



[Hunter, A.](#) (2023) Return and circular migration in later life. In: Torres, S. and Hunter, A. (eds.) *Handbook on Migration and Ageing*. Series: Elgar handbooks in migration. Edward Elgar, pp. 183-195. ISBN 9781839106767 (doi: [10.4337/9781839106774.00025](https://doi.org/10.4337/9781839106774.00025))

This is a draft chapter. The final version is available in *Handbook on Migration and Ageing* edited by Sandra Torres and Alistair Hunter, published in 2023, Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd
<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781839106774.00025>

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Deposited on 17 August 2023

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18. Return and circular migration in later life

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At first glance, return migration appears as an unambiguous and self-evident concept. After all, narratives of return and homecoming have been familiar to humanity at least since the time of Homer's *Odyssey*. Yet the assumed straightforwardness of the return concept is misplaced, as the profusion of synonymous terms reveals – re-migration, reverse migration, counter-stream migration. As King and Kuschminder (2022) observe in their introduction to the *Handbook of Return Migration*, pinning down return is not as easy as first assumed. Firstly there is conceptual ambiguity about the locus of return: should this be recorded at the level of the country of origin, or at a more localised administrative scale (region, municipality)? Does relocation to a different region in the same country qualify as return? Secondly, for how long does one need to be away, and for how long does one need to return, before it counts as return? As King and Kuschminder (2022) show, an array of scholarly definitions of return have different answers to these questions. Moreover, early definitions tended to depict return as a unique migration event, a once-in-time move from location B back to location A (Bovenkerk, 1974), whereas more recent work has shown that return is better conceptualised as a process or transition, sometimes involving numerous return visits over the course of years or decades. Such visits have been theorised as facilitating return preparedness (Cassarino, 2004). Others go further, arguing that return is best understood 'not as a singular migration event but as a structuring narrative marker in transnational lives, through which ideas of home and belonging are negotiated, irrespective of whether physical return has occurred, is projected or is even possible' (Walsh and Näre, 2016: 7).

An additional difficulty in the study of return migration, related to its conceptual ambiguity, concerns the collection of data for research and statistical purposes. In the context of international migration, border checks tend to routinely record entries but not exits, and observing return statistically would entail linking such records across jurisdictions. In the context of internal migration (i.e. migration within the borders of one country, see Chapter 13 in this volume), censuses, surveys and other population registers may be able to observe return migration, but it depends on which

questions are asked. Due to space constraints, this chapter will not discuss later life return in contexts of internal migration (but see e.g. Liu et al., 2020 for the Chinese case). Beyond the realm of statistics, it is not straightforward for researchers to identify individuals with an accumulated history of migration from location A to location B earlier in life, then back to A at a later point in their life, since return migrants may not be easily distinguishable from the non-migrant population (Ciobanu and Ramos, 2016).

In addition to challenging the assumed straightforwardness of the concept, a second commonplace belief which requires further scrutiny is the assumption that return is the 'natural' and always desired endpoint of the migration trajectory. This belief, for example, was very prominent in Western Europe in the decades of rebuilding after WWII – among employers, policymakers and migrants alike – who all assumed that the presence of the 'guestworkers' from southern shores would be temporary. Yet mass return did not occur (see Castles et al., 1984 for a comparative study of Germany and the UK). In fact, the opposite occurred, as wives and children emigrated to reunify with their husbands and fathers, in the face of economic recession (the 1970s oil shock) and with stricter immigration controls looming (Anwar, 1979). While return was still an aspiration for many first-generation migrants in various Western European countries, the presence of young children was a complicating factor (Castles et al. 1984). The parents' dream of return was put on hold: delayed until children had completed their studies; then postponed again as the second generation established their own families and the first generation entered grandparenthood (see e.g. Liversage and Mizrahi Mirdal, 2017).

Nonetheless, later life, and specifically retirement, is a juncture when the question of return may be posed again, hence the relevance of return to the ageing-migration nexus which is the focus of this handbook (see Chapter 4 on retirement in this volume). In advanced economies with comprehensive social security and/or occupational pension systems, the end of working life, coupled with the exportability of pensions (to a greater or lesser extent), liberates the recently retired from a number of geographical constraints and marks an appropriate moment to relocate if so desired (Hunter, 2018; Klinthäll, 2006). One relocation option, still held dearly by some, is to return. Indeed, returns of retirement feature in Cerase's seminal four-fold typology of return migration (Cerase, 1974), and retirement return is also one of the migratory forms included in the currently available typologies of the ageing-migration nexus (e.g. King et al., 2017; Warnes et al., 2004; Wiseman and Roseman, 1979), alongside categories such as international retirement migration and late-in-life family reunification (see Chapters 17 and 19 respectively in this volume). Granted, in comparison to these other categories, post-retirement return has not garnered as much research attention. Nonetheless, a discernible body of literature can now be said to exist, developing initially in the late

1990s (Byron and Condon, 1996), and now encompassing several literature syntheses (e.g. Bolzman, 2022; Ciobanu and Ramos, 2016), monographs (e.g. Hunter, 2018), an edited volume (Percival, 2013), and a significant number of articles, as reviewed below.

Highlighting retirement as a key juncture, quantitative data (where available) do point to a retirement return effect with rates peaking around retirement age and declining thereafter, as found for returns from Sweden (Klinthäll, 2006), Australia (Cobb-Clark and Stillman, 2013), France (Rallu, 2017), Germany (Yahirun, 2014). It is worth noting that the aforementioned studies are based on registry, census or household panel data covering a wide range of origin countries. Yet, as will be further demonstrated below, the proportion of migrants engaging in *permanent* return later in life is comparatively low. Instead, a more common pattern for older migrants is to circulate between the migrant destination and the place of origin, at least when they have the motivation (family, friendship networks etc.) and the resources (health, wealth, property etc.) to do so. Circular migration, sometimes also called pendulum migration (De Haas and Fokkema, 2010) is defined as ‘the repeated back-and-forth movements of migrants ... It differs from return migration in that it requires the establishment of a dual life and more than one return, rather than a single emigration and return’ (Tezcan, 2021: 80). It can be a ‘best of both worlds’ strategy for older migrants, capitalising on their ‘duality of resources and references’ (Bolzman et al., 2006: 1361), but may also reflect what Sayad (1999) refers to as ‘double absence’, or as Liversage and Mizrahi Mirdal (2017: 295) put it ‘perpetually missing something.’ Regardless of how it is experienced, though, the significance of circular migration among a large proportion of older migrants warrants the dual focus of this chapter on both return and circular mobilities. The next section will present the available data on the actual proportions of older people engaged in these two migratory forms.

<a> Prevalence of Return / Circulation, and Intentionality

As noted above, there are difficulties in measuring return, and for this reason few studies present reliable data on the prevalence of actual return. However, certain trends are discernible in the available literature. One of the most elementary findings is that return migration in later life is comparatively rare. A paper by Vega and Brazil (2015), based on US and Mexican census micro-data, showed that less than 5% of Mexican males with US immigration experience returned to Mexico after age 50. Rallu (2017) estimated return rates of 5.5 to 10.5 per cent over 5 years, for migrants of all origins in France aged 60 to 69. An analysis from Germany of longitudinal panel data notes a higher prevalence of return from Germany, at 17% (Yahirun, 2014). Looking at older lifestyle

migrants specifically, Giner-Monfort et al. (2016) estimated that around 10% of British citizens aged 55+ returned to the UK over a five year period, based on Spanish registry data.

Turning our attention to the prevalence of circular migration, it appears that circular migration is much more common than return, particularly in later life. Constant and Zimmerman's pioneering work in this area, based on analysis of longitudinal panel data (1984-1997) from Germany – one of Europe's principal migrant-receiving countries – reveals that over 60 per cent of migrants from the so-called guestworker¹ countries (Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia) engage in circular migration (Constant and Zimmerman, 2011). Furthermore, older migrants are disproportionately involved in such flows, with higher rates of exit and longer stays outside Germany than those in middle age (ibid). Survey data from Switzerland, with an over-sample of older Italian, Portuguese and Spanish migrants aged 65-79, likewise showed a large majority engaging in circular migration, with over 70% spending some weeks in their country of origin per year (Bolzman et al., 2017).

It is worth remarking that the few statistics presented here are drawn from studies on *actually realised* return or circulation. However, because of the methodological difficulties noted above, much of the literature to date on later-in-life return/circulation has focused on *intentionality* to return/circulate (Ciobanu and Ramos, 2016). This latter literature likewise shows that the desire to return permanently appears to be a minority choice (for large-N studies on return intentionality see e.g. Attias-Donfut et al., 2006, for France; Bolzman et al. 2006, for Switzerland), and interestingly this desire seems to diminish further *following* retirement (e.g. Bolzman et al., 2017 for Switzerland). As ably summarised by Ciobanu and Ramos (2016) in their review, work on intentionality has also elaborated some of the influences on the return decision, pointing to the importance of factors such as finances and housing; family and gender dynamics; citizenship and social rights; health and wellbeing; and social networks and norms in the place of origin. In terms of finances and housing, intentions to return are stronger when a prior financial connection has been established at the place of origin (e.g. remittances, property ownership) and when pensions are exportable, particularly when the pension is worth more in the home location than the destination thanks to purchasing power differentials (ibid). Family dynamics are also crucial, with the motivation to return or circulate being much stronger when family members, especially spouses or children, are not co-located (ibid). Within spousal relationships, the willingness to return is not always equally shared, with the literature showing that male partners are more likely than females to favour permanent return (see e.g. Attias-Donfut et al., 2006; Bolzman et al., 2006). Acquiring citizenship is interpreted as a marker of integration in the destination country, potentially lessening the desire to return (Ciobanu and Ramos, 2016). Health status also influences decisions to return or circulate. The availability of good

quality and affordable healthcare / medicines can be a key factor in decision-making, potentially necessitating regular trips to the immigration country to meet healthcare needs (Hunter, 2011). Last but not least, the erosion of social networks in the place of origin after lengthy absences may reduce the desire to return: older migrants may feel they have less in common with their non-migrant peers over time (Ciobanu and Ramos, 2016).

These various influences on the *intention* to return/circulate, provide a helpful roadmap for understanding the critical juncture which is retirement. However, as they point out, this body of work is subject to a number of biases, not least that *intention* to return does not necessarily lead to *actual* return (Bolzman et al., 2006; King and Kuschminder, 2022). Another bias owes to the fact that the majority of studies have limited their sample to those in countries of immigration, meaning that those who have already returned (permanently/temporarily) are excluded (i.e., selection bias). Given these caveats, and the fact that the intentionality literature has already been ably summarised by Ciobanu and Ramos in recent times, the remainder of this chapter will present an overview of the literature dealing with *actual* return and circulation later in life. This state-of-the-art review is based on a systematic search of relevant English-language literature available in the major social science databases (accessed via the Proquest Social Sciences Premium Collection, excluding databases concerned with education, linguistics and information science). In order to make the task feasible, search results were limited to peer-reviewed research articles (excluding editorials, interviews, authors' replies, research protocols, obituaries and book reviews etc.), published since 2010.²

<a> State of the Art

To aid comparability with the foregoing discussion, the section below will be structured according to the five themes identified as salient in the literature on return intentions: finances and housing; family and gender dynamics; citizenship and social rights; health and wellbeing; and reintegration to social networks and norms in the place of origin.

 Finances and Housing

As regards housing, the literature on intentionality is largely confirmed by studies of actual return and circulation. A longitudinal quantitative study of later life returns from Germany to Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia shows that those who own a home in the country of immigration return less than those who rent (Yahirun, 2014). Home ownership in country of origin, by contrast, is associated with a seven-fold increased likelihood of circular migration among

Southern European older migrants in Switzerland, based on another large-N sample (Bolzman et al., 2017). The greater the distance between first and second homes, the less common circulation appears to be due to the high transportation costs, as shown for example in a qualitative study of older Jamaicans returning from Britain (Horst, 2011). This same study also highlights the design and size of returnees' homes as a symbol of material status, but family dynamics complicate such housing ideals, with the perceived emptiness of homes and the distance to children and grandchildren in the UK making return feel like a loss (ibid). Walsh (2018) points to similar ambivalences in her qualitative study of older returnees to Britain, as her relatively privileged participants grapple with experiences of ill health, impairment and bereavement.

Much of the theoretical literature on return migration prioritises economic factors as a key determinant of return (Cassarino, 2004). While economic factors may be key in younger adulthood (Yahirun, 2014), this perspective ignores 'changing priorities over the lifecourse' (Vega and Hirschman, 2019: 723). Neo-classical economics suggests that cost of living considerations and the purchasing power of pension income should be decisive in location decisions later in life (e.g. Klinthäll, 2006), yet the evidence is mixed. A mixed-methods comparative study of older German lifestyle migrants and Turkish-German retired guestworkers who circulate between Germany and the coastal region of Antalya on Turkey's Mediterranean coast showed that cost of living factors were important in both group's decision to spend significant periods in Turkey (Kahveci et al., 2020). By contrast, cost of living differentials were not reported as particularly decisive in the return/circulation decision in a Swiss study, even though Italian, Portuguese and Spanish older respondents acknowledged that their home countries were cheaper than Switzerland (Bolzman et al., 2017; see also Hunter, 2018). As the following section will show, family dynamics seem more salient for later life return.

 Family and Gender Dynamics

For both younger and older returnees, a desire to be close to family in the home location is a prominent reason for return, indeed the most prominent reason in a large-N survey of Mexican returnees from the USA (Vega and Hirschman, 2019). One question on which there appears to be considerable consensus across the literature is that return migration is more associated with male gender, and this pattern continues into older age. Quantitative evidence for this is found in e.g. Rallu (2017) for returns from France; and in Vanthomme and Vandenheede (2021), for the Belgian case. Qualitative evidence on the gendered patterns of later-life return is discussed in Horst (2011) for returns from the UK to Jamaica. Mixed-methods data collected in Morocco shows that most later life

returnees in that context are male labour migrants who had left their wives and children behind in Morocco during working life, and who return (from France, Belgium and the Netherlands) at retirement to be with their families (De Haas and Fokkema, 2010). In a similar vein, when it comes to circular migration, a quantitative longitudinal dataset from Germany shows that migrants whose close relatives reside in the home country are absent from Germany longer than those whose family is in Germany (Constant and Zimmerman, 2011). By the same token, the most important factor in *not* returning definitively from Switzerland to various Southern European countries was proximity to adult children and grandchildren living in Switzerland (Bolzman et al., 2017). Circular migration in later life thus appears as a means of maximising relationships with family and friends who are transnationally dispersed.

However, migration decisions in later life can also engender intra-family conflicts and ambivalence. In some cases, these conflicts can block permanent return (see e.g. Hunter, 2015 on remittance conflicts amplified by the immediacy of new communication technologies). Tezcan's qualitative study highlights conflicts between ageing first-generation migrants (who circulate between Turkey and Germany) and their adult second-generation children in Germany, notably over grandparenting roles and generational differences in acculturation (Tezcan, 2021; see also Chapter 27 on intergenerational transmission of values, in this volume). Similarly, the Moroccan study mentioned above noted how older male returnees sometimes struggle to adapt to family life with their left-behind families in Morocco, with mother-child relationships having evolved during their long absence and adult children sometimes resentful that they were not able to migrate to Europe with their fathers (De Haas and Fokkema, 2010; see also Chapter 20 on left-behind older people in this volume). For those who did reunify their families in Europe, the patriarch's desire to return is frequently over-ruled by other family members: female spouses wish to guard their independence of movement and not lose touch with their grandchildren growing up in the immigration country, while adult children object to returning due to unfavourable economic prospects (see e.g. De Haas and Fokkema, 2010; Bolzman et al., 2017). Short of outright family conflict, the literature also points to the imbrication of intergenerational ambivalence with later life return and circulation. Gallo's ethnographic study of middle-class Indian retired returnees from the Persian Gulf, UK, USA and Australia shows how this ambivalence arises from the 'colonial encounter between contrasting kinship models' (Gallo, 2019: 50), resulting in a normative tension between upholding 'modern' ways of doing family, which participants espoused as younger migrants, and meeting their own care needs in later life in the absence of their transnationally dispersed offspring. Intergenerational ambivalence related to care needs is also a feature of a methodologically innovative study set in Denmark (Liversage and Mizrahi Mirdal, 2017). By conducting a longitudinal interview study over three

decades with a sample of 18 Turkish women, they eloquently demonstrate the value of a life course perspective, showing how female Turkish migrants' return intentions morph into enacted circular mobilities in later life.

 Citizenship and Social Rights

As noted in the intentionality literature above, naturalisation has been considered as an indicator of integration in the destination country, and assumed to reduce the inclination to return. The available large-N quantitative research on the relationship between naturalisation and actual return/circular moves appears to confirm this. For example, Yahirun (2014) found that migrants who had acquired German citizenship were less likely to return than non-naturalised migrants, and only a fifth of return migrants from USA to Mexico had US citizenship (or indeed any form of legal residency) (Aguila and Vega, 2017). Having said that, naturalisation does not equate to sedentarism: quite the opposite, as a secure legal footing seems to encourage circular mobility. Constant and Zimmerman (2011) observe that either possessing EU citizenship or acquiring German citizenship was associated with increased circular migration of guest workers in Germany. By contrast, qualitative research indicates that those on renewable residence permits, with less secure legal status, are obliged to exercise care when coordinating their trips, to avoid exceeding permitted durations outside the country of residence which would imperil their access to social rights like healthcare (see e.g. Hunter, 2018 for older North and West African migrants in France; Kahveci et al., 2020 for a comparison of Turkish and German retirees who circulate between Turkey and Germany). Gehring (2017) conceptualises such bureaucratic residence requirements – at local, national and supranational levels – as 'legal gates', which can facilitate or constrain international mobility. A related obstacle to transnational social protection in later life is that many migrants have not contributed to social security systems long enough (in either the sending or receiving country) to be eligible to draw benefits such as state pensions or old age income support (see e.g. Aguila and Zissimopoulos, 2013 for a large-N study of older Mexican returnees from the US). In many instances bilateral social security agreements between sending and receiving countries which would totalize contributions in the respective jurisdictions do not exist, for example between Greece and Albania (Duci et al., 2019) or the stalled US-Mexico totalizing agreement (Aguila and Vega, 2017). Böcker and Hunter (2017) discuss novel policies in the Netherlands and France to facilitate transnational ageing, providing income support for older migrants who return to their countries of origin on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. While such experiments may serve as a blueprint for future innovations in

the realm of transnational social protection, these policies also face obstacles due to electoral (anti-immigrant) *realpolitik* and legal challenges.

 Health and Wellbeing

The relationship between physical health status and return/circular mobilities is complex, and consensus in the literature is hard to find. Some research suggests a negative association between health and return/circular migration, with those in poorer health being less mobile or able to return. Bolzman et al. (2017) found that among Italians, Portuguese and Spanish seniors in Switzerland, those in better health are three times more likely to circulate than those who say their health is bad or very bad (see also Kahveci et al., 2020). Likewise for return, Norredam and colleagues' (2015) analysis of Danish registry data showed lower rates of return as disease severity increased, a finding echoed in Vanthomme and Vandenheede's (2021) census-based study of returns from Belgium, with the exception of older Turks in Belgium, which the authors suggest may be due to 'salmon bias', namely a selection effect whereby the least healthy migrants return. This 'salmon bias' hypothesis (also known as the 'unhealthy remigration effect' or 'remigration bias') has been discussed as a possible explanation for the lower mortality of migrants compared to natives which has been noted in many contexts (see Chapter 25 on mortality in this volume). Large-N studies on the US-Mexico case have made important contributions to this field. For example, Canedo and Angel (2019) note that returnees from the USA to Mexico are more likely to be physically disabled than Mexicans who never migrated (stayers), implying a burden on the Mexican health system from return. Furthermore, in the Mexico-US context there is a gendered dimension, with older female returnees more likely to be disabled than both older male returnees and also older female stayers (Wong and Gonzalez-Gonzalez, 2010).

Turning to mental health status and return, the available evidence is very mixed. In their large-N comparative study Canedo and Angel (2019) found no significant differences in mental health between returnees and stayers in Mexico. By contrast, a quantitative study of older Irish returnees (mainly from the UK) by Barrett and Mosca (2013a), also comparing returnees with stayers, highlighted the 'psychic costs' of migration, using problem alcohol use as a proxy measure of lower mental health/wellbeing. Gender differences were again at play, with older male returnees more exposed to problem alcohol use than male stayers, whereas for older female returnees the experience of migration seems to have had a protective effect on their mental wellbeing (ibid). Contrary to the findings of both Canedo and Angel (2019) and Barrett and Mosca (2013a), Baykara-Krumme and Platt (2018), in an innovative three-way comparison, found that older Turkish

returnees have higher life satisfaction than stayers, and similar levels to their migrant compatriots ageing in Germany (Baykara-Krumme and Platt, 2018). Rejecting the 'unhealthy remigration effect', their quantitative findings suggest that a selection effect is at work, with the happier and more optimistic leaving for Germany in the first place (ibid).

Moving from returnees' health status to their healthcare needs, the possibility of accessing (affordable) healthcare appears to be a key consideration in location decisions in later life. In a large-N study of southern European older migrants in Switzerland, nearly half of those who do not return/circulate cited the quality of health services as a reason for remaining in Switzerland (Bolzman et al., 2017). Other studies, mainly qualitative, show how older migrants demonstrate agency through careful comparison of costs and quality across a range of healthcare provision in places of origin and destination. Such calculations may be a factor in either return (see e.g. Sampaio, 2020 for returns to the Azores Islands) or circular migration (e.g. Tezcan, 2021 for the German-Turkish case), with trips being scheduled in order to coordinate with medical consultations to manage chronic conditions (see e.g. Hunter, 2018; Kahveci et al., 2020). However, circular migration may not always be an optimal health strategy. Moreno et al. (2016) document the problems faced by Latinos who circulate between Mexico and the US in self-managing their diabetes care (see also Hunter, 2018). Lastly, Sun (2014) notes how ageing Taiwanese returnees from the US justify their access to public healthcare in Taiwan by claiming to be 'respectable citizens' who contributed actively to their homeland in the past, and continue to do so now that they have returned. Such narratives allude to the final theme of this state-of-the-art review, reintegration.

 Reintegration to Social Networks and Norms

The literature on return intentions discussed above noted that a loss of social networks and changes in social norms in the place of origin may reduce the desire to return. How then do those who actually return negotiate their place in the origin society and achieve reintegration? Because of the different contexts in which reintegration can occur (e.g. 'voluntary' versus 'forced' returns), a universally accepted definition of the concept is yet to emerge. The definition of reintegration favoured here is the 'process of adaptation (...) between those who have returned and those who remained behind during their absence' (Arowolo, 2000: 62), in which the social, economic and normative domains are particularly important. It is often assumed that reintegration is a straightforward and self-evident process because returnees are in a familiar environment, finally back where they 'belong'. Yet the places (and people) one returns to have evolved in the interim, and the person who returns is not identical to the one who left, even more so when it comes to

return later in life. 'In short, there is no return to the situation as it once was' (King and Kuschminder, 2022:16).

While there is a substantial literature on reintegration in general terms (e.g. Arowolo, 2000; Dumon, 1986; Gmelch, 1980; Kuschminder, 2017), there is much which remains unknown about the reintegration of older returnees specifically (Ciobanu and Ramos, 2016). From quantitative studies, one finding on which there is a degree of consensus is that older returnees have smaller social networks than non-migrants and are more socially isolated (e.g. Barrett and Mosca, 2013b for returnees to Ireland). This was also seen in relation to the smaller household composition of returnees from the US to Mexico, with fewer relatives or friends to call on for informal care and support (Mudrazija et al., 2016). Hunter's ethnographic study of older returnees from France found that social reintegration came easier to those who had been involved in community development projects via hometown associations in West Africa during their time abroad (Hunter, 2018). Turning to social norms, a long-standing finding in the wider reintegration literature is the disillusionment that returnees may experience in relation to 'backward' norms in the place of origin (e.g. Cerase, 1974). Such narratives also feature in the small body of literature which has considered later life return specifically. For example, some of the older returnees interviewed by De Haas and Fokkema (2010) in Morocco bemoaned the lack of trust, materialism and relaxed work ethic of stayers. An original recent perspective in this direction is work on changing cultures of ageing in the Azores Islands by Sampaio (2021). The returnees she interviewed, mainly from North America, contrasting their 'modern' and 'advanced' attitudes to independent ageing, self-care and active work ethic with the 'traditional' culture of ageing and reliance on family among their age-peers who had not migrated. Tensions likewise abound between Taiwanese stayers and highly skilled professionals who return from the US to Taiwan in later life, as discussed by Sun (2016). Sun's qualitative study is original both for its focus on a highly skilled return population (in contrast to the majority of research on later life return which has taken lower skilled labour migrants as its focus) and for its emphasis on older returnees as agents of change in their homelands, as opposed to the dominant focus on wellbeing and care needs. Future research which promotes these two lines of enquiry would be a welcome addition to the still sparse evidence base on later life reintegration (cf. Ciobanu and Ramos, 2016).

<a> Directions for Future Research

An obvious gap is the relative paucity of studies on circular migration in later life, with only 15% of the surveyed papers focusing on circular migration exclusively. Put another way, the literature is

disproportionately skewed towards analyses of return, despite the much higher prevalence of circular migration compared to return in later life, as noted above. In general, more quantitative evidence would be welcome on the prevalence of actual return and circular migration, to confirm the trends noted above. One promising analytical orientation, pioneered by Baykara-Krumme and Platt (2018) and worthy of further development, is to compare returnees with, respectively, stayers in the place of origin and compatriots in the country of immigration who are ageing-in-place/circulating. Such an analytical strategy would minimise the selection biases inherent when questions of return and circulation are only addressed within the context of the immigration country. It would also help to address a number of thematic questions which remain unanswered, such as whether returnees have better or worse mental health than stayers and compatriots ageing-in-place abroad respectively, and the determinants of that relationship.

More generally, the above review has pinpointed a number of areas where evidence is mixed or where there is insufficient evidence to permit more definitive statements. One example of mixed evidence relates to the influence of cost-of-living considerations on return and circular migration. Furthermore, current knowledge on reintegration in later life is partial: quantitative approaches would complement the largely qualitative studies which have hitherto prevailed here. The complex relationship between health status and return/circular mobility seems the least well understood of the themes addressed above, and suggests itself as a second priority for future research (cf. Baykara-Krumme, 2013; Hunter, 2018). Mudrazija et al. (2016) argue for further research to examine whether the similar health outcomes of returned migrants and non-migrants are due to similar health trajectories across the life course, or whether migrants' health was initially better at migration, but declined more quickly than non-migrants while abroad. Studies comparing migrants from the same countries of origin but returning from different countries could also be designed to advance the scholarship on these questions. Decline in health after return could also be due to post-return stresses. Bolzman et al. (2017) recommend future research on whether health-related reduction in transnational mobility leads to compensatory mobilities (e.g. IT-mediated ones), or instead implies declines in all types of mobility.

A third priority is to continue to promote the analytical benefits of a life course perspective, which highlights the added value of the ageing-migration nexus to migration studies more broadly. Specifically, a life course perspective puts paid to earlier notions of return as a once-in-time, definitive move from Location B back to Location A, as discussed above. In this vein, future research should prioritise longitudinal studies of return and circular migration. Quantitative longitudinal studies are of course the 'gold standard' in this methodological paradigm, but funding to undertake them is difficult to secure. Qualitative longitudinal studies are more readily envisageable, and there

is much to emulate in this innovative methodological approach (see e.g. Liversage and Mizrahi Mirdal, 2017). Furthermore, moving beyond the 'migration corridor' approach (e.g. US-Mexico; Germany-Turkey) will enable scholars to leverage comparative insights from multiple places or origin and/or destination. In sum, much remains to be established when it comes to the 'returns' from return (and circular) migration later in life, and given the measurement difficulties noted above, methodological innovation will be key in expanding the knowledge base.

<a> Notes

¹ Guestworkers migrated to Germany (and other Western European states) from the end of WWII to the mid-1970s, on the basis of bilateral agreements designed to fill temporary gaps in the workforce, mainly in blue collar jobs (see Castles et al., 1984, chapter 2).

² The titles and abstracts of all 311 results were screened by the first author, followed by full-text review of 132 items to ascertain whether cross-border return and/or circular migration in later life was the principal or significant focus of study. 54 articles were retained for inclusion in the review. Of these 54, most (nearly two-thirds) focus on return migration, with only 15% focusing on circular migration exclusively, and the remainder of the papers discussing both return and circular mobilities. Just over half of the papers are based on qualitative methods, with a few mixed-methods papers, and the remainder (40%) being exclusively quantitative in orientation. Half of the papers (27) analyse returns from one or more European countries; a sixth of the papers (nine in total, all quantitative) consider the USA-Mexico corridor specifically, with a further six papers discussing returns from the USA to other countries of origin.

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