

## **Drivers of Life Satisfaction among Ageing Migrants in Italy.**

Eralba Cela<sup>1</sup>, Elisa Barbiano di Belgiojoso<sup>2</sup>, and Stefania M.L. Rimoldi<sup>3</sup>

Wellbeing is a multidimensional concept that has been analysed from different perspectives, related to objective dimensions such as material conditions, health, social networks, etc., and to the subjective ones that can be accessed through questions regarding individuals' perceptions about different aspects of their lives. Subjective wellbeing is usually operationalized according to three components, namely life satisfaction, happiness (or hedonic wellbeing) and eudemonic wellbeing. In this paper we focus on life satisfaction, targeting migrant population that, within the vast empirical research on the topic, has been relatively much less analysed compared to the majority population (see for example Bonini 2008; Bohnke 2008). In the recent decade there is, however, a growing research attention on individuals with a migratory background (Angelini et al. 2015; Arpino and De Valk 2018; Bartram, 2011; De Jong et al. 2002; Hadjar and Backes 2013; Paparusso 2018; Safi 2010; Stranges et al. 2019; Stillman et al. 2015; Wright 2012). Nonetheless, little attention has been paid to older migrants, who still remains the forgotten subject in the arena of life satisfaction research (Sand and Gruber 2018); only a few studies have specifically focused on life satisfaction in later life by exploring how it is affected by different aspects of migration experience and integration (Amit and Litwin 2010, Baykara-Krumme and Platt 2018; Hadjar and Backes 2013; Calvo et al. 2017; Sand and Gruber 2018). In this paper we aim to fill this gap by focusing not only on a rather neglected migrant group in general – the ageing migrants – but also on a country - Italy - where evidence on them is almost absent; to the best of our knowledge, the only studies are those of Cela and Fokkema (2017) and Cela and Barbiano di Belgiojoso (2019) that address loneliness and health respectively.

We analyse life satisfaction among different groups of migrants in Italy and address the effect of pre-and-post-migration experiences on migrants' gendered perception of quality of life in old age. Data come from a unique dataset, from the survey 'Social Condition and Integration among Foreign Citizens' conducted by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) during 2011–2012.

We expect firstly, that life satisfaction of ageing migrants will be negatively affected by typical problems related to the ageing process, such as loneliness and poor health conditions; secondly, we expect different levels and determinants of life satisfaction among men and women; and finally, we expect the area of origin to play a key role in determining life satisfaction.

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<sup>1</sup> IRCCS INRCA - National Institute of Health and Science on Ageing, Centre for Socio-Economic Research on Ageing, Ancona, Italy and University of Milan

<sup>2</sup> Department of Statistics and Quantitative Methods – University of Milan-Bicocca [elisa.barbiano@unimib.it](mailto:elisa.barbiano@unimib.it)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Statistics and Quantitative Methods – University of Milan-Bicocca

### **3.Data and method**

Our analyses are based on the survey ‘Social Condition and Integration among Foreign Citizens’ (hereinafter SCIF) conducted by ISTAT during 2011–2012 on a sample of 25,000 individuals living in a household with at least one foreign-born member. Our target population are migrants aged 50 years old or more, represented by 3,104 individuals.

We applied logistic regression models with dependent variable the dummy for life satisfaction (hereafter LS), coded as 0=‘not satisfied’ (reference) if migrants rated their life satisfaction as lower than 7, and 1=‘satisfied’ if conversely migrants’ rate was equal or greater than 7. This indicator is based on the answer on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied) to the question “All the things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?”. Several independent variables were build using principal component analysis, whereas others reflected migrants’ experience in Italy and their evaluation, as well as the conditions before migration.

The following control variables were considered also: area of origin, gender, age at arrival, educational level, civil status, macro area of residence and years since migration.

Logistic regression analyses have been applied on the total sample, separately by gender, estimating several nested models adding one dimension per time.

We performed several robustness checks to verify the stability of the estimates obtained with logistic regression models (cross-validation) and to check whether the results were driven by a specific migrant group.

### **4.Results**

#### *Descriptive analyses*

Life satisfaction of ageing migrants varies considerably by area of origin and gender. Migrants from the Philippines are the most satisfied followed by Latin Americans, Western migrants and Sub-Saharan Africans. While the less satisfied are Ukrainians and Moldovans. In general, women are more satisfied with their life compared to their male counterparts.

#### *Regression models*

The general model shows that female migrants are more likely to be satisfied compared to males, however, this difference disappears when change in the occupational status before and after migration is taken into account. Ukrainians and Moldovans remain always the less satisfied compared to Western migrants, while Sub-Saharan migrants are more likely to be satisfied. Separated migrants are less likely to be satisfied compared to single. Migration experience and perceptions influence the satisfaction as follows: living environment characterised by urban degradation, having been

aggrieved verbally or physically and feeling stranger and not accepted negatively affect LS. Likewise, health problems, transnational family and loneliness, increase the likelihood of low LS, confirming our expectations. Conversely, social capital like having intimate friends has a positive and strong effect on LS. Unsurprisingly, economic resources are crucial for LS: having good or very good economic resources positively affects LS. Migrants who escaped from their country of origin are less likely to be satisfied with their life. The change in occupational status does matter too.

As for gender and country of origin, several qualitative and quantitative differences emerge confirming our expectation that gender and country of origin are key variables to consider when interpreting results on LS.

Religiosity among ageing migrants is strongly and positively related to life satisfaction, while years since migration is not statistically significant in line with the empirical evidence.

## **5. Conclusions**

This paper presents the first quantitative study on older migrants' life satisfaction in Italy.

Our results show that overall economic, spiritual and social resources have a clear and positive effect on life satisfaction in later life. On the contrary, poor health conditions, poor and unsafe living environment, as well as, detachment from family members who live back home, coupled with feelings of loneliness and feeling not welcome in Italy have a clear negative impact on how ageing migrants evaluate their life as a whole. Other additional ingredients enhance this dissatisfaction and are related to reasons of departure and in particular to forced migration (escape), but also to the geographical context in Italy.

The results show that gender is a key dimension when analysing life satisfaction, supporting our second expectation. Differences between women and men refer both to quantitative and qualitative dimensions: women are generally more satisfied than men and determinants of life satisfaction are different between the two groups. The differences according to the country of origin are relevant both in quantitative and qualitative terms. As expected, origin affects the way migrants evaluate different aspects of their life.

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