Transnational Return and Social Change

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Hierarchies, Identities and Ideas

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INTRODUCTION

A MESO-LEVEL APPROACH TO
LINKING TRANSNATIONAL RETURN
AND SOCIAL CHANGE*

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Research in the field of migration has long focused on one-way movements and studied the processes of settlement and social integration, while the topic of return migration was much neglected (Gmelch 1980; King 2000). When return started to attracted attention, it was conceptualized as the end of a migration cycle, with migrants moving back home and resettling there (Gmelch 1980). In recent years, however, researchers started recognizing return as a more diversified process, enlarging the scope of return migration to encompass forms that were once overlooked. Such inclusion became particularly relevant when return became more apparent in the contexts where

anti-migration discourses were becoming prevalent in many Western countries, economic growth was being sustained in the migrants' countries of origin, the pace of mobility between the countries of origin and the countries of destination had accelerated, and cross-border connections had become more common. Adding to this now growing field of research, the contributors to this book suggest new ways of understanding the dynamics of return migration and the associated social changes in countries of origin.

In the existing literature, return migration was viewed from two crucial perspectives: (1) academic writings were concerned with the returnees' motives and characteristics on the micro level, as well as their experiences upon re-integration into their native towns and villages, and (2) the migrants' return was dealt with in terms of the economic impact they had in their home countries. Recent enthusiasm about the migration–development nexus led to a renewed interest in return migration and its developmental effects on the countries of origin, which are understood predominantly in economic terms. Parallel to – and in relation to – these inquiries are the broader transformations with which migration (including return migration) is associated in current scholarship. In a special issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* on migration and social change, Nicholas Van Hear (Van Hear 2010) re-introduced a fundamental question: 'Does migration change societies?' He asked how deep and enduring that change would be, what kind of change there has been and how it came about. This involves a perspective that considers human mobility as part of and shaped by the processes of globalization and social transformation and, in turn, as a contributor to these processes. Similarly, many migration scholars have addressed social transformation in terms of its profound structural changes from a political-economic perspective (Castles 2012) and, more recently, within a post-structuralist framework that considers power, discourse and social practices as being interconnected with hegemonic political projects (for an extensive overview of this topic, see Amelina et al. 2016).

Notwithstanding the importance of such deep-seated changes and macro-structural transformations, we argue for the need to study the dynamics and impact of return migration at the meso-level and thus to analyse more mundane types of changes. The contributors to this book share the belief that everyday processes and small-scale changes are as important as macro-transformations for understanding the societal impact of migration. Over the long term, some of these changes may have cascading effects that concatenate into deep transformations. Other changes may never extend beyond more restricted confines but can still be a factor in the pluralization of society. In addition, we conceptualize return migration from a dynamic, transnational perspective rather than seeing it as closure of a migration cycle, as has long been the prevailing view. On the one hand, our view helps to shed light on

the ways in which transnational ties and practices shape migrants' return. On the other hand, it shows how return migration leads to the emergence of new transnational involvements, ties and practices (or the transformation of existing ones), and thus how resources are continuously mobilized. Therefore, our focus is on the meso-level processes of change in local communities, social groups, networks and organizations and on how these processes evolve through returnees' continued or renewed transnational practices and resources. The argument we aim to put forward is that the missing meso-link that Thomas Faist (2000) identified in the theory of migration is also missing when it comes to theorizing about its consequences. Theorizing a link between transnational return and meso-level social change can help us better understand the dynamics on the ground and adds one more element in attempts to answer questions about whether and how migration changes society.

In this introductory chapter, we will expand on the meso-level focus just described and will delineate the contributions of the subsequent chapters. The introduction consists of four parts: In the first part, we examine the role of migrants' return with regard to earlier and current debates and theories of social change. In the second part, we define our understanding of return migration as *transnational return*. In the third part, we introduce three key questions that are guiding our endeavour to link transnational return and meso-level social change and explain how the chapters herein will help to address them. Thus, our inquiry begins with a focus on the transnational practices that returnees engage in and on the types of resources or capital they transfer. Further on, we ask what practices, social relations and social categories are changing and what the consequences are for social hierarchies, collective identities and cultural capital (specifically here local cultural knowledge and norms). The fourth part describes the methodologies employed in the chapters that follow and provides a brief outline of the book's content. Lastly, we explore how meso-level social change is occurring. The concluding section summarizes the main arguments we have put forward and that are substantiated throughout the book.

The Debates on Social Change and Migrants' Return

Social change has been a main subject of sociological inquiry from the early years of the discipline. Since the classic writings of Durkheim, Weber and Marx, social theory has been concerned with societal stability and change, as driven by economic forces, technology, social structures, ideas or human agency. Thus, social change was largely associated with modernization and economic growth, which have been addressed (particularly in post-war social thinking) from the perspectives of structural functionalism and conflict theory.

In keeping with this approach, the return of migrants has been studied, on the one hand, in terms of the movers' reasons and motives for migrating (e.g. family situation, economic issues, nationalist sentiments [especially in anthropology research]) and in terms of cost-benefit calculations that signal either failed and thus truncated migratory projects (according to neoclassical economic theories) or successful and accomplished emigration (according to the new economics of labour migration). On the other hand, studies have also examined the potential impact of returnees with respect to their skills, savings and ideas acquired abroad, as well as on the social order, the reduction of social inequality and socio-economic development in their countries of origin (Cassarino 2004; Gmelch 1980).

In response to the broader sociological perspectives on social change, research concerning the impact of returning migrants on their places of origin has been based on functionalist modernization and neo-Marxist conflict theories. Influenced by Talcott Parsons's structural functionalism and other modernization theories of the 1950s and 1960s, the evaluation and stability of modern, rational, industrial society became benchmarks for assessing change. Certainly one famous example of this approach would be Walt W. Rostow's Stages of Economic Growth model, in which he theorized the evolution from traditional to modern society, eventually characterized by 'high mass consumption' (Rostow 1959). Using the modernization perspective in the debate over the role of migration for development, researchers could assert that the return of migrants would advance socio-economic development and bring social change to countries that were still in the developing stage.

Over the following two decades (1970s and 1980s), modernization theories were critically scrutinized as scholarship began to offer a different version of the structures of modern capitalism. Influenced by two schools of thought – Immanuel Wallerstein's world economy (system) approach (Wallerstein 1979) and the views of Latin American *dependencia* theorists (Cardoso and Faletto 1979), who focused on the unequal relations between 'core and periphery' (i.e. developed industrialized countries and less developed, poor countries) – migration experts now considered contextual factors to be the major hindrance to the impact of migrants who returned to their home countries. In this light, the structure of global asymmetry and the power of local elites would leave little room for returnees to generate innovation and change at home (Gmelch 1980).

The migration–development debate of the 1990s further revived the interest in the connection between return and social change. Early on, return was believed to be the main pathway towards effecting change and development in the migrants' countries of origin, again offering greater expectations, particularly from the Western immigration states' perspective. Although the

empirical results are still somewhat inconclusive, this perspective is reflected in the policy programmes for assisted return and the bilateral readmission agreements, as well as in the famous 'triple R' approach (recruitment, remittances, return) (Cassarino 2016; Martin and Sirkeci 2017). In the meantime, policies and theorization around the migration–development nexus have acknowledged the role of migrants' transnational involvements, as measured by the enormous financial remittances migrants send home (Faist and Fauser 2011). However, the ways in which migrants' return is interconnected with transnational practices and with the transfer of resources have received little attention in this debate.

Beyond the narrow confines of the developmentalist focus, scholars have more recently been debating the broader social changes and transformations and their link to migration, albeit not specifically with the migrants' return. Drawing on the theory of neo-functionalism, Alejandro Portes (2010) argues prominently that, at the surface level of society, migration has brought 'ubiquitous' and generally incremental changes, whereas at deeper levels, it has rarely changed social structures or cultural value systems. In contrast, Stephen Castles considers migration an 'integral and essential part of social transformation processes' (Castles 2010: 1578). From a political-economic perspective, migration emerges historically as being part of, and shaped by, the forces of early industrialization as much as of the current phase of 'accelerated globalization'.

Although applying different arguments and perspectives, most scholars who theorize about a link between migration and social change focus on the deep societal levels (Castles 2010; Portes 2010; Van Hear 2010; Vertovec 2004), on 'a shift in social relations so profound that it affects virtually all forms of social interaction and all individuals and communities simultaneously. It is a "step change" that goes beyond normal processes of change' (Castles 2015: 4). Even when this shift is considered on a global scale, and whether it is seen as an influence on migration or as influenced by migration, it is generally seen on the level of bounded political-territorial entities, usually nation states. Such a view on deep changes thus entails, at least implicitly, conceptualizing change within a nationally bounded society and accepting state borders as definitional limits of the unit of analysis (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). However, this approach often overlooks local dynamics and the implications for local communities, social groups, networks and organizations. Our focus on the meso-level approach to return migration offers fertile ground for theorizing about and debating the social changes that are mundane but not uncommonly 'ubiquitous' in this process (Portes 2010).

Another argument in support of the meso-level approach is the importance of contexts. As scholars in this field have pointed out, context is crucial

when one is examining the types of changes brought about by migration and how these occur (Fauser and Nijenhuis 2016; Van Hear 2010). Many scholars who investigate return migration argue that some contexts are more prone to innovation, whereas others may resist change, so that whether and how deep change occurs will vary from place to place. Although this is a relevant perspective, we would like to add that it is important to ask *how* context shapes change. This implies that contexts are dynamic realities, and therefore migration and transnationalization are mutually interrelated with ongoing local changes. Thus, the transnational practices of migrants and the transfer of economic, social or cultural capital can change social structures, identities, and local norms and knowledge 'back home', so that local economies and social lifeworlds become transnationalized. In other words, processes of transnationalization frequently evolve in a self-reinforcing and cumulative manner, generating more transnationalization (Portes 2010). Migrants' transnational practices – their mobility as well as their return – can influence others to become mobile as well. Similarly, the cultural knowledge and norms accumulated abroad may diffuse into the local setting and be accepted, or resisted, by non-migrants, yet they do not remain without effect. In this vein, the authors represented in this book are interested in phenomena that are often less fixed or bounded within national confines and are smaller in scope, with a focus on a variety of meso-level changes in cities, towns and local communities, and in diverse social groups, social networks and social and religious organizations. The understanding of social change pursued herein relies on the mundane, meso-level processes that are related to migration and, in particular, to migrants' return and their transnational practices and resources.

A Transnational Perspective on Return Migration

In much of the earlier literature, return migration is considered to be the end stage of the cycle of migration. This cycle starts with migrants leaving their place of origin, continues throughout their stay abroad and ends with them eventually settling in the immigration country or '[moving] back to their homelands to resettle' (Gmelch 1980: 136). In contrast, studies on return migration have recently proliferated, and the accompanying literature shares a critical view of this older perspective. Although not necessarily signalling a significant growth in return migration, this scholarship does point to its reconceptualization (King and Christou 2011) by identifying three theoretical frameworks within which return migration can be theorized and researched: 'The mobility paradigm, the transnational approach and diaspora studies' (ibid.: 452).

Acknowledging these debates, the transnational perspective in migration research builds on the fact that migrants, rather than merely moving and settling abroad or eventually returning 'back home', are actively maintaining ties that connect their places of immigration and of origin. This perspective thus conceptualizes ongoing back-and-forth movements and the maintaining of transnational ties and practices, together with transfers of resources (Basch et al. 1994; Faist et al. 2013). Return has always been an important aspect in transnational research, yet it is only recently that migrants' transnationality has been gaining theoretical weight in studies of return migration. To give several examples, transnational scholars have looked into the returnees' role in local development (Black and King 2004), have considered the experiences of returning migrants (Jeffery and Murison 2011), have examined the ways in which migrants' return leads to new forms of transnational family life (for this relationship, see for instance Olivier-Mensah and Scholl-Schneider 2016) and have pointed to various forms of transnational mobilities and practices that have emerged upon migrants' return (Carling and Erdal 2014). A transnational perspective also represents an element of the newer conceptualizations of return mobilities in a broader sense (King and Cristou 2011).

In this section, therefore, we build on this emergent scholarship (including the contributions to this book) to discuss the connection between return and transnationality and to flesh out the notion of *transnational return*. In order to unravel the relationship between return and transnational connections, it is helpful to distinguish the following three dimensions (Faist et al. 2013, chapter 1): *transnationalization* is the process through which the world is becoming ever more connected in many different fields, including politics, the economy and family. Different from globalization, transnationalization emphasizes the emergence of specific connectivities rather than world-spanning processes. It involves non-state actors rather than states (as compared with internationalization) yet pays attention to the shaping forces of the latter. *Transnational social spaces* or *fields* are border-spanning social formations, communities, networks and organizations – the meso-level formations through which transnational ties, practices and transfers emerge and persist (Faist 2000; Pries 2008). Lastly, *transnationality* concerns the micro-level of individuals and assembles cross-border ties and practices, identity and spatial mobility together with the transfers that are channelled through them. Thus, while transnational scholarship has been concerned with the emergence and persistence of transnational meso-level formations, our aim is to understand the meso-level implications of transnational ties, practices and transfers.

We argue for a two-way relationship between return and transnationality. Analytically, as elucidated below, we distinguish, first, the relationship between the ways in which transnational ties and practices shape return, and, second,
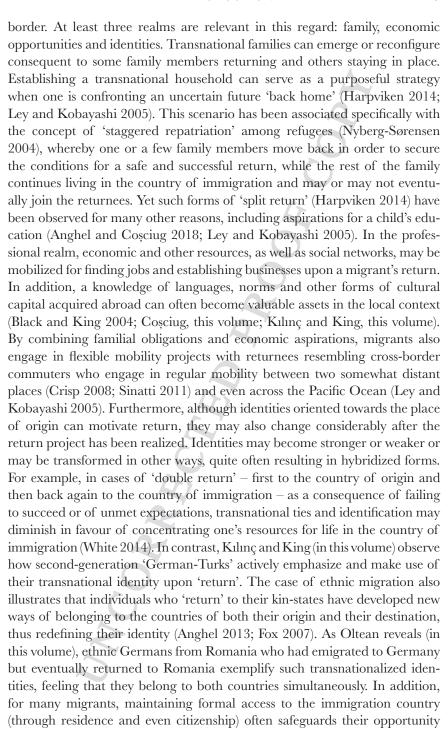
how return (re)produces transnationality. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that this relationship is often difficult to disentangle empirically because it takes place within transnational social spaces.

First, transnational social formations and practices shape, and often motivate, return. Transnational connections are often a factor in return decisions. Most of the earlier theoretical accounts focused exclusively on economic considerations in understanding the motives for returning to one's place of origin. But some early studies looked at the role of family, who stayed behind, and other social bonds in eliciting a desire to return (Gmelch 1980: 139). From this perspective, it is evident that some previous research spoke to a transnational agenda *avant la lettre*. In this vein, transnationalism has been considered a meso-level theory to explain return and in some cases its impacts (Cassarino 2004). Longing for a familiar place and the wish to be closer to kin and friends, as well as obligations towards elderly parents, are the factors often reported in a migrant's decision to return home. The intensity of transnational ties has also been identified as a predictor of one's intention to return, although not necessarily of its follow-through (Vathi 2015). Other transnational factors concern identificational attachments and nostalgia for one's country of origin. Vacations and strategic preparatory visits contribute to the planning of a migrant's return. However, strictly speaking, transnational identities trigger not just movements 'back' to a homeland or hometown; some groups return to an (imagined) place of origin where they may never have been or have never lived before (Stefansson 2004: 7). In some cases this represents a 'second-generation return', in which offspring relocate to their parents' homeland, such as individuals who move from Germany to Turkey (Kılınç and King, this volume) or Latvian 'returnees' of even later generations (see Lulle et al., this volume). Not all returnees head towards their original hometown but instead move to destinations that are economically more prosperous or safer (Jansen 2011). In addition, historical ethnic minorities (e.g. Germans from countries in Eastern Europe) have 'returned' to their kin-states, which calls into question the notion of 'moving back to the homeland'.

The second distinction we analyse is not only whether transnational ties and identities shape return but also whether return produces new forms of transnationality. We know that return brings about new transnational ties and practices and transforms existing ones. In transnational migration research, return is a relevant path for the transfer of financial as well as social remittances, which include ideas, norms, identities and behaviours (Levitt 2001b). Returnees may also maintain a 'dual frame of reference', orienting their behaviour to both their old and their new places of residence simultaneously (Guarnizo 1997). Thus, return includes carrying and mobilizing resources and transnational capital, knowledge, skills and ideas across the

border. At least three realms are relevant in this regard: family, economic opportunities and identities. Transnational families can emerge or reconfigure consequent to some family members returning and others staying in place. Establishing a transnational household can serve as a purposeful strategy when one is confronting an uncertain future 'back home' (Harpviken 2014; Ley and Kobayashi 2005). This scenario has been associated specifically with the concept of 'staggered repatriation' among refugees (Nyberg-Sørensen 2004), whereby one or a few family members move back in order to secure the conditions for a safe and successful return, while the rest of the family continues living in the country of immigration and may or may not eventually join the returnees. Yet such forms of 'split return' (Harpviken 2014) have been observed for many other reasons, including aspirations for a child's education (Anghel and Coșciug 2018; Ley and Kobayashi 2005). In the professional realm, economic and other resources, as well as social networks, may be mobilized for finding jobs and establishing businesses upon a migrant's return. In addition, a knowledge of languages, norms and other forms of cultural capital acquired abroad can often become valuable assets in the local context (Black and King 2004; Coșciug, this volume; Kılınç and King, this volume). By combining familial obligations and economic aspirations, migrants also engage in flexible mobility projects with returnees resembling cross-border commuters who engage in regular mobility between two somewhat distant places (Crisp 2008; Sinatti 2011) and even across the Pacific Ocean (Ley and Kobayashi 2005). Furthermore, although identities oriented towards the place of origin can motivate return, they may also change considerably after the return project has been realized. Identities may become stronger or weaker or may be transformed in other ways, quite often resulting in hybridized forms. For example, in cases of 'double return' – first to the country of origin and then back again to the country of immigration – as a consequence of failing to succeed or of unmet expectations, transnational ties and identification may diminish in favour of concentrating one's resources for life in the country of immigration (White 2014). In contrast, Kılınç and King (in this volume) observe how second-generation 'German-Turks' actively emphasize and make use of their transnational identity upon 'return'. The case of ethnic migration also illustrates that individuals who 'return' to their kin-states have developed new ways of belonging to the countries of both their origin and their destination, thus redefining their identity (Anghel 2013; Fox 2007). As Oltean reveals (in this volume), ethnic Germans from Romania who had emigrated to Germany but eventually returned to Romania exemplify such transnationalized identities, feeling that they belong to both countries simultaneously. In addition, for many migrants, maintaining formal access to the immigration country (through residence and even citizenship) often safeguards their opportunity

to leave again, re-emigrate or relocate elsewhere (Cassarino 2004; Kılınç and King, this volume; Ley and Kobayashi 2005).

Therefore, in line with other researchers, we consider return migration as an 'unsettled' and transnational process (Markowitz 2004; Sinatti 2011). Our concept of *transnational return* opens the way towards an interconnected, two-way relationship between return and transnationality. Although not all returnees continue to be mobile or even think about emigrating again, other forms of transnational ties, practices, identities and imaginations matter to the ways in which return evolves and to the impact return has. Some studies share elements of this framework (as cited in this section), but in considerations of how transnationality shapes return or how return can lead to new aspects of transnationality, social change has not been on the agenda. Even the literature on financial and social remittances (i.e. the transfer of money, ideas and norms) has generally focused on the contributions of those who are absent and not of those who are newly present 'at home' (Boccagni and Decimo 2013; Lacroix et al. 2016) and even less on the changes these returnees are generating. As the chapters of this book will reveal, continued and newly emerging transnationalities engage with and have an impact on social change.

Linking Transnational Return and Meso-Level Social Change

In considering return migration from a transnational perspective, we aim to shed light on the social changes that emerge from the return of migrants to their places of birth or ancestry. Rather than accounting for deep shifts and macro-level transformations, we are interested in what occurs on the meso-level of localities, communities, social networks and organizations. First, this concerns the nature of transnational practices and the resources transferred back home; in this vein, we ask the question, 'What is being transferred by return migrants?' Second, we look into the social changes produced by transnational return by asking two related questions: 'What is being changed?' and 'How does social change occur?'

To address the first question, we have focused on the type of transnational practices and resources that returnees transfer and mobilize. In doing so we stress the need to distinguish these practices and transfers from the impact they have. The results are also relevant to acknowledging that not only do financial transfers contribute to allowing access to more money, but also the availability and spending of these transfers are interconnected with norms and ideas. Such linkages are widely documented in the literature on 'culture of migration', which argues that migrants' transfer of remittances and goods leads to new patterns of consumption, aspirations and values in the places of origin, especially among the youth. This situation, in turn, fosters

an aspiration to migrate, referred to as the 'migrant syndrome' (Massey et al. 1994; Reichert 1981). Social remittances – that is, the transfer of ideas – may not only result in changes in such things as health practices or managerial activities, but may also introduce new accountability mechanisms when it comes to financial transactions of hometown associations (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). With regard to our second question, which focused on what is being changed, we have identified three dimensions of social reality as relevant domains of change, namely social hierarchies, collective identities and cultural capital (especially local cultural norms and knowledge). Our third question concerns the link between transfers and changes, asking 'What are the mechanisms through which social change occurs?'

To return to our first question ('What is being transferred by the return migrants?'), research conducted in countries of origin over the past 15–20 years has investigated financial remittances and their effects, particularly their effects on economic investments and the reduction of poverty and social inequality (Docquier and Rapoport 2003). A growing literature is now also focusing attention on the transmission of social remittances as a matter of cultural diffusion (Boccagni and Decimo 2013; Levitt 2001a, 2001b; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). With a similar interest, some scholars, including some of the contributors to this volume, also draw on Bourdieu's theory regarding the forms of capital (economic, cultural and social) in understanding transnational transfers. Although the concepts of remittances and capital originated within different theoretical traditions, they share some similarities. Economic capital refers to resources that can easily be converted into money and in this way resembles financial remittances. Bourdieu divided cultural capital into three different forms – objectified, institutionalized and embodied – of which the latter two are of interest here. *Institutionalized cultural capital* is expressed through formal education, qualifications and certificates. Closer to social remittances is Bourdieu's notion of *embodied cultural capital* as more tacit 'long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body' (Bourdieu 1986: 47). Social capital is another element in social remittances (Levitt 1998) and allows for the cross-border transfer and mobilization of other types of capital. Using the framework of remittances or capitals, scholars shed light on practices and transfers beyond financial exchanges and their impact on economic development. It is also crucial to the perspective on transnational return to consider that transfers are not transmitted one-way or one-time only. Instead, returnees may continuously mobilize resources in transnational spaces that connect countries of emigration and immigration.

Such practices and resource transfers can help in the (re)adaptation process, as in the case of returnees from Germany to either Romania (Oltean, this volume) or Turkey (Kılınç and King, this volume) who successfully mobilize

their economic capital and, more importantly, their institutionalized and embodied cultural capital upon their return, having been enabled by a local context that is favourable to its validation. Ethnic Germans who emigrated from Transylvania (Romania) to Germany and eventually returned to the city of Sibiu (Romania) were able to capitalize on the professional skills they had acquired in Germany, being hired by German companies that had settled in Transylvania during the post-socialist openings or through associations funded by German donors. Similarly, second-generation children of immigrants from Turkey who returned from Germany to their parental homeland are making use of their German language skills and cultural knowledge in their professional lives in Antalya.

Perhaps more than for any other group in Europe, such transfers are fundamental to Roma migrants' well-being. Prior to their emigration from Romania, these migrants lived in poor settlements and were deprived of stable income. Accumulating financial capital abroad improved their social and economic standing, not to mention their household consumption (Anghel, this volume). Furthermore, in some cases, the skills they had developed abroad in their Hungarian destination, where they traded goods, allowed them to continue these activities upon their return.
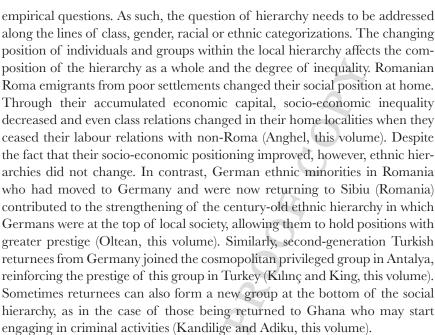
Migrants' exposures to different forms of working and living, compared with what they were used to, convinced them to try out new lines of business. This is also what Anne White details when describing one of her respondents who opened a high-quality restaurant in Poland after having seen similar ones in the US, her immigration destination (White, this volume). Her restaurant business has become a lucrative investment in a context where local consumption habits are in the process of changing, not least because of the travel and tourism experiences of a growing number of local Poles. Yet there are also cases when there are hardly any transfers, as in the case of the forced return of migrants to Ghana from Libya and Cote d'Ivoire. Kandilige and Adiku (this volume) show how this situation is severely hampering the basic adaptation of returnees in a context that is rather hostile to them.

In seeking to answer the question 'What is changing?', we employed a dynamic perspective within the context of transnational returns. We looked into three notable dimensions of social life where change can be observed: social hierarchies, collective identities and cultural capital (particularly local knowledge and norms).

First, our emphasis on *social hierarchies* entails uncovering the local distribution of resources, power and prestige as affected by transnational return. In general, return migration is associated with an expectation of social upward mobility that is enabled by the resources acquired abroad. In practice, how often this occurs, under what conditions and to whose benefit (or disadvantage) are

empirical questions. As such, the question of hierarchy needs to be addressed along the lines of class, gender, racial or ethnic categorizations. The changing position of individuals and groups within the local hierarchy affects the composition of the hierarchy as a whole and the degree of inequality. Romanian Roma emigrants from poor settlements changed their social position at home. Through their accumulated economic capital, socio-economic inequality decreased and even class relations changed in their home localities when they ceased their labour relations with non-Roma (Anghel, this volume). Despite the fact that their socio-economic positioning improved, however, ethnic hierarchies did not change. In contrast, German ethnic minorities in Romania who had moved to Germany and were now returning to Sibiu (Romania) contributed to the strengthening of the century-old ethnic hierarchy in which Germans were at the top of local society, allowing them to hold positions with greater prestige (Oltean, this volume). Similarly, second-generation Turkish returnees from Germany joined the cosmopolitan privileged group in Antalya, reinforcing the prestige of this group in Turkey (Kılınç and King, this volume). Sometimes returnees can also form a new group at the bottom of the social hierarchy, as in the case of those being returned to Ghana who may start engaging in criminal activities (Kandilige and Adiku, this volume).

The second dimension we identified concerns *collective identities*, which refers to the ways in which returnees align themselves with (or against) pre-existing social groups and communities as part of their distinctive contribution to social change. Ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe may be 'returning to the homeland' (Germany), where they had never lived before. Their identity projects will be influenced by their experiences in the (imagined) homeland, which in turn will shape their re-migration projects. When planning to return to Romania, Romanian Germans reassess the Romanian elements of their identity that have changed their way of being German and how they understand and express their group's identity (Oltean, this volume). Similarly, returnees to Latvia tend to form a distinct social group composed of second-generation returnees who develop a minority-like identity in what they consider their 'home' country (Lulle et al., this volume). Orthodox Romanians who return home from different European countries are also becoming more active members of local religious groups, which enhances their social position and social capital back home and in turn leads to changes in the collective identity of the religious community. Although migration was considered to be inappropriate for 'good believers', the involvement of returnees in the church has contributed to a change in the institutions' discourse, with migration being seen in a more positive light (Coşciug, this volume).

Cultural capital, particularly local knowledge and norms, represents the third important dimension of social change that we identified. Often the early

studies on return migration (Gmelch 1980) and on the nexus of migration
and development (Faist and Fauser 2011), as well as studies in the field of
social remittances, had already noted that returnees bring 'back home' not
only a knowledge of language and professional skills, but also a work ethic
and new attitudes and ideas. These cultural transfers introduce changes in,
for example, how businesses and other organizations are run. Along this vein,
German-Turkish returnees make use of German teaching methods, exposing
Turkish pupils to different ways of learning (Kılınç and King, this volume).
In other cases, migrants may create a demand for non-traditional teaching
methods. Claudia Olivier-Mensah (this volume) shows how her respondent,
who returned to Ghana from Germany, searched for an appropriate school for
her child that would match her newer vision of education and learning, but
the options available on her return could hardly meet her expectations. Other
examples of changes related to the cultural capital of returning migrants
include facilitating institutional and school exchanges between immigration
and emigration countries (Kılınç and King, this volume; Oltean, this volume)
and reviving local associational life (Oltean, this volume; White, this volume).
In other cases, returnees introduce new quality standards and new forms of
labour organizations based on their prior professional experience in the migra-
tion country (White, this volume). However, such change can be limited, as in
the case of Ghanaian returnees for whom certain habits acquired abroad are
kept within a close circle that does not extend beyond families, small groups
or cliques. As such, these meso-level changes produced by (embodied) cultural
capital or social remittances are more limited in scope and may only occasion-
ally scale out towards other domains or scale up towards higher levels (Levitt
2001a). Yet these concepts draw attention to the fact that traveling norms and
practices will enter the local context first.

Finally, we asked 'How do the processes of change occur?' In answering this
question, we looked at some mechanisms that mediate between transfers and
changes. We have already pointed out the decisive importance of contexts. In
this respect we identified three main mechanisms: *innovation*, *reproduction* and
inertia.

Innovation can take place easily in receptive contexts where the environment
embraces new ideas. The examples provided by White and by Kılınç and King
(this volume) show that returnees can innovate while tapping into existing or
emerging consumption and lifestyle demands for their new businesses or skills.
At other times, innovation occurs in more adverse environments. Migrants
forced to return to Ghana founded an NGO to represent their interests and
raise societal awareness about their difficult situation. Similarly, better-off
Latvian returnees have formed businesses and other organizations to support
other returnees who wish to come back and re-adapt locally (Lulle et al., this

volume). Innovation can also be negative when some returnees decide to engage in criminal activities, such as when failed returnees in Ghana exhibit violent behaviour and join criminal gangs (Kandilige and Adiku, this volume).

Reproduction refers to the reinforcement of an existing state of affairs, including emerging changes. In the case of innovation, it is the returnees who initiate and sustain change, whereas in the case of reproduction, change is not initiated by returnees but, together with other individuals in the situation, they participate in sustaining such change. In this regard, migrants may join groups who are already gaining strength, such as the Orthodox church in Romania (Coşciug, this volume) or the growing cosmopolitan circles in the tourist city of Antalya (Kılınç and King, this volume) or they may participate in keeping ethnic institutions alive, reproducing pre-existing institutional structures (Oltean, this volume). As migrants' practices here become stronger and contribute to establishing the emerging structural and cultural elements, these become part of social change and sometimes allow for their existence or spread even when they do not fundamentally alter local social relations and hierarchies.

Inertia is when no change occurs. This can happen when change is limited to families and small groups, as it is with some Ghanaian migrants who return to their home country and decide to keep their expectations private (Olivier-Mensah, this volume). In many other cases, returnees comply with the local social order, as is the case for the poor Roma in Romania who have had to accept their marginal status (Anghel, this volume).

Methodological Notes and an Outline of This Book

The past 15 years have witnessed many methodological debates concerning research on migration, and on mobility in general, and concerning attempts to unfold, from a transnational and multi-sited perspective, the dynamics of migration and mobility. In this general context, our interest in studying the link between transnational research and meso-level social change not only focuses on the different types of return mobilities and the motivations behind them, but equally considers the interactions between transnational return migrants and local groups, communities, institutions and identities.

The chapters herein document the results of research carried out in a number of countries: Romania, Poland, Latvia, Turkey and Ghana. They focus on emigration from and return to European countries, but also from Ghana both to Europe and to its neighbouring countries, Libya and Côte d'Ivoire. In so doing, we hope to formulate a comparative image of how returnees fare upon their return and, in particular, what types of changes they generate in their societies of origin.
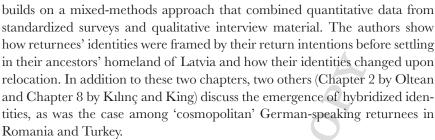
The first part of the book addresses the question of how transnational return changes the local distribution of resources, power and prestige and thus asks how social hierarchies change. The first two chapters deal with research carried out in the Transylvania region of Romania. In Chapter 1, Remus Anghel shows how migration and transnational return influenced poor Roma who live in segregated settlements and how Roma returnees have repositioned themselves locally. Research in this case involved Roma returnees, their family members and other members of the local community, including their non-Roma neighbours. To complement the information obtained through interviews, this study included many hours of observation within these segregated settlements. Chapter 2 likewise deals with interethnic relations and ethnic hierarchies. Ovidiu Oltean shows how ethnic German organizations maintained their activities despite their shrinking numbers. The research here focused on participant observation in these organizations, which entailed Oltean's involvement in organizing local activities of the German community and observing the sociality between Germans and non-Germans, returnees and non-migrants. They found that return migration is not always a successful process.

In Chapter 3, Kandilige and Adiku explore return migration in a very different context and analyse the role and repositioning of involuntary returnees from Côte d'Ivoire and Libya. In this case study, the subjects' involuntary return was one of failure, because of their resulting low status. This qualitative research involved interviews not only with the returnees and their families, but also with persons at other levels, particularly members of civil society organizations that dealt with the returnees' reintegration as well as government officials who dealt with repatriation procedures.

Part 2 includes analyses of collective identities, which require a slightly different methodological approach. On the one hand, personal identities are one of the ways in which returnees relate to their countries of origin and, as such, influence their motivations to return. On the other hand, collective identities are the basis for group formation among returnees, as will be shown in several chapters of this book. Here, empirical research involves in-depth interviews with both returnees and non-migrants and describes forms of sociality and identification to which returnees can align or can help shape. In Chapter 4, Anatolie Coșciug describes the role of Romanian returnees in strengthening local religiosity and how they mobilize religious social capital upon their return. In this case, the research was based on fieldwork carried out in different European destination countries and in the migrants' home country of Romania, as well as on a series of participatory research projects carried out with returnees who trade goods between Romania and various European countries. Chapter 5 by Aija Lulle, Zaiga Krisjane and Andris Bauls

builds on a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative data from standardized surveys and qualitative interview material. The authors show how returnees' identities were framed by their return intentions before settling in their ancestors' homeland of Latvia and how their identities changed upon relocation. In addition to these two chapters, two others (Chapter 2 by Oltean and Chapter 8 by Kılınç and King) discuss the emergence of hybridized identities, as was the case among 'cosmopolitan' German-speaking returnees in Romania and Turkey.

Part 3 focuses on the transfer and change of cultural capital, understood here as local cultural knowledge and norms. Methodologically, the two chapters that deal with this subject look at the types of transfers and changes in ideas and behaviours. In Chapter 6, Claudia Olivier-Mensah shows how Ghanaian returnees from Germany used the implicit and explicit knowledge they acquired in Germany in their readaptation to Ghana. Her research employed a grounded-theory methodology, relying on biographical interview data together with qualitative social networks analysis. In Chapter 7, Anne White analyses the influence of social remittances on communities of origin, comparing their effects on both larger cities and smaller localities and describing the differences between visible and less visible changes. Her study relied on a livelihood approach, using empirical data from several research projects that involved both quantitative and qualitative data gathered in Poland and the United Kingdom.

Finally, Chapter 8 by Kılınç and King shows how returnees' (trans)cultural capital influenced their habitus and how this informed a cosmopolitan identity among Turkish returnees from Germany who resettled in Antalya, Turkey. These authors also show the role of the participants' connectedness to Germany for the transfer of ideas and for sustaining a form of 'transcultural capital' that received local appreciation and was positively valued in Turkey. To this end, the authors relied on biographical interviews.

In his Afterword, Paolo Boccagni calls for an understanding of social change as the cumulative outcome of social interactions and for expanding the research, not only by suggesting the need for a 'deeper' analysis of case studies, as can be found in many of the chapters herein, but also by employing a comparative perspective. Second, he argues for viewing return as a segment of a broader migration system, as a biographical threshold for individuals that involves readaptation and resocialization and as an element of interdependence between societies of emigration and immigration. Finally, he stresses the need to distinguish between the exaggerated representations (including the 'moral panics') of the potential results of migration and transnational return and their 'real' effects on changing groups, communities and institutions.

Conclusions

The contributors to this book follow a transnational perspective as a crucial lens for analysing and meaningfully studying return migration and its implications. As a way of expanding the meso-level approach in transnational research that has focused on the emergence and persistence of transnational social formations (Faist 2000), we have concentrated on changes in communities, networks and organizations as a strategic locus of research. We therefore asked how social change is logged in with return migration and is, in turn, subject to the processes of transnationalization. Our research agenda rests on two premises. On the one hand, rather than looking into macro-level social changes, we focused on the changes occurring at the meso-level. Changes in communities, families or local associations are often less visible and generally do not attract the same attention as deep-seated transformations. Nevertheless, such meso-level changes may be equally important for understanding the impacts of return and transnationalization and may concatenate into broader changes over time or become one aspect of pluralized societies. On the other hand, our aim is to define dimensions of social life that change under the influence of return migration, together with the underlying mechanisms of these changes. Much of the research on return migration has focused on migrants' mobilities, motivations to return and on how returnees fare. While inquiring about the impacts of return, which have so far received less attention in the literature, we addressed the ways in which social structures, identities and local cultural knowledge and norms are altered by transnational return. In so doing, we have considered return migration and its impact within the broader changes taking place worldwide and in particular places, and we have defined a research agenda that concerns return migration and social change.

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Part 1

CHANGING SOCIAL HIERARCHIES

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Chapter 1

WHEN THE POOR MIGRATE AND RETURN: CLASS AND STATUS REPOSITIONING AMONG ROMA TRANSNATIONAL RETURNEES

Remus Gabriel Anghel

Introduction

In recent years, return migration has started to receive increasing attention in academic and policy debates. In the context of the heated debates on remittances, migration and development, new hopes emerged on the roles that returnees might play in developing their home societies. An array of research from different parts of the world aims to capture these roles, such as developing entrepreneurial activities or transferring back home the knowledge, funds and social capital acquired abroad (Åkesson 2009; Black and Castaldo 2009). If this return and development optimism emerged principally in relation to questions concerning economic growth, a related research agenda on the types of social changes that can emerge due to return migration is evident. This relates to the larger research agenda on migration and social change with the assumption that, due to their accumulated cultural, financial and social capital, returnees may be in a favourable position to influence the society in which they live.

In this chapter I embark on this research agenda, asking how returnees can produce social change. The literature on return migration often mentions that returnees reposition themselves towards their society of origin. Here, I ask how such repositioning influences their society of origin or feeds into existing processes of social change. While considering social change as returnees' repositioning, I ask how previously deprived people – in this case Roma from deprived settlements in Romania – reposition themselves upon their return towards the prevailing inequality and deprivation in which they had lived.

Secondly, I ask what consequences may emerge locally for Roma/non-Roma[1] relations. The migration and return of these people, and how they fare upon their return, is not just a subject of academic relevance but also of public interest, as the Roma are often regarded as 'lowest of the low' of European societies (Stewart 1998). The research was conducted in two localities in the central part of Romania, a rich town and a poor village, each of which have a deprived Roma settlement from which people migrated and to which they have returned.

In the following, I first discuss the concept of return migration used in this chapter and how return and migration may impact on inequality. Afterwards, I describe the case studies analysed, including some of the main changes in social and economic restructuring of these localities and how Roma migration occurred from these places. While I consider the relations of inequality between the poor Roma and the majority as often based on class, this section also discusses the need to address class and social status as relevant categories of local social structuration. Finally, I analyse how migrants reposition themselves towards the non-Roma and local social hierarchies. Different types of returnees may have different roles in how social hierarchies may change locally. During this research, I identified four ways in which these returnees repositioned themselves towards the non-Roma: returnees who become *challengers* of local hierarchy and inequality; *boundary-crossers*, who are able to cross ethnic divisions; *conformers*, who reproduce the existing hierarchy; and finally *those who exit* the local context and remigrate. While discussing these types of repositioning, I draw conclusions on how we can use a broader concept of social change in relation to local stratification and the larger processes of change experienced in a transition society such as Romania.

Migration, Return Migration and Social Differentiation

Return migration is today a highly diversified phenomenon. Traditionally, return migration was conceived as the last stage of a migration cycle (Cassarino 2004) and as a permanent movement (Gmelch 1980) after a shorter or longer period of migration: 'Return migration describes a situation where migrants return to their country of origin […] often after a significant period' (Dustmann and Weiss 2007: 238). This initial understanding conceived return as the end phase of the migration process, thus limiting the phenomenon to only a limited number of cases.

Research in recent years has, by contrast, acknowledged return as a much more diversified phenomenon in which decisions to return, migrate or return again are part of a larger project of mobility for migrants of first or second generation. Migrants' back-and-forth movements involve return and it is

sometimes difficult to distinguish between short visits and temporary or seasonal returns (Sinatti 2011: 154). In this respect, 'the transnational movement can arguably be conceptualized as a form of return' (Black and King 2004: 80), where return is just another stage in a continuous migratory project (Cassarino 2004), 'as in a transnational field, there is no finality to movement' (Ley and Kobayasi 2005: 118).

The reason may be not only that motivations to return vary over time but also because returnees fare differently; very often, return expectations are not met in reality, in which case migrants may be forced to remigrate (White 2014). As King mentions (see Cassarino 2004: 262), an optimal experience of migration is needed in order to make return a sustainable process. Besides, in many cases sustaining transnational ties is a vital resource for returnees in order to be able to adapt to the society of return (Sinatti 2011). This leads us to consider return as part of a larger mobility framework. Therefore, I use in this chapter the concept of *transnational return* (Fauser and Anghel, this volume), which is a diverse phenomenon having different forms, namely permanent, occasional, seasonal or temporary return (King 2000), staged return (Harpviken 2014), double return or re-emigration (White 2014). In this sense, one may conceive the back-and-forth movement of temporary migrants, such as the poor Roma in this chapter, as alternating outmigration and transnational return. In addition, as many of them are in fact seasonal or temporary migrants, I contend that transnational return is a relatively generalized phenomenon among these poor migrants.

Returnees' adaptation to the context of origin is key for how the return process occurs. As the structural approach argues, return shall be analysed not only in relation to returnees' migratory experiences but also to the social and institutional factors in their countries of origin (Cassarino 2004). In this sense, it is often considered that 'local power relations, traditions and values […] have a strong bearing on the returnees' (ibid.: 5). This crucial element opens up a second related question on defining contexts and what types of changes return migration may engender. From a structural point of view (Cassarino 2004; Cerase 1974), returnees not only have difficulties in adapting to the context of origin, their innovative potential is also reduced. On the other hand, literature on financial and social remittances portrays a different perspective in which such effects are actually significant, for instance with the large wave of remittances, the new consumption patterns emerging in regions of origin and the new ideas that are transferred there (Levitt 2001; Massey et al. 1994). Much of this difference actually depends on how we conceive not just return migration but also social change.

This chapter is about poor people who migrate and return. Looking at migrants' economic positioning back home, research shows that the effect of
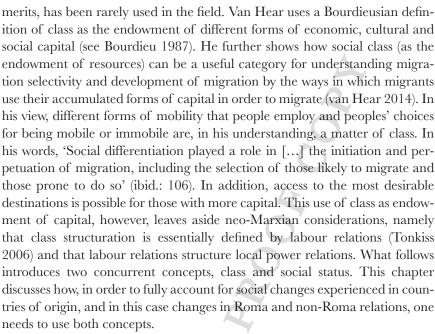
migration and remittances on income inequality is mixed and dependent on context (Black et al. 2006). A large number of studies show that migration accentuates economic inequality. The main reason is that migration requires resources and those migrating actually come from better-off parts of the societies of origin. The seminal works of Massey and his collaborators in Mexico (Massey 1987; Massey et al. 1994) show that migration propagates from the richer to the poorer parts of societies of origin. Afterwards, due to remittances, migrant households become richer and relative deprivation grows between the richer and poorer households, generating further migration. Such a perspective, embraced by the new economics of labour migration (NELM) theorists, discusses migration as a risk diversification strategy and relative deprivation as a main cause of generating migratory motivation. These studies thus show that inequality tends to increase in initial phases, increasing the income of better-off families that receive remittances; it decreases afterwards, when migration develops and involves poorer parts of society. In these cases, remittances have a levelling effect: the evolution of income inequality is in such cases an inverse U-shaped pattern, where after a period of increase, inequality may decrease (see, for instance, the discussion in Docquier and Rapoport 2003). Such a levelling effect does not always occur for the poor. As Black et al. (2006) show, poorer Albanian households were less able to benefit from remittances than richer households, whose members had the opportunity to migrate internationally and not just internally, by contrast with the poorer ones, who remained in the so-called 'migration-poverty trap' (Black et al. 2006: 8). The same process holds true for other similar cases (Osella and Osella 2000) or for cases where only the rich households are able to migrate (Åkesson 2009). At the same time, there are cases where it is mainly people from the poorer or subaltern segments of society who migrate. This often results in changes to their social positioning back home (Black et al. 2006; de Haas 2007; Osella and Osella 2000). However, there is a strong argument that, because of migration selectivity, these are rather exceptional and that much of the migration actually develops in accordance with the Massey model and the proponents of the NELM theory. Accordingly, research on income inequality actually shows that migration (and consequently, return migration) may produce consequences in returnees' social positioning; the same has been suggested by Gmelch, who considers that there is significant evidence of social mobility among returnees (Gmelch 1980). After defining return migration as transnational return encompassing an array of return practices and assessing the role of migration on inequality, another important question is how to address the issue of returnees' social positioning in relation to social change.

Recently, Nicholas van Hear (2014) inquired into the usefulness of class for studies of migration, arguing that the concept, in spite of its undisputed

merits, has been rarely used in the field. Van Hear uses a Bourdieusian defin-
ition of class as the endowment of different forms of economic, cultural and
social capital (see Bourdieu 1987). He further shows how social class (as the
endowment of resources) can be a useful category for understanding migra-
tion selectivity and development of migration by the ways in which migrants
use their accumulated forms of capital in order to migrate (van Hear 2014). In
his view, different forms of mobility that people employ and peoples' choices
for being mobile or immobile are, in his understanding, a matter of class. In
his words, 'Social differentiation played a role in […] the initiation and per-
petuation of migration, including the selection of those likely to migrate and
those prone to do so' (ibid.: 106). In addition, access to the most desirable
destinations is possible for those with more capital. This use of class as endow-
ment of capital, however, leaves aside neo-Marxian considerations, namely
that class structuration is essentially defined by labour relations (Tonkiss
2006) and that labour relations structure local power relations. What follows
introduces two concurrent concepts, class and social status. This chapter
discusses how, in order to fully account for social changes experienced in coun-
tries of origin, and in this case changes in Roma and non-Roma relations, one
needs to use both concepts.

Class is a central concept of sociological theory, discussed in the theories of
Marx, Weber, Bourdieu and Giddens. It refers to 'structural social divisions,
[that are seen] as influencing individual and collective behaviour, cultural and
political affiliations […] it refers to those who hold property and those who do
not' (Kalb 2015: 1). Class was a central concept in researching economy and
economic relations until the middle of the twentieth century (Carrier 2015;
Kalb 2015), used in historical sociology, economics and history. However, class
has received serious criticism in the past. In the 1970s and 1980s a series of
voices asked about the analytical usefulness of the concept in the contexts
of emergence of the middle class and fragmentation of industrial work
(Tonkiss 2006); it was argued that 'big classes' cannot account for diversified
occupations in late capitalism, for collective action, social closure and class
awareness (Weeden and Grusby 2005). Class was also criticised for paying
less attention to the internal heterogeneity of classes and it was suggested
that a micro-class approach would probably better fit the post-industrial situ-
ation (ibid.). Furthermore, while analyses of class focus on labour, exploitation
and labour relations (Tonkiss 2006), neo-Weberians preferred the alternative
notion of social status for studies on social stratification. Whereas class is an
economic category referring to "all persons in the same class situation" (Tonkiss
2006: 134), status is a social category that involves social evaluation. Status is
both a set of social and economic indicators, as well as expectations about the
social roles associated with them (Woelfel and Murero 2005). It corresponds

to a certain volume of resources associated with it. For symbolic status I have chosen to refer to the prestige or honour a person or a group possesses due to their position within society (Anghel 2013; Bourdieu 1984). Research on migrants' social and symbolic statuses was first conducted by scholars of the Manchester School (Epstein 1967) and has been restated by scholars to assess how migrants reposition themselves in their societies of origin (Nieswand 2011). Conceptually, socio-economic status corresponds to Bourdieu's (and van Hear's) understanding of class as migrants' endowment of economic and social resources. However, by contrast with their formulations, I use the notion of class in line with a Marxian framework and language inspired by class analysis, where class describes the relationship between labour and capital. In this way, class relations better capture relations of exploitation, domination, ownership and control, crucial to the analysis of capitalism (Tonkiss 2006). Simultaneously, when analysing migrants' repositioning back home, there is a need to analyse returnees' social and symbolic statuses. Thus, although this discussion started from van Hear's call to restate class as an important analytical tool, my view takes a different route. First, I consider status as well as class to be a necessary concept in migration scholarship, while second, I look at how class and status can be useful not in understanding how migration propagates, but in how return migration generates social change back home.

Accordingly, in assessing how the return migration of the poor Roma effects social changes back home, I show how the Roma reposition themselves in their society of origin in terms of class and status. Whereas class is suited to capturing changes in their labour relations as well as relations of exploitation, social status is a concept suited to research their repositioning. I carried out the research in multi-ethnic communities and an account of ethnicity or ethnic relations may be required. As the chapter refers to the relationships between the Roma and non-Roma, and the new positions that Roma returnees can attain back home, for the purpose of this chapter I look at ethnic relations as essentially relations of prestige or symbolic status. The symbolic status of individuals, which is related to the prestige of an individual or a group, is highly relevant for how the Roma, as members of a stigmatized ethnic group, are treated by the majority and how their social positioning relates to existing social hierarchy. Finally, using both concepts I can address how the social change induced by migration relates to broader transformation within Romanian society, where class and class relations re-emerged after the collapse of state socialism. Accordingly, in the following sections I first describe the research locations and how Roma poor settlements were maintained and enlarged in size after socialism. Afterwards, I describe the types of transnational return and returnees' repositioning. I conclude with an analysis of the social change induced by return migration.

Post-Socialism, Poor Roma Settlements and Migration in Two Romanian Localities

The research was conducted in two localities: a small city, Sebeș, and a village, Zăbala. Roma settlements emerged and developed differently in the two localities. In both cases, Roma lived segregated socially and economically from the majority. In the first context I deal with a large Roma settlement of about four thousand people.[2] The town has about thirty thousand people, the majority of whom are Romanians. There is also a small German community of about four hundred people, a fraction of the former German community living there before 1989. In the second case, I analysed a small group of Roma living in the multi-ethnic village of Zăbala,[3] with a majority of Hungarians: the village has about thirty five hundred people, twenty five hundred of whom are Hungarians, eight hundred Romanians and about two hundred Roma.

The two localities were not chosen randomly. They were selected in order to research migration and the ensuing social change comparatively, focusing on poor Roma and non-Roma groups. As the emergence of poor Roma settlements is one of the most important processes of social change in Romania and one of the most important issues to be addressed in relationship to social inequality and poverty, I considered it important to address the issue of inequality and migration in such settlements. Many poor Roma settlements in Romania are actually located in small cities and villages. Thus, I have chosen a village and a small city. Secondly, I tried to compare a poor locality, the village of Zăbala, with a rich one, the town of Sebeș. The fieldwork in Zăbala had some antecedents. I first conducted there fieldwork at the end of the 1990s. I conducted further research after 2012. In Sebeș, I spent more than six months undertaking fieldwork, in different time sequences spanning over four years. Research in both cases was based on qualitative interviews and participant observation. In Zăbala I focused on a group of Roma, whereas in Sebeș I investigated a large network of friends and relatives. While I conducted research in both places, I cannot claim generalizations for the whole situation of poor Roma settlements in Romania; likewise, not everywhere has clearly defined exclusionary boundaries between the Roma and non-Roma, as they are here. However, as both places had shared anti-Roma sentiments and these settlements were segregated from the majority, I consider these cases exemplary for the ways in which the relationships between the Roma and non-Roma evolved in relation to migration and post-socialist transformation.

The Roma in Sebeș were traditionally marginal. The local hierarchy of prestige was and still is based on ethnicity. Germans were considered to be at the top of this hierarchy, praised for their civilization and organizational

capabilities. Romanians came after Germans and they form the large majority. The Roma are considered at the bottom of the social hierarchy, living in segregation 'because they deserve to stay in their place, in the "quarter"' (Ioana) and are considered to be unreliable. During socialism, the 'quarter' was much smaller than today. At that time, the Roma worked in socialist factories; they had the lowest paying jobs, but they still had a regular income and employment. Their children attended schools. After 1989, the former socialist industry collapsed. Within a few years' time, most of them were unemployed. The 'quarter' also grew in size considerably, as it attracted other poor Roma people from neighbouring villages and cities. Living conditions in the Roma settlement are extremely poor, with no paved roads and no sewage system. The houses are mainly of very poor quality, constructed from bricks and wood. People started to look for work to Romanians extensively. These Roma lived out of selling scrap iron, begging and receiving the meagre Romanian social benefit payment, and also received some temporary and informal work whenever needed in town. Poverty was rampant and discrimination widespread. Only a small portion of them were able to obtain labour in textile, wood or leather factories, working for the minimum wages in Romania. The emergence of class relations between Romanians and the Roma was one of the most important transformations which emerged locally after 1989, with the Roma occupying a subaltern position in relation to Romanians. For a decade, economic decay was strong. But the city started to experience sustained growth due to a series of large-scale investments conducted by large international companies. Today, it has transformed into a hub of industrial production and attracts internal migrants. However, most of the Roma remain unemployed and instead of obtaining jobs locally, they started to migrate internationally on a large scale.

The Roma from Zăbala had also a low status historically. They were a small group of up to two hundred people, most of whom lived on the margins of the village in a poor settlement. In common with the case of Sebeș, the Roma from Zăbala occupied the lowest place in the local hierarchy of prestige. Stereotypes about them were very negative. During state socialism the Roma started to work in agriculture and construction; most of the time, however, they performed casual works for the non-Roma villagers. After the collapse of state socialism in the area, the industry that employed most Hungarians and Romanians collapsed, but the Roma were the most affected. They continued performing random works for the non-Roma. It was only towards the end of the 1990s that their lives started to improve when they migrated to Hungary.

The migration of people from the two settlements took different forms. In Sebeș, the Roma started to migrate after 2007, when Romania became an EU member state. It encompassed a large part of the youth as well as

adults. They migrated temporarily towards many European destinations, such as Germany, Italy, Greece, the United Kingdom, Belgium or France. They usually employed temporary migratory practices: they had short-term labour contracts (usually informal) or performed street work, such as begging, collecting scrap iron or busking. Over the years some of them managed to find regular jobs and remain abroad. Within a few years, the effects of remittances became apparent in the 'quarter', as people had started to renovate their houses and to improve living conditions. Although public infrastructure in the settlement remained extremely poor, there are clear signs of improvement in contrast to what houses looked like and how people lived previously.

In Zăbala, the Roma migrated to Hungary. Some of them had some random informal labour works in construction and agriculture, and returned. A small group of these Hungarian Roma, however, were able to position themselves as transnational informal traders. They started trading activities in the markets in Budapest, specializing in informally selling Chinese goods. Afterwards they continued to trade informally in Hungary and other countries from Central and Eastern Europe. The rest of the Roma remained at home, relying on random jobs and social assistance.

Accordingly, in Sebeș and Zăbala, the Roma were segregated from the majority population. A major social change that occurred for these people and their localities was the development of class relations between the Roma and non-Roma: many Roma started to work for non-Roma and were economically dependent on them. Their symbolic and social status remained the lowest throughout these years and social segregation remained high. In the following section I analyse the changes produced by migration and return migration, especially the effects that emerged for the people living in these two segregated areas.

Transnational Return and Social Change in Two Poor Roma Settlements

Debates on migration and social change oscillate between positions which, on one hand, consider migration a powerful process of social change (Castles 2010) and, on the other, those which argue that migration does not produce deep social change, as it is not able to change deep values and institutions (Portes 2010), even when entire regions become transnationalized (ibid.). In this section, I interrogate the social changes produced by migration and return migration, focusing on how migrants position themselves towards their society of origin and how class relations and social status change. During the fieldwork I differentiated between four types of returnees: *challengers*, who aim to challenge the local hierarchy and Roma/non-Roma relations; *boundary-crossers*,

who are able to cross ethnic divisions; *conformers*, who reproduce the existing hierarchy; and finally *those who exit* the local context of their origin and remigrate.

In the following, I embark on this typology and discuss the social changes which ensued. *Challengers* of the local ethnic hierarchy are Roma who actively react to prevailing ethnic inequalities by questioning and attempting to change their local position. This situation is similar to processes in which labour migrants earn high prestige back home, improving their consumption and very often building new houses[4]. They are able to obtain higher socio-economic status and a position of high prestige due to migration. Such cases are rather generalized, from Mexico (Massey et al. 1994), to Romania (Anghel 2013) or Ghana (Nieswand 2011). Improving one's own social status was also a more generalized phenomenon among Romanian labour migrants (Anghel 2013). There are also case studies showing how migration restructured migrants' localities of origin and how migrant households became richer than non-migrant households. In the case of Roma migrants and returnees, the process is sometimes highlighted in the phenomenon of the Gypsy palaces that appeared in Romania after the 1990s and in the contentious dispute over the worthiness of their enrichment (Toma et al. 2017). During the course of my research, I encountered such a case in Zăbala, constructed by the Roma who became rich petty traders in neighbouring countries. They started going to Hungary, where salaries were much higher than those in Romania, at the beginning of the 1990s. As previously mentioned, within a few years they started to buy Chinese products from a market in Budapest and to resell them in the smaller cities and villages around Budapest. As these products were very cheap, trade was very effective. In a very short period of time they were able to accumulate sufficient resources and could buy houses and quit the poor Roma settlement. They started to renegotiate vis-à-vis the Hungarian majority not only their class position, as they ceased working for the non-Roma, but also their symbolic status (Anghel 2015). With the money they gathered, they bought and erected new houses in the centre of the village. They obtained a new socio-economic status in this rather poor village. As they were extremely poor and marginal before migration, it was hard for local peasants to comprehend how these Roma made their money and how were they able to sustain a higher level of consumption. This whole new situation resulted in a tense symbolic negotiation. For the local Hungarian majority, this situation was a turning upside down of the centuries-old prevailing social and symbolic order. For the Roma, it was a better life and an opening for new aspirations. They ceased their relationships with the poor Roma and over the years they were able to establish new friendships with Hungarians. Despite the fact that the Roma were still perceived as low in the local symbolic order, more positive

attitudes emerged in relation to these rich returnees. These people maintained their high economic status by maintaining transnational relations, conducting trade internationally and not relying on local resources. In Sebeș, too, in spite of the strong migration from 'the quarter', I encountered only one person who was able to successfully challenge the prevailing social and economic hierarchy, a small businessman who was able to get involved in local politics and oppose the anti-Roma discourses. He migrated to Germany at the beginning of the 1990s and returned. Over the years, he was able to set up a small construction company, operating both locally and in the wider region. As in the first case, he raised his criticism of anti-Roma discourses and the attitudes of the majority. In both contexts, however, in spite of strong migration and return, such cases are rather rare and only a limited number of individuals were able to become challengers. In these two localities, the enrichment of returning Roma became a subject of heated debates. However in studies on Romanian Roma, the Roma enrichment is rather a marginal phenomenon (Kiss et al. 2009; Vincze and Raț 2013).

A second type of repositioning is the case of *boundary crossers*, that is, Roma who were able to cross ethnic divisions. There are, for instance cases, of mixed marriages or increasing interethnic alliances and friendships. If usually there is a predominant and unchallenged norm of discrimination, cases of crossing ethnic boundaries represent a *de facto* change towards smoother anti-Roma discriminatory attitudes and more similar socio-economic and symbolic statuses between the Roma and the non-Roma. In this case, too, there are no longer class relations between the Roma and the non-Roma. The case of Doru is here telling. He went to Spain 10 years ago and obtained a very good job for a company selling sandwiches in Madrid. He considered himself to have developed a friendly relationship with his Spanish employer. Because of the economic crisis, however, the company entered into bankruptcy and he was forced to find another job. Doru had bought a flat in Madrid before the economic crisis, but with the new job he was unable to afford the mortgage. He lost the flat and had to return 'home'. When he worked in Spain, he was able to construct a house in Sebeș outside 'the quarter' and sent remittances to his wife's parents. The departure from Spain was not easy for him, as he had many friends there. At the departure, Doru remembers, his former Spanish employer was very sad, almost crying. Back home, he had to readapt to Romania. When I conducted the interview with him, he was employed at Daimler and not very happy with the salary but pleased with the stability of the job. He also had Romanian colleagues and acquaintances. Some other Roma were also able to acquire houses outside the 'Roma quarter', towards the 'Romanian' parts of the city. However, there were not that many cases like Doru's in Sebeș, and most of the Roma migrants leaving and returning

to the city had to keep their poorly paid jobs in local companies. Doru's case is similar to others in Turda, a city of 50,000 people in the central part of Transylvania, where Anghel and Coşciug (2018) analysed how the Roma and non-Roma returnees engaged in the very profitable business of selling second-hand cars from Germany. Conducted as a quasi-informal trade, this is a very good opportunity for people with limited prospects. Returnees thus positioned themselves as a category of quasi informal traders, similar to the case of the rich Roma in Zăbala, who were able to benefit from their migration experience. Even when coming from poor backgrounds, these Roma traders had relations with Romanians and social differences between Romanians and these Roma traders seem not to play a significant role. In these cases, traders were also returnees who worked in the West and they were able to capitalize on their social capital and migratory experience. Their return to Romania ended up in their social repositioning and attempt to cross local ethnic divides.

More cases than the previous two were among the Roma who were *conformers*, people who reproduced the existing social and symbolic hierarchy. I encountered two types: one involving slightly more successful migrants who were able to maintain temporary migratory practices over a number of years, and the other involving 'failure'. The first case concerns those who were more successful: they migrate regularly to the West and send and invest remittances obtained abroad. They live better, although they do not leave the Roma quarter and had to face the same anti-Roma discriminatory attitudes. Ion, for example, is employed as a tailor in Sebeş and during summers he goes to Spain where he is a street musician. He is well above 50. He considered himself fairly old and unable to leave for Spain or another European country for good. He accepts his position in Romania and aims for no status improvement, but only a slightly better quality of life, by combining the regular job at the factory and summer street activity in Spain. Similarly, Dan is working in a leather factory. He is a Pentecostal principal. When he was in France he found support from a Pentecostal priest, who offered him work. He stayed there for a while and returned after a few months. Such temporary strategies – where people migrated and worked abroad, or migrated repeatedly and performed marginal jobs, and eventually returned – produced substantial remittances that were often invested in houses and improved peoples' lives. These strategies, that lacked stable labour contracts, but were based on a series of temporary migrations, were actually practiced by many people in the 'Roma quarter' from Sebeş. They provided sufficient remittance to improve the life in 'the quarter' by improving their living conditions.

In the second case, 'failure', returnees had limited migratory experiences and performed poorly paid jobs. In Zăbala, some Roma became successful petty traders but most of them remained excluded in the small Roma

'quarter', unable to capitalize on their migratory experience. They had to comply with the existing ethnic hierarchy. They remained in the same social position, even maintaining the same types of class relations to the majority, for whom they had to continue working randomly. These people remained disadvantaged. At the same time, their being unable to succeed vis-à-vis other Roma returnees, that is, their relatives and former neighbours, represented another source of frustration. In Sebeș, likewise, not only non-migrant Roma but also many migrants had to accept their marginality. In the cases of some migrants I interviewed, who used to beg and perform petty jobs in France, migration did not mean an improvement of their condition. Some still rely on casual work, such as collecting empty bottles and used iron or small construction contracts for Romanians. Others work in the leather and textile industries, obtaining very low salaries. They still have to live in the same miserable conditions, with random and poorly paid jobs. In such cases, remittances helped them to cover some of household costs, but their status and class relations remained unchanged.

Finally, there are those returnees who aim to *exit* and to migrate permanently. The people I interviewed complained about disadvantages back home, which they could no longer cope with. In such cases, returnees considered or hoped that permanent emigration would be a better option than return. At the same time, this strategy is linked to obtaining long-term jobs abroad. Nicu is a young Roma man from Sebeș who wants to move to Spain permanently. In his words, he wants 'to get out of there' as quickly as possible and hopes for a better life than in the 'quarter'. His father works in Madrid and Nicu would go to him. He considers life in the Roma quarter unbearable. Nicu first migrated to Spain after 2007, when his father had a long-term job. He spent many years there and had many Spanish friends; for him, there were few reasons to return. At the time of the research in Sebeș he was 'at home' as he had no job in Spain in the context of the economic crisis. However, he intended to migrate again and was confident he would eventually remain in Spain. In cases like that of Nicu and other Roma from Sebeș, exit not only meant an attempt to earn more money, but it also demonstrates that migration was considered a way to enter an environment where they would be treated like a normal and decent human being. Like Nicu, Anca left Sebeș a few years ago and moved to Germany where she works in a restaurant. She was followed by her husband who works in carousels around Germany. They were able to take their daughter with them and resettled in Germany. When Maria, her mother, went there to visit, she considered that everybody treated her well: 'You go on the street and they say: "Hallo", and you answer: "Hallo"' (Maria). Her niece is well integrated at school, socializing and partying with her German colleagues. Back home in Sebeș, Maria lives in extremely poor

conditions. Even though she has many Romanian acquaintances, another of her daughters, Elena, was not able to find a job, in spite of the fact that there is strong demand for workers in the city. In cases such as those described above, migrants considered they were treated better and not deemed 'Gypsies' abroad. For them, the solution to their low social and symbolic status was to leave. This does not mean they would be successful abroad, but rather that they aim to 'exit'. As far as they have relatives and friends in Sebeș, they return from time to time there; however they try to remain abroad where they have long-term jobs. In the following, I put these cases together and draw conclusions on how to conceptualize the social change I described so far.

Conclusions: Social Change as Returnees' Social Repositioning

This chapter has analysed the changes people from two poor Roma settlements in Romania underwent due to migration and return. I first analysed migration, return migration and their effects in relation to broader processes of social and economic transformation in Romania. I thus show how the development of the Roma settlements (especially the large one in Sebeș) was the product of the dramatic transformation of the country, in which poor Roma started to depend economically upon non-Roma, even establishing class relations. In both contexts, the Roma were at the bottom of the social and symbolic hierarchy, most of them living segregated in two poor settlements. Migration produced changes in terms of remittances and helped to alleviate their poverty. As far as these people were no longer working for the non-Roma as before, migration was a powerful process that led towards the disappearance of class relations between the Roma and the non-Roma.

I have felt the need to embed the analysis within a theory of social differentiation (Castles 2010). In this endeavour, van Hear's imperative (2014) of using the concept of class in migration research was a rich avenue for exploration. Even though I used it differently, in a Marxian framework, this allowed me to point towards one of the most important changes locally, namely changes in labour relations. By using the concepts of social and symbolic status I was able to obtain a more nuanced analysis of the changes in social relations occurring between the Roma and non-Roma. Roma ethnicity is a racialized category in both locales and relates to symbolic statuses, in which local hierarchies were actually based on ethnicity and ethnic stereotypes. This made the endeavour all the more fascinating, as it drives the analysis not only towards changes in the Roma economic positions but also towards their attempts to change centuries-old symbolic hierarchies. I thus approached social change looking at how returnees reposition themselves upon return and what possible effects can

Table 1.1 Returnees' repositioning and migration trajectories

Type of repositioning	Changes in terms of status and/or class positions	Migration trajectory and ties abroad
Challengers	Socio-economic status improvement, no further class relations with non-Roma, challenge of the social and symbolic status upon return. Mostly in Zăbala	Successful migratory experience and return, in some cases returnees maintained transnational activities
Boundary crossers	Better integration into the local labour market at return. No further class relations. Similar socio-economic status to non-Roma, mostly in Sebeș	Tendency for permanent return, in some cases transnational activities
Conformers	More successful: Improving living conditions, economic improvement. No class relations, low socio-economic status. Zăbala and Sebeș Failure: Continuous dependency, maintenance of class relations. Low socio-economic status. Zăbala and Sebeș	Temporary migration and return Not many ties to locals abroad Limited migratory experience, return as permanent
Those exiting	Intention to leave the place permanently. Sebeș	Dense social ties to locals in Western Europe (Spain, France, Germany). Settlement abroad, return as visits back home or short stays

have return migration on existing social hierarchies. The cases analysed and the processes explored are summarized in Table 1.1.

Thus, it resulted that those able to change their social position back home were those who were more successful abroad and who, often, were able to maintain their economic activities abroad, for longer or shorter periods of time. They were also among those who were actively and in some cases, successfully, able to change or challenge the local symbolic hierarchy. These, however, were few. A large majority were able to improve their economic status and ceased their class relations with the non-Roma. However, they still had a lower socio-economic status than the majority of non-Roma 'home-stayers'.

In the case of those for whom migration was occasional, not much changed; finally, those able to exit had only small stakes locally and were not interested in changing their local social position back home.

This resulting typology – differentiating between challengers, boundary crossers, conformers and those who exit – resulted from the ways in which returnees were able to capitalize on their migratory experiences and reposition themselves locally. In this respect, the typology of the new roles of transnational returnees can provide a comparative perspective for other similar studies. A note on the size of the locality and its economy is also relevant here. Although the change in Sebeș was significant in 'the quarter', public discourses were stronger in Zăbala, where the number of successful returnees is actually smaller. In addition, in Sebeș returnees could find some jobs upon their return, which was not the case for unsuccessful returnees in Zăbala. Accordingly, while analysing these types of return and social repositioning, it emerged that return migration resulted in a process of step, or incremental, change that is very diversified and individualized. Changing long-established values and worldviews was not apparent and only some of the returnees were able to generate such change. However, the class and status changes underwent locally meant an important change overall.

Notes

1 Where in this chapter I deal with non-traditional, non-Romani speakers, I prefer the term non-Roma to Gadge (non-Roma in the Romani language).
2 The research here was carried out between 2013 and 2016. It lasted altogether more than nine months. The research team included Alina Silian, Oltean Ovidiu and Anatolie Coșciug.
3 The research in Zăbala was first conducted in 1998. I returned to the field in 2012 with a group of researchers that included Oltean Ovidiu, Camelia Badea and Kovács Mihály Levente.
4 For the Romanian case, see Betea and Wild (2016).

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Chapter 2

MINORITY INSTITUTIONS, GERMAN TRANSNATIONAL RETURN MIGRATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN TRANSYLVANIA

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Introduction

Predominantly a country of outmigration two decades ago, in recent years Romania has witnessed a change in mobility patterns and a diversification of migratory processes (Anghel et al. 2016; Petroff 2016). The previous outmigration flows have developed and grown into streams of circular and transnational migration, processes which are accountable for increasing levels of financial and social remittances and multilayered social transformations in migrants' home localities (Anghel 2016; Vlase 2013). In the present chapter, I approach some of these migratory flows, discussing the mobility and transnational practices undertaken by ethnic Germans who emigrated from Romania and who now tend to return. I analyse the effects of the transnational engagement and temporary return migration of Romania's German minority on former ethnic German localities from the multi-ethnic region of Transylvania, an area situated in the central part of the country with a long history of emigration to Germany and German-speaking spaces. In particular, I interrogate the role that returnees play in the process of reinvention of ethnic German institutions, focusing on two types of transnational returns: returns mediated by institutions and those mediated by family ties and social networks.

Most of the returnees are concentrated in the multi-ethnic city of Sibiu (also known by the German name of *Hermannstadt*), one of the urban settlements of this region profoundly affected by the outmigration of the ethnic German population. Since the time when the dwindling proportions of this population stirred pessimistic predictions regarding the future of ethnic Germans in Romania (Dowling 1991), there has been a surprising change. Transnational

returnees have ensured a more active ethnic German presence in Transylvania and enhanced an ongoing process of German cultural revival. This process of ethnic revival has been, paradoxically, undertaken not by ethnic Germans, but mostly by Romanians. By entering German institutions and appropriating the language, the local non-German population of former Saxon settlements revitalized German associational life. Finding a fertile ground that offered them the opportunity to remake ties to their country of origin, many ethnic German returnees participated in this paradoxical process of ethnic revival. The impact of their transnational activities and linkages extends outside the boundaries of the transnational community, altering the social structure and societal culture of their origin localities (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2009: 184). I will show in this chapter how the transnational ties and cross-border exchanges and relationships developed by Transylvanian Germans, while themselves not enacting substantial societal changes, nonetheless 'contribute significantly to broadening, deepening or intensifying conjoined processes of social change that are already ongoing' (Vertovec 2004: 972).

The process of social change approached in this chapter is conceived as one that unfolds locally, but which is shaped by larger national and trans-national actors and institutions (Faist 2016; Fauser and Nijenhuis 2016). It consists of processes of cultural borrowing which primarily involve ethnic Romanians but which also include Hungarians and Roma who started to fre-quent German organizations, speak the German language and appropriate the German habitus (Câmpeanu 2012; Oltean 2018). The process is mediated by ethnic organizations and institutions that are locally based but transnation-ally embedded. By joining this web of minority institutions, ethnic German transnational returnees – and their transnational associations and initiatives – become 'transnational agents of change', who engage with their localities of origin and contribute to locally unfolding processes of social change (Faist 2008, cited by Fauser and Nijenhuis 2016: 340). Their transnational return contributes to the revival and reinvention of ethnic German organizations in Romania by enhancing minority institutional capacity through transfers of knowledge and expertise in organizational management (Wang 2015). Moreover, it contributes to the reinforcement of the local social hierarchy and reinstates the presence of Transylvanian Saxons in a setting that was almost depleted of its German population.

In what follows, I will first outline the theoretical framework of this chapter, discussing the relationship between migration, transnationalism and social change. I will then describe the methodology, local context and historical developments that led to the emigration of Romania's German minority. Subsequently I will map the main transnational return practices of Transylvanian Saxons, which are interlinked with the activities of different

institutions of Romanian Germans, and henceforward analyse the impact of their transnational return. Finally, I will outline some conclusions.

Migration and Social Change

For a long time, the study and research of social change have been dominated by approaches which have analysed and theorized the phenomenon mainly from the perspective of great social transformations that produced systemic changes (Polanyi 2001). According to theories largely inspired by Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*, social change is supposed to have profound implications, entailing durable and radical transformations, and influencing both cultural norms wrought in the deep layers of society as well as surface phenomena such as institutions and social organizations (Portes 2010: 1540). According to this definition, social change unfolds as a process that questions and entirely reconfigures existing social structures (Castles 2010: 1576). Here, however, I embrace a slightly different approach, following the argument that 'social change can coexist with stability and stability is reflected at the visible level of social life, in existing institutions and the social organizations that they underlie' (Portes 2010: 1539). I consider that the process of the ethnic revival of German associations does not change society in a fundamental way, but that it actually assures the continuity and revival of local associational life. Often, institutions and social organizations suffer mutations and changes which are measurable and observable, while deep elements of social life such as values are harder to change and resist alteration (Portes 2010: 1539–40). Social change does not always translate into major disruptions of the societal order. It can sometimes be nested into various layers of society and its effects can be 'mediated by local historical and cultural patterns, through which people develop various forms of agency and resistance' (Castles 2010: 1576). The process of social change that I tackle in this chapter unfolds at the local level but it is embedded in migration and transnational processes, and affects minority institutions and local ethnic relations. Migration plays an essential part in this process, but it is not the sole factor shaping institutional change. The process of change that I investigate here is shaped by an interlocking web of transnational mobility and transnational social formations, and middle-range institutions and local organizations.

The connection between migration and social change has been widely discussed and studied (de Haas 2012; Kivisto 2011). The contribution of migrants to social change is, however, not always straightforward. When it comes to institutional change, some studies argue that collective remittances and collective action undertaken by return migrants do not always scale up to have a larger impact on institutions and broader societal structures

(Kapur and McHale 2005; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010; Wang 2015). Institutions are resistant to change and alter only gradually (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). They are embedded in the local cultural context, social norms and social networks (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010). Local societal structures, cultural differences, low institutional absorptive capacity and resistance to institutional reform often hamper the transfer of remittances and expertise acquired abroad by returnees (Wang 2015). Ideas and knowledge remitted by returnees might be received with reluctance and resistance by their co-nationals back home if migrants lack sufficient embeddedness and acceptance into local social networks and groups (Wang 2015).

In the return process analysed here, Transylvanian Saxon returnees encountered both structures of resistance and opportunities. They have never-theless managed to be accepted in local German-speaking networks and to negotiate the advancement and implementation of various organizational practices intended to improve local German organizations. In the following sections, I will show how these transnational return migrants have adapted and contributed to the revitalization of German associational life.

The Case Study and Research Methodology

This chapter is based on research carried out between 2013 and 2017, during which I conducted fieldwork in rural and urban settings in the region of Transylvania, which had a significant ethnic German population prior to 1990. The fieldwork consisted of short- and medium-length periods of time (ranging from one week to two or three months) in which I conducted semi-structured interviews and participant observation with ethnic German returnees and non-migrant members of the Transylvanian Saxon community, with German and Austrian migrant nationals who lived temporarily or permanently in Romania and with ethnic Romanians living in former German villages and towns. In particular, I interviewed people from ethnic German organizations and institutions and German speaking socializing groups concentrated in the city of Sibiu. I mainly employed a snowball sampling method, using my interviewees' extensive social networks in order to be able to reach as many people as possible from ethnic German migrant organizations and trans-national networks, or from the ethnic German minority organizations that are still active in various former Saxon settlements in Romania.

The Migration Context

The presence of this population of German origin dates back to the medieval colonization of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when populations coming

from various German-speaking regions of Western Europe settled inside the arch of the Carpathian mountains (Koranyi and Wittlinger 2011: 2; Lendvai 2003: 42–43). Known as Transylvanian Saxons, they had an uninterrupted existence of more than eight centuries in Transylvania; here, they managed to preserve their identity, language and institutions due to collective rights, administrative autonomy and leverage and ownership over natural resources, trade and craftsmanship (Pakucs-Willcocks 2018). In the ethnic hierarchy of this multi-ethnic region, Transylvanian Saxons used to occupy the highest position and were praised for their hard-working character and industriousness (Dowling 1991).

Together with the other ethnic Germans of Romania, Transylvanian Saxons began to migrate to Germany at the end of the Second World War (Salat and Novák 2015: 65–67). Although a large proportion of Romanian Germans managed to leave the country before the end of communism, a sharp increase in emigration followed the revolution (Dietz 1999: 5). More than half of the last 200,000 ethnic Germans who remained in Romania after 1989 emigrated in the years that immediately followed the fall of the country's dictatorship (Ursprung 2015: 13). From a time when they represented the majority in the urban municipalities and rural areas of multi-ethnic regions such as Banat and Transylvania, the ethnic Germans of Romania have been reduced to a small, shrinking ethnic minority, living on the brink of vanishing altogether (Dowling 1991). Their departure has been perceived as a considerable loss for their home communities and left available a position of prestige in the local social structure, together with a valuable heritage and a developed institutional infrastructure.

Searching for Possibilities to Return

Romania's ethnic German population has integrated fairly well into German society (Anghel 2013; Dietz 2006), but this has not prevented them from nurturing feelings of attachment to their homeland and developing strategies of return (Iorio and Corsale 2012; Koranyi and Wittlinger 2011; Paul 2013). From the transnational perspective, migration does not necessarily translate into migrants becoming uprooted from their home society, but rather into the development of a 'plural social embeddedness' (van Hear 2011) and a 'consciousness of simultaneity' at home and abroad (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). Integration and assimilation in a host country does not necessarily lead to the abandonment of the multiple allegiances and forms of belonging that migrants nurture towards their national, ethnic and religious communities (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). On the contrary, migrants often have the capacity to transgress national and cultural

boundaries, configuring their social relations and social identities in relation to more than one nation state (Basch et al. 1994). They develop a plurality of cross-border networks, linkage and ties which enable them to remain engaged with their home locality while incorporating in the economy and political institutions of their host country (Glick Schiller et al. 1995: 48). They use these ties to create transnational linkages and spaces forged between their origin and destination countries.

After Romania's accession to the European Union, many ethnic Germans who moved to Germany both before and after the fall of communism started to search for ways to return. Attracted by the growing economic opportunities and dynamic social and cultural environments in regions such as Transylvania, they engaged in seasonal visits, root tourism (Iorio and Corsale 2012) and student mobility exchanges, as well as volunteering in local organizations or investing in hospitality facilities (Oltean 2018). Very few returned permanently, though, and those that did return for good were reassured by the safety net of being able to remigrate back to Germany at any time. They often behave like transnational rather than permanent returnees, bridging the advantages of having access to two societal and economic contexts.

Among Transylvanian Saxon returnees, I have identified two main typologies of return. The first consists of transnational returns mediated by transnational institutions and organizations, while the second is structured by family ties and transnational social networks. Both types of transnational return imply the development of durable social networks and connections to the country and region of origin, and both return processes subsequently feed into local processes of ethnic revival.

Institutionally Mediated Return

Ever since the fall of the communist regime, Germany has supported the German minority in Romania with financial and institutional assistance (von Koppenfels 2004). It has offered grants and funds to German schools, the German Forum, retirement homes and the social centres destined for elderly and deprived persons (Klein 2010), and to the renovation of architectural heritage and material culture (Grama 2010). It has also assigned professional staff to assist ethnic German organizations in Romania. German-speaking professors come to teach in German schools and university departments in Romania; meanwhile, the Federal Republic encourages graduates and skilled professionals to take jobs in the underfinanced Romanian educational system. The Institute of Foreign Affairs – *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen* (IfA) – assigns referents for the various departments of the ethnic German organizations in Romania and supports a network of cultural centres in the largest cities

that still retain a German minority. Prior to the year that Sibiu was European Capital of Culture in partnership with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the German Agency for International Cooperation – *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) – provided assistance in the restoration and rehabilitation of the Saxon historical heritage of the city. With the accession of Romania to the European Union in 2007, bilateral cooperation and institutional linkages multiplied. Networks of volunteers and social workers who receive grants and funds from Austria and Germany have designed social projects and work together on local development with German organizations in Romania. This complex relationship has enabled and facilitated the return and activism of some Transylvanian Saxons, who have worked temporarily in Romania and participated in ethnic German organizations.

One of the Transylvanian Saxons who returned to Romania temporarily is Sara, a young woman I met in Sibiu, who developed transnational connections to her home region. Sara was born in Romania and is a member of a Transylvanian Saxon family; she left for Germany in the late 1980s as a child, with the rest of her kin. She returned a couple of times to her native home town for occasional visits until she decided to take a job at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IfA), thus moving to Romania for a longer period of time. She was assigned to work in the regional headquarters of the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania (DFGR), an umbrella organization representing the German minority. She was based in Sibiu as a referent in the youth organization. In Sibiu she became acquainted with the German-speaking milieu of the city, composed mostly of non-Germans, and made friends among the German-speaking youth networks grouped around the German Youth Forum. Her mission was to develop this youth organization and recruit new members. While she performed her duties as a referent she became embedded in the local social reality. After a couple of years, once she had finished her contract in Romania, she moved back to Germany but kept contact with the friends she made in Romania. She returns occasionally to attend the wedding ceremonies of her former colleagues and friends or for short visits.

Like Sara, Michael returned to his home village in Romania after living in Germany for almost twenty years. His return was mediated by the home town organization – *Heimatortsgemeinschaft* (HOG) – an organization established by emigrated Transylvanian Saxon fellow villagers in Germany, of which Michael was an active member while abroad. He returned to Romania with the task of taking into custody the fortified medieval church in his home village, which had become a desirable tourist attraction in the intervening years. Michael is still young and brought new ideas into the local Saxon community. He rapidly restored and refurbished different sections of the fortress. He also became thoroughly involved in the Saxon community, working closely with remaining

older Saxons in local development projects. At first, his ideas were regarded with suspicion but with time he gained acceptance and appreciation. Michael pictures his return as permanent and definitive, but this does not stop him playing the role of a mediator or broker between the Transylvanian Saxons living abroad, their home town organizations and those remaining in his home village.

Saxon returnees who take this institutional path move to Romania most often for work, studies or volunteering. Those that are detached temporarily to Romania are paid by German standards and have many relocation benefits. The flow and exchange of personnel between different German organizations in Romania and governmental institutions in Germany offers many possibilities for Transylvanian Saxons searching for a job outside Germany to return to their home country. Due to the high degree of institutionalization, regulation and permanence, the expanding institutional and economic ties in Sibiu articulate a growing and dynamic German speaking milieu.

While those who return permanently are not numerous, seasonal returns have increased tremendously in recent years. These transnational linkages forged by the home town associations established in Germany and Austria enable Transylvanian Saxons to return seasonally to Transylvania. This situation was well reflected at the last annual reunion of Transylvanian Saxons, which Sibiu and its surrounding cities and villages hosted in the summer of 2017. The reunion brought more than ten thousand Transylvanian Saxons living abroad to Romania and follows an older tradition, according to which Saxons reunite every year or two in their home villages and towns in Transylvania and in Germany. Among those who participated or took part in the preparations for the reunion, there were several returnees who are active members of German-Romanian transnational networks, who commute all year long between Germany and Transylvania.

These transnational returnees work in conjoined efforts with the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church (which is the main religious denomination to which Transylvanian Saxons belong to) or with other local initiative groups. They often support grassroots projects initiated by Transylvanian Saxons in Romania. By mobilizing the Transylvanian Saxon communities abroad and by catering to German foundations, they obtain money for renovation and conservation works at fortified medieval Saxon churches. In some cases, they have even managed to build or modernize retirement homes or youth centres. Through the development of numerous social projects in Transylvania and cultural activities aimed at and involving the German-speaking youth, their transnational engagement has some sort of multiplication effect upon German associational life. The German-speaking youth in Transylvania have access to a larger and more

developed associational infrastructure, as well as more numerous opportunities for participation, than before. In certain areas of Transylvania, German associations and organizations have reinserted themselves back into the social and community lives of former Saxon settlements, providing the German-speaking population with a space of cultural expression where they can socialize in a German-speaking milieu and contribute to the development of German minority institutions.

Socially Mediated Returns

While institutionally mediated returns have seen an increase in the past decade, an important share of the returnees are in fact driven back to their region of origin by personal and family matters and through the use of transnational social networks. Many Transylvanian Saxons engage individually with their localities of origin during their occasional visits in their home region by making small donations to fortified churches or by volunteering for short periods of time in different projects. Others are close to the age of retirement and are preparing their houses in Transylvania, which they kept or bought back, for the time when they will return for good upon retirement. A significant share of Transylvanian Saxons return almost every summer to their home localities, reiterating a ritual that has become now common for them. The returnees travel, visit friends and relatives, and undertake maintenance work upon their Romanian houses: for a few months a year, they leave their life in Germany to become Transylvanians again. Their seasonal returns are concentrated in the summer time but there are some who circulate all year long. They enjoy the easier and cheaper means of travelling to explore new opportunities arising in Romania in terms of work, internships, social life and volunteering. Those who have returned permanently have contributed to the establishment of transnational links between Romania and Germany. Some have managed to become successful entrepreneurs.

Some returnees who decided to move back permanently arrived after Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007. On many occasions, migrants did not have a clear plan in mind before emigrating, but rather opted for a trial period, maintaining an open possibility of return (Gmelch 1980: 138). Effectively, they arrived in order to see what life in Romania was like and stayed, knowing that they could return to Germany or leave for somewhere else. These migrants take advantage of freedom of movement in Europe and are rather financially resourceful. Some of the returnees that decided to move back permanently have chosen to settle in places where German-speaking communities survived and where they could find an active German social life. They are rather successful returnees who see their return in terms of a contribution to

the development of their origin localities; they portray themselves as return migrants who intend to make a difference in their home country.

One of the interviewees, Martin, decided that he wanted a change in life and, after living in Hamburg and finishing his studies in Political Science and Geography, moved to his home village in Transylvania, where he used to spend his summer vacations. His decision to return was mainly motivated by the desire to try something new and downshift from his busy life in Germany. Martin returned progressively. At first he came for holidays in his native village, where his parents kept and preserved the family's house. He maintained relations with some of his childhood friends and made new ones in Sibiu. He got acquainted with the easier, alternative bohemian life style, which encapsulated a natural milieu that many young people are searching for in Germany. He wanted to spend some time in his native village and take care of the family house before landing a 'serious job'. Therefore, he decided upon graduation that this was the right moment to return to Romania. At the time of the interview, he had already lived in Transylvania for four years and had a German girlfriend from Sibiu. He collaborates with different tourism companies, which offer him seasonal work and good earnings taking German tourists around Romania in cultural and hiking circuits. He does not plan to move back to Germany anytime soon and portrays himself as a permanent returnee. At the same time, he feels he is not far from his family in Germany, as he receives visits from his cousins and brothers all year long. Like Martin, other young Saxon returnees came back to Transylvania in order to study, to volunteer in architectural conservation works, to discover their roots or simply to contribute to the changes taking place in Romania.

The Revival of German Associational Life

In spite of the massive depletion of the Transylvanian Saxon community due to emigration, the German language and culture have proved to be extremely resilient in certain places such as Sibiu. This resilience has been fed to a certain extent by the return migration of Transylvanian Saxons and by the development of transnational networks. However, those standing at the centre of this process of ethnic and cultural revival are not ethnic Germans but ethnic Romanians who borrow the German language and habitus. This process emerged in the multi-ethnic settings of Transylvania prior to the emigration of the ethnic German population and intensified after the fall of communism.

The transition to democracy in Romania after 1989 brought a positive development in terms of minority rights and multicultural policies (Salat and Novák 2015: 63). Although imperfect, the new democratic institutional framework set in place offered the German minority the right to establish some structures

of ethnic governance and a certain degree of cultural autonomy. The city of Sibiu became home to several ethnic German minority institutions, such as the regional and national headquarters of the German Forum (DFGR), the headquarters of the Lutheran Church of Augsburg Confession in Romania, prestigious German teaching schools and one of two German theatres in the country. Overwhelmingly inhabited by an ethnic Romanian population, Sibiu has preserved and cultivated the German language and culture, together with a set of minority institutions meant to represent the interests of the German minority in Romania. As I consider minority institutions fundamental to the process of the German revival, this section continues with an analysis of how they managed to survive and develop in recent years.

The Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania

One of the representative institutions of the German minority that has experienced a significant revival in the last decade and a half is the DFGR, established after the fall of communism as an umbrella organization that would enable ethnic Germans to participate in the democratic political life of the country (Salat and Novák 2015). After going through a difficult transition period, during which the members of the Forum have witnessed the massive decrease in the ethnic German population and during which any claims made by minority groups were treated with resistance and suspicion by the political establishment (Alionescu 2004), the situation changed significantly at the end of the first transition decade. Unexpectedly, the DFGR managed to win the local elections in several localities of Transylvania in the early 2000s. After its initial success in Sibiu in the local elections of 2000, in the following elect-oral cycles the DFGR extended its electoral support into other former Saxon settlements, winning several mayoral mandates in smaller urban areas from the same county (Dragoman 2013). Progressively, the DFGR surpassed the position of an ethnic party and extended its electoral support, moving to the position of a dominant local and regional political party (Dragoman 2018).

To a certain extent this performance can be explained by the failure of traditional, mainstream parties to provide economic growth, development and modernization (Zamfira and Dragoman 2009). It has also been made possible due to the willingness of the local population to trust and elect the DFGR (Stroe 2011). Afterwards, this choice strengthened due to the proven capacity of the DFGR to significantly improve the economic and adminis-trative standing of the municipalities where they won mandates (Dragoman 2013). But the DFGR is not only a political party or a cultural organization. In the past decade, it has grown from an ethnic organization into a commu-nity organization frequented by ethnic Romanians and other groups as well

as ethnic Germans. In all these activities, Saxon returnees such as Sara played a crucial role in mobilizing the non-German youth around the Forum's activities. The catalyzing role of the Saxon returnees in reviving the youth organization of the DFGR would not have been possible without the existence of a large German-speaking community which borrowed not only the German language but also elements of the Saxon identity and habitus.

The German-Teaching School System in Romania

The existence of an extended educational infrastructure that provided education in German from kindergarten to high school (and later on also to university) has encouraged the local population of Transylvania to enrol their children into German-teaching schools after the massive emigration of Transylvanian Saxons. Liable to disappear with the prospect of dissolution, the German-teaching school system has been maintained mainly due to the interest of the ethnic Romanian population in educating their children in the German language. At one time, German-teaching schools in Romania were populated mainly by ethnic Germans and only sparsely with Romanians and other ethnic minorities; nowadays, the opposite is true. In the German-teaching schools in the county of Sibiu, only 0–5 per cent of students identify as ethnic Germans, while the rest identify mainly as ethnic Romanians (Manta-Klemens 2010). The ethnic German population has decreased dramatically in the last two and a half decades, dropping to 60,000 people in 2002 (Dragoman 2013: 102). By 2011, this number had declined even further, to only 36,000 people (Ursprung 2015: 13), with about 1,600 of those residing in Sibiu, a city of more than 160,000 inhabitants (Dragoman 2013: 102). In spite of this development, the number of students in German-teaching schools has remained constant since the mid-1990s. Only in the county of Sibiu are there more than five thousand students enrolled in the public German school system from kindergarten to high school (Manta-Klemens 2010). If we add to this number the group of those that undertook private German classes or those who attend private German-teaching kindergartens or private schools, the number of German speakers in the county exceeds the entire German minority in Romania.

Seen as an asset of upward social mobility and social prestige, and a valuable credential that would facilitate emigration to Germany, this practice has rapidly gained traction in many former German settlements of Romania. Non-ethnic Germans consider that – by borrowing the language and practices of their ethnic German neighbours –they will improve their chances of adapting to and integrating into the German labour market and society in the eventuality of emigration. After the motivation for emigration decreased, the process has become self-sustaining as the local population

has come to consider the German teaching system as prestigious and of good quality. Many students and their parents interviewed during fieldwork explained their choice for German teaching schools in terms of higher quality of education and improved chances on the labour market. Very few mentioned emigration to Germany as one of their main options. Entrance to and enrolment in German teaching schools is, however, only the first step in a longer and larger process.

With enrolment in the German-teaching public system, the Transylvanian youth gain access to a web of networks and pool of social resources structured around ethnic German organizations. Each institution or organization serves as a node for several German speaking networks, to which outsiders gain access when they enrol at schools or convert to the Lutheran faith. Many of the extracurricular activities of these schools are interconnected with the activities of other German organizations or involve people are active in several institutions and German-speaking groups. These organizations and institutions are extremely close to one another, and often work in a conjoined way in various projects and activities.

By developing numerous extracurricular activities with their students, schools put them in contact with the other organizations of the German minority community and involve them in various cultural or community projects. Students described their participation in the activities of the ethnic German cultural organizations as positive and enriching. Any extracurricular activity or project that offers them the opportunity to learn and practice the German language is considered rewarding and valuable. Their parents and teachers equally encourage their involvement and participation in these cultural activities. In fact, one of the reasons for which students and parents prefer the German teaching system over the Romanian system is exactly the emphasis put on extracurricular activities and international mobility. In this context, German organizations such as the youth organization of the DFGR, the youth organizations of the Lutheran Church and folk dance groups consistently manage to attract a substantial number of students from German-teaching schools each year.

In fact, participation in German cultural clubs and folk dance associations offers numerous opportunities for travelling abroad to Saxon reunions and German cultural festivals, and for getting into contact with other German organizations in Romania. Some of the pupils from the German-speaking youth networks interviewed in Sibiu became acquainted with the youth organization of the DFGR while participating in different cultural festivals in Germany and Romania. During those festivals they were approached by those in charge of developing the youth organizations and henceforward invited to join the Saxon dance group of the Forum.

Recent transnational return migration, which has placed cultural referents into management positions of the German Forum's youth organization and brought young active members into various German cultural associations, has fed this process of German cultural renewal and the revival of associational life. In some cases, the Transylvanian Saxon returnees crafted a development strategy or revived cultural associations that were once on the brink of disappearance. In one of the Saxon villages in the surroundings of Sibiu where I conducted fieldwork, the local folk dance group has been revived after the return from Germany of two brothers from a Romanian-Saxon family, who undertook to bring back to life a tradition present in their home village in the past. They grouped the German-speaking youth around them and created an active cultural association. One of the Saxon returnees who participated in the folk dance group has become one of the most active members both of the youth organization of the DFGR in Sibiu and among the coordinators of Saxon cultural activities. The referents placed by the IfA into management positions in the headquarters of the DFGR helped the youth organization to establish a more permanent and institutionalized structure, and ensured the constant recruitment of new members.

The process of institutions opening to non-Germans is not restricted to the DFGR, to the school system or to cultural associations. It also includes the German Lutheran church and other grass-roots religious organizations, which traditionally existed in every Saxon locality (Oltean 2018).

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Transylvania

Alongside the enculturation of the local population in the German language and Saxon cultural traditions, one of the processes that pinpoints the ethnic and cultural hyphenation of this society is the transgression of religious and confessional boundaries. During fieldwork I often stumbled upon the conversion of non-ethnic Germans to the Lutheran faith. Evangelical Lutheranism has lost its social and political leverage in Romania, as the number of ethnic Germans decreased (Klein 2010); places such as Sibiu, however, have managed to stop the dramatic decrease of Lutheran communities. This development is mainly due to the conversion of German speakers of Romanian ethnicity to Lutheranism, as well as to a certain extent due to the return migration of Transylvanian Saxons and the in-migration of German migrants and expatriates.

Non-ethnic Germans who frequent the German schooling system in Romania often take religious education classes in German and participate in frequent social and cultural activities organized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Among them, there are a small number who go every year a step further, undertaking the religious evangelical confirmation and observing the Lutheran religion

throughout adult life, although they originate mostly in Orthodox Romanian families. Consequently, this process of religious conversion has revived Lutheran communities and ensured the presence of an active German-speaking youth in the local organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Functioning rather as small working groups or social networks structured around specific initiatives and projects, these German-speaking networks have contributed significantly both to the conservation of Saxon ecclesiastical architecture and to the revival of Lutheran youth organizations. One of these organizations, for example, has taken a derelict fortified church into its custody: situated in a village where almost all Transylvanian Saxons have left, this church has been transformed into a youth centre and hostel. In close cooperation with the youth organization of the DFGR, the organizers have staged an annual programme of cultural festivals and social events, culminating with a music festival that takes place every August outside the walls of the church. In time, this youth centre has become an important node in the ethnic German associative life of Transylvania, developing a web of partnerships and connections to other institutions and groups across Romania and abroad. It has grown progressively into more than a religious organization. In fact, its activity and the members' identity as a group are hardly structured around religious activities. Rather, these types of organizations have become grass-roots formations that develop community projects. They ensure a social space where the German minority and German-speaking community of Transylvania can articulate projects and develop a new form of cultural expression. In this case, ethnic German returnees acted as brokers. They mediated the relation between various ethnic German cultural associations and the Lutheran Church. One of the Saxon returnees who took a job in the marketing department of the Lutheran Church's administration, in charge of cultural tourism, was responsible for shaping the recent tourist strategy that promotes fortified Saxon churches as venues of youth and cultural events. Other members of the Lutheran Church commute all year long between Romania and Germany, trying to work as mediators between the activity of Transylvanian Saxon parishes in Germany and Saxon communities in Romania. They bring new ideas and a new approach to religious community life. Henceforward, the Lutheran Church in Transylvania, once extremely ethnically exclusive, has become oriented mainly to community building projects and ecumenical dialogue, assuming the role of an active social actor in the former Saxon settlements of Transylvania.

Conclusions

The city of Sibiu, like many other Transylvanian settings, has been characterized in the past by social closure and differentiation based on ethnic

affiliation and social class. In the local social order, Transylvanian Saxons used to occupy the highest position of the ethnic hierarchy. To a certain extent, in spite of their massive outmigration, they have preserved this position of prestige right up to the present (Dragoman 2013). In consequence, the institutionally mediated transnational return of Transylvanian Saxons nurtures the appropriation and diffusion of German language and culture outside the ethnic German community, reinstating the symbolic and material presence of ethnic Germans in a context where this population has been reduced to a tiny fraction of its previous size, when ethnic Germans represented one of the largest ethnic minorities in Romania (Wagner 2000). Their transnational return and the development of transnational social spaces and ties linking Germany and Romania have reinstated their symbolic social position in their region of origin, and reinforced the local social hierarchy of prestige based on ethnic differentiation. Together with the local dynamics of ethnic renewal, ethnic German transnationalism has contributed to the creation of new categories of differentiation, turning the ethnic German identity from an ethnic to a social category, accessible to those who frequent ethnic German schools and cultural organizations, as well as to those who have access to German-speaking transnational networks.

Organizations such as the DFGR and the Lutheran Evangelic Church have benefited from the experience and social capital transferred home by Transylvanian Saxon returnees. They have put their skills to work in the reorganization of German minority institutions. Transnational return migration has facilitated the circulation of specialized personnel and the diffusion of governance practices. The connections to Transylvanian Saxon returnees who have taken management positions or volunteered in ethnic German organizations in Romania have allowed minority institutions to exceed the roles played by small cultural organizations, transforming instead into community organizations involved in local projects and representing local interests. Through their transnational connections and their capacity to attract Transylvanian Saxon returnees, they have developed institutional capacity and secured constant functioning, in spite of the decrease of the ethnic German population in Romania. These transnational developments have consolidated the institutionalization of German language and culture in Transylvania and fostered the creation of a social and economic context where German has become relevant once again.

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Chapter 3

RETURNS OF FAILURE: INVOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN GHANA

Leander Kandilige and Geraldine A. Adiku

Introduction

Benefits that accrue to countries of origin are touted as a vindication of the role of migration in national development (Pellerin and Mullings 2013). These debates are usually framed around the receipt of remittances from nationals abroad (Teye et al. 2016), knowledge transfers (Mazzucato 2007) and the brokering of investment relationships (Davies 2007) but also tangible and intangible resources that return migrants inject into their countries of origin upon return (Ammassari 2004). Drawing on Castles (2010), migration can be seen as part of the broader transformations happening in society. In as much as migration influences social change, social change also influences migration. This is because transformations in society (social, economic and/or political) influence people's decisions including whether to migrate or not, how and where to migrate to. Migratory movements in turn affect the social, economic and political conditions at the different geographical locations simultaneously. Migrants may possess or impart political influence, they may invest in businesses and may cause change in social attitudes both in communities they depart from and those they interact with.

Whereas a growing volume of literature exists on voluntary return migration and its potential impacts on origin communities, those on involuntary return migration are relatively fewer. Thus, using involuntary returns of Ghanaian migrants from Libya in 2011 and Cote d'Ivoire in 2002/2003 and 2010/2011 as a case study,[1] this chapter seeks to build on the extant literature on involuntary return migration by answering the following questions: (a) What are the social, economic and political implications for the individual, family and local community and nation (reflecting the micro, meso and macro

levels of change) (at the origin) in times of involuntary returns? (b) How does the nature of return experience potentially transform individuals', families' and communities' perceptions about the role of migration in broader meso-level social change? (c) What strategies do involuntary return migrants employ to navigate and survive their new reality? Does remigration cease with invol-untary return migration?

Migration Context and Involuntary Return: Ghana's Socio-Economic Milieu

The exploration and production of oil in Libya, together with the country's mines and farms have attracted an increased number of sub-Saharan Africans to migrate there (de Haas 2007). The growing number of sub-Saharan African arrivals in Libya was partly dictated by the scrapping of all immigration con-trol measures, except for a Medical Certificate, by the Libyan authorities and the country becoming more pan-African in her outlook in response to UN sanctions between 1992 and 2000 (de Haas 2006; GDP 2009). For many Ghanaians, Libya was not a preferred destination until the mid-1980s (Bob-Milliar 2012). This was, however, necessitated by the expulsion of Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983 and 1985 which precipitated a change in the direction of flow to other parts of the continent including Libya (Akyeampong 2000). Both skilled and unskilled Ghanaian migrants moved to Libya to seek opportunities mostly in the construction sector (Bob-Milliar 2012). With time, predominantly unskilled and un/semi-educated Ghanaians continued to migrate to Libya through informal Sahara Desert routes (Anarfi and Kwankye 2003). However, while some migrants perceived Libya as a destination country, others increas-ingly use Libya as a transit country to Europe (Lucht 2012). The segmented labour market in Libya has Ghanaians concentrated in the building and con-struction sector especially as plasterers, steel benders, electricians and manual labourers on construction sites. The 2011 political unrest in Libya compelled nearly nineteen thousand Ghanaian migrants to return home involuntarily (NADMO 2012).

Migration of Ghanaians to Cote d'Ivoire has been a common practice but this was intensified in the 1970s due to socio-economic crisis in Ghana, coupled with the fact that the then Ivorian president, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, introduced new immigrant-friendly policies which aimed at increasing agricultural production in his country (Riester 2011). According to Riester (2011), these policies created employment in the cocoa plantations and brought other economic opportunities into the country, which encouraged an increased migration of low-skilled Ghanaians into Cote d'Ivoire – from 42,000 in 1975 to between 500,000 and 800,000 in 1986 (Anarfi et al. 2000).

The predominant occupation for Ghanaian migrants in Cote d'Ivoire is paid agricultural labour and retail. Economic decline and increasing xenophobic attacks during the civil wars of 2003 and 2010 prompted hundreds of thousands of migrants, including some Ghanaians (about 12,250) to leave the country (NADMO 2012).

Ghanaians from Cote d'Ivoire and Libya returned to a country considered prosperous by international economic standards. However, Ghana has serious internal socio-economic disparity between north and south and rural and urban areas which potentially has implications for involuntary returnees.

Economic growth rates in Ghana averaged 7 per cent between 2000 and 2011 (Osei-Assibey 2013). In 2011, Ghana became a low middle-income country and boasted a US$1,580 per capita income (one of the highest gross domestic product [GDP] per capita in West Africa). With an economic growth rate of 14.4 per cent, Ghana was one of the fastest growing economies in the world in 2011. Moreover, Ghanaian economic enlargement positively impacted on poverty levels (50 per cent reduction) nationally, in 2006 compared with 1990 levels (GSS 1992, 2006). However, this ostensibly impressive reduction in poverty levels masked significant internal spatial variations in income distribution. This is true for both the poverty incidence and the poverty gap. These are manifested in a north–south as well as rural–urban dichotomy. Whereas the south and urban centres were experiencing significant economic growth, reduction in poverty levels and improvements in living standards, the north and rural areas were deprived.

As a result, the historical north–south divide in standard of living appeared to have widened and income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, increased from 0.37 to 0.42 between 1992 and 2006, for instance (Osei-Assibey 2014). Again, Ghana's economic performance in 2017 was a significant improvement from that of 2016. According to the World Bank (2017), the fiscal deficit dropped to 6 per cent of GDP in 2017 from 9.3 per cent in 2016, underpinned by concerted fiscal consolidation efforts. These improvements, notwithstanding, the World Bank (2017) still notes significant income inequalities in Ghana. Involuntary 'return of failure' involving youth from rural areas who are mostly unskilled and illiterate is examined through this prism in this chapter.

Involuntary Return Migration and Social Change: Economic, Political and Social Consequences

Involuntary return as a result of violent political upheavals in destination countries leads to the sudden visceral uprooting of migrants who were making a living for themselves. In spite of reports of pervasive acts of discrimination

and racism against sub-Saharan African migrants in Libya (Kleist 2017a), some undocumented migrants secured secondary sector jobs (Piore 1979) in the construction sector. Unplanned involuntary return may therefore have socio-economic and political consequences not only for returnees but for their families and communities as well. Castles (2003: 5) notes that forced migration is both a result and cause of social transformation in the South. He cites examples of conflicts and generalized violence that result in mass flights and argues that violence and forced migration also cause social transformation by destroying economic resources, undermining traditional ways of life and breaking up communities. These migrants having been forced to return may experience a reduction in their capacity to effect positive change in their communities because of the unprepared nature of their return. And if they do not have the support (of the government, community or their relatives), it can potentially lead to social, economic and emotional upset (see Zhao 2002).

Cerase (1974: 251–54) while reflecting on 'returns of failure' notes that migrants lived miserable lives abroad and were mostly employed in low-skilled jobs which they detested and having returned home, their lives continued to be tough because they lacked access to opportunities. Cerase (1974: 261) concluded that the physical, moral and technical conditions of returnees will determine the effectiveness of the use of their capital earned abroad and the possibilities of their assisting in the origin country. Cassarino (2004a: 20) also notes that there is diversity among return migrants, so we should account for new variables when we explain how and under what circumstances migrants return. Drawing on Ghosh (2000: 185), he concludes that return 'is largely influenced by the initial motivations for migration as well as by the duration of the stay abroad and particularly by the conditions under which the return takes place', hence the importance he places on the level of migrant preparedness during return. In this chapter, we examine what happens when the migrant is unprepared to return.

Change in societies (in terms of values, norms, behaviour, institutions and structures) has been the preoccupation of scholars from time immemorial. As discussed earlier societal change affects migration and vice versa. Portes (2010: 1593) discusses five broad lessons from centuries' old theories of social change.[2] Of the five lessons, lessons three and four are of importance to this chapter because they reflect the changes we identified in the Ghanaian case. They are as follows: (a) Effects of social change are similarly diverse. They can be organized in a hierarchy of 'microprocesses' affecting individuals and their immediate surroundings, 'meso-processes' affecting communities and regions, and 'macro processes' affecting full societies and even the global system. (b) Change at each of these levels must be similarly prioritized into processes occurring 'at the surface' and yielding only marginal modifications

of the social order, and those producing core systemic changes of the kind identified in everyday discourse as 'revolutionary'.

While reflecting on the relationship between migration and social change, Portes (2010: 1548) argues that migration affects the social structure and social institutions in origin and destination countries and notes that for this change to be significant it requires the 'remaking' of the value system and the transformation of a society's class structure. He distinguishes between the nature of the social change effects for origin and destination societies. For destination societies, he notes that migration reinforces, not modifies, the basic power structure and value systems of these countries; for example, by migrants assimilating into the various pre-existing structural positions of these societies. He concludes that the transformative potential of contemporary migration is therefore limited (ibid.: 1550). Ghanaian migrants' presence in Libya, for instance, did very little to change the social structure, power dynamics and general views around race and social equity between the indigenous population and especially black sub-Saharan Africans (Kleist 2017a). For origin societies, he suggests that migration may strengthen or stabilize the existing sociopolitical order rather than transform it. He gives the example of remittances and argues that even though they are important for origin societies, they also consolidate the existing class structure rather than change it in any significant way because remittances flow to the relatively wealthy in origin societies. This chapter examines what changes when these forms of economic support are curtailed abruptly through involuntary returns.

Some of the social change effects of migration on origin societies can be seen at the economic, political and social levels of society. At the economic level, the effect of migration on low-income origin countries can be seen in terms of remittances (which helps families and economies of origin countries to overcome income risks within the imperfections of local credit and futures markets) but also the potential to create businesses and other employment opportunities thereby strengthening the economy of sending regions and facilitating their expansion.

Even though remittances and other migrant economic enterprises change the socio-economic status of relatives of migrants at the micro level, it largely consolidates the existing class structure in origin areas rather than change it in any significant way. Scholars such as Lipton (1980) and Carling (2008) argue that migration and remittances preserve existing inequalities in origin societies and argue for a fundamental change in the well-being of the citizenry. They call for implementing policies that deal with structural inequalities in origin countries. There are potential economic consequences for involuntary returnees because their abrupt return may curtail the flow of economic resources to their relatives, making it difficult for the attainment of the *nouveaux*

riche status that usually characterizes low/unskilled migrants upon voluntary return (Nieswand 2013).

At the political level, migratory flows may stabilize the existing socio-political order rather than transform it. Migration provides the option for dissenters to leave so that the status quo is maintained. Hirschman (1978: 102) notes that from the point of view of the political managers, outmigration had similar and related beneficial effects. People who chose emigration were obviously dissatisfied in some way with the country and society they were leaving. With exit available as an outlet for the disaffected, they were less likely to resort to voice. Outmigration provides a safety valve, alleviating the pressure of popular discontent on elites and allowing them to preserve their positions of privilege (Ariza and Portes 2007, cited in Portes 2010). The departure of poor, unskilled and mostly illiterate rural Ghanaian youth to Libya and Cote d'Ivoire could be interpreted as a political statement by migrants against income inequalities but regarded as a safety valve by the political elites. However, involuntary returns may have political consequences in the form of changes to various sustainable return and reintegration policies (see IOM 2017b).

At the social level, migrants have been known to influence the social landscape of their origin countries. In her studies of Dominican migration to the United States, Levitt (1998: 927) notes that 'social remittances are the ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending country communities'. They are the 'North-to-South' equivalent of the social and cultural resources that migrants bring with them which ease their transitions from immigrants to ethnics. She further notes that sending towns and regions have been culturally transformed by the consumer goods, values and changed cognitive frameworks beamed from the United States. In the same fashion, involuntary returnees may feel the burden of expectations. In many cases returnees are considered 'agents of change' and expected to revolutionize not only their own lives but those of their relatives and their communities at large. When this weight of expectation weighs migrants down and they feel that they can never meet these expectations, they may remigrate even if it means going back to dangerous places. Involuntary returnees may continue to maintain some form of transnational ties with their destination societies no matter how loose to facilitate their remigration.

Migration is, therefore, an integral part of broader social transformation but it also has its own internal dynamics which shape social transformation in its own right. In such instances, there is no question that migration acquires 'structural importance' for the sending country, but its main effect is the tendency to consolidate the existing class structure rather than changing it in any significant way. The above theoretical insights have focused mostly on

voluntary return migrants. In this chapter, we consider the role of return migration, particularly involuntary return, on social change in the origin country.

Research Methods

Primary data were collected using mainly qualitative research methods (in-depth interviews and focus group discussions) among 53 participants from six categories of actors.[3] Returnee participants were made up of both males and females even though the vast majority were males. In addition, family members who had in-depth knowledge about the migration experiences, return processes and the impact of return on the household were interviewed in order to gauge social change at the micro level. Some community leaders and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that provided services to returnees from Libya and Cote d'Ivoire were interviewed as a basis for measuring the impact at the meso/community level.

Additionally, some senior officials from government agencies that actively participated in the evacuation, repatriation and reintegration of returnees from the two countries were interviewed to measure the statutory and structural factors inherent in managing situations of forced return. Finally, intergovernmental organizations that provided logistical, technical, financial or advisory support to the evacuation, repatriation and reintegration of returnees from Libya and Cote d'Ivoire were interviewed. The data collection took place in Accra (the capital city of Ghana) and the Brong Ahafo (especially Nkoranza but also Sunyani, Domaa Maasu, Nkwabeng and Domaa-Ahenkro) and Western regions of Ghana between March and September 2016.

Findings

Socioeconomic dimensions of involuntary return and social change

Social change and changes in perceptions of migration

Adopting Portes's (2010) conceptualization of the effects of migration on social change as diverse, and organized in a hierarchical order, the Libya and Cote d'Ivoire case studies highlight variable effects especially at the micro and meso levels.

Micro-level changes
At the micro level, involuntary return of Ghanaians from Libya and Cote d'Ivoire impoverished returnees, thus denying them access to accumulated

disposable income that is usually associated with investment portfolios by return migrants (see Black et al. 2003). The forfeiture of cash and property in an attempt to flee from crisis situations was a common experience among returnees from both countries. Ernest's and Sophia's narratives, for instance, highlight a precariousness that is inherent in unplanned returns. The narratives also expose some vulnerabilities to the utility of return migration as a vehicle for positive social change at the micro level.

> I couldn't bring my stuff. It was in a rush because of the war. I left some of my money there – about US$8,000 and some of my luggage. I remember the amount because we used to wrap every $1,000 we get and I had wrapped about 8 of them by then. Not that I forgot to take it. The fight was becoming intensive and scary. (Ernest, returnee from Libya)

> One day at the market I heard people screaming and running and there was a tenant who lived in our house who wanted to close his store before running and he was hit by a bullet. So we went to the village where my husband was working and we walked, we couldn't take any of our things […] *I'm now a useless person over here with nothing.* (Sophia, female returnee from Cote d'Ivoire)

The role of migration in engendering superior social class attributes on migrant households, at the origin, is dissipated by the sudden curtailment in remittance flows and the reversal in roles when the return migrant relinquishes their status as provider and rather become persons in need of support from household members. This also finds meaning in previous research such as Nieswand's (2013) examination and theorization of transnational paradoxes of status and class, where Nieswand distils how a particular category of Ghanaian transnational migrants (popularly referred to in Ghana as *Burgers*) materially achieve a middle-class status at home by doing blue-collar jobs in Western Europe or North America. While his analysis includes the situation of some tertiary-educated migrants who lose their social standing in destination countries through taking up of secondary sector jobs (Piore 1979) in highly segmented labour markets in Europe, the appreciation in social status at the origin due to the acquisition of material goods and cash is of analytical value to this chapter. Return migrants usually experience upward social mobility within origin communities because they acquire tangible assets such as taxis, lands, houses and also what Nieswand (2013: 10) refers to as conspicuous body-related consumer goods such as expensive mobile phones, gold necklaces, fancy shoes and the sponsoring of life cycle rites such as funerals and weddings. However, the attainment of this *nouveaux riche* status is characteristic of predominantly voluntary returnees. Involuntary return migration denies returnees the opportunity to transfer accumulated wealth to help

concretize their expected elevated social position at the origin which is some-times significantly different from their devalued social standing at the destin-ation. Also, the reversal in roles for involuntary migrants from breadwinners to dependents on handouts compels families and communities to re-evaluate the premium placed on migration as a shorthand parachute to high social standing.

This perception of constrained or stunted social mobility associated with unplanned return is more relevant to the particular category of migrants under review because of their low educational backgrounds and their occupa-tion in lower-end menial jobs at the two destination countries (Libya and Cote d'Ivoire) and their inability to remit substantial amounts of cash to facilitate the acquisition of capital goods prior to their return.

Contrary to conclusions by scholars such as Lipton (1980) and Carling (2008) that migration and remittances preserve existing inequalities in origin societies, our study finds that involuntary 'return of failure' has the effect of rather being a 'leveller' of social statuses (Vasta and Kandilige 2009) in origin communities. Previously privileged remittance-receiving households lose social standing due to an abrupt curtailment of sources of additional income. This tends to bridge income inequalities between migrant and non-migrant households.

> She lost all her room possessions including the things at her shop so she couldn't bring anything along. Getting these things now will be quite difficult. *We can't eat without her because she used to provide for our feeding. So, since she doesn't have anything now, we give her some of what we have.* (Richard; brother of a return migrant from Cote d'Ivoire)

Loss of remittance income, dependence of return migrants on meagre house-hold resources and the burden of catering for depressed and sometimes seriously ill/injured return migrants contribute to complications in intra-household relationships:

> *So, for me I don't respect him anymore and whoever hears the story doesn't respect him either* […] I should think his return has affected his extended family. He was the one providing for his family. (Esther, spouse of a returnee from Libya)

Deterioration in social status is exemplified by households' inability to pro-cure tangible items (such as cars and houses) which serve as non-verbal sig-nalling of their privileged position in society. Also, the quality of schools that one's children attend reaffirms one's social standing. Involuntary returns, therefore, compromise migration-induced social change at the micro level by

impacting negatively on access to social markers such as private schools, private healthcare and processed foods. Akosua, for instance, laments the precariousness associated with her husband's involuntary return:

> Yes, nothing, he didn't bring anything […] When he was there, we had made up our minds to buy a car but we couldn't because of the conflict. If he was still there, we would have bought it. And now life is not like before, the money we earn has gone down […] *our children would have gone to good schools [private schools] but now it's the government school they attend.* (Akosua, spouse of a return migrant from Libya)

The curse of returning home empty-handed (Akyeampong 2000) also brought psychological and emotional stresses to both returnees and their households. These feelings are exacerbated by the sociocultural expectations in Ghana, which is mostly a patriarchal society, of a man as the head of household responsible for providing for the needs of the family. Anita's account represents how families' hopes and plans can be disrupted by unplanned returns during conflict situations:

> So his coming is a problem for us […] It has even messed him up and he is depressed because he can't take care of his own family. He is no longer happy. *It's a worry because he is a grown-up man with his burdens on other people.* He is expected to take care of the family but lack of money has brought lots of hardships and worries which isn't good for his health. (Anita, spouse of a returnee from Libya)

Meso- and macro-level changes

In spite of the positive connotation implied in the concept of 'social remittances' (Levitt 1998), some communities rather experience negative social change resulting from the reinsertion of involuntary returnees. While not unique to the presence of involuntary returnees, communities sometimes contend with anti-social behaviour and increased criminal activities involving such returnees. The contravention of social norms, traditional behavioural dictates and acts of criminality have inadvertently dented origin communities' perception of the hitherto unquestioned role of migration in community development. A calm disposition towards strangers, respect for the elderly and participation of the youth in communal labour activities are traditionally expected by society, especially in rural areas in Ghana. These social norms are challenged by involuntary 'returnees of failure' who deal with the stigma and loss of respect associated with the manner of their return by adopting a new identity as 'hardened hustlers' who no longer conform to established societal

norms. A prominent community leader who manages a local radio station captures these revised perceptions succinctly:

> The biggest challenge is they [returnees] themselves. Most of the returnees from Libya tend to live a life that wasn't their character before they travelled to Libya. They become wild! […] Secondly, whenever you hear that some armed robbers have been arrested, you'll find at least a returnee among them. *So, unfortunately they live a kind of life that makes the community regard returnees as bad people* […] At funerals too they cause a lot of problems […] they always associate the death of their colleagues to unnatural causes and will pick a fight with the old women and men in the deceased person's family because they suspect them of witchcraft which they claim is used to kill their friends. During such funerals, sometimes they block the main road forcing drivers to pay them money before they are allowed to go. (The Director of Dormaa FM)

These case studies constitute the second largest forced returns, after the mass expulsion of Ghanaian migrants from Nigeria in 1983 and 1985 (Akyeampong 2000). Their unplanned return had some macro-level implications on policy formulation on the management of migration in Ghana. While not the sole reason, the publicity that characterized the delayed evacuation of trapped Ghanaians abroad and reintegration challenges faced upon return contributed to significant changes in national policies. In 2012, Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration set up a Diaspora Support Unit to provide targeted support, especially consular support during crises, to Ghanaians abroad. In 2014, the Unit was upgraded to a Diaspora Affairs Bureau which, among others, created diaspora desks in almost all Ghanaian missions abroad to better appreciate the needs of Ghanaian diaspora members and it later spearheaded the drafting of a Diaspora Engagement Policy for Ghana. Ghana also drafted and launched a National Migration Policy in April 2016. These major developments in policy are geared towards courting the Ghanaian diaspora for remittances towards national development but also extending rights and protections to Ghanaians abroad, especially during crisis situations. Mass involuntary returns invariably have negative cumulative economic implications at the macro level.

Social change and innovative means to mitigate new realities

The post-arrival challenges faced by involuntary returnees and the erosion of the potential positive social change associated with migration are partially addressed at the various spatial levels. Upon forced return, returnees adopt opportunistic menial jobs that are locally available in their rural communities.

These coincide with the types of jobs that previously served as push factors for their migration in the first instance. Migrants judge such jobs as incapable of facilitating the realization of their aspirations in life such as building a house, marrying, sending their children to private schools, acquiring property or starting a business, among others (see Mensah, 2016). The attainment of these aspirational goals is important since they are linked with transitioning from 'childhood' to 'adulthood' in the Ghanaian context. Honwana's (2012: 19) conceptualization of 'waithood' is particularly instructive in this case as it examines the 'challenges of youth transitions to adulthood in Africa as an illustration of global contemporary forms of the struggle for freedom from want and freedom from fear. It explores the lives of young people struggling with unemployment and sustainable livelihoods in the context of widespread social and economic crisis'. The concept of 'waiting' is equally employed by Kleist (2017b) to explore the unpredictability and lack of control over one's mobility in situations of deportation and flight from conflict.

To avoid the trap of 'waithood' and spillage into poverty, return migrants either accept agricultural jobs on lands that sometimes do not belong to them or join family members in the burning of charcoal. 'Joseph', a spouse of a return migrant from Cote d'Ivoire, notes that '*she [return spouse] had to join me in the firewood business in order for us to earn a living*'. Miniscule returns from such activities at home only serve as a stopgap measure even for migrants who worked in equivalent sectors abroad due to differences in comparative remuneration. This finds meaning within the prevailing income inequalities in Ghana between rural and urban dwellers as well as those of the northern compared with the southern regions of the country. 'Returns of failure' also reflect a weakness in governmental and/or non-governmental reintegration programmes for involuntary returnees. These are in spite of reports by intergovernmental organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that reported attempting to support long-term sustainable reintegration by providing training to a handful of involuntary returnees in farming techniques. IOM (2013) outlines a focus on helping beneficiaries appreciate farming as a business through specific training in bookkeeping and encouraging the formation of cooperatives to boost their ability to access credit from financial institutions. The impact of this reintegration programme was minimal because it lacked any significant scale. Zampagni et al. (2017), for instance, report that out of 900 registered involuntary returnees from Libya to the Nkoranza district in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana in 2011, only 50 people were enrolled on the IOM reintegration programme. Also, such programmes fail to tap into skills acquired abroad by returnees, for example, a skilled plasterer being given farm equipment to go into a sector that is culturally associated with poverty. This is the equivalent of what Mattoo et al. (2008)

refer to as 'brain waste' within the context of highly skilled and educated migrants.

As a means of better exploiting their valuable skills acquired abroad and providing mutual support to their membership, involuntary returnees, especially from Libya, have formed some returnee associations and professional groupings. These include the creation of several groups along ethnic, political and religious lines. One prominent group is the Great Jamahiriya Peace Group, which was an association of all returnees but with specific political interests in Libya. Other apolitical groups included the Northern Returnees Integrated Development Society, a regionally based group comprising those affected by the Libya crisis. The main focus of this group is on the prevention of future migration crises and unsafe irregular migration. There has also been the emergence of professional groups for electricians, carpenters, artisans, builders or welders that bid for contracts within their communities. The formation of associations and professional groups upon return, in Ghana, mirrors migrants' adoption of resource-pooling and informal job sharing schemes in Libya. These schemes allowed migrants to team up to execute short-term contracts in the construction sector, mostly as plasterers. The replication of these approaches in Ghana somewhat amounts to social change.

Another approach to dealing with the adverse socio-economic impacts of involuntary return on migrants is by sharing their unique experiences of fleeing crisis-engulfed destination countries with academics, researchers, aid agencies and philanthropists in exchange for financial support. Competition for exclusive and authentic insights in to motivations for migrating, migration experiences, return and reintegration challenges faced by migrants has enabled returnees monetize their experiences by informally setting up a price list, for example, local researchers and students are expected to compensate interviewees with between ¢10 and ¢20 while international researchers and organizations are expected to pay between ¢50 and ¢100 per interview. At least one returnee from Libya (Abdul-Razak Ramadan) has written up his experiences in to a book, with support from charitable organizations, and this has become a useful reference material for scholars and policy makers. Oral presentations at workshops, seminars and conferences is another channel through which returnees share their experiences and either reclaim a sense of purpose/dignity or even receive financial support to aid with their reintegration into their home communities. These practices have the effect of helping alleviate poverty associated with unplanned returns at the individual and household levels. They also help generate greater awareness about the risks associated with undocumented migration, even though a steady stream of youth continues to migrate to the same destination countries in search of better economic opportunities.

Additionally, there are significant differences in interpretations of the role of religion in facilitating successful reintegration after return between voluntary and involuntary return migrants. For instance, highly skilled voluntary returnees, mostly from Europe and North America, deride what they regard as 'excessive religiosity' among their home community members and sharply criticize their 'unnecessary waste of time' in churches as a source of their poverty (Setrana and Tonah 2014). On the other hand, involuntary returnees from Libya and Cote d'Ivoire rather relied heavily on religion as a means of coping with their unplanned return. Within this context, lack of access to economic resources, employment opportunities and the trauma of unplanned return seem to make involuntary returnees more susceptible to depending on an external divine intervention compared with voluntary returnees. Reliance on religion was more prominent among vulnerable returnees such as women and children. Akos, for instance, recounts her faith that only God could cure the trauma that her children experienced as a result of the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire:

> Because of the war, my children became traumatised and terrified by any sound. Anytime they heard any sound or loud noise they would quickly run to hide. It really affected them psychologically, but gradually through prayers they came back to normal. So little by little we were able to overcome that through prayer [...] *Because there are certain things that only God can handle.* Even when I take them to the hospital, how do I describe the situation to the doctor? (Akos, returnee from Cote d'Ivoire)

Remigration beyond involuntary return

The preceding sections have attempted to highlight some of the challenges that involuntary return introduces against expectations of the positive social change at micro and meso levels. In spite of all the trauma, loss of cash and property in Libya and Cote d'Ivoire, and loss of social status and prestige and the stigma, in Ghana, attached to a 'return of failure', the majority of involuntary return migrants maintain their transnational social networks and return to the same destination country once they judge the situation to be relatively stable, if even not safe. In the case of Cote d'Ivoire, migrants easily crossed the border back into parts of the country that were deemed relatively safe. This was possible due to the contiguous nature of the geographical location, porous national borders and also the ECOWAS free movement protocol which allows nationals to circulate among Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member states[4] for up to 90 days without visa restrictions.

While more challenging, returnees remigrated to Libya by relying on their established social networks along the transit route in Niger and also contacts

in Libya to facilitate a quicker return to their previous lifestyles within the destination community. Ongoing conflict among ever-changing factions in Libya poses serious risk to the safety of all migrants (especially from sub-Saharan Africa) but a number of migrants carry out a cost-benefit analysis and conclude that they are better off taking the risk of remigrating to an active conflict zone than remain in Ghana. This calculus is premised on the perceived futility of the socio-economic situation in their country of origin for that particular category of migrants – unemployed and mostly illiterate youth. As one return migrant youth starkly remarked, '*It is better to die from the bullet of a stranger in another country than to die of hunger in your own country*.' This somewhat exaggerated and exasperated perspective about a country that was recently adjudged by the Britton Woods institutions as having transitioned from a poor developing country to a lower middle income country, points to marked inequalities among the social classes in Ghana. The return of migrants to Libya is not, however, limited only to the desperate illiterate youth but also includes others from the Ghanaian middle class too. An example is cited by a former diplomat at the Ghana embassy in Libya of regular Ghanaian migrants in Libya who worked in well-paid jobs as English teachers and religious leaders who took advantage of the government and international community-funded chartered flights to transport their property from Libya to Ghana for free during the 2011 crisis and then returned to Libya within only weeks of their evacuation.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights how involuntary 'return of failure' is impacted by as well as impacts the existing social hierarchies in the country of origin. Disparities in the allocation of economic and political resources along class and spatial lines in Ghana negatively affects the expected upward social mobility that is associated with transnational return at the micro and meso levels. Poor, unskilled and illiterate labour migrants (from rural and agrarian communities) have fewer opportunities for upward social mobility when caught up in unplanned incidents of 'return of failure' stemming from conflict situations at destination countries. Among the 'returnees of failure', the reversal in roles from breadwinners to dependents on family handouts has a curious effect of rather 'levelling' (Vasta and Kandilige 2009) the social hierarchies in origin communities between migrant and non-migrant households.

While a migration culture has taken hold in some deprived migrant-sending communities in Ghana due to the potential for somewhat significant changes in their social status at the individual and household levels, incidents of 'return of failure' suggest that some typologies of return migration 'yield only marginal modifications of the social order, leaving the deep elements of values

and social structure substantially unchanged and sometimes even buttressing the fundamental constitutive elements of society' (Portes 2010: 1544). The chapter builds on known research into voluntary return migration by authors such as Cassarino (2004b), Cerase (1974) and IOM (2017a) that clearly recognize the need for a distinction between the various types of returnees. Cassarino, for instance, recommends an urgent need for a distillation of who returns, when and why; and why some returnees appear as actors of change, in specific social and institutional circumstances at home, whereas others do not (Cassarino 2004b: 254). Whereas Cassarino notes that voluntary return takes place once enough resources, whether financial or informational, have been gathered and when conditions at home are viewed as being favourable enough, this chapter draws attention to cases where the 'returnee's preparedness' and 'resource mobilization' are both constrained by the circumstances at the destination that compel their unplanned return.

The chapter concludes that return migration is not simply a matter of going home or a 'settled' process, but it can be characterized by ongoing mobility and preservation of transnational social networks depending on the economic and social circumstances at the origin. The analysis also supports Sabar's (2013: 66) conclusion on the critical role of economic variables (i.e. savings, source of income and owning a house or business) on involuntary return migrants' homecoming experiences, especially on their ability to relocate or embed themselves in their old environment and make progress.

Involuntary return migration is particularly much more complex as migrants negotiate their unplanned reinsertion into their origin societies while drawing on their experiences from the destination country to carve out a livelihood strategy for themselves. Resource-pooling and informal job-sharing schemes mediated through membership associations, high dependence on religion and sharing of migration experiences in exchange for financial support have been found to be critical livelihood strategies by 'returnees of failure'. Such return migrants retain the option of remigration prior to the full restoration of peace at the destination.

Notes

1 Libya and Cote d'Ivoire provide unique contexts for analysing involuntary returns from both inter- and intra-regional perspectives – i.e. North to West Africa and intra-West African contexts. This approach unearths subtle similarities and disjuncture associated with geopolitical, economic and social differences.
2 See A. Portes (2010).
3 Return migrants, family members, civil society organizations, community leaders, intergovernmental organizations and government authorities.
4 Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Nigeria.

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Part 2

RESHAPING COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

Chapter 4

RELIGION, RETURN MIGRATION AND CHANGE IN AN EMIGRATION COUNTRY

Anatolie Coșciug

Introduction

This chapter explores how religion, as a form of collective identity, can be mobilized and changed by Romanian return migrants. After many years of strictly controlled mobility during the communist regime, Romanians could at last freely emigrate outside the country. With a stock of 3–4 million people, the Romanian migration is considered today one of the largest in Europe. Many of Romania's migrants are involved in various transnational, circular and seasonal forms of migration (Anghel et al. 2016; Matichescu et al. 2017). After years of worsening socio-economic context in destination countries and an improving climate in Romania, Romania is experiencing an increasing ongoing (transnational) return of migrants (Martin and Radu 2012; Anghel and Coșciug 2018). Conceptually speaking, there is little research unfolding the role of religion and religious identity among migrants upon return, even though it is important to understand returnees' ways of aligning with or against pre-existing social groups and broader categories of belonging to better grasp their contribution to social change back home (Frederiks and Nagy 2016; Sheringham 2011; Smith and Grodź 2014). Most of the existing work on migration and changes in the religious realm considers only the context of the destination country. Yet in many emigration countries such as Romania, significant religious revival has been detected but not discussed in connection with the country's massive migration flows (Radu 2016). This chapter thus contributes to an emerging stream of growing literature on how international migration affects the development of religion in the homeland, regarding its organization, practice and belief (Bender 2012; Vertovec 2001, 2009). In order to explore this topic, I use data collected in the last four years

in a number of research projects regarding eastern European and Romanian migration pattern and mechanisms, with a focus on migrants involved in the trade of second-hand cars imported from Western Europe to Romania.

In what follows, I briefly review the existing literature on religious social capital and explain how and why religion may be a source for social capital and what its relevance is in the context of international migration. This is followed by a discussion of how religious social capital can be mobilized by (return) migrants but also how deployment of religious social capital can lead to various changes in the religious field and several examples of such instances are given. In connection with this, I explore how the concept of 'identity' is increasingly used to explain migration-driven changes brought by returning migrants and why Romania can be an interesting case study regarding the revival of religious collective identities.

The theoretical part is followed by a couple of methodological notes on the type of data collected and methods and strategies of data gathering. After this, the chapter turns to the empirical part where it first explores how returned migrants mobilize religious social capital for the development of the trade with imported second-hand cars and how this in turn changes the anti-emigration discourse of the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC), including how religious tolerance is brought back home by returned migrants. The chapter concludes with the focal findings of the chapter and discusses them, including the main limitations and several ideas on further research objectives.

Religious Social Capital and Religious Transformation

Religious congregations have been presented in the literature for a long time as places where one can find various forms of support, identify new opportunities and establish new friendships (Ellison and George 1994; Putnam 2000; Radu 2017; Stark and Finke 2000). That much might be clear by now. One of the main mechanisms of these activities is that, through active involvement, religious congregations become places where people can meet other participants and develop interpersonal networks that help attain their goals (Furseth 2008). For instance, previous studies suggest that various forms of religious participation are associated with having influential friends (Wuthnow 2003), better education and health outcomes (Mueller et al. 2001; Park and Sharma 2016), risk taking (Miller and Hoffmann 1995) or more businesses opportunities (Chen 2001).

For immigrants, religious social capital – identified as religion based networks that facilitate trust, cohesion and cooperation – has been found to be important especially for initiation and perpetuation of migration, immigrants' entrepreneurship and integration in the destination country (Hardwick 2003;

Light 1984; Massey and Espinosa 1997; Massey and Higgins 2011; Portes and Zhou 1999). In addition, several studies have documented how religious social capital is mobilized for various reasons by the immigrants once they return home. For instance, Reynolds (2008), in a study about Caribbean second-generation returned migrants, observes that women especially have difficulties re-adapting to local gender dynamics, difficulties which can be overcome with the help of other women attending the same parishes. In another study about Indian migrants in the Gulf countries, Oommen (2016) reports how returned migrants use the transnational networks developed by the Charismatic neo-Protestant Churches to stay in contact with (immigrant) communities living in the former destination countries. Similarly, Osella and Osella (2003) argue that returned migrants in India tend to use the public religious domain to convert their newly accumulated economic capital as migrants into much needed local prestige and status in order to overcome barriers imposed by the local castes system.

However, the development and mobilization of interpersonal networks via religious involvement may in turn lead to various changes to the religious institutions and contexts where they are embedded. Such examples can be seen in the international migration literature where an increasing stream of research looks at how migrants can change the religious landscape of destination countries (see Hirschman 2004 for an extensive overview on this issue in America, and Hämmerli and Mayer 2014 for an overview of the context in Europe). Several scholars convincingly argue that, often times, migrants change their rituals and worship style compared with their fellows who stay at home (Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Levitt 2006). For instance, Vertovec (2009) observes that various elements of immigrants' faith and religious practices, identities, organization and relations can be transformed in the destination societies, such discourses about women's position and their roles within the religious groups, recognition of cultural rights surrounding specific religious practices, tolerance towards other religious groups, ritual practice and several other. Using a specific example, Sheringham (2011) argues that Brazilian churches/praying houses (regardless of their religious affiliation) in the United Kingdom are changing and adapting their practices, doctrines and beliefs according to their new local context which is framed by destination and origin country policies, institutions and history but also that the immigrants themselves are changing the way they understand and practice religion.

But migration does not only change the religious landscape in the destination societies, it can bring changes to the origin societies as well. As migrants' ways of understanding and practising religion in their destination societies is changing, some of these changes may be transferred to or can occur in the countries of origin (Frederiks and Nagy 2016; Levitt 2006; Smith and Grodź

2014). In this vein, Vertovec (2009) argues that the impact brought upon religious phenomena by migrants in the origin countries includes 'patterns of organisation, personal and group identities, intergroup relations, modes of practice and even elements of faith'. Such an example is given in the study of Mazzucato et al. (2006) on funerals in Ghana which become a multisited phenomenon that is changed by family members' living abroad in terms of financing and religious practice. Another example can be found in the work of Gardner (1995) on Bangladesh return migrants who seems to engage in more orthodox forms of Islam, at least at the discursive level, back home compared to the ones practised by non-migrants. One more example comes from the south of India where low-caste return migrants have been observed commoditizing religious practices using the abroad accumulated money, bringing in this way new ways of performing rituals and novel sense of religiosity (Osella and Osella 2003).

In recent years, scholars increasingly have started to use the concept of identity to exemplify migration-driven changes in migrants' origin countries (La Barbera 2014; Sussman 2010). Both personal and collective identities, Jenkins (1996) notes, are constructed through a process of internal (self-attributed) and external (other-ascribed) dialectic. This is one of the reasons why collective identities seems to be a promising venue to better understand how migrants align with or against pre-existing categories of belonging back home (see Introduction of this volume). Despite these arguments, there is limited research on religious (collective) identities and their associated elements (such as the understanding of what religious is, values and beliefs, practices or attitudes) and if and how they are changed in the context of return migration to their origin countries (Frederiks and Nagy 2016; Smith and Grodź 2014).

One of the first attempts to explain why and how religious institutions and practices are changed by returnees in the societies of origin is exemplified by the work of Levitt's on immigrants in the United States and how they transfer social remittances, which include identities, ideas and practices, back to their origin societies (Levitt 2001; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). On the same topic, Oommen (2016) argues that even though the Pentecostals Church existed long before the mass emigration of Indians from Kerala to the Gulf countries, many returned migrants and their families joined it to the extent that it became one of the most important religious denomination in the region. In turn, this situation led to a popularization of new religious ideas, conceptions and traditions. In other research, Hagan and Ebaugh (2003) show how Maya Pentecostal immigrants in Houston, USA, are changing religious practices, beliefs and institutions back home in San Pedro by building new churches, multiplying religious practices performed in the United States and so on. Regarding the case of the Orthodox denomination, Hämmerli and Mayer

(2014) argues that the religious identity of the non-migrants in the sending context suffers changes by incorporating migration-related example and ideas, such as the challenges Orthodox migrants have to face in the West.

Concerning changes of the religious collective identity in relation to migration, Romania could offer a fertile ground for research for a number of reasons. One is that both a massive religious resurgence and transformations of the local religious landscape occurred in the last few years after a long period during communism when religion was (partially and discretionarily) banned in the public space (Flora et al. 2005; Stan and Turcescu 2007; Voicu and Constantin 2012). In this vein, religion has today become one of the most important collective identity makers for Romanians to the extent that, together with Poland, it is considered one of the most religious countries in Europe (Radu 2016, 2017). Against this background, it is not yet clear if and how Romania's massive international emigration has impacted these changes. This concern is of real significance if one considers a number of recent developments in Romania: the emergence and consolidation of Romanian immigrant religious communities abroad (Ciobanu 2010; Ihlamur 2009) the increasing (transnational) return migration (Anghel and Coșciug 2017, 2018) and the already researched migration-led changes brought by migrants in such fields as entrepreneurship (Croitoru 2015), gender roles (Vlase 2013) and ethnic relations (Anghel et al. 2016).

Methodological Notes

This study is part of two larger research projects carried out at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania and a doctoral research project carried out at Bielefeld University in Germany. The first research project[1] aims to assess the impact of religious participation on social capital formation, especially among young people. For this purpose, in 2016 and 2017 we conducted comparative fieldwork on religious participation among Romanians and Polish (youth) living in their home countries and those living abroad in Spain and the United Kingdom. The second research project[2] broadly aims to analyse the effects of migration in Romania. For this purpose, we conducted in-depth fieldwork in Romania in various urban and rural communities to more closely observe how different ethnic groups in Romania were affected by the social changes brought about by migration. The doctoral research[3] is concerned with the study of the transnational trade of second-hand goods imported by Romanian migrants (mostly returnees) as a reflection of the social transformation taking place in post-communist Romanian society. In this research, the nexus between (return) migration and religion also proved to be crucial and was included.

In these research projects I conducted interviews and participant observation with Romanian entrepreneurs involved in the trade of imported second-hand cars, both local (with no migration experience) and returned migrant entrepreneurs. Respondents were identified through a variety of sampling methods in Romania and abroad, such as theoretical sampling, snowball sampling and matched sampling. I used three entry points for this endeavour: a group of entrepreneurs in Cluj, one of the largest cities in Romania and the largest in the region of Transylvania; the second-hand car market which is situated at the outskirts of the Cluj; and a second-hand car market situated in Berlin, Germany.

The interview guideline was conceptualized into three main 'blocks': (1) Migration history, background and experience; (2) involvement and experiences with imports of second-hand cars in Romania; (3) religious participation and religious community integration. Each thematic block was introduced by a 'narration stimulus', which introduced a new thematic topic. Interviews with returned migrants were not initially designed to specifically describe the changes migrants can bring to the religious realm in their origin country but rather to grasp their general reintegration back home.[4]

Nevertheless, to better grasp immigrants' contribution to the religious landscape in Romania, I also looked into the participation in religious ceremonies and visited several religious communities. In this context, interviews were conducted with five religious leaders and people involved in the daily management of their religious institutions from two religious denominations: Orthodox and neo-Protestant (Pentecostal and Baptist).

Return Migrants' Mobilization of Religious Social Capital

Probably the main reason why trade of imported second-hand cars is so successful is related to the ability to offer high-quality products at a competitive price (Beuving 2006; Brooks 2011; Coșciug et al. 2017; Rosenfeld 2012). As I have already argued elsewhere (Coșciug 2017), Romanian migrants have a distinct advantage in this regard. Nearly the entire stock of second-hand cars imported to Romania come from countries where significant Romanian migrant communities exist, such as Germany, Austria, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and the United Kingdom. In this sense, prior living experience in these countries is highly valuable due to the possibility of developing foreign language skills, extending social networks and learning how to navigate new institutional settings. This situation has profound implications for the second-hand car trade to the extent that those regions in Romania that send the most migrants abroad to the countries from which the cars are imported are the

regions that import more second-hand cars/capita than anywhere else in Romania.

Much of the existing literature on social capital and migration looks at the use of social capital by migrants both before and during the process of migration. Additionally, in this research, it can be observed that social capital is also important for migrants after they return back home. Several studies on return migration have meaningfully argued that both migrants and their origin countries are likely to have changed during their stay abroad so that the return has to be renegotiated (Cassarino 2004; Colombo et al. 2009; De Bree et al. 2010; Ralph 2009). The second-hand car trade explicitly shows that entrepreneurs need social capital resources, while the religious communities are spaces where such social capital can be acquired. Therefore, this section explores why and how religious social capital is mobilized by returned migrants involved in the trade of second-hand cars.

Migration is a dynamic process and as much as migrants need to adapt to new realities in their destination countries, they also need to adapt when returning home, since the places they leave behind undertake significant change while they are gone (Ralph 2009; Colombo et al. 2009; Faist 2008). This is especially salient in the case of Romania which, as a recent democracy and member of the EU, has undergone fundamental reforms in the last 20 years (Levitz and Pop-Eleches 2010; Gallagher 2013). As such, most of the returned migrants involved in the trade of second-hand cars highlight that coping with the changed environment back home requires extensive social capital. At the same time, many of the social ties that they had before moving abroad were lost during migration, due merely to geographical distance and loss of contact. As an example of this, in some smaller towns and villages in Romania, one has seen massive migration flows in the last two decades and returning home may imply returning to a changed context, sometimes one in which most of one's network of acquaintances are absent, since they had also migrated.

> [Our city] has changed very much in these 8 years when I was abroad [...] many of my friends, people from my school generation, [they] went abroad as well [...] I couldn't find anybody when I returned home and I was looking for something. (Vasile, male, 38, returned from Italy)

As such, readjusting to the realities in the origin community is rendered difficult not only by the structural developments brought about by political and social changes that Romania has experienced in the last decades, but also by returning to a community where the returnees do not know too many people

besides their extended family. Starting or developing a business under such circumstances can be difficult and restrictive. In Romania, second-hand car trades are more often than not small businesses, mostly informal, in which personal contacts are fundamental in finding clients, identifying partners or securing financial capital. At best, it can become a medium-sized enterprise where the majority of those directly involved are family members. Under these circumstances, social capital is a central element for the success of the enterprise. Lack of access to social capital resources upon returning negatively influences the prospects of a successful business. As Andrei, a 33-year-old migrant who returned from Germany and who imports second-hand cars from Austria, explains it,

> In the beginning I didn't import cars on which I have to do additional work, to paint, to polish or to repair [and which bring the highest gains], because I didn't know how to do that alone […] and I knew nobody to help me with these specific tasks […] and the one I knew would make me pay as a regular client.

As it turns out, finding business partners or people to work with is a daunting task. As the respondent notes, not having or having limited access to qualified and trustworthy labour upon return made it hard for a while to get involved in (partially damaged) car trading, although it is obvious that this niche would be particularly profitable, given the low cost of damaged vehicles in Western Europe and the relatively cheap labour force in Romania. It took time for Andrei to re-establish his social relations back home and increase stocks of social capital, which then allowed him to engage in businesses yielding higher profits.

One of the strategies for increasing the stock of social capital deployed by Paul and many other returned migrants involved in the trade of second-hand cars was to (re)engage with the religious community back home. Besides going to church on Sundays and other various religious ceremonies (e.g. weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc.),[5] returnees tend to appear in higher numbers on other events organized by the Orthodox Church, especially when it comes to pilgrimages to sacred places in Romania or abroad (e.g. to Jerusalem) and visits to various Orthodox parishes in the diaspora.

In this context, several respondents in this research note how important gains can be drawn from one's reintegration in the religious community. One often mentioned idea by the returnees is that most of the religious communities where traders are involved are relatively large but tightly knit and it is not difficult to find collaborators or possible clients since information travels fast. As an example of this, Maria is member of a family returned from France

together with her husband and now they sell second-hand cars almost exclusively to co-parishioners.

> Any type of business you have it is not independent of God's will, I saw it myself, nothing happens accidentally […] It happened that people approached me at [name of the church] to ask for help with a second-hand car […] and they knew I am a trustworthy fellow because they see me, they see my family here every Sunday. (Maria, 45, returned from France together with the husband)

In addition, religious communities seem to be characterized by trust among co-parishioners and capitalizing on this trust may prove essential to establishing a good business reputation in a trade generally known for having a bad reputation. As it appears in the above and other interviews, trading second-hand cars is usually perceived in negative terms in Romania. Many negative preconceptions are related to this business and to the people involved in this trade who are usually known as '*samsari de maşini*',[6] a pejorative term referring to people who sell second-hand cars. In this context, many entrepreneurs rely also on their religiosity to overcome these negative perceptions related to their trading activities.

The Change of Religious Collective Identities

The previous section explored why and how religious communities, as a source of social capital, are mobilized by returnees in order to develop the trade of imported second-hand cars in Romania. But this mobilization of religious social capital can bring in turn a number of changes regarding ROC anti-emigration discourse as well as religious tolerance at the local level. The following section explores the main changes in the religious sphere that relate to the case of return migrants involved in the trade of second-hand cars in Romania.

Changing anti-emigration discourse at the local level of the Romanian Orthodox Church

The ROC is the biggest religious denomination in Romania. For Romanians living abroad, it is also an essential institution with around seven hundred to eight hundred churches operating in all the major migration destinations and beyond and many other associations and centres (McMahon 2015). Despite its large presence and active involvement in various religious and non-religious activities outside Romania, the ROC has an open anti-emigration discourse

back home (Ihlamur 2009). As one of the priests interviewed in my research has commented, the ROC has a tendency to portray overseas emigration as rather a negative process. The common discourse and official doctrine is to present emigration as a money-motivated activity (which has a negative sense by default in the Orthodox religious tradition – Dinello 1998) that can bring many negative outcomes to migrants' families and the origin communities overall, such as children and elderly being left behind, the dissolution of marriages and the loss of national identity.

> The departure of so many Romanians abroad also raises a number of social issues […] such as increasing rate of divorce, infidelity among spouses, or increasing number of abandoned children or left for to be carried by their relatives. (Matei, Orthodox priest, 33)

But despite the open anti-emigration stance, migrants and their families are by no means turned away from the church and many of the activities of the ROC are designed precisely for them. One such example is the ROC's celebration of the 'Romanian Migrants' Day' starting with 2009, in August on the Sunday following the Feast of the Assumption,[7] which includes the organization of various religious and non-religious activities. In this vein, it was interesting to note in different cases that the anti-emigration rhetoric is softened when it comes to talking about returnees' cases. According to one of the religious leaders, the change of discourse about emigration has appeared in the last few years when an increasing number of families have returned back but also in the context of their active involvement of the local community's religious affairs.

In this light, within the religious communities I studied, migration is increasingly seen and portrayed as an 'acceptable' strategy. Trough constant interaction and returnees' active involvement in the religious life of the local community, the anti-migration ideas are less emphasized within the parishes and many of the returnees are given as examples of civic involvement for the local community. As one priest have commented, this holds true especially when migrants have received 'religious guidance' from Romanian Orthodox priests while abroad and when the accumulated financial and social remittances are (also) used to develop the origin communities in general ant not only for migrants' families:

> Even though this fact [that people should stay in their countries] is often highlighted in our church […] but you understand […] it is better when they have the appropriate means to help [with the accumulated money and skills] the poor, elderly and sick that they met in Romania or parishes who build churches here. (Ion, Orthodox priest, 54)

In addition, parishioners are increasingly accustomed to the challenges their fellows with migration background had to face while abroad. These topics are increasingly approached and discussed due to the returnees' presence in the parishes but also due to the increasing number of visits and events organized, often due to returnees ties, with Romanian Orthodox parishes abroad, such as camps dedicated to Romanian youth living abroad or invited spiritual fathers from the homeland.

The idea of a changing ROC's anti-emigration discourse and attitudes at the local level has emerged in the interviews with the returnees as well. Remarkably, most of them were aware of and agreed with the ROC's anti-emigration discourse in the sense that migration can indeed harm the origin society equilibrium and something has to be done to reduce or stop it. But as in many other cases related to ROC, returnees make a sharp distinction between the ROC's official doctrine and daily practice or, in their own words, between 'what priests say in the church and what they actually do in real life' (Elena, female, returned from the UK, 47).

Religious pluralism

Many Romanians living abroad are exposed to religious and cultural pluralism. Quite often, going to the church/praying house is one of the times when Romanian migrants closely interact with people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds (Hellermann 2006). For instance, as it emerged in several interviews, ROC is a place for meeting and prayer for the Greek, Ukrainian, Russian, Moldavian, Serbian and other Orthodox communities living in the same area (see Hainard and Hämmerli 2011 for similar observations in Switzerland). In this context, it is not at all uncommon for priests to offer religious services (such as baptizing or weddings ceremonies but not only these) in two or three different languages, such as Romanian, Russian, Italian, Spanish and so on. In other cases, Romanian Orthodox religious groups carry out their activities in destination countries in buildings offered by the local community. As one recent returnee who was a priest in Spain and now serves in Romania mentioned, the buildings offered for religious activities to the Orthodox believers are former churches/praying houses which usually are not allowed to be changed and still preserve the style and structure of the previous religion. Even more, in yet other cases, Romanian migrants attend the churches of already existing non-Romanian Orthodox communities, such Greek, Russia, Serbian and so on.

The above mentioned instances can give space for exchange of a wide variety of religious and non-religious ideas and values; including ethnic and religious tolerance which can be transferred back home by migrants as previous

studies have shown (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Vertovec 2009). However, the above described situation is rather specific to the Romanian communities living abroad, while back in Romania religious pluralism is considered one of the biggest challenges the Orthodox Church has to face (Flora et al. 2005; Ihlamur 2009). In this regard, it was relevant to observe many cases where returned migrants managed to promote, in various forms, mutual help and cooperation among competing religious institutions. As in the below case, which exemplifies how the idea of working together with other religious groups comes from previous similar experiences in Italy:

> So it comes the time when we had the meeting to organise our participation to this event [the Pro-Life March] and […] as I did this already in Italy […] but there we did it together with a Catholic church […] so I […] I proposed to work with the nearby Catholic church […] if we fight for our common beliefs […] their help is as useful as any other help. (Cristian, male, returned from Italy, 38)

But religious tolerance can take many other different forms besides the above explained example. For instance, many of the connections forged in destination countries with members of other religious groups or denominations are maintained after the Romanian migrants return. The traders of second-hand cars (or their family members) are among the most active promoters and organizers of international visits and exchange programmes with various groups from their former destination countries and beyond.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study puts together selected in-depth interviews and participant observations from three distinct research projects which were conducted in the last four years to explore how religion, as a form of collective identity, is mobilized by Romanian return migrants to develop the trade of second-hand cars imported from Western Europe to Romania and what kinds of changes in the religious field this mobilization may bring. In the context of increased circular mobility, a worsening socioeconomic environment in destination countries and an improving one in Romania, an increasing number of migrants return back home. Many opt to invest their social and financial remittances acquired abroad in businesses. The trade of imported second-hand cars is one of the business activities where return migrants tend to invest in Romania due to a number of advantages they pose as migrants, such as foreign language and cultural skills, knowledge of foreign and Romanian markets, institutional

know-how in both Romania and abroad, social networks in the destination countries and so on.

After reviewing the literature on the relationship between return migration and social change in the field of religion, I concluded that there is limited research on religion's role in (transnational) return migrants' lives, even though it is important to understand returnees' ways of aligning with or against pre-existing social groups and broader categories of belonging to better grasp their contribution to social change. Existing literature on the subject mainly considers the destination country's context and broadly ignores migrants' origin countries, where in many cases massive religious resurgence has happened in the last few decades. Romania and its migrants offer such a case where religion is one of the most important collective identity markers.

A number of findings can be extracted from this research regarding the mobilization of religion and the changes it brings to the religious landscape. First, the second-hand car trade requires extensive social capital (such as ties and trust), while the religious communities are fertile spaces where such social capital can be acquired. Returned migrants face social capital deficits in their country of origin, mostly due to their prolonged absence and the dynamic social, economic and political context at home, which has an effect on the success and development of their businesses. In this context, religious communities appear as spaces where social capital can be created and accessed and where return migrants find business partners, clients and support.

Second, mobilizing religious communities and the social capital it entails can also bring a number of changes to the religious field. ROC, which is known for its anti-emigration discourse, tends to soften its stance in places with an increasing number of returned migrants and activities organized by them. The ROC's approach moves towards considering emigration from Romania as an acceptable process when migrants are 'guided' by its priests serving abroad and when, after return, financial and social remittances accumulated abroad are also used to develop the local community back home. In addition, due to the nature of the Romanian communities abroad, the exposure to other ethnic and religious communities is high, a situation which can lead to increasing religious tolerance and its transfer back home among some returnees.

This research has a number of limitations. One of them is related to the relatively small number of interviews, which does not confer any degree of generalizability to this endeavour. However, by carefully selecting respondents and ensuring a certain diversity of migrant experiences and denominations, I aimed to reduce the impact of such limitations. I believe that these research results are a starting point for broader comparative studies on migration and religion in contexts of emigration. In addition, the second-hand car trade is

a particular type of business activity, one characterized by a high degree of informality and prejudice and which is therefore dependent on higher levels of social capital. Thus, this research does not shed light on other economic activities fostered by return migrants, but rather on this very particular type of business.

Finally, I consider the most surprising finding of this study to be the fact that religious communities in countries of origin are mobilized by returned migrants and that this intensive mobilization also brings in turn changes in the lives of their respective religious communities. Understanding which changes appear and why and how they appear, opens up a challenging debate on the topic of return migration and religion, a topic which has been understudied.

Acknowledgement

Notes

1 Organizations and the Social Capital of Youth in Post-communist Countries, project funded by Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation (PN-11-RU-TE-2014-4-0032).
2 Recasting Migrants Voices: Local Perspectives on Migration, Development, and Social Change in Romania, project funded by UEFISCDI, the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0602).
3 Selling off the West: Migrants' Second-Hand Trade and Social Transformation in Romania, Project Carried Out at Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology, Bielefeld University, Germany.
4 To better grasp the topic I also used a number of field notes taken during trips in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria and the United Kingdom, but also during the preparation and selling of the second-hand cars phases which took place in Romania (see Coșciug 2017). This includes the mapping of several second-hand car markets in Romania and abroad with the help of the students attending the 'Qualitative Research Methods' class I held at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in 2016.
5 As a side note, one curious religious ceremony which has developed hand-in-hand with the trade of the imported second-hand cars in Romania is the 'baptizing' of the purchased cars. For instance, in some of the second-hand car markets in Romania one can find Orthodox priests ready to perform such ceremonies.
6 Apparently, the word *samsari* originally comes from the Turkish/Arabic word *simsar* or *symsar* which can be translated as a person who can make everything an object of trade, who can sell everything – https://dexonline.ro/definitie/samsar.
7 In Romanian – Sărbătoarea Adormirii Maicii Domnului.

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Chapter 5

DIVERSE RETURN MOBILITIES AND EVOLVING IDENTITIES AMONG RETURNEES IN LATVIA

Aija Lulle, Zaiga Krisjane and Andris Bauls

Introduction

More than twenty years ago Russell King (1996, 2000) wrote that return migration is the unwritten chapter in migration scholarship. Since then, literature on return migration has flourished. This more recent literature has also explored the diversity of return experiences and modalities, including different temporalities of return – so that it is more appropriate to speak of *return mobilities* rather return migration because mobilities can take very diverse forms, including visits, tourism and so on (King and Christou 2011). Return migration, on the other hand, has been more associated with the end of the migration cycle and permanent return. In this chapter of the Latvian case, we engage in conceptual debate and empirical analysis of comparisons and syntheses across both dimensions – return mobility and migration – and how these are related to transnational return. The latter implies that people can return either permanently or temporary, but they keep ties across borders and, moreover, their return can be enabled by transnational networks.

First, conceptually and methodologically, we need to set alongside each other two historical waves of Latvian emigration and diaspora formation, which we label here for the sake of initial simplicity 'old' and 'recent' emigrants. Such historical attentiveness is crucial for understanding how transnational cultural values and norms are changing (Portes 2010) in different groups of return migrants in Latvia. Second, we comparatively explore three different temporal modes of physical return: 'permanent' return, diaspora tourism from the 'old' emigration and the practice of recent migrants returning to visit friends and relatives. However, rather than build our analysis by boxing our data into discrete categories, we wish to investigate similarities, blurrings and connections between the different return types, mobilities and experiences.

The Latvian case also illustrates the differential feasibility of return for different diaspora/emigrant groups. Return for those who escaped the Soviet occupation of Latvia during the Second World War and after – whom we call the 'old' migrants – was hardly possible until the late 1980s, since the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) regarded emigrants as traitors. Unable to return, the Latvian exiled communities abroad, especially in Western countries, developed a strong diasporic identity. They emphasized that they left Latvia for political reasons; their goal was to campaign for Latvian independence from the Soviet Union, not least because this would enable them to return to their homeland.

In contrast to the 'political exile' identity of the older diaspora, those who left Latvia after independence was re-established in 1991, and in much higher numbers after the country joined the EU in 2004, are usually perceived as 'economic migrants', even if not all of them self-identify with that totalizing label. For this second wave of emigration, there are no restrictions on return of any kind. Yet these migrants frequently express disappointment with the lack of opportunities in present-day Latvia, which prompted them to emigrate in the first place and are a deterrent to permanent return.

Two different reference points exist when it comes to the primary reasons for emigration from Latvia: political and economic. However, in these simplistic constructions of historical waves and types of Latvian emigration and diaspora formation, perspectives on return mobilities are somewhat overlooked. From Ankrava's (2011) research comparing the two migrant waves to the United Kingdom we see that exiles saw the return as a dream and as an obligation, and therefore made special efforts to safeguard their Latvian identity in exile. By contrast, the departure point of many recent emigrants was mixture of disappointment and distancing from Latvia.

Hence our *first objective* in this chapter is to articulate conceptually and methodologically the strength and nature of these two different reference points of value systems and norms between the earlier exiles (and their descendants) and the recent migrants, and to see whether and how these differences are changing over time. When it comes to actual returns, only a few exiles were able to come back in Soviet times: they arrived on short tourism visits and their movements and activities were constrained by the restrictions imposed by the Soviet security services. But soon after independence, thousands visited Latvia, especially for the song festivals – by far the country's most celebrated event for mass gatherings. Some diasporans relocated back to Latvia, and some of these then left again. In fact, throughout the first two decades of the twenty-first century, we can observe what we might call mixed returns – by former exiles and by recent emigrants simultaneously. Moreover, these return mobilities are transnational by nature – keeping ties across borders, acquiring

and maintaining social networks and homes in two or even more places, and reaching out to communities of former exiles and migrants both 'here' and 'there' (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). Our chapter develops a conceptual understanding of the simultaneity of diverse returns. In doing so we inter-weave macro- and meso-level processes with interviewees' everyday reflections on their return motivations and experiences, expressed through the realities of the three types of return: permanent relocation, diasporic tourism and visiting family and friends.

The *second objective* which underpins this chapter concerns with the three types of physical return that we identify. Specifically we ask what transnational patterns and nuances do the different return mobilities express? And *thirdly*, we ask: how does return foster emerging sociocultural identities of returnees; and what kinds of social change are taking place consequent upon the return of the two émigré groups? This is crucial in understanding how return leads to social changes in collective identities of these groups. In order to approach all these questions, we link these temporalities of return to Latvia's emigration history and its contemporary social context. We then follow with the analyt-ical subsections on permanent return, diaspora tourism and visiting friends and relative. In the conclusion we reflect on our contribution to the scholarly debate on transnational return in the contemporary world.

Latvian Emigration, Identity Reference Points and Transnational 'Returns'

Latvia is a country with a long history of emigration. Currently, more than 370,000 people of Latvian origin live outside the country. In relative terms this is large proportion, given that the total population of the country was less than 2 million in 2017, and is rapidly declining due to the combined effects of emigration and a low birth rate. The largest emigrant communities are in Europe (especially Great Britain and Ireland, but also in Germany, Sweden and Norway), the USA, Canada, Australia, Russia and Israel. Representation of the many Latvian communities abroad takes place under the umbrella organizations of the World Free Latvians Association and the Association of European Latvians. Both bodies have taken an active role in policy planning back in Latvia. Especially in previous decades, considerable influence was held by those who emigrated during the Second World War. It was common to call these emigrants 'exiles' or 'foreign Latvians'. Soviet ideology regarded those who lived outside the Soviet Union with extreme suspicion. Cultural ties were forged, but only under the close surveillance of the Communist Party and its institutions. When returning to independent Latvia they could be recognized by their 'foreign' everyday behaviour, for instance, in shopping, or in their

topics of conversation. However, there is an important nuance here: 'foreign Latvians' were usually those returned from Western countries but not from Russia, which was the major destination for deportations and voluntary moves within the USSR. In this latter case, the common references were, and remain, 'Russia's Latvians' and 'former deportees'.

When recent emigrants return – except in the case of the youngest generation of children who have largely been brought up abroad – they are still familiar with the Latvian scene, although admitting that the country is rapidly changing. However, both older émigrés and recent returnees are ambiguous about how to call themselves. 'Migrant' comes with negative connotations, whilst 'return migrants' sounds too formal. The alternative term – 'diaspora' – only became current in public discourse very recently, in the 2010s, and this now reflects a clear political incentive to move away from the term 'emigrants' with its excluding and stigmatizing associations.

As in the experience of the other countries, the diffusion of the word 'diaspora' is meant to create an 'inclusive' atmosphere to foster allegiance to the nation-state, and to encourage diasporans to contribute to its economic development (by investing) and to its demographic salvation (by returning). While some of our participants were ready to embrace their designation as members of the newly-minted notion of a Latvian diaspora, many remained uncertain as to how to label themselves and instead used verbs, not nouns, by saying, for instance, 'I returned' or 'I came back home'.

Brubaker (2005) has explored the various emerging identities which are constitutive of the contemporary understanding of 'diaspora' – an understanding which goes beyond the much earlier 'victim' and 'historical trauma' definitions of the term (cf. Cohen 2008; Safran 1991). For Brubaker (2005: 12), a diaspora 'implies both a historically embedded social formation of quasi-permanent residents and their descendants abroad' and also 'a community of practice […] an idiom, a stance, a claim'. Applying this creative construction to return migration/mobility, we need to acknowledge the different 'social formations' of emigrants from the past in order to understand ongoing social change in a society with large-scale emigration and simultaneous, albeit lesser in size, trends of return. Furthermore, as Cassarino (2004) argued in his landmark paper on theorizing return migration, existing power relations fundamentally shape returnees' experiences and their capacities to integrate and to innovate. Latvian migration has always been cast within geopolitical structures of foreign occupation, regime change, uneven capitalist development and ongoing economic uncertainty. These macro-scale structures have governed both, on the one hand, the dynamics of migration and the ability to engage in transnational practices and, on the other hand, the possibilities and incentives to return, thereby reinforcing the important point that the role of capitalism is

overlooked in the field of transnationalism studies. At the meso and micro scales, returning emigrants often face social structures of power relations that either enable or prevent them adjusting, innovating or developing a feeling of belonging to Latvia. At the same time, the past and current encounters between those who are 'back', either short term or permanently, and non-migrants have the potential to alter these structures and initiate change in ways that are both fundamental and mundane. Before we analyse these return-focused interactions in more detail, next come two scoping sections, first on types of return mobility and second on methods.

A Three-Way Typology of Transnational Return

Return migration has been a recognized reality ever since human migration was first identified as a scholarly field of study. Much more recently, 'guestworker' schemes in early post-war Europe, notably in Germany, implied that return to the country of origin would take place once the temporary migrants' work contracts were fulfilled. Likewise, the common conception of refugee movements has generally included the understanding that the refugees would return home permanently once the danger that they were in had passed; this was especially the case if their status was one of 'temporary protection'. Theoretically, discursively and policy-wise, therefore, return has been imagined as the closing stage in the migration cycle, involving lasting resettlement; in other words, *permanent return* (Cassarino 2004; Gmelch 1980). However, at the end of the guestworker schemes, in the mid-1970s, it is well documented that many previously temporary workers stayed on and did not return (Castles et al. 1984). Instead they, and later their descendants, continued their transnational lives and identities by making more or less frequent trips to their homelands, to visit family members and also for holiday purposes. Moreover, these different types of return mobility – visits, tourism, temporary and permanent relocation – can overlap and intersect in complex ways that can also evolve through time.

   To take an example, return visits and keeping in transnational touch with relatives, friends and the 'culture' of the homeland can replace the more irrevocable decision to permanently return (Bauböck and Faist 2010). This is especially important for the first-generation migrants but can also apply to second- and third-generation diasporans too. In some cases they can pass as 'locals' but in other circumstances their diasporic, and hence 'non-local' identity is unmasked in everyday activities – in their accent, dress, behavioural traits, consumer habits and so on (see Wagner 2015). There is a noteworthy trend in recent years for the theme of 'roots' or *diaspora tourism* to be the subject of scholarly study (Coles and Timothy 2004; Marschall 2017). The essence of

diasporic tourism is the combination of a holiday visit in the ancestral home-land with connecting with one's roots, including both family connections and historical/natural sights. Such diasporic holidays can be independently organized or, more often, are facilitated by migrant networks and diaspora-owned travel agencies. One of the empirical questions that we investigate below is how diaspora tourism can lead to other types of 'return'.

If diaspora holiday visits also involve seeing relatives and acquaintances, then this return mobility merges with our third type, visiting friends and relatives, commonly, or 'VFR' (Janta et al. 2015). There is also an emerging literature on this subfield of (return) mobility studies, but much of this comes from tourism studies and has no relation to migrant and diaspora populations. Research which focuses on this latter perspective stresses how VFR mobilities are often an essential part of migrants' transnational practices, being enfolded within the longer-term mobilities of emigration and return migration (see for instance Humbracht 2015; King and Lulle 2015; Mueller 2015). VFR mobilities are often frequent and regular – one or several times per year, coin-ciding with statutory holidays from work and school, and also with signifi-cant events in the homeland – religious holidays, cultural festivals, key family occasions and so on.

So, recognizing that there are complex connections between return mobilities and transnationalism (Carling and Erdal 2014; King and Christou 2011), we move to interrogate how transnationalism plays a role in these three types of return mobility. Given the relatively small size of Latvia and the scale of past migration waves, the diverse modalities of return are likely to have a noticeable, even indelible impact on social conditions and social change there, all the more so in an era of unfettered to and fro mobility and cheap air travel.

Methods

This chapter draws on a programme of mixed-method research on Latvian emigration carried out during 2014–15 under the aegis of the Centre of Diaspora and Migration Research and the Department of Geography at the University of Latvia. An online quantitative survey was implemented to delin-eate the broad contours of recent emigration, especially as regards return migration and visits (Krisjane and Bauls 2014). We use this survey only as background data for the main source we draw on for our account here – in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 returnees (10 each from the 'old' diaspora and recent emigrants), plus eight interviews with people engaged in activities and positions related to return migration and diaspora tourism, including real-estate agents, event organizers, returnee business owners and policymakers. To some extent these two groups overlapped, for instance being

both a returnee and running business involved with diaspora tourism. This is an interesting finding in itself, since it illustrates how socio-economic change takes place via migration and return. Selection of interviewees was based mainly on the snowball method, starting from several entry points to maximize diversity of different ages, generations and social-class backgrounds of the participants selected.

Our analysis is focused on the three return types discussed above – permanent returnees, diaspora tourists and visits to relatives and friends. But we were deliberately open to new links between these types: for instance, how VFR and diaspora tourism relate to permanent return. We also pay attention to the mundane ways and expressions through which participants who fit into one theoretically defined category talk about 'others' – for instance, members of 'old' diaspora reflecting about the behaviour of 'recent' returnees. Finally, we examine social changes taking place as a result of different return mobilities, including policy initiatives.

Permanent Return

The first two examples of permanent return cases are concerned with the 'old' diaspora – the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Latvians who emigrated during the Second World War – while later examples will illustrate the returns of more recent emigrants. Our aim is to focus on differences that are felt or that exist structurally among these returnees and to question the very notion of 'permanent'.

Elita (aged 31 at the time of interview) was born in Canada. Through her studies in Canada and in the United Kingdom, Elita arrived at an awareness that she wanted to understand more about her ancestors' homeland and started researching Latvian history. In parallel to this interest, Elita nurtured the idea of moving to Latvia. However, due to her Canadian citizenship – a 'third country' from the Eurocentric point of view – such a move would be bureaucratically cumbersome and would require proof of stable income, which, as a student, Elita did not have that time. Then in October 2013 the Latvian parliament made a historical change to the Citizenship Law (1994) allowing dual citizenship for those whose ancestors were Latvians. Elita recounts,

> I started writing my blog in English about the Latvian ancestors because many of my generation do not speak Latvian anymore, but they are nevertheless very interested in Latvia. More people started writing to me personally, requesting help in understanding or searching for their 'roots'. Over several years I accumulated clients and was able to make a roots-searching service as my income and I decided to move to Latvia permanently. I started travelling to Latvia during summers but

lived in Canada the rest of the year. As soon as the changes in the Citizenship Law were introduced, I immediately applied for dual citizenship and I booked a flight to Latvia the very same day I got my passport. (Elita)

As we can see, Elita did not 'return' to Latvia immediately. Her idea of a permanent return grew from her study of history and from the global network she built of clients with Latvian 'roots'. Moreover, prior her return, she had engaged in diaspora tourism, visiting the country several times as a diasporic tourist. Yet there is a dissonance between how she sees herself – as 'returning' to her ancestors' homeland – and her legal status as an immigrant born in Canada. She refers to herself as 'a foreign Latvian' and notes that others also call her so. She dislikes the part 'foreign' because she insists that she is a Latvian and returned to Latvia in her special way as she could. 'Our parents or grandparents were born here, but we are, nevertheless, returning to our families' homeland,' she stated.

In our second example, Davis's (aged 27) participation in a folk-dance group was one of the reasons he first came to Latvia. He had visited Latvia as a teenager with his parents but being in Latvia together with other Australian-Latvian youth for *Dziesmusvētki*, the traditional Song and Dance festival (more about this later), created a special feeling of belonging. Due to the highly positive impression of Latvia he had at that time, he decided to travel to Latvia alone the next year. He had just turned 18 when he arrived to spend three summer months in Latvia.

I met wonderful people! I made really nice acquaintances and felt deeply that I belong here. *Dziesmusvētki* was my first stimulus – incredible euphoric sense of belonging and togetherness. It had a huge impact on me, although I was playing with thoughts that I could live in Latvia for a year or so to understand where my grandparents come from. And then my own trip the following year […] I had this sense that all doors are open – the world belongs to me, everything is possible. (Davis)

Davis was studying in an Australian university and, at the same time, was pursuing his 'dream' vocation – becoming a chef. He left his studies in Australia and moved to Latvia. This turned out to be a permanent move. At the time of the interview he had already been living there for eight years. He arrived with few possessions, and did not have big plans to move permanently or temporarily. He sent his CV out here and there, but then at some point decided to open a café. Starting a business was not in his plans but, as often happens in migration stories, the conditions for business or self-employment can be more favourable than accessing paid employment in established structures due

to his 'foreign' background. The success of his venture was helped by other diasporic returnees and visitors from diaspora:

> We are a kind of 'minority' here. There are relatively few of us, but we understand each other well. We do have different ways of thinking to some extent, and we have different life experiences, therefore we try to support each other. If one of us [diaspora Latvians] tries to start something new, the others usually support it. I actually had to send just a few phone messages and the word spread about my café. Everyone knew and of them most came. (Davis)

Although they are relatively few in number, Davis describes the capacity of the 'old' diaspora to innovate and bring change. Thus, a strong exilic identity to support each other transfers also to Latvia, after return. This further produces social change in terms of capacities to influence social structures: to maintain and grow a business, where social and identity-based support plays a crucial role.

The next examples are from recent emigrants who are returnees from the so-called 'young' diaspora. Elmars, an artist (aged 31) lived in the United Kingdom for several years. Although he studied and had a job, he did not like life there. According to Gmelch's typology of return (1980), one could say that it was a return of 'failure'. However, Elmars himself put it differently – more in terms of feelings: 'I did not like it in England. But I don't think I will stay in Latvia either. I have a plan, but I need at least a year to work it out before I can move away again, and it will not be to England.' In this short excerpt we can see the complexity of return. Elmars travels back to London from time to time as his partner and child still live there. He did not like living in England, but thanks to the free movement of European citizens within Europe, he can return and travel to and fro relatively easily. And yet, he does not think of his return as permanent; Latvia is a temporary stopover, where he will rethink his options for onward migration to another country.

In a different example, Eliza (aged 24) studied and worked in the United Kingdom and returned by responding to a special return incentive, funded by the Latvian government (2015), intended to attract foreign-educated youth back to Latvia. She considered returning to Latvia if she could find a job, because she had to repay her study loan obtained from Latvian banks. She did get a job through the return scheme but was disappointed how little change and innovation she could make:

> They [governmental institution] did not actually try to understand the unique skills and abilities I have. These come not only from my education abroad but also from two years of professional work. I was asked to do the simplest tasks, those which were left over. I felt quite bad because I was applying for this

programme and all this idea of return was very purposeful to me. And I ask this question to myself from time to time – did I really have to study abroad to do these very simple tasks now? But I try to work with my attitude and I try to take it easier, simply as my way of how I managed to return to Latvia. (Eliza)

Her return, institutionally envisaged as innovative, was not felt as such by Eliza herself. Social change was blocked by 'old' structures in the institution she was assigned to. However, Eliza's own motivation to return was more complex, including longing to be within networks of her friends and relatives and, in relation to her perception of class and lifestyle, to live in a place where her extended family owns land: 'One more thing I understood in London: I lived in a very tiny flat, and it was terribly expensive but we have a big plot of land and a big country house back in Latvia. And it is so easily accessible from Riga [as a weekend home].'

Note how, in contrast to Davis, Eliza expresses her belonging(s) in economic ways: she, together with her extended family, *owns* a property, and this seems to be more important than her political identification with Latvianness. Her current friends in Riga are mostly people who have also studied in the United Kingdom and have returned. She needs to stick to these people because sometimes she thinks the return was a mistake for her career and only those who have had similar experiences could understand her.

In sum, the meaning of a permanent return for recent migrants or returnees from the 'old' diaspora differs in their motivations for return and their emphasis on Latvianness as a historically constructed form of belonging. Moreover, the notion of permanence is highly relative, both in the examples presented here as illustrations and backed up by evidence from the wider corpus of interview and survey data.

But there are also similarities: Davis did not have any savings but he succeeded in establishing his own café. This reality of return would bring him closer to 'economic' migrants. In the meantime, the dominant discourse citing economic difficulties in Latvia is also being challenged by recent returnees. Some of them have established an association in Latvia, *Your Move*, with the aim of advertising workplaces for qualified returnees and promoting return to Latvia as a lifestyle choice too, with opportunities to have an interesting social life, cheaper living costs and better housing than in London or other world metropolises (Kreilis 2018).

Diaspora Tourism 'Returns'

Diasporans are, by virtue of the one of the defining criteria of diaspora, oriented towards the improvement of their homeland (Safran 1991). Through

interaction with their personal networks, and sometimes in response to state programmes, diasporans often initiate and participate in large-scale cultural events, local gatherings, visiting ancestral graveyards, genealogy tourism and more. Summer activities for diaspora children and families are an increasingly important activity, combining networked tourism events in Latvia with encouragement for the younger generation to understand life in Latvia, improve their language skills, and, potentially, consider returning to Latvia permanently some day.

In this section we illustrate three such touristic returns: genealogy tourism, searching for one's 'roots' and Song and Dance Festivals, which are highly influential large-scale events across all three Baltic states. These returns are not only transnationally relevant for identity processes but are also interlinked with permanent return and VFR.

Elita, whom we introduced in the previous section, had engaged in developing a tourism activity, and also moved to Latvia herself. Here she describes her main clients:

> They are middle-age people mainly, or older, born around the 1950s or the 1960s. Usually they do not speak Latvian anymore because only one of the family members went abroad. One group are the children of those who were sent to Germany as foreign workers [*Fremdarbeiter*, people who were forced to work during World War Two]; the parents fully integrated into the local society and did not tell anything to their children and other family members. But now, when a person who was in forced labour has died, their children want to know everything of what he or she did not tell them. Usually this is the main story for most clients. (Elita)

The above quote and the network of diasporic clients she has developed are relevant in several ways, but one aspect is glaring: the emigration of previous generations was, to a great extent, silenced; parents or grandparents did not want to tell their offspring about the past. After Elita started advertising these activities online, her network of clients began to grow, and roots-searching visits increased. Although we do not have statistics regarding these visits, the numbers of such returnees are qualitatively relevant to identity processes. The social change takes place at historical, individual and organization levels. After decades of silence, they want to unpack the history of their family, and search for possibilities to do so. The increasing interest by such individuals allows Elita and similar specialists to make a living by organizing tours back to Latvia.

Moreover, Latvia's capital Riga has always been multicultural with a prominent presence of Germans, Jews and Russians, including many as property and business owners, and playing an important role in arts, culture and

science. A special role belongs to the Baltic German minority in drafting the legislation of independent Latvia in the early twentieth century. However, just before the Second World War, they had to suddenly leave their homes in an accelerated repatriation to Germany.

The case of the Baltic Germans illustrates the situation for both diasporans and, the so-called 'affinity diaspora', which Ancien et al. (2009: 6) define as 'a collection of people, usually former immigrants and tourists or business travellers, who have a different national or ethnic identity to a nation state but who feel some special affinity or affection for that nation state and who act on its behalf, while resident in the state, after they return home, or from a third country'. During the Cold War in the 1970s and 1980s, some Baltic German representatives living in the Federal Republic of Germany were vocal in their call for restoration of Latvian independence. Vivid stories and memories about life in pre-war Latvia had been transmitted over generations. One representative of a Baltic German organization in Latvia describes the diasporic return trips they have been organizing since the early 1990s:

> [Baltic Germans] knew best where they wanted to go on excursions. They grew up here themselves [in Riga or other places in Latvia]. Descendants of barons, famous artists, they knew art works and places by heart. All life, traditions, everyday things, seasons in Latvia, crossing the frozen Daugava river by foot in the winters, summers spent at Jurmala resort, all these memories were so alive. They could tell us more than we could tell them, and through these memories new friendships emerged [among Baltic German visitors who met in Riga]. Some stayed in hotels, but usually there were friends and relatives who hosted our guests in their homes. There is no need to encourage them to visit Latvia. […] We have our 'golden guests': a lady, in her 90s, she takes a six-hour trip from Germany and as soon as she gets back to Germany she calls [her friends] on the phone and says that she wants to come back to Riga. On every visit [the Baltic Germans] photograph their native homes in Riga. And so it goes, year by year. (Representative, Baltic German organization)

One of the liveliest examples of diasporic returns are the Song and Dance Festivals. A tradition that began in the late nineteenth century, these were the first activities that diaspora members worldwide sought to organize, even in displaced persons camps after the Second World War. As networked events, they brought together Latvians as well as their relatives and friends on a geographical basis: the song festivals were held regularly in Australia, Germany and in various parts of the US. Since independence, the participation of diaspora choirs and dance groups has grown steadily over the years, and for many recent emigrants, establishing a choir or dance group is motivated by both the

desire to maintain ties with each other abroad through practising Latvian culture and with the aim of returning to Latvia, at least for this event (Carpenter 1996). For Davis (introduced earlier) attending these festivals triggered a permanent return too. He emphasizes that his grandparents always lived with the dream of returning to Latvia, while his parents followed a common tactic to instill the idea of return in their children:

> They had this vision that each child would spend at least some time, a year or so, in Latvia and would see life there through their own experience. Such personal experience was important in my parents' vision so that we children would understand why it was important to maintain and nurture our Latvianness abroad, and why we had to study the language. (Davis)

Thus, diasporic tourism would serve as a trial, which could lead to a personal choice to return or not. More importantly, it was a choice that was already transnationally interwoven through everyday efforts in maintaining the language while abroad. But Davis also challenges the view that exiles are politically motivated to return: 'My generation is very diverse; not everyone has enough motivation to save up money and come to (visit) Latvia. Others don't have enough motivation to speak Latvian.' However, he does contrast the 'old' diaspora to recent emigrants:

> I have spoken about returning with some who have left recently and live abroad, and then people say: 'Yes, I would like to return but it is so difficult in Latvia, I cannot survive.' As if everything is so bad here; well, I don't know. What I know is that belonging makes life colourful. […] For me everything started changing when I undertook a leadership role in a Latvian organisation; through singing and dancing, my awareness of Latvianness grew. I am Latvian through and through, I am not Australian. It's a nice place, but I never really felt that I fully belong there. (Davis)

And so his migratory path evolved: from taking a leadership in diasporic events in Australia, to visiting Latvia during Song and Dance Festivals and finally to permanent return.

Visiting Friends and Relatives

VFR mobility is motivated by a multitude of reasons, including transnational homemaking, holidays in the parental country, visiting doctors or spas, going to the theatre and renewing travel documents (King and Lulle 2015). Much VFR is seasonal, tied to summer holidays, but many visits are also spontaneous.

Our interviews with diaspora members and policymakers reveal that there are dividing lines in VFR practices: clients from the 'old diaspora' tend to stay in hotels. Indeed, one popular hotel established by diaspora owners is called *Radi and Draugi* [Relatives and Friends]. The clients tend to be elderly. When more recent emigrants come back to Latvia they usually stay with friends and relatives, often their parents or grandparents, or in their own homes; they do not need hotels. Medical consultants praise diasporans who 'spread the word' about services in Latvia and act as 'good-will ambassadors' who tell their neighbours, work colleagues and family members about Latvia. In a nutshell: from the business and policy point of view, VFR mobility is beneficial.

Among our interviewees and survey respondents the following reasons are frequently cited: 'home' is still there also relatives; the need to renew documents; combining visits with cultural events and medical check-ups with familiar doctors and in the native language (important for recent emigrants). From the 'old diaspora' Anita, from the United Kingdom, who is in her 70s, visits Latvia at least twice a year. She has an apartment in Riga, she sets up meetings with friends and acquaintances, does work in archives as she writes about Latvian diaspora and makes her cultural agenda: 'I hardly got tickets to opera. All are sold out already a month before. And they say that Latvians lack money.' She makes this sarcastic reference to money possibly due to the ingrained division which we mentioned before – between political and economic reasons for emigration, and also those who regularly express disappointment with Latvia's low salaries. From the recent diaspora, Daiga, also from the United Kingdom, who emigrated in 2009, jumped on the plane every month as she was still doing her diploma back in Latvia and combined this with her work in a hotel in London.

VFR mobility is by far the most numerous and widespread form of return mobilities, yet it is largely overlooked by policymakers and in public discourse. However, people themselves attach great importance to this mobility, both as a facilitator and replacement for, permanent return. Latvia clearly remains a hub for both VFR mobility and diaspora events. According to our survey data (Krisjane and Bauls 2014), those who live abroad alone visit Latvia more often than those who live with at least one other family member. Men tend to travel back to Latvia more often than women. Furthermore, there is a very significant difference in terms of qualifications: those with higher educational degrees tend to visit Latvia more often than lower-educated respondents. Personal aspirations to return to Latvia influence frequency of travel as well. Those who aspire to return to Latvia travel 2.3 times a year on average, while those who do not actively plan to return to Latvia average 1.4 times per year. Moreover, the longer people live abroad, the less frequent are their visits back to Latvia. This is at odds with the existing Repatriation Law (1995) on support

for return: permanent return and longer time spent abroad are favoured over those who have left recently. Initially, repatriation was possible for those who left Latvia before 1991 – Latvia's independence, but in the 2010s changes were introduced and now return support is available to those who have spent at least 10 years abroad.

VFR is a quantitatively and qualitatively relevant type of transnational return; it is linked to networks of family and friends, managing properties back in Latvia and running transnational errands regarding necessary official documents. Besides, choosing a place to stay – either in hotels, with relatives or friends, or at their own properties, poses further questions regarding our understanding of the nature and location of transnational 'home' in today's mobile world.

As pointed out in our introduction, little is known about how meso-level initiatives influence the institutionalization of transnationalism. Two important legal initiatives stand out. First, the *Citizenship Law* (1994) enables both an easier return for those who previously had only one citizenship, and also enables the forging of stronger ties with current states of residence out-side Latvia. But here comes a caution: the law does not allow for dual citizen-ship, for instance, with Russia, which is not part of the EU or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) but is home to Latvian descendants from sev-eral waves of migration, including the forced deportations that took place during and after the Second World War. In this way, geopolitical differences are strengthened.

But the most important changes are related to the *Diaspora Law* (2018) – the latest initiative with innovative suggestions that came directly from the 'new' and 'old' diasporas residing in Europe, represented by The European Latvian Association. This law envisages declaring a second residence in Latvia precisely due to widespread practice of VFR and the prior difficulties which returnees face: they must deregister from Latvia, albeit many see it as 'home'; de-register cars; they have difficulties with understanding why, when and how to pay tax in Latvia et cetera. Therefore the old and new diaspora members together proposed to introduce a new norm, whereby émigrés can register their second residence in Latvia and can vote in municipal elections if they hold a property in Latvia. Such changes would create a category of transnationals who reside abroad but also visit Latvia frequently and not only feel belonging but can legally practice it.

Conclusion

In this chapter we first considered, conceptually and empirically, reference points of value systems and norms between the earlier exiles and the recent

migrants in order to trace certain manifestations of social change. 'Old' diaspora members generally emphasize their political and sentimental obligations towards Latvia, while recent migrants are often rather disappointed with the country's economic state. However, in the contemporary regime of increased opportunities for travel and return, such divisions get blurred: 'old' diaspora returnees do have economic motivations, alongside responsibilities to nurture Latvianness in their children and grandchildren. And recent returnees try to change the division by emphasizing pragmatic gains and the possibilities of a 'better life' upon return to Latvia. In terms of evolving social change, more similarities may evolve through returns of the second generation of recent migrants. Permanent return to Latvia is not seen only as an obligation or as a result of failure to integrate abroad (Cassarino 2004; Gmelch 1980), but as a pathway of opportunities, which may also lead to emigration again.

Second, we examined three different modes of return to understand how mundane practices reveal themselves in such transnational patterns of mobilities. Along with the taken-for-granted idea that return is the final move which closes the migration cycle, we included diasporic tourism and VFR (Janta et al. 2015) as actually existing return mobilities which shape identities and belonging to contemporary Latvia. Diasporic return relates more to the 'old' diaspora and deepens our understanding of historically formed identities and social changes in Latvia. Exilic experiences and the silence of relatives about reasons why they left Latvia can be altered again through 'roots' tourism. Members of the 'old' diaspora open tourism services, restaurants and hotels to cater for their relatives and friends, among a broader clientele. But both diasporans and the recently emigrated prepare on an everyday day basis, wherever they live, to come back to Latvia for the Song and Dance Festivals, taking place once every five years and gathering tens of thousands of participants. Despite their infrequency, Song and Dance Festivals are born out of a transnational everyday process, leading towards the potential return: as visits, as diaspora tourism and as permanent return. But preparation for and participation in this event can also lead to permanent return, as we saw.

In terms of the sheer scale of border-crossing, VFR is the most popular form of return mobility. Transnational connections of families and friends across borders lead to visits, and Latvia remains the centre of such visits. It is also driven by many other everyday activities that people want to perform in Latvia: attend cultural events, look after properties and have medical checks and procedures. Permanent return, diaspora tourism and VFR enfold into, encourage or also deter each other. All three types of return lead to more pluralized understanding of transnational return as evolving social change. Some of these are negative for returnees; for instance, during VFR mobility or diasporic tourism, returnees are legally treated as 'foreign residents'. Moreover,

return mobilities, such as shorter tourism visits enrich understanding of diaspora by including 'affinity' diaspora (Ancien et al. 2009) and belonging of people who are not ethnic Latvians but want to return there regularly.

Finally, and responding to our third question on how does return foster emerging sociocultural identities and what kinds of social change are taking place, we see shifts towards stronger trasnationalization in society (Portes 2010). While existing legislation tended to favour permanent return, actual practices of multiple returns create a tension with such restricted understanding of return. We argue that bottom-up policy initiatives that stem from returnees' own experiences can channel social change that is already emerging in collective identities. With the example of 'old' and 'new' diasporans working together in proposing legislative changes to enable non-resident Latvians better more opportunities to maintain a second residence in Latvia and participate in local political life, Latvia paves a way towards more fundamental changes in a country where various forms of transnational return are becoming constitutive of its future.

Acknowledgement

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Part 3

QUESTIONING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND NORMS

<div align="center">

Chapter 6

'BE THE CHANGE': ACTION STRATEGIES AND IMPLICIT KNOWLEDGE IN TRANSNATIONAL RETURN MIGRATION*

Claudia Olivier-Mensah

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Introduction

Movements of people, and therefore their lives in entirely new and previously unknown national contexts, shape and change the attitudes, actions and identities of individuals. These transitions and changes become particularly apparent when persons are confronted with social contexts that, prior to these life-changing events, were perceived as known and familiar. Return processes in which a person comes back to the starting point of where the migration initially began enable, on the one hand, a conscious return to one's own basis and, on the other hand, often lead to confrontations with the social environment[1] in the context of origin.

Although return processes constitute a highly individual experience with different forms of knowledge acquisition in the biography of a person, the current societal debate on return migration tends to be fairly general, in focusing on explicit expert know-how and its economic relevance on the long-term economic growth of a society. 'Discussions about the relationship between migration, incorporation, and development […] focus too much on the economic at the expense of the socio-cultural. It's as if we just get the money right, all else will follow' (Levitt 2011: 139). Other forms of knowledge, however, such as experiences and values, and the significance of change for each actor remain almost entirely unconsidered since they are perceived to be of little or no relevance to the political debate about migration and

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development. But the fact must be noticed that changes are not just happening on the whole scale with great and measurable success but rather through individual actors who have changed and who influence other persons to change too on a small daily basis. Or, in Mahatma Ghandi's words: 'Be the change that you wish to see in the world.'

This chapter intends to highlight the relationship and exchanges between the individual actors and their social environment in return migration. In this respect, it aims at looking at the persons not merely as 'resources' and 'suppliers' of 'useable' knowledge for the country of origin but rather perceiving them as agents of their own life by tracing their subjective handling of their knowledge in return processes. Thus, to understand the personal action strategies of returnees of their knowledge at the micro level is a precondition that social change can take place also at a societal meso level.

The article is structured as following. The first part is dedicated to elaborating the theoretical relationship between transnational return, knowledge and social change (section two). In the following part, I examine the research context of Ghana and the design of the underlying study more closely (section three). By means of empirical analyses, I shed further light on which forms of knowledge the actors develop regarding the interaction with their social environments, and I further identify the central acting strategies of the returnees (section four). The article concludes with the central findings and a discussion of the wider question – Changing who? (section five).

Transnational Return, Knowledge and Change

The return of migrants to their countries of origin is considered in the migration-development nexus (Faist et al. 2011; Nyberg-Sørensen et al. 2002) as one of the most effective approaches to promote economic development (Black and King 2004; Tiemoko 2004). A successful return, which is equated with a permanent residence in the country of origin, was for long time a precondition for the development and social change (Van Hear 2010) of a society. However, empirical studies increasingly dissociate themselves from a purely development-focused view. They attempt, through models of mobility (Xiang et al. 2013), transnationality (De Bree et al. 2010) and social networks (Salaff and Greve 2013) new theoretical perspectives, to be able to comprehend the complexity of return processes beyond the one-dimensional interpretation as sedentariness. To develop a deeper understanding of what is meant with the term transnational return, the concept of transREmigration (Olivier-Mensah 2017) can be useful, which describes four RE-framings in the discussion of return migration. First, it REconceptualises return in breaking

up the categorical distinctions between forms of migration into emigration, return migration and transmigration. Return is no longer viewed as the end (Cassarino 2004) but as one phase in the migration process and interpreted as a part of a circular system of social relationships. Second, transREmigration emphasizes that by remembering the familiar and intimate, patterns and actions need to be RE-contextualized in particular. 'Transnational return […] highlight[s] social boundary work in remigration processes. This concept describes the fact that a return is a reencounter with a social context and a reference system which one knows from before and in which transnational "ways of being and belonging" (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) in particular are challenged through a recontextualisation' (Olivier-Mensah and Scholl-Schneider 2016: 4). Third, transREmigration REfocuses the perspective on societies and the nation state at the macro level, from the viewpoint of the actors on the micro level. It opens a subject-focused perspective on return and social change and enables to highlight the actions, feelings, thoughts and the knowledge of the actors. And forth, the economic focus is REconstructed by examining agency and processes of empowerment.

The transnational understanding of return also influences the discussion about development and change and therefore about the so-called brain drain versus brain gain debate. The concept of brain drain, the migration and loss of knowledge, is put into contrast with the argumentation of brain gain, the gain in knowledge as a result of the return of migrants. Mainly the migration of skilled professionals and highly educated migrants who left their countries of origin to begin their studies or vocational trainings and their respective social capital (Bourdieu 1986) are highlighted. The competition over the 'heads' of the migrants focuses therefore essentially on knowledge as a form of social transfers[2] (Boccagni and Decimo 2013; Olivier 2011) and on the question, which nation can profit from it.

However, there are different forms of knowledge. The main differentiation is that into explicit and implicit knowledge (Polanyi 1966). Explicit knowledge describes knowledge that is conscious and available and can therefore be voiced, debated, documented, transported and corrected, such as expert knowledge, particular know-how and factual knowledge. Implicit knowledge refers to knowledge content that is considered difficult to formalize and communicate as it is subconsciously present in a person's mind and therefore constitutes incorporated knowledge, such as experiences, intuitions, feelings, firm beliefs and value systems. Explicit knowledge has been subject to modification stimulated by different national context. Thus the knowledge acquired abroad during, for example, a study programme, when applied in the context of origin in return processes, is frequently subject to adaptation to local

circumstances. These transnationalization processes of expert knowledge are an expression of context-related knowledge application of returnees. Implicit knowledge, on the other hand, points to the phenomenon that experience and values collected by a person are subject to modifications due to the existence of different national reference frames. Hence the act of migration and the experiences collected in a new national context frequently lead to changes in the behaviour, attitudes, expectations and habitus pertaining to the prevalent value system which need to be dealt with in return migration. 'Returnees may be faced with social pressures or feel marginalized by their own origin society, while at the same time trying to negotiate their places in society without denying their own specificities' (Cassarino 2004: 264). The inner innate scale that adequately worked abroad requires new alignment in the country of origin.

The knowledge forms can be examined from two different levels of inter-pretation. The individual level relates to the fact that all knowledge is connected to a person and, against this background, allocated to one individual person in a micro context. In contrast, the society level describes that knowledge is examined towards its usefulness and regarded as 'thought-reflected cultural potential that is beneficial to society (Kron 2009: 270) by focusing on acting of individuals that produces social change.

The interlinked observation of the knowledge forms and its levels is in close connection to the debate on brain drain/gain. The discussion thereby mainly concentrated on the form of explicit knowledge, qualifications and education, with a focus on its usability for the nation-state of the countries of origin at the macro level. However, besides the political and economic profit for the long-term change and the social transformation (Amelina 2016; Castles 2012) of a society, the individual significance of knowledge for the life of the actors should not be forgotten (Olivier 2011). Based on the concept of lifeworld orientation (Grunwald and Thiersch 2009) which provides help to self-help through empowerment and identity work, the agency of individuals is promoted. They are considered as initiators within the context of their own actions who generate resources and develop possibilities far beyond any structures at nation-state–level. An actor-based perspective describes personal change and development hence as a circle: the analysis of a specific situation, the collection of information and the integration of the new information into the own (value) system leads to a change in behaviour (Taylor 1999). Only a person who changes according to the motto of Mahatma Gandhi 'be the change' at the micro level can produce societal changes at meso level. Those micro changes and how to deal with them are visible on a daily basis and by small developments occurring in the context of social relationships which will be analysed in the following empirical sections.

The Empirical Study

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, one can safely speak about educational migration taking place in Ghana. Despite language barriers and a lack of colonial ties, Germany is one of the countries preferred by many Ghanaians with a desire to study abroad. A substantial number of highly qualified Ghanaians returning from Germany can be observed who use state-supported financial assistance for their return to their home countries.

Since the early 1990s, the Ghanaian government has pursued a range of different return policies, all of which are based on the strategy to attract highly qualified Ghanaian nationals living abroad. In 2001, a homecoming summit was organized under the auspices of the Kufuor government which proclaimed the potential and skills of the Ghanaian diaspora for the country's development (Awumbila et al. 2008). Legal and institutional innovations focusing on the international mobility of the Ghanaian population include dual nationality which was introduced already as early as 1999 and the right of expatriates to vote from abroad, which was established in 2006. With these incentives, the stability of its political system, strong economic growth and good work opportunities, Ghana offers solid conditions to persons willing to return. This assumption also supports the general understanding that migrants' decisions to return is largely dependent on the economic and political frame conditions in their countries of origin (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013).

In the following, the implicit forms of knowledge and transnational dimensions pertaining to the return processes are examined from the position of the actors by means of empirical evidence. The data were collected in Ghana from August to December 2009 within the context of the author's dissertation which examines the migration biographies[3] and the transnational social embedding of highly educated Ghanaian migrants[4] from Germany. The methodological approaches[5] applied to collect data were qualitative ego-centred social network analysis (SNA) in the form of network cards (26 cards), narrative interviews (32 interviews) and the participant observation method. The latter was applied primarily during further informal meetings with the interview partners and during seminars and alumni meetings for the purpose of collecting background information and know-how about the individual living situations of the actors. Additionally, expert interviews were conducted with the central representatives of the sectors responsible for migration and remigration policies in Ghana. The data material was collected and analysed by means of the grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss 1998). The evaluation of the social networks was conducted using the software-based tool VennMaker[6]. The empirical foundation of this chapter is based on biographical accounts which were collected during the narrative interviews.

The time span that the interviewed Ghanaians spent is Germany varies between 1 and 28 years. The average time spent in Germany until the return to Ghana is 5.7 years. A total of 78 per cent of the returnees obtained a master's degree in Germany. The second largest unit with 10 persons is the group of persons who completed their doctoral studies in Germany. A clear minority are the students who obtained a diploma were awarded a bachelor's degree or participated in some form of career development via the company Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung GmbH (InWent). The highest percentage of highly skilled Ghanaian migrants taking part in the study is found in the natural sciences (50 per cent), followed by humanities and social sciences (28 per cent), structural sciences (19 per cent) and economic sciences (3 per cent).

Action Strategies of Ghanaian Returnees to Handle Implicit Knowledge

For many of the interviewed Ghanaian returnees, the time spent in Germany constituted a formative period not only with reference to their study courses and the acquisition of specific expert knowledge but also with different experiences and mental changes. Jack Straw is a Ghanaian remigrant from Germany. After living in Germany for 2.5 years and the successful completion of a Master course in Environmental and Resource Management, he returned to Ghana and reflected on that process. 'Coming back to Ghana […] you realize that even though this is where you are from and you went away, but you realize that this is totally different. And you find it difficult to understand your own system. The system that you've been living in for twenty something years.'

Jack's perception of Ghana, his country of origin, along with his statement that he finds it difficult to understand its 'own' system, illustrates the changes in attitude he went through while being abroad. All forms of implicit knowledge described within the course of the following analysis constitute transnationally acquired knowledge. In the following the strategies which are used to deal with the transnationally acquired knowledge and how it is evaluated and trans-mitted is illustrated with the examples of the cases of Abena Ameyaw, Kwame Asare and Jack Straw.

Adaptation and reintegration

One pattern how to deal with implicit knowledge is characterized by the general acceptance of the social environment in Ghana. Abena Ameyaw completed her doctoral degree in Environmental and Resource Management during a four-year stay in Germany. She spent this time together with her

Ghanaian husband who, at the same time, participated in an open university course in England. During their time in Germany, she also gave birth to two children. After the family returned to Ghana, Abena advised her husband how to better cope with local challenges. 'My husband is always complaining that there [in Ghana] is no water, electricity is not efficient […] he is always complaining […] this should be this, this should be that […] and I just tell him this is Ghana, just switch your mind, you have to get used to things' (Abena Ameyaw).

After returning to Ghana, the implicit knowledge of Abena's husband led him to criticize and reject the local conditions in Ghana because, while living in Germany, he had become familiar with and accustomed to other standards. Since her husband has no power to influence the external structural circumstances, Abena's solution to the problem, however, is acceptance and adaptation and becoming accustomed to the social environment in Ghana. 'Just switch your mind' she tells him and thus describes the process of simply turning the switch, changing one's thoughts and accept that one is back in Ghana and no longer in Germany, under different circumstances. In this process, knowledge needs to be adapted, or in other words, reactivated, by switching back to the old knowledge base pertaining to the context of Ghana that existed prior to migration. The metaphor of the switch illustrates that the newly acquired implicit knowledge is not discarded but continues to exist on the other side of the switch, available, though currently not activated.

Kwame Asare, who lived in Germany for 6.5 years and now works as a researcher for a non-government organization in Ghana, uses a different metaphor to describe the knowledge adaptation process to the social environment in Ghana. 'To reintegrate, you've come back, you've been out there, everything changed, the way you speak, the way you talk and the way you do everything, so it was getting back your Ghanaian gloves on' (Kwame Asare).

Kwame uses the term 'reintegration' to describe his way of coming to terms with the changes affecting himself. Upon his return, his first step is to put his 'Ghanaian gloves' back on again. The gloves are to conceal his changes and his implicit knowledge as the reversal of norm changes and value systems in an educational process is not easily feasible. They continue to exist beneath the surface, yet the 'Ghanaian' element is meant to obscure the changes. Since the gloves have the same appearance as the social environment in Ghana, they serve as a kind of 'magic hat'. Besides this function, the gloves also work as a protection against the surrounding environment – against resistance, discrepancies and conflicts. However, they are not just gloves. They are 'his' personal gloves, the ones Kwame had been wearing in Ghana prior to his migration to Germany. According to Kwame, the process of reintegration therefore requires the personal status which had existed prior to migration to be

re-established. It means that the implicit knowledge content, the experiences, modified behaviour patterns and opinions that were acquired as a result of the migration process need to be disguised in order to remain unnoticed by the social environment to avoid confrontation.

The behaviour patterns outlined above regarding the adaptation of implicit knowledge to the social environment in Ghana, on the one hand, pursue the activation of former implicit knowledge content from Ghana by 'switching your mind' and, on the other hand, by applying the 'glove strategy', aim to conceal the implicit knowledge acquired whilst living in Germany.

Knowledge transfer

Besides the strategy of adaptation and reintegration, significant importance is placed on the transfer[7] of implicit knowledge, as the following example of Abena demonstrates, in which she describes her desire to teach her daughter some German after their return to Ghana.

> My elder daughter she's 2 years 8 months (.) and […] she was picking the language when we came […]. I really wish I could continue with her but my German now is so bad because I don't want her to lose it […] so I try to buy the DVDs in German for her and to try to get her some books in German. (Abena Ameyaw)

Having returned to Ghana, Abena wants her daughter to grow up bilingually and profit from this resource. It was during her stay in Germany that Abena became aware of the importance of the German language and developed a strong tendency to retain her language skills. Through her implicit knowledge, Abena develops acting strategies to foster her daughter's explicit knowledge of the language despite her own lack of explicit knowledge content. Thus she generates new possibilities.

As far as parenting is concerned, Jack has a vision similar to that expressed by Abena. He attempts to share his implicit knowledge regarding his own educational concept with his parent generation.

> These are the different worlds you know. Yeah but this makes ehh the world an interesting place […] but you have to live in the two worlds to know how life is. Yeah if you don't understand if you don't travel around, you wouldn't see what life is all about […] If you just know only Germany […] You don't have life, quality of life and if you know only Africa and the way things are done in Africa you don't know life. Now I'm planning of getting money. My mother is 68. When she is 70 years, I am planning of sponsoring my mother to go and spend

one month with my brother in the US. So she would have the opportunity to see
the other world before she dies. (Jack Straw)

Besides Jack's personal understanding of education, in other words, that trav-
elling transmits knowledge about the diversity of life and that one has to know
both worlds – Africa and Germany/Europe/the USA – to know about life
and experience real quality of life, it also becomes apparent that he wants to
offer his mother an opportunity to find out about 'the other world' by enab-
ling her to spend one month with his brother in the United States. Similar to
Abena, though not with regard to the generation of his children but to that
of his own parents, Jack attempts to create a space of opportunities similar
to the ones he experienced as a result of his migration to Germany. Unlike
Abena, however, he does not create this space within the national context of
Ghana but by spending time in a different national context. The creation of
a transnational 'space for opportunity to experience' in both cases therefore
constitutes a concrete mode of behaviour regarding the implicit generational
transfer of knowledge in the family environment.

Niches and parallel worlds

If knowledge transfer is not feasible merely by the realization of new
experiences, attempts are made to exert a further influence on the creation of
the social environment in Ghana. Following her reflections on the significance
of the German language, Abena depicts her vision and preference regarding
a specific institutional type of child rearing and education.

> When I came here, I was looking for a school for my daughter […] because there
> [in Germany] the way they teach is different, it's more like teaching through
> playing, but here [in Ghana] is different. I go to a school, nursery one or kinder-
> garten and they are all sitting by a table and A:hh, so eventually we have to look
> for a Montessori school and it is very expensive. (Abena Ameyaw)

Abena rejects the type of education predominant in Ghana and prefers the
model of the Montessori pedagogy,[8] which focuses on the needs of children
by placing decision-making processes and the discovery of individual learning
requirements at the very centre of the activities. Due to the fact that in Ghana
the conventional social environment of institutional early childhood educa-
tion does not offer Abena the opportunity to transfer her educational ideal
to her children, she searches for a special context which allows her to realize
her aspirations despite all obstacles. Abena develops a strategy which enables
her daughter to continue to experience a type of education similar to the

one she had already received in one of the nurseries in Germany during her migration time. Hence Abena attempts to transfer to her daughter her own understanding of education by shaping her daughter's social environment.

A different picture is revealed by the work situation of Jack who works for a state-operated industrial enterprise in Ghana. It sheds light on the impact which the non-transfer of implicit knowledge as a result of resistance from the social environment can have on the actors.

> This is the problem with those of us, who have studied outside, especially in Germany, where we learned to be sufficient, we learned how to change things, things shouldn't be static, they should be dynamic, continually improvement, these are all systems we learned in Germany […], but here people resist and we get frustrated. […] You are coming from the Western World, you want to introduce new ideas, you are the devil. This is how we have been doing it all this thirty years or twenty years […] so even they don't want, sometimes they don't want you […] You are working, you are receiving salary, but you are not happy. (Jack Straw)

Jack Straw outlines first the implicit knowledge he gained as a result of his stay in Germany. With his altered attitudes, however, but above all with trying to implement his new ideas, he faces considerable resistance from the social environment of his work place in Ghana. The returnees are considered a problem because they want to introduce new ideas coming from the 'Western World', and thus they represent change and transition. The conflict between the new ideas what he brings forward to share and the rigid structures prevalent in his working environment in the government-run sector is something Jack has to endure. His work reality does not make Jack happy. Although he expresses a lack of understanding regarding the reactions he encounters in his working environment and the fact that all of his knowledge, explicit and implicit, and therefore he as a person, are not welcome, he does not actively attempt to change the situation. On the contrary, he redirects his efforts by attempting to create a different social environment by becoming self-employed in the future. In his understanding, this outlook would dissolve the tension between his implicit knowledge and his direct work context. 'To find a job or to pursue PhD and come back to lecture. […] I won't be in any industry and ehh be a consultant in my field. Then I will be on my own. Lecture and be on my own, I don't need anybody to employ me' (Jack Straw).

As his preferred option for a future life, Jack envisages pursuing a PhD title in a foreign country and then returning to Ghana. He is aware of the fact that another migration for educational purpose is not going to dissolve the tensions arising after his return. He therefore aspires to find a position as an

independent consultant and lecturer at the university which, in his opinion, would ensure that he no longer depends on the structural conditions of the state-run economic sectors in Ghana. Both envisaged vocational activities, however, comprise the basic concept of knowledge transfer[9] (consultation and tutoring). Jack wants to create his own place in Ghana where he can apply his acquired explicit and implicit knowledge and where he is not directly affected by a social environment that he regards as problematic – 'I will be on my own'. Similar to Abena who is searching for an institutional educational institution in Ghana that appeals to her own educational ideals, Jack is looking for a work environment that will allow him to maintain, implement and further develop his own educational ambitions.

In doing so, in both cases 'niches' and parallel worlds are searched and consciously created in the national container of Ghana that will allow the fulfilment of individualistic demands which are not sufficiently met by the collectivistic environment and which will make behavioural changes and transformations of cultural norms and values 'liveable'. In this respect, the 'niches' constitute a possibility to shape the concrete social environment and therefore offer an opportunity for Ghanaian returnees to withdraw from the established structures of the Ghanaian society.

Escape and new spaces

However, if the Ghanaian 'national container' is too restrictive and the conditions to alter and reshape the established national structures towards one's own benefit are too challenging, the option to leave Ghana again in the future is also taken into consideration. Jack can imagine going abroad again for better education and to acquire more explicit and implicit knowledge by doing his doctorate in Germany. The same idea is also expressed by Abena. 'When we were coming down […], we bought a six month ticket, because we didn't know how things would be. […] A six month return ticket, because we thought, oh when we come and things don't work, then we can always run back (laughs).'

Abena uses the strategy of a re-emigration or, as she calls, it a 'return' to Germany as a safety net in her remigration process to the country of origin. The return ticket creates an opportunity and an alternative perspective if the uncertain return to Ghana does not fulfil the expected outcome.

Both cases exemplify against the approach of sedentariness how the competence in mobility acquired by the migration process is made use of even after returning. The strategy of escape and creating new spaces abroad is used in order to gain more implicit knowledge, realize personal goals and increase life satisfaction in a transnational space.

Summary and reflections

The empirical examples often illustrate a tense relationship between the knowledge of the actors acquired abroad and their socio-spatial environment in Ghana. Since the persons present in the social environment frequently do not have the same value system as the returnees, they often do not regard the new perspectives and impulses as an improvement or new learning experience but rather tend to perceive them as disruptive elements. The returnees' implicit knowledge, behaviour changes and transition of cultural values and norms, which were acquired and triggered as a result of their migration to Germany, cannot be applied and transmitted to the same extent to the social environment in Ghana so that a brain gain can be achieved. In conclusion, the following four central acting strategies regarding the handling of implicit knowledge and the social environment can be identified:

(1) Deactivation of knowledge by adapting to the social environment

In their social interactions, the returnees adapt the knowledge acquired abroad to the social environment in their countries of origin. In doing so, the knowledge newly acquired abroad is concealed and/or deactivated whereas knowledge from the reference framework of the country of origin consistent with the social environment is activated. During this process, the acquired knowledge is not applied or transmitted and therefore social change cannot take place immediately. Kwame attempts to conceal his implicit knowledge in Ghana by applying the 'glove strategy', and Abena advises her husband to 'switch his mind' to deactivate the knowledge. By disguising/deactivating their implicit knowledge, however, the content is not deleted but rather preserved, and in some specific situations (such as when meeting other Ghanaian returnees from Germany) made available and retrievable. However, besides the deactivation of implicit knowledge, it is in particular the development of this action strategy which leads to the active utilization of this knowledge. For it is through the experience of migration that the realization is made that different national contexts require different gloves and the activation of different switches.

(2) Application of implicit knowledge by creating an own social environment

With regard to knowledge application in Ghana, the model of a 'niche construction' is pursued in the 'national container' to seek to accomplish individual interests and ideals and prevent collision between implicit knowledge and the social environment. Although the social environment is accepted in

its prevailing form and there are no expectations with regard to overall societal changes, attempts are made to shape the concrete social surroundings to suit own personal requirements. Certain contexts of the surroundings that are most likely to allow living out one's own implicit knowledge are consciously searched, utilized or independently created. Thus Abena can transmit her implicit knowledge and her educational ideas to her daughter via the special form of the Montessori kindergarten because the prevalent type of pre-primary child care in Ghana does not enable her to do so. Jack aspires to withdraw from the structures of the state-run Ghanaian economic sector that he is unable to accept by striving for independence and a working position at the university and thus realizing his ambition to apply and transfer his explicit and implicit knowledge. Therefore the confrontation with the social environment is engineered by creating 'niches' for one's own benefit. This does not merely enable the active utilization and living out of implicit know-how but furthermore facilitates a continuation of the individual education and development processes inspired abroad.

(3) Transfer of implicit knowledge by facilitating experience

Implicit knowledge that a person is conscious of can, like explicit knowledge, be communicated, questioned, discussed, corrected and transferred. Whereas value systems and opinions can in their existing forms not be transferred identically to other persons, the returnees develop strategies to enable their transmission and to contribute to social change in their countries or origin. The creation of a 'space for opportunity to experience' is of decisive significance for the generation-spanning transfer of experience and educational philosophies inside a family. Hence, in the case of Abena, her implicit knowledge regarding the significance of the language allows her to resort to media tools, due to her own lack of explicit knowledge, to enable her daughter to acquire explicit knowledge. This strategic mode of behaviour with the available consciously reflective knowledge content can therefore lead to compensate for the personal lack of explicit knowledge forms. Jack, on the other hand, wants to finance his mother a one-month stay with his brother in the United States.

(4) Acquisition of implicit knowledge by breaking away from the social environment

The last strategy is an example of the mobility competencies acquired as a result of the migration process. This mobility is envisaged, on the one hand, by Jack who is planning to complete his doctorate abroad and also by Abena, who considers a return flight ticket a possibility and a possible future vision.

Furthermore, another stay abroad does not only present an opportunity to apply existing implicit knowledge but pursues the intention to further expand the existing knowledge and gain additional knowledge. However, also a re-emigration can contribute to social change in the countries of origin because the diaspora, for example, in the form of migrant self-organizations is of high importance and can influence the social and political systems also transnationally from abroad.

Returnees position themselves in dealing with their knowledge and trying to implement everyday forms of social change by using a set of individual acting strategies: 'just switch your mind', 'getting back your Ghanaian gloves', creation of 'niches', generational transfer of knowledge and transnational mobility. By employing these strategies, Ghanaian returnees position themselves between the formation of 'adaptation to', 'shaping' and 'escaping from' their social environment in their country of origin. From an actor's perspective, the passive and active maintenance and the expansion and transfer of conscious implicit knowledge is therefore attainable. All four positions described frequently occur simultaneously in the different areas of life of a person and present central resources to structure and engineer life. Thus processes of adaptation to the social environment, for example, within the context of work by disguising specific attitudes and avoiding confrontation, can run parallel with the shaping of and active influence of the social context surrounding the family, and, in addition, by creating alternative windows of opportunities abroad in the family context. The interaction of the different action strategies pursues the goal to be able to interact, communicate and altogether function in a specific social environment.

Conclusion: Changing Who?

Implicit knowledge of actors has a significant influence on individuals and their orientations, as the empirical evidence of this chapter points out. From this perspective, knowledge is an intrinsically inalienable asset as humans cannot be reduced to mere knowledge carriers and their explicit knowledge in migration processes. Migration influences all kind of knowledge forms. Implicit knowledge therefore changes in the behavior, attitudes, expectations and habitus and reform the picture the returnees have of their own identities. These new formations must be negotiated when confronted with the former norms and value systems of the social environment when returning to one's country of origin.

Returnees are dealing with topics of adaptation and reintegration as well as creating niches and parallel worlds in their country of origins. Furthermore, an escape, that is, another re-emigration and finding new spaces abroad can serve as another possibility. A repeated remigration, however, is in a transnational

perspective no longer equated with the failure of the return process (Olivier 2011). As a particular situation requires, implicit knowledge is deactivated, acquired, applied and transferred. Implicit knowledge must thereby by no means exert a restraining influence on adaptation: 'The process of adaptation does not entail the abandonment of the identities they acquire abroad' (Cassarino 2004: 262). Instead, reintegration constitutes a mutual adaptation and exchange process of returnees and the society (Kuschminder 2017). Implicit knowledge content, maintaining transnational identities and belongings and adaptation to and active engineering of the social environment in return processes are thus by no means contradictions. The combined and flexible handling of these processes in the form of strategic de- and re-activation processes regarding implicit knowledge to cope with the social environment in the context of origin is rather an expression of the huge resources and the flexibility of the returnees.

If we do not want to stop by merely recognizing changes in return migration at individual level but dare to take a further look at what this means for the influence on the society of origin, the following can be stated: A total deactivation of knowledge describes the most inaccessible situation and refers to the act of a brain waste (Hardy 2010) instead of a brain gain which expresses the waste of potential which results when knowledge and capabilities are not used. By contrast, the last two patterns of application and transfer are of special interest. Individual changes can contribute to social-structural changes in a society when the implicit knowledge of the returnees is applied and transferred or rather socially remitted. Levitt (1998) describes three forms of social remittances: normative structures, the order of routines/practices and social capital in the form of social networks, which relates closely with the analysis of the empirical data of this chapter. If social remittance can be successful depends fully on whether confusion, misinterpretations and tensions can be overcome or not. For that process both the knowledge sender, that is, the ability to transfer, and the receiver, that is, the willingness to accept new knowledge, are relevant if social change, which can bring about new standards and local-level impacts, is to be achieved. Even 'social remittances affect local-level organizational culture and practice, they can also influence regional and national changes' (Levitt/ and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 1). So, if you start with little things, big things can happen.

Notes

1 The term 'social environment' refers to all persons and groups of persons present in the closer local socio-spatial area of a person to which direct contact including physical presence exists. The term therefore does not refer to the sum of all natural social relations of a person since translocal and transnational relations are not included in this definition.

2 However, different from the terms of social transfers and social remittances, which are setting the focus on a third unit beyond the actor, to which something should be remitted/transferred, the concept of knowledge primarily highlights first the knowledge production and its handling of the individual.

3 The term migration biography is in this context widely used to describe the history of migration. This underlying understanding and the methodological implementation differ substantially from the approach taken by reconstructive biographical research and narrative-biographical analysis. Migration biography focuses merely on the excerpt of the overall biography which is characterized by migration processes. Also, it addresses not only the past and the course of the migration covered until this point but includes both the present (current life situation) and the future (future perspective).

4 The term highly educated migrants refers to persons with an academic degree (awarded by a university, technical college or university of cooperative education) and to people who further qualified their professional training abroad (apprenticeship, professional training or further education programme). Generally, educational migration, in contrast to other forms of migration such as marriage migration or escape, is coupled with the intention to return to the country of origin as the reason for migration seems to have vanished after completing the professional training or further education. Besides that, other forms of migration, such as work migration, can involve the acquisition of formal and informal education and thus constitute a form of educational migration.

5 For further information on the methodological approach of the study with special focus on the combination of interviews and visual procedure in the preparation, data collection and evaluation phase, see Olivier (2013a).

6 VennMaker is an analysis and visualisation tool which communicatively collects, digitally visualizes and evaluates data on social networks. For more information, see http:// www.vennmaker.com.

7 Implicit knowledge content cannot be transferred identically to other people. For this reason, the general risk exists that knowledge content is easily lost and can no longer be utilized. Implicit knowledge is generated through processes of perception, judgement, expectation, thought, decision-making and action (Neuweg 2005). In this respect, it is inasmuch the result of learning-by-doing as also that of the internalization of ideals and values in one individual.

8 For more information regarding the pedagogic approach of Montessori, see http:// www.montessori.com.

9 Although the differentiation into explicit and implicit knowledge content at an analytical cognitive level is at first useful, it becomes clear at this stage that the forms cannot be clearly distinguished in empirical science. Thus all of Jack's knowledge, that is to say both implicit and explicit knowledge content, faces resistance from his current working context and also his preferred professional activity as a lecturer and advisor in Ghana is aspired by him due to the possible general applicability of his explicit and implicit knowledge.

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Chapter 7

POLISH RETURNEES' LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES, SOCIAL REMITTANCES AND INFLUENCE ON COMMUNITIES OF ORIGIN

Anne White

Introduction

This chapter explores how local cultural understandings change following migration and return migration. In particular, I examine the agency of returnees in enacting change. After discussing the Polish case study and explaining my methodology, I explore three interconnected topics: how to make the concept of social remittances a more precise analytical tool; the specificities of social remitting to different types of origin location, especially cities vis-à-vis small towns; and empirical examples of successful remitters, with suggestions about specific factors for success.

Levitt's (1998) article which launched the social remittances concept was titled 'Social Remittances: Migration-Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion'. This subtitle can be taken as a starting point for analysis, although, as discussed later, Levitt also offers more precise definitions. Social remittances merge into cultural transformations already taking place in sending countries, transformations which have causes in interwoven endogenous and exogenous factors. I argue that social remitting's contribution to social change can be best understood if we first try to understand the wider patterns of social change taking place in a sending country, both on a more abstract level – such as secularization – and also with reference to particular beliefs, attitudes and practices – such as diminished church attendance. This can be done by consulting quantitative data. Subsequently, in-depth interviews and participant observation help the researcher identity specific situations in which migration is influential, vis-à-vis other possible determinants of change, and

whether direct social remitting is taking place or whether migration influences are more indirect.

Different social groups and different geographical locations within a country change differently, and migrants' individual contribution to change has to be understood in the context of these local trends. Moreover, among certain social groups and residents of certain locations, migration has a particularly strong impact on change, in that it provides opportunities which such individuals would not otherwise experience. These are the members of society for whom migration makes a difference. If, in their everyday lives, they make 'migration-driven' changes to their behaviour, these add up to contribute to change in Poland overall. Kuhn (2012: 1005) paraphrasing Pichler (2009), provides evidence to suggest that 'while highly educated people generally hold highly cosmopolitan attitudes, there is a much greater variance in attitudes among low-educated people. They seem to be more influenced by personal experiences.' This chapter investigates such experiences.

The Polish Case Study

Poland is a suitable country for a case study of contemporary return migration impact. The scale and intensity of Polish return migration, as well as its thoroughly 'transnational' nature, suggest that it should have considerable influence. Poles are among the most mobile of EU citizens, energetically taking advantage of the 'Europeanisation of the Polish labour market' (Stola 2016: 95) since EU accession in 2004. By the end of 2016, about 2.5 million Poles registered as permanent residents of Poland were estimated to be living temporarily abroad, about 2.2 million of them in the EU (GUS 2017: 461).[1] Although there has never been a 'return wave' of Poles in recent years, there is a stream of individually returning migrants, as people complete their migration projects abroad and/or come home because they miss their family and friends (Frelak and Reguska 2008: 3; Kostrzewa and Sałtys 2013: 74). According to the 2011 census, about three hundred thousand Poles currently living in Poland had returned between 2002 and 2011 from living abroad for at least one year. Over 57 per cent of them returned in the years 2008–11 (Anacka and Fihel 2014: 74; Kostrzewa and Sałtys 2013: 72). October 2016 survey data suggested that 12 per cent of Poles currently living in Poland had worked abroad in the last 10 years, including 27 per cent of 25–34-year-olds (Cybulska 2016: 1, 3). Martin and Radu (2012: 111), using European Social Survey data for 2006–8, estimate that 8 per cent of the economically active population aged 24–65 in Poland had worked abroad for at least six months in the past 10 years. These are just snapshots, however. There are also many Poles living abroad today who have returned to Poland in the past,

only to depart again (White 2014). One-off migration projects, followed in some cases by return to Poland, are more characteristic of big-city dwellers; repeated migration is most common among small-town residents (Strzelecki et al. 2015: 144).

Polish society is also a suitable case study for exploring the effects of migration on a society in change. Like other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Poland has undergone profound change since the collapse of the communist regime in 1989 and is still changing fast since EU accession in 2004. Poland also has a particularly strong sociological tradition, and social trends are easily mapped, since they have been recorded in detail, often since the 1980s (Bucholz 2016).

Change has occurred on all levels, from deep changes in values and power relations to a multiplicity of small changes in everyday practices. Broadly speaking, Poland has become a society which is similar in most respects to societies in contemporary Western Europe. Despite moves by the Law and Justice party, PiS, in power since 2015, to control the media and judiciary, Poland today is much more democratic and pluralist, and individuals have far greater agency and autonomy, than under the communist regime. Officialdom is less arbitrary, there has been some 'Americanization' of management and service standards (Arcimowicz 2015: 252–58), and urban grass-roots movements are much more confident, especially in cities (Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2017). In simple terms, everyday life is more interesting and varied for many people, and these tendencies have been enhanced since EU accession in 2004.

Of course, change is not unilinear and not everything is changing: the research puzzle is to understand how migration affects complex patterns of continuity and change. Some survey evidence suggests, for example, that Polish society is still very conservative, Catholic and family-centric: Polish adults continue to value the family high above work, money and friends (Czapiński 2015: 255; World Values Survey data), around 92 per cent believe in God (Boguszewski 2015: 37). However, even such continuing trends conceal important sub-trends. In 2016, for the first time, the youngest Poles placed the values of 'love and friendship' clearly above 'family and children' (Boguszewski 2017: 67–68). An increasing majority of Poles – while still opposed to rights for sexual minorities – do not conform to the Church's teachings on sex, birth control and divorce, and would like to see these revised (Roguska 2015). Increasingly, Poles declare support for gender equality, and to some extent gender roles within households are more evenly distributed (Krzaklewska et al. 2016), but opponents of gender equality are also increasingly vocal.

A fundamental change since 1989 is new direct exposure to cultural difference brought by opportunities to travel and live abroad. Although communist-era Poland had considerably more open borders than most of

its neighbours (Stola 2010), in 1989, most Poles had never been abroad. By 2015 this figure was only 23 per cent (Boguszewski 2016). Taking also into account not just migration figures but also the large numbers of visits by stayers to family and friends abroad (Boguszewski 2016) it is reasonable to expect migration and travel abroad to have had considerable influence on cultural change in Poland. Before the very recent (2016–17) wave of Ukrainian migration to Poland, it has only been by going abroad that Poles are exposed directly to cultural difference. Post-Holocaust and Second World War, Poland is a nearly homogenous country in ethnic terms: 96 per cent of Polish residents self-identified as Poles in the 2011 census (GUS 2012: 107).[2] The expectation that being abroad does have a particularly large impact on Poland, as a mono-ethnic country, is confirmed in the large qualitative study by Arcimowicz et al. (2015), which began by investigating the impact of the media on changing habits in Poland, and ended by concluding that work and travel abroad were more important influences. The wisdom of the returnee was nicely described by Lucyna, a 36-year-old returnee from Ireland whom I interviewed in Wrocław in 2016:

> Many people who aren't planted in one place don't have narrow views about one uniform society. That because I was brought up in this country I have to do the same as everyone else. Isn't that true? I'll follow the same path as the rest. No, the fact that you can simply have your own opinion, you should think things out for yourself, and so on, that's how it [working abroad] gave me so much.

Arcimowicz et al. (2015) conclude that Poles cannot simply be divided into two sorts, conservatives and advocates of change. Each interviewee rejected some foreign practices, but accepted others. They conclude that 'based on the narration of our respondents, one could place their habits [not them] in various points on the continuum' between nationalism and cosmopolitanism (Arcimowicz et al. 2015: 381). This is at odds with the polarization framing, commonplace in public discourse in Poland today, where the Foreign Affairs Minister, for example, reportedly divided Poles between 'vegetarians and cyclists' on the one hand and 'patriotic heterosexual Catholics' on the other, and Kaczyński, the PiS leader, dismissed the political opposition as the 'worst sort of Pole' (Davies 2016).

Survey evidence suggests a sliding scale of openness to change, with city residents most open *on average* and villagers least (White et al. 2018, ch. 2). These are only averages: Poland is not neatly divided between a conservative mass of peasants and a liberal, cosmopolitan urban elite. A more careful look into its society reveals social change, like migration, occurring almost everywhere. Even villages have their vegetarian cyclists.

Although my subject matter is 'returnees', I use the term to include migrants who are still circulating between countries. Scholars in today's transnational world do not assume that return is 'for ever', and Polish return migration seems indeed to be quite unstable: many returnees engage in repeat migration. This is sometimes intentional, if their households remain in Poland, and they simply work abroad as much as necessary and spend the rest of the year at home. However, return abroad is also an unintentional result for would-be definitive returnees, who come back to home localities in Poland for family reasons only to discover that employment opportunities locally are still very limited (White 2014). The Polish case amply illustrates the 'unsettled' quality of contemporary return, mentioned in the Editors' introduction. Moreover, those returnees who come back to Poland and manage to stay put often continue to live in intense transnational fields. So do many stayers, especially those with family abroad. In fact it would be hard to find anyone who did not have any transnational connections, and the case of Poland does not back up Carling's (2008) suggestion that sending societies can be divided between those living inside transnational social fields and those outside them.

Methodology

I apply a livelihood strategy approach to migration decision-making and reintegration strategies. Livelihoods are defined by Ellis (2000: 231) as 'the activities, the assets, and the access that together determine the living gained by the individual or household'. Applying a livelihood strategy approach means asking why individuals and families choose certain livelihoods from among the range of culturally appropriate possibilities they perceive to be available to them in their local area (White 2009). The aggregated effect of individual livelihood strategies can be social change. Most obviously, if migration becomes a suddenly popular strategy, there can be a wave of migration, as occurred from Poland in 2004–7. Livelihood strategies also embody cultural capital as a kind of household or individual 'asset' and 'access' (to use Ellis's terms), such as knowledge gained from working abroad. In development studies, livelihoods are usually assessed according to their 'sustainability'. Sustainability seems to imply a certain long-term commitment but is compatible with strong transnational ties. In fact it is the very existence of these ties and the reassurance they provide which create the sense of security to return: social and economic capital located in the receiving country is still accessible, and the escape hatch remains open (Black and Gent 2006; Carling and Erdal 2014).

The four research projects on which this chapter is based are summarized in Table 7.1. In addition, my 10 years of teaching English to Polish adults at Saturday schools in Bath have provided weekly immersion in the world of UK

Table 7.1 Anne White: Polish migration research projects

Project title	Methodology and sample size
'Polish families and migration since EU accession', 2006–9	Opinion poll (1101 respondents), Podkarpacie, 2008. 115 in-depth interviews in Poland and UK: 82 in small towns in Poland (2007 Kłodawa, Gniezno, villages around Poznań (9); Suwałki and Ełk (9); 2008 Grajewo (Podlasie) and Sanok (54); 2009 Grajewo (10)), 33 in Bath, Bristol, Frome and Trowbridge. The 102 interviewees were all working-class mothers, including 19 return migrants. 13 interviews were repeat interviews. (See White 2017, 15–20 and appendices.)
'Polish double return migration', 2010–12:	32 interviews with return migrants, 50:50 f/m, different ages, backgrounds, 20 in Poland (Warsaw, Poznań and Grajewo); 12 in UK (Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare). (See White 2014, 26.)
'Long-term unemployment and migration', 2013	36 interviews with unemployed people (28f/8m) including 18 return migrants in Limanowa (Małopolska). (See White 2016b, 411.)
'The impact of migration on social change in Poland', 2015–16	46 interviews with 49 people (30f/19m, different ages and backgrounds) in 2015: Wrocław (4); and in 2016: Wrocław (20), Łódź (3), Warsaw (8) and Lublin (12) including 22 return migrants.

Polish migrants, particularly manual workers, including many conversations on the theme of return. I have also visited friends from the Saturday school who have returned to settle in Poland.

As part of the first project, which investigated why Polish parents were increasingly taking their children with them to live in countries such as the United Kingdom, rather than the normal pattern of one parent migrating and leaving the household in Poland, I commissioned an opinion poll which surveyed men and women in small towns and villages in south-east Poland about their opinions on children's and parents' migration. Analysing the survey data, I noticed potential social remittance effects: these might explain the more radical, less gender-stereotyped responses given by returnees from the United Kingdom (White 2017: 91–92). Furthermore, the in-depth interviews revealed evidence of social remittances in the sense that women living in high migration locations in Poland were often being persuaded by their friends and female relatives abroad that it was better for families to uproot children and take them too – an aspect of changing migration culture also captured by my opinion poll. The nuclear family was therefore being prioritized over the extended family based in the local community, an

example of the trend towards 'post-collectivism' which marks former Soviet bloc countries in general.

All my projects are about localities or, as the editors phrase it, communities; so is this chapter. However, the 2015–16 research project took place not in small towns but in cities, since I was intrigued by the question of how migration influenced life in places where it seemed almost invisible and is even denied to take place (White 2016a). Warsaw or Wrocław, with populations in 2015 of 1,744,000 and 636,000, respectively (GUS 2016: 44), can hardly be described as communities. However, they do consist of separate districts, localities within cities which are meaningful units of analysis for migration impact. It is often also useful to study particular social groups or activities such as language classes which take place in cities (White 2016a: 74–75).

The Concept of Social Remittances

Scholars investigating the influence of migration on origin communities today can hardly avoid the term 'social remittances', coined by Peggy Levitt. Social remittances are of course not a new phenomenon, but the term is seductive as a neat way of making the point that migration has cultural consequences. Levitt herself detailed many attributes of social remittances in *The Transnational Villagers* (Levitt 2001), and made clear that she was restricting the term to deliberate transmission of new ideas, values, beliefs, practices and social capital. 'Migrants and nonmigrants can state how they learned of a specific idea or practice and why they decided to adopt it' (Levitt 2001: 63). By contrast, De Haas (2010: 1595) equates social remittances with the broader phenomenon of 'migration-driven forms of cultural change', particularly the propensity of migration to breed migration. Boccagni and Decimo, introducing their *Migration Letters* special issue on social remittances, also stretch the concept, referring (Boccagni and Decimo 2013: 1) to the 'myriad ways in which migrants affect their home societies'.

This chapter will adopt a narrow definition of social remittances, to distinguish adoption and deliberate spread of new ideas and practices by potential agents of change from other social impacts, impacts which may often be unintentional and indirect, such as changes in gender roles when women migrate alone. Szczygielska (2013: 185), for example, describes how their wives' migration becomes a 'forced lesson in housekeeping' for husbands in small-town Poland. I discuss such indirect effects – which I do not label social remittances – at length elsewhere (White et al. 2018). Although detailed, Levitt's account still left much to discuss about similarities and differences between economic and social remittances and about how social remitting occurs, particularly in places with less community spirit than those she describes in Dominican Republic.

Recent conceptual work, some of which is discussed here, has honed it into a more precise tool (see especially the special issue of *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, 2016, Volume 5, Number 2; Grabowska et al. 2017; White and Grabowska 2018).

Boccagni and Decimo (2013: 4) refer to 'the "suitcase" of immaterial goods brought back by migrants to home societies' and a suitcase metaphor often seems implicit in the scholarship. It is thought-provoking, since it prompts us to consider the parallels with economic remitting. Can social remittances be brought in a suitcase and given out to people in the origin society? Whether one believes culture can be 'carried' as in a suitcase depends on how culture is defined, and in some simple ways the metaphor is apt; for example, new eating habits and recipes can be brought from abroad. However, on coming into contact with the origin society, the cultural contents of the suitcase must change, for example, because cooking ingredients in the origin country will be different, so what goes into the suitcase is not identical to what comes out. For instance, Nagy (2009: 10), writing about how Romanian rural bed-and-breakfast hotels introduce comforts which members of the family working abroad have seen in the West, suggests that 'they help impose foreign models but often with a double translation, linked to diverse local reinterpretations'. Livelihoods, as mentioned above, have to be culturally appropriate to the specific location in which they are conducted, and, if they are dual location livelihoods, this necessarily implies a kind of negotiation, and sometimes also compromise and give and take (White and Grabowska 2018). It is the process of local interpretation and negotiation which has to be studied as part of the transmission of social remittances to origin communities.

We should also not be misled by the parallel with economic remittances – the results of which can be tracked in consumption or investment – into believing that migration has to have social impacts which can be traced very far. It is possible to study how returnees and stayers who visit migrants abroad influence their immediate contacts: Grabowska et al. (2017) interviewed 'followers' of some of their most successful social remitters. However, except in the case of very specific innovations, it must normally be the case that social remittances, as they ripple out further from stayer to stayer, become impossible to pinpoint and therefore indistinguishable from cultural change occurring for other reasons.

Social remittances in the sense of practices and lifestyles begin life as ideas, but a particularly thorny issue is at what stage a new idea can be considered a remittance. Grabowska et al. (2017) helpfully distinguish between acquiring, transmitting and diffusing social remittances. The question is whether the acquisition stage, when the migrant is still abroad, really counts as part of social remitting. Karolak (2016) advocates referring to social remittances as

'potential social remittances' until they have been transferred to someone else. However, this does not mean they are negligible. Money, if kept in a suitcase under the bed, is worth noticing, as savings which may someday be spent. Similarly, an account of social change cannot ignore potential social remittances – ideas which have been acquired abroad and saved for a rainy day, perhaps because the return migrant does not feel sufficiently confident yet to try to spread them in the origin community. Social change, after all, is partly simply about the changing composition of a society: whether it contains more people with savings, and more people with a particular opinion or belief, particular skills or an idea for setting up a particular business at some future time.

The actual diffusion of ideas and practices depends on individual migrants. They have different degrees of influence, because of where they live (i.e. the potential to contribute to change which is already occurring), and by virtue of who they are: their capacity to persuade others and lead by example. These features are discussed in Sections 5 and 6 below.

Communities of Origin and the Differential Impact of Social Remittances

More cultural change is already occurring in Polish cities than in small towns, particularly in the most dynamic, prosperous and outward-oriented cities, with the largest proportions of university graduates, such as Warsaw and regional centres in western Poland. It is here that church attendance is lowest, acceptance that homosexuality is 'normal' is highest, generalized trust is stronger and so on, although extreme right groups have also been gaining strength in recent years. Considering that social remittances are most effective where they back up already existing trends, one might suppose that they are often more successfully transferred in cities than in small towns. Cities there-fore constitute more *receptive* environments.

The following, rather self-contradictory quotation from Wiesław, a barman who had worked in a nightclub near London and then returned to Wrocław, illustrates how returnees can contribute to two significant Wrocław trends: culinary openness combined with a general hostility towards alien 'cultures' stoked by nationalist politicians in both Poland and the United Kingdom.

> Foreign restaurants in Wrocław are not just for tourists, Poles eat there too […] Poland is a more open country, since communism ended. Some Poles began going abroad and saw how people lived, their eating habits, and Poles who came back to Poland passed that on. That's probably how change takes place here.

The same thing happens in England taking into account all those cultures. England is full of people from other countries, India, Poland, Germany, Italy. It's hard for English people to keep their national consciousness. Just like it is for Poles to keep their traditions.

As mentioned above, city residents include return migrants (like Wiesław) who have successfully re-settled in Poland, compared with the more shifting population of returnees in small towns and villages. Polish cities are also more culturally diverse than smaller places: they receive increasing numbers of tourists and immigrants. Wiesław was hoping to set up a business organizing British stag nights in Wrocław – not a livelihood strategy open to small-town residents.

However, small towns also have their advantages for social remitting. Return migrants often have a wealth of migration experience garnered from numerous trips abroad.

My husband has been working abroad more or less all the time since we got married [.] First my dad took him to Germany, we have family in Germany, so. Well, later [sigh] he went to the USA, because his sister is there […]. And just now he's been in England. A friend suggested it to him, and off he went. He was tempted by the opportunity. (Magda, Sanok, 2008)

You earn some money, come back to Poland and spend money on all sorts of things, including helping someone out and you end up without a penny and there's no work here, so you wait for a lucky chance to go abroad. That's how it works. (Lech, Grajewo, 2012)

When I mentioned this typical small-town livelihood strategy to a builder in the city of Wrocław, who had returned from a single migration episode in London, he was astonished: could it really be viable to shift from country to country in response to opportunity?

My interviews suggest that small-town builders, not surprisingly, react in different ways to what they see abroad, but can become at least potential social remitters. Lech, despite socio-demographic characteristics which tend not to be associated with cosmopolitan attitudes (basic vocational education, in his 50s, a small-town resident from eastern Poland) loved to travel and communicate in sign language, and viewed foreigners not through the prism of stereotypes but as individuals similar in some ways to himself. He pointed out that he had worked for ten different German employers and three Polish ones and they had all behaved differently.

Return migrants are also more numerous proportionately to the general population in small towns and visible (Anacka and Fihel 2014), and, partly as a result, the results of their actions may be more *visible*. This is partly because

there are fewer other sources of change, so social remittances may be more visible as factors driving change. However, in all settings, much depends on the attributes of individual returnees. Successful agents of change also have specific individual characteristics which in some cases allow them to have influence even in less favourable settings.

Agents of Change: Small-Town and City Returnees

In my research, the more influential social remitters had spent a fairly extended period abroad; acquired new skills and/or ideas abroad; lived among non-Poles in the destination country and came to understand something about that society; intended probably to stay in Poland; successfully re-integrated, had social capital in Poland and created a socially acceptable livelihood for themselves upon return and were therefore well placed to bring change to the places where they live in Poland. Similarly, Grabowska et al. (2017) singled out a number of interviewees who possessed personality traits such as a capacity for reflexivity, had contacts and experiences abroad which had enabled them to acquire social remittances, maintained transnational contacts with the destination country after return to Poland and worked in organizations, institutions and businesses in Poland where they came into contact with the public were respected locally and had good networks in the community.

The following examples are from my 2012 interviews with return migrants in Grajewo, a small and very conservative town in north-east Poland with high unemployment and a strong migration tradition, and a 2016 interview in Lublin. Anna was a former investment banker who had returned after spending her early adult life in the United States, to open the town's first good quality restaurant. Although she complained that it had been hard at first to find waiting staff who could provide American-standard service, the restaurant was doing well. As the following quotation indicates, school teachers, who in recent years have become better paid, have been acquiring new aspirations as a result of migration and travel abroad, and Anna tapped into an unmet need.

ANNA: Most of my clientele is upper class, middle upper class […] mostly teachers. And parents, yes. My restaurant works […] I'm not sure if that's about the money itself or the change of people's minds to go out. Because years ago it wasn't that way […].
ANNE: So why do you think people are changing their habits?
ANNA: I think a lot of people travel. You know, outside Poland. To Europe, to the States. All over the world. And they see and they try to do the same here. And actually the standards of restaurants are changing as well. Because people want and demand different things and quality.

However, Anna also emphasized that she succeeded not just because of her business experience in the United States but also because of her negotiating skills and willingness to take into account local specificities.

> I had no idea what to do. But a friend of mine, my friends actually, we talked and talked, what the town needs. And that's what came up […] [You have to] be open to different views of other people, it's a factor in a lot of things. Here or in any town in the world. You have to adapt to people who live here and try different things, different strategies, see what works and what doesn't work.

She also underlined that successfully maintained social connections were crucial to success.

> ANNE: What was the secret of your success?
> ANNA: I don't know! Well, first of all this is my home town. My parents were here and they were pretty known, especially my father. And then I know a lot of people in this town […].
> ANNE: You still have friends here? But you left a long time ago, didn't you? You said you were in America for 15 years.
> ANNA: Yes but I always came back once a year at least. Once a year or twice a year I was here.

In a rather different case, Eugeniusz, a forester without even secondary education, returned to a village near Grajewo after years of working on and off in Germany. He had had good relations with his German employers and co-workers and still kept in touch with Germans, whom he guided on hunting expeditions in the forests around Grajewo. When he returned to Grajewo he set up a forestry team with other return migrants, as a bastion of German working practices.

> When I was in Germany I got to know the technology, how work was organised. I brought those things back to Poland, to a new market. Because I came back here to work in 2000. Ah, I had unusual good luck because a few friends had [also] been able to work in German forests back then. And when they returned to Poland they worked for me. So I had enough experienced and useful people […]. People who knew what they were doing. They knew how to be careful. Working in Poland, it was the same. None of us, I or any of my employees, ever had an accident.

Although eventually Eugeniusz had to close his business as a result of unfair competition, he succeeded for three years. Like Anna, he had a supportive

network of friends who agreed with him about the need to work responsibly, and his business idea was appropriate in the changing economic environment. Health and safety standards have been improving in Poland for various reasons in recent years, but Eugeniusz emphasized how important it had seemed to introduce German standards in 2000. He told a cautionary tale about an earlier episode in his career where he had been employed by a Polish building firm putting up balconies which would not carry weight. 'That's Polish mentality. You can't imagine it happening abroad. I learned a lot. Taking a more responsible approach to things.'

Finally, Mateusz was a circular migrant working in a small town in Germany whom I interviewed when he was doing an odd job in the city of Lublin in 2016. He could not be seen as a typical small-town resident, since in Poland he lived in Warsaw, while spending much time in his original, small home town (population ten thousand). By working part of the year in Germany, he was able to finance a congenial lifestyle in Poland which included urban activism. He had established a foundation to organize events such as fun runs and festivals which he hoped would integrate local society. He had local support networks and had even been elected a local councillor.

> In general I was heavily inspired by Germany, when it comes to civic activism […]. I liked the German Christmas markets […] and I decided to have a Christmas market in [Town]. And that's how it was, to a large extent I was inspired by that […]. One thing I liked was mulled wine with orange. We had it too. Not only that, but we brought the cartons of wine from Germany. Because the quality was better than in Poland […]. Several dozen litres, since several hundred people came […].

> My foundation's goal is the creation of local civil society […]. I always wanted to do it although I was very motivated by reading Erich Fromm's *To Have or to Be?*

Of course, city returnees can also be agents of change, although locally or in workplaces rather than on the level of the whole city. Lucyna, quoted in the chapter introduction, who had had many non-Polish friends in Dublin with whom she still kept closely in touch, described how she had learned to challenge inequality in the workplace:

> In Dublin] parents felt like, I don't know, they had equal rights to decide about the pre-school, everything that happens there […]. But here there is a more authoritarian attitude […].

> I've changed a lot, thanks to Ireland I'm more self-confident, because they have a more open attitude […]. If my children are ill I simply go to my boss and say I'm not coming to work, whereas before leaving Poland I'd be afraid […]. And

now I'm trying to make my [women] friends into rebels – don't be scared, just go ahead and do it! If I can change anything it will be in my own environment, among people near me. You couldn't on a big scale like the whole city […]. I try to show my friends that there is a different way of looking at things, a different way to live, and you can be more open and assert your own rights.

Conclusion

It is pointless to expect social remittances, on their own, to achieve cultural change. However, by defining social remitting narrowly, and putting its stages under the microscope using qualitative methods, one can see how social remittances do feed into wider, already occurring trends, which have a variety of often non-migration-related causes, as well as resulting from indirect migration influences (for detailed discussion, see White et al. 2018). Social remitters help along numerous processes of change at all levels, as discussed in Section 2 of this chapter. The particular return migrants featured in Section 6, through their livelihood strategies, were contributing to various specific trends – improvement of service standards, more eating out and greater culinary variety; better health and safety; more urban grassroots activism. In turn, these specific practices related to broader/deeper changes in Poland and other post-communist societies: greater individual freedom and choice and sense of agency, more cultural diversity and more respect for the law. Quotations from other interviewees earlier in the chapter also testify to how migration can help contribute to more 'open to difference' attitudes, although it can sometimes have the opposite impact (White 2018).

The chapter argues the need to keep in mind that 'sending countries' such as Poland are socially and geographically diverse, and in particular that residents of the largest cities are on average more prosperous, highly-educated and likely to hold liberal views. The fact that my research projects were based both in small towns and cities, and among different social groups in cities, facilitated understanding of how migration-driven social change occurs everywhere, even in the biggest cities, which are most exposed to a variety of other external influences, and which have lower levels of migration. Returnees to cities help contribute inconspicuously to trends which are already occurring anyway. Migration influences are often more visible and seem more weighty in comparison to other determinants of change in smaller locations, whose inhabitants are on average less well-educated, less able to purchase foreign holidays, less likely to meet foreigners in Poland and more likely to hold more conservative opinions. (Nonetheless, here too there is an unmet demand for certain changes, as illustrated in the example of the Grajewan teachers who welcomed the new opportunity to be able to eat out in Grajewo as they had

done on holiday abroad.) Although Lucyna, the returnee to Wrocław quoted in Section 6, felt that her contribution was confined to her individual workplace, the three small-town returnees profiled in Section 6 had visible impact on other local residents. Moreover, in keeping with Kuhn's suggestion that less well-educated people can become more open to difference through personal experience, the cases of builders Lech (Section 5) and Eugeniusz illustrate how migration can change the composition of society by increasing the number of more open-to-difference inhabitants even among social groups usually less associated with such attitudes.

Finally, all returnees featured in the chapter maintained strong transnational links even after return to Poland, and their migration experience endowed them with cultural and social capital which facilitated their success locally in building new organizations and businesses. These attributes, as also shown by other migration scholars (particularly Grabowska et al. 2017), seem to be particularly important in helping some returnees become agents of local change.

Notes

1 Although all migration statistics are unreliable, the GUS estimates are usually regarded as the best available, being compiled from a mix of Polish and receiving country data.
2 Of these, 2 per cent claimed dual identities such as Polish and Tatar.

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Chapter 8

TRANSLOCAL 'RETURN', SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE VALUE OF TRANSCULTURAL CAPITAL: SECOND-GENERATION TURKISH-GERMANS IN ANTALYA

Nilay Kılınç and Russell King

Introduction

In the grand scheme of European post-war migration, by far the largest bilateral movement has been that of Turkish nationals to Germany – a 'stock' of 2.85 million people, according to *Statistisches Bundesamt* (2015). Starting with the first labour recruitment agreement in 1961, the Turkish community in Germany nowadays extends over four generations. Return migration has been an ever-present part of the phenomenon of Turkish migration to Germany: initially as temporary 'guest workers', later as a result of the 1973–74 recession and, more recently, as a function of the life-stage effects of the retirement of the first generation and – our focus here – the 'return' of the young adult second generation. We put 'return' in scare quotes as this is not a true return migration, since the second generation, by definition, was born and brought up in Germany (or taken there before the school age). Acknowledging that the literal understanding of 'return' does not grasp the complex relationship of the second generation with the ancestral homeland, we interpret their settlement in Turkey as a process of 'transnational return', altered by individual decisions, hybrid identity constructions and various forms of transnational mobility (Olivier-Mensah and Scholl-Schneider 2016).

We further link these experiences of 'transnational return' to social change in the localities of 'return'. The literature on second-generation Turkish-German 'returnees' deals mainly with these individuals' acculturation and integration processes in the ancestral homeland (King and Kılınç 2013, 2014;

Rittersberger-Tılıç et al. 2013); this group's role in instigating social change and reshaping the culture of their localities of resettlement is understudied. This chapter's aim is to investigate these transformative effects, both on these localities and on their own lives – their reconstructed identities, social networks and career prospects.

Our geopolitical frame of reference for studying this 'counter-diasporic' process of second-generation relocation to the parental homeland is the tourist city of Antalya on the south coast of Turkey: a favoured destination not only for first- and second-generation return migration but also for German tourists and expat settlers (Kaiser 2012). The exact number of Turkish returnees in Antalya is not known, since those with German citizenship are counted as foreign residents. Instead, we know that more than eight thousand German nationals (including a share of naturalized former Turkish citizens) make up the largest category of foreign nationals in the city (Balkır and Südaş 2014).

Due to Antalya's popularity among German tourists and expats, Turkish-German returnees are able to find relatively well-paid employment opportunities in the (until very recently) buoyant tourist economy. This aspect of Turkish return migration – involvement in the tourist sector and the migrants' role in transforming the local social, economic and cultural life – has been overlooked in the Turkish return migration literature. In fact, the relationship between the second-generation migrants and social change is, as we shall see, reciprocal. The 'returnees' are both attracted by the economic opportunities and cosmopolitan character of this large-scale tourist resort, and instrumental in contributing to the lively social and cultural atmosphere of the place.

Based on qualitative data from in-depth narrative interviews with second-generation returnees, we pose and provide material to answer three main questions. First, how do the informants describe the nature of their transnational (or, rather, 'translocal') lives – in other words, their lifestyles and social networks within and beyond Antalya? Second, what specific forms of 'cultural capital' do they bring with them, and also develop on-site, which enable them to get jobs and set up businesses in the tourist sector? And third, how is their 'transported cultural capital' translated into social change in their locality of 'return'?

With these questions in mind, we focus on returnees' non-economic transfers, which we collect under the term 'transcultural capital' (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006). This includes transnational and translocal social networks, know-how and skills (especially language skills), lifestyles, attitudes and values. As our findings will illustrate, the returnees' transfers of 'transcultural capital' have been accelerating the process of social change in Antalya since 1990s towards a more open-minded, liberal and cosmopolitan city as the returnees act as 'cultural mediators' between the European tourists/expats and the local population.

It is important to point out that the sample of participants interviewed do not have familial origins in Antalya. Hence, their settlement in this tourism niche cannot be explained by reference to the classic 'returning to ethnic roots' argument of other studies of diasporic return migration (e.g. Tsuda 2003, 2009; Wessendorf 2007). Many of the narrative accounts mention failed attempts to settle first elsewhere in Turkey – the parents' home towns or villages or in big cities like Ankara and Istanbul. Subsequently, through word of mouth, social networks or, in a few cases, prior holiday visits, Antalya emerged as a much more favoured location to settle, for a combination of economic, sociocultural and lifestyle reasons.

Turkish Migration and Second-Generation 'Return'

The emigration of Turkish workers to Germany was the hallmark of the wider phenomenon of post-war European labour migration and of its transformation from a temporary, rotating migrant workforce into settled immigrant communities (Castles et al. 1984). Turkey made a labour export agreement with Germany in 1961, followed by recruitment contracts with other European countries in the mid-1960s, but Germany remained the most important destination for Turkish migrants and Turks became the biggest migrant group in Germany. The widely used term *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) illustrated the German government's attempt to emphasize their temporary stay, while also valuing their economic contribution.

Subsequently, rights to family reunion and further inflows of political exiles, students and highly skilled migrants during the 1980s consolidated the migrant-worker presence into a multigeneration diaspora of more than 2.85 million Turks and Turkish-origin people. Of these, 1.5 million had only Turkish citizenship, including more than 440,000 who were born in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt 2015). Since the turn of the millennium, emigration from Turkey has fallen away, due to the country's strong economic development and the fluctuating prospect of EU membership (Sirkeci et al. 2012).

Return migration has been continuous since the 1960s: an estimated 1 million from Germany to Turkey between 1960 and 1990 (Martin 1991). Returns were especially numerous in the wake of the first oil crisis (190,000 during 1974–77), the second oil crisis (200,000 during 1978–83) and as a result of the German government's 'return incentive' scheme (310,000 during 1983–85): these figures are from Gitmez (1983) and Erzan et al. (2008). However, although the 'return' of the German-born second generation to Turkey was occasionally recognized (Rittersberger-Tılıç et al. 2013), no credible estimates of the size of this particular flow exist.

Our previous work has contributed to drawing the qualitative contours of the phenomenon of second-generation 'return' with special reference to Istanbul (King and Kılınç 2013), the Black Sea coast (King and Kılınç 2014) and, latterly, Antalya (Kılınç and King 2017). This earlier empirical research revealed that return migration intentions are fostered by the memory of enjoyable childhood holiday visits to Turkey, by the first generation's oral representations of Turkey as the authentic homeland and by feelings of discrimination and marginalization experienced in Germany. However, the outcomes of resettlement in Turkey are sharply differentiated by place.

Second-generation Turkish-Germans who settle in Istanbul view favourably the lively and eclectic life of this megacity as well as the good job opportunities available, especially for those with higher education and specialized skills. This group narrates a strong 'Istanbul identity' and distances itself from other members of the Turkish community in Germany who fit the classic guest-worker type, with limited education and a conservative mindset of traditional Turkish values. However, Istanbul returnees are challenged by the city's chaos, high living expenses and lack of professionalism in the job market. By contrast, those who settle in small towns and rural areas of the Black Sea coast project their 'return' as a reunion with their parents' places of origin and hence their relocation decisions are shaped by kinship and family ties and living in a 'secure' environment. The third spatial setting, Antalya shows a different dynamic wherein the return is a highly individualistic decision which prioritizes personal lifestyle choices over family and, in some cases, professional careers. The attraction is the tourist economy, offering both job and business opportunities, vibrant social and leisure activities and a more liberal and 'alternative' lifestyle in an environmentally attractive location.

Theoretical Perspectives

Our theoretical starting point is the 'transnational turn' in migration studies (Glick Schiller et al. 1992, 1995) in which migrants are seen as 'transnational agents' sustaining economic, social and political ties across the national borders dividing their 'home' and 'host' countries. Within this optic, there is an abundant literature on evaluating the extent to which the human capital, skills and competences acquired by migrants abroad can benefit the home countries in cases where the migrants return (see e.g. Dustmann and Weiss 2007; Williams and Baláž 2005). Our contribution extends this established literature on transnationalism, return and socio-economic development in several novel directions.

First, we shift focus from the first to *the second generation*, who were born in the destination country to first-generation migrant parents or were taken

there as very young children. Although they represent what Rumbaut (2002) has called the 'post-immigrant generation', the second generation has the potential, too, to lead 'transnational lives' (Levitt and Waters 2002) and their ongoing mobility leads to new and searching questions over the nature and complexity of their 'identity', 'belonging' and sense of 'home'. This chapter plugs in to an evolving literature on the 'return' of the second generation in their parental homeland, which has variously been called 'ethnic return migration' (Tsuda 2009), 'roots migration' (Wessendorf 2007) or 'counter-diasporic migration' (King and Christou 2010). What is particularly intriguing about the 'return' of this migration cohort is the ambiguity and 'reverseness' which it introduces into definitions of migration directionality (is it emigration or return?), notions of home(-land) and ongoing transnational relations (King and Christou 2011, 2014).

In a bit more conceptual detail, then, the second generation, wherever they are located, sustains a multiplicity of connections across their 'home' and 'host' societies (for them, which is which?) thus creating active 'transnational social fields' (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) in which the home–identity nexus is especially complicated by their history of residence in two countries/locales. Especially for the second generation, 'return' is an ongoing journey and 'home' is conceptualized as a dynamic process of 'homing', a 'space-in-the-making' entailing habitation, social processes and an evolving sense of belonging 'in place' – 'an abstract awareness of one's self, diaspora and multiple belonging' (Ghosh and Wang 2003: 272). A smooth (re-)integration is desired and sometimes achieved, but existing literature on second-generation return more often speaks of alienation and confusion when relocating to the ancestral homeland (e.g. King and Christou 2010; Wessendorf 2007) and this includes our previous research in Istanbul (King and Kılınç 2014). As we shall see, the situation of second-generation 'returnees' in Antalya is somewhat different and this has very much to do with two further conceptual planks in our theoretical platform: the singularity of Antalya as a place and the way in which returnees have been able to deploy their cultural capital or, more precisely, their 'transcultural capital'.

Second, then, we highlight the *importance of locality* as the place where (return) migrants touch ground (Ley 2004). In other words, the 'transnational social fields' have a distinctly spatial context (Bruneau 2010) which, following Brickell and Datta (2011), we redefine as 'translocal social fields', since the notion of translocality allows a more flexible approach to documenting and understanding individual migrants' subjectivities. Furthermore, by building on Anthias's (2008) framework of 'translocational positionality' (i.e. understanding identity construction in the light of social positioning according to class, gender and ethnonational origin in specific multilocations), and the Bourdieusian

notion of 'habitus' (an unconscious set of dispositions that individuals possess and develop throughout their lifetimes in their social fields – Bourdieu 1990), we develop the newer concept of 'translocational habitus'. We suggest that those of the Turkish-German second generation acquire *translocational habitus* since they were raised with the values and cultures of two (or more) social fields, which can help them to shift and adapt their subjectivities across different translocal spaces. Conceptualizing Antalya as a translocal social field in which second-generation 'returnees' and others embody and develop their habitus through the materialities and emotions of everyday practices and encounters also involves recognizing what Massey (1993) calls the 'power geometries' of these translocational relations and mobilities. We further demonstrate that habitus is not a static notion, predefined according to its exclusivity but, rather, can be deployed in a flexible, non-deterministic sense, facilitating the growth of individuals in new settings and circumstances (Reay 2004). This, in a nut-shell, is part of what has happened to our research participants in navigating the spatial transition from their working-class migrant family backgrounds into a 'better' and more liberating life in Turkey.

The way that they are able to develop their translocational habitus is through the successful mobilization of their *transcultural capital*. This is the third conceptual element in our framework. In Bourdieu's (1990: 138) well-known formulation, 'cultural capital' represents the accumulation of knowledge, skills and learning; or more generally the 'know-how' that advantages an individual and gives him or her status, prestige and authority in society. In a migration context there is a dual frame of cultural reference, which becomes especially enhanced with the second generation and its 'return' to the parental homeland. In this case we may, following Meinhof and Triandafyllidou (2006), speak of 'transcultural capital' as the capital that develops as a joint creation of the migrants' encounter with both 'abroad' and 'home' and the transferability of that capital back to the homeland. Let us unpack this definition in the context of the subjects of our research. For Turkish-German second-generation returnees, their 'joint encounters' are multiple: in Germany with members of their own ethnic community and with the wider German 'host' society; in Turkey/Antalya with the Turkish 'host' society and with German expats and tourists. We also need to acknowledge that, for our research participants, the notions of 'home', 'homeland' and 'host society' are deeply ambiguous and subject to change over time. For instance, second-generation 'returnees' have potentially two 'homelands' – the home country of their parents, the ancestral homeland and their 'German' homeland, where they themselves were born and brought up.

Moving now to a more pragmatic specification of transcultural capital, in our case study this consists of languages, intercultural communication skills and the ability to move between and mediate different cultural repertoires.

This means not only knowledge of 'Turkish' and 'German' culture but also of the cultural needs and expectations of German tourists on holiday in Turkey.

Conceptualizing the second generation Turkish-German returnees as active agents who stimulate social change with their 'transcultural capital' and activities in their 'translocal social fields' requires an understanding of how the social structure exists and changes as an intermingling of agency and structure (O'Reilly 2012). As Morawska (2009) argues, everyday engagement (active agency) reproduces and transforms structures and cultures. However, we cannot reduce the process of social change to a group of individuals – in this case the returnees. Instead, we understand that social change is multifaceted, shaped by many other forces, including the advent of mass tourism in the area and the broader trend to economic modernization in Turkey. Nevertheless, through exploring how returnees utilize their 'transcultural capital' in their daily practices in Antalya, we aim to trace their role in the process of social change in Antalya. This process started to become evident from the 1980s onwards with the tourism boom, the settlement of foreign nationals, and the arrival of the Turkish returnees from Europe (mainly Germany) to fill the job positions in the new tourism economy.

Returnees' transfers of transcultural capital and interactions in Antalya's tourism spaces create an undeniable cosmopolitan atmosphere in the city. This resonates with Meinhof and Triandafyllidou's (2006) more fluid characterization of cosmopolitanism, delineating it against both more elite constructions and more 'traditional' forms of diasporic/national transnational capital. Delanty (2006: 42) argues that 'the micro dimension of cosmopolitanism concerns individual agency and social identities, that is, aspects of cosmopolitanism reflected in internal societal change'. As our methodology and findings will show, for both the identities of 'returnees' and social change in the place(s) of 'return', an epistemology that includes self-awareness, empowerment and agency is necessary. If we accept that cosmopolitanism denotes 'a way of being in the world, a way of constructing an identity for oneself that is different from, and arguably opposed to, the idea of belonging to or devotion to or immersion in a particular culture' (Waldron 2000: 1), then we argue that returnees in Antalya, due to their self-reflexive condition and evolving translocational habitus, have a cosmopolitan sensibility wherein they take individual initiative to reflect their cosmopolitan lifestyle with the Turkish locals and foreign tourists and expats.

Methods

This research has an exploratory design which involves an iterative interplay between empirical data and theory, with special reference to our two key concepts of translocational habitus and transcultural capital.

The 'field' of the research is the tourist city of Antalya, on the Mediterranean south coast of Turkey. Boosted by tourism, Antalya has grown rapidly in recent decades and, at the 2016 census, was the sixth-largest city in Turkey, with 2.3 million inhabitants. Antalya's development as a tourist resort had started in the 1960s with domestic tourism but then the city became an important international destination as an effect of the 1982 Tourism Incentives Law which encouraged investment in the rich cultural and natural assets of the city and its surrounds (Ortaçeşme et al. 2000). Once these investments had been made, growth in tourist numbers escalated – from 1.8 million arrivals in 1995 to 7.5 million in 2005 and 11.9 million in 2015. At this last date, Antalya province accounted for 33 per cent of all tourists visiting Turkey. However, the number visiting Antalya (also the rest of Turkey) dropped to 6.5 million in 2016 due to the political situation in Turkey.

Interviews were collected by the first author in two rounds of fieldwork (2014 and 2015) with 74 second-generation Turkish-German 'returnees' in and around Antalya. Most of the participants were employed in jobs related to tourism – in hotels, restaurants, real-estate offices, shops and so on, or as tour guides, interpreters or language tutors. For this chapter, we focus on a subsample of 31 interviews in which narratives of transnational identities and practices are particularly prominent. The interview design was open-ended and flexible but loosely structured around a list of themes which had been discussed by both authors, building on prior research carried out by the second author on second-generation 'returnees' in Greece (see Christou and King 2014; King and Christou 2010).

The interviews were arranged via a variety of on-site personal contacts followed by snowballing: hence not a true random sample, but we have no reason to believe that the sample is significantly distorted in any way beyond being limited to those who agreed to be interviewed. The overall goal was to capture in detail both the previous lives and backgrounds (in Germany and, where relevant, in other locations in Turkey) and more particularly the everyday lives and achievements of the participants in Antalya. Most interviews lasted 1–2 hours and took place in a relaxed atmosphere in cafés in the Old Town (Kaleiçi) or in the Lara-Kundu tourist strip where many hotels are located. Interviews were held in Turkish or German, according to the interviewees' preference, and were recorded subject to the usual procedure of 'informed consent'. Subsequently they were transcribed and simultaneously translated into English, then coded via NVivo and interpreted through a theoretically informed narrative and thematic analysis (Riessman 2002).

The subsample of 31 consists of 15 women and 16 men, mostly in their 30s and 40s at the time of interview; 29 were born in Germany and 2 were born in Turkey and taken to Germany before the age of three. Most have Turkish

citizenship but seven hold German citizenship. Citizenship is important as an external structure because it affects their ability to travel around Europe and therefore back to Germany. Nine participants have third-level education, from either Germany or Turkey; most of the rest have the German vocational-stream secondary school education. Typically, they were the children of 'guest workers' who migrated to Germany during the 1960s and 1970s. Significantly, none of the parents originated from Antalya province; most migrated from rural areas in different regions of Turkey. In the case of 26 participants, their parents remain in Germany; in the remainder of cases, their parents have either returned to the town or village of origin or are deceased.

The Role of Transcultural Capital in Post-'Return' Lives and Social Change

We begin our empirical analysis by highlighting that it was not possible to provide a simple typology of the informants' reasons for return to Antalya. However, it was clear in the interview narratives that they had a 'cultural imaginary' of Antalya as a 'tourism paradise' where someone with good German language skills could make a decent living. Their accounts show that this meso-level factor was especially strong in the 1990s, when Antalya saw its main growth in mass tourism and an increasing number of German nationals (especially retirees) who bought houses in the area. The participants explained that they heard about Antalya from Turkish friends and relatives, from newspapers and, in a few cases, from their own experience of being there on summer holidays from Germany. They realized that they could make a fresh start and a new life in this international niche. It also needs to be noted that the majority of the sample has vocational training (*Berufsschule*) and they explained that they were working in relatively low-paid jobs in Germany. In that sense, Antalya stood as a promising alternative as the tourism job market was in need of staff with foreign language skills. The growing presence of German tourists in Antalya since the mid-1980s has created a dramatic socio-economic change in Antalya wherein city planning, service sectors and tourism businesses in general were developed for the needs of predominantly German and European tourists and expats. One of our participants, Bedri, who previously worked in a tour agency and is now a German language teacher, describes the shifts that have occurred in Antalya:

Antalya has become a cosmopolitan city over the years. I was talking to the owner of Antalya's oldest tour agency and he told me that, 40 years ago, when he took a tour bus with European tourists to Manavgat [a town in Antalya province], the locals threw stones at them. Tourists were called *gavur* and *kafir* [derogatory

terms to call someone a non-believer of Allah]. Today, you can do anything in Antalya, it is like a European city. The city has adapted to its *multikulti* residents – now there are German- and European-style cafés and bars, biking paths, schools where the language of instruction is English, German or Russian […] In many parts of Turkey, you still cannot go to a café with a woman and have a cup of coffee if you are not married. In that sense, Antalya is really the only place in Turkey that would fit my liberal mind-set. (Bedri, male, aged 31)

The first point we pick up from Bedri's narrative is the social change in Antalya – a frequently cited reason why our informants chose to settle here. Due to their experiences of direct or indirect exclusion, discrimination or personal identity crisis in their earlier years in Germany, the participants were attracted by the more inclusive practices and attitudes in the increasingly 'open' and cosmopolitan society of Antalya, which they were happy to make their 'home'. Equally important was the availability of various jobs for Turkish-Germans who have a good command of German, English and Turkish, the three key languages of the city's tourist economy. Hence Antalya as a 'return' place of settlement satisfies both the lifestyle and economic expectations of our informants.

A third important element arises in the account of Bedri and many other interviewees. Once they returned to Turkey, their 'translocational habitus' and their experience of living in Antalya evoked a self-awareness and self-worth wherein they became more compassionate, sensible and 'a better version of themselves'. They felt more confident in actively participating in the re-making of the social world in Antalya. Also relevant here is their 'transcultural capital' which allows them to take a part in the process of social transformation. This comprises not only their repertoire of languages but also their knowledge of German and Turkish cultures, lifestyles, work ethics and habits. In the following interview extract, Bedri tells us about how his German educational background helps him as a teacher:

In Germany, the education system prepares you for life. I studied in the Gymnasium [the most academic stream] until the fourth grade and what I was taught is still relevant today. They not only teach you topics but also how to think, and manners too, such as not chewing gum in the theatre, how to bike, how to cross the road and so on. So, it is not rote-based learning with army discipline as in Turkey! I apply this integrated approach to my own teaching. My students always joke and say that I am too German and I have the German mind. Well, in a way I guess I am, at least when it comes to education.

Bedri is thus benefitting from his 'transcultural capital' to bring an alternative to the classical authoritarian Turkish education system. As a teacher, his main

drive has been to show young minds that an alternative way of learning based on hands-on experiences and critical thinking is possible. Bedri has extensive networks in Europe through his educational initiatives and he takes his students abroad, mainly to Germany. We can say that he applies 'cosmopolitan learning' which includes 'pedagogic tasks that help students explore the criss-crossing of transnational circuits of communication' instead of learning about cultures in an abstract and nationalistic manner (Rizvi 2008: 30). Education is a key component in the transformation of individuals and society; those 'returnees' who have positions in the education sector take an active role in shifting locally defined educational practices and policies to a more globally engaging level.

From another narrative, we observe how Koray uses his skills to act as a 'cultural mediator' through his job as a tour guide. Below, Koray reflects on his 'double habitus' as reflexive and translocational, helping him to mediate between different ethnic/national groups in different social fields. He uses this capacity to shift between his identities to informally teach tourists/expats and locals about the how and why of their behaviours, lifestyles and mentalities.

> I've been working as a professional tour guide for 12 years. I've always been upset by Turkey's negative image in Europe. So, I wanted to become a mediator between two cultures, showing tourists the more intellectual, modern and liberal side of Turkey. My advantage is that I've lived in Germany, so I understand their mind-set. I can feel what they want, what they think. This is not just about being able to speak their language. You need also to understand what the German lifestyle, humour and daily routines are. But at the same time, I take the tourists to local shops and bazaars and I act as a mediator between the local people and tourists; hence it is also important to understand the Turkish way of doing things. I also teach the locals that they should respect the tourists, and not see them as victims to rip off. So, we are not just guides, we are performers, we are psychologists. Our job is to manage people, and create a community feeling. I try to learn more about the world too, like I have news apps on my phone so I constantly follow Turkish, German, European news, so I can talk about things with my tourist groups. Because Germans love asking questions, but also criticising. (Koray, M35)

Participants working as tourist guides generally reflected a sense of patriotism towards Turkey, the country which they appreciate more now that they live there. Nevertheless, through their translocal positionality and reflexive stance, they appreciate certain aspects of life and society in both Turkey and Germany. We find that their acknowledgement of their own fluid identities helps them to transcend the pre-existing limitations and established mindsets

in society. With jobs like tour guides and teachers, they communicate a cosmopolitan sensibility to those around them in Antalya (locals, pupils, tourists and expats). Gaining a sense of empowerment is key – once they realize that their knowledge of multiple languages, cultures and lifestyles puts them in this unique position in Antalya, they use this transformative force for improving their lives as well as contributing to the cosmopolitan character of the local social milieu.

Hence, the participants' 'transcultural capital' is not only useful in their working lives. They freely mentioned that they have built social networks with German 'expats' and other Turkish-German 'returnees' in Antalya – in a way, they have created a transnational bubble of their own. We return to Bedri's narrative to connect the returnees' active agency not only to societal change but also to the way they would like live. Bedri has Turkish, Turkish-German and German friends in Antalya and has also created and sustained social networks in Europe.

> At my school, there are five other teachers who are second-generation Turks from Germany. I enjoy it because we are like-minded people and we have empathy for each other. I think my life in Antalya is based on having both Turkish and German lifestyles. I am a German citizen, I go to Germany at least once a year, take my students on school trips, I also sometimes work as a guest teacher in German schools or go to conferences in other European countries. In Antalya, I spend most of my time with Turkish-Germans at school, but I have German neighbours and friends who have been living in Antalya for more than 10 years. So, I am quite active and mobile, I have networks both from tourism and education in several countries. This helps me because, when I am here, I miss Germany and when I am in Germany, I miss Antalya. At least, in Antalya, I can switch between my identities and have both cultures at the same time, the good parts of the Turkish and German cultures! I think […] I am Turkish at heart, German on paper, and a global citizen in my mind. (Bedri, M31)

As Bedri elaborates above, these transnational ties and activities are part of the lifestyle of people like him and they enjoy being with like-minded people. This is also reflected in their personal relationships with romantic others. The interviewees often related that they feel more empowered in their social circles where people share similar transnational backgrounds and processes of self-actualization. We also see this empowerment at a group level to have the ability to transform elements of local society because these individuals represent an attitude to life, work and social relationships based on being open and inclusive to other cultures while trying to incorporate what they see as the best aspects of different cultures into their respective social strata. In a way,

this is their reaction to injustice and oppressiveness towards themselves (as Turkish from Germany) and to others in society.

Moving on, the following interview extract relates how some informants cross over the social/ethnic/symbolic boundaries in the city and lead their 'dual' lives in a translocal social field. Adile works as a salesperson for water sports and lives in an international gated community with her husband, who is also a second-generation Turkish-German, and their daughter, who is a German citizen. Hence, her life is between Antalya and Munich but, in Antalya, she is able to maintain certain habits and traditions that she used to enjoy in Germany.

> We often go to Germany as the German government requires my daughter to be in the country from time to time, but also my husband's and my own parents live in Germany. But when we are there, we long for Antalya. Here, we have created our home, our own space. We have German and Dutch neighbours here and other Turks married to Germans, so at work and home we have an international environment. That's why I wouldn't live anywhere else than Antalya because, here, it is not like Turkey. We celebrate Christmas with our neighbours, our friends bring German bread, sausages, chocolate for us. Our house is decorated like a German house, it is minimal. So, I think we combined Turkish, German and Mediterranean style, it is a mishmash! My husband and I travel along the coast and go camping and climbing – we feel free in Antalya. (Adile, F38)

Like Adile, some other informants also mentioned their house designs as minimalist and functional, which they associate with the German style. Hence, they incorporate the translocal element to their bricks and mortar houses, in which they bring together the aesthetics and taste of several places; in this particular case, Mediterranean style accompanies German minimalism. In other narratives it was also found that the informants were closely following the German-related shops that were opened in Antalya – such as German bakeries or stores that sell German goods. Thereby, we trace a shift in individuals' consumerist behaviours, trying new and international products as a result of cities being globalized. All these practices show that the participants have access to so-called 'expat spaces' which are normally not available to the locals. Similarly, most of the informants mentioned that they live in the Lara district where they have 'expat' neighbours, which also signals that social neighbourhood life outside of the crowded 'tourism spaces' has also been transforming Antalya.

One-third of the sample group still lead mobile lives upon 'return' to Turkey through their tourism-related jobs, travelling to different countries or involving themselves in seasonal jobs. This shows, first, that return is not a finished

project but an ongoing process with multiple trajectories. Second, these fur-
ther mobilities and experiences in different countries instigate a cosmopol-
itan attitude to the self and the social world. Due to Antalya's increasingly
international environment, 'returnees' perceive and live 'place' as a 'meeting
place' (Massey 2002) where they can have social relations with people from all
over the world, and yet ground these global and transnational connections at
a local level. The narratives show that the informants link this 'global sense
of place' (Massey 1991) to a 'cosmopolitan sense of self'; as they see that
the place is not bounded and static, they also perceive 'the self' as changing
through the negotiations, hierarchies of power and interconnectedness of the
place. In that sense, their transnational attachments and hybrid identities fit
with Antalya's 'field', which can be perceived as a 'third space' (Bhabha 1994)
wherein there is no one dominant culture, but culture is mixed, cosmopolitan
and fluid. Below, Rıza relates how he uses his previous tourism experiences
across the world to make a living in Antalya and how Antalya's tourism spaces
correspond with his lifestyle.

> Since I was 20 years old I was working as a surfing instructor or animator at
> hotels in different parts of the world. These experiences made me a different
> person, seeing all these different lifestyles, experiencing different climates,
> cultures, meeting new people […] So, then I realised that life was not about
> Turkey and being Turkish, or Germany and being German […] I improved my
> English language skills and also learned French, Spanish and Russian. Then,
> every time when I went back to Germany and saw the Turks there I felt that they
> were so backward and conservative […] I didn't see myself as an immigrant
> or the son of guestworkers […] I was just myself, a citizen of the world. When
> I moved to Antalya, it felt familiar; the work mentality here is like in Spain, it's
> relaxed. I didn't have any culture shock because Antalya is multicultural, but
> I feel like an alien every time I visit my parents' village. (Rıza, M43)

There are a couple of important contextual points regarding Rıza's story. As
he is a German citizen, he has the freedom of travel and work which is other-
wise a limitation for Turkish citizens. In that sense, he has the privilege not to
be affected by this macro-level structural factor. With his extensive language
skills and experience in the tourism sector, Rıza was able to get a well-paid
job in Antalya and, equally importantly, the international environment in
the city made his 'return' a positive experience. As well as feeling completely
'displaced' from his parents' 'Turkish' community in Germany, where he
was brought up, he also does not feel any familiarity with his parents' village.
Hence, having roots in a particular place does not automatically guarantee a
sense of belonging. Like Rıza, other respondents also highlighted that they felt

secure in Antalya because their multiple identities and 'transcultural capital' are not only accepted but valued (and occasionally misinterpreted) in the job market and social environment. Rıza further reflects on this aspect:

> In Antalya's tourism environments, I feel safe because the people are mostly more open-minded. But I still have to explain myself from time to time. The German tourists here sometimes tell me 'Wow, your German is so good!'; they mean it as a compliment but in fact it is an insult. Like, how come a Turk can speak German so well? […] Then I just smile and reply 'Your German is good too' [laughing]. So, I am German, I am Turkish. Maybe I am none. Maybe I'm my own kind of person. I don't want to live my life within these categories anymore.

In this narrative extract, what is remarkable is that the second-generation Turkish-Germans can use their 'transcultural capital' to acquire prestige in the social field of Antalya. Participants like Rıza pointed out that their position vis-à-vis the Germans has been reversed: while they had been trying to prove themselves to the German 'dominant other' in Germany, in Antalya they are the 'hosts' and the German tourists are the 'guests'. As Rıza articulated, the second generation throw off their anxieties of being the Turkish minority in Germany and, in Antalya, are able to 'make peace' with their Turkish-German identities – and hence have a more relaxed approach when the 'others' try to stereotype them, for instance that Turks have problems with the German language.

Finally, participants highlighted that they benefit from social media platforms, notably Facebook, to reconnect and keep in touch with their friends and families in Germany, and they occasionally have German friends and family visiting them in Antalya. For instance, Bengisu, who has been living in Turkey for 25 years and working as a pharmacist in a tourist-oriented pharmacy, has been linking up with her old friends via social media and hosts them in Antalya.

> On Facebook I have found my good old friends from Germany. They were all very curious about my life in Turkey. I started posting photos, and when they saw my huge house with the pool and the photos of the nature from Antalya, some of them wanted to visit. They are a bit jealous [laughing] because they could never afford a life like this in Germany. So […] we have friends visiting from Germany from time to time; also my husband is a Turk from Germany, so he has his friends over too. (Bengisu, F50)

Interviewees also mentioned one interesting practice that can be added as a new wave transnational practice, in which they would check out their old houses or towns in Germany on Google Maps' Street View and hence pay a

'virtual visit' to places from the past without physically being there. Practices such as Skyping with friends and family and keeping in touch with them on Facebook show that the informants experience being 'here' and 'there' not only symbolically but also through virtual reality. Such practices keep alive their ties with people/places from their past, thereby illustrating the relevance of key constructs like 'networked societies' (Castells 1996), 'liquid modernity' (Bauman 2005) and 'time–space compression' (Harvey 1999) which are characteristic of late-modern times. In sum, it can be argued that the boundaries between home/away, here/there and native/foreign are 'liquid', and the informants experience life in Antalya as a translocal one in which they are simultaneously in contact with different scales (national, international, global, transnational) within this locale.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to show that the second-generation Turkish-Germans' 'return' to a specific locale in Turkey is a complex process with diverse trajectories. For our sample group, the choice of *where* to live and *how* to live upon 'return' was made consciously and intentionally (cf. Hoey 2005). Moreover, through the narratives and lives of the research participants, we demonstrated that Antalya presented itself as a rather unique destination for this particular migratory cohort. Here, in this favoured place on the Mediterranean coast, which many interviewees referred to as a kind of 'paradise' (Kılınç and King 2017), they were able to have the best of both worlds, especially compared to what their lives would probably have been like had they stayed in Germany. They were able to achieve fulfilling working lives earning, in most cases, good incomes, and they were able to enjoy open social relationships in a relaxed setting with other 'returnees' and with German and other European settlers and tourists. In both dimensions – work and social life – their transcultural capital was valued and became further enhanced.

Furthermore, the narratives reflected that, through the harmonious 'fit' between their lifestyles and identities ('habitus') and the transnational social field of Antalya, with its cosmopolitan and fluid population of locals, returned migrants, expats and tourists, our participants became more self-reflexive about their own 'hybrid' or cosmopolitan identities and about their place-based 'belongingness' to Antalya. In this hybrid or 'third space' of migrants and tourists, it was possible for their habitus to be conceptualized as both translocal and in constant evolution. Here, the participants felt comfortable being 'different', as difference is tolerated and valued in both the working and the social environment, which fuse together in a tourist setting of combined work, sociality and leisure.

Finally, we have established that there is a mutual dependency between (return) migration and social change in Antalya. We acknowledged that social change is multifaceted and cannot be reduced to only one group of individuals. However, we found that, as active agents, second-generation 'returnees' contribute to the city's tourism development by transferring their transcultural capital and to its social spaces, where they stimulate a cosmopolitan ethos.

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AFTERWORD

3 X 3: KEY CONTRIBUTIONS, EMERGING QUESTIONS AND WAYS AHEAD AFTER *TRANSNATIONAL RETURN AND SOCIAL CHANGE*

Paolo Boccagni

Contributing to an edited collection with an afterword has its own benefits. Writing after all contributors have already done the same, and being read after readers have gone through most of the book, provides a unique space for reflection. It is a valuable opportunity to build on the research insights from several colleagues, within the same analytical frame, and a logical endpoint to my editorial engagement with them. All that follows, of course, is nothing final. Rather, it aims to relaunch the dialogue with the burgeoning literature on return migration, primarily in a sociological domain. With a view to this, I discuss three major conceptual strengths of this book, three emerging questions across its case studies and as many prospects for further empirical research (hence '3 x 3').

Expanding the Purview of Return Migration Studies: Meso Social Change, Hierarchies, Temporalities

There is no paucity of literature on return migration by now, all across social sciences (Carling et al. 2011; Cassarino 2004; Jeffery and Murison 2011). Along with more traditional themes such as the economic impact of return or its interface with the 'culture of migration', some recent case studies have touched upon different, less obvious aspects. Among them are ageing and the life course (Percival 2013), migration imaginaries (Bolognani 2016), the role of second generations (Conway and Potter 2009) or the well-being of returnees and their families (Vathi and King 2017).

Against this burgeoning and diverse research backdrop, *Transnational Return and Social Change* marks an advancement in disentangling the social consequences of return migration, in a transnational optic, at a meso level. From different perspectives and locations, all contributors call for a shift from a migration and development (M&D) approach to one open to the long-term consequences of return migration for social change. This leads to redraw the boundaries of research on migrant-sending communities, with a two-fold aim: first, interrogating the influence of return migration on local social structures, identities and values *without* precoding it with the normative categories of much M&D debate (i.e. 'good' vs 'bad' ways of using remittances, or 'productive' vs 'conspiscuous' expense); second, understanding social change as the cumulative outcome of bottom-up interactions between returnees and their counterparts, in the light of their variable assets and life projects.

For sure, the cumulative impact and pace of social change from below is hard to assess once for all. For one thing, it is typically context-dependent. It also has a slower rhythm in some life domains, such as the one of predominant social values, than in others. It is not by chance, for instance, that the Roma returnees in Anghel's case study in Romania (this volume) tend to improve their position in an economic domain but not in the unwritten hierarchies of social prestige. The stigmas attached to their categorization as Roma are more resistant to change than their own social and economic prospects. Indeed, a focus on social change is central to the investigation of the local impact of return migration *as it is* – not as 'we' would like it to be, depending on the moral, ideal or political agendas that shape our work. The ultimate aim, then, is less to see how transnational return affects development (whether as a win-win solution or a source of new trade-offs) than to unveil, and gradually analyse, the social mechanism and dynamics that account for different societal outcomes.

As Fauser and Anghel (this volume) emphasize, there is a promise in refocusing the study of return migration at a meso level, rather than 'only' at a macro one (regarding, for instance, the impact of return on the aggregate structure of class inequality). For sure, the case studies in this book zoom down to the particular histories of individual returnees, as they engage with their closer social networks and groups, in situ or from a distance. Nonetheless, these accounts *go meso* as they address the interaction between the transnational assets, life projects, sets of aspirations returnees may mobilize and the preexisting local structure of opportunity. A meso level has also to do with how returnees, as individual or collective actors, position and (dis)align themselves vis-à-vis the preexisting groups and categories of belonging in their communities of origin, wherever located – be that in Romania (Coșciug, Anghel, this volume) or Ghana (Kandilige and Adiku, this volume).

Returnees' social capital, and all of their forms of bourdiesan capital, thus come to the foreground (Fauser and Anghel, this volume). This involves not just what returnees bring back in a more or less metaphorical suitcase but also the transnational networks and opportunities they use for their own purposes. For instance, in Cosçiug's case study (this volume), the religious networks of Romanian returnees keep being a fertile terrain for their transnational economic activities. The know-hows and cultural repertoires returnees may have assumed from different backgrounds, up to combining them with each other, are equally important. The 'transcultural capital' used by second-generation German-Turks in Antalya, as a way of mediating the interactions between foreign tourists and local inhabitants, is another case in point (Kilnic and King, this volume).

On the other hand, the category of social hierarchies is particularly promising to revisit the aftermaths of return migration along more subtle lines than those of success or failure. For one thing, return migration can be a hierarchically patterned phenomenon in itself. Public authorities in many countries of origin try to attract certain returnees – those expected to bring back more assets – and discourage many more. In this sense, as the study of Lulle et al. on Latvia (this volume) suggests, an economic and temporal hierarchy about which returnees should come first shapes diaspora-reaching policies, although often with limited practical effects.

More fundamentally, return migration can disrupt the prevalent overlapping between social, economic and moral hierarchies in the local communities of origin. This goes one step beyond Nieswand's (2014) 'status paradox', pointing to a close interdependence between Ghanaians' blue-collar jobs in Western countries and the achievement of a middle-class status in their homeland. If returnees get back with little of the advancements expected from them, as Kandilige and Adiku (this volume) remark, they experience a decrease in social status, relative even to their own conditions before leaving; in a nutshell, from 'providers' to 'dependants'. In the poignant comment of one of their interviewees, 'The biggest challenge is they [returnees] themselves.'

If, on the contrary, returnees have been effective and lucky enough in exploiting the opportunities available abroad, and in displaying this through improved material conditions, there is a chance that their position in the economic hierarchies be maintained or improved. This is not without frictions, though, and does not necessarily apply to the unwritten hierarchies of social and moral prestige. Suffice it to think of the pervasive stereotypization of returnees as the *nouveaux riches*, invariably in need to show off their affluence in order to gain social acceptance. Interestingly, most of the chapters in this book include some instance in this respect.

In the third place, revisiting return migration as part and parcel of transnationalization, and as a question of social change, is a source of valuable insight for the study of temporality. Return can be temporally patterned in many different ways, as for its position in the course of migration, its rhythm and recursivity. It may be relatively well-planned in advance, as in many case studies in this book, or accelerated and even improvised under major constraints such as the eruption of civil war in Libya or in Cote d'Ivoire (Kandilige and Adiku, this volume). In either case, return migration needs to be appreciated from within the life course of those involved, that is, returnees *and* their significant others left behind. It follows that we should not necessarily think of return as a single, one-time event, one that accomplished itself once for ever and stands out as a distinctive unit of analysis, regardless of what was there 'before' and 'after'. Return may actually be a recursive process, along one and the same migration corridor or through different ones. It may be enacted by migrants, but also by their descendants (Kilnic and King, this volume).

At least ideally, therefore, return migration calls for more longitudinal research, in parallel with the biographies of those involved and with the ongoing patterns of social change in the communities of origin. If return is not necessarily for good, the ways of studying it need also to adopt a dynamic approach. What holds true today, in the micro-dynamics of return-driven social change, may no more hold true in 10 years from now. Some of those who were categorized as returnees in the case studies of this book could turn out to 'be' again migrants, circular travellers or just people settled elsewhere, in the very moment someone is reading about their stories. Just as all of the categories we use, *returnee* is no essence. It does not mean all of those involved, of course, but it needs also to be reassessed over time, even if only to work out as a category.

Unveiling Three Crosscutting Themes: Home, Social Remittances, Proximity

All of the previous remarks feed into the explicit analytical foci of *Transnational Return and Social Change*. Furthermore, these case studies can facilitate conceptual advancement, regardless of their own specificities, in at least three more respects.

The first crosscutting theme has to do, unsurprisingly perhaps, with the ambiguous significance of *home*. Whatever the assessment of success or failure in return migration, and of their determinants, the literature has almost invariably followed a tacit assumption: that returnees' countries or communities of origin are *home* for them; put differently, that return is the same as *homecoming*.

Yet, this equivalence should not be taken for granted, as some authors, most notably in refugee studies, have pointed out (Malkki 1995; Markowitz 2004; Stefansson 2004).

At the most basic, the phenomenon under study here is simply 'the return of migrants to their places of birth or ancestry', as the *Introduction* puts it. Yet, does that entail a return 'home', as our ordinary use of language would suggest? If so for whom, under what conditions, to which and whose homes?

Examples abound, in this volume, of cases in which return to the pre-migration living context does *not* amount to returning home, if we understand the latter in its deepest meaning: not just, ascriptively, as the place one originally comes from, but rather as a place associated with a special sense of security, familiarity and control, or at least with the endeavour to achieve and emplace it (Boccagni 2017). In fact, the social history of return migration is also a history of people who, once back, likely find themselves *less* at home than they would have expected to. Schutz's (1944) seminal essay on the *Homecomer* has much to say in this respect (cf. also Werbner 2013). Distance in space and time from sending communities, adaptation to the dominant norms and expectations in the context of immigration, and social changes that anyway occur in the countries of origin are all factors that lead to the same outcome: return being a complex, mixed and not necessarily homely experience (Ralph 2009; see also Coşciug, this volume). More often than not, return turns out to be closer to a more or less radical and conscious readaptation than a way of getting back to what used to be there – the 'natural' order of things (Boccagni 2011; Malkki 1995).

This is no marginal question. The ability to bridge the gap between the recollections, even idealizations of the context of origin and the real life conditions there is critical to returnees' 'reintegration'. Whether for analytic or practical purposes, there may be little alternative to referring to the contexts of origin as home, as the pervasive use of the word in this book also suggests. Nonetheless, it is important to have critical consciusness about this conflation. Returning *home* is nothing natural or obvious. It is unlikely to bring migrants back to a pristine and warmly inclusive home community. It need not be inherently better, more desirable or morally superior – all aspects that lie in the subtext of home – than any other mobility option. Whether and under what circumstances returnees feel at home, hence *are* at home, is ultimately an empirical question. Their ability/opportunity to cultivate thick transnational networks, prior to return (and even after it), is arguably a strong determinant of the answer.

For sure, the equivalence between the context of origin and home touches a deep emotional chord in the minds and hearts of returnees themselves. Yet, this strong evocative power is a double-edged sword (Boccagni 2017). In fact,

it obscures the very real challenges of return. More fundamentally, it is subject to political manipulation by those institutional actors, such as governments in immigration countries, which have an interest in facilitating or even forcing return. In doing so, they invariably evoke migrants' 'home' – read: country of origin – as the (supposedly) better, right and natural place for them to be. Having said this, returning home is a still more complex and ambivalent experience for second generations and diasporic descendants, as Fauser and Anghel (Introduction) highlight theoretically, and as Kılınç and King and Lulle et al. (this volume) exemplify empirically.

The contributors of *Transnational Return and Social Change* also go some way forward in unpacking, and empirical assessing, the long-debated category of *social remittances*. This is in the footsteps of what several authors have been trying to do in recent years, particularly in Eastern Europe (Grabowska et al. 2017; Nowicka and Serbedzjia 2016). Social remittances are at the core of the contribution of White (this volume). Yet, some concern with this notion can be traced in the other chapters as well. The key point that can be made across them is that *what returnees bring back,* besides being irreducible to dichotomies such as good vs bad, ends up in a situated interaction with the preexisting ways of doing things – it does *not* predetermine them. Particular values or practices to which migrants may have adapted abroad, for instance in the religious domain, in the labour market or in civic culture, are not just 'imported'. Instead, they enter in contact with previous, often more traditional ones, with a final outcome that is not necessarily one of radical change (Portes 2010).

As important is that social remittances, while being affected by the assets available to returnees, are no mere translation of their overt intentions and ambitions. The reception of social remittances in their old/new social environments is something returnees are hardly in a position to predict, let alone control. At some point, relatively new ideas, lifestyles or ways of doing things can take a life of their own, as a matter of multilateral diffusion that it not under the control of any individual 'social remitter'. What is distinctive of return migration is rather the embodied and relationally thick form in which cultural diffusion occurs: an outcome of former migrants *being there*, and, sometimes at least, displaying unusual attitudes and behaviours through their day-to-day social practices.

This leads to yet another crosscutting theme out of this edited collection: the need to appreciate *return as everyday encounter* – a social experience unlike any transnational relationship migrants may have engaged in from a distance. Upon return, ex-migrants and non-migrants find themselves to be part again of the same field in a geographical sense, no less than in a social one. In order to advance a research agenda on social change, therefore, it is important to ask not only what is transferred, what is changing or how it is changing

(Fauser and Anghel, Introduction). And there is not only a need for to unveil returnee agency from the bottom up, as White (this volume) helpfully suggests. Equally crucial, and less obvious, is to investigate *How proximity affects social change:* put differently, how it is that *migrant return, as the recovery of bodily proximity between the relevant parties,* makes a difference in each of these respects. How does the emplaced presence and embodied mediation of returnees affect the social communities of origin, relative to the transnational influence they would exert from abroad? What does a more or less extended return add to the contents and consequences of their social remittances sent from abroad in their absence?

As Fauser and Anghel (Introduction) point out, 'travelling norms and practices first engage the local context' and then may affect larger scales of reference. More precisely, they first involve bodily interactions between returnees and their counterparts – they are also, and perhaps primarily, a matter of embodied capital. How ideas, norms and values 'from elsewhere' interact with the 'local mainstream' depends fundamentally on the relational embeddedness, the personal influence and the demonstration effect of returnees themselves, as long as they belong to the same perceptual field as their counterparts (see White, this volume).

Any form of cultural capital gained or empowered abroad may gain traction only as long as it is embodied and displayed in returnees' ways of being. And at the same time, upon return former migrants gain a much better sense of everyday life there, and of the opportunities and constraints they are faced with. Sometimes, though, the physical presence of returnees is enough to be a source of tension and 'undue' competition over already scarce resources, in a much more radical way than would happen with migrants living elsewhere and being 'content' with remitting money. Similar frictions are only more likely if migrant return is unwanted or forced (see the instance of Kandilige and Adiku, this volume).

What's Next: Comparing, Positioning, Disentangling Return Migrations

It is not just a ritual to conclude, with the benefit of an afterword, that all the topics addressed so far require and deserve more research. Much of the literature on return migration, including this collection, is based on specific case studies, and there is no reason to expect a different development in the future. Nevertheless, one could hardly deny the need to *expand* this domain of research further, were it only for its political significance or for its constitutive interdisciplinarity. After all, studying return is not just a matter of migration or refugee studies. It also involves other research domains such as

development, international relations or cultural studies (related to cultural diffusion). Leaving all of these instrumental aspects aside, the core question of how return migration affects social change does require more, and more diverse, research. In what follows I'll briefly sketch out three major points, to pave the way for further theoretical and empirical work.

Methodologically speaking, expanding research on return migration would mean not only to go deeper, relying on extended participant observation rather than 'only' in-depth interviews. Still more critical, and generally absent, is a comparative logic to inform the research design from the beginning, rather than in a post hoc fashion: what variations and commonalities can be found, and why, between different 'returns', under different time-space coordinates (see however, in this collection, Lulle et al.). A systematic comparative analysis could be done both in time, regarding the historical development of return patterns within the same migration system, and in space, by comparing different instances of return migration, selected with some theoretically meaningful criterion. While large scale comparison does raise dilemmas and costs, all the more so in migration studies (Fitzgerald 2012), it is arguably the condition for knowledge production on return migration to be more valid and politically relevant.

In the second place, and more substantively, the issue ahead is to do justice to our own understanding of return, less as an analytically autonomous event than as a segment of broader transnational migration, biographical and societal trajectories. The open question is then not only what comes after return but also how return migration fares, relative to other factors, as a point of disrupture or continuity in the historical development of a migration system; as a biographical threshold, involving a degree of (re)adaptation and (re)socialization in the life course trajectories of returnees and their families; as a catalyst of the interdependence between societies or local communities of origin and settlement, as long as the distinction between the former and the latter is still meaningful.

In the third place, arguing that return-driven social change is context-dependent, and that returnee is an analytically weak category (it catches only one particular aspect, and moment, of far more complex identities and biographies), does not mean to deny that social change via return migration matters, and deserves more investigation. At the same time, return migration is by no means the only source of social change in a given community. There is a cognitive and perceptual trap which is typically associated with migration, and migrants, whenever they are perceived – and stigmatized – as the quintessentially culprits for processes of change that have more complex and less visible determinants than the settlement of more or less diverse newcomers (or for that matter, returnees). If migration, including return, needs to be studied

against a broader background of societal transformation (Castles 2010), it is important to tell the exaggerated representations and moral panics associated with it (which are significant in themselves, as a research subject) from its 'real' effects on the social fabric of the groups, communities and institutions involved.

At the end of the day, and in order to do so, the option of a meso level of analysis is quite reasonable and realistic. This is the more abstract and generalizable level where the local influence of specific individuals or groups of people, so-called returnees, can be traced. By collecting and comparing many local instances of meso-level change, in different (but reasonably comparable) migration systems, the conditions can be built for the next analytical step: uncovering some more generalizable social mechanisms and dynamics of change, along the same lines that several contributors to this book have already insightfully, if preliminarily, traced.

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