

CONTACTS WITH CHILDREN AND SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING: DO THE RELATIONSHIPS DIFFER FOR OLDER MIGRANTS AND NATIVES IN EUROPE?

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Background & Research Question

Individual's **perception** of own wellbeing is fundamental to the definition itself of wellbeing: **the only one to really know whether a person is feeling well is the person themselves** (Layard 2005). Furthermore, being satisfied with one's life can help to **manage stress** and adds to **well functioning** in society.

→ We investigate **subjective wellbeing (SWB)** as measured by **life satisfaction**.

Previous literature (e.g., Katz 2009) showed that different dimensions of intergenerational family solidarity contributed significantly to life satisfaction and vary between countries in Europe. Others showed that there are differences in life satisfaction between migrants and natives (Arpino & de Valk 2018).

Does the effect of intergenerational relationships between older parents and adult children on SWB differ between natives and migrants' populations in Europe?

Focus on two central dimensions of **intergenerational solidarity** in parent-child relationships (Bengtson 2001): 1. **associational** solidarity (i.e., frequency of contacts) and 2. **structural** solidarity (i.e., geographical distance).

Data & Method

Data: *Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)*

- Waves 2, 4, 5, 6

Sample selection: respondents aged **50+ years old**

Following Bordone & de Valk (2016), we distinguish **4 regions of residence:**

- Nordic, Continental, Southern, Eastern Europe

Method: **linear regressions with clustered standard errors**

- With interactions with the immigrant dummy variable

Variables

Dependent variable: *Satisfaction with Life Scale*

- "On a scale from 0 to 10, how satisfied are you with your life?"

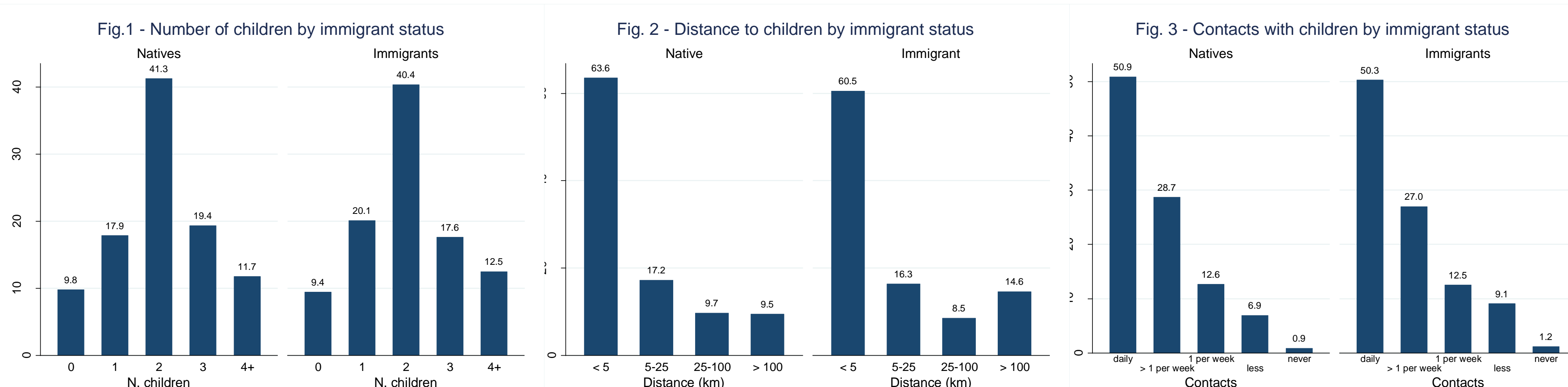
Explanatory variables:

- **Contacts** (daily, >1 per week, 1 per week, less, never);
- **Geographic proximity** (<5, 5-25, 25-100, >100 Km)

Controls: age, marital status, employment status, number of children, rural or urban area, a relative measure of education, household income (deciles by country and year), long-standing illnesses, GALI, survey waves. The analyses are stratified by gender.

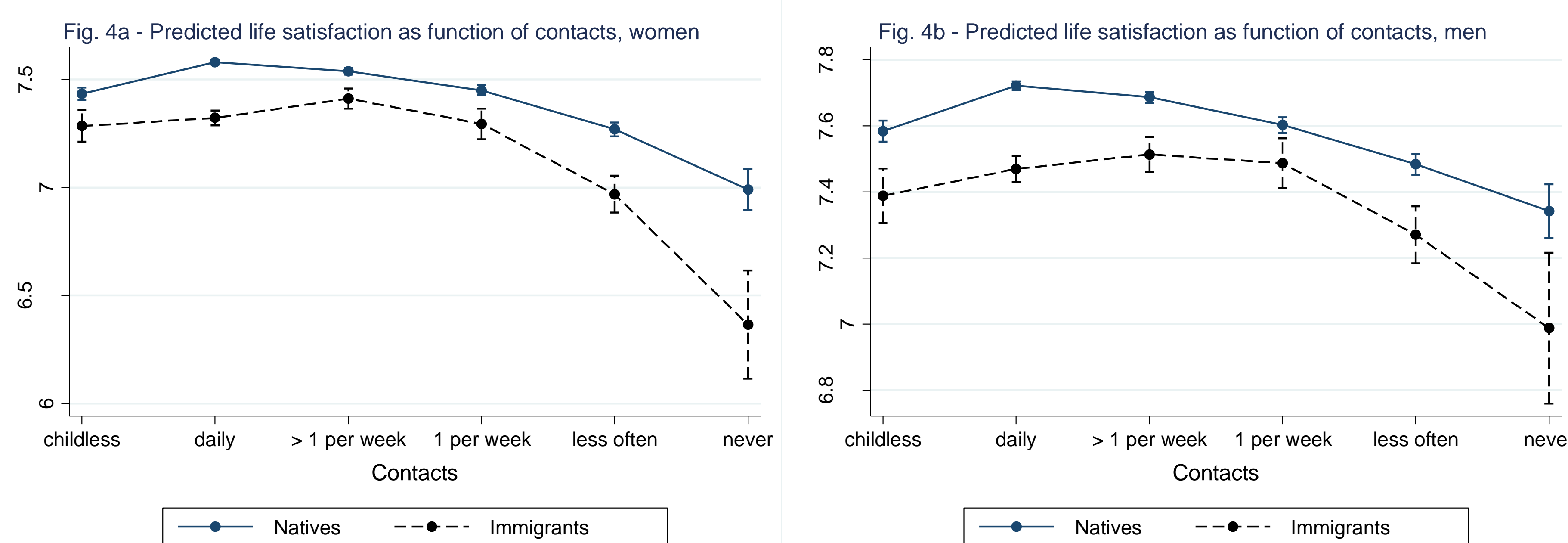
Results

Descriptive findings



- Distribution of the main explanatory variables is very **similar** between immigrants and natives
- Slightly higher percentage of parents who live very far (>100 Km) from all children among immigrants
- Similar distributions by immigrant status were also found for grandchild care

Multivariate results



- **Predicted life satisfaction** by immigrant status for childless individuals and parents with different frequency of contacts with children (women Fig. 4a and men Fig. 4b)
- The models include **interactions** between immigrant status and the categories of contacts
 - Several interactions were statistically **significant**
- For both women and men, parents with **no contact** to their children show the **lowest** levels of **life satisfaction**
 - Stronger effect for immigrants, especially for women

Conclusions

We found **similar distributions** in different measures of intergenerational solidarity **between immigrants and natives older adults** in Europe

- As for the association between contacts with children and life satisfaction, we found a negative effect of having lost contact with children, stronger for immigrants.
- For both women and men and for both immigrants and natives, having frequent contacts with children is significantly associated with life satisfaction.
- The associations between the other intergenerational solidarity measures and life satisfaction were very similar for immigrants and natives.

Next steps:

- We plan to conduct additional analyses to examine heterogeneities related to immigrants' origin (North-West Europe, South Europe, East Europe, America, Africa, Asia).

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