he identifies cover the whole ensemble of

---

3 Clifford, Diasporas, 1994
diasporic groups, as the transnational, refugees, historical and contemporary diasporas. He also identifies some central tendencies which characterise single diaspora groups, and the predominant function which they perform in the receiving context.

In this conception, settler diaporas are those groups which, especially in the past centuries, migrate with the aim to settle in a certain territory and become the dominant group. The European colonisers in Asia, Africa and Latin America are the most clear example of these diaspora groups.

The Labour and Entrepreneurial Diaporas have a more contemporary focus, and retrace – in a way – the classical definition of low skilled and high skilled migrants.

For Labour diapora the author refers to unskilled individuals or urban proletariat which migrate in search of better opportunities accepting low wages jobs. Those people are vulnerable to discrimination, and tend to remain stuck in their condition for several generations. By contrast, the entrepreneurial diaspora consists in those people with business experience and professional skills which choose to seize better opportunities in the host country context, gaining new competences and advancing their professional position. “the first and certainly the second generation gain access to education and attain middle class status in business, skilled labour and professional roles. They provide role models for their youth. A few become wealthy and influential. If they encounter exclusion or discrimination, they innovate professional roles or discover and exploit niches or high-risk opportunities in the local economy that enable them to practice or further develop their entrepreneurial talents” (Esman, 2009).

Esman normative conceptualisation has to be read as an introduction to the description of the target diaspora groups of the present research.

The entrepreneurial diaspora described is, in my reading, a side of the most general category of “skilled/high skilled diaspora”. As from the World Migration Report of 2008, it is not easy to identify a clear definition of skilled diaspora. The indicators that are commonly used are the level of education and the occupation and, with reference to the research objectives to achieve, one or the other indicator is privileged. As in Esman, the high skilled are often identified by people which have achieved a tertiary education level, which means with a university education or more. In addition, the professional activities and the job experiences have a high importance because they allow to further filtering the definition. Additional indicators employed refer to the job categories (managers, health care provides, teacher, business people) or sector of interests (creative industry, arts).

According to the aims of the present research, the key characteristic of skilled diaspora is the capacity to affect somehow the economy of the countries of origin, not only through the economic remittances, but also through circular/return migration, participation in business, science, technology, political or educational networks and activities producing positive externalities.

Furthermore, the transnational relations in object have a precise “localisation” which undermines a strategy of intervention of host and home country.

To better specify, Transnationalism from above, canalise and institutionalise transnational practices spontaneously occurred among diaspora groups and home countries. European Union countries and African country, and the single programmes of intervention based on global and European migration policies are one of the grounds of the research.

In a similar way, the second set of initiatives object of the study – the from below ones – can be conceptualised under the framework of the so-called “core transnationalism”, as activities that: a) form an integral part of the individual’s habitual life; b) are undertaken on a regular basis; c) are patterned and therefore somewhat predictable. (Guarnizo, 2000).

Given this framework, the second point to analyse concerns the way in which transnational practices are carried on and the role of diaspora networks as one of the key actors in those processes.

Generally speaking, the theory of networks in political science is referred to “the role the networks of knowledge based experts – epistemic communities – play in articulating the cause and effect relationships of complex problems, helping states identify their interests, framing the issues for collective debate, proposing specific policies, and identifying salient points of negotiation” (Haas, 1992). This definition undermines that epistemic communities are actors which - through knowledge - keep power and have a recognised influence on national and international polity (“control over knowledge is an important dimension of power”). Epistemic communities expertise is recognised and, as Haas points out, have the characteristics of sharing a value-based knowledge; sharing beliefs which are the basis for the contribution on policy issues and actions; sharing an inter-subjective notion of validity, which influences the criteria for evaluating the knowledge in a specific sector.
of expertise; sharing of policy practices in facing a specific policy issue to which their knowledge is directed. This definition undermine a conception of epistemic community as an elite, and its role in the decision making process is relevant because of a high level of legitimation of its policy action in the institutional and political context.

With reference to initiatives ascribable to “social remittances”, the most suitable theoretical definition is the one provided by Keck and Skikkink of transnational advocacy networks: “A transnational advocacy network includes those relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services”. (Keck, Skikkink, 1998).

The role of transnational network in international migration is, according to Robert Lucas, twofold. From one hand, it is a way to increase familiar linkages amplifying the migration streams; on the other hand, they may play a key role in development, influencing economics and politics.

It is clear how the migration history of each individual cannot be regarded excluding the relations with the network in which people are embedded. Networks shape the engagement of people in economic, social and political fields influencing both private and public sphere.

As Peggy Levitt, diaspora networks raise “at first in response to the economic relations between migrants and non-migrants, social religious, and political connections [...] the more diverse and thick a transnational social field is, the greater number of ways it offers migrants to remain active to their homelands. The more institutionalised these relationships become, the more likely it is that transnational members will persist” (2001).

The interactions and interconnections of diaspora with home countries has become deeper over time, mainly because two principal factors: Firstly, global processes at political, economic and social level, which tend to “de-link from specific national territories while transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation states “(Kearney, 1995); secondly the emergence of new pattern of global capitalism, which have permit the raise of communication and transportation technology, with clear consequences on mobility and connections. In addition, transnationalism influence the political and institutional sphere because diaspora is able to organise its political life across national borders and demand for new rights as dual citizenship or the exercise specific political rights, as the influence on institutions of the countries of origin through a “diaspora quota”.

These issues, which constitute the object of the present work, are grounded in the transnational theory and look to diaspora networks as the key factor in the migration and development policies and practices. It is necessary to clarify that the empirical research will look at the engagement through network as a substantial part of transnational engagement but, due to the nature of the development/institutional rebuilding practices in analysis the engagement through networks and civil society organisations may assume peculiar forms of involvement. Diaspora network are, according to the nature of the initiative (from above/from below), involved in different stages of the policy process. For instance, the initiatives “from above” prefer to collaborate identifying the networks as implementing partners, while, in the initiatives “from below”, the patterns of action may assume different shapes. A further conceptualisation of this point and an in-depth study of those relations will be provided in the paragraph on case studies description.

3. Methodology and case studies selection

Generally speaking, literature on migration and development is characterised by a widespread optimism regarding the contribution of diaspora to the home country economies and social development. This optimism is close to an institutional view of the migration and development linkage, in particular to the “triple wins” idea, namely the possibility of the implementation of a virtuous circle that provides positive outcomes (at least) on the migrants themselves, sending and receiving areas.

The research will try out this optimistic approach, and will look at outputs and outcomes of the institutional rebuilding programmes, working on the main actors involved in the initiatives, in particular on diaspora organisation and networks, together with the principal occasions of engagement, as the international organisation programmes where diaspora is seen as “beneficiary”.

The research hypotheses, which will be verified through the qualitative analysis, have been formulated on the elements of the literature both on international anchoring and migration and development, and challenge the current research on the topic through the discussion on some sensitive issues as the relationship between diaspora and democracy (and state consolidation).
The Research hypothesis have been structured as following:

H1: Policy discourse and literature does not take into consideration Diaspora as an actor able to give a direct contribution and policy advice. The constant presence of a “mediator” (international organisation, governments) distorts the role of diaspora.

H2: In the single activities, the presence/absence of the international organisation is a key determinant in affecting the impact, in particular the independent variable of “Legitimacy”.

H3: As well, it affects the variable of “effectiveness”

H4: Diaspora and migrants will not affect “democratisation” directly: in this sense, is better to refer to a “development framework”, characterised by the presence of specific structures which enable the actors to channel social remittances properly.

The majority of case studies have been chosen during the period of visiting at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in the Department of Development Studies, which has allowed me to be in contact with relevant organisations, scholars, activists and “eminent migrants” engaged in the transmission of social remittances. To ensure the validity of result and respect the will of the respondents, the case studies will be anonymous.

The choice of the case studies has been made according to specific criteria, which have been identified under the broad categories of “transnationalism from above” and “transnationalism from below”.

The case study analysis has been conducted through a semi-structured interview based on two questionnaires, which slightly differ according to the nature of the engagement (from above/from below). The main difference in the questionnaires regards the starting point of the case study: in the “from above” cases, the respondents will refer to the experience for which they have been ask to participate. In the “from below” cases, the respondent will have as a starting point a initiative of their choice chosen from the one of the organisation they belong to. The questionnaire has been studied to be a flexible instrument, to adapt to the respondent needs: it has been filled autonomously, followed by a in depth interview, or by the respondent together with the interviewer, which has facilitated collection of the most relevant information in terms of accurateness.
4. Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transnationalism from above</th>
<th>Transnationalism from below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The interventions in the countries or origin are funded by an international donor (western international organisations or western ngos) or are donor driven.</td>
<td>• May include advocacy-lobbying initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are carried on in the framework of a programme, in compliance with EU policy</td>
<td>• More flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are based on Partnership agreements with local authorities in home country context</td>
<td>• May have a clear political purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Civil Society organisations are indicated as partners or just a bridge between the single actor and the International Organisation- local government.</td>
<td>• May be totally autonomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The person choose to engage by himself autonomously</td>
<td>• Organisation based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The international organisation may hire the person through a call, and the individual is considered as a “project beneficiary”</td>
<td>• The collaboration with the home country institution is not always direct and may be reached through the involvement of a local partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The interventions are A-political, because are not expression of an issue or an organisation</td>
<td>• There is a closest collaboration with civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fixed structure of intervention, partially specular to the economic remittances based ones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The collaboration with the home country institution is always direct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1. Case studies overview

For the purposes of this paper, the results will be summarised looking at legitimacy and effectiveness with a reference to the “mobilisation”, “opportunities” and “motivation” factors.

The empirical research has been conducted looking at twelve organisations which engage diasporas, in particular: nine diaspora ethnic or region based organisation (mainly Ethiopian and Somali) two diaspora networks and one International organisation.

The organisations are based in the UK (England and Wales), where, as said in the introduction, the largest part of the empirical work has been conducted.

The choice of looking at the organisation rather than the individual action has been made according to some considerations on the nature of diaspora engagement itself and the contingencies which have occurred during the research fieldwork and will deeply explained further.

The present research has tried to narrow the geographical area of origin of the diaspora organisations involved to the Horn of Africa, although the nature of the majority of the organisations involved in the research is differentiated. If a half of the organisations has a national/regional base (for instance, the Ethiopian ones mainly work on the region of Tigray), the rest of organisations in their structure development have chosen to abandon the region -based focus building their network on a wider geographical area. It is particularly relevant with the advocacy activities on certain issues (mainly health and children - women rights), which have widespread and build partnerships in more than one country.
At a first stance, the questionnaire prepared was understood to be hand out individually to single project participants of a certain organisation, reaching a sample of at least one hundred people. During the fieldwork it has been realised that the first objective was unrealistic because of the structure of each organisation. It has been noticed that there is a strong interconnection between stakeholders or partners outside UK, and that diasporic transnational organisations personnel or volunteers residing in London were quite few. Furthermore, the organisations sometimes used to work together and/or overlapping with biggest networks or institutions.

The choice of looking at the organisations rather than individuals has been made also according to the consideration that the nature of individual engagement is wide-ranging and fragmented. The organisation assures the existence of a structured project of intervention, an internal organisation of the staff and an easier traceability of the stakeholders involved. Furthermore, it is possible to exclude “unclear” intents in the home country and the predominance of “personal ambition” as principal motivation for the engagement (ie. Economic or political advantage) which represents a bias for the objectives of the research. It has been asked to a responsible to respond to the questionnaire on behalf of the organisation. The majority of those people have a high-qualified job and higher education degrees.

Almost each organisation provided the data on its own activity. This data collection had been particularly hard, because of the reticence of some of the respondents to give that information, considered as “sensitive”. The information provided show that the number of stakeholders in the home country context is large, and may reach also 50,000 beneficiaries for all the activities and services provided. Furthermore, the collaboration with home country civil society and the local institutions is particularly relevant in order to understand the structure of each organisation. Ethiopian organisations in particular, are able to build very good relationships with institutional stakeholders, due to the local policy on diaspora, considered as one of the major resources for the development of the country.

It means that some organisations have a wider network of collaborators in the home country, both from institutions and civil society, and it has a great significance for the analysis of the research variables. It has been estimated that, due to the transnational nature of most of the organisations, the number of stakeholders which reside in Africa, is bigger than the number of stakeholder in the UK and Italy, as from the table:

The choice of the case studies has also taken into account the kind of activities that each organisation carries on in the home country context.

It is widespread in Europe, also supported by governments and local authorities, the conception of diaspora engagement in the framework of the policies on migration and development or co-development, aimed to have an impact both on the economies of the most critical areas and- on the long run – reduce the migration pressure. The work of the majority of the organisation aims to the economic development, as the contribution to the reduction of brain drain, through the “brain circulation” and the creation of new opportunities of employment.
and work, which may positively affect the countries of origin. For instance, it has been encouraged through several programmes, as the IOM Mida, or Ghanacoop, the creation of a network of cooperatives and/or small medium enterprises, enabling the esteem of remittances and their productivity for development. The present research work has put aside the “economic value” of remittances, focusing on the institutional and social development.

As previously mentioned, diaspora in its action is conceived as an “epistemic community” which provides a support based on the transmission of ideas and specific knowledge in different sectors of public and community life.

In this sense, the selection of the organisations has been based their capacities to contribute to local policies through the strengthening institutions, local capabilities and civil society awareness on definite issues, in the framework of specific projects or programmes and defined goals. Furthermore, the empirical evidence has shown that one of the most interesting model of organisations which characterise the diaspora engagement is wider and more structured, and characterised by the will of building and enhancing development partnerships pursuing the different needs of diaspora groups. Those organisations assume also the role of network, being the principal point of reference of smaller diaspora organisations and also Home and Host country governments, local authorities and transnational institutions (in particular European Commission and United Nations). Together with activities of diaspora support in different sectors (employment, entrepreneurship, training..), much of the work of those organisations is based on lobbying and advocacy to governments, through the participation to the principal institutional dialogue processes on migration issues but also bringing together civil society and governmental partners in self-directed activities (conferences, platform, building of partnerships). Those organisations constitute a sort of hybrid of the two concepts of transnationalism “form above and from below”, working as a sort of “juncture” between the two levels.

4.2 Legitimacy

Diaspora temporary return programmes are one of the major activities of engagement and imply an employment of human resources – skill, knowledge and capitals – in a perspective of growth through a top-down approach. These initiatives - marked as “transnationalism from above” - are characterised by a commitment of international organisations, governments, local authorities, which engage diaspora individuals as “beneficiary” of projects. The international organisation use to work on the engagement of diaspora directly, with frequent calls of application for diasporas - mainly from Somali region – or indirectly, through the involvement of a Europe-based civil society organisation, which has the role to disseminate or make awareness about both the IO’s programme and the issue of diaspora engagement itself. Research is not new in studying those kinds of project, framing the diaspora and international organisation intervention in the efforts aimed to stop brain drain and improve brain circulation. Diasporas are hired to engage in activities aiming to strengthen the capacities of the institutions, also providing policy guidelines and training. To this aim, personal resources as skills, capabilities and confidence in a certain work environment are essential. The majority of the people involved are men with higher education diplomas, and past work experiences in development cooperation also as volunteers. The good positions and careers undermine a good economic integration in the country of residence.

In these specific cases, for the nature of the programme itself the individuals are not affiliated to an organisation/diasporic association, and choose autonomously to apply. The people interviewed consider essential the support of the international organisation and – consequently – the approach of the programme to the institutional strengthen. Although Diaspora demonstrates a high level of commitment and high trust in its capacities, there is also the awareness of the importance of funding and resources – both human and material – which the organisation is able to provide. The most important case study for this section has been the IOM QUESTS MIDA project\(^5\), which aims to employ, for a definite period, diaspora professionals in home country institutions. To study legitimacy the analysis will consider the interaction between the International Organisations, the local authority and the diaspora and the consequent effects on civil society.

\(^5\) http://www quests-mida.org/
Before to start, it is important to notice that local civil society is “excluded” in the sense that it is considered as “indirect beneficiary” of the project in analysis, because do not have an active role in the project activities.

From the interviews it has emerged that “engage and maintain relationships” in the home country context means to build a relationship firstly with the International Organisation, which will provide support and resources during the “return period” of the diaspora.

It has been registered variegated level of trust between “beneficiaries” and the organisation, which will be the first “relation” analysed. This is a sort of pre-condition for the analysis of legitimacy because IO is the “mediator” between the diaspora and the local authority.

Diaspora, in general, considers the IO accountable, but may become particularly severe, on the basis of the perception of how the IO knows the territory it operates.

The main critical points regarding the appropriateness of the intervention lays in the perception of the level of awareness that the organisation has, and the capacity of building bridges also beyond the institutional level, including civil society.

“I think that The IO has known how and access to all the resources they can get from western countries. They have connections with different Diasporas. I met here in Mogadishu different people from different countries. It is very important to get a lot of experience and meet different people”.

≈

“International organisations have to ask us what we need. They also have to have greater consideration toward people who have background information on a country. They use to hire people who do not have enough information or have been out from the country for years. Those people have language and cultural barriers. People in Somalia need people who understand them”

≈

If diaspora works together with the government of home country it may avoid a lot of problems. The advantages of diaspora engagement have to be communicated to Somali people, in particular with reference to social remittances. There are no disadvantages for Diasporas. International institutions have to be a partner in this process.

The second level, which may enable the understanding of the “legitimacy”, lays in the relationship between the diaspora beneficiary and the hosting local authority. The collaboration between diaspora and local authorities is the key element of the project, and influences its success and the “appropriateness” of the interventions deriving from this collaboration on a wider scale. This element is one of the most critical, because for the majority of respondents, there is not a full collaboration, and the local authorities is often considered as unskilled and not cooperative. In this sense, the full cooperation represents an aspect of the legitimacy, because is the symptom of the total acceptance of the intervention and the mutual recognition of the significance of diaspora work.

“I will evaluate my interaction as average which is 5 according to this ranking. There is two different feelings among the local staff. One group are co-operating and are ready to learn while the other sees the diaspora staff as a threat to their growth and will try to sabotage the work of the expatriate”.

≈

“My interaction with host home country institution is a 10. The other experts and I are very involved with the institution; in fact we have integrated very well into the institution due to the fact that we have now been there for 2 years and more. At the beginning, I would say our interaction level was about a 7 but now we have assimilated into the organization. Also the reason interaction with the organization is at a very high is because the staff is now very open and trustful of us due to the duration we’ve been there.”
The last level to identify the legitimacy in the “from above” cases regards the relationship between project beneficiaries (and the whole programme) and civil societies of home countries. As mentioned civil society is an indirect beneficiary of the IO initiatives, and marginally involved in the process. However, is the subject that mostly concerns Diaspora, which aims to establish a relationship based on accountability and trust.

In particular in the Somali context, it has been noticed a widespread concern on the motivations for the return. The prevalence of personal ambitions, career opportunities etc. as the principal aims for going back may turn in a “conflict” with locals in the process of re-integration. This issue is present in the replies, and much of the respondents are critical toward the returnees who seek for political roles or economic speculations. The engagement of civil society actors in this process allows a slight change in this perception, creating a linkage between civil society, diaspora and the International Organisation and enhancing trust among the actors.

Although the project object of the study mainly refers to institutional strengthen, there are some spaces for civil society, both as partners (recruiters of potential project participant) or beneficiary of diaspora intervention. Especially in the first case, their presence is essential not only for recruiting, but in building awareness and sense of belonging (identity building), and helping the re-integration within home country context minimising the risk of tensions.

“If the diaspora person has the skills to contribute, it is fine, apart from being a clan. There are engineers, doctors, nurses, even the ones who knows administration or work in the local governments, if they have got money and want to make thing there it is fine. But the people who go there and just want to become ministry or parliamentarian no, they are damaging the people who are there. On 300 parliamentarians, 2/3rd of those are from the Diaspora, and what happened to the people who are coping there? Rebuilding our country is always in our mind, but the question is how.”

“There are many good stories and less good stories of diasporas back home, but in the end the advantages are more than damages”

“Anyone at any age of Somali origin living outside the country has the idea of giving back to the community and a strong sense of going back. The way to do that has a lack of “how” to do it and I think it is the gap we fill because we were able to connect the diaspora young Somali in Europe to the means to go back home and encourage them to make it possible giving them the platform to meet other people as institutions or universities.”

“Now there is a more complete understanding from African governments that diasporas are doing what they are doing, they are acting, and the real challenge is to find a way to support the diaspora without negatively affecting local communities, and finding a compromise. This issue can be overcome, and is strictly correlated with training. At the same time, I can understand the feeling of frustration of local communities, because we are speaking about access to resources, and resources are power. Diaspora is competing unfavourably for positions. I think is also important to stress the transnational dimension of the diaspora, so I think is a mistake to assume that diaspora goes back only to have best jobs. In reality they do back and forth and have good relationships with the communities, because they are their relatives.”

In the case of “transnationalism from below” the decision of diaspora organisations to mobilise toward the home country vary according to their dimension, necessities and capacities. Much of those organisations are region-based and engage mainly in coherence with their professional skills. Some organisations are academic or research based, working on the strengthening of institutions; other organisations mainly work in their native region, through personal contacts and informal networks. There are also – among the case studies – issue-based transnational organisations, which involve an high number of officers and beneficiaries, with a long tradition of engagement and a trans-national recognised impact.
Although the variety of the cases, those organisation share the basic feature of being independent from an international organisation, and to prefer a grassroots approach for their initiatives of development. There is not a mediator between the diaspora organisation, the local government and the local civil society, with a consequent change of the nature of the relationships among the actors in term of interactions and – consequently – on the level of trust.

This set of case studies collect the organisation which prefer to work through a “grassroots approach”, which act through direct contact with civil society also through the collaboration with local organisations involved as implementing partners of certain initiatives.

On the side of legitimacy, in more than one interview the basic question which diaspora asks itself is whether they are legitimised to bring change, and it has been the principal point of reflection of the majority of interviews.

For the “from below” cases the nature of the relationships and the linkages with home country actors has resulted heterogeneous: diaspora may be seen outside civil society and- consequently- perceive itself as an “outsider”, although others feel more integrated, because of their ability to build partnerships. In this context, Local Ngos or charities are “gatekeepers” able to support diaspora in building the relationships. Once the relationship of trust is build, it become easier to communicate and to find a welcoming environment, while in some cases diaspora may tend to rule.

A more general point object of discussion is that, for those cases, the idea of “democratisation” is strongly contested, in favour of the idea of “development”.

Looking at the factors of engagement, the first difference concerns the “identity building” of the community. The reasons to engage lay in the identity of the groups, and there is not the necessity of a preliminary process of identity building, as the “recruitment phase” in the from above cases.

During the interviews, the “legitimacy” has been investigated through several questions on the perception that home country actors usually have on the organisation’s activities.

The picture given by the separate analysis of the attitude of civil society and local authorities reveals two main points of interest: firstly, the issue of “integration” within the local civil society, Secondly the modalities through which the trust between the organisation and the local authorities is shaped.

According to the first point, it has been noticed that the integration within civil society is the most problematic issue for diaspora actors.

It has been asked to the organisation’s respondent to illustrate the relationship between them and the beneficiaries/ stakeholders of their intervention, under the perspective of the potentialities of change.

For the respondents “engage and maintain relationships” and the issue of “appropriateness of the action” are related with the integration within civil society. It means, essentially, to be perceived not as a “foreign” but as an equal member of civil society with the same ambitions and aspirations.

“It is a responsibility, and diaspora is key because is the most titled actor which can take action. It is a moral responsibility. But the diaspora has to be skilled properly otherwise may cause damages rather than benefits.”

≈

“Diaspora has to be able to influence policy makers but at the same time not be part of the political processes. Policy advising and institutional rebuilding are the most appropriate spaces for diaspora action. Diaspora may organise themselves in several ways (for clans, or regions for instance), but it is important to have a coherent policy and be coherent to the good practices already existing carried on by the people on the ground. What is needed is a systematic approach rather than a “here and there” approach.”

≈

“You are a foreign person. Because of Diaspora there are some issues, which usually came out. I am not a stranger, but people think there is a lot of money and diaspora is favoured. For this reason the government tries to take some measures in order to take the population from abroad”.

≈
“Diaspora is a few people, we are a sort of spray of the perfume. We as diaspora are nothing. No way for me to influence the civil society. You can contribute to change. For instance, if you work in the government, but in society you are nothing”.

This tendency changes the objectives, which are not related to lead and “import” an institutional or policy change, but to support it from the inside.

“It has been a positive learning curve overall, but now more than ever I am convinced that sustainable development in Africa will come from home-based effort. The role of the diaspora is to support this change not lead it. The narrative of Diaspora as saviour of home countries is reductive and in some cases diaspora involvement can be counterproductive as some Diaspora get involved in home affairs for person financial and political gains, which may not align with the national good. It is legitimate for local actors to be critical of Diaspora motives in taking part in development initiatives. It is up to diaspora actors to prove the value added of their contribution to the development of their country of origin, and diaspora actors need to lose their sense of entitlement as whether it is by choice or not, the fact is they are not permanent residents living the everyday reality of their country of origin”.

“It is not a matter of influence. We sit down and identify the need and then we prioritise it according to the needs. The people choose the projects.”

The second point which explain the “legitimacy” of diaspora concern the relations with the institutions, which become more articulated and have a direct influence on the aforementioned issue. It is important to remember, to clarify the analysis, that the influence on institutions is mainly understood as “policy change” and is carried on through advocacy and campaigning, but also mentoring, skill transfers through training or lobbying. Policy change do not mean that the issue is “political”: the organisations are de-politicized, they are not activists but - as the respondents often remarked - actors of development.

Institutions search and ask for more diaspora, recognising the role of remittances in the local economy and societies and taking the best from diaspora action in term of knowledge, networking, policy and investments. This is particularly true for the countries of the Horn of Africa where the interviewed diaspora comes from. In these contexts, specific regulations are in place as in the case of specific “diaspora rights” (Ethiopia), and where Diaspora is one of the key actors in the rebuilding of the country (Somalia).

The grassroots approach toward the “rebuilding” of home country institutions has to be accountable also in the host country institutions. This is because local charities or administration often finance diaspora organisations for their development projects.

In the both of cases, there is a good collaboration with the two levels, but at the same time diasporas seek for independency. Although “independency” is often mentioned as a core issue for the legitimacy in the home country, particular cases or tensions have not been registered.

Too much “harmony” may result counter productive for diaspora. Especially in the case of Somali diaspora, when institutions give too much space or there is a manifest line up with a certain party, there are risks of tensions with civil society.

There are cases where independency is not the first and fundamental issue, and the organisation completely share governmental goals and attitude toward the diaspora organisations’ projects, through a mechanism of mutual support, in terms of finance but also in accountability and visibility towards civil society. According to the respondent organisation, it has not an impact on the legitimacy within civil society, revealing a general optimism toward the success their own work.

In general, organisations work to have an impact on institutions, which is mainly indirect. They do not work directly within a certain authority with personnel and politicians, but they prefer to bring issues from a grassroots level with the aforementioned instruments. In some specific cases, the organisations choose to be engaged in particular dialogue platforms where both institutions of host and home countries take part. This particular aspect, which has been observed in a couple of case studies, requires the capacity of mobilisation at an higher level, much closer to “activism”. Their behaviour results in coherence with Price’s:
“A final issue concerning the authority of transnational civil society actors is the acceptance of their role in bringing information and moral concerns to light. As noted by Paul Nelson (in Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink), this legitimacy can derive from claims to represent affected communities (for example, of the global poor, the South), to represent a domestic constituency, or to be official participants in institutionalized political processes.”

Within this particular cases, it has been highlighted from the respondents the need of “learning” the policy language and an intense work of networks to be invited at the “table” and to be “legitimised” from the grassroots levels to speak in their voice.

“Now, if you entangle with central government, you will not be independent anymore. Furthermore, government donate not in cash but in benefits, so to say, land, reduce taxation etc. If you enter in government finances you risk your freedom. If you are an independent expert you challenge them.”

= “After training and workshops I am optimist because I have been financed and my local partners are happy and asked me to set the mentoring programme again because of its positive results. I am waiting for funding to start again. Civil society and local authorities accepted me and my work, and government officials have approved it entirely. The real problem is to meet the expectations of those people.”

= “Diaspora has to be able to influence policy makers but at the same time not be part of the political processes. Policy advising and institutional rebuilding are the most appropriate spaces for diaspora action. Diaspora may organise themselves in several ways (for clans, or regions for instance), but it is important to have a coherent policy and be coherent to the good practices already existing carried on by the people on the ground. What is needed is a systematic approach rather than a “here and there” approach”

= “You have to invite yourself to the table, you don't have to wait be invited to meetings. It is fundamental to identify how and were the conversation is taking place and get yourself there”

4.3 Effectiveness

As the concept of legitimacy, the definition of effectiveness has been borrowed from Lipset, as: “the actual performance of the intervention in object, and the actual success in satisfying the needs and the expectations of the receiving societies and institutions, and the ability to contribute to the resolution of problems related to institutional rebuilding and strengthening”.

The analysis of the effectiveness will proceed according to the examination of “outputs” and “outcomes”, where “Outputs are important products, services, profits, and revenues: the What. Outcomes create meanings, relationships, and differences: the Why. Outputs, such as revenue and profit, enable us to fund outcomes; but without outcomes, there is no need for outputs”.6

6 Price, R., Transnational civil society and advocacy in world politics, World Politics (55), June 2003, 579-606
In particular, the outputs will regard the direct effect of single diaspora intervention, while the outcomes the
general effects, with a look to the potentials of diaspora as an actor of “democratisation”.

As précised in the concept elaboration of the research, a unitary definition of social remittances - and their
measurement, is almost impossible, because their volatile nature, and the concept itself has been framed
according to their “systematic and intentional” transmission. This is the principal reason why it has been chosen
to work on the efforts of some diaspora organisations, framing the research into specific interventions. For the
analysis of the variable, it is necessary a first look at the principal activities that each organisation – especially
the ones “from below” carries on in the home country, and the principal modalities of implementation.
As mentioned before in the explanation of the case studies selection, the choice has been made according to the
activities implemented in the home country, which – in their heterogeneity – have the common feature of the
will of impact – through a direct collaboration or indirectly – on local institutions or policy making.
Although much of the organisations implement different initiatives in different sectors, to facilitate the analysis,
the projects are be gathered into four “topics”, which are:

- “advocacy and campaigning”, which has the scope to raise awareness on sensitive social issues, and
covers the two levels of civil society and government both of European and African countries.
- “skill transfer, capacity building and institutional support”: which mainly concerns the “from above
cases”. It implies the direct work on institutions, through the transferring of skills, knowledge and
capacities “to foster transparent, accountable, and responsive governance”8.
- “training, mentorship and research” concerns the initiatives of skill transfer at civil society level,
including specific training for government officials and research at different levels including
cooperation between home and host country research centres and universities.
- “institutional dialogue”: it mainly concern the creation and/or the participation at transnational dialogue
platform on diasporas and development, where diasporas are invited to bring a contribution for policy
making at a wider level.

In this framework, with regard to the “success in satisfying needs and expectations”, the “from above cases”
clearly have major opportunities in terms of resources and influence. There is a big response to the calls
published by the IO and good evaluation of the activity at all.

The success in satisfying the needs has also to be considered in relation to the stakeholders. In particular, the
“from below” cases have a wider range of stakeholders, including the donors of host countries. The
organisations have the duty of being accountable, especially through a precise balance of finances. Furthermore,
a pre-departure training enables the reduction of possible tensions and to work in a sense which may need
expectations of local population.

≈

“You have to keep timing and finance balance; clear balance sheet and expenses has to be
precise, otherwise we don’t get funding next year.”

≈

I think that the IOM has know how and access to all the resources they can get from western
countries. They have connections with different diasporas. I met here in Mogadishu different
people from different countries. It is very important to get a lot of experience and meet different
people.

8 http://www quests-mida.org/page.php?id=bndsNnZmYmhqMjc
The “ability to contribute” is the most controversial issue, especially because the difficulty of an access to the monitoring and evaluation documents, because their “confidentiality”. According to the documentation which each organisation provided, there is a general success of the initiatives in place, especially in reference of the number of beneficiaries reached and the continuity of the projects throughout the years. As Lipset, education is the ground and the necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the support of every democratic practice, resulting more significant than income and occupations. The work of international organisation goes in this sense, in order to meet diaspora needs and civil society needs.

Under the MIDA program, IOM is currently providing capacity injection in four key sectors: Health, Public Finance Management, Education and Justice. IOM and its partners believe that the three sectors are crucial for economic development and stability of Somalia. To date, IOM, through the implementation of 10 project and project components has facilitated and supported: More than 372 Somali diaspora assignments within more than 80 Somali institutions, including ministries such as health, finance, planning, interior, justice, foreign affairs and among others. 30 professional interns recruited from 2014 to date. The MIDA participants have trained more than 500 locals through workshops and on job trainings.9

We have worked in over 9 African countries supporting over 18 partner organisations, including being the driving force behind the foundation of 3 local, women-led organisations. Currently we support 50 girls clubs across Africa, involving over 1,500 girls to provide peer support, information and signposting on sexual and reproductive health and girls’ rights.

Sometimes there are tensions between the centre and the periphery and most importantly – there is a real need to manage expectations of diaspora about what they can achieve, in particular by authorities and local authorities, because in many case the diaspora we are working with has an incomplete understanding of the local context in terms of local system, local procedures, entitlements, even legal system. This is a point which has been raised to us by three African governments that we trained. There is a sort of frustration because diaspora who goes home expects a lot and sometimes those expectations are unrealistic (ie. Access to resources, infrastructures, will of receiving a special treatment). Example: we interviewed a number of diaspora returnees, relocated to Addis Ababa principally. None of them had any idea about the system of structures of Ethiopian government had in place to support returnees. There seem to be a disconnection between what governments are doing and how diaspora relates to locals. Partially it is a trust issue, partially a knowledge issue. I’ll give you another Ethiopian example: There is a number of Ethiopian women based in the same building with their office and they usually collect schoolbooks and other educational materials to donate it back to Ethiopian schools. They usually complained about taxes they had to pay to send those material in Africa. I addressed this issues to the government but they told me there was a misunderstanding because they didn’t have to pay any taxes.

Going beyond numbers and official reports, it is important to consider how the presence of the “international organisation” or “diaspora network” has an impact in terms of effectiveness. International organisation, as a mediator, guarantees finances, continuity and accountability of diaspora initiatives. The “ability to contribute” as from the definition refers not only to the project itself, but – with reference to the outcomes - also to the ability to contribute to spread the idea of good governance and - in particular cases - democratic norms. Au contraire, the “from below” cases which, as seen, have a closer contact with civil society, and the impact on governance is indirect, with a lower success of adoption of certain norms or practices. However, the absence of

9 IOM QUESTS MIDA FACTSHEET – provided by International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Somalia, Nairobi Office
the international organisation in the grassroots processes have increased chances to include wider ranges of civil societies and build awareness on certain topics, or to ensure a direct support in certain activities.

5. Conclusion

This paper has illustrated the preliminary findings of a wider Ph.D. research, trying to give a response to the research hypothesis illustrated in the methodology section. In particular, it has been analysed, through the analysis of qualitative interviews, the factors of contribution identified by Wescott and Birkenhoff according to the macro-categories of “legitimacy” and “effectiveness” elaborated from Lipset’s conceptualisation. Following the hypotheses, it is possible to develop the idea that for the evaluation of the impact of diaspora intervention on the building of “good governance”, the joint analysis of legitimacy and effectiveness has a key importance for two reasons: firstly, it allows to give space to the study of the interactions among stakeholders, through the conceptualisation of the patterns of actions and relationships; secondly, it enables correlate this element to the performance of intervention, in relation to definite needs and expectation. To this aim, a specific definition of social remittances becomes fundamental. The classical approach which refers to “ideas, know how, practices and skills” (Peggy Levitt) has been improved through a look to the way of transmission, which has to be intentional and systematic, and definite in time and space.

In both the from above and from below set of case studies diaspora has been considered as the central actor around which the analysis has been build. The illustrated findings have revealed that the link between diaspora and democratization is not direct, and normative change undermines some condition. In particular, the inclusion of local civil society is a key determinant, because is the turning point to evaluate the level of legitimacy of the initiatives of “change”, being the principal concern of single diaspora members and organisations. This element has a direct impact also on “effectiveness” which emerged to be mainly based on the ability of inclusion of different levels of society. In this framework the “mediation” of the international organisation is not always so sensitive to that need, and it may cause tensions and mistrust towards the whole processes in place. It is possible to argue that the relation between diaspora and democratisation (or better, “good governance”) is not based on a direct correlation. With reference to diaspora as “external” or “international” actor of democratisation able to influence institutions through the existing social linkage, it is necessary to refer also to the concrete conditions of access to democratic building practices. If it true that the institutions in the processes described as “international anchoring” develop through social learning and rule adoption, it is also true that the process has to be framed adding a reference to the “development framework” in which diaspora operates which represent the privileged ground of action for the establishment of good governance seeds through the promotion of social learning.
Bibliography

❖ Birkenhoff J. Wescott C., Converting migration drains into gain – Harnessing the resources of overseas professionals, Asian Development Bank, 2006
❖ Chechel J., Moravcsik A., A constructivist research program in Eu studies? In European Union Politics, 2001 2: 219
❖ Easman M., Diasporas in contemporary world, polity press, 2009
❖ Faist T., Migrants as Transnational Development Agents: an inquiry into the newest round on the Migration-development nexus, in Population, Space and Place,14, 2008
❖ Glick Schiller N., Faist T., Migration, Development and Transnationalism - a critical stance, Berghan Books, 2010
❖ Price, R., Transnational civil society and advocacy in world politics, World Politics (55), June 2003, 579-606
❖ Smith, Guarnizo: Transnationalism from below, Comparative Urban and Community Research V6 – 1998
❖ Vertovec S, Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism (Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, eds), Aldershot: Edward Elgar 1998