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# Return Migration

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### Abstract

This article aims to present an overview of the literature on return migration. Through combining the perspectives of various disciplines, notably economy, sociology, and psychology, the main theoretical issues, studies and findings in the field of remigration are presented. In this paper, we concentrate on traditional immigrants with a 'pull' incentive (e.g., labor migrants) who migrated mostly for economic or sometimes educational reasons rather than the immigrants who are forced from their own countries and 'pushed' (e.g., political refugees) into a new environment (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). We address the strengths and the weaknesses of the extant models and theories in explaining the causes and the consequences of the remigration experiences of the traditional migrants. Finally, drawing from a study of Turkish return migration from Western Europe, we discuss the contextual conditions such as attitudes of mainstream groups in the remigration country which are salient moderators of the acculturation process and which makes return migration different from migration.

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## Introduction

This article aims to present an overview of the literature on return migration (or remigration). According to the report of United Nations Population Division (UNPD, 2013), there were 232 million international migrants in 2013 which is equal to 3.2% of the world's population, that is, approximately 1 out of 31 people is an international migrant. Europe hosts the largest number of international migrants with 72 million, and Germany ranks first with 10 million migrants according to the report. This migration flow has not always been unidirectional and has not always ended in the destination country. Large numbers of migrants return 'home' for various reasons each year. Glytsos (1988) reports that 85% of the 1 million Greeks, who migrated to West Germany between 1960 and 1984, returned home (p. 525). As for the case of Turks – in this article we pay particular attention to and report a study on return migration to Turkey –, approximately 1.5 million emigrants including rejected asylum seekers returned to Turkey between 1980 and 1999 (Turk Sanayicileri ve Isadamlari Dernegi [TÜSIAD], 2006, p. 70). Today, return migration is still ongoing and every year around 40,000 migrants of Turkish origin return to Turkey from Germany alone (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2001). Therefore, remigration is an important phenomenon that needs close academic attention.

The huge diversity of migrant categories such as refugees, asylum seekers, sojourners, various types of expatriates, and diasporic migrants (Harvey & Moeller, 2009; Moeller, Maley, Harvey, & Kiessling, 2015) necessitates a close analysis of the distinct types of returns and returnees. In this article, we focus on immigrants with a 'pull' incentive (e.g., labor migrants) who migrated mostly for economic or sometimes educational reasons rather than the immigrants who are forced from their own countries and 'pushed' (e.g., political refugees) into a new environment (Ward et al., 2001), such as the major wave of Syrian refugees to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and more recently to various European countries. Through a systematic analysis of the theories, we describe the main theoretical issues, major studies, and their findings in the field of remigration.

This article consists of two main parts. In the first part of the paper, an overview of theories and models from different approaches are presented and discussed. In the second part of the paper, mentioned theories and models are discussed in the context of Turkish return migration. On the basis of a project initiated by the first author (Kunuroglu, Yagmur, Van de Vijver, & Kroon, 2015a, 2015b), return migration experiences of Turkish remigrants are presented and general characteristics of Turkish remigrants are discussed with an intergenerational perspective to shed light on the processes the migrants go through. Finally, we draw conclusions about the current state of research in this fledgling field of return migration.

## The Study of Return Migration

Return migration is described as a "situation where the migrants return to their country of origin, by their own will, after a significant period of time abroad" (Dustmann & Weiss, 2007, p. 238). We extend this definition to also include the children and grandchildren of labor

migrants so as to include the large stream of second-generation returnees who often remigrate with their children, as they often return after having established a family in the country of labor migration. Starting from the early 1960s, labor migrants of Yugoslavs, Algerians, Greeks, Turks, Moroccans, Spaniards, Italians, and Portuguese were recruited in the rich countries of Western Europe as cheap labor force. Many migrations, originally intended to be short term and temporary, ended up as permanent settlements, even if many of these migrants never gave up the ideal that they would return in the near or more distant future. This drive is sometimes so strong that migrants prefer to be buried in their heritage countries, if they have not returned yet, which probably symbolizes for them that they could eventually return to their 'home'. As for the second generations, either not wanting to live the life of their parents or not wanting to let their children to live the life they themselves have, they still kept the 'return' idea alive. Raising the question of what the dynamics are of these perceived destinies for each generation, we show how the return of labor migrants has been analyzed and documented in the literature. Through a systematic overview of the available return migration literature, we intend to describe distinguishing characteristics specific to return migrants.

Return migration has been studied by a variety of disciplines such as economy, sociology, anthropology, geography, and psychology. However, it is still a rather under-theorized field (Cassarino, 2004; Rogers, 1984) in which most attempts to theorize return involve its incorporation or application to general theories of migration (King & Christou 2008). Cassarino (2004) provides a very systematic and rigorous review regarding the typologies and frameworks of return migration. He distinguishes between five different theoretical paradigms in the study of return migration: neoclassical economics, the new economics of migration, structural approach, transnationalism, and social network theory. In our paper, we also cover psychological approaches and address the question how much each theory helps to explain remigration experiences of the traditional migrants. More specifically, we discuss the following approaches:

- Economical approaches: Neoclassical Economics and New Economics of labor migration, Structural approach
- Sociological Approaches: Transnationalism
- Psychological Approaches: Models dealing with acculturation and culture shock: W-curve theory of Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), Acculturation Strategies Framework of Berry (1997), and Cultural Identity Model of Sussman (2002; 2010).

## **Economical Approaches**

### **Neoclassical Economics and New Economics of Labor Migration**

Neoclassical economics perceives traditional migration as an outcome of the migrants' striving to increase his or her income and wage differences between the sending and the receiving countries (Todaro, 1969). Moving from this perspective, in this framework, return is perceived as a failure of the migration experience either through miscalculation of the costs or failing to keep the benefits of the migration. Besides, migrants are viewed as

individuals desiring to maximize their earnings, as well as their stay in the migration context through family formation (Cassarino, 2004).

In studies conducted on labor migrants, Baučić (1972) found that workers from the former Yugoslavia returning from Germany were mostly disabled by the work done in the host country. They were less enterprising people and could not endure the heavy work conditions in Germany. Kayser (1967) revealed similar findings for Greek return migrants from Germany and Trebous (1970) for Algerian return migrants from France. Similarly, Penninx (1982) reported that Turkish guest workers (a term used in those days to refer to labor immigrants) who had better positions in the hierarchy of labour had less inclination to return.

Contrary to Neoclassical Economics which defines return migrants as individuals failing to maximize expected incomes, New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) perceives return as a rational result of a calculated strategy for the household as well as a consequence of a successful achievement of the intended migration goal (Cassarino, 2004; Constant & Massey, 2002; Stark, 1991). Therefore, NELM extends the context of economic analysis, incorporating the individual within his/her family unit and blending income maximization with risk aversion (King & Christou, 2008). Furthermore, unlike Neoclassical Economics which assumes that migration is permanent in nature so as to maximize earnings, NELM assumes that people move temporarily (Constant & Massey, 2002).

Remittances play an important role in remigration. In a study on immigrant workers in Germany by Constant and Massey (2002, pp. 27-28) from 1984-1997, it was found that remitters who have a spouse and have a high rate of employment in the home country are more likely to return. Remittances were also of interest in the literature on international labor migration from Turkey in the 1970s and early 1980s (Gitmez, 1984; Gökdere, 1978). Remittances were perceived as indicators of migrants' attachment to the homeland and their failure to sever their homeland ties and integrate to the country of settlement (Çağlar, 2006). Therefore, when trends of consumption and savings of Turkish migrants changed, it was perceived as a sign of severing ties with the homelands and the desire to integrate. Some scholars have argued that Turkish migrants have been integrating into Germany, showing that they have been spending increasingly higher portions of their income there. Therefore, such trends were taken as the indication of Turks' incorporation into German society at the expense of their homeland ties (Çağlar, 2006).

Although both economical perspectives provided valuable insight into the reasons why people migrate and return home, they are not without shortcomings. First, these frameworks concentrate merely on financial and economic determinants of return migration, thereby overlooking the influence of social, political, institutional, and psychological factors. Second, these models provide almost no information about the decision making processes leading to remigration and the interaction between the migrants and the socio-political environments both in the sending and receiving contexts. The final shortcoming relates to the fact that second and subsequent generations are hardly represented in the models; they seem to be simply embedded in the household or family unit, which has relevance only within the migration goal of the first generation. All in all, the success/failure paradigm is too simplistic to explain such a multi-layered and multi-faceted phenomenon as return migration.

## Structural Approach

The structural approach, similar to NELM, emphasizes the significance of the financial and economic resources brought back to the country of origin following the return decision and reintegration of the migrants. However, the structural approach does not perceive return as the mere individual experience of the migrant, but argues that return migration should also be analyzed with reference to the social and institutional context in the country of origin (Cassorino, 2004; Cerase 1974; King, 1986). Within this approach, the work of Cerase (1974) provides one of the most cited typologies of return migration, distinguishing between four kinds of return of first generation immigrants, namely return because of failure, conservatism, retirement, and innovation.

- **Return of failure** occurs when the immigrants cannot adapt to the destination countries due to social or political factors. The difficulties in integrating to the immigration context (e.g., discrimination, language issues) motivate them to return. Those returnees are perceived to make little developmental impact on the countries of origin. These 'failed' return migrants can also easily readapt back at home as they returned before they were adjusted to the new context, although the return often comes with considerable loss of face because of the failure.
- **Return of conservatism** pertains to the migrants with an initial return intention after saving some money during the migration period. They tend to stay longer in the migration context than the previous group, transfer remittances, and realize their financial plans like buying properties in the country of origin. They stick to the values of the home society; therefore, rather than changing the social structure, they reinforce it back at home.
- **Return of retirement**, as reflected in the name, refers to returnees who aim to spend their old age in the home countries after they ended their working life. They are considered to make almost no developmental impact back at home.
- **Return of innovation** occurs when immigrants are fairly well integrated abroad, having acquired new skills and being involved more in the society of the host country. The returnees constitute a dynamic group perceiving themselves as 'agents of the change' and aim to return and change the homeland, bringing new ideas and values as well as using the knowledge and skills acquired in the host country.

Cerase's typology constituted a base for the subsequent conceptual approaches. Gmelch (1980) reformulated Cerase's typology, analyzing return migrants' intentions, motivations, and adjustment patterns. According to Gmelch, return is guided by situational and structural factors, such as opportunities that immigrants expect to find in countries of origin, as well as opportunities offered in respective host countries. However, as the situational factors can only be evaluated after return, Gmelch finds the immigrants ill-prepared for return. Therefore, he analyses success or failure of remigration by correlating the reality of the home economy and society with the expectations of the returnee. If the social, economic or political context is not consistent with the expectations of the returnee, the reintegration becomes difficult.

The structural approach was quite influential, attempting to show that return can no longer be seen as a phenomenon detached from the contextual factors both in the sending and receiving countries. However, by mainly focusing on the influence of return migration on the countries of origin, the structural approach leaves many unanswered questions about the internal dynamics of return migration. It does not provide in-depth information about how migrants interact with the environments in the host and home country context, and the psycho-social processes that they go through. Moreover, the framework pays almost no attention to later generations, although it is documented in the literature that some aspects of the Cerase's typology can be extended to second generations (see King & Christou, 2008). Finally, the approach and the typologies mostly focus on the traditional migrants moving from rural areas to modern countries; therefore, the experiences of highly skilled immigrants seem to be missed in the frameworks.

## **Sociological Perspectives**

### **Transnationalism**

Since the beginning of 1990s, transnationalism has had a major impact on the conceptualization and understanding of return migration. In this section, we present our overview of the theory in four parts. We first provide a detailed explanation of the concept of transnationalism. Then, we review studies investigating the motives for and the outcomes of return in line with transnationalism. Finally, we briefly mention the critics of the theory.

#### *The concept of transnationalism*

Transnationalism is a term conceptualized by a group of social scientists in the early 1990s deriving from the common pattern of experiences of migrants in the US, including those from the East Caribbean, Haiti, and Philippines, who keep their multi-stranded social relations that link them to their country of origins (e.g., Kearney, 1995; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). Therefore, the migrants were called transmigrants when they developed and maintained multiple ties, such as familial, institutional, religious, economic, and political, both with their country of origin and settlement (Schiller et al., 1992). That is, the transnational approach provides a conceptual framework that does not perceive migration or return necessarily as an end point; it describes how migrants develop multi-layered identities not only through the social and economic links sustained within the heritage and host countries, but also through various ways the migrants are attached to one another by their ethnic origins, kinship, and in-group solidarity.

In many ordinary labor migration flows, it is mostly the first generation migrants who can sustain their previous social network and pre-existing institutional contacts in their ethnic homelands. However, previous research on the generational transitions revealed that second generation migrants often maintain some knowledge of their parents' native language and travel back and forth, so the ties continue, although the magnitude is unclear (Levitt & Schiller, 2004; Somerville, 2008; Wolf 1997). Especially with the recent developments in modern telecommunication and media tools, transportation, cheap

international phone calls, international airfare, and the Internet, ties and relationships are facilitated for the subsequent generations that span across sending and receiving countries.

The proponents of transnationalism argue that the migration experience cannot be sufficiently understood by looking only at what goes on in the host country, even if not all migrants might be transnational actors or participate in transnational activities all the time. Research in this tradition locates migrants within transnational social fields, rather than their host countries, and this research empirically examines the nature and strength of their transnational ties (Levitt, 2005). The manner in which transmigrants conceptualize their experiences and construct their collective identities is shaped by both the political and economic context of their country of origin and the country of settlement (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995; Somerville, 2008). Further, the transnational studies cover a wide range of key concepts, such as nation, ethnicity, identity, culture, society, place, space, home, nostalgia, etc., which help us understand the multifocal and interdisciplinary nature of mobility from the perspectives of both who have moved and the recipient societies (Quayson & Daswani, 2013).

A caveat on transnationalism as a term is needed. We examine the term here in the context of migration where immigrants have ties with communities in their countries of origin and settlement. However, transnationalism has also been used in a broader sense to refer to multiple ties and interactions that connect people or institutions across the borders of nation-states, linked to globalization and not necessarily linked to migration (Vertovec, 1999). Also, transnationalism as used here is different from integration, as defined in a bidimensional framework (Berry, 1997; also discussed in more detail below). Integration involves both the maintenance of the heritage culture as well as interaction with and participation in the culture or cultures of the society of settlement. Compared to transnationalism, integration is less focused on actual involvement with the country of origin. Finally, the term diasporic return migrant is increasingly used. The term refers to people who lived away from their country of origin for quite a long time due to certain political, social, economic, and cultural reasons, or rather cultural pressures, and return to their ethnic homelands (Yijälä & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2010; Tsuda, 2009a). Although the term diaspora historically only referred to Jewish people who lived outside their ethnic homelands for centuries, now it is used to refer to a broader category in the field of migration studies. The word diaspora has extended its meaning since mid-1980s through the 1990s, including more groups of migrant groups such as refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, or guest workers who left their ethnic homelands but still share a religious or national identity, and placing more emphasis to the non-center and hybrid diasporic identities (Daswani, 2013, p. 35). Brubaker (2005) argues that a diaspora should consist of at least three core elements: dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary maintenance. Recently, the words transnationalism and diaspora have also started to be used interchangeably even though there are subtle differences between them (Quayson & Daswani, 2013).

Tsuda (2009a) describes two types of return of diasporic migrants: the return of first generation immigrants to their country of birth and 'ethnic return migration' referring to the 'return' of second and subsequent generation immigrants to their country of heritage after having lived abroad. The experiences of first and subsequent generations differ in the sense that the first generation migrants return to their country of birth which they are quite familiar



with; the latter group, on the other hand, essentially 'returns' to an ethnic homeland which for them is somehow a foreign country. However, there is a similarity in that both groups return to an ethnic homeland which they might feel personally or emotionally attached to.

### *Motives for return migration*

When we review the studies which attempt to find out the factors that influence return migration decisions, we see that in a transnational approach, actions of the migrants are viewed as a direct outcome of their 'belonging' to an ethnic community. Furthermore, migrants' self-identification as well as the perception of the 'homeland' are taken to influence their return decision (Cassarino, 2004). There are many studies showing that notions of belonging and homeland attachment have a powerful influence particularly on the choices of second generations regarding their choice of residence (Christou, 2006; King & Christou, 2014; Reynolds, 2008; Wessendorf, 2007). In the case of ethnic return migrants, the idea of 'home' mostly becomes an ambiguous concept as the migrants can experience significant uncertainty in terms of the place they belong to (King, Christou, & Ahrens, 2011) and therefore, they are in search of a place that provides them with a strong sense of belonging and identification (Wessendorf, 2007).

Studies on motives for return migration indicated that return is triggered by multiple, interrelated factors. In a large study, Tsuda (2009a) examined what has caused millions of diasporic migrants to return to Japan, their ethnic homeland after living away from their country for decades. He stated that even if economic motives are the primary return motive, ethnic ties and emotional reasons play an important role in the decision as well. The relative importance of economic and other motives can vary by ethnic group. In some later studies conducted on second generation Greek remigrants from Germany, it was found that they return mostly because of non-economic reasons such as life style, family, and life stage (King et al., 2011), or their ethnic ties such as their prior existing social network or their kinship ties (King & Christou, 2014). On the other hand, research done on Caribbean (Potter, 2005) and Indian (Jain, 2013) migrants showed that the return was primarily due to economic reasons such as better job prospects.

Economic and ethnic reasons as 'pull factors' have often been documented and emphasized in the literature as major motives for return. Nevertheless, the negative discourse in the host country, as manifested in negative attitudes of the mainstreamers towards immigrant groups, xenophobia, perceived discrimination, racism, may influence immigrants' sense of belonging as well as return migration decision (Bolognani, 2007; Kunuroglu et al., 2015b). Negative social conditions in the immigration context create integration problems as well as failure in sense of belonging to the country of immigration. It is documented in the literature that in the context of "racial, racist and racist discourses and where there is a limited access to legal citizenship" (Silverstein, 2005, p. 365) it becomes difficult for individuals to identify themselves as members of the host country even if they have never lived elsewhere (Kılıç & Menjívar, 2013). Bolognani (2007) maintains that Pakistani subsequent generations perceive Pakistan as a way of escaping from stigmatization in Britain after 9/11. In a study on migrant Australians, Noble (2005) maintains that incidents of racism towards Arabs and Muslims since 2001 led to discomfort amongst migrants and their children and undermine the ability of migrants to feel at home. On the

other hand, as the Rejection-Identification Model would predict (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999), an exclusionary, discriminatory environment may reinforce the attachment to the heritage country and in-group solidarity (Kibria, Bowman, & O'Leary, 2014; Portes, 1999), causing immigrants to feel that they never fully belong to the country of immigration (Tsuda, 2009b).

It is documented in the literature that many migrants mythologize the city of the homeland to which they desire to return through stories narrated to them by older family members or through nostalgia and memory (Datta, 2013). The term nostalgia, which is derived from the Greek 'nostos' (return) and 'algos' (pain), today, is now commonly used to describe the desire to one day return to a place called home (Quayson & Daswani, 2013, p. 16), although it was a word first used by a medical doctor, Hofer (1934, p. 45), to describe the pathological homesickness of the Swiss soldiers serving outside their countries (1934). However, for the subsequent generations, ethnic ties are often based on the annual summer visits, positive stories, and a favorable image of homecoming from the stories and memories of parents and grandparents, which might lead to a romanticized and idealized home country image (Cohen, 1997; Tsuda, 2003; Wessendorf, 2007). Reynolds (2008) found that second generation ethnic Caribbeans in Britain, who were never fully part of British society, tended to reorient themselves to their parental homeland, whose memory had been kept alive for them by their parents' narratives and regular return visits.

#### *Outcomes of return migration*

The studies on the consequences of return migration also emphasize that migrants who live for years with the dream of return and finally realize that the dream tends to turn into an experience of disappointment. It has been noted that migrants experience a simultaneous sense of rupture and alienation when returning to the place called 'home' (Quayson & Daswani, 2013). Schiller and Furon (2001) compared the first generation Haiti people's perception of home upon return to the 'old clothes that no longer fit.' For the second and third generation migrants who do not have embodied experience in the origin countries, it is also noted in Christou and King (2006) that return experiences trigger similar feelings of exclusion and alienation that the first generation experienced in the Western cities.

The attitudes of majority members upon return have been noted as an important factor in the readaptation period leading (re)migrants to be able to 'feel at home' or 'not feeling belonged to the home country' after return (Christou 2006; King & Christou, 2008; Ní Laoire, 2008; Ralph 2012). In studies on Irish return migrants, the majority of respondents reported to have problems about belonging due to the negative attitudes of non-migratory Irish peers (Ní Laoire, 2008; Ralph, 2012). In the return context, the mismatch between the self-identity of the returnees and the identity attributed to them creates double consciousness, which has a deep influence on them especially with the shocking revelation that they are regarded in their homeland as foreigners and aliens, a feature repeatedly documented in the literature on counter-diasporic second generation return migrants (Christou 2006; Kunuroglu et al., 2015a; Reynolds, 2008).

### *Critique of the theory*

The fast growing body of empirical studies within the transnationalism approach contributes to understanding relevant concepts and processes specific to return migration. However, its limitations should also be acknowledged. First of all, it is found to be a rather fragmented field that needs a better defined framework as well as analytical rigor (Portes, 1999). Furthermore, Somerville (2008) states that the research should focus more on the processes of identity formation rather than identity outcomes. He adds that the static identity markers cannot capture the emotional attachments and the agency in formulating and expressing emotional attachments (p. 31). Finally, the literature says very little about the return of the subsequent generations (King & Christou, 2008).

## **Psychological Approaches**

Within the remigration theories of psychological perspectives, cultural transition is perceived as a multifaceted phenomenon involving aspects of emotion, behavior, and cognition (Ward et al., 2001). Although sociological perspectives focus more on the political, social, and economic effects of returnees on the citizens of the homeland, psychological observations focus more on the individual changes in the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Sussman, 2010). Acculturation and reacculturation studies mainly try to explain psychological aspects of cultural transitions and perceive stress and coping as inherent and inevitable aspects of transition experiences of the migrants. People who leave their country of origin for any reason, such as improving their standard of living, or giving their children better opportunities or escaping from poverty, go through an acculturation process in the migration context, which can be defined as “the process of cultural change that occurs when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into prolonged, continuous, first-hand contact with each other” (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149). Although the change is experienced by both groups, the minority group is most affected. When migrants decide to return for whatever reason, a process of reacculturation starts (Donà & Ackermann, 2006). Reacculturation refers to readjustment to one’s own culture (or heritage culture) after having lived in another culture for an extended period of time. However, migrants have developed partly or entirely new identities in the migration period (Kim, 2001; Sussman, 2000), which makes their reacculturation experience different from and sometimes more complicated than their original acculturation experience in the host country. Therefore, scholars emphasized the importance of studying the acculturation experiences of the migrants to understand the reacculturation processes (Kim, 2001; Sussman, 2000).

Initial research in acculturation and reacculturation literature mostly focused on culture shock and adaptation whereas recent literature shifted the attention to cultural identity. One of the models dealing with time aspects of acculturation such as culture shock is the W-curve theory of Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) which is explained in the following section.

### **W-Curve Theory of Gullahorn and Gullahorn**

Gullahorn and Gullahorn’s (1963) W-curve theory, which is also called *reverse culture shock* model, was one of the most influential theoretical frameworks that was widely studied in

earlier times. The W-curve was a theoretical extension of the U-Curve theory by Lysgaard (1955), which describes the experiences of people who started to live in a new environment as 'culture shock.' The authors maintained that the adjustment processes reoccur when the sojourners return home and the wellbeing of returnees are inclined to change over time. According to the theory, the returnee feels initial relief and comfort upon return which is followed by a culture shock resulting from not finding the experience as expected. Afterwards, the gradual readaptation process starts.

The W-curve theory was questioned many times and was not found to reveal the processes of return accurately (Adler, 1981; Sussman, 2001). The shortcomings of the model are documented in a study by Onwumehili, Nwosu, Jackson, and James-Hughes (2003) in which they maintain that W-curve model can neither differentiate the acculturation and reacclimation processes, nor can it elaborate on why and how reacclimation takes place. Moreover, empirical studies of acculturation and reacclimation processes have never shown the curves as described in the theory; that is, the theory was found to be inconclusive, neither descriptive nor prescriptive. Further, in the literature, the model assumes a high level of commonality of the acculturation pattern across migrants, which is not in line with the high degree of variability observed (Ward et al., 2001).

A key model explaining the process of immigration and acculturation is Berry's (1997) acculturation framework which is explained in the following section.

### **Acculturation Strategies Framework of Berry**

Berry's (1997) acculturation model is a major model describing the process of immigration which suggests that the migrant faces two issues upon migration: maintaining the home culture and having contact and participation with those of other culture(s) in the society of settlement. We have to note here that there are different views on the conceptualization of the second dimension. While some scholars define it as adopting the culture of, or identification with the mainstream society (e.g., Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006), Berry uses the concept 'contact with other groups' rather than the word 'mainstream adoption.' In Berry's model, cultural maintenance on the one hand and contact with other groups on the other hand constitute four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. In the integration strategy, the migrant maintains certain features of the home culture and participates in the new culture as well. In assimilation, the migrant participates in the life of the larger society and no longer desires to maintain the heritage culture, which leads to loss of the culture of origin. In separation, the migrant rejects the new culture while maintaining the features of the heritage culture. Finally, marginalization reflects the full rejection of both cultures. According to the model, the highest level of acculturative stress is observed where there is a limited supportive network (e.g., marginalization) and the lowest level of stress is experienced when the migrant manages to combine the key aspects of both cultures (e.g., integration)

Berry's model, which mostly emphasizes the importance of acculturation orientations, was extensively used to describe the post migration processes that migrants go through. However, as it was constructed to answer the question of what happens to people in 'one' culture and come to continuous contact with another 'new' culture, it was not adequate to predict the experiences of return migrants. His model is exclusively based on the

experiences that the immigrants have in a new ethnic, linguistic, and religious group, where the persons' orientations towards home and host culture identifications predict socio-cultural adaptation or 'fit in' the host culture. Consequently, the model is insufficient to elucidate the return migration experiences of immigrants who developed new identities in the immigration context, and of subsequent generations who tend to have even more complicated and multilayered identities. As the reacculturation orientations of the returnees differ greatly from the ones immigrants have in migration context, the model provides less insight in the variations in the reacculturation outcomes.

Finding the remigration experience rather different from the initial migration experience, Sussman (2000) developed her Cultural Identity Model, focusing on remigration, which is explained in the following section.

### **Cultural Identity Model of Sussman**

Sussman (2000) based her model on the argument that the salience of the immigrants' pre-immigration cultural identity, as well as their cultural flexibility, predicts their sociocultural adaptation in the host country. Subsequently, immigrants who have adapted to the new culture, utilizing the values, thought patterns, and behaviors of the host culture to some extent, have undergone changes in their cultural identity, which only become obvious to them after return migration. That is, adjustment to the host country predicts the readaptation back at home again. She tested her theory on U.S. corporate returnees (2001) and American teachers returning from Japan (2002) and confirmed that the less migrants identified with the U.S. (so, the more they changed their original identity), the more severe readaptation stress they experienced.

Sussman defines four different return migration strategies, labelled *subtractive*, *additive*, *affirmative*, and *intercultural*; each is associated with different identity shifts and levels of stress during the remigration experience. Identity shifts occurring as a result of the behavioral and social adaptations to the host country become salient upon returning home. The experiences of *subtractive* and *additive* identity shifts are caused by obscured pre-immigration cultural identities which become salient just after migration. She states that these shifts are being triggered by the recognition of the discrepancies between the home and host cultures. Both identity shifts are characterized by relatively high levels of stress upon return; however, while *subtractive* identity shifters tend to search for opportunities to interact with the other return migrants after repatriation, *additive* identity shifters might search for opportunities to interact with the members of the previous host culture after return. For *affirmative* identity shifters, the home culture identity is maintained and strengthened during the migration experience as the discrepancies between the home and host culture are largely ignored and therefore less stress is experienced upon reentry as the home cultural identity is less disturbed. Finally, *intercultural* identity shifters hold and manage many cultural identities simultaneously and therefore experience a very smooth return process. They search for interactions and develop friendships with members representing different cultures and might take part in a wide range of international entertainments after return.

Tannenbaum (2007) analyzed the return migration experiences of Israeli return migrants using the Berry's acculturation model and Sussman's Cultural Identity Model. He maintained that remigration experiences of the study population were quite similar to

immigration features, and he found Berry's model more relevant than Sussman's. Israeli return migrants' narratives showed evidence of cultural identity even prior to transition, although Sussman emphasized emerging salience of cultural identities upon initial transitions.

Within acculturation research, there are multiple studies examining several different aspects of the return migration, such as psychological consequences of reentry (Adler, 1981; Şahin, 1990), influence of several variables in reentry experience such as age (Cox, 2004; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963), cultural distance between home and host environments (Uehara, 1986), contact with host country individuals (Kim, 2001) and so on, but most of them are conducted on the temporary sojourning individuals (Cox, 2004; Sussman, 2002; Uehara, 1986). However, because of the temporary nature of their stay, their experiences might not be comparable to the return experiences of traditional migrants.

Similar to the studies within the field of transnationalism, the studies of reacculturation point to the stress and negative emotions experienced by returnees in the post return period. Tannenbaum (2007) states that the changes in the conditions in the country of origin create a mismatch between the remigrants' idealized memories and the reality awaiting them at home. Moreover, one other prominent reason of the post return difficulties is the attitudes of the majority group members towards remigrants in the ethnic homeland (Neto, 2012; Sussman, 2010). Neto (2012) investigated the degree of psychological and sociocultural adaptation among adolescents who returned to Portugal and suggested that discrimination experienced by Portuguese adolescents upon return played an essential role in their reacculturation outcomes. Sussman (2010) states in her work on return migration to Hong Kong that in most of the cases the remigrants return wealthier than they left and can afford to build bigger apartments, run businesses, or buy land. She maintains that compatriots do not always welcome the new philosophies, products, or accented language of the returnees and may perceive them as a threat to the prevailing social and spiritual order. On the other hand, the context of Hong Kong, with its unique history and flexible and open attitude toward its repatriates, shows us how the cultural environment and attitudes of the home country can alter the emotional response. Sussman maintained that people from Hong Kong were more positive, open, and flexible toward returnees (p. 127), allowing them to maintain an additive/bicultural identity with little stress. Therefore, she added that the returnees in Hong Kong reported more positive emotions about being home. The differences in findings in the above studies show the significance of historical and societal context of home countries on psychological experiences of returnees during cultural transition.

The following section on Turkish return migration presents the characteristics and return experiences of traditional Turkish migrants. The above mentioned theories and models are discussed in the context of Turkish return migration as Turkish migration and remigration provides rich insight with its long history of immigration in Europe and cultural, social, and psychological processes experienced by different generations of migrants in various periods. The motives for return as well as the post return experiences of the migrants are discussed with regard to above mentioned theories and studies.

## Case Study: Turkish Return Migration

The Turkish case provides a good example of pull migration due to its long history as the largest non-European immigrant group in Europe and characteristics of its migrants migrating from underdeveloped parts of Turkey to urban European cities mainly for economic purposes. The Turkish migration flow to European countries started in the early 1960s, with the first bilateral labor agreements of Turkey with West Germany in 1961 and after that with Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands in 1964, with France in 1965, and with Sweden in 1967 (Gökdere, 1978). As all these agreements were based on rotation, the so-called *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) were expected and mostly expecting to stay for a couple of years and then return to Turkey. In the early stages of migration, Turkish migrants were mainly uneducated men and then women from the economically less developed regions of Turkey who planned to stay for a short period abroad to earn money and return back to Turkey. They were rather skeptical about the new life style, norms, values, and belief systems in the host countries, and therefore preferred to keep their Muslim and Turkish identity (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2003). As the labor migration to Europe was regarded as temporary, the migrant workers were not expected to be incorporated in the receiving society at social, economic, political, and cultural levels and therefore their migrants' orientations towards homeland were not perceived as anomalous (Çağlar, 2006).

However, the rotation principle did not work out for both sides and most Turkish migrants stayed for much longer time periods than they had expected (Abadan-Unat, 2006, 2011). After the 1980 military coup in Turkey, asylum seeking became another reason for emigration for certain Turkish citizens. With family reunifications and family formation, together with constant labor migration, the number of Turkish citizens living in Europe reached almost two million in the 1980s and 2.9 million in the mid-1990s. The mismatch between the expectations and realities has been stated as one possible reason of the mounting tension between the host countries and Turkish immigrants (Kayaalp, 2011, p. 24). There are currently more than 3.5 million people with Turkish ethnic origin residing in Europe (İçduygu, 2012), with a majority of these (more than 2 million) residing in Germany (Ehrkamp & Leithner, 2003). Today, contemporary Turkish-origin migrants, especially the third generation, cannot be simply considered as temporary migrant workers and have little in common with the guest workers of the past. Today they are actively involved in the dynamic business sector and social life (Kaya & Kentel, 2008).

This migration flow has not always been unidirectional and has not always ended in the destination country. Approximately 1.5 million emigrants including rejected asylum seekers returned to Turkey between 1980 and 1999 (TÜSIAD, 2006, p. 70). Today, return migration is still an ongoing phenomenon and large numbers of migrants return to Turkey for various reasons each year. Around 40,000 migrants of Turkish origin are reported to return to Turkey only from Germany every year (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2001).

The findings of a project initiated by the first author help us to discuss general characteristics of Turkish remigrants, understand the processes the migrants go through in both the immigrated and return context with an intergenerational perspective, and therefore to have a deeper understanding of the internal dynamics of Turkish return migration. The first part of the project (Kunuroglu et al., 2015b) investigated the motivations of Turkish return

migrants who lived in Western European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and France for many years, and decided to go back to Turkey to resettle. On the basis of semi-structured interviews conducted with 48 respondents, the study revealed that initial return ambition, perceived discrimination in Western Europe, and strong sense of belonging to Turkey play the most essential roles in return decisions.

The experiences of the informants regarding migration, adaptation, and return processes touched on numerous themes ranging from economic reasons, such as the deteriorated economic conditions in the migration context, or recent improvements in the economy of Turkey, to personal ones such as wanting the children to pursue education in Turkey. The narrations revealed that the adaptation processes of the informants varied greatly among respondents from different generations and/or socio-economic status. That is, some migrants reported to have been quite adapted in the host country, while others did not feel adapted; some stated they were exposed to discrimination and others were not; some had reached their financial aims and others had not - they, however, have all returned. Therefore, our findings suggested that return should not be perceived as an individual decision triggered by just one factor in voluntary return, as it is mostly a consequence of many interrelated factors, and it is a rather multi-layered and multi-causal process. Beyond all these factors, it was remarkable in the narratives that the return was commonly described by most participants as a very natural, expected, and inevitable part of their migration story and their life in general. The participants were found to feel emotionally and ethnically belonging to Turkey and express deep loyalty to their family and 'home.' The findings are also in line with those from previous literature that the immigrants who have a pre-existing sense of belonging to the society and people may idealize life in the ethnic homeland, at least at the premigration stage (e.g., Tartakovsky, 2008). Wessendorf (2007) also states that the dream of returning 'home' is a prominent characteristic of sojourners' identities.

The study showed the importance of the socio-political context in Western Europe in the return decision. The experiences in the migration context, especially perceived discrimination, was a major theme reported by participants as a major cause preventing them to have a strong feeling of belonging to the host country they lived in. Failure to feel belongingness to the immigrated context and not feeling connected to host members were described as major reasons for serious concern for the future of their children. Return was commonly an action taken to avoid letting their children experience being negatively stereotyped or to avoid letting them experience an unequal social status in the society. Therefore, the participants maintained the social and economic links with the homeland or parental homeland through summer visits or buying properties like summer houses.

The second part of the project (Kunuroglu et al., 2015a) investigated the post-return experiences of the return migrants. The study revealed that main issues experienced after return were found to be related to perceived discrimination in Turkey, cultural distance with mainstream Turks, and children-related issues experienced after return. In most narratives, personal, emotional, and social difficulties are mentioned that are similar to the features of first migration experience. The study revealed that acculturative stress and negative emotions accompanying acculturation in regular acculturation studies (Berry, 1997; Ward et al., 2001) also applied to return migration experiences of Turkish migrants. Negative emotions and stress mostly resulted from readaptation problems of children, especially in



the school context, perceived distance experienced with Turkish people, and perceived discrimination. The unexpected readaptation problems of the children were reported to be very frustrating, especially for those who returned to provide their children a feeling of home and belonging that they always missed in the migration context. The families reported to have expected smoother adaptation for their children before return, as they observed their children to be very enthusiastic about the summer visits to Turkey. The children knew Turkey through transnational summer visits and associated it with holiday, happy family gatherings, and good weather, which made it more difficult for them to adapt to the internal dynamics of life in Turkey.

It was also notable in the narrations of the returnees that after missing old friends, customs, friendship patterns and values, and living with the idealized dreams of home in the host cultures, they were disappointed not to find reunion a pleasant experience. We concur with Tannenbaum (2007) who stated that changes in the conditions in the country of origin create a mismatch between the remigrants' idealized memories and the reality awaiting them at home.

Another frequent theme in the narrations was the changes they have gone through which are only recognized upon return. The participants reported to have realized that they adapted to different cultural characteristics of the Western culture, such as being punctual, direct, or sticking to the rules of the system, which they see as a reason for the perceived distance with Turks, in addition to difficulties interacting with majority Turks in return context. Many first generation migrants reported to have attempted to start a business, or get a position at a company, but failed to sustain it as they could no longer fit to the norms and values in the work context.

When we evaluate the Turkish return migration case in terms of W-Shape Theory of Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), the model did not seem to describe or predict the experiences of Turkish return migrants. Turkish returnees were not found to go through the stages of the theory, namely, honeymoon, culture shock, initial adjustment, mental isolation, acceptance, and integration, respectively. We found that the intrapersonal and interpersonal variables have great impact on the readaptation periods of the returnees. In addition, the theory did not provide any insight to the experiences of the subsequent generations.

Berry's model was more relevant in explaining the experiences of Turkish return migrants in the sense that in most narratives, personal, emotional, and social difficulties were noticeable in the narrations of the respondents, similar to the features of first migration experience. However, as mentioned above, as Berry's model was constructed to answer the question of what happens to people in 'one' culture and come to continuous contact with another 'new' culture, it was not adequate to capture the experiences of Turkish return migrants. Moreover, reacculturation conditions, orientations, and outcomes differ greatly from the ones the migrants had in their initial migration experience. In terms of reacculturation conditions, although Turkish returnees expect to find a familiar environment where they can meet their need to feel at home and sense of belonging in Turkey, they are exposed to 'almanci' stigmatization. In terms of language, the colloquial Turkish they speak to survive in daily in-group life in Western Europe does not match the academic language level of the schools for children. The accented speeches of the returnees are also not welcomed by Turkish mainstreamers. The cultural distance experienced with the Turkish

mainstreamers due to unexpected changes of the society, norms, and values also make return different from the migration experience. Regarding the Turkish return migrants who have the same ethnicity, language, religion, and so forth as the mainstreamers, they still feel that they do not 'fit in' the home country and feel treated as 'outsiders' and 'strangers.'

In terms of acculturation orientations, different from the migration process, almost all returnees showed an orientation towards integration. They all stated that they find it important to establish good relationships with the Turkish mainstreamers and to keep good ties with the contacts in Western Europe. As a consequence, the model does not differentiate well between return migrants and does provide deeper insights into the reacculturation outcomes.

The process of return migration is also conceptualized in terms of Sussman's (2010) Cultural Identity Model. In the study, most of the returnees were found to experience either subtractive identity shift or additive identity shift. Importantly, both are characterized by high levels of stress upon return. Subtractive identity shift causes the returnees to perceive themselves differently from compatriots in the home context, accompanied with the feeling of isolation (fitting the descriptions of most respondents) (Sussman, 2010). All but one respondent in the study stated that they perceive mainstream Turks in Turkey differently than themselves. Additive identity shift causes the returnees to feel more similar to host culture identity and upon return, they look for opportunities to interact with the previous host culture members. Although Sussman (2010) defines this shift as an identity gain, as Tannenbaum (2007) states, she did not emphasize the negative aspects much, which are necessary to explicate the return migration process. The experience of feeling different and not belonging to 'home' upon return was expressed as a more difficult experience than initial migration by most respondents. Affirmative identity shift, which is characterized by stressing the positive sides of the home culture and ignoring the gaps and differences between home and host culture, predicts low levels of stress upon return. Although according to Sussman (2010) the experience of return migration is defined for them as a welcomed relief, the research revealed that the mismatch between their identities and the ones that are assigned to them in the return context was a major cause of stress even for the respondents who go through an affirmative identity shift. Intercultural identity shift, which is described as a global world view was the least common pattern which is also parallel to the claim of Sussman (2010, p. 77). In the context of Turkish culture, cultural norms are highly rigid and deviations are not accepted. Besides, people tend to have a strong need for feeling of belonging; therefore, it is not common to detach from strong national or religious identity.

Sussman's model provided valuable insight in terms of explicating identity shifts that the informants went through in the migration context. However, her work provided less information regarding reacculturation conditions, orientations, and outcomes. The dynamics of the interactions between the returnees and majority Turks and the political and institutional factors were also influential in the readaptation period. Moreover, the model also fails to explain the processes for the subsequent generations' experiences (the children and grandchildren of the emigrants who go back to the ancestral country).

All in all, most of the previous models provided us valuable insight in explicating different dimensions of the Turkish return migration. However, no model was found comprehensive or sufficient enough to elucidate all aspects of return migration. Therefore,

a more comprehensive model that can see the overall picture of return migration as a whole and reflecting on the identified differences of return experiences from migration experience is needed. Furthermore, the experiences of subsequent generations need to be reflected more in reacculturation frameworks.

## Conclusions

The paper presented an overview of literature devoted to remigration of pull migrants. The review brings together the theories of remigration from different disciplines such as economics, sociology, and psychology and documents how each theoretical stream attempts to explain the motivations and consequences of return. The findings of a project on Turkish remigrants are used to discuss general characteristics of Turkish remigrants and to understand the processes that the migrants go through with an intergenerational perspective. The extensive research in the literature and findings of the Turkish case lead us to draw the conclusion that return migration is a multi-layered phenomenon influenced by multiple interrelated factors. It differs from the migration experience in that contextual conditions such as attitudes of mainstream groups in the remigration country are salient moderators of the reacculturation process.

It was notable in our review that most models which attempted to explicate return migration processes have been borrowed from the migration literature. However, the experiences of migrants and return migrants are rather different. When we examined the Turkish case and described the characteristics of return migration phenomenon, we found that economic perspectives did not suffice to explain either motives or consequences of return migration with superficial success/failure paradigm.

Transnationalism can shed light on how Turkish returnees kept their ties and their dream to return to their ethnic homelands alive in the migration context and contributed greatly in explaining motives for return. However, transnationalism did not provide enough insight in explicating post-return processes return migrants went through. Particularly, reacculturation conditions and the interactions between returnees and majority members, as well as the reformulation processes of remigrant identities are hardly dealt with in the theory.

As for acculturation models, it is maintained that in our review that W-Curve hypothesis neither described nor predicted the phases of the Turkish returnees went through in Turkey. Although Berry's model provided one of the most relevant frameworks explaining the post return experiences of Turkish return migrants pointing at the personal, emotional, and social difficulties, similar to the features of first migration experience, it is found inadequate in capturing the reacculturation conditions, orientations, and outcomes specific to remigration. Differently from the target that Berry's model was constructed for, remigrants are not inclined to get into contact with the mainstreamers of a completely different culture, with different ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics. The orientations of the remigrants also did not vary that much compared to orientations of migrants in the migration context. Almost all returnees in Turkish return migration case showed orientations towards integration. Berry's

model also was insufficient in providing insight to the acculturation experiences of subsequent generations.

Finally, Sussman's Cultural Identity Model focusing on identity shifts of the immigrants who experienced the migration context and were recognized upon return contributed to the understanding of varying stress levels experienced by returnees due to those changes in identities. However, focusing mostly on the identity shift, the model does not provide enough insight to the internal dynamics of interactions between returnees and majority members and its influence in the readaptation period. Similar to the above mentioned theories, the return experiences of subsequent generations are also missed in the model.

To sum up, Turkish return migration case shows that remigration is a complicated and multilayered phenomenon. Narratives of Turkish return migrants touched on many factors such as the characteristics of both home and host countries, integration levels in the host country, children related issues, the socioeconomic level of the migrants, as well as initial return intention of the migrants influencing the return decisions, and the reintegration processes of return migrants in Turkey. Therefore, a model identifying and referring to different characteristics of return migration phenomenon in terms of reacclimation condition, orientations, and outcomes are needed in the literature. Although the models reviewed provided us valuable insight in explicating different dimensions of the Turkish return migration, no model by itself was found comprehensive or sufficient enough to provide a comprehensive picture of return migration. Therefore, a more encompassing model referring to identified differences of return experiences from migration experience is needed. Furthermore, the experiences of subsequent generations need to be reflected more in future reacclimation frameworks.

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## Discussion Questions

1. Do you have any acquaintances that have had return migration experience? Discuss their experiences in terms of return motivations and post return experiences. Do you see some common patterns among them?
2. Discuss how and to what extent the existing theories can explain the cultural transitions of the remigrants?
3. What are the main issues in return migration research? Discuss how they can be addressed in future research.
4. There is an idiom in Turkish as: “Bülbülü altın kafese koymuşlar, yine de vatanım demiş”. (Literal translation: They put the nightingale in a golden cage, it still craved for its country). What do you think the idiom tells about the characteristics of Turkish culture? How do you think these characteristics influences return decisions and the readaptation processes upon return? Do you have similar expressions in your native language? Discuss.
5. What are the differences between migration and return migration (from the perspective of the migrants)?
6. If an immigrant would tell you that she considers to move back to the country of her ancestors with her family, what would you advice to prepare her for the return experience?

7. Most studies on acculturation of immigrant minorities take ethnicity, religion and language as core variables. This study shows that it is not ethnicity, language or religion but a sense of belonging to certain groups and constructed social identity which constructs the boundaries between groups of people. In line with this finding, how would you evaluate the models that treat ethnicity as a fixed and rigid entity? How do you think the boundary construction approach might influence future studies on acculturation?

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