

Migration in the Web of Relations

Social networks and network capital in immigration to Hungary
at the end of the millennium

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Immigration to Hungary from neighbouring countries has the specific feature that most migrants are of the same nation as the host population. The purpose of the present dissertation is to reveal the presence of social networks and the role of network capital in the immigration process by examining this specific, and, at the same time, most characteristic, segment of immigration to Hungary.

The frameworks within which the role of social networks and network capital is interpreted are outlined by presenting the actual context, the historical and cultural background, the ethnic character, the structural reasons and the individual motives of immigration. The study points out that only for a small group of immigrant does ethnicity play an actual primary motivating role at the end of the millennium while the role of economic factors is much more general. Furthermore, even in the case of this small group, ethnicity does not show up in the form of repulsion from ethnic conflicts or ethnic discrimination. It is rather present in the examined process as an important cultural, ethnic and network capital and thereby plays a stimulating and regulating role.

The main issue of the study is to find how network resources emerge, besides ethnic capital, in this process. The role of social networks and network capital is examined by empirical data in three different aspects. First the study reveals immigrants' pre-migration contacts in Hungary as a *potential network capital* and the resources (information, help) tapped thereby, as a *mobilised network capital*. It demonstrates that chain migration—mainly through family and relatives—is also gaining ground in immigration to Hungary. Besides the widening of migrants' networks one can see an increasing efficiency in their mobilisation. Contrary, help from the host population seems to decrease over time that may indicate decreasing willingness of reception. The study also reveals the factors determining various types of network capital (by logistic regression) and identifies four groups of immigrants (using elements of network capital in cluster analysis). It briefly touches upon the micro-social embeddedness of migration-decision and the move itself.

The second part of empirical analysis presents the most important features (size, multiplexity, density, heterogeneity, and composition) of immigrants' post-migration egocentric networks, including also indicators showing the strength of ties in the closer network. These indicators let us to characterise immigrants' social integration in the host country. On the basis of the *composition of networks* we can conclude that for the older and less educated persons the family and relatives represent the dominant integration channel, while for the younger and educated the friends serve the same purpose. It is important to emphasise that while in the initial period of settlement, help and support were mainly received from earlier migrants, especially from family members and relatives, the post-migration networks contain a significant proportion of contact persons born in Hungary, particularly friends. As for the structure of networks, there are significant differences by the level of education and age: the higher the level of education the larger the network, the smaller its density and the proportion of family ties, while the contrary is true as age increases. Contacts among immigrants with the same country of origin reflect the so-called *transplanted networks* (due to chain-migration).

Finally, the third part of empirical analysis examines the role of network resources in migrants' integration into the labour market. It reveals the role of potential and mobilised network capital in finding a job within a short time following immigration and in the success in the labour market on the long run. It highlights the changing and varying role of the network capital over time and across the type of contact. The mobilised network capital contributed to finding a job within a short time following immigration, while potential network capital had a controversial effect: the presence of family members and relatives who arrived earlier increased the probability of temporary unemployment by supporting new immigrants during the first period of their settlement. It is an important conclusion of the results that the importance of initial network capital decreases over time. It is migrants' human capital that determines their labour market position on the long run. Nevertheless, gender differences in the success of migrants' labour market integration maintain for long, even with other factors under control. The country of origin also affects success, especially during the early period of residence.