



Antti Kivijärvi and Kai Mathias

LOVE OR ANARCHY?

EMOTIONAL BONDS AND WELL-BEING OF YOUNG MIGRANT MEN

If we now speak of well-being, then you can say thank God I'm healthy. I have enough money to live. I have my duties which satisfy me. I have a family that supports me. I have good friends with whom I can share something, discuss things and whom I can trust. And I have a religion, I have a purpose in life and I know for what I am working for. [GE_09]

It is difficult when you are alone in Finland. There is nobody who tells you what to do, what is good, what is bad. And now, my family is not able to help me. I moved here to live alone. [FI_03]

Men are often defined as public actors. Thus, the well-being of men is considered mainly in the fields of education, work and social networks (Lewis 2012). However, in this chapter, our focus is on men in private spheres. We examine the lives of young migrant men in the form of intimate and communal attachments. We call these types of relations emotional bonds that provide support, a sense of continuity and feeling of belonging. We ask the following question: What kind of connections are there between emotional bonds of young migrant men and their well-being? Moreover, within the framework of transnational analysis, we ponder whether there are any group-based differences in the emotional bonding of our informants.

Trusting and supportive attachments are themes that are strongly emphasised in the literature on well-being and happiness. Many scholars have claimed that relatedness is a basic human need (Baumeister & Leary 1995) and a resilience factor across the lifespan of people (Small et al. 2010). Moreover, strong attachments are essential in promoting subjective well-being, and, as expected, feelings of loneliness have the opposite effects (Abrams et al. 2005).

Emotional attachments vary during the life-course of an individual. For infants and children, the most important relations are grown-up care givers, during youth peers often become more significant and as adults, people begin to couple and have children of their own. As young men between 16 and 27, many of our informants are in a transitory phase. They might be strongly supported by their parents or be totally without their care, some might rely on their friends or some might already have their own partners and children and form fundamental attachments with them. Some might have all of this, some none.

In the context of migration, family ties, in particular, have been considered an essential topic of research in classical literature (Thomas & Znanieck 1918-1920). Firstly, relationships in the form of transnational unions are often the reason for migration in the first place. Secondly, particularly in regions outside the wealthy west, migration is a way to escape poverty. Parents attempt to provide a better future for their offspring by migrating themselves or investing in their children by sending them to create a better future (Juntunen 2002). Thus, it is likely that familial relations as well as gender and generational roles are in turmoil as a consequence of migration (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Olwig 2011). The aim of this paper is to analyse these upheavals and their connections with the well-being of young migrant men.



Data and analysis

We carry out our task by scrutinizing qualitative interviews conducted in seven countries (Czech Republic, France, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy and United Kingdom). In each country, 40 young migrant men from immigrant backgrounds were interviewed. Approximately half of the informants participated in group interviews and half of them were interviewed individually. Moreover, in each country, 10 individual follow-up interviews were conducted to gain more in-depth knowledge. In our analysis, we primarily focus on individual interviews (n = 131), since they provide more information on the emotional bonds of our informants. In group sessions, intimate issues were often discussed rather briefly. Group interviews are included in our analysis as secondary data.

We conducted our analysis by using both qualitative content analysis and by quantifying individual interview data. In the qualitative content analysis, we focused on what the informants said about their emotional bonds, not, for example, on narratives or interaction patterns. We carefully read the parts which included talk about families, partners, other close relationships (such as friends, relatives, partner's family etc.) and cohesion/conflicts in these types of attachments. Moreover, in the context of close relations, we sought themes such as gender and generational roles, masculinity and transnationalism.

We executed the quantitative analysis in order to explore the factors related to the emotional bonding of our informants. We categorised the following "independent variables" for our analysis: 1) country of residence, 2) age, 3) country of origin, 4) residence status, 5) length of stay in the country of residence, 6) age of migration and 7) location of respondent's family members. As "dependent variables" we defined whether respondents 1) feel emotionally connected to and 2) receive material or informative support from others. In addition to all this, we calculated and categorised the closest relations reported in the individual interviews. As a method in our quantitative analysis, we simply counted the distributions and significance of inter-group differences (chi square tests of independence, p marginal value = 0.005).

Conceptual framework: Emotional bonds and eudaimonic well-being

To analyse the connections between emotional bonds and well-being, we must define our two key concepts. By emotional bonds, we refer to positively experienced social relations consisting of two distinctive aspects:

- 1) Providing a feeling of continuity and belongingness (emotional aspect)
- 2) Providing material support and advice (bonding aspect)

By harnessing the notion of emotional bonds, we wanted to avoid forcing normative concepts and our probably biased preconceptions of how peoples' social relations are organised. For example, the dominant notion of a family is loaded with everyday assumptions about heterosexual, intact and small-numbered nuclear collectives. The notion of emotional bonds allows us to look at the attachments and their meanings more analytically. For some migrant men, the concept of a family might be too narrow, excluding, for example, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Moreover, in some cases biologically determined family relations can be replaced/supplemented by other supportive characters such as foster parents, partners, friends or wider and even imaginary communities (Al-Sharmani 2007).

When studying the well-being of young people in particular, the two-fold implication of emotional bonds is quite feasible. Both emotional and bonding aspects are intrinsic in the notion of eudaimonic well-being. Since Aristotelian times, eudaimonic well-being (as opposed to hedonic) has been defined as a feeling of continuous growth across an individual's life-span and the ability to realise one's potential (Ryan & Deci 2001, 146; Vanhoutte 2012, 6). It can be claimed that peoples' ideas about their potential and desirable



direction of growth are strongly determined in relation to significant others and communal attachments. For example, according to Schoon and Schulenberg (2013, 54), young peoples' 'active engagement in and commitment to meaningful social roles predict higher levels of life satisfaction and well-being'. In other words, emotional bonds provide a platform on which eudaimonic well-being can flourish (*cf.* Huppert et al. 2009).

As is rather self-evident, the emotional aspect of the concept of emotional bonds illustrates a life-course perspective for people—knowledge of where they have come from and ideas about where they want to be in the future. In the data, the young men often describe chains of generations in which they position themselves. Through the stories of their grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins and—in some cases—their own children, they are able to identify a path they consider worth taking.

In turn, the connection between well-being and the bonding aspect of our notion is more concrete. In the existing research literature, it has been indicated that particularly close ties anchor people to certain communities, thereby providing them with material support and advice. More distant acquaintances and peers are often important in transmitting new knowledge and opening access to new networks (e.g. Granovetter 1973; Briggs 1998). Consequently, for particularly young people, bonds provide a foundation from which to build one's life without having to worry about subsistence or fulfilling basic needs.

Finally, in the research literature on well-being there is plenty of evidence on the likely consequences of a lack of emotional bonds. It has been indicated that living without significant relations easily leads to an 'anarchic' orientation towards life: cynicism, lack of generalised trust, feelings of disconnectedness and rejecting help offers (e.g. Scherwitz et al. 1991). In the light of this discussion, an empirical scrutiny of emotional bonds against the backdrop of eudaimonic well-being seems more than necessary.

Diversity and transnationalism: General remarks on emotional bonds of migrant men

Before attempting to answer our research question, it is important to examine the quantity and quality of emotional bonds of our informants. The first remark from the data is that the emotional bonds of migrant males are diverse. They consist of those with family and extended family members. Occasionally, the interviewees saw themselves as more family-oriented than the majority of people in their countries of residence and often highlighted that "[Family is] the most important thing in life" [FI_FG1].

I feel better in Turkey because I've got family there. Lots of family members. I feel more alone here, more like the only man of the house. My friend has got lots of uncles and cousins and if I had that here I would feel more safe. [UK_01]

They [Czech people] do not keep together, whereas for Vietnamese the family is a basis and it represents the most important thing. We keep together notwithstanding they are aliens such as a Vietnamese or a person from our community, so we help each other... [CZ_FG1]

Not surprisingly, for many, their relationships with parents were the most important and closest. However, according to the data, it appears that the role of siblings and cousins might be emphasised in a new society. The social networks and everyday life of young people during school hours and leisure may be unfamiliar to their parents. Thus, mutual understanding and support can be received from peer relatives.

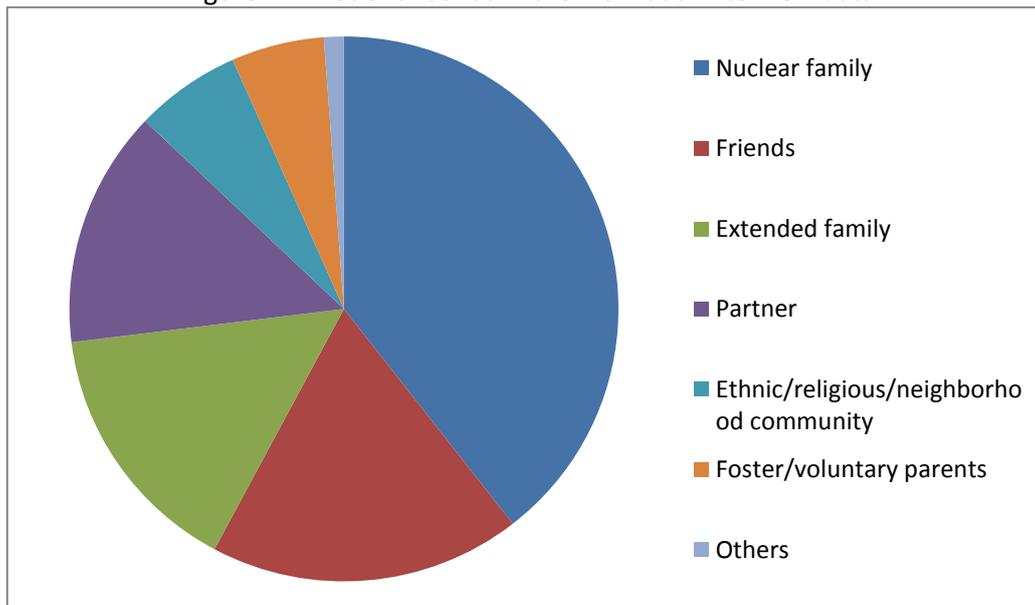
We were at school together and he [my brother] looked after me, he had my back. When he skipped school I would cover for him. Then in 2nd and 3rd year he told me that I was able to look after myself [IT_13]



Yes, where work and the future are concerned she [my sister] is a role model. She also prepares me a little for later on. She says how things are and how she got where she is.
[GE_20]

In addition to (extended or blended) family members, partners, friends, wider communities and even foster and voluntary parents were defined as emotional bonds. Figure 1 illustrates the diverse nature of these bonds.

Figure 1: Emotional bonds in the individual interview data



The second finding from the data is that emotional bonds are transnational. This implies that many of the close relations of our informants reside in different countries and continents—usually, this means one or both of their parents and siblings. Approximately half of the men who were interviewed individually have family members both in their country of residence and in other countries. One third has all their family members in their countries of residence, while family members of approximately one out of five live in another country/countries. Transnational life, which includes aspects such as remittances, yearning, travel plans and IT connections, is common for young migrant men.

However, being far away does not necessarily mean diminishing the significance of one's familial bonds. In certain cases, the distance may actually highlight the importance of being on good terms and having intact relations with one's family members.¹ Moreover, the distance might make parental support more apparent and interviewees' gendered role in his family more concrete.

If they [my parents] want money I am happy to send them everything because they looked after me for 21 years. [UK_07]

I have the feeling that someone is supporting me [while talking with father who lives in the country of origin] and that makes me stronger. [GE_12]

The third remark from the data is that the manifold and transnational bunch of attachments function as emotional bonds for most of the men interviewed, providing both feelings of belonging and more concrete support in the form of material benefits or advice. The closest social relations were often considered the



foundation of a happy and stable life and sources of security, which countered the occasionally harsh living conditions that included experiences of discrimination and material deficiency in a new society.

...fairly ok, because my mum was there [...]. She just told me where to walk, how to walk and speak to people, what time of the day to walk [IR_19]

A: People we know who have lived here for six years maybe. They are friends of our relatives and they helped us in the beginning. First our relatives then us. All people. We help each other

Q: So do you think that Russian speaking people form a cohesive community in your city?

A: I think so. All communicate and help each other. It is a good thing. [FI_19]

The bulk of our informants have emotional bonds. Almost all of them receive emotional support (table 1). Moreover, receiving material support and advice is rather common as well. More than two out of three interviewees have these types of relations (table 2).

Table 1: Receiving emotional support

	N	%
Yes	125	95.4
No	5	3.8
Missing	1	0.8

Table 2: Receiving material support and/or advice

	N	%
Yes	91	69.5
No	34	26.0
Missing	6	4.5

Overall, our informants appear to be quite well-off when considering their social attachments. The great majority of them have emotional bonds as a source of identity (they are able to answer questions such as who am I, where do I belong and where am I going?) and many other forms of support.

What probably distinguishes many young migrant men from ethnic majorities is the diversity and transnational nature of their bonds. Transnational family networks are important to many informants, while simultaneously several of them are strongly attached to local peer groups. For some young men, local peer groups might imply ethnicity or religiously determined communities in which cultural identity is strengthened and reciprocal support shared. As for others, local peer groups might mean ‘communities of difference’ (e.g. Vestel 2004). In these types of groups, any assumed ethnic or linguistic differences do not prevent cohesion. However, majority representatives are often a scant part of peer circles of this kind: “[W]e are just like brothers, who are also from here and from all over the world” [GE_20]. The cohesion is often built on shared experiences of (ethnic or social) otherness in the fields of dominant society: “Many Black people live there and I feel comfortable” [UK_03].

Emotional bonds as generational continuums

Despite the diversity of emotional bonds, family or extended family relations are rather dominant in our data (see figure 1). It can be claimed that most of our informants are in a transitory age in which the significance of peer relations begins to fade, while the importance of familial relations increases. Young people begin to assume adult positions in their respective societies by finishing schooling, entering the labour market and having families of their own. Consequently, less time is invested in peer relations.



In the interviews, the transitions toward adulthood are manifested as accounts in which cultural identities and intergenerational relations are reflected quite thoroughly. Often, this implies that the interviewees depict generational chains by positioning themselves between their predecessors and descendants (born and unborn children). Many young men see themselves as transmitters of cultural heritage and material assets between the two generations. This mediator role is defined by their mobility and minority positions in their current living spheres. Their intergenerational relations are in a flux as a consequence of migration, and their cultural heritage often becomes tangible in the context of differing majority cultures.

In the context of eudaimonia, for many interviewees, generational chains represent continuity and feelings of belonging to something bigger. Parental upbringing and support in addition to stories told and photographs shown are essential in enhancing socialisation into a specific group of people. The meaning of individual life-courses are formed through an acknowledged relationship among the past, present and future generations. Thus, for many young migrant men, emotional bonds imply 'generational continuums'. A position in the continuum gives purpose to life and a comprehension of one's (cultural) identity—an understanding of '*what is good, what is bad*'. In the data, men describe their positions in the generational continuums in the following manner:

I am French above all, but I don't forget my background, I know that over there (Algeria) I have things I can't give up because my father was heir to a legacy and I've always felt a responsibility towards this. [FR_08]

My parents and grandparents worked here. They built up everything we have. Now we try to achieve something more for our descendants. [GE_FG1]

As hinted above, for migrant men in particular, intergenerational relations become significant. For many of our informants, it is important "*to have a better life than our parents*" [FI_FG2]. By making these types of statements, men refer to the many sacrifices their elders have made for them by either migrating themselves to new countries or investing in their children by sending them to study or work in the wealthy West. Thus, many young men feel gratitude and respect toward their parents/relatives and want to be worthy of the expectations placed on them.

My father always says, we did this for you. Our life is over, we are old enough, we cannot do anything here. [...] Stay on the path, so my parents can be proud of me later. [GE_01]

Ten, twenty years ago it was so that my parents thought that the Western Europe is like a gold mine for us. [...] But when people arrive there, they see what it is about and how difficult it is and they must start from scratch. [CZ_16]

I feel like I have a different role now. I'm not a child anymore. I'm an adult who is their child. I'm going to take care of them now. I want them to be comfortable in their old age. I want to watch out for them because they've sacrificed so much up till now. [FR_03]

I see it as a privilege to support my parents or my brothers and sisters. They had such a hard time to bring me up and support my education, so I don't see it as a burden but a privilege to give them something back. [UK_09]

Men's positions in generational continuums are gendered in many ways. Fathers or other male relatives often function as role models for them. For some interviewees, respectable older men who have successfully fought against obstacles are a great source of inspiration: "*[My father] is the greatest role*



model I could have ever ask for” [IR_07]. Such persistent role models show the importance of hard work and how to overcome obstacles: “No matter what happens [my father] has a solution” [GE_07].

In the case of immigrants from ‘third countries’, it is often men who attempt to cross European borders in the hope for a better life²: *They [mother and sister] have not had the opportunities I have [...] I should give back a little to everyone [IT_01]. ‘Giving back’ or ‘staying on the path’ often requires adopting a masculine position in the chain of generations. Not surprisingly, this means the role of provider in relation to both previous and future generations. (cf. Donaldson & Howson 2009.) Some men are expected to send remittances to relatives in their countries of origin as soon as they have established their position in a new country. Simultaneously, men wish to have sufficient material success to be able to have families of their own.*

Yes, of course [it is my responsibility to earn money]! Also for the children; you need to have a profession and good work, then you can marry but before nothing is possible. [...] That is my tradition. [...] It is not a matter of money but of good work, so that the children will study well and say, ‘we want to become like our father’. [GE_04]

For many young men, it is important to find an accepted role as a part of the generational continuum that suits their gendered identity. Feeling that they are needed as men in their (extended) families evidently promotes many men’s well-being. Thus, an ability to transmit cultural values and material resources across generations is essential. Without masculine qualities such as independency and ability to take care of other people as well as protect child and female family members, one’s value as a man is easily questioned. Therefore, feelings of belonging and continuity and a will to fulfil one’s potential often arise from intergenerational attachments. Moreover, for the interviewees, ordeals related to migration and difficult conditions in both countries of origin and residence might affect the process of becoming the ‘man of the house’.

It is definitely different than before. You have more responsibility. As a man [...] I would say that I have some obligations to my family. We are a faithful family and I also feel obliged to take care of my sisters and my brothers. [...] My father cannot do everything on his own [GE_07]

I have my mother and two sisters, my father died during the war. I am the youngest but I’m the man of the house and had to think about taking care of them. [IT_FG3]

When I came here I relied on my own. [...] I am very proud of what I have already done. [...] My brother might see me sometimes as role model, I tell them stuff sometimes. My sisters see me as independent, like my parents. I am proud of being independent. [UK_02]

For some men, there are other types of attachments that enhance eudaimonia as well. Ethnically, religiously or—in certain cases—locally determined communities offer attachments of this kind. In a few cases, relatedness to such communities can be described as emotional bonds providing both feelings of continuity and belonging (emotional aspect) and support and advice (bonding aspect). For certain interviewees, locally determined neighbourhood peer communities function as a source of identity, future perspective and immediate material benefits: *‘We stick together. [...] it is like a big family here in Friedricshburg. You help each other. Makes life easier.’ [GE_FG2]*

Sometimes, ethnically and religiously determined communities are more ‘imaginary’ and do not provide material benefits and advice. For some migrant men, particularly those interviewed in the United Kingdom,



minority communities and religions functioned as emotional attachments. These men might be strongly committed to their countries of origin, races, religions or minority ethnicities that they represent in surrounding societies: *“I’m just proud of where I’m from, my colour, my race”* [IR_15]

Strong ethnic or religious identities are occasionally connected to intact emotional bonds with one’s family/relatives. Attachments to generational continuums anchor certain migrant men to group-based identities and enable them to comprehend the goals they want to achieve during the course of their lives. Occasionally, group-based identities of minority representatives are contrasted against majority cultures.

As seen above, most of the young migrant men interviewed have familial and/or communal bonds which attach them to some collective. In the context of eudaimonic well-being, these attachments can be considered protections against current conditions of late or liquid modernity. In today’s European societies, young people are forced to choose their life-paths from an enormous number of options. There are no readymade paths and goals in life. The responsibility of making the right choices is left to the individuals themselves. According to some writers, these conditions lead to ‘ontological insecurities’ (e.g. Young 1999)—feelings of disconnectedness, fear of making the wrong decisions and longing for the certainty of the past.

In the light of the above analysis, emotional bonds in the form of generational continuums or communal attachments protect young migrant men from ontological insecurities. Emotional bonds offer young migrant men a foundation against which individual life paths can be safely planned even in precarious conditions: *‘Growing up you also learn that your origins are important too. It’s important to know where you come from, to know family, traditions...’* [FR_04]. Consequently, according to certain scholars, the significance of families, in particular, is highlighted during late modern times as supportive forces for young people (e.g. Allat 1998). For the informants of this study, the significance of both families and other communities is evident.

Who are not well-off?

In addition to answering our primary research question regarding the connections between emotional bonds and well-being of young migrant men, a comparative stance is inherent in this research. The original idea was to explore nation-based differences in the data. However, when examining our quantitative analysis, no such differences can be found. The only (statistically significant) group-based differences in emotional bonding of our informants are related to the location of their family members, their length of stay in countries of residence, migration statuses and the timing of their migration. Those men whose family members live in different countries, who have migrated less than eight years ago and after turning 13 and men from refugee or asylum-seeker backgrounds receive less material support (bonding aspect).

In qualitative terms, cross-country comparisons are rather problematic with the available data, particularly when analysing private issues such as emotional bonds (as compared to issues directly related to public policies such as education and labour market). The men interviewed in different countries do not share the same backgrounds. In some countries, mostly recently arrived asylum-seekers from Africa and the Middle East were contacted, while in certain other countries, second-generation young men were interviewed, while in some others young men who have migrated due to family reasons from South America were the major target group. Therefore, when defining group-based differences in the well-being of migrant men, we have to look elsewhere.

In the light of the previous section on the importance of intergenerational relations, it is quite evident that the breakdown of generational continuums hampers the well-being of young migrant men. In other words, ‘an expectation that men can cope with [...] the loss of family’ (Lewis 2012) is simply false. For some men, at



worst, the breakdown of the generational continuum might lead to social disintegration and anarchic orientation towards life, as they live without meaningful links to the surrounding social world. However, such men are few in number in our data (also because it is difficult to contact them for research or any other purposes).

However, a few such men were interviewed for this research. They tended to have similar life stories. Due to harsh conditions in their countries of origin, some of them had lost contact with most of their family members. Some of them had gained access to Europe with the help of some relative already living there. In practice, these young men entered Europe through family reunion processes to live with their uncles, aunts or distant fathers and their established family settings. Consequently, the families of these young men were not reunited in the actual sense of the word. Instead, they came to Europe to live in completely new familial settings. In such settings, these young men remained outsiders in cramped apartments. In these types of circumstances, the risk of conflicts with their guardians tends to increase and generational continuums begin to unravel.

My life is like... I don't have my mother in here and I've been fighting with my father. And my brothers live separately. You can understand how life is. Loneliness. [FI_12]

It's hard of course, but there's no-one I can talk to. It's my problem. [...] No, I don't want to discuss them. I want to work them out myself (he sighed). [GE_17]

It's not been easy, living in a country that's not your country. [...] It's not easy because you live alone. [...] You don't have your parents to discuss things with. It's not the same talking to your older sister – you have to hustle. [IR_02]

Furthermore, in the data, there are examples of homosexual men who have been abandoned by or left their conservative family members. In any case, this small-numbered group of young men seem to be in a highly vulnerable position. They suffer from mental problems and some of them are homeless. Thus, lack of emotional bonds and breakdown of generational continuums can have very tangible consequences. Moreover, some of these young men have a fragile identity, little trust toward other people and low expectations for the future. In other words, they are detached from supportive social relations—they are neither attached to their communities of origin nor to their countries of residence. Such rather extreme and anarchic conditions stem from mental loneliness and not so much from physical distances.

Generational continuums rarely break up as dramatically as in the examples above. More often, the men report that they are not able to fulfil their roles as a man in their new surroundings. At the time of the interviews, some of them felt that they were not able to 'give back' to their elders or raise the living standards for the next generation.

If I don't apply for work, I'm nothing. This is on my mind always. [FI_17]

It's [earning only little money because not being able to work as an asylum seeker] like feeling like a child again [IR_01]

I'm going to have children but first, as I live in a hostel, it's a bit hard, you know, maybe they will transfer us to other hostels after with the kids, with a lot of noise, with... it's hard, it's really hard. [...] Now we cannot [have children] because I do not know, I don't have a job today, I do not know about tomorrow... [FRA_18]



It can be claimed that paid jobs are not ends in itself, but rather means through which an acceptable position is earned in generational continuums. In many ways, the informants of our study face the problem of the 'second generation'. They expect themselves to and are expected by their families to do well in their respective localities. There is probably less pressure on the first generation. Migrating in middle-age or older and not having great success in the labour market of the receiving country is more acceptable. However, it is different for men who have migrated during their childhood and youth.

The great majority of our informants (76 %) have migrated to Europe between the years 6-25. Moreover, almost two-thirds of them (63 %) migrated after turning 13. This implies that expectations of/on them are high, but the possibilities of them having great success in European labour markets are lower. According to several studies, migration during adolescence or late adolescence exposes migrants to poor educational and occupational attainment (e.g. Crul & Vermeulen 2003; Heath et al. 2008; Mussino & Strozza 2012). Therefore, many of our informants, particularly those who have not had the possibility of receiving a high standard education in their country of origins, are in a challenging position. These men face difficulties when attempting to redeem the gendered positions in their generational chains.

Not being able to find work or working in low-paid jobs has very direct implications on the emotional bonds of migrant men as well. These implications particularly concern our target group—third country nationals (TCNs). Often, public policies in the form of family reunions and visa regulations come in the way of fostering emotional bonds of the young migrant men in our data. To overcome these regulations, men are required to prove their ability to support themselves and often other people too. Thus, unemployment and low or irregular incomes deny many men the possibility of physical proximity with their loved ones.

I have tried to find a job but nobody will help. [...] If I want to bring my wife from Iraq to Finland, I have to have a job and salary of 2000 euros per month. This is really bad.
[FI_FG1]

I dream that my family is together. Things like this, which I cannot make possible. For this you need, besides money, the city and the opportunities. My siblings just cannot come here. [GE_02]

Thus, the tightening of European border control policies has very direct consequences on the well-being of migrant men. It can be assumed that uniting with one's partners and children would enhance the eudaimonic well-being of many migrant men. It might be that uniting with family enables migrant men to focus on more long-term planning instead of just living day-by-day and trying to attain certain income limits. In one empirical case, even the son of a family saw the importance of having all the children in the same country: *'My sister is the angel of our family because everything just went well since she came'* [IT_05].

Conclusions and policy implications

In the data, there is definitely more love than anarchy. Young migrant men have a diverse array of emotional bonds and they talk about their families, relatives, friends, partners and many other attachments with love and respect: *'[My parents] just want me to be happy and I want them to be happy* [IR_24]. Moreover, it is important to remember that migration in itself does not put men in vulnerable positions in relation to social attachments. Even emotional bonds are not solely based on physical proximity. The abundant number of transnational emotional bonds young migrant men possess speaks for itself.

We asked what kind of connections there are between emotional bonds of young migrant men and their (eudaimonic) well-being. In our empirical analysis, we conceptualised the most obvious connection as



generational continuums. Many of our informants position themselves between past and future generations. It is important for them to be able to fulfil their (masculine) roles as a part of this continuum. Young men respect their parents or other older relatives for all the sacrifices they have made to enable their offspring a better life. Their gendered task is to take the next step in a new society by establishing positions in the labour market, social networks and eventually be able to provide a readymade platform for the next generation. Being successful in this task is essential for their feeling of self-worth. Emotional bonds in the form of generational continuums provide a life-course perspective for many young migrant males—an idea about one's roots and potentials and eventually a vision of the future paths. In other words, in the accounts of young men, parental expectations are mainly manifested in the forms of support and internalised duties, not as coercive control.

The main conclusion of our research is that for young migrant men, belonging to a certain community is important. These communities often include (extended) family members and ethnically or locally determined attachments. In any case, the feelings of belonging of young migrant males are often derived from affiliations with people who share the same ethnicity or people from various immigrant backgrounds.

The above fact has certain important policy implications. It has been claimed that during recent decades, politics of community cohesion and inclusion have been emphasised throughout Europe (e.g. Vasta 2007; Joppke & Morawska 2007; Joppke 2007). Consequently, public support for multicultural politics is decreasing because of the rise of assimilationist and nationalistic ideologies and a fear of promoting ethnic segregation. Concretely, this implies diminishing support for ethnic minority organisations and a stance according to which certain ethnic minority communities and even families are a threat to societal cohesion. However, together with several other studies (e.g. Elling et al. 2001; Spaaij 2012; Harris 2013), our data provides knowledge that challenges assimilationist stances. Families and often ethnically determined (minority) communities are essential in promoting feelings of belonging and enhancing motivation of becoming integrated into the various fields (education, employment and networks) of receiving societies as well. In other words, attachments to minority communities do not mean decreased societal cohesion but quite the contrary: minority bonding might even increase interests of seeking contact with 'mainstream societies'. Therefore, nationalistic politics of assimilation might have harmful consequences for migrant men in particular and the ethnic minority population in general.

Finally, it would be beneficial to view young migrant men as caring actors in private spheres, not only workers or security threats. What distinguishes them from many other men is that their emotional bonds are often transnational. Therefore, on national policy levels and in the context of professional practices, it would be beneficial to recognise the transnational motivators underlying the actions of migrant men. Rethinking family reunion policies, particularly in the case of adult men, seems necessary. Furthermore, it is necessary to develop tools to recognise and support socially disintegrated young migrants (not only unaccompanied minors).

Notes

¹ In the data, even deceased family members might be emotionally significant in the sense of belonging and feeling of continuity.

² The interviews conducted in Italy offer many examples of women/mothers who have migrated from Southern America to work as caregivers in Italian middle class families.



References

- Abrams, Dominic & Hogg, Michael & Marques José (eds. 2005) *The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Allat, Pat (1998) Young People and Families: En/Countering social exclusion. In Helena Helve (ed.) *Unification and Marginalisation of Young People*. Helsinki: Nuorisotutkimusverkosto, 74-95.
- Al-Sharmani, Mulki (2007) Transnational Somali families in Cairo. *Refuge* 24 (1), 88-98.
- Anderson, Benedict (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Baumeister, Roy & Leary, Mark (1995) The need to belong: desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin* 117, 497-529.
- Briggs, Xavier de Souza (1998) Brown kids in white suburbs: housing mobility and the many faces of social capital. *Housing Policy Debate* 9 (1), 177-221.
- Bynner, John (2013) School to work transitions and wellbeing in a changing labour market. In Helena Helve & Karen Evans (eds.) *Youth and Work Transitions in Changing Social Landscapes*. London: Tufnell Press, 31-44.
- Crul, Maurice & Vermeulen, Hans (2003) The second generation in Europe. *International Migration Review* 37 (4), 965-986.
- Donaldson, Mike & Howson, Richard (2009) Men, migration and hegemonic masculinity. In Mike Donaldson & Raymond Hibbins & Richard Howson & Bob Pease (eds.) *Migrant Men: Critical Studies of Masculinities and the Migration Experience*. London: Routledge, 210-217.
- Elling, Agnes & De Knop, Paul & Knoppers, Annelies (2001) The social integrative meaning of sport: A critical and comparative analysis of policy and practice in the Netherlands. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 18 (4), 414-434.
- Granovetter, Mark (1973) The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (6), 1360-1380.
- Harris, Anita (2013) *Young People and Everyday Multiculturalism*. London: Routledge.
- Heath, Anthony & Rethon, Catherine & Kilpi, Elina (2008) The second generation in Western Europe: Education, unemployment and occupational attainment. *Annual Review of Sociology* 34, 211-235.
- Huppert, Felicia & Marks, Nic & Clark, Andrew & Siegrist, Johannes & Stutzer, Alois & Vitterso, Joar & Wahrendorf, Morten (2009) Measuring well-being across Europe: Description of the ESS well-being module and preliminary findings. *Social Indicators Research* 91, 301-315.
- Joppke, Christian (2007) Beyond national models: Civic integration policies for immigrants in Western Europe. *West European Politics* 30 (1), 1-22.
- Joppke, Christian & Morawska, Ewa (eds. 2003) *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nations-States*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Juntunen, Marko (2002) *Between Morocco and Spain. Men, migrant smuggling and a dispersed Moroccan community*. Helsinki: Institute for Asian and African Studies, University of Helsinki.
- Lewis, Chloé (2012) The invisible migrant man: questioning gender privileges. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/chlo%C3%A9-lewis/invisible-migrant-man-questioning-gender-privileges> (retrieved 29.7.2014)
- Mussino, Eleonora & Strozza, Salvatore (2012) The delayed school progress of the children of immigrants in lower-secondary education in Italy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38 (1), 41-57.
- Olwig, Karen Fog (2011) 'Integration': Migrants and refugees between Scandinavian welfare societies and family relations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (2), 179-196.
- Portes, Alejandro & Rumbaut, Rubén (2001) *Legacies. The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ryan, Richard & Deci, Edward (2001) On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, 141-166.



- Scherwitz, Larry & Perkins, Laura & Chesney, Margaret & Hughes, Glen (1991) Cook-Medley hostility scale and subsets: Relationship to demographic and psychosocial characteristics in the CARDIA study. *Psychosomatic Medicine* 43, 45-56.
- Schoon, Ingrid & Schulenberg, John (2013) The assumption of adult roles in the U.K., the U.S.A., and Finland: Antecedents and associated levels of well-being and health. In Helena Helve & Karen Evans (eds.) *Youth and Work Transitions in Changing Social Landscapes*. London: Tufnell Press, 45-57.
- Small, Mario & Harding, David & Lamont, Michèle (2010) Reconsidering culture and poverty. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 629, 6-27.
- Spaaij, Ramon (2012) Beyond the playing field: Experiences of sport, social capital, and integration among Somalis in Australia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35 (9), 1519-1538.
- Thomas, William & Znaniecki, Florian (1918-1920) *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America. Monograph of an Immigrant Group*. Boston: Gorham Press.
- Vanhoutte, Bram (2012) *Measuring Subjective Well-being in Later Life: A review*. Manchester: The Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research.
- Vasta, Ellie (2007) From ethnic minorities to ethnic majority policy: Multiculturalism and the shift to assimilationism in the Netherlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30 (5), 713-740.
- Vestel, Viggo (2004) *Community of Differences—Hybridization, Poplar Culture and the Meaning of Social Relations among Multicultural Youngsters in 'Rudenga', East Side of Oslo*. Oslo: NOVA.
- Young, Jock (1999) *The Exclusive Society. Social Exclusion, Crime and Difference in Late Modernity*. London: Sage.