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Immigrants' wellbeing in Europe: How it changes with the hostility and hospitality of their environment

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

I declare that my thesis consists of 46,250 words excluding Appendices.

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I declare that my thesis was copy edited for conventions of language, spelling and grammar by LSE Language Centre and INED Proofreading Services.

Michaela Šedovič
London, August 2023

Dedication

To my Grandpa.

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Abstract

Current research on the effect of exposure to the destination population on immigrants' life outcomes shows that they change under different circumstances, and the results are inconclusive. Intergroup contact theory proposes that distinguishing between positive or negative contact is essential in determining the direction of its effect. My thesis focuses on this difference and, measured through aggregated non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants, examines how hostility or hospitality in immigrants' areas of residence affects their wellbeing. The research on non-migrants' attitudes is plentiful. However, limited research focuses on immigrants' own views and experiences as subjects with their own agenda. Applying Intergroup theory, my doctoral project answers the overall question, "How does hostility of non-migrants relate to migrants' subjective wellbeing?". I study this relationship using progressively more granular spatial data. In the first paper, I conduct a comparative study of European countries and regions within them using European Social Survey data. Then, in the second paper, I employ smaller spatial units at the municipal level focusing on immigrants and ethnic minorities in England and Wales employing Understanding society data. Finally, I turn my attention to the mechanisms behind this relationship. Using qualitative data, I explore immigrants' experiences in an emerging destination, Slovakia, testing if the patterns existing in the old destinations repeat in a new context. My research advances the current understanding of immigrants' integration by calling attention to individuals' wellbeing as a subjective measure of integration. Understanding how immigrants relate the destination context and interactions with the destination population to their life satisfaction is informative to public and integration policies. Investigation of attitudes towards immigrants is conducive to our knowledge of what creates social and cultural boundaries in destinations and which immigrants, depending on their individual characteristics, are allowed to surpass them and become accepted members of society. My last paper makes a theoretical contribution to our understanding of the impact of host society responses and structural discrimination by recentring the research in a geographical context where typically only native emigration has been studied.

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1. Introduction: Immigrant integration and subjective wellbeing

The integration of immigrants is one of the central research topics of migration research in Europe due to the growing societal diversity caused by immigration, the settlement of immigrants and their descendants in destination countries, and their gradual blending with local populations. Immigrants' and their descendants' integration is measured through various objective measures such as income, language mastery, or obtaining citizenship (e.g., Vervoort, Dagevos, and Flap 2012; Bartram 2011; André and Dronkers 2016; Vink et al. 2020). Lately, scholars have called for an approach to integration which would focus on immigrants' own agency and understanding of the success of their immigration project (M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019). As in the case of studying society in general, objective, specifically economic, measures are under scrutiny, considering their ability to provide a complete picture of individual's quality of life (Tov and Au 2013; Stiglitz, Sen, and Fitoussi 2009).

This scrutiny turns researchers towards subjective measures of immigrants' successful integration in their destination. The growing interest in wellbeing research since the late 90s is linked to its potential to better inform social and public policies, monitor social progress, and reveal another angle of how people assess their welfare compared to individual and macro level economic measures (Tov and Au 2013; Jenkins 2020). The same trend in assessing quality of life has also reached immigration research and the study of immigration outcomes (Penninx 2003).

A distinct focus on immigrants' wellbeing is valuable given the event of migration itself can alter the way how immigrants experience happiness and the aspects influencing it. M. Hendriks and Bartram (2019) argue that a "migrant's happiness evaluation can function as a summary indicator of their experience of the objective and subjective benefits and costs of migration that truly matter to them" (289), therefore it is an indicator of migrants' overall migration outcomes. Immigrants' life satisfaction provides a summary measure of their own assessment of their situation, rather than that assumed from their (improved) objective situation based on income, housing, or similar objective criteria (e.g., Bartram 2011). Study of subjective wellbeing of immigrants has potential to uncover the most important factors influencing their experience in the destinations, because it does not focus only on their actual living conditions but also their interpretation of such conditions, which is uncaptured using only objective measures (M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019). The focus on subjective wellbeing also challenges the approach to integration solely from the

perspective of the destination and its population. Measuring immigrants' own perception of life outcomes in the form of assessing their life satisfaction independently from the destination population gives them agency in research, instead of just comparing their outcomes with those of non-migrants.

As the research of immigrants' happiness is at an early stage, there still is a need to conduct research in different areas such as happiness of immigrants, destination populations, and stayers; application of happiness analysis in policy making; wellbeing development in case of internal migration, or in relation to causes of migration (M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019). However, to research those areas of immigrants' happiness, it is critical to first identify determinants contributing to immigrants' wellbeing. Immigrant integration is a dynamic and multidimensional process involving the receiving and arriving population to the same degree (Penninx 2003). Therefore, one of the potentially key influences on immigrants' wellbeing is the environment in the destination and its many components.

I situate my thesis in the study of immigrant integration research and specifically the field of immigrants' wellbeing. I focus on the impact of the destination population on immigrants' wellbeing. I aim to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the intergroup migrant/non-migrant relationship as one of the key determinants of immigrants' life satisfaction in their destination. My thesis consists of three interconnected studies. In my first two papers I ask how non-migrants' attitudes to immigrants influence immigrants' life satisfaction. I use progressively more granular spatial data to study the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and wellbeing. In the first paper[1], I conduct a comparative study of European countries and regions within them. I firstly demonstrate there is a significant relationship between attitudes and immigrants' wellbeing, secondly, I show a large variation in the attitudes and thus the migrants/non-migrants'relationship within countries, and finally that the heterogeneity in the association across migrant groups depends on their time spent in the destination country. My findings prove that anti-immigrant attitudes - as an explanatory measure of the variance in immigrants' subjective wellbeing - measure different aspects of intergroup interaction compared to existing measures, such as perceived discrimination, but are complementary to them. In my second

[1] Under review in Migration Studies journal, awaiting the second set of reviews after receiving Revise and resubmit.

paper[2], I employ smaller spatial units at the municipal level, focusing on immigrants and ethnic minorities in England and Wales. My results show anti-immigrant attitudes on a regional level are a stronger predictor of immigrants' wellbeing than municipal attitudes. These findings point out the importance of within country variance and of the sub-national research focus that would consider more than just neighbourhood effects. In my last paper[3], I turn my attention to the mechanisms behind the relationship between non-immigrant attitudes and immigrant subjective wellbeing and ask how immigrants perceive various forms of interactions and how and why these interactions impact the life satisfaction of immigrants in the destination country. My qualitative study of an emerging destination country, Slovakia, demonstrates immigrants are aware of destination population attitudes towards themselves and explains how it affects their wellbeing. I discuss how the context of Slovakia differs compared to the old destination countries, but that the patterns of the intergroup relationships are comparable.

The rest of this introduction is structured as follows. Section 1., discusses the link between anti-immigrant attitudes and immigrants' life satisfaction. In Section 2., I focus on the determinants of immigrants' wellbeing. In Section 3., I describe the practical considerations of my analysis for each paper and their limitations, and I also describe the geographical and cultural context of my research. In Section 4., I outline the most important contributions of my research. Finally, in Section 5., I outline the thesis chapters.

1. Non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants and their life satisfaction

The destination context strongly influences immigrants' welfare in various dimensions. Existing research shows that social interactions, exposure to the destination country population, contact in the online world, feelings of discrimination, experienced and perceived discrimination and feelings of belonging affect immigrants and their life outcomes, including subjective wellbeing (Hellgren 2018; Crul and Schneider 2010; Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020). Similarly, the public's preference for immigrants in their country also impacts immigrants' life satisfaction (Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol 2022). Immigrants are sensitive to destination country policies and symbolic boundaries in

[2] Under review in European Journal of Population, awaiting the second set of reviews after receiving Revise and resubmit.

[3] Under review in international Migration Review.

the destination culture (Heizmann and Böhnke 2018; Kogan and Shen 2019; Schilling and Stillman 2021).

All these forms of interactions between immigrants and the destination context and its population are different ways that non-migrants can influence a range of aspects of immigrants' everyday life. What connects these interactions are underlying opinions of the destination populations - their attitudes to immigrants, which are understood to shape the behaviour of non-migrants as experienced by immigrants (Malloy, Ozkok, and Rosborough 2021).

According to recent notions of intergroup contact theory, positive interactions between members of an in-group and out-group in a specific area may have beneficial impact on intergroup contact and individuals residing in this area (Hewstone 2015). This notion suggests that these positive interactions are proxies of general values in those areas, which celebrate or denounce the diversity. Attitudes towards immigrants have the potential to be a measure of these values in a society (or an area) in terms of the population's relationship to immigrants and therefore important for studying positive or negative impact of the society on members of the out-group, in this case immigrants. Research on anti-immigrant attitudes supports this notion, and highlights the possible link between anti-immigrant attitudes, discrimination, and their consequences - and calls for further research into these processes (Esses 2021). As Esses suggests, a focus on the interaction of anti-migrant prejudice measured at various spatial levels in destination countries, while neglected in research, can shed light on its effect on immigrants' life outcomes post-migration, including life satisfaction.

Despite existing findings confirming an association between national attitudes towards immigrants and immigrants' life satisfaction (Heizmann and Böhnke 2018; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018) there is a gap in our understanding of the variation in this association, the mechanism behind it, and the potential policy implications.

Research on attitudes towards immigrants shows their high variation and that different immigrant groups stimulate different attitudes. So while existing findings confirm that there is an association, the attitudinal research points out the possible heterogeneity in this relationship. Research on the effects of perceived discrimination against immigrants clearly shows varied experiences in the destination depending on immigrants' ethnicity, gender, class, or origin (e.g., Esses 2021; Paparusso 2018).

More importantly, if attitudes towards immigrants are proven as a good predictor of immigrants' wellbeing, they can complement existing measures and methods currently

employed to explain it, such as perceived discrimination, voting behaviour, and proxies of contact. With detailed knowledge of the evolution of attitudes and their spatial distribution in countries and across different demographic groups, we can learn about the potential sources of discriminatory behaviour and the social contexts that are conducive to negative intergroup contact (Hoxhaj and Zuccotti 2020; Dražanová 2022; Velásquez and Eger 2022). Contrarily, we may also learn which contexts are conducive to positive immigration outcomes. Suppose there is a strong association between the two phenomena. In that case, research detailing the evolution of attitudes towards immigrants can serve as a roadmap to changing those attitudes, for example, through education and policies (Jeannet and Dražanová 2019; Dražanová 2022), and thus indirectly improve immigrants' experience in the destinations and contribute to immigrant integration. The analysis of the heterogeneity in the association between attitudes and wellbeing based on immigrants' individual characteristics can uncover those most susceptible to being negatively affected by strong anti-immigrant sentiments.

2. Determinants of subjective wellbeing of immigrants

2.1.Attitudes towards immigrants

Comparable to research on immigration, attitudinal research is also linked to growing migration and connected developments of immigration policies. Attitudes towards immigrants and other minorities are of extensive interest, mostly among political scientists and economists as they underline behaviour in society. Attitudes towards immigrants are seen as a predictor of electoral behaviour and linked to voting. Thus, a large body of work exists on the correlates of attitudes towards immigrants and attitudes' evolution (Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2012). This literature is centred on non-migrants (majority members) and the outcomes of attitudes influencing this population specifically.

The breadth of research on anti-immigrant attitudes brings knowledge of aspects influencing the attitudes of different individuals depending on their individual socioeconomic and demographic characteristics (such as age, religion, income, prestige of job), media consumption (type and frequency), societal and political context (electoral cycle), and events that affect them, such as those which create the feeling of scarcity of goods in society (e.g., an economic crisis, a growth in the immigration flows). According to those studies, individuals prefer immigrants who are similar to them but at the same time do not threaten their position, e.g., at a workplace. More liberal, higher educated, younger

people from urban areas tend to be more pro-migrant (Harteveld et al. 2018; Dražanová 2022; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, and Courtemanche 2015). The links of anti-immigrant attitudes to election outcomes, media coverage, but also the behaviour of political elites have also been studied previously. This is relevant for immigrants' wellbeing as negative attitudes can lead to support for far-right parties and to political radicalisation (Malloy, Ozkok, and Rosborough 2021) and feed a media cycle which potentially also radicalises against immigrants (Erhard, Heiberger, and Windzio 2021). Considering this knowledge, adopting anti-immigrant attitudes as an explanatory factor in migration research is underutilised, specifically in terms of immigrants' life outcomes, as it can be valuable from a theoretical perspective by, e.g., uncovering mechanisms behind negative intergroup relations, and is also policy-relevant. In short, this means that the negative attitudes towards immigrants could be a measure of an environment generally hostile to immigrants.

Attitudes towards immigrants as a predictor of non-migrants' behaviour have the potential to inform us about the interactions between immigrants and non-migrants from a new perspective. Considering that attitudes influence non-migrants' behaviour (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985), and that specifically particular stereotypes and attitudes towards immigrants determine behavioural tendencies in relation to specific immigrant groups (Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2007), the level of their hostility or hospitality can be informative about the context in which immigrants live and, thus, how it relates to their life satisfaction. The opportunities, which such utilisation of anti-immigrant attitudes in research brings, are threefold. First, unlike measures of contact, data on non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants are both more available and do not rely on a singular act of contact between the two groups. While non-migrants can avoid immigrants as an out-group in their own country, immigrants are constantly exposed to the destination population in various forms and thus potentially aware of attitudes even if they are not in contact. Second, unlike proxies of contact which report the frequency of contact, anti-immigrant attitudes report the nature of the exposure – positive, negative, or potentially ambivalent. Third, unlike perceived discrimination, which is reported by immigrants and may be compounded with their life satisfaction (less happy migrants being more likely to observe discrimination in their encounters), attitudes, if used as an explanatory measure of an immigrant's outcome, are an exogenous measure. This makes the interpretation of an association with an individual's wellbeing free from obvious confounders.

Two international research studies employ attitudes towards immigrants as explanatory variables in evaluating immigrant life satisfaction. Heizmann and Böhnke (2018) employ anti-immigrant attitudes aggregated on a national level as indicators of symbolic boundaries in a country, arguing that in countries with weaker boundaries defined as lower opposition towards outgroups, immigrants are more satisfied. A similar methodological approach to state-level aggregation is used by Kogan, Shen, and Siegert (2018). They argue that immigrants' life satisfaction is negatively associated with stronger anti-immigrant attitudes. While these studies do not further analyse particularities in the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and varied migrant groups in European countries, they offer a solid foundation to build further research. For example, building on this knowledge, my thesis focuses on the study of within country variation of attitudes, mechanisms behind this association, heterogeneity in relation to immigrants' subpopulations, and discusses the potential of long-term effects of attitudes toward immigrants on their wellbeing.

2.2.Other determinants of immigrants' wellbeing

Immigrants' life satisfaction differs from non-migrants' in how it evolves and what affects it. Thus, there are wellbeing influences shared with non-migrants, as well as, distinctive influences specifically related to the wellbeing of immigrants that need to be considered. Most important among these factors are country of origin (Bălţătescu 2007; Amit 2010), as many factors influencing life satisfaction are first, culturally determined and dependent on the home-country conditions, and second, dependent on ethnic and other visible signs of otherness among immigrants. Immigrants particularly report higher life satisfaction if the economy, democracy, and public goods, such as social and welfare services, are well-functioning in the destination, or relatively better-functioning than in their home countries (Kogan and Shen 2019). Otherness is linked to the ways non-migrants consider specific immigrant populations. Visible otherness has for a long time been shown to be directly associated with lower wellbeing (Hughes and Thomas 1998) and with more often perceived and experienced discrimination (e.g., Vohra and Adair 2000; André and Dronkers 2016).

Length of stay in the destination and the individual's family migration history are also linked to their wellbeing. Immigrants living in the destination countries for a longer time tend to report lower life satisfaction than newly arrived individuals who are more hopeful about life in the new country (Safi 2010). However qualitative research reports that

life satisfaction of immigrants and refugees grows with time spent in the destination, naming acculturation as the mechanism (Khawaja and Hebbani 2019). Examining the difference between the wellbeing of migrants and their children also brings mixed results. Some research (Safi 2010) does not find differences in reported wellbeing, and some suggests that the first generation reports higher life satisfaction compared to their children due to their different goals and aspirations. Arpino and de Valk (2018) argue that while every generation of immigrants reports a lower level of life satisfaction compared to receiving society members, the second and 2.5 generations are doing better compared to the first.

Objective parameters such as state protection from discrimination, language proficiency, and naturalisation are positively associated with life satisfaction dimensions, especially with job and financial satisfaction (Chiswick and Miller 2002). Institutional discrimination is consistently negatively associated with the life satisfaction of immigrants and minorities (Verkuyten 2008). Similarly, objectively assessed higher levels of naturalisation, integration and identification with the destination country are positively associated with life satisfaction (Sapeha 2015; Amit 2010).

As for subjectively assessed measures, perceived discrimination is consistently linked with worse integration and immigration outcomes (Safi 2010; Vohra and Adair 2000; Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020; Houle and Schellenberg 2010). Amit (2010) then shows that self-identification and the destination population's acceptance of the fact that an immigrant self-identifies with the destination country are positively associated with life satisfaction. Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval (2020) link ethnic and racial harassment to worse mental health in the UK.

Social relations in the destination pay a crucial role in integration and feature in immigrants' wellbeing assessment. Social relations and social embeddedness generally lead to higher levels of subjective wellbeing (de Vroome and Hooghe 2013; Arpino and de Valk 2018). However, it is necessary to differentiate between immigrants' interactions with and exposure to the own group (immigrants, co-ethnics) or out-group (non-migrants). A high level of interaction with one's own group is positively associated with life satisfaction if it means contact, social interactions and protection (Verkuyten 2008). However, if it stands in the way of integration and means social exclusion, it is negatively associated with subjective wellbeing (Sapeha 2015). Knies, Nandi, and Platt (2016) confirm these results in their study of neighbourhood effects on different ethnic groups in the UK. They show positive impact of in-group concentration for African Black, British Pakistani and British

Indian minorities, but lower life satisfaction for other minority groups, who are not benefiting from own ethnic group. Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol (2022) conclude in their study of German ethnic minority neighbourhoods, that ethnic enclaves can be beneficial, especially for the second generation. However, they show the potential positive impact of one's social capital depends not only on demography (share of co-ethnics/destination population in an area), but also quality of relationships and ethno-cultural infrastructure of enclaves. These results are in line with findings from other countries (Vervoort, Dagevos, and Flap 2012; Vervoort, Flap, and Dagevos 2010)

Despite these findings, research examining how interactions with destination societies relate to immigrants' wellbeing are largely limited to research on perceived discrimination and proxies of contact in different forms like neighbourhood ethnic composition or foreign population rates. Research examining direct measures of the effect of intergroup contact on immigrants' wellbeing is almost non-existent, which is partly linked to the limited availability of data that would allow such studies.

Tip et al. (2018) explore the relationship between life satisfaction and contact quantitatively for a small sample of refugees and confirm a positive association of intergroup contact with majority culture and improved language skills with reported wellbeing. Other studies confirm the same association in minority-majority relations in various limited contexts. For example, Shook and Clay (2012) show a positive impact of intergroup relations among university students in the US. Using cross-sectional data, Eller and colleagues (2016) confirm increased wellbeing for indigenous group members as a result of direct outgroup contact with the ethnic majority. However, considering the specific subpopulations considered by these qualitative studies focusing on immigrants' and minority acculturation, mental health of immigrants, belonging, integration, and life satisfaction (Stevens, Hussein, and Manthorpe 2011; A.K. Ramos et al. 2017; Miller et al. 2020), their authors argue that there is a need for a better understanding of this relationship and its variation in general immigrant populations.

Besides immigrant-specific predictors of wellbeing, there are factors predicting higher or lower life satisfaction that immigrants and non-migrants share, such as socio-demographic and economic factors. Generally, the relationship between age and life satisfaction is U-shaped (Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008). However, among immigrants the relationship may differ as Bayakara-Krumme and Platt (2018) found that Turkish immigrants tend to report higher life satisfaction at older ages compared to stayers – individuals who did not migrate from Turkey. Education is positively associated with life

satisfaction and also with other life satisfaction correlates such as income, health and positive psychological traits. The potential for education to have a positive impact on wellbeing is higher in low-income countries (Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008). Safi (2010) showed that health status is an important explanatory factor of immigrants' life satisfaction, as it is for non-migrant populations. Among beliefs, religion, religiosity and trust in institutions are strongly associated with better subjective wellbeing (Bălţătescu 2007).

Employment translates into higher self-worth and gives meaning to life, while unemployment reduces life satisfaction. However, this association is correlated with other factors such as the type of work, hours worked per day and commute and the income they generate (Luttmer 2005; Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008). Life satisfaction is also associated with the characteristics of the environment in which individuals spend their time. Dolan, Peasgood, and White (2008) associate subjective wellbeing with economic characteristics (economic recession, GDP, unemployment rate, growth in rates, inflation), welfare system and public insurance, climate, level of democracy, quality of housing (safety of areas, level of deprivation), and level of urbanisation (Diener et al. 1999). To identify the role of attitudes towards immigrants in shaping immigrants' wellbeing, these other factors related to wellbeing need to be considered and controlled for as they could interact with the relationship.

3. Practical considerations in empirical research of the relationship between non-migrants' attitudes and immigrants' wellbeing

3.1. Wellbeing and life satisfaction in (immigration) research

Research on wellbeing captured by subjectively assessed measures most often employs the following three concepts: life satisfaction (and its domains), subjective wellbeing, and happiness. Definitions of these constructs vary according to disciplines (e.g., economics, social psychology, sociology), and also depend on the type of data and methodology applied. Regarding their use in the surveys and questionnaires, research studies point out the hierarchical structure these concepts create (with happiness being the least and wellbeing the most complex concept) and differences in their potential understanding by respondents and consequent interpretation in research.

Life satisfaction is defined by Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz (1999) as the evaluation of one's life which is "embedded in the cultural and social context of both the

subject and the evaluator" and "cannot be reduced to the balance of pleasure and pain and subjective assessment of life satisfaction. However, these [pleasure and pain] remain in the centre of the research focus" (Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz 1999, x.). Subjective evaluation of one's life satisfaction additionally involves "a component of judgment and comparison with ideals, aspirations, other people and one's own past" (Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz 1999, x.). This definition implies a life satisfaction measure considers the evaluator's feelings. However the measure is more complex as it involves cognitive judgment of one's life beyond exclusively these feelings.

When comparing life satisfaction with subjective wellbeing, Diener et al. (1999) see subjective wellbeing as a broader concept, an 'umbrella term' covering how people think and feel about their lives. It includes people's emotional responses, satisfaction within different life domains and a global judgment of life satisfaction. This definition suggests that life satisfaction is only one component affecting wellbeing.

Similarly to life satisfaction and subjective wellbeing, happiness is in some literature defined interchangeably with these concepts (Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008; M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019; Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz 1999). Haller and Hadler (2006) on the other hand, consider happiness a measure of day-to-day positive emotion especially in relation to social interactions, in contrast to life satisfaction as a measure of wellbeing on a more cognitive level.

Despite the theoretical differences, these concepts are often deemed interchangeable in empirical studies with various degrees of discussion about their conceptual differences (Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008; Diener et al. 1999; van Praag, Frijters, and Ferrer-i-Carbonell 2003). Therefore, the debate about the definition of the terms is usually put aside, and the focus is given to defining what is measured by the available data. This approach can be seen in studies on the life satisfaction of immigrant and non-migrant populations (Safi 2010; Bălţătescu 2007; Kirmanoğlu and Başlevent 2013). As I see life satisfaction as a measure of subjective wellbeing, I do use these two terms in this work interchangeably, unless defined otherwise in the text. However, I do not use the term happiness as I agree with the definition by Haller and Hadler (2006) considering it as a less complex concept, and thus I also do not employ happiness as a measure even if it is available in some datasets used in my empirical chapters.

Life satisfaction is also measured through components, or domains, such as satisfaction with one's health or job. The aim of looking at life satisfaction as an aggregate of components is to more precisely understand the respective contribution of various

components to over-all life satisfaction (van Praag, Frijters, and Ferrer-i-Carbonell 2003). Nevertheless, the use of domains of satisfaction is less present in empirical research compared to use of general life-satisfaction measures (Diener et al. 1999; Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008). That is especially true for studies on migrant populations. Research has shown that in particular domains, they might experience high satisfaction because they compare the pre- and post-migration status of the particular domain, while their general life satisfaction can remain low (Bălţătescu 2007), suggesting that overall satisfaction is not simply an aggregate of the satisfaction with different domains of life for this subpopulation.

Considering the international aspect of this thesis, it is necessary to discuss life satisfaction comparability in a cross-country and cross-cultural environment (Veenhoven 2000). In life satisfaction research, there is a notion that the meaning of happiness varies across people and that cultural differences magnify this variation. The most often cited reasons for cultural differences are 1) differences in the definition of the words "happiness" and "satisfaction" across cultures and languages, 2) societal desirability, which affect individual's responses according to cultural norms, and lastly, 3) differences in approaching the concept of happiness in non-Western countries, which are less familiar with it. All these might influence how immigrants assess their life and report on it. However, Veenhoven (2000) explains that all these hypotheses confronting cross-cultural comparisons of life satisfaction have been tested and subsequently failed. The correlation studies show that differences in reported life satisfaction are strongly correlated with country characteristics (Veenhoven 2000). Moreover, Diener, Diener, and Diener (1995) and Veenhoven (2012) showed that individuals' subjective wellbeing is not only associated with country characteristics but also that the associated characteristics are broadly similar across countries. Comparing these characteristics, Diener, Diener, and Diener (1995) concluded that they do not create a completely relative and incomparable set of indicators in each country but are always related to the same social and economic factors across countries (e.g., GDP or unemployment rate). Another reason to question the comparability of life satisfaction in migration research is immigrants' potential self-selection into migration. For instance, those who choose to migrate might be more optimistic than stayers or the destination population, which would need to be considered in a research comparing these populations. However, this challenge should not affect research solely focused on immigrants (M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019).

Thus the wellbeing measure is well-established across different countries and various cultures, and has been extensively studied. In summary, despite the possibility that indicators, to a degree, measure different concepts, both theoretical and empirical studies agree that the concept of life satisfaction evaluated through these measures is comparable across cultures and therefore suitable for research on immigrants' subjective wellbeing.

In focusing on the life satisfaction of immigrants, its levels and predictors, I aim to understand immigrants' own perceptions and assessment of their lives and not necessarily whether they catch up with the non-migrant population. While studies comparing non-migrant/stayer populations with immigrants (Baykara-Krumme and Platt 2018; Frank, Hou, and Schellenberg 2015) set up benchmark values against which immigrants' life outcomes can be potentially compared, the sole fact of catching up with the non-migrant population or improvement against stayers does not necessarily equal the success of immigration. For example, Bartram (2011) reports that improvement in an individual immigrant's economic situation compared to their non-migrant counterparts does not equal a higher level of wellbeing. As discussed above, wellbeing is predicted by a multitude of factors. An immigrant might be coming to a destination from a country with a higher average life satisfaction. In such a case, assimilating with the destination population regarding the level of life satisfaction would mean diminished levels of life satisfaction (even though immigrants often achieve lower levels of life satisfaction compared to the destination country population). Therefore examining immigrants' own perception of their welfare and successful integration is a better measurement than setting up benchmarks related to the destination population.

To measure integration in terms of wellbeing means examining if all immigrants are able to achieve the same level of life satisfaction despite their origin, individual characteristics, and context in which they live after immigration. If there is a heterogeneity in the potential to achieve high levels of life satisfaction or in improving one's life satisfaction between immigrants and non-migrants (or between different immigrant groups) then research has to also identify the causes of this heterogeneity. Consequently, we would need to study how to reduce the barriers in immigrants' ability to attain happiness in destination countries, to provide equal opportunities for all immigrant groups and non-migrants to lead a satisfying life.

Taking into account these theoretical discussions and available data, in my first two papers, I used a singular life satisfaction variable as a measure of subjective wellbeing and relied on the definition as it is theoretically framed by Veenhoven (1996). Veenhoven

defines life satisfaction as 'the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads' (Veenhoven 1996, 17). Given my research question, which is related to individually assessed life satisfaction, and my interest in migrants' satisfaction with their lives in the destination, this definition allows for a reasonable interpretation of the results from my data.

Bartram (2010) allows a free definition of the measured phenomenon, arguing that respondents are free to define happiness in their own terms when reporting their own happiness levels. The in-depth interviews directly asking about the life satisfaction of interviewees in my last study relied on this approach, letting respondents to define their understanding of the concept. This furthers my research as data collected this way demonstrate what immigrants consider important when assessing their subjective wellbeing.

Most questionnaires collect data on subjective wellbeing on a scale based on the respondent's assessment their wellbeing as a value between 0 (completely unsatisfied) and 10 (completely satisfied) or use similar descriptions and scales (for example 1-11 or 1-7). This unit of measurement is not strictly defined, compared to, e.g., income measured in currency or education measured in years. Therefore this raises a question whether well-being, as a subjectively assessed value, could be reasonably interpreted and compared across groups using these scales despite the well-defined order of the units of measurement (Bond and Lang 2014).

While researchers agree these scales are subjective they also agree such comparative research is indeed possible. If the scales are considered ordinal, life satisfaction can be reasonably measured and compared across people, groups, and countries, even if the units and values of measurement are not pre-defined. However, Jenkins (2020) demonstrates that it is necessary to use the right tool specifically designed for ordinal scales to achieve the best data analysis, instead of relying on methods used for other measures, such as income distribution. Moreover, Bond and Lang (2014) stress it is important to study these scales with specifically defined research goals, such as how wellbeing pertains to policy-making, to deliver sound interpretation.

In my thesis, in the quantitative papers, I took into account these methodological discussions. Using a single scale, I focus on immigrants' relationship with the destination population and study heterogeneity in the association for different immigrant groups based on their generation, length of stay in the destination, area of residence in the destination,

origin, and individual-level sociodemographic characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, educational attainment, employment status, health, socialising), testing for the best methods and fit of the models.

3.2. Geographical and cultural context – Europe, the UK, and Slovakia

The three different papers in this thesis do not aspire to offer a direct generalisation of their findings across different geographical and cultural contexts. My aim is to rather demonstrate similar patterns across these contexts and draw attention to the anti-immigrant attitudes as a critical predictor of immigrants' wellbeing with the ability to define their life outcomes depending on individual characteristics. My inter- and intra-national analysis shows this association is significant in 22 European countries, including old destinations such as France or the UK, as well as in new ones like Czechia or Estonia.

The single-country analysis of the UK allows comparison of a diverse immigrant population varying in their generation, origins, and sociodemographic characteristics. The study shows the association between anti-immigrant attitudes and immigrants' wellbeing is still important for explaining immigrants' experience in the UK despite the long history of immigration in the UK.

Finally, the qualitative study in Slovakia confirms the same patterns hold even in this new destination country with a substantially different history in terms of immigration, emigration, and colonisation. I discuss these similarities in my last paper as well as in the Conclusion.

3.3. Discussion on contextuality and temporality of attitudes towards immigrants

Studies utilising attitudes towards immigrants as predictors need to recognise that these attitudes are context and time specific, because they change when individuals' circumstances or environment change. However, thanks to the well-understood predictors of the attitudes towards immigrants, these changes are also predictable. Therefore, in studies relying on attitudes towards immigrants as predictors, they can be controlled for. Moreover, attitudes are considered rather stable and potential changes in them rather gradual (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2018; Erhard, Heiberger, and Windzio 2021; Bohman and Hjerm 2016).

Gorodzeisky and Semyonov (2018) provide discussion of various studies of attitudes towards immigrants in Europe showing stable trends especially since the 2000s. Uncovered trends were dependent on the size of immigrant populations and national

economic policies, which they also confirm in their own analysis. Moreover, they show cohort effects in attitudes towards immigrants, which were later confirmed by other researchers, who showed the importance of experience in formative years on one's attitudes. In their study of impressionable years, Jeannet and Dražanová (2019) show how attitudes are stable over lifetime of an individual.

One salient factor of a potential change in attitudes is the media cycle and information flow transferred over mass media. Media information is shown to be influential on attitudes and its impact can be positive or negative depending on the content of news (Erhard, Heiberger, and Windzio 2021). People are especially sensitive to electoral events and media coverage of their results (Nandi and Luthra 2021). However, the potential of the media effect is dependent on individual's sociodemographic and economic characteristics and their interest in politics, and thus varies across populations. However, due to data availability, to the best of my knowledge, there is no study of the longevity of media effect on attitudes. Considering the effects of cohorts and impressionable years, it is possible the media effect is rather short-term. The potential of attitudes to change in time and across different contexts means any research utilising them needs to consider their potential changes and trends.

3.4.Data challenges and opportunities

Data availability poses challenges to migration research, especially if the research design aims to examine the effect of non-migrants and destination characteristics on immigrant groups. My research design required the availability of sufficient sample sizes of varied immigrant groups and, at the same time, of non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants. Moreover, my interest in within country variation meant that data had to be available on area units smaller than the national level, which is the standard for cross-national data collection.

Existing studies in Europe, however, rarely collect data on representative samples of the immigrant population, as they are primarily focused on the overall population and aim to generalise their study results to that total population. By contrast, many studies that focus on immigrant populations, lack information on non-migrants. A survey including both populations, the European Social Survey (ESS), does not allow a comparative study of varied immigrant groups due to the limited sample sizes of specific origins. For studying within-country variation, Understanding Society – the UK Household longitudinal survey (UKHLS) enables comparison between non-migrants and different immigrant groups, and

at different geographical levels. However, UKHLS does not collect data on attitudes towards immigrants.

These issues informed my empirical approach and methodological choices. Across the three papers, I make use of various data sources and use different methodological tools. In my first paper, I pool five rounds of ESS data to create a dataset with sufficiently large immigrant samples across countries of interest to conduct my analysis. Such an approach is well-documented as suitable for research of immigrants in Europe and has been employed in previous studies using ESS (e.g., Arpino and de Valk 2018; Malloy, Ozkok, and Rosborough 2021).

In the analysis employing UKHLS data, I use data from another international nationally representative survey, the European Values Survey, including four measures of attitudes towards immigrants collected in the same period as the UKHLS. Due to the cross-sectional character of the data and migrant sample sizes, and the corresponding methodological tools I employ, I do not draw causal inferences. This is a limitation from the perspective of the analysis of mechanisms or claims to a causal relationship between attitudes and wellbeing.

Use of different sources of datasets also means using different measures of immigration attitudes. These measure are ranging from measures of respondent's opinions regarding the generally positive or negative perceived impact of immigration on the destination country, through their opinion on immigration policy and open borders, to their perception of immigrants' activities. All of these measures are considered to be measures of attitudes towards immigrants (Dražanová 2020), although they might be based on different grounds, such as, (ethnic) bias, feeling of threat, or political leaning. Considering that my research design does not compare these varied measures directly and that the previous research shows that presenting negative opinions on immigrants or immigration across different dimensions of immigration attitudes can predict respondent's hostility (and vice versa) (for discussion see e.g., Malloy, Ozkok, and Rosborough (2021) and Esses (2021)), I do not consider that a limitation of this study.

My analyses respond to calls from anti-immigrant prejudice scholars to examine the impact of attitudes on immigrants' life outcomes (Esses 2021). As suggested by this literature, I considered and integrated multiple levels of analysis of anti-immigrant attitudes and examined their impact on wellbeing. It is necessary considering attitudes towards immigrants are formed under the influence of different factors: local and national political representation, media, education, local and national policies, or political

institutions (Bohman and Hjerm 2016). Thus, they vary within countries and therefore also have varied impact on individuals (whether immigrant or not) in the same country, which shows up in the data, and in analyses depending on the level on which they are conducted. However, as the research of anti-immigrant attitudes' impact is in its early stages it is not yet established what levels are best for analyses of this type (Esses 2021). Variation in spatial context is also a topic of investigation in neighbourhood effects and the segregation and integration literature, especially with focus of its impact on intergroup interactions. However, this field also hasn't established the ideal levels of data analysis for research with a focus on intergroup contact and effects of prejudice (for discussion see Petrović, van Ham, and Manley 2018). I therefore take a pragmatic approach, working with the spatial scales available and incorporating as much sub-regional analysis as I can.

In my final chapter, in order to address the challenges of identifying mechanisms within existing data, I turn to qualitative analysis. In this work, I offer a similar analysis in a new destination context of Eastern Europe, Slovakia. Qualitative data from interviews do not allow me to establish a causal relationship, nevertheless they tell a story of pathways and mechanisms behind the relationship of attitudes and wellbeing. My qualitative findings can advocate for improved data collection and be tested in a causal analysis in the future, when more fitting data become available. At the same time, they show how qualitative findings can inform a field typically relying more on quantitative studies.

4. Contributions

In my thesis, I focus on immigrants' wellbeing as an indicator of their experience living in the destination country and a subjective measure of the success of their migration. I contribute to our understanding of the relationship between destination country and immigrants' experiences by first asking how non-migrants' anti-immigrant attitudes influence immigrants' life satisfaction. Considering broad research identifying different channels of interactions linked to immigrants' wellbeing, I assume all of these channels might be *underpinned* by the same opinions about out-groups the non-migrants have and which they then mirror into their behaviour such as voting, hostility, contact with and avoidance of others, discriminatory behaviour, which in consequence forms the lived-environment of immigrants. Secondly, I am asking how immigrants perceive various forms of interactions and how and why they impact their life satisfaction in the destination country.

I build on empirical studies using concepts of Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport 1958). Specifically, I draw on research emphasising the positive or negative character of interactions rather than their frequency (Mazziotta et al. 2015; Pettigrew and Hewstone 2017) and on studies demonstrating positive outcomes of contact beyond changes in prejudice. Anti-immigrant attitudes are not a proxy for contact; however, the more recent interpretations of intergroup contact do not strictly define contact as a dyadic individual-level interaction. Hewstone (2015) argues that what is missing in integration and diversity research is the research on the contextual effect of contact: a person living in a context with a higher mean level of positive contact can experience positive outcomes of these intergroup interactions beyond their own contact and irrespective of their knowledge of others experiencing these positive intergroup interactions (p. 430). Attitudes towards immigrants can potentially be this measure of the mean level of positive or negative contact in a diverse society.

My research advances the current understanding of immigrants' integration by calling attention to individuals' wellbeing and how it is constructed as a subjective measure of integration. The analysis of anti-immigrant attitudes and their relationship with immigrants' wellbeing advances our understanding of what forms immigrants' life satisfaction after they migrate. Understanding how immigrants relate the destination country context and discriminatory behaviour towards themselves to their life satisfaction is informative for public and integration policies. Investigation of attitudes towards immigrants is conducive to our knowledge of what creates social and cultural boundaries in destinations and which immigrants, depending on their individual characteristics, such as ethnicity, religion, and length of stay in the country, are allowed to breach them and become accepted members of society. My last paper further contributes to our understanding of immigrant outcomes and the impact of host society responses by recentring the research in a geographical context where typically only native emigration has been studied (see e.g., Bălțătescu 2007; Bartram 2013; Bynner 2017; Moroşanu et al. 2021). My work contributes to migration research substantively, theoretically and methodologically.

The international analysis of European countries confirms previous findings of the link between anti-immigrant attitudes and subjective wellbeing. However, the aggregation of the attitudinal data on the regional sub-national level shows that attitudinal diversity exists within countries. This consequently creates varied hostility levels towards immigrants within the same country. It means the experience of immigrants in a single

country can be as different as the experience of people in various countries despite living in the same nation-state with the same policies and state approach to immigration. The size of the association between anti-immigrant attitudes and subjective wellbeing is comparable to the most prominent known individual-level explanatory variables of wellbeing, such as education. My findings build upon existing research on this association (Heizmann and Böhnke 2018; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018) and bring new knowledge thanks to the exploration of variation in the association within a country.

Comparing the effects of the measure of perceived discrimination and anti-immigrant attitudes on immigrant wellbeing, and the effect of the interaction of perceived discrimination in the association between attitudes and wellbeing, I show that attitudes of non-migrants are one of the drivers of wellbeing and can explain some of the variance in wellbeing of different groups of immigrants previously overlooked in research. For example in research using perceived discrimination, immigrants might not report perceived discrimination or might not realise they are discriminated against. This study thus confirms the explanatory potential of anti-immigrant attitudes in immigrant-centred research and exposes a need for research on the association between attitudes and wellbeing on a smaller geographical level. My analyses of smaller units than the national state answers the calls for a type of empirical approach employing multiple levels of data analysis, as research shows that diversity occurs on the sub-national level, and thus, methodological nationalism might obscure this diversity (Eger and Breznau 2017; Petrović, van Ham, and Manley 2018).

Using UKHLS data, I analyse the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and subjective wellbeing in England and Wales. The aggregation of attitudes on regional and municipal levels allows us to compare levels on which non-migrants' attitudes link to immigrants' experience more prominently, contributing to existing discussions about the importance of an integrated analysis of different levels of the potential link between attitudes and immigrants' life outcomes (Esses 2021). Surprisingly the analysis shows a significant and stable association on the regional level rather than the municipal one. Considering immigrants in the sample live more often in larger cities, these results might demonstrate the effect of more liberal attitudes there but also a Person-Positivity bias when individuals do not mirror their hostility in everyday personal interactions. The association on the regional level then suggests the attitudes form the hostile environment through which immigrants experience anti-immigrant attitudes. Finally, investigating the effect of the most negative attitudes against their average values within regions showed that the

most negative attitudes do not link with wellbeing. These results further confirm that average aggregated anti-immigrant attitudes are a valuable tool in analysing immigrant experience alongside perceived discrimination and voting preferences, which have received the lion's share of attention to date.

Qualitative interviews with immigrants further reveal the complexity of the link between anti-immigrant attitudes, hostile environment, and immigrants' experiences. The experience of anti-immigrant attitudes is dependent on the ethnicity, and social class of immigrants not only in how they are perceived and treated by non-migrants, but also in the expectations non-migrants have towards immigrants and the role they should play in the destination country based on their background. Thus, anti-immigrant attitudes do not range only from positive to negative and can affect immigrants' wellbeing in two ways. First, by creating a hostile or welcoming lived environment and second, by putting pressure on immigrants to behave according to predefined rules expected from them, whether they are able and willing to do that or not. Immigrants differ in identifying prominent interactions with non-migrants which affect them, ranging from contact with a barista in a café, through experience with the Foreign Police office, through workplace relationship, to (dis)satisfaction with welfare services offered. Further, the interviews with immigrants uncovered that understanding the local culture (and language) is another layer complicating immigrants' perception and experience of attitudes, as misunderstanding can alter the meaning of behaviour in intergroup interactions. This analysis of a non-western European country as a destination broadens our understanding of Europe as the destination region and the changing role of the Central and Eastern European region from solely sending countries to receiving ones. The anti-immigrant attitudes and the importance of racial hierarchisation described in the study of Slovakia, which can be seen in post-colonial countries, suggest there is a colonial complicity and a desire to be in the centre, as described in Nordic non-colonial countries (Vuorela 2009).

5. Thesis Outline

In this thesis I present three papers. In Chapter 2 of this thesis, an international analysis of this association in 22 European countries demonstrates that the association between regional attitudes towards immigrants and their wellbeing is statistically and substantially significant for immigrants from the first and second generations, differs depending on the length of time spent in the country of destination, and measures a different societal process

compared to perceived discrimination. These findings support the claim that further research at a subnational spatial scale is necessary.

Chapter 3 is focused on the British context. Using UKHLS data on England and Wales, my findings confirm the stable association of attitudes and immigrants' wellbeing and show the importance of the regional level for the integration of immigrants. My analytical approach using multiple methodological approaches to data analysis demonstrates that the most negative attitudes toward immigrants, which are often used as a measure, are not the only relevant factor in immigrants' life satisfaction. An entire composition of attitudes towards immigrants impacts their experience in the destination. Finally, this paper presents the need for further research into the mechanisms of this association, including using of multiple levels of data aggregation and an analysis of their interplay. This is however conditional on future surveys including immigrants in destination countries in sufficient sample sizes.

Chapter 4 is a qualitative empirical analysis of a new destination country. Slovakia, like many Eastern European countries, has a radically different history of immigration compared to Western Europe where most studies of immigrant integration have focused. In light of this, it is valuable to ascertain if research on the life outcomes of immigrants in such a setting compares despite the historical differences. My analysis using 50 in-depth interviews with immigrants in Slovakia shows that while the context differs, many patterns affecting immigrants wellbeing in the destination, such as racialised hierarchies, can be found also in new immigrant destinations.

Finally, Chapter 5 offers some conclusions, reflects on the overall contribution of my papers, and the implications for policy and for future research.

2. Immigrants' Subjective Wellbeing in Europe: Variation by Regional Attitudes towards Immigrants

1. Abstract[4]

Research suggests that immigrants' wellbeing varies with their lived environment. This variation's potential but under-researched driver is non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants. Using pooled European Social Survey data (2010-2018) for 22 destination countries, I address the question, 'Are more positive attitudes towards immigrants in regions where immigrants live associated with their higher life satisfaction?'. To answer it, I estimate models of life satisfaction regressed on a summed index of 6 measures of attitudes towards immigrants aggregated to the regional level and control for individual-level predictors and country, year, and origin fixed effects. I find a significant association between more negative regional attitudes and lower immigrant wellbeing. Its strength is comparable with the most important known individual-level predictors of wellbeing (e.g. education). My results further show that the length of stay at the destination interacts with the strength of association (only those more recently arrived are affected). Despite well-attested links between feelings of discrimination and wellbeing, I show that those who express greater discrimination are not more sensitive to attitudes towards immigrants. This suggests that each measure speaks to a separate mechanism of experiencing discrimination. Showing that regional attitudes are strongly related to immigrants' wellbeing implies that the lived environment should be at the forefront of the migration outcomes research.

2. Introduction

Hope for a better life in the destination country is a key driver of migration (Dones and Ciobanu 2022). Yet, it is still not clear which living contexts are more conducive to immigrants' wellbeing, as destinations vary in their treatment of immigrants. This is an important issue as life satisfaction is an indicator of immigrants' subjective wellbeing and hence a measure of successful integration and the success of their own migration projects (Bartram 2010). A better understanding of the determinants of immigrants' life satisfaction, therefore, has the potential to enhance policy as well as speak to academic concerns.

The wider wellbeing research emphasises the role of contextual factors on individuals' life satisfaction (Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008). However, most research

[4] A newer version of this chapter is pubished as an article in the Migration studies jurnal: Šedovič, M. (2024) Immigrants' Life Satisfaction in Europe and the Effect of Attitudes towards Immigrants. Migrant Studies 12 (1): 68 - 92. https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnad034.

on immigrants' wellbeing currently focuses primarily on the role of their individual characteristics, e.g., socioeconomic indicators (Amit 2010; Bălţătescu 2007; Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020), although there are exceptions (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018). One key contextual factor expected to impact immigrants' wellbeing is the extent and character of their exposure to non-migrant populations. The non-migrants' behaviour toward foreigners can range from welcoming or antagonistic. Multiple studies have shown that perceived discrimination is consistently associated with lower life satisfaction among immigrants (Safi 2010; Vohra and Adair 2000). Other research studies employing indirect measures of contact, such as neighbourhood immigrant concentration, indicate that exposure to non-migrants could affect immigrants' wellbeing in both directions (Sapeha 2015). Thus it is not exposure to them per se but rather the character of exposure which matters. However, exposure's positive or negative nature cannot easily be captured with currently utilised measures, such as immigrant/non-migrant concentration in an area. Therefore research that directly investigates the association of the nature of the exposure or the more or less favourable orientations towards immigrants with the life satisfaction of immigrants remains limited.

In this paper, I focus on this relatively understudied aspect of the character of interactions with non-migrants that immigrants experience. This means that through measuring the non-migrants' perception of immigrants, I focus on the nature of the context of reception (positive or negative) rather than attempting to estimate specific contacts. Recently, a couple of papers (Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018; Heizmann and Böhnke 2018) ascertained a link between national attitudes towards immigrants (ATI) and immigrant wellbeing. I aim to further our understanding of this association by exploring its variation among different immigrant groups and exploring variation within individual countries.

Using five pooled rounds of European Social Survey data (ESS) from 22 European countries, I aggregate non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants on the subnational regional level. In this descriptive analysis, I employ these attitudes as a regional measure of greater or lesser hostility towards immigrants in the environment in destination countries where they live. I investigate whether more positive local attitudes towards immigrants in the areas where immigrants live are associated with immigrants reporting higher life satisfaction. Additionally, I control for the concentration of immigrants in the region as an indirect measure of exposure to account concurrently for the potentially positive association with attitudes towards immigrants. Immigrant groups differ from each in life satisfaction and key characteristics predicting it. As these variations may be correlated with

variations in attitudes, I control for various predictors of life satisfaction. Importantly, I also expect and thus investigate the variation in the association when accounting for specific immigrant characteristics.

My paper's contribution is threefold. First, I contribute to our understanding of immigrants' wellbeing, particularly in terms of its association with the interactions with the destination population and their attitudes. My research design allows me to explain the variation in the association between exposure to non-migrants and wellbeing for a wide group of immigrants compared to studies focusing only on those self-identifying as discriminated. The aggregation of attitudes toward immigrants on the regional level uncovers subnational heterogeneity. Regional values report the variation across the environments in which immigrants live in a country in more detail compared to studies using national averages. Secondly, from the policy-making perspective, knowing how particular attitudes towards immigrants affect specific immigrant groups can serve integration policies as non-migrants' attitudes are a well-researched phenomenon. Research on how it links to immigrants can assist, for example, in identifying the immigrant groups exceedingly affected by negative attitudes.

Finally, I introduce attitudes towards immigrants not only as a control variable, as in the previous research but show it is a valuable *complementary tool* in the research of discrimination alongside variables of perceived/experienced discrimination and proxies of contact. My use of attitudes towards immigrants avoids potential issues of endogeneity. As an aggregate measure, they are not evaluated by respondents concurrently with life satisfaction, thus offering advantages over current estimates of the association between discrimination or prejudice and life satisfaction. While I cannot claim my results are causal, they provide a new detailed account of what is happening in particular social settings where immigrants live.

3. Background

Why is it relevant to ask whether local attitudes towards immigrants affect the life satisfaction of immigrants? The current literature in this area suggests two main reasons. First, studies based on intergroup contact theory (Allport 1958; Pettigrew 1998) have shown that contact between the members of a native majority and immigrant or ethnic minority populations is relevant for building intergroup relationships and, thus, for minority/immigrant integration. They are essential, especially for gaining skills needed in the new environment (Tip et al. 2018) or the feeling of belonging (Shook and Clay 2012).

Second, research links immigrants' experiences of racial harassment and discrimination to reduced life satisfaction (Vohra and Adair 2000), poorer health (Safi 2010), and worse mental health, including higher levels of anxiety and stress (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020). Hellgren (2018) shows, in a qualitative study exploring immigrants in Barcelona and Stockholm, that rejection perceived by racialised immigrants and minorities and the lack of interethnic contact are linked with reduced feelings of belonging and lower life satisfaction. Conversely, the perception of acceptance in the destination country's society is linked with higher immigrant wellbeing (Amit, 2010). Thus, studying local attitudes towards immigrants could potentially uncover how non-migrants' individual negative attitudes form barriers to integration and, through exposure, translate into experiences of discrimination, harassment and prejudice, and hence into immigrants' lower wellbeing.

3.1.Hostile environment and life satisfaction

To address my research interest, I measure subjective wellbeing through self-assessed measures of life satisfaction.[5] Veenhoven (1996) defines life satisfaction as 'the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads' (Veenhoven, 1996, p. 17). I focus on the individually assessed general life satisfaction of immigrants. I operationalise life satisfaction as general and current. Thus, Veenhoven's (1996) definition of the concept ties closely to my operationalisation and allows for a reasonable interpretation of my results.

Hostile environments and perceived discrimination relate to immigrants' wellbeing. For example, Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval (2020) show that harassment in the neighbourhood by locals adds to immigrants' stress and anxiety, whilst de Vroome and Hooghe (2013) found that discriminatory practices in the workplace force immigrants to face less desirable living conditions. In their European cross-country study, Kirmanoğlu and Başlevent (2013) show variation in the effect of self-assessed discrimination on life satisfaction: the discrimination perception decreases life satisfaction for all but with a more significant effect for ethnic minorities. The comparable difference in life satisfaction based on ethnicity was also confirmed in Canada (Sapeha 2015), Israel (Amit 2010) and the UK (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016). Safi (2010), in another European study, firstly confirms

[5] While being aware of the nuances between the terms *(subjective) wellbeing* and *life satisfaction* and the discussion of these terms in the literature, for the purpose of this research, I am using them interchangeably.

higher life satisfaction for individuals belonging to the second generation and those with a longer stay in the destination country. However, these differences disappear when controlling for self-assessed discrimination. Ultimately, there is a great variation in the wellbeing of immigrants based on their individual characteristics. Research also demonstrates the variation in the effect of encounters with non-migrants on immigrants' experience depending, for example, on their ethnicity or country of origin (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016; Davies et al. 2011).

3.2. Forms of exposure to non-migrant populations and their impact

This research examines the character of potential interactions between immigrants and non-migrants. Intergroup contact theory initially proposes that individuals hold negative attitudes towards others, leading to prejudice and hostility. According to theory (Allport 1958), contact, if happening under specific circumstances such as having a common goal, equal status of groups, and institutional/authority support of the contact, can improve them. However, the application of the theory has since evolved and is applied in research on different aspects of intergroup relations besides hostility.

A meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp (2011) has shown that intergroup contact, even under less ideal conditions than those suggested by Allport, has a positive effect on intergroup relations. Which effect, positive or negative, dominates in the outcomes of intergroup relations depends on the type, nature, and ratio of positive and negative contacts individuals have (Pettigrew and Hewstone 2017). Mazziotta et al. (2015), therefore, argue that it is the character of the contact that is critical in the research of intergroup contact and its subsequent impact (whether on attitudes towards others or other aspects of life). They point out that, until recently, there has been a lack of research that distinguishes between the two characters and their different effects. Similarly, Pettigrew and Hewstone (2017) suggest it is essential to measure both types (positive and negative) of contact.

There is a substantial body of literature examining the effect of contact and exposure to non-migrants on different aspects of the life of minorities, including ethnic minorities (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016), immigrants (Hellgren 2018; Sapeha 2015), and refugees (Tip et al. 2018). However, the measurement of exposure is most often inferred from proxies, such as the share of foreign-born or immigrant concentration (Sapeha 2015), diversity (Putnam 2007), neighbourhood diversity or ethnic composition (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016). These studies successfully link immigrants' life satisfaction with intergroup contact or its lack and identify its importance in wellbeing research. However,

although the variables in these studies can measure some association, they are beset by their inability to distinguish the complex character of exposure. For instance, as Sapeha (2015) concludes, in her research on Canadian immigrants using immigrant concentration proxy, shows an association with life satisfaction. Only the additional use of individual measures of intergroup friendship and support groups in her study uncovers why this association is of a particular type and direction. Proxy measures do not allow following the recommendation to distinguish the positive or negative contact/exposure.

Studies on the negative effect of perceived (Safi 2010; Vohra and Adair 2000) or experienced (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020) discrimination is another research field linking exposure to non-migrants with immigrants' lower life satisfaction or wellbeing. Using measures of discrimination allows us to examine the negative context in the intergroup contact research, however, the scope is rather limited. The most often used measures of perceived discrimination do not distinguish the origin of the discrimination and thus cannot conclude if the source is the non-migrant population or sources like other immigrant groups or institutions. Research shows there are barriers preventing immigrants from recognising, acknowledging, and reporting discrimination. Thus those individuals who do not express they perceive discrimination are not investigated in studies employing self-assessed discrimination measures (Hopkins et al. 2016). Lastly, while these measures are useful in assessing immigrants' health (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020), linking perceived discrimination and lower life satisfaction (Safi 2010; Vohra and Adair 2000) brings an endogeneity issue. The endogeneity potentially occurs because such research designs condition one self-assessed measure on another self-assessed measure: measures of perceived discrimination predict self-assessed life satisfaction.

In this paper, I bring together the research on discrimination and empirical research stemming from the Contact theory, which focuses on the character of interactions. I show there is a scope to introduce new complementary measures of the character of intergroup interactions – regional attitudes towards immigrants. This measure captures the context of exposure more directly than proxies and for wider immigrant groups than perceived discrimination in order to understand the potential impact of the environment on immigrants' wellbeing.

3.3.Attitudes towards immigrants as a measure of exposure to the destination country population

Research suggests that attitudes and behaviour are strongly correlated, and individuals tend to act following their beliefs (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985). Thus, if attitudes are negative and, at the same time, reflected in the actions of non-migrants, it will imply that immigrants repeatedly face hostility during everyday activities such as microaggressions, passing a racial slur graffitied on a wall, feeling mistrust from police officers, failing to find a job, or reading a racist op-ed in a newspaper.

Anti-immigrant attitudes do not always positively correlate with the foreign population rate (Hopkins et al. 2016). Some research, therefore, suggests that negative attitudes towards immigrants simply predict less intergroup interaction, however, while immigrants tend to select where to settle and avoid the most hostile areas, it is not always attainable for them, and they live in a range of different environments (Maggio 2021a). Unlike non-migrants, who can avoid contact with immigrants, immigrants (except for specific isolated communities) are regularly exposed to the destination country's population. Therefore, while attitudes towards immigrants are not a measure of contact, they can serve as a proxy of exposure to non-migrants with the added benefit of measuring its quality (positive-negative) when studied from the perspective of immigrants.

Commuting, shopping, visiting institutions, dealing with authorities, working, reading news, or being subject to the law could be means of immigrants' exposure to non-migrants and their attitudes and behaviour. Direct contact is only one of the ways through which immigrants might be exposed to non-migrants, and focusing solely on contact ignores these other potential channels of experiencing hostility (or hospitality). Thus, existing research using direct contact measures might tell an incomplete story about the effect of exposure. The attitudes towards immigrants refrain from assuming means of exposure and report only the destination population's perception of immigrants and therefore capture the nature of exposure immigrants experience from a novel perspective. Research using attitudes towards immigrants as an explanatory variable can thus contribute to a more comprehensive picture of the effect of exposure.

Despite our comprehensive understanding of attitudes towards immigrants from the perspective of non-migrants (Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet 2009), there is a lack of research centred on the experience of immigrants when researching attitudes towards others (Tip et al. 2018), such as how they affect these communities. To my knowledge, only two studies have looked at the effect of the non-migrant population's attitudes towards

immigrants on immigrants' life satisfaction (Heizmann and Böhnke 2018; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018).

In their cross-country research, Heizmann and Böhnke (2018) use attitudes aggregated at the country level to represent symbolic boundaries. The attitudes are used as a proxy to map whether immigrants are perceived negatively across Europe. Their results show an association with life satisfaction, although only for non-EU immigrants. In another cross-national study, Kogan, Shen, and Siegert (2018), using national attitudes towards immigrants, show that immigrants are more satisfied in more welcoming countries. While these two studies confirm the link between national-level attitudes and immigrants' wellbeing, they do not aim to explore the variation of attitudes within countries or the association between attitudes towards immigrants and wellbeing.

However, the differences in life satisfaction show the need to look into the variation in this association by their individual characteristics. The attitudes towards immigrants and immigrants' experience of contact/exposure with non-migrants could be affected by immigrants being (un)accustomed to hostility, immigrant generation, immigrants' ability to pass as non-migrants, and other characteristics. Thus it is still unclear if attitudes towards immigrants in a particular country are experienced equally by all immigrants living there. Moreover, the regional variation in the attitudes makes an argument to explore this association on the sub-national level.

Considering how well-explored attitudes are, their potential to inform policies is not fully utilised. Exploring which regions in countries are more anti-migrant, which immigrant groups are exceedingly affected by negative attitudes, and what individual or contextual factors confound this association could, with the current knowledge of the attitudes towards immigrants, inform policy-makers in greater detail.

3.4. Conceptual and Research Framework

The key part of my research design is the aggregation of attitudes at the sub-national regional level. It controls the heterogeneity in each country whilst also matches immigrants to the most probable levels of attitudes they experience. Research on the determinant of attitudes towards immigrants indicates that factors such as unemployment and foreign population rates play a role in non-migrants' attitudes (Rustenbach 2010). Therefore, it is important to distinguish also the variation of these determinants within a country. It is necessary to acknowledge there is a degree of self-selection of both immigrants and non-migrants into regions of residence based on their attitudes towards the other group or local

attitudes towards immigrants (Putnam 2007). Nevertheless, there still is a great variation in the attitudes towards immigrants in the regions of immigrants' residences, and thus immigrants face different types of lived environments, which is the focus of this study. This means that despite some self-selection, my research improves our understanding of how the environment relates to immigrants' subjective wellbeing.

While moving to a smaller geographical level, such as neighbourhoods, would have some analytical advantages, subnational regions bring information about a broader area in which individuals spend time beyond the place of their residence. Moreover, the availability of comparable national data would be limited using smaller regions. The use of regional-level variables allows the comparison of most European countries, and a cross-country design makes it possible to compare intra- and international differences in the association. This broadens the research, which is currently limited to studies considering small samples or specific immigrant groups and geographical locations (Verkuyten 2008; Tip et al. 2018; Hellgren 2018).

Migrants differ in well-documented aspects that affect life satisfaction and attitudes towards them. Taking account of this heterogeneity is important because the actual association between attitudes and life satisfaction may be otherwise disguised in analysis, which assumes constant effects. Therefore, I draw on the literature to select the factors differentiating immigrants.

I account for age, gender, highest attained educational level, labour market status, and social activities, which are consistently linked with life satisfaction (Diener et al. 1999; Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008; Arpino and de Valk 2018). On the contextual level, I consider regional unemployment and foreign population rates, which could affect intergroup relations (Laurence 2009). They are also related to the life satisfaction of individuals and attitudes towards immigrants (Billiet, Meuleman, and De Witte 2014; Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008). Especially the foreign population rate, as a proxy of intergroup contact (cf. Rustenbach 2010), is a potential determinant of attitudes as proposed by the Intergroup theory and thus might confound the association. The regional unemployment rate also serves as a proxy of area deprivation.[6] I control for them intending to bring robust results and be able to investigate the association further.

[6]The EU-SILC dataset on the Material and Social deprivation by NUTS region (dataset ilc_mdsd08) would be a more precise measure, however, the Eurostat only provides harmonised data since 2014.

Following existing research, I expect some immigrant characteristics to impact the association between attitudes towards immigrants and life satisfaction. Specifically, I expect the second generation and those with a longer tenure in the destination to be less affected by anti-immigrant attitudes as they are more embedded in the culture (Arpino and de Valk 2018). Although, the effect might persist for some ethnic groups which experience more discrimination (Cheung 2013) or for those with both parents born abroad (Safi 2010). There are two exclusive hypotheses on how the length of stay might affect the association. While satisfaction with the economic situation tends to rise with the years for immigrants, long stays in the destination country also come with regret, (un)fulfilled expectations, and comparisons with their home country, which might, conversely, lead to lower life satisfaction (Bartram 2015; Kóczán 2016). Similarly, change in the individual's (mental) health during their life and tenure in the destination can also lead to a lower life satisfaction. Although, the new life-course approach in the research on immigrants' health shows these changes to be linked to the different health statuses of cohorts rather than changes in time (Brunori 2022).

There are, again, two hypotheses on how perceived discrimination can interact with the association. First, based on ethnicity, sending country (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020), skin colour, religion, language, and nationality (Heizmann and Böhnke 2018), immigrants might differ in their visibility and thus stigmatisation. This suggests life satisfaction of individuals who perceive they belong to a group being discriminated against is more sensitive to attitudes towards immigrants. These individuals may be more perceptive to the environmental hostility or feel it is directed specifically at them. Conversely, those who do not identify as discriminated against may be unaffected by attitudes. The second perspective stems from empirical research showing attitudes towards immigrants, and perceived discrimination have different spatial distributions in a population (Hopkins et al. 2016). This suggests they are independent, and individuals might be affected by attitudes despite the fact they do not perceive/disclose to perceive discrimination. I employ the variable measuring respondent's perception to belonging to a group discriminated against, which is often employed instead of perceived discrimination measure if the latter one is not available (e.g., see studies employing ESS data(Kirmanoğlu and Başlevent 2013; Safi 2010)). While they might measure slightly different dimensions (perception of discrimination vs. perception of group discrimination), considering I acknowledge this in the results section (see page 57) and also do not have an alternative measure in the dataset, for the purpose of this analysis, I consider the measure of belonging

to a discriminated group as an appropriate alternative measure. This variable is not only a key control, but I also use it to draw a comparison between the frequently used research design using self-assessed/perceived discrimination as the main explanatory variable and my research design.

I add to existing research by providing a more precise description of the role of positive/negative exposure on immigrants' life satisfaction and explicitly addressing whether this association differs according to immigrants' characteristics. By studying the association of the regional level non-migrants' *attitudes towards immigrants* and immigrants' life satisfaction, I can first explore the understudied nature of exposure and the within-country variation in the association established by Kogan et al. (2018). This approach contextualises discrimination occurring in a hostile environment. Secondly, identifying the sources of heterogeneity by individual characteristics advances our understanding of this association from simply confirming its existence to identifying potentially unequal effects of the lived environment on different immigrants. Thirdly, employing attitudes towards immigrants prevents endogeneity issues (between self-assessed discrimination and subjective wellbeing) and identifies the source of discrimination by only including non-migrants' attitudes. I introduce attitudes towards immigrants as a new complementary tool for empirical research of immigrants' outcomes in their destination. Finally, my results can better inform integration policies.

4. Data and methods

4.1. Data and sample description

I use the European Social Survey (ESS), a cross-sectional survey conducted biennially since 2002 across most European countries (European Social Survey 2018). I pool five rounds of the ESS datasets (cf. André and Dronkers 2016) from the fifth to ninth rounds (collected between 2010 and 2018). I restrict my sample to the 22 European countries that participated in at least three of those waves: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK. This provides me with a sufficient analytical sample and ensures I capture variation within the regions in each country. My main analytical sample comprises 27,795 individuals of immigrant origin. They are split into 14,654 individuals (52.7%) born outside their country of residence (immigrants) and 13,141 individuals (47.3%) born in their country of residency but with at least one *parent* born outside of that country (the second generation).

I estimate my main model using both generations but split the sample to consider immigrant-specific measures (length of stay) and to assess whether the variation in consequences of attitudes between groups is in line with my theoretical expectations. Those who could not be clearly identified as of immigrant origin or not are not considered further (N=1652).

I employ a second sample (N=166 205) comprising survey participants born in their country of residence with both parents born in the same country ('non-migrants') to construct my main independent variable: (non-migrants') attitudes towards immigrants. See Appendix A1 for details.

Although ESS is not explicitly designed for migration research, it is extensively used for this purpose (Kirmanoğlu and Başlevent 2013; Bălţătescu 2007; Safi 2010; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018). The advantages of ESS data for my analysis include the wide sample of participating countries, access to variables of interest, and the ability to identify immigrant groups in terms of ethnicity, language, country of origin, length of stay and immigrant generation. The limitation of ESS is that it is translated only into languages used as a first language by more than 5% of the population of any given country, which excludes immigrants speaking other mother tongues. However, immigrants can complete the survey in any language, e.g., the national language of the destination country and therefore can participate. Still, this potentially means some immigrant groups are not sampled. The survey also does not reach certain populations, such as irregular immigrants (Bălțătescu, 2007). Considering the other challenges this population faces, I do not aim to generalise my findings to those individuals but focus on the same immigrant populations as authors of existing studies.

Furthermore, ESS provides markers of sub-national regions in which the data are collected - Nomenclature of Territorial Units Statistics (NUTS). These units are a standardised geocoding system used to recognise subdivisions of states in Europe for statistical purposes.

4.2. Dependent variable - Life satisfaction

The response variable in this study is individuals' life satisfaction. The survey question is worded as follows:

'All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays? Please answer using this card, where 0 means extremely dissatisfied, and 10 means extremely satisfied.'[7]

This measure is well-established across different countries and cultures and has been extensively studied. I follow previous cross-cultural comparisons of subjective wellbeing (van Praag, Frijters, and Ferrer-i-Carbonell 2003; Bălţătescu 2007), including research using ESS data (Kirmanoğlu and Başlevent 2013; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018; Safi 2010) and research studies focusing on examining possible uses of the ESS for cross-cultural research (Meuleman and Billiet 2012; Davidov and Semyonov 2017).

There is a concern about its comparability in a cross-country and cross-cultural environment in life satisfaction research. This concern derives from the view that there is a variation in the meaning of happiness across people, which could be magnified by culture. The most often cited reasons for cultural differences are 1) differences in definitions of the words 'happiness' and 'satisfaction', 2) societal desirability affecting individual's responses according to cultural norms, and 3) differences in approaching the concept of happiness in non-Western countries, which are less familiar with it. Veenhoven (2000) explains that all hypotheses confronting cross-cultural comparisons of life satisfaction have been tested and subsequently failed.

The studies show that differences in reported life satisfaction are correlated with country characteristics (Veenhoven 2000). Moreover, the set of characteristics with which life satisfaction is correlated are similar and comparable across countries and always related to the same social and economic factors (Diener, Diener, and Diener 1995; Veenhoven 2012). In summary, despite the possibility that life satisfaction measures, to a degree, measure different concepts, both theoretical and empirical studies agree these measures are comparable across cultures. Moreover, I control for the country of origin and destination in my models.

4.3. Key explanatory variable - Attitudes towards immigrants

To construct the measure of attitudes towards immigrants, I use the non-migrant sample described above, aggregate the data to the regional level, and build an index by combining six measures (Table 1). The correlation matrix shows a medium to high positive correlation among the indicators (0.42-0.78). Exploratory factor analysis distinguished two different

[7]ESS questionnaire also records the spontaneous answer 'I don't know.'

dimensions in the measures. The first dimension, which includes questions *a-c,* describes attitudes regarding whether to *allow* new immigrants into a country. The second dimension measures the attitudes regarding the *benefits* of immigration for the country: *d-f.* This division agrees with stronger correlation ties among the two sets of variables. However, the eigenvalue suggests that one factor is enough to explain the variance in the variables (Appendix A2).

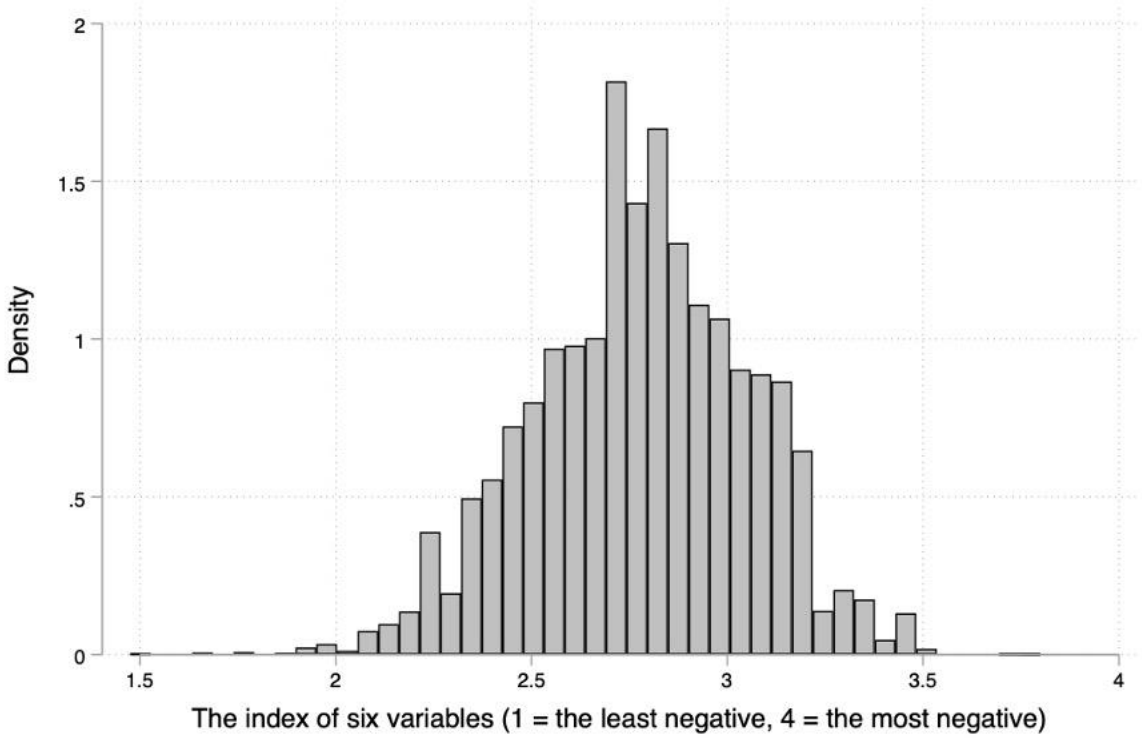
Table 1 - The six measures of attitudes towards immigrants in the ESS.

	Measure	Scale	Note
a	"To what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country]'s people to come and live here?"	4-point scale (allow many to come and live here, allow some, allow few, allow none)	Reverse coded
b	"How about people of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people?"	4-point scale	Reverse coded
c	"And how about people from the poorer countries outside Europe?"	4-point scale	Reverse coded
d	"Would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?"	11-point scale	Recoded to 4-point scale
e	"Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries?"	11-point scale	Recoded to 4-point scale
f	"Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?"	11-point scale	Recoded to 4-point scale

Meuleman and Billiet (2012) analysed the cross-cultural validity of ESS migration scales and showed a high level of cross-country comparability using the index of the *allow* measures. Since my research design is cross-country, and my analysis indicates a single index approach (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.945$), I retained the single index. I summed the values for the six measures, with the answers to the statements d-f rescaled to a 4-point scale (see Appendix A2 for discussion), and took the average. This gives me a continuous scale between one and four. The mean of the summed index is 2.78 for the pooled sample, and they are stable in time (Appendix A2). I aggregate attitudes to NUTS1 or NUTS2 level classification depending on the smallest available level for each country, resulting in 194

regional measures of attitudes (Figure 1), with an average count of 450 non-migrant respondents per unit. While the difference in the population size of a NUTS1 and a NUTS2 units is significant, they are both regional areas and considering my focus on the variation within countries, using both levels is not an issue. Table 2 and Appendix A3 present descriptive information for all variables.

Figure 1 - Distribution of regions on the attitudes scale.



4.4. Control variables

I include potential confounders to better isolate the association between regional attitudes and individuals' wellbeing (see Background). I use measures of the immigrant generation and belonging to a discriminated group for the full sample and length of stay for the first generation only. Additionally, I include individual-level controls: age and its quadratic term, gender, education, health, frequency of social activities, and labour market activity. On the regional level, I include regional unemployment and foreign population rates.

Lastly, I control for the destination country, ESS round (year), and the country (or for smaller countries, world region of origin[8]), using fixed effects. The approach to the appraisal of one's life is learned during socialisation and thus influenced by both the country of origin and destination, although immigrants' life satisfaction is often closer to the destination's average than the origin's average (Veenhoven 2012). As life satisfaction is also associated with contextual factors that are otherwise not controlled for in the model and might change over time, such as a country's economic situation, I add a fixed effect for the year to account for this.

The first generation's initial number of countries of origin was 191, and for the parents, it was 195 (mothers) and 189 (fathers). Among these, I identified multiple countries with insufficient observations to incorporate them individually in the analysis. I grouped them into regions based on geographical and cultural closeness and average reported life satisfaction (Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs 2019). For a country to be included separately, the flow of emigrants from that country has to be more than 100, and at least 70% of them had to choose the same destination country.

Given the considerable variation in countries of origin, using the world regions of origin narrows the number of categories for the fixed effect variable. It solves the problem of small country sample sizes (Safi 2010). The redefined areas comprise 37 countries and 17 world regions (Appendix A3).

Table 2 - Response variable, Individual level independent variables and controls.

Variable	**Measure**	***N***	**%**
Migrant generation	First generation	14 849	52.73
	Second generation	13 315	47.27
Time since arrival in the country	0-5 year	2 034	13.70
	6-19 years	5 206	35.06
	20+ years	7 610	51.25
Belonging to a discriminated group	Belonging	3 316	11.77
	Not belonging	24 848	88.23

[8] The term 'world region of origin' as a grouping of sending countries with the same cultural background and a similar level of life satisfaction is not to be confused with the subnational regions of EU countries where I aggregate attitudes. For this reason, I further use only the term country of origin, even when speaking about the world regions of origin.

Paid activity in the last 7 days	Employed	15 402	54.69
	Not employed	12 762	45.31
Gender	Male	13 094	46.49
	Female	15 070	53.51
Education	Primary	7 134	25.33
	Secondary	9 658	34.29
	Vocational	4 294	15.25
	Tertiary	7 078	25.13
Social activities	Never	456	1.62
	Rarely	5 282	18.77
	Often	10 615	37.69
	Every day	11 806	41.92

Variable	**Measure**	**Mean**	**SD**
Life satisfaction	11-point scale	7.03	0.013
Attitudes towards immigrants	4-point scale	2.78	0.27
Age	Continuous (years)	45.7	0.1
Age squared	Continuous (years squared)	2403	10.3
Health	5-point scale	3.81	0.92

4.5. Estimation methods

I estimate a series of nested linear regression models with fixed effects controlling for country and year effects. Fixed effects are preferred to a random intercept approach in this model for two reasons. First, methodologically, the number of destination countries is insufficient to employ a random intercept model with confidence (Bryan and Jenkins 2016) as is insufficient the sample size that would not allow enough observations per each country of origin group in a multi-level model (see Appendix A3 for discussion).

Second, theoretically, my focus is on individuals in particular countries, and I do not aspire to generalise the inference beyond the immigrant population of the individual countries included in the analysis. Thus, I do not assume these countries are a representative set of countries from a bigger sample, which is the multi-level model assumption. Considering insignificant changes in regional values of the explanatory variable in time, I do not aim to interpret the region-year findings, thus, I do not need to cluster data in this way.

All analyses are adjusted using post-stratification weights designed by ESS. The post-stratification weights use auxiliary information to reduce the potential non-response bias and sampling error. I adjusted my estimates to account for the survey design using svyset command in Stata. I cluster standard errors at the regional level (Moulton 1990). However, I also run robustness tests using cluster-robust standard errors to exclude the possibility of measuring the cluster correlation and/or heteroskedasticity and over/underreporting the variation in the population, as suggested by Cameron and Miller (2015).

5. Results

5.1. Regional attitudes towards immigrants and immigrants' wellbeing

The descriptive analysis of the life satisfaction of immigrants and non-migrants shows significant differences across regions (see Figure 1, Appendix A4 for an example using the subsample for the UK). These differences suggest that the life satisfaction of immigrants is correlated with regional characteristics differently than the life satisfaction of non-migrants. This confirms the importance of looking at the association beyond the national level and not treating the nation-state as a homogenous unit, as that can obscure the findings.

Table 3 shows the full sample analysis results testing the association between regional attitudes and life satisfaction while including controls. The estimation provides clear evidence of an association. It is statistically and substantively significant. As the main estimate of interest indicates, immigrant life satisfaction decreases by 0.20 ($p<0.001$) points with each increasing point of negative attitudes. This means that the potential effect of moving one point in the distribution of attitudes towards immigrants on life satisfaction is higher than attaining vocational education compared to elementary education.

All the control variables in the model, which are significantly associated with life satisfaction, are oriented as expected. An individual with a job, higher education, good health and social contacts tends to report higher life satisfaction (Diener et al. 1999). In contrast, those who self-identify with a discriminated group tend to assess their levels of life satisfaction as lower (Kirmanoğlu and Başlevent 2013). Compared to the model without covariates, the results indicate that the association between attitudes and subjective life satisfaction is robust to adding all control variables. The exclusion of regional controls or the indicator of belonging to a discriminated group does not significantly change

estimates of the association between attitudes and wellbeing (significant on the level between *p<0.01* and *p<0.1* depending on the model specification*)*.

Table 3 - Estimates from fixed effect OLS regression models with life satisfaction as the response variable.

	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model D	Model E
Negative attitudes	-0.201	-0.198	-0.261	-0.242	-0.226
	(0.072)**	(0.120)+	(0.103)*	(0.126)+	(0.118)+
Second generation	0.172	0.255	0.257	-0.014	0.172
	(1.302)	(1.301)	(1.238)	(1.358)	(1.337)
Male	-0.101	-0.104	-0.098	-0.098	-0.098
	(0.023)**	(0.025)**	(0.025)**	(0.025)**	(0.025)**
Age	-0.058	-0.057	-0.059	-0.058	-0.058
	(0.004)**	(0.004)**	(0.004)**	(0.004)**	(0.004)**
Age squared	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.000)**	(0.000)**	(0.000)**	(0.000)**	(0.000)**
Health	0.679	0.693	0.682	0.681	0.682
	(0.019)**	(0.018)**	(0.018)**	(0.018)**	(0.018)**
Discrimination	-0.554		-0.564	-0.552	-0.952
	(0.037)**		(0.044)**	(0.045)**	(0.454)*
Secondary education	0.031	0.040	0.041	0.036	0.036
	(0.035)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Vocational education	0.130	0.134	0.136	0.135	0.135
	(0.047)**	(0.044)**	(0.044)**	(0.044)**	(0.044)**
Tertiary education	0.310	0.314	0.317	0.315	0.314
	(0.033)**	(0.040)**	(0.040)**	(0.040)**	(0.040)**
Meeting socially	0.315	0.313	0.313	0.314	0.315
	(0.018)**	(0.019)**	(0.019)**	(0.019)**	(0.019)**
Paid work	0.304	0.304	0.315	0.300	0.300
	(0.025)**	(0.029)**	(0.029)**	(0.029)**	(0.029)**
Unemployment rate	-0.040	-0.041		-0.041	-0.041
	(0.005)**	(0.006)**		(0.006)**	(0.006)**
Foreign population rate	-0.002	-0.003		-0.002	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)		(0.002)	(0.002)
Generation X ATI				0.070	
				(0.093)	
Discrimination X ATI					0.144
					(0.161)
R^2	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22
N	27,795	27,795	27,795	27,795	27,795

+ $p<0.1$; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

Notes: Models additionally include fixed effects for the country of origin, country of destination and ESS year of collection. Models A – full model, no interaction, B – full model, excluding indicator belonging to discriminated group, C – full model, excluding regional controls, D – interaction effect of the ATI and the migrant generation, E – interaction effect of the ATI and self-assessed perceived discrimination.

5.2. Variation in the association by generation, length of stay, and perceived discrimination

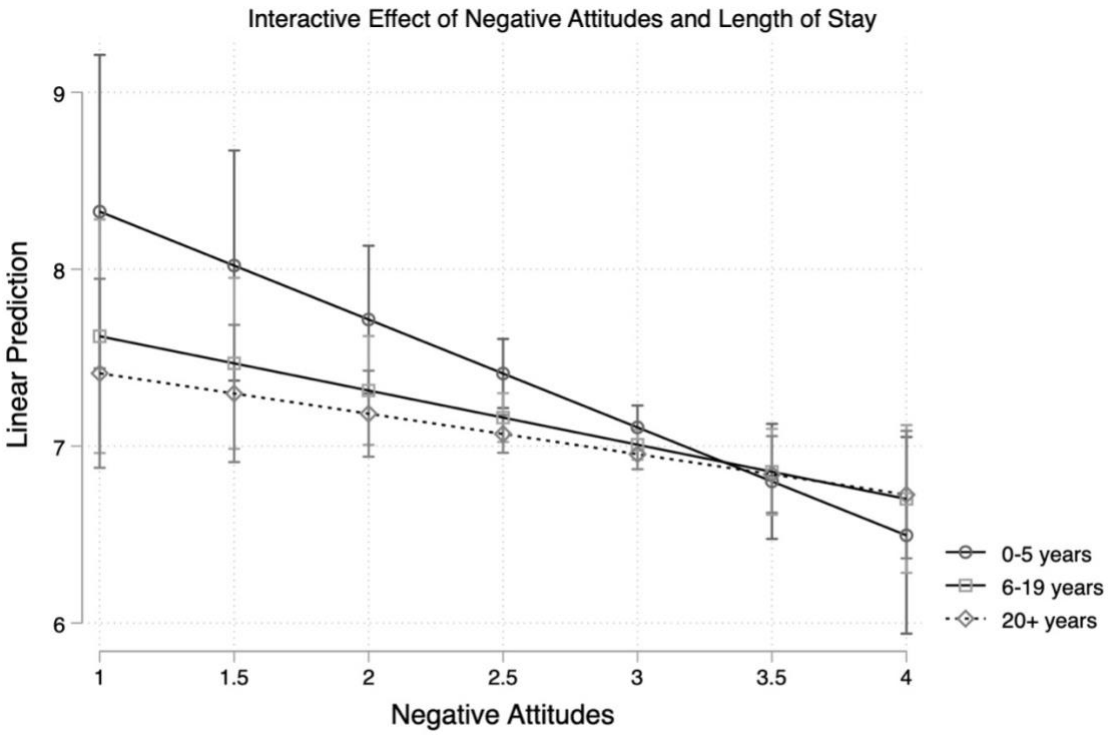
The difference between generations is not significant whether it is measured as the main effect or an interaction (Table 3). The value of life satisfaction is higher for the second generation, with high variation. The variation is in line with the previous research, which shows that the life satisfaction of the second generation is predicted by the origin of parents and discrimination faced by individuals (Safi 2010; Cheung 2013). Being born in a country might not translate into protection against hostility and its consequences for all. This suggests a potential long-lasting negative effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on some immigrant groups - all members of those families, despite some of them being born in the country, might experience an association between hostility towards immigrants and their life satisfaction.

I estimate a model for the first generation and explore the interaction effect of length of stay on the association. The main estimates (Appendix A5) show heterogeneity in the association. The length of stay in the country is associated with immigrants' levels of life satisfaction ($p<0.05$). Those staying in the country the longest assess their wellbeing as worse than the other two groups, which aligns with existing research (Kóczán 2016; Safi 2010) and supports the theoretical argument of unfulfilled expectations (Obućina 2012).

This heterogeneity is further confirmed by the estimates from the model with interaction (Figure 2, Appendix A5). The association between attitudes towards immigrants and life satisfaction is much greater for those who recently arrived and significantly differs ($p<0.05$) compared to the group staying in the destination for 20 or more years. Their life satisfaction is the least sensitive to regional hostility, but they have a low level of LS regardless. Individuals who have been in the destination countries for 0-5 years tend to self-report higher wellbeing in the regions with less negative attitudes and vice versa. Individuals coming to a destination country with certain expectations might be more affected by experienced hostility. Immigrants living in the destination country for a longer time tend to assess their life satisfaction in comparison to the population of a destination country rather than stayers in their home countries, which is the case for recent immigrants

(Bartram 2013). This, combined with familiarity with the environment and a longer time of exposure to it, might result in the assessment of their own life that is less susceptible to the environment as they are acclimatised to it.

Figure 2 - The interacted effect of negative attitudes and the length of stay in the destination country for the first generation.



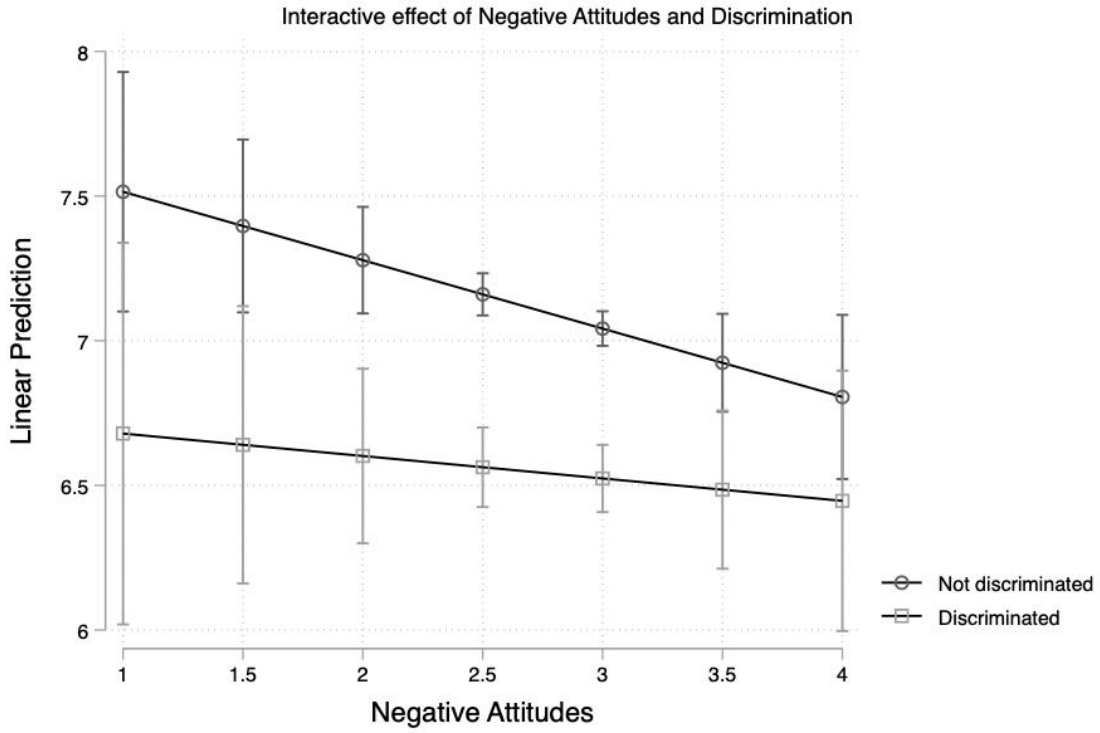
Notes: Estimates from fixed effect OLS regression model with an interaction effect. Life satisfaction is measured on a scale from 0 (completely unsatisfied) to 11 (completely satisfied). Y-axis shows 6-9 for a more detailed view. *N*=14,654.

Finally, I show that self-assessed discrimination is significantly associated with the lower life satisfaction of individuals across all models, as expected (Safi 2010; Vohra and Adair 2000). Figure 3 (the full model in Table 3, Model E) presents estimates of interactive effect and the lack of a statistically significant interaction there is of interest. There is no significant difference in the association between regional hostility and an individual's wellbeing according to their sense of whether they belong to a discriminated group. This is an important observation considering the wide use of self-assessed discrimination as an explanatory factor of wellbeing.

My results suggest both immigrants who do not see themselves as belonging to a discriminated group (or do not report this in a survey) and those who do (or report) are affected by hostility and assess their respective levels of life satisfaction as lower in regions with a higher level of negative attitudes. The lack of interaction between the attitudes and self-assessed discrimination aligns with Hopkins et al. (2016) analysis of spatial patterns of anti-immigrant attitudes and perceived discrimination which shows they do not correlate as well as other empirical research suggesting the perception of hostility varies across different immigrant groups (Maggio 2021a). However, these estimates might suggest a different association with ATI if respondents were directly asked about perceived discrimination instead of belonging to a group discriminated against.

These results, along with the estimates from the model excluding the indicator belonging to a discriminated group (Table 3, Model B), show that belonging to a discriminated group and being exposed to negative attitudes are not interchangeable measures. This might be unaccounted for in research models relying on self-assessed measures of discrimination and lacking an exogenous measure of hostility. Some individuals might not be able to perceive the discrimination or express they experience it, but my results show it still links to their experience. Therefore, there might be whole immigrant groups whose life satisfaction and experience with discrimination are not observed in these studies. For instance, this might explain the insignificant difference in the wellbeing of the first and the second generation of immigrants when associated with anti-immigrant attitudes. My expectation to see a difference in estimates was based on studies employing the variable self-assessed feeling of discrimination. These results support the notion that attitudes as an explanatory variable can be a valuable complementary tool contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of variation in immigrants' life satisfaction.

Figure 3 - Interacted effect of negative attitudes and self-assessed discrimination on the life satisfaction of immigrants.



Notes: Estimates from fixed effect OLS regression model. Life satisfaction is measured on a scale from 0 (completely unsatisfied) to 11 (completely satisfied). Y-axis shows 6-8 for a more detailed view. *N*=27,795.

5.3. Robustness checks

To ensure the robustness of results, I enrich the main model with additional controls that are traditionally applied as explanatory variables of wellbeing but are not linked to the discrimination: marital status (single, married, divorced, widowed), having a child (binary), relative income of the household (country income decile) and individual occupation.[9] The attitudes remain significantly negatively associated with wellbeing ($p<0.05$), which decreases by 0.36 points with each point of attitudes towards immigrants in the regions with more negative attitudes (Appendix A6, Model A).

The main model shows great variation based on the country of origin. In the variation of the full model, I replaced the fixed effect of origin with the country of origin's

[9] The last two variables yield too many missing values to include them in the main model. The portion of missing values is approximately 20% for the relative income and 19% for the occupation classification. The values are not missing at random. T-tests show significant differences between groups of individuals answering these two questions and those who did not.

average life satisfaction (scale) to control the cultural conditionality in assessing one's life satisfaction. This model yields results comparable to the main model.

I estimate two models to check the internal validity of my analysis. Life satisfaction research faces the problem of cardinal assumption (Jenkins 2020), which is problematic in the cross-cultural interpretation of measures of subjective wellbeing. Following the discussion on scales, I examine whether changing the life satisfaction scale yields results that would suggest different interpretations. I estimate an additional OLS model with a rescaled life satisfaction (7-point scale) and an ordinal regression model treating the life satisfaction measure as an ordinal variable (7 categories). I compare the estimates with the main OLS model (Stevenson and Wolfers 2008). In accordance with previous results, estimates of these two models confirm a significant association between regional attitudes and individual wellbeing ($p<0.05$, full results Appendix A6, Models B and C).

Lastly, considering the OLS model assumptions of no heteroscedasticity, I run models using cluster-robust standard errors to exclude the possibility of measuring cluster correlation and/or reporting heteroscedasticity. These models estimate the same results as the main models. The consistent findings in these additional models support my conclusion that the life satisfaction of immigrants and the second generation is associated with regional hostility.

6. Discussion and conclusion

I set out to understand the variation in attitudes towards immigrants on the sub-national level and to ascertain how they are related to the life satisfaction of different groups of immigrants. It is important to understand the relationship between the environment and immigrants' wellbeing, as well as what contributes to said wellbeing and how. My paper highlights the association between regional attitudes towards immigrants and immigrants' life satisfaction and the potential for attitudes to contribute to explaining the variation in life satisfaction of some immigrant groups. Notably, this association is robust to the inclusion of a wide range of potential confounders and measures and is stable if examined using different statistical tools.

This paper's contribution to knowledge is both substantive and methodological, and it suggests possible directions for follow-up. The substantive results are twofold. First, my research design puts the association of interest into a cross-regional comparative perspective and sheds light on different environments experienced by immigrants within a single country. Controlling for regional deprivation and immigrant concentration,

immigrants in regions with anti-immigrant attitudes consistently report lower life satisfaction compared to immigrants in the same country who live in areas with less negative attitudes. Second, using multiple differentiating characteristics of individuals to acknowledge the heterogeneity of immigrants, these results address the unexplained variance in the wellbeing of particular immigrants. My innovative results build on research focused on national levels of attitudes towards immigrants (Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018; Heizmann and Böhnke 2018) and add to our knowledge information regarding this association on the subnational level, which has not been studied yet.

My results show this association is not confounded by individuals' assessment of their group being victims of discrimination (which itself is associated with LS). These findings lead to an important implication for future research using self-assessed discrimination as an explanatory tool. The fact that there is a discrepancy between results using endogenous and exogenous measures of discrimination suggests these measures are not interchangeable but rather complementary and measure different intergroup experiences (Vohra and Adair 2000; Kirmanoğlu and Başlevent 2013; Amit 2010). This finding should be tested employing data including measures directly asking respondents about perceived discrimination and should make us revisit previous findings and further explore whether there are groups of immigrants who do not belong to/identify as discriminated groups (or cannot assess their experience as discriminatory) but are still negatively affected by hostility. An alternative interpretation might be that immigrants report lower wellbeing in a hostile environment, even if this hostility is targeting other immigrants. This implies the existence of intergroup solidarity, and further research should reckon with these potential interpretations.

Considering differences between immigrants and the second generation, the association is similar for both groups, even if the levels of their life satisfaction differ. This result supports previous research showing that more than the difference between the generations, there is a variation in life satisfaction of the second generation immigrants of varying origins (Safi 2010).

I show that immigrants of a longer tenure in the destination, although reporting lower life satisfaction, are less affected by regional negative attitudes. This implies that those staying longer in destinations are more accustomed to the negative environment that they are exposed to or, potentially, that there is a compositional effect of cohorts at play. It would be valuable to examine further how different environments - different compositions of foreign-born populations and different levels of hostility - affect individuals according

to the years lived in the destination country using longitudinal analysis. Such results could have major implications for integration and settlement policies if we better understand the relationship between the length of stay, the sensitivity of immigrants' wellbeing to a hostile environment, and the cause of lower wellbeing of long-stayers.

From the perspective of methodological contribution, my results show that using the measure of attitudes gathered from the non-migrant population partially tackles the endogeneity of previously used self-assessed discrimination as explanatory variables in immigrants' wellbeing research using self-assessed measures of life satisfaction. Using attitudes measure, I additionally explain variation in wellbeing for groups not accounted for yet. This study builds on the research on attitudes towards immigrants and explores their potential as an explanatory variable in research centred on immigrants.

The main limitation of this study is the size of my sample for individual origin countries. It may limit the analysis and the interpretation, for instance, in analysing immigrant subpopulations and the compositional effects in variation. The size of the sample is a reoccurring problem in migration research. In this paper, I mitigate this challenge by combining separate rounds of ESS data to improve the sample size. However, this affects the generalisability of the results to immigrant populations other than those represented in the ESS. Another limitation is the possible residential self-selection of immigrants, which is driven, for instance, by immigrants' income, origin, or regional characteristics. Considering the robustness of the results to the inclusion of different controls, including determinants of the residential self-selection, my model, to a degree, controls for that. However, I cannot entirely exclude the possibility of some effect. While this research design does not allow us to draw causal inferences, my study puts forward new information regarding the variation in immigrant wellbeing.

Nonetheless, this paper broadens the literature on immigrants' wellbeing and its relationship to the destination environment and population (Wiedner 2021; Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016; Hewstone 2015). The use of attitudes towards immigrants as an explanatory variable for their wellbeing tackles previous methodological issues in this area of research relating to the use of self-assessing measures and proxies. Combining the new measure of lived context with immigrants' own characteristics, I am able to describe how the hostility of non-migrants' links to immigrants' wellbeing and contributes to explaining variations in immigrants' wellbeing. Further, the robustness of the results provides a clear indication *that regional attitudes matter for immigrants,* even in the presence of other factors known to impact immigrants' wellbeing. Therefore, this work is an important

contribution to the continued effort to improve the literature and policy relating to immigrants' wellbeing and their integration.

3. Do attitudes towards immigrants matter? The subjective wellbeing of immigrants in England and Wales and their exposure to non-migrants.

1. Abstract[10]

The wellbeing of immigrants is affected by those around them and the context in which they live. Yet we still know relatively little about the impact that attitudes toward immigrants (ATI) have on immigrants' life satisfaction, nor do we know the routes by which it manifests. By matching individual data from UK Understanding Society to area-level data on ATI for England and Wales from the 2018 European Values Study, I examine whether subnational ATI are associated with immigrants' life satisfaction. If so, I aim to determine the geographical level at which it is prominent and identify the channels through which this association operates. By exploiting the different geographical scales at which ATI are aggregated, I show within-country variation in ATI. Controlling for contextual- and individual-level characteristics, I find that immigrants' wellbeing is sensitive to exposure to the negative ATI of non-migrants at the regional level but not at the municipal level. Theoretically identified channels (local social cohesion and ethnic composition) are not drivers of this association, but it is moderated by interethnic friendships. Further, I show that ATI are a measure of environment rather than a function of intergroup contact or exposure and that the entire composition of the ATI in an area is more important than the most negative attitudes. I discuss the implications of these findings.

2. Introduction

Understanding the subjective wellbeing of immigrants is an important contemporary issue. Firstly, life satisfaction[11] is a measure of an individual's experience, which in this case concerns immigrants and their ability to live happily in the destination. Secondly, when we focus on immigrants as a group, their wellbeing and the conditions that improve or diminish it serve as indicators of a country's success in creating effective integration policies and providing support for immigrant populations.

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[10] A newer version of this chapter is published as an article in the European Journal od Population: Šedovič, M. (2023) Do attitudes towards immigrants matter? Subjective wellbeing of immigrants in England and Wales and their exposure to non-migrants. European Journal of Population 39 (1): 38. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10680-023-09686-z.

[11] While I am aware of the differences between the terms *subjective wellbeing* and *life satisfaction*, I am using them interchangeably for the purpose of this research (see Chapter 1).

The effective integration of immigrants is a critical issue in Western Europe, due to the growing shares of settled immigrant populations (M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019). Integration is typically examined in terms of immigrants' success on objective measures, such as educational attainment, earnings, or mastery of the language (Vervoort, Dagevos, and Flap 2012; Bartram 2010). Increasingly, it is argued that integration should (also) be assessed according to subjective criteria such as life satisfaction (M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019; Jenkins 2020). Such measures may better reflect an immigrant's own evaluation of the success of their migration project (Baykara-Krumme and Platt 2018). In addition, life satisfaction does not necessarily correlate with objective criteria. For example, Bartram (2010) finds only a weak association between immigrants' total income and their self-assessed life satisfaction. This raises the question of whether objective (particularly economic) measures are sufficient for assessing the success of migration projects. To identify what contributes to immigrants' own sense of success in the destination, we need to understand the additional factors that influence their life satisfaction.

I analyse the relationship between immigrants' expressed life satisfaction and local non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants (ATI). One critical influence on immigrants' wellbeing is their lived environment. Integration is a two-way process (Klarenbeek 2021), and a welcoming or hostile environment can affect an individual's ability to integrate. Hostile environments are associated with social isolation (Maggio 2021b) and immigrants feeling like outsiders (Berry 1997). Perceived and/or experienced discrimination lead to lower wellbeing and diminished mental health (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020), and their consequences need to be researched further (Esses 2021). Without an environment that promotes (positive) exposure to non-migrants, immigrants cannot acculturate to their new society (Vervoort, Flap, and Dagevos 2010). Therefore, it is crucial to examine immigrants' wellbeing and how non-migrants can affect it.

The research on the impact that the exposure to non-migrants has on immigrants' wellbeing is neglected in current literature. Most research on immigrants' wellbeing which considers non-migrants as a factor, attributes the variation to the immigrants' individual perceptions of discrimination or non-migrants' behaviour. These tend to be associated with immigrants' lower wellbeing (Kirmanoğlu and Başlevent 2013; Safi 2010; Vohra and Adair 2000; Verkuyten 2008; Obućina 2012). However, measures of perceived discrimination capture only negative interactions, and since they are based on subjective perceptions, they might be endogenous to other subjective measures such as wellbeing. Another approach uses proxy measures of contact, which assume that contact occurs when immigrants and

non-migrants are in proximity and affect each other (Sapeha 2015; Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016). These studies employ measures such as ethnic composition or foreign population levels. Proxies offer a greater potential to capture the extent of contact and exposure to non-migrants, but they generally lack information about whether the interaction is positive or negative. The research that considers non-migrants' attitudes tends to take the perspective of methodological nationalism and treats a country's population as homogenous (Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018; Heizmann and Böhnke 2018).

Although ATI are not a measure of contact, I consider local ATI as a measure of exposure to outgroup and as a complementary tool to existing measures, namely proxies and experienced discrimination. This allows me to better explore the meso-level and contextual level. Contemporary research in the field of contact theory highlights a lack of investigation into the meso-effect, specifically the effect of contact within the lived context. Various authors propose that a person living in a context with a higher mean level of positive contact can experience positive outcomes from these intergroup interactions. These outcomes may extend beyond their own contact and remain independent of any knowledge about others having experienced positive intergroup interactions (Hewstone 2015).

Local ATI overcome the limitations of previously used measures in capturing the impact of non-migrants on immigrants' wellbeing in four ways. Firstly, ATI capture both the positive and negative spectrum of attitudes. Secondly, ATI are not endogenous to wellbeing, as an individual immigrant's wellbeing is unlikely to affect ATI in a given area. Thirdly, they potentially capture non-migrants' responses to immigrants in ways that go beyond specific types of behaviour, such as voting. Except for certain isolated groups, immigrants interact with the population of their destination country in various situations on a daily basis. It would be impossible to capture and measure them all. Thus, ATI provide a more general description of the lived environment of immigrants. Lastly, local ATI allow us to observe the within-country differences in non-migrant attitudes.

Immigrants experience attitudes through contact and exposure to non-migrants, namely by having them as friends, neighbours, and colleagues, or simply by residing in the same spaces, neighbourhoods, or regions. All these channels of exposure can therefore be associated with better or worse wellbeing. However, the literature is inconclusive on the direction of associations, with the results differing across studies. This could be explained by the diverse character of contact and varying degrees of exposure that are studied. The character of contact and exposure may be either positive or negative. I capture the

character of contact and exposure using ATI on local and regional levels and test some of these channels.

Using a nationally representative study of the UK with large samples of immigrant groups, I employ regression models to estimate the association between local and regional aggregated ATI and self-reported life satisfaction. Multiple levels of ATI allow me to identify which theoretical channels of exposure influence the association with life satisfaction and, thus, which of these are its potential drivers. Examining multiple levels also reveals subnational differences in the relationships of immigrants with their environment.

My descriptive results reveal previously unaccounted for associations between ATI and subjective wellbeing at the regional level. With the exception of interethnic friendship, these associations are not influenced by the other potential channels I explore, namely social cohesion and ethnic composition. I discuss the implications of my findings.

3. Background

Although certain determinants of life satisfaction like age and employment are the same for immigrants as for non-migrants (Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018; Luttmer 2005), other factors are unique to the particular experiences of immigrants. For example, identifying with the destination country, level of integration, opportunities to integrate, and discrimination (Crul and Schneider 2010; M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019; Vohra and Adair 2000; Safi 2010). Many of these factors are linked to immigrants' social relations and their lived environment in the destination. This includes the networks and (in)groups they belong to (Arpino and de Valk 2018; Sapeha 2015), their contacts (Sapeha 2015), and their exposure to non-migrants in spaces that both groups occupy simultaneously (Kirmanoğlu and Başlevent 2013; Hellgren 2018; Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016; Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol 2022).

The effect of intergroup exposure on individual wellbeing is influenced by two important determinants. First is the character of the exposure. Second is the extent of exposures, which may depend on several aspects such as own-group concentration, interethnic mixing, societal diversity, and one's social contacts.

3.1.Character of exposure

According to intergroup contact theory (Allport 1958; Pettigrew and Tropp 2011) and empirical research on immigrant and non-migrant samples (Laurence, Schmid, and

Hewstone 2018), the character of exposure can be positive, negative, or ambiguous. Therefore, this exposure could affect certain aspects of immigrants' lives positively, negatively, or to varying magnitudes. Thus, distinguishing the character of exposure is essential in identifying the direction of the relationship effect between groups (Allport 1958). The same also holds true for research on immigrants' wellbeing.

Research shows that negative attitudes and behaviours towards immigrants are associated with their mental and physical wellbeing. For example, Kogan, Shen, and Siegert (2018) conducted a comparative study of 18 European countries in which they argue that more racist ATI threaten immigrants' wellbeing. Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval (2020) found that the experience of harassment had an adverse effect on the mental health of immigrants in the UK and increased their anxiety. Perceived discrimination globally serves as an explanatory factor for immigrants' lower life satisfaction (Safi 2010; Vohra and Adair 2000). For example, Schilling and Stillman (2021) show that exposure to far-right mobilisation negatively impacts asylum seekers' integration. Furthermore, Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol (2022) demonstrate its impact on the wellbeing of immigrants in Germany. This is especially true for skilled immigrants (Knabe, Rätzel, and Thomsen 2013).

On the other hand, Kogan, Shen, and Siegert (2018) associate more positive national ATI with higher life satisfaction among immigrants. Similarly, qualitative studies argue that living in more inclusive areas alleviates immigrants' feelings of disintegration and detachment (Hellgren 2018), two factors that are closely linked to life-satisfaction (Amit 2010).

One common feature of research based on the character of contact is the use of subjective measures to indicate perceived discrimination, such as feeling discriminated against or self-assessing oneself as belonging to a discriminated group. Another is the use of non-migrants' specific behaviours, like voting patterns or performed discrimination. There are two main reasons why measures capturing immigrants' perceptions might inadequately describe or introduce bias when assessing information about the lived environment of immigrants. First, there are issues with the measurements themselves, as they capture only negative perceptions and might be endogenous if related to other subjective measures. Second, there are issues with the data collection, as survey questions might be too specific and thus collect only information about particular encounters. Immigrants might not feel comfortable answering these questions. Some may not experience or perceive discrimination themselves but may still be affected by the

experiences of fellow immigrants. For instance, Hopkins et al. (2016) show very little geographic variation in perceived discrimination in the US, despite differences in the behaviour and anti-immigrant attitudes of residents. They suggest that perceived discrimination might not be perceived in the immediate environment while also finding that its triggers are unclear and that it might be decoupled from non-migrants' behaviour.

Measures that capture non-migrants' behaviour may be better than perceptions at partially describing the environment. However, immigrants' perceptions may be influenced by specific non-migrants' behaviours other than voting preferences or support for a political party. Examples of such behaviour could be having a Brexit bumper sticker or asking an individual with an accent where they are from. It is difficult to capture the general behaviour of non-migrants as a sum of all their actions by using narrowly specified measures. What is more, they do not indicate how such behaviours are actually observed or experienced by immigrants. Thus we lack a comprehensive understanding of the association between subjective wellbeing and the character of contact or exposure.

3.2.Extent of exposure

Immigrants can experience exposure to non-migrants in various ways, such as through personal contact, neighbourhood interactions, in the workplace, commuting, or formally in institutions. The workplace and local residential area are the two primary settings where people spend their lives (Laurence, Schmid, and Hewstone 2018). Therefore many of these exposures to others occur there (Laurence 2013). However, the research is inconclusive regarding whether higher or lower immigrant/own-group concentration in local areas positively or negatively impacts immigrants' wellbeing. A research study on 15 western and southern European countries showed a strong negative correlation between life satisfaction and local ethnic diversity for both immigrants and non-migrants (Davies et al. 2011). The results suggest that increased ethnic diversity is connected to ethnic and religious tensions and that UK residents are more sensitive than other countries to any changes in their local environment.

However, Knies, Nandi, and Platt (2016) do not find this pattern. Using UKHLS, they find variation in the association between life satisfaction and own-group ethnic concentration. Some groups (Pakistanis) report lower life satisfaction, while others (Black Africans and second-generation Indians) report higher levels. A recent German study used a novel dataset with measures of ethnoreligious density based on places of worship and ethnic businesses to find associations between higher wellbeing and greater ethnoreligious

density, especially for non-European immigrants (Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol 2022). In contrast, the regional concentration of immigrants is negatively associated with the life satisfaction of immigrants in Canada (Sapeha 2015). The same study shows higher levels of satisfaction among immigrants with more interethnic friendships.

The generally accepted explanation for differences in results is that some groups benefit from own-group concentration in the form of protection (Cobb et al. 2019), whereas others benefit from exposure to the destination country's culture and non-migrants, as it speeds up their integration. Furthermore, this relationship may vary over time. For example, living primarily within the immigrant's own-group might initially provide benefits such as developing skills and building networks, but this could later prove to be an obstacle to improving their economic advancement (Musterd et al. 2008), language proficiency (Vervoort, Dagevos, and Flap 2012), or links with non-migrants (Vervoort, Flap, and Dagevos 2010).

However, the association might also be explained by whether immigrants are exposed to hostile or welcoming environments, as suggested by research on the character of contact. We cannot confirm this assumption because the extent of exposure and its character are studied separately. Firstly, proxies of exposure like neighbourhood diversity measure the extent of exposure but do not capture its character. Secondly, the research on the character of exposure produces results that may not be generalisable to all immigrant populations, but rather to those who self-assess as experiencing discrimination or being members of such marginalised groups. The combination of these two factors produces a knowledge gap.

Therefore, I employ non-migrants' ATI as a measure of exposure and to capture its character. As Reitz (2002) formulates it, ATI provide a set of pre-existing boundaries within which integration takes place in the destination. Average ATI measures the mean level of positive or negative interactions in an area, which predict the social norms of valuing or not valuing diversity (Hewstone 2015). Thus, I assume the measure of ATI encompasses behaviours towards immigrants to some extent. This includes behaviour such as voting, but also more subtle expressions of pro/anti-migrant behaviour that would be harder to capture in other ways. The non-migrants' ATI might also be seen as a proxy for legal regulations and policies, which they informally create by influencing policy makers (Reitz 2002). However, although ATI encompasses other behaviours, it also has the advantage of being an important measure on its own. Immigrants might be affected by ATI, even if they are not acted upon, simply by knowing these attitudes. For instance, EU

immigrants feel more fearful in the UK after the Brexit referendum, despite no evidence of any increases in intergroup violence (Nandi and Luthra 2021). The results of the referendum informed immigrants of these particular attitudes. However, the election results are not the only way for immigrants to observe the ATI of non-migrants, considering they are in daily contact.

As I expect ATI to be related to subjective wellbeing, I investigate the channels which expose immigrants to non-migrants' ATI. I test two widely employed determinants of subjective wellbeing, which characterise immigrants local lived environment - ethnic concentration and social cohesion and their role in the association between life satisfaction and ATI (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016; Davies et al. 2011; Laurence and Bentley 2016). Additionally, I investigate the role of intergroup friendships. While these might not be linked to the local environment, they serve as an indication of an individual's socialisation outside of their own-group and thus of intergroup contact, which might influence the association of non-migrants' ATI. Positive intergroup contact is a known determinant linked with understanding between groups (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). Having such friendships could be a predictor not only of the ability to empathise with one another's circumstances, but also of a decrease in concerns about non-migrants' ATI.

3.3.Aggregation of ATI

While ATI are a well-researched phenomenon from the non-migrants' perspective (Davidov et al. 2019; Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet 2009), they are under-researched from the immigrants' perspective (A. Ramos et al. 2019; Becker 2019). Non-migrants' ATI are even more rarely employed as determinants in research analysing immigrants' life outcomes. Two cross-national studies explore the impact of ATI on immigrants (using the European Social Survey). In the first, Heizmann and Böhnke (2018) use ATI to measure symbolic boundaries between the natives and immigrants. In the second, Kogan, Shen, and Siegert (2018) focus on welcoming environments, which they measure through both aggregated ATI and legal migrant integration regulations and policies (MIPEX).

While these two studies confirm an association between wellbeing and ATI, both are international comparative studies and their unit of analysis is a nation-state, meaning that ATI is aggregated at a broad level. Kogan, Shen, and Siegert (2018) test two determinants of wellbeing: 1) ATI and 2) integration policies. The legal regulations should serve as a better measure at the national level, as they do not vary across a country. Nevertheless, the authors refute the hypothesis that regulations are linked to wellbeing and

find well-being has an association only with ATI, which exhibit notable cross-country variability.

Considering that these research studies do not account for within-country variability, their results point toward the necessity of a more granular approach to analysing the association with ATI, as we do not know whether within-country variation in attitudes is relevant in determining immigrants' life satisfaction. Nor do we understand whether differences in life satisfaction align with the channels through which immigrants might encounter attitudes, as well as the factors that might mediate these associations.

I consider different aspects of non-migrant behaviour towards immigrants. Of these, the most important concern where and how specific behaviours may manifest and be experienced by immigrants. Therefore, I aggregate the ATI at two levels: 1) local (NUTS3 – comparable to Local Authority Districts (LAD)); and 2) regional (NUTS1/Government Office Region (GOR)). When aggregating attitudes, I presume they drive behaviour (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985), specifically behaviour towards immigrants (Malloy, Ozkok, and Rosborough 2021).

I choose to employ *the local level* for two reasons. First, it is reasonable to assume that is where immigrants spend the majority of their everyday life and thus experience most of their daily interactions, whether they be with locals or immigrants. Second, while the governance of immigration operates primarily at the (inter)national level, the governance of integration is progressively shifting toward local levels (Glick-Schiller and Çağlar 2009; Hackett 2015). This recent "local turn" (Zapata-Barrero, Caponio, and Scholten 2017) in governance means that immigrants are increasingly influenced by the local environment and governments, which are primarily composed of and elected by non-migrants. Thus, research on the relationship between immigrants and their lived environment must also focus on this level. The focus on subnational levels also overcomes the issues of methodological nationalism and shows diversity within countries instead of treating them as homogenous units (Glick-Schiller and Çağlar 2009). LAD is a policymaking level in the UK, which means that residing in a particular district can specifically affect one's life.

Two issues emerge when using LAD aggregation. Methodologically, the UKHLS contains only a small sample size of immigrants, which may lead to an increased margin of error and a lack of statistical power. I attempt to adjust for this by excluding units with excessively small samples. As this prevents me from analysing all LAD units, my analysis covers only a part of England and Wales, specifically urban areas. This in turn gives rise to

the second issue, which concerns the intergroup relations in these areas. Research shows residents in urban areas might be disengaged from others, especially strangers (Zeeb and Joffe 2021). This might show up in analyses due to immigrants' and non-migrants' possibly being ignorant of each other.

Conversely, there may be a risk of person-positivity bias, in which individual's negative attitudes towards an abstract outgroup do not necessarily translate into hostility toward members of that group (Iyengar et al. 2013; Sears 1983). Person-positivity bias would mean disassociation between (negative) ATI and (hostile) behaviour and, thus, I would observe no association. Higher population densities and concentrations of immigrants in local urban areas might create the conditions that generate this bias. Therefore, my analysis also employs the GORs. Although *regional aggregated data* is not as good as LADs for measuring the immediate environment of an individual, regions are nevertheless distinct enough to capture the specificities of the environment in which individuals live. For instance, Devon is more comparable to Cornwall, which is in the same GOR, rather than to Essex or Northumberland, which are in other regions.

Existing theoretical and empirical research also supports the use of multiple levels of analysis. There is no agreement on the most appropriate spatial level for measuring interethnic interactions (Petrović, van Ham, and Manley 2018) as exposure to others varies across different locations and at various scales (Manley, Flowerdew, and Steel 2006), depending on the characteristics of particular areas. This implies that individuals may experience different environments when moving among regions. My research design allows me to capture potential inter- and intra-regional diversity while providing a more comprehensive understanding of the environment in which individuals live.

Many studies discuss the effect of neighbourhoods on immigrants (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016; Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol 2022). I decided against engaging neighbourhoods and the neighbourhood effect theory, due to the possibility that using such small units could cause endogeneity in my explanatory variable. Contact theory shows that individual attitudes are affected by interpersonal contact or the lack thereof. The life satisfaction of immigrants living in these small units could affect the ATI of non-migrants at the neighbourhood level, potentially leading to variations in ATI and introducing reverse causality. Choosing higher granularity allows me to assume that the aggregated ATI are not directly influenced by the life satisfaction of immigrants in those areas.

3.4.The study setting

My study is set in the UK, a research setting which, according to Platt and Nandi (2020), presents a considerably complex portrayal of immigrants' experiences. The UK exhibits substantial demographic and socioeconomic diversity within and between immigrant groups, and its long immigration history enables comparing the wellbeing of diverse immigrant groups and cohorts. Moreover, a substantial and growing body of literature is centred in the UK, encompassing research that explores topics similar to the subject of this paper, such as immigrants' health and mental health (Nandi and Luthra 2018), integration and interethnic relations (Berrington 2018; Wright 2011; Burgess and Platt 2018), and life satisfaction (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016). This allows me to situate my findings within the broader context of research on immigrants.

The pool of identified wellbeing determinants is naturally extensive and goes beyond the scope of this work. While I acknowledge them, my aim is not to offer a comprehensive analysis of all those determinants but rather enhance our understanding of the extent to which the environment shapes immigrants' life satisfaction and the channels through which this influence occurs. I focus on the potential of an under-researched existing measure (ATI) and control for determinants, which might influence the association of interest.

At a more granular local level, I test two area-specific determinants as channels of exposure: ethnic composition and social cohesion. I assume that the variation in their impact on wellbeing, as described in the existing research (Sapeha 2015; Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016; Davies et al. 2011), is linked to differences in local and regional ATI. My hypothesis is that immigrants exposed to greater shares of white British citizens are also exposed to more negative ATI, thereby resulting in lower-reported life satisfaction. Cross-sectional studies argue that a diverse local environment (the extent of exposure to others) leads to negative outcomes in the community (Davies et al. 2011). Laurence and Bentley (2016) present a longitudinal analysis suggesting that preferences for or against outgroup neighbours (referring to the quality of the intergroup relations) may be the underlying reason for the varying impact of diversity on social cohesion. I hypothesise there is a potential for the same association: individuals living in areas with higher social cohesion are exposed to more positive ATI and report higher life satisfaction. Since local ATI map areas closest to an individual's home, where I expect them to spend the majority of their time, I expect the relationship between ATI and wellbeing to be stronger there.

At the less granular level, I examine the share of interethnic friendships as a channel of influence. Previous research acknowledges their moderating effect on the association between environment and wellbeing (Laurence, Schmid, and Hewstone 2018; Sapeha 2015). I hypothesise a weaker association between ATI and wellbeing for individuals with interethnic friendships.

4. Data and methods

4.1.Data and sample

I use Understanding Society – the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) wave 9 (University of Essex 2020). This dataset is matched at the area level in order to aggregate measures derived from the European Value Survey 2018 (EVS 2021).[12]

The UKHLS is the nationally representative longitudinal household panel that provides data from all adult members (aged 16 and above) residing in approximately 40,000 households, encompassing around 100,000 individuals. Each adult member of a household is asked core questions in a face-to-face interview and through a self-completion online survey on an annual basis, supplemented by rotating modules. It is not only a representative study but also includes an Ethnic Minority Boost sample (since 2009) and an Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Boost sample (since 2014) to ensure adequate subsample sizes for analysing minority and immigrant groups.

My main analytical sample and all but explanatory variable come from the UKHLS data collected during the period 2017–2019. As I aim to analyse immigrants and the local areas where they live, I apply four criteria to restrict my sample: 1) adults (16+ years old) who were born outside the UK, with at least one parent born outside the UK, and who migrated to the UK at some point in their lives; 2) individuals who answered the question about their life satisfaction; 3) individuals from the NUTS3 units included in the European Value Survey, which provides ATI information; and 4) only those in the NUTS3 units with a sufficient number of observations (at least 30 per unit) to conduct the analysis at the local level (N = 2,096). All other respondents are excluded from the sample. This resulted in streamlining my sample to mostly urban areas. The size of NUTS3 units ranges between 150,000 to 800,000 people. The missingness rates for individual variables range from

[12] Data are available under restricted access from the UK Data Service and Gesis - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences.

0.05% to 3.84%, with the exception of the education variable, which reaches 12.83%[13]. For all variables except education, I use listwise deletion. The education variable is categorical, and I recode missing cases into a separate category to retain the sample size (Appendix B1).

The analytical sample is combined with the European Value Survey, which is an international cross-sectional survey. The EVS aims to provide representative data of the resident population aged 18 years and older, with the targeted national sample ranging between 1000–1500 individuals. The survey uses a probabilistic sampling method to gather representative data via face-to-face interviews, with mixed-mode methods included.

The UKHLS wave 9 data are suitable for my analysis because it is one of the three waves that include the neighbourhood module, which I employ to investigate channels of exposure. Additionally, the timing aligns with the European Value Survey 2018 data, which provides my explanatory variable. The EVS data offer the most recent available source of information on individuals' ATI which also captures residency information at a geographical level smaller than the Government Office Region (Appendix B2).

4.2. Measures

4.21 Dependent variable

I use the self-reported life satisfaction to measure immigrants' subjective wellbeing. This measure is based on a 7-point scale in answer to the question: *Please choose the number which you feel best describes how dissatisfied or satisfied you are with the following aspects of your current situation: Your life overall.* The scale ranges from *completely dissatisfied* (1) to *completely satisfied* (7). This measure captures individuals' cognitive assessment of their life as a whole (Veenhoven 2000) and is recommended for the study of outcomes related to immigration (M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019). I decided against using other measures such as happiness as it is considered as a simpler measure of day-to-day positive emotion in contrast to life satisfaction measure (Veenhoven 2000). Since my focus is on overall satisfaction (Veenhoven 2012), I avoid using an index of life satisfaction dimensions, such as job satisfaction.

[13] Individuals in this category are not systematically different from those with valid educational qualifications information.

4.22 Independent variable

The aggregated ATI at the regional and local levels are derived from the EVS. Local geographical areas NUTS3 mostly correspond to LADs, for instance the London Borough of Croydon, however some combine a number of LADs, for instance, the NUTS3 unit *Haringey and Islington* combines the London Boroughs of Haringey and Islington. NUTS1 regions are the same as GORs, (e.g., East of England). This aggregation yields the ATI values of 28 NUTS3 areas and 10 NUTS1 regions.

The EVS contains five items that measure ATI. One question asks for responses measured on a 5-point scale. In four statement pairs respondents position themselves closer to the one they agree with more (Table 4).

Table 4 - Variables measuring attitudes towards immigrants in the European Value Survey questionnaire.

	Variable	**Scale**	**Scale orientation**	**Included in explanatory indicator**
1	Now we would like to know your opinion about the people from other countries who come to live in Britain – the immigrants. How would you evaluate the impact of these people on the development of Britain?	5-point scale	1 – very bad 5 – very good	In robustness check only
	Matrix of statements	**Scale**	**Orientation of the scale**	
2	Immigrants take jobs away from the British – Immigrants do not take jobs away from the British	10-point scale	1 – completely agree with negative statement 10 – completely agree with positive/neutral statement	Yes
3	Immigrants make crime problems worse – Immigrants do not make crime problems worse			Yes
4	Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system – Immigrants are not a strain on a country's welfare system			Yes
5	It is better if immigrants maintain their distinct customs and traditions – It is better if immigrants do not maintain their distinct customs and traditions			No

I investigated these measures using correlation and factor analyses. I excluded statement 5 due to its ambiguity and lack of correlation with the other variables. The other

three measures are not ambiguous and measure level of agreement with stereotypical negative statements about immigrants. Based on the results (Appendix B3), I combine variables 2, 3, and 4 into a continuous indicator that measures attitudes on a 10-point scale, ranging from 1 (the most negative – agreement with the stereotypical statement) to 10 (the most positive – disagreement with the statement) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.94).

Measure 1, which is scaled differently, is not used in the main indicator. Nevertheless, I use a rescaled 5-point index that includes variables 1 to 4 as a robustness check.

The local ATI scores range between 3.3 and 10 points, while the regional ATI scores range between 4.6 and 6.2 (both on a 10-point scale). Non-migrants in the Greater London region exhibit the most positive regional ATI scores, while the most negative are found in the north of England. However, at the NUTS3 level, variation is high within the GOR areas. The higher variation at the more granular level aligns with my theoretical expectations of a stronger association in those areas.

My main analysis uses averaging as the method of data aggregation (cf. Heizmann and Böhnke 2018; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018). However, I also run separate models using other methods of aggregation to check for the robustness of results and investigate if the potential association is driven by the most negative ATI (see Robustness checks). Specifically, I aggregate ATI using the mode, median, and share of negative attitudes in population (share of respondents indicating the most negative attitudes with 1 and 2 on a 10-point scale, where 10 is the most positive).

4.23. Control variables

In order to isolate the association between ATI and wellbeing from other effects, I employ control variables. Employing individual- and regional-level controls allows to explain the variations in the strength of association between and within immigrant groups. It is clear from both international and UK research that ethnically visible immigrants have lower life satisfaction (Amit 2010; Safi 2010; Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol 2022). Potentially, it is because of different treatment of non-migrants, but it might also reflect lower life satisfaction in their countries of origin. Thus, I expect that the variation in the association that depends on the area of origin is due not only to different exposure levels but also to the character of contact, as non-migrants might have different attitudes towards various immigrant groups. I also control for the origin of immigrants, as self-selection in

immigrant settlement patterns and the composition of immigrant groups can influence the variation in ATI within specific areas, especially if they are the dominant minority.[14]

I focus on factors that could be linked to life satisfaction, and the non-migrant population's perception of individuals (e.g., cultural background/origin) and/or can expose them to non-migrants (e.g., social activities, being employed). Finally, I control for individual and contextual factors such as the area's sociodemographic and economic characteristics (Musterd et al. 2008; Paparusso 2018; Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016), as they might influence individual wellbeing and ATI, despite their limited support for the economic threat theory (I. Hendriks, Lubbers, and Scheepers 2022).

Thus, I include the following individual immigrant characteristics in my analysis: employment status (binary), social interactions (binary), region of origin (5 categories), length of stay in the destination (3 categories), sex (binary), age (continuous) and its quadratic term, and highest level of education attained (seven categories). I also control for regional unemployment rate. Additionally, as channels of exposure, I incorporate neighbourhood cohesion (measured using Buckner's Neighbourhood Cohesion Instrument – short), local area ethnic composition measured as the proportion of White British residents, and having friends from another ethnicity (five categories) (Table 5).

Table 5 - Descriptive statistics of all explanatory and control variables.

		Suitable NUTS3 units	
		N	**%**
Life satisfaction	Least satisfied	55	2.62
	2	111	5.30
	3	170	8.11
	4	295	14.07
	5	432	20.61
	6	781	37.26
	Most Satisfied	252	12.02
Sex	Male	913	43.56
	Female	1183	56.44
Age	mean/SD.	48.31	15.44
Place of birth	Europe, Australia, North America	245	11.69
	India, Pakistan, Bangladesh	873	41.65
	Africa	237	11.31
	South America	93	4.44

[14] I do not simultaneously control for both ethnicity and area of origin, as those measures are collinear.

	Other	648	30.92
Length of stay in the destination	0–5 years	94	4.48
	6–19 years	834	39.79
	20+ years	1 168	55.73
Education	Lower Secondary and Lower	237	11.30
	Upper Secondary	241	11.50
	Higher Education	226	10.78
	University	650	31.01
	Other	473	22.57
	Missing	269	12.83
Job	Unemployed	874	41.7
	Employed	1 222	58.3
Social meetings	No	358	17.08
	Yes	1 738	82.92
Interethnic friendships	No friends	75	3.58
	All same friends	578	31.15
	More than half same	752	35.88
	About half the same	396	18.89
	Less than half same	295	14.07
Social cohesion (Buckner)	Mean/SD.	3.54	0.77
Ethnic composition (Share of British White residents)	Mean/SD.	56.17	20.68
GOR Unemployment rate	Mean/SD.	4.81	0.74
Total		2 096	

Data on the unemployment rate and ethnic composition rate are sourced from ONS (2018).

4.3.Empirical strategy

I estimated two sets of linear regression models. In both of them, life satisfaction (measured on a 7-point scale) was regressed on aggregated attitudes (10-point scale) while controlling for individual and regional characteristics. I first estimated ordered logistic regression models (Appendix B4), treating the response variable as an ordered categorical variable (for the discussion on wellbeing measures see Jenkins 2020). I then compared these results with the results estimated in linear regressions. Since the results were comparable and linear regressions are easier to interpret (especially when using the interaction term), I present the results from the linear regressions. After assessing the limited number of individual observations, the observed NUTS3 regions, and the

discussions on multilevel modelling (e.g., see Bryan and Jenkins 2016), I concluded that the sample size prevents me from using multilevel modelling and thus opted for linear models.

I analysed the data first in models where the main explanatory variable was aggregated at the NUTS3 level, and then in a model where attitudes were aggregated at the GOR level. The models using attitudes aggregated at the NUTS3 level included the GOR as a fixed effect to control for variations in regional characteristics. Given the complex survey design of the UKHLS, I adjusted my estimates to account for stratification, clustering, and non-response weights using the "svyset" Satat command. For wave 9, I used the UKHLS weights, which were specifically designed for cross-sectional research of a single wave. Considering the size of the units and their number (sample size), in the models with the explanatory variable at the NUTS3 level, I cluster standard errors at that level (Moulton 1990; for a discussion see Cameron and Miller 2015).

4.31 Variation in the association

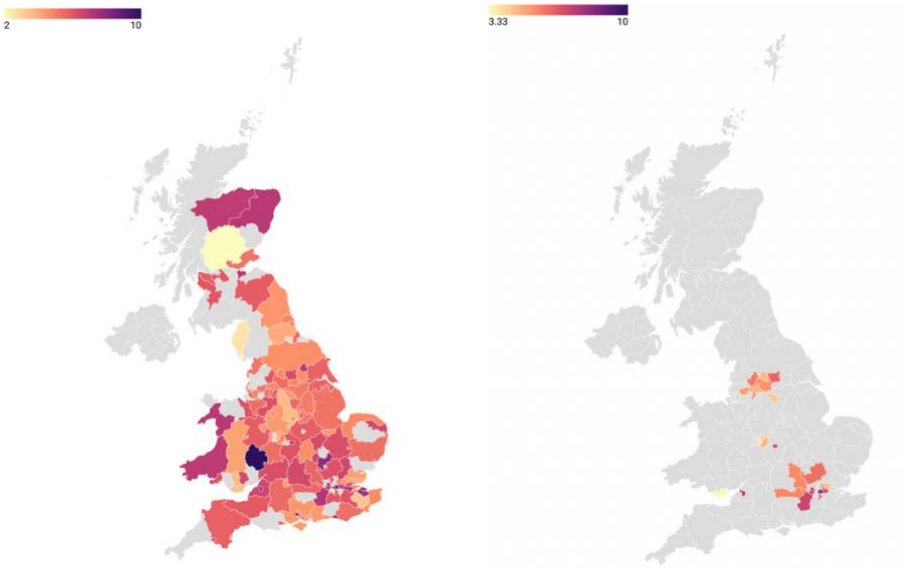
As discussed in the Background section, I test three channels of exposure. As they are linked to respondents' residential areas, I test the interaction terms of *Neighbourhood cohesion* and *Ethnic concentration* with NUTS3 level attitudes. Then, I test the moderating effect of *Interethnic friendship* at a higher geographical level, as this channel is not specific to a geographical area.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive results

The sample primarily consists of highly populated and urbanised areas, namely London, Bristol, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, and Cardiff (Figure 4 - right). Although these areas may not be representative of the entire population of England and Wales, they do represent areas where most immigrants live (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016). Therefore, I generalise my findings to the immigrant population residing in these areas.

Figure 4 - Aggregated ATI at the NUTS3 level. The grey areas on the left map represent missing data from the EVS. The grey areas on the right map additionally indicate regions with fewer than 30 observations per unit.



Note: The left map illustrates the variation in ATI across the country. The right map shows variation in ATI for the examined sample. Darker areas indicate more positive attitudes towards immigrants.

5.2. OLS Estimates

Table 6 presents estimates from models using local attitudes, where higher values indicate more positive attitudes. Model 1 represents the unadjusted association, and Model 2 is the full model. Model 3 controls for the GOR, and Model 4 incorporates all three channels of exposure simultaneously. Across all four models, there is no significant association between local ATI and life satisfaction. These results suggest that local attitudes do not play a role in determining immigrants' wellbeing. They potentially align with theories proposing disengagement between individuals in urban areas (Zeeb and Joffe 2021) and the Person-Positivity bias.

Regarding the potential channels, there is a small but significant positive association between higher wellbeing and the proportion of white British residents in the local area. Their concentration as an outgroup to immigrants is not associated with lower

levels of wellbeing, as I initially expected. Furthermore, I have confirmed a strong positive association between social cohesion and higher reported life satisfaction among immigrants. Additionally, in order to exclude the possibility that the null effect might hide a significant interaction, I estimated models that included interaction terms between local ATI and both of these channels. However, the models with interaction terms did not reveal significant variation (not shown). These results do not confirm my hypothesis that the greater variation in ATI across local areas would lead to a stronger association at the most granular level than at the national level (Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018).

Table 6 - Linear regression model estimates of immigrants' life satisfaction on local ATI.

	Model 1 Unadjusted	Model 2 Full Model	Model 3 Full Model with GOR	Model 4 Channels
Local ATI	0.034	0.012	0.015	0.009
	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.022)	(0.027)
Share of White British residents				0.005
				(0.003)*
Social Cohesion				0.331
				(0.043)***
Half or less friends same *(r.c. More than half friends same)*				-0.070
				(0.070)
No friends				-0.440**
				(0.182)
Individual controls		Yes	Yes	Yes
GOR region			Yes	Yes
R^2	0.00	0.04	0.05	0.08
N	2,096	2,096	2,096	2,096

Notes: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. All analyses are adjusted for sample design and non-response. Controls not shown in the table: sex, age, age squared, education,

employment, region of origin, length of stay in the destination, socialisation, and dummy for GOR. Full models in Appendix B5.

To examine if the association nevertheless varies within England and Wales as hypothesised, I estimated models with regional ATI (Table 7). Model 1 is the unadjusted association, and Model 2 is the full model. Model 3 includes the intergroup friendship measure, and Model 4 includes the interaction term between intergroup friendship and ATI. In contrast to the previous analysis, the association between the regional ATI and immigrants' life satisfaction is both statistically and substantively significant. The association remains robust even when including additional individual and regional variables. The one-point change in the regional ATI is associated with a 0.18 difference in an individual's reported life satisfaction (Models 2 and 3). This is twice the difference in reported wellbeing between an employed and unemployed respondent. Considering that the regional ATI vary between 4.7 and 6.2 points, the difference in reported life satisfaction between two individuals with comparable socioeconomic and demographic characteristics can be as high as 0.272 points, depending on their place of residence. This represents a substantial gap.

Table 7 - Linear regression model estimates of immigrants' life satisfaction on regional ATI.

	Model 1 Unadjusted	Model 2 Full Model	Model 3 Channels	Model 4 Interaction
Regional ATI	0.223** (0.087)	0.181** (0.092)	0.180** (0.092)	0.267** (0.111)
Half or less friends same *(r.c. More than half friends same)*			-0.054 (0.070)	2.060* (1.081)
No friends			-0.580*** (0.184)	-4.374* (2.544)
Half or less				-0.372*

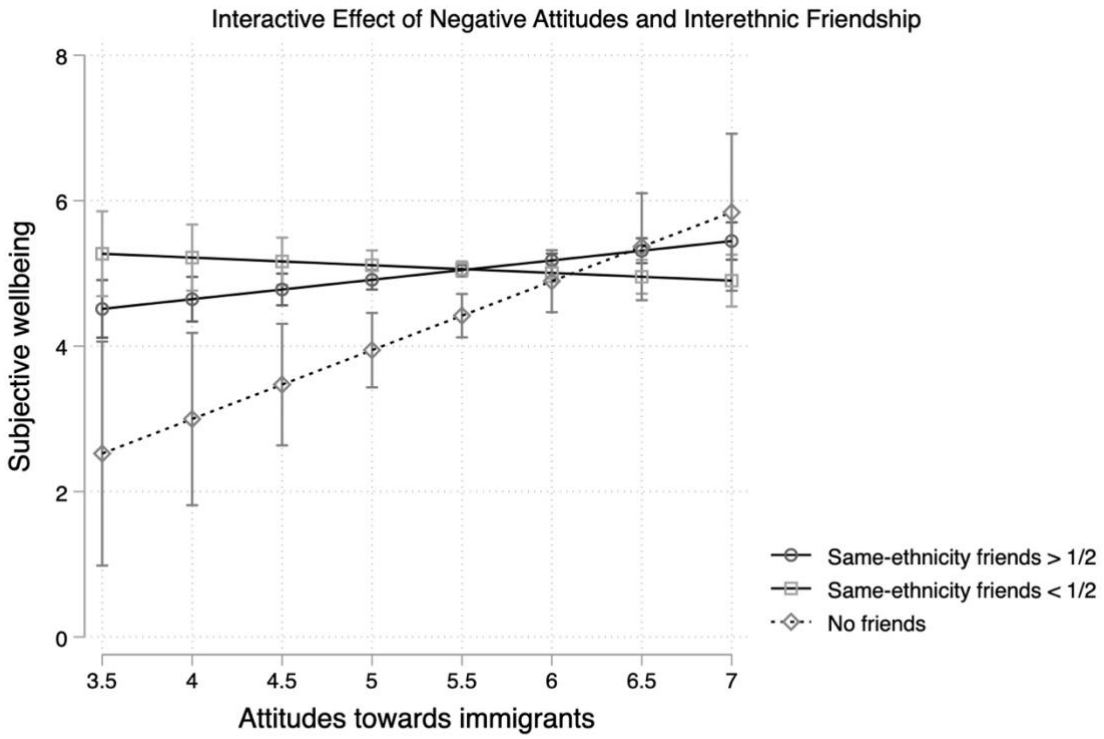
friends same x Regional ATI *(r.c. More than half friends same)*				
				(0.190)
No friends x Regional ATI				0.681
				(0.455)
Individual controls		Yes	Yes	Yes
Regional controls		Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.00	0.04	0.05	0.05
N	2,096	2,096	2,096	2,096

Notes: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. All analyses are adjusted for sample design and non-response. Controls not shown in the table: sex, age, age squared, education, employment, region of origin, length of stay in the destination, socialisation, and regional unemployment. Full models in Appendix B6.

The inclusion of the channels of exposure in the model does not change the estimated association. Estimates in Model 4 indicate variation in the association between ATI and wellbeing based on interethnic friendship, but only for those with half or fewer friends of the same ethnicity. The main estimates shows a strong association between higher reported wellbeing and a greater number of interethnic friendships. The interaction term shows that friendships have a moderating effect on the association between ATI and wellbeing, meaning that in regions with more positive ATI, the number of interethnic friendships is less important for reporting higher life satisfaction. Figure 2 shows there is estimated difference of approximately 1 point in reported life satisfaction between those who have half or less friends of the same ethnicity (5.5) and those who have more than half of their friends of the same ethnicity (4.5). Those with no friends report the lowest levels of wellbeing in the regions with the most negative attitudes (2.5). However, despite statistically significance (although p<0.1) and the trend that can be perceived, the strength of the moderating effect is large only when comparing those with and without friends and

is rather low, when focusing on the difference in the respondents' friends' ethnicity. The uncertainty is also reflected in the wide confidence intervals. This suggests that interethnic friendships may provide protection against ATI in regions with more negative observed attitudes, which is in line with my expectations.

Figure 2. The interacted effect of negative attitudes (GOR level) and respondents' share of interethnic friendships in the destination country.



Note: Attitudes towards immigrants are measured on a scale from 1 (completely negative) to 10 (completely positive). Y-axis shows scale of 3.5-7 for a more detailed view.

Some of the wellbeing determinants in these models (employment, origin) do not exhibit strong or significant values, despite their widely acknowledged link to wellbeing (Paparusso 2018; Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008). Unlike the previous models, I was able to estimate the model for the whole sample, encompassing all NUTS3 regions. My findings indicate that this lack of association is to some extent due to the sample size, as the estimates from the full model show the expected significant associations (not shown).

5.3.Robustness checks

To assess the robustness of results and the association, I estimated three additional sets of models. First, I ran models using different measures of ATI. Table 8 shows the size and significance of the association between regional ATI and subjective wellbeing estimated through an OLS regression model, defined as Model 2 (Table 7), using two indices of ATI and three ATI measures separately (refer to Table 4). Table 9 shows estimates from the same models run in a logistic regression for all measures except the share of the most negative attitudes. In comparing *average* regional ATI that are reported in the results with the *share, mode*, and *median*, I investigate whether the observed association between regional ATI and wellbeing is driven by individuals with the most negative attitudes. As the results show, there is no link between the share of most negative attitudes and subjective wellbeing. However, considering the strong and significant link with the regional median, I conclude that the overall composition of the attitudes present in a region is more important than the share of the most negative attitudes.

Table 6 - Comparison of the association between life satisfaction and various measures of regional attitudes towards immigrants estimated in the OLS models.

	Welfare	Crime	Jobs	Index 3 ATI measures (10-point scale)	Index 4 ATI measures (5-point scale)
Average ATI	0.234*	0.136+	0.179*	0.181*	0.359+
	(0.114)	(0.076)	(0.090)	(0.092)	(0.193)
Share of most negative ATI	−0.008	−0.009	−0.015	−0.010	−0.009
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Mode ATI	0.039	0.049+	0.040+	-	-
	(0.035)	(0.028)	(0.023)		
Median ATI	0.172*	0.078+	0.069+	0.108*	-
	(0.076)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.053)	
R^2	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	
N	2,096	2,096	2,096	2,096	

+ $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Table 7 – Comparison of the association between life satisfaction and various measures of regional attitudes towards immigrants estimated in the logistic regression models.

	Welfare	Crime	Jobs	Index 3 ATI measures (10-point scale)	Index 4 ATI measures (5-point scale)
Average ATI	0.304*	0.178+	0.230*	0.233*	0.472+
	(0.141)	(0.095)	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.241)
Mode ATI	0.050	0.062+	0.051+	-	-
	(0.044)	(0.034)	(0.028)		
Median ATI	0.217*	0.102*	0.087+	0.139*	-
	(0.095)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.066)	
N	2,096	2,096	2,096	2,096	

+ $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Second, I tested my assumption of a linear association between attitudes and wellbeing from the main model, as the association might be limited only to environments with exceptionally positive or negative attitudes. I ran the analyses at the NUTS3 level, dividing the units into three categories based on the degree of negative attitudes. The first model included the first and last quintiles, and the second model included the first and last deciles, representing the most positive and most negative ATI (Appendix B7). These models failed to demonstrate a significant association between ATI and wellbeing. Therefore, I conclude there is no association between local ATI and subjective wellbeing, which is in line with the main results presented in Tables 6, 8, and 9.

Lastly, I ran models that included controls for changes in the ethnic composition of the local area over the last two years, as these changes might impact local ATI and thus the association. These models also failed to demonstrate a link between immigrants' wellbeing and local ATI (refer to Appendices B2 and B7). These results further confirm the absence of an association at the local level.

6. Discussion

This paper analyses the association between non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants and their wellbeing, exploring how this association varies across different aggregated levels of attitudes towards immigrants (ATI), as well as potential channels of exposure. I

expected a positive association between welcoming ATI and wellbeing, with a stronger association at a more granular level of aggregation. I also expected that greater social cohesion, ethnic diversity, and more interethnic friendships would have a moderating effect on the negative association. My research introduces an innovative approach by measuring aggregated ATI at multiple spatial levels, aiming to assess whether aggregated ATI are a suitable measure of environmental hostility or hospitality.

Examining this previously unstudied relationship, I demonstrate a strong association between regional ATI and wellbeing, identifying the region as a crucial area for investigating the lived environment of immigrants. Although the majority of immigrants in my sample live in urban areas, and despite the lower variation in ATI across regions compared to local areas, the subjective wellbeing of immigrants is strongly associated with regional differences. However, local ATI did not exhibit a significant association with life satisfaction, and I found no evidence of a link between investigated channels of exposure and the association. My analyses yield three key findings regarding the link between wellbeing and the environment, as measured through ATI.

Firstly, by examining not only the different levels but also the channels of exposure to ATI, I was able to discern whether ATI are specifically linked to immigrants' personal interactions or if they shape the overall environment in which immigrants live, thereby impacting their life satisfaction beyond their interactions with non-migrants. This is crucial because immigrants might not experience ATI *solely* through contact or exposure. The results at the local level and the absence of moderating effects suggest that ATI are more of a characteristic of the broader environment rather than a function of intergroup contact or exposure. These findings align with theories emphasising the importance of contextual effects and the mean levels of positive/negative intergroup exposure within the environment (Hewstone 2015), which I found on the regional level. The lack of association at the local level is in line with the Person-positivity bias theory (Sears 1983), which posits that individuals do not channel negative prejudices into their interactions. This also underscores the importance of refocusing research in immigrant studies to encompass *both* the extent and character of intergroup contact or exposure (Esses 2021) rather than just on one of these elements.

If any importance can be ascribed to immigrants experiencing ATI through channels other than merely contact or exposure, this explains why regional and not local ATI are linked to their wellbeing, as regions reflects a broader lived environment– place of residence, work environment, area where an individual lives, commutes, etc. Although

these findings do not align with my initial expectation that the association will be stronger at the most granular level, they do confirm that immigrants throughout England and Wales face different levels of hostility from non-migrants, not unlike immigrants residing in different countries (Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018). The results at the sub-national level reveal within-country differences that can be relevant to immigrants' experience.

Secondly, the analysis of the association using different ATI aggregates reveals that the average value is the most appropriate measure, as it captures the overall composition of local and regional attitudes, which seems to be more relevant for immigrants' life satisfaction than the share of the most negative ATI. This finding aligns with the contact theory, which posits that individuals with the most negative ATI might not come into contact with immigrants and therefore not expose them to their prejudice. The average value of regional and local ATI does not imply that immigrants are necessarily encountering those on-average-hostile/welcoming non-migrants. However, those values are more reflective of the individual's experience within their area when compared to national averages.

As I find no evidence of an association with the most negative ATI that is typically linked to perceived discrimination, my findings are also consistent with the hypothesis put forth by Hopkins et al. (2016), which posits that ATI are separate from (perceived) discrimination. Nevertheless, the link between ATI and subjective wellbeing shows that ATI still impact immigrants' lives. Considering that those with the most negative ATI are also usually voters of right-wing political parties (Malloy, Ozkok, and Rosborough 2021), exploring ATI could serve as a complementary approach to investigating perceived discrimination (Safi 2010; Vohra and Adair 2000) and voting preferences (Schilling and Stillman 2021). This could shed light on the cumulative effect of the environment on individuals in their destination country. By employing multiple levels of data aggregation, we can gain insight into the specific levels at which immigrants are exposed to ATI. Moreover, analysing the data at different levels enhances our ability to extrapolate the results to the population to which we can confidently assume we can generalise our results.

Thirdly, the robust association between regional ATI and wellbeing, even after controlling for known predictors of wellbeing, implies a link between the region and wellbeing. This finding is unexpected, as the literature tends to investigate context at the neighbourhood level (Knies, Nandi, and Platt 2016; Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol 2022; Laurence and Bentley 2018), which is more comparable to the local area level employed in this paper, or to the policymaking level (the "local turn") considering potential effects on

local residents. In the case of the UK, the substantive results on the regional level might be linked to diversity in the regions themselves, additionally to reflecting that people move between their local areas but remain within their regions. Regions might be reflecting the culture typical for the population living there or historical experience with immigration that forms the attitudes towards immigrants and, consequently, immigrants' lived environment. Therefore, my research contributes to our understanding of immigrants' wellbeing by explaining some of the reported variations in life satisfaction observed among different immigrant groups, based on their place of residence.

My results provide evidence that the lived environment is associated with immigrants' life satisfaction. However, limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, as this relationship has not yet been studied at the local level, there is a lack of data that would allow establishing the causality and therefore the path of immigrants' exposure to ATI. The second limitation is that while I have controlled for regions of origin and contextual controls, which accounts for immigrants' self-selection into regions based on local characteristic and the pull effect of co-ethnics, I cannot completely rule out the potential impact of self-selection on the study results. Immigrants might affect the ATI of non-migrants, for example, causing a more negative ATI towards a particular immigrant group. Lastly, I have controlled only for the potential habituation of individuals to the conditions of the destination country by considering their tenure length. My data do not allow for a definitive determination of whether or not immigrants gradually become accustomed to negative treatment and if this habituation potentially has a protective effect on their wellbeing.

The findings of my study suggest that future research would benefit from examining attitudes on larger samples and by using longitudinal data. It is possible that the lack of association observed in my analysis was driven by lower statistical power due to the sample size, despite only using areas with a pre-defined minimal sample size. Thus, I cannot completely reject the hypothesis that local ATI are associated with (local area determinants of) immigrants' wellbeing. Longitudinal data would provide valuable tools for conducting such analyses. However, this recommendation is constrained by another limitation related to data availability. First, there is limited data on non-migrant attitudes disaggregated at a small area level in the UK, such as from sources like EVS or the discontinued Citizenship Survey. Second, there is a lack of sufficient datasets that allow for a comprehensive analysis of immigrants. While most immigrants live in urbanised areas, some settle in a much wider variety of other places. By focusing solely on cities in data

collection and research, we fail to investigate these other immigrants and create further gaps in understanding the nuances of their experiences. There is great potential for research on ATI and their impact. This cannot be achieved without obtaining more widely available data on ATI and immigrants across countries, not just on those in urban regions.

Nevertheless, my descriptive and exploratory results provide new insights into the relationship between the environment and immigrants' wellbeing. My study highlights the importance of focusing on variation in the environment within regions and countries. Specifically, I introduce a novel application of the ATI measure as an indicator of the local and regional hostile or welcoming environment, thereby providing a tool for identifying areas where education and integration policies could improve immigrants' wellbeing by addressing non-migrants' ATI. The implications of my findings suggest that immigrants residing in different areas of the UK encounter different environments and therefore experience distinct opportunities for wellbeing. Thus, this paper paves the way for future research on the effect of the environment on immigrants.

4. "I have no problems because I am white": Understanding immigrants' wellbeing and its relationship with the destination population's attitudes towards immigrants.

1. Abstract[15]

How do interactions with non-migrants affect immigrants' wellbeing? Drawing on novel qualitative data for a new immigrant destination (Slovakia), I examine this under-researched question from the immigrants' perspectives. I investigate how their wellbeing is related to contacts with non-migrants and immigrants' interpretations of non-migrants' behaviour and attitudes. Using thematic analysis, I explore immigrants' accounts of the impact of these contacts. First, I demonstrate that different forms of intergroup interaction collectively contribute to immigrants' wellbeing and need to be studied concurrently. Second, I show that immigrants consider non-migrants' attitudes as having an important impac on their experience in Slovakia, and that these non-migrants' attitudes are based on racialised and classed hierarchies. Immigrants are forced into roles depending on their position in the hierarchy (e.g., an expat, a spouse of a Slovak, a migrant worker). Third, immigrants consistently feel treated as a part of a group and in their assigned role. Lastly, they feel unable to leave the migrant identity, which forces them to perform the role of a "good migrant", especially in contact with institutions. My findings speak to existing quantitative research and identify that the mechanism linking migrants' subjective wellbeing with the destination population's attitudes/behaviour is the combined extent and character of all immigrants' social interactions.

2. Introduction

Life satisfaction is an important indicator of integration in the destination country (Crul and Schneider 2010; Houle and Schellenberg 2010; Miller et al. 2020). It is a subjective indicator that provides information about an immigrant individual's own perception of the success of their migration project (Baykara-Krumme and Platt 2018) and it complements objective measures such as income. The salience of immigrants' life satisfaction as a measure of their integration is particularly relevant in new destination countries, where the information about the immigrants' life outcomes is scarcer and where their experience

[15] Under review in international Migration Review.

might differ compared to outcomes in the traditional destination, due to the specificity of context (Coșciug 2018).

Immigrants' life satisfaction is clearly influenced by their relations with the destination population, which changes depending on the extent of their exposure to non-migrants' attitudes (Sapeha 2015; Šedovič 2022). Despite that, few studies have looked at the relationship between exposure to and contact with the destination population and immigrants' life satisfaction (although see Arpino and de Valk 2018; A.K. Ramos et al. 2017; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018). There is currently limited research exploring how immigrants perceive and experience contacts and exposure to non-migrants, how the effects of these experiences combine, and how and why different forms of contact translate specifically into immigrants' wellbeing. Therefore, this study focuses on immigrants' subjective wellbeing and investigates how it is affected by destination populations specifically in new destination countries.

Existing research typically explores the effect of contact or exposure on other migration outcomes such as immigrants' health (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020), tests other determinants of life satisfaction such as discrimination (Safi 2010), but rarely tests multiple measures of intergroup interaction simultaneously (Sapeha 2015). Qualitative and mixed-methods research on immigrants' experience is better equipped to explore the combined effect of different forms of contact on immigrants (cf. Pekerti et al. 2020; Hellgren 2018). However, it often only explores specific populations within migration flows such as students or refugees (Karaman, Schmit, and Can 2022; Khawaja and Hebbani 2019).

This gap is even starker in the countries with lower levels of immigration and new destinations in Europe, as research is more often conducted in traditional destinations in Western Europe and North America (Hellgren 2018; Bynner 2017; Kim 2012; Howe, Heim, and O'Connor 2013; Stevens, Hussein, and Manthorpe 2011). While that can be attributed in part to data availability and the fact that immigration is longstanding in Western Europe, the historical and cultural differences between these countries and newer destinations pose the question as to whether findings are generalisable across the whole of Europe. For instance, many of the Eastern European countries have a short national history as they are newly established (e.g., Czechia, Slovakia, Ukraine) and their previous, socialist, political regimes did not allow immigration or emigration,. This can influence locals' attitudes to migration generally.

In this paper, I aim to study the combined impact of different forms of intergroup contact with and exposure to the destination population on the subjective wellbeing of immigrants, drawing on thematic analysis of 50 in-depth interviews with immigrants. I report immigrants' interpretation of their everyday interactions in their destination society and how they do or do not link these interactions to their wellbeing. This study is set in Slovakia, an emerging destination country. Despite the rise in immigration to Eastern Europe there is a little, especially qualitative, research focused on these countries as receiving rather than sending countries (Yalaz and Zapata-Barrero 2018). Yet, this region has the potential to show another context of immigrants' integration compared to other European countries given the absence of colonisation or guestworker migration, which shape attitudes and interactions in other settings.

My analysis shows that immigrants in Slovakia feel that they are categorised into a hierarchy depending on their ethnicity/race and social class. The hierarchy determines immigrants' standings in society and the level of hostility and privilege they experience. Based on this hierarchy, non-migrants assign immigrants roles, which they expect them to perform if they are to be accepted. Immigrants are aware of this hierarchisation and these roles, and interpret the non-migrants' behaviour towards themselves as being based on the attitudes towards immigrants as a group and not themselves personally. In my discussion, I show four mechanisms of how racial hierarchisation and expected roles negatively affect the subjective wellbeing of all immigrants, including those who are most privileged. I show that different forms of contact with and exposure to the destination population affect immigrants' experience in combination and create a hostile or welcoming environment. I argue that it is difficult to disentangle the effects of particular intergroup interactions and therefore they need to be studied simultaneously.

My study advances scholarship in two ways. First, I investigate the environment in a new destination. My results confirm the thesis that a country that lacks experience with immigration presents a different environment for immigrants' integration whether it comes to e.g., institutional support or the destination populations' attitudes (Coșciug 2018). On the other hand, I show that despite the different historical development of the intergroup relationships between the immigrants and the destination population, they are the product of similar principles as in the old destinations, such as racial hierarchisation (Hellgren 2018). To interpret this finding, I borrow the concepts of colonial complicity and the desire to be in the centre, introduced in the Nordic countries, to explain this similar development of intergroup relationship (2009). Understanding the Slovak context enhances

understanding of immigration in Europe in general. Second, this work contextualises findings from quantitative studies linking immigrants' life satisfaction to their experience with the general population in the destination country. By interrogating immigrants' own interpretation of exposure to and interactions with non-migrants and showing the importance of the intersection of ethnicity/race and class in their experience, we can better understand the mechanisms behind the differing associations between life satisfaction and non-immigrant attitudes.

3. Background

An increasing number of scholars argue that subjective wellbeing provides an important indicator of immigrants' integration, illustrating their subjective evaluation of the success of their migration project (Baykara-Krumme and Platt 2018; M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019; Jenkins 2020). Immigrants' inclusion in the destination country and their perception of such inclusion and acceptance are often linked to their expressed life satisfaction as shown in both quantitative and qualitative research (Houle and Schellenberg 2010; Hellgren 2018; Safi 2010). While the link between discrimination/inclusion and life satisfaction is well-established and the theoretical argument for the importance of measuring integration through life satisfaction is strong, there is a limited body of literature examining *how* immigrants experience their own in/exclusion and *how* they relate it to their wellbeing.

3.1. Immigrants' relationships with the destination population in quantitative and qualitative studies

Existing studies often measure the experience of inclusion or discrimination through proxies or immigrants' perceptions of their standing in the destination society. Safi (2010), in her research on thirteen European countries, shows that perceived discrimination explains migrants' lower life satisfaction, while Houle and Schellenberg (2010) state in their research on immigrants in Canada that perceived acceptance is linked positively to life satisfaction. Similarly, Amit (2010) shows that being identified as an Israeli by non-migrant Israelis predicted migrants' higher life satisfaction. Living among the local population and befriending them is shown to also have a positive effect on immigrants' subjective wellbeing (Sapeha 2015). On the other hand, experiencing discrimination has long-lasting negative effects on the feeling of belonging (Crul and Schneider 2010) and on migrants' mental health (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020). The destination population's

negative attitudes towards immigrants have also been shown to be detrimental to life satisfaction (Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018; Heizmann and Böhnke 2018). Support for anti-immigrant or far-right movements and policies also has a negative effect on immigrants' life satisfaction (Schilling and Stillman 2021; Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol 2022; Nandi and Luthra 2021). However, both qualitative and quantitative research has failed to show a link between national migration and integration policies and migrants' feelings of belonging or life satisfaction (Ersanilli and Saharso 2018; Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018), which suggests the mechanism behind the link is rather in the exposure to the destination population than in the actual impact of policies.

Quantitative studies research different measures of interaction with the destination culture, such as intergroup friendships, school composition, experience/perception of exclusion/discrimination, proxies of contact (e.g., neighbourhood composition), and other measures of exposure to the destination population (e.g., media, election results, anti-immigrant attitudes). This list of measures is not exhaustive and these measures are not always distinctive and might be measuring multiple dimensions of contact and exposure. For example, neighbourhood composition measures the proximity of groups, the probability of intergroup friendships, or the risk of experiencing discrimination. This lack of precision is also an issue for predefined indices of area heterogeneity (Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). This poses the question – what experiences do we actually capture with these measures and how do we interpret them?

Despite this lack of precision, these could all be considered measures of forms of exposure or contact, whether (in)direct, casual, or para-social (in online space), with non-migrants, and thus intergroup interactions in one form or another. But how do immigrants gain the feeling of acceptance or discrimination and which interactions are more relevant for the construction of these feelings and for immigrants' life satisfaction? Existing quantitative studies do not offer comprehensive analysis of the relative importance or combined effect of particular ways of experiencing contact with (or exposure to) the destination population and their attitudes towards immigrants. This is the case despite the fact that some of these studies report on multiple forms of interaction, for example neighbourhood composition and intergroup friendships (Sapeha 2015). Moreover, these studies rarely take into account immigrants' behaviour in terms of contact with the destination population, e.g., seeking or avoiding contact. Some insights on the mechanisms driving the relationship between attitudes and life satisfaction, however, come from qualitative research.

Howe and colleagues (2013), in their mixed-methods research conducted in Scotland, show that when immigrant respondents talk about discrimination and perceived discrimination they cover both general prejudice (e.g., people making fun of a whole ethnic group) and personal experiences, such as, being called names, teased, or feeling like they have to hide a part of themselves. Personal experiences were more strongly related to one's wellbeing and to a negative impact on one's mental health. Conversely, in-depth interviews with former refugees in Australia showed that acculturation and belonging to local communities (such as a church) and a longer stay in the destination are the most important for immigrants' life satisfaction, highlighting the importance of shared interests (Khawaja and Hebbani 2019). More frequent interethnic contact was also shown to promote feelings of belonging in a comparative study of Sweden and Spain; however, Hellgren (2018) points out an existing status hierarchy based on an immigrant's ethnicity. Deeper meaningful connection with the local community as a determinant of positive development of mental health and wellbeing was also shown in an international community in Japan (Miller et al. 2020) and among Hispanic immigrants in the US (A.K. Ramos et al. 2017). Multiple studies show that support from non-migrants in the destination, whether in the form of friendship groups or an employer assistance, sustains immigrants' life satisfaction as it reduces stress from acculturation and balances negative experiences (Pekerti et al. 2020; Stevens, Hussein, and Manthorpe 2011). These qualitative and mixed methods studies shed light on particular forms of contact and mechanisms through which immigrants are affected, and show how varied they are. Examples of positive contact can be assistance with acculturation to the destination culture or help with bureaucratic demands. A racial hierarchisation of immigrants is an example of a mechanism further affecting contact positively or negatively.

3.2. Theoretical frameworks – multiple perspectives

Studies of links between immigrant experiences in a destination and their wellbeing and integration are interpreted from a number of perspectives and using a multitude of frameworks. As noted by Hendriks and Bartram (2019), there is an absence of a comprehensive framework in research on the destination environment's effects on immigrants' life outcomes due to its complexity. In this paper, I explore what types of interaction with the destination country, its population and its culture immigrants accord importance to and the perceived impact on their wellbeing in the destination country, using

the case of Slovakia. I aim to uncover what interactions immigrants consider to be (the most) relevant to their wellbeing and how and why these translate into life satisfaction.

Considering this research aim and the absence of any singular framework within existing literature, I situate my research amongst other empirical studies to assess the similarities and differences between my findings on immigrant integration and those in old immigration destinations. I employ concepts of racialised (socio-economic) marginalisation and hierarchisation (Hellgren 2018; Stevens, Hussein, and Manthorpe 2011; Howe, Heim, and O'Connor 2013) as my data show a perceived patterns of hierarchisation of immigrants by the destination population. This forms the basis of marginalisation of some migrant groups. Further, I use the concept of symbolic boundaries (Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018; Heizmann and Böhnke 2018; Sapeha 2015; Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol 2022; Miller et al. 2020), as the hierarchisation creates the boundaries on which some immigrants gain easier access to and acceptance in Slovakia as a destination. Finally, I interpret the repeated patterns of racialised profiling and hierarchisation seen in the regions with colonial history through the concept of colonial complicity (Vuorela 2009), which proposes that these patterns became universal and thus, other countries tend to subscribe to them to participate in the benefits of existing social order defined by colonisation.

I also employ intergroup contact theory (Kim 2012; Hellgren 2018; Pekerti et al. 2020; Allport 1958) and examine if the distinction between positive and negative interactions (Pettigrew and Hewstone 2017) is applicable to the case of Slovakia as it is for other contexts. I examine the impact of contextual, specifically meso, level of intergroup contact (Hewstone 2015). It is a new way to consider intergroup contact. Hewstone (2015) suggests that the face-to-face interactions of individuals create an environment which impacts individuals beyond these specific interactions – a meso-level of interaction. By using immigrants' own accounts of their experiences and focusing on any intergroup interaction(s) an individual considers important, I circumvent the issue of defining what accounts as contact and let the immigrants define it for themselves. Studying different forms of interactions jointly allows, I suggest, for a more comprehensive interpretation of the impact of a destination as a complex context on individual immigrants.

Finally, to interpret the impact of stigmatisation and immigrants' management of interactions with non-immigrants, I employ Goffman's theories of stigmatisation and symbolic interactionism. Stigmatisation is a construction of social categories which are assigned to others based on their individual characteristics, including immigration status,

and these categories are assigned potential value or prejudice (Wei, Jacobson López, and Wu 2019). Immigrants, upon understanding the culture in the destination, can use these categories and act according to cultural expectations to manage their social interactions with the destination population (Goffman 1956).

3.3.Slovak context

Slovakia is a European Union member and since 2007 also a member of the Schengen zone. It is one of several EU countries in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region with a high emigration rate, anti-immigrant attitudes, and, at the same time, growing immigration.

Migration trends in CEE and South-eastern Europe have changed, primarily as a result of the EU and Schengen zone enlargements. On top of being primarily (and historically) sending countries, their role has shifted, and they are becoming also destination and transit countries (IMISCOE, 2016). However, existing research primarily considers them as sending countries (Moroşanu et al. 2021; Bynner 2017; Black et al. 2010).

The novel situation of experiencing immigration forces these countries to grapple with challenges, including pressure on policy-making (Coșciug 2018), changes in destination populations' attitudes to immigrants linked to an inflow of foreigners, and changes in the country's demographics and labour market (Hwang and Roehn 2022). Research is needed to understand these challenges, the differences between old and new destinations, how immigration is changing these countries, and what it means to immigrants and local populations there. To properly understand and predict the trends in immigration in the EU and globally, we have to research and understand the new and emerging destinations (Winders 2014).

Previously minimal immigration into Slovakia has changed since EU enlargement and with the recently improving economic situation in the country. Nevertheless, despite a 36% growth in immigration in the last 10 years, it remains only at a 3.8% of the total population (*Slovak Republic* 2021). The largest groups of immigrants (outside Czechia and Hungary) come from Ukraine, Romania, UK, and other EU countries, followed by Belarus and Russia (OECD 2021). The share of immigrants is low compared to other OECD and neighbouring countries (OECD 2022). Slovakia is a young country, established in 1993, which has gone through significant changes in the last 30 years, including the change of regime and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. These historical events are still present in

the society and might contribute to more salient boundaries of who does or does not belong. Definitions of nationhood and national identity are still emerging. This may complicate the cultural integration of foreigners. Additionally, the country's approach to belonging is based on the *jus sanguinis* rather than *jus soli* principle, which further impedes easy integration.

Slovakia has a longstanding (labour) emigration history which continues today, although it has plateaued since 2019 (OECD 2022). Emigration still remains at levels considered alarming by the state with approximately 350,000 people in the productive age range emigrating between 2000 and 2015 (Haluš et al. 2017) and the country losing its most-skilled workforce and graduates (Hwang and Roehn 2022; *Country Report Slovakia 2020* 2020). With a population of 5.4 million people the number of emigrants constitute about 9.5% of the labour force, which leads to a labour force gap. Emigration, coupled with the fastest ageing population in the OECD (Dujava and Pécsyová 2020), which further lowers the labour force pool, has led to greater interest in employing third country nationals (TCNs). However, unlike neighbouring countries, Poland and Czechia, Slovakia as a country has no long-term strategies to attract TCNs as migrant workers (Ministerstvo práce 2021; Gallo Krieglerová et al. 2021); there is no collective memory of emigration history that would shape Slovakia's policies to be more pro-migrant (as seen e.g., in Ireland), and Slovakia faces difficulties attracting migrant workers as well as high-skilled foreigners and returning Slovak emigrants (OECD 2022).Yet, Slovaks are reluctant to receive immigrants and hold negative attitudes towards them, as existing studies of non-migrants' attitudes towards immigration show (Gallo Krieglerová et al. 2021; Findor et al. 2021).

Exploring Slovakia and its specific context means developing an understanding of the effects of an anti-migrant government, high emigration, a fragile definition of nationhood, and minimal previous immigration in the destination on immigrants' circumstances. The potential findings can contribute to our understanding of the immigration and integration in countries with similar settings. Such understanding may increase in significance with the predicted growth of immigrants globally, or at times of unprecedent events, such as the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, which might lead to the emergence of other new destinations.

4. Data and methods

I use qualitative data stemming from the *Research of foreigners' integration – barriers, tools and attitudes* project conducted in 2020-2021 by the Center for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture[16] in Slovakia and funded by the European Commission's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (Gallo Krieglerová et al. 2021). This project collected a range of data from immigrants and non-migrants, including the 50 in-depth semi-structured interviews that are analysed in this paper. These interviews were conducted in 2021 with a diverse range of immigrants of both sexes, and of different nationalities, ages, and socio-economic backgrounds, providing a rich, unique, and extensive quantity of qualitative data for analysis. As part of the research team, I contributed to the design of the interview script and I conducted ten of the interviews.

4.1.Interviews and sample

The interview script was informed by global theoretical and empirical research on wellbeing and integration of immigrants. To the best of my knowledge, these are the first qualitative immigrant data that are focused on immigrants' experience, and specifically wellbeing, in Slovakia.

Interviewees were purposively sampled using the snowball method, starting with immigrants recruited by the research team and through social media. This allowed us to reach different migrant communities, including those not in close contact with the non-migrant population. Additionally, thanks to networks among migrants we circumvented approaching them through gatekeepers such as community or religious leaders as this would limit us to those who gather in formal organisations. The criterion for participation was being a documented immigrant currently living in Slovakia. Asylum seekers and undocumented/irregular immigrants were excluded due to their special circumstances influencing their relationships with institutions and their often limited interactions with the destination population. Similarly, individuals who immigrated to the country before Slovakia become an independent country were not sampled as their experience could be influenced by living in the previous regime. However, we did not exclude those who came to Slovakia as asylum seekers if they had subseqeuntly received a visa or (permanent) residency. Immigrants who had naturalised were also included in the sample. The sample aimed to include a wide range of individuals who would represent different types of

[16] Centrum pre výskum etnicity a kultúry: http://cvek.sk/en/home/.

immigrants. The most prominent difference compared to the overall migrant population in Slovakia is that the sample excludes citizens from Czechia and Hungary. They were excluded as both are neighbouring countries and fellow members of the EEA (unlike neighbouring Ukraine) and have a long history of their citizens living in Slovakia (unlike Poland and Austria). Due to these countries' special relations with Slovakia[17] their citizens cannot be considered as regular migrants.

Before agreeing to the interviews, the interviewees were informed about their purpose and the conditions of participation (anonymity, voluntary participation, recording, transcribing and storing of interviews and data). Interviews were conducted in Slovak, English, Ukrainian, Russian, Serbian, and Romanian, as those are the languages most often spoken by immigrants in Slovakia. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the interviewers. Interviews conducted in Ukrainian, Russian, Serbian and Romanian were translated to Slovak or English. Interviews conducted in Russian, Serbian, and Romanian were conducted by language professionals (translators) trained to conduct research interviews by the research team. These interviewers were themselves members of migrant communities. Other interviews were conducted by the research team members, who were Slovak.[18] The interviews lasted between 25 and 135 minutes and averaged 50 minutes. Interviews were conducted at the migrant's place of choice (in a café, in their office/home) or over zoom, if participants did not feel safe to meet in person because of Covid-19 (see Appendix C1 for Considerations and reflexivity).

To protect anonymity, we did not collect information on immigrants' precise age, education, or employment, although interviewees often shared this information throughout the interviews. When quoting respondents in this study, I keep personal information to a minimum to protect their anonymity, while I mention relevant sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., country of origin, ethnicity).

We interviewed 27 women and 23 men. The largest share of the sample (16 people) lived in the capital or Bratislava region. Eight interviewees lived in Košice (the second

[17] Czechia and Slovakia were part of one state until 1993 and Hungary and Slovakia were part of one state until 1920, with the new borders being contested by Hungary until recently. Hungarians also form a significant autochthonous minority in Slovakia and Slovak Hungarians are motivated by the Hungarian government to change their citizenship to Hungarian.

[18] See Appendix C1 for a discussion on impact of interviewers ethnicity and nationality on collected responses.

biggest city) and the Košice region. The rest of the sample were located across the country. The interviewees came from 23 countries, 17 of them from non-EU countries and 5 from EU countries (Table 1). Three respondents came from the UK to live in Slovakia while UK was an EU member state. The sample represents a uniquely diverse selection of immigrants and thus offers a rare opportunity to compare experiences of immigrants coming to the destination from a wide range of environments and for a wide range of reasons.

Table 8 - Description of the interviewees based on their age, sex, country of origin, and region of residence.

Characteristics		**Number of interviews**
Country	Afghanistan	1
	Armenia	1
	Belarus	1
	Brazil	1
	Estonia	1
	India	3
	Iraq	1
	Israel	2
	Italy	2
	Kosovo	1
	Malaysia	1
	Peru	1
	Philippines	1
	Romania	5
	Russia	1
	Slovenia	1
	Spain	2
	Serbia	4
	South Africa	1
	United Kingdom	3
	Ukraine	13
	USA	1
	Viet Nam	2
Region	Bratislava	16
	Košice	8
	Žilina and Trenčín	5
	Trnava	6
	Prešov	5
	Banská Bystrica	7
	Nitra	3
Age categories	Up to 25	7
	26 – 40	12
	41 – 60	20

	61 +	3
	Not known	8
Education	Lower secondary or lower	4
	Upper secondary	12
	Tertiary	15
	Not known	19
Gender	Male	23
	Female	27

Themes explored in the interviews included: perception of the country, Slovaks, and Slovakia's readiness to accept immigrants; feelings of (not) being accepted; past experiences with locals; the individual's identity and opportunities to preserve it; language; following current events and media; relationships – family, locals, other foreigners, own group; wellbeing; COVID-19; experiences with the process of integration, meaning of integration for the respondent and his/her perception of integration expectations in Slovakia; experiences with governmental services and institutions; and meaning of home (see interview script in the Appendix C2).

4.2.Methods

The data provided rich material regarding numerous aspects of immigrants' lives. However, this analysis focuses on the link between immigrants' life satisfaction and their experience with Slovaks, whether it is direct and personal, in passing or through other channels such as (social) media, communities of foreigners, and institutions. To achieve this, I clustered codes to create themes. The codebook was partially based on the script questions, and partially informed by my initial readings of the interviews. My analysis relies on an abductive analytical approach. This requires strong understanding of underlying theories (immigrants' integration, intergroup contact, subjective wellbeing) followed by reading the interviews and going between qualitative data observation and theorisation (Timmermans and Tavory 2012). My thematic analysis then focuses on themes covering interpretation of the relationship between immigrants' wellbeing and contact/exposure to non-migrants.

My research is not exploratory as my assumptions come from existing research; however, it aims to push the boundaries of knowledge attained in current research by testing it in a new context and developing existing ideas. Specifically, I test existing knowledge about intergroup contact and its impact on immigrants' wellbeing, and examine if current research captures the realities of intergroup contact as it plays out in Slovakia and whether what we already know is found in this context.

5. Thematic analysis

Based on my analysis of the interviews, I identify a global theme encompassing respondents' experiences as a *Hierarchy of privilege and discrimination* based on the ethno-racial and socioeconomic status of individuals. This is the recurrent element of all themes concerning immigrants' experience with the non-migrant population. The hierarchy seeps into all aspects of migrants' existence in Slovakia, impacts their wellbeing and shapes how they navigate their everyday life.

In this paper I first outline the hierarchy, and then discuss the immigrants' sources of knowledge and level of understanding of the destination population's beliefs and attitudes and how they shape the pressure to perform as a "model immigrant". Finally, I analyse how the hierarchy, attitudes, and the pressure to perform affect immigrants' wellbeing.

5.1.Hierarchy of discrimination and privilege

Respondents, excluding those few who were in a country for a very short time or were isolated due to the COVID pandemic, recognised that their personal circumstances shape their experiences when in contact with non-migrants. The immigrants highlighted the existence of a hierarchy through which Slovaks assess foreigners[19] and decide how to interact with them. While other respondents discussed this issue too, those from the EU, and those who were middle-class and white or light skinned[20] were more vocal in formulating this hierarchy, a fact which I further discuss below. Immigrants' experiences suggest that Slovaks position themselves and their country within a hierarchy and approach differently those who they consider to be above themselves (generally more privileged), at the same level, and those below (generally more discriminated against).

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[19] In the Slovak language immigrants are most often called *cudzinci*, which best translates as foreigners. Other terms such as immigrants, migrant/foreign workers, refugees, or expats are also used (see discussion in Findor et al, 2021). I use the terms immigrants and foreigners interchangeably in this article, unless otherwise specified, and use other terms according to the content of interviews.

[20] The categorisation of individuals based on their look and racialisation were thematised in interviews by respondents. Respondents equally described the racialisation of foreigners by Slovaks, who assign categories to others. The descriptions of individuals are based on the content of interviews, e.g., the way respondents describe themselves or report how others describe them, and not my own judgment. Many who in other countries would not be racialised are racialised in Slovakia and cannot always "pass" as white or local (including the author of this article).

Those more privileged, according to respondents' descriptions, are white, from "western" Global North countries (ideally EU), speak English, are employed or entrepreneurs, middle-class or above, and have a Slovak partner. Some immigrants use the term 'expats' for these immigrants, despite the lack of expatriate history in the Slovak context. This can also be found in the Slovak discourse regarding foreigners. Slovaks have different attitudes towards those more privileged and also a different set of expectations – or no expectations – when it comes to integration. For example, they are not expected to learn the Slovak language, like Slovak food, contribute to the economy, or to try to befriend Slovaks. In this hierarchy, according to a Spanish respondent, whose comment sums up a number of observations in the data, those more privileged get a "free pass" while other immigrants are considered a problem even if they try their best. Immigrants in this category are aware of the privileges they enjoy and why, and discussed them openly in interviews, including comparing themselves to other immigrants:

> "I was a bad teacher but they hired me anyways. I don't have to work, so I can observe and don't have to function as a full-scale member of community." (respondent from the US).

> "As a British person not in Bratislava I have been very welcome. My experience depends on where I come from." (respondent from the UK).

> "My advantage is that I am English, people want to chat with me to use their English. They wouldn't want to talk to me if I was Spanish or French." (respondent from the UK).

Those who are considered roughly equal to Slovaks are usually from other EU countries and their race plays a role in this perceived evaluation. Their immigration and integration into Slovakia is easy from the legal perspective due to their European citizenship and they can pass as Slovak in everyday life, so they are not regularly exposed to negative reactions to themselves. Many respondents pointed out priviledges that come from their high-earning jobs, which signal to Slovaks that they are not coming to "steal jobs" or "abuse the social system" and push them into the "expat" category in peoples' understanding. Some of these respondents speak about discrimination and xenophobia directed at foreigners, and even differentiate between xenophobia and racism. They point out that they are doing well in the destination because of how they look (skin colour, religion) and suggest that negative experiences of immigrants with the destination population are based on racism and/or colourism.

> "I have no problems because I am white. On another occasion I don't have a problem because I am from the EU." (respondent from Estonia).

> "I am not discriminated. Slovenia is the EU. I even think that for Slovaks when I say I am from Slovenia it is like 'wow' reaction from them." (respondent from Slovenia).

The mentions of skin colour are frequent in the dataset as is its link to immigrants' experiences, which speaks of its importance in the society and, as a consequence, for the integration of non-white foreigners. This integration penalty for non-white immigrants is also observed in other European countries (Sobolewska, Galandini, and Lessard-Phillips 2016).

Lastly, those who are from countries considered as below Slovakia in the hierarchy, or too different from Slovakia, are those who frequently described experiences of perceived discrimination or taking active steps to avoid it. Those with negative personal experiences are immigrants of visibly different ethnicity. A respondent from southeast Asia spoke about being orientalised and being welcomed in a community of Slovaks because they "are exotic." A couple of respondents said they cannot recall a problematic encounter with Slovaks, some even said they have very good relationships with everybody. At the same time, they explain, they avoid certain places (e.g., particular neighbourhoods, bars) or people on the street or public transport:

> "I have never experienced directly any sort of discrimination on the basis of my colour and ethnicity, not even once. … But I take precautions. I'm not outside in the middle of the night in certain places. I don't say that you shouldn't be, okay? But then anything can happen anywhere. So you see, the point is that one needs to exercise restraint and responsibilities." (respondent from India)

When asked to elaborate on the safety measures they exercise, immigrants with such habits did not recognise their behaviour as safety measures and were puzzled by the question. They could not tell how they knew what and who to avoid. When asked about whether this limits them in their everyday life, they described their behaviour as normal. These respondents also had knowledge of discriminatory behaviour towards their foreign friends or colleagues. Their behaviour is comparable with the behaviour of other groups exposed to threats who share practices focused on protecting them from risks (Aksoy and Gambetta 2016).

Muslim and dark-skinned immigrants mentioned the experience of being refused entrance to restaurants and bars on a regular basis. One black respondent says he often feels like he is looking over his shoulder in Slovakia even though he personally did not have a negative experience. A respondent from Afghanistan had problems securing an apartment for his family when he tried to both rent a place and buy a place. This respondent explicitly talks about racism and discrimination based on his origin:

> "They ask you 'Why are you here, why are you still here?', even though I am here for long time, still they are questioning us, why are we not going anywhere else. Now this is a home for me, why should I go anywhere else? They ask those questions even though I have citizenship here." (respondent from Afghanistan)

This particular account shows the different level of expectation and acceptance. The respondents from the priviledged group felt welcomed no matter the level of their integration or attempts at integrating. However, this respondent shows commitment in his learning of the language (which is a condition to receive citizenship), and is still exposed to a hostile environment and reactions to his presence in the country.

This experience with buying a house also shows that while the other two groups further differentiate based on their socioeconomic status, in the case of the last group, the ethno-racial origin is more important in the eyes of the destination population. Another respondent also offered an observation of the relationships between Slovaks and immigrants experiencing more discrimination:

> "I mean, you can see in the street how people look at foreigners. Like you don't see a group of mixed like Arabic and Slovak people. So I know that these people might have like tons of money, but because of the colour of their skin, they are not in that group. There is like no violence, no physical violence, no verbal abuse. No, I haven't seen these. It's more, subtle. You know, you see the groups…" (respondent from Spain).

The interviewees disclosed information about negative experiences in the second half of the interview, often after declaring that they have positive experiences in the country. They discussed the negative experiences as an issue that is not linked to them personally, but to immigrants in general. Besides the hostility and discrimination immigrants experience themselves, almost all of the respondents reported witnessing or knowing of other immigrants having a negative experience with hostility and discrimination. However, a limited number of them acknowledged this as a systematic problem and/or expressed concerns for themselves. The recognition of discrimination

against others and not against oneself means some immigrants do not experience it (which would be expected considering the racial hierarchisation), but it can also be seen as a sign of victimisation avoidance used as a coping technique often observed among those experiencing discrimination.

Immigrants with a higher socioeconomic status reported hostility towards others more often than those with blue collar jobs or lower educational status. The economically less priviledged respondents put the blame for the negative experience on (immigrant) victims and their behaviour: "well, that happens to you if you go to a night club", or apologised for the behaviour of the majority population: "they [colleagues] called me Rumunka [a Romanian female] but I liked it, they didn't mean nothing bad." These accounts demonstrate the inequality in the treatment of immigrants and their different levels of recognition of discrimination and racism. Moreover, they show how an individual's race/ethnicity and social (and economic) status intersect and shape how immigrants are perceived by non-migrants, how they interpret these encounters, and thus how interactions between immigrants and the destination population are shaped by this inequality.

When respondents who do not have personal experience with discrimination talk about their friends' stories, they point out the differences in nationality or ethnicity between themselves and their friends. A white British migrant explains:

> "My colleagues from Africa experienced negative behaviour, not physical attack, but people were glaring at them. I talked about it with Slovak colleagues and I don't think it happened because of racism, people are just curious, they are not used to dark-skinned people. But I also have a Brazilian friend who was physically attacked."

Immigrants observing discrimination against others are often themselves in positions of power in the destination and enjoy privileges that come with their status. These statements pass judgment on both the destination population and other immigrants, and might be affected by the privileged respondents' origin. For example, an English respondent might be reading the situation also from their perspective of a white person from a country with relatively high immigration and a longstanding Black population.

These qualitative data allow us to understand the variability reported by the quantitative research and its roots, and to see the importance of an intersectional perspective, especially the intersection of ethnicity and socio-economic status (Bonnet et al. 2015), to understand how inequality can interact and how the impact on wellbeing,

whether positive or negative, can be multiplied. The racialised hierarchy intersecting with class described by immigrants in Slovakia is comparable with patterns of discrimination uncovered in Western European countries (Hellgren 2018) and suggests that destination populations across Europe share an approach to foreigners rooted in the (post)colonial hierarchy and racism/colourism (Vuorela 2009).

The observations and descriptions of the experiences of others also raise a question as to whether immigrants are able and willing to disclose information about problematic experiences in destinations, if the information is collected in another form. This might be due to individuals' unwillingness to discuss the topic, but also due to what seems to be a disassociation from the experiences of discrimination immigrants had themselves (e.g., apologising for it, downplaying it), an issue I observed in the data repeatedly. These interpretations are shared among immigrants and are one of the sources of information on which immigrants build their understanding of Slovakia and Slovaks (whether these sources are correct or not).

5.2. Understanding and interpretation of Slovaks' attitudes and behaviour

The intergroup contact between Slovaks and immigrants is informed not only by non-migrant attitudes towards outgroups but also vice versa. Immigrants' sources of information for understanding Slovaks are varied. Some come from direct interactions but not all. This is because not all immigrants are in everyday touch with non-migrants in the form of having friends, or colleagues. But all of them had some experience with Slovaks and even those who do not speak the language or struggle with interpreting the behaviour of locals during their casual encounters have an opinion on Slovaks, their (anti-)migrant attitudes, behaviour, or the country in general, which they gained through mediated contact with the destination population. This further confirms that direct contact, whether close or casual, is not necessarily the most important or exclusive way that immigrants interact with and learn about the destination country population, and it confirms the thesis that a meso-level of contact might be an important avenue to explore in intergroup contact (Hewstone 2015). The interviews with immigrants who do not speak the language or did not for a long time, those who came to the country during the pandemic and whose socialisation was limited, and those who are living in their own communities, show other channels of contact and exposure.

Those immigrants who do not speak Slovak (very well) say they do not understand Slovaks, but not only on the linguistic level. A respondent from Latin America explained

an incident in a bank: “I don’t think she discriminated against me, but I am not 100% sure.” Another respondent concluded that she only understood that Slovaks working in services were not rude to her particularly, but just not pleasant in general, when her language skills improved.

However, despite ambiguous interpretations of Slovaks’ behaviour even these respondents had ideas about Slovaks’ attitudes which they gained through their co-ethnics, other migrant communities, limited contact (e.g., through work, or rental agreements), through institutions and services (most importantly health services and the foreign police), and through (social) media.

Immigrants meet with other migrants outside of their own ethnic groups and influence each other, especially in the online space. These are the platforms where the image of a Slovak person as an individual, as a group, and as a state/nation is constructed, moulded, and (re)invented. Individuals can and do promote trust or mistrust in Slovaks in general and in specific groups, inform about institutions and their employees, or in general look out for fellow immigrants. While direct contact with Slovaks can shape immigrants’ opinions positively and negatively, and partially influence their life satisfaction in particular dimensions, immigrants rely on multiple sources of information. As an Israeli migrant explains below, their experience is different to that of other immigrants, but they mention both when asked about their experience:

> “So what I get from other people [foreigners] on Facebook is that Slovakia is a closed country and not really tolerant towards foreigners and foreigners get a lot of rejection… But we had positive experience so far.”

Local media does not appear to play a role in understanding the context of the country for the majority of immigrants. They prefer international media, because of the language barrier or transnational links, even years after migrating. Others do not consider what is in the media as important. Finally, about a third of respondents sees media content as important, even if anti-immigrant rhetoric is dismissed as populistic and thus unlikely to be fulfilled. This was especially true for European immigrants, who experience(d) similar political discourse in their countries. Political discourse equally did not receive a strong recognition in the interviews as migrants’ source of information about Slovakia and Slovaks’ attitudes.

Lastly, the state and its institutions are another source of information. Immigrants, especially from third countries, link the behaviour of individuals with the approach of the

state. Discrimination and racism are also evident on the state level. According to one respondent, the approach of the state is "that if people want to come, they will and they will figure out what they need to". A European respondent speaking Slovak agrees. He explained that he is getting good treatment from the foreign police, because he understands what to do and how it goes. He, however, remembered instances of discrimination and abuse of power directed at Muslim immigrants who did not understand the procedures when in a foreign police office. This treatment seems to be in line with the national immigration and integration policies of a state, which were described by multiple respondents as being "not interested in us, not offering services. It makes sense when their policy is not to encourage immigration". A Ukrainian respondent compared Slovakia unfavourably to Poland: "the state doesn't have a blue card like in Poland or a policy what to do with migrants". Another, speaking about different private migration agencies, says she "would like to feel more protected [as a migrant]. To know who I can approach [if there is a problem]." These experiences with institutions directly affect immigrants' wellbeing as institutional discrimination (or neglect) is source of stress and anxiety. Considering these respondents are labour migrants from outside the EU, this aligns with the findings regarding the hierarchy of immigrants.

This also accords with migration experts' opinions criticising the state publication, *Migration Policy of Slovak Republic until 2025* (Ministerstvo práce 2021). This 15-page document is vague, does not state any criteria regarding the management of migration, nor a specific institution responsible for it (Gallo Krieglerová et al. 2021). The approach of the state is to limit the number of arrivals, and does not advance an understanding of immigration among the local population. It misses a chance to gradually change the environment to a more welcoming one, considering the established need for (labour) migration. And these negative attitudes are then experienced by the most vulnerable already-established immigrants.

All of these sources of information (direct interactions, other immigrants, social networks, media, politics, institutions) cumulatively build up individuals' understanding of the destination and their place in the society, which is dependent on the existing hierarchy of privilege. This then shapes their further experience with Slovaks. Therefore, all these sources of information are mechanisms through which Slovaks' attitudes impact immigrants' wellbeing.

5.3.Performing a role

The hierarchy and expectations put a lot of pressure on immigrants beyond what is commonly recognised as discriminatory treatment. In general, the most important expectations of Slovaks are for immigrants to learn the language, follow rules, be polite and "behave". The expression 'to behave' was an often repeated one and respondents said they see it as condescending as it means not only integrating in life in Slovakia, but assimilating the culture and forgetting one's own. The success in fulfilling the expectations shapes the interactions of an immigrant with non-migrants.

While these are general expectations, immigrants agree that Slovaks have specific expectations when it comes to particular immigrants, depending on their origin. All the different types of immigrants in Slovakia, including the most privileged ones, feel like they have a prescribed way of how to live, and what reasons they should have to move to the country. This pressure shapes individual immigrants' behaviour to perform in a certain way, to be a *model immigrant*. Otherwise, they or their fellow immigrants might experience negative consequences.

One Romanian immigrant did not want to disclose to her co-workers her economic situation, her type of car and apartment, because they were more expensive than the co-workers expected, and she was afraid of their reaction. Hiding a part of an individual's life or identity is described also by Howe, Heim, and O'Connor (2013) as a coping mechanism in the face of adversity. Multiple Ukrainian respondents said Slovaks do not want to talk to them about "big topics", they do not think Ukrainians can be interested in art, politics, or history. One of them explained that it was hurtful to be told that she should not be involved in Slovak politics, in "our things", by a Slovak. Some immigrants, who came to Slovakia with their non-Slovak partners, say it is unusual for Slovaks to see, for example, a British couple being interested in living in Slovakia. They expect western Europeans to come only if they follow their Slovak spouses and are suspicious of unexpected behaviour and constantly question why a foreign couple would choose to live in Slovakia. A Serbian respondent concludes that Slovaks are just not interested in foreigners and are constantly surprised by their ability to keep up with local politics or events. Slovaks also "don't understand somebody could see an opportunity here, like the place, or just come to explore."

The need to perform a certain role, and the fear of stepping out of that one prescribed role fitting the person Slovaks expect an immigrant to be, shows how strongly the contact with non-migrant culture shapes individuals' experience and their wellbeing.

For example, the Romanian immigrant's experience of withholding the information about her economic situation suggests that a better economic situation that should lead to higher wellbeing can in fact be a source of stress.

Despite the hierarchy that they recognise, respondents complain that, when talking about immigrants, the Slovak population, institutions, and politicians do not care about differentiating between immigrants and do not see them as a varied group of people. This trend of "putting everybody in the same bin", as one respondent called it, is problematic as it does not allow immigrants to be perceived as individuals. It further pushes them to perform the prescribed roles instead of showing their individualities and fulfilling their potential. One respondent explained:

> A: "Personally, I want to try to be a good image of a foreigner. I try to make Slovaks say 'look, he´s a foreigner so foreigners are ok, they´re friendly.' So I wouldn´t do something to upset people. Obviously, my humour is different to Slovak humour. So maybe my jokes do not go down as well as they would in Australia or England. But I´m not gonna do something anti-social, like get drunk and shout and scream. I´d like to be a good person and let local people think 'oh, foreigners are ok.' " (respondent from South Africa).
>
> Q: "It seems like a lot of responsibility."
>
> A:" Why not? I think it´s quite nice to be a presentable foreigner so I could make people think foreigners should be accepted, they are nice, friendly people trying to fit in."

This impact of interactions in a complex social network on immigrants' understanding of the culture (in the destination) and through that on their behaviour could be interpreted through the concept of symbolic interactionism. Immigrants, upon understanding the expectation they face, adapt their behaviour in socal interactions to correspond and recreate the culture in the destination to impress others and avoid embarrassment (Goffman 1956).

5.4.Wellbeing

It was rare for respondents to link their experiences with non-migrants, whether bad or good, with their life satisfaction directly. The exception were those individuals who experienced the most serious types of discrimination and racism, for example on the labour or housing market: "Personally, it [discrimination] affects me [negatively], but it also affects other foreigners...". However, many spoke about the effect on their feelings (e.g., "hurtful", "unbelievable", "feel insecure"), when talking about positive and negative experiences, even mentioning the strength of the effect those encounters had on them. The

way respondents link experiences with their internal thoughts and processes are emotional and complex. Whether immigrants mention their wellbeing explicitly or implicitly, is not necessarily important. It is important that their wellbeing is negatively affected. Happiness is the driver of migration and barriers to achieving its growth have merit for the immigrant experience and thus it is necessary to study them (M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019).

When respondents were asked about their wellbeing, the factors they identified as influencing their wellbeing varied and depended on the reasons why the immigrants came to the country and their ability to fulfil these reasons (e.g., employment, family, safety). The majority of the immigrants explained that their satisfaction comes from their confidence in living in the country once they understand it. This further shows the need for acceptance from non-migrants and explains why immigrants follow paths that are expected from them in the destination, even if these might not be the ones they would choose themselves.

Theoretical papers and empirical research suggest that the wellbeing of immigrants is greater during the period immediately following arrival, which is attributed to excitement or improved conditions compared to sending countries (Bartram 2015; Kóczán 2016). With time, the assessment of one's own wellbeing goes down, depending on how happy an immigrant is with their own migration project. My qualitative data, however, speaks to another pattern of wellbeing evolution, whereby higher life satisfaction develops after some time spent in the destination. This is similar to the results of other qualitative studies (Khawaja and Hebbani 2019).

Immigrants who experienced more discrimination or those more isolated from the Slovak population, explain that it took them a long time to feel happy in Slovakia. A direct contact or friendships with locals are only some of the factors listed as important for immigrants' satisfaction. However, most of the factors that immigrants identify as important are linked to a welcoming environment and interactions with locals. To solve administrative issues and learn the language one needs a (relatively) positive experience with state institutions and support in learning the language. To learn about the culture and feel as a part of a community one needs to create relationships with locals. Thus, these activities are dependent on contact, as it guides and enables them. In this instance my findings align with findigs from other contexts such as Australia and the UK, where positive contact in an educational setting and with supportive employers are shown to impove immigrants' life oucomes (Stevens, Hussein, and Manthorpe 2011; Pekerti et al. 2020).

Overall, my data tells a story of a complex interplay of contacts with the destination population defined by a racialised hierarchy, intercultural (and linguistic) understanding, and expectations, which affect immigrants' subjective wellbeing in combination. These accounts of how immigrants navigate life in the destination country help to explain *how* and *why* interactions with the destination population are linked to immigrants' wellbeing.

6. Discussion and conclusion

In this study I set out to understand *how* intergroup interactions between immigrants and non-migrants affect immigrants' subjective wellbeing. Employing qualitative interview data, my thematic analysis shows how immigrants experience and interpret their engagement with the destination population. In this section I discuss four mechanisms behind the effect of these intergroup interactions on immigrants' wellbeing and discuss the specific context of Slovakia as a new destination.

My analysis demonstrates that contacts between immigrants and non-migrants are varied and that there is no clear cut notion of what immigrants count as a contact. I argue that particular types of experiences e.g., relationships with neighbours or interactions with institutions, collectively contribute to the development of immigrants' wellbeing instead of one of them being its singular driver. Nevertheless, current research, nevertheless, typically examines different types of exposure independently using particular theoretical frameworks (e.g., multiple discrepacnies theory, neighbourhood theory) and data (Kim 2012; Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol 2022). My findings corroborate the importance of these particular types of contact; however, the data from immigrants' accounts also suggest that as different contacts are experienced jointly they produce the impact of the whole destination context. This suggests that these different types of exposure also need to be studied simultaneously.

I identify four main mechanisms that link immigrants' subjective wellbeing and contact with the destination population and culture, based on my analysis. All four are rooted in the hierarchy of privilege and discrimination. First, the hierarchy itself is linked with a lower wellbeing as it sorts immigrants into categories, which prescribe them different worth as individuals (Wei, Jacobson López, and Wu 2019). This categorisation hurts those of a 'lower value' as it is clear from my data that immigrants are aware of the hierarchisation.

Second, the hierarchy affects the life satisfaction of all immigrants as it takes away an individual's choices. While being a part of a collective way of doing things may not

necessarily be a negative experience, my data shows immigrants feel forced into roles they would not take up otherwise. Immigrants perform these roles to be able to live and integrate themselves into the society as 'good migrants' (Goffman 1956). Third, immigrants feel that they will be punished if they act outside of the prescribed roles, whether out of choice or necessity. Finally, the hierarchy shapes the contact between state institutions and immigrants, who are dependent on them, as state institutions also do not treat immigrants equally and invest very little in assisting with their integration. These four mechanism point out the importance of employing an intersectional perspective in the study of immigrants' outcomes in the destination, as the intersection of ethnicity/race, socioeconomic status, and origin country contribute to the immigrants' experience in the destination.

My study supports previous findings regarding the importance of class and race in immigrants' integration (Hellgren 2018; Bonnet et al. 2015) and intergroup interactions that lead to or limit that integration (Pekerti et al. 2020; A. Ramos et al. 2019; Houle and Schellenberg 2010). I have demonstrated that most of the interactions between an immigrant and non-migrants are rooted in the hierarchy of privilege and prejudice that non-migrants are seen to create and endorse depending on their preferences over immigrants' origin and characteristics. While the idea of a hierarchy among immigrants based on the non-migrant preferred origin of immigrants is not novel (e.g., Sobolewska, Galandini, and Lessard-Phillips 2016), in my research I show that immigrants are aware of these hierarchies and present how this theoretical concept translates into the everyday life of immigrants and directly and indirectly influences their subjective wellbeing and integration.

Third, my research also serves as a case study of immigrants' experience in a new destination country. I show that their experience is dependent on their origin and affected by class and racial marginalisation, which is comparable to migrants' experiences in other European countries with longer a immigration history such as Spain, Sweden, the UK, or the Netherlands (Sobolewska, Galandini, and Lessard-Phillips 2016; Hellgren 2018; Vuorela 2009). However, immigrants in Slovakia are more susceptible to encountering issues with the state institutions, which are inexperienced due to the small migrant inflow and weak policies regarding immigration and integration. This is a surprising finding as Slovakia's historical development is not comparable with these countries. The current experience of immigrants in Slovakia can be compared with the early diversification in Western Europe in the second half of the 20th century. However, immigrants today are

arriving under different circumstances. It might suggest that a destination can adopt attitudes towards immigrants and conform in their treatment to 'standards' seen in other countries, independent of its particular context.

Slovakia is a good example of a Central/Eastern European country and may reflect trends in neighbouring states. This paper also presents a very broad dataset of immigrant interviewees regarding their origin and thus offers the varied experience of individuals of different backgrounds and with different motivations to migrate (see Appendix C1 for the discussion of the dataset limitations). While surveys can shows us patterns, I demonstrate that these qualitative interviews can help explain the variation in the experience of immigrants as seen in survey data.

My study provides novel information about the integration of immigrants in a new destination country and describes how social interactions between immigrants and non-migrants impact immigrants' life satisfaction. Using qualitative data and immigrants' own accounts of their perceptions and interactions, this work contributes to a comprehensive understanding of immigrants' life outcomes.

5. Conclusion

In this thesis, I set out to examine the role of attitudes towards immigrants in the integration of immigrants in European destination countries. It is now increasingly recognised that understanding immigrants' subjective assessment of their overall life in the destination is critical to evaluating their integration (Bartram 2010) and the success of their migration project (Baykara-Krumme and Platt 2018; Dones and Ciobanu 2022). I built on the body of research focusing on attitudes towards immigrants. This literature has offered extensive insights into how such attitudes vary and the influence they have on the behaviour of non-migrants. My goal was, instead, to focus on the implications for immigrants: I aimed to determine if attitudes towards immigrants play a role in immigrants' experience in the destination and can contribute to our understanding of factors influencing immigrant wellbeing.

My research complements and advances existing studies linking national-level attitudes towards immigrants' life satisfaction (Kogan, Shen, and Siegert 2018). However, a unique contribution of this work is acknowledging the unequal geographical distribution of prejudice towards immigrants found across the Global North (Hopkins et al. 2016) and the within-country variation in anti-immigrant attitudes. I showed that this heterogeneity has a concrete impact on immigrants, which can be concealed if they are aggregated on too large a scale, such as nationally. I demonstrated that there is evidence for a relationship between regional attitudes towards immigrants and immigrants' life outcomes, as hypothesised by scholars researching attitudes (Esses 2021). In this, I connected research on attitudes towards immigrants with empirical studies employing intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew et al. 2007; Allport 1958). Intergroup scholars put forward a notion that the average levels of positive or negative intergroup contact in an area could be a measure of a new, meso-, level of intergroup interactions, which estimates the values behind them, and that they might impact the community in the area beyond singular contacts (Hewstone 2015). I showed that aggregated attitudes towards immigrants offer a sound proxy of how far (sub)populations value diversity created by immigration and that attitudes can explain the impact of intergroup interactions on immigrants. Thus, my study on immigrants' wellbeing contributes not only to the integration literature but also, more generally, to immigration and minority research. It empirically tests multiple theoretical ideas from Intergroup contact theory research and research of attitudes, and it has implications for future research.

My three papers demonstrated the relevance of attitudes towards immigrants for research on immigrants' integration and, specifically, for understanding the impact of destination context on immigrants' wellbeing. While I did not explain the relationship between attitudes towards immigrants and their life satisfaction completely, I provided a stepping stone for future research. My work also provides policy-relevant information, contributes to understanding of the new immigrant destination context, and advocates for improving data collection with a focus on immigrants.

My results presented In Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrate the importance of considering the regions within countries as at least as varied as countries are when it comes to the association between attitudes towards immigrants and their wellbeing. The homogenous legal system in a national state is insufficient to provide an equal environment for immigrants across the country. Even if accounting for regional macroeconomic differences, destination populations across countries hold varied political and social attitudes that differ by area. They impact the immigrant experience to a degree that is comparable with the most well-known predictors of wellbeing, such as employment and education. These regional disparities need to be considered in future research if we want to report factors influencing immigrants' life outcomes and integration reliably. This expands beyond just life satisfaction, but also to other markers of immigrants' lives, such as health.

However, I also uncovered heterogeneity in the association between attitudes towards immigrants and immigrants' wellbeing. As shown in Chapters 3 and 4, it depends on the individual immigrants' personal circumstances, such as origin, skin colour, gender, and socioeconomic status, which interact with the area of their settlement and the social environment they experience there. In Chapter 4 I further showed that immigrants are aware of the impact of their identity and circumstances on how non-migrants perceive them and what attitudes they have towards various migrant groups when some are perceived as superior and others as lesser. This knowledge affects immigrants' wellbeing but also shapes interactions with the local population and experience in the destination in various ways, which further impact their life satisfaction. My qualitative findings underlined this overall conclusion by revealing that immigrants expect attitudes to translate into non-migrants' behaviour. I show that therefore some of the immigrants avoid contact and interaction or adapt their behaviour to avoid negative contact.

Aggregating attitudes towards immigrants creates a measure of the social environment in communities. The aggregated measure shows that the concentration of pre- or anti-immigrant attitudes in a particular area has a tangible impact on immigrant

populations living in those areas. Attitudes measure a different quality of the relationship between immigrants and non-migrants than previously used measures (e.g., perceived discrimination or election results). The combined results of my two quantitative empirical chapters successfully demonstrate how immigration attitudes measures can aid research centred on immigrants. This allows me to conclude that attitudes towards immigrants are a novel and valuable measure of aspects of destination country contexts that have not been previously studied, and they can be employed on multiple subnational geographical levels. The value of attitudes is based on the existing knowledge of the factors shaping them. For example, which are the demographic groups in the destination population more prone to hold negative attitudes, the immigrants who are more often negatively perceived, as well as the contextual events that influence these attitudes such as times of economic crises or increased flows of immigrants (Becker 2019; Billiet, Meuleman, and De Witte 2014; Jeannet and Dražanová 2019). This is informative for understanding the mechanisms behind the relationship between attitudes towards immigrants and their wellbeing and for the potential policy implications of my findings.

Policy Implications

My international analysis of regional differences supports the notion of shifting the research from the national level to more granular levels. Policymakers would benefit from focusing on life satisfaction and paying attention to regional variation. Highlighting international differences, especially those that could inform policies, can be counter-productive for bringing change and setting up national policies. Such results overlook subnational differences and do not inform policymakers about the potential benefits of developing varied policies within a country. This creates barriers to establishing functional multilevel governance and functional local turn in policymaking promoted in migrant integration policies (in Europe) (Fossum et al. 2023). For instance, the UK regional analysis I presented in this thesis could serve to identify regions in which addressing non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants could more substantially improve immigrants' reported wellbeing compared to other regions due to the strengths of the association between the two. Policymakers, however, are not the only audience that could benefit from more in-depth reporting on the subnational disparities in immigrants' wellbeing. The audience also includes, for example, charities, NGOs, and community and religious organisations working with immigrants.

Armed with information about the consequences of attitudes towards immigrants and for immigrant life satisfaction/integration, policymakers or other entities, such as

communities or non-governmental organisations, could consider more targeted responses to improve the outcomes for vulnerable groups. Knowing which migrant groups in which regions tend to be more negatively impacted could, for instance, funnel the limited help NGOs can offer regarding general assistance with integration or more specific services, such as mental health care, to those more sensitive and moderate the negative impact. More generally, the identification of sources of negative attitudes in society (Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet 2009) and migrant subpopulations whose wellbeing is the most affected can be a road map for concentrated policies changing the attitudes, e.g., through education or information campaigns (Dražanová 2022), or by identifying potential moderators of the negative impact for those specific immigrants. Alternatively, specific integration policies focused on acculturation and increased intergroup understanding could be established in regions with higher shares of immigrant groups whose life satisfaction is more reduced by negative attitudes.

However, regional heterogeneity is not the only factor that needs to be considered in policy responses. The ethno-racial and socioeconomic hierarchy, which, as my analysis of Slovakia showed, predicts benefits and barriers faced by particular immigrants, indicates that there can be further patterned variation in the experience of immigration and integration policies. These findings are important for national policymakers in Slovakia but can be extrapolated to general policy responses in the larger region. For instance, from the administrative perspective in Slovakia, beyond the impact of EU citizenship on integration, there are limited considerations for the disparities in immigrants' needs when integrating into the country (Rizman and Sacherová 2018) and immigrants' wellbeing and intergroup interactions influencing it are not amongst them. Even the recognition of the special legal needs of third-country nationals only dates to 2019. As I discussed in Chapter 4, Slovakia has the least developed integration policies not only in the OECD but also in the region (the CEE region, but also in the countries of the Visegrad Four Group). They do not reflect the variety of immigration paths, experiences, and needs of individuals settling in Slovakia, and this actively undermines the wellbeing of immigrants and needs to be improved.

The larger regions are more responsive to the incoming flows of immigrants and national needs regarding immigration in their legislation (e.g., green cards in Czechia and Poland). However, the relatively short period since these countries started receiving immigrants is comparable with Slovakia and thus they can still be considered as new destinations. The integration policies in the region are not on the level seen in Western Europe, where integration is more advanced despite its shortcomings (Hellgren and

Zapata-Barrero 2022). The non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants in the CEE show similar trends to those in Slovakia (Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2012). Thus, the relationships between the non-migrant and immigrant populations in CEE potentially copy trends such as the socioeconomic and racial hierarchisation and the negative impact of intergroup interactions on wellbeing, which I demonstrated in my work and have been shown in other newer destinations, such as Nordic countries. Thus, the findings from Slovakia can be helpful in developing integration policies more generally.

Future research

A critical avenue of future research is one focused on understanding the mechanisms behind the relationship between attitudes and immigrants' wellbeing. My analysis of the UK context examined the effect of neighbourhood social cohesion and the share of the non-migrant population as a potential mechanism. While my results are robust, there are other mechanisms, such as media coverage and consumption, voting patterns, language proficiency, or own-group concentration, that can potentially be tested to better understand the heterogeneity in the association, especially if using datasets with larger migrant group subsamples. Findings from Slovakia showed the emergence of patterns in immigrant-non-migrant relations comparable to the old destination regions. They emerge despite the different context in the new destination and different treatment of immigrants by the state, local population, and environment in which there is a relatively limited number of foreigners and own-groups compared to traditional destinations, e.g., in Western Europe. These patterns correspond to those existing during the early diversification of society in old destinations and copy racial prejudice and power dynamics seen in post-colonial countries as well as elsewhere in Europe (2009). Research into mechanisms behind these patterns could uncover why different contexts lead to the same patterns in the impact of intergroup interaction on immigrants' life outcomes.

New avenues of research are beginning to examine the prejudice and attitudes towards others, not only between migrants and non-migrants but also among minorities and between different generations and cohorts of immigrants (Šedovič and Dražanová 2023). As settled populations of immigrants face – and react against – hostile environments, their wellbeing becomes an important way of evaluating how even those who appear more integrated on some objective measures may nevertheless feel excluded from the national life of their country of residence. The ability of immigrants to acquire citizenship, the growth of mixed families, and the number of descendants of immigrants living in the destinations where their parents and grandparents settled all create multi-

ethnic societies. The growing diversity also means more complex interactions between ingroups and outgroups, as the delineating borders defining who belongs to the dominant culture and who does not (will) become blurred (Just and Anderson 2015). As recent studies discuss, diversity can increase tensions in society, surge in far-right movements, and contest ideas of tolerance and openness towards immigrants (Hellgren and Zapata-Barrero 2022). We can already see some of these tendencies in European societies today. Research on immigrants' experience and wellbeing in the destination needs to take into account and build on the demographic changes in the composition of the destination societies and their potential effects. The interactions with and exposure to other immigrants, second-generation migrants, and people of mixed background and their effect on immigrants' wellbeing can become as important to study as are currently examined relationships with non-migrants and immigrants' own-group, to fully understand immigrants' wellbeing.

My application of the regional attitudes towards immigrants as a measure of the interaction between immigrants and non-migrants partially confirms Hewstone's notion (2015) about intergroup contact potentially affecting intergroup interactions on the meso-level. To fully confirm this, a more comprehensive analysis of multiple levels of intergroup interactions should follow and be tested in other contexts. I showed attitudes towards immigrants could be operationalised as measures of that meso-level. As in the case of attitudes as a measure of environment, if they are used as a proxy of intergroup contact, they will complement existing measures, such as area-based measures of migrant/ethnic composition, as used, for example, by Knies, Nandi, and Platt (2016); Wiedner, Schaeffer, and Carol (2022). They could thus enrich potential future research with information about the character of the contact – in particular, whether it is positive or negative and can be employed in future research examining the effect of the destination population on immigrants' life outcomes.

The combined use of complementary quantitative and qualitative methods in studies of minorities and immigrants has not been fully utilised, despite the benefits mixing research methods and data can bring, often because of restrictions on data or methods (Carling and Erdal 2012). In Chapter 4, I showed how studies on new and understudied topics or in the new destination countries can benefit from qualitative data. Especially when research cannot rely on assumptions from existing studies (e.g., due to them being conducted in another context) or exploratory and descriptive research, it can benefit from

both the breadth and depth of information regarding immigrants that mixed-methods or combined qualitative and quantitative methods can provide.

Implications for the data collection

The need for improvement for data collection on immigrant populations in Europe has been voiced before (Hewstone 2015; Esses 2021; M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019). The event of immigration is life-changing, and its impact on the immigrant population needs to be studied separately from research on the general population. To provide data for sound research on immigrants, we need sample sizes allowing for research of heterogeneities, longitudinal data, and information that would allow us to study all groups of immigrants settling in the destinations, not only those following the most traditional settlement path. For instance, as I discussed in Chapter 3, the immigrant sample sizes sufficient for analysis on the local level from the Understanding Society survey only covered the most urbanised local areas in the UK. This means immigrants living in rural regions or less migrant-populated areas are not part of my analysis or studied regularly, despite the Understanding Society data providing the most immigrant over-sampled dataset for research of migrant minorities in the UK if not Europe. This means we cannot ascertain how immigrants in rural areas are potentially distinct from urban migrant population and whether we can extrapolate findings on them. I appreciate the financial and practical constraints linked to such data collection. However it should not be the reason to give up on improvements in data collections, for example, in the form of establishing new panel data collections specifically focused on immigrants or examining the potential of novel data sources such social media or mobile phone data, which might be more cost-effective.

Going forward in the research of immigrants' wellbeing, we need to utilise longitudinal data sources. My first two empirical chapters indicated that the environment of the destination is associated with immigrants' wellbeing and also that time spent in the destination impacts this association. It requires two types of data to disentangle whether the length of time spent in the destination is really what impacts the effect of attitudes or if it is more of a cohort or period effect. First, we need data that can track changes in individual immigrants' wellbeing over time. Second, such a study would also need to account for temporal change in the destination environment and population, which is difficult to control for with cross-sectional data or data describing a singular data point. While longitudinal data on immigrants' wellbeing were available for the purpose of my analysis, this second component was missing. Longitudinal and multilevel studies, including moderation/mediation analyses, are especially recommended for conducting research on

intergroup relations (Pettigrew and Hewstone 2017), which would include research on the effect of non-migrants' attitudes on immigrant wellbeing.

Longitudinal information on migrating individuals and studies comparing immigrants' experiences, non-migrants' attitudes, and quality of life both before and after the event of migration is another challenge for analysis. While panel data monitoring individuals pre- and post-migration would be complicated to collect due to the traditionally national-based data collection (M. Hendriks and Bartram 2019), panel studies of immigrant populations have the potential to become more popular to conduct and therefore more available in the future.

Aside from data collection, question design could also be enhanced. Survey questionnaires collecting information on intergroup contact and perceived/experienced discrimination would benefit from improvements in order to improve our understanding of immigrants' experiences of intergroup contacts and interactions. The heterogeneous association between immigrants' wellbeing and attitudes towards immigrants compared to the association with perceived discrimination show the importance of measuring perceived and experienced discrimination more precisely. The lower reported life satisfaction in regions with higher anti-immigrant attitudes, even for those who do not perceive discrimination, demonstrates that the negative impact of discrimination could impact individuals despite their not having direct experience of prejudice. More precise questions regarding the experienced and perceived discrimination, for example, focusing on who are the perpetrators and questions regarding witnessing discrimination of others, could bring new information about the mechanisms behind the relationship of the immigrants' life outcomes and interactions with the destination population.

The new or enhanced data sources could address the key future issues for research of immigrants' wellbeing I discussed in this chapter, such as understanding the mechanisms behind the association of non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants and their wellbeing, longitudinal trends in this association and research into intergroup relationships in an increasingly diverse society. The combined results from my international analysis, multilevel national analysis of the UK, and qualitative analysis built a case which shows the importance of non-migrants' attitudes towards immigrants for the latter's wellbeing and their own understanding of this issue. Anti-immigrant attitudes are associated with immigrants reporting lower satisfaction with their lives, which creates barriers for them to be successful in their integration and post-migration life in general. Understanding this issue is essential in achieving greater benefits of immigration for immigrants and is key for

policymakers as it would help us to understand how they can improve immigrants' lives and integration.

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Appendices

Appendix A

1. Analytical sample

The ESS dataset includes, in the five examined rounds, in total 26 countries from the EU and EEA region and seven other countries. Considering the national specifics of migration and integration policies and the lack of control of these factors in my analysis, I decided to include only countries within the EU and/or EEA. Thus, I excluded Albania, Israel, Kosovo, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine. From the other 27 countries, I have excluded Croatia, Greece, Iceland and Slovakia, as they have only participated in one or two (Iceland, Slovakia) rounds. Lastly, I have excluded Cyprus because it is not possible to differentiate between regions within the country.

Table A1a - Excluded countries

		ESS Round 5	6	7	8	9
Excluded non-European countries	Ukraine	x	x			
	Russia	x	x		x	
	Israel	x	x	x	x	
	Albania		x			
	Kosovo		x			
	Serbia					x
Excluded European countries	Croatia	x				
	Cyprus	x	x			x
	Greece	x				
	Iceland		x		x	
	Slovakia	x	x			

Additionally, individuals who could not be defined as members of a native sample or members of a non-native sample are deleted listwise, as well as individuals with missing information about being born in the country of residence and with missing information about their parents being born in their country of residence. The complete list of excluded

cases (N) per round is in the Table A1b In total it includes around 10% of original cases in the dataset.

Table A1b - Excluded individuals

	ESS round 5	6	7	8	9	Total
Non-native/Non-migrant	374	346	309	338	285	1652
Total deleted cases because of missing origin	252	328	274	233	212	1299
Of which: No country of birth	47	23	11	14	23	118
Of which: No country of birth - mother	93	106	86	87	78	450
Of which: No country of birth - father	217	286	242	201	182	1128
Total number of excluded cases	626	674	583	571	497	2951
Analytical sample before cleaning	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649

Since, for the analysis, I use a sample pooling multiple rounds over time, it is important to ensure comparability in the key response measures of immigrant-origin sample in each year and the ATI measures from the native sample. Descriptive analysis (see Appendix A3) provides no evidence of significant differences in these measures. The t-test analyses of the means of ATI measures between years, and pooled samples using different combinations of ESS rounds, do not show significant differences in means. The ATI measures are relatively stable in time, especially if measured as an index. Additionally, possible differences in samples across years or in ATI are controlled for in the model by control variables and year fixed effects (cf. Safi, 2010; André and Dronkers, 2017).

2. *Regional variables – Key independent variable*

Table A2a - Values of ATI summed index for years 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018.

Year	Mean summed index of ATI
2010	2.73

2012	2.79
2014	2.77
2016	2.79
2018	2.82
Pooled sample	2.78

Notes: ATI is measured on the scale 1 (welcoming attitudes) to 4 (negative attitudes). The 3 variables originally measured on the 10-point scale are rescaled to 4 point scale and aggregated.

When rescaling the variables Cultural threat, Economic threat, and General threat for constructing the single measure of ATI I trialled different approaches, e.g. recoding the variables from 11-point scale to 4-point scale, but considering aggregating the measures, I opted for the continuous scale from 1-4 that allowed capturing more variation. The aggregation from the not recoded or not rescaled measures was possible, but creating a single summed index would take more steps (first aggregation, then rescaling or recoding, and finally summing up with the already aggregated index of the other three measures) and thus a larger potential for error. When checking this solution on a selection of countries (and their regions) aggregated values were not significantly different from those of the final solution. I decided against the option to rescale or recode the three indicators measured on a 4-point scale as it would not be precise.

Table A2b - Correlation matrix of attitude measures.

	Same ethnicity	Different ethnicity	Poor countries	Economic threat	Cultural threat	General threat
Same ethnicity	1					
Different ethnicity	0,7387	1				
Poor countries	0,6389	0,7805	1			
Economic threat	0,4427	0,4968	0,4822	1		
Cultural threat	0,4385	0,5186	0,4963	0,5960	1	
General threat	0,4231	0,5111	0,4936	0,6091	0,6537	1

Note. *N*=166 205 observations. All associations are significant on *p*=0.05.

Table A2c - Factor analysis of attitude measures.

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor 1	3,4815	2,88238	0,8439	0,8439
Factor 2	0,59912	0,55417	0,1452	0,9891
Factor 3	0,04496	0,0435	0,0109	1
Factor 4	0,00146	0,00126	0,0004	1,0004
Factor 5	0,00019	0,00184	0	1,0004
Factor 6	-0,00165	.	-0,0004	1

Table A2d - Factor loadings.

Variable	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Uniqueness
Same ethnicity	0,7358	-0,2806	0,147	0,3583
Different ethnicity	0,8832	-0,374	-0,1098	0,068
Poor countries	0,7874	-0,2219	-0,0179	0,3304
Economic threat	0,6942	0,286	0,0839	0,4292
Cultural threat	0,7243	0,3298	-0,0147	0,3664
General threat	0,7303	0,3752	-0,0611	0,3221

Note. *N*=166 205 observations.

Cronbach's α = 0.945 for all six indicators.

3. Descriptives - Individual variables including missing values

Considering the small number of missing values — less than 1% of missing cases per variable — I decided to delete missing values listwise as the process of imputation would be too complicated and would not bring a significant additional number of cases. The only variable which has a higher number of missing cases is the variable 'country of birth', which yields 2.8% of missing cases. However, as these are missing at random, and the whole number of missing cases does not exceed 5%, I apply the same solution to the last control variable too. Tables A3b – A3j describe response variable and the control variables for each ESS round.

In the case of country of origin, 37 countries and 18 regions of origin are described based on the most often cited origins for individuals and their parents. However, as migration flows change over time, not all of the countries are indicated as often by the first generation as they are by the second generation. Therefore, those countries which yield fewer than 80 individuals (indicated in grey) are included in the corresponding regions. All models are run twice, using both versions of variables. However, the results do not vary significantly, which further shows the robustness of the model.

Table A3a - How satisfied with life as a whole?

	ESS round					
	5	6	7	8	9	Total
0	109	113	95	54	57	428
(%)	2.05	1.83	1.49	0.87	1.02	1.44
1	68	75	47	34	33	257
(%)	1.28	1.22	0.74	0.55	0.59	0.87
2	115	158	154	96	84	607
(%)	2.16	2.56	2.42	1.54	1.51	2.05
3	246	263	253	222	182	1166
(%)	4.62	4.27	3.97	3.57	3.27	3.93
4	215	285	283	257	190	1230
(%)	4.03	4.63	4.45	4.13	3.41	4.15
5	708	680	717	616	491	3212
(%)	13.28	11.04	11.26	9.90	8.82	10.83
6	462	537	590	575	487	2651
(%)	8.67	8.72	9.27	9.24	8.74	8.94
7	828	1027	1099	1193	1025	5172
(%)	15.53	16.67	17.27	19.17	18.40	17.44
8	1301	1436	1525	1482	1499	7243
(%)	24.41	23.31	23.96	23.81	26.91	24.43
9	698	847	900	865	793	4103
(%)	13.10	13.75	14.14	13.90	14.24	13.84
10	565	713	678	803	698	3457
(%)	10.60	11.57	10.65	12.90	12.53	11.66
.	15	26	24	27	31	123
(%)	0.28	0.42	0.38	0.43	0.56	0.41
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649
(%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A3b – Age groups

	ESS round

	5	6	7	8	9	Total
15 - 20	442	456	443	425	389	2155
(%)	8.29	7.40	6.96	6.83	6.98	7.27
21 - 30	930	990	962	951	812	4645
(%)	17.45	16.07	15.11	15.28	14.58	15.67
31 – 40	1001	1190	1223	1258	1116	5788
(%)	18.78	19.32	19.21	20.21	20.04	19.52
41 - 50	1045	1103	1171	1141	1012	5472
(%)	19.61	17.91	18.40	18.33	18.17	18.46
51 - 60	829	1019	1111	1040	892	4891
(%)	15.55	16.54	17.45	16.71	16.01	16.50
61 - 70	576	798	803	842	726	3745
(%)	10.81	12.95	12.62	13.53	13.03	12.63
71 - 80	358	421	468	381	440	2068
(%)	6.72	6.83	7.35	6.12	7.90	6.97
81 - 90	124	162	152	148	151	737
(%)	2.33	2.63	2.39	2.38	2.71	2.49
91 - 114	9	10	14	10	0	43
(%)	0.17	0.16	0.22	0.16	0.00	0.15
.	16	11	18	28	32	105
(%)	0.30	0.18	0.28	0.45	0.57	0.35
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649
(%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A3c - Gender

	ESS round					
	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Female	2884	3300	3428	3283	2951	15846
(%)	54.11	53.57	53.86	52.75	52.98	53.45
Male	2445	2859	2937	2941	2619	13801
(%)	45.87	46.41	46.14	47.25	47.02	46.55
.	1	1	0	0	0	2
(%)	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649
(%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A3d - Highest achieved education

	ESS round					
	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Primary	1544	1668	1520	1475	1334	7541
(%)	28.97	27.08	23.88	23.70	23.95	25.43

Secondary	1803	2030	2168	2113	1903	10017
(%)	33.83	32.95	34.06	33.95	34.17	33.79
Vocational	742	930	1039	927	814	4452
(%)	13.92	15.10	16.32	14.89	14.61	15.02
Tertiary	1224	1493	1599	1676	1503	7495
(%)	22.96	24.24	25.12	26.93	26.98	25.28
.	17	39	39	33	16	144
(%)	0.32	0.63	0.61	0.53	0.29	0.49
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649
(%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A3e - Being in paid job in past 7 days

	ESS round					
	5	6	7	8	9	Total
No	2539	2984	2899	2670	2361	13453
(%)	47.64	48.44	45.55	42.90	42.39	45.37
Yes	2791	3176	3466	3554	3209	16196
(%)	52.36	51.56	54.45	57.10	57.61	54.63
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649
(%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A3f - Meeting socially

	ESS round					
	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Never	94	122	107	80	91	494
(%)	1.76	1.98	1.68	1.29	1.63	1.67
Monthly	984	1253	1206	1145	1003	5591
(%)	18.46	20.34	18.95	18.40	18.01	18.86
Weekly	1895	2206	2422	2431	2201	11155
(%)	35.55	35.81	38.05	39.06	39.52	37.62
Daily	2351	2566	2605	2550	2257	12329
(%)	44.11	41.66	40.93	40.97	40.52	41.58
.	6	13	25	18	18	80
(%)	0.11	0.21	0.39	0.29	0.32	0.27
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649
(%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A3g - Belonging to discriminated group based on race, ethnicity, religion, language or nationality

	ESS round					
	5	6	7	8	9	Total

Not belonging	4783	5439	5569	5469	4860	26120
(%)	89.74	88.30	87.49	87.87	87.25	88.10
Belonging to at least one	547	721	796	755	710	3529
(%)	10.26	11.70	12.51	12.13	12.75	11.90
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649
(%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A3h - Years lived in a country

	ESS round					
	5	6	7	8	9	Total
.	47	35	36	203	61	382
(%)	0.88	0.57	0.57	3.26	1.10	1.29
0 - 5	480	455	501	417	397	2250
(%)	9.01	7.39	7.87	6.70	7.13	7.59
6 - 19	967	1161	1072	1294	1106	5600
(%)	18.14	18.85	16.84	20.79	19.86	18.89
20+	1417	1662	1771	1512	1574	7936
(%)	26.59	26.98	27.82	24.29	28.26	26.77
Second generation	2419	2847	2985	2798	2432	13481
(%)	45.38	46.22	46.90	44.96	43.66	45.47
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649
(%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A3i - Mean attitudes towards immigrants by the Life Satisfaction categories

		Mean ATI	Standard Error	95% CI	
Lowest		2.728954	.0117236	2.705976	2.751933
	2	2.714646	.0088539	2.697292	2.732
	3	2.704211	.0054428	2.693543	2.71488
	4	2.71957	.0047523	2.710255	2.728885
	5	2.765756	.0030968	2.759686	2.771826
	6	2.822909	.0025017	2.818006	2.827812
Highest		2.836576	.0044384	2.827876	2.845275

Table A3j - Subjective general health

	ESS round					
	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Very good	74	79	74	94	76	397
(%)	1.39	1.28	1.16	1.51	1.36	1.34
Good	348	454	426	365	331	1924
(%)	6.53	7.37	6.69	5.86	5.94	6.49
Fair	1395	1556	1616	1490	1251	7308
(%)	26.17	25.26	25.39	23.94	22.46	24.65
Bad	2178	2569	2770	2733	2481	12731
(%)	40.86	41.70	43.52	43.91	44.54	42.94
Very bad	1332	1495	1471	1536	1427	7261
(%)	24.99	24.27	23.11	24.68	25.62	24.49
Missing	3	7	8	6	4	28
(%)	0.06	0.11	0.13	0.10	0.07	0.09
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649
(%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Country and region of origin

There are 191 countries of origin of individuals defined as first generation, 189 countries of origin defined as countries of origin of individuals' mothers and 195 for individuals' fathers. If in any of those categories there are more than 100 individuals coming from a particular origin country, and at least 70% of them go to one particular destination country, this country becomes its own category. For instance, there are more than 100 emigrants from Surinam and more than 70 of them reside in The Netherlands. Therefore, Suriname is its own category. Contrastingly, there are more than 100 emigrants from Hungary; however, they form multiple migratory flows and reside in 16 countries. As there is a maximum of only 36 Hungarians in a single country, Hungary is included in the category Eastern Europe.

The rest of the countries are included in regions based on their geographical closeness and similar average wellbeing according to the World Happiness Report (2019). If countries are regionally close, and usually they would have been categorised together (for instance according to geographical territory such as subcontinent or according to the UN categories), but the difference in their average wellbeing is more than 1.2 points, they are in different categories. For example, the Middle Eastern category is divided into countries with lower and higher wellbeing without the concern about their geographical closeness within the region; Pakistan is included with central Asian countries; western

Europe and Canada are in the same category: Global North; Romania is included with South European countries rather than Balkan countries.

Table A3k - Counts of the individuals coming from particular countries and regions of origin. The second generation individuals are in a separate category

Country/region of origin	ESS round (*N*)					
	5	6	7	8	9	Total
.	24	115	215	402	96	852
Albania	2	9	13	10	3	37
Spain	70	66	71	77	71	355
Finland	97	133	105	110	116	561
France	3	4	10	4	5	26
United Kingdom	12	11	5	3	9	40
Croatia	19	24	26	16	20	105
Hungary	0	0	1	0	0	1
Indonesia	61	59	57	73	72	322
Ireland	0	0	1	0	0	1
India	6	9	4	2	0	21
Italy	3	11	4	5	7	30
Angola	15	19	11	21	7	73
Kazakhstan	14	16	12	6	19	67
Morocco	0	1	2	2	3	8
The Netherlands	192	168	214	185	171	930
Norway	0	1	1	0	0	2
Pakistan	2	1	1	2	3	9
Poland	0	0	0	1	0	1
Portugal	1	3	1	0	0	5
Romania	1	0	2	4	1	8
Serbia	7	10	5	12	15	49
Russia (+ former USSR)	17	21	18	15	21	92
Austria	6	5	4	6	9	30
Sweden	10	7	6	26	41	90
Slovakia	14	12	14	18	10	68
Surinam	92	85	94	94	98	463
Tunisia	0	1	0	0	0	1
Turkey	0	0	0	1	1	2
Australia, New Zealand and Oceania	383	504	514	402	381	2184
Balkan countries	4	1	2	3	32	42
Bosna and Hercegovina	11	9	4	2	11	37
Caribbean	271	269	253	245	258	1296
Central Africa	63	79	58	87	92	379
Central Asia	109	125	168	137	154	693
Eastern Africa	195	210	215	189	187	996
Eastern Asia	40	37	46	43	42	208

Eastern Europe	20	13	16	14	48	111
Global North	83	109	115	96	107	510
Indian Subcontinent	116	108	118	103	119	564
Middle East	45	72	56	32	46	251
Middle East II	120	97	130	120	98	565
Brazil	41	40	55	37	31	204
Northern Africa	59	61	51	50	44	265
Southern Africa	91	131	107	133	130	592
Southern America	234	253	196	253	213	1149
Southern Asia	27	31	28	27	35	148
Southern Europe	26	21	18	27	26	118
Western Africa	270	309	301	300	269	1449
Belarus	11	16	14	7	3	51
Second generation	2416	2847	2983	2794	2433	13473
Czechia	0	1	0	0	2	3
Germany (+ former DDR)	22	21	14	25	2	84
Algeria	5	5	6	3	9	28
Total	5330	6160	6365	6224	5570	29649

Table A3l - Countries and regions of origin including average level of life satisfaction in the country.

Country/region	Code	Wellbeing	Countries in the region with information on wellbeing	Countries in the region with imputed wellbeing	Included for the first generation models in a case of the too few cases
AL	1	5,00			
AO	2	3,79			
AT	3	7,39			
BA	4	5,89			
BR	5	6,19			
BY	6	5,23			
CZ	7	7,03			
DE	8	7,12		Former DDR	
DZ	9	5,04			
ES	10	6,51			
FI	11	7,86			
FR	12	6,67			
GB	13	7,23			
HR	14	5,54			
HU	15	6,07			
ID	16	5,34			
IE	17	6,96			
IN	18	3,82			

IT	19	6,52			
KZ	20	6,01			
MA	21	4,90			
NL	22	7,46			
NO	23	7,44			
PK	24	5,47			
PL	25	6,20			
PT	26	5,91			
RO	27	6,15			
RS	28	5,94			
RU	29	5,51		Former USSR	
SE	30	7,37			
SK	31	6,24			
SR	32	6,26			
TN	33	4,74			
TR	34	5,19			
UA	35	4,66			
US	36	6,88			
XK	37	6,39			
Australia	38	7,27	Australia New Zealand	American Samoa Cook Island Norfolk Island French Polynesia Papua New Guinea	
Balkan	39	5,32	Bulgaria Montenegro Macedonia	Former Yugoslavia Former Serbia and Montenegro	Albania Serbia Belarus Bosna and Hercegovina

Caribbean	40	5,83	Belize Costa Rica Cuba Dominican Republic Honduras Haiti Jamaica Mexico Nicaragua Panama Trinidad and Tobago	Antigua a Barbuda Dutch Antilles Aruba Caribbean Netherlands Dominique Guadalupe Saint Kitts and Nevis Saint Lucia Saint Martin Montserrat Puerto Rico Sint Maarten Martinique Barbados Grenada	
Central Africa	41	4,20	Burundi Democratic Republic of Congo Central African Republic Congo Rwanda Chad Uganda		
Central Asia	42	5,26	Armenia Azerbaijan Georgia Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan Turkmenistan Uzbekistan		Pakistan Kazakhstan Turkey
East Africa	43	4,31	Djibouti Ethiopia Kenya Comoros Madagascar Mauritius Malawi Somalia Tanzania	Eritrea Reunion Seychelles	

East Asia	44	5,52	Mongolia China Hong Kong Japan South Korea	Macao	
Eastern Europe	45	6,00	Estonia Lithuania Latvia Moldova	Former Czechoslovakia	Hungary Poland Slovakia
Global North	46	7,32	Canada Denmark Iceland Belgium Switzerland Luxembourg	Andorra Aaland Island Greenland Isle of Man Jersey Monaco San Marino Faroes Island Lichtenstein	France United Kingdom Ireland Norway Czechia Austria
Indian Subcontinent	47	4,69	Bangladesh Bhutan Sri Lanka Nepal Laos Myanmar	Bhutan British Indian Ocean Territory	India
Middle East	48	6,14	United Arab Emirates Bahrain Israel Jordan Kuwait Lebanon Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia		
Middle East II	49	3,96	Afghanistan Iraq Iran Palestine Syria Yemen	North Korea	

North Africa	50	4,11	Egypt Libya Sudan South Sudan		Morocco Tunisia Algeria
South Africa	51	4,19	Mozambique Botswana Lesotho Namibia South Africa Zambia Zimbabwe Swaziland		
South America	52	5,99	Argentina Bolivia Chile Colombia Ecuador Guatemala Guyana Peru Paraguay El Salvador Uruguay Venezuela	French Guyana	
South Asia	53	5,78	Cambodia Malaysia Philippines Singapore Thailand Taiwan Vietnam	East Timor	
Southern Europe	54	6,09	Cyprus Greece Malta Slovenia Northern Cyprus		Italy Portugal Romania

West Africa	55	4,88	Burkina Faso Benin Cote d'Ivoire Cameroon Gabon Ghana Gambia Guinea Liberia Mali Mauritania Niger Nigeria Sierra Leone Senegal Togo	Cape Verde Equatorial Guinea Guinea-Bissau Sao Tome and Principe Mayotte	Angola

NUTS regions

Explanatory variable Attitudes towards Immigrants, and control variables: Foreign Population Rate and Unemployment Rate, are aggregated/defined on the smallest available regional level. For the ATI, this means the smallest level available for each country across 5 rounds. For the controls, this means the smallest available public data measuring these rates.

As the dataset is constructed from data from five different years across a decade, firstly, I had to unify the regions, as the NUTS regional borders and codes change over time. I have unified codes for France, and partially for Ireland, Finland and Hungary.

Eurostat data also follow the changes in NUTS regions, and I had to unify some regions in Lithuania, France, Hungary, Ireland, and Slovenia.

Unemployment rate

The UK and Germany only provide unemployment for all regions in all years in Eurostat on the NUTS1 regions, so that is what I use. One Finnish region (FI20) misses information on unemployment completely, thus national level is imputed for this region.

Foreign population rate

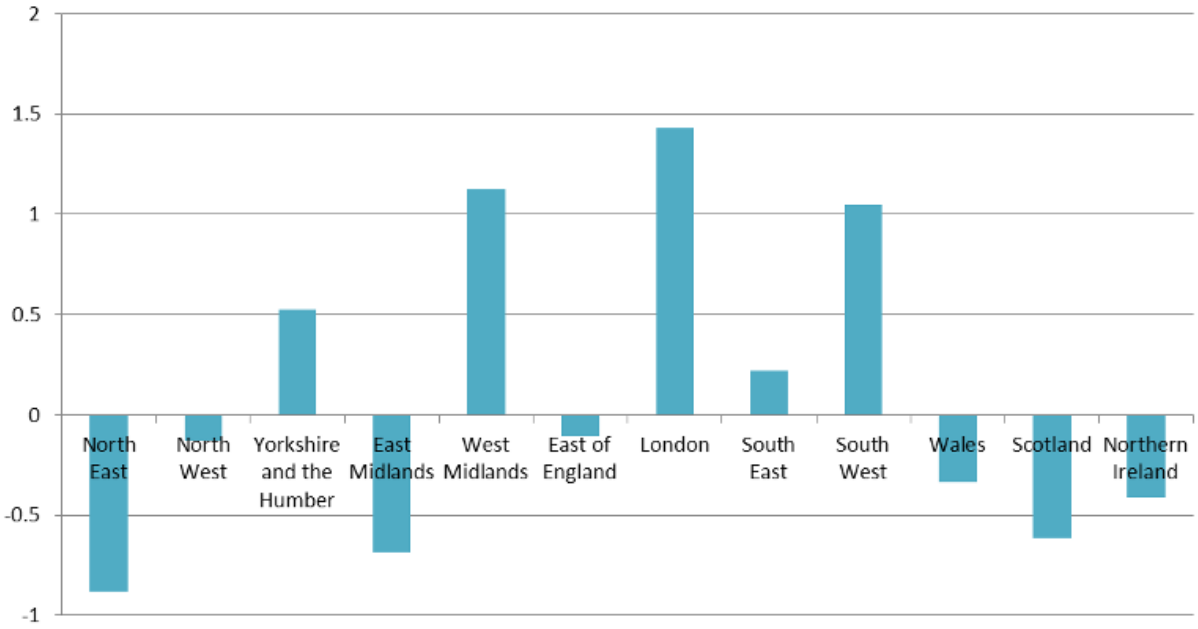
I employ a variable measuring Eurostat foreign born population rate including only individuals aged 15 and older for one region in Poland and Finland there were missing data

in years 2010 and 2012, which I imputed from year 2014. Bulgaria only provides Foreign population rate on the NUTS1 level.

4. Descriptive analysis

Figure A1 illustrates significant differences between wellbeing of immigrants and non-migrants residing in different regions of the UK shown in the descriptive analysis of life satisfaction. The differences in the reported life satisfaction between groups vary across subnational regions. For instance, in case of Greater London area, UK, immigrants are on average 1.4 points more satisfied with their lives than non-migrant. On the other hand, in Scotland, immigrants' assessment of their life satisfaction is on average 0.6 point lower than non-migrant.

Figure A1: Differences in the life satisfaction between migrants and non-migrants.



Note: This graph presents only the UK sample. Zero on the Y axis stands for no difference in life satisfaction. Positive numbers indicate higher life satisfaction for immigrants. ESS pooled data.

5. *First generation model variations*

Model A – Full model for the first generation, no interaction

Model B – Interaction effect of the ATI and the length of the stay in the country

Model C – Destination country fixed effect excluded and substituted for the subjective wellbeing level in the sending country (scale)

Table A5a

	Model A	Model B	Model C
Negative attitudes	-0.285	-0.602	-0.279
	(0.154)+	(0.251)*	(0.155)+
Male	-0.117	-0.120	-0.132
	(0.036)**	(0.036)**	(0.036)**
Age	-0.055	-0.055	-0.056
	(0.006)**	(0.006)**	(0.006)**
Age squared	0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.000)**	(0.000)**	(0.000)**
Discrimination	-0.626	-0.629	-0.655
	(0.055)**	(0.055)**	(0.055)**
Secondary education	0.156	0.153	0.175

	(0.053)**	(0.053)**	(0.053)**
Vocational education	0.270	0.268	0.286
	(0.061)**	(0.061)**	(0.061)**
Tertiary education	0.427	0.425	0.441
	(0.054)**	(0.054)**	(0.053)**
Meeting socially	0.366	0.365	0.366
	(0.025)**	(0.025)**	(0.025)**
Paid work	0.462	0.461	0.475
	(0.039)**	(0.039)**	(0.039)**
Lived in country 6-19 yrs	-0.188	-0.710	-0.174
	(0.052)**	(0.614)	(0.050)**
Lived in country 20+ yrs	-0.284	-1.713	-0.276
	(0.064)**	(0.644)**	(0.061)**
Unemployment rate	-0.035	-0.036	-0.033
	(0.007)**	(0.007)**	(0.007)**
Foreign population rate	-0.003	-0.003	-0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
6-19 yrs X ATI		0.185	
		(0.214)	
20+ X ATI		0.504	
		(0.224)*	
Wellbeing in the country of origin			-0.062
			(0.016)**
R^2	0.15	0.15	0.15
N	14,850	14,850	14,849

+ $p<0.1$; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

Models additionally include fixed effects for the country of origin (only Model A and B), country of destination and ESS year of collection (all models).

6. Robustness check models

Model A – Full model with additional controls including living with a child, marital status, relative income of the household and individual occupation

Model B – Life satisfaction rescaled to a 7-point scale

Model C – Ordinal regression model with the life satisfaction treated as categorical variable with 7 categories

Table A6a.

	Model A
Negative attitudes	-0.357
	(0.147)*
Second	-1.478

generation	
	(0.122)**
Male	-0.190
	(0.032)**
Age	-0.073
	(0.006)**
Age squared	0.001
	(0.000)**
Health	0.658
	(0.021)**
Living with a child	-0.049
	(0.038)
Married	0.349
	(0.045)**
Divorced	-0.046
	(0.056)
Widowed	0.059
	(0.079)
Income decile	0.121
	(0.007)**
ISCO10 - 2	-0.108
	(0.060)+
ISCO10 - 3	-0.148
	(0.063)*
ISCO10 - 4	-0.278
	(0.075)**
ISCO10 - 5	-0.312
	(0.072)**
ISCO10 - 6	-0.226
	(0.175)
ISCO10 - 7	-0.229
	(0.074)**
ISCO10 - 8	-0.252
	(0.087)**
ISCO10 - 9	-0.328
	(0.087)**
Unemployment rate	-0.046
	(0.008)**
Foreign population rate	-0.001
	(0.003)
R^2	0.23
N	17,098

+ $p<0.1$; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$,

Models additionally include fixed effect for the country of origin, country of destination and ESS year of collection.

Table A6b

	Model B
Negative attitudes	-0.139
	(0.070)*
Second generation	0.100
	(0.787)
Male	0.395
	(0.011)**
Age	-0.055
	(0.015)**
Age squared	-0.034
	(0.002)**
Health	0.000
	(0.000)**
Discrimination	-0.314
	(0.027)**
Secondary education	0.021
	(0.023)
Vocational education	0.073
	(0.027)**
Tertiary education	0.174
	(0.024)**
Meeting socially	0.185
	(0.011)**
Paid work	0.179
	(0.017)**
Unemployment rate	-0.023
	(0.004)**
Foreign population rate	-0.001
	(0.001)
R^2	0.21
N	27,795

+ $p<0.1$; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$,

Models additionally include fixed effect for the country of origin, country of destination and ESS year of collection.

Table A6c

	Model C
Negative attitudes	-0.202
	(0.102)*
Second generation	-0.126

	(1.370)
Male	-0.091
	(0.023)**
Age	-0.048
	(0.004)**
Age squared	0.001
	(0.000)**
Health	0.629
	(0.017)**
Discrimination	-0.462
	(0.038)**
Secondary education	-0.003
	(0.036)
Vocational education	0.075
	(0.041)+
Tertiary education	0.205
	(0.038)**
Meeting socially	0.279
	(0.018)**
Paid work	0.229
	(0.027)**
Unemployment rate	-0.033
	(0.006)**
Foreign population rate	-0.003
	(0.002)
Cut 1	-3.490
	(1.429)*
Cut 2	-2.304
	(1.430)
Cut 3	-1.050
	(1.432)
Cut 4	-0.173
	(1.431)
Cut 5	1.227
	(1.431)
Cut 6	3.520
	(1.432)*
	27,795

+ $p<0.1$; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$,

Models additionally include fixed effect for the country of origin, country of destination and ESS year of collection.

Appendix B

1. *Variables, missingness and data distribution*

Table B1a - Frequency table for an individual level variable Life satisfaction.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Completely unsatisfied	60	2.61	2.61
2	131	5.71	8.32
3	187	8.14	16.46
4	326	14.20	30.66
5	461	20.08	50.74
6	855	37.24	87.98
Completely satisfied	276	12.02	100.00
Total	2296	100.00	

Table B1b - Frequency table for an individual level variable Sex.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Men	992	43.21	43.21
Women	1304	56.79	100.00
Total	2296	100.00	

Table B1c - Frequency table for an individual level variable Age.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Missing	3	0.13	0.13
17-20	35	1.52	1.66
21-30	238	10.37	12.02
31-40	525	22.87	34.89
41-50	560	24.39	59.28
51-60	411	17.90	77.18
61-70	313	13.63	90.81
71+	211	9.19	100.00
Total	2296	100.00	

Note: This table is only for the purpose of presenting missing data and distribution. Variable age is employed as a continuous variable in the model.

Table B1d - Frequency table for an individual level variable Place of birth.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Europe, Australia, North America	278	12.11	12.11
India, Pakistan, Bangladesh	967	42.12	54.22
Africa	253	11.02	65.24
South America	96	4.18	69.43
Other	702	30.57	100.00
Total	2296	100.00	

Table B1e - Frequency table for an individual level variable Length of stay in destination.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0-5 years	96	4.18	4.18
6-19 years	888	38.68	42.86
20+ years	1231	53.61	96.47
missing	81	3.53	100.00
Total	2296	100.00	

Table B1f - Frequency table for an individual level variable Highest educational qualification.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Lower than Lower Secondary	100	4.36	4.36
Lower Secondary	297	12.94	17.29
Upper Secondary	181	7.88	25.17
Higher Education	531	23.13	48.30
University	390	16.99	65.29
Other	426	18.55	83.84
Missing	371	16.16	100.00
Total	2296	100.00	

Table B1g - Frequency table for an individual level variable Worked last week.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
No	960	41.81	41.81
Yes	1323	57.62	99.43
Missing	13	0.57	100.00

Total	2296	100.00

Table B1h - Frequency table for an individual level variable Go out socially.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
No	402	17.51	17.51
Yes	1892	82.40	99.91
Missing	2	0.09	100.00
Total	2296	100.00	

Table B1i - Frequency table for an individual level variable Proportion of friends of same race.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Missing	5	0.35	0.35
All	628	27.35	27.70
More than half	810	35.28	62.98
About half	431	18.77	81.75
Less than half	335	14.59	96.34
No friends	84	3.66	100.00
Total	2296	100.00	

2. *Use of the concurrently collected data*

While consecutive measures – first attitudes towards immigrants and then migrants' life satisfaction - would be a more fitting approach for approximating the causal impact of attitudes on migrants' life satisfaction, there are a couple of arguments supporting concurrent measures. First, the empirical research shows that the changes in the attitudes towards immigrants tend to be relatively slow when aggregated (Kaufmann and Harris 2015), which suggests the average attitudes of non-migrants in the year 2018 can be considered comparable to attitudes in 2017. Second, attitudes tend to be formed during impressionable years, and the significant changes arise between cohorts/generations rather than in the form of short-time individual change (McLaren and Paterson 2019; Jeannet and Dražanová 2019).

These two reasons mean that potential difference in attitudes in regions between years is more likely to be driven by the change in the residential composition of areas than by sudden changes in individual attitudes of a significant share of residents. To check the extent of changes in residential composition in the two years, I look at changes in ethnic

composition as they are the most relevant for my research. According to the ONS estimates of the ethnic composition in local administrative units of England and Wales, the average absolute change in ethnic composition between 2016 and 2018 was 0.5%. Only 2% of units (8 units) experienced a total change higher than 2%, and the white population share has changed by more than 2% only in 9 units. Considering these changes, I assume changes in other compositions, such as the age structure of residents, are also not sudden. Therefore, knowing that the change in the regions' compositions in the UK is, first, gradual and, second, that the regional attitudes do not change in the radically opposite direction, it is appropriate to use the concurrently collected data.

3. Correlation and factor analysis for ATI index

Table B3a - Pairwise correlations of ATI measures aggregated on the NUTS1 level

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Jobs	1.000			
(2) Crime	0.855 (0.000)	1.000		
(3) Welfare	0.952 (0.000)	0.745 (0.000)	1.000	
(4) Development	0.885 (0.000)	0.881 (0.000)	0.841 (0.000)	1.000

(obs=3,118)

Table B3b - Factor analysis/correlation of ATI measures aggregated on the NUTS1 level.

Method: principal factors Retained factors = 2

Rotation: (unrotated) Number of params = 6

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor1	3.480	3.306	0.970	0.970
Factor2	0.174	0.185	0.049	1.018
Factor3	-0.011	0.044	-0.003	1.015
Factor4	-0.055	.	-0.015	1.000

Factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances

Variable	Factor1	Factor2	Uniqueness
Jobs	0.978	-0.106	0.032
Crime	0.893	0.269	0.131
Welfare	0.931	-0.272	0.058
Development	0.927	0.126	0.125

(obs=3,118)

Table B3c - Pairwise correlations of ATI measures aggregated on the NUTS3 level.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Jobs	1.000			
(2) Crime	0.772 (0.000)	1.000		
(3) Welfare	0.752 (0.000)	0.827 (0.000)	1.000	
(4) Development	0.591 (0.000)	0.783 (0.000)	0.733 (0.000)	1.000

(obs=3,118)

Table B3d -Factor analysis/correlation of ATI measures aggregated on the NUTS level.

Method: principal factors Retained factors =2

Rotation: (unrotated) Number of params = 6

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor1	2.944	2.890	1.046	1.046
Factor2	0.053	0.117	0.019	1.065
Factor3	-0.064	0.056	-0.023	1.042
Factor4	-0.119	.	-0.042	1.000

Factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances

Variable	Factor1	Factor2	Uniqueness
Jobs	0.807	-0.160	0.323
Crime	0.924	0.019	0.145
Welfare	0.889	-0.023	0.209
Development	0.805	0.164	0.326

(obs=3,118)

Table B3e - Cronbach's alpha for indices summing 3 and 4 measures aggregated on NUTS1 and NUTS3 level.

Index	Cronbach's alpha
Index of 3 NUTS3 measures	0.9157
Index of 4 NUTS3 measures	0.9204
Index of 3 NUTS1 measures	0.9447
Index of 4 NUTS1 measures	0.9608

4. Ordered logistic regression models

Table B4 - Ordered logistic regression estimates for models employing NUTS1 index of 3 and 4 aggregated measures of ATI regressed on life satisfaction.

	NUTS1 index of 3 measures	NUTS1 index of 4 measures
ATI	0.233	0.472
	(0.114)*	(0.241)+
Gender	0.103	0.103
(r.c Male)	(0.083)	(0.083)
Age	-0.038	-0.038
	(0.015)**	(0.015)**
Age squared	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)**	(0.000)**
Indian Subcontinent	-0.128	-0.130
(r.c.: Global North)	(0.136)	(0.136)
Africa	0.099	0.099
	(0.167)	(0.167)
South America	-0.130	-0.134
	(0.233)	(0.233)
Other	-0.177	-0.178
	(0.136)	(0.136)
6-19 years in destination	-0.356	-0.354
(r.c.: 0-5 years)	(0.211)+	(0.211)+
20+ years in destination	-0.542	-0.540
	(0.224)*	(0.224)*
Lower secondary education	-0.050	-0.048
(r.c. Less than lower secondary)	(0.222)	(0.222)
Upper secondary education	-0.251	-0.247
	(0.242)	(0.242)
Higher education	0.007	0.008
	(0.211)	(0.211)
University	0.133	0.135
	(0.217)	(0.217)
Other	-0.139	-0.137
	(0.211)	(0.211)
Missing	0.120	0.122
	(0.216)	(0.216)
Employment	0.049	0.048
(r.c. Employed)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Less than ½ friends same ethnicity	-0.048	-0.047
(r.c. More than ½ friends same ethnicity)	(0.095)	(0.095)
No friends	-0.677	-0.676

	(0.229)**	(0.229)**
Go out socially	0.642	0.643
(r.c. No)	(0.111)**	(0.111)**
GOR Unemployment rate	0.067	0.069
	(0.055)	(0.055)
Cut 1	-2.697	-2.595
	(0.758)**	(0.812)**
Cut 2	-1.524	-1.422
	(0.750)*	(0.805)+
Cut 3	-0.711	-0.609
	(0.748)	(0.804)
Cut 4	0.132	0.233
	(0.748)	(0.803)
Cut 5	1.041	1.142
	(0.749)	(0.804)
Cut 6	3.053	3.154
	(0.751)**	(0.806)**
N	2,096	2,096

5. Full results on the local level

Table B5 - OLS Regression estimates for models employing NUTS3 ATI measure.

	Model 1 Unadjusted	Model 2 Full Model	Model 3 Full Model with GOR	Model 4 Channels
Local ATI	0.034	0.012	0.015	0.009
	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Gender *(r.c Male)*		0.112	0.111	0.116
		(0.063)*	(0.062)*	(0.066)*
Age		-0.027	-0.030	-0.041
		(0.013)**	(0.013)**	(0.012)***
Age squared		0.000	0.000	0.000
		(0.000)**	(0.000)**	(0.000)***
Indian Subcontinent *(r.c.: Global North)*		-0.090	-0.083	-0.191
		(0.081)	(0.083)	(0.110)*
Africa		0.108	0.080	0.000
		(0.142)	(0.145)	(0.134)
South America		-0.215	-0.211	-0.249
		(0.191)	(0.193)	(0.182)
Other		-0.118	-0.129	-0.128
		(0.103)	(0.102)	(0.110)
6-19 years in destination *(r.c.: 0-5 years)*		-0.182	-0.200	-0.271
		(0.158)	(0.164)	(0.163)*

20+ years in destination		-0.353	-0.369	-0.440
		(0.133)**	(0.141)**	(0.174)**
Upper Secondary education *(r.c. Lower secondary and less)*		-0.180	-0.200	-0.203
		(0.115)	(0.117)*	(0.133)
Higher education		-0.013	-0.026	-0.045
		(0.108)	(0.110)	(0.136)
University		0.081	0.068	0.053
		(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.113)
Other		-0.092	-0.073	-0.103
		(0.086)	(0.084)	(0.116)
Missing		0.042	0.078	0.033
		(0.117)	(0.116)	(0.132)
Employment *(r.c. Employed)*		0.092	0.095	0.129
		(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.077)*
Go out socially		0.606	0.598	0.444
		(0.081)***	(0.080)***	(0.089)***
Share of White British residence				0.005
				(0.003)*
Social Cohesion				0.331
				(0.043)***
Half or less friends same ethnicity				-0.070
				(0.070)
No friends				-0.440
				(0.182)**
R^2	0.00	0.04	0.05	0.08
N	2,096	2,096	2,096	2,096

* $p<0.1$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$

6. Full results on the regional level

Table B6

OLS Regression estimates for models employing NUTS1 ATI measure.

	Model 1 Unadjusted	Model 2 Full Model	Model 3 Channels	Model 4 Interaction
Regional ATI	0.223	0.181	0.180	0.267
	(0.087)**	(0.092)**	(0.092)**	(0.111)**
Gender *(r.c Male)*		0.112	0.116	0.116
		(0.067)*	(0.067)*	(0.067)*
Age		-0.029	-0.031	-0.031
		(0.012)**	(0.012)***	(0.012)***
Age squared		0.000	0.000	0.000

	(0.000)***	(0.000)***	(0.000)***
Indian Subcontinent *(r.c.: Global North)*	-0.098	-0.095	-0.090
	(0.110)	(0.109)	(0.109)
Africa	0.081	0.072	0.067
	(0.136)	(0.135)	(0.135)
South America	-0.225	-0.213	-0.223
	(0.184)	(0.183)	(0.183)
Other	-0.138	-0.136	-0.137
	(0.111)	(0.111)	(0.111)
6-19 years in destination *(r.c.: 0-5 years)*	-0.198	-0.200	-0.190
	(0.165)	(0.165)	(0.165)
20+ years in destination	-0.369	-0.376	-0.361
	(0.177)**	(0.176)**	(0.176)**
Upper secondary education *(r.c. Lower secondary education)*	-0.191	-0.191	-0.171
	(0.135)	(0.135)	(0.135)
Higher education	-0.013	-0.022	-0.012
	(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.138)
University	0.074	0.067	0.083
	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.114)
Other	-0.080	-0.076	-0.060
	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.117)
Missing	0.058	0.040	0.068
	(0.133)	(0.133)	(0.134)
Employment *(r.c. Employed)*	0.091	0.093	0.093
	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)
Go out socially *(r.c. No)*	0.606	0.520	0.523
	(0.086)***	(0.090)***	(0.090)***
GOR	0.037	0.035	0.039
Unemployment rate			
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Half or less friends same *(r.c. More than half friends same)*		-0.054	2.060
		(0.070)	(1.081)*
No friends		-0.580	-4.374
		(0.184)***	(2.544)*

Half or less friends same x Regional ATI				-0.372
				(0.190)*
No friends x Regional ATI				0.681
				(0.455)
R^2	0.00	0.04	0.05	0.05
N	2,096	2,096	2,096	2,096

7. *Robustness check models: non-linearity and local ethnic composition change*

Table B7a - Linear regression estimates for robustness checks models employing NUTS3 ATI measures.

	Model 1 ATI - index	Model 2 ATI - quintiles	Model 3 ATI - deciles	Model 4 Ethnic composition control
Local ATI	0.009			0.017
	(0.022)			(0.017)
2nd-4th quintile		-0.014		
(r.c. 1st quintile)		(0.091)		
5th quintile		0.106		
		(0.082)		
2nd-9th decile			-0.122	
(r.c. 1st decile)			(0.061)+	
10th decile			0.038	
			(0.073)	
Change in 2 years				0.051
				(0.058)
Gender	0.116	0.115	0.114	0.117
(r.c Male)	(0.066)+	(0.065)+	(0.065)+	(0.066)+
Age	-0.041	-0.041	-0.041	-0.041
	(0.012)**	(0.012)**	(0.012)**	(0.012)**
Age squared	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)**	(0.000)**	(0.000)**	(0.000)**
Indian Subcontinent	-0.192	-0.182	-0.191	-0.190
(r.c.: Global North)	(0.086)*	(0.086)*	(0.087)*	(0.086)*
Africa	-0.001	0.005	0.008	0.003
	(0.140)	(0.142)	(0.141)	(0.141)
South America	-0.249	-0.243	-0.243	-0.247
	(0.185)	(0.184)	(0.186)	(0.186)
Other	-0.127	-0.122	-0.122	-0.127
	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)
6-19 years in destination	-0.269	-0.267	-0.279	-0.272

(r.c.: 0-5 years)	(0.158)	(0.159)	(0.159)+	(0.159)+
20+ years in destination	-0.438	-0.439	-0.455	-0.442
	(0.129)**	(0.129)**	(0.130)**	(0.130)**
Upper Secondary education	-0.201	-0.196	-0.195	-0.197
(r.c. Lower secondary and less)	(0.117)+	(0.116)	(0.117)	(0.118)
Higher education	-0.045	-0.041	-0.035	-0.042
	(0.108)	(0.108)	(0.111)	(0.109)
University	0.055	0.056	0.061	0.059
	(0.089)	(0.089)	(0.090)	(0.091)
Other	-0.101	-0.100	-0.105	-0.101
	(0.084)	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.084)
Missing	0.033	0.034	0.040	0.037
	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.121)	(0.120)
Employment	0.128	0.126	0.126	0.130
(r.c. Employed)	(0.061)*	(0.061)*	(0.060)*	(0.062)*
Go out socially	0.443	0.440	0.440	0.445
	(0.089)**	(0.090)**	(0.090)**	(0.089)**
Share of White British residence	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005
	(0.002)**	(0.002)**	(0.002)**	(0.002)**
Social Cohesion	0.331	0.331	0.332	0.329
	(0.041)**	(0.041)**	(0.042)**	(0.041)**
All same friends	0.001	0.002	0.003	0.003
	(0.066)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.066)
More than half same	-0.050	-0.045	-0.043	-0.048
	(0.090)	(0.091)	(0.090)	(0.091)
About half the same	-0.097	-0.093	-0.089	-0.095
	(0.097)	(0.098)	(0.099)	(0.098)
Less than half same	-0.440	-0.444	-0.446	-0.441
	(0.218)+	(0.219)+	(0.219)+	(0.218)+
R^2	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
N	2,096	2,096	2,096	2,096

+ $p<0.1$; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$, these models control for the GOR (dummy), which is not shown in the table

Appendix C

1. *Considerations and reflexivity*

The sample size means that the data collected are not representative. However, the purposively chosen sample included a wide range of immigrants who came to Slovakia for varied reasons and voiced different experiences, which showed in the collected data. Thus, the dataset is informative for the Slovak context and can be informative also for similar contexts.

The evidence relies on self-reporting and, therefore, must acknowledge the impact of social desirability, sensitivity, and bias in respondents' answers. However, the inclusion of a wide range of interviewers, the use of languages most often spoken by immigrants (hired interviewers underwent rigorous training), and the inclusion of migrant interviewers and interviewers with migrant experience or multi-national identity might mitigate this bias. Respondents' answers were detailed, and the lack of differences in detailed descriptions between respondents interviewed by Slovak and non-Slovak interviewers, including when talking about negative experiences, suggests respondents felt comfortable answering questions in interviews. While the research design calculated with working with languages most often spoken by immigrants in Slovakia and with English, there is still a possibility some migrant groups did not have a chance to participate due to the language barrier. Similarly, because the team of interviewers was predominantly female (9 out of 10 members) and white (all interviewers), it might have prevented some people from agreeing to be interviewed or might be reflected in their responses, as the gender and race of interviewers might have created a power dynamic in their interactions with interviewees. We acknowledge these potentially unequal relationships and that they probably affected the data collected to varying degrees and we interpret our data accordingly. The potentially negative impact of the power dynamic was mitigated by, for example, giving interviewees agenda over the spaces where interviews were conducted.

This project was conceptualised and led by a Slovak research team and funded by the European Commission, with this particular study conducted by a (migrant) researcher situated in an institution in London. To prevent the insider influence bias, a team with a mixed migration experience has been created to be able to reflect on, acknowledge, and discuss individual member’s biases around migration and thus mitigate their impact on the research at all its stages and including research results. The research team included Slovaks

(3 out of 6), an immigrant (1 out of 6 researchers were Ukrainian), and Slovaks with their own migration experience (2 out of 6). To mitigate the creation of an extractive research, the data collected in this study served not only the purposes of academic research but also the policy research conducted with the aim to improve policies impacting immigrants' lives in Slovakia.

The research team considered the topic of the research and its potential impact on immigrants (and other foreigners in Slovakia, including refugees) at every stage to dynamically react to emerging situation during the research project. Research was conducted at all of its stages responsibly, with empathy, considering the vulnerability of respondents, adhering to norms given by the founding body and research institute conducting the study (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz 2019).

Due to the pandemic, the research design underwent some changes, especially in the data collection order and inclusion of distance interviewing using online platforms. On average, there were no differences in interviews conducted in person and online regarding the length or information provided.

2. *Interview script*

This interview consisted of an introduction and six section based on dfferent topics of research interest. Below are listed questions guiding interviewers during the interviews with respondents:

An introduction

- How did you get to Slovakia? What was your journey?

Sections:

1. *Slovakia and foreigners*

<u>1A) Perceived hostility/welcoming environment of the non-migrants society to foreigners</u>

- How would you describe Slovakia? What kind of country is it? What is the first thing that comes to mind when somebody says "Slovakia"?
- When you think about locals in Slovakia, what type of people is more welcoming to migrants? Do you have any personal experience or examples? And now, what type of people is more hostile/closed off to foreigners/immigrants?
- Do you think Slovakia is ready to accept more immigrants coming to the country? Why do you think so?

- What do you think about the political discourse about migration and immigrants/foreigners? What do you think about what politicians say about immigrants?

1B) Feeling of being accepted/being an outsider

- Have you ever felt like an outsider in Slovakia? If yes, could you describe any specific situation when you felt like that? If not, what do you think is the reason? Would you say it changes in time when you think about how locals see and treat you? If yes, why do you think it is happening?
- Now, thinking about the feeling of being accepted in Slovakia, can you describe when did you/do you feel accepted in Slovakia or by Slovaks (e.g., in the community/neighbourhood, the city/town where you live, at work, in general)? Would you say this is how you always felt or is the feeling of being accepted changing in time?

1C) Your experience with the behaviour of members of majority/Slovaks towards you

- What are your experiences with Slovaks? Have you ever experienced any adverse reaction from people around you because you are a foreigner? Could you tell me more about this experience? Whose reaction was it? What were the circumstances? What was your reaction?
- Has this ever happened to somebody you know?
- When you think about your experiences with locals/Slovaks, are they changing in time, for example, when you compare these days and the time when you first arrived in the country? If yes, what would you say is the reason (e.g., locals perceive you differently, the country is changing, you are changing …)?

1D) Immigrant's own identity – its importance and possibilities to preserve it

- Are any customs and traditions in your country different from those in Slovakia? Can you give me an example? How important is it for you to preserve them? Can you do that in Slovakia? If yes, are you doing it? If not, why? And is it a problem for you?
- Which language do you speak at home or in your community? Is it important for you to speak your mother tongue? Have you ever experienced any reaction from others when using your mother tongue/language other than Slovak?

2. *Integration in the society*

2A) Following current events in Slovakia

- Do you usually follow news about current events in general? Do you follow news specifically about political and social events in Slovakia? If yes, how often? To what extent is it important for you to follow political and social events in Slovakia?
- Where do you usually get news about political and social events in Slovakia?
- If you want to follow what is happening in Slovakia, do you think you have enough options to do that? Is there any information you're missing/can't get?

2B) Relationships with other people, participation in different groups

- Now I'd like to ask you about your relationships, people you are in touch with, and acquaintances in Slovakia. When you think about the people you meet regularly, who are they? Who are your colleagues, classmates, and neighbours?
- Who are the people you spend time with most often when away from home/family? Are they foreigners, Slovaks?
- Do you meet your colleagues in your free time? Can you tell me who they are? Are they foreigners, Slovaks?
- (If not spending time with Slovaks) Why do you think you are not spending time with locals/Slovaks? Would you say it is important to be in touch with Slovaks when you live here? Would you like to have more links with them? If yes, what are the barriers?
- Are you a member of any communities, societies, or clubs (does not have to be official)? Can you tell me more about them? Who are the people you are meeting there?

3. *Wellbeing*

3A) Satisfaction with life in Slovakia

- When you think about your life, how satisfied are you with how things are going in general? And more specifically, how happy are you with particular aspects of your life (e.g., work, living situation, relationship, health, anything else the respondent wants to refer on).
- Is there anything you'd like to change about your life or any of its aspects? If yes, what would that be? Why? Is such a change possible/realistic? Why yes/no?

- When you think about your country of origin (or another country you used to live in), would you say you are more or less satisfied/happy in Slovakia than you were there? Why do you think you are more/less satisfied here?
- When you think about the time you arrived in Slovakia, would you say you are more or less satisfied with your life now than then? Why is it so?

3B) COVID-19 impact on one's life satisfaction

- When you think about the last year, how did COVID-19 and the restrictions it brought affect your life? And what about your life satisfaction? Are you more or less satisfied/happy?
- And how was your life affected when you think about your everyday activities? For example, when dealing with governmental offices and authorities? When doing activities, which help you integrate into Slovakia (if relevant)? Did it affect your work/your chances of finding a job? Your education/Slovak language course?

4. *Perceived Slovaks'/locals' expectations from migrants – opinions*

4A) Perceived expectations in integration

- An often-repeated opinion about foreigners in Slovakia is that they have to assimilate/adapt to be accepted in the society/by Slovaks. Would you agree with that? What do you think Slovaks expect from foreigners when they say that foreigners should adapt/assimilate? Do you remember a situation when something (specific) was expected from you personally? Can you tell me about this experience?

4B) How realistic are these expectations

- When you think about Slovaks' expectations of foreigners, would you say they are realistic? Can a foreigner fulfil them? How can a foreigner learn about the expectations locals have?

5. *Experience with the process of integration*

5A) Opinion about integration

- What do you think about when somebody says integration? What does this term mean to you? Are you integrating into Slovak society? What or who is helping you in this process (the most)? And how?

- What does a foreigner need when they come to a new country? Would you say that you are getting that in Slovakia?

5B) Opinion about discrimination/disadvantage

- Would you say that you, as a foreigner, are disadvantaged compared to the destination country's population (Slovaks)? If yes, how? In what aspects? Could you give me an example of a specific situation or experience when you felt disadvantaged/discriminated against? (follow up with a question about particular aspects of life – labour market, health care, housing, education (of children), availability of social services, etc.)

5C) Experience with governmental offices and authorities

- What are your general experiences dealing with governmental offices and/or authorities when you needed to get something done? Can you describe to me your best and worst experiences? When you go to any government office to get something done, what usually helps you manage it successfully? And what is usually the most significant barrier you face when dealing with Slovak authorities/offices? In general, what would you say works well and what does not?

5D) Availability of the integration services

- In many countries, specific services are available to foreigners for free to help them integrate (e.g., labour market consultations, assistance with housing, language courses, translators available in governmental offices, etc.). Are there any services like this in Slovakia? (If yes) Which ones? Do you have any personal experience with them? Can you tell me more about it? What do you think about such services in Slovakia in general - Are they adequate, is there enough information about them, and are they available in a language you speak/understand? What could be improved in this regard?
- (If these services are not available in Slovakia) What do you usually do when you need help navigating certain situations (e.g., dealing with authorities)?
- Do you have previous experience from another country with available services for foreigners, which you'd like to see in Slovakia? (If yes) Can you tell me more about them?

6. *Closing questions*

6A) Meaning of home

- What does home mean to you? Do you feel at home in Slovakia? (If yes) What makes you feel like that/helps you feel like that? (If not) Why not?

6B) Feeling at home in Slovakia

- What would help you feel (more) at home in Slovakia?