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The Process of Return:

Decision Making, Reintegration and Sustainable Return

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Sustainable Return

- Gained popularity in 1990s
- Embedded into the AVR discourse
- One of the common goals of EU Member states AVR programmes
- Lacks agreed upon definitions and measurement

= Ambiguous term as a key policy and programming goal



Defining Sustainable Return

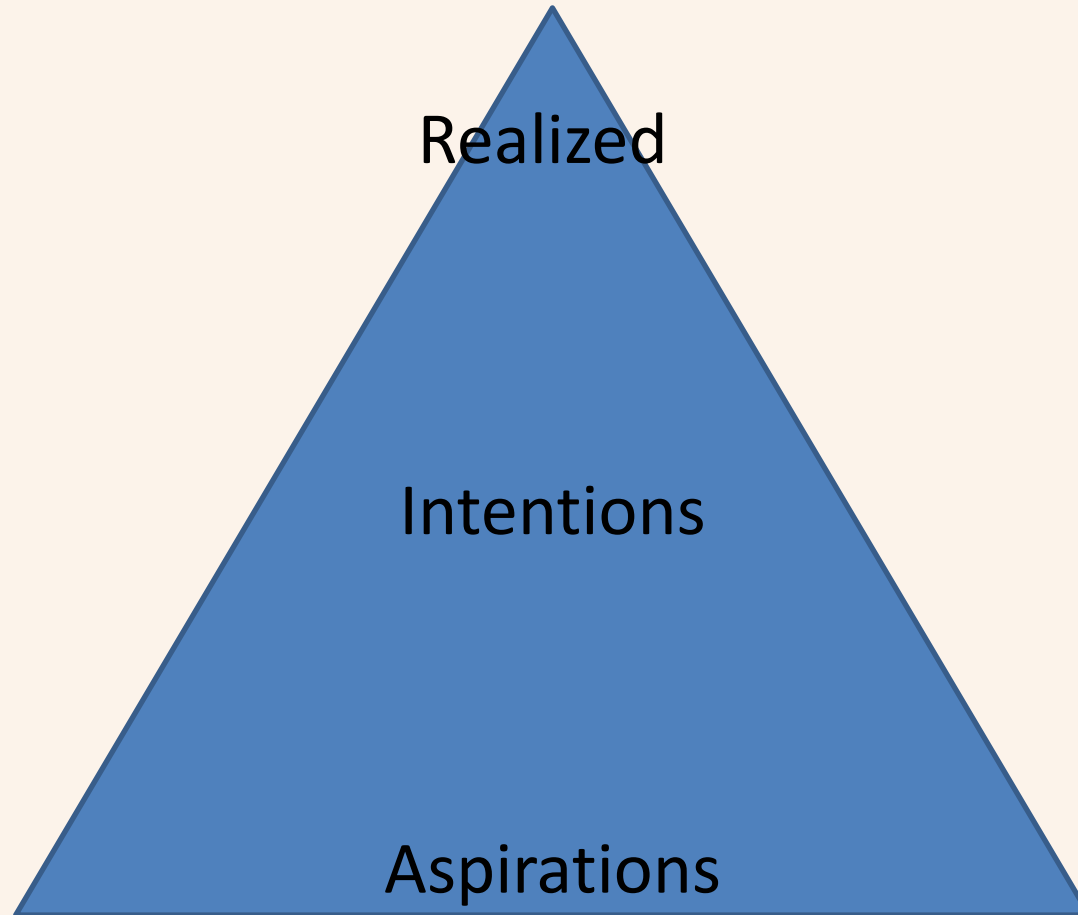
1) “Sustainable return is return which **deters new irregular migration of the returnee** and – where possible – of other third-country nationals in the Country of Return **by consolidating the position of returnees in their home countries** and – where possible – enabling the returnee to consolidate the position of other people in his / her community or country of return.”
(COM(2015) 453 final cited from EMN, 2016)

= Avoiding irregular re-migration to the EU



Remigration as an indicator for sustainable return?

- Remigration aspirations
- Remigration intentions
- Realized remigration
 - Geography
 - Legality





Defining Sustainable Return

2) “sustainable return should be understood either as: (a) **successful reintegration** in the country of origin, which includes the economic, social and psychosocial aspects and the capacity of the individual to cope with push factors, both old and new, on the same level as the local population or (b) eventual legal remigration made possible by skills acquired during the reintegration process.” (IOM, 2015)

= successful reintegration



- 3) “socio-economic status and fear of violence or persecution is no worse, relative to the population in the place of origin, one year after their return” (Black et al., 2004)

- 4) “the individual has reintegrated into the economic, social and cultural processes of the country of origin and feels that they are in an environment of safety and security upon return” (Koser and Kuschminder, 2015)

- 5) “Those who aspire for reintegration and are able to reintegrate” (Strand et al., 2016)



Sustainable Return = Successful Reintegration

How do reintegration conditions impact remigration intentions and realized remigration?

1. Sustainably returned with no remigration
2. Sustainably returned with remigration
3. Unsustainably returned with no remigration
4. Unsustainably returned with remigration



Developing Categories (Strand et al., 2016)

Post-return Characteristic	Type or Returnee
Sustainable Return	Those who aspire for reintegration and are able to reintegrate
Volatile Return	Those who aspire for reintegration but are unable to reintegrate
Unsustainable Return	Those who do not aspire for reintegration, but are unable to re-migrate
Re-migration	Those who do not aspire for reintegration and are able to re-migration, either back to the country of previous settlement or elsewhere



Measuring Reintegration

- Multidimensional process
- Objective and subjective indicators
- Index approach is possible



Measuring and Defining Successful Reintegration

- Data can help inform benchmarks for successful reintegration - identify factors leading to and inhibiting reintegration
- Provide context and information to target programming appropriately to address inhibiting factors to reintegration



Decision Making for AVR

- Complex Individualized Process- include feelings and perceptions
- Viewed within the Migration Cycle
- Quantitative evidence indicates that AVR is less selected by individuals from post-conflict countries



Gap in Linking Decision Making for return with Processes of Reintegration and Sustainable Return

- Some evidence to show that positive decision making factors lead to higher levels of reintegration and sustainable return
- Evidence from anthropological research that forced returns and deportations lead to high levels of unsustainable return and vulnerabilities amongst returnees



Conclusion

1. Remigration and Sustainable Return are not one and the same- Remigration is not a sound indicator for measuring sustainable return
2. Sustainable Return should be viewed as the result of a successful reintegration process
3. Reintegration should be viewed as multidimensional, measured with objective and subjective indicators and an index approach is useful here
4. Strong need for more data and evidence in this area, large role for host country governments to play in developing first database on returnees



Thank you!

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