

Back Home at Last! Factors Influencing Return and Reintegration of Ghanaian Returnees

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Abstract. The paper presents the migration experience factors underlying returnees' reintegration into their countries of origin. Questionnaires were used to gather information on three main areas: return migrants' socio-demographic characteristics and migration trajectories, migration experiences abroad and post-return experiences. This was followed by in-depth-interviews and observations which primarily looked at the social and economic reintegration processes. The study focused on Ghana since various governments of Ghana have pursued different return migration programs in the early 1990's with the aim of attracting especially skilled Ghanaian nationals abroad. The paper found that returnees, who maintain links with home through remittances, visits and telephone calls, were abreast with prevailing conditions in the home country and received support from friends and relatives on return. Return migrants keep ties with host countries for the sake of businesses and other benefits, which may not be readily available in the home country. Unsuccessful reintegration is not only limited to refugees or involuntary returnees but also found among voluntary and skilled returnees.

Keywords: *return migrant, voluntary return, successful reintegration, unsuccessful reintegration, transnational, Ghana*

Introduction

Generally, the negative consequences of the "brain-drain" syndrome on Africa's economy are well documented (Asiedu 2010; Adepoju 2010). This has culminated in a number of policies and programmes by governments aimed at stemming the tide of immigration. Such policies are aimed at facilitating the return of African professionals to their home countries (Manuh 2005; Diatta and Mbow 1999; Thomas 2008). Diatta and Mbow (1999) have studied attempts by the Senegalese government to initiate actions aimed at improving the social situation of Senegalese migrants, ranging from their protection in host countries to their re-insertion at home. Through the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM)

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (AVRR), some African emigrants have also been assisted to return home. These nationally developed policies alongside other initiatives by host governments and the personal decisions of migrants as well as improvements in economic and political situations at homes have culminated in an increasing return of migrants to their home countries. While there is now a large number of skilled Africans living abroad, there is also increasing evidence that Africans living abroad are either returning home or expressing a desire to do so (Borjas and Bratsberg 1996; McCormick and Wahba 2001). Mostly, interest in the return migration of African migrants abroad has been closely associated with the potential of such flows to reverse previous patterns of “brain drain” into a “brain gain” necessary for fulfilling the development aspirations of African countries (Vizi 1993; Logan 1999; Olesen 2002). In addition, various “windows” of opportunity back home and the on-going western economic crises have contributed to the return of several African emigrants living abroad.

The number of Ghanaian abroad returning home is expected to rise because various governments of Ghana have pursued different return migration programmes since the early 1990’s with the aim of attracting especially skilled Ghanaian nationals abroad back home. In 2001, a Homecoming Summit was organised by the Kuffour administration to attract and tap the potentials and skills of Ghanaians in the Diaspora to help in the development of the country (Manuh and Asante 2005). Also, the increasing economic growth, the relative political stability of the country and the discovery of oil have contributed to the return of Ghanaians (Awumbila et al. 2011). It was estimated that 10 percent of all Ghanaians abroad return home in any given year (Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS) 1992 and 1998/99 cited in IOM 2009), with a greater portion of the returnees coming from Europe (Black, King and Litchfield 2003a; Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare and Nsowah-Nuamah 2000). However, less attention is paid to the factors that determine whether or not return migrants have successfully resettled in their home countries.

In this article, my aim is to contribute to this knowledge gap by examining the socio-economic and migration experience factors underlying returnees’ reintegration into Ghana. The paper first examines the theoretical approaches on return migration and reintegration. This is followed by a discussion on the study population and the methods used. It further analyzes factors influencing reintegration and finally makes some conclusions and recommendations for policy.

Theoretical perspectives on return migration and reintegration

The process of return migration is usually conceptualized under four main theoretical perspectives. The first is the neo-classical (NE) perspective. According to this theory, the migration process is motivated by wage differentials between origin and destination countries in which case migrants generally move from areas or countries with low wages to those with higher wages (Borjas 1989). According to Thomas (2008), within this framework, migrants will only return home if they fail to derive the expected benefit of higher earnings abroad (Constant and Massey 2002; Cassarino 2004). In contrast to the neoclassical theory, the New Economics of Labour Migration theory (NELM) considers return migration 'as part of a defined plan conceived by migrants before their departure from their countries of origin' (Thomas 2008:657). Adherents of this theory argue that the original plan of migrants includes planning for an eventual return to their destinations after accumulating sufficient resources abroad. Therefore, most migrants leave home with the intention of acquiring skills, savings, and other resources that would be useful to them upon their return home. The adventure abroad is often considered to be a temporal enterprise and most migrants would therefore return home immediately they achieve their goals (Ammassari, 2004). On the other hand, Structural theories on return migration stress the importance of the social, economic, and political conditions in the home countries not only as major factors in the decision to return but also as factors that affect the ability of returning migrants to make use of the skills and resources that they have acquired abroad. Unlike the other two theories, structural theories on return migration do not consider the success of the migration experience abroad to be a key determining factor in the decision to return; instead, they focus on the ability of return migrants to be productive after arriving home. They argue that returnees may not be able to reintegrate if the 'gap' between norms and values at home and their own is too large. They may therefore decide to depart again. Alternatively, they may also respond to expectations at home by spending their savings on consumption or unproductive investments.

In comparison with the NE, NELM and the Structural approach to understanding return migration, transnationalism provides a framework for

explaining return and reintegration. It helps to understand the concept of reintegration as a process of re-adaptation which may not entail the abandonment of the identities they acquire while abroad. This is not to say that returnees are not faced with challenges of reintegration but through the regular contacts maintained with their households in their countries of origin, as well as the back-and-forth movements which illustrate transnational mobility (Portes 1999; Cassarino 2004; 2007), they are able to better prepare and sustain their return and reintegration. Examining the activities of migrants between home and host countries (during migration and after return) further assists to understand return and reintegration as a process sustained through advanced technology and telecommunication. In this respect, return migrants are more likely to be reintegrated through the maintenance of contacts with host countries. However, there is hardly any empirical evidence on how the transnational perspective helps to understand return migration and reintegration in the Ghanaian context. More importantly, the challenges returnees face (despite their cross-border activities) during their stay abroad has received little attention in the transnational framework approach.

Conceptualising Reintegration

There are conceptual problems regarding reintegration; sometimes it is used interchangeably with resettlement and readjustment of return migrants. The Oxford Dictionary defines integration as the intermixing of persons previously segregated'; and reintegration as 'the process of integrating back into society (cited in Arowolo, 2000). Though the Oxford Dictionary's definition recognises that both integration and reintegration are one of adaptation, the definition does not take note of the fact that they do not follow the same process. Limitations of the Oxford Dictionary make it more appropriate to consider a more comprehensive definition of the concept from the European Reintegration Networking and the 2008 Global Report. The European Reintegration Networking defines reintegration as the "re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or a process, example of a migrant into the society of his country of origin with the objective to enable these people to help themselves". The 2008 Global Report by the MIREM (Migration de Retour au Maghreb) project also defines reintegration as a "process through which a return migrant participates in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the country of origin" (Cassarino, 2008, p. 134). The

definitions to some extent recognise the difference between integration and reintegration. In other words, reintegration, re-inclusion or re-incorporation from their explanation 1) takes place in the home country; 2) involves a process which may take some time; 3) takes place after one has stayed out of the home country for some time and returned. However, they are not clear as to what could influence return migrants to be reintegrated or not.

Within the context of this study, reintegration is defined as *the process of give and take in the home country as return migrants learn to live with their families and communities back home* (Kyei 2013). 'Re-migration'¹ after a voluntary or involuntary return is measured against other variables to determine whether return migrants have reintegrated or not. The mere act of "returning" or "re-migrating" in this context, may not necessarily mean the returnee has reintegrated or not. Reintegration is looked at from two standpoints: the objective and subjective criteria. The objective criteria demonstrate the extent to which returnees have successfully or unsuccessfully secured accommodation, satisfactory jobs, among others. On the other hand, the subjective criteria reveal the subjective feelings of the returnees showing how satisfied they are with their reintegration based on their own experiences.

Research methods

Like most African countries, Ghana has no universal registration of returnees on which to base a random sample and returnees are extremely hard to track (cf. Grant 2009). Anarfi et al. (2003) in their study of the Ghanaian case found that returnees largely mirrored national demographics overall. Cohen (2005) also argues that most returnees relocate to the most globally connected urban centres. My sample was therefore purposively selected from four major urban centres in Ghana known for the concentration of return migrants. These included the two largest cities in Ghana (Accra and Kumasi metropolitan areas) and the Dormaa/Berekum and New Juabeng municipal areas. The international migration literature (Anarfi et al. 2000; Taylor 2009) cites these locations as the established return migration flow regions in Ghana.

The study used the snowball technique in selecting its respondents. In order to have as many diverse responses as possible, key informants with in-depth knowledge on the survey areas were recruited to assist the researchers to identify

¹ Conceptualized as moving to live abroad again for one and/or more years.

returnees. During the preliminary field trip to the selected sites, 14 returnees were selected. These 14 returnees led the researchers to find other return migrants through chain referrals and personal contacts. A total of 138 return migrants from Western countries were invited to participate through personal contacts and telephone calls. However, the difficulty and sensitivity of the research as well as the similarities in responses at some point (ie. saturation point) made it possible for only 120 respondents to actually participate.

The first section of the survey asked questions relating to migrants' socio-economic circumstances before and after return. The survey instrument was pre-tested to help establish stability, consistency and content validity. It was self-administered and the advantage was that all questions which were relevant to respondents were answered. At the end of the structured questionnaires, respondents were asked to give their consent by providing their contact details for further in-depth interviews. Twenty-five of such respondents were selected based on their sex, age and mode of return. The qualitative information focused primarily on post-return experiences and was a follow-up on the structured questionnaires.

In order to ascertain the probability of a return migrant reintegrating successfully, a logistic model was estimated using the logistic regression approach. The logistic regression analysis is used in models in which the dependent variable is dichotomous. For this purpose, returnees were asked to evaluate whether they had successfully reintegrated or not using re-migration as an indicator to measure their own satisfaction on the resettlement process. In such a case, the conventional regression methods are inappropriate and, therefore, the method of estimation is the Maximum Likelihood which assumes that the optimality properties of the Maximum Likelihood Estimators are met (Amemiya 1981; Maddala 1983; Greene 2000).

Reintegrating successfully can be predicted in terms of the following probabilities:

$$\text{Prob}(Y=1) = F('X) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$\text{Prob}(Y=0) = F('X) \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Y is the random variable representing reintegration. Consequently, Y=1 implies the return migrant will reintegrate successfully, while Y= 0 implies the return migrant will not successfully reintegrate. The set of parameters reflect the impact of changes in the independent variables on the probability of reintegrating successfully in Ghana.

A linear regression model can be derived from equations (1) and (2) as follows:

$$F(X_i) = (X_i) \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

Taking expectations of equation (3) and since $E(Y/X) = F(X, B)$, a regression model can be constructed as:

$$Y = E[Y/X] + (Y - E[Y/X]) \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

$$Y = X + \dots\dots\dots (5)$$

Where X represents the independent variables X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n and is the error term.

The empirical model as specified in equation (5) means that the probability of a return migrant reintegrating successfully depends on factors which are denoted by the vector X where X_1 represents whether the return migrant is satisfied with his/her situation in Ghana; X_2 represents the age of the return migrant; X_3 represents years spent abroad; X_4 represents whether the return migrant owns a house in Ghana and X_5 represents whether the return migrant studied abroad. These vector ' X ' variables are the only significant factors (at 0.05) among the list of other variables.

Profile of study population

Majority (78 percent) of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 54 years, including some younger and older returnees. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents were females. A representative ethnic mix was a more difficult task to attain because of the diverse groups as well as the absence of records on ethnicity of emigrants or returnees. Most of the respondents were within their productive ages (with an average age of 42 years) with males dominating (63 percent). Their educational levels were generally high with 61 percent having either a university or diploma certificate. Out of the total of 120 respondents, 54 percent either furthered their education or acquired some kind of training or skills abroad. Respondents were found in all sectors of the Ghanaian labour market with majority (23 percent) of the skilled returnees in the educational sector as lecturers, researchers or high school teachers. Other skilled returnees worked in the banking, administration, sales/marketing or health sectors. This is attributed to the fact that recent recruitment of skilled personnel appears limited to the teaching and telecommunication sectors as well as some non-governmental organisations (cf. Anarfi and Jagare, 2005). Most of the low or unskilled returnees were engaged in trading/businesses (29 percent) including, mechanics, drivers, traders, masons, hairdressers and tailors. Eight per cent were

farmers while, 5 per cent had no income earning activity. More than half (69 percent) of the respondents were married, while the rest were either single (22 percent), separated or divorced (8 percent) or widowed (1 percent). About 89 percent returned voluntarily while 11 percent were involuntary¹ return migrants.

The return migrants had stayed in different countries in Europe and North America with majority coming from the United Kingdom (41 percent). The average time spent abroad was about nine years with a minimum of one year and a maximum of 44 years. Majority of the return migrants came back home because they either felt homesick (32 percent), had completed their training or ended their contract abroad (21 percent), wanted to start their own businesses or projects (15 percent) or had lost their jobs in the host country (8 percent).

Generally, in the sample selection, I considered many of the important variables that influence the activities of return migrants: location of residence, age, sex, class, level of education and the type of business undertaken by the returnees. Most returnees to Ghana live in Accra and the major urban centres, hence our choice of the capital, Accra and three of the most urbanized settlements in Ghana. The age of the returnees often determines the type of jobs and businesses that they undertake. Elderly returnees are most likely to be self-employed or work as consultants if they have specialized qualifications. Women with low education are most likely to work in the informal sector which is highly feminized in Ghana (cf. Esson 2013), while middle-aged persons with high education and training will likely seek employment in the public or private formal sector. The income level, or rather the amount of capital available to the returnee determines the kind and level of investments made (Grant 2009).

Finally, the stellar performance of the national economy during the period of the research and data collection (2009-2010) influenced the potential success rate of returnees' reintegration. In 2008, Ghana attained the status of a middle-income country and per capital income reached US \$1500 in 2009. In addition to income earned from the production of gold, cocoa, tourism, exports of non-traditional goods and remittances from Ghanaians abroad, Ghana started the commercial production of oil in December 2010. These developments resulted in considerable confidence in the economy by foreign and local investors. Furthermore, macro-economic conditions relevant to the performance of any business venture were quite favourable. Economic growth reached a peak of 14.4 percent in 2011. The rate of inflation and interest rates were falling and the exchange rate was relatively stable (Oxford Business Group 2011). Thus, the general economic conditions for doing business in Ghana were quite

favourable during the period of the research.

Who is a successfully or unsuccessfully reintegrated return migrant?

Returnees were asked to evaluate whether they had successfully reintegrated or not, using re-migration as an indicator to measure their own satisfaction on the resettlement process. They were asked if they plan to travel and live abroad anytime soon. To this end, a third (37 percent) of the total respondents said “yes” while more than half (63 percent) said “no”.

Among those who said “no”, they replied angrily, *‘what for, money or to do those menial jobs, or to work without satisfaction in their offices?’* (Fieldwork responses August 2011- January 2012). However, these same respondents did admit that they do travel or would want to travel out for short periods. The following case illustrates how return migrants gradually get successfully reintegrated into their communities:

Case 1: Paul: I never regret returning to live in Ghana

Paul, a single young teacher at Donyina, a suburb of Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, had the passion to travel. To him, that was the only way to “better his life”. In 1972, he left Ghana for the United Kingdom, where he began work as a cleaner and a part-time student in an engineering school which earned him a Diploma in Telecom Engineering. After 28 years of stay in the United Kingdom, Paul returned to Ghana in the year 2000 at age 66. This was after his retirement from the British Telecom. With the help of his brother and through his remittances, he started a school and secured his own house prior to his return. The school began with five pupils at the basic level. The school now runs from the primary to the Junior High School level. He testified to the growth and success of the school with reference to the presence of the children of some prominent persons in the school. One of the challenges he faced, however, was with getting support from former friends and colleagues. This was because most of the friends he contacted while away had died on his return. Demands and expectations did not end with the family as friends and relations perceive him rich and endowed because he is a return migrant. This, coupled with his status as an elderly person in the society, has won him several positions in the church and the community. He is called upon during fund raising in the church to make contributions. Paul has no regret returning to Ghana to settle almost a decade ago. He gladly manages his school. He sees the work as a way of contributing to the development of his

country. He has been able to offer a number of Ghanaians employment as well as make respectable returns from the school. His major source of income is his pension pay from his former employers in the UK and other remittances sent him by his family in the UK. He has travelled once to the UK in thirteen years and hopes to go probably the last time for his son's wedding. He does not wish to live in UK again because he has successfully reintegrated in Ghana.

Deducing from Paul's post-return experience, a successfully reintegrated return migrant could be described as one who has decided not to live abroad again based on the person's adjustment and the extent to which the person feels the homeland satisfies the self-defined needs. Yet, the person does not necessarily cut ties with abroad, but may make short trips or keep in touch with the host country. Indeed, the finding adds on to the transnational approach because it is clear that return migrants' long and strong attachment with host countries stay with them even after return.

On the other hand, some of the reasons given by those (37 percent) who expressed the desire to re-migrate were for want of better and consistent incomes, better employment and others. Such returnees get frustrated with the environment and are eventually pushed back to the countries where they resided as immigrants (Anarfi et al 2005).

Case study two tells the story of a couple who returned to Ghana and are not satisfied with their return and are currently making preparations to travel and live abroad again.

Case 2: Mr. and Mrs. Addo: Re-emigration! The only option for us.

At age 31, Addo, a young administrator in Accra left Ghana to visit his wife who was then a student in Norway. He seized the opportunity to further his education in the same University as his wife. In order to finance his stay in Norway, he joined his wife in the distribution of newspapers and cleaning of offices. He combined these jobs with his education, as well as, his family life. With a Master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies, from the University of Oslo in 2004, Addo envisaged getting a better employment at home. Together with his wife, they decided to return home and to settle permanently in 2005. They returned with many domestic appliances with the intention of moving in to their own apartment. Contrary to his thoughts, they realised the location of the house was a bit removed from town and so he had to find a place in town to live. He had to stay with one of

his friends whom he stayed with on his visit, while his wife settled at her mother's house. Addo, though wanted to find a job in the labour market, did not apply for any job until his return. His high hopes for a job with his Masters' degree, however, had to wait for some time as all his applications for employment received no immediate responses. Additionally, he had to battle with the domestic pressures of the wife because she had consistently kicked against the idea of returning to Ghana, citing the difficulties she experienced on her visits. In spite of this, he managed with the one car, stayed with a friend until he was fortunate to secure a job with an insurance company (using his bachelor's degree) and started earning some income. Addo had to bear all the financial cost of his family until Akyaa, his wife, started trading in clothes and shoes; though she possesses a Master's degree in Development Studies from the University of Oslo (year of completion 2001). Addo and Akyaa were financially supported by family and friends who lived abroad at that time. They supported Akyaa when she resorted to trading. Unlike her husband, she does not have networks in the labour market and considering the frustrations her husband had gone through before securing a job, she did not want to go through a similar situation. As a trader, Akyaa had high expectations of her job. She returned with the hope of establishing a huge shopping centre. Unfortunately for her, the business is not expanding; her dreams are continuously being derailed. She sometimes doubts if she invested in the right venture. She actually regrets coming back to Ghana. She even wishes to have detected her pregnancy while in Norway; that could have delayed their stay. This same thought was expressed by the husband too.

Addo and Akyaa, like some other returnees expressed disappointment due to several challenges they faced upon their return to Ghana. First, is the high expectations of the returnees about Ghana's improved economic situation (for example, better jobs with high salaries and booming businesses with high profit margins). Second, misinformation by their trustees at home prior to their return; and the last is as a result of a combination of the above reasons. Despite these challenges, some respondents admitted managing the difficulties back home while others could not,, resulting in re-emigration. Interestingly, some of such respondents like Addo and Akyaa, were highly educated and so re-emigrating meant a loss to the nation. Re-emigration of such respondents to some extent supports the views of many northern governments and some literature on the matter (International Organization for Migration 2003; Anarfi et al 2005; Eikaas

1979), where a return that results in re-emigration due to unemployment, poor business environment among others is seen as indicating a failure of the sustainability of return.

Logistic Regression – Predictors of the Probability that a Return Migrant will Reintegrate Successfully in the Home Country

Table 1 presents labels and descriptions of all variables in the logistic regression and their corresponding codes.

Table 1: Description for the dependent and independent variables for the logistic regression

Variables	Description	Variable Coding
Dependent Variable		
REINTEGRATION	Reintegration	0 = Unsuccessful 1 = Successful
Independent Variables		
SATISFACTION	Feeling of Satisfaction after Return	0 = Not Satisfied 1 = Satisfied
AGE	Current Age of Respondent	0= Age ≤ 42years 1 = Age > 42years
YEARSABROAD	Number of Years Spent Abroad	0= Years abroad ≤ 9years 1= Years abroad > 9years
OWNHOUSEINGH.	House Ownership in Ghana	0 = Does not own a house(s) 1 = Own a house (s)
OVERSEASQUAL.	Overseas Qualification	0= Not attained overseas qualification 1= attained Overseas Qualification

Source: Survey Questionnaire, August 2011- January 2012

For analytical purposes, the dependent or outcome variable is whether or not a respondent is successfully or unsuccessfully reintegrated. For binary logistics, the responses are coded as 1 = Successful Reintegration and 0 = Unsuccessful Reintegration as shown in table 1. The independent or predictor variables include

the following: age, attained overseas qualification, house ownership, feeling of satisfaction and years spent abroad. The selection of these specific variables is influenced not only by the respondents' background characteristics and migration experiences, but also by a careful examination of the variables that may improve the predictive ability of the logistic regression. For instance, variables such as gender, education, marital status, professional/business contact abroad, investment abroad, and network support are not included in the regression because the chi-square test did not show any significant relationship between these variables and reintegration. Most of the variables, including the dependent variables, were recoded.

Results and Discussions

The logistic regression in this section shows the results of reintegration outcomes among return migrants. Table 2 shows odd ratios associated with the probability of successful reintegration and the significance of the predictor variables (age, overseas qualification, happiness, house ownership and years spent abroad) in explaining variations in successful reintegration. From Table 2 (in the significant value column) it is clear that age, years spent abroad, one's satisfaction upon return and house ownership have no significant effect on a return migrant's successful reintegration. However, the result shows that having overseas academic qualification has a certain effect on a return migrant's successful reintegration ($p = 0.02 < 0.05$). The negative regression coefficient associated with "attained overseas academic qualification" means that there is a negative correlation between having attained academic overseas qualification and successful reintegration. In other words, having overseas qualification has influence, although less, in determining a successful reintegration.

Table 2: Logistics Regression results showing Factors Associated with the Odds of Successful Reintegration

Variables	β	Wald	Significance	Exp(β)
OVERSEASQUAL.	-0.823	3.921	0.048	0.439
SATISFACTION	0.854	2.427	0.119	2.349
AGE	-0.148	0.106	0.745	0.862

YEARSABROAD	-0.722	2.675	0.102	0.486
OWNHOUSEINGH.	0.553	1.593	0.119	1.739
CONSTANT	0.811	2.892	0.089	2.25

Source: Survey Questionnaire, August, 2011- January, 2012, Note: * $p < 0.05$

The model results indicate that return migrants who have attained qualification or skills abroad are (-56.1 percent) less likely to be successfully reintegrated than those who did not attain any skills or qualification overseas. This negative regression coefficient confirms the negative relationship between attaining overseas qualification and successful reintegration. Thus, having attained overseas qualification does not necessarily guarantee a successful reintegration upon return. This means that the NELM proposition of successful reintegration based on the resources acquired abroad has turned out to be a weaker factor when controlled with other factors such as house ownership, number of years abroad, satisfaction with their situation in Ghana and age. In other words, although the acquisition of skills and qualifications abroad are significant in determining successful/unsuccessful reintegration, other factors are much more crucial when it comes to factors influencing successful reintegration. Indeed, some of the returnees acknowledged that they have failed to use the innovative and new ideas and knowledge in their business activities or for the development of the home country because of resistance from well-entrenched hierarchies and local jealousies.

The result indicates that returnees who are satisfied about their return are more likely (130 percent) to successfully reintegrate than those who are not satisfied about their return. Also, the positive coefficient of regression means that a returnee's emotional disposition to return home has a positive effect on reintegration. In other words, reintegration is easily achieved when returnees are satisfied with their situation upon return, even in the midst of challenges and vice versa. This finding supports the existing literature that the stronger the web of interpersonal ties with the country of origin, the higher the probability of return migration and the more successful reintegration becomes. Paul, for example, is comfortable with his presence in Ghana because he says:

If nothing at all, in Ghana, when I am here, my grandchildren and nephews are around ... I can send them on errands anytime, ask them to fetch me water and

cook for me, at least. Who will do this for me in the UK? I can only get help when I am admitted to the elderly home (Paul, interview in Kumasi, 15th January, 2012).

Also, returnees who are above 42 years are (-10 percent) less likely to reintegrate than those who are 42 years and below. The negative regression coefficient is an indication that a returnee's age has a negative impact on reintegration. That is, the older the respondent the more difficult it is for him or her to reintegrate successfully upon return. Thus, respondents who return to retire after several decades abroad are often no longer in touch with the society they left behind which, in the meantime, has itself changed. Yet Paul, the sixty-six year old retiree managed to make new friends who helped him socialize well, thereby, having positive impact on his reintegration. Some studies portray "retirees" as a marginal group who find little in the local society to relate to and who withdraw from it by spending their time with other elderly returnees reminiscing about their lives abroad (Cerase 1970). This could also mean that, despite the support, care and honour the elderly receive from the extended family, they may still experience a "gap" between norms and values at origin and those adapted from host country. Contrary to some respondents of this study, the home and host country norms and values were not seen as a hindrance to successful reintegration despite their long stay abroad.

In addition, older respondents responded to expectations at home by spending their savings on consumption or unproductive investments. Huge expectations by family and community members hinder successful reintegration. For example, Paul confirmed that he pays school fees and other bills that are incurred by the extended family. He also felt that was his obligation as the "head of the family". This finding supports the structural approach that emphasizes the importance of the home country's socio-economic and political context as important factors that affect the ability of returning migrants to utilize the skills and capital they acquired abroad (Diatta and Mbow 1999; Thomas- Hope 1999) in order to ensure successful reintegration.

Return migrants who have lived abroad for a duration of 9 years and above are (-51 percent) less likely to successfully reintegrate than those who have lived abroad for 9 years and below. Return migrants who spent long periods abroad lose ties (Gubert and Nordman 2008) with the home country and, therefore, are less likely to successfully reintegrate. For such returnees, extra commitment is required

to enhance their reintegration process. In-depth interviews revealed that return migrants who had lost ties organise drink-ups with friends, go for old school meetings and so on. Paul, for instance, after spending twenty-eight years abroad had challenges finding his friends because most of his old friends had passed away. He made efforts to deal with this situation by organising drink-ups, attending hometown associations and church meetings in order to create and revive old relationships. Nevertheless, returnees who spent more time abroad came home with enough accumulated capital to start their own businesses. Savings brought back home is a means of overcoming the capital constraints of start-up capital for running a business (Ammassari 2004).

Returnees who own houses here in Ghana are (73.9 percent) more likely to reintegrate successfully than those who do not own houses upon return. Actually, the most outwardly visible signs of returnee status are the houses built in the “New Towns”. These newly-built houses reflect the new-found status of returnees. Some studies have also shown that owning a house is prestigious and symbolizes “manhood”. For instance in the Ashanti culture (Smith and Mazzucato 2004) and among these return migrants, it has a significant influence in determining a successful reintegration. More so, earlier discussions have demonstrated that the owning of houses is due to return migrants’ personal expectations as well as that of their families. Therefore, to own a house, among return migrants, is a key factor to successful reintegration. Besides, these changes in society confirm the perspective of the structural theory on return migration which describes return migrants as agents of change if they are able to transform their home country through the resources they acquire abroad (Colton 1993; Thomas 2008).

Conclusion and policy recommendations

Among several other factors, “having attained overseas qualification” has less influence on successful reintegration. This finding does not corroborate the NELM theory that predicts successful reintegration among returnees who have acquired skills or resources from abroad. The literature on brain gain of international return migration, and the findings of this study, as well as the information from returnees interviewed, point out that when the skilled and enterprising returnees come with capital, inventive ideas and new knowledge of the way things are done, they can hardly use them in their business activities or for

the general advancement of the country because of resistance from well-entrenched hierarchies and difficulties associated with entry into certain formal sector establishments.

Although the paper shows that Ghana has been able to partly reverse the phenomenon of 'brain drain' that has enthralled the country since the 1960s into a brain gain, their contribution may be restrained. Therefore, as the structural approach suggests, these challenges form part of the institutions and traditions of the home country that prevent returnees from having a successful reintegration.

Additionally, return migrants are successfully reintegrated when they live permanently in Ghana but have the "luxury" of maintaining contact with colleagues abroad. Return migrants' long and strong attachment to their former host countries stays with them even after return. These are exhibited through communication with friends and relatives abroad, visits to the host country, having investments abroad, receiving pension pay and maintaining professional and business contacts abroad. In order for return to be sustainable, returnees need to retain continued access to the wider international professional and social world in which they have worked and lived. These findings provide empirical evidence on how trans-nationality replaces the fixedness of return through fast transport and a multitude of other communication media. This advancement in technology makes mobility both real and virtual. On the other hand, the return migrants are unsuccessfully reintegrated when they are disappointed by the socio-economic environment of the home country and therefore, re-migrate to the host country. The re-migration of unsuccessfully reintegrated returnees to some extent supports views expressed by northern governments and some literature (International Organization for Migration 2003; Anarfi et al. 2005; Eikaas 1979), where a return that involves re-emigration is seen as indicating a failure of the sustainability of return. However, some of these return migrants are highly skilled and therefore, their capabilities could be beneficial to both the home and host countries.

Therefore, the paper makes some specific suggestions; that is, most initiatives such as the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) program and the Dual Citizenship Act of 2002 by the Ghana government in collaboration with some host country governments, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and Development Partners so far, aim to alleviate the economic obstacles that returnees face. However, this study found that returnees also faced cultural difficulties. Return migrants often come to realize that they have to regain an

understanding of how the local structures work at home and often face a period of adaptation due to prolonged time spent abroad during which a realistic picture of the home context may be lost. Largely, these cultural conditions create tensions for migrants trying to introduce change. Attempts to introduce change were received in a number of ways by the surrounding communities or population at large. These initiatives may, for example, cause difficulties or tensions with colleagues in the workplace. This study revealed that problems were encountered when respondents wanted to introduce change. For this reason, programs and policies facilitating return need to take into consideration that the impacts of returnees depend both on the efforts of the returning migrants as well as on the attitude of non-migrants. This could prevent local jealousies and the deterioration of the relationship between return migrants and non-migrants. The study recommends that the respective districts, municipal and metropolitan assemblies receiving these return migrants should be resourced both in terms of logistics and skilled personnel to be able to, for example, provide psychological and material support to returnees who have stayed longer overseas and to those who are also aged.

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