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PHD Thesis

**EXPLORING RETURN MIGRANTS' CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL CHANGE IN
THE ORIGIN COUNTRY: THE CASE OF TRANSNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURS
IMPORTING USED CARS IN ROMANIA**

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	3
Summary.....	7
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	10
Chapter 2: Patterns and mechanisms of return migration to Romania.....	39
Chapter 3: Two facets of returnees' entrepreneurship in Romania: juxtaposing business owners and self-employed return migrants within a multi-method research framework.....	63
Chapter 4: The role of social capital in the development of trade with second-hand cars in Central and Eastern Europe.....	82
Chapter 5: Returnee entrepreneurship mixed embeddedness in a developing country. The case of second-hand cars traders in Romania.....	92
Chapter 6: To be or not to be a <i>samsar</i> . Understanding motivations for entrepreneurship among returnee transnational entrepreneurs with used vehicles in Romania.....	115
Chapter 7: Religion, return migration and change in an emigration country.....	144
Chapter 8: Conclusion.....	159
Appendix.....	162
Bibliography.....	163
Statement of contribution of co-authors.....	200

Summary

This cumulative dissertation main aim is to generate new knowledge on the topic of entrepreneurship among return migrants, more specifically on importers of second-hand cars in Romania in particular, including their potential contribution to social change processes in their origin communities.

Returnee entrepreneurship is becoming an important venue for scholarly investigation since a significant share of the return migrants worldwide turn to entrepreneurship in their origin country, a context which heightens their transfer and use of knowledge, skills and other forms of capitals accumulated abroad. They are increasingly considered active “agents of change” who can significantly contribute to the economic advance and the transformations of their native communities.

It is in this framework that this dissertation seeks to generate new knowledge on the topic of entrepreneurship among return migrants, more specifically on importers of second-hand cars in Romania in particular, including their potential contribution to social change processes in their origin communities. Thus, this cumulative dissertation is focused around two research questions:

- (1) Which are the factors that can shape the development of the trade with used cars among returnees in Romania?
- (2) How trade with used cars conducted by returnees is structured as a form of social change?

In what follows, this summary presents the research context and the specific positioning of the publications included in this cumulative dissertation and discusses the theoretical contribution it seeks to make. It continues by introducing the research aim and objectives and it also points out the research design and methods used in this dissertation. At the end, it gives an outline of the seven publications included in the dissertation in addition to the introduction and conclusion chapters and presents how they build upon each other to provide a comprehensive research narrative.

A1. Research background

International migration is commonly assumed to be one of the most important social processes of our time. The unprecedented increase in the volume, nature and diversity of migration flows worldwide over the last five decades has generated a vast academic scholarship. Much of this large body of literature is mainly focusing on emigration and migrant integration in the destination countries (Castles and Miller 2014; Portes and Rumbaut 2014; King and Okólski 2018). Notwithstanding, migrants' origin contexts are taken into account increasingly more in the academic literature (partially) due to the migration-development debate which has gained momentum in the last decades but also due to the increasing scholarship seeking to understand “the multiple ways in which migration relates to social change” (Portes 2008: 2; Schiller and Faist 2010).

A.2 What is social change?

In extant literature it is commonly agreed that migration and social change are intertwined in complex ways. After several decades of research on this and other related topics, which are the potential impacts of international migration on the countries of origin persists to be an animated debate. One important reason for this inconclusiveness is that “what change means” and “how it takes place” in the migration context lacks clarity and agreement. Change has been an important topic of sociological inquiry from the early stages of the discipline. Over time, the concept had several meanings due to important paradigm shifts in the social and development theory (Ziai 2009), shifts which have been echoed as well in the debate over the role of migration in changing destination and origin countries (de Bree et al. 2010). For instance, in the first debates in the 1960s over if and how migration can change destination and origin countries the term *development* was used. *Development* has been understood rather as *economic growth* (measured as GP/capita) from the perspective of neoclassical growth theories, *modernization* (defined as a process of structural socio-economic change) from the structuralist theories perspective, or the expansion of the productive forces from a Marxist perspective (Snowdon and Vane 1997). In the more recent literature, *development* was rather understood as a change towards a positive specified goal. Within the migration literature an alternative analytical tool has been proposed to the previous forms of conceptualizing change in the notion of social transformation. It builds on the increasing criticism the concept of *development* has received for having normative underpinnings and thus being biased towards a modernist and Eurocentric view on change (Alexander 1994). Social transformation is defined as profound structural modifications of societal relations and it is argued that migration

is part-and-parcel of wider social transformations (Amelina, Horvath, and Meeus 2016). Consequently, the nature of its impact on the origin countries should be differentiated based on: a) the wider context where it operates (e.g. economic, institutional, legal); b) the level where it is studied - micro (individuals, families, etc.), meso (regional), and macro (national, international); c) the dimensions considered (income, conflict resolution, inequalities, etc.) (De Haas 2012; van Hear 2010; Castles 2010; Portes 2010).

A3 How social change takes place in migrants' origin country?

For the origin country context, there are mainly three channels around which the migration-development literature is organized: absence/presence of an individual, transnationalism, and return migration. In terms of individuals absence/presence, the pessimistic perspective was that outmigration reduces the population of a certain region and by this in its labour supply, especially among the highly skilled ones (Parrado and Gutierrez 2016). Using arguments extracted from the neoclassical approach, it was further explained that this is not necessarily the case as some of those who migrate were not part of the labour force in the first place but also because a smaller labour force can also lead to wage/income increase and such create incentives for the expansion of labour force and reduce unemployment (Massey et al. 1998, Lucas 2005). This rather optimistic perspective has been overthrown towards a more pessimistic one mainly based on the 'brain drain' debate where it was argued that the emigration of the highly educated was especially problematic for the development of the origin countries given their scarcity of highly skilled individuals and their importance for the developing countries but also considering the highly skilled over-representation among emigrants (Chiswick 2000). After dominating the academic literature for several decades, this perspective has been challenged especially from the NELM literature. The main arguments of this overthrow were that the possibility of outmigration can create an incentive for further education/skill acquisition among local population who for various reasons end up by not emigrating and thus increasing the level of education (Stark 2001).

Transnationalism is another important channel in discussing the migration-development links in the emigration countries. The increasing attention given to financial and social remittances in the migration-development nexus have been part of a larger change from considering outmigration a definitive process which assumes that migrants will ultimately cut their ties with the origin communities to a transnational perspective which specifically highlights that migrants tend to sustain their ties which link their immigration and origin places (Schiller and

Faist 2010). The optimistic perspective postulates the idea that remittances - broadly defined as the flow of money (financial remittances), knowledge, and universal ideas (social remittances) (Faist 2008; Levitt 1998) – can lead to a various of changes in the migrants; countries of origin. Specifically, the transfer of money was found to reduce poverty, increase investment, and provide better access at education and health services, hence directly touching upon improvements in social welfare and economic development in the origin countries. For several decades the financial remittances were the most visible form of migrant transnationalism discussed in the literature but recently scholars increasingly highlighted the importance of non-financial aspects in the change processes of the emigration countries (Guarnizo and Smith 1998). The social remittances – broadly defined as ideas, behaviours, values, and social capital which travel across borders (Levitt 1998; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011) – were found to contribute to the transfer of technology and know-how, foster foreign investment, promote entrepreneurship and other ideas and behaviours, hence directly contributing to the improvement of the economic development and wellbeing in general in the origin countries. The ‘revisionists’ exponents have a critical stance on this nexus, and they argue that financial remittances sent back by migrants are used in consumption rather than in business activities, thus creating a disincentive to work amongst household receiving financial remittances which in turn can increase their dependency on exogenous financial resources (Massey et al. 1998). Other potential negative impacts of financial remittances were as well explored, such as price inflation or worsening export competitiveness due to currency appreciation or increase of social inequality (Lopez, Fajnzylber, and Acosta 2007; Ball et al. 2013). Another important concern was that even though migrants appear to bring back home social remittances, the changes and other development initiatives they want to make in the origin countries are constrained, among others, inadequate opportunities available on the market or the lack of transparency (King, Lulle, and Buzinska 2016).

The third category of impacts discussed in the migration-social change nexus scholarship considers return migration. Return migration is also an important topic to be addressed when discussing the benefits and costs associated to international migration. Return migrants can be defined as the individuals who return to their origin countries, where she or he was born (or where their parents were born in the case of the second generation return migration), after living in other countries for a long period of time and who plans to spend a meaningful time back home (Sironi, Bauloz, and Emmanuel 2019; Cassarino 2004). Contrasting the earlier literature where return migration was considered the finale stage of the cycle of migration, current literature increasingly shows that migrants are actively maintaining ties that connect the origin

and destination countries and constantly reconsidering their trajectories and the possibility to re-enter into a migratory pathway. Furthermore, returnees are not necessarily individuals who had unsuccessful migration-related experiences in the host countries and thereby return back home (Engbersen and Snel 2013). The debate on the possible impacts of return migration over the migrant destination countries use similar arguments with those presented in the previous two streams of literature. From a labour supply perspective, return migration has been seen as extending the labour force and contributing with new skills to the origin country labour market. In addition, migrants are anticipated to acquire (some) financial, human or social capital while living abroad and thus their return is seen as an especially important vehicle to transfer these forms of capitals to the benefit of the origin country (Ammassari 2004). Furthermore, returnees can also foster transnational practices as many of the returnees maintain their ties with the former destination countries, thus sustaining the flow of money, ideas and knowledge with the former destination and other countries. All these processes were found to significantly contribute to the economic development of the origin country as well as to the transformation of various values or behaviours in the origin communities (Faist 2016; Tomić Hornstein, Pichler, and Scholl-Schneider 2018; Remus Anghel, Fauser, and Boccagni 2019). On the pessimist side, several studies find that not all the returnees are eager and can equally contribute to the social change back home as, for instance, some migrants return to retire or are not actively engaging in economic or social activities upon return. Another important concern is that many of the skills and knowledge acquired abroad are location or field-specific and cannot be easily used or translated in the origin countries (Cassarino 2004; Klagge and Klein-Hitpass 2010).

A.4 Returnee entrepreneurs as social change actors

One of the most important ways for return migrants to contribute to the social and economic changes in the origin countries is entrepreneurship. Returnee entrepreneurs are broadly defined as migrants who start up a new economic venture back home upon return (Gruenhagen, Davidsson, and Sawang 2020). Returnee entrepreneurs are a distinct form of migrant entrepreneurship in the sense that their ventures are mainly oriented towards/based in the origin contexts (Drori, Honig, and Wright 2009). Various estimates indicate that about 10 to 30 % of the returnees worldwide engage in business activities or plan to engage in economic endeavours in the near future, usually higher than the shares local population has (Batista, McIndoe-Calder, and Vicente 2017; Brück, Mahé, and Naudé 2018; Wahba 2015;). Thereby,

entrepreneurship among returnees is a rising phenomenon worldwide and returnee entrepreneurship seems to be of particular significance for the developing countries which, it is argued, can counterweight the ‘brain drain’ associated effects and capitalize on the ‘brain circulation’ enabled potential. In the last two decades, returnee entrepreneurship has witnessed an increase in interest among scholars, government and international institutions (Saxenian 2007). The phenomenon has especially received attention in industrialized and emerging economies, such as China, Taiwan, India, Korea and several other. But the emergence of the returnee entrepreneurship phenomenon, however, is not limited to the Asian emerging economies. Due to the rising international migration and return in several other regions, increased research attention was also given to the phenomenon in Latin America, Northern Africa or Eastern Europe and it is expected to gain further momentum in the coming years in several other regions (King 2018b).

Returnee entrepreneurs are seen as vital contributors to the socio-economic change of their origin country because, in addition to the possibility to transfer of significant amount of social and financial remittances to the origin countries, numerous studies found that: returnees tend to be more entrepreneurial than the local population (Wahba and Zenou 2012; Piracha and Vadean 2010); their firms can create more jobs and have better economic outcomes than the local population businesses (Marchetta 2012); returnee ventures can foster a spill-over effects to local companies in reducing unemployment and poverty, stimulate innovation, and reorient firms towards export (Gubert and Nordman 2008); or that returnee entrepreneurs can induce new (innovative) ideas and practices in their firms and the wider society (Vlase 2013; Faist 2016).

B. Research design and methods

B.1 Study design

This dissertation employs mainly a qualitative approach that draws on in-depth interviews and observations to better understand return migrant entrepreneurs involved in the trade with second-hand cars. In general, the qualitative approach aims to offer a more profound understanding of the phenomenon studied. It usually collects data using more flexible instruments, such as semi-structured interviews or participant observation. The main benefit of this approach is that it allows first-hand observations, ascertain key themes and foster the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon studied (Babbie 2016; Creswell 2014). As

migration, return and returnee entrepreneurship are considered complex phenomena, many scholars advocate the use of qualitative methodologies to deliver a more nuanced understanding of these complex phenomena. In addition to the in-depth interviews and observations undertaken second-hand car importers, a number of interviews with key informants were also conducted. This approach is in line with an increasing body of the literature in the migration studies and beyond where this research strategy is used, especially when dealing with migrant entrepreneurship (Bagwell 2008; Gruenhagen, Davidsson, and Sawang 2020). Another research strategy used was to develop a field journal. This was proved a very important strategy to gather data as it allows to describe the position I had as a researcher and how participants respond and react to it, such as questions they ask or comments they make. All these research techniques supplement each other and thus can grant a ‘thicker’ analysis of the second-hand car trade.

This doctoral research is mainly based on the research assumptions of multi-sited ethnography (Mazzucato, Kabki, and Smith 2006; Falzon 2016; Marcus 1995). As (King 2018a) argues, a multi-sited research design “enable researchers to ‘follow the people’ as well as other material transfers (such as remittances) and intangible flows”. To better understand trade with used vehicles, a research design which allows to follow the flow of people (traders, clients, etc.), material transfers (the used cars, money, etc.) and other intangible flows (knowledge, information, etc.) through all the geographical spaces they pass through from the importing to exporting countries is essential.

Therefore, the research design includes data collection in the importation country (Romania), the main exportation countries (Germany, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Spain, etc.), and transit countries (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, etc.). Interviews and participant observation were undertaken not only in different geographical spaces but also in various virtual spaces and at stages of the cross-border second-hand car trade: from searching for the cars on dedicated web platforms or on situ in second-hand car markets in Romania and abroad, to public institutions dealing with import-export procedures, inside the workshops ‘preparing’ the cars to be resold, or during negotiation and the sales stage.

Longer periods of time were spent in several locations in Romania (Cluj, Sibiu, Turda, etc.), in Germany (Berlin, Köln, Chemnitz, Mönchengladbach, etc.), the UK (London, Brighton, Croydon, etc.), Norway (Oslo), Austria (Vienna), Spain (Zaragoza, Pamplona, Madrid, etc.) and several other. However, considering the mobility patterns of second-hand car traders, most of the fieldwork time was spent “on the road”, traveling with the entrepreneurs from importing to exporting countries in multiple ways (via buses, airplanes, personal vehicles, etc.).

Another important aspect of the study design resides in its *sequential transformative* approach. Therefore, the research uses mainly data collected via qualitative methods (e.g. expert interviews, semi-structured interviews, field notes, etc.) but it also incorporates data collected via quantitative methods (such as statistic databases and surveys' databases). The data collected via quantitative methods was used to test ideas and hypotheses extracted from data collected through qualitative methods, as in the case of the frequently mentioned supposition that the different migration experiences can have differentiated impact over the return entrepreneurs' trajectories which was unfolded in the contribution number III.

B.2 Sampling strategy

For the returnee entrepreneurs involved in the second-hand car trader, the inclusion criteria were that they should own a business¹ importing second-hand cars from abroad and that they should have an international migration experience of at least one year. This definition was the most suitable for the research purpose as during the fieldwork I observed that returnees are also involved in other economic activities upon return but also because not only returnees import second-hand cars in Romania.

Respondents for the interviews were identified through a variety of sampling methods in Romania and abroad, such as snowball sampling and purposive sampling (Babbie 2016; Creswell 2014). A purposive sampling method is “a deliberate process of selecting respondents based on their ability to provide the needed information” while the snowball sampling is often “used with isolated or hidden populations whose members are not likely to be found and cooperate without referral from others in their network” (Padgett 2008).

The recruitment process started on several entry points to generate as many as possible immigration, return, and entrepreneurial trajectories. As such, for the research carried out in this dissertation I used four entry points: a group of entrepreneurs in Cluj area, one of the largest cities in Romania and the largest in the region of Transylvania; the second-hand car market situated at the outskirts of the Cluj, probably the largest used cars market in Romania and one of the largest in CEE region; a second-hand car market situated in Berlin, one of the most important cities for this kind of trade in Europe; and a religious community stretching between the UK and Romania.

¹ I used a broad definition of entrepreneurship and owing an enterprise as second-hand car trade is conducted rather informal and the businesses tend to be small.

In the second stage of the sampling, I asked for referrals (snowball process). This generally led to identification of other traders of imported used vehicles with and without migration background but also of other key informants. The use of snowball sampling was especially useful as in Romania, as well as in any other contexts, the trade with second-hand cars is a 'sensitive' subject (see contribution no IV and III for more details on this).

As such, I directly collected a total of 50 interviews conducted with traders of imported second-hand automobiles. For comparison reasons, I also interviewed 15 traders with no migration background, clients, Romanian and foreign business partners, return migrants involved in other forms of entrepreneurship and with people who are not directly involved in the trade but have a sense of what is happening in the field (e.g. public officials, priests, etc.). A number of field notes were also taken during trips to and from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, the UK, but also during the preparation and selling phases. Several second-hand car markets in Romania and abroad were mapped, identifying the most common make and model, destination of the sold cars, prices at destination and origin, to identify the main characteristics of the clients, partners and sellers, and several other details.

The interviews and participant observations were conducted between 2014 and 2018. Some of the traders interviewed in 2015 and 2016 were revisited as a follow-up in 2017 and 2018 to find out if important changes have appeared in their activities. All the interviews were conducted in Romanian. On average, the interviews took between 30 minutes and two hours and 30 minutes.

All the returnee entrepreneurs interviewed in this study are men, one of the main characteristic of the cross-border second-hand car trade in Romania and beyond (Beuving 2006; Beuving 2015; Rosenfeld 2012; Coşciug 2017; Brooks 2013). The majority of them are middle aged and have medium education (high school or VET), two of the entrepreneurs have low education while three of them had university degrees. In terms of number of employees, most of the entrepreneurs work alone or together with other family members. It is relatively common to receive support from the wife/life partner or other siblings at least in parts of the process. Just in the case of three entrepreneur's non-family members were employed to carry out parts of the importation process.

In addition to the interview and participant observation techniques, a database was built to test ideas and hypotheses extracted from the qualitative data. The database resulted from a survey conducted with Romanian citizens who lived abroad and at the moment of the survey were back in Romania. The survey employed a questionnaire applied on paper (PAPI method) and the data were collected over June and July 2019. To increase the heterogeneity of the sample,

we used an extended network of field operators who autonomously selected ‘seeds’ (return migrants) for the snowball technique and each interviewer questioned a maximum of seven return migrants. We obtained a sample of 600+ non-retired Romania returnees (the fieldwork began from Sibiu County and gradually extended towards the neighbouring counties). The questionnaire included questions regarding the period before migration, the migration experience, and the return process. I contributed to all the stages of this process, from conducting training with the field operators, to the introduction of the collected answers, data preparation and recoding and so on.

B.3 Data analysis and management

The data collected via qualitative (semi-structured interviews, field notes, expert interviews, participant observation) and quantitative methods (statistic databases and surveys’ databases) have been analysed via both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The qualitative analysis process followed a bottom-up framework As such, it started with the preparation of the data, transcription, than moving to the reading of all the transcripts, coding, followed by themes and the connections between them, and the interpretation of those connections and meanings identification of the identified themes.

Transcription of the collected semi-structured interviews, field notes, expert interviews, and participant observation was the first stage in the process of narrating the participants stories. All the recorded interviews were transcribed manually. The notes taken during the interviews and the participant observation were as well typed, edited and put into a file.

Interviews, documents (e.g. laws and regulations, news, etc.) and fieldwork notes were analysed using a thematic coding (analysis). This step allowed me to familiarize myself with the data, to get an overview of its content and the most relevant topics. In this step, smaller text units for sequence analysis were identified. In this step also, specific words, phrases, paragraphs, and other units of analysis. were highlighted and constituted as codes/nodes. The latter step involved the intense analysis of the identified small units of text, sometimes even word by word.

For the data collected via quantitative methods, we decided to employ Firth’s corrected binomial logistic model, which has become an important approach in analysing binary outcomes in a condition of imbalanced distribution of the dependent variable (Puhr et al. 2017). This type of logistic regression has been previously used in studies focusing on migrants and entrepreneurship (Szarucki et al. 2016). The dependent variables within the discussed logistic

regression models are derived from contrasting the two specific types of returnee entrepreneurs with those that are employed in other professions upon return (business owners in contrast with non-entrepreneur returnees; self-employed returnees in contrast with non-entrepreneur returnees). Contribution number III contains more information on the he types of measurements used for variables introduced in the logistic regression models.

C. Specific contributions of the cumulative dissertation

I. Patterns and mechanisms of return migration to Romania

(book chapter co-authored with Remus Anghel, published in Caroline Hornstein Tomic, Robert Pichler and Sarah Scholl-Schneider (eds.). (2018). Remigrations to Post-Socialist Europe. Hopes and Realities of Return. LIT Verlag: Münster.

This book chapter aims to examine the main patterns of return migration and entrepreneurship in Romania. The paper argues for the need to distinguish between different patterns of emigration to be able to deliver a nuanced understanding of return migration: permanent emigration, long-term labour migration ending in settlement in host countries, and temporary migration. This distinction proves to be relevant for the patterns of return migration meet in Romania, especially because many of the returnees are in fact from the categories of short and long term and to a lesser extent from the category of permanent migration. Entrepreneurship seemed to be a favourite avenue of activity for long-term migrants aiming to return as the labour market in Romania still does not offer competitive working conditions. In this context, the paper suggests a further differentiation between two sub-groups of returned entrepreneurs based on which is their main market: ‘transnational connectors’ (main customers are the Romanians abroad) and ‘survival and developing entrepreneurs’ (Romanian market).

This distinction is important for the topic of this dissertation -impacts of migration on origin countries - as the paper argues that, for instance, ‘transnational connectors’ have higher revenues comparing with other returnee entrepreneurs. A special case in this category, and a very important one for comparative purposes, is the cross-border trade with second-hand cars which, which, despite its informality, is among the most lucrative in terms of financial benefits even though it attracts many returnees without sufficient financial and social capital to be involved in a different business.

II. Croitoru, Alin and Anotolie Coşciug. Two facets of returnees' entrepreneurship in Romania: juxtaposing business owners and self-employed return migrants within a multi-method research framework. Submitted and in review at Sage Open.

(submitted to Sage Open, under review, together with Croitoru Alin)

This paper adds to the developing literature on the potential diversity of returnee entrepreneurship by analysing the different types of small-scale entrepreneurship among returnees. Data from an survey conducted with return migrants in Romania but also from in-depth interviews with returnees in entrepreneurship are combined to reveal distinct profiles of returnee entrepreneurs and to illustrate their specific ways of thinking about entrepreneurship and migration. Currently, Romania is one of the most fertile settings to research intra-European return migration due to its important flows of temporary international migrants.

The paper highlights that there are major differences between business owners and self-employed returnees in terms of entrepreneurship. Returnees who are business owners are those who benefited significantly more from migration than non-entrepreneur returnees—in terms of economic savings, human capital accumulation, and enhancement of their stocks of social capital; while returnees in self-employment reveal no significant differences for these migration outcomes compared to non-entrepreneur returnees. The distinction between the two groups of entrepreneurs has certain implications for origin states' policies oriented towards stimulating return migration through programmes oriented towards returnees' entrepreneurship.

III. The role of social capital in the development of trade with second-hand cars in Central and Eastern Europe. The case of Romania and Moldova

(published as single author in Moldoscopie (2016) LXXII(1): 102-119)

The article deals with how traders from two different countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Romania and the Republic of Moldova) distinctly use their social capital to import used vehicles from Western Europe. The paper argues that while it is in general acknowledged that social capital plays an important role for the initiation and the subsequent growth of businesses, a more nuanced understanding of how different types of social capital are used to initiate and

develop trade with second-hand goods has received scant attention in the literature. Three specific areas were identified where social capital proves to be critical: a) start-up financial capital; b) access to customers and new markets; c) and for various forms of support and access at labour force. In addition, the article further argues that while the Moldovan entrepreneurs rather rely on the ties available within the close kinship group and the extended family, the Romanian ones tend to rely on both bridging and bonding social capital.

IV. Returnee entrepreneurship mixed embeddedness in a developing country. The case of second-hand cars traders in Romania.

(single author, submitted to the Migration Studies)

Worldwide estimates indicate that about a quarter of the migrants returning to their origin countries invest in business ventures or plan to do so in the future. Motivated by the high level of return migration worldwide and entrepreneurs' over-representation among them (Naudé, Siegel, and Marchand 2017), researchers have increasingly investigated how human capital, social networks or economic and political-institutional conditions have been used by returnees for their business endeavours. Yet, as recent literature increasingly suggest, migrant enterprises are not shaped only by one of these factors but rather by the each of them and the interplay between them. As it is argued in this paper, a holistic perspective which integrates and combines insights from all three concepts and their interplay can provide a better understanding of the returnee entrepreneurship phenomenon.

To better understand the emergence and development of entrepreneurship among return migrants, this article applies the mixed embeddedness perspective to analyse how economic and institutional structures together with social networks and personal characteristics of returned migrants and the interplay between them in several contexts have affected the development of the trade with second-hand cars in Romania. The article finds that returnees' embeddedness at the macro level (e.g. the high demand for imported used vehicles in Romania), at the meso level (e.g. weak and strong ties spanning across borders), at the micro level (e.g. linguistic and navigational skills) and the interplay between them (e.g. the use of social networks to counterweight the changing economic and institutional conditions at home or abroad are undergoing significant changes) meaningfully shaped returnees trade with imported second-hand cars in Romania.

VI. To be or not to be a *samsar*. Understanding motivations for entrepreneurship among returnee transnational entrepreneurs with used vehicles in Romania

(single authored book chapter, submitted)

The main scope of this chapter was to unfold how the return migrants involved in the trade with imported used vehicles in Romania can have multiple motivations behind their business initiatives. In other words, the chapter clarifies how the returnees directly experiences various push and pull factors which in turn further influence their choice for various forms of entrepreneurship.

Similar to other studies dealing with the topic of entrepreneurship among migrants, this chapter highlights that necessity-driven entrepreneurs tend to establish a business venture with used automobiles imported in Romania after their return mainly as a way to escape various difficulties encountered in the origin or destination countries. In relation to the origin country context, the respondents mention issues as lacking essential networks, being unable to find (enough-paid) jobs, and not adapting to the local job market. In terms of difficulties mentioned in relation to the (former) destination country context, the returnees mention in their interviews that they lacked access to conventional (satisfying) employment opportunities in the (former) destination country. In this vein, becoming entrepreneurs was not something that the returnees aspired to but rather a form of escaping the harsh labour market conditions which ‘pushed’ them along towards the trade with used cars.

While a part of the respondents seemed to be ‘pushed’ into entrepreneurship trajectories due to issues related to the origin or destination countries contexts, other returnees seem to be ‘pulled’ rather than just ‘pushed’ into entrepreneurship. In other words, similar to other studies on migrants’ entrepreneurship, in this study several respondents maintained that they entered transnational entrepreneurship with used cars when recognizing potential market opportunities of this trade in Romania. The pull factors mentioned by the respondents are related to their previous migration experience, the intention to extend the business or to obtain a higher income.

As several respondents in this research specify, opportunity-driven entrepreneurship can also have its roots in the previous entrepreneurial activities and experiences. Some of those previous entrepreneurial experiences appear to have been necessity-driven while other entrepreneurs have their roots in the previous entrepreneurial activities which appear to have been opportunity-driven. As such, in contrast to other studies dealing with migration-entrepreneurship nexus, the results of this research indicate more Romanian return migrants involved in the trade with used vehicles have an opportunity-driven entrepreneurship experiences than a necessity-driven one before switching to the importation of used goods in Romania. The result further indicates a further research direction which can specifically address the specific mechanisms through which the opportunity and necessity driven entrepreneurs switch to new business initiatives.

VII. Religion, return migration and change in an emigration country

(single authored book chapter, published in 2019 in Paolo Boccagni, Margit Fauser and Remus G. Anghel (eds.), Transnational Return and Social Change. Social hierarchies, ideas, and social identities. Anthem Press)

This chapter explores how religion, as a form of collective identity, is mobilised and changed by Romanian return migrants. In doing so, it starts by explaining that after many years of strictly controlled mobility during the communist regime, Romanians could at last freely emigrate outside the country. Today, after almost three decades of flexible emigration regimes, around three to four million Romanians live abroad, considered one of the largest migrant communities in Europe. Many of Romania's migrants are involved in various transnational, circular and seasonal forms of migration, including and increasing the ongoing (transnational) return of migrants. Taking into consideration how important religion and religion identity is considered in Romania, this paper thus contributes to an emerging stream of growing literature on how international migration affects the development of religion in the homeland, regarding its organisation, practice and belief. As most of the existing work on how religious institutions and practices are changed by migrants mainly considers the context of the destination country (Levitt 2006), insufficient research has focused on the role of religion and religious identity among migrants upon return, even though several studies specifically highlight how important it is to understand returnees' ways of aligning with or against pre-existing social groups and

broader categories of belonging, to better grasp their potential contribution to social change back home (Smith and Grodź 2014; Frederiks and Nagy 2016; Sheringham 2011). As such, the paper explores why and how returned migrants mobilise religious social capital for the development of trade with imported second-hand cars. It does so by especially highlighting the process of migrants re-adjusting to their country of origin and enriching their personal contacts which are fundamental in finding clients, identifying partners, or securing financial capital. In this context, many returnees involved in trade with second-hand cars become active members of their parishes, a situation which makes them central figures in the religious communities back home. This prominence of returnees' activities and constant support for the religious communities has led in turn to changes in the anti-emigration discourse of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which is known for opposing the emigration of Romanians abroad. A second change that appears to be promoted by the returnees' religious involvement is related to religious tolerance, especially regarding involvement in activities that bring together various religious denominations working for common goals.

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