CONTACTS WITH CHILDREN AND SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING: DO THE RELATIONSHIPS DIFFER FOR OLDER MIGRANTS AND NATIVES IN EUROPE?

Bruno Arpino¹, Valeria Bordone², Helga de Valk³

1. University of Florence (IT), bruno.arpino@unifi.it; 2. University of Vienna (AT), valeria.bordone@univie.ac.at; 3. NIDI & University of Groningen (NL), Valk@nidi.nl; @ValkHelga

Background & Research Question

Individual’s perception of own wellbeing is fundamental to the definition itself of wellbeing: the only one to really know whether a person is feeling well is the person themselves (Layard 2005). Furthermore, being satisfied with one’s life can help to manage stress and adds to well functioning in society.

We investigate subjective wellbeing (SWB) as measured by life satisfaction.

Previous literature (e.g., Katz 2009) showed that different dimensions of intergenerational family solidarity contributed significantly to life satisfaction and vary between countries in Europe. Others showed that there are differences in life satisfaction between migrants and natives (Arpino & de Valk 2018).

Does the effect of intergenerational relationships between older parents and adult children on SWB differ between natives and migrants’ populations in Europe?

Focus on two central dimensions of intergenerational solidarity in parent-child relationships (Bengtson 2001): 1. associational solidarity (i.e., frequency of contacts) and 2. structural solidarity (i.e., geographical distance).

Data & Method

Data: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)

• Waves 2, 4, 5, 6

Sample selection: respondents aged 50+ years old

Following Bordone & de Valk (2016), we distinguish 4 regions of residence:

• Nordic, Continental, Southern, Eastern Europe

Method: linear regressions with clustered standard errors

• With interactions with the immigrant dummy variable

Variables

Dependent variable: Satisfaction with Life Scale

• “On a scale from 0 to 10, how satisfied are you with your life?”

Explanatory variables:

• Contacts (daily, >1 per week, 1 per week, less, never);

• Geographic proximity (<5, 5-25, 25-100, >100 Km)

Controls: age, marital status, employment status, number of children, rural or urban area, a relative measure of education, household income (deciles by country and year), long-standing illnesses, GALI, survey waves. The analyses are stratified by gender.

Results

Descriptive findings

Multivariate results

Conclusions

We found similar distributions in different measures of intergenerational solidarity between immigrants and natives older adults in Europe

• As for the association between contacts with children and life satisfaction, we found a negative effect of having lost contact with children, stronger for immigrants.

• For both women and men and for both immigrants and natives, having frequent contacts with children is significantly associated with life satisfaction.

• The associations between the other intergenerational solidarity measures and life satisfaction were very similar for immigrants and natives.

Next steps:

• We plan to conduct additional analyses to examine heterogeneities related to immigrants’ origin (North-West Europe, South Europe, East Europe, America, Africa, Asia).

Acknowledgements:

• BA’s work is part of the project “Care, Retirement & Wellbeing of Older People Across Different Welfare Regimes” (CREW) and he acknowledges funding from the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness (PCIN-2016-005) under the second Joint Programming Initiative “More Years Better Lives”.

• HvdV’s work received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. 819298).

• VB and BA are part of Grandparenting in Europe, follow us on Twitter @GrandparentsEU