> Definition: The return of migrants to their country of origin – sometimes as fulfilment of original intentions, sometimes as a consequence of revised intentions. Far from being the opposite or reversal of 'outward' migration, it has much in common with outward migration.

On reflection, it is no great surprise that significant numbers of migrants choose not to remain in the destination country. Return migration has received less attention from researchers than 'outward' migration, in part because of data limitations (Khoser 2000): many destination countries do not record departures, and origin countries often do not treat the entry of their own citizens as 'immigration'. To the extent that research is meant to help us overcome misconceptions arising from 'common sense', the research we do have about return migration shows that there is a great deal we can learn. Many of the interesting issues have to do with the notion that return migration is a simple matter of returning 'home': many returning migrants find that matters are a great deal more complicated than the idea of 'home' would imply. Other key topics include the relation between return and development, and the specific challenges faced by returning refugees.

An important argument about migration generally is that flows take place in 'migration systems' that connect countries and regions (Fawcett 1989); Morawska (1991) observes that migration systems can facilitate not just outward migration but return as well. In an era of transnationalism, with cheaper and faster transportation, return migration is common. Even in earlier periods, return migration was more common than is often realized: roughly one-fourth of the 16 million European immigrants who arrived in the USA in the early twentieth century returned (Gmelch 1980). For the contemporary period, Dustmann and Weiss (2007) estimate that more than half of immigrants to the UK leave within five years of arrival, with higher rates for those originating from other wealthy countries. Trends of return at present have likely been affected by the global economic crisis that has reduced employment levels in most wealthy countries, with disproportionate impact on jobs held by immigrants. On the other hand, increasing scholarly attention to return in recent years probably arises as much from the popularity of the transnationalism perspective as from any actual increase in return.

A variety of typologies are available to summarize the different modes of return migration. An oft-cited one is that of Cerase (1974): return migration is characterized here as retirement, failure, conservatism or innovation. The first two are self-explanatory, while 'conservatism' indicates return by someone who never really

tried to integrate thoroughly in the destination country and returns without having been much affected by the migration experience. 'Innovation' denotes a migrant who did absorb some of the values and practices of the destination country and returns intending to catalyse changes at 'home' using what they have learned while away (an intention Cerase says is typically frustrated). Another approach is found in Piore (1979), who distinguishes between different types of success and failure. Migrants often arrive with the intention to return after having met a goal (usually financial, e.g. accumulation of savings), and return can then be an indication of success. In other instances migrants intend their move to be permanent, but economic hardships in the destination lead to return as a matter of failure. The complication in this scheme is that intentions can change after arrival: people who intended to remain permanently might decide to return even in the absence of hardship, while someone who intended only a temporary sojourn can find that accumulation of savings is much more difficult than they had expected and then postpone return, perhaps indefinitely.

In some destination countries governments have not been content to treat return as a wholly voluntary matter for the migrants themselves. In democratic countries where deportation was typically not an available policy option, some governments (e.g. in France and Germany in the 1970s and 1980s) offered financial incentives and other forms of assistance, hoping to persuade immigrants (especially those who were unemployed) to depart. These programmes were generally not very successful: there were fewer takers than anticipated, and some of those who took the incentives likely would have returned even without them (Rogers 1997). King (2000) writes that decisions about return often have more to do with family or other non-economic considerations, in contrast to the economic basis of outward migration decisions. Other forms of government policy are rife with unintended consequences related to return: American efforts to reinforce borders against unauthorized crossing in recent years are widely acknowledged to have reduced the likelihood of return among undocumented Mexican immigrants, who fear that if they leave they will find it more difficult to gain re-entry to the US (e.g. Massey et al. 2003).

A central area of concern is what migrants experience after return to their country of origin. Many returning migrants invest a great deal of hope and optimism in return, in no small measure because of the notion that they are going home. The word 'home', however, can be misleading, particularly when one has lived abroad for an extended period. Sometimes returnees fail to anticipate how much 'home' has changed (or alternatively are frustrated at how little it has changed, see Boccagni 2011). They might also fail to perceive how much they themselves have changed and find it difficult to connect with old friends and family. For outward migration, one perhaps expects loneliness and other challenges of adaptation – but 'returning home' can be all the more difficult for the way one expects it to be easier than it is (Tannenbaum 2007). Boccagni (2011) found a significant level of misunderstanding and mistrust between returnees and stayers in Ecuador, and some disappointed returnees (unhappy with their economic situation as well) ended up migrating outwards again. Return need not be the end of a migration cycle; in some cases it is a stage in 'circular migration' (Cassarino 2004).

Such experiences raise questions about the meaning of migration and return in a world of nation-states. In a conventional understanding, migration creates an anomaly: someone attempts to gain membership in a different society, and that process entails a difficult transformation from 'foreigner' to 'national'. At least in highly ethno-nationalist contexts, that transformation can be difficult to the point that it is never complete: even with naturalization, an immigrant might always be perceived (even perceive themself) as a foreigner. Immigrants who experience discomfort in this situation might decide to try to resolve the anomaly by returning to the place where their nationality indicates that 'this is home'; Boccagni suggests that some migrants think of return as 'a restoration of the natural-order of things' (2011: 11). The research noted in the previous paragraph suggests that there might be limits on the effectiveness of this resolution: by virtue of living abroad for an extended period, a migrant arguably becomes, to a certain extent, a foreigner with respect to their country of origin. For some migrants, return is not difficult in these terms: they meet their goals and generally find satisfaction in return. But for others, return brings to mind the phrase 'you can't go home again'. In this perspective, return is not the reverse of outward migration; instead, it shares some essential features with outward migration (see Lee 2009).

Some researchers apply the notion of 'return' to the migration of immigrants' children (and subsequent generations) when they move to their parents' country of origin. Often the word return is enclosed in quotation marks (as with King and Christou [2010], writing about 'second-generation "returnees"'), indicating the challenges of applying it to the migration of those who did not themselves originate in the country in question. In such instances the word 'home' is even more ambiguous: such migrants can experience significant uncertainty as to where they really belong (King et al. 2011). Different contexts contribute to different outcomes for 'counter-diasporic migration': Jewish immigrants in Israel (whose families have lived elsewhere for many generations) can become Israelis with relative ease in a context of shared religious/ethnic identity and sustained large-scale immigration. Brazilian descendants of Japanese emigrants, on the other hand, typically remain 'Brazilians' as *Nikkeijin* (immigrants of Japanese ancestry) in Japan, given persistent disparities of language and culture (Tsuda 2003).

Research on return migration also considers its implications for development in the country of origin. In an older perspective rooted in neoclassical economics, return migration was expected to catalyse development insofar as migrants returned with useful skills and experience acquired in a developed ('modern') country (and perhaps some capital as well). Many scholars have long been sceptical of this claim, noting that migrant workers were often employed in unskilled jobs in the destination and sometimes experienced downward occupational mobility via migration; they might even have been skilled workers prior to emigration, such that their departure was a loss for the local economy. Other research has produced more optimistic results: Conway and Potter (2007) find that migrants (even those at or near retirement age) often return with relevant human capital that contributes to the local economy. Ammassari (2004) reached a similar conclusion about elite migrants who returned to West African countries and used connections developed while abroad to support their entrepreneurial efforts. In some instances, governments in sending countries

encourage emigration with the expectation of eventual return; migration can even be part of a diaspora-building strategy, with governments and other actors encouraging development of transnational ties among emigrants and their descendants, with these links perhaps leading to various types of remittances.

The return of refugees and asylum seekers likely requires a different analytical focus. Return in such cases could be considered more unambiguously attractive (assuming the threat leading to their flight has passed), given that refugees didn't want to leave in the first place. As with other types of migrants, however, it would be unwise to expect return to be a restoration of the *status quo ante*. Situations for returned refugees might no longer be dangerous, but they can still be very difficult – as discovered by Blitz (2005) in research on the return of Serbian minorities to eastern Croatia in the 1990s and 2000s, who encountered state discrimination as well as displacement by Bosnian Croats, themselves refugees from Bosnia. For failed asylum seekers, 'return' (e.g. deportation) might take place while the origin country is still dangerous – though some destination countries attempt to coordinate return with origin countries in hopes of reducing the likelihood that the migrants will try to gain entry again (Khoser 2001).

See also: *Transnationalism; Circular migration*

KEY READINGS

Conway, D. and Potter, R.B. (eds) (2009) *Return Migration of the Next Generations: 21st Century Transnational Mobility*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

Ghosh, B. (ed.) (2000) *Return Migration: Journey of Hope or Despair?* Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

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34 Second Generation

> *Definition: The children of immigrants, born in the country to which their parents have migrated.*

Immigration has transformed many societies around the world, in some cases over many decades. The children of immigrants hold a special place in those