

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND VITAL SATISFACTION: THE PINK AND BLUE PUZZLE

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Abstract- This paper approaches the relationship between migration, social capital and vital satisfaction from a gender perspective. The importance of this approach lies in considering the concept of social capital as a tool for analysing the personal development process, emphasizing the different social dimension of men and women. This analysis is based on three types of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking, and examines their relationship with individual's perceived life satisfaction. The existence or absence of social networks as well as the nature of ties are considered key factors in the success or failure of an immigrant's life project. This paper presents an empirical study on a convenience sample of immigrants in Valencian Community. The results suggest that positive or negative synergy between these three types of social capital takes a different way for men and women to determine whether immigrants have better perceived life satisfaction. That is, immigrants' life satisfaction is associated with the structure of their social capital which is different among men and women.

Index Terms- migration, bonding, bridging and linking social capital, life satisfaction, gender.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, studies concerning interpersonal relations and their various implications are increasingly being taken as a basis for analysing the migration process, to determine the nature and impacts of migratory networks on immigrants' socio-economic situation in the host society, and most of all, the implications on their perceived life satisfaction.

The multi-dimensional nature of immigrant integration makes it a difficult subject for studies to deal with globally. Nevertheless, previously hidden dimensions have gradually been added to include explanatory new factors. Thus in addition to socio-demographic factors (such as education level, age, gender) the research has added new economic, social and psychological characteristics linked to the process: the immigrants' social networks and relationships.

Given the importance of migration networks, this study examines the relationship of such networks with the success or failure of social integration in the host country and considers the following question: Do immigrant relations affect their perceived life satisfaction in any way? Is the effect of relationship different for men and women respect their perceived life satisfaction? Previous studies suggest that social capital, represented by contacts and social activities, is a good indicator for predicting satisfaction and quality of life for the elderly [1] and elderly immigrants [2]. These studies, however, have not explored deeply the type of strong or weak ties in migrant networks nor the gender differences. The differentiation between ties has mainly been developed in the economic literature to explain economic growth rather than life satisfaction.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a short literature review of the main concepts

such as social capital, migration networks, social ties and subjective life satisfaction. The following section presents the methodology, data, justification of the sample and the variables for the empirical work. Section 4 presents the outcome of the relationship between types of social capital and subjective life satisfaction and finally the conclusions.

II. SOCIAL CAPITAL, MIGRATORY NETWORKS AND LIFE SATISFACTION. SHORT LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Social Capital

There is abundant, albeit recent literature on social capital. The vagueness of the definition of social capital is apparent throughout the literature and is mainly due to its intangible nature and the multiple dimensions involved. Social capital is not a homogeneous concept, in fact quite the opposite. For example, from an economic perspective, social capital reflects an important phenomenon related to the way values such as trust and cooperation promote efficiency and economic development [3].

The problem in defining the concept of social capital is the main criticisms of some authors. Vagueness in its definition entails significant limitations of the social capital approach as a tool for analysing the dynamics of social and economic development: 1) the impossibility of capturing it concretely (a study of each and every dimension would be too impossibly complex to tackle) and 2) the difficulties of measurement. Although the definitions contain a series of common elements that can be considered as "dimensions" of the concept (trust, networks, social rules), it is impossible to find a way of measuring them all at the same time. In spite of this, it is possible to recognise a general definition of the concept. In short, the premise behind the concept of social capital is networks, associations, norms and values that enable

people to act collectively to produce a positive externality in favour of themselves or the community [4].

B. Migration Networks

Migration affects and is affected in many ways by life in society, hence the approaches from different disciplines with different focuses, originating many explanatory theories according to the scientific area (sociology, economics, geography or a multidisciplinary approach) [5]. All the explanatory theories have emerged over time in response to the paradigms that were current when they were produced. One of these theories is migration network theory, which explains part of the migratory phenomenon through social networks, so that larger networks or stronger ties generate less uncertainty, risk and costs for potential migrants, making it more likely that migration and/or settlement in the host society will take place. This network approach provides part of the theoretical framework of the present study.

The relationship between migration and social capital can be seen throughout the migration process, from the moment when people decide to emigrate until they reach their new destination. In the successive stages of the process, migrants make use of their social networks, family resources, neighbours and friends' knowledge, and the unstable or consolidated social structures created by previous migrants. The set of all these "interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination area through the bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin" is what Massey et al. define as migration networks [6], which provide supranational support for migrants and provide them with resources that are inaccessible through official channels [7].

C. Well-being and Subjective Life Satisfaction

One of the most studied component of individual well-being relates to individuals' overall valuation of their own life [8]. This component is life satisfaction, widely used by economists to explain the individual well-being with income, age, marital status and health care, among others [9].

In relation with these variables, [10] studied integration of migrants in USA. The authors used a set of socio-economic variables plus their vital satisfaction level to show the positive and direct relationship between vital satisfaction level and integration in the host country. Other studies ([2]) show that evaluation of migrants' integration needs more than objective parameters (such income level), so it is advisable to add the own perception of integration and vital satisfaction related to.

The model presented here follows this line of research and attempts to study individual life satisfaction from

a micro approach, whereas most studies in this field deal with the issue from the macro perspective, so what is really being studied is social well-being. According to [12] there are three traditional approaches to the study of well-being:

1- A purely economic approach which identifies well-being with health. However, not all elements that contribute to social well-being are quantifiable from a monetary perspective.

2- The utility function approach which states that well-being is directly related to the satisfaction of needs. Levels of well-being can therefore be approximated by the level of utility provided by the consumption of goods and services. The difficulties with this approach, however, including problems with the aggregation of individual utility functions, have meant that this stream has developed almost exclusively from the theoretical perspective.

3- And finally, the social indicators approach. This approach permits the inclusion of new variables which reflect socio-economic, cultural, ecological and even biological aspects of the study collective.

In this context, this paper focuses on the social variables and its contribution lies in the inclusion of variables to collect information on the type of relationship immigrants establish in the destination country with those around them and the degree of those relationships. These variables reflect the level of individual bonding, bridging and linking social capital.

D. Bonding, Bridging and Linking Social Capital

Although there seems to be no universally accepted methodology for determining which areas and subareas to consider in migrants' vital satisfaction analysis, this work chooses to include a series of variables considered to affect social welfare from an individual perspective, based on information provided by the questionnaire. Some of these variables coincide with the majority of studies on the subject (age, education, marital status, education, level of income or healthcare...), but the contribution of this study lies in the inclusion of variables to collect information on the type of relationship immigrants establish in the host country with those around them and the degree of those relationships. These variables reflect the level of individual social capital.

[13] differentiates two types of social capital. Firstly, bonds between family, close friends and neighbours. Secondly, connections between people and heterogeneous collectives where relationships are more formal. The differentiation between the two types of links, formalised a priori in most cases, has been developed mainly in the economics literature to explain economic growth more satisfactorily.

When analysing development in economic terms, bridging social capital takes on a major role and, as

most studies on the subject point out, can have a positive impact on economic growth ([14] [15]). In short, relationships that make bridges or bridging social capital "are more productive" in economic terms because, although weaker, by being open and heterogeneous they offer greater potential for accessing information and innovation and provide greater access to inaccessible resources ([16], [17]). In contrast, the relationship between bonding social capital and growth seems to be the opposite ([18], [19]). Strong close ties tend to hinder the generalisation of trust, which is fundamental for development ([20], [3]), because it lubricates economic relations, reducing transaction costs (for example in the labour market, the financial market) and contributing to socio-economic development¹.

With respect to the third type of social capital, [21] pointed out that there was another dimension of social capital: linking social capital: relationships which include the capacity to leverage resources from formal institutions beyond the community. That reflects trust in national and international institutions. Several authors, such [22], [23], and [24] have analyzed this additional kind of social capital.

In relation to migration networks and immigrant integration in the host society, the three types of social capital appear to behave in the same way. A study by [25] on women immigrants in the USA reported a negative relationship between bonding social capital and the social promotion of women, because the circles of family and friends were in a similar disadvantaged situation and consequently opportunities for beneficial interaction able to favour social mobility were scarce. In contrast, heterogeneous networks (bridging) function more effectively to generate social promotion opportunities when they act with women ([25]).

The study of social networks is very complex due to the multitude of overlapping factors in the process of forming and operating such networks. A key aspect when observing this process is the time and place where a network develops, as social networks differ according to whether they are in the origin or destination country. Therefore, it must be remembered that this study is based on the situation of the emigrant after arrival in the host country, that is, it analyses networks in the destination country.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Data and Sample: Immigrants in Valencian Community

The object of the empirical study is the immigrant collective in the Valencian Community. Romanian, Latin American and Moroccan immigrant's collective

¹ Most employment, business and financial relationships nowadays are based on trust and cooperation and so their presence generates benefits or objectives that would otherwise be impossible to achieve, because the associated risk would be difficult to assume and contracts would not be easily accepted

data are used to test the level of integration, and how can be affected by their networks and gender. Romanian immigration seems to be an important collective and has been particularly significant in this area (especially since the year 2000 as a consequence, among others, of the restrictions imposed by Germany after its reunification and by other developed European countries ([26], [5]) until the start of the current economic crisis.

Our work goes deeper into the findings of [5]². We consider the largest foreign communities in the self-governing region of Valencia: Romanians, Bolivians, Colombians, Ecuadorians and Moroccans immigrants in order to study their integration in the host society. We use a representative sample, stratified in four levels (gender, age, territory and seniority) of 724 immigrants distributed over the three provinces of Valencian Community (Alicante, Castellón y Valencia). Data were collected using Community Social Report Questionnaire from [27] suitably adapted to the context and study population. This questionnaire collects employment, economic and social variables with particular emphasis on the part referring to immigrant support networks. It has been used before [28] to determine whether different levels of social capital affect or not immigrants' perceptions of their own life satisfaction.

B. Variables and hypotheses

In order to tests the causes of the higher level of satisfaction with life of immigrants, three groups of variables are included, as can be seen in the three next groups:

Control variables: There are many factors which settle important differences towards level of vital satisfaction in the host country, including Age, Gender, Marital Status, Education, and Nationality. Careful evaluation of them suggest that women relationships could be different of men's on the purpose of getting a higher level of satisfaction with life. Gender differentiations in social capital means differences between men and women to their ability to link with diverse kind of people, and to develop dissimilar kind of link with them.

Other socioeconomic variables: income, access to Health Care public services, and return expectations. (We expect that greater levels of absolute income, and better access to public Health Care services affect positively the levels of vital satisfaction. On the other hand, lower return expectations get in higher levels of life satisfaction.

Social capital variables: the theory provided the basis for choosing a series of variables that are normally

² Study of social capital in migratory flows, which took a representative sample, stratified in four levels (sex, age, territory and seniority) of 418 Romanian nationals, distributed in the province.

used in similar analyses³ to represent bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Table I). These variables reflect three areas 1) sense of community, 2) trust in different people and 3) trust in institutions. In accordance with the main authors, the first area shows bonding social capital, the second one indicates bridging social capital, and the last one shows linking social capital. These variables are the following: NBHD reflects the relationships with the neighbors, TRUST reflects the relationships with dissimilar people (we are talking about religion, here), and INSTIT reflects trust in national and international institutions, as can be seen in the next table:

Table I. Social Capital Variables

Bonding Social Capital (NBHD)	Sense of community and participation in social life	Person takes part in community or neighbourhood activities frequently and voluntarily (Person has a trusting relationship with neighbourhood: 1=Yes, 0=No)
Bridging Social Capital (TRUST)	Trust in different groups	Person has a trusting relationship with people with different religious beliefs (1=Yes, 0=No)
Linking Social Capital (INSTIT)	Trust in Institutions	Political Parties can be trusted (1=Yes, 0=No)

Life Satisfaction: This analysis considers that different levels of individual life satisfaction may be determined, in addition to the usual socio-economic and cultural variables, by the existence of individual differences reflected in the relationships each individual has with their surrounding environment, that is, due to differences in their personal stock of social capital.

The study variable, which is individual life satisfaction, is showed in the questionnaire by the question To what extent are you currently satisfied with your life? The response was structured in ten levels to enable the analysis presented below. It has been taken from the World Value Survey Questionnaire, and we have converted it from ten levels to two levels (upper the median and under the median), in order to run different logit models.

The analyses here attempt to shed light on the different role of relationships (bonding, bridging and linking social capital) in migrants' life satisfaction and therefore the following hypotheses are proposed for verification:

This type of analysis is intended to verify whether the individual's level of bonding, bridging and linking social capital influences life satisfaction. Therefore, consideration of types of networks in individual relations requires the testing of four different null hypotheses.

³See [15] for an interesting compilation.

1- H₁: The structure of the social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) affects individual life satisfaction

2- H₂: The structure of the social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) affects individual life satisfaction of men

3- H₃: The different structure of the social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) affects individual life satisfaction of women

4- H₄: The individual satisfaction of men and women are affected in different ways by social capital structure

IV. RESULTS

In order to study and measure the association between vital satisfactions and the independent variables, a bivariant analysis was run using contingency tables (Table II). This analysis helps to confirm the suitability of each independent variable for inclusion in the final model. Note, however, that in case if a result was not significant the variable was still included in the model following the recommendations in the literature ([29], [30], and [31]).

TABLE II. CONTINGENCY TABLES

Independent Variable	Chi Square	p-value	ODDS Ratio	ODDS IC	
				Inf	Sup
NatEur	6.296	0.012	1.520	1.095	2.109
NatSud	21.006	0.000	2.129	1.536	2.949
NatMor	2.106	0.000	0.309	0.223	0.428
Gender	1.329	0.249	1.192	0.884	1.607
CivilState	0.067	0.796	0.959	0.698	1.318
EstPrim	11.313	0.001	0.415	0.256	0.702
EstSec	15.187	0.000	1.936	1.385	2.705
EstSup	0.352	0.553	0.875	0.563	1.360
Healthcare	1.421	0.233	1.536	0.755	3.123
Return	3.422	0.064	0.742	0.541	1.018
Neighb	5.857	0.016	0.679	0.496	0.930
Instit1	6.772	0.009	1.523	1.109	2.093
Trust1	1.596	0.207	0.820	0.602	1.116
Instit2	3.533	0.060	0.743	0.544	1.013
Trust2	9.487	0.002	0.558	0.384	0.811

The data in the above table indicate an association between the life satisfaction of immigrants and the variables European, Latin-America and Moroccan nationality, education, return expectations and every social capital variable. The variables considered to have no effect on the dependent variable are gender, marital status, and access to Health Care. As can be seen in Table III, a certain number of variables has been excluded of the final analysis. The use of correlation matrix has helped in this phase.

In the multivariate analysis five different logistic models were tested to study the impact on life satisfaction of social network of migrants and the role of gender in these relationships. Logit model is a useful and relevant approach for understanding variables with two responses such a high and low life satisfaction.

TABLE III. LOGISTIC MODELS

	MODEL 1	MODEL 2	MODEL 3	MODEL 4	MODEL 5
European Nationality	-0.329 (0.096)***	0.138 (0.691)	0.146 (0.673)	0.111 (0.823)	0.430 (0.443)
Marital Status	0.100 (0.607)	0.089 (0.764)	0.068 (0.817)	0.990 (0.050)**	-0.325 (0.423)
Gender	-0.245 (0.132)	-0.178 (0.432)			
Age	-0.004 (0.615)	0.004 (0.698)	0.003 (0.748)	0.024 (0.174)	-0.0005 (0.972)
Primary Education	0.061 (0.887)	-0.727 (0.300)	-0.644 (0.0353)	-0.316 (0.711)	20.329 (1.000)
Secondary Education	-0.927 (0.011)**	-0.908 (0.117)	-0.839 (0.142)	-1.366 (0.041)**	20.813 1.000
Higher Education	-0.619 (0.127)	-0.269 (0.664)	-0.192 (0.753)	-0.557 (0.450)	21.506 1.000
Income		0.031 (0.900)	0.048 (0.844)	0.475 (0.195)	-0.169 (0.642)
Healthcare		-0.704 (0.131)	-0.687 (0.141)	-0.556 (0.370)	-0.845 (0.281)
Return		0.201 (0.428)	0.233 (0.349)	0.165 (0.623)	0.590 (0.180)
Neighborhood		0.721 (0.004)*	0.698 (0.005)*	1.133 (0.004)*	0.556 (0.114)
Trust1		0.484 (0.046)**	0.476 (0.049)**	0.417 (0.240)	0.679 (0.059)***
Institutions 1		-0.384 (0.093)***	-0.397 (0.082)***	-0.676 (0.041)**	-0.213 (0.526)
Constant	1.622	0.934	0.605	0.348	1.000
-2LogLikelihood	901,075	495,405	496,023	242,617	236,400
R2 Cos and Snell	0,038	0,064	0,062	0,125	0,075
R2 Nagelkerke	0,052	0,087	0,085	0,171	0,102
X2	15,362	10,760	14,282	10,545	3,689
Sig	0,052	0,216	0,075	0,229	0,884
N	725	725	725	725	725

* Indicates the estimated coefficients are significant at 1% level

** Indicates the estimated coefficients are significant at 5% level

*** Indicates the estimated coefficients are significant at 10% level

The results from the logistic regressions estimations are shown in the models in the above table. The effects of the educational achievement of the Model 1 seems to follow the previous studies on the area. The secondary education is the only significant variable over the level of vital satisfaction of migrants ([31]). Respect to nationality of migrants, results point that to have a non-European nationality has significant effect on the vital satisfaction.

Although a lot of studies show a direct relationship between Health Care and satisfaction with life, in our study the variable is not significant. The reason could be the following. In Spain, in 2015 illegal immigrants were barred from the public health service unless they paid into a special insurance scheme. But there are exceptions: pregnant mothers, children and access to A&E in emergency cases. It is possible, for that reason, Health Care variable is not significant because many migrants have minimum services guaranteed, disadvantaged social groups are covered, and some regions have free access to public services. Models 2 and 3 show the results using socioeconomic indicators plus social capital variables. In both cases, just the social networks variables are significant when we analyse the probability of get higher level of satisfaction with life. So, H_1 is accepted.

Models 4 and 5 present show the particular structure of social capital of men and women and their effect on total satisfaction. As can be seen in Model 4, the relationships with closer people and the relationship with institutions are significant for vital satisfaction of men, meaning the importance of maintain part of the family in the hosted country, and the importance of trusting in the government, which can work to protect the rights of migrants. Model 5 indicates that the vital satisfaction of women are affected mainly by the relationships with dissimilar people. This is consistent with previous studies ([31]). Due to their caring role with children, women can have more contacts with dissimilar people in schools and social care services.

In both cases can be said that the null hypothesis H_2 and H_3 , are accepted, because the structure of social capital affects the vital satisfaction of women and men. However, the relevant finding in satisfaction with life of women and men is differently influenced by social capital structure: women life satisfaction is affected by bridging social capital instead men life satisfaction is affected by bonding and linking social capital. So H_4 is accepted.

CONCLUSION

This present study contributes to the analysis of migration with a deeper examination of the social capital structures or levels for men and women, on perceived life satisfaction in the host country. The results point to differences between groups with different social capital. Our findings suggests a pink and blue puzzle on the relationship between social capital and perceived life satisfaction. Women have a kind of bridging social capital that affect positive and directly on their level of satisfaction with life while vital satisfaction of men is affected, direct and positively, by bonding and linking capital.

The results of the empirical analysis between persons in that community suggest there are differences in perceived life satisfaction among individuals with unequal amounts and proportions of bonding, bridging and linking social capital, measured either individually or jointly at the same moment in time and testing all possible combinations of the three types of social capital. As this work has shown, all these networks are vitally important for the perception life satisfaction. Initiatives on these lines, based on identifying and supporting family or neighbourhood networks would enable immigrant communities to make better use of their social capital, reinforcing, extending and opening it up to other networks, by introducing training and empowerment strategies. Attention should also be paid to promoting associationism to strengthen the stock of bridging social capital, because the main shortfall detected is the shortage of resources embedded in relations beyond the close circle of family and friends.

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