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To Stay or to Return? A Review on Return Migration Literature

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Abstract

For a long time, return migration had been one of the neglected topics of migration literature. However, in recent years, many studies discussing return migration in various dimensions have been published. This paper aims to assess the main findings of return migration studies, particularly in recent years, with an emphasis on the multifaceted character of return migrations. This study also reveals that, in the last few decades, the transnational ties established by migrants with their homelands have changed their perspectives on return (i.e., re-migration). This trend shows that while human mobility increases with the development of transportation and communication technology, re-migration tends to take on a cyclical, rather than a permanent character in recent times.

Keywords: *Return migration; re-migration; transnationalism*

Introduction

Literature concerning migration has been eerily quiet when it comes to return migration. One possible explanation for this is that the theoretical and methodological tools used in migration studies are not designed for the purpose of analysing and understanding return migration. Another explanation is the lack of academic consensus on how to evaluate this type of migration. Namely, migration scholars traditionally classified return migrants as 'failures' and chose to focus more on the 'winners,' thus largely overlooking return migration as a phenomenon (Tezcan, 2018). Also, because migration studies generally focus on onward migration, the fact that most migrants return to their home countries tends to be disregarded (Bijwaard and Doeselaar, 2014).

Return migration is usually defined as a type of migration where migrants return to their home countries from the countries, they had previously aspired to settle as residents. However, no consensus on the definition exists. In early literature, this topic has mostly been discussed with a focus on migrants returning home due to retirement or due to losing their jobs because of political reasons (Rajan and Akhil, 2019).

Although return migration has been considered the forgotten page of migration studies for a long time, information and data related to this issue have been implicitly present in numerous studies. For instance, Gmelch (1980) reveals that a fourth of the 16 million migrants who immigrated to the United States from Europe more than a century ago returned to their home countries in the 20th century. Citing the 1919 Foerester report, Guazzetta (2004) reveals that between the years 1876 and 1903, those who declared themselves to be temporary residents in the United States were more numerous than those who declared permanent residency. Even

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during the migration peak of 1880-1920, when the US received a record number of migrants, almost half of them returned to their home countries not long after.

It is well-known that international migration statistics lack absolute correctness and coherency. Moreover, statistics on return migration are even weaker, as a significant number of countries do not even record the number of return migrants. Indeed, there is a wide confusion regarding which groups count as return migrants. According to King (1978), in many studies, the efforts to explain return migration are largely insufficient because a single causal factor can rarely explain the return and the thought process behind it. This is because, in most cases, such major decisions are influenced by a variety of factors.

Furthermore, it is quite hard to categorise return migration under specific headlines, because most of the time even migrants themselves cannot precisely state why they want to return, or their reasons for return could be tied up with a complex variety of personal, psychological, familial, cultural, social, economic, and political reasons. Thus, when studying the reasons and forms of migration, migration scholars should focus on the following factors: 1) the entry status of countries to which one migrates, 2) the migrants' positions within the labour market, 3) their social class, as well as 4) the spatial, financial, political, and cultural dynamics of the process of unification, 5) the process of separation, and 6) social exclusion in their home countries (Purkis and Güngör, 2015). Therefore, because return migration literature has to consider a large variety of independent and differential parameters, it is altogether challenging to precisely categorise migration studies.

In this study, methodologies as well as theoretical frameworks and fundamental findings of return migration studies published in recent years are distinguished, categorised, and evaluated. Articles that are referenced in this work are mainly taken from open access academic journals found on Taylor & Francis, published in the field of migration studies using the following keywords; "return migration", "re-migration", and "circular migration". If a few well-known journals and papers that date back to the earlier eras of this field excluded, major contribution to this study comes from articles published after 2010. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the fundamental findings of return migration studies in recent years and to emphasise the many-sidedness of return migration.

Methodological Debates in Return Migration Literature

As a subcategory of migration studies, return migration has been approached and patterned from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives. A classical approach is to explain migration through *push and pull factors*. For instance, this method was used by Chort et. al. (2016) to explain the factors that motivate out-migration, as in pushing migrants to leave their home countries, as well as factors that attract or pull them back to their country of origin. The study presents an analysis of Mexican migrants to the U.S. between the years of 1995 and 2012, yielding that most importantly the biggest motivator for a return had been accumulating enough savings abroad to buy a house back in Mexico. Alongside the economic factors, the study has also found that while climatic shocks have no impact on return migration, violence in the country of origin is a significant deterrent for the decision to return. Similarly, previous research by Gmelch (1983) also employs the push-pull approach to categorise the causes of return migration. Namely, in some cases, various negative influences in the host country create the push factor, which forces migrants to return to their home countries. On the other hand, various positive factors in the migrants' home countries can have a pull factor, which

encourages them to return as well. More specifically, the main push forces can be categorised as 1) political or social pressure in the newly-settled country, 2) a law that limits residency time, 3) insufficient accommodation, 4) lack of economic equality and opportunity (such as not being able to get promotions), as well as 5) problems regarding adaptation. The pull factors include: 1) development of the job market in one's home country, 2) the force of familial tides (including the expectation to marry and settle), 3) investments in housing, land, and work, as well as 4) hopes of retirement (King, 1978, 176). However, migration scholars should be careful not to generalise here, because each state has its own unique political, economic, cultural, and bureaucratic conditions.

Another method to categorise the causes of return migration is the *neo-classical approach*, which focuses on rational choice and human capital. Namely, this approach does not only study push and pull factors that surround movements of migration but also takes into consideration the age of migrants and their level of education (Bailey and Law, 2013, 22). In addition, this perspective explains return migration through the prism of cost and benefit and/or unmet salary expectations. The neo-classical approach starts from the premise that migrants usually settle in other places to maximise their gains, defining 'failure' as a situation in which migrants are unable to gain the benefits they thought they could. Such an interpretation of return migration conceptualises migration as a 'one-sided process,' as it presupposes that migrants migrate only to permanently settle in their destinations. Thus, if living conditions in the newly-settled country are satisfactory, it is illogical for migrants to return to their home countries. In short, those who win, stay, and those who fail, return. However, another perspective within the scope of neo-classical approach looks beyond the typical dichotomic concept of failure and victory, and views migration as a temporary solution to acquire new skill sets to boost one's economic competence back home, taking factors such as language education and better higher education opportunities abroad into account. In a nutshell, this approach argues that "return migration is the outcome of an optimal human capital investment plan over the individual's life cycle" (Ette et al. 2021; Dustmann and Glitz, 2011).

Unlike the neo-classical approach, the *new economics of labour perspective* (i.e., NELM) focuses on labour and migration economy, examining return migration from the perspective of work experience and/or lower economic benefits. Essentially, according to this approach, migration is a means of maximising one's economic gains (Fong, 2012) and is therefore perceived as a strategy of subsistence (Stark, 1995). More specifically, NELM sees migration as a process influenced by the economic ups and downs of targeted countries rather than by the migrants' personal decisions. Thus, NELM sees return migration not as 'failure' but as a sign of 'success' (Tezcan, 2019, 131).

There is also an approach that argues that return migration is part of a process of *optimal decision-making*, which rests on the presupposition that individuals make strategic life decisions with the intention of maximising total benefits (Hamdouch and Wahba, 2015). According to this approach, migrants who are unable to make psychical or human capital in host countries come to realise that they can utilise their accumulated gains to better ends in their home countries. This is because the migrants' savings in their host countries have higher purchase power in their home countries. Thus, migration is viewed as a result of optimal decision-making and individuals are perceived as rational economic decision-makers (Kirdar, 2012, 455).

Furthermore, according to the *anthropological perspective*, it is the social and cultural needs that encourage individuals to return to their home countries, thus determining the success or failure narratives of return migration (Fong, 2012).

It is important to note that these varied methodological approaches to migration studies stemmed as responses to one another. For instance, geographers who examined migration in 1970s integrated quality-based ethnographic methods into their studies as a response to the quantity-based and positivistic approaches. Thus, geographical studies that focus on migration began to embrace the quality-based methodology of ethnographic studies, which criticise quantity-based approaches as determinist and disregardful of the individual's role. Namely, *ethnography* generally focuses on participant observation, interviews, and various visual interpreters. To this end, modern digital technologies, such as video recording, are used to further improve this method. According to Noble (2013), what makes ethnography so useful to those who study return migration is its strengths in comprehending variety and hybridity, as well as its capacity to reveal contingency. Furthermore, ethnographic perspectives include life stories as a part of the study, thus it allowing the participants to connect their past, present, and future. As interviews which focus on life stories allow for a discussion of a variety of subjects, they give the researches significant room for movement. Also, there is a certain degree of freedom and flexibility on the part of interviewees, as it is not necessary that their story is ordered chronologically.

Another method used in return migration studies is *critical realism*. This method allows analysis on multiple levels, especially by combining different methodologies together. According to Purkis and Güngör (2015), critical realism opens up a space to examine migration through economic, political, institutional, social, spatial, and gender perspectives. It also helps to test the limits of a specific approach in migration studies and its overall understanding of migration. Moreover, instead of a strictly positivist approach which would require the analysed material to be explained and brought together in a unified outcome, critical realism offers a multi-perspective apprehension of a fast-paced reality with multiple and sometimes unrelated layers of 'reality' playing out even in a single phenomenon. Therefore, it can be argued that critical realism as an approach is a multi-faceted analysis, which seeks to understand and explain its subject area as a thoroughly examined structure with various components, rather than a methodology to reach a single deductive outcome (Bashkar, 2010; Türkün and Erendil, 2000).

Finally, there is also a *'mixed migration' approach,* which has been quite popular in recent years. Just like the critical realism approach, it also allows for a many-sided perspective and seeks to deconstruct binary categories such as inner and outer migration, obligatory and willing migration, political and economic migration, listed and unlisted migration, formal and informal migration, etc. This approach argues that all migration flows have 'triggers' or visible reasons, and behind these reasons there could also be a plethora (or a 'mix') of invisible factors which make migrations unique, complex, and worth studying. Therefore, 'mixed migration,' as a concept, is useful, because it emphasises the many-sidedness of migration flows and teaches us to avoid reductionist views (Dişbudak and Purkis, 2015; Purkis and Güngör, 2015). However, by discouraging categorisations, this approach makes it harder to find meaningful patterns. In other words, while attempting to deconstruct binaries considering migration, the mixed migration approach risks putting all types of migration into a big whole.

Discussions on the Economic Impact of Return Migration

Early studies regarding return migration focused on 'successful' migration attempts, which are those migrations that have fulfilled their purpose. This interpretation looks at return migration from a purely economic perspective. Namely, return migrants are considered less successful when economically compared to those who did not leave and are thus called 'unsuccessful' (Bijwaard et al., 2014; Borjas 1989; Fong, 2012; King et al., 1985; Lindstrom and Massey 1994; Noble, 2013). Therefore, this approach defines onward migrants as those who seek new opportunities, while return migrants are characterised as those who are disappointed. Yet, as argued in the paragraph concerning the neo-classical approach, there are more factors to the economics of return migration than a simple categorization of 'failed and successful' migrants. One study by Bastia (2011) suggests that return migration in times of crisis have multiple potential 'winners and losers', and is subject to different outcomes depending on the destination country's laws and geographical proximity. In this study, Bolivians that migrated to Argentine and Spain in different timespans have partaken in return migration based on their economic success, which shows that mostly the averagely successful ones decided to return as opposed to the most successful and the least successful group. Additionally, the study found that the highly unfortunate economic situation of families of the least successful group in the home country acts as a further deterrent for return.

In general, international migration is considered a fundamentally positive phenomenon for three main reasons. These can be summarised as: 1) the transfer of money, 2) the improvement of human capital, 3) the transfer of knowledge, technology, and investments in the migrants' home countries (Lapshyna and Düvell, 2015; Wahba, 2015). From the perspective of the global political sphere, return migration is also thought of as a triple-win scenario for the following reasons: 1) home countries benefit from the resources and capabilities of return migrants, 2) home countries renew their workforce, and 3) it is assumed that, return migrants are seen as enjoying improved conditions in the country of origin achieved thanks to migration (Sinatti, 2014).

If the conditions in which they find themselves do not meet their expectations, migrants who think that the resources they made from human or financial capital can be better utilised in their home countries might consider returning as the most suitable option (Stark, 1995). Approached from the perspective of economic development, it is not only the quantity of the transferred financial capital that is important, but even more crucial is to what degree the capital is utilised towards productive and non-consuming ends. Indeed, in order to employ the financial capital in the most efficient way, the returning migrants need to be able to make use of investment opportunities and risks. As for the transfer and effective usage of information, many parameters such as familiarity with institutional practices, adaptation to local networks, tax policies, legal regulations, and the current condition of commerce in the home country are important to consider (Klagge and Klein-Hitpass, 2010).

Furthermore, returning migrants bring to their home countries not only financial capital but also the experience they have gained abroad. When this experience is translated into productive activities, productivity levels are sure to increase (Gmelch, 1983). However, for this to work, we have to presuppose that returning migrants will certainly contribute to their country's development. However, this does not necessarily have to be the case, as the country's economic and structural conditions might render that contribution impossible. For instance, economic fluctuations and political instabilities might bring about an unfavourable

setting for development and investment. Referring to the fact that the World Bank's Business Confidence and Bureaucratic Convenience Index places Ukraine at 152nd out of 183 countries, Lapshyna and Düvell (2015, 295) argue that a country's unique conditions, and factors such as intense bureaucracy and corruption, can impede the potential economic benefits from return migration. Examining Kosovo diaspora's intention of returning from abroad and taking on entrepreneurial activities, Krasniqi and Williams (2019) find that such activities are strongly influenced by migrants' perception of confidence and risk in the institutions of their homeland.

Moreover, many migrants might not be able to use the skills and experiences they have gained abroad in their home country because of the structural characteristics of the labour market. According to Pirvu and Axinte (2012, 195-196), migrants rarely find a job in the same industry in which they worked abroad. As a result of not being able to adapt to the labour market in one's country of origin, those migrants might resolve to re-migration. For this reason, although the claim that migrants bring back experience might theoretically hold ground, in practice, it often fails to do so. For instance, less than 10% of migrants returning from Germany to Turkey have done an apprenticeship, meaning that they are not a skilled labour force. Moreover, returning migrants might have trouble finding industries that are compatible with their qualifications.

Furthermore, returning migrants might want to start their own businesses, rather than work for others in their home country (Gmelch, 1980). Russel et al. (1985) argue that the reason return migrants start their own businesses is because they cannot find a job in the industry or service sector. Also, in her research on migrants who returned to Egypt, Wahba (2015) found that migrants prefer to start their own businesses mainly because of the low wages in the country of origin. Therefore, there are many factors that hinder the potential of human capital, translating into investment. Nevertheless, on account of the work experience gained abroad, return migrants usually receive a somewhat higher salary. In their study on the entrepreneurial tendencies of the migrants who consider returning to Kosovo, Krasniqi and Williams (2019) found that the experience of self-employment in the host country encourages entrepreneurial activities in the migrants' place of origin. This shows that the past experience of a return migrant can positively influence his or her intention to become an entrepreneur. Another research in this field was done by Fenicia et al. (2016). They observed returned Russian migrants who worked in Germany. The researchers found that, in order to make up for the perception of freedom and safety they lost in Germany, these migrants tend to gravitate towards entrepreneurial activities in the form of self-employment. Similarly, Dustmann and Kirschkamp (2002) found that more than half of the migrants who returned to Turkey are economically active and engaged in entrepreneurial activities.

Another economic aspect of return migration is the comparison between the salary of return migrants in their host country and their home country's average wage. Namely, Knapp et al. (2013) studied the effect of wages on migration and found that the real increase in wages depends on the type of migration. Although the level of education is an important factor determining the real increase in wages, in the long run, there are no significant differences between the wages of return migrants and those who never migrated. In her study on the wages of return migrants in Egypt, Wahba (2015) found that the migrants' wages are 16% higher than those of non-migrants. At this point, the question should be whether the experience gained abroad is reflected in the increase in wages after the return or not. For

instance, Lacuesta (2010) finds that, compared with non-migrants, there is an 11% increase in the wages of return migrants and argues that this difference stems not from experience gained abroad but from differences between migrants' and non-migrants' abilities before migration. In their study of Puerto Rican migrants, Hernandez (1967) states that return migrants have higher incomes than non-migrants and can thus be classified as middle class (qtd. in Muschkin, 1993, 86). Another researcher, Fong (2012), draws attention to how educated and skilled migrants face lower income levels in their home country.

Furthermore, Borjas (1989) finds that, as they continue receiving higher salaries, migrants who live in the US generally have no tendency to return. Meanwhile, Dustmann (2003), emphasises that, in Germany, migrants who receive high salaries generally tend to return to their home countries. On the other hand, Contant and Massey (2002) who worked on the same data set, could not find a meaningful correlation between return and income of migrants in Germany, but rather observed that migrants who are unemployed or do marginal jobs tend to return more.

Another aspect of the relation between return and wages is the influence migrant's salaries in the host country have on returning to their home countries. In their study focused on the Indian guest worker in the USA, Depew et al. (2017) observed that low-income workers are more prone to return than others.

A correlation can indeed be made between the level of education and the wish to return (Makine, 2012). For instance, according to Newbold (2001), the rate of return is lower among migrants who have good levels of education and multiple opportunities for employment. Connecting one's level of education with one's level of income, Dustmann et al. (1996) argue that, as better-educated people tend to have better income, reaching the expected income level will be easier for that group of people. On the other hand, concerning human capital, the time of stay in developed countries will grow together with the gain in qualifications (Muschkin, 1993). Therefore, there are two distinct approaches to return migration that both stem from the supposition that better-educated people will have better qualifications. The difference is only in the perspectives. Namely, the first approach argues that, as they will earn a higher income and adapt more successfully, better-educated migrants will not wish to return. On the other hand, the second approach looks at migrants' education from the perspective of economic accumulation, arguing that, as educated migrants tend to reach their target accumulation more quickly, better-educated migrants will be more eager to return.

Being skilled and well adapted to the labour market also plays a significant role in migrants' decision to return. Indeed, a study has found that having a full-time job has a negative correlation with return, whereas unemployed migrants have a higher chance of return (Kristi and Tiit, 2014). However, some other researches failed to find this correlation between skills and return (Constant and Massey, 2002; Dustmann 2003; Kirdar, 2009). Moreover, Ciselik (2011) draws attention to how studies that focus on migrants' status of employment usually overlook the factor of job satisfaction.

Another reason why return migration has recently come to the fore in the migration literature is the general attrition of employment opportunities and security in the world due to the global economic stagnation and crisis or, in other words, neoliberal policies. As a result of this, more and more migrants wish to return home and start a new life again. Namely, they see their home country as a safe harbour where they feel comfortable and are surrounded by friends

and family (Filimonau and Mika, 2017). As the conditions in Europe or in the migrants' home countries change, this return might be permanent or lead to re-migration. Research has shown that being unemployed for long periods of time is another factor that leads to a return. For instance, Vathi et al. (2019) found that 90% of the migrants who returned from Greece to Albania were forced to do so due to unemployment. Moreover, migrants who usually work in the fields of construction or do domestic jobs, have stated that they have been unemployed between one and three years before returning. From the total number of Polish migrants who moved to Europe after Poland's acceptance into the European Union, 1.1 million have returned after losing their jobs in foreign countries (White, 2014, 28).

Finally, return migration can also be approached with regard to remittance. Namely, worker's remittance and savings are essential parameters in the study of return migration. Indeed, many migrants, in order to keep their rate of savings high, endure poor working conditions and work for long periods of time, their main motivation being to reach the target funds as soon as possible. The sooner they reach the target, the sooner they can return home. King et al. (1985) point out that half or one-third of the funds saved by migrants are reserved for remittance. Remittances can improve the macroeconomic indicators of the home country, help the poverty rate by providing for the consumption needs of the family, ensure higher expenditure on health and education, and support the formation of human capital by promoting entrepreneurial activities (Krasniqi and Williams, 2019). Since return boosts local development, it is more favourable than remittance. While remittance is mainly used for consumption, savings that function as a prerequisite for return are deployed usually towards productive activities.

Additionally, repeat migration is a form of mobility that can be thought of as another form of return migration and source of remittance. A study by Garip (2012) focuses on the wealth gap between non-migrants and first-time migrants as opposed to repeat migrants from Mexico to the U.S. Indeed, the findings exhibit that repeat migrants tend to generate more wealth for themselves in terms of land ownership and provide greater amounts of remittances for the home country. Nevertheless, the study points out that remittances are an important source of income for local households, they raise the welfare level and act as an economic regulator for the receiving countries, in this case, Mexico.

Emotional Attachment to Country of Origin, Political Reasons, and Diasporic Liaisons

The role that values, attitudes, and emotions play in the decision to return is just as significant as economic factors (Razum et al. 2005). After all, migration is an individual's decision, so one must consider the personal element of the decision-making process. Indeed, although the decision comes as a result of familial, social and economic factors, an individual's personality can also be very influential. In this respect, psychological states such as loneliness and depression usually play an important part in the decision to return. Fenicia et al. (2016) note that migrants' longing for the land and people left behind, melancholy, nostalgia, and psychological derangement are some of the main reasons for return. Moreover, anthropologists who believe migration cannot be explained solely on the grounds of economics argue that social and emotional attachment with the country of residence strengthens the tendency to return (Fong, 2012). In short, longing for the land and people left behind, melancholy and nostalgia can trigger the decision to return.

Fidelity to the home country also plays a part in return migration. Indeed, love for the home country was found to be an important factor in many previous studies, which have shown that motivations to return are fundamentally similar among migrants. What influences the decision to return are mostly ethnic particularities, belongings, roots, nostalgia, and historical attachment to one's home country (Mensah and Schneider, 2016). Longing and nostalgia might sometimes make this decision seem irrational. For example, after living in the US for 35 years, a Swedish immigrant has uttered these words: 'I like the US, but I ache to see home once again, and I want to see Sweden once more before I die' (Wyman, 2001, 5).

In his study, Toren (1978) discovers how patriotic feelings and family ties had played a significant role in the decision to return among the migrants who moved back from the US and Canada to Israel since 1970. Toren has shown that instead of the push factors in the host country, Israelis returned as a result of pull factors triggered by ideological reasons. This demonstrates the role historical background, belonging, and political developments in the home country play in the decision to return. However, patriotic reasons might not always have an influence on the decision to return. For example, Poznan (2017) demonstrates how the 1910's Hungarian Government campaign of employing patriotism to encourage return was ineffective.

Political developments in the country of origin can also have a positive or a negative impact on return migration. For example, a country coming out of civil war and entering into a prosperous time of political stability can induce return migration, while tumultuous developments might result in the postponement of the return. Moreover, migrants are not only attached to the home country through friends and family, but they might also follow the political developments occurring in the country and decide to provide material or ideological support for opposition (Hansen, 2008; Reinhardt, 2015). Such situations might also have an influence on the decision to return.

Gender Roles and Return Migration

Another largely overlooked aspect of return migration is the influence of gender roles on migration. When focusing on gender, it is important to take into consideration the distinct attitudes of the migrants' family members. For instance, Girma (2017) has found that factors such as fear of abandoning traditional values, loss of self-confidence, and being exposed to discrimination can have a more significant effect on women's wish to return than on men's. In her paper reviewing the literature on return migration and gender, she observes that women's reasons to return are different from men's. According to Girma (2017), men adhere more than women to societal expectations by claiming responsibility for the family and making investments in their country, thus fulfilling their patriotic duties and taking part in political activities in their homeland. On the other hand, because of the existing socio-cultural structure and traditional values of their homeland, women tend to have a stronger wish to stay in the host country than men. This is because they feel more liberated in the host country and they consider it to be a safe environment in which their children can have a bright future. Indeed, this disagreement might lead to conflicts in the family and even divorce (Fenicia et al., 2016). Nevertheless, because of their economic freedom and liberated status in the host country, women might try to postpone the return decision as long as possible. Besides, it was found (Bastia, 2011) that the decision to stay is explained to avoid the feelings of shame upon

return. The feelings of shame are more common among male migrants than the female ones along with the familial economic concerns.

Women's socio-economic role after the return is dependent on gender equality in the home country. Namely, it has been observed that women who returned to Egypt are exposed to an increase in restrictive gender norms. In his gender-focused study on return migrations to Somalia, Hansen (2008) defined this specific migration as a distinct male migration characterised my manhood. Fenicia et al. (2016) focused on female migrants who returned to Russia from Germany, and she observed that many women complain about the toils of childcare and domestic work. Indeed, these women reported that they had much better living conditions back in Germany.

In her study on migrants returning from Germany to Turkey, Tezcan (2019) examined factors such as xenophobia and self-identity. She found that the wish to return to one's home country is twice as strong among men than among women. Namely, Tezcan attributes this to the difference of cultural norms that men and women abide to. For instance, even when Turkish women experience xenophobia in Germany, they still prefer Germany to Turkey because of gender equality and job merits. This, in turn, shows that women wish to stay in the host country in order to retain a comparatively stronger position in the family.

Furthermore, in their study on migrants working in the service industry who migrated back to Poland from the UK, Filimonau and Mika (2017) found that woman have a stronger tendency to re-migrate because of factors such as longing for home and loneliness. Another factor that effects return decision is the cost of children's education in Britain and the overall concern about their children's future.

Family, Children, and Return Migration

Regardless of the type of migration, social attachments are always an important factor to consider. Indeed, migrants always need social structures to feel familiar with the environment. These structures include formal or informal networks based on kinship, friendship, and acquaintance. According to the theory of social capital, one's migration does not only increase the potential of new (and especially familial) alliances, but it also generates the social capital that the other members of the network can utilise to lower their costs and risks (King and Skeldon, 2010; Massey et al., 2015). Namely, social networks function as a shield for the migrants living abroad. With the intimacy of ethno cultural, religious, and lingual familiarity, migrants adapt to the host country more quickly (Kaya, 2017). Accordingly, Kaya (2016) considers social networks as strategies developed by migrants against precarity and loneliness. Indeed, the feeling of belonging that hinges on ethnicity, religion, sect, and cultural values, together with a common everyday experience, allow migrants opportunities for socialising. Therefore, forming a solidarity network and socialising through it can be viewed as a form of survival practice (*[author(s)]*).

Research has found that familial factors can influence the return decision in many ways. Above all, it is essential to understand whether the decision is made in a consensus or through conflict. For example, a change in the marital status (e.g., dying of a partner, separation, or divorce) can strongly influence the return decision. In a study on migrants returning from Germany to Russia, Fenicia (2016) finds that migrants without an expansive social circle in

the host country choose to return to their home country after separating with their non-German partners.

Some studies show that strong family, kinship, and friendship attachments motivate return migration. It has been found that the wish to return usually increases during holiday visits to home countries. For this reason, the frequency of such visits might influence the return decision. Another important factor concerning the family is when relatives in the home country grow old, become ill, or require medical care. Thus, the willingness to take care of the elderly or sickly family members might be another reason to return. Indeed, as family reunification is an important motivation for return, family members who live away from other members of the family tend to return more than those families who all live together in the host country.

As being married to a partner from the host country increases the wish to stay (Kristi and Tiit, 2014), having a partner back in the home country increases the wish to return (Guzzetta, 2004; Makine, 2012). Also, research has found that migrants returning because of the death of their partner, divorce, separation, or medical conditions hope that returning home will provide a blank slate for them to start a new life away from painful memories. Thus, return decision is highly dependent on a change in marital status. For example, Bijwaard and Doeselaar (2014) have found that the change in the marital status of migrants living in the Netherlands had a significant influence on their tendency to return to their home countries. Indeed, both divorce and remarrying increase return rates for migrants born in underdeveloped countries. On the other hand, migrants from developed countries who remarry are more prone to stay, while young migrants are most affected by divorce.

As migration literature mostly focuses on adult migrants, child migration is usually neglected. According to Dustmann (2003), migrants do not only consider their own well-being when deciding to migrate or re-migrate, but they also take into account their children's future. Viewed from this aspect, children's education, age, and status of enrolment to a school become important factors. Thus, even if parents wish to return to their home countries, concerns for their children's education and future might suspend that decision.

In their study conducted in China in 2015, Li et al. (2019) observed that return migration has negative consequences on children's mental health, such as the risk of depression and loss of self-esteem. Namely, after returning to their home countries, children are often socially excluded from their peers and are ridiculed because of their distinct accent (Caitriona, 2011). Also, returning children tend to long for their friends left behind, so they usually have difficulties forming new friendships. This is especially true for children of middle and late young age. More specifically, Konzett (2016) states that returning children under the age of 12 experience fewer problems compared to others since this age group is able to learn the language and adapt to society effortlessly.

Circular Migration, Re-Migration and Return Migration

Most studies on return migration ignore what happens after the return, thus limiting the scope to return decision or the act of returning itself. However, return migration is essentially not very different from other types of migration. Although people return to a place they were familiar with before, their values and attitudes may have changed during their life in the host country, or they may find the place changed beyond recognition. Therefore, adaptation

problems, disappointment, and economic failure are common factors that affect the decision to migrate again (White, 2014).

Until the 2011 population census was published, many people believed that a large number of Polish migrants had returned home permanently. This is because re-migration was not considered. Cieslik (2011) found that a significant portion of migrants who returned to Poland after living and working in Britain consider re-migration. In other words, there is human mobility between the two countries. In a study on migrants returning to Poland, White (2014) demonstrates that, since 2004, half of the migrants have returned home, and most of them have not yet settled in their host countries.

Depending on the degree of content and the quality of living conditions in the returned country, return migration can be circular or permanent (Lynn and Ho, 2016). For example, return migration from the US to Mexico is usually circular, since migrants who live in small villages and towns return home with their families after being employed as seasonal workers in the US. Moreover, as a consequence of the changing border policies in the US, Mexican migrants are exposed to more deportations. According to Masferrer and Roberts (2012), even when these migrants are sent back home because of criminal activity, they return to the US to reunite with their families. In other words, there is a circular migration again. Furthermore, in their study on Mexican migrants, Massey et al. (2015) found that the probability of return of documented migrants is decreasing as a response to the dire escalation in border patrol, while the immigration of documented migrants has not decreased. They also draw attention to the overall lack of circular migration research in the literature.

In his study on migrants returning from Canada to Britain, Richmond (1968) found that these migrants had mainly been satisfied with their lives in Canada, so the vast majority of them were planning to re-migrate to this country. On the other hand, it is estimated that approximately one-third of the Bulgarian Turks who migrated to Turkey from 1989 onwards have returned to their home country. This is explained by factors such as being unable to find suitable employment, poor working conditions, long hours, low wages, cultural differences, sexist perceptions against women, and social discrimination in the host country (Dişbudak and Purkis, 2015).

There is a general pattern of migrant reactions to return migration. At first, the returned migrant feels optimistic. However, as harsh reality becomes clearer, depression and disappointment take over, which can quickly result in resignation. Also, migrants who returned because of their nostalgic longings which were in the way of rational planning can have difficulties finding employment in their home countries or can get disappointed with their new jobs (Anne, 2014). After returning to their home countries, migrants experience trouble when adapting, almost as if they have re-migrated to a third country. In their study on returning Irish migrants, Barrett and Mosca (2013) demonstrate that return migration can cause depression and a sense of isolation. This is because many migrants consider returning without taking into account how much their home country or society has changed since they emigrated. Indeed, difficulties such as adapting to the people, the locals constantly expecting money from them, being treated as second class citizens, and overall discrimination are common factors that influence the decision to re-migrate (Eimmerman, 2014; Hansen, 2008; Pirvu and Axinte, 2012).

It is important to note that not every returning migrant has to suffer from adaptation problems and loneliness in the home country. For instance, a migrant's changed value system might lead to them no longer having a wish to take part in their country's social activities, religious institutions, or to spend time with their friends. This is because return migrants may have learned how to become 'self-sufficient' individuals or they may have developed a parallel coping mechanism (Barrett and Mosca, 2013).

Lastly, regardless of what conflict leads to re-migration, in some circumstances it can bring about difficulties as if the migrant is leaving for the first time. These difficulties differ depending on the time of residence in the previous host country, as well as the changes and transformations that took place during this period, and the minimum capital (financial, social, human, physical, etc.) needed for another migration. On the other hand, the process after re-migration can pass relatively easy and the person may even experience relief as he or she is relieved from the conflicts that led to the re-migration decision.

Transnationalism and Return Migration

As a result of communication and transportation improvements, spatial distance is no longer a major obstacle. Globalisation has, thus, brought a new dimension to migration studies, making transnationalism one of its essential parts. Namely, in the context of migration, transnationalism points at migrants' reciprocating movement as they simultaneously try to establish connections in their home country, host country, and other countries.

When migration moves in a single direction, instead of taking place as a process that has a definitive end, it represents the mobility between transnational *sending* and *receiving* zones. According to Faist (2012, 200), these zones consist of 'multiple interactions of ideas, monetary resources, goods, symbols, and cultural practices.' He then stresses that even weak and indirect social relations play an important role in the notion of 'social capital's function of bridging.'

Transnational approaches have been discussed in the literature since the early 1990s in the framework of identity, adaptation, social capital, and return migration. Even though return migration could be seen as the anti-thesis of transnationalism, it is, in fact, a crucial part of it. Indeed, activities, such as contacting family members and friends from abroad, visiting them, sending remittance, following the home country's news media, participating in politics, and investing in one's home country can all be considered transnational acts that sustain and preserve migrants' attachment to the home country. Namely, transnational activities keep migrants familiar with the economic and social changes in their country, while also generating attachments and a sense of belonging. Therefore, it makes sense to understand return migration and transnationalism as separate concepts that influence each other. Transnational mobility also means expenditure for traveling and Carling (et al., 3) argues that "most migrants do not have the opportunity to lead intensively transnational lives, but rather spend most of their time in either country of destination, or move back to the country of origin more permanently, or indeed move elsewhere." This too shows us that return migration and transnationalism are two different concepts, yet they can also be in a causal relationship.

In a study on migrants returning from Germany to Turkey, Tezcan (2019) found that migrants who are more prone to return are the ones who followed the news from back home while they lived in Germany, regularly made contact with relatives living in their home country, sent remittance, and had visited Turkey in the last two years. This implies a correlation between

return migration and transnational activities. Furthermore, according to Tezcan (2018), indecisiveness concerning return is higher in migrants who do not visit their home country and therefore, who are not familiar with the recent economic and social developments occurring there.

Research has found that factors such as adapting to the host country's values, as well as cognitive, behavioural, and attitudinal acceptance, along with learning the majority language and forming friendships or marrying with members of the host country (social integration) facilitates socio-cultural integration. Indeed, sharing similar characteristics with the majority group through structural integration, labour market (economic integration), living conditions (housing integration), and acquisition of citizenship (political integration) can increase one's determination to stay in the host country. What is also important to note is that ethnic minorities are more prone to migrate because of discrimination and security. According to various studies, integration and return migration are, indeed, inversely correlated (Fenicia et al., 2016; Kristi and Tiit, 2014; Lynn and Ho, 2016).

A new approach in migration literature focuses on migrant networks, transnationalism, and university graduate mobility patterns that have emerged in recent years. According to this approach, adaptation and integration correlate in a distinct way. Namely, research has found that return migration does not occur only when the migrants are unsuccessfully integrated. Indeed, well-adapted migrants who have the resources and capital needed to sustain transnational attachments can be more prone to return thanks to the abundance of means they possess. For instance, a study on Russians and Estonians living in Finland revealed that even though they are well-adapted to the Finnish society, Estonians are more prone to return to their home country (Kiristi and Tiit, 2014).

White (2014) has studied Polish people who had lived in England, returned to Poland, and then re-migrated through a framework of transnationalism. In the first period (i.e., the first time they lived in England), the researcher found that the Polish migrants' transnational practices correlated with predictions concerning labour emigration, as migrants used their savings in England to make investments in Poland, to frequently make visits, and to watch Polish TV channels. Then, after returning to Poland and re-migrating back to England, the Polish migrants made an effort to reconstruct their previous lives in the host country. Thus, in order to buy a house in England, they had to sell properties in Poland, as well as to disregard the Polish fluency of their children. Also, they began spending holidays not in Poland, but in other countries.

Furthermore, whether or not migrants own a house in the host country can influence their return. Although buying a house in the host country is usually viewed from an economic perspective, this act also consists of a series of social decisions that attach the person to the host country. However, the economic conditions of the host country might prevent migrants from investing or buying houses. Fenicia et al. (2016) found that, as migrants in Germany usually have low-paying jobs, they are often unable to obtain credit for buying a house in the host country. However, migrants' economic achievements allow them to invest and buy houses in their home country. Indeed, buying a house in one's home country provides a sense of freedom and economic confidence for returning migrants. Therefore, by purchasing these houses, the migrants are essentially investing in their potential return.

For the abovementioned reasons, researchers who study return migration ask migrants questions such as: 'How often do you visit your country?', 'Where do you spend your holidays?', 'How often do you make visits to countries other than your home country?' Indeed transnational attachments give migrants two hats to hang: one in the home country and the other in the host country. Furthermore, frequent visits to the country of origin for touristic purposes can later turn into an intention and act of settling back in the home country. Moreover, when these people migrate, they can influence their friends and relatives living in the host country to join the same process by the pull factor they generate (Eimmerman, 2014).

Vathi et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative research on Albanian migrants returning from Greece, and found that the migrants actively participate in the Greek welfare system through transnational ties, actively benefiting from the services. Furthermore, in a case study on migrants returning to Hong Kong, Bailey and Law (2013) found that opportunities created by the international system and globalisation, urban systems, and emergent labour markets increase migrant mobility. This mobility can materialise in the form of migration or re-migration. Consequently, globalisation and transnationalization join political, economic, and socio-cultural factors to influence human mobility.

What is also important to note is that transnational ties are not terminated with return migration, but are often continued with visits to the host country, ongoing economic and cultural attachments, and even re-migration. In a study on Jamaican migrants, Horst (2007) examined the ways transnational ties are maintained after the return. She found that Jamaicans who returned from the USA still continue to make visits to the host country, which highlights the importance of the dynamic relation between transnational social zones and return migration.

Whether the individual is a citizen of the host or home country is also an important factor in transnational ties. This is because citizenship, with the social and political rights it endows, gives migrants the much sought-for confidence (Lynn and Ho, 2016). Moreover, although it is claimed that obtaining the citizenship of the host country consolidates stay (Gundel and Peters, 2008; Kristi and Tiit, 2014), it can also lead to a reconsideration of return, as it assures migrants that, if needed, they can always move back to the host country. Since every country has its own law, it is not possible to find a correlation between double citizenship and return. For instance, while the law allows a circular migration between EU countries, it does not, however, allow the same type of mobility between countries such as Turkey and Europe. Thus, these migrants fear that they might come across legal restrictions if their return. In other words, visa requirements can limit a migrant's capacity of mobility and his or her formation of transnational ties.

According to Depew et al. (2017) visa expiration should be considered 'involuntary departure'. Such departures might not only be due to the visa's expiration date, but also to the conclusion of the current job and termination of employment. Going back and forth in this manner is called a visa cycle. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise here that securitisation of migration and the laws against informal migration can have a counterproductive effect by triggering illegal immigration and increasing the criminalisation of migrants (Purkis and Güngör, 2015). Therefore, while migration takes on a transnational dimension, its securitisation renders migration an important topic for domestic policy.

Conclusion

Thanks to the return migration studies conducted in various countries in recent years, this field of study has finally received its much-deserved attention after a long period of silence. Indeed, various methodologies, theoretical approaches, and data sets have been used by scholars to research unique characteristics and periodic differences of return migration in different countries and among diverse migrant groups. In this paper, we presented the rich literature on the subject of return migration that emerged out of all these studies.

In conclusion, human mobility increased with the developments in transportation and communication technology. Meanwhile, transnational ties established by migrants with their homelands have significantly changed the perspectives on return. Rather than being permanent, as it was before, return migration tends to assume a circular character in modern times. There are numerous factors that determine the nature of individual migrations, such as migration corridors opened between two countries, migration culture, strong ties with both countries, dispersal of family members between different countries, cheap and comfortable transportation, retirement, and remote working opportunities. It is, furthermore, necessary for researchers to reveal the reason or motivation of any particular migration, as well as to draw attention to the migrants' adaptation process and the circular character of migration. Indeed, the factors of return migration that ought to be considered are numerous, which is why researchers should refrain from easy, deterministic explanations and take into account that migration may arise from various reasons depending on many parameters stemming from the particularity of any individual case. Therefore, return migration is too complex of a phenomenon to be explained by one-dimensional approaches, since this type of migration, just like all other types, is influenced by various micro, mezzo, and macro factors.

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