

## COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION: THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK IN LATIN AMERICAN MIGRANTS IN A RURAL PROVINCE (TERUEL, SPAIN)

## INTEGRACIÓN Y PARTICIPACIÓN COMUNITARIA: EL ROL DE LAS REDES SOCIALES EN LOS INMIGRANTES LATINOAMERICANOS EN UNA PROVINCIA RURAL (TERUEL, ESPAÑA)

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### Abstract

Social network play an important role in both the decision to emigrate and the choice of location. Related to migrants and its social net, very little is known about patterns of integration and community participation in rural and low population density contexts in Spain. This article explores these issues and is based on a study, in the province of Teruel (Spain), using a sample of 324 Latin American migrants over the age of 18, selected by sex and place of residence. A standardised test – the Musitu and Gracia AC-90 Community Social Support Questionnaire and open questions were employed. ANOVAS analysis showed significant differences in community integration and participation in accordance with socioeconomic, motivational and social interaction variables.

**Key words:** Social network, community integration, community participation, Latin American migrants, rural communities.

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### Resumen

Las redes sociales juegan un papel decisivo tanto en la decisión de emigrar como en la elección del lugar de destino. Sin embargo, se conoce poco sobre su rol en el desarrollo de la integración y participación comunitaria de los emigrantes a contextos rurales y poco poblados. Basandonos en la la provincia de Teruel (España), este artículo analiza estas cuestiones con una muestra de 324 inmigrantes latinoamericanos mayores de edad y seleccionados en función de su sexo y su lugar de residencia. La investigación se ha realizado a partir de cuestionario estandarizado de Apoyo Comunitario (AC-90 de Musitu y Gracia) y de preguntas abiertas y cerradas. Los procedimientos estadísticos y especialmente, los análisis de varianza muestran diferencias estadísticamente significativas en su inserción comunitaria considerando la situación económica, las motivaciones de emigración y las variables relativas a la interacción social.

**Palabras clave:** Redes sociales, integración comunitaria, participación comunitaria, inmigrantes latinoamericanos, rural communities.

## Introduction

Both in the United States and Europe, the rural exodus generated significant demographic (especially from the 1960s), economic (the decline of agriculture), cultural (the loss of traditions and customs) and institutional (unequal development and access to power) changes (McIntyre, 2009; Overbeek, 2009). In Spain, despite the 'economic miracle', the transition to democracy and European integration, the last decades have seen growing regional differences and the progressive depopulation and aging of inland rural areas (García & Serrano, 2004).

It would seem that the existence of the Spanish rural population does not so much depend on indigenous population growth as on migration. Authors such as Cantarero (2002), Labrianidis & Sykas (2009) and Mendham & Curtis (2010), have described a new model of rural coexistence that includes, intellectuals, neorural inhabitants, tourists, second-home owners and pensioners that, in general, have migrated from cities and urban areas.

In contrast to urban anonymity, rural villages have a culture of coexistence that is adjusted to norms that are sanctioned by the local community; the extensive neighbourhood and family network has a greater influence in conditioning relationships and this implies greater social control and assignment of family roles that suppose restrictions on individual behaviour but offer a higher level of social support and solidarity in a more natural and human environment (Berry & Okulicz-Korzaryn, 2009).

People that live in areas where there is a high level of social solidarity and integration are more committed to shared community objectives and see themselves as having more power and control over their own lives (Campbell, Cornish & Mclean, 2004). Identity involves a socialisation process that includes the presence of reference groups and the corresponding

feelings of belonging to them (Townley & Kloos, 2009). In this context, social capital is directly related to the possibilities of personal and community development (Campbell, Cornish & Mclean, 2004). The concept of social capital illustrates the beneficial and protective attributes that personal relationships provide (Tseloni, Zissi & Skapinakis, 2010). Its communitarian definition contemplates the variables related to the social networks, their capacity for adaptation, the acceptance of individuals and the ability to respond to their needs with respect and tolerance, thereby creating a basis for social integration (Gil-Lacruz, 2000, Gil-Lacruz, Izquierdo, Martín & Ochoa, 2008). As a consequence, the functions, structure of the network and the levels of integration are simultaneously implicated (Maya, 2009).

Social support networks have been profoundly studied in migrant populations due to their positive effects with regards to the challenges faced by these groups in their new environment. In many cases, the decision to emigrate, the choice of the location and the process of integration depend on the prior existence of social networks (De Miguel & Tranmer, 2010); their presence is a key factor in access to resources such as housing, health, education, social services and employment (Martín, Ochoa, Izquierdo & Gil-Lacruz, 2007).

However, the definitions of social capital and social network differ according to different culture backgrounds, communitarian environments and labor market conditions. For example, comparing Ecuadorian emigration between United States and Spain, American emigration is leadership by males from rural regions faced by long term economic decline (Gratton, 2007). The Spaniard labour market conditions is not only segmented by sex, but women characterised by an important concentration in domestic service. In Spain, Ecuadorian women leadership the process, many of whom left behind her families (Gratton, 2007). For this women, practising transnational motherhood entails communicating frequently, sending remittances and showing a deep affective involvement (Bocagni, 2012). This situation generates new types of relationships and new struggles related to family reunion and ca-

regiving practices. In spite of the Spaniard policy strategy of return during this economic crisis, return possibilities is not so plausible in the family stabilisation abroad and of the uncertain prospects for development in the motherland (Boccagni & Lagomarsino, 2011).

When migrants arrive at a destination, they develop social relations that begin with family members and compatriots and the reproduction of cultural patterns from their society of origin (Vergunst, 2008). These networks are themselves conditioned by the impact of the migration, both in terms of their composition (e.g. the family) and size (usually small, to begin with), and their capacity for regeneration and recuperation is an indicator of the success of the processes of integration and community participation (Maya, 2009). Latin American migrant experiences in different contexts, as for example self-positioning in the wider social matrix and their perceived forms of inclusion, are shaped by political ideas, class and economic opportunities (Durr, 2011).

According to Molina (2007), in Spain, recent research on migrant social networks has analysed the extent to which the structure and characteristics of the composition of social networks influence and explain psychosocial processes such as the identification of the migrant with their new society (Lubbers & Molina, 2007), a sense of community (Maya & Armitage, 2007), a sense of wellbeing and the evolution of migratory chains (De Miguel & Tranmer, 2010).

The migratory network is not only a mechanism that facilitates the movement of people between their communities of origin and destination, it also allows for the circulation of ideologies. This communicative activity implies participation in the community and involves a wide range of disparate and complex variables that include the study of social needs, social representations and identity and the corresponding distribution of power (Marková, 2000). Previous experience influence the migrants participation in their new communities.

On one hand, migrants who have spent more time in a more participatory context at origin and who are in closer contact with these societ-

ies are more like to get involved in civic associations at destination (Voicu & Rusu, 2012).

On the other hand, pasive attitudes and prejudices and stereotypes are easily developed in a climate of mutual ignorance and isolated rural enclaves are no exception. Gómez Bahillo (2004) suggested a number of arguments to explain the absence of relationships between Spaniards and migrants and the consequent associative behaviour, the most important are listed below:

- Saving money and reuniting the family are priorities and this means that free time activities and associative behaviours are reduced.
- Stereotyped opinions that Spanish people are racist and prejudiced. Similar prejudices are also developed with regards to other cultures and peoples. The considerable cultural diversity and variety of interaction patterns within the Latin American community must also be taken into account, for example, mixed race couples with one partner being Spanish are more common among Dominicans, Cubans and Peruvians (Martínez, García & Maya, 2002).
- Associative behaviour is facilitated by the migrant's long term residence and the basic knowledge of normative and sociocultural functioning of the locality. Being socially active and a member of associations or groups before emigrating is also influential, as is knowledge of individual rights and interest in those with whom relationships can be established.
- The preference for relationships with compatriots and their nuclear families that often help the newly arrived migrant to overcome feelings of loneliness and nostalgia.
- Support is prioritised on the basis of esteem and reciprocity, rather than on authority, the role of the expert compared with that of the 'client', 'user' or 'patient' or a unidirectional relationship. Other explanations for the failure to integrate may be lack of knowledge with regards

to available resources or doubt and fear when faced with situations of illegality or irregularity.

Even rural and isolated host communities, they do not want to forget their traditions but, at the same time, they do not want their new members to abandon their roots (Pennix & Martiniello, 2006). This results in the development of new, alternate, overlapping, areas of identity, formed by an effort to adapt. Communities defend the need for differing forms of integration and there are a variety of stages in its evolution (Pradilla, 2006). This dynamic process implies to negotiate spaces, institutions and roles. As Vergunst (2008, 2009) points, it is a struggle for control in which migrant can develop a power of agency and people from the locality share the skill of acceptance or exclusion.

Andrzejewska & Rye (2012) recommend us to pay more attention to the social contexts of migration and social capital resources of migrants in rural areas. Formal sociability according to Moya (2005), as for example join to associations or practice associational activities are interesting indicators of this development attempt. Reyes-Ruíz (2005) also defends that formal and informal networks that Latin American migrants do to accommodate to their host society, contribute to the creation of a pan-national Latin American culture abroad.

Why do Latin American migrants settle in the rural environment in Teruel (Spain)? What kind of social relationships do they have? Do they participate in the life of the community? How do they feel that they can improve their situation and empower themselves and their communities? This article seeks to answer these questions, determine the characteristics and profile of the rural migrant and identify the factors of the social networks and host communities that condition the migratory experience.

### Research data

The province of Teruel is characterised by an extreme climate and mountainous terrain.

The area suffered a significant rural exodus in the 1950s and 1960s. Its current population is 145,015 with a population density of 9.8 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (the Spanish average is 91.4). Only 21 of its 268 municipalities have over one thousand inhabitants (Spanish National Statistics Institute, INE, 2010).

Of the 66,027 workers registered as paying National Insurance in the province, 18,312 are Latin American migrants who make up 27.7% of the total number of foreign residents in Teruel (INE, 2010).

The non-random, Latin American migrant research sample was selected with a confidence level of 95.5% and a margin of error of  $\pm 5$ . The sample was stratified on the bases of sex (128 men, 196 women) and place of residence (59% from Teruel capital, 41% from the rest of the province). 324 individuals over the age of 18 were interviewed. The study was therefore transversal, with on-the-spot data collection.

With the aim of achieving as wide ranging regional representation as possible, the study involved students from the Zaragoza University Faculty of Humanities and social and community professionals from the rural environment (e.g. social workers, rural development workers, local councillors with responsibility for migration etc.). Approximately one 25% of the contacted people refused to answer because of not having time or interest on the research, and for being afraid of his/her illegal situation. Anonymity was guaranteed at all times.

### Research instruments

The questionnaire combined standardised, integrated instruments with open questions. The main groups of variables considered were:

- Socio-demographic characteristics: sex; age; marital status; access to family and friends in Spain; education; employment; perception of level of income; remittances sent to country of origin; place of residence and time lived there.
- Assessment of the migration experience: motivation for migration and settlement

in Teruel; valuation of quality of life and personal improvement gained from the migratory experience; future expectations; sources of improvement of situation and agents responsible.

- Social network: geographical origin of neighbours and individuals of frequent social relationships; sources of social support; valuation of social support.
- Future intentions in relation to settlement in the place of residence.
- Community participation and integration.

The standardised test employed for the measurement of community support was the

AC-90 (Musitu & Gracia, 1990) this was selected due to its high level of internal consistency in Spanish samples (e.g. Cronbach's Valencia = 0.88; Cronbach's Zaragoza = 0.90; Gil La-cruz, 2000).

There were 11 items on the Likert-type scale (minimum grading = 1; maximum grading = 5) grouped by two factors: integration and community participation. This community support measurement contemplated cognitive aspects (e.g. 'my opinions are well received in my neighbourhood or community'), affective (e.g. 'I identify with my community') and behavioural (e.g. 'I participate in social or civil groups in my community') Community is always referred to the territorial residential approach.

Table 1

*Descriptive statistics in AC-90 Test Items*

<b>Community is related to the neighbourhood (territorial and residential approach)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mín</b>	<b>Max</b>
1. I do not feel comfortable in my community	2.33	1.200	1	5
2. I identify myself with my community	2.93	1.117	1	5
3. My ideas are welcome in my community	2.99	.998	1	5
4. Not many people in my community know who I am	2.90	1.255	1	5
5. I feel that my community is something that belongs to me	2.74	1.167	1	5
6. I take part in the community associations	2.45	1.210	1	5
7. I take part in social events in my community	2.50	1.160	1	5
8. I take part in a social or civil group (neighbours, housewives etc.)	2.12	1.069	1	5
9. I do not actively support the social demands put forward by my neighbours	3.10	1.220	1	5
10. I take care of my community's needs	2.93	1.188	1	5
11. I do not take part in the leisure activities of my neighbourhood/ community	2.90	1.263	1	5
Variable	Items equation			
Participation	06 + 07 + 08 + 10 - (09 + 11)			
Integration	02 + 03 + 05 - (01 + 04)			

The statistical treatment of the data was undertaken in two phases: the first was a des-

criptive analysis of the main characteristics of the sample; the second was a variance analysis

aimed at prioritising the statistically significant differences between the values of the target variables.

## Results

### Descriptive results

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics Independent Variables Abstract (N = 324)*

<i>Independent variables (frequencies)</i>				
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>39.5%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>60.5%</b>
Age	15–24 years 22.8%	25-31years 26.8%	32-39 years 25.8%	Over40 23.7%
Civil status	Single 33.6%	Married/partner 55.2%	Separated 9.3%	Widowed: 1.5%
Country of origin	Argentina 25%	Colombia 21%	Ecuador 11.4% Dominican Republic 8.6%	Other 34%
Education	None 5.9%	Primary 25.3%	Secondary/ Vocational 46.6%	University 22.2%
Employment	Employed 76.2%	Unemployed 10.8%	Student 8.6%	Other 4.3%
Evaluation of economic situation.	Insufficient incomes	39.9%	Sufficient income	57.7%
Send money home	No	45.4%	Yes	53.7%
Place of residence	Teruel capital	59.5%	Villages	33.1%
Period of residence	Less than three years	57.7%	Three years or more	42.3%
Motivation for migration	Work or education 21%	Family reunification 18.2%	Economic 54.3%	Other 3.7%
Evaluation of quality of life	Worse 4.3%	The same 25.3%	Better 67.3%	
Improvement with migration	None or little 4%	A little 23.1%	Considerable 45.7%	A lot 26.5%
Future expectation	Worse 0.3%	The same 17%	Improvement 82.2%	
Neighbours	None 3.1%	Other migrants 7.4%	Spanish migrants 16.7%	Spanish 72.5%
Family in the area?	No	21.9%	Yes	75%
Friends?	None	20.1%	Yes	72.5%
Origin of relationships	None 4.6%	Compatriots and other Latin Americans 24.4%	People from Teruel 17.9%	Other 52.2%
Sources of support	None 12%	Compatriots 26.2% Other migrants 8.6%	Spanish acquaintances 36.1%	Other 16.4%
Evaluation of support	Negative 4.9%	Unsatisfactory 11.1%	Satisfactory 34.9%	Useful 42.3%
Future plans	Stay in Teruel 45.7%	Move to another part of Spain 15.7%	Emigrate to another country 2.5%	Return to my country 29.3%

The largest group of respondents (25%) were born in Argentina, followed by Colombia (21%), Ecuador (11.4%) and the Dominican Republic (8.6%). The remainder (34%) were born in other Latin American countries. The majority (59.5%) were resident in the capital of the province. The median period of residence was 2 years; the average residence was 3.4 years and the standard deviation 4 years. Half the respondents were married or lived with their partners. 43.8% of the respondent's families and dependents lived in the province.

68.8% of the sample had secondary or tertiary education. Just over three-quarters (76.2%) were employed at the time of the interview, 8.6% were in full time education whilst the figures for unemployed (10.8%), homemakers (3.4%) and retired/pensioners (0.9%) were considerably smaller.

The majority of those in employment worked in hostelry (28%), domestic service (13.9%) and construction (10.8%). Only a small proportion worked in industry (8%) and agriculture (0.9%).

When asked about the motive for migration, the most common responses were to improve the economic situation (54.3%), joining family members that had already migrated (18.2%) and better employment or educational prospects (21%). The main reason why Teruel was chosen as a destination was that family members and friends and/or acquaintances were living there and this aided social integration and the search for employment.

67.3% were happy with their new lives, despite the problems and difficulties; 25.3% believed that their situation was neither better nor worse; 4.3% said that they were worse off than before they emigrated. A conclusive 96% stated that, in general, moving to Teruel had been a positive experience. This optimism was reflected by the fact that 82.2% believed that in the future they would achieve a higher standard of living.

Governmental organisations were the most important factor in the improvement of their situations (the Spanish State: 31.6%; the Local Council: 13.6%, the Aragonese Regional Gov-

ernment: 12.5%). Nevertheless, almost one in ten (8.5%) declared that they were responsible for their own progress and argued that organisations directly associated with the migrants themselves could be an alternative to official bodies (8.3%). Work related organisations (employers, 7.9%; Trade Unions, 4.1%), the local community (neighbours, 5.8%, others, e.g. the church, 2.65%) and the mass media (5.8%) were also considered as important.

The analysis of the social network revealed the following interaction patterns:

- A large majority of the sample (72.5%) had Spanish neighbours. Whilst almost half (49.4%) interacted with people from all origins, less than one in five (17.9%) mixed with Spanish people and people from Teruel itself.
- 4.6% said they had no significant relationships with anyone. Loneliness and isolation were problems that worried 4.3% of respondents and 2.5% were concerned about adapting to local customs. Only 0.9% saw the defence of their cultural and religious identity as problematic.
- More respondents had relationships with their compatriots (15.1%) than with people from other Latin American countries (9.3%). The most common social meeting place was the home (40.7%), followed by the workplace (15.1%), bars and restaurants (12%) and outdoors (10%).
- 62.4% never, or only sporadically, talk about their problems with other people; 35.8% said that they often talk with others about problems. These figures change slightly when the problems are emotional or concerning feelings (59.9% never, or only sporadically; 4.1% often).

Interaction patterns do not necessarily guarantee effective support: 12% of interviewees had nobody to turn to when they experienced problems and difficulties; 37.2% reported that they had experienced discrimination at some point, 33.1% had been discriminated against a few times and 28.2% had never suf-

ferred rejection or problems due to being an migrant in a rural area.

In times of need, the respondents frequently seek out their compatriots (26.2%) and migrants from other countries (8.6%), but the main agents of support are Spanish friends and acquaintances (36.1%). Municipal services, governmental and non-governmental organisations, such as the Church (Caritas), the Red Cross, migrant support centres, associations, employers and others represented 16.4% of social support relationships.

The fact that Teruel is a small, tranquil province, with a low cost of living, beautiful countryside and good administrative support with migration settlement was highly valued; these factors are seen as contributing to a better quality of life. However, a number of complaints and difficulties were also mentioned by the respondents: separation from family (27.5%); uncertainty with regards to the future (13.9%); problems with bureaucracy (13%); loneliness (10.8%); feelings of mistrust shown by Spanish people (9.3%); in the category 'other', 'the harsh climate' was often mentioned.



## Inferential results

Table 3

*Analysis of variance between groups by community participation*

	Averages corresponding to community participation				
	GI	Sc	F	P	Averages
Gender	1	1.041	0.052	0.819	Male 3.95 Female 4.07
Age	3	76.364	1.316	0.269	1.º 4.78 2.º 3.39 3.º 4.12 4.º 3.92
Civil status	3	8.503	0.142	0.935	Single 3.94 Married/partner 4.13 Separated 3.6 Widowed 3.67
Family in Spain?	1	2.594	0.132	0.717	Yes 3.94 No 4.16
Friends	1	0.424	0.20	0.886	Yes 4.00 No 4.1
Education	3	13.209	0.221	0.882	None 3.58 1.º 3.83 2.ª 4.23 Univ 3.93
Employment	4	290.276	3.797	<b>0.005*</b>	Employed 3.51 Unemployed 5.18 Student 6.36 Homemaker 5.80. Retired 3.67
Sufficient income	1	1.720	0.085	0.770	Yes 4.07 No 3.92
Send money home	1	7.937	0.397	0.529	Yes 3.86 No 4.18
Place of residence	1	141.353	7.658	<b>0.006*</b>	Village 4.84 Capital 3.38
Period of residence	1	5.829	0.294	0.588	Less than 3 years 3.90 3 or more years 4.18
Motive for migration	7	234.612	1.717	0.104	Employment 4.64 Education 6.56 Family 3.98 Economic 3.71 Transit 2.0 Facilities -3.0 Ideology 7.75 Other 3.0
Quality of life Evaluation	2	0.960	0.024	0.976	Worse 3.85 The same 3.97 Better 4.07
Improvement through migration	4	40.234	0.505	0.732	No 8.0 little 3.78 some 3.72 Considerable 3.97 a lot 4.48
Future expectations	2	173.320	4.478	<b>0.012*</b>	Worse 5.0 The same 2.37 Improve 4.37
Neighbours	3	19.300	0.323	0.809	None 2.67 Other migrants 4.0 Mix 3.38 Spanish 4.11
Relationships	6	73.416	0.609	0.723	None 5.27 Compatriots 3.67 other Latin-Americans 3.38 Other Spaniards 7.0 Other migrants 3.75 A mix 4.16
Sources of support	8	231.856	1.463	0.170	None 2.54 Compatriots 3.63 Other migrants 5.15 Spaniards 4.74 Municipal services 2.44 Welfare services 4.60 Migrant associations 4.33 Employer 1.0 other 3.86
Evaluation of support	3	215.797	3.733	<b>0.012*</b>	Useful 3.58 satisfactory 5.11 Unsatisfactory 3.31 Inadequate 2.31
Future plans	5	69.683	0.702	0.623	Stay in Teruel 4.44 Move in Spain 4.29 Move to other country 3.50 Return to my country 3.79 Return in a few years 3.55 other 2.89

Among the socio-demographic characteristics that influence the participative behaviour

of migrants in the community, the most significant are employment and place of residence.

The unemployed, students and homemakers are more often involved in the activities or their locality ( $F = 3.797, p = 0.005$ ) (employed 3.51 < retired 3.67 < unemployed 5.18 < homemakers 5.80 < students 6.36) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Those that reside in outlying villages are more involved in the community than those who live in the capital ( $F = 7.658, p = 0.006$ ) (resident in villages 4.84 > resident in the capital 3.38) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

Individuals that feel that in the future their situation will be worse are more likely to participate in the social life of the village where they live ( $F = 4.478, p = 0.012$ ) (worse 5.0 > better 4.37 > the same 2.37) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Respondents that were more satisfied with the social support they received were also more likely to be involved in community activities ( $F = 3.733, p = 0.012$ ) (satisfied 5.51 > useful 3.58 > unsatisfied 3.31 > inadequate 2.31) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

The results of this work show that community integration depends on a series of socioeconomic and psychosocial variables, the most important of which are the objective living conditions and the valuation and expectations of the migratory experience.

The economic level of the migrant has an influence on the individual's identification with their community ( $F = 4.169, p = 0.042$ ) (sufficient income 3.75 > insufficient 2.96) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The motivation for emigration is also significant with regards to the degree of community integration: people that migrated for ideological, family or educational reasons, feel happier in Teruel than those that believe they will only stay a short time in the area or those that came to the area to improve their economic situation or find employment ( $F = 2.127, p = 0.041$ ) (temporary residence 0.29 < facilities 1.0 < employment 3.12 < economic reasons 3.39 < education 3.89 < family 3.93 < ideology 7.5) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

Community integration appears to be easier in the villages than in the provincial capital ( $F = 6.040, p = 0.015$ ) (villages 4.00 > capital 3.01) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The composition and valuation of the social network that develops with the migratory experience fosters the feeling of integration; Latin American migrants that have social relationships with local people and

people from other areas (not just their compatriots) feel more integrated in the life of the community ( $F = 3.574, p = 0.002$ ) (non-Latin American migrants 0.80 < no relationships 1.60 < other Latin Americans 1.69 < Spaniards not from Teruel 2.67 < compatriots 3.22 < people from Teruel 3.80 < a mix 3.96) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

This tendency is consistent even for the variable 'neighbourhood composition'; more positive responses were from those who live among the Spanish population: ( $F = 4.368, p = 0.005$ ) (no Spanish neighbours 1.33 < other migrants 1.58 < a mix 3.31 < Spanish 3.73) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). People that had established friendships also felt more integrated ( $F = 4.420, p = 0.036$ ) (no friends 2.65 < with friends 3.66) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

When those respondents that identified with their community were asked which source of support had been most useful in the integration process, the most common were their employer, Spanish people in general and social welfare organisations such as the Catholic Church (Caritas) and the Red Cross ( $F = 2.013, p = 0.045$ ) (migrant associations 1.33 < none 2.77 < compatriots 2.78 < municipal services 2.89 < other migrants 3.08 < social welfare organisations 3.60 < Spaniards 4.29 < company owners 6.5) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

Migrants who said that they felt a sense of belonging to the community were more likely to believe that migration had allowed them to improve their lives ( $F = 4.954, p = 0.001$ ) (no -1 < not much 2.16 < quite a lot 3.57 < considerably 4 < very much 4.33) ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). There was a statistically significant difference with regards to the community integration among those that stated that their quality of life had fallen since they migrated ( $F = 5.633, p = 0.004$ ) (no change 2.40 < worse 3.29 < better 3.87) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Respondents that had a more positive valuation of their quality of life tended to define themselves as part of the community; similarly, those that were more positive about expectations for the future felt more integrated in Teruel ( $F = 3.294, p = 0.038$ ) (worse 0.0 < no change 2.5 < better 3.67) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

The intention to settle permanently in the province provided a stronger association with the locality: ( $F = 4.179, p = 0.001$ ) (settle here 4.27 > move to another country 3.25 > move to

another municipality 2.55 > return to country of origin 2.52 > return in a few years time 2.50) ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

## Discussion

The aim of this work was to investigate the profile, integration pathway and social network characteristics of an migrant group that are often ignored in social research projects: Latin American migrants that settle in rural environments such as Teruel is.

Like the migrants that left the Teruel province in the 1960's the Latin American migrants to the same province were motivated by the desire for self-improvement. However, in the same way that many of the migrants that left the area have now decided to return to their villages, half of the recent migrants also think of their lives in this province as a temporary period before going back to their countries of origin or moving to another part of Spain or emigrating to another country. Long term residence is only really considered by those that enjoy, in their host communities, significant improvements in their wellbeing and quality of life. Integration in a social network is an important part of the definition of this process (Ortiz & Mendoza, 2008).

From a community perspective, the study of the social network of the migrant offers the possibility of understanding the micro and macro version of the migratory experience and to combine the literature on migratory chains with research on the psychological adaptation of the migrant (Palmerl, Perkins & Xu, 2010).

Social support networks provide resources that facilitate the process of adaptation. In line with results of other studies (e.g. Fernández, 2010), this research found that having contacts has a significant influence on both the decision to emigrate and the choice of destination (third, behind economic and employment factors as the motivation for migration). Once in Teruel, respondents prioritised interaction with their compatriots. Nevertheless, this affective security can later cause social mobility difficulties (Maya, 2009).

When does the individual stop being an migrant in their new place of residence? The change from feeling oneself as an 'outsider' to being 'one of us' is not always gradual and depends on rather subjective factors such as acculturation, socialisation, adaptation and integration (Retortillo & Rodríguez, 2008). The ideal situation would be that the migrant could combine the maintenance of their cultural identity with community participation in the host community.

Indicators of continuity and permanence in place of residence are still living with family members or as married/cohabiting couples, community participation and the opinion that the migratory experience has resulted in an improvement in quality of life. 45.8% of respondents said that they would like to stay in Teruel; other factors that influenced this opinion were accepting the reality of the new situation in comparison with pre-migration expectations, the level of social skills, versatility of social networks, economic and employment conditions and national legislation on migration.

To a large extent, the social networks and their composition provide the answers to migratory dilemmas. Given the changes in lifestyle, customs, language etc., the peer group, the family and the neighbourhood provide the base from which feelings of self-esteem and self-efficacy are derived, although contact with local people (Spaniards) is one of the main agents of social support; it is therefore important to examine the relationships that are established between the indigenous population and the migrants. The results lead us to the distinction between monocultural social networks (oriented to people of the same cultural background or to people of the host culture) and culturally mixed (migrants and hosts) social networks. The personal preference for specific or diversity in social relationships require further research in terms of values, required skills or exchange consequences.

A possible avenue for future research could be a more in-depth analysis of the dimensions of social networks, for example, size, density, the centrality and organisation of their mem-

bers, predictive factors for their smooth functioning and the development of social capital. The profundity of the social networks can be seen as a significant indicator of migratory success as they increase the possibilities of facilitating the exchange of opportunities, information, affectivity and security among their members (Lin, 2001).

Latin American migration is considered here as homogenous group in spite of the significant cultural differences between the ethnic groups in the sample and their cultural and historical links to Spain. Next step in this research is add these enrichfull perspectives.

It would also be interesting to examine the perceptions of the local inhabitants of these rural areas concerning their migrant neighbours. Previous studies have concluded that reduced migrant density in a locality (Castellini, Colombo, Maffei & Montali, 2011), knowledge of the local language, a shared culture and religion (as is the case with Latin American migrants to Spain) ease the processes of integration (De Miguel & Tranmer, 2010). The extension of the sample used in this work to include other migrant groups that do not have this cultural affinity with Spain is another attractive subject for future research.

Given that a positive migration experience supposes long-term integration, a longitudinal research project evaluating that experience from both the point of view of the migrants and the local population would be worthy of consideration (Musitu, Buelga, Vera, Avila & Arango, 2009).

Due to the rather disturbing depopulation of the villages in the province of Teruel, the area has a recent history of local intervention and integration initiatives aimed at migrant groups. Migration involves the generation of knowledge and experience that is very significant from the perspective of social and human capital (Cabrer, Serrano & Simarro, 2009). The recognition of this, and the goodwill of the initiatives that have been implemented have not proved to be a guarantee of success. In addition to policies of control and regulation, Spain's migrants require support in the

development of the processes of integration and peaceful coexistence.

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