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Entrepreneurial Investment by Assisted Returnee Migrants

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ABSTRACT

Despite the research on return migration testifying to a growing and lively debate over the last few decades, research on returnee entrepreneurship remains scant. The context of "non-elite" returnee entrepreneurs remains particularly overlooked by management scholars. This study widens our knowledge by exploring what determines returnees' decisions to allocate their initial financial investment to microenterprise start-ups instead of the other routes open to them. Drawing information from a sample of 93 African and Latin American migrants supported by an "assisted voluntary return and reintegration program," the analysis explores the impact of returnee entrepreneurs' heterogeneous preparedness to return and entrepreneurial motivations behind how much of their available budget they choose to allocate to entrepreneurial investment. The results show that the availability of resources to ensure the satisfaction of basic needs at the household level in the country of origin and other factors related to the returnees' motivations to establish small businesses drive such entrepreneurial investment allocation decisions. The implications of those findings for future research and policies are discussed.

Keywords: entrepreneurial investment; start-up financing; return entrepreneurs; migrants; assisted voluntary return; AVR; AVRR; necessity entrepreneurship

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INTRODUCTION

New venture creation activities undertaken by migrants returning to their homelands from abroad[1] have gained increasing academic attention (for recent reviews, see Bolzani, 2021; Gruenhagen et al., 2020) in recent years. Several scholars argue that returnee entrepreneurs have accumulated human, social, and technological capital abroad that gives them advantages over entrepreneurs who have never left the home country in terms of business creation and management (e.g., Li et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2010). Financial capital and skills accrued from education, work, and entrepreneurial experience abroad have been shown to be determinants of returnee propensity to enter self-employment (e.g., McCormick & Wahba, 2001; Krasniqi & Williams, 2019). Based on such assumptions, the majority of studies on returnee entrepreneurship in the entrepreneurship and management literature have analyzed self-initiated returnee entrepreneurs, i.e., those who voluntarily and autonomously move back to their countries of origin, investing in and sponsoring start-up business activity (e.g., Wright et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2010; Qin & Estrin, 2015). The returnees characterized in those studies are "skilled individuals […] having studied or worked in a more developed country" (Gruenhagen et al., 2020, p. 347) or "scientists and engineers returning […] after several years of business experience and/or education in another (developed) country" (Drori et al., 2009, p. 1006). Not surprisingly, those studies have explored returnee entrepreneurs' self-employment propensity and their potential in terms of technological, human, and financial capital transfer (e.g., Dana, 1998; Wright et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2010).

To date, however, by disregarding migrants' heterogeneous conditions for return and for new venture development, the narrow scholarly focus on skilled, self-initiated returnees has not provided a wider understanding of returnees' entrepreneurial decision-making. The motivation

[1] This paper addresses international migration occurring between countries of the global South and North. Therefore, return migrants are defined herein as returning to home countries in the global South.

behind this paper is the consideration of heterogeneous drivers of entrepreneurial investment, i.e., "the deployment of resources by an individual to his/her new venture" (Cassar & Friedman, 2009, p. 241), among returnee entrepreneurs. I specifically call for closer attention to be paid to two sources of heterogeneity in returnees' entrepreneurial investments: the degree of migrants' preparedness to return (Cassarino, 2004) and their motivation to engage in entrepreneurship upon return (Gruenhagen et al., 2020).

As returnees' decisions to start businesses back in their countries of origin are nested in their decisions to return, the decision-making process should be seen as part of a larger migratory project and idiosyncratic migration history (Gruenhagen et al., 2020). Seminal studies have highlighted that return migration might be driven not only by the aspiration to make use of resources acquired through the migratory experience (e.g., to realize innovative entrepreneurial activities) but also by other reasons, such as failure in the host country (e.g., escaping difficult integration) (e.g., Cerase, 1974). Many situations may force migrants to return or they may choose to leave due to a lack of opportunities for a sustainable livelihood in the host country (e.g., Ruben et al., 2009; Jeffery & Murison, 2011). Those "involuntary returnees" reflect a variety of profiles, such as rejected asylum applicants, students terminating their study period with no overstay opportunity, and unemployed economic migrants and their family members not being able to remain in the host country (e.g., Bastia, 2011; Ruben et al., 2009; van Houte & Davids, 2008). Such migrants, following Cassarino (2004), are not always well prepared for their return for reasons of willingness and readiness (i.e., lack of will and of sufficient resources and information about postreturn conditions).Studies focusing on self-initiated returnee entrepreneurs also overlook other possible motivations, such as necessity for engaging in entrepreneurship (Gruenhagen et al., 2020). As shown by numerous studies in both developed and developing countries, many entrepreneurs start their businesses to satisfy basic physiological and safety needs (e.g., security and financial needs; Dencker et al., 2021), either due to a lack of alternatives (as a last resort, e.g., Reynolds et al., 1999) or because of favorable institutional factors or policies (e.g., Bergmann & Sternberg, 2007). Returnee entrepreneurship may not always result from an entirely deliberate choice to exploit market or innovation opportunities or to make use of the skills acquired during the migratory experience (Cerase, 1974). It may be engaged in to satisfy financial and security needs, especially in contexts where labor markets do not present other accessible opportunities. In addition, returnee entrepreneurs might have other motivations for establishing businesses, such as self-enhancing goals (e.g., personal utility, welfare, or achievement) or self-transcending goals (e.g., contributing to family and friends or to society) (e.g., Bolzani & Foo, 2018; Conger, 2012; Gorgiewski et al., 2011).

As a specific instance of returnee entrepreneurship that can illuminate our understanding of the heterogeneous preparedness to return, returnees' entrepreneurial motivations, and thus the various extents of their investments in start-up activities, this paper considers the context of "return and reintegration" policies. Offered by supranational authorities, such as the European Union or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Ghosh, 2000a), or by national governments (Haase & Honerath, 2016), such policies provide returnees with a budget that can be allocated to setting up a business in their country of origin. In that regard, the schemes typically provide financial support that can alleviate the burden of start-up costs, compensate for the time spent exploring opportunities, or provide funds for training and capacity building. The context of this research is interesting because it allows for the study of returning migrant entrepreneurs who have self-selected into return migration assistance and entrepreneurship-support programs to become "assisted returnee entrepreneurs."

Building on those considerations, this paper is aimed at presenting novel insights into returnee entrepreneurship by analyzing *what explains the extent of financial investment allocated* *by return migrants to start a microenterprise in the context of assisted return*. That research question is explored using a unique dataset of 93 African and Latin American return migrants supported by an Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) project in Italy. AVRR programs are important migration management tools in the European Union, where over 55,000 migrants benefit from them on a yearly basis, with the support of a total budget of around €133 million (European Parliament, 2017). The program beneficiaries are migrants with a (potentially) "irregular" legal status who receive and manage in-kind and in-cash assistance, both prior to departure and after their return, in the form of funding for business activities, education or vocational training, housing, and healthcare (Kuschminder, 2017a). The returning migrants participating in such programs thus form a markedly different group from the previously described self-initiated returnee entrepreneurs, who often are "elite" migrants such as highly skilled entrepreneurs (e.g., Wright et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2010; Qin & Estrin, 2015).

This paper provides two relevant contributions to the literature. First, it contributes to the entrepreneurship literature by widening the scholarly understanding of returnee entrepreneurship (Drori et al., 2009; Pruthi, 2014; Ojo, 2017; Gruenhagen et al., 2020) in light of its linkages to the domains of migration management and entrepreneurship policy. The concept of "migration management" (Ghosh, 2000b) has been used to adjust migration flows while designing images of controlled, linear, and coordinated international mobility processes and systems. In addressing assisted return and reintegration policies, this paper explores a context where migrants' opportunities to stay in the host country or to reintegrate in the home country are tied to security-oriented instruments of migration control (Åkesson & Eriksson Baaz, 2015) framed as more "palatable" voluntary programs offering better opportunities for migrants returning to their home countries (Kuschminder, 2017a). Unlike prior studies focusing on self-initiated, elite returnees, this paper reveals heterogeneity in migrants' preparedness to return to be an important factor in analyzing returnee entrepreneurs' investment decisions in nascent enterprise activities. This paper also connects migration management to the literature on entrepreneurship policy by highlighting the case of voluntary return and reintegration programs based on the creation of microenterprises. The preference for returnee reintegration schemes based on self-employment, rather than designing more complex programs to sustain stable-wage employment options, might signal policy-makers' alignment with an "entrepreneurship for all" view where "compensatory" interventions (Honig, 2018) are offered as a solution to existing opportunity gaps, unemployment, and limited upward mobility, all of which remain unaddressed.

The second contribution of this paper is in addressing the scholarly debate around the motivations and choices of nascent entrepreneurs by looking at a particular group of entrepreneurs who are "assisted" in making entrepreneurial investments. Assisted returnee entrepreneurs have different return and entrepreneurial motivations from those of the self-initiated returnee entrepreneurs previously described in the management and entrepreneurship literature. Specifically, assisted returnee entrepreneurs exhibit different degrees of preparedness to return in terms of willingness and readiness (as defined earlier). They face investment decisions linked to allocating budgets provided by return programs to support their reintegration in their home countries. Therefore, although all assisted returnee entrepreneurs can be described as potentially "pushed" into return and entrepreneurship as a response to necessity, they still have a variety of choices open to them regarding their investments in the entrepreneurial activities they decide to establish in the home country (e.g., deciding how much money to allocate to start-up developments). That focus on nascent entrepreneurs' investment choices also offers new insights of relevance to the strategic entrepreneurship literature (e.g., Cassar & Friedman, 2009) in an unexplored context.

The insights from this paper are important for developing policy-makers' understanding of the factors driving migrants' commitment to the entrepreneurial dimension of AVRR programs, where the provision of support for microenterprise start-ups might be the key to the success of migrants' long-term reintegration in their home countries (e.g., Fonseca et al., 2015). However, it is rare for researchers to gain access to these contexts, showing that closer collaboration with policy-makers is needed to provide useful insights into the links between migration, return, and entrepreneurship. By collaborating with researchers in the definition of the research questions and the methodology for data collection, policy-makers can contribute to refining the collective knowledge about returnee entrepreneurs, the dynamics of support programs, and the impact on entrepreneurial activities in home countries.

The paper is organized as follows. First, the literature review offers an overview of preparedness to return and heterogeneous entrepreneurial motivations as factors influencing decisions related to entrepreneurial investment in the context of assisted returnee entrepreneurship. The methodology section presents the research design, including details of the research context, data collection, and descriptive statistics. The results section presents the statistical findings, which are then discussed in terms of theoretical and practical contributions in the final section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial investment decisions by assisted returnee migrants

Investigating the context of assisted returnee entrepreneurs requires widening the perspectives presented in the previous management literature on returnee entrepreneurship. That literature focuses mainly on elite, self-selected samples of individuals (e.g., scientists or engineers; Drori et al., 2009) or on migrants who have planned and prepared to return to the home country (e.g., Pauli & Osowska, 2019). Prior research has provided several insights into the drivers and outcomes of returnees' entrepreneurial investments to exploit opportunities in knowledge-based sectors (e.g., Liu et al., 2010; Qin & Estrin, 2015: Wright et al., 2008) or advanced services (e.g., Pruthi, 2014).

However, assisted returnee entrepreneurs are migrants who self-select into return and reintegration schemes due to lack of opportunities, the threat of illegality, or precarious living conditions in the host country (e.g., Ruben et al., 2009; Jeffery & Murison, 2011). By entering into voluntary return and reintegration programs, assisted returnees receive a specified budget to spend on their reintegration upon return to their countries of origin. Among the options for budget allocation, returnees can use part or all of that budget to cover the expenses incurred in developing their business plans. Given that more complex business ideas require more investment, and the amount of investment influences the business perspectives of growth and success (Frid et al., 2015), it is important to understand what factors influence assisted returnee entrepreneurs' capacities to allocate higher levels of investment. In this paper, I draw on various theoretical perspectives that highlight the role of migrants' preparedness to return (Cassarino, 2004) and of the heterogeneity in motivations to engage in entrepreneurship upon that return (Gruenhagen et al., 2020).

Preparedness to return and extent of entrepreneurial investment

The "preparedness to return" framework proposed by Cassarino (2004) suggests that migrants are prepared to return when they are willing to do so (e.g., for family reunification), and are ready to return, that is, they have mobilized adequate resources (tangible and intangible resources, and social capital, e.g., financial remittances), and have gathered sufficient information on the conditions in the home country (e.g., from relevant networks). Building on this framework, in this paper, I argue that preparedness to return, as substantiated by willingness and readiness to return, drives assisted returnee entrepreneurs to allocate greater amounts of financial investments in nascent entrepreneurial activities in the home countries as a step toward achieving long-term reintegration (Cassarino, 2004).

According to Cassarino's framework, assisted returnee entrepreneurs should be understood as having different degrees of willingness to return, depending on the failure or fulfillment of their personal migration projects, and any contextual urgency they face in the host country (e.g., work permit renewal unlikely, rejected asylum application, or expiry of study visa with no option to extend, renew or transform). In a nutshell: migrants might wish to return, and thus are prepared for it; or not wish to return but are being forced to do so, thus leaving them unprepared despite the support provided by assisted return and reintegration schemes. It is to be expected that willing and prepared migrants would allocate higher investments in the development of their business ideas.

A returnee's capacity to mobilize resources and information networks is also important, due to the relationship between entrepreneurial investment in the nascent business stage and the financing opportunities that entrepreneurs can mobilize, by leveraging their personal wealth and access to external financing (Frid et al., 2015). Assisted returnee entrepreneurs' positions in the host and home country social hierarchies strongly distinguishes them from elite returnees, and they face higher costs from and barriers to accessing resources (Croitoru, 2019). In addition, they might not necessarily be able to exploit fully their achievements in terms of human, financial, and social capital (King, 2000; Ammassari & Black, 2001) to develop their business. In fact, substantial evidence exists regarding the hurdles and "brain waste" faced by migrants in the host countries by, for instance, being involved in menial and unskilled jobs that do not allow them to gain additional or significant human capital (e.g., Al-Rasheed, 1992; Gmelch, 1980; King, 1986) or experiencing higher levels of discrimination and unemployment than native workers, especially in times of economic crisis (e.g., Cebolla-Boado et al., 2015).

Motivational heterogeneity in assisted returnee entrepreneurs

The assistance and reintegration support offered by dedicated policy programs invites assisted returnee entrepreneurs to explore opportunities for developing a business in the home country. They can therefore embrace entrepreneurship as a form of occupation to become individuals working for themselves and at their own risk (e.g., Hopp & Stephan, 2012). Assisted returnee entrepreneurs thus closely resemble the profile of necessity entrepreneurs, who are defined as individuals who create ventures to fulfill their basic needs (Dencker et al., 2021), such as physiological (e.g., food, water) and safety needs (e.g., security and basic financial resources) (Maslow, 1954).

In this paper, I argue that assisted returnees with varying degrees of preparedness to return take entrepreneurial investment decisions by prioritizing their urgency to satisfy basic needs. Returnees with the strongest urgency to satisfy basic needs, such as living expenses, health, and accommodation costs, will not allocate a budget to entrepreneurial activities, as they would not be able to afford to live without allocating the full reintegration budget to the satisfaction of basic needs. Conversely, the returnees allocating higher amounts to investing in start-ups are those with a relatively lower need to fulfill basic needs. Such entrepreneurs can "afford" to allocate money to entrepreneurial activities, thus delaying (uncertain) future financial returns on the investment. In other words, assisted returnees "who are focused on survival will likely experience a sense of urgency and ignore entrepreneurial opportunities with long payoff periods (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011)" (Dencker et al., 2021).

However, assisted returnee entrepreneurs might also be motivated to address higher-level needs such as "psychological needs," which include belongingness, love, and esteem, and "self-fulfillment needs" corresponding to self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1954). Indeed, the prior literature shows that various motivations may lie behind nascent entrepreneurs' decisions regarding entrepreneurial investments (Shepherd et al., 2015; Shepherd et al., 2019). While some nascent entrepreneurs are motivated by self-enhancing goals such as personal utility and welfare or achievement, others are motivated by self-transcending goals of valuing contributions to close others (e.g., family and friends) or to society (e.g., collective welfare, environment) (e.g., Bolzani & Foo, 2018; Conger, 2012; Gorgiewski et al., 2011).

I explore in this paper how heterogeneous motivations across assisted returnee entrepreneurs drive different investment patterns. Specifically, I argue that assisted returnee entrepreneurs willing to invest in a business as a means of building on their acquired competences and knowledge (i.e., self-enhancing motivations) make their investment decisions on the basis of different factors from those of entrepreneurs willing to invest in a business as a means of adhering to perceived social behavioral expectations and pressures from relevant others (e.g., family, close friends, and the community). For instance, migrants who were originally forced to migrate for humanitarian reasons might place higher entrepreneurial investments, as this could give them the opportunity to deploy their skills for a long-term reintegration project (i.e., self-enhancing motivation). Alternatively, altruistic migrants seeking to open a business to help their families (i.e., self-transcending motivations) might place higher entrepreneurial investments if the welfare of their household is already secured by the availability of other assets (e.g., home ownership).

METHODOLOGY

Research background

Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programs began to grow in popularity during the 1990s and have become more widespread over time. Although no global estimate of AVR flows exists, data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the largest provider of AVR globally, show that the number of individuals assisted by IOM programs increased from 31,270 in 2011 to

100,662 in 2016 (Kuschminder, 2017a). Such programs have transformed over time from providing support only for travel-related expenses to providing reintegration support in the home country under AVRR programs (Lietaert, 2018).

In the European context, return migration is a fundamental policy priority, to be accomplished either through forced or voluntary returns (Kuschminder 2017a). The European Union funds the system for returning irregular migrants through the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF). Those funds are distributed to member states for allocation to programs established by the responsible national authorities through calls for proposals from implementing organizations with expertise in migration. For example, at the time of data collection, around 90 programs, implemented either by the IOM or by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), in the European Union were offering help to migrants in returning to and reintegrating in their home countries (see also European Commission, 2014). Voluntary returns are preferred to forced removals because they are considered more humane and thus more palatable and politically appealing for host country populations (Kuschminder, 2017a). They are also less expensive and complicated, provide better cooperation with origin countries, and, through the provision of reintegration assistance, they are seen as offering more opportunities for the sustainable return of migrants and for home country development (Black et al., 2011). Despite those advantages, scholars and civil society have questioned the degree of voluntariness of those programs, the genuine extent of assistance provided, and their actual effectiveness in supporting postreturn reintegration and sustainable return, especially in countries where safety and security cannot be guaranteed (e.g., Blitz et al., 2005; Ruben et al., 2009; Leerkes et al., 2017; Kuschminder, 2017b; Webber, 2011). Migrants assisted by AVRR programs are a heterogeneous population ranging from those who would not have returned had they obtained a residence permit or faced no risk of forced deportation (e.g., Cassarino, 2008; Leerkes et al., 2017) to those leaving voluntarily and profiting from in-kind and in-cash assistance (e.g., Lietaert, 2018; Strand et al., 2016). In both cases, migrants assisted by those programs lose the residence permits granted by the host country, but repatriation does not preclude the possibility of continued migration, especially domestically or regionally (Leerkes et al., 2017). In fact, most studies have found that a significant portion of individuals participating in assisted return programs do emigrate again or aspire to do so in the future (Scalettaris & Gubert, 2019).

This study focuses on the Italian context, where the Ministry of the Interior is the responsible authority for AVRR measures. Around 3,950 migrants in Italy were assisted to return to their home countries during the period 2009–2015. Ecuador, Peru, Tunisia, and Morocco were the most common destinations.[2] Italy is an interesting country to study because migration has become an increasingly sensitive political issue there due to the enduring economic crisis and the recent "refugee crisis" (The Times, 2018). In that context, both forced and assisted returns have become topics at the center of political parties' narratives against irregular migration (Actionaid, 2019).

Data collection

This paper draws on information from migrants' applications to participate in an Italian AVRR project[3] sponsored by the AMIF 2014–2020 during the period 2016–2018. The project was conducted by Italian NGOs and their local counterparts with the goal of assisting the return of 250 migrants from Colombia, Ecuador, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, and Senegal. A total of 115 heads of household started procedures to request assistance to return to their countries of origin, but only 93 presented a reintegration plan and actually left Italy with the assistance of the

[2] http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/rimpatri-volontari-assistiti
[3] The name of the project is not disclosed to ensure full anonymity of the reported data.

program.[4]The assistance offered to the migrants by the project included: (1) in-kind assistance prior to departure (information and counseling to prepare a reintegration plan, help to obtain travel documents, purchase of flight tickets, transport, and support at the departure airport); (2) in-cash assistance at the point of departure (€400 per person); (3) in-kind assistance in the return country (reintegration support in the form of training and/or education, business start-up, furniture and accommodation, health expenses, covered up to a maximum of €1,600 for the head of the family, plus €800 for each accompanying adult family member and €480 for each accompanying child). Migrants participating in the program were free to decide how to allocate the in-kind reintegration support across the four budget categories (training/education; microenterprise start-up; furniture and accommodation; health expenses).[5] The Italian NGO staff (most of whom were social caseworkers or educators) also supported them in developing individual and family reintegration plans. Migrants participating in the program declared that they had not taken part in similar schemes in the past and would return their residence permit (if still valid) to the police authorities at the time of departure from Italy, thereby waiving any legal immigration status in Italy.

Data were collected through accessing and systematizing information contained in the 115 folders of documents prepared by the project staff in Italy, based on standardized project forms approved by the Ministry of the Interior for use during the period dedicated to the migrants' departures (around 1,500 pages in total). Using a similar approach to that of Leerkes et al. (2017), I analyzed only the documents regarding migrants applying as the head of a household, to remove clustering of observations at the household level, since individuals in couples or families do not decide to use assisted return programs independently from each other. The analyzed documents

[4] In total, the 115 households that started the procedure to request assistance to return to their countries of origin comprised 155 members. At the end of the project, 131 people had actually left Italy with the assistance of the program. Of those, 93 were heads of household presenting a reintegration plan and 38 were family dependents.
[5] Out of the 93 household heads, only 4 migrants allocated no budget to microenterprise start-up.

provided both qualitative and quantitative information on migrants' demographics, human capital (e.g., education and work experience, both in Italy and abroad), social capital (e.g., information on family and other ties in the home country), reintegration plans (e.g., amounts allocated to housing, health, employment, education/training expenses, and microenterprise business plans), motivations, expectations, and objectives.

Descriptive statistics

This paragraph presents key descriptive information regarding the 115 heads of household who requested project assistance. A distinction is made between those who returned and those who did not. On average, migrants requesting assistance to return were male (72%), 38 years old, single (73%), and most commonly residing in northern Italy (48%). As reflects migration patterns in Italy, African migrants were significantly younger than the Latin American ones (36 vs. 40 years old), much more likely to be male (89% vs. 59%), single (47% vs. 29%), and without dependents in Italy. Migrants most frequently completed their education in the country of origin (75%). The majority hold a high school diploma (53%). In most cases, migrants were working prior to migrating (92%), for an average of around eight years and more likely in blue-collar jobs (63%). The human capital of Latin American migrants was significantly higher than that of the African migrants (11.7 vs. 6.3 years of education; working in white-collar positions for 45% vs. 27%). The majority were economic migrants (65%) who had migrated relatively recently (in 2010, on average). Latin American migrants were on average older than African migrants when leaving the country (33 vs. 27 years old). African migrants were far more likely to have arrived in Italy as undocumented migrants than those from Latin America (respectively 82% vs. 2%).

At the time of their request for assistance, the majority (69.6%) of migrants were classified as irregular. Most were either unemployed (83.5%) or occasional workers (13%). On average, the sample migrants had worked in Italy for around four years (equivalent to approximately 50% of time spent in Italy) and in blue-collar, unskilled jobs (99%). The overwhelming majority of assisted returnees (95%) had had no legal problems in Italy (e.g., no criminal record). Most migrants had a primary family (95%) in the country of origin and maintained contact with it (95%), including by sending remittances (66%) but rarely through one or more personal visits (31%).

Migrants who requested assistance but decided not to leave Italy had either voluntarily dropped out of the AVRR program (50%) or were not authorized by the police/government authorities because they could not fulfill the criteria for the program (50%). Comparing migrants who returned with migrants who did not return shows that returnees were more likely to be married, to have sent remittances to support investments or business activities, to have visited their home country in the last one to three years, to identify more with their home country, and to have worked in less-qualified jobs in the home country (data provided in Table 1). Those differences indicate selection bias in the sample of returned migrants, which is accounted for by correcting the empirical estimations.

Insert Table 1 about here

Measurement

A short narrative description follows of the dependent, independent, and control variables. Table 2 provides an overview of those variables, together with their measurement and source.

Insert Table 2 about here

Dependent variable. Decision-making regarding the level of entrepreneurial investment by assisted returnee nascent entrepreneurs (*invest_plan*) is measured as the percentage of the reintegration plan budget allocated to starting a new entrepreneurial activity.

Independent variables. Two sets of independent variables are included in the analysis, in line with the literature on return migration and entrepreneurial decision-making. The first set of variables refer to Cassarino's preparedness to return framework (2004). Here, three variables regarding migrants' willingness to return are included: family reunification, improved home country conditions, and acculturation to the home vs. host country. First, it has been argued that assisted returnee entrepreneurs are more likely to allocate higher amounts of financial capital to nascent entrepreneurial activities to look for stable economic reintegration opportunities and to provide additional economic, social, and educational opportunities for their households (e.g., Ruben et al., 2009). A variable measuring the number of family members in the home country (*family_home*) is therefore built from prereturn assistance information. Second, by considering the safety/security aspects of return, previous studies have shown that migrants who left for personal safety or other humanitarian reasons are likely to perceive improved conditions in the host country upon return (e.g., Leerkes et al., 2017; Ruben et al., 2009). Following that line of reasoning, assisted returnee entrepreneurs who first emigrated from the home country for humanitarian motives would be more willing to invest in entrepreneurial start-ups. That is measured through a dichotomous variable taking the value 1 if the returnee first emigrated for humanitarian reasons, 0 otherwise (*humanit_migr*). Third, as acculturation is a relevant factor in the process of migrant integration (e.g., Berry, 1997), it can be expected that their acculturation with the home country would be positively related to the entrepreneurial investment and the willingness to return to reintegrate in the long term. Conversely, acculturation to the host country might be negatively related to the willingness to put higher investment into binding entrepreneurial activities in the home country (e.g., De Haas & Fokkema, 2011; Constant & Massey, 2002). Therefore, two variables drawn from 8-point scales adapted from Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) are considered for measuring the degree of identification with the country of origin (*homec_identific*) and with Italy (*hostc_identif*) prior to the return.

Another element in Cassarino's framework (2004) is the mobilization of resources. In that regard, migrants who were able to prepare for their return through sending remittances for investments (e.g., real estate or land) or business activities can be expected to be more able to invest in entrepreneurial activities with the goal of reintegrating in the home socioeconomic context (e.g., Black et al., 2003; Nisrane et al., 2017). That is measured through two dichotomous variables, the first of which (*remitt_invest*) takes the value 1 if the migrant sent remittances for investment or business activities, 0 otherwise. The second (*home_own*) takes the value 1 if other tangible resources, such as home ownership, are available to ease the migrant's reintegration and allow for higher entrepreneurial investment (0 otherwise).

Lastly, as theorized by Cassarino (2004) and shown by several studies, migrants' preparedness to return is linked to the extent of the knowledge they have maintained regarding conditions in their home countries (e.g., Coniglio & Brzozowski, 2018). As that knowledge is highly correlated with the extent and frequency of contact with people in the home country, a variable measuring the recency of personal contacts through personal visits to the home country during the previous five years is included (*recent_netw_homec*).

The second set of variables included in the analysis relate to the different motivations that can drive entrepreneurial decision-making. A variable measuring the self-enhancing vs. self-transcending motivation of assisted returnee entrepreneurs to establish a microenterprise in their country of origin was created by analyzing responses to an open question in the predeparture questionnaire asking assisted migrants to describe the goals that they set for their business. Each answer is assigned to a first-order category to create idiosyncratic labels, such as self-realization, exploit competences, independence, financial well-being, reputation, support to family, and conformity. Some of the first-order categories are then aggregated into second-order categories: (1) self-enhancing motivations if the migrant reports having the goal of self-realization, exploiting competences, increasing financial well-being, or being independent; and (2) self-transcendent motivations if the migrant reports having the goal of supporting their family, gaining reputation, or doing something of value to the family or the local community. The variable *self-enhanc* thus takes the value 1 if the entrepreneur reported self-enhancing motivations, and 0 otherwise. That variable is used to compare groups of assisted returnee entrepreneurs. In fact, the dependent variable *invest_plan* takes statistically significant higher values ($p < 0.05$) for migrants starting a business with a self-enhancing motivation (allocating 88% of their reintegration budget to entrepreneurial activities) than those with a self-transcendent motivation (allocating 74% of their reintegration budget to entrepreneurial activities).

Control variables. Following the approach taken in the existing literature on entrepreneurial investment, several other individual- and environmental-level variables are used as controls. First, returnee demographic characteristics such as *age* and *gender* (dichotomous variable taking the value 1 if returnee entrepreneur is male, and 0 if female) (e.g., Girma, 2017; Gmelch, 1980). Second, human-capital variables such as *education* (number of years in formal education programs) (e.g., Ammassari, 2004). Third, variables that proxy the returnees' urgency to satisfy basic needs such as the general living conditions measured in terms of whether the returnee's destination country is in Africa rather than Latin America (*africa*).

Method

As the dependent variable entrepreneurial investment is measured as a percentage, the data analysis was conducted using a fractional logit model (Papke & Wooldridge, 1996). A comparison was drawn between assisted returnee entrepreneurs with self-enhancement motivations and those with self-transcending motivations by relying on a split sample test approach (Chow, 1960).

To account for selection bias, the data available from the AVRR program allowed selection into the return program to be taken into account for those migrants only requiring information about the program. Selection bias was addressed by correcting estimates using inverse probability weighting (Wooldridge, 2007). Inverse probability weighting relies on logistic regression to estimate the probability of the exposure observed for a particular person then using the predicted probability as a weight in the subsequent analyses.

The analysis proceeded in two steps. First, a probit regression was run to estimate whether a migrant returned with the assisted return program. To that end, I followed the determinants in return migration literature indicating that return is explained by both individual-level characteristics and the conditions in the migrants' host and home countries (Cassarino, 2004; King, 2000; Kuschminder, 2017a; Paparusso & Ambrosetti, 2017). Variables which the results showed to be significant in defining key differences between returnees and non-returnees were also included (i.e., Table 1).

Specifically, the following variables were included: a dichotomous variable *married* (1 if married, 0 otherwise) (e.g., Brekke, 2015; Leerkes et al., 2017); a dummy variable accounting for whether the assisted returnee was *unschooled* (1 if unschooled, 0 otherwise) (e.g., Di Bartolomeo, 2011); a dummy variable taking the value 1 if the migrant sent remittances for investment in real estate or business activities, 0 otherwise (*remitt_invest*) (e.g., De Haas & Fokkema, 2011; Sinatti, 2011); the number of years residing in Italy (*hostc_years*) (e.g., Dustmann & Weiss, 2007; Portes & Zhou, 1993); a dummy variable taking the value 1 if the migrant was residing in a region in northern Italy, where a greater number of welfare services are available, and 0 otherwise (*hostc_region*); a dichotomous variable taking the value 1 if the migrant faced legal problems in the host country, 0 otherwise (*hostc_legal_prob*) (e.g., Joppke, 2010; Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Ortensi, 2013); a dichotomous variable taking the value 1 if the migrant was unemployed at the time of application to join the AVRR program, and 0 otherwise (*hostc_unempl*); a dummy variable taking the value 1 if the migrant had visited the home country in the last one to three years, 0 in other cases (*homec_visit*) (de Haas & Fokkema, 2011; Portes et al., 2002); a variable taking values on an 8-point scale adapted from Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) measuring the degree of identification with the country of origin before return (*homec_identific*); a dummy variable taking the value 1 if the migrant had previous work experience in the country of origin in white-collar jobs, 0 otherwise (*homec_whitec*) (e.g., Constant & Massey, 2002); and a dummy variable accounting for the migrant's continent of origin (1 = *africa*; 0 = Latin America) (e.g., Brekke, 2015; Leerkes et al., 2017). The probit results are shown in Table 3. Based on those results, the inverse of the predicted values for each observation were used to calculate the weighting for correcting the subsequent estimates.

In the second step of analysis, the main regressions were run by weighting observations using the inverse probability scores calculated in the first step.

Insert Table 3 about here

RESULTS

Correlations across variables are shown in Table 4. The results from fractional logit estimations are shown in Table 5. Models 1, 1a, and 1b in Table 5 show coefficients without accounting for migrants' selection into the returnee group, whereas Models 2, 2a, and 2b include a correction using inverse probability weighting. Model 2 serves as a reference point in the discussion.

Insert Table 4 and Table 5 about here

The results for the whole sample, as presented in Model 2, show that the only significant factor which explains the percentage of entrepreneurial investment from the total available budget for returnee entrepreneurs is home ownership. Home ownership is an indicator of the welfare level of the returnee's household in the home country, which signals the availability of additional resources that nascent entrepreneur returnees can exploit in addition to the (small) budget made available by the AVRR program. That finding confirms the idea that assisted returnee entrepreneurs can be viewed as being close in profile terms to necessity entrepreneurs, for whom the preparedness to return in terms of being able to satisfy basic needs such as accommodation increases their likelihood of investing higher amounts of reintegration budgets in entrepreneurial activities.

Beyond that general finding for the whole sample, the analysis shows that assisted returnee entrepreneurs are not a homogeneous group. The differences in their entrepreneurial motivations are the key to understanding the extent of their investment in business start-ups. In fact, comparative tests of the level of entrepreneurial investment show that returnee entrepreneurs driven by self-enhancing motivations allocate higher investments to entrepreneurial activities than the entrepreneurs driven by self-transcending motivations. The factors explaining the level of entrepreneurial investment decisions vary across the two groups. As shown in the split sample analysis, higher levels of entrepreneurial investment by assisted returnee entrepreneurs driven by self-enhancing motivations are explained by the presence of family members in the home country

(β = 0.34; p < 0.10). Those results might look contradictory, since greater investments by those with a family in the home country could be considered closer to a self-transcending motivation (i.e., caring about the family) than to self-enhancing motivations. The extensive qualitative data available from the project documents, which contain information on motivations to return and expectations regarding the short- and long-term conditions following their return, provide several solutions to that apparent paradox. Some migrants display self-enhancing motivations linked to the willingness to be independent of their families, with returning as an entrepreneur seen as a source of income upon which returnees can proudly manifest their economic autonomy from the family. Other migrants report having the goal of increasing their self-realization and financial well-being by contributing to existing family business activities. Overall, therefore, those results suggest that migrants driven by self-enhancing motivations are more willing to invest in entrepreneurial activities which would allow them to foster a long-term resettlement and reintegration if they have a family in the home country.

Returnee entrepreneurs driven by self-transcending motivations will however plan higher investments in entrepreneurial activities if they are older (β = 0.13; p < 0.05), single (β*married* = -3.55; p < 0.01), male (β = 1.95; p < 0.10), returning to an African country (β = 3.65; p < 0.01), and have a weak identification with the host country (β = -0.50; p < 0.05). Those results suggest that returnee entrepreneurs driven by self-transcending motivations seem to invest in their microenterprise by adhering to patterns characterized by conformity to strong local social expectations about returnees (e.g., older, male, and single returnees, especially those returning to Africa) and a willingness to reintegrate in the home context (e.g., lower identification with the host country).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Return migration is a topic of mounting interest for policy-makers in Western countries due to the increasing flow of immigrants and the related restrictive turns in immigration policies (Ruben et al., 2009). Yet that context is rarely investigated by management and entrepreneurship scholars (Bolzani, 2021; Drori et al., 2009; Gruenhagen et al., 2020). Whereas previous studies in those disciplines have mostly focused on elite migrants returning to the home voluntarily to establish a business, I seek in this study to provide an understanding of the entrepreneurial undertakings by "non-elite" returnee migrants who instead might face involuntary or urgent return decisions.

As a novel context of research, I consider in this paper the specificities of returnees "assisted" by return and reintegration policies offered by actors in the host country. Under several circumstances, those entrepreneurs might be rather "ill prepared" for their return (Gmelch, 1980) because they lack clear willingness to return, ability to fully mobilize tangible and intangible resources, social capital, and the information needed to secure their return and gain awareness of the social, economic, and political changes which have occurred since they left their countries of origin. In the context of return and reintegration policies, migrants can decide how much of their budget to invest in the start-up of a microenterprise in their countries of origin. This paper thus explores the factors explaining the extent of the financial investment that assisted returnee entrepreneurs allocate to their businesses. Accounting for self-selection of migrants into the considered AVRR program, it analyzes data about a sample of 93 African and Latin American migrants.

The research reveals that the most vulnerable returnees allocate their reintegration budget to satisfying more urgent basic needs (e.g., healthcare, living costs, and accommodation). Contrarily, returnees who are more prepared to return and better able to satisfy their basic needs (e.g., owners of accommodation) allocate higher levels of investment to microenterprise start-ups. Therefore, return and reintegration policies seem to be a form of institutional lever which can directly alleviate part of the basic needs for returnees, but at the expense of entrepreneurial investments, since higher levels of entrepreneurial investments will be made by "wealthier" or "safer" returnees who adequately planned or prepared to return by mobilizing resources. These findings speak to recent developments in the literature on necessity entrepreneurship (Dencker et al., 2021). Analyzing the lack of preparedness and the decisions about how to exploit the budget made available under an AVRR program, I argue that assisted returnee entrepreneurs can be conceptualized as being closer to necessity entrepreneurs; they invest in a business start-up as a form of occupation (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). However, I also argue that the boundary condition of satisfying basic needs does not take into account the different degrees and urgency of needs to be addressed through entrepreneurial activities. It is therefore useful to further look at the heterogeneous additional motivations for entrepreneurship, such as self-enhancing or self-transcending motivations, which accompany necessity entrepreneurship beyond its focus on the satisfaction of physiological and safety needs.

Hence, a second important discovery of this study is that, among necessity entrepreneurs such as those considered herein, wide heterogeneity remains in terms of entrepreneurship motivations, which derive from the need to satisfy higher needs (e.g., psychological and self-fulfillment) than just the basic ones. The heterogeneity in nascent entrepreneurs' motivations is not a new topic for entrepreneurship research (e.g., Shepherd et al., 2015; Shepherd et al., 2019), but it is a qualifying finding with respect to the latest theorizations on necessity entrepreneurship (Dencker et al., 2021), which highlight only satisfaction of physiological and safety needs as motivating for necessity entrepreneurs. Contrarily, this study shows that various factors can explain the investment decisions made by assisted returnees based on their different entrepreneurial motivations—either self-enhancing or self-transcending. These findings are also new in the domain of knowledge about returnee entrepreneurship, suggesting that future studies on returnee entrepreneurs should further consider the nuanced psychological processes characterizing return migration (Vathi, 2017).

This study allows interesting comparisons to be drawn with the existing management and entrepreneurship literature on returnee entrepreneurs focusing on the use of human, social, and technological capital accumulated by returnees abroad (e.g., Drori et al., 2009; Li et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2010). Assisted returnees such as those considered by this study who participate in a program that incentivizes them to become entrepreneurs present very different characteristics to those of the returnee entrepreneurs studied in the management and entrepreneurship literature (e.g., Li et al., 2012; Pruthi, 2014). In addition, the countries of origin considered in this study (African and Latin American countries) are insufficiently researched contexts, both in the previous literature on assisted return (e.g., Kuschminder, 2017a) and on transnational entrepreneurship (e.g., Kiss et al., 2012). Management scholars should be aware of the problematic assumptions in the celebratory narrative of successful returnees for their home countries, since the development potential of migration is contingent upon the structural constraints in the country of return. Migration experience might not necessarily be an enriching experience that leads to the accumulation of skills, experiences, and social connections (Åkesson & Eriksson Baaz, 2015). Therefore, studying "assisted returnee entrepreneurs"—not only those in AVRR but also in other schemes offered by supranational authorities such as the UNDP (Ghosh, 2000a) or national governments (e.g., Haase & Honerath, 2016)—can contribute to widening our knowledge of the contextual nature of entrepreneurial activities (Shepherd et al., 2019). Future studies should therefore investigate in greater detail the antecedents, processes, and outcomes of entrepreneurship in such contexts.

This paper opens a reflection on the scant literature addressing the relationship between institutions and the venture creation process prompted by returnee entrepreneurship (Gruenhagen et al., 2020). In this regard, the paper also provides insights into the effects of institutional levers targeted to disadvantaged groups, as recently called for by necessity entrepreneurship scholars (Dencker et al., 2021). Entrepreneurship for migrants is increasingly proposed in international policy circles as both conducive to development of their homelands (e.g., Gillespie et al., 1999; Bolzani et al., 2020) and a means for social inclusion in the home and host countries (e.g., OECD, 2020). However, those forms of "niche" entrepreneurship policy, aimed as they are at stimulating the level of business ownership and entrepreneurial activities around underrepresented segments of the population (Dahlstrand & Stevenson, 2010), can become "compensatory" interventions offering entrepreneurship as a solution to existing opportunity gaps, unemployment, and limited upward mobility, while leaving unchanged these structural conditions (Honig, 2018). In the context of developing countries such as those considered in this study, initiatives to support entrepreneurship might be used as a "development apparatus" based on the assumption that they will lead to economic development and job creation (Smit & Pretorius, 2020). The creation of programs of voluntary return and reintegration based on the creation of microenterprises (rather than, for example, programs supporting stable employment options) resonates with neoliberal orthodoxies (e.g., Tedmanson et al., 2012) in which the responsibility for development is moved from the state to individuals (e.g., migrants, Faist, 2008; Bolzani et al., 2020) or private business initiatives (Sutter et al., 2019). Indeed, returnees' development of businesses in their home countries is often construed as being part of the solution to reducing poverty and fostering development (Smit & Pretorius, 2020). The results of this study suggest that a critical stance should be adopted in analyzing those solutions, given that higher entrepreneurial investments emerge as being possible only for those wealthier and safer entrepreneurs with relatively reduced urgency to satisfy basic needs. Future scholarly work should reflect more critically on the positive assumptions about migration, entrepreneurship, and development (e.g., knowledge transfer, innovation, and internationalization) for migrants' home and host countries (Gruenhagen et al., 2020).

This research is also relevant from a policy-making perspective. Over recent decades, policy-makers and international organizations have highlighted return migration as a means of home country economic and social development driven by the returnees' economic resources, knowledge, skills, cultural diversity, and expanded social networks (e.g., Anghel, Fauser, & Boccagni, 2019; Black & King, 2004; Nyberg-Sørensen, Van Hear, & Engberg-Pedersen, 2002). Therefore, policy-makers in both the home and host countries express great expectations of returnees' entrepreneurship and investments (e.g., Sinatti, 2015). However, that discourse about return migration and development takes place against a background of developing security-oriented instruments of migration control (Åkesson & Eriksson Baaz, 2015), viewing the repatriation of migrants as an essential component of migration management in Western countries (e.g., Dustmann, 1996; Ruben et al., 2009; Scalettaris & Gubert, 2018). For instance, European policy-makers emphasize the wish to control migrants' entry to and exit from the European territory by coupling "return" with the terms "removal" and "readmission," thus using return as "a means for the turning back of undesired immigrants such as irregular stayers, rejected asylum seekers, and people living in marginal conditions" (Sinatti, 2015, p. 279). This study, focusing on an assisted return program, unveils the factors that explain the returnees' decisions to invest in entrepreneurial activities in the home country, thus providing useful suggestions for policy-makers and operators involved in helping returnees to implement sustainable long-term reintegration plans.

A relevant finding of this study for policy-making is that migrants less prepared for return, and thus most vulnerable, allocate their reintegration budget to satisfying more urgent basic needs (e.g., healthcare, living costs, and accommodation). By so doing, they are at risk of being unable to sustain long-term reintegration, in the absence of other income-generation support mechanisms provided by the program (e.g., for finding employment or traineeship opportunities). Since previous studies have shown that returnees who receive financial assistance to start a business in the home country are more likely to reintegrate in the country of origin over the long term (e.g., Koser & Kuschminder, 2015), the amount of investment allocated by more “privileged” assisted returnees (e.g., those who can count on additional resources, such as home ownership) should be a variable of interest to policy-makers and caseworkers involved in the delivery of equitable AVRR programs.

Several opportunities present themselves for additional development with respect to the scientific understanding of entrepreneurship in the context of AVRR programs. The number of such schemes at the global level is increasing, and policy-makers are strategically reflecting on these tools as part of comprehensive and integrated approaches toward migration and asylum system management (e.g., European Commission, 2021). However, these funds may come under changing pressures depending on socio-political or environmental conditions, are clearly political, and thus may be far from guaranteed. Therefore, the changing policy landscape and operational implementation of these schemes should be closely considered by future studies. It is however important that scholars engage in this field of study because of the dearth of research on the implementation and results of these schemes (Paasche, 2015; Kuschminder, 2017a). It is recommended that policy-makers allow research on the antecedents and outcomes of those programs. Nevertheless, as there is no systematic data collection for keeping track of return migration, whether assisted or not (Leerkes et al., 2017), such efforts will have to be negotiated by researchers, policy-makers, civil society, and organizations involved in return programs (e.g., EMN, 2016). In that regard, as shown by the research design of this study, the data that can be collected through those collaborative efforts can be very rich. Here, attention should be devoted to designing tools for effective/efficient data collection tools and measurement of variables which could be used by project staff and understood by assisted migrants (e.g., use of dichotomous or categorical answer options vs. psychometric scales).

Importantly, this study focuses solely on entrepreneurial investment decisions reached by migrants prior to their return to their country of origin. Although it can be difficult to follow up on return migrants and their reintegration outcomes in the long run, future studies should engage in establishing a longitudinal design to track entrepreneurial development and outcomes over time. As an example of those research efforts, studies could track whether returnees could implement their business plans or were required to change them, either with respect to the forecasted business activities, logistic arrangements, costs/investments, or milestones. As an additional example, it could be important to engage not only in analyses of the opportunities for revenue generation by the microenterprises established by returnees in the home country, but also comparative analyses with other waged salary opportunities either in the home country or abroad. Investigating the long-term effect of entrepreneurial engagement, in terms of sustainable reintegration (as opposed to, for instance, remigration), would be very important to ascertain the real value of these initiatives to sustain the medium- to long-term well-being of returned migrants and their households.

EXHIBITS

Table 1 – Sample descriptives

	Returned (n = 93)		Not returned (n = 22)		Total (n = 115)		Mean diff. sig.
	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	
Age	38.88	10.85	37.68	12.82	38.65	11.21	n.s.
Gender (male) (b)	0.71	0.46	0.77	0.43	0.72	0.45	n.s.
Married (b)	0.41	0.49	0.18	0.39	0.37	0.48	**
Having a legal residence permit (b)	0.55	0.50	0.68	0.48	0.57	0.50	n.s.
Health issues (b)	0.10	0.30	0.09	0.29	0.10	0.30	n.s.
Year of migration	2010	8.21	2009	9.07	2010	8.35	n.s.
Motivation for migration = work (b)	0.64	0.49	0.66	0.48	0.65	0.48	n.s.
Age at migration	31.08	10.27	28.86	10.41	30.65	10.29	n.s.
Arrival year in Italy	2011	7.89	2010	9.39	2011	8.15	n.s.
Documented migrant on arrival in Italy (b)	0.67	0.47	0.55	0.51	0.64	0.48	n.s.
Number of family members in Italy	0.61	1.30	0.32	0.72	0.56	1.22	n.s.
Number of children <18 years old in Italy	0.33	0.91	0.14	0.47	0.30	0.85	n.s.
Maintained regular contact with family in the home country (b)	0.95	0.23	0.95	0.21	0.95	0.22	n.s.
Sent remittances (b)	0.66	0.48	0.68	0.48	0.66	0.48	n.s.
Sent remittances with investment/business goals (b)	0.03	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.16	*
Having primary family in the country of origin (b)	0.94	0.25	1.00	0.00	0.95	0.22	n.s.
Having extended family in the country of origin (b)	0.24	0.43	0.18	0.39	0.23	0.42	n.s.
Presence of other relevant people in the country of origin (b)	0.02	0.15	0.09	0.29	0.03	0.15	n.s.
Children in the country of origin (b)	0.41	0.49	0.50	0.51	0.43	0.50	n.s.
Visited the home country during the last year (b)	0.05	0.23	0.05	0.21	0.05	0.22	n.s.
Visited the home country in the last one to three years	0.16	0.37	0.04	0.21	0.13	0.34	*
Visited the home country in the last three to five years	0.18	0.39	0.18	0.39	0.18	0.39	n.s.
Identification with Italy (c)	3.80	2.35	3.57	2.27	3.76	2.33	n.s.
Identification with the home country (c)	6.87	1.57	6.05	1.99	6.71	1.68	*
Years of education	9.40	4.73	9.36	4.54	9.39	4.67	n.s.
Education completed in home country (b)	0.75	0.43	0.73	0.46	0.75	0.44	n.s.
Education completed in Italy (b)	0.40	0.49	0.45	0.51	0.41	0.49	n.s.
Previous work experience in home country (b)	0.92	0.27	0.91	0.29	0.92	0.27	n.s.
Years of work experience in home country	8.12	8.07	6.27	6.43	7.77	7.80	n.s.
Previous "white-collar" work experience in home country (b)	0.33	0.47	0.54	0.51	0.37	0.49	*
Willingness to attend training courses back in the home country (b)	0.63	0.48	0.64	0.49	0.63	0.48	n.s.
Currently unemployed in Italy (b)	0.84	0.37	0.82	0.39	0.83	0.37	n.s.
Years of work experience in Italy	3.35	5.11	4.83	8.63	3.63	5.30	n.s.
Legal problems in Italy (a)	0.05	0.23	0.14	0.35	0.07	0.26	n.s.

Notes: (a) Dummy variable, statistical difference tested through the Wilkoxon–Mann–Whitney test
(b) *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.1$

Table 2 – Summary of variables

Variable name	**Description**	**Data source**
Invest_plan	Percentage of reintegration plan budget allocated to entrepreneurial activities	Prereturn business model information
Independent variables		
Self_enhanc	1 = assisted returnee entrepreneur reporting a self-enhancing motivation for business creation, 0 = reporting a self-transcending motivation	Prereturn assistance information
Remitt_invest	1 = the migrant sent remittances to purchase real estate or land, or to finance business activities, 0 = otherwise	Prereturn assistance information
Humanit_migr	1 = the migrant first emigrated for humanitarian reasons, 0 = otherwise	Prereturn assistance information
Hostc_identif	Extent of identification with the host country (Italy) (8-point scale; aided visual diagram) before departure	Prereturn assistance information
Homec_identif	Extent of identification with the home country (8-point scale; aided visual diagram) before departure	Prereturn assistance information
Family_homec	Number of family members in the home country	Prereturn assistance information
Recent_netw_homec	1 = the migrant visited the home country during the last five years, 0 = otherwise	Prereturn assistance information
Control variables		
Age	Age of returnee	Prereturn assistance information
Married	1 = married migrant, 0 = otherwise	Prereturn assistance information
Gender	1 = male; 0 = female	Prereturn assistance information
Education	Years of formal education	Prereturn assistance information
Home_own	1 = the migrant or their family owns a home in the home country, 0 = otherwise	Prereturn assistance information
Africa	1 = country of return in Africa, 0 = country of return in Latin America	Prereturn assistance information

Table 3 – Probit regression of the probability of being an assisted returnee migrant

	Probability of being a returnee
Variables	**Coefficients (standard errors)**
Married	0.654
	(0.414)
Unschooled	0.756
	(0.682)
Remitt_invest	0.272
	(0.696)
Hostc_years	-0.058**
	(0.0268)
Hostc_region	-0.619*
	(0.371)
Hostc_legal_prob	-0.695
	(0.573)
Hostc_unempl	0.313
	(0.475)
Homec_visit	1.321**
	(0.609)
Homec_identific	0.231**
	(0.108)
Homec_whitec	-1.105***
	(0.396)
Africa	-0.614
	(0.396)
Constant	0.229
	(0.944)
Pseudo R-squared	0.2509

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$
n=115 (i.e., heads of households who requested project assistance)

Table 4 – Correlation of variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	invest_plan	1.000											
2	age	-0.0238	1.000										
3	married	0.0000	0.0902	1.000									
4	gender	0.2644*	-0.0838	0.2425*	1.000								
5	africa	0.2491*	-0.1854	0.1990	0.3871*	1.000							
6	remitt_invest	0.0245	0.1453	0.0645	-0.0839	0.0645	1.000						
7	humanit_migr	0.0260	-0.2048*	-0.2053*	0.1888	0.4123*	-0.1932	1.000					
8	hostc_identif	-0.0768	0.1332	-0.2172*	0.0402	0.0031	0.2704*	0.0336	1.000				
9	homec_identif	-0.0408	-0.0878	0.1271	0.1334	0.0126	0.0072	0.0617	-0.2780*	1.000			
10	education	-0.1472	-0.0733	-0.1539	-0.2378*	-0.5536*	0.0149	-0.1277	0.1266	0.1043	1.000		
11	home_own	0.3011*	0.0397	0.0441	-0.0112	0.0973	0.2407*	-0.1682	-0.0346	-0.0062	0.0447	1.000	
12	family_home	0.1451	0.1119	0.3700*	0.1699	-0.1241	0.0472	-0.1758	-0.1903	0.0065	0.0445	0.1894	1.000
13	recent_netw_homec	-0.1982	0.1612	0.0128	-0.2634*	-0.2042*	-0.0037	-0.0310	0.1838	-0.2581*	0.1838	0.0593	-0.0516

Note: * $p < 0.05$
n=93 (i.e., heads of households who were assisted to return to the home country)

Table 5 – Results, fractional logits estimations

	Selection model not included			Selection model included		
	Mod 1	**Mod 1a**	**Mod 1b**	**Mod 2**	**Mod 2a**	**Mod 2b**
Variables	**invest_plan (all sample) Coefficients (s.e.)**	**invest_plan (self_enhanc = 1) Coefficients (s.e.)**	**invest_plan (self_enhanc = 0) Coefficients (s.e.)**	**invest_plan (all sample) Coefficients (s.e.)**	**invest_plan (self_enhanc = 1) Coefficients (s.e.)**	**invest_plan (self_enhanc = 0) Coefficients (s.e.)**
age	0.01	-0.03	0.14***	0.01	-0.03	0.13**
	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.055)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.056)
married	-0.57	-0.04	-3.64***	-0.61	-0.15	-3.55***
	(0.485)	(0.582)	(1.300)	(0.492)	(0.575)	(1.362)
education	0.02	-0.07	-0.09	0.02	-0.07	-0.10
	(0.054)	(0.072)	(0.091)	(0.053)	(0.068)	(0.088)
gender	0.72	0.89	1.81*	0.79	0.87	1.95*
	(0.493)	(0.680)	(1.039)	(0.495)	(0.652)	(1.075)
home_own	2.64***	3.20***	3.66***	2.34***	2.60**	3.49***
	(0.496)	(1.025)	(1.032)	(0.467)	(1.027)	(1.050)
africa	0.88	-1.24	3.71***	1.03	-1.23	3.65***
	(0.631)	(0.777)	(1.238)	(0.655)	(0.755)	(1.294)
remitt_invest	-0.19	-1.20*	-0.30	0.08	-1.20	-0.05
	(0.622)	(0.646)	(1.160)	(0.820)	(0.878)	(1.254)
mot_human	0.06	0.88	-0.98	-0.20	0.96	-1.20
	(0.699)	(0.663)	(0.967)	(0.694)	(0.636)	(0.949)
hostc_identif	-0.09	-0.13	-0.52**	-0.11	-0.10	-0.50**
	(0.078)	(0.081)	(0.205)	(0.084)	(0.082)	(0.204)
homec_identif	-0.10	-0.02	0.38	-0.07	-0.04	0.38
	(0.127)	(0.151)	(0.288)	(0.127)	(0.136)	(0.286)
family_homec	0.20	0.25	-0.13	0.20	0.34*	-0.11
	(0.174)	(0.182)	(0.379)	(0.183)	(0.177)	(0.389)
recent_netw_homc	-0.53	-0.71	-0.87	-0.30	-0.49	-0.72
	(0.509)	(0.594)	(0.664)	(0.528)	(0.605)	(0.670)
constant	0.87	3.50***	-4.78*	0.80	3.30***	-4.41
	(1.284)	(1.278)	(2.819)	(1.324)	(1.258)	(2.935)
N	91	54	35	90	53	35

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.1$

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SHORT BIO

After 5 years of work in the domain of financial audit and of development cooperation in Europe and Africa, Daniela obtained her Ph.D. in Business Management in 2013. She carries out research intersecting the domains of migration, entrepreneurship, and technology transfer, being interested in entrepreneurial processes and outcomes with a focus on diversity and social inclusion. She coordinates and is a member of numerous European and national projects on these issues and has been a consultant for the OECD and UN-IOM.