

Human and social capital in national reports and comments

**How do they manage their
personal resources ?**

Undocumented Worker Transitions

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INTRODUCTION

Contrary to other thematic reports, the description of the problem tackled in this report was built on data reconstituted from factual information communicated during interviews.

Secondary data, interpretations and judgements rather than facts are examined here, with all the risks that this type of analysis entails; for example, the reinterpretation or over interpretation of a witness's account.

As a reminder, the question of the human and social capital of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees or illegal aliens was not formulated as a specific question in the survey's questionnaires. And this is explained by the subject itself which is really a theoretical construct created by researchers in economics and sociology to interpret the relationships between individuals and the contexts they operate in.

In this case the context is migratory experience and the analysis examines human or organizational resources put in place by the witnesses to accomplish their migration - or according to interpretations, to make a success of it or to fail. But success and failure still need to be defined.

This is why, according to the British report, it is not possible to ask the witnesses directly about their own human or social capital. On the contrary, we should begin either from the responses given to other questions, or from the life-story itself and reinterpret the answers according to the definition of human and social capital we have chosen.

This exercise is delicate and will give rise to debates over interpretation because the meaning to be given to the concepts of human and social capital is particularly unclear.

1. CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

As noted in the introduction, it is difficult to agree on a precise and unanimous definition of what is understood by this concept and their use in determining the course of the individuals who are the subject of this study.

We believe that only the British report suggests a definition and hypothesis for its use in the context of the experience of migration. The concept of social capital will mean all the qualities and abilities of individuals to use all of the tools available to them in completing their plan successfully. These opportunities appear within the root communities, families and institutional structures and will be put to use and support migrants in their attempts to enter the job market, to get help from the authorities, to find housing, etc. Thus social capital is a quality necessary for the achievement of successful migration. These many cases illustrate the different ways to go, the characteristics of communities, the successes and failures.

However, we recognize that a high level of human or social capital does not necessarily guarantee successful integration and this becomes apparent in all national experiences.

Such an admission raises questions on the use of a concept which cannot provide a tool for the interpretation of behaviour when it says it will.

However the other contributors generally use it in that way.

But the concept of social capital in particular, which is the most versatile, is the subject of controversy among researchers who work on the questions of social relations and cohesion¹. As it is used to provide an explanation for a great number of situations ranging from the political behaviour of a group to the economic success of a family or a country, suicide and other human behaviour, it is in fact used as a metaphoric formula to represent concisely on

¹ Keming Yang, (*University of Reading*), *UK Individual Social Capital and Its Measurement in Social Surveys*, *Survey Research Methods* (2007), Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 19-27. <http://w4.ub.uni-konstanz.de/srm>, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 19-27

one hand the level of education or professional or other skill possessed by an individual and on the other hand the degree of integration of an individual in a network of relations useful in their social ascent.

As far as we are concerned as authors of a thematic report on the subject, we had to keep to the formula as it is used, and in each report looking at what it represents in the context. In general it will be the same except where the possible content of the concept of social capital seems to be debated. As it is a question of union affiliation, we have dwelt on it for a moment.

On a topic such as migrations, we would have preferred not to have had to rely on vague and simplistic concepts which are part of the liberal economy's discourse and which serve as foundation to the OECD's analyses and European Union directives.

1.1 BUT PRACTICALLY....

Practically, writing this report, and to avoid these debates and simplify the operation we have formed the habit of interpreting these notions by using references known and intelligible to all. These references are quantifiable indicators, factual data which is part of the witnesses' profile.

For example, in order to evaluate the witnesses' human capital we start from a simple and unambiguous objective indicator : diplomas and academic experience. On top of this comes professional training or experience, having a trade before to migration : the higher level of qualification, the more prestigious the previous trade was, the higher the witness's level of human capital will measure. Additionally knowledge of the host country's language, possibly health, youth and availability (measured for example, by celibacy) can be considered objective indicators.

Other human qualities can also be taken into account, such as dedication, ability to adapt and flexibility, but there are no objective indicators to measure them. Consequently they will be implied or integrated into a larger group called the social capital.

Social capital will be considered an explanatory variable for the behaviours of individual actors.

In this particular context where migration is considered the referential social structure, the concept of human capital will be used to represent the whole of the resources at the disposal

of the individual migrants or the groups of migrants to which they belong in order to carry through the project.

The elements constituting their social capital are heterogeneous: it is a mix of personal ability given to individuals, of the effects of their participation in an existing social structure, for example the benefits derived from belonging to a well-off family, from a good cultural level, etc.

We will also look in the witnesses' accounts for information relating to church affiliation, association membership, affiliation to ethnic action groups, family history, the advantages of having been welcomed by relatives in the host country, and any other sign of participation. Social capital thus appears to be a number of resources that enable individuals and groups to cooperate in reaching their goals. We can then prove that a person with this kind of social capital has the proper requirements to achieve a successful migration.

All in all, the witness accounts are there to provide all the illustrations which attest to the interpersonal or adaptative qualities of individuals, and with such indicators as participation in support networks within national or religious communities, registering with social organisations (union or party), belonging to families which have this kind of high social capital or even to nations supposedly better equipped than others, etc.

1.2 SOCIAL CAPITAL AND MIGRATORY DYNAMIC

It seems to us that this kind of exploitation of the notion of social capital in the context of migration tends to "privatize this experience of migration", that is to say treat it as the singular history of an individual or a particular group which is well endowed with social capital. Even if it is difficult to deny the share of the individual's choice in the decision to undertake migration, and to recognize that individuals are not all able to assume it, this exclusive reference to a concept of social capital as the prerogative of individuals conceals the collective dynamic of the migratory movement.

Whatever their capacity for initiative, individuals who choose migration join this global momentum which pushes populations out of their original territorial areas in search of other areas of opportunity for themselves and their family circles.

This dimension of collective dynamic supports individual initiative and similarly, individual initiative is part of this collective dynamic. We see then that the diversification of forms taken by migratory movements today, the "new migratory practices", are not only carried forward by individuals who are particularly well equipped (in social capital), but they participate in the

radical transformation which is being operated in the relationship between populations. We have emerged today from the binary model², country of origin, country of destination, escape from poverty/search for a better salary, which prevailed in the 1970s. Migrations today have adopted a multiple model with the multiplication of regions of origin and cities of destination which opens up possibilities for migrants to change course and multiply their points of anchorage.

What matters most in this transformation is to realize that these changes in perspective driven by migrants themselves call into question the practices of support for foreigners which betted only on their integration in the host country and which saw in these foreigners only victims of savage exploitation.

The new migrants' social capital today is made up of the integration of globalization of exchanges and relationships in their individual trajectories.

It is this, we believe, that the interviews bear witness to when they recall the plans which motivated them beyond the daily painful conditions.

In summary, let's say that the first part of the report tries to make a point on the question of human capital and to confront the theory and the results of the survey in different countries. Among the criteria for the definition of human capital, we have given priority to consideration of the knowledge of the host country's language. Knowledge of the language is always a necessity which goes beyond the language : it is also revealing of the relationship between the host country and the new arrival. In the second part, we will go back to the information provided by the national reports on what the teams consider are part of social capital, and from there organize the contents.

² S. Weber, *Nouvelle Europe, nouvelles migrations, frontières, intégration, mondialisation*, le Félin, Échéances séries, Paris, 2007

2. AN INDIVIDUAL PART OF HUMAN CAPITAL

A certain emphasis was placed, in the profile of those migrants we have endeavoured to follow, on the personal qualities and aptitudes of the individuals who have taken the migratory experience to its conclusion, that is to say by settling in and becoming long-term residents of another country, legally or illegally.

It is on the basis of this project that we chose them and that we asked them to testify to their migratory journey. We can therefore consider that, within the mass of candidates for emigration, we have selected only those who have accomplished their goals.

The personal qualities and aptitudes seen in those migrants are part of what is commonly called their human capital and their social capital. The evaluation of this human and/or social capital is determined with regard to their migratory experience itself.

Human capital and social capital have this in common, since they are both capitals, that they are considered as resources accessible to all and destined for the realisation of individual objectives.³

The terms human capital and social capital are, in our minds, portmanteau words which include on one hand individual characteristics, such as the psychological profile, the level of education and culture, ability to adapt, and on the other hand, the characteristics of context such as combinations of opportunities, the availability of networks of help and support on the individual modes as much as on the collective modes when we refer, for example, to gender, nationality, religion, or the cultural origins of groups or persons.

The abundance of content carried by these concepts does not make it easier to understand or describe the motivation of individuals (or the bundle of motivations), or the transformation in

3 S. Ponthieux, *Le capital social*, La Découverte, Repères séries, Paris, 2006

individuals or groups brought about by the experience of migration. But this content, in reality, puts the emphasis on individualities and their personal qualities and underestimates the collective impact of the migratory experience by neglecting the dynamic of transformation of populations and of social and cultural relations in the region of origin as well as in the region of destination.

Without further pursuing this train of thought, there is, in the recourse to these concepts, somewhat of a privatisation of the migratory experience, an individual appropriation of a collective phenomenon.

2.1. MEASURING HUMAN CAPITAL

To see more clearly and to determine the level of human and social capital in the context of migration, we have to work from the hypothesis that certain individuals' migration turn out better than others'.

Our enquiries therefore lead us to ask people about their views of their own success, in the light of the advantages they had at the start.

In principle, the highest level is seen in those who succeed, the lowest in those who fail.

But a criterion of measurement still has to be defined.

Thirty or forty years ago it was thought that a successful emigration was achieved by people who, after a stay of many long years and thankless hard work, had reached an respectable social position in the host country. The criterion for success was the degree of integration into the host country.

Without resorting to caricature, integration was measured by the fact that the children had become well-educated or had obtained good jobs, that is to say better than their father's : white-collar work rather than labourer, engineer, physician or lawyer rather than shopkeeper, etc. Success meant that girls would go to school and the family owned their home. And, finally, success also meant a durable bond with or gratitude towards the host country.

Today integration is still the key concept in success but it is described in words which conform more closely to the liberal economy's model : that is to say a successful migration measured

by the sharing of advantages between the integrated migrant and the host country, by the exchange of services between the two parties and the ability to seize opportunities presented by the host society.

It is within this framework that we will have to consider the weight of human capital in the migratory experience of the witnesses.

2. 2 HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE MARKET

On October 28th last, the OECD and the Paris Club organised a joint seminar on the "World market for human capital". The subject of the seminar was defined thus :

« This joint seminar tackled the economic aspects of the existence of a global market of human resources. Beyond the selection of migrants, all OECD countries are dealing with questions of recruiting immigrant workers and their subsequent retention, as well as the risk of "brain drain", particularly in developing countries.»

The phenomenon of international migrations could not be better controlled except by considering it a vast market of human resources from which developed countries should be able to draw to reinforce their competitive positions.

As the OECD says, it is by choosing migrants according to their human capital that these countries would draw the most benefit from migrations.

In return, according to this logic, it is to seek out the market where they can best maximize their investment in training that these people of high human capital travel and migrate throughout the world.

The theory of human capital calls upon us to give priority to qualified individuals who bring their knowledge to the country who receive them, whereas less qualified individuals who bring nothing to the host country should be rejected.

2.2. 3 But what is human capital ?

The concept is not a new one; many authors have used it but the most frequent use is due to international economic institutions such as the OECD and the World Bank.

The OECD has tried hard to remove the ambiguities and give it a meaning which could achieve consensus.

Its new popularization series, *"The essentials of the OECD"*, provides experts and politicians with socio-economic analyses of the contemporary world within a very pragmatic perspective. The first issue is devoted to "human capital".⁴

Human capital is an individual's investment of himself to gain a better economic position.

This is how the OECD illustrates it :

« A student studies medicine to heal people, but also because doctors earn more than street-sweepers; a manager trains to learn a new inventory system so she can keep up to date at work but also in the expectation of gaining a promotion and a pay rise » («Human Capital: How what you know shapes your life », OECD Insights Series, February 2007)

This investment that people devote to themselves is above all their level of education but it also comprises the care they take about their health. Such investments, if they benefit the individual, also benefit the community. There can be no contradiction :

« Economic growth is only part of the human capital equation. Education brings other benefits to the individual, too: people with more schooling are more likely to volunteer for community groups, like women's associations and parent-teacher groups. They're also more likely to enjoy better health: they smoke less (an extra year of education means that an average woman will smoke 1.1 fewer cigarettes a day), and exercise more (an extra 17 minutes a week for every extra year in school). Indeed, good health can itself be regarded as a part of human capital, although clearly people can't always invest in it in the same way as they do in education".

4 « Human Capital: How what you know shapes your life », OECD Insights Series, February 2007

From now on, despite all that it leaves unsaid about the relationship between people and society, this concept of human capital has become widespread and has established itself with all specialists and experts.

Economists speak of human capital when they have to take workers into account in their analysis of production systems; company management and human resources specialists need to promote "human capital" to face competition. Public authorities rely on this theory of human capital to justify their political decisions, in matters of public education for example, but also, notably, in matters of immigration.

This is what we are interested in.

It is on the basis of this theory that the European Commission proposed that Member States should harmonize their immigration policies (*Green Paper on an EU Approach to Managing Economic Migration, 11th January 2005*). It wants the legal and professional immigration of qualified persons or persons fulfilling a clear demand for qualifications to be resumed.

The idea is to increase the human capital potential by using that of migrants which they put at the disposal of the states who receive them.

Every state would determine its need and admission capacity.

But this kind of opening is not without some oversight : the same Green Paper includes a chapter which proposes tighter coordination of repression as regards illegal immigrants, particularly with the setting up of a border police and a system for the return of undesirable individuals, which we must assume are lacking in human capital.

In other words, the intake of strong human capital is combined with to the return back of weak human capital.

In light of this background, it seems to us there is no innocent use of the concept of social capital.

2. 3 HUMAN CAPITAL IN NATIONAL REPORTS

As understood in the reports by the various **project partners**, the concept of human capital is a number of individuals' personal characteristics which are potentially useful for getting them into the job market. In this sense the concepts of human capital and employability are linked.

In this section, we shall do no more than account for the information provided by the summary reports, not engaging in a debate which would force us to reconsider the data.

What are the constituent elements of human capital as they are understood by the teams ? We consider the following are part of the human capital of the individuals we met : -the level of education or qualification, as sanctioned by school education; command of the host country's language ; professional training, mastery of a trade measured by the previous position in the job market.

We did not include the criterion of health , which nonetheless is explicit in the OECD's definition.

It can be established from these additional elements whether an individual has or does not have a high level of human capital. And a high level of human capital would be a guarantee of employability.

According to the British report we should distinguish those who have a high level of human capital from those who do not. We quote :

“The literature on human and social capital provides well-developed definitions these characteristics. (...For the UK interviews we defined human capital as the skills and or qualifications, which individuals said that they had and included within this category those with fluency in the English language⁵. (...°) Some interviewees were highly qualified, with these

⁵ Our underlining

qualifications gained prior to arrival. In general the interviewees can be divided into those with high human capital on arrival (professional qualifications, language and tertiary education) and those with low human capital (elementary education only and or unskilled work and little or no English)". (UK migrant interview analysis report)

We should then verify the relevance of this categorisation in relation to the question asked : the access to employment in general and to qualified employment⁶ in particular.

The Danish report asks which is more important, human or social capital, bearing in mind that people cannot exercise their skills outside the illegal economy.

The same perplexity is found in the other national reports. In reality, every team establishes that at least half the people interviewed have a secondary school diploma or a higher education degree but that in the jobs market these qualifications are of no use, or more precisely, none of the witnesses who were interviewed who work in the illegal economy have jobs related to their qualifications.

This phenomenon is generalised in the illegal economy, but even in the formal and legal economy it is unusual to be able to work in the trade you have been trained in.

There are obviously counter-examples: the case of a Slovak nurse is mentioned who works in a retirement home in Austria. There is also a Turkish hairdresser who opened a hairdressing salon in Austria, or an engineer refugee who works in new technologies, but at an unskilled worker's salary. Looked at closer these examples only confirm the rule.

So it is with the nurse. It is known that all European countries tried to compensate for the shortage of nurses by "importing" qualified nurses from abroad with the promise of working conditions at least equivalent to those of local nurses: Italy has imported nurses from the Philippines, France from Spain and Belgium tried with Romanian nurses. But the latter didn't

⁶ We use « qualified employment» as it is the usual term. In reality, it does not make sense, since it is the person who is qualified. Employment posts are not qualified but are more or less high regarded or well paid.

stay, having been discouraged by the constraints imposed upon them regarding language skills and qualifications. The setback was obvious elsewhere too. In fact, the policy is misunderstood: within the mass of asylum seekers who have showed up at borders, a number of people had degrees and proved to be able to make up for the shortage. But despite that supply, it was established that female asylum seekers with qualifications were unable to work legally⁷. Rather they will be found working as night auxiliary nurses, legally or not, in retirement homes or hospital structures with responsibility for which they are not paid. The few who have been able to practice their trade have had to confront the management to obtain equivalence and undergo training which many of them, being mothers, cannot afford to spend time or money on. This is exactly the case of the Slovak nurse.

The degree qualified employment equation never applies to recent migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Even less so when they come from Africa⁸. Their previous experience weighs very little against bureaucratic obstacles, in the procedures for obtaining equivalence of qualification, or in access to profession etc., never mind the many forms of discrimination, suspicion and prejudice which permeate society.

Conversely, the underground economy is not as selective. It hardly burdens itself with diplomas and all that can be said about it is that holders of degrees turn out to be more competitive than others when there is a shortage of work. That is the case with this engineer, who agrees to work 48 hours a week for what should be considered a quarter of a salary.

Undocumented workers are the most employable and constitute the most flexible, the most versatile and the cheapest workforce. No matter if they are doctors or engineers, whether they speak the host country' language or not; only their capacity to work, their endurance and their submissiveness are important. And this is what the testimonies show over and over

7 Krzeslo E. : « Profil d'une nouvelle catégorie de chercheurs d'emploi en Belgique: les étrangers primo arrivants accueillis dans les dispositifs d'accompagnement à Bruxelles et en Wallonie », Lettre d'information du TEF (Travail Emploi, Formation), n°2-3, 2005., Accessible online: http://www.ulb.ac.be/socio/tef/page_lettre/lettreinfo.html

8 H. Cardu et M Sanschagrín, « Les femmes et la migration : les représentations identitaires et les stratégies devant les obstacles à l'insertion socio professionnelle à Québec », Recherches féministes, n°2, 2002, pp.87-122

again, whether they come from Belgium, Great Britain, from Austria or elsewhere, "human capital" is not a valuable commodity for undocumented workers, and for women in particular.

2.4 HUMAN CAPITAL AND SOCIAL MOBILITY : THE FALL OF WOMEN

M. Nedelcu⁹ observes that studies on the migration of qualified people apply mainly to sectors to which women have little access. The case of qualified women is almost never touched upon.

This absence can be explained partly by the fact that the theory of human capital pushes forward the idea that highly qualified migrants "will move on the market to maximize their training investment, drawn by polarised attraction forces".

M. Nedelcu wants to show that this analysis does not correspond to the reality of migrations, or to that of the women in this category. She stresses that even when they are qualified and they do have professional experience in their country of origin, these women meet the same obstacles as other women : being received in Quebec as « *accompagnantes* » (*birth auxiliaries*) despite being the skilled workers (engineer, doctor) that Quebec is looking for.

It is this status as « *accompagnantes* » which will determine their fates, rather than their professional qualities and abilities.

This is exactly what is happening with the group of qualified women which represents almost half of our population.

A majority of them has gone through secondary education in their countries of origin and usually until the age of 16 at least. A substantial proportion of women have university degrees. A minority has received primary or minimum education or vocational training only.

This high level of education, often with professional experience, is unrelated to the present professional occupation, that is to say the type of employment in the host country.

All the women in the study, whether they are doctors, engineers, teachers, etc, or not, invariably work in the same small number of sectors, whatever their country of origin or host country may be : the domestic and cleaning sector, nursing children or elderly people, hotels and restaurants, the sex industry or entertainment.

2.4 .1 Women are not chosen for their diplomas but for their gender.

Gender takes precedence over any form of human or social capital in this line of migration and access to the job market.

In this instance, being women migrants will immediately put them within a subordinate structure which determines which kind of activity will be accessible, the administration situation (being considered as "*accompagnantes*"), and also the kind of personal behaviour expected regarding spouse or children ¹⁰.

This logic of subordination reaches its peak for migrant women in Bulgaria, as the report establishes, because they suffer violence and forced prostitution on top of being exploited economically. Women in this case are even more dependant than in their country of origin.

This victimization, however, is criticized by other women who come from formerly socialist countries. These women who are better trained, university educated and used to working on an equal footing with men claim that their objective is to make money and we understand from the interviews that they are willing to accept any kind of work, even below their qualification levels, as long as they can make money.

They suffer from poverty, not discrimination or lack of equality. In their opinion a women who is willing to work can always manage abroad.

9 Nedelcu M., « Stratégies de migration et d'accès au travail des professionnelles roumaines à Toronto, Rapports de genre et nouvelles dynamiques migratoires », Revue européenne des migrations internationales, vol. 21-n°1, 2005, pp. 77-106

10 H. Cardu et M Sanschagrin, « Les femmes et la migration : les représentations identitaires et les stratégies devant les obstacles à l'insertion socio professionnelle à Québec », Recherches féministes, n°2, 2002, pp.87-122

It has become obvious that no qualified women have illusions as to which kind of work is available to them : they know they will be doing cleaning work or working in kitchens. They also know they will only have access to "feminine" work because, as has already been established, the illegal job market is infinitely more segmented than the legal job market.

Rather they aim to be recognized for the work they do, that is to say to be paid fairly and to be able to make a living in complete independence.

"She does not say that I am a 'cleaning lady/Putzfrau'... thanks, thanks. I don't care if she calls me 'putzfrau' or not. Household cleaning – no problem. (...) If I was a man I could easily work on a construction site and earn 'normally' like the other people too." (A-I13). (Austrian national report)

Even those countries who claim a high degree of equality between men and women in the job market conform to the rule and derive some advantage from the situation.

And so it seems to us the questions relating to the non-recognition of diplomas or previous professional qualifications are problematic only insofar as they harm these women's' projects of migration. In other words, the question of equality and discrimination only make sense from these women's point of view and what they intend to do with their lives. Otherwise it is merely a theoretical debate.

In our view this is how it should be understood. The problem is not the lack of recognition or the shame of servile work but the level of pay for the work and what it brings in terms of independence. And in very practical terms, what the search for independence by women represents can be understood by taking the example of the conversion of the subordinate position into a tool for emancipation in the community of Filipino domestic servants in Paris.

These Filipino women, who were the subject of an in-depth study by L. Mozère¹¹, illustrate in an exemplary way a certain type of migratory strategy which is more and more common with refugees and migrants today, and particularly amongst women. It can be said that these women are typically of a high degree of "human capital" and a high degree of "social capital", therefore corresponding very closely to the model of success in the liberal economy.

To sum up let us say these Filipino women are for the most part university graduates who have chosen to leave their families and to migrate alone to offer themselves as servants and to make money which will help support their families. L.Mozère describes how these women have had to manage themselves as employees of a firm of which they are also the boss. It goes without saying that this firm is illegal and that these women are moonlighting. All in all, just like many other women these days, they "work the migration system for their own benefit."

One of our Ecuadorian interviewees says the same thing : she is a university graduate who came alone and who has been working illegally as a cleaning lady. Since her arrival she has managed to avoid depending on an intermediary and has found suitable employment with various individuals. By taking steps towards regularization, she is setting out to build a career.

2. 4. 2 Exceptional cases : graduates holding qualified work

Some women can be considered privileged because they have managed to get jobs which correspond to their degrees or previous professional qualifications without first having had to get equivalence.

Needless to say this situation does not exist in the market for illegal work. Except perhaps, as in the Austrian example, without a corresponding salary.

11 L. Mozère, Les domestiques philippines « entrepreneures d'elles-mêmes ». Le marché mondial de la domesticité. Rapport de recherche, Mission du Patrimoine ethnologique « formes contemporaines de l'économie informelle : activité, échanges et réseaux de relations » (131 p) (Filipino domestic servants : their own entrepreneurs. The world market in domestic work. Research report, Ethnological Heritage Mission : « Contemporary forms of the informal economy : activity, exchanges, and relations networks » (131 pp)

To make this correspondence possible, a combination of circumstances was necessary and it is particularly sophisticated. It comes from specific regulations which were put in place in Belgium following the effort to process working papers and which tries to facilitate integration in the job market for newcomers.

We met a woman from Rwanda (BE 1) who has a degree in pedagogy from a teachers' college in Rwanda and who obtained legal status in 2000. This status gave her the right to work and to social security benefits. These benefits, which are monthly payments almost equivalent to the minimum wage in Belgium, are coupled with a plan for employment at local level. This plan consists in financing wages, for a set period, of the beneficiaries, who will be hired by local associations.

This woman benefited from such a contract at the end of which the association offered her long term employment. The work corresponds to her level of qualification, and this is a legal obligation for associations subsidised by the authorities.

But this opportunity is open only to people who have been able to enter the system or those who, by chance, find "socially responsible" employers.

Recognition of the diplomas of migrants who are relocating in a new country has never been the rule as all countries are protectionist when it comes to access to skilled professions. But we must take into account the length of stay in a country to compare national policies in this regard. Certain national reports include in their population people who are legally in order and who have been present within the country for 10 years or longer, and some who have only just arrived and do not yet have any legal status.

Any situation is possible between these two extreme : but to measure the level of recognition, if only for the level of education¹², we should not confuse foreigners who have settled legally

¹² This is also true as regards the level of trade-union membership. When the little interest that migrants show in unions, and vice-versa, is referred to, it obviously concerns refugees or asylum seekers, or those who have come recently as part of family regrouping. It does not concern foreigners established for decades. What is more in Belgium, there are no statistics for trade union membership according to nationality.

and for the long term and who enjoy the same rights as local citizens, and others who are in semi-legal or illegal situations and have to survive in the underground economy.

2. 5 HUMAN CAPITAL AND LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE: AESOP'S LANGUAGE

Certain countries in the survey have pointed out an assessment of the language level in the task of the witnesses' characteristics, while others have not.

The command of the host country's language is one of the criteria for the assessment of the level of human capital of migrants and is considered as a primary requirement in the job market and a measure of the "employability" of individuals.

The Spanish report presents a task linking command of the language and employment. It is shown that the majority of those who know Spanish are employed. However, in Great-Britain 13 out of the 30 witnesses speak little or no English and are nevertheless employed. The two unemployed witnesses in the group are said to speak "fluent English".

It does not seem to us that, apart from the British, Danish and Spanish cases, we really know the level of witnesses' command of the local language. Other team (Italy, Belgium, Bulgaria, Austria) did not consider this question¹³

Nevertheless this assessment is perhaps awkward because we must take the number of years of residence into account, and in some of the national panels witnesses have been in residence for more than 10 or even 20 years.

We would like to stop briefly here to look at the multiform nature of the language question in the context of migrations.

Firstly it should be made clear that this simple pragmatic approach of using language as an index of human capital really leads to the exclusion from the assessment of the cultural universe of migrants of which their language is the expression.

¹³ Why ?

In this approach we consider that migrants have agreed to give priority to the interests of the host countries because we assume they agree to adapt to their demands and conditions.

Lastly, let us not forget that the language question goes beyond the simple question of the use of language, and is used by states as a filter for access to residence permits.

Ultimately, let us therefore remember that the question of the command of language goes beyond the utilitarian vision which sees it as a factor of production for the benefit of the economy. Indeed, under the assessment of the level language, an assessment is made of the level of culture of individuals and of the value of that culture. And so in the logic of the assessment of human capital, he who does not know the language of the host country is considered a "languageless" individual.

The individual who does not have a language, in the ancient Greeks' sense, was the foreigner who did not speak Greek, that is to say a "barbarian", (literally : who speaks a language we do not understand ¹⁴). A Barbarian cannot be a citizen; he is good enough only to be a slave.

In modern times this is equivalent to the colonial logic which considers the human and historic capital of those who do not share the language and culture of the homeland a negligible quantity.

But far from being barbarians, a great number of our witnesses arrived in our country with their own academic background and also often with knowledge of languages other than their own ; and so for example, African witnesses who were questioned in French also spoke English and Russian (and this is without counting Kinya-rwanda or Swahili), others who were questioned in Spanish spoke English or French, witnesses from central Europe had learned Russian and French in school, and others from Latin America or Asia knew English.

This knowledge of languages is not taken into account if it does not come with knowledge of the local language : they are of no use on construction sites, in kitchens or in the fields,

14 Literally, « br, br », as bird's language

except for exchanges within teams when they are international. In a few exceptional cases noted in various national reports, migrants who are now legally registered to stay and work have been able to use their linguistic abilities to find work in reception centres for refugees.

In fact the same is true for knowledge of languages and for academic qualifications : in the job market where the majority of them find work, past achievements are of no use because the jobs do not involve communication with the outside, or because these migrants remain enclosed within community structures.

It is more interesting to ask about the process which leads migrants to embark on this training: it will become obvious that it is generally a decision which is part of a plan to stay for the long term. In migration this decision is the materialisation of the changing of destiny¹⁵ always correlated with other important decisions such as, for example, beginning a process of regularization in accordance with the procedure or according to other modalities (such as marriage), following through with children's education, getting some training etc. All are decisions which show how individuals have gone into the process of change and how they set about leading their lives.

Women's experience is particularly useful in showing what a complex process this is. During the interviews with the Brazilians from Brussels¹⁶, we were struck by the peculiar usage of French and Brazilian by the men and women when couples were interviewed. Most men knew only a few words of French whereas their wives were able to manage. They used French to give a description of their legal situation and the administrative procedures, but the

15 Every immigrant family knows the debate on the status of the mother tongue and the adoption of another language. In some cases, the family chooses deliberately not to teach their mother tongue to the children, and in others, on the contrary, it is encouraged. What is at stake is far more than integration and the « usefulness » of the language.

16 The case of those Brazilians appeared to us symbolic of a current mutation process. It is typically a population of migration « opportunists » : with no migration project, but seizing an opportunity to earn money fast and go back richer. They have no problem entering the country or finding a job and accommodation, even in the worst conditions, as long as they earn money. Their migration project is built later, step by step, to overcome the difficulties of their relative illegality, and is different for men and women.

description of working conditions and employment was the men's prerogative and given in Brazilian.

This division of languages shows the division of jobs within the couple and, beyond this division, the subtle differences in appreciation of the experience of migration. The women have the advantage of being immediately thrown into the language as cleaning ladies in families and draw on this advantage to take charge of the family's well-being, relations with the authorities, schools and social services. Language is a necessity, it soon becomes the guarantee for settlement in the future.

Men, on the other hand, have contacts only with their countrymen or with Brazilian or Portuguese employers: the occasions are rare when they get to speak another language or they even feel the necessity to do so.

In the following example, the Ecuadorian woman who was able to escape a situation where she was being exploited as a household maid does not speak French. But after the arrival of her husband and daughters and since her girls have been going to school she has felt the necessity to learn to speak French to maintain links with her children who speak to each other in French.

- And how is it she doesn't speak French ?

(dialogue in Spanish)

T - *she was saying that where she used to work the people told her it wasn't important and that her work had to be done properly.*

- but her daughters speak French ?

(dialogue in Spanish)

T - *she says her daughters speak French between themselves so she told her husband " well listen maybe we should learn because we don't understand what they're telling each other"*

(dialogue in Spanish)

T - *I was asking if her daughters were conniving and keeping things from their mother. She says no, it's just that their daughters would like their parents to learn French.*

- doesn't she know where she can learn French ?

(dialogue in Spanish)

T - *She says that precisely it is now the idea to go and get lessons. They are busy looking now but as they don't have papers, many schools refuse to take them so they are seeing if they can find places that will teach French even to illegal immigrants. They are mostly busy with all the documents that need to come from Ecuador to obtain residency papers here and that is their priority.*

- and if she gets her papers, what are her plans ?

(dialogue in Spanish)

T - *her intention is to be able to work legally here, pay taxes and feel useful to the country.*

Finally, considering the conditions in which illegal work is often done, especially for those who work in family businesses or businesses held by compatriots, knowing the local language becomes a tool of emancipation, a possibility of communication with the outside, if needs be to lodge complaints or approach the authorities.

This is where the ambiguous nature of "ethnic" economic networks and "communities" becomes apparent : their positive role in the integration of compatriots (of low human capital) in the job market, the support and help which they bring to individuals who without them would be left to their own devices is shown in the British and Austrian reports, but they also show that these networks take advantage of their members' dependence on them, in particular when they are incapable of communication with the outside. Examples abound in different reports of witnesses who claim to prefer working for any employer other than a compatriot. In this case the question of language is only a sign of dependence and exploitation by ethnic networks.

On top of this knowing the local language can also appear to individuals as a way of enhancing their status with respect to their surroundings and can also be a way of integration. In a few words this is what the woman was saying.

2. 5. 1 Language as a means of control

In fact, the promotion of learning languages as a tool for integration and a condition of employability can be ambiguous : it becomes part of the dominant discourse on "chosen emigration", of the politics of asylum and of selection of migrants with strong human capital.

More and more often, learning and/or knowledge of the language of the host country are set as supplementary conditions for access to the territory and the right of residence.

They are in fact used as criteria for selection for entry into a country and, depending on the country and time, this additional filter can be more or less strict.

We will not review the current regulations in European countries and the other countries of emigration such as Canada¹⁷; suffice it to know that some countries impose a language examination for people seeking an entry visa, even in cases of family reunification, while others impose lessons or exams. Depending on the country, the course is compulsory or optional, fee-paying or free and can in some cases be recognized officially with an examination. The examination can be more or less difficult, requiring minimum marks, or can simply be a test. But sometimes the examination can also be a pre-requisite for visa application, and consequently it is imposed in the country of origin by the host country's consulate.

2.5.1 The use of different languages

In order to measure the importance to migrants' interest of learning the host country's language, we should ask whether it is useful to learn it with regard to the plan for migration itself.

In our view, not all languages are on a par.

17 For an overall view of the different national legislations, see : Ministère de l'emploi, de la cohésion sociale et du logement, direction de la population et des migrations : Notes et Documents, n°55, June 2006, Séminaire international sur l'intégration linguistique des migrants adultes, Journées de Sèvres, 26-27 September 2005 (www.cohesionsociale.gouv.fr)

It is clear that the international language for communication is English. The usefulness of English is not in question and we can assume that individuals who are going to stay in the UK, whatever their migration plan, know that they will be better off learning this language.

Generally speaking, for people from north or Sub-Saharan Africa and even for some people coming from central Europe, learning French is not a problem but French is not deemed as valuable as English. Usually, however, the choice is not between English and French, but rather between English and any language that less disseminated. It is the case of Dutch in Belgium even though knowledge of Dutch is considered an essential condition for finding a job¹⁸; it is also the case for Danish, Bulgarian, or even German.

In a pragmatic vision of migration, it is true that the international "usefulness" of these languages is not guaranteed.

It is possible, then, that the desire to learn these languages depends on the plan to settle in the long term in that country by, for instance, marrying a Danish or Austrian citizen. All the more so when the conditions for entry into the country are particularly selective and leave few avenues for appeal.

Or again, learning that language has become mandatory with the possibility of penalties. That has become the case in France recently, and in Belgium in Flanders it is mandatory for refugees and asylum seekers if they claim social benefits or housing.

Not knowing the language is not a sign of maladjustment or exclusion. Once more it is important to take into account the person's socio-economic environment and project.

2. 5. 2 Language and employability

Only the reversal of the hypothesis remains to be done.

18 Even to receive a social housing and other social benefits allocated by local or regional authorities.

In fact, experience also shows that this proposition which considers knowledge of the language as a tool for employability is not always true. Sometimes the opposite is true. It is clear that the Ecuadorian woman would never have been as a domestic servant employed had she spoken French.

Equally, it is because they speak only Brazilian that those illegal immigrants are interesting in the eyes of Brazilian and Portuguese businessmen : the situation allows them to take on the role of sole intermediary or even translators for their employees, in particular by providing them with fake Portuguese identity papers and fake documentation for the authorities.

It is by taking advantage of this situation that they can present these Brazilian workers to the authorities as assigned Portuguese employees present in the country only temporarily ¹⁹.

"We take somebody's papers who is in Belgium legally, we put our photograph on the papers then we photocopy them. This service costs 200 €, but we can sell the papers on to somebody else who will then sell them on again. So if you give me your ID card ,twenty other people will be working in Belgium with your name. With this system, if the police come, I'm sent back to Brazil but the boss can say : "Oh, but I didn't know this man had fake papers" and so this way he escapes paying a fine".

¹⁹ Social inspectorate interview, 2/12/2008

3. SOCIAL CAPITAL IN MIGRANTS' EQUIPMENT

In the framework of this survey we are primarily interested in migrants' points of view and the way they recount their experiences. We consider whether the witnesses always share the same point of view on success, given the diversity in profiles and projects. In the interviews with witnesses, the emphasis is put on past and present situations : the projects and expectations of witnesses were mentioned in the interviews only indirectly to justify attitudes and choices in day-to-day life. So by emphasising the *transitions* in the migratory trajectories of migrants, it is the changes which took place in their socio-economic situations and their social and intellectual consciousness which are highlighted. This ability to meet changes, to adapt to new situations and even to anticipate them is part of the baggage migrants take with them on their journeys, on top of diplomas and qualifications.

We tend to think that in terms of social capital, these witnesses' greatest worth is precisely their capacity to come to terms with changes, and even anticipate them.

This is one of the differences between old and “new migrations” most often brought light by present research : migrants today are no longer allocated a specific place in the job markets of developed countries : they are no longer “pre-allocated”²⁰, pre-destined to become the foot-soldiers of industry, which goes to fetch them in their countries of origin. On the contrary, they must act independently, make a place for themselves as employees or self-employed which the formal economy denies them, and so create their own niches possibly in competition with others, whether migrants or indigenous. In the liberal logic which they experience everyday, they expect to have to pay their way one way or another. Some have paid the hard way, as we know, but most know they will have to earn their living by obeying market rules and adapting to new social codes, whatever the difficulties.

²⁰ M. Peraldi (dir.) *La fin des norias? Réseaux migrants dans les économies marchandes en Méditerranée*, Maisonneuve et Larose, Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'Homme, Paris 2002

It is for this reason, and because they cannot really count on other solidarity that they must get the support of their own social networks. This experience was the subject of the interviews: the qualities or resources used were described in the national reports under the heading “social capital”. This is what was reviewed in the following :

Reviewing the teams reports, we were struck by the similarities in the experiences identified in the testimonies : the factual aspects add up and confirm each other despite differences in institutional and political contexts. We expected that testimonies from Italy and Spain would be fundamentally different from those coming from countries such as Austria and Denmark, to mention countries whose migration policies are the least similar, but it seems not to have any effect on the modalities of access to the job market. The difference lies rather in the duration of the experience of illegality and the possibility of an outcome. Bulgaria presents a particular configuration, not according to migrants' experience, but rather because the state itself is a failed agent. Indeed, the absence of social regulation and the weakness of institutions responsible for managing migrations are both a danger and an opportunity for migrants : one danger is that of letting the arbitrary rule and weaken the protection they could receive, but an opportunity for those who in a relatively deregulated economy manage to find a place for themselves following the path already traced by many local citizens.

In relation to social capital, as we already have mentioned, the reports use the same references with the exception of trade union affiliation. Only the Danish report mentions the trade union question in the social capital chapter, and its comments join those we made regarding Belgium.

3. 1 SOCIAL CAPITAL IN NATIONAL REPORTS

Rather than presenting national analyses one after the other, we chose to structure this part around the major characteristics which will have been exposed : this will allow us to avoid repetition and, if need be, go deeper in the approach by diversifying examples. We have mentioned a few extracts from interviews which seemed significant when they appeared in the national reports. We have also taken the liberty of quoting sentences from these reports if they followed the authors' thinking better than the re-phrasing we could have proposed.

3.1.1. Having a diploma and a network

The Spanish report defines social capital as a set of resources available to all the players in a structure, whoever they may be. We can therefore say that the witnesses who have had access to the resources have a good social capital. We do not ask, therefore, if all the witnesses are on the same footing regarding the resource or if conditions were imposed for having access to it.

Practically speaking migrants who have chosen to settle in Spain for the long term are endowed with a good social capital on two conditions : if they had a job in their country of origin, and if they have studied there.

Graduates have a good social capital. It is true that a degree guarantees good employment (recognized as qualified employment) only when refugees have been able to sort out their situations.

It is rare, however, that regularised foreigners with degrees have jobs for which they are qualified. But they can go through training, which is not possible for illegal migrants.

But when they are illegal, migrants cannot turn their qualifications or diplomas to advantage. They are forced to take whatever job is available.

The report therefore reckons that regularization encourages the growth of social capital.

Nowhere, indeed, does the illegal economy select its candidates on the basis of social capital. There is a risk of losing one's social capital by working illegally in the underground economy. The command of Spanish is part of social capital : knowing Spanish facilitates access to the job market. But the question of the quality of the employment arises.

The command of the local language is certainly an advantage when looking for work but this

quality (which adds to the migrants' human capital) still has to be marketable. If this is the case in Spain, it is not so in Bulgaria.

3. 1.2 The specific difficulties facing qualified migrants :

(a) communities and qualified work.

In terms of social capital, in Bulgaria, even when migrants find employment in line with their qualifications and they do know how to speak the language they are victims of the state's disorganisation. When it is not able to or not interested in applying the law even to large companies or NGOs all workers are victims, especially migrants.

“The immigrants with education and good knowledge of their own and the Bulgarian language can find part time work in NGOs, computer companies, other private business companies, where they provide translation and other intellectual services without contract and are paid in cash. These violations of the law are embarrassing for the immigrant and for the employer and usually these are short-term agreements, which forces the educated migrants to migrate once again from one job to another. This was the case with the mediator and translator used by the team in this project – an African journalist who assisted the interviewers.”

The presence of a community is part of social capital : but for degree holders this network, however, is not an adequate resource in terms of employment since the jobs available to the community are generally unqualified or semi-qualified and mostly precarious.

The Austrian, Bulgarian, British and Italian reports share this analysis regarding communities. If we agree that degree holders will not find qualified work in the illegal jobs market, nor will the jobs they could find in the community allow them to practice their trade: they don't correspond to their level of qualification but they are directed at people with little or no qualifications, and for them they are opportunities.

The Austrian report indicates that qualified jobs in the undeclared jobs market are mostly filled by Austrian citizens who are, furthermore, legal workers. They are not accessible to migrants. According to our Austrian colleagues the reason is that they require knowledge of German. However this explanation is not enough and it does not correspond to the particular nature of the workings of the illegal jobs market for undocumented workers.

For a start, it almost is never the case that in the informal economy irregular foreign workers take the place of indigenous workers whatever the nature of the work and the level of qualification. They all work in different employment sectors and are not, apart from a few exceptions, interchangeable. When we look at how the underground economy works, we see that the different ways in which irregular labour is used are essentially correlated to the labour's status, that is to say its degree of illegality, that is also to say precariousness. For example, multinational companies who need highly qualified specialists immediately will not call upon undocumented workers even if they have these qualifications. They prefer to pick employees from abroad and bring them over without complying with work permit regulations imposed by their country. But to attract them they will have to be paid handsomely, which is made easier since the employers do not pay social contributions.

Contrary to the general view, the cost of labour is not always the reason for resorting to undeclared workers : according to the type of work, sector, size of company, the need can be speed of reaction in case of extra workload, flexibility, temporary shortage, administrative slowness, etc., which the employer can avoid by using undeclared workers.

In the case of the undeclared workers themselves, if they are not forced into it by absolute necessity like undocumented workers why do they agree to work illegally?²¹ It is clear that in countries in which workers have social security benefits, undeclared work is essentially done by people who have social security cover. It is because they are protected by social security, as unemployed persons receiving benefit payments, as invalids, as part-time workers or even full-time workers, that they find an advantage in working in the illegal economy.

Illegal migrants, because they are not entitled to any social benefits or protection and are under threat of being take back to the border, are forced to accept any undeclared work which others may have turned down. For this reason they will do the most precarious jobs, the heaviest, the dirtiest, the most dangerous and the worst paid.

²¹ Note that undeclared work comes in different forms. Full-time is an exception.

(b).regularization without equivalence

The same goes for graduates : all the reports have noted that even when they have been regularized and they have been able to get out of precarious situations by becoming legal refugees, they do not find work corresponding to their level of qualification. Their diplomas are usually deemed worthless. It is surprising since a certain number of countries have announced that they have opened their borders to asylum seekers who have skills and degrees which are in demand. We gave the examples of nurses, doctors and even computer scientists.

But such announcements have produced no results.

The Bulgarian report quotes the case of an Afghan engineer who says that he cannot understand the waste of skills represented by such a system. In reality, far from wastage, the system is perfectly rational from an economic point of view.

Before foreigners who hold degrees are authorised to exercise a trade they have studied, they are generally asked to apply for a recognized equivalence of their qualifications. But at the same time the procedure is long, complicated, expensive and rarely gets anywhere. On top of this, in most cases refugees or regular migrants do not have the possibility of fulfilling the conditions for this recognition : in particular because of the cost or the obligation to follow training. (On this point see the chapter on human capital). And yet most countries say they want to improve the employability of refugees who are already in the country and organize training. It is established everywhere that they rarely achieve their goals²².

The British report notes that when training is done in British academic institutions the outcome is different.

22 E. Krzeslo, M. Hamzaoui, Intervention directe sur l'emploi en Région de Bruxelles-capitale : Le cas des primo arrivants de nationalité ou d'origine étrangère. evaluation report for the Centre for Equal Opportunies and against Racism; and Primo arrivants de nationalité ou d'origine étrangère : Dispositifs, employabilité et insertion, (Liège et Verviers), August 2007

There are many factors at play in this refusal of recognition. Racism or sexism²³ are part of the reason, but above all state protectionism and the professions' corporatism. States believe that equivalences between their own and foreign diplomas (especially African ones) devalue their own diplomas. Professional bodies, especially those of the medical profession, but also architects, engineers, lawyers, etc., want to preserve their monopolies. And so a Rwandan doctor who was a refugee and has since been naturalized Belgian, had worked and studied in Russia and other countries for over 30 years and was forced, at the age of 63, to begin his eight years studies to practice in Belgium.

(c) jobs

The British report examined the correlation between the level of human capital and employment in the journey of the people who were interviewed, starting from the hypothesis that a high level of human and social capital will grant access to better employment.

The problem is the definition of better employment : how do you assess the value of employment ?

A man of Nigerian origin, trained as a dentist, finds a job as a security guard and is paid £7 an hour. Should we consider that a £7 wage is higher than that of another security guard who does not have a degree ?

What may seem correct in this hypothesis is that having a degree or previous professional experience would be proof of a greater ability to adapt to new situations, to learn new things or to develop new initiatives to get on the social ladder. It is not so much what was studied or the previous activity which matters but the fact that these people have already got some experience of society and some knowledge of the world. For example these middle-aged north African women, married to immigrant workers in France, who started as a group in international trade after having observed how they managed to sell to their neighbours the stock of merchandise they brought back from France during their holidays. Today, these

²³ H. Cardu and M Sanschagrín, op cit.

women “on business trips” have set up an import circuit between Turkey, Algeria and Tunisia, and make significant profits in their own names.²⁴

There are certainly some amongst our witnesses who, like these women or other modern examples, are preparing to develop new activities, but apart from some declarations of intent heard in some testimonies it is difficult to be sure without the benefit of hindsight.

In any case, as each team has concluded, diplomas and qualifications from the country of origin have no value in the informal economy and little in the formal economy²⁵ as they are not reflected in wages.

Whatever jobs are offered, the level of pay is defined exclusively by the market with no reference to any scales or collective agreements.

²⁴ M. Peradi, op.cit et C. Schmoll, « Femmes et migrations, pratiques spatiales transnationales et stratégies de mobilité des commerçantes tunisiennes », *Jura Gentium*, revue de droit international et de la politique globale, III(2007), 1, <http://juragendum.unifi.it/fr/surveys/med/scmoll.htm>, 12P.

²⁵ Except in some circumstances and public statutory employment or equivalent employment as quoted earlier.

3. 2 .COMMUNITY OF ORIGIN, COMMUNITY SOCIAL NETWORKS.

3.2.1. community self-reliance

The British report places major importance on the social capital of belonging to a community. The Austrian report also notes that the communities play a protective and sociable role for new migrants, whom they help to find their way in a new society.

The existence of a large Turkish community in Austria works as a kind of social capital even for those Turkish migrants who come to Austria without any connections prior to arrival.

This is not a new phenomenon, it is as old as migration itself. But what is seen more and more today is the autonomy of communities, especially where the State is absent or present only in the form of the police. It is then expected of the communities that they maintain social and economic links beyond borders by, for example, helping their members to make a living. In this way, communities which are already settled grow, as it were, by setting up migratory chains which serve to fill the lesser qualified jobs and undeclared work²⁶. That is the case for Chinese labour in restaurants and hotels, for example, which pays for passage in hours of work. The following case is mentioned in the British report :

“Interviewee 18 had graduated from college with an IT qualification, but had never managed to secure work in that field in China. In the UK he was working in the restaurant sector, earning just £1.80 an hour plus accommodation and food”.

The British and Austrian reports attach great importance to these ethnic communities.

Especially for surviving as completely undocumented migrant strong personal contacts are one of the most essential factors for not being detected as the example of I24, a young male

²⁶ Ibid.

migrant from Serbia, illustrates. In his case the social capital in form of his in Austria living aunt was decisive for his surviving as undocumented migrant for years.

In the Austrian case, the role of the community was considered important because Austria is not (or is rarely) a preferred destination but rather chosen because of the presence of family already residing there. Austria (like Belgium) also seems to be a chance destination for refugees of certain nationalities who find themselves abandoned there by their passeurs.

“Many refugees reported that they don’t know in which country they at last ended up and therefore they arrived without any social capital in the host country”.

Consequently, specifically choosing the country of destination (as is the case for most migrants arriving in Spain) makes the role of communities less important.

3. 2. 2 communities ambiguity

The optimistic hypothesis which sees the presence of an ethnic community as a support for migrants in their trajectory of settling in the country of destination is often disproved in practice.

The Austrian report underlines the ambiguous role of these communities with regard to their members. It reports individuals' testimonies saying that they kept away from their community, have refused its help and support or tried to escape it. The examples are characteristic and is the case of witnesses from the Turkish community which seems to be the best organized ethnic community in Austria : one is a homosexual and knows he will be condemned and will not be able to live his own life under community control, another a woman who refuses the husband offered to her, and another who left her country because she wanted to escape her circle's control.

If the community can be of help in emigration, it can also trap its members when the indifferent public institutions of the State leaves these community structures to run themselves.

3.2.3 .instead of degrees : knowledge of the underground economy

The Danish report reveals this new source of qualifications :

“Being situated in an illegal situation, as refused asylum seeker, involved in a prohibited marriage etc. (see chapter 2) and forced to be involved in undocumented economic activities and transactions, the question, that is with regard to life chances and the possibilities for the improvement of the socioeconomic status; what counts most: Human capital or the social capital?”

This is the first time that the question has been put in these terms : “what counts most ?” Human capital and social capital are presented as an alternative between individual abilities and social aptitude to achieve one's migratory project in the context of the illegal economy. And so the Danish report underlines, just like the reports from all the other countries, that the illegal economy which employs irregular migrants (but certainly some regular migrants as well²⁷) does not recognize or pay for degrees obtained in the countries of origin, or for professional experience or for any qualifications. Even if some illegal workers have the possibility of exercising high-level functions, for example putting their knowledge of computers to use for their employers (Austrian, Belgian and Danish examples) no employer will pay them an “official” rate (in accordance with a collective agreement, for instance).

Consequently, it is more important for illegals to get help from community, religious or any other networks; and so having these connections is considered part of social capital.

Our Danish colleagues, however, put forward an interesting hypothesis regarding the underground economy and its relationship with the abilities and qualifications of individuals. Even though it does not allow one to turn one's degrees and knowledge to advantage, the underground economy nevertheless requires that those who want to make a living from it be able to understand its functioning and adapt their behaviour accordingly. Some witnesses admit that they had to learn where, how and from whom to obtain information, work, the

²⁷ We have seen in the testimonies collected in Belgium, that the fact of having papers and of having a residence permit in the country does not always make it possible to work in the legal economy. The difficulties of access to the legal job market are not always due to the legal situation of the job seeker, but result from job discrimination and other more complex mechanisms. In the branches of industry where the irregular migrants are present, the practice of illegal work is generalized and also affects citizens and indigenous workers. Consequently, the connection between legal residence and legal employment that some national reports present as obvious is completely false.

goods they need, how to make use of rules meant for something else, etc. Some have even learned a trade they knew nothing of because they would get work only there and nowhere else.

Such a training can be mastered well enough for a person who had no experience to start with to become a team leader on a building site or even head of a company, when to begin with they had never worked in that sector. It is the case of this Brazilian witness's boss in Brussels :

“Interviewer: And the boss, when he came to Brussels, did he work as you did or did he get here with lots of money?”

1st Brazilian : No it was the same as for me. He came here without money, worked a lot and now he knows many people; people contact him to organize work. This boss also knows many people in Brazil. But in Brazil there is poverty. So the Brazilian boss brings people over. He tells them ; come here;, over here it's ok. You can work for 40 Euro a day”. In Brazil 40 Euro is 120 Reais which is a lot. (...) The Brazilian boss pays for the flight, the person works for 4 or 5 months but receives no money! The boss I worked for, that's how he does it”.

And the Danish reports suggests that the workings of the underground, irregular or informal economy, which is based on the refusal of social regulation, is strongly codified : this code has to be learned by the people involved. Knowledge of this code and of norms of adequate behaviour turn out to be much more useful skills than academic degrees and professional qualifications in helping individuals find their way. Having a lot of human capital in this environment means being able to adapt to this economic model and to use it to one's benefit, being one of the winners in the “struggle for life” and, if need be, to crushing competition. It is said that human capital in this case distinguishes the “winners from the losers”.

“The character of the human capital among interviewees is different depending on their educational merits, some with university degrees, some almost without any education, and they have different professional skills too.

Another important feature is the development of the skills obtained due to the involvement in underground economy. Underground economy, like any other feature, has got its own characterised principles, norms of behaviour, values etc. Learning these roles and rules, and taking advantage of them, is the pivotal factor in differentiating between winners and losers”

But on top of knowledge of the codes and behaviours, illegal may also need to find support and trust in somebody : they must be sure that these supports are totally devoted to them, which is why they will choose their families or their community of origin, or sometimes close friends, because they know that these support structures will be able to keep track of them and protect them against competition. It is “social capital” logic. Everyone has some social capital that they can use for their own success, and for no one else's. It will become apparent that trade union support cannot count as social capital in the sense that the particularity of trade union struggle is the defence of collective, not individuals', interests.

" Having a network of closed friends and family, who somehow have to live under similar or even worse situations. The human capital, in this manner is actually the ability to make it in this specific situation.

"If you don't know people and if there is not a sense of mutual sympathy and trust, and even better, a mutual, preferably continuous need, you can walk the street alone having a inferior diploma in your pocket. So it's about knowing how to behave as an individual who needs others to make a proper living."

" I am a hard working woman, and everybody knows it, so if they want to do a job properly, I get the job. But I wouldn't be able to have a living if I didn't know people. It depends on your social competences; is it a human or a social capital?"

"This church is the only association in which she participates. Once a week she meets in her cell. Almost everybody in the cell is from the Philippines. They eat and drink together and discuss their situation and problems. They are like a family and if one has problems, e.g. with the host family, one can ask for help from them"

Unlike the other reports, the Danish one asks if trade unions can be part of these potential supports and aid networks. It notes that in the Danish experience those organisations do not play that role.

"I know about trade unions and I know that Denmark has a strong trade union tradition but, frankly speaking, they don't care about me; they are here to take care of their members' interests not mine. I know that I can take care of myself and nobody cares more about me

than myself, so why should I think about trade unions – at the best they give a fine to my employer and kick me out of the country – isn't ?”

3.3 .WHY TRADE UNION NETWORKS ARE NOT PART OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

In the three countries which can boast of having almost institutionalised trade-unionism such as Belgium, Denmark and Austria, witnesses who have worked as illegal labour in legal companies alongside unionised workers have indicated that they never had contacts with the trade union representatives in those companies. According to their testimonies, the representatives are not interested in them and do not try to help them. They themselves do not try to speak to trade unions because they know beforehand they will not receive any support.

What is the explanation ?

In the social model of industrialized countries, even in periods of crisis or recession, salaried workers still think the only barrier to the all-powerful employers is trade unions. That does not mean that they stop criticizing them for straying from the grass-roots' preoccupations or their weakness in the face of infringements of social liberties.

Nevertheless, salaried workers traditionally consider trade unions their natural defenders.

Paradoxically this view is not shared by the weakest and most precarious workers, illegal immigrants working in the informal economy.

So with illegal immigrants who are often over-exploited, contacts with trade unions are exceptional. A majority of these undocumented workers are in small companies with no trade union representation, but even in those companies which do have recognized union representations, they only rarely interested in these unwanted colleagues.

In our survey, the question of relations with trade unions does not seem to have given rise to much interest and respondents did not dwell on it, apart from a few cases of witnesses who for political reasons chose to be trade-union activists. But in that event they focused mainly on helping migrants socially and legally and not on so-called union action in companies and industrial sectors.

One should ask the question, and it is not inappropriate to ask it in this chapter on social capital since trade union organisations are more legitimately the community of salaried employees than are religious or ethnic communities.

These are, of course, hypotheses produced by the little work that has attempted to find an explanation²⁸.

The following testimony sums up the topic: temporary work, isolation, the need to rely on what is available since there is no alternative.

What is specific about this job is that it is temporary and that you are a live-in. No colleagues.. *“If you have problems with your host family, we must pray that we will be okay. The only club or association I go to is this one (the Pentecostal church). There is no trade union or anything like that for us, as far as I know.”*

One hypothesis is that these migrants, though salaried, do not define themselves as such : they will turn to trade unions only in extreme cases, in particular when in deadlock they are trying to obtain an official status through the trade union. This is illustrated by the famous strikes of undocumented migrants which were supported by the CGT²⁹ trade union in Paris in April 2008³⁰.

In fact, as the Danish testimony below shows, irregular workers, undocumented migrants and refugees who are faced with the harshness of social relations in the underground economy enter a logic of individual defence and solitary struggle. Far from feeling part of a collective action group, they see themselves as competitors struggling for survival in the jungle of a lawless economy. Even if they complain about the exploitation they suffer, they claim they are

²⁸ F. Brun, « Usages d'entreprise et inactivation du droit du travail : l'exemple du Sentier ». *Quatre Pages*, Centre d'études pour l'emploi, (January / February 2002), concerning a textile workshop employing Chinese workers. Works on the history of immigration between the two wars can also be cited

²⁹ Confédération générale du Travail

³⁰ [Pierre Tartakowsky](http://www.metiseurope.eu) « *Sans-papiers : déplacement du champ des contradictions*, 18 septembre 200. Can be read on www.metiseurope.eu : "Correspondances Européennes du Travail »

forced to accept it because they have no choice and in their minds this terrible episode is only temporary. They see it as a transitional ordeal which sorts out the candidates and selects only the best. They cannot rely on the usual means of defending themselves in social conflicts, such as union negotiations or work stoppages. On the subject of the recurrent problems met by Brazilian building workers in Brussels who complain to his organization, M. Pereira explains

"Many Brazilian workers choose to rely on other strategies to assert their rights, especially to (demand) payment of late wages, such as (individual) negotiations, physical or verbal threats, mediation by social services or by a lawyer³¹ »

This testimony is confirmed by the Labour Ministry's inspectors who receive the complaints from undocumented workers whose wages have not been paid : but these inspectors ³² regret that these complaints, which could lead to these slave drivers' being charged, never get anywhere. The complaint is withdrawn as soon as the wages are paid or when the complainant returns to his or her country of origin. In fact they only try to scare their employers and are not interested in putting the rogue bosses out of business.

As some studies have shown, and they are confirmed by witness accounts, the exploitation endured by illegal immigrants is most often regarded as temporary because it is linked to an employee status which will be cast off as soon as possible. This is a second hypothesis concurrent to the first.

The idea is that wage-earning cannot be considered a successful destiny. To escape it honourably, one ought to start a company which could grow and itself employ others, in other words to take the place of the employer..

³¹ M. Pereira, *Parcours entre droits et stratégies de (sur)vie*, July 2008, communication, Rio de Janeiro Ccloquent on expatriate Bresilians.

³² Under Belgian law, employers must comply with social legislation whatever the legal status of the worker. In other words, labour inspections can receive complaints from undocumented workers and prosecute employers, without suing the complainant for illegal residence or employment. Compliance with social labour law is a measure of public order. It goes without saying that this is ignored and rarely used by undocumented workers.

This Danish testimony illustrates that state of mind : it heralds the rest of the story : we see how the witness intends to solve his situation.

“I pay money to my own director because I have the talent and I have the contacts but officially my good family member is the owner of my business. This is madness but the only way to make some money because I am not allowed to do anything in Denmark.”

3.3.1 Individualism and spirit of enterprise

The Austrian and Belgian reports bring testimonies which show this reality : they are from migrants who claim to have been hired through employment agencies which turned out to be the creatures of previously illegal workers who have since regularized their situations.

We have examples of companies which were set up by people travelling between their country of origin and a country of destination, after having been regularized. They make the most of their freedom of movement to organize particularly lucrative activities. This freedom of movement has given birth to new "circulating" models of migration, based on commuting between country of origin and the country of destination, in particular around the Mediterranean³³. Women in particular are involved in these experiments.

Above all our examples concern the placing of labour in agriculture and the building industry.

Projects of this type are very popular among with migrants, especially illegal immigrants : they are themselves often involved in undertakings of this kind and even if they know their dangers, they will give priority to the possibility of upward mobility present in the status of self-employed worker or boss of a company. According to a widely shared opinion, which reflects the dominant ideology, the one who comes out on top is best and owes nothing to anyone. This, without beating around the bush, is what this testimony shows.

³³ Peraldi M. (dir.) op.cit.

Got no education, and doesn't believe that it is necessary to get wealth and rich. You better have some good business ideas. The only problem is that he lacks the capital to start some thing good, and that his network is not able to provide money in the scale that he need. His whole being depends on the social network with other immigrants, mainly countrymen or other Arabs.

It is, in any case, an important reason for embarking in long and painful regularization procedures, especially for men.³⁴

Finally, it seems to us that if migrants believe they will not be able to count on the solidarity of their workmates, compatriots or autochthones to improve their working conditions, then they must rely on personal networks, their families and their communities.

This resource is part of their social capital precisely because it is accessible only to themselves, even if there is a price to pay.

In our view, it is also true that trade union support cannot be part of social capital because it is, by definition, collective support, individual commitment in the group's interest.

Quite the opposite.

3.3. 2. Missed rendez-vous

For trade unions, refusing to take into account the fate of these workers is the antithesis of this position.

By taking charge of undocumented people in Paris in April 2008, the CGT trade union specified that it was taking an unusual step : by leading the strike movement, the CGT imposed workers' solidarity on undocumented people who would not perhaps be prepared to defend it after being regularized.

³⁴ In the Brazilian couples interviewed in Brussels, women do not perceive regularization as an opportunity for paid work, but as a way for the family to benefit from social democracy advantages : free school and health care, day care for children, including the possibility of acquiring property

It is, for that matter, a particular characteristic of the undocumented movement that they almost never capitalize from the point of view of case law, or from a political or social point. (...) This constitutes one of the dimensions of the condition of undocumented people who either disappear by being expelled or put as much distance as possible between themselves and their former comrades-in-struggle and their support after being regularized.³⁵

In other words, defending this type of salaried workers is not a trade unions' priority, precisely because it is uncertain that undocumented workers will assume this position.

But the trade union argument raises other obstacles.

To make a point of mentioning it, we base ourselves on discussions with a trade union official in charge of the hotel and catering sector in Brussels, where there are many illegal workers in full view³⁶.

In Brussels, delegates of this trade union, which is well established in companies, meet undocumented cook assistants and cleaners in the kitchens of the big hotels. But the trade union's usual policy is not to defend them against employers or to try to enlist them : as they are considered supplementary labour, temporary and volatile, taking responsibility for them would be a waste of time. The priority is to redress the many illegal practices affecting legal workers.

On the other hand, some trade unionists are uneasy about defending illegal workers because they fear that union support would legitimize recourse to undeclared labour. And so a union delegate in a Belgian telephone company who found that the firm in charge of excavation work for the laying of cables was employing undocumented workers, induced his employer to

³⁵ M. Bernardot, « Nos compagnons secrets, la grève de sans papiers du printemps 2008 dans la restauration », *Mouvements*, July 2008, <http://mouvements.info/spip.php?article308>

³⁶ Survey of the café/hotel/restaurant industry, as part of the European SMALL project (Trade union membership in SMEs) 2004-2005

break the contract and have the workers dismissed, even though he was aware of the difficulties that this would create for the illegal workers³⁷.

Finally, trade unions also point to the lack of resources for take charging of irregularities committed regarding undocumented workers, because they do not pay union fees and need an enormous legal follow-up.

Naturally, the official position does not prevent some militants or members from committing themselves to helping these undeclared workers, but they do it in their personal capacities or within the trade union structures which have a political commitment and fight human rights from a humanitarian point of view. So, in fact, as an organisation, trade unions cannot be said to be indifferent to the exploitation of undocumented people, but we have found little evidence of their demanding action for their benefit in companies.

Nevertheless we must not forget that trade unions fear the reactions of some members who do not like migrants. We know that far-right parties make impressive scores in elections by using xenophobia and racism and they get many workers' votes. Furthermore, they do not distinguish between migrants and the most illegal are, in their eyes, undocumented migrants. It is in fact an untruth; these workers are convinced that recent migrants take jobs that are rightly the indigenous workers' and that they bring wages down. These ideas are constantly encouraged by the restrictive and security policies of the State.

A last remark on this point : contacts between undocumented and regular workers are difficult to establish on building sites : trade union delegates are often confronted with groups of workers not from their companies whose employment conditions are different from their own. The segmentation and generalized subcontracting on building sites is a serious threat to social cohesion and cooperation between workers because each is under a different hierarchy and a trade union delegate is not allowed to call any employer other than his own. So delegates do not want to take the risk of interfering where they ought not to.

³⁷ FGTB Wallonia conference on sub-contracting and illegal working, 15 April 2008

As regard trade-union activity among undocumented migrants, the Italian report shows that foreign migrants are integrated into trade-union organizations, which have adapted to the new composition of the working-class in Italy. In Italy, however, the new members of the trade-union organisations have benefited from procedure for regularisation through work that do not exist elsewhere.

4. HUMAN CAPITAL AND SOCIAL CAPITAL : OTHER VIEWS

4.1 DESTABILISATION

According to the Italian report the importance that should be given to the resources which constitute human and social capital seem to be measured by the importance of the obstacles which migrants must face. The refusal to recognize diplomas and professional qualifications acquired in the country of origin is part of this process of “destabilising” migrants, on a par with the obstacles to family regrouping and to access to housing in which institutions and governments are involved.

The question then is not so much to define and show the level of social or human capital of individuals, but rather to question how it is used to counter the strategy of undermining living conditions.

The major hypothesis around which the analysis of the strategies and profiles of migrants revolves is the aspiration to “stability” : stabilisation.

We must understand the meaning of stabilisation as opposed to subservience, weakening and jeopardization.

Subservience in the job market can mean not recognizing diplomas and qualifications, which allows a reduction in wages and the cost of labour, but it also undermines the whole of the migratory project.

This is a quote :

“This inferiorization is produced at various levels and goes beyond the immediate sphere of work. It constitutes the measure through which to evaluate the success of the entire migration project, and at the same time reproduces in daily life and in subjective experience the relations now in force between the countries of the global North and South, nullifying the political and economic investment and the sense of individual and collective emancipation that education represents.”

The social weakening of migrants translates into a denial of access to social housing and forced submission to crooked landlords, but there are also the legal provisions which contribute to this project.

The testimonies gathered in Italy show that community associations, like union affiliation, must be considered experiments in self-organisation for migrants.

Their existence testifies to the existence of a dynamic offensive at the heart of migrant communities which manifests itself on one hand by allowing its members to make their voices heard and to mobilise, but on the other hand by contributing to the stabilisation and the integration into the job market of the members who are in need of stabilization.

“The research has shown that immigrant associations, along with participation in unions, constitutes the principal channel through which immigrant workers express their self-activation and self-organization. In addition to promoting the knowledge of their countries of origin, the spheres of activity tend above all to favour the stabilization of immigrant populations, through forms that range from engagement to full-fledged mobilization.”

4.2 BULGARIAN PARTICULARITIES

All the countries in the survey start from hypothesis that refugees and regular/irregular asylum seekers had organised their migratory journey as though the country of destination, our countries, were the final leg of the journey. We assume that the individuals who found asylum in Belgium, Italy, Spain, etc. had decided to stop there for the long term or even for ever.

However, if we refer to the accounts brought to us, a certain number settled elsewhere first, then changed their minds and left again in search of another host country.

We have not noted the motives which led them to change their destinations, and sometimes they do not wish to explain them. It does seem obvious, however, that some destinations are preferred while others are the best of a bad job.

The example that comes up most often is Great-Britain. The press constantly reports desperate attempts by some refugees to cross the Channel from Belgian and French ports and who roam for weeks near motorway parking lots looking for a lorry to take them across.

Some may already have risked their lives to reach the Canary Islands or the Italian islands in the Mediterranean.

Other countries are also undoubtedly destinations, either because work is easily available, or because some family is already settled there, or because it is close, etc. or they are transit places where people have settled despite not really wanting to.

Nevertheless, it is on the basis of an assumption of definitive settling that we have constructed our criteria for analysis, in particular those that have guided the analysis of the social and psychological profile, in particular the evaluation of human and social capital.

However, we have no guarantees that that assumption is the right one, in Bulgaria least of all. In the Bulgarian report there is the account of a rather unusual employer who accepts the idea that the refugees he employs are mainly concerned with finding another country of residence. We can therefore imagine that these refugees are going to apply their resources not to the development of their integration in Bulgaria, but to moving to another place;

“Many refugees from Iraq arrive nowadays, sometimes with their families, and they have to feed them because the financial support is very low /BGN 55 (EUR 27,5) per month per person/. I hire two or three of the newcomers in my workshop. I lose much, because I have to train them for two or three months and I pay them for that time. Usually they save the money and pay to a trafficker, and depart to another European country, where other members of their family reside or where the conditions are better. Then I have to hire new people, to train them, etc. This is not good for my business but I have to do it, because I am doing well and have the ability to help my fellow nationals.” /8 *bulgaria d_m_Iraq_35.doc* / It is clear that this is a special case of undocumented employment: **legal business where undocumented employees are appointed but not with the objective of generating profit in the shadow economy**³⁸; the goal is solidarity and support for the refugees. At the same time the interviewee emphasizes that his business survives due to the Bulgarian employees who remain his basic staff.”

³⁸ Underlined by reports author

CONCLUSION

In this evaluation of the social (and human) capital of the migrants who reach our countries, we have tried to measure the personal and professional qualities they could offer to the development of our societies and in so doing also gain some profit for themselves. It is hard, in carrying out this analysis, to avoid the point of view of the “consumer”, which has been ours, since the assessment was made in terms of our own criteria, for example the relationship between human capital and integration in the workforce ; thus we asked ourselves if a better job came from better human or social capital. But finally we had to come to conclude, from observing reality through the witnesses' accounts, that this correlation was flawed. This does not mean that our criteria for evaluation are wrong or inadequate, but simply that they do not really take into account the point of view of the person being evaluated.

Putting it more simply, it would have been easier to ask the witnesses why they left and what they intend to do with their “capitals”.

This is the question put by the anthropologist Emmanuel Terray³⁹. It enables him to link the question to the debate on human rights which is particularly sensitive in this area.

Why do these people who are capable of putting their cultural and social capital to use, and have already done so, decide to leave their countries and settle elsewhere to succeed in a new life ?

We know quite well that neither poverty nor unemployment today is sufficient motivation for leaving. That is why migrants tell us they did not come to be satisfied with being paid a pittance in the underground economy. But nor did they come because we needed their qualifications to develop our economies or rejuvenate our demography. We know that the decision to migrate is a private decision which does not depend on a State's demand but on

an individual (or a family's) desires, which transcend circumstances. Despite political measures which seek to close borders and limit the freedom to travel, those desires will continue to prevail and migrants will continue to come and go, depending on their own choices and not those of States.

³⁹ C. Rodier, E. Terray (dir), Immigration : fantasmes et réalité, pour une alternative à la fermeture des frontières, La Découverte, sur le vif, Paris, 2008.

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