Migration and Happiness: Evidence from Germany

Abstract

In this paper we explore the impact of life satisfaction on temporary migration. In particular, temporary migrants in Germany are asked their intended years of stay in Germany. Unlike previous research that focused on a binary variable on the migrant intention to stay, we use more detailed data on the exact year length of intended stay. This way we are able to estimate the marginal effects of happiness on each additional year of stay by a migrant. Besides individual happiness we control for demographic, socioeconomic characteristics and self-assessed health status. We also examine how satisfaction with i) environment, ii) dwelling, and iii) household income may affect the intention to stay longer. With and without sample selection, we are able to identify a positive and statistically significant effect of all satisfaction categories on the intention to stay. We also identify a positive effect of self-assessed health status on the intention to stay. However, this result is not robust across the different specifications.

Keywords: Happiness; Life Satisfaction; Migration; Germany
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