To Be Mobile to Stabilize and to Return to Enjoy: Safety, Cultural Familiarity and Inner-self in the Context of Mobility vs. Migration

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Abstract

Return is discussed mostly in the context of migration, not regarding mobility. When it comes to the return of the EU citizens, it is not seen as much of a return but retro-mobility. However, there are also great differences between member-states regarding return patterns. These patterns are influenced by socialization, work cultures, and concepts such as safety, family, and the self. These differences, which do not seem very crucial at first, can result in return, rather than permanent migration. To understand the dynamics of return, I focus hereby on two women's lives, where I conducted two interviews with each: one during mobility and another before their return to their home countries, namely to Iceland and Spain. I argue, in this paper, that the motivations for return are complex and cannot be easily categorized as one specific factor. Rather, they are a combination of multiple factors that vary during diverse periods of mobility. These factors can be examined in the context of macro, meso and micro, which are the themes that emerged from the interviews as safety, cultural familiarity, and inner-self. The inner-self makes the last decision to return, whilst ideas on safety and cultural familiarity are facilitating factors for return. Hence, every return is a biographical story, and one must consider the biographies of each migrant and/or mobile person before they examine the reasons to understand return in its full complexity.

Keywords: *Mobility; return migration; follow-up interviews; return mobility; youth*

> *You might need somethin' to hold on to*
> *When all the answers they do not amount to much*
> *Somebody that you can just talk to*
> *And a little of that human touch*
>
> Bruce Springsteen

Introduction

When *spatial mobility*[2] is considered, we think most of the time of those who gain materially and/or non-materially from this mobility experience. However, the conditions that prepare return after the mobility experience are not discussed in depth. In research, mobility has been a highly popular theme in the last two decades (Urry 2004; Sheller 2004; Sheller and Urry 2006; Creswell 2010; Merriman et al. 2013; Cuzzocrea 2018; King 2018; Van Geel and Mazzucato 2018; Marcu 2017). Nonetheless, regarding mobilities, 'return' has not been such a prevalent theme (King and Christou 2011). Hence, in this paper, I discuss mobility and

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[2] From now on when I use the term "mobility" I use it as "spatial" unsocial, not to confuse it with other sociological terms.

return looking closely at two narratives of two women who came to Norway for diverse reasons but later on, who returned to their countries, namely to Iceland and Spain.

The main research question(s) of this paper is as such: why and how young people return to their home countries after a mobility that can be considered as a successful one? What are the triggering factors of return apart from economic and rational reasons? To answer these questions, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with two women when they arrived in Norway (during their mobility experience) and later on, conducted another follow-up interview with each of them just before they returned to their home countries. Both interviews (during mobility and just before return) lasted in average one and a half hours and they provided great details on their individual motivations to become mobile, how supportive their families were, which types of expectations they had from their mobility experience, and how they realized these expectations. In the follow-up interviews, they explained why they decided to return home, elucidating diverse causes.

The paper starts by discussing the crucial theories and literature on return. Second, I will describe the particularities of the methodology and how I chose my interviewees. Third, I will analyse their stories regarding factors such as macro (pull and push factors), meso (cultural familiarity in the name of social capital and family), and micro (individual perspectives towards mobility and inner self) considering agency and uncertainties that mobility can bring to their lives. Finally, I will discuss the results within the light of previous literature on return, depict the original contribution of this paper, and will also suggest further research agenda.

Transnational Lives: Tensions between Roots and Mobility

Return is mostly discussed in the literature regarding migration (De Haas, Fokkema, Fihri 2015; Abraham 2020). Reason for this is that there are cases where mobility turns into a permanent stay and obtains the criteria of migration for good, whilst mobility can also end up in return despite having the chances for further stay.

There have been many definitions and categorizations of return, but I adopt the simple definition by Gmelch (1980) in this paper. Gmelch (1980, 136) suggests that there are many ways to name a return migration: "reflux migration, homeward migration, remigration, return flow, second-time migration, repatriation, and retro-migration". He defines return migration as "the movement of emigrants back to their homelands to resettle." (p. 136). He also looks at the typologies of return migration and reminds the notion that there are different causes for return:

> "first are those who were forced to return due to some outside factors, either family circumstances, such as the need to look after an ill or elderly parent, or faltering economic conditions in the host country. These migrants were satisfied with their situation abroad and would have preferred to remain had they been able to do so. Second are those who failed to adapt to the way of life in the host society, perhaps because of the strangeness of language, people, and customs or because they could not bear the psychic costs of being separated from close friends and the familiar environment of home." (p. 137).

Most of the time, it is a combination of these factors (internal and external) that causes return. To add more depth into the research on return, it is necessary to understand the logic behind the different categorizations. Cerase (1974) says that there are four categories of return: "1)

return of failure, if the migrant failed to integrate into the host society and finally decided to return; 2) return of conservatism, if the migrant family migrated to gain an income to be consumed at home; 3) return of retirement; and 4) return of innovation, if the migrant intends to invest in the social and financial capital gained abroad in their home country." There are distinctive ways to classify the return intentions. For example, Gmelch (1980, 138) groups them in line with the intention to be a temporary or permanent migrant:

1. *Returnees who intended temporary migration. The time of their return is determined by the objectives they set out to achieve at the time of emigration.*

2. *Returnees who intended permanent migration but were forced to return. Their preference was to remain abroad, but because of external factors, they were required to return.*

3. *Returnees who intended permanent migration but chose to return. Failure toadjust and/or homesickness led to their decision to return.*

In the case of mobility, the line between temporary and permanent is more blurred as the mobile people within the EU are free from the limitations of a third country national (who has the citizenship of a non-EU country) who would have had to return, otherwise, would have become undocumented in the eyes of the state. Therefore, external factors for temporary migration that cause limitations on the stay period are not present in the context of mobility of EU citizens.

As Cassarino (2004, 2) writes "in a neo-classical stance, return migration involves exclusively labor migrants who miscalculated the costs of migration and who did not reap the benefits of higher earnings". Then Cassarino (2004) contrasts this strategy with the new economics of labor migration (NELM), where migration and return naturally follow each other. In contradiction with neo-classical understanding, according to Stark (1991), many migrants return because they are successful in achieving their aims during the migration phase. Considering both approaches, Cassarino (2004, 4) underlines "as the structural approach to return migration contends, return is not only a personal issue, but above all a social and contextual one, affected by situational and structural factors."

Glorius (2013, 228) states that different factors lead to remigration: "1) migrants' motives, both for the initial migratory move and for the return decision; 2) the quantity and quality of social capital in countries of origin and destination; 3) structural factors, such as the demographic and economic situation in a country, immigration law, and the existence of repatriation programs." In line with this argument, most studies report on noneconomic factors of return (Gmelch 1980). Glorius (2013, 230) also connotes that many people return for personal or family reasons rather than *economic reasons.*

As Elder (1994, 5) suggests there are four ways in which life course can be examined: "the interplay of human lives and historical times, the timing of lives, linked or interdependent lives, and human agency in choice making." Hence, all of these factors are decisive in mobility and in return decisions. Combining the theories with Elder's life course explanation, it can also be argued that return is not only an individual decision since it is affected by the structural, social, and contextual factors that surround the migrant or the (spatially) mobile person.

This structural approach also includes communicational links of the individual distributed within a borderless social sphere, which can be summed up as the "transnational perspective

on migration" (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 2008). To open a brief parenthesis on the transnational experience of the migrant as well as the mobile person, it is important to understand that "society is not directly equated with or limited by the borders of a single nation-state" (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004, 3). If we think about the context of the EU and the free intra-EU movement for EU citizens and their dependent family members, the Schengen area creates a more feasible environment for a borderless transnational society.

"Borderlessness for EU citizens" within the EU postulates that "persons can engage simultaneously in more than one nation-state and a nation-state does not limit the boundaries of meaningful social relations" (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004, 34). A mobile person or a migrant is engaged in more than one culture, more than one nation, and more than one legislation, it can even be called a plethora of allegiances to which one can willingly or unwillingly subject. Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004, 15) describe the structure in a very clear manner: "when people belong to multiple settings, they come into contact with the regulatory powers and the hegemonic culture of more than one state. These states regulate economic interactions, political processes, and performances, and have discrete nation-state building processes." Hence, we should consider the conceptualization of return in the context of the dynamism of transnational links and mobility.

Cassarino (2004, 7) underlines two kinds of understanding of "return": A clear and definite return, and an unfinished return, which is an idea, supported by the transnationalism stream where return is envisioned differently by transnational identities (p.8). In the case of the young mobile people who are involved in intra-EU movement, "rooted mobilities" (Cuzzocrea, 2018) is a concept that also describes a "home and mobility" dimension of transnationalism perspectives. In rooted mobilities, young people imagine their mobility paths ending with returning home and/or doing something useful for their home contexts (ibid.). Cuzzocrea (2018) concentrates mostly on the Sardinian youth, who plans to be mobile within Europe and she captures this dialect of "becoming mobile with an idea to return home". Hence, the mobilities are rooted within the imagination of a future self that uses mobility in a positive sense for home, which demonstrates the inherent connection with the "roots".

Regarding "return" Cassarino (2004, 17) draws attention to three important dimensions: preparedness, mobilizing resources, and circumstances in the home and host countries. Preparedness depends on willingness to return and readiness to return, whilst mobilizing resources is related to tangible resources, intangible resources, and social capital one has. These two factors affect and are in interaction with circumstances in the host and home countries (ibid.). Although Cassarino's (2004) work is of great analysis and it captures macro, meso, and microdimensions of return, the individualistic reasons for return are not very much deliberated within this text. Besides, the return imperative that arises from sudden life changes and once-in-a-lifetime happenings, in other words, critical junctures, are also not detailed[3].

Although Cassarino (2004) distinguishes between reasons for return and contexts of return, King and Christou (2011) create a typology of return. They suggest four categories: return visits (for special occasions, generally short-term), link between return visits and long-term location (slightly longer visits to assess if permanent return shall be made or not), return

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[3] However, overall, as a structure covering diverse theories of return, his work will prove to be crucial in one of the analytical chapters of this thesis. Therefore, this theme will be discussed in detail in the analytical chapter on return together with the literature on return migration of the highly skilled migrants and mobile people.

mobilities of childhood (children who must change countries under the control of their parents or who want to return themselves with their agencies), second-generation return migration (when young adults return either independently or with their families), and ancestral return (long established diasporas who go back to their homelands like Jewish or Armenian populations) (pp. 458-460). Finally, they advocate that the return is not always to the parents' homeland but the return can occur as going to another place within the homeland like the Caribbean return (p.460). Hence, there are many phases and faces of return, which makes it impossible to categorize every single individual into predetermined definitions.

The theories and ideas of return are also connected with relations with home and what home means (Boccagni 2017) to a young mobile person. King and Christou (2011, 454) describe this tension of the mobility: "Within (return) migration, there is a tension between mobility on the one hand, and a search for a stable home (land) in which to settle and 'belong' on the other." Moreover, King and Christou (2011, 454) criticize the fact that return is not considered in mobility studies for various reasons "perhaps because return implies a 'homing process', a return to base, an endpoint of the migratory cycle, return mobilities do not feature much in the mobilities literature." To confirm this proposition, it is necessary to add that within Europe, mobility, despite having migratory characteristics from time to time, is not considered to have similar qualifications as migration. However, the young people, who move from one EU member to another, still encounter different tax systems, work cultures and employment opportunities, languages, and understanding of socialization.

An important work regarding the youth mobilities and mobilities that turn into migration belongs to Erdal and Ezzati (2015). Erdal and Ezzati (2015, 1206) explore the dynamism regarding migration that the changing ideas of belonging are inevitable once a migrant goes abroad and starts to make new decisions. In this sense, they underline that the age at the time of the migration and the connections built in the host country matter greatly to transform ideas of mobility to a longer stay. Their work is in line with the work of King and Skeldon (2010) who were saying that lifecycle and age can affect the decisions to stay or return. These are important insights considering the temporal dimensions of migration (Cwerner 2001). According to Cwerner (2001), there are different time dimensions such as strange times, heteronomous times, asynchronous times, collage times, remembered times, diasporic times, and nomadic times. Cwerner (2001) draws attention to the fact that "temporary immigrants,[…], are always making up their minds." (p.27). This observation is also important for this paper as young mobile skilled people can also be in the same situation between temporariness and staying further, changing plans according to the circumstances.

To wrap this section, return is not always to the home city or return is not always "the end". Home can be in different places for both migrants and mobile people, and they might experience similar dilemmas before they decide where to stay or whether to return. Moreover, transnational ties are quite important in connect with different homes in a century where being away from home is felt much less thanks to technological improvements. Using the theoretical perspectives and thematic analysis, I argue that there are three main reasons for return at the macro, meso and micro level around the feelings of *safety, cultural familiarity and harmony* with the inner-self. I will develop these terms throughout the paper.

Methodology

Sample

The interviews have been carried out within the context of the Horizon 2020 framework research project "Mapping mobility – pathways, institutions, and structural effects of youth mobility in Europe". The target group consists of young people (who were at the time of the interviews between the ages of 18 and 29) who became mobile within the context of (seeking) employment. The data were collected during autumn 2015 and spring 2016 using a combination of two interview technics: problem- and narration- focused face-to-face interviews.

Out of these interviews (15 in the context of employment) I have selected two interviewees who returned to their home countries, namely Maria from Spain and Hedda from Iceland, and conducted follow -up interviews with them. The follow -up interviews were realized a few days before they returned to their home countries. The interviews were semi-structured and they lasted 1.5 hours in average. Last but not least, there were asynchronous interviews with a period of 1 year to 14 months in-between.

Follow-up interviews

Despite their challenges, these follow-up interviews provided substantial ideas about the interviewees. As a part of this methodology, these interviews are evaluated in depth by Ryan, Rodriguez, and Trevena (2016) from a critical perspective. Ryan et al. (2016) question the linearity of the events in the follow -up interviews and draws attention to the fact that "changing life circumstances" shall also be taken into consideration. Here, the spontaneity and the asynchronous interviews were helpful to capture the changing dynamics in these two women's lives.

Analysis

I examined and analyzed the interviews in three emerging themes in NVIVO: *safety, cultural familiarity, and inner-self.* These are the themes that have emerged because of the questions directed to the research participants. Nevertheless, they are also the themes around which mobility and return was theorized. Safety, within this context, consisted of many themes such as "working conditions, employment, salaries, better CV, career and time spent with family and others apart from working hours". Hence, the concept of safety is quite inspired by the working conditions that Cieslik (2011, 1367) describes: "the type of employment influences the amount of available free time, the time spent commuting, the flexibility of childcare arrangements, and financial security". Family ranges from "nuclear family to larger family members, parents, children but also what one considers as family, ideas on setting a family or being single, and socialization patterns". Finally, inner-self is understood more as the "character, internal transformations, positive changes regarding self-confidence, belief in oneself, belief in one's future, and also searching for safety in the "self"". Therefore, the themes were kept broader in the examination of the interviews that led to the categorization of reasons of return in macro, meso, and micro levels to cover all aspects of this phenomenon.

Two Women's Stories: Three Levels of Analysis

Structural Conditions that Prepare Mobility and Return: Safety

Regarding mobility and return, there are three levels of considerations that emerged from the coding process of the interviews. In this section, I examine how the interviewees consider and consider the term "safety".

The first one is more about a vague idea of Norway emanating from the experiences of acquaintances. For instance, Hedda says that Norway is a very popular destination country for the Icelanders. Hedda connotes that there is almost a migration culture to go to Norway from Iceland. However, simultaneously, she mentions "saving money" and having better economic conditions in Norway compared to Iceland.

For Maria, in fact, the push factors seem more prominent because of the economic crisis. However, she refers to a couple of factors about society, unemployment, the lack of jobs matching the skills that are provided at the universities, and "being a victim of the government". Nevertheless, she also adds "individual reasons" that influence her decisions along with structural factors. Therefore, even though it seems at first sight that an economic crisis is a reason for which people migrate, the preliminary reasons are mingled and more complex than just "the economic crisis".

In line with this perspective above, in the context of youth mobility in Norway, it is necessary to discuss that the motivations of young people can differ greatly. For instance, Bygnes (2017) suggests that those who leave Spain do not leave only because of the crisis but they attempt to go to Norway because of "anomie", a term that is by Durkheim, meaning "a painful state or condition felt by individuals and by society" (Durkheim 1985). She mostly interviews with the highly skilled Spanish migrants and showed that they did not leave Spain because of unemployment but because they wanted career development (p. 2). Maria's story is quite similar to this narrative, where she says that she wanted to achieve a better position in her training and career.

There are also significant differences in the cultural aspects. Hedda, for instance, does not state so many differences in cultural understanding between Iceland and Norway. Cultural affinity and geographical proximity in the case of Iceland and Norway are significant in Hedda's case. When it comes to Maria's side of the story, she clearly mentions that there are different ways of expression of affection and daily interactions in Norway.

For both of them, the economic opportunities and feeling safe are pull factors but they had different ideas and idealizations in mind when they first came to Norway and this aspect takes us to the second level of examination, which is the meso level with cultural familiarity: the way culture is reflected in daily interactions, conversations, physical expressions of affinity, and family rituals.

Cultural Familiarity: Context of Socialization with Others

Families and peers can be supportive or the opposite can be true: they can be envious or even jealous for those who become mobile. Hedda says that some of her family members or friends did not seem enthusiastic for them, when they decided to move. Moreover, her family was challenging, so she felt each time she did something she had to prove herself and strive always for the best.

Some families can be difficult and so the courage to prove oneself can be a push factor. Hence, there is a great influence of the surroundings, culture, and family, but at the same time there is the internalization of these traits by the individual. For instance, an explanation was that Hedda moved to Norway because she wanted to demonstrate that she could do better. As Elder (1994) underlines important factors for life course, *family patterns and interdependency* are of great importance in the context of youth mobility.

For Maria, the challenging family was not there, but she felt challenged in the labor market. She stated that her mother was a homemaker and her father was a plumber, and they were not particularly (spatially) mobile. At first, her family did not support the idea of mobility as she would be far away from them, but afterwards, as she got her first job, they became more supportive. Cwerner's (2001) time and space perspective is extremely important in explaining this aspect and capturing the dynamism of migrant decisions and their evolution.

When it comes to the motivations to return, cultural familiarity and family weigh heavy for both. It almost sounds as if one returns to where one runs away from various reasons. For instance, Hedda starts to think because of the birth of the third child, that her family would not get to know her child, and she asks questions about bigger families in Iceland and how she misses gatherings with them. Furthermore, they are in better conditions to return also from an economic standpoint. She also feels stronger (as she considered migration and independence as an achievement) as an individual and she has more confidence in her nuclear family, too.

Maria is also more confident about herself and about her capabilities after her mobility experience, so she returns to what she finds lacking in Norway: friends, family, socialization patterns, and "warmer" interaction with others at home. Hedda refers more to the bigger family and being connected with them, Maria refers more to general patterns of cultural familiarity and activities such as theatres and outings with friends and crowded dinners with the family.

Reflection of Agency on the Mobility Experience

Both Hedda and Maria, feel that the mobility experience provided them tangible and intangible resources. For instance, they are both positive about return, they feel that they have developed a stronger inner-self to face their families and broader issues they might encounter. They learned how to be alone, they learned how to survive on their own, and during the time of the second interview, they both felt prepared to return. Additionally, both of them mobilized their tangible resources in line with return: in the case of Hedda, it is money saved for return, and in Maria's case, it is a better CV, better training, and a prestigious job experience abroad. Hedda is prepared to go home both emotionally and economically. Maria feels that when she returns, she can focus on what she wants to do for the future and she feels that she has grown both personally and career wise after mobility. Henceforth, the mobility experience has equipped Maria with great qualifications, apart from the self-discovery about where she really wants to be. They both feel they have had a major learning experience and they shift from self-performance to "belonging" as they return.

Changing Ideas of Mobility and Return

In the first interview, Maria was talking about her reasons to move to Norway and she was explaining the reasons of outward movement, where she suggested that "the job market in

Spain was not ready for the university graduates, which is twice as much as the number of graduates during the time of her parents". Regarding safety, she says:

> According to the work market under 30th in Spain the youth has the rate of 52% unemployment no matter you have a degree or not. You have many problems to find work. Maybe it is better now because half of us migrated now (laughter). It is quite a bad situation now in Spain. Because the politicians did not apply properly politics, the market is not well structured. The government were building many houses, which we did not need, and a lot of migration was coming in. OK I will make it easier for you understand. They are not enough jobs for the highly qualified, the only thing we have as an option is nonqualified jobs… Many young people have a degree but they have bad jobs like working in Burger King, in supermarkets or like that because we cannot afford to provide the employment to these youth...

She chose a specific program to go to Norway, which she searched for first in Finland. However, they did not have this program there. And so, she decided to go to Norway:

> I really wanted to go to Scandinavia because I am an educator and I thought that here has a good education system to learn from. Originally, I want to travel to Finland but there were not any projects for me because I wanted to have a project in the high school and the only high school in Scandinavia was in D (City in Norway).

First, she got a 60 percent position as a Spanish teacher. Her family supported her decision, although initially they thought that she moved too far but then to support her employment aspirations, they changed their attitude. She says:

> Oh, they were very happy. But when I came to Norway first time for EVS (European Voluntary Service), they were not so enthusiastic and said "why are you going so far away?". But now they see that I am very content to be here, having a good job and happier than ever, they support me now.

Her family did not travel so much, and she also did not travel, either, previously in her life. Once she went to Cyprus and told this experience to everyone. Therefore, it was a big step for her, and she also did not feel very confident about her English skills. Although for a long time, she was convinced that it was fine for her to stay in Spain despite the difficulties in the economy and not finding opportunities to develop her skills, she needed to travel to understand her capacity and attempted to understand herself better. Finally, she wishes that everyone can become mobile. She expressed her eagerness and happiness as such:

> I travelled, my horizon became wider and I just realized that the more I can be out the I can get to know other ways, I expand myself… I wish everyone has the same chance to see how much self-development is involved just by going out from your environment; to work with the new culture is so rich.

She also indicated that she is quite satisfied with this experience of mobility: "Because I am fulfilled, I am doing what I was born to do and having a good life, good salary. So, all I ask for is a good change to develop myself." Moreover, she also indicated that now she belongs to a more international culture rather than being and feeling Spanish only, she redefined her way of belonging with these words:

> The most specific thing I experienced is that I changed my mind, from Spanish citizenship to the world citizen, my belonging…If we speak about roots, before I could have settled my roots in my city. And I would say that I do not feel like I belong there anymore, I feel like I want more… Of course, I belong to my city, my family and environment but it has been much… my belonging is much wider and I feel like I want to explore it all. I do not want to stay safe in a bubble.

Maria had some problems during her time in Norway because some students refused to speak English or and she could not easily figure out how to reach out to them:

> When I arrived in Norway, I was very cheerful, touchy, and very Spanish. After two days, they sent me to the mountain trip with my students, a 48-hour trip in the nature with Norwegians. At first, I was very cheerful and said "hi guys, I am your new Spanish teacher, how are you doing, everyone cool?". I was very surprised because no one answered my question in the group. When I was talking to them, they did not look at my eyes; they refused to speak English. I had to spend 48 h with teenager Norwegians, and I did not speak any Norwegian. I was alone in the amazing Norwegian nature, and that was it. I though this is going to be my year, amazing mountains, but how can I reach out to the people?

Afterwards, she stayed long enough in the destination city and spent some time in the work place working intensively. However, she decided that her work place was the kind of place where people with families would prefer to stay as it was difficult for her to be isolated whilst dedicating herself only to work: "this place is best for people with families, with a couple or with a kid, then that's healthier for everyone. They have contact with the locals because they have schools, they get to know the other Norwegian families, at the weekends, and then they go to work."

Moreover, although she was offered a job with a permanent contract, she refused it because she decided to go back. Although she found the absolute job safety, she thought that it was not what she wanted. Besides, she was satisfied with the fact that she gained enough experience out of this mobility:

> And then they offered, and then I said no again, and it was because I, I was not happy. It was not about the position anymore, it was not about, eh, it was not about the job place anymore, like the thing that made me stay in Norway was the *safety*, but then I started missing all the things. I started missing my free time, I started missing my privacy, I started missing social life, and cultural life. Museums, concerts, theater…

These remarks reveal that the decision to return is shaped during mobility. The idea of return as an anti-thesis of mobility and stay, is always present. However, if the synthesis of ideas on migration and return weighs heavier for return after considering all three aspects such as safety, family (and-or familiar environment), and what inner-self desires, then the return is a stronger option. Therefore, she revealed that she was lacking qualifications she gained from the mobility experience and after gaining these experiences together with her professional development, she thought what was missing could not have been found or constructed in the country of destination, like the "things" she used to have before mobility:

> I went away to have a more of a CV, more of a career, a professional development. That was my main reason to move outside Spain. And, because, I had everything else. I had a family, I had a social network, and I had a social life. I have had relationships for a long time and so on. So that was covered. But I was lacking my professional development. I came here, and it was the opposite. Here, I had all my professional development the way I wanted, as much as I wanted. And I have developed a lot of strength on my CV, much skills, a lot of knowledge, and a lot of perspective in life, whilst working. Oh my god, it was a lot of personal growth as well…

At this point, she does not equate safety with the quality life anymore as she says: "But then I was lacking exactly what I had taken for granted in Spain, which was the warmth, the family, the social, the personal space, the privacy… All these… The leisure. The quality life". The quality life she defined was related not only to family but cultural familiarity, a range of themes that consist of acculturation, food, socialization, friends, climate , etc. Furthermore, there were pull factors that were also effective in her return decision and these factors were related to her career, which at the same time meant that her mobility experience would be presumably appreciated as she returned to Spain:

> And I did not ask for anything. I said "hey, you know I'm coming back", and they were like "oh my god we need you". And I did not do anything. I have not applied or anything. That's amazing. I feel very lucky, and I feel very rich, and I'm unafraid of coming back because I know that something will come up, and we will see. But first, now I'm facing that transition moments, so I must think carefully on how I want to do this. So first I'm gonna be a couple of weeks with my family, then I will go volunteering one weekend in a personal development summer camp with socially -challenged kids. We are helping them learn how to meditate, how to do yoga in the mornings… We are hugging trees, we are connecting with nature, and that will help me as well… To settle down.

When explaining the reasons for leaving Norway, she also revealed that she felt a bit isolated but more importantly, the way of expressing herself was not the same that she was used to, related to bodily contact (physical contact). For instance, she was saying:

> Yeah, and how cold people are here. Now, I can go two weeks without a hug. And they honestly do not feel that need. They honestly do not understand. They don't get it or how, yeah, so… That's something that, yeah, that I can't blame on anyone, but I need, I need human contact.

> But otherwise what is so important as well, is to say this, that they were very careful and very dedicated, and they were expressing that affection in many other ways, but not in the way that I needed.

She needs her communication routines that seem to weigh heavier than the routines she adapted to in Norway. Then, she tries to connect with the self where she feels safer now, in Spain. She wants to have a permanent position where she belongs. And toward the end of the interview, she gives some mixed signals saying that her ideas might still change but the current feeling she has is that she feels happy to be back home.

In her first interview, Hedda clearly stated that the idea was to have more earnings and time for themselves from work so that they could also spend more time with their children. She indicated that her family was not very satisfied with what she did and how she took many initiatives with her husband and decided to move. She also wishes her children to travel around the world and earning more helps realize this motivation, as she argued. Simultaneously, she wanted to continue her education, as she was 26 during the time of the interview. Her husband wanted to build a dream house, and they felt that their visions could become real in Norway.

In the migration process, the family members had to support each other more than usual, so they had to think about the details and decide together. Moreover, she also had a self-transformation where she seemed to be getting used to being alone, whilst before mobility, she could not have imagined to be that way:

> We have grown (laughing) … yeah we became a lot better friends and we just had each other so we had to be sort of … yeah moving in the same direction with everything … and … we learned a lot, I learned that I do not have to have my family around me … every second of the day (laughing) … and now I have started to like being alone and … things I did not like before, I think I was so scared of the world and now it's … so much easier than I thought …

Again, a theme that creates the life of Hedda is uncertainty and search for safety, as they used to rent a house back home where she lived. Now, she wanted to buy a house:

> I think it will help us get to places we want to be a bit faster because we can save money here and maybe build a house that is his dream and I … don't think/, I don't want to be the reason why he can't do things so I think … that's maybe a little bit why I wanted to try to move because I wanted to try to do a little better … (thinking) I don't know … because we … in my country we always think about the future and … there is uncertainty about everything … what will happen? Is this going to be fine, but now we are starting to learn more about taking it one day at a time … and then to just see how it goes because … now we know that it is going to be fine.

On the other hand, she draws attention to this challenging combination of thinking about the future all the time and living in uncertainty. She adds that she likes the diversity in Norway and she feels more comfortable where they live now, so it is not only the material resources that she thinks as attractive, but also the fact that this new place offers a more societal diversity in her case. There are differences between home and host countries, and she suggests that the latter has a more international environment. She states that she feels freer away from the conformities of where she is from:

> Yeah may be... (excited) because I have always liked to be away from Iceland (laughing). I always like to/ I always think, for example the clothes I wear when I am in Iceland, when we go away from my own country I feel like I can be however I wish to be because Iceland is a small island … with 300.000 people and everybody looks the same, everybody has the same shoes, the same coat, the same hat, and if you do not look like everybody else, you are weird and then you go to different places and you think "woah, everybody here is weird", what I think (laughing) is that it's

you. But here there are so many people, so many personalities, and I think I like that because here … everybody embraces the difference in everybody, I feel freer here.

The working conditions in Iceland were not so favourable, so they moved out of a situation where they felt that they had to work long hours and earned not enough and would not be able to spend enough time with each other and with their kids. This theme is also related to safety within the times of uncertainty:

> In Iceland, we both had to work all the time… we did not have that family life … we did not do anything together, we were so used to waking up, taking the kids to kindergarten and then I go to work, I go get them and he was working till midnight. So, I just saw him 1 h in the morning and sometimes on Sundays, but otherwise, we had to work. All the time, just to get a little bit of extra money and it wasnot enough …

In addition to this, they had a motivation to come to Norwa; as a family they knew another family friend who invited them and they felt that they were accepted in this new place. They did not feel lonely or they did not feel like they were in a foreign place without any ties:

> A: Yes, so have a excellent relationship with them… I felt excellent when we moved here … everybody was welcoming and made us feel like … yeah … so we felt accepted…

Before they came to Norway, they were prepared as a family to quit their jobs back in Iceland. Thinking about the trade-offs of earning more for the sake of children would help them see the world. Therefore, they wanted to provide the conditions they had to their own children, or even better conditions:

> but they came/ they decided to come and they … had to quit the job and all that before they had a job here so we were sort of, yeah, we werenot completely ready for this situation … […] AND because now we have … a little extra money and that .. so we can maybe travel worldwide … because that is something I want for my children, to be able to see the world … because I got the opportunity when I was a kid and I think that is something that is always going to be good for you … (excited) and then the kids will love it (laughing)

On the other hand, there is a motivation for Icelanders to come to Norway and there are many who do so, as she suggests for the salaries: "… was getting everybody to accept that we were moving and not just to/ … many people are moving to Norway in the last decade … many people from Iceland are moving here … and it's because of the salary."

The relationship with her family was not good enough, so she had to prove herself each time. Her family was not very supportive, but her husband's family was more supportive. Hence, within their motivation to move, there is a combination of individual and social factors. She felt that it was a way to prove herself as well: "and I was sad, but it made me want to move even more .. (excited) because I must show everybody that we could do (laughing) … I had to prove everyone wrong."

When they moved to Norway, they were quite prepared. They knew the bureaucracy, and they arranged everything really easily. These issues were not major problems on their side as they had someone to help them "family like" before they moved.

Discussions and Concluding Thoughts

From a temporality perspective, after the mobility experience, it is observed that the ideas of the spatially mobile people change within time (Erdal and Ezzati 2015). The idea to return home becomes ripe as one moves out of the comfort zones and proves independence, finds safety, and examines both contexts and spaces of living. In both interviews, proving oneself is one of the most important traits. Again, spatial mobility provides an accelerated experience and a chain of challenges for young people to manage a part of that transition to adulthood, which is still very cultural, temporal and contextual. As it is seen in the cases of Maria and Hedda, they learned "how to …" in different ways coming from very different contexts. They both noticed that there is a sharp distinction of just choosing to stay elsewhere and choosing to return after having been elsewhere. In this instance, return decisions taken are affected by the duration, intensity, and quality of the mobility experience.

The external economic gains and an internal (more intrinsic) way of enlightenment exist in both cases. However, being more confident of one's own capacity to achieve things alone, is more of a guarantee after gaining knowledge in a different place, after an alternate way of existence and after having had many conversations with the inner self. At the meso level, differences between nuclear families and single young people are observed. When it comes to return, different cultural understandings come to the fore: Hedda mentions "family" more as a "challenge" but at the same time as "belonging"; Maria describes a familiar environment and ways of communicating via demonstration of feelings as a part of the atmosphere of her life in Spain. Considering that Maria is a social worker, her connection with the inner-self might be stronger as a part of her job, and so she talks more about self-awareness and internalization. For the fact that she also moves alone and stays alone, the isolation she feels is stronger compared to Hedda, who has the third child in Norway with her husband.

When we look at the similarities, we observe that they both feel mentally stronger after the mobility to the point that the retro-mobility decision does not cause any regrets for both.

Their reasons for return are analogous at three levels: 1) safety 2) cultural familiarity 3) inner-self. Hedda felt safe because they (as a family) saved enough money to buy a house back in Iceland and she proved to her family that she could do it. They trust more in their capabilities to face challenges. Maria feels safe because she built up her CV and friends and colleagues already started to offer her jobs in Spain.

Regarding cultural familiarity, Hedda feels that her third child will grow up knowing the family members (as they return). Maria feels that her feeling of belonging culturally to where she lives weighs heavier than a successful career accompanied by isolation and loneliness. If it was not difficult for her to engage in home making in Norway, she could have stayed but her social and cultural capital in her own country was so enriching for her that she needed that after her "isolated" work experience in Norway.

Finally, regarding the inner self, there are great transformations: Hedda feels that as a family, they learned how to stand together and it was not only a mobility for economic reasons, although economic safety meant a lot to them. Maria feels that the safety that she has been looking for is inside herself; in other words, she discovered that her inner-self is fiercer, her agency is more alive and capacitated. However, Maria is also sure of herself after she had provided herself a better future after strengthening her career.

Another common point between them is that they escape from the conditions, which make their agency feel disempowered, and by becoming mobile, they act to build a new empowered self. After they have this intangible resource where they feel that they are empowered, they feel ready and prepared (Cassarino 2004) enough to return to the place, which makes them felt disempowered. Especially in places where the international experience is appreciated, they can both contribute to their societies in different ways.

This research shows that the biographical reasons should be added to the return reasons when macro, meso and micro levels are considered. Cassarino (2004) had four categories of return: *return of failure, return of retirement, return of conservatism and return of innovation.* The cases of Maria and Hedda do not fit to any of these categories although Hedda's case similar to conservatism and Maria's case is similar to innovation. Hence, this research shows that return categories shall be rethought and revised as not every return story would be the same and every return decision is not taken after a similar period of time period. The categories of return used by Cassarino (2004) are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, there is a need for making new categories for return cases considering diverse levels of macro, meso and micro: safety, cultural familiarity and dynamic changes in the inner-self.

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