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# THE ROLE OF ETHNIC, FAMILY, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG THE ARGENTINES AND MOROCCANS IN GALICIA, SPAIN

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## ABSTRACT

### **The Role of Ethnic, Family, and Social Capital in Intergenerational Social Mobility Among the Argentines and Moroccans in Galicia, Spain**

The paper's main objective is to present the results of research aimed at analyzing the intergenerational social mobility processes linked to migration in Argentine and Moroccan families settled in Galicia, Spain. By examining family strategies, the study analyzes the varying mobilization of social, financial, and human capital, intersecting with ethnic capital. The results point out the complex interaction and interrelationship of different conditioning elements (macro, meso, and micro-social determinants) and make it plain that there is a real capacity for agency of particular descendants within given structures, despite the barriers imposed by public policies, labor market discrimination dynamics, and the socioeconomic situation in Spain.

**KEYWORDS:** social mobility, capital, ethnicity, migrations, second generations, Spain, Argentina, Morocco

## IZVLEČEK

### **Vloga etničnega, družinskega in socialnega kapitala pri medgeneracijski socialni mobilnosti med Argentinci in Maročani v španski Galiciji**

Glavni namen prispevka je predstaviti rezultate raziskave, katere cilj je bil analizirati medgeneracijske procese socialne mobilnosti, povezane z migracijami, v argentinskih in maroških družinah, ki so se naselile v španski regiji Galicija. Avtorica s proučevanjem družinskih strategij analizira različne mobilizacije socialnega, finančnega in človeškega kapitala v presečišču z etničnim kapitalom. Rezultati raziskave nakazujejo kompleksno interakcijo in medsebojno povezanost različnih dejavnikov (makro-, mezo- in mikrosocialnih determinant) ter jasno kažejo, da lahko nekateri potomci kljub oviram, ki jih predstavljajo javne politike, dinamika diskriminacije na trgu dela ter socialno-ekonomske razmere v Španiji, dejansko avtonomno delujejo znotraj obstoječih struktur.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** socialna mobilnost, kapital, etnična pripadnost, migracije, druge generacije, Španija, Argentina, Maroko

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## INTRODUCTION

Studying intergenerational social mobility involves adopting a perspective beyond individual trajectories (Sáiz, 2004). The study of educational and occupational mobility processes between parents and children involves, by definition, describing and understanding how social positions are transmitted from generation to generation (Thélot, 1991). Erikson & Goldthorpe (1993, pp. 301–307) define the concept of “mobility strategies” as “the strategies, whether consciously or unconsciously adopted by individuals and families in particular class positions, either to maintain these positions or to improve them” (in Echeverría Zabalza, 1999, p. 72).

This paper will present the results and conclusions of qualitative research that attempted to reveal the factors that affect and condition the educational and occupational trajectories of young migrants of Argentine and Moroccan origin settled in the autonomous community of Galicia, Spain. In this regard, the study focused on the so-called second-generation immigrants and those reunited children or “1.5 generations” defined by Rumbaut (1997), aged 15 to 29.

A second objective is to determine how intergenerational social mobility strategies work for both groups. To do this, in most cases, two generations were included (parents and descendants) and, when possible, three family generations (grandparents, parents, and children). Despite considering families’ stories from a broad intergenerational approach, we measured social mobility changes by focusing on parents’ and descendants’ educational levels and professional categories. The selected approach was based on the idea that the family group is the basic unit for social mobility, not individuals (Sáiz López, 2004, p. 156). To do so, the analysis of family capital mobilization was carried out, focusing on the activation and maximization of social, financial, and human capital, intersecting with ethnic capital.

This study included a tridimensional approach that analyzed macro-structural, meso-social, and micro-sociological elements. The main hypothesis that guided this research stated that in highly ethno-stratified societies, the social origin of migrant families largely determines the results of social mobility strategies in children, as it conditions migrants’ incorporation processes to the host society and, later, their access and further acquisition of valuable resources as human, social, and financial capital. This hypothesis will guide us, thus, to the analysis of the activation, mobilization, and function of the different types of family capital and their roles in individual and group social mobility strategies.

## METHODOLOGY

The results presented in the following paragraphs are based on qualitative research that has applied a multi-sited ethnographical methodology, comprising interviews with two generations of migrants and the non-migrant family members left behind.

Interviews were conducted on several occasions, following the objective of collecting life stories. Observation stages also complete the methodological approach.

This study was carried out between 2011 and 2015 and scoped three different social scenarios: the Spanish region of Galicia, where migrants had settled, and the provinces of Buenos Aires in Argentina and Beni Mellal in Morocco, as the two origin contexts. This approach enabled a transnational perspective on the phenomenon studied. It provided the elements to understand how migrants planned their migration, their resources before and upon arrival, and the strategies they developed to facilitate it.

Thirty families were included in this study: fifteen from Argentina and fifteen from Morocco. A total of 172 interviews were conducted. All of them were contacted following the snowball sampling method. The two parents and at least one descendant were interviewed by applying in-depth interviews, which sometimes led to life stories.

Regarding the observation method, this was also possible at the places of the migrants' origin by sharing different moments of their day-to-day life, and where an ethnographical approach was carried out to understand the social actors' situation prior to migration and the different determinants imposed by the origin societies. In order to do so, the other family members left behind, as well as key informants, were also interviewed.

Regarding the transnational ethnographical strategy, several fieldwork studies enabled this analysis. They were developed in three different social spaces attending to migrants' homelands (Buenos Aires province in Argentina and Beni Mellal province in Morocco) and the host society where they have settled in Spain.

Finally, a three-dimensional conceptual approach (micro, meso, and macro sociological perspectives) completed the analytical strategy.

## ARGENTINES AND MOROCCANS IN GALICIA

Argentine migrations to Spain are characterized by trends that historically divide their emigration patterns into five cyclical phases marked by moments of political, social, or economic crisis in this southern country. These phases include the "brain drain" of the 1970s, political exile following the 1976 coup, the hyperinflation crisis of 1989, the neoliberal period from 1997 to 2000, and the crisis starting in 2001, also known as the *corralito* crisis (Actis & Esteban, 2007). This text analyzes a set of family histories of Argentines who migrated to the Autonomous Community of Galicia in Spain, primarily during the most recent phases. However, cases from other migration phases, particularly the hyperinflationary and neoliberal periods, are also included.

The Moroccan population constitutes one of the earliest migrant groups in Spain (López García, 2003; Pumares Fernández, 2002). Their migration patterns date back to the 1970s, increasing in volume during the 1980s and 1990s, although slower

(Gómez Crespo, 2004). The settlement of migrants in areas further from major urban economic centers across the country generally follows specific labor integration strategies (Pumares et al., 2006). This is the case for the Autonomous Community of Galicia, which borders Portugal.

Moroccan migrants from a specific region in Morocco (Beni Mellal) developed a migration network starting in the early 1980s, where the cross-border street market became their primary employment niche. Moroccans in Galicia became visible in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as evidenced by the findings of Golías Pérez (2004). As the author highlights, this visibility seems closely linked to Spain's first extraordinary regularization process in 1991.

Later, in 1995, when a growing number of families arrived after residing in other communities like Catalonia, Madrid, or Andalusia, it began to show characteristics of a true settlement. According to this same study, the distribution of the Moroccan population in Galicia by province shows a clear concentration in the provinces of Pontevedra (49.37%) and A Coruña (28.35%), with the former particularly notable in the municipalities of Vilaboa, Pontevedra, Vigo, and Tui, and the latter showing a significant concentration in the municipality of Arteixo (Golías Pérez, 2004). For this study, we have considered families arriving in the early 1990s, following a staggered migration model: first, the father, followed some decades later by the reunification of women and children.

## THE INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY TRAJECTORIES OF ARGENTINE AND MOROCCAN FAMILIES IN GALICIA

The Argentine–Galician transnational bridge has already been studied by Oso Casas (2017) and Golías Pérez (2014), revealing the dynamics of a migration route where several generations of migrants move between two social spaces, facilitated by family heritage in the access to European citizenship based in blood ties. Although Argentine migration to Galicia has a long history and has followed several phases throughout the 20th century, the families included in this research are only those who arrived in the early 21st century, particularly those related to the so-called *corralito* crisis. They all come from the province of Buenos Aires.

In the case of Moroccan families, their migration has been staggered and carried out in several stages: first, the men, followed by the women and children, due to immigration policy restrictions. In contrast, Argentine families have evidently benefited from access to naturalization through family heritage. These two case studies, therefore, highlight the opposite effects of citizenship policies.

Moroccan families also followed different migration routes and revealed different timelines. They all arrived in the early 1980s and 1990s and share the same origin:

various locations in the province of Beni Mellal. Both the Argentine and Moroccan families follow the pattern of economic migration.

The stories told by Argentine families reveal a strong intergenerational feature in their migration projects. Based on this main characteristic, we have observed the historical evolution from the grandparents' to the grandsons' generations, where migration has been part of family projects. The primary trend observed in the Argentine community case has shown a predominance of upward intergenerational mobility in education. However, the occupational trajectories have shown some evidence of over-education, underemployment, and job insecurity, which leads migrant children to prefer being inserted into the family's business when possible.

When we analyze Moroccan families' migration stories, as the second case of study, we find that they show strategies based only on two generations. However, this case involves an extensive kinship network. The reduced intergenerational historical dimension is replaced by an interest in observing the geographical mobility linked to several parallel family nuclei, in other words, from a horizontal perspective that passes through generations by which transnational kinship networks are formed. Reunification regulations in Spain have temporally marked Moroccan migrations. Thus, children's educational and occupational trajectories have been significantly impacted by the age of their arrival in the settlement society. Despite this, the analysis shows that many children achieved upward social mobility in both domains. However, others have increased the family educational level but have reproduced parents' occupational category.

If we compare both communities, we can see that the Moroccan families were in the least advantageous position with the first-generation insertion into the Galician labor market. On the other hand, when we analyze this aspect to see if it reveals social mobility linked to migration or is related more to the migratory context, we find significant differences between both communities. As such, if, in Argentine families, a similar trend between men and women shows the reproduction of occupational categories and some downward occupational mobility, the Moroccan families show horizontal mobility (between sectors) for men and the reproduction of the inactivity situation in women, which is primarily explained by the influence of the immigration regulation in Spain which imposes different requirements and restrictions in the access to the legal situation of migrants, depending on their national origin. These differences translate into more precarious labor conditions for Moroccan migrants (working in the informal and lowest steps of the Galician social structure). In contrast, Argentine migrants (and the Latin-American community in general) can accede to the formal and primary market, in Piore's words (Piore, 1979). In this regard, preferential policies for populations of Latin American origin come into play again, particularly those linked to historical Spanish migrations (Izquierdo Escribano et al., 2002). These policies provide easier access to visas and permanent residence for individuals who are not descendants of Spaniards, while offering naturalization by descent for those with family ties to earlier Spanish migrations.

Nevertheless, we find several different nuances to point out: first-generation Argentines do not generate a promotion in occupational conditions, as they do not show any improvement in their new jobs in Galicia. On the contrary, in some cases, they compound their social position. This phenomenon seems to be related to a sacrifice strategy from parents to children, which certainly improved their "potential" for social mobility by acquiring a higher level of education if we take into account the theory of human capital, which outlines that occupational upward social mobility is related to educational attainment. However, they rarely succeed in achieving it.

At the same time, if the Argentine case revealed a higher degree of diversity in the initial occupational categories, the Moroccan case showed occupational uniformity prior to migration. This fact leads us to consider the idea of the variable "migration context" as a fundamental factor determining social mobility strategies. Accordingly, Beni Mellal families, represent farmer fathers and inactive mothers.

So far, in line with reproduction theories (Bourdieu, 1980; Bertaux, 1969), social mobility processes between social spaces seem to show a trend for social position reproduction in the Argentine case by investing in small independent businesses to avoid discrimination in the labor market. In the worst cases, we have observed moderate downward social mobility processes after migration. In the Moroccan case, in contrast, we can see horizontal mobility but not vertical. That is to say, Moroccan first-generation migrants are inserted in the lower strata of the Galician society (informal jobs in the secondary economy) as a large number of them are positioned within the ethnic niche of street commerce. This conclusion must consider that migrants have been contacted by the "snowball sampling" method, which has produced particular bias in this analysis, as all families were related to the economic activity developed by fathers and were linked by the ethnic-niche network. The Argentine families described are first generations of urban origin and with a diversified occupational level, that is to say, without a specific professional profile. These characteristics contributed to placing migrants in more advantageous positions, as their incorporation into the labor market was essentially produced within the primary market. They were, therefore, placed in the small entrepreneurship sector and even in positions of professional and civic leadership, as per the classification by Portes & Böröcz (1989). However, the economic crisis in Galicia has led these migrants to unemployment and job insecurity, which shows that migrants are exposed to significant doses of vulnerability regarding economic cycles. In the case of those migrants settled in Galicia, these results seem to be linked to the lack of useful social networks that can work as a buffer to avoid unemployment.

Despite this, the structural determinants seem to impact the Moroccan community more directly. This phenomenon is related to the lack of valid resources that enable them to dodge social mobility obstacles. The type of jobs where migrants were positioned within the secondary market has further submerged them into social segregation and invisibility. Together with migration policy and the local labor market structure, we can add other factors such as the low qualification

level, the language barrier, and the restrictive and hermetic effect of ethnicized social networks—the community's social capital shields against local discrimination and racism.

We will further develop the premise of the different forms of capital (human, social, financial, and ethnic capital) in more detail in the following section, as they are key elements in understanding these segregation processes. As per Zhou and Lin's theory (Zhou & Lin, 2005), ethnic capital links the first three forms of capital (human, social, and financial).

Nonetheless, anticipating the conclusions suggests that social mobility processes driven by children are profoundly affected by families' struggles to avoid ethnic-stratification.

## **THE ACTIVATION AND MOBILIZATION OF HUMAN, SOCIAL, FINANCIAL, AND ETHNIC CAPITAL IN SOCIAL MOBILITY STRATEGIES**

The mobilization of capital—its nature, function, and efficacy—has been at the core of our principal hypothesis. The results obtained describe concrete behaviors in each migrant community concerning the activation of the different resources and the launching of intergenerational social mobility strategies.

When we follow families' discourses in the Argentine case, the analysis of social capital seems to work as an element that activates motivations and expectations for migration, as it is closely related to kinship networks settled in Galicia. This responds to evidence showing that these migrations are typically linked to the Spanish outbound patterns of yesteryear. Nevertheless, the mobilization of social capital linked to kinship ties does not seem to show the expected results. Although representing a family heritage, family networks do not seem to offer the necessary efficiency to activate useful resources to gain a softer social and professional insertion in the settlement context.

They didn't really help us; we thought this could be an advantage, but instead, it was difficult to bear with family tensions, and there was quite a lot of prejudices about us that we didn't understand. (Pamela, an Argentine woman, settled in A Coruña, Galicia, originally from Buenos Aires)

My Galician family, the cousins of my mother, had promised a job here in Vigo, instead, when we arrived, they offered a bedroom in the basement without windows and exploited us in a sewing workshop with no salary at all. (Marga, an Argentine woman, settled in Vigo, Galicia, originally from San Antonio de Padua, Buenos Aires)

This situation entails a feeling of disappointment in Argentine migrants with a family relation to Galicia, as noted by Cook-Martín & Viladrich (2009). They explained the

“problem with similarity,” arguing that ethnic similarity between the native-born population and Latin-American migrants linked to Spanish ancient migration patterns led immigrants to a subordinated social position, particularly influencing the Argentine community in Galicia. In this case, the problem of Galician roots produces a mismatch between what was expected and what is finally obtained.

There’s a bit of everything, but I’ll give you an example. In my sector, rentals, it’s very hard for me to get a rental over the phone because the first thing is “no foreigners,” “no foreigners.” Now, what I’m not quite sure about is if we, Argentines, are considered “foreigners” ... because it’s a real problem. It’s the property owners who decide not to rent their flats to foreigners ... But I think we Argentines are Spanish ... I think they feel a lot more affinity. What happens is, over the phone, sometimes they don’t really know where you’re from, and there is the accent, so it’s hard for me to get a property over the phone ... but once they see me, once they know me and all, they open the doors for you ... (María José, an Argentine woman, real estate agent, living in Vigo, originally from Vicente López, Buenos Aires)

The self-perception of the interviewed migrants showed a certain ambiguity. On the one hand, whether due to having legal documentation or being born into a family of Spanish origin, the repeated feeling was one of belonging fully to the host culture, seeing themselves as “equals,” which explains the mismatch between what is expected and what is received, as there is a non-visibility or a non-recognition of the otherness that inevitably arises between locals and foreigners, particularly in the labor sphere:

There was another guy, too; we worked together. You work and talk. We were working, talking, and this man, of course, overheard me talking, the accent, and said, “These people who come here starving,” he says, and all the usual stuff ... he was saying, “This is why the country is in this state, we’re going to be left without jobs because these people come here starving,” and so on ... (Mariano, an Argentine man, unemployed truck driver, living in Vigo, originally from Pilar, Buenos Aires)

Moreover, significant findings have shown repeated tensions between earlier migrants and non-migrant members of the same kinship network, tensions that seem to be transmitted intergenerationally. These inherited disputes have even hampered some of the families’ incorporation processes. In this way, returnees (migrants with a family relation within Galicia) have been involved in a subordination process, which has led to a social hierarchy based on the disdain and mistrust of the locals toward roots migrants. This social phenomenon reflects the cracks caused by ancient family tensions that classified and differentiated migrant from non-migrant (the “locals”) family members.

Cook-Martín and Viladrich have already remarked that, in contrast to what actually happens with the preferential migration regulation in Spain, the fact of counting with family boundaries and historical links to Galicia gives rise to unrealistic expectations in migrants. This explains that preferential policies can have a perverse effect or a *boomerang* effect, which is the opposite of what was desired (Cook-Martín & Viladrich, 2009).

Conversely, the co-ethnic social capital appears as an element that merely offers social spaces for cultural membership. Nonetheless, some of these migrants, particularly those without a family link to the settlement society, have arrived in Galicia attracted by the co-ethnic networks of neighbors and friends already settled there. In contrast, Moroccan co-ethnic social capital seems to play a fundamental role. It seems to show a different nature, as it presents more solid solidarity processes inside the community compared to the Argentine case. It implies, as well, a “migratory culture” as a consequence of the transnational circuits that enabled a more fluent continuity of solidary-focused links between the different members of the kinship network, of the different phratries and generations. This objective seems to have become more difficult for the Argentine families due to the distances that separated families between Galicia and Argentina. Solidarity nexuses, therefore, entail a larger conception of the family within the Moroccan cultural universe. The higher cohesion of family and community networks might have led, at the same time, to a greater ability to control its members.

Following Putnam’s theory (Putnam, 2000) leads us to state that in a highly ethno-stratified society, the higher the possession and mobilization of a “bridging” type of capital, the higher the disposition to upward social mobility, and the higher the dependency on family and “bonding” capital, the lower the probabilities of succeeding. This premise criticizes Portes and Zhou’s theory, which argues that the higher the co-ethnic social capital and the more rigid the family structure, the easier it is to avoid the structural determinants (Portes & Zhou, 1993). In contrast, lower family flexibility and a higher dependence on the family and community networks have a more limited predisposition to upward social mobility, at least in the social context (Galicia) where this research has been developed.

At the same time, if we follow the notions of *weak ties* and *strong ties*, we can state that the lack of weak ties related to professional networks seems to restrict migrants’ access to a better job position in the local labor structure. On the other hand, ties nature seems to be differently defined in both communities. While Galician kinship networks (or *far family ties* as called by Aguilera & Massey, 2003) seem to represent weak ties in the case of Argentine migrants, extended family members and co-ethnic networks definitely represent strong ties for Moroccan families and, therefore, show an impact according to Granovetter’s principle on the “strength of weak ties” (Granovetter, 1973).

We came here because my uncle and his family came here, and he came here because his brother-in-law came here. We’d come to Galicia to follow our family

and then all work together in the street commerce. (Fatiha, a young Moroccan female university student, settled in Cesantes, Galicia, originally from Tagzirt, Beni Mellal Province)

Secondly, analyzing the mobilization of financial capital shows two clearly differentiated attitudes for each of the studied communities. In this way, while the Argentine case reveals a significant investment destined for the economic activity developed in the migration country, particularly in acquiring a house, revealing a clear settlement choice, the Moroccan families save their earnings to invest them in the homeland. This aims at producing visible social mobility in the migrants' place of origin. This fact explains how investment is usually destined to build or improve the family house and enable a transnational productive way of life between Morocco and Spain.

My parents are saving money to build a house in our hometown of Beni Mellal. They plan to return there once we are all working. They don't want to stay here permanently, and all the money they earn is being set aside to invest in our home in Beni Mellal. (Morad, a young Moroccan boy, settled in A Coruna, Galicia, originally from Ouled Youssef, Beni Mellal Province)

Some of the migrant parents invested in a business in their homeland, counting the contribution of non-migrant family members to manage a double economic activity in Beni Mellal and in Galicia, which enabled them to maintain the regular legal situation in Europe and helped as a buffer when the economic crash arrived in Spain.

When he hadn't worked here [father], he returned to Souk Sebt and worked in the country with my grandparents or in the family business. (Salma, a young Moroccan girl, settled in Arteixo, Galicia, originally from Souk Sebt, Beni Mellal Province)

In the third place, when we analyze the mobilization of human capital, fieldwork has confirmed a higher investment in education by Argentine families, showing much more interest in training and acquiring extracurricular human capital in children. The migrants' first language is undoubtedly one of the most important factors that determine the acquisition of further human capital, as Moroccan first generations do not have the same possibility because they rarely speak Spanish fluently and have equal difficulties in reading or writing it. The parents' education level also plays a fundamental role in this behavior. As such, a lower human capital in Beni Mellal's families explains the lack of intergenerational transmission of the educational value from parents to children and confirms the premise of a direct relationship with educational attainment, as the lower the educational level in the parents, the higher the level of academic failure in descendants (Fernández Enguita et al., 2010, pp. 75–79). At the same time, the interrelation between human capital and financial capital is confirmed in the premise that affirms that school attainment is linked to a family's

socioeconomic situation as holder of different forms of capital (Coleman, 1988; Bourdieu, 1996, as cited in Waters, 2006, p. 182). In this regard, we must emphasize the importance of the social position within the host society's social structure, as Moroccan families do not usually have sufficient financial resources to afford additional training for their children apart from the official and compulsory education.

In line with other studies, the results on occupational mobility trajectories in Argentine families point out that the transfer of human capital from parents to children seems to work as a pillar in the reproduction of the sociocultural level (Fernández Enguita et al., 2010; Mijares Molina, 1999; 2004; 2007; García Borrego, 2008; Pedreño Cánovas, 2010), as children tend to reproduce their parents' occupational category (Pedreño Cánovas, 2010, p. 148). In Moroccan families, the upward educational mobility in boys seems to be related to the social and educational contexts as a consequence of the regulatory framework that obliges young migrants to obtain the compulsory education level, which is indeed much higher than the average educational level of the parents.

Moreover, as we have already mentioned, the trajectories of families are differentiated depending on the gender variable. In this way, if boys tend to finalize their studies at the end of the first stage of their secondary education and continue, at best, with initial or intermediate professional training, girls tend to increase this level by obtaining baccalaureate levels or even higher education diplomas, which increases the family human capital as well. Despite this, occupational categories show that Moroccan migrant children are placed in the most vulnerable positions of the labor structure, reproducing what García Borrego (2008) has called the "heritage of the immigrant condition."

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL ORIGIN IN OWNING CAPITAL

A family's social origin significantly influences its survival strategies and trajectories (Borjas, 1993; Pedreño Cánovas, 2013). Consistent with Bourdieu and Passeron's theory (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970), we can explain the "social origin" concept as a further approach to a parents' socioeconomic level, not only considering economic means but other resources to which social agents can also have access, such as financial and social capital, taking into account their initial possessions as well as the ones generated after migration. This perspective is repeatedly intertwined with the context of origin and destination as a social arena that can limit or enable further educational and occupational mobility.

The study's general hypotheses set out three specific variables to define "social origin": the parents' educational level, their professional category and socioeconomic level prior to migration, and their rural or urban origin. The conclusions developed in the previous paragraphs confirm the prominent role of at least the first two variables in the trajectories of migrant youngsters. In other words, the higher

the possession of human and financial capital, the higher the probability of evading ethno-stratification barriers. In the third place, the rural or urban origin influences the kind of occupation the parents had prior to migration, the family's worldview, and its propensity to social mobility. The parents' occupational category and human capital before migration can then influence their occupation after migration, which, at the same time, will determine the family's income level.

We can see that "social origin" entails a complex interrelation of elements (Figure 1). The theoretical logic that helps close this rational circle between human capital, financial capital, and "social origin" is due to the initial possession of human capital, which will determine the possibility of acquiring a higher amount after migration. This acquisition will influence, at the same time, the greater disposal of resources that will enable migrants to be placed in a more favorable position within the new social structure. However, educational attainment does not ensure obtaining the corresponding occupational level. Meanwhile, the parents' occupational level will influence children's access to human capital, which will, therefore, have a bearing on the descendants' occupational level. In this way, the parents' human capital and the family's financial capital will condition the result on the educational trajectories of the children and, at the same time, will determine the need to provide economic support to the group in an earlier stage. Thus, the lack of financial capital within the family can lead to children attaining lower trajectories, as they tend to abandon the educational pathway in favor of financially supporting the group. This explains why many of the social actors' decisions are greatly conditioned by the family's position within the settlement social structure. This "inertial effect," as Pedreño Cánovas (2013) calls it, reflects that a *state of existential fragility* is transferred onto the children by the parents' work conditions, which explains why not all of the descendants can benefit from the investment in schooling in the same way to generate social mobility.

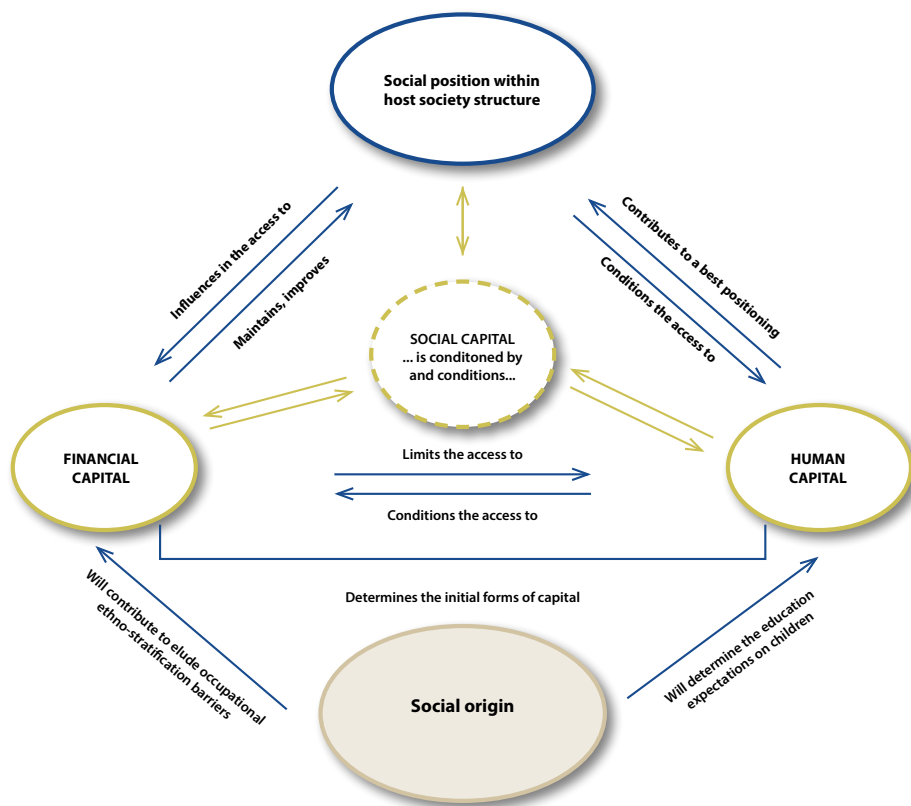


Figure 1: Conceptual interrelation between the social origin and the different forms of capital (source: own elaboration).

Thus, the social position in the home society plays an important role in the inter-generational social mobility trajectories after migration, as it strongly influences the family's "social origin" (Borjas, 1993). The differences in social origin are also translated in the parents' expectations of their children's education, reflected in their social position, the kind and quality of resources that children will be able to count on to help educational and occupational social mobility happen (Pedreño Cánovas, 2013). The stories of the families analyzed have revealed a social inequality that transcends the two social spaces (origin and destination), determining the educational and occupational trajectories of first-generation migrants and their descendants.

## CONCLUSIONS

The interaction and interrelationship of the different conditioning elements have made it plain to see that there is a real capacity for the agency of certain descendants within given structures, whose process involves complex hierarchies of gender and age.

We have seen that both migrant communities mobilize different capital to reach the objective of being inserted into the Galician labor structure while trying to avoid the discrimination processes in the labor market. The narratives analyzed have brought to light that there is a complex interdependence between migrants' social position and their ethnicity (Pedreño Cánovas, 2013), as one and the other seem to go hand in hand and are closely interrelated. Therefore, if Argentine migrants have tended to activate their financial and human capital as strategic resources to avoid possible discriminatory situations, Moroccan migrants have tended to mobilize social capital to respond to the lower possession of the other two forms of capital. The different positions occupied by migrants have revealed that the propensity to employability is much higher in the Argentine case than in the Moroccan one. While the first group is one of the best-positioned migrant communities, the Moroccan migrants reveal a significant gap between the desirability to work (activity rate) and the success in obtaining a job (employment rate). Once more, the Argentine phenomenon seems possible thanks to the initial financial and human capital, which has enabled them to consolidate the "independent professional" pathway as their occupational activity in Galicia (Villares Varela, 2010). This fact confirms the premise that where migrants are placed within the social scale may have much more of an impact on occupational trajectories than their ethnic origin (Cebolla Boado, 2004). However, both variables must be considered (Aparicio, 2006). In contrast, the social mobility strategies of Moroccan families, whose human and financial capital are much lower, have been significantly affected by the structural determinants and labor market segmentation.

Last but not least, our results have shown, concerning social capital, that the precarious conditions faced by migrants in the labor market lead to a lack of opportunities for children, competencies, and the necessary connections in order for them to advance further within the social scale (Gans, 1992).

Therefore, we can state that if human and financial capital can contribute to generating a more equal insertion of the social actors into the labor market, the efficacy of social capital depends especially on its *nature*. We highlight the difference between *family social capital* and *extra-family social capital* as elements that impact the social actors' trajectories differently. While the former pertains to the family as a migrant's primary unit of belonging and situates the individual into a group context, the latter situates the social actor within a broader network of interconnected relationships. Hence, social capital linked to ethnic networks will not produce the same effects as the mechanism to accede to the labor market, as it will keep social

actors caught up in subordinated categories, particularly when migrants are part of communities exposed to high levels of labor discrimination, as in the Moroccan case (De Lucas & Torres, 2002). In other words, the lack of financial and human capital and the exclusive mobilization of co-ethnic social capital explains why Moroccan migrants could not avoid occupational and ethnic stratification with the same success that the Argentine migrants have achieved. In the following diagram (Figure 2), we present a sort of “radar” that can comparatively measure the differentiated mobilization of capital by each community:

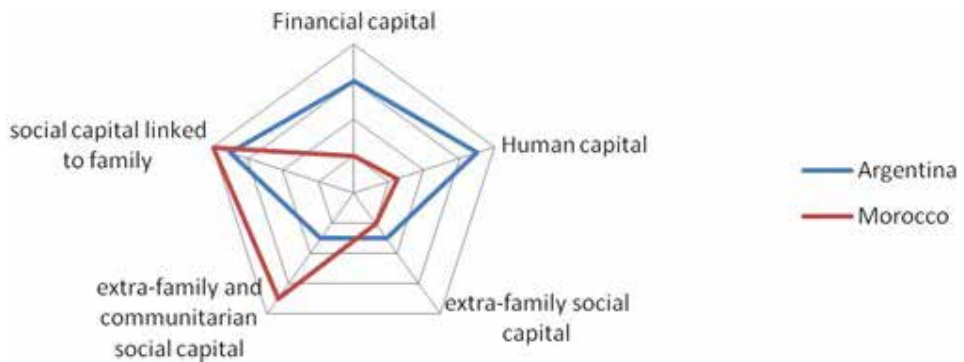


Figure 2: The differential uses of forms of capital in Argentine and Moroccan families (source: own elaboration).<sup>1</sup>

The conclusions indicate that social capital linked to ethnic networks restricts social promotion possibilities and probably limits migrants' economic activity, related to their ethnic community. On the other hand, the closer the relationship is between the migrant actor's occupational strategy and their family, the more significant the impact of *meso-social* determinants, as this enhances the influence of the group's expectations and the tensions related to solidarity and reciprocity within the group. Accordingly, the greater the dependence on kinship networks and family, the greater the limitations on individual expectations in favor of group desires and the greater the likelihood of existing tensions within the different family components (family nucleus or beyond, within kinship networks).

Finally, the position of each ethnic origin within the local ethnic stratification scale will increase or limit the social mobility possibilities inside the social structure.

1 Figure 2 represents the relevance that each capital has had in the migrants' social mobility strategies. We must remark that this figure is just an approximation of reality, as social behaviors can difficultly be traduced into mathematic equations. We must also take into account that this graph makes reference to the different capital activated in the occupational insertion processes of first generations parents. Its relevance relies on the influence of this behavior toward capital investment in children's trajectories. The acquisition of forms of capital by children is not considered in this figure.

If we translate this final reasoning as an equation, we can find the following relations (Figure 3):

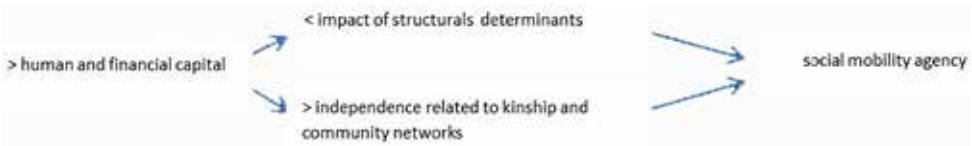


Figure 3: The logical interrelation of determinants to social mobility (source: own elaboration).

As we can see, if human and financial capital reveal an inverse impact of structural factors, social capital demonstrates a direct relationship. At the same time, the lower the possession of the first two, the higher the dependence of social actors on the family, kinship, and community networks, which would simultaneously reduce agency capabilities for social mobility.

However, although our principal hypothesis insists on the dependence of trajectories on the structural framework—*context specific*—we open a window to the social actor’s agency—*path dependent*—as conclusions help to argue that the strategic use of resources can soften stratification effects and can help to avoid some of the barriers imposed on intergenerational social mobility.

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## POVZETEK

### VLOGA ETNIČNEGA, DRUŽINSKEGA IN SOCIALNEGA KAPITALA PRI MEDGENERACIJSKI SOCIALNI MOBILNOSTI MED ARGENTINCI IN MAROČANI V ŠPANSKI GALICIJI

Sofia Laiz Moreira

Avtorica v prispevku predstavi rezultate raziskave, ki je potekala med letoma 2011 in 2015 in katere namen je bil analiza procesov medgeneracijske socialne mobilnosti, povezanih z migracijami, v argentinskih in maroških družinah, ki so se naselile v španske regije Galicija.

V raziskavi je bil uporabljen teoretični okvir, ki je temeljil na celostni obravnavi pojava migracij, pri kateri je družbeni akter razumljen v okviru različnih dinamik moči, ki ga povezujejo z družinsko sfero in družbeno dimenzijo na podlagi razrednih, spolnih, starostnih in etničnih hierarhij.

Avtorica je v študiji s preučevanjem družinskih strategij analizirala različne mobilizacije socialnega, finančnega in človeškega kapitala v presečišču z etničnim kapitalom. Študija izpostavlja kompleksno interakcijo in medsebojno povezanost različnih dejavnikov (makro-, mezo- in mikrosocialnih determinant, njeni rezultati pa jasno kažejo na dejansko zmožnost avtonomnega delovanja nekaterih potomcev v okviru obstoječih struktur, kljub oviram, ki jih predstavljajo javne politike, dinamika diskriminacije na trgu dela ter socialno-ekonomske razmere v državi.

V študijo je bilo vključenih trideset družin: petnajst iz Argentine in petnajst iz Maroka. Avtorica je opravila 172 intervjujev, s katerimi je pridobila ključna spoznanja o migracijskih izkušnjah sogovornikov. Pri pogovorih v obliki poglobljenih intervjujev so sodelovale različne generacije: oba starša in vsaj en potomec, pri čemer so bili, kadar je bilo to mogoče, vključeni tudi stari starši.

V študiji so bili zaobjeti trije različni družbeni scenariji: španska regija Galicija, kjer so se migranti naselili, ter provinci Buenos Aires v Argentini in Beni Mellal v Maroku kot dve izvorni območji. Izbrani pristop je avtorici omogočil transnacionalno obravnavo preučevanega pojava ter ji zagotovil osnovne podatke za razumevanje načinov, na katere migranti načrtujejo svojo selitev.

Ugotovitve raziskave so pri migracijah iz Maroka izpostavile pomen socialnega kapitala kot glavnega dejavnika za uspešno integracijo, v nasprotju s tem pa se je v primeru Argentine pokazala neučinkovitost socialnega in etničnega kapitala, uporabnejša pri strategijah migrantov pa sta se izkazala kulturni in finančni kapital.

Poglavitno odkritje raziskave je bilo dejstvo, da človeški in ekonomski kapital obratno sorazmerno vplivata na strukturne dejavnike, medtem ko se pri socialnem kapitalu kaže neposredna povezava. Poleg tega je bilo ugotovljeno, da manj kot imajo družbeni akterji prvih dveh vrst kapitala, večja je njihova odvisnost od družinskih, sorodstvenih in skupnostnih omrežij, kar zmanjšuje njihovo sposobnost za socialno mobilnost.

Pri tem pa avtorica kljub temu, da v glavni hipotezi raziskave izpostavlja odvisnost trajektorij od strukturnega okvira (pogojenost z okoliščinami), prepoznava tudi možnost vpliva samih družbenih akterjev (pogojenost z usmeritvijo). Ugotovitve raziskave podpirajo tezo, da lahko strateška uporaba virov ublaži vplive stratifikacije ter pomaga preseči določene ovire na področju medgeneracijske socialne mobilnosti.

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