

PART III

Return Migration: A New Perspective*

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Introduction

For many immigrants, returning home is a prospect they cherish and one that sustains them during their migration history. Ties with the home country, even if stretched, keep this aspiration alive. Recently arrived migrants, or those arriving under temporary programmes, lend themselves naturally to these return dynamics. Yet in fact some will return home and others will not; some will move on to a new destination, while others will be caught up in a cycle of circular migration. While return migration is a major component of migratory flows, our knowledge of it is still fragmentary.

What is the scope and nature of return migration? Are young people, women, or skilled workers more likely to return home? Why do some migrants settle permanently in the host country, while others choose to stay only a short time? What role should immigration policies play in this respect? Can return migration be well managed? Finally, what is their impact on the economic development of the home country?

These questions lie at the core of current issues relating to international migration management, from the viewpoint of host countries and home countries alike. On one hand, the growing importance of temporary migration programmes in OECD countries, and on the other hand the expectations aroused by the potential role of migrants in developing their home countries, will readily explain the renewed interest in the issue of return. Developing sound policies will require a good knowledge of return migration as well as a deeper understanding of the factors that determine it. In the absence of suitable data, some of these aspects have been overlooked, especially in the economic literature on international migration. An important body of work has been produced over the last ten years, however, and it brings a new perspective to return migration.

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This report discusses the different dimensions, both factual and political, of the return phenomenon. It is based primarily on a series of new statistical results, and attempts to improve the international comparability of data (Section 1). It then moves on to review the theoretical analyses of the determinants of return as well as the available empirical evaluations (Section 2). Next, it looks in detail at the policies that OECD countries have implemented to promote return (Section 3). Finally, it offers some elements for analysing the impact of return migration on the development of the origin countries (Section 4).

Main findings

- Departures by foreigners from OECD countries can represent anywhere between 20% and 75% of arrivals in any given year. This discrepancy among countries can be explained in part by variations in the outflow/inflow ratios of foreigners by country of origin, and also by the relative importance of temporary migration. In any case, the outflow/inflow ratio

is not an adequate measure of the phenomenon of migrants returning to their home countries.

- In fact, while return can be defined as the situation where a migrant goes back to his home country after living in another country for some period of time, the definition will often conceal more complex situations (secondary or repeat migration, temporary or definitive return, etc.). There are few statistics available for deriving a comprehensive and accurate appreciation of the return phenomenon.
- The estimates presented in this report are based on different methods, using available data sources in the home and host countries (population registers, labour force surveys, and population censuses).
- The results indicate that, depending on the country of destination and the period of time considered, 20% to 50% of immigrants leave within five years after their arrival, either to return home or to move on to a third country (secondary emigration). Some countries, such as Canada, the United States and New Zealand, are more successful than European countries in retaining immigrants.
- The return rate does not generally vary much by gender, but it changes sharply over the life cycle of migrants, with higher rates for the young and for retirees. Returns by level of education also produce a U-curve (i.e. the return rate is higher at the extremities of the education spectrum).
- Migrant mobility is greater between countries at a similar level of development, whereas when income disparities are greater, migrants are more likely to stay put. Return rates to OECD countries are on average twice as high as those to developing countries.
- Four main reasons can be offered to explain return migration: i) failure to integrate into the host country, ii) individuals' preferences for their home country; iii) achievement of a savings objective, or iv) the opening of employment opportunities in the home country thanks to experience acquired abroad. Moreover, migrants are likely to adjust their objectives over time, and in light of immigration policies in the host country.
- Policies relating to return are attracting growing interest. There are two distinct categories of measures: those intended to support the effective management of temporary migration programmes, and those that involve assistance for voluntary return. In addition, some host country policies (naturalisation, portability of social entitlements, etc.) can affect migrants' length of stay.
- Despite the variety of host country initiatives, programmes for assisting voluntary return have only a limited impact, at least if they are evaluated in light of the numbers involved in comparison with the total of returnees. This no doubt reflects the fact that return is only an option if the political, economic and social situation in the home country is stable and attractive.
- The contribution of migrants to the development of their home countries results from a combination of the resources they transfer before and at the time of their return (human, financial and social capital) and the returns to those resources.
- While there has been no macroeconomic assessment of the effect of return migration on countries of origin, this can be assumed to be limited. The resources contributed by migrants are more likely to boost growth that is already under way, especially if the authorities promote the effective use of these resources.

1. Measuring return migration

For a given host country, the return home of immigrants necessarily involves their departure from the national territory. As shown in the charts presented in Annex III.A1, outflows of foreigners from OECD countries are far from negligible: depending on the country, they can represent anywhere between 20% and 75% of the volume of yearly inflows.¹

Migrant outflow/inflow ratios also vary by country of origin, a fact that may be explained in part by differences in the level of development: mobility is higher between countries at similar levels of development, while permanent settlement is more likely when income disparities are greater.

The charts in Annex III.A2 reveal two distinct profiles in outflow and inflow trends by country of origin. The first profile represents the case where inflows and outflows are positively correlated: an increase in entries is accompanied by an increase in exits. The second profile, by contrast, implies a negative correlation between inflows and outflows: exits decline when entries increase, and *vice versa*.

An analysis of migrant inflows and outflows offers an initial overview of the scale of return migration and some of its characteristics. Yet this approach does not establish an explicit link between exits and entries, because they do not necessarily relate to the same individuals. It is therefore sensitive to cyclical variations in flows, and cannot be used to estimate return rates. Moreover, inter-country differences in the recording of inflows and outflows limit international comparability. The remainder of this report attempts to circumvent these obstacles, and proposes a detailed and quantified analysis of return migration from OECD countries.

1.A. Definitions and methods

There is little in the way of internationally comparable statistical information available on return migration. Attempts to measure the phenomenon, in effect, face two difficulties: the definition of return migration, and data availability.

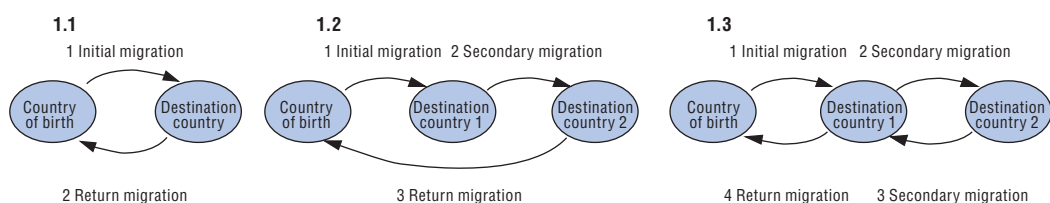
What is a returning migrant?


According to the definition offered by the United Nations Statistics Division for collecting data on international migration (UNSD, 1998), returning migrants are “*persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short-term or long-term) in another country and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year.*” This definition embraces four dimensions: i) country of origin, ii) place of residence abroad, iii) length of stay in the host country, and iv) length of stay in the home country after return.

According to this definition, a migrant’s home country refers to his nationality. However, for persons born abroad and naturalised and for those born as foreigners in the host country, a definition based exclusively on the country of nationality does not seem appropriate. Differences in legislation on nationality also pose problems of international comparability. Thus it would appear preferable to take the country of birth as the criterion for identifying returning migrants.

Return can sometimes be part of a more complex migration history, as Chart III.1.1 shows: the last country of residence before return is not necessarily the country of initial

Chart III.1. Various cases of return migration



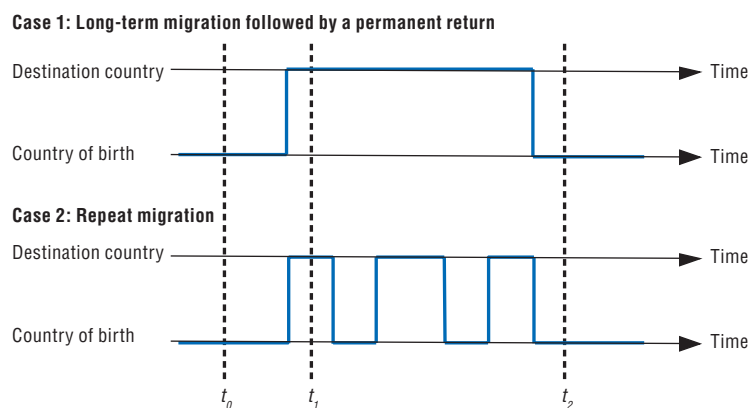
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destination (Chart III.1.2), and a departure from the country of immigration is not necessarily a return to the country of origin (Chart III.1.3).²

In the case of a short stay in the host country, return migration is especially difficult to identify, and is therefore frequently underestimated. The length of stay at the time of return can be measured from the declaration given upon exit from the host country, or after return to the country of origin. In the first case, the measure is subject to some uncertainty,³ while in the second case it is a truncated measure.

The possibility of measuring length of stay in the host and home countries depends on the availability of data. In the example shown in Chart III.2, if place of residence is observed only at dates t_0 , t_1 and t_2 , then cases 1 and 2 are equivalent. Yet the reality is rather more complex. Even if “temporary” returns are particularly difficult to identify, as are short stays in the host country, it would be particularly important to be able to distinguish true returns from mere visits of migrants to their home country

Chart III.2. Timing of migration for an individual and observational equivalence



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Data sources and estimation methods

The sources of data for measuring return migration can be differentiated according to two main dimensions: the place of collection (in the country of origin or the country of destination) and whether the measurement is direct or indirect. If returns are identified from host country data, the measure will be based on immigrants leaving the territory. If the data come from the home country, returns will be identified on the basis of native-born persons entering the country. These two approaches do not necessarily coincide, to the extent that not all departures measured by the host country will necessarily have the home country as destination. The second dimension distinguishes direct measurement of

migratory flows and indirect measurement based on changes in migrant population stocks.

Direct measurement of exits or returns using longitudinal data

A prime source of statistics on returning migrants is data from population registries, which are compiled from a permanent census of the *de jure* population.⁴ Residents are required to register upon arrival and to de-register upon departure.⁵ These records thus count entries and exits from the country, and can be used to measure the departure of migrants and the return of native-born persons who were residing abroad. The information contained in the registries varies from one country to another, but generally includes country of birth and nationality, as well as destination and planned length of stay abroad for those leaving the country.

The first limitation on the use of population registries for measuring return migration is that people register and de-register on the basis of their planned length of stay in the country (for entries) or the planned length of absence from the country (for exits). Some individuals, then, may leave the country without de-registering if they plan to return shortly. If they do not return as planned, their departure is not recorded. The same holds for people who deliberately fail to “sign out”, so as not to lose certain entitlements associated with residency in the country.⁶ Moreover, by definition, population registries do not include illegal immigrants, and there is thus no way of measuring their departure from the territory. Nor does the registry always make it possible to identify the destination of persons leaving the country: when this information is available, it expresses a person’s intent about the next country of residence, and not necessarily the real or final destination. Among the countries that maintain population registries are Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries, Spain and Switzerland.

In some countries, inflow and outflow data are collected at borders points (ports, airports, etc.). These data are collected primarily for immigration control purposes, and information on arrivals is generally more complete than that on departures. Moreover, these sources contain very little information on the demographic and social characteristics of migrants. Australia, New Zealand and Japan collect data of this kind. Another example of data collection at border crossings is the International Passenger Survey in the United Kingdom, the purpose of which is essentially statistical.

A direct measure of outflows can also be derived from longitudinal surveys. If the initial sample is representative of the foreign-born population, and if there is a way of knowing why immigrants leave the sample (*i.e.* death or departure), then we can estimate exits from the territory, and eventual returns. Sample size and structure are the main limitations of these tools. Longitudinal surveys generally have fairly small samples, because of technical and cost considerations, which make them less representative and affects estimates of exit rates. On the other hand, sources of this kind are very useful for studying individual behaviour. Among the available longitudinal surveys, the German socio-economic survey (GSOEP) is probably the one that has been used most for analysing return migration. Some countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden) also have immigrant-specific longitudinal surveys. Finally, some specialised surveys can track the migration path of individuals between the countries of origin and destination (see Box III.1).

Box III.1. Specialised surveys

Specialised surveys conducted among migrants in host countries, or among migrant communities in countries of origin, can be used to collect detailed information on individuals' migration history, the length of their various stays abroad, their savings, their motivations and the socio-economic context of migration. In some cases, these data are collected in both the home country and the host country.

These surveys generally have samples of modest size, and are not useful for estimating the scope of initial or return migration, but they can be of great help in understanding the causes and consequences of return migration. Examples are the NIDI (Netherlands) surveys covering Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Senegal and Ghana (see Schoorl *et al.*, 2000) or the Mexican Migration Project.

The Mexican Migration Project (MMP) is a research project launched in 1982, based at Princeton University in the United States and the University of Guadalajara in Mexico, which studies the migration of Mexicans to the United States. Each year, during the winter months (when seasonal migrants are home), the MMP randomly samples households in communities located throughout Mexico. The sample comprises some 300 households and more than 5 000 individuals each year. In addition to social, demographic and economic information on the household and its members, the interviewers collect data on each individual's first and last trip to the United States. From household heads, they compile a year-by-year history of US migration and administer a detailed series of questions about the last trip northward, focusing on employment, earnings, and use of United States social services.

Following completion of the Mexican surveys, interviewers travel to destination areas in the United States to administer identical questionnaires to migrants from the same communities sampled in Mexico who have settled north of the border and no longer return home. These surveys are combined with those conducted in Mexico to generate a representative binational sample.

Source: MMP site: <http://mmp.opr.princeton.edu/>.

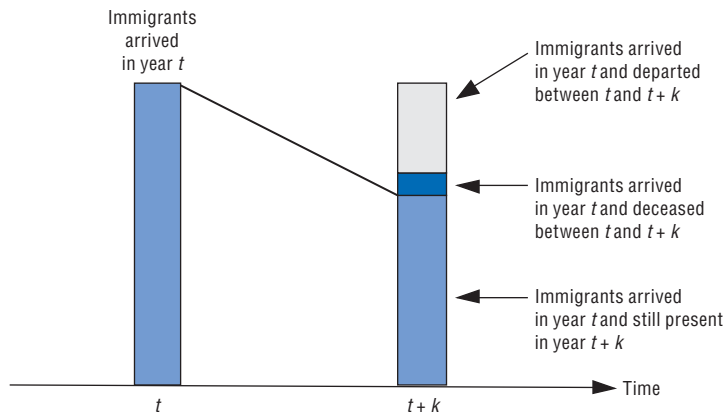
Indirect measurement of departures from the country of destination


Indirect measures of migrant departures, based on data collected in the country of destination, involve estimating, for a cohort that arrived in year t , the difference between the initial stock of the cohort and the stock remaining at a later date $t + k$, accounting if possible for deaths within the cohort during the interval (Chart III.3).

The size of the immigrant cohort entering in year t can be obtained, for example, from a direct measurement of immigration flows.⁷ The size of this cohort in year $t + k$ can then be measured from a large sample survey (labour force surveys, for example) or from a population census. Depending on the available data, it may be possible to obtain detailed results by region or country of origin, gender, education and other variables of interest. However, this approach may be limited by sampling problems, in particular for those countries of origin that are less heavily represented.

Borjas and Bratsberg (1996) apply this method in the case of the United States, using data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service showing the number of foreigners admitted as permanent residents between 1975 and 1980, and also the 1980 census, which gives the remaining size of this cohort at that time. Given the differences in coverage between the two sources – entries do not count irregular immigrants and temporary

Chart III.3. **Indirect estimation method of immigrants' exits from the destination country**



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migrants (non-immigrants), whereas the population census counts them at least in part – the stocks from the census have to be corrected in order to calculate the exit rate of immigrants.

Such adjustments are not needed if the inflows in year t and the remaining cohort in $t+k$ are measured from similar data sources. Thus, for the United States, we can use the 2000 Census and the nation-wide American Community Survey of 2005 to estimate return rates after five years of residence, by country of origin and by selected characteristics, for migrants entered in 1999.⁸ The results are detailed in Section 1.B.

A comparable method involves use of annual labour force surveys (LFS) for five European countries (Belgium, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), with which we can track the cohorts arrived during the 1990s in successive surveys. In this way we can estimate the immigrant retention rate. The results are also shown in Section 1.B. Because of some inherent limitations in these data, specific adjustments had to be made⁹ (see Box III.2).

Indirect measurement of returns to country of origin

Returns of migrants can be estimated from the countries of origin, if there is a representative survey available with information on individuals' previous place of residence. This is the case, for example, with the population censuses of a growing number of countries, which include a question on country of residence five years prior to census date. Here, we can not only estimate the number of return migrants for different countries of previous residence, but we can also compare the number of returning migrants with the number who never left the home country. When adequate data are available, it is also possible to match the home country census against the censuses of the principal destination countries. In this way, we can estimate return rates and we can also compare returning migrants with those who have remained in the host country. The method is illustrated in Chart III.5.

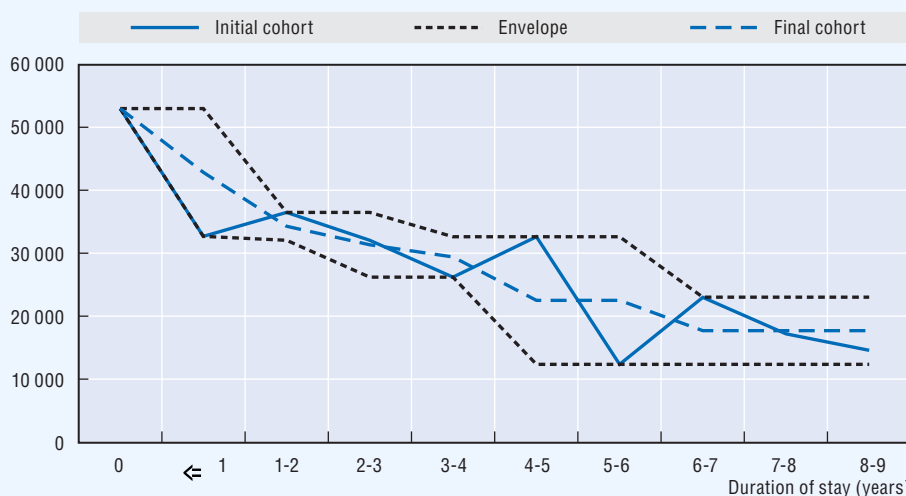
One drawback of this method is that it is generally not possible to control for the date of arrival in the destination country and, consequently, for the length of residence in that country. The "return rates" estimated in this way are not comparable, then, to the return rates by cohort estimated from surveys conducted in the destination countries. In fact, this

Box III.2. Estimating return migration from labour force surveys

For each labour force survey (LFS), non-responses about the length of stay are reallocated proportionately so as to maintain the total stock of immigrants.* The stocks for each length of stay are then re-weighted so that the total stock estimated from each survey coincides with official estimates of the immigrant population. The change in the size of the cohort entering in year t is then estimated by tracking the stocks by length of stay in the surveys for years $t + 1$, $t + 2$ and so on. As migrants arriving within the last year are only partially covered and are not very well represented in the LFS, the number of arrivals in each cohort is generally obtained from national administrative data (International Migration Database, see www.oecd.org/els/migration/imo/data).

Because the employment survey samples are unstable and responses about length of stay are concentrated at certain values (five years in particular), the stocks of these cohorts are volatile and must be smoothed out in order to estimate retention rates. The smoothing method selected involves constructing an envelope around the original cohort, and the final stock for a given length of stay will be the average between the maximum and minimum of the envelope. Chart III.4 presents the adjustments made to the 1993 immigrant cohort in the Netherlands.

Chart III.4. Evolution of the cohort of immigrants who entered the Netherlands in 1993, by duration of stay



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Source: Authors' calculations; Labour force surveys of the Netherlands and International Migration Database.

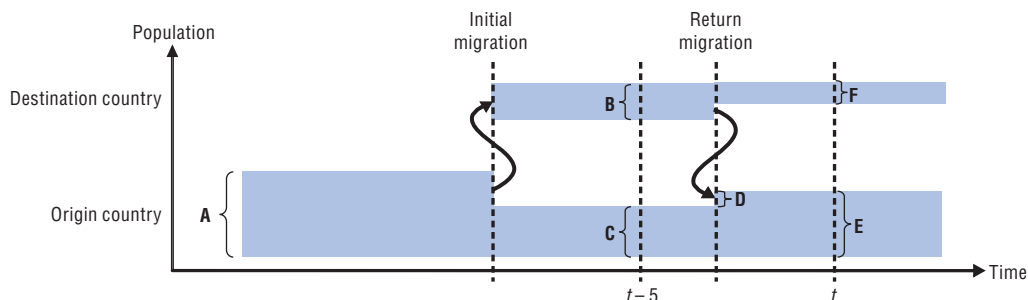
One limitation to this approach is that there are differences among countries in the official rules for recording inflows. Countries that have population registries use them as the sampling base for the LFS; inflows covered by the LFS are thus closely linked to registrations in the registries. Registration rules depend essentially on the immigrant's length-of-stay intention, and they vary from one country to the next. In a country where the registration criterion is the intent to stay more than three months, inflow figures will contain a significant number of persons entering for short stays. In countries where the registration criterion is one year, fewer entries will be recorded and consequently the exit rate will be lower.

* Non-responses about length of stay must be reallocated when the non-response rate varies from one year to the next, as is frequently the case.

method can be used to calculate a proportion of returns among migrants present at a given date, i.e. a ratio between outflows and a stock; this is typically lower than a return rate for a given cohort, which relates outflows to inflows.

We use this method for several countries in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico), matching their censuses with those of the United States and Spain, the main host countries of immigrants from these countries. The results are presented in Section 1.B.

Chart III.5. **Method for estimating returns using a census in the origin country**



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Note: Censuses in the origin and destination countries take place in year t . Censuses of both countries include a question on the country of residence 5 years earlier. A: initial population in the origin country; B: number of migrants arrived in the destination country before $t-5$; C: number of non-migrants (A-B); D: return migrants among migrants arrived in the destination country before $t-5$; E: population in the destination country in t . D is observed at date t in the origin country through the information on the place of residence in $t-5$; F is observed at date t in the host country. The proportion of returnees in t among the migrants living in the destination country in $t-5$ is equal to $D/B = D/(F+D)$.

1.B. The magnitude of return migration

This section presents the main findings from estimates elaborated using the methods described in the previous section. They are supplemented by results taken from the existing literature on return migration. The following presentation distinguishes between estimates based on “country of destination” sources and those obtained from “country of origin” sources.

The differences in return rates by country of destination can be attributed to three types of factors. First, the nature of residence permits, in particular the requirements for renewal and change of status, varies greatly among the admission categories, and affects the probability of return and the effective length of stay. For example, seasonal workers are likely to return fairly promptly to their home country. Foreign students are not, *a priori*, supposed to settle permanently in the host country, but in many OECD countries (see OECD, 2007) they now have the possibility of changing their status upon completing their studies, under certain conditions. On the other hand, people entering under a selective migration programme in settlement countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand) receive a permanent residence permit upon arrival. In Europe, some temporary stay permits are in effect permanent, and allow for long-term settlement. The composition of migration flows according to these different categories will affect the observed average return rate.

The motives for migration also determine the propensity to return. People immigrating under family reunification provisions are likely to settle permanently.¹⁰ With refugees, by contrast, the likelihood of return will depend essentially on the restoration of

economic, social and political stability in the home country, and the degree of integration in the host country. Finally, individual circumstances such as marital and family status are also a key factor in migratory behaviour.

Given the differences in the nature of flows by country of origin and the features of migration policies in OECD countries, return rates can be expected to vary among countries. In interpreting the results presented in this report, it is important to bear in mind these institutional and structural differences, even if it is generally difficult to identify their impact precisely.

Estimating returns from host country data: overall re-emigration rates by entry cohort


We present here the outcomes of estimates made for several European OECD countries, based on labour force surveys for the period 1992-2005, and for the United States, using the 2000 population census and the 2005 American Community Survey.

Generally speaking, the estimated exit rates (i.e. including returns and secondary emigration) are fairly high. As Table III.1 shows, overall exit rates after five years of residence range from 19% for the United States to 60% for Ireland. In other words, of an entry cohort of 100 immigrants arriving year t , 40 were still present in year $t+5$ in the case of Ireland, 50 in Belgium, 60 in United Kingdom and Norway, 72 in the Netherlands, and 81 in the United States. The US estimate may be understated, since departures during the first year (i.e. between 1999 and 2000) are not counted (see Note 8). On the other hand, re-emigration rates for Ireland and Belgium are particularly high. In Belgium's case, this could perhaps reflect the presence of European institutions and of numerous multinational corporate headquarters. As noted in Box III.2, the comparability of the results is limited by inter-country differences in inflow recording criteria.

Table III.1. Estimates of re-emigration rates in selected European countries and the United States after 5 years of residence

Population aged 15 and older

	Entry period	Average re-emigration rate after 5 years (%)
Ireland	1993-1998	60.4
Belgium	1993-1999	50.4
United Kingdom	1992-1998	39.9
Norway	1996-1999	39.6
Netherlands	1994-1998	28.2
United States	1999	19.1

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Source: See Box III.2 for the estimation method and the sources for the European countries and Note 8 for the United States.

Existing estimates of re-emigration rates after five years of residence, obtained with comparable methods, provide similar results. For the United Kingdom, Dustmann and Weiss (2007) obtain an average retention rate of 60% after five years of residence, over the period 1992-2002, using data from employment surveys, and this result is identical to what we obtained for the period 1992-98. For the United States, Borjas and Bratsberg (1996) offer estimates of exit rates at the time of the 1980 census for cohorts entering between 1970 and 1974, and between 1975 and 1980. They obtain re-emigration rates of 21.5% after six to ten years of residence, and 17.5% after five years of residence or less. These results are

comparable with the five-year rate we estimate for persons arriving in 1999 (19.1%) and they suggest that the overall immigrant retention rate in the United States has changed little in the last 25 years. For Norway, Bratsberg *et al.* (2007) estimate, for cohorts entering between 1967 and 2003, an average exit rate of around 50% after five years of residence. For the Netherlands, using data from the population register, Bijwaard (2004) finds a re-emigration rate of around 35% after five years for the 1997 entry cohort.

Comparable exit rate estimates are available for other countries. For Canada, Aydemir and Robinson (2006) find a retention rate of 76.3% after five years of residence for male migrants entering in 1996, yielding an exit rate of 23.7%.¹¹ For Denmark, Jensen and Pedersen (2007) estimate a retention rate of 45% after five years for the cohort of immigrants entering in 1983 (*i.e.* an exit rate of 55%). For New Zealand, Shortland (2006) estimates that 77% of the 1998 cohort were still present in the country in 2003, that is a re-emigration rate of 23%.

Taken as a whole, these estimates indicate that re-emigration rates after five years of residence vary from 20% to more than 50% depending on the host country and the period considered. Some countries, such as the United States, Canada and New Zealand, which figure among the traditional countries of long-term immigration, retain more of their immigrants than do European countries.

Differences by country of origin

Retention rates by entry cohort vary substantially depending on the migrants' home country. The makeup of migration flows in terms of country of origin may also explain in part the differences in re-emigration rates by country of destination, which we have just reviewed.

In the case of the United States, for example, our estimates indicate that the exit rate of Mexican migrants entering in 1999 was 18% after five years, while it was 24% for persons from South America, 43% for immigrants from Canada, and 54% for those from a country of the EU15.

For Norway, the findings of Bratsberg *et al.* (2007) again show great diversity according to region of origin: although the average re-emigration rate after five years is about 50%, the retention rate of immigrants from OECD countries is below 30%, while that for immigrants from non-Western countries is above 75%. For Sweden, the probability that an immigrant will leave the country varies by region of origin as well: migrants from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe are least likely to depart (Nekby, 2006).

Return migration versus secondary migration

According to the definition discussed in Section 1.A, return migration is a particular case of re-emigration, one in which the new country of destination is the same as the country of origin. With secondary migration, the new country of destination is different from the country of origin. It is important to distinguish between return migration and secondary migration, because the implications in terms of immigration policies and in terms of the impact on the country of origin are not the same.

Direct estimates comparing secondary migration and return migration are available for the Nordic countries, thanks to their population registries, which include information on planned destination. For Sweden, Nekby (2006) shows that for the period 1991-2000, 72% of immigrants (aged 26 to 64 years) leaving the country were planning to return to their country of birth, leaving a secondary migration rate of 28%. This percentage varies greatly,

however, by region of origin: the share of secondary migration in total re-emigration is less than 15% for persons born in the Nordic countries and in Western Europe, but it exceeds 20% for North Americans and South Americans, 40% for natives of Eastern Europe, and 50% for Asians and Africans. In the case of Norway, Bratsberg *et al.* (2007) obtain comparable results. Over the period 1967-2003, 93% of Danish and Swedish immigrants who left Norway returned to their home countries, indicating a secondary migration share of around 7%. For immigrants from the United States and the United Kingdom, the share of secondary migration in re-emigration was respectively 14% and 13%. By contrast, for immigrants from emerging or developing countries the secondary migration share was much higher: 22% for Turkey, 19% for Iraq, 30% for Somalia, and 67% for Viet Nam.

In the case of Austria, exit registry data include an indication of migrants' region of destination. For individuals leaving Austria between 2002 and 2006 and born in the EU15 (excluding Austria), between 86% and 93% had the EU15 as their destination. This suggests that the share of secondary migration is relatively small, unless it is assumed that these persons are emigrating to a European country other than their country of birth. In the case of African immigrants leaving Austria, the share having Africa as destination was between 78% and 90%. If we assume that the great majority of Africans returning to Africa from Austria in fact go back to their country of birth, then secondary migration would represent at most 20% of African immigrant departures.

The relative share of secondary migration and return migration seems then to vary significantly by country of origin and country of destination, but also according to the nature and length of residence in the host country. Immigrants from relatively poor countries or regions who have lived in an OECD country are more likely to emigrate to a third country, while immigrants from countries where living standards are comparable to those in the host country have a tendency to go back to their country of origin.

Estimating returns from home country data

From the viewpoint of migrants' home countries, returning native-born persons (or nationals) are detected upon entry. If these return migrants have the nationality of their country of origin, they face no formalities in re-entering their country, and very often there will be no administrative record of such entries (except in countries that have registries covering the entire population, such as the Nordic countries). The most current source of information on returning natives is therefore the population census, when it includes a question on previous place of residence (see Section 1.A for a description of this method).

Table III.2 presents an estimate of the number of return migrants in selected countries of Latin America, by country of destination, using census data. The results show that return rates differ greatly by country of origin and country of destination: the highest return rate is for Chileans who immigrated to Spain (about 16%), while the lowest rate is for Mexicans and Argentines who immigrated to the United States (4%).


1.C. Who are the returning migrants?

This section discusses the principal socio-economic characteristics (age, length of stay, gender and education) of returning migrants.

Table III.2. Proportion of return migrants among migrants from selected Latin American countries

Destination countries: United States and Spain

Census year (t)	Migrants resident in the destination country in 2000 and arrived before year $t-5$		Migrants returned from the destination country after year $t-5$		Share of migrants returned in year t among migrants living in the destination country in $t-5$	
	[1]		[2]		[2]/(1+2)	
	United States	Spain	United States	Spain	United States	Spain
Argentina 2001	98 438	61 860	3 860	2 770	3.8	4.3
Brazil 2000	114 085	17 800	11 596	1 519	9.2	7.9
Chile 2002	66 542	9 180	5 080	1 730	7.1	15.9
Costa Rica 2000	51 267	–	4 400	–	7.9	–
Mexico 2000	6 268 985	11 280	239 987	1 404	3.7	11.1

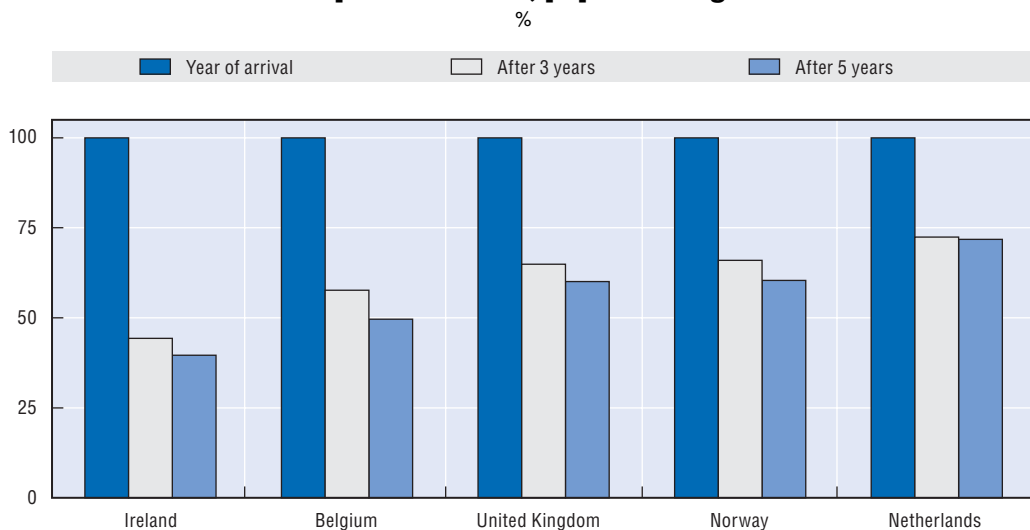

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Note: See Chart III.5 for the estimation method.

Source: Column [1]: population censuses of the destination countries (United States (2000) and Spain (2001)); column [2]: population censuses of the origin countries.

Age and length of stay of returning migrants

With the help of European employment surveys, we can compare retention rates after three years of residence with those after five years. A clear tendency emerges from this comparison for all countries analysed: the return rate after five years is not much higher than the return rate after three years. This indicates that immigrants who leave their country of destination do so after a relatively short time abroad. In other words, the longer a migrant stays in the host country, the less likely he is to return home or to emigrate to a third country (see Chart III.6). This result is largely explained by the fact that, in many European countries of the OECD, an immigrant can obtain a long-term residence permit after five years of residence, or can even take out the nationality of the host country.

Chart III.6. Retention rates of immigrants after 3 and 5 years of residence for selected European countries, population aged 15 and older

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Source: See Box III.2 for the estimation method and sources.

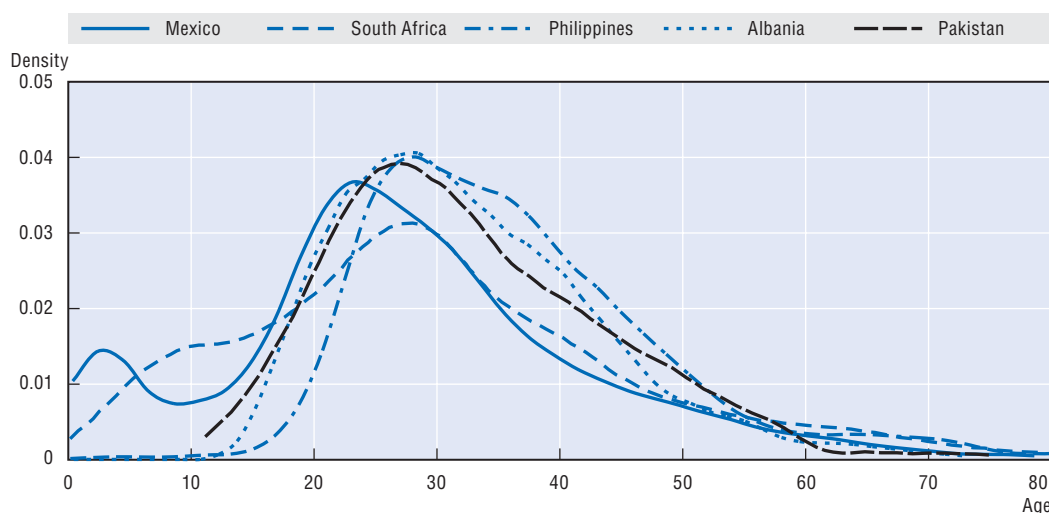
The analyses performed with data from the population registries in Nordic countries confirm this finding. For Sweden, Nekby (2006) shows that a migrant's length of residence in a country diminishes the likelihood that he will return to his home country: controlling for a set of demographic factors, Nekby shows that ten years spent in Sweden will reduce the probability of returning to the home country by nearly eight percentage points. On the other hand, length of stay has less impact on the probability of secondary migration. Similarly, the results obtained by Bratsberg et al. (2007) indicate that the average retention rate of immigrants in Norway drops from 60% after three years to 50% after five years, and to 40% after ten years.

For the United States, data from the 2000 Census and the 2005 American Community Survey also show that the propensity to re-emigrate declines with length of stay. While the re-emigration rate of immigrants entering in 1999 is 19% after five years, only 11% of persons who entered in 1998 and were still present at the time of the 2000 Census would leave the United States between 2000 and 2005. For the 1997 entry cohort, this proportion falls to 7.5%, and for immigrants who arrived between 1994 and 1996 it is only 5%.¹²

Monitoring of immigrants over a longer time reveals that, in some cases, the probability of return declines at first and then rises. For Denmark, Jensen and Petersen (2007) estimate that the probability of leaving the country declines in the first 15 years of residence, and then grows, reflecting the lifecycle of the migrants, and in particular a significant propensity to return home upon retirement (see also Box III.3).

However, as McKenzie (2006) shows, a preponderant portion of returning migrants go back home at the early stages of their lifecycle, when they are relatively young. He found that Mexican migrants return to Mexico at an average age of 24 years, after three years abroad, and that Albanians go back to their country at an average age of 25 years, after seven months abroad (see Chart III.7).

Chart III.7. **Distribution of age at return for selected countries**



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/428363154421>

Source: McKenzie (2006).

Are women more likely than men to return home?

For European countries, there would seem to be no significant differences in re-emigration rates according to gender. In the United States our estimates show, however, that there is a significant difference between men and women, with re-emigration rates after

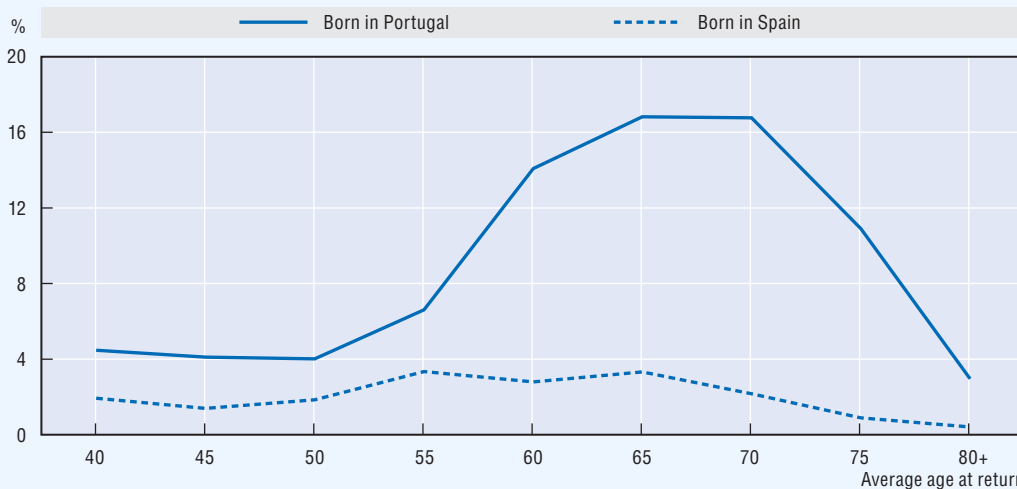
Box III.3. Return for retirement

When they reach the age of retirement, some migrants return to their country of origin. In the case of Sweden, for example, Klinthäll (2006) shows that the probability of return increases significantly after age 65, the legal retirement age in that country. This effect is even more pronounced for persons retiring between the ages of 51 and 64 years.

In the case of returning migrants born in Spain and Portugal and living in France, a joint exploitation of the 2001 census data for the two Iberian countries and the 1995 French employment survey allows us to estimate the proportion of Spanish and Portuguese migrants returning to their country of origin, by age group, between 1995 and 2001. As Chart III.8 shows, that proportion rises sharply after 50-55 years for Portuguese immigrants, and much more moderately for Spanish immigrants, who return in much smaller numbers. Thus, among Portuguese immigrants aged 60 to 64 years who were living in France in 1995, nearly 17% had returned to Portugal within the five following years, whereas this proportion is only 3.5% for Spanish immigrants. Differences in integration and in the characteristics of migratory waves contribute to explaining these gaps.

Upon retirement, however, some migrants may choose to split their time between their home and their host countries. In the case of migrants living in France, De Coulon and Wolff (2006) show that the “to and fro” option is far from negligible, particularly among immigrants from southern Europe and those from North Africa and the Middle East. Portuguese immigrants in France are also likely to come and go throughout their working life (especially for spending vacations at home), and they very often maintain ties to their home community. Immigrants who acquire a dwelling in Portugal (often in their home village or town) will end up spending longer periods of time in the country after they retire (Charbit et al., 1997).

Chart III.8. **Share of immigrants born in Portugal and Spain returning from France to their origin countries, by average age at return**



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Source: Authors' calculations; Labour force survey of France 1995, Portuguese and Spanish censuses 2001.

five years of 22% and 16% respectively. If we exclude Mexican migrants (among whom men are overrepresented), this difference shrinks but it does not completely disappear (21% for men and 18.5% for women). For Mexican immigrants, the re-emigration rate for men after five years is much higher than that for women (23% versus 9.6%). For those Latin American countries for which data are available, by contrast, male-female differences are minimal.

Education: are better-educated migrants more likely to return than others?

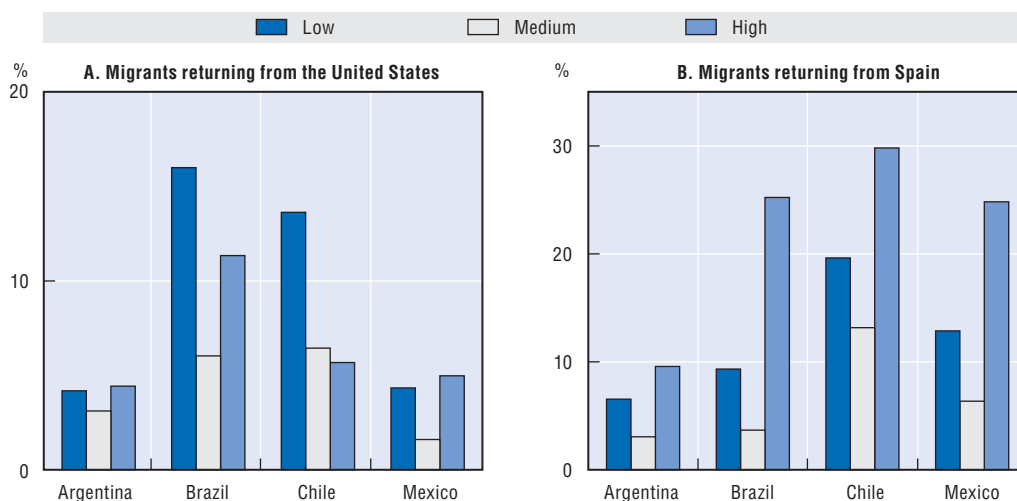
Does the propensity for immigrants to return home vary according to their level of education? For European countries, the re-emigration rate of highly skilled immigrants is above the average. In the United States, less-qualified immigrants (with less than lower secondary education) and those with higher education have a much higher re-emigration rate than immigrants with an intermediate level of education: for men who arrived in 1999 at the age of 30 years or more,¹³ the re-emigration rate after five years was 34.3% for the least educated, 4.4% for those with intermediate education, and 23.5% for the highly educated. The same profile can be found for the return rates of immigrants from most Latin American countries returning from the United States or Spain (Chart III.9).

Several other authors (notably Nekby (2006) for the case of Sweden) have identified such a relationship between immigrants' education level and their probability of return.

Highly skilled migrants generally exhibit a high return rate. For the United States, Finn (2007) shows that the retention rate of foreigners who have earned a doctorate in an American university is around 65-70% five years after they received their degree, which suggests a re-emigration rate of 30 to 35%. This retention rate varies significantly, however, by country of origin and by field of study.

Chart III.9. **Proportion of return migrants by educational attainment among immigrants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico**

Population aged 25 to 64 years old



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/428383021711>

Note: Low educational attainment means less than lower secondary, medium means completed upper secondary education and high educational attainment means tertiary education.

Source: Population censuses of the respective countries (see Table III.2).

2. The determinants of return migration: from theory to practice

Gaining a proper understanding of the motivations that underlie migrants' decision to return to their home countries or to move on to a third country is an important matter for preparing migration policies, particularly those relating to temporary or circular migration.

Even if we confine the question to voluntary returns, or more precisely to the case of migrants who are able to make a choice unconstrained by their legal status, we must admit

that the standard theoretical models are inadequate to explain return migration. Economic approaches to the decision to migrate, such as those offered in the seminal contributions of Sjaastad (1962) or Harris and Todaro (1970), are unable to explain return migration to developing countries from OECD countries, which are characterised by negative differentials in expected income. Beginning in the 1980s, however, and more particularly during the 1990s, the question of return migration was the subject of numerous theoretical interpretations and empirical evaluations that succeeded in characterising and identifying the principal mechanisms at work.

We may distinguish essentially between four types of arguments, founded respectively on: i) failure to integrate into the host country and changes in the economic situation of the home country, ii) individuals' preferences for their home country; iii) the achievement of a savings objective, or iv) greater employment opportunities for individuals in their home country, thanks to experience gained abroad.

2.A. The failure of migration and the importance of the macroeconomic environment

A first set of studies seeks to explain return migration by positing faulty information about the host country when the decision to emigrate was taken. In a situation of imperfect information, prospective migrants will have an erroneous appreciation of possibilities and conditions for integration in the labour market and the society of the host country. They may for example underestimate the difficulty of mastering the host country language, of gaining recognition for foreign qualifications, or of putting their professional experience to profitable use. When they have an offer of employment, candidates for migration may underestimate the cost of living, and in particular the cost of housing, and thus overestimate the living standard and the savings capacity they will enjoy in the country of destination. Under these conditions, it is those who have "failed" in fulfilling their migration plan who are most likely to return home. In these cases, the return will be fairly prompt, and will be all the more likely if access to information is poor.

The early contributions of Yezer and Thurston (1976) and Allen (1979) pursue this line of reasoning, and apply it to internal migration in the United States. Herzog and Schottmann (1982) attempt to estimate the effect of access to information on return migration,¹⁴ but the results are not very robust and do not permit to validate the model. Da Vanzo (1983) obtains more convincing results however: she finds, in particular, a significant and positive correlation between distance of migration and probability of re-emigrating.¹⁵

Looking at immigrants to the United States, Duleep (1994) also characterises return migration as "failed migration". He shows that there are two return peaks, one that comes very quickly after emigration, and the other much later, at the time of retirement. Borjas and Bratsberg (1996) model return migration in a framework based on the selection model of Roy (1951), in which the composition of migratory flows depends on the relative distribution of incomes between the home and host countries, and average returns on human capital. Within this framework, return migration is explained primarily by an error in evaluating the shape of the income distribution in the host country. The authors show that return migration selection is inverted in relation to the initial selection process. In other words, if the host country attracts relatively unskilled workers, it will be the better-skilled among them who are most likely to return. There are some empirical studies to validate this model, especially for Puerto Rican immigrants to United States (Ramos, 1992), and more recently for migration between Sweden and Finland (Rooth and Saarela, 2007).

Some studies have tested the hypothesis of “failed migration” by analysing the link between integration into the host country labour market and return migration. The results, however, are to some extent contradictory. Borjas (1989) shows, for example, that the immigrant scientists in the United States who emigrate are the ones who are least successful on the labour market. Reyes (1997) obtains similar results for Mexican workers in the United States. In the case of Germany (Constant and Massey 2002, 2003)¹⁶ and Canada (Lam, 1994), exposure to unemployment increases the probability of return.

For immigrants who find it difficult to join the labour market, access to a social security system can reduce their propensity to emigrate. Reagan and Olsen (2000), Jensen and Petersen (2007), and Nekby (2006) obtain such results for the United States, Denmark and Sweden, respectively.

The fact is that, in making their decision to return, migrants consider not only their situation on the host country labour market, but also the opportunities open to them in their home country. The macroeconomic context in the home country and in the host country is a major determinant of the decision to return. Using census data for the host countries (United States and Spain) and the home countries (Argentina and Mexico), we can compare return rates by age, gender and level of education against the unemployment rate differential observed between the home and host countries for each of these categories (see Chart III.10). Despite the heterogeneity of situations, the calculation shows a positive correlation between the probability of returning to the home country and relatively better employment opportunities. This is especially the case for Mexicans in the United States and for Argentines in Spain.¹⁷

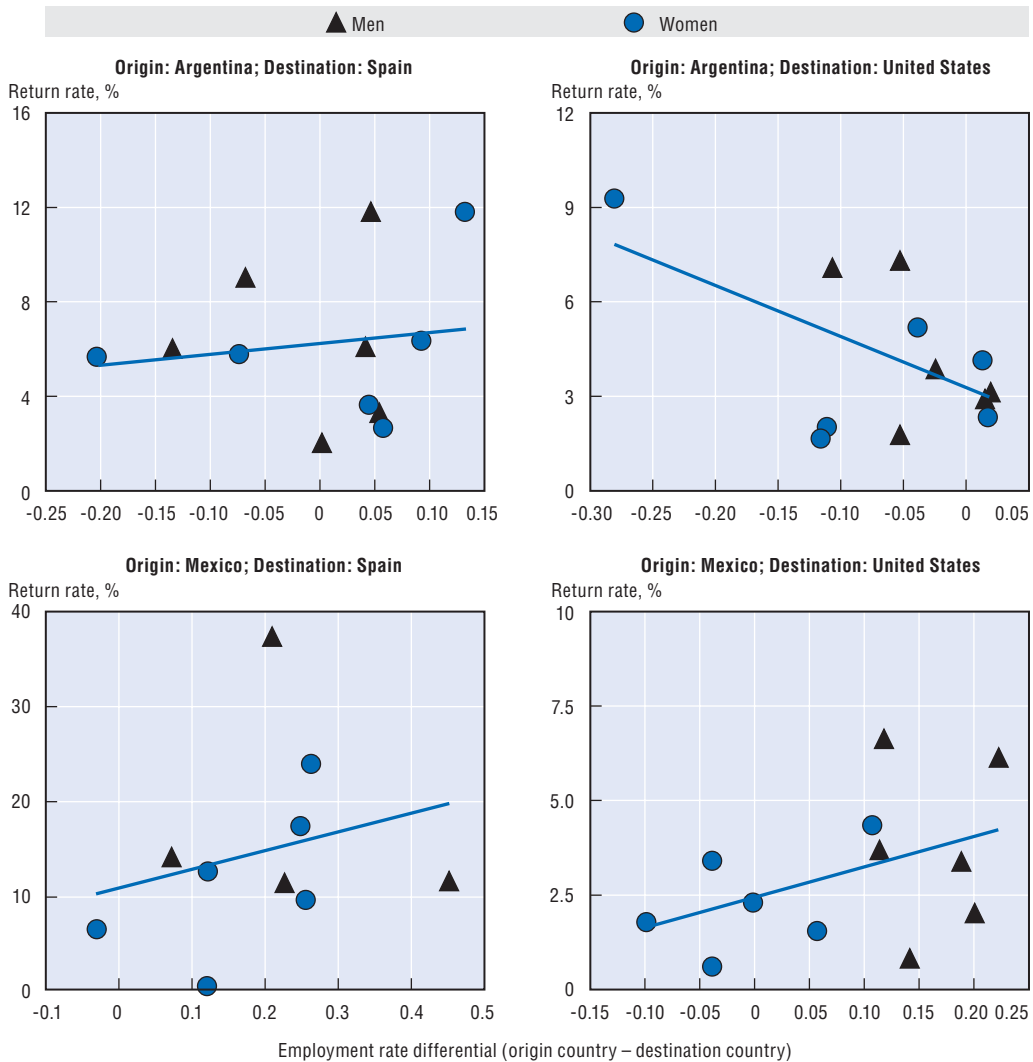
The importance of the home-country macroeconomic situation can also be seen in the behaviour of Turkish immigrants who returned from Germany at times of economic expansion in Turkey. Economic conditions in the host country also matter. Many Portuguese immigrants returned home, for example, at the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s, when their host countries were in an economic downturn. This example also shows the importance of the political context surrounding economic changes, as Portugal had emerged from dictatorship in 1974.

2.B. Preference for consumption in the home country

Another way of understanding return migration is to consider it as an integral part of the initial migration plan. Assuming that migrants maximise their utility throughout their lives, it might be optimal for them to choose to limit their stay in the host country even if the positive income differential vis-à-vis the home country persists.¹⁸ This conclusion holds especially if the utility derived from consumption is higher in the home country than in the host country.¹⁹ If the immigrant does not return during his working life, then he will be bound to do so when he or she retires.

Building on the work of Hill (1987) and Djajic and Milbourne (1988), this literature developed rapidly in the early 1990s. Originally, these authors assumed an exogenous preference for the home country, but that preference could also be explained by the purchasing power differential (Djajic, 1989; Stark, Helmenstein and Yegorov, 1997). For immigrants, time spent in the host country can be used to accumulate money that will be spent upon return. They will return when the marginal benefit of higher savings is offset by the loss of utility associated with residing abroad. Under certain conditions, they will

Chart III.10. Return rates by origin and destination countries, as a function of observed employment rates differentials, circa 2000



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Note: Persons aged 25 to 64 years old, allocated in 12 groups according to gender (two groups), educational attainment (three groups: primary and lower secondary, upper secondary and tertiary) and age (two groups: 25-44 and 45-64). Each data point represents a distinct population group.

Source: Authors' calculations; Population censuses of Argentina, Spain, Mexico and the United States (circa 2000).

return before retirement age. This is more likely if the person immigrated at a young age or has a higher preference for present consumption.

Under these conditions, the length-of-stay effect of a wage increase in the host country will be, *a priori*, ambiguous: the income effect and the relative wage effect will work in opposite directions (negatively and positively) on the optimal length of stay. Using Germany as an example, Dustmann (2003a) shows that migrants compensate for unanticipated wage fluctuations by adjusting their length of stay: *ceteris paribus*, a wage cut (or increase) will weaken (strengthen) the resolve to return.

Galor and Stark (1990, 1991) posit that, given the probability of return, migrants will smooth their consumption over their lifecycle by saving more or working harder in the host

country. This would explain why some immigrants succeed in accumulating more wealth than their fellow workers who were born in the country.

Dustmann (1997a) builds this model into a stochastic environment. He shows that uncertainty about the home country labour market tends to increase migrants' precautionary savings, and can increase the optimal length of stay.

Few empirical studies have tested these models explicitly, but a number have confirmed implicitly the role that attachment to the home country can play in return migration. For Germany, Constant and Massey (2000, 2003) show that having a spouse or children in the home country²⁰ is an important factor for return; conversely, access to German nationality or emotional ties ("feeling German") can explain a stronger propensity to settle permanently. Lindstrom (1996) obtains similar results for Mexican migrants in the United States.

2.C. Saving to invest

Another type of argument for explaining return migration holds that migration can serve to finance an investment project in the home country. From this perspective, individuals make a joint choice that incorporates migration, savings, return and investment.

While the lifecycle models described above link the savings objective to future consumption, the argument here is that those savings will be used to finance a productive investment. In formal terms, the distinction is subtle, but the two approaches have potentially different implications. For example, the "migrant entrepreneur" faces an additional constraint on the age at which he returns, in that he must be able to enjoy the fruits of his investment over a sufficiently long time before the end of his working life.

Berninghaus and Seifert-Vogt (1993) offer an initial attempt to formalise the behaviour of migrants in terms of savings objectives. They show that, if the initial savings objective cannot be achieved by a certain date, because of unfavourable economic conditions in the home or host country for example, the migration plan is likely to change. In that case, temporary migration could become permanent.

Dustmann and Kirchkamp (2002) propose a model that links savings behaviour in the host country, the decision to return, and the choice of activity in the home country (entrepreneurship, paid employment or inactivity). They show, among other things, that migrants are better placed to develop an individual activity in their home country if they emigrated at a young age. They also show that the effect of a wage increase in the host country on the average length of stay is uncertain. Better pay reduces the length of stay for "migrant entrepreneurs", but for those who initially chose paid work upon their return (because they did not believe they could achieve the minimal savings objective to become entrepreneurs) it can shift them into another migration regime.²¹ Under certain conditions, assisted return, particularly systems that help migrants create their own businesses, can have a similarly ambiguous effect on the length of stay.

The authors then test their model on a sample comprising nearly 700 Turks who had lived in Germany and had gone back to Turkey under an assisted return programme. In this sample, more than half of the individuals were engaged in an entrepreneurial activity four years after their return, and 43% were inactive. Dustmann and Kirchkamp confirm the negative effect of age at immigration and they identify a positive effect of education on the probability of being an entrepreneur. The most significant effect, however, is associated with exercise of an independent activity in Germany.²²

Mesnard (2004) explains the link between return migration and entrepreneurship by the need to overcome problems of access to the credit market in the home country. The estimations applied to Tunisia confirm that there is a constraint on access to credit, and demonstrate the role that international migration plays in this context.

Yang (2006) also tries to test the entrepreneurship argument in the case of the Philippines. According to the author, if migrants have set themselves a savings target, a sharp depreciation of the Philippine peso (such as occurred during the Asian financial crisis in 1997) should encourage them to return. The empirical results do not confirm this mechanism, however, and in fact suggest a reverse effect: a 10% depreciation of the peso reduces the return rate by 1.4 percentage points. Yet if migrants set their savings target in foreign currency, or if they expect higher inflation following depreciation, the preceding results are not enough to invalidate the savings target hypothesis. The findings of Reyes (2004) are the reverse of Yang's in the case of migration between Mexico and the United States. Other studies in different contexts confirm the importance of the link between immigration, return and entrepreneurship. This is notably the case in Pakistan (Ilahi, 1999), in Egypt (McCormick and Wahba, 2001) and in China (Zhao, 2002) (see Section 4 for further details).

2.D. Human capital formation and return migration

Still another type of argument developed in the literature focuses on the fact that migrants acquire human capital in the host country, and this may complement their initial human capital to varying degrees. The existence of externalities in the learning function or exposure to a new technological environment could mean that human capital is accumulated more rapidly in the host country than in the home country. The case of foreign students who return home after studying abroad can be understood in this framework.²³

The literature in this field however relies more on the effect of complementarity between initial human capital and that acquired abroad. Thus, some authors argue that skills acquired in the host country allow migrants to increase the return on their human capital in the home country. The key factor for the return decision is essentially different here from that described previously, in that it lies, at least partially, in the possibility of investing the expected income differential between the home and host countries.

This mechanism was already present in the model of Borjas and Bratsberg (1996). Dustmann (1995) also incorporates it to show that, given the growth in income upon return, migrants' savings will reveal two peaks: the first in the host country, and the second after return to the home country.²⁴

Several empirical studies confirm that there is a wage premium for returning. This is notably the case for Ireland: Barrett and O'Connell (2001) show that men who emigrated and returned to Ireland earned on average 10% more than those who never left (50% for those who emigrated to find employment). On the other hand, they find no significant effect for women. The findings of Co, Gang and Yun (2000), in the case of Hungary, are of the same nature but reversed by gender: women alone benefit from a return premium, in the order of 40%.²⁵ Wahba (2007a) is one of the few authors to explore this question for developing countries. For Egypt, she shows that individuals with international migration experience will earn on average 38% more than those who never emigrated. The results of these last two empirical studies are particularly interesting, because they are careful to control for the double selection to which returning migrants are subject: the selection

resulting from the non-random nature of migration, and the selection (conventional for wage estimations) deriving from the choice to participate in the labour market.

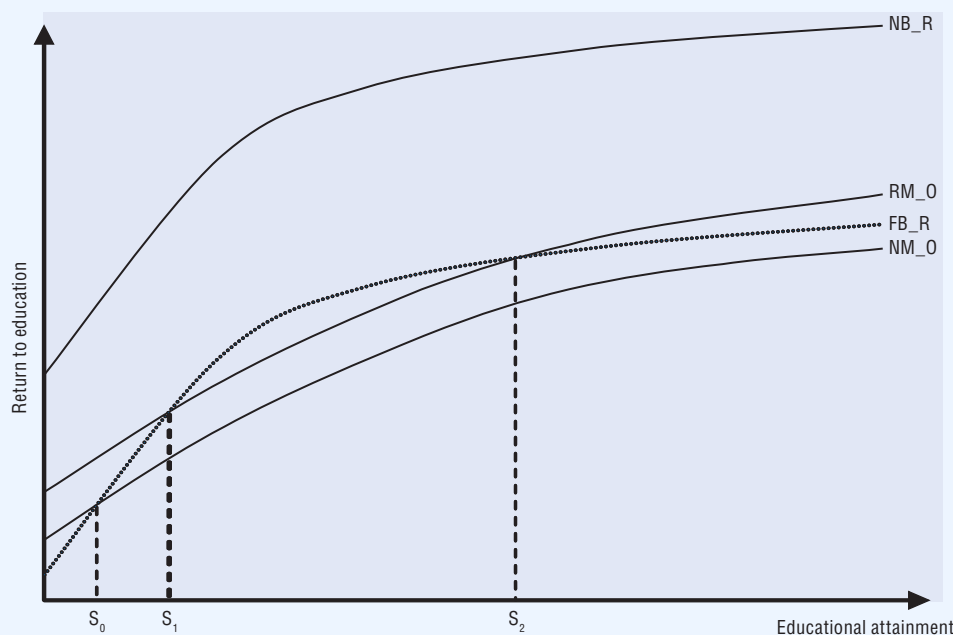
In Section 1, we noted a greater propensity to return at the two extremities of the education spectrum. This finding may be attributable to generational effects, with older, unskilled migrants returning toward the end of their working life, and younger, educated migrants returning for other reasons. In some cases, this finding persists even after controlling for migrants' age structure and length of stay (e.g. Nekby, 2006). The human capital accumulation model offers a framework for interpreting this finding, especially for return migration to developing countries (see Box III.4).

Box III.4. Return to education and return migration

To the extent that the return to education in the migrant's home country is less concave than in the country of destination, and taking into account the costs of migration and re-emigration, the human capital accumulation model can explain differences in migratory behaviour by education level (see Chart III.11).

In Chart III.11, individuals with very little schooling (below S_0) will not expect to earn enough in the host country to cover their fixed costs of migration, and they will not migrate. For individuals with an education level higher than S_0 , emigration will be profitable and will equip them with new skills. The least skilled migrants (those with an education level between S_0 and S_1) and the most highly skilled (education level above S_2) will find it in their interest to return to their country of origin because there they can capitalise on their experience and earn more than they could without emigrating. Migrants with an intermediate level of education (between S_1 and S_2) will also acquire skills, but not to the extent that return will be profitable, which may be explained by the lack of employment opportunities corresponding to their level of skills in their home country.

Chart III.11. Return to education in origin and destination countries and migration status



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Note: NB_R: Natives of the host country; NM_O: Non-migrants in the origin country; FB_R: Immigrants in the host country (taking into account migration fixed costs); RM_O: Return migrants in the origin country.

2.E. “Serial migrants”: repeat or circular migration

Returning home does not necessarily mean the end of the migration pathway, and it is not always final. At least two types of arguments can be invoked to explain repeat or circular migration. The first has to do with the psychological cost associated with emigration, which grows with length of residence abroad. If they can afford the travel costs, migrants may be tempted to divide their total expatriation time into a series of shorter stays. Hill (1987) develops a model that is compatible with this interpretation. Reyes (1997) offers an illustration based on migration between Mexico and the United States. A second type of argument relates to the legal framework in which international migration takes place. The average length of stay for a temporary immigrant will reflect the possibility of extending his permit or changing his status. These possibilities hinge on the provisions of immigration policies, and they vary greatly among countries. The available economic studies do not cover these institutional aspects sufficiently.

Several recent studies, however, have sought to evaluate the nature and scope of repeat migration. Constant and Zimmerman (2003, 2007) use the GSOEP survey to show that, over the period 1984-1997, 62% of immigrants from Italy, Greece, Spain, the former Yugoslavia and Turkey left Germany at least once, for a year or more.²⁶ Having a family in the home country is a major incentive for repeat migration. As well, people who hold a German passport are more mobile. On the other hand, it seems that the least educated are less mobile.

The geographic location of family members certainly plays an important role in explaining repeat migration. Using a French survey that asked immigrants about their intention to return home upon retirement, de Coulon and Wolff (2006) show that having children in the host country can explain why parents choose circular migration between their country of origin and their children’s place of residence.

In the case of migration between Hong Kong (China) and Canada, studies have identified similar determinants to those described above, in particular the impact of naturalisation (DeVoretz and Ma, 2002). On the other hand, return and circular migration towards Hong Kong appears very selective (DeVoretz, 2006). More generally, migrants seem to alternate their place of residence over the span of their life cycle in light of opportunities and constraints (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005). This particular case can be characterised as “hypermobility”, facilitated no doubt by the accessibility of Canadian nationality, but also by the social level of persons concerned.

2.F. The importance of immigration categories and the role of immigration policies

The concomitance of different motivations for return and the fact that migrants adjust their goals over time, particularly as a function of the situation in the home country and integration problems in the host country, makes it difficult to identify the determining factors of return migration, and calls for a global approach.²⁷

The available theoretical and empirical works seldom distinguish between categories of migrants. Klinthäll (2006b) identifies four groups of migrants, according to the level and nature of the constraints imposed by their migratory status: i) economic migrants with permanent residence rights, ii) economic migrants with temporary residence permits,²⁸ iii) refugees with unlimited residence rights, and iv) migrants under temporary protection for humanitarian reasons. This categorisation does not cover the full range of migration modes, however. For example, it does not take account of migration for family reunification, which

could perhaps be included in the first or second category. Nor does it mention the case of foreign students who have a temporary residence permit (group ii). Finally, the last category should be expanded to cover asylum-seekers awaiting decision on their claim.

Migrants in the first group are free to make the decision to return with few constraints. The decision will depend, as discussed previously, on a series of identifiable economic factors at the two ends of the migration chain, that is, in the host country and in the home country. Most economic studies of return migration can be situated within this framework.

Migrants in the second group face a restricted choice, since staying on illegally is the only alternative to going home (or re-emigrating) if their permit is not extended or made permanent. Although the great majority of return migration to developing countries fall within this context, analytical studies to date have been poorly equipped to grasp this reality.

Refugees holding an unlimited residence permit (the third group) are dependent on what happens in their home country. Several studies have looked specifically at what determines the return of refugees, highlighting the importance of social and political conditions in the country of origin. For Sweden, Klinthäll (2003, 2007) shows, in the case of Chilean refugees, that political changes are an important but not a sufficient condition, since the economic situation in the home country also plays a determining role.

For migrants under temporary protection, the situation is still more specific, since they are subject to a dual constraint, or more accurately a constraint in the host country that becomes effective when the constraint in the home country is lifted. The majority of voluntary assisted returns take place in this framework (see Section 4). The theoretical and empirical studies discussed above, however, shed no light on this situation.

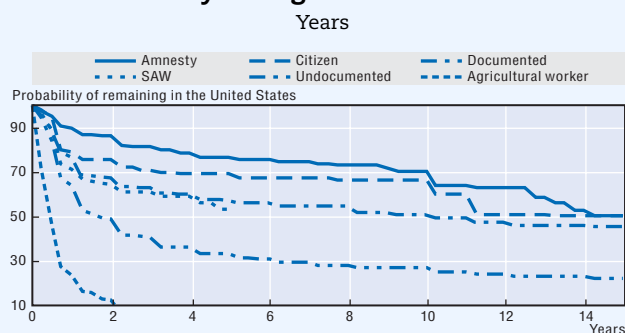
The available results on return rates by category of migrant show without ambiguity that conditions of entry and legal status are important. In New Zealand, for example, 16% of permanent immigrants arriving in 1998 had left the country “definitively” five years later (Shortland, 2006). That proportion varies from 19% for migrants entering as “business people and skilled workers” to around 29% for those admitted on humanitarian grounds. The differences are more pronounced in Canada, and still more so in countries where temporary migration represents a larger share of foreign worker inflows, as in the Netherlands (see Box III.5).

Box III.5. Some findings on return rates by entry category of migrants

Reyes (1997), Dynamics of Immigration: Return Migration to Western Mexico

The Mexican Migration Project identified return migration flows in 31 West Mexican communities between 1982 and 1993. Undocumented immigrants (54% of the sample) were more likely to return to Mexico: nearly 70% of them did so after five years, or almost twice the rate for legal immigrants, and four times that for people who took advantage of a regularisation programme.

Chart III.12. Probability of remaining in the United States by immigration status and duration



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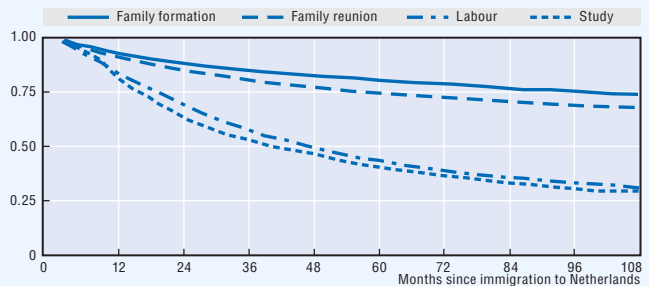
Source: Reyes (1997).

Box III.5. Some findings on return rates by entry category of migrants (cont.)

Bijwaard (2007), Modeling Migration Dynamics of Immigrants: The Case of the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, inflows and outflows of foreigners can be identified and characterised using data from the Central Register of Foreigners, together with municipal records. For persons entering between 1995 and 2003, the return rate after five years is 20 to 25% for family reunification and family formation migrants, and nearly 60% for foreign students. By comparison, around 55% of labour migrants leave the country within five years.

Chart III.13. Probability of remaining in the Netherlands by immigration status and duration



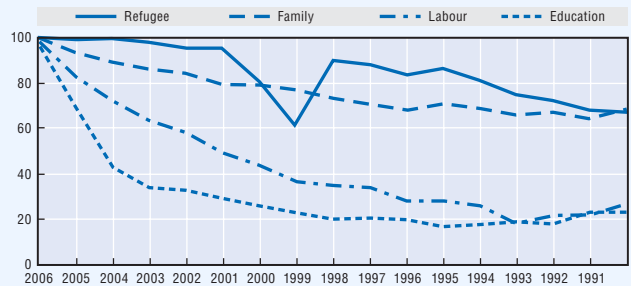
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Source: Bijwaard (2007).

Statistics Norway (2007)

The population registry in Norway, as in most Nordic countries, can be used to track immigrants by category of entry. The Chart opposite shows, by year of entry, the proportion of non-Nordics still living in the country in 2006. For example, among entrants from 2001, only 5% of those admitted on humanitarian grounds had left Norway by 2006. The figure is 20% for family reunification immigrants, while it is nearly 50% for workers and 70% for students.

Chart III.14. Percentage of people remaining in Norway in 2006 by reason for immigration and year of entry, non-Nordic persons



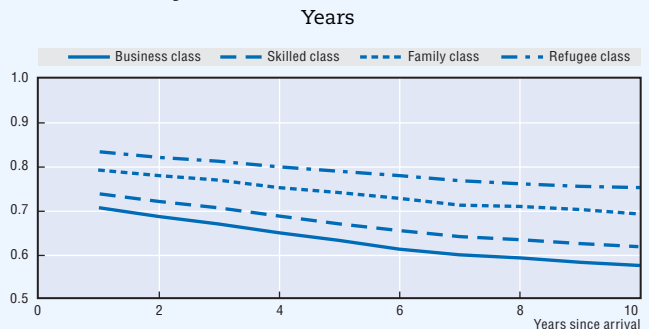
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/428722152722>

Source: Statistics Norway (2007).

Aydemir and Robinson (2006), Global Labour Markets, Return and Onward Migration

Canada's landing records (LIDS) and the immigration database (IMDB) can be cross-referenced to the tax records of immigrants arriving in the country between 1980 and 1996. Persons who did not complete the tax declaration for four consecutive years are assumed to have left country. It is estimated that 30 to 35% of persons entering as "business" immigrants or skilled workers left Canada after five years. The figure is around 20% for refugees, and 25% for those entering under family reunification provisions.

Chart III.15. Probability of remaining in Canada by visa class and duration



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/428777410557>

Source: Aydemir and Robinson (2006).

Even if the legal and institutional conditions are often missing from the analysis of return migration determinants, it is clear that they are an integral part of the issue. To what extent do the specific features of migration systems and policies influence return migration, or more generally the length of stay of migrants? What are the incentives in place in OECD countries to encourage migrants to return to their home country? What is the role of assisted voluntary return programmes? Are these mechanisms effective? These questions will be addressed in the following section.

3. Immigration policies and their impact on return migration

Return migration is an issue that must be addressed in any global approach of migration flows management. Thus, policies regarding migrant return are attracting growing attention (IOM, 2004; Abella, 2006; EMN, 2006/2007). A first category of measures concerns migrants holding permits under temporary programmes, and seeks to ensure that these programmes function effectively. Some programmes are designed to assist permanent migrants in planning their return, while others focus on the departure of those who are not entitled to remain in the country. In addition, some features of host country policies may affect migrants' choice as to their length of stay. This section looks successively at these different aspects and also addresses the question of repeat or circular migration.

3.A. Ensuring the effective functioning of temporary migration programmes

A notable feature of recent trends in international migration is the growing importance of temporary migration, particularly for employment purposes (notwithstanding the fact that many OECD countries are now building more bridges for permanent immigrants). To ensure that temporary migration programmes achieve their purpose, host countries are also paying increasing attention to measures for "guaranteeing" the return of these migrants. These measures are generally based on a combination of coercion and incentives.

Return and the prospect of future immigration

Generally speaking, all countries make it a condition for granting a new residence permit that the applicant must have complied with the conditions of his previous permit. Consequently, migrants who entered with a temporary visa and who have overstayed their legal limit will be denied a new permit. The prohibition period can be as long as several years, and can be extended if the immigrant has been expelled or if he has exceeded his legal stay by more than one year.²⁹ Member states of the European Union can also transfer their decision to the Schengen information system (SIS), in which case the ban is applicable to all Schengen visas.³⁰ Moreover, most countries impose a fine and, in some cases, a prison penalty. These provisions have a dissuasive effect, but it is not enough to guarantee return in all cases, and their effectiveness will depend on the intensity and effectiveness of controls.

In the case of seasonal worker programmes, the incentive to return can be reinforced by the "assurance" that the migrant can join the programme again subsequently. In this spirit, France introduced a new type of permit in 2006, targeted at seasonal workers, allowing them to hold a job for less than six months during three consecutive years, provided they maintain their residence outside France. Few countries have formally adopted multiyear seasonal permits, although in practice the conditions for renewal can be

eased for those who have already participated in the programme. This is the case in Italy, where migrants who have already worked two consecutive seasons may apply for a renewable three-year permanent permit.³¹ Until 2007, H2B visa holders in the United States who respected the conditions governing their permits were able to obtain a new permit beyond the quota.³² In Spain, seasonal workers who have already participated in the programme are allowed entry at the request of their employer (i.e. without going through the selection process in their home country). One month after their permit expires, holders must present themselves to the consulate that issued the permit in order to confirm their return.³³ These approaches result in higher return rates, but also in repeat migration, the impact of which on the probability of permanent settlement in the host country is difficult to assess. A better knowledge of the host country and the establishment of lasting ties could indeed generate longer-term immigration.

Financial incentives

Migrants can also be encouraged to return by a clause providing that a portion of their wage earnings will be paid directly in their home country. For example, the “Bracero” programme under which more than 4.5 million Mexican workers were recruited into US agriculture between 1942 and 1964, required that 10% of workers’ wages be withheld until after they returned to Mexico. In the same spirit, Cuban migrants working under intergovernmental agreements see a portion of their earnings (generally 30%) paid directly to Cuba. To some extent, this approach amounts to forced savings, which could in fact merely substitute for migrant remittances.³⁴

A less coercive approach might be to allow migrants, upon their return, to recover all or part of the contributions they have made to unemployment insurance and old-age security programmes, even if they are not eligible for benefits under those programmes. Temporary migrants in fact often have to make the same contributions as other workers, but they do not do so long enough, or with sufficient continuity, to qualify for social benefits in the host country.

The role of employers and the selection process

Employers may be asked to expedite the return of the temporary workers they have hired. Outside the OECD, Singapore requires employers hiring temporary workers other than Malaysians to deposit SGD 5 000 (around USD 3 200) per employee, and this is refunded when the migrant returns to his home country.³⁵ In some OECD countries (e.g. Korea, Italy and New Zealand), the employer must undertake to foot the bill in the event of an expulsion order.³⁶ Yet it is questionable whether employers have the means to verify, much less to guarantee, that the migrant will leave at the end of his contract.

Another possible way of ensuring a high return rate is to select candidates according to their probability of return. This approach is apparent, for example, when the recruitment process is contracted out to some institution evaluated by the host country authorities on the basis on its ability to maintain the integrity of the programme. Some of the temporary migration programmes run by the IOM fall in this category. In Morocco, the recruitment agency for temporary workers (ANAPEC) is now giving priority to hiring married women with children for seasonal agriculture work in Spain. Beyond the ethical issues such an approach may raise, it is by no means certain that it can be extended to higher-skilled jobs, or to other sectors.

3.B. Assisted voluntary return programmes

Assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes are of long standing in several OECD countries. In Germany, they date from 1979.³⁷ Switzerland, Belgium, France, the Netherlands and most of the Nordic countries³⁸ have had such programmes in place for more than ten years. Still other countries adopted AVR programmes in the late 1990s, or more recently. There are two types of programmes: those targeting migrants who entered illegally or have overstayed their visa, and are thus in an irregular situation in the host country, and those aimed at migrants with a permanent residence permit.

“Voluntary” return of migrants in an irregular situation

For migrants in an irregular situation, or those who have been ordered to leave the country after their temporary protection status has been revoked (for example rejected asylum-seekers), most OECD countries have introduced provisions to help them return to their country voluntarily. These programmes constitute an alternative to expulsion. They allow migrants to choose the conditions of their return (place and time) and they may also receive financial assistance or help in preparing their return. Australia, Austria, France, Ireland, Hungary, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom have provisions of this kind (see Annex III.A3). These are attractive to host countries for two reasons: i) they facilitate repatriation to countries with which no readmission agreement has been signed, and ii) the return can be carried out at a lower cost than a removal order.³⁹ The number of migrants concerned varies greatly from one country to another but it can be substantial, as in Germany, Japan, and to a lesser extent in the United Kingdom (with respectively 9 000, 11 000 and 6 000 returns in 2006).

The distinction between voluntary return and forced return is somewhat tenuous, in the sense that the individuals involved really do not have the option of staying in the country (see Box III.6 for an analysis of forced returns). In Australia, for example, the assisted voluntary return programme is targeted at migrants from Iran and Afghanistan who are under detention. In the United States, the law provides that a “removable alien” may apply for “voluntary departure” to avoid the penalty of a 10-year re-entry ban (US Department of Justice, 1999). In Japan, the voluntary return programme applies only to migrants who have overstayed their visa, and it offers only a partial amnesty from the prohibited re-entry period.

Encouraging permanent migrants to return to their home country

AVR programmes are also used to encourage and assist the return home of migrants who are legally and permanently settled in the host country. Most of these programmes are implemented with the help of non-governmental organisations, which manage logistical aspects. The IOM is one of the main operators in this field.⁴⁰ Most programmes are specific to certain countries of origin, particularly those that have produced the largest refugee flows. Many operations have been conducted, for example, for refugees from the Balkans⁴¹ or, more recently, from Afghanistan⁴² and Iraq.

AVR programmes targeted at permanent migrants generally cover transportation costs, but they may also include a return bonus and a number of services such as, for example, reintegration assistance, a pre-return preparation trip, or vocational training. Lump sum resettlement allowances can be sizable: the Danish authorities, for example, offer Iraqi immigrants up to USD 9 000 per adult and USD 10 500 per child. Their size varies

Box III.6. Forced returns

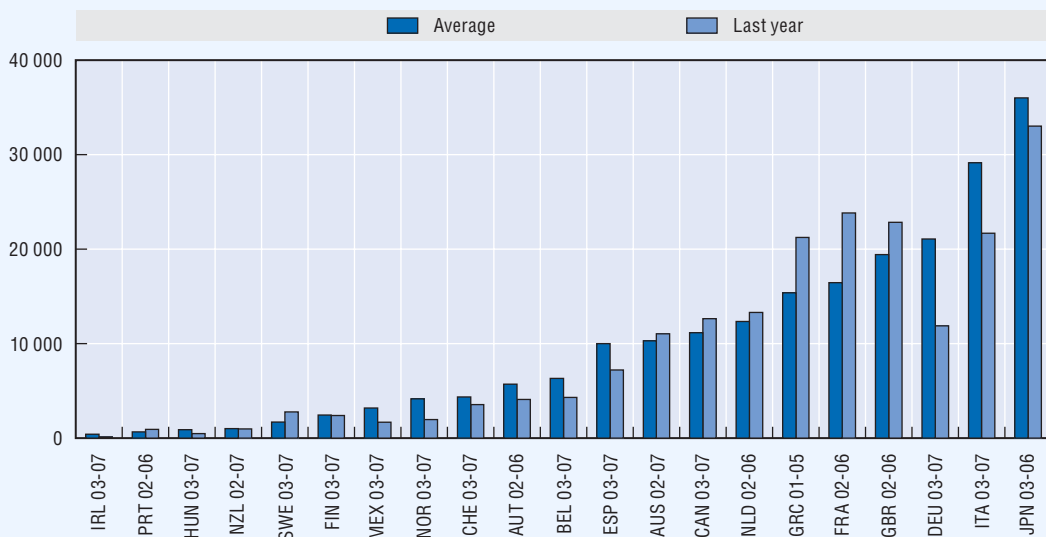
The bulk of the return migration flow is voluntary. Yet some of those returning home have been forced out by a removal order, for having broken the laws on immigration or residency. Some of those forcibly removed will have been imprisoned or held in detention centres since their arrival in the territory. All OECD countries practise forced removal. The scope of the phenomenon varies, however, depending on how systematic the controls and removal procedures are, and on the nature and intensity of immigration flows and the country's geographic location. The number of departure orders issued is often far greater than the number of forced removals, either because the individuals concerned decide to leave of their own accord or because they have evaded enforcement.

The statistics presented in Chart III.16 show the number of forced returns from OECD countries between 2002 and 2007, excluding persons turned back at border points. In most countries, with the notable exceptions of Greece, France and the United Kingdom, there was a gradual decline in expulsions toward the end of the period. This may reflect, in part, the recent drop in asylum requests, since a significant portion of forced returns involves rejected asylum-seekers. In this context, readmission agreements play an important role.

The existence of a readmission agreement* with the migrant's country of origin or of transit is often a necessary condition for enforcing removal orders. The number of readmission agreements signed by OECD countries has multiplied over the last five years. Switzerland, France and Germany have signed the most, at 39, 38 and 28 agreements respectively.

As of June 2007, the European Union had signed five readmission agreements with Albania, Hong Kong-China, Macao, Russia and Sri Lanka. It has signed another batch of agreements with Ukraine, Moldova and the Balkan countries (except Croatia), which are to come into force during 2008. Still other agreements are being negotiated with Algeria, China, Morocco, Pakistan and Turkey. Several directives have been issued to reinforce co-operation among member states in the removal of foreigners (Directives 2001/40/EC and 2003/110/EC, Council Decisions 2004/191/EC and 2004/573/EC).

Chart III.16. Number of forced returns in selected OECD countries, yearly average for the periods indicated and last available year, 2001-2007



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/428831657036>

Source: Various national sources and European Migration Network (2006-2007).

* Or a protocol of consent or co-operation, or a police co-operation agreement.

greatly, however, depending on the country of origin, and there is often a limit per family. The bonuses are frequently paid in several instalments, to make the return permanent. While the offer of assistance is unlikely to have any significant effect in changing the mind of migrants who had no intention to return, it may well accelerate a return that was already planned, although the theoretical and empirical studies discussed in the previous section are divided on this point.

Some programmes are targeted more specifically at migrants who are facing problems in the labour market. They may be offered the choice of a monthly pension to be paid once they have returned home. The pension will generally be smaller than the entitlements accumulated in the host country, but it may still seem advantageous, given the cost-of-living differential between the two countries. Such a provision was introduced in France in 1984 through a system of subsidies for the reintegration of foreigners who had been unemployed for three months or were receiving social assistance. In Denmark, persons aged 50 years and older who are no longer able to work can opt for a monthly allowance in their home country, for five years. The Netherlands' emigration law extends this option to foreigners at the age of 45, provided they have lived in the country for at least three years and have been drawing unemployment, disability or retirement allowances for at least six months (EMN, 2006-07). While the attractiveness for the host country is obvious, the migrant will need to base his decision on the economic and social conditions prevailing in his home country: older workers and retirees in particular will be especially concerned about access to health care.

Another aspect of assisted return has to do with reintegration. Access to information is a key factor for successful return, and most programmes include this dimension. In Germany, for example, the Federal Office for Migrations and Refugees has established the "Supported Return Information Centre" (ZIRF). Denmark and Austria have created similar mechanisms. The IOM is working with several European countries (Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) under its IRRICO project ("Information on Return and Reintegration in Countries of Origin"). The availability of vocational training adapted to employment prospects in the country of origin can also play an important role in the reintegration process. Germany offers special training to returning migrants, which is provided in Germany but not recognised there. Other countries prefer to offer such services after return (i.e. in the country of origin).

Entrepreneurial support in the home country is another important aspect of AVR programmes. The grants seldom exceed a few thousand euros, however (e.g. maximum EUR 5 000 in Spain and EUR 4 000 to 7 000 in France, depending on the country of origin and project), which means that they are primarily of benefit for microenterprises. In this area, France has gained valuable experience since the mid-1990s.⁴³ Activities rely on local operators who offer project coaching services and manage the grants directly. The projects created this way are frequently viable and help create jobs in the country of origin, but they are still few in number. The same holds in other OECD countries with arrangements of this kind. The weakness of financial incentives, given the difficulties in accessing additional credit, and the scarce investment possibilities in the home countries probably explain why these mechanisms have had little impact.

In some cases, return does not seem to be a precondition for participating in the programme, although this objective may be more or less implicit. The TOKTEN programme ("Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals"), which the UNDP has been running

since 1977, fits within this category. The programme allows expatriate volunteers to contribute to projects in their home countries, by returning for a period of up to three months. Over the 20 years of programme operations, some 5 000 persons have participated in projects in nearly 50 developing countries. Similarly, the IOM has developed a specific programme for Africa (Migration for Development in Africa – MIDA, formerly the Return of Qualified African Nationals Programme – RQAN). Between 1983 and 1999, more than 2 000 highly qualified Africans took part in this programme. While unstable economic and social conditions and the lack of social capital specific to the country of origin constitute the major barriers to return, participation in temporary return programmes can facilitate longer-term settlement plans. Such programmes are unlikely, however, to have a major impact.

Despite the many initiatives and the sums spent by host countries, assisted voluntary return programmes are of limited impact, at least when they are assessed in light of the numbers of people involved and in comparison with return flows as a whole (see Annex III.A3). This no doubt reflects the fact that return is only an option if the political, economic and social situation in the home country is restored and stabilised. Yet even in this case, AVR programmes will not make much difference for migrants unless financial constraints are the primary barrier to their return.

AVR programmes are essentially confined to the European OECD countries. In the European Union, many such programmes are supported by the European Refugee Fund or the European Return Fund (see Box III.7). Other countries have not really adopted this mechanism, either because they set their sights explicitly on the permanent integration of new immigrants (as do Australia, Canada and New Zealand) or because, on the contrary, they offer few possibilities for permanent immigration (Korea and Japan).

Box III.7. The European Return Fund

The European Return Fund was established in 2007 for the period 2008-2013 as part of the general programme of “Solidarity and management of migration flows” (Com(2005)123/final), and represents continuation of the European return programme in place since 2002. It has a five-year budget of EUR 676 million.

The objective is to help participating member states* to institute “integrated return management”: to examine and evaluate the potential group of repatriates, the legal and logistical constraints in the member state, and the situation in the country of return, and to prepare specific and targeted actions.

In this context, particular attention is paid to ensuring common standards in member states’ return management. The fund also covers the voluntary return of persons who are not under an obligation to leave the territory, such as asylum-seekers whose applications are still being processed, and persons under temporary protection.

* The United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark do not participate in the Fund.

3.C. Removing the obstacles to return

Beyond specific programmes, it is likely that the propensity of permanent migrants to return to their home countries is influenced by institutional factors, such as the possibility of securing the right to come and go between the host and home countries, or the portability of social entitlements.

Access to the nationality of the host country has been found to be an important factor in international mobility. Naturalised immigrants know that they can always come back to the host country to seek health care, for example, or if conditions in their home country deteriorate (e.g. political or economic instability). Migratory movements between Canada and Hong Kong, China, are often cited as an example to illustrate the positive effect of return migration on the country of origin, and access to Canadian nationality has played a significant role here (DeVoretz and Ma, 2002). By recognising dual nationality, the home and host countries facilitate international mobility for their citizens. Most OECD countries accepted dual nationality, with the exceptions of Norway, Japan and Denmark, which impose very strict conditions, and to a lesser extent Germany (exceptional situations), Austria (reciprocity), and Spain (agreements with 12 Spanish-speaking countries).

More generally, the rules under which migrants may acquire permanent status play an important role in mobility as such. Thus, when immigrants are subject to strict rules governing their authorised length of stay abroad, there is a risk that they will be “frozen” in the host country. Conditions on the maximum length and frequency of absences apply for persons seeking to obtain a permanent residence permit⁴⁴ or to qualify for the nationality of the host country. The European Commission is considering amendments to the directive on the status of long-term residents (Directive 109/2003) to allow migrants to return to their home countries for more than 12 months without putting their rights at risk (Article 9-1c).

The portability of social benefits is also an important issue in this context. There are two aspects to the question. The first concerns the impact of length of stay on the accumulation of social security entitlements (disability, sickness, old-age); the second concerns the payment of pensions and social benefits abroad. National legislation does not generally recognise universal portability of social benefits, but this question is often dealt with through bilateral social security agreements.


According to Holzmann, Koettl and Chermetsky (2005), OECD countries have signed a total of nearly 2 700 agreements of this kind (see Table III.3). The first one was signed between France and Italy in 1919. Since that time, France has negotiated nearly 400 agreements, and Germany more than 200. By contrast, Japan, Korea and the Central and Eastern European countries have very limited experience in this field. Some agreements have been negotiated in a multilateral framework, such as between member countries of the European Union (EC Regulation 1408/71 and PC 83/2004), and also between the EU and Mediterranean countries following creation of the Euromed Partnership (the Barcelona Declaration of 1995) and in the framework of the association agreements. ILO Convention 157 on Maintenance of Social Security Rights (1982) also addresses the issue of portability, but only three countries (Spain, Philippines and Sweden) have ratified it to date.

Holtzmann *et al.* (2005) find major discrepancies in terms of the coverage of social security agreements, depending on the country of origin. Nearly half of migrants from Europe living in the rest of the world are covered by a bilateral social security agreement, while the comparable figure for persons from Africa, Asia and Latin America is 9%, 7% and 4% respectively.

The portability of old-age benefits, and in particular retirement benefits, has generally received particular attention. Most OECD countries allow immigrants to receive their pension in their home country, for example, sometimes at a reduced replacement rate.⁴⁵ In Australia, persons over the age 55 who have contributed for at least ten years may receive a lump sum payment corresponding to their pension entitlement when they return to their

Table III.3. **International social security agreements, 2000**

	Number of agreements
Australia	66
Austria	146
Belgium	167
Canada	180
Czech Republic	10
Denmark	49
Finland	55
France	386
Germany	224
Greece	58
Hungary	18
Iceland	22
Ireland	20
Italy	112
Japan	4
Korea	2
Luxembourg	136
Mexico	6
Netherlands	165
New Zealand	28
Norway	54
Poland	46
Portugal	95
Slovak Republic	12
Spain	140
Sweden	66
Switzerland	124
Turkey	59
United Kingdom	157
United States	97
OECD total	2 704

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/430134724057>

Note: Numbers refer to bilateral social security agreements per country, including all additional protocols and modifications to previous agreements. Note that the OECD total may include double counting.

Source: Holzmann, Koettl and Chernetsky (2005).

country of origin. The combined accumulation of entitlements between the host and home countries is generally more difficult, and is not systematically covered by bilateral social security agreements. In the case of Mexico and the United States, an agreement dating from 2004, but not yet ratified, provides for combining the periods during which entitlements can be accumulated in each country, to reach the eligibility threshold of ten years.⁴⁶

Bilateral agreements are generally not very effective in guaranteeing access to health care. Yet this aspect can be a determining factor for migrants' choice of residence, especially for older persons or those who are chronically ill. Most countries provide temporary special visas for people to seek care in their former country of immigration (particularly for pensioners living abroad), while a few countries maintain care facilities in the principal countries of origin of migrants.

Other institutional obstacles to return can exist in the origin country itself. These may relate, for example, to problems with the recognition of qualifications and experience acquired abroad, to the taxation of transferred financial assets, or to administrative restrictions (see Section 4 for a more detailed discussion).

3.D. Circular migration

Circular migration has recently attracted special attention as a new approach to the orderly and balanced management of migration between host and home countries (see Box III.8). While this approach may not be all that “new”, in light of the examples presented above, there is still a question as to its expected benefits.

At first sight, circular migration of workers should offer the host country and employers readier access to the manpower they need, while minimising any fiscal costs. They allow the country of origin to reduce the impact of the “brain drain” and they hold out as a potential benefit the new skills acquired by migrants. Finally, they encourage rotation, and they may allow greater numbers of people to enjoy the expected benefits of migration.

Box III.8. Mobility partnerships and circular migration between the European Union and third countries

As part of its initiatives on migration and development and its action programme on legal immigration, the European Commission (EC) prepared a series of proposals in 2007 dealing with circular migration and mobility partnerships between the European Union and third countries. Mobility partnerships could represent an innovative approach to sharing responsibility for illegal migration issues, for combating clandestine immigration, and for linking migration and development. The question of circular migration can be addressed in the course of these partnerships, provided they are properly managed in co-operation with all stakeholders. In this context, the EC and EU member countries participating in mobility partnerships are invited to establish mechanisms to facilitate economic immigration, in light of manpower needs. The EC could also help third countries to develop their capacity to manage legal migration flows.

These forms of assistance could range from providing information on manpower needs and on immigration conditions in member countries of the Union, to measures that would encourage the mobility of students, researchers and young professionals, and could even include language or technical training, programmes to facilitate the economic and social reintegration of migrants upon their return, and provisions governing the transfer of migrants’ savings. The mobility partnerships could include measures to streamline short-term visa procedures and to encourage circular migration or return migration, while at the same time addressing the “brain drain” risk.

The commitments expected of third countries would relate to re-admitting their own nationals, when they are caught in an irregular situation in the European Union, as well as those who have transited through their territory. Other commitments would include initiatives to discourage illegal migration, to improve border controls, and to make travel documents more secure. A final aspect concern is to enhance the social and economic environment in the third-country partner, so as to reduce the incentives for irregular migration. In December 2007, the European Council adopted the EC proposals and agreed to negotiate mobility partnerships on a pilot basis. These would include circular migration systems managed in close co-operation with all stakeholders.

This approach, then, could produce gains on three fronts (Agunias and Newland, 2007; Agunias, 2006).

This approach raises some questions, however. Under what conditions can migration policies generate the expected benefits? What are the implicit trade-offs among the various stakeholders in circular migration?

From the viewpoint of migrants, greater mobility means, *ceteris paribus*, substituting temporary for permanent migration. This in itself will lead to a reduction in accumulated entitlements, and potentially to redistribution within the home country of the gains from international migration, since more individuals will be able to acquire short-term migration experience. From this perspective, the acceptability of a circular migration system will likely depend on the degree to which individuals are already integrated into the migratory process.

From the viewpoint of employers, it is not clear that they will always favour greater turnover in the workforce, especially if their needs are not exclusively for temporary workers. The costs involved in selection, training and apprenticeship will rise with the turnover rate. The prospect of ready access to foreign manpower may help offset this cost, but perhaps not fully.

From the viewpoint of the origin country, return is economically beneficial only if there are sufficient employment opportunities to absorb this flow of labour. In the least developed countries, in particular, current demographic trends are exerting heavy pressure on labour markets. The expected gain to the home country from the return of highly skilled workers will depend on how long they stay.

From the viewpoint of the destination country, finally, the expected fiscal benefits of circular migration will materialise only if different cohorts are involved (*i.e.* so that it is not always the same migrants who are travelling back and forth). In this case, as noted earlier, it may be difficult to impose return. If some immigrants extend their stay unlawfully or manage by other means to settle permanently (for example by forming a family in the host country), the investments essential for long-term integration in the society and labour market of the host country may be delayed. This is what happened in the 1970s and 1980s, with the end of temporary worker immigration programmes.

When manpower needs relate to fixed-term employment, as is the case with seasonal work, circular migration would seem to be an optimal solution. Yet this approach is unlikely to meet every type of need, especially in the context of an ageing population where recruitment is bound to become increasingly difficult, regardless of the skills level sought.

Faini (1996) drew some lessons from temporary migration programmes that were introduced in the 1960s and 1970s. “*The main shortcoming of Germany’s immigration policy, and an explanation for its failure to enforce a sufficiently high rate of returns, stems from the attempt to fill with temporary migrant workers what were in the end permanent jobs. This strategy was strongly resisted by German entrepreneurs, who complained about the need to retrain workers continuously.*” He concluded that: “*The policy debate should focus on two separate but related issues: 1) should policy aim at encouraging temporary migrations? 2) are policy-makers able to control the length of migrants’ stay?*” (p. 247).

4. Return migration and the development of the origin country

The contribution of migrants to the development of their origin country results from a combination of the resources they transfer upon their return, and the returns obtained from those resources. Those resources can be of three kinds. First, migrants bring back with them the education and working experience they acquired abroad. Second, they may come back with financial capital, in the form of savings accumulated during their stay abroad, which they may repatriate in various degrees of liquidity. Finally, they have specific social capital obtained from their migration experience.

Beyond the output growth that the increased availability of certain factors makes possible, return migration can also have a positive impact through other channels. For example, by creating new businesses, returning migrants can help improve the functioning of markets in their home country. They can also foster the transfer or adoption of new technologies. Having been exposed to the way businesses work in other contexts, they may also help to disseminate the “good practices” that they were able to observe (see Black *et al.*, 2003).

That said, no macroeconomic assessment of the impact of return migration exists, in part because the required data are missing, and in part because the expected effect is probably weak, given the low volume of flows. In any case, return migration is certainly not enough to jumpstart the development process. In fact, a reverse causality is likely to predominate: migrants will be more inclined to return home if economic conditions are attractive and promise new opportunities. The resources that returning migrants bring with them can, however, give a dynamic boost to growth that has already been unleashed, particularly if the authorities encourage these resources to be put to effective use.

The remainder of this section addresses the impact of the different kinds of resources repatriated by migrants (human, financial and social capital) and the policies that the home countries have adopted to encourage and support return.

4.A. Human capital: reintegrating returning migrants into the labour market and putting their human capital to use

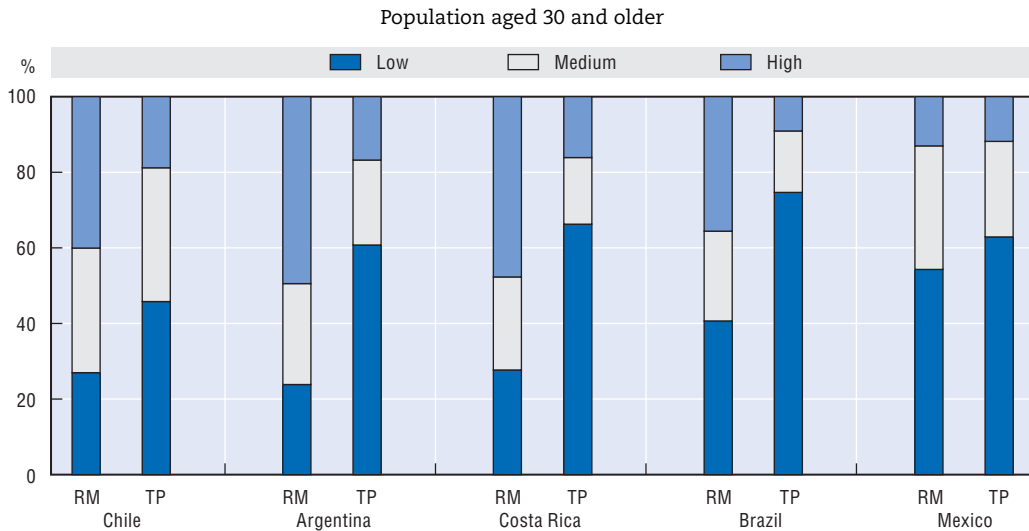
Comparing return migrants and non-migrants in the country of origin shows that return migrants are often better educated. This is the result of the initial migration selection and that of return migration, but it also reflects the fact that migrants acquire skills and experience while they are abroad (see Section 2.D).

The human capital contribution of returning migrants

Chart III.17 shows that, in Latin American countries, the share of individuals 15 years and older with a higher-education degree is much greater among returning migrants than in the general population, with the exception of Mexico, where there is no difference in the education level between these two groups. Similarly, for Uruguay, Meyer *et al.* (2007) found that about a quarter of returning migrants had a higher-education degree, compared to 11.5% for non-migrants.

In West Africa, the average length of schooling among migrants returning from the OECD area, at 11 years, was double that for non-migrants and for migrants returning from other parts of the world (Gubert *et al.*, 2007). In Egypt, 19% of returning migrants had a university education, *versus* 9.7% for non-migrants (Wahba, 2007b).

Chart III.17. **Educational attainment of return migrants compared to that of the total population**



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/428846422042>

Note: RM: return migrants, TP: total population. The population of reference considered here is individuals aged 30 and older, to take into account only persons having completed their education before returning.

Source: Population censuses of the countries.

In Cape Verde, where until recently there was no university, access to education is one of the motivations for migration, especially to Portugal. In this case, 16% of returning migrants have a higher education degree, while the figure is only about 1% among those who have not emigrated (De La Barre, 2007).

Under these conditions, return migration produces human capital gains for the entire economy, and they may in certain cases more than compensate for the loss of human capital initially attributed to emigration (Batista *et al.*, 2007). Yet for this to hold true, there must be sufficient employment opportunities to motivate the return of skilled workers.

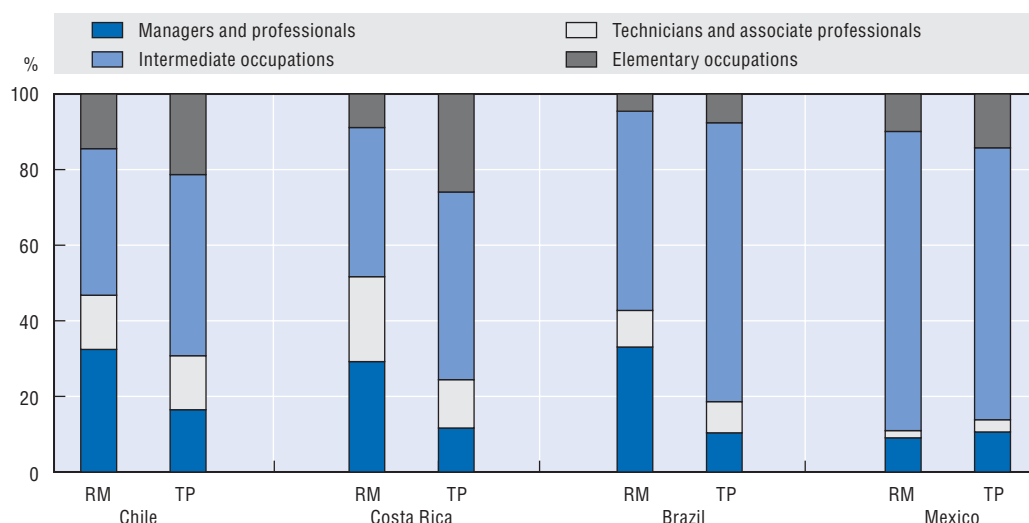
Reintegration into the labour market

For many migrants, return allows them to capitalise on the skills they have acquired abroad by landing a more highly skilled job than they could have hoped for had they stayed at home. In Chile, in Costa Rica and in Brazil, return migrants are clearly overrepresented in the most highly skilled occupations, and underrepresented in the least skilled trades. On the other hand, in Mexico there is no significant difference between the jobs held by return migrants and those held by other people, and indeed return migrants are slightly underrepresented at the top of the skills pyramid (Chart III.18). In Uruguay, 64% of returning migrants are employed, while this is true for only 43% of the general population (Meyer *et al.*, 2007).

Migrants returning to West Africa are also better placed in the labour market than non-migrants (Gubert *et al.*, 2007). Those returning from OECD countries are greatly overrepresented in the public sector and in the formal private sector. However, this result may be attributable in part to the level of education.

A counterintuitive finding is reported by Enchautegui (1993) in the case of Puerto Rico. She shows that migration experience in the United States has a negative impact on the employment situation, and in particular on the wages, of returning migrants compared to

Chart III.18. Occupations of return migrants compared to those of the total population



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/428848886612>

Note: RM: return migrants, TP: total population. Managers and professionals: ISCO groups 1 and 2; technicians and associate professionals: ISCO Group 3; intermediate occupations: ISCO Groups 4 to 8; elementary occupations: ISCO Group 9.

Source: Population censuses of the countries, circa 2000.

non-migrants. This may reflect the fact that the jobs performed by Puerto Ricans in the United States are insufficiently skilled or are too disconnected from labour market needs at home for there to be any premium on vocational experience acquired abroad.

Co *et al.* (2000) report similar findings for migrants returning to Hungary. The premium for foreign experience is apparently nil for men, while it is positive for women. This can be explained by the fact that the main employment sectors for men and for women after return (construction and industry for men, financial services for women) place very different values on foreign experience. Moreover, migrants who have stayed abroad for a long time may find themselves disconnected from the home labour market: they will lack up-to-date information on the demand for labour or they will have lost their “contacts”, which may condemn them to a less successful job search and a lower salary.

Some migrant groups find it harder to reintegrate

Some groups of migrants face special difficulties in rejoining the labour market in their home country. This is especially true of those who emigrated for non-economic reasons (*e.g.* refugees) or for those who were expelled from the country of destination. In these cases, return was not planned as a function of employment opportunities in the home country, and it may be harder to capitalise on the migration experience. This reduces the expected benefits for the home country and also casts doubt on whether the return is sustainable.

For refugees, disappearance of the grounds for exile is a necessary condition for the sustainability of return, but it is not a sufficient condition. When there is a mass return of refugees to a given region, the state of the local labour market will be a key factor in their reintegration, and their return may heighten existing tensions between labour supply and demand. Up-to-date information on the labour market and employment opportunities is

therefore essential, especially for migrants returning after a long absence. From this viewpoint, assisted voluntary return programmes can help guarantee a successful return, by ensuring that migrants are informed about opportunities in their home country, and also by offering targeted support, for example through training adapted to local labour market needs.

Language can also be an obstacle for people who emigrated as children and were schooled in the country of destination (Arowolo, 2000). More generally, there is a whole set of social and cultural factors that can affect the prospects of successful reintegration in the home country.

The legal conditions for return are also very important. In the case of Ghana, Sabates-Wheller *et al.* (2007) show that persons who migrated legally are more likely to have improved their economic status between their departure and their return than those who migrated illegally. In Cape Verde, there are serious problems with the reintegration of migrants expelled from the United States or repatriated from other African countries, and their return is clearly placing an additional burden on the government and on Cape Verdean society (De La Barre, 2007).

4.B. Financial capital: the role of entrepreneurs

As several studies of developing countries have shown, a fairly important proportion of migrants will seek to start a business or arrange independent employment after their return. This is particularly the case for persons who emigrated with the specific objective of accumulating savings by working abroad (see Section 2.C), and also for those who find that creating their own business is the best way to overcome labour market re-entry problems.

Egypt, where return migration is particularly important,⁴⁷ is an example of this trend. Wahba (2007b) demonstrates that returning migrants contribute significantly to creating small enterprises, and that they are responsible for 15% of investment and of job creation in this sector. Savings accumulated abroad play a crucial role here. Mesnard (2004) finds that nearly 26% of migrants returning to Tunisia will start their own business, although this figure is not very different from that for the population at large (24%).

In West Africa, Gubert *et al.* (2007) show that migrants returning from OECD countries are more likely to head a business or to be independent than people who never emigrated, or than those returning from other regions of the world. In Cape Verde, by contrast, it appears that returning migrants play only a marginal role in developing new economic activities. This finding may reflect the lack of investment opportunities in the country, as well as the characteristics of returning migrants, most of whom come back for retirement (De La Barre, 2007).

Age at return has an impact on the probability of creating a business, as confirmed by the results from the MIREM project in the Maghreb countries (Cassarino, 2008): persons with relatively short migration experience (less than a dozen years) are much more likely to create an enterprise than those returning at retirement age. Typically, the plan to create a business after return will have been formed before departure, and the purpose of the stint abroad will have been to accumulate the necessary financial and human capital.

There are a number of factors, however, that condition the ease with which a business can be launched in the home country. These include the accessibility of additional credit to finance the investment, and also administrative restrictions. According to Hamdouch and

Ould-Aoudia (2007), a third of returning migrants who have started projects in Morocco cite administrative restrictions as the main obstacle.

4.C. Social capital: the role of networking in the home and host countries

During their stay abroad, migrants have the chance to build social capital specific to the host country, forming networks of relationships and acquiring knowledge of the economic and institutional conditions of their new country of residence. But, at the same time, they may find it difficult to maintain their contacts with their home country.

In some cases, personal and professional contacts forged abroad can be very useful in the pursuit of specific activities after return, particularly in international trade (Rauch and Trindade 2002), for activities based on technology transfer, or for seizing employment opportunities related to direct foreign investment. Here, the acquisition of a foreign language can be a decisive asset. This is a case where return migration and trade are complementary.

Distance and length of stay no doubt have an influence on the number and quality of contacts that emigrants will be able to maintain in their home country. Moreover, returning migrants may in some cases find that they are resented or even rejected by non-migrants, either because they constitute competition for jobs (or for marriage, or for housing) or because they are seen as a privileged group.

In order to avoid this pitfall – and perhaps for personal reasons as well – migrants planning to return will make special efforts to maintain ties with their home community. For Ghana, for example, Mazzucato (2007) cites several studies showing the intensity of migrants' ties with their families and friends, as well as with associations. In addition, more than 60% of returned Ghanaian migrants still maintain the links they forged abroad (40% keep ties to associations). Concerning skilled migrants, Lowell and Gerova (2004) and Meyer and Brown (1999) list more than 60 electronic networks linking diasporas throughout the world, for the purpose of maintaining links within what is often a scattered community and for sharing information on employment opportunities in the home country. In some cases, the countries themselves support these initiatives.

4.D. Home country policies to encourage the return of their nationals

Some countries make great efforts to attract back their nationals residing abroad. They may institute systems of information and cultural outreach to expatriate communities, and they may also encourage migrants to seek representation in institutional structures, and particularly in parliament. They may even offer incentives to encourage return (special access to certain social services, permission to hold convertible foreign-currency accounts or to earn premium interest rates, etc.), as well as reintegration assistance. A comprehensive summary of these provisions would exceed the scope of this report, but a few examples can be cited to illustrate the variety of approaches.

A prime example is Jamaica, where a government programme has been in place since 1993. This programme encourages Jamaicans to come home by providing information, facilitating their move, and helping them enter the labour market (Thomas-Hope, 1999).

The Philippines is another interesting example: the reintegration of returning migrants is one of the government's priority objectives (Go, 2007).⁴⁸ The economic component of the reintegration programme consists essentially of training and expedited

access to credit for creating a business, while the “psycho-social” component offers returning migrants services such as family counselling and capacity development training. A “one-stop-shop” for the reintegration of migrant workers was established at the beginning of 2007, providing access to the full range of services that migrant families are likely to need.

In Argentina, following the post-crisis economic recovery, several programmes were introduced to revive scientific and technical activities and resources. One of these is a postdoctoral fellowship programme targeted at Ph.D. holders who have completed their thesis work abroad and are seeking a research position in Argentina (Meyer *et al.*, 2007).

Colombia has also introduced measures to assist reintegration of expatriate scientists. Returning doctoral candidates are enlisted for ongoing research projects. Loans for professionals to set up shop or to create innovative enterprises have recently been established, together with recruitment campaigns targeted at Colombians living abroad. Particular attention is given to recognition of diplomas acquired abroad (Meyer *et al.*, 2007). This is very important for attracting young people studying in other countries. Indeed, it is a growing issue for many developing countries, as students’ international mobility has increased sharply in recent years.

Tunisia has a system to facilitate the return and reintegration of emigrés and their families. The economic dimension of this system is designed primarily to encourage Tunisians living abroad to invest in economic projects in Tunisia: they are eligible for tax holidays and import permits for capital goods for such projects, and definitive return is not a precondition. Moreover, Tunisians residing abroad can open a tax-free bank account in foreign-currency or in convertible dinars, and they are free to transfer assets (Bel Haj Zekri, 2007). In Algeria, returning migrants can repatriate all their personal belongings duty-free, and if they create a business they are exempt from tax on the import of equipment (Saib Musette, 2007).

Finally, there is the example of China, which since 2002 has extended its provisions for encouraging the return of young graduates by offering them preferential treatment in terms of job placement, social advancement, wages and salaries, taxation, and social programmes in general. In addition, returnees can retain their dual nationality if they were naturalised in the host country, and they have the possibility of re-emigrating (Zweig, 2006).

The effect of direct incentives for return may however be ambiguous. They can encourage individuals to emigrate in order to benefit from assistance on their return. They can also represent a windfall for migrants who are planning to come home anyway. Finally, they can feed resentment among non-migrants, and so complicate the process of reintegration.

Conclusion

The issue of return is at the heart of the debate on international migration management. Understanding of the phenomenon is still fragmentary, in part because of difficulties in measurement and the lack of comparative data. This report has attempted to overcome this dual obstacle by looking at the definition problems and reviewing the available sources and methods for evaluating return migration. It also includes a detailed analysis of the economic literature on returns. Finally, estimates of return rates are provided for several OECD countries and some origin countries.

An initial finding is that return migration is a major component of migration flows. According to the results presented here, roughly two migrants in five will leave the host country within five years after their arrival. This figure varies greatly, however, by country of origin, by host country, and by category of admission. It also varies according to the individual characteristics of migrants. Return rates to OECD countries are overall twice as high as those observed toward developing countries. Moreover, there is a higher propensity to return among the least educated migrants and also among those with higher education.

Return migration is concentrated at the extremities of the lifecycle, that is they involve primarily young persons recently arrived in the host country, and older persons, particularly those of retirement age. The relationship between length of stay and probability of return is a decreasing one, with fairly marked threshold effects after a few years of residence: the majority of returns occur within the first three years, and after five years the return rate is relatively low.

For migrants, the idea of return is an attractive one, because their departure was often felt as something imposed on them, and even as a form of exile. The studies discussed in this report show that the impact of integration in the host country on the propensity to return is, *a priori*, ambiguous. A more favourable employment situation will allow a migrant to achieve his migration objective sooner, but it may also induce some migrants to prolong their stay abroad, or even to settle abroad permanently. The nature of the relationship is further complicated by the fact that migrants generally pursue several concomitant objectives, and those objectives may vary over their lifecycle. Migrants plan their migration pathway, and their return, in light of their individual and family objectives, but they also take account of opportunities in the home country.

Despite the variety of initiatives in host countries, it is therefore hardly surprising that assisted voluntary return programmes have limited impact, at least if we assess them in light of the numbers of people concerned and in comparison with the total flow of returnees. Another aspect of return policies concerns the need to guarantee the effectiveness and credibility of temporary migration programmes, which have acquired growing importance in most OECD countries over the last 10 years. In this context, OECD countries rely on a mix of incentives and coercion to ensure return, while facilitating access to legal and temporary foreign manpower.

This report has highlighted the importance of entry categories for the probability of re-emigrating (with return treated as a new migration), without offering a detailed analysis of the impact that the grounds for admission and the characteristics of the residence permit (duration, conditions for renewal and change of status) may have on return rates. As well, the role of the migrant's family and marital situation (place of family formation, place of residence of family members) deserves further study. Such analyses would permit assisted return measures to be targeted more effectively, and incentives to be adjusted to individual and family characteristics and migration trajectories.

From the viewpoint of the home country, economic, political and social conditions play a determining role in returns. Except in the case of very short-term migration, the migrants themselves will often see the possibility of retaining a dual foothold in the home country and the host country as essential for maintaining the ties (including family bonds) that they have forged in the host country, and for ensuring access to the social services to which they are entitled. In this context, it is important to take advantage of all the ways in which migrants can contribute to the development of their home country, without

necessarily making return a precondition. Engaging the diasporas, through virtual or temporary return, can also promote the transfer of skills and technologies. This will serve to reinforce ties with the home country, which for some will facilitate their reintegration if they return. Return migration can in this way support, if not actually initiate, the development process.

Notes

1. Inflows and outflows are measured here for a given year and, *a priori*, do not relate to the same individuals. Moreover, outflows do not include returning naturalised immigrants.
2. Another specific case concerns the “return” of immigrants’ children to their parents’ country of birth. By definition, the children of immigrants born in the host country are not themselves immigrants. When they migrate to their parents’ origin country, then, this cannot be properly called a return migration, even if they see it as such. “Returns” of immigrants’ descendants can include repatriates from the former French, Portuguese and Spanish colonies, as well as migration of “ethnic minorities” in certain European countries (notably Germany, Finland and Hungary) and Japan.
3. The planned length of stay can differ from the actual length for several reasons: problems of reintegration in the home country or new opportunities abroad may induce people to depart again, or alternatively to extend their stay in the country (for example, by turning a simple visit into a longer stay, see Gmelch, 1980).
4. Depending on the country, this may cover the general population or only the foreign-born population, in which case the registries can only be used to identify departures of foreign-born individuals (i.e. excluding naturalised immigrants).
5. The registration rules vary by country, but they generally require a residence permit and the intention to remain in the country for certain period.
6. These registries are updated periodically, however, for the specific purpose of deleting such persons.
7. Inflows can also be estimated using a survey that isolates immigrants arriving within the last year.
8. We use the 2000 Census (a public sample of microdata representing 5% of the population) to identify migrants entering in 1999 on the basis of those present in 2000 who arrived in 1999, and we use the 2005 American Community Survey (sample of 1% of the population) to identify migrants who entered in 1999 and were still present in 2005. Mortality rates by age and by sex were used to account for cohort attrition not related to immigration. This approach tends to underestimate 1999 inflows, because it does not count people who left before the 2000 Census. Thus we estimate a return rate after five years of residence for immigrants who entered in 1999 and stayed at least until the 2000 Census.
9. Dustmann and Weiss (2007) used a comparable approach for the United Kingdom, but with a slightly simplified methodology.
10. Particularly if they emigrate after marrying a native of the host country.
11. Using a methodology that combines lending records and the Canadian population census.
12. Reagan and Olsen (2000) obtained similar results using different data: probability of leaving the country declines with length of stay. For the United States, Van Hook *et al.* (2006) match individual records from successive Current Population Surveys to identify immigrant departures and to estimate the annual departure rates for different categories of immigrants in 2000. The results are consistent with those obtained from other methods. The annual departure rate declines sharply with length of stay in the United States: it is 6.5% for immigrants present for up to four years, 5% for those present between five and nine years, and 2.5% for those present more than ten years.
13. Persons younger than 30 are excluded in order to eliminate, as far as possible, individuals whose level of education may have changed between their arrival in the United States and their departure.
14. Access to information is measured here in terms of distance and size of the migrant’s home-country community.

15. In the case of Egyptian migrants, Gang and Bauer (1990) demonstrate a counterintuitive effect of access to information, by showing that a larger community abroad facilitates access to better jobs and thus tends to reduce migrants' length of stay.
16. Kirdar (2008) moderates the findings of Constant and Massey (2002, 2003) by showing that the connection between the choice to return and labour market success cannot be analysed without taking into account the duration of unemployment. He finds that immigrants who have been unemployed for less than a year are more likely to re-emigrate, while the longer-term unemployed tend to remain in Germany.
17. The case of Argentines in the United States constitutes a counterexample, reflecting the fact that the employment situation in Argentina in 2000 was not seen as more favourable than that in the United States for any group of migrants.
18. On the other hand, if we assume that migrants' calculations are confined to income maximisation, then they will return home only if the relative income situation is reversed.
19. For many migrants, the savings accumulated in the host country should be enough to purchase property in the home country, which they will hope to use upon their return. This is a non-productive investment.
20. See also Dustmann (2003b, 2007) for a modelling and assessment of the role of children in the return migration choice.
21. Another relevant work here is that of Lindstrom (1996), who shows that Mexican immigrants from the more dynamic regions tend to create a business and to remain longer in the United States in order to achieve sufficient savings, while other immigrants are inclined to shorter but repeated stays.
22. Tani and Mahuteau (2008) examined factors determining labour market entry for 1 000 migrants returning to Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. They were able to confirm the effect of age at immigration on the probability of being employed, and the importance of entrepreneurial experience acquired abroad for developing a productive activity in their home country.
23. See for example Güngör and Tansel (2005, 2006) for an analysis of the determinants of return migration for Turkish students earning degrees in Germany.
24. Dustmann (1999) inverts this reasoning to show that the prospect of return (especially if the residence permit is of short duration) has a negative impact on the accumulation of capital that is specific to the host country and is not readily transferable to the home country (e.g. mastery of the host country language).
25. Tian and Ma (2006) explore the particular case of individuals who emigrated from Hong Kong, China to Canada during the 1990s and then returned home. According to the 2001 Hong Kong Census, this situation applies to more than 80 000 persons. The authors show that, with a higher education degree, these individuals are 70% more likely to hold a managerial position, and they will earn 80% more, than immigrants who remained in Canada. On the other hand, the authors find no return premium *vis-à-vis* those who never emigrated.
26. Bijwaard (2004) estimates that nearly 40% of immigrants who entered the Netherlands in 1995 had left the country seven years later. However, 16% came back over the same period, and of those, 33% left again.
27. See Dustmann (2000, 2001) and Dustmann and Weiss (2007) for an attempted summary of the main arguments outlined above. See also Cassarino (2004).
28. In most European OECD countries, certain fixed-term residence permits are renewable upon application, or automatically, and are therefore effectively permanent. These permits must be distinguished, however, from those issued under temporary migration programmes (seasonal workers, workers on assignments, students), which are not renewable, even if changes of status are possible in some cases. Holding a temporary permit does not necessarily imply that the migration itself is temporary.
29. In Denmark, for example, the ban is generally for one year. It is three years in Spain and can be as long as ten years in Italy and the United States. A recent amendment to New Zealand's immigration law provides for a variable ban: i) "none", in the case of voluntary departure, ii) two or five years after an expulsion order, depending on the length of overstay, and iii) permanent, for permanent residents who have been expelled.
30. The European Commission has prepared a draft directive [COD(2005)0167] to harmonise return conditions. It calls for a maximum re-entry ban of five years (unless there is a threat to national or

- public security) in case of expulsion or overstay. The proposal is currently being debated by the European Parliament and the Council.
31. Another example is Switzerland which, until 2003, offered a seasonal permit (for up to nine months) whereby those who had worked for 36 months in the course of the last four years could obtain a renewable annual permanent (permit B).
 32. Although the Senate voted to extend this exemption in 2008, it has not been renewed.
 33. This requirement is one of the measures most commonly used by host countries to verify that seasonal migrants have gone home.
 34. In home countries with high inflation, moreover, the sums transferred may lose their value swiftly, even before the return, unless they can be held in foreign-currency accounts.
 35. See Epstein, Hillman and Weiss (1999) for a theoretical discussion of effects induced by measures of this kind, particularly in terms of the illegal employment of foreigners.
 36. In most countries, moreover, the employer is liable to a fine or even a prison sentence for illegally employing foreigners.
 37. Germany had already signed a bilateral agreement with Turkey in 1972, to help immigrants return to their country.
 38. See Dustmann (1996) for a historical presentation and a comparison of return policies and trends in Germany, France and Switzerland.
 39. In the United Kingdom, for example, the cost of expelling rejected asylum-seekers was estimated at GBP 11 000 per person in 2003-04, or ten times the cost of voluntary assisted departures (UK National Audit Office, 2005). In 2006, in a move to encourage rejected asylum-seekers to return home voluntarily, the return premiums under the VARRP (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme) were raised temporarily to GBP 3 000 per person. For further details on this programme, see Home Office (2002, 2005).
 40. See www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/747 for a complete list of return programmes implemented with IOM support.
 41. In the case of Kosovo, for example, the IOM assisted more than 2 700 returns from Belgium between November 2000 and December 2001 (RKB project), 280 from Finland between March 2000 and December 2001 (DRITA I and II projects), 415 from Berlin between July 2000 and March 2003 (BORK project) as well as around 120 families leaving Italy between October 2000 and December 2001. Between July 1999 and the end of 2000, more than 32 000 Kosovars were also repatriated from Switzerland in partnership with the IOM.
 42. Since March 2003 the IOM has been running the programme for the "Return of Qualified Afghans from the EU" (EU-RQA), building upon a worldwide programme launched in 2001. Returning migrants receive a lump sum of EUR 600, plus EUR 300 as a monthly wage subsidy for those working in the public administration in Afghanistan. A total of 540 qualified persons were repatriated under this programme since 2001. The IOM and the European Union also signed an agreement to assist up to 5 000 Afghans under the RANA programme ("Return, Reception and Reintegration of Afghans Nationals in Afghanistan"). Between June 2003 and May 2005, nearly 1 800 persons returned to Afghanistan under this programme. Some 300 reintegration projects were also financed (EUR 1 500 per project).
 43. The Priority Solidarity Fund for Co-development (FSP *co-développement*) established under the co-development agreements signed with Mali and Senegal in 2006 have replaced the Local Migration and Development Programme (PDLM) that was established in 1995 for countries of the Senegal River Basin. FSP *co-développement* was extended to the Comoros in 2007. The PDLM now embraces other geographic areas, including Romania, where it is known as the Migration and Co-development Programme (PCDM). More-targeted programmes are also financed by the European Refugee Fund (ERF), in Armenia, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. They also support investment projects, to a limit of EUR 3 660. Finally, the FSP *Cadre* and FSP DSTE (Scientific, Technical and Economic Diasporas) covers several countries in Asia, the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, designed more specifically to mobilise the diasporas through co-development projects (CICI, 2007; ANAEM, 2006; Kaba and Force, 2002).
 44. The European Directive on the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents (Directive 109/2003) stipulates, for example, that "periods of absence from the territory of the member state concerned shall not interrupt the period referred to in paragraph 1* and shall be taken into account for its calculation where they are shorter than six consecutive months and do

not exceed in total 10 months within the period referred to in paragraph 1.” *Continuous legal residence for five years.

45. Holzmann, Koettl and Chermetsky (2005) mention the example of Germany which, in the absence of a bilateral agreement, generally imposes a 30% discount on pensions paid abroad. This discount also applies to immigrants returning to Turkey and to Tunisia but not, for example, to those settling in Morocco, under the terms of the agreements signed with these countries.
46. Previously, a person who had worked as much as 499 weeks, but less than a full 10 years, in the United States and Mexico was not entitled to retirement benefits in the two countries.
47. In 2000, nearly 2 million Egyptians were living as temporary residence in countries of the Gulf.
48. Nearly half of the 8 million Philippine residents abroad are temporary migrants. Migrant workers make a crucial contribution to the economy through the remittances they send to their families.

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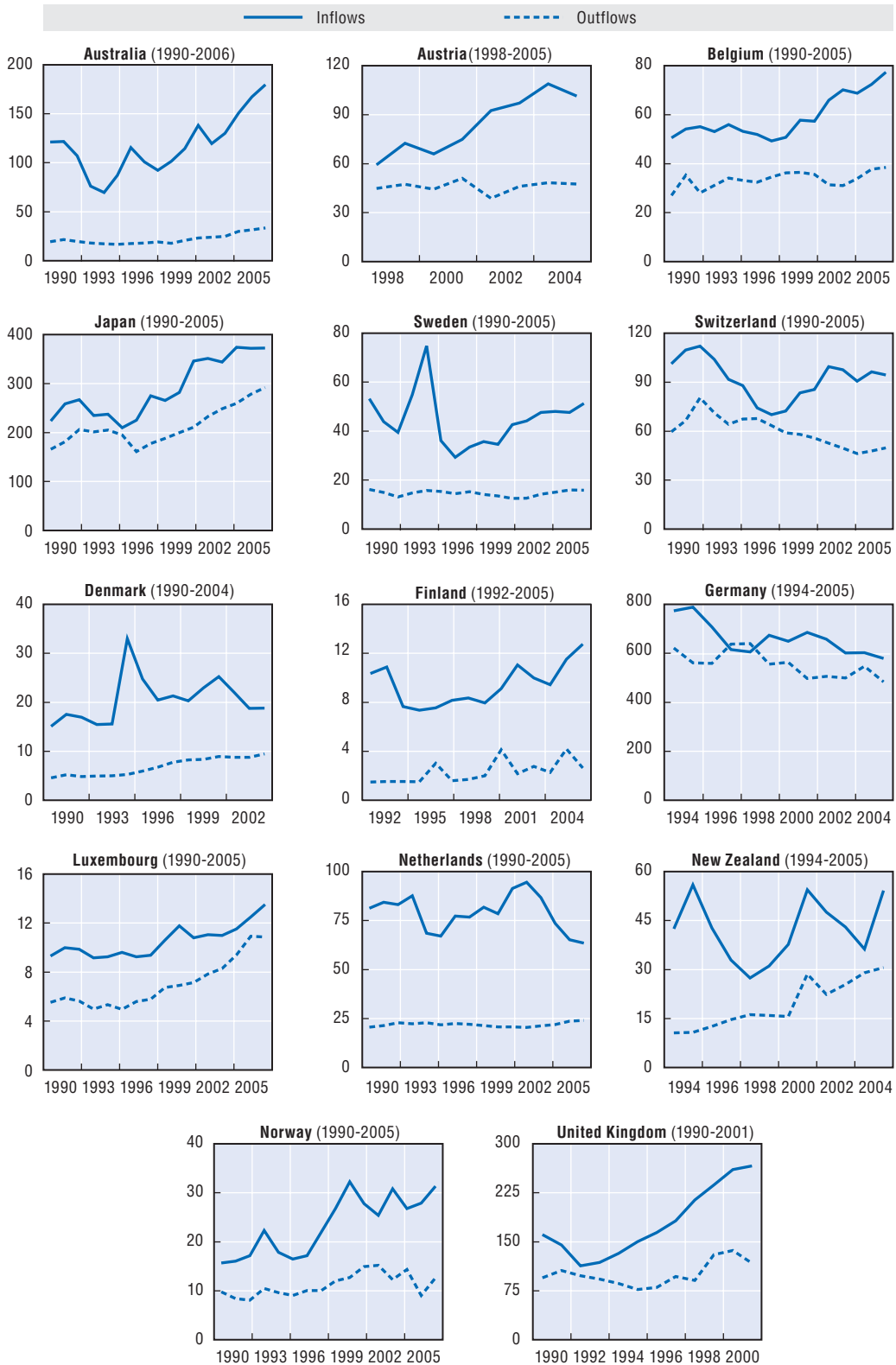
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ANNEX III.A1

*Inflows and outflows of foreigners
in selected OECD countries*

Chart III.A1. **Inflows and outflows of foreigners in selected OECD countries**
In thousands



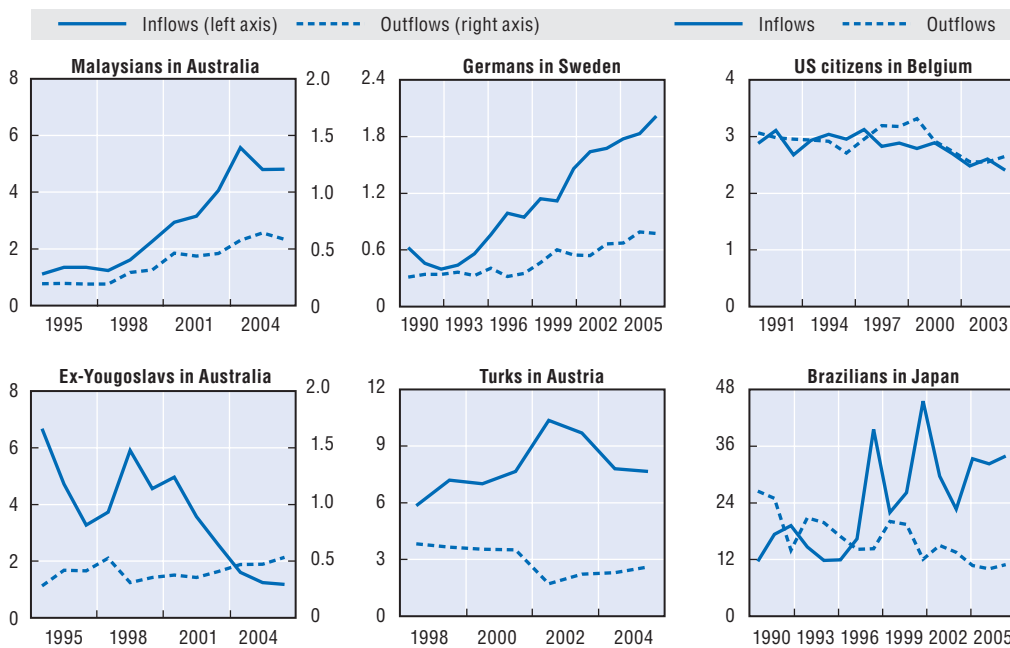
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Source: Database on International Migration. See www.oecd.org/els/migration/imo/data.

ANNEX III.A2

Inflows and outflows of migrants from Australia, Belgium, Sweden, Austria and Japan, various nationalities

Chart III.A2. **Inflows and outflows of foreigners in selected OECD countries**
In thousands



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/430144510064>

Source: Database on International Migration. See www.oecd.org/els/migration/imo/data.

ANNEX III.A3

*Main voluntary assisted return programmes
in selected OECD countries*

Table III.A3.1. **Main voluntary assisted return programmes in selected OECD countries**

	Australia	Austria	Belgium	Canada	Denmark
Main general programme	Reintegration assistance package	General assisted voluntary return	Return and emigration of asylum seekers (REAB)	No dedicated voluntary assisted return programme	Danish repatriation Act
Since	2004 (AFG:2003, IRQ: 2002).	2000.	1984.		1999.
Target group	Asylum seekers who are not in need of protection with temporary protection visa, temporary humanitarian visa or return pending visa.	Asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers.	Asylum seekers and all foreigners who receive or may benefit from governmental assistance (including irregular migrants but not refugees).		Foreigners with residence permit on humanitarian grounds and other immigrants who wish to return to their home country.
Number	56 Iraqis since 2003, 34 Afghans since 2002, 6 persons from other countries since 2004.	9 340 persons since 2000, 2 164 persons in 2007.	25 196 persons since 2000, 2 593 persons in 2007.		1 415 persons between 2000 and 2006, 148 persons in 2006.
Financial support (except transportation)	2 000 AUD per person, up to 10 000 AUD per family.	370 EUR per person.	250 EUR per adult, 125 EUR per child under 18.		26 634 DKK per adult, 8 523 DKK per child.
Additional counseling and reintegration support	IOM provides support services to Afghans.	Counseling services co-funded with the European Refugee Fund.	IOM provides information on the situation in origin country under the IRRiCO project.		Migrants over 60 or over 50 and unfit for work can get between 1 000 to 4 500 DKK monthly for up to five years.
Service providers	Department of Immigration and Citizenship.	IOM (logistic and general assistance) and other NGOs.	IOM.		The Danish Refugee Council advises on repatriation and local municipalities provide aids.
Other programmes (e.g. country-specific) and funds	Afghans and Iranians in immigration detention	Assisted voluntary returns to Afghanistan and Moldova	Reintegration (RF) and vulnerable cases (VCF) funds		Assisted voluntary return to Iraq and Kosovo
Since	2002 for Afghanistan, 2003 for Iran.	2003 for Afghanistan, 2005 for Moldova.	2006.		2006 for Kosovo, 2007 for Iraq.
Target group		Refugees and asylum seekers.	VCF: REAB candidates under 18, victims of trafficking, older migrants, pregnant women, etc.		Rejected asylum seekers.
Number	68 Afghans since 2002, 28 Iranians since 2003.		RF: 81 persons in 2006, 271 in 2007. VCF: 12 persons in 2006, 64 in 2007.		80 Kosovars since 2006, 7 Iraqis in 2007.
Financial support (except transportation)	2 000 AUD per person, up to 1 0000 AUD per family.	AFG: 500 EUR per single person, 800 EUR per married couple, 100 EUR per child (up to 1 200 EUR per family). MDA: 300 EUR per person.	700 EUR per person or 1 750 EUR per family. Special programme for Rep. Dem. Congo: 1500 EUR per person (45 persons since 2006).		KOS: No cash grants but in-kind return package. IRQ: 6 000 USD + 3 000 USD after 6 months per adult (3 000 USD + 7 500 USD per child).
Additional counseling and reintegration support		Specific programmes are carried out in Moldova by the Austrian Development Agency.	Medical assistance, temporary housing, tracing of family members...		KOS: Access to micro-credit and assistance. IRQ: Up to 2 200 USD for setting business.
Service providers	Department of Immigration and Citizenship with IOM in some cases.	IOM.	IOM.		KOS: Danish Refugee Council. IRQ: NGOs including IOM and Danish Red Cross.

Table III.A3.1. **Main voluntary assisted return programmes in selected OECD countries (cont.)**

	Finland	France	Germany	Greece
Main general programme	Assisted voluntary return programme	Assisted voluntary return (AVR, previously IQF), Assisted humanitarian return (ARH)	Government assisted repatriation (GARP), Reintegration and emigration (REAG)	No dedicated voluntary return programme
Since	1998.	AVR: 2005 (IQF: 1991), ARH: 1992.	1979.	
Target group	Refugees, asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers.	AVR: Irregular migrants, rejected asylum seekers. ARH: Vulnerable groups.	Refugees, asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers, irregular migrants.	
Number	334 persons since 2003.	IQF: 12 778 persons until 2005 (647 in 2005). AVR: 1 991 persons in 2006. ARH: 4 444 persons until 2006 (548 in 2006).	More than 519 200 persons until 2005. 11 300 persons in 2005 and 9 104 persons in 2006.	
Financial support (except transportation)	For refugees except if they were granted Finnish citizenship. Travel cost only for asylum seekers who withdraw their application.	AVR: 3 500 EUR per married couple, 2 000 EUR per single adult, 1 000 EUR per child (up to 3 children), 500 EUR per additional child. Payment after return: 50% after 6 months, 20% after 12 months. IQF: 153 EUR per adult, 46 EUR per child. ARH: 300 EUR per adult, 100 EUR per child.	100 EUR per adult and youth, 50 EUR per child under 12 (up to 600 EUR per family). Additional financial support for some origin countries (resp. 200-500 EUR and 100-250 EUR, up to 750-1500 EUR per family). States and municipalities may provide additional support.	
Additional counseling and reintegration support	Yes.	Yes, see below.	Yes including adult education and vocational training in Germany.	
Service providers	IOM.		IOM.	
Other programmes (e.g. country-specific) and funds	Several country-specific programmes run by IOM	Reinsertion programmes to develop economic activities in origin countries: – FSP co-development (prev. PDLM, incl. PMIE) – Co-development migration programme (PCDM) – Public aid to reintegration (APR)	United States refugee programme (USRP), Special assistance programme (SMAP)	Sponsored country-specific assisted voluntary return programmes
Since		FSP codev: 2006 (previously PDLM since 1995), PCDM: 2006 (but initiated in 1999), APR: 1984.	SMAP: 1994, USRP: 1997.	
Target group		FSP codev: Mali, Senegal, Comoros. PCDM: Romania. APR: All foreigners unemployed or at risk of losing their job. Special projects (funded by ERF via ANAEM) for Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cameroon, Rep. Dem. Congo, Georgia, Guinea, Mauritania, Moldavia and Ukraine.	SMAP: People not eligible for GARP or REAG, including ethnic Germans. USRP: "Resettled" refugees in the United States.	Mainly Afghans and Iranians, asylum seekers and irregular migrants.
Number		FSP codev: 133 projects in Mali in 2006 (129 in 2005), 5 projects in Senegal in 2006. PCDM: 67 projects in 2006 (28 in 2005). PMIE: More than 600 projects financed since 1996.	SMAP: 7 085 persons until 2005. USRP: 39 935 persons until 2005.	Less than 100 people since 2003 in total.
Financial support (except transportation)				
Additional counseling and reintegration support		Up to 3 660 EUR per project (Mali and Senegal: up to 7 000 EUR). Training in the origin country or France. FSP programmes also offer to develop joint economic projects in the origin country and France.		Yes.
Service providers				IOM.

Table III.A3.1. **Main voluntary assisted return programmes in selected OECD countries** (cont.)


	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Japan	Mexico
Main general programme	Hungarian assisted return programme (HARP)	Voluntary assisted return and reintegration (VARRP)	"Return and start again" (Protection system for asylum applicants and refugees - SPRAR)	Departure order system	Voluntary return assistance program
Since	1993.	2001.	2003 for the current programme.	2004.	2006.
Target group	Rejected asylum seekers.	Asylum seekers and irregular migrants.	Refugees, asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers.	Foreign nationals who have overstayed and wish to depart from Japan.	All foreigners originating from outside the American continent.
Number	4 471 persons since 1993, 212 persons in 2007.	1 547 persons since 2001 through IOM (255 in 2007). 1 516 persons since 2001 through DJELR (63 in 2006).	1991-2001: 5 252 persons. 2001-2003 (Piano Nazionale Asilo): 263 persons. 2003-2007 (SPRAR): 534 persons.	24 245 persons since 2004, 11 100 persons in 2006.	1 164 persons in 2006, 2 498 persons in 2007.
Financial support (except transportation)	50 USD per person.		700 to 1 500 EUR per family.	No (the foreign national may not enter Japan for one year, which is shorter than in case of deportation).	No.
Additional counseling and reintegration support	No.	600 EUR per person, 1 200 EUR per family (600 EUR per unaccompanied minor) for vocational/education training or to start a small business.	Yes.	No.	No.
Service providers	IOM.	Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) and IOM.	IOM.	Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice.	IOM.
Other programmes (e.g. country-specific) and funds	2005 and 2006 return programmes	Voluntary assisted return programme for vulnerable irregular Nigerian nationals	Repatriation fund		
Since	2005.	2006 (duration 18 months).	1992.		
Target group	People from Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Montenegro, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine with an expulsion order.	Vulnerable Nigerians who have been refused permission to remain in Ireland (this programme is jointly organised with the Netherlands).	Vulnerable groups and workers in difficulty (0.5% tax on wages contributed to the fund but has been waived by law 286/98).		
Number	160 persons in 2005, 180 persons in 2006.	Up to 100 persons.	571 persons until 2006, but in 385 cases it was for the remains of migrant workers who died in Italy.		
Financial support (except transportation)	200 to 250 EUR.		No.		
Additional counseling and reintegration support	In 24 cases, people were granted 1 500 EUR to set up businesses.		No.		
Service providers	IOM.	IOM.			

Table III.A3.1. **Main voluntary assisted return programmes in selected OECD countries (cont.)**

	Netherlands	New Zealand	Norway	Portugal	Spain
Main general programme	Return and emigration of aliens (REAN) and Emigration Act (EA)	No dedicated programme but will assist persons who are liable to return	Voluntary repatriation (VR) and Voluntary assisted return (VAR)	Sustaining return information and advice network (SuRRRIA)	Voluntary return programme
Since	REAN: 1992 (revised in 2006), EA: 2000.		VR: 1992, VAR: 2002.	2001.	2003.
Target group	REAN: Legal migrants lacking personal resources (but irregular migrants are not automatically excluded). EA: Legal migrants (target origin countries and refugees).		VR: Refugees and foreigners with a residence permit granted on humanitarian grounds. VAR: Foreign nationals denied leave to remain (incl. rejected asylum seekers).	Irregular migrants who have been asked to leave the country but do not have sufficient resources.	Refugees, asylum seekers, persons under temporary protection and irregular migrants.
Number	REAN: 14 842 persons over the last 5 years. EA: 3711 persons between 2000 and 2004.		VR: 6 800 persons since 1999 (small numbers since 2002, 48 in 2006). VAR: 4 921 persons since 2002 (443 in 2007).	277 persons in 2007.	4 669 persons since 2003, 1 003 persons in 2007.
Financial support (except transportation)	REAN: Up to 500 EUR per adult and 100 EUR per child. EA: Basic provision (up to 2 000 EUR) including transportation.	No.	VR: 15 000 NOK per person (no ceiling and nothing has to be repaid if the person stays at least 24 months in the origin country). VAR: No.	About 250 EUR per person (returnees are not allowed to re-enter Portugal for 3 years).	50 EUR per person. Reintegration allowance: 400 EUR per person (maximum of 1 600 EUR per family).
Additional counseling and reintegration support	EA: Re-emigration provision for those who are 45 and older. On average they receive about 480 EUR per month (minus exportable benefits).	No.	Yes.	Reintegration subsidies in some cases for vulnerable migrants or to start a small business.	Special project for Latin American migrants providing notably: – allowance to start a project: 1 500 EUR per person and project (maximum 5 000 EUR), – medical insurance for 1 year, – access to education.
Service providers	IOM.		VAR: IOM and Norwegian People's Aid.	IOM.	
Other programmes (e.g. country-specific) and funds	Assisted return and reintegration		Reintegration for Afghan and Iraqi nationals	Return of East Timorese refugees	
Since	2006.		2006 for Afghanistan.	1999.	
Target group	Selected asylum seekers (rejected) not eligible to REAN.		Afghans and Iraqis from Kurdistan, irrespective of their legal status.	East Timorese Refugees.	
Number	3 864 persons in total.		270 Afghans.		
Financial support (except transportation)	1 750 EUR per adult, 875 EUR per child.		3 000 to 15 000 NOK per person.		
Additional counseling and reintegration support	Possibility to have a grant to set up small businesses and receive vocational training.		Counseling, vocational training in the origin country and assistance for establishing a small business.		
Service providers	IOM.			INDE (NGO).	

Table III.A3.1. **Main voluntary assisted return programmes in selected OECD countries (cont.)**

	Sweden	Switzerland	United Kingdom
Main general programme	Voluntary return migration/repatriation programme	Individual return assistance	Voluntary assisted return and reintegration (VARRP)
Since	1993.	1997.	1999.
Target group	Permanent resident, refugees and persons with a residence permit granted for humanitarian reasons and who are not able to return home.	Refugees, asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers.	Asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers.
Number	319 persons between 2002 and 2006, 29 persons in 2006.	More than 65 000 persons over the last 10 years (including current and previous country-specific programmes).	About 16 800 persons until 2006, 6 200 persons in 2006.
Financial support (except transportation)	10 000 SEK per adult, 5 000 SEK per child (maximum 40 000 SEK per family).	320 EUR per adult, 160 EUR per child under 18.	Standard: 1 000 GBP, partly of in kind reintegration assistance. In 2006, the benefits were temporarily increased for those having claimed asylum on or before 31 December 2005: 500 GBP cash grant, 1 000 GBP of in kind reintegration assistance and 1 500 GBP in a series of phased cash payments (or in kind reintegration assistance).
Additional counseling and reintegration support	Since 2006, persons who have received their residence permit due to their need of protection do not lose the benefit of their permit before 2 years.	Maximum 1 675 EUR to establish a small business (since 2002). Additional assistance for medical treatment for up to 6 months.	Yes.
Service providers	Various NGOs.	Federal Migration Office (ODM), Directorate for Development and Cooperation (DDC) and IOM.	IOM.
Other programmes (e.g. country-specific) and funds	Return programme	Nine country-specific return programmes currently running	Assisted voluntary return for irregular migrants (AVRIM)
Since		Ethiopia (2006), Afghanistan (2006), Armenia (2004), Georgia (2004), Iraq (2003), North Africa (2005), Nigeria (2005), Western Africa (2005), Balkans (2007).	2004.
Target group	Rejected asylum seekers or migrants whose temporary residence permit has expired.	All foreigners with no criminal record except for the Balkan region programme, which targets vulnerable people and minorities.	Irregular migrants and overstayers.
Number	41 438 persons since 2002, 3 953 persons in 2007.	Ethiopia: 14 persons, Afghanistan: 8, Armenia: 74, Georgia: 72, Iraq: 506, North Africa: 22, Nigeria: 66, Western Africa: 48, Balkans: 48.	667 persons until early 2006.
Financial support (except transportation)	No substantial grant.	Ethiopia, Afghanistan, North Africa, Nigeria: 2 000CHF per adult and 1 000 CHF per child; Armenia, Western Africa, Georgia: 1 000 CHF per adult and 500 CHF per child; Iraq: 2 000 USD per adult and 1 000 USD per child; Balkans: up to 3 000 CHF per person.	1 000 GBP only for people in vulnerable situation.
Additional counseling and reintegration support	Yes.	Yes.	
Service providers		ODM, DDC and IOM.	IOM.

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