ANALYSING LIFE SATISFACTION OF IMMIGRANTS BENEFITTING FROM THE WELCOME AND INTEGRATION CONTRACT IN LUXEMBOURG

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BACKGROUND

Imigrants’ wellbeing depends on their life satisfaction, but the reciprocity of the relationships between its sociological and psychological determinants is under-documented.

Wellbeing is typically defined as a life that matches an individual’s ideal. The most widely used measures of wellbeing are various subjective reports of satisfaction with life: in general, in important domains of life, or happiness.

In 2011, in order to help non-EUs (but also EUs) to a successful integration, a 24-month Welcome and Integration Contract was elaborated by the Luxembourgish Agency for Welcome and Integration.

The Welcome and Integration Contract is available for: Any foreigner over the age of 16, legally residing in Luxembourg and wishing to settle sustainably.

Three services are offered:

- Language courses - 3 semesters at a reduced rate in at least one of the official languages: Luxembourgish, French, and/or German;
- Civic courses - 6 free hours promoting the history of Luxembourg, its political organization, culture and customs;
- Orientation day - familiarizing with the main institutions and different organizations of the country.

The aim of our research was, two and a half years after the implementation of the contract, to analyse the associations between components of feeling integrated, social participation and socio-demographic factors, and life satisfaction among non-EU and EU beneficiaries.

METHODS

Design.
Cross-sectional national study.

Population.
452 ongoing and former contract beneficiaries participated to the survey.

Data collection & instruments.
Self-administered questionnaire sent at home.
- Life satisfaction (LS) (1 single item) was assessed on a visual scale [1;10] point from *not satisfied at all* to *completely satisfied*
- Impacts of Welcome and Integration Contract (WIC) on feeling integrated (11 items) and on social participation (6 items),
- Socio-demographic characteristics (sex, education, years of residence).
- Number of used services [0;3]

Statistical analyses.
Linear regressions with each variable, to explain LS
Significant factors entered in a general linear model differentiating non-EUs and EUs.

RESULTS

LS is similar: 233 non-EUs: 7.8/10 ( 2.4) 219 EUs: 7.6/10 ( 2.1) (European indicator in 2013: 7/10)

Socio-demographic characteristics are similar:
- 63.5 % women ; mean age 39.4 9 y, 77% living in couple
- 63.5 % with a university level
- 1/3 working, 1/3 retired, 1/3 unemployed
- Living in Luxembourg since 5.7 ( 4.5) years
- About 3/5 used all 3 available types of WIC services.

Data stemming from the research DiaBPT-CAI «Diagnostic des Besoins et des Demandes Spéﬁques des Bénéficiaires de Pays Tiers du Contrat d’Accueil et d’Intégration », co-funded by the European Integration Fund and the Luxembourg Agency for Welcome and Integration (OLAI).

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DISCUSSION

Among non-EU beneficiaries, higher LS is found in women living in Lux for the fewest years and the least capable to obtain information in Luxembourgish.

Among EUs, higher LS is found in those who are satisfied with the mutual engagement allowed by the contract, and using the most contract services, in relation with their nation.

For all participants, interventions aimed at improving immigrants’ satisfaction with their place at the professional level, and their participation to political life, could enhance their life satisfaction.

Wellbeing varies across individuals, over time, and across cultures. A better understanding of the causes of this variability may help policy makers to make better decisions that increase wellbeing of immigrants, and in consequence give them an opportunity towards successful integration.