

The European migrant experience

NELI ESIPOVA*
MAGALI RHEAULT*
ANITA PUGLIESE*
KIRTI KANITKAR*

Abstract

The experience of migrants living in 15 European countries was examined across major life domains: Subjective wellbeing, physical, financial, career, social, religion, community, and national institutions. Evaluative and experiential wellbeing ratings are lower among migrants, as well as social connections and attachment to their local community. Financial wellbeing is lowest among newcomers; however, migrants still do not reach the level of the native born after five years in their new country. Migrants are more likely than native born residents to express entrepreneurial spirit and to have confidence in national institutions of their new country.

Keywords: migrants, well-being, new comers, long timers, Europe

Introduction

Between 2004 and 2009, population growth in the 27 European Union member states was primarily the result of net migration (European Commission, 2010). This has heightened interest in and debates on integration. European policy makers, hence, are in need of research tools to make informed decisions. The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), a partnership between the British Council and the Migration Policy Group, is one such tool that assesses integration policy in 31 European and North American countries. MIPEX focuses on measuring several aspects of national legislation, including migrants' access to labour markets, family reunification, education, political participation, residency, naturalization, and anti-discrimination, to determine whether an enabling or disabling integration environment exists in a given country. While tools such as MIPEX are important, the part that is often missing from policy discussions is the opinions of migrants themselves. Gallup's recent research articulates the views and attitudes of those on the move towards integration. It also underlines the need to gauge migrants' wellbeing as quality of life measures are considered to be important for representing national prosperity in Europe (Stiglitz et al., 2009).

Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman makes note of the distinction between two forms of subjective wellbeing: experiential and evaluative (Kahneman and Riis, 2005). As described by Kahneman, experiential wellbeing is concerned with momentary affective states and the way people feel about experiences in real-time, while evaluative wellbeing is the way they remember their experi-

* Neli Esipova, Magali Rheault, Anita Pugliese, and Kirti Kanitkar are all affiliated with Gallup, NJ, USA. E-mail: neli_esipova@gallup.com.

ences after they are over. Evaluative wellbeing may include individual assessments of life domains such as standard of living, housing, job, marriage, and personal health. Experiential wellbeing seeks to bypass the effects of judgment and memory and capture feelings and emotions as close to the subject's immediate experience as possible. Deaton (2008) and Deaton *et al.* (2010) have shown that at the national level evaluative wellbeing is correlated with income, education, and health, suggesting that this form of wellbeing is an important construct to use in analysing the migrant experience.

Building on Kahneman's and Deaton's work, Gallup scientists have identified the main drivers of wellbeing. In *The Five Essential Elements of Wellbeing*, the Gallup researchers discuss the importance of career, social connections, personal economics, personal health, and community to a person's overall wellbeing. Using this framework as a useful structure for analysis, this paper describes the migrant experience in the following life domains: Subjective wellbeing, physical, financial, career, social, religion, community, and national institutions. This multidimensional, comparative analysis helps to 1) better understand migrants' dynamic experience as they become progressively more familiar with the environment of their new country and community and 2) gauge the potential gap between the two migrant classifications and the native born category in terms of fundamental domains of life.

This paper presents data from the Gallup World Poll, an ongoing project that surveys residents in more than 150 countries on a variety of topics. Gallup migrants' opinions collected in 15 EU member states provide important metrics to inform integration policies.

Methodology

Results are based on 25,380 interviews conducted in 2009 and 2010 as part of the larger Gallup World Poll. Between 1,000 and 2,000 interviews were conducted among adults, aged 15 and older, in each of the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Telephone interviews (landline phone or landline/mobile) were conducted in 14 countries; face-to-face interviews were conducted in Greece. In each country, Gallup conducts interviews in the official language. As a result, individuals who do not speak the official language in their country of residence may be under-represented. Of the total sample across 15 countries, 3% of individuals contacted were unable to participate because of a language barrier.

In this study, migrants are classified as either "newcomers," those who moved to their current country of residence less than five years ago, or as "long timers," those who have been living in their current country of residence for at least five years. Both newcomers and long timers are "first-

generation” migrants. Both migrant groups are compared to the “native born”, respondents who said they were born in their country of residence.

Gallup used the following survey questions to categorize respondents into three groups:

Were you born in this country, or not?

If not born in country, ask: In which country were you born?

If not born in country, ask: Did you move to this country within the last five years?

	Sample Size
Native born (those born in their country of residence)	23,032
Long timers (migrants who have lived in their current country of residence for more than five years)	1,928
Newcomers (migrants who have lived in their current country of residence for five years or less)	420

Migrant profiles

Across the 15 countries surveyed, each group exhibits different demographic characteristics (see detailed table in Appendix 1). Migrants’ main countries of origin are other European nations, with an increased proportion of newcomers who say they were born in Latin America. Long timers are more likely than newcomers to come from very-high-development countries, while the latter are more likely to hail from high- and medium-human-development nations. Newcomers are more likely to be young, as one-half are younger than age 30, and long timers are most likely to have a university degree. Compared with the native born, migrants are more likely to be unemployed (not working and actively looking for work) or underemployed (unemployed or working part time but wanting full-time work), demonstrating the potential economic challenges among migrants in these countries.⁶

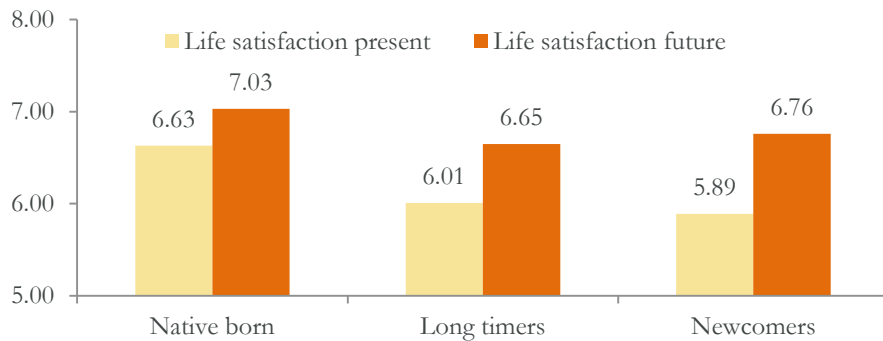
Wellbeing and attitudes can vary with age, gender and education. In order to ensure comparability of the three groups, demographic variables of age, gender and education were used as covariates in the analysis. The results below represent means and percentages that have been adjusted for age, gender and education differences between the groups. Not adjusting for age, gender, and education would leave the analysis open to the confounding influences of these demographic characteristics on wellbeing and domains of life.

Life domains

The **subjective wellbeing** domain addresses the two main types of subjective wellbeing: evaluative and experiential. Worldwide, Gallup measures evaluative wellbeing using the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale (Cantril, 1965), which asks *individuals* to rate their present and future lives on a ladder scale

with steps numbered from 0 to 10, with 0 being the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life.

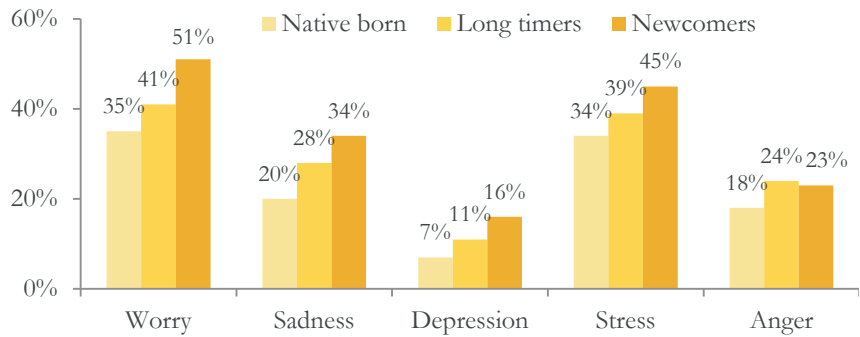
Figure 1: Migrants’ evaluative wellbeing is lower than the native born (mean ratings)



Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

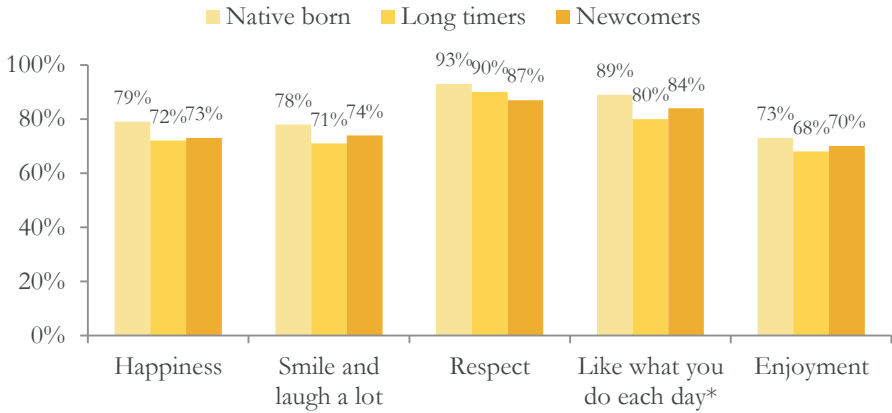
Migrants provide significantly lower ratings of their present and future lives than the native born. Newcomers’ and long timers’ ratings of *their present lives* are significantly lower than the native born (Figure 1), revealing that even after five years, migrants’ wellbeing does not reach the level of the native born. Both migrant groups also give lower ratings to their future lives than the native born. However, the large gap between migrants’ ratings of their present and future lives suggests a sense of hope or optimism.

Figure 2: Migrants are more likely than the native born to report negative experiences



Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

Figure 3: Migrants are less likely than the native born to report positive experiences



Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

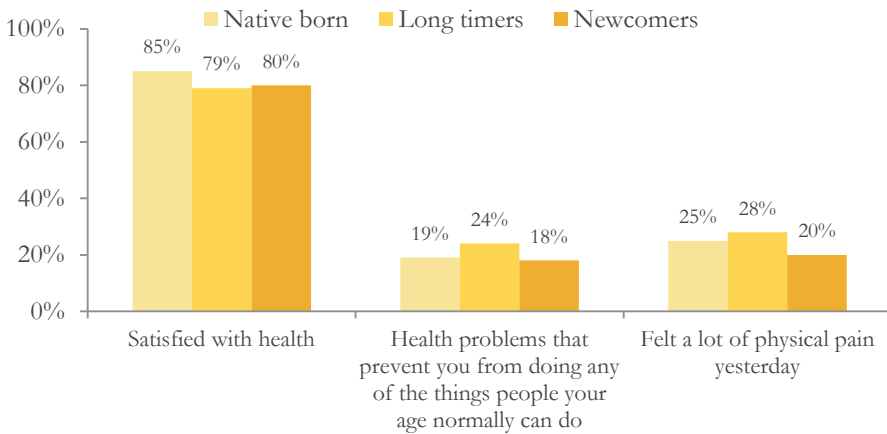
** Data collected in 2010 only.*

Measures of experiential wellbeing also reveal that migrants' emotional picture is less positive than that of the native born (Figures 2 and 3). Newcomers are the most likely to report feeling a lot of worry, sadness, depression and stress, while anger is equally reported among both migrant groups. When asked about positive experiences, migrants are less likely than the native born to report feeling a lot of such emotions the day before the survey, although the differences are not as large as for negative emotions.

The **physical** domain addresses aspects of individuals' subjective health. While health is a fundamental component of the human experience, it encompasses objective clinical assessments and subjective reports of disability, function, and sensory symptoms. For example, some researchers indicate that while objective health measures gauge the "patient's degree of health," subjective measures "translate that objective assessment into the actual quality of life experienced" (Testa and Simonson, 1996). As a result, subjective quality of life and health measures are increasingly incorporated into clinical research studies.

Satisfaction with personal health is higher among the native born than among migrants. Reports of feeling a lot of physical pain and health problems are slightly higher among long timers than the other two groups (Figure 4). As healthy individuals may be the most likely candidates to leave their country, it may explain, at least in part, such a lack of difference in subjective-health perceptions. Further research is needed to better understand migrants' health perceptions and their actual health outcomes.

Figure 4: Long timers more likely to report health problems and physical pain



Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

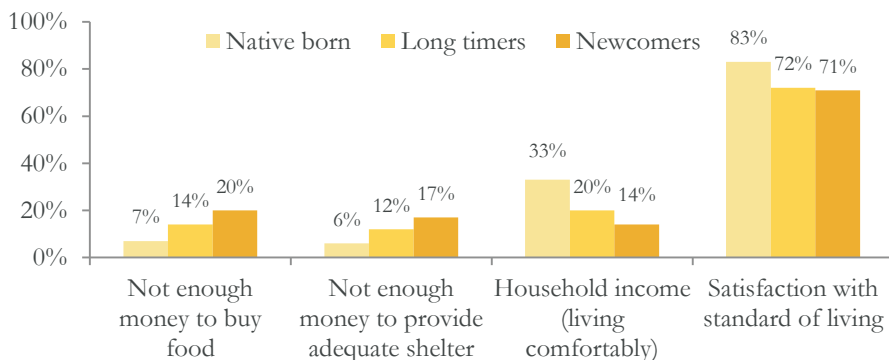
The **financial** domain addresses individuals' financial situation. It focuses on migrants' perceptions of household income, standard of living, and basic needs.

With respect to very basic needs, relatively large proportions of migrants report lacking money to buy food and to provide shelter for themselves and their families in the past 12 months (Figure 5). Long timers are less likely than newcomers to report having such financial difficulties. Also, long timers are more likely than newcomers to say they live comfortably on their present household income. One would expect that long timers -with a better financial situation- would rate their standard of living higher than newcomers. But, satisfaction with standard of living is the same for both migrant groups.

While migrants' personal economics appear to improve with time, their financial situation still lags that of the native born. Higher proportions of unemployed and underemployed migrants may explain, at least in part, the ongoing financial difficulties many migrants face, even after five years of residence in their adopted country. More research is necessary to measure changes in migrants' financial wellbeing over longer periods of time.

These results reveal that life evaluation and standard of living do not show the same improvement as basic economic indicators. It is necessary to examine non-economic factors to more fully understand the migrant's experience.

Figure 5: Migrants' financial wellbeing improves over time, but not satisfaction with standard of living

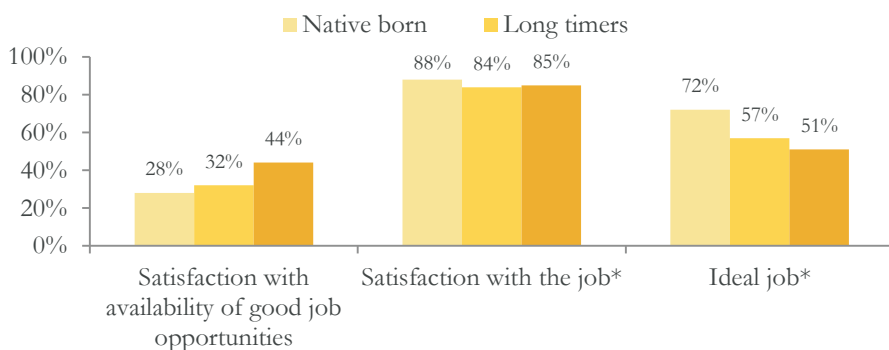


Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

The **career** domain addresses several aspects of the job climate and perceptions of entrepreneurship, including potential obstacles to business creation (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Newcomers are optimistic about job opportunities; migrants less likely than the native born to say their job is ideal

183



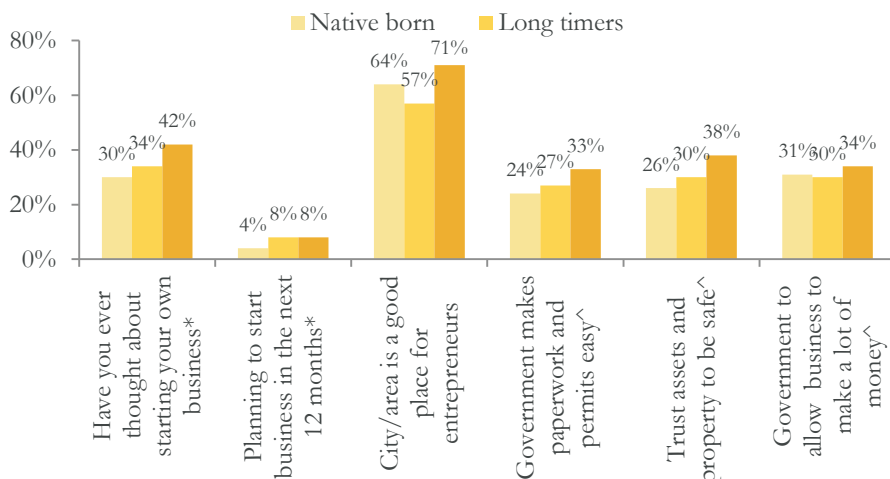
Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

**Data collected in 2010 only, among those who are working.*

Newcomers express the most optimism about potential job opportunities. Among those who say they are working, strong majorities among all three groups say they are satisfied with the work they do. But when asked if their job is the ideal one for them, migrants are far less likely than the native born to say this is the case.

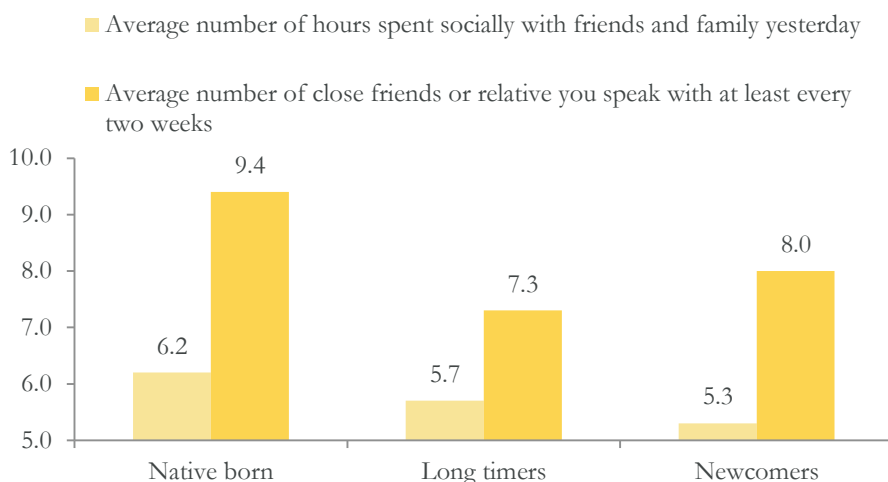
Self-employment and business ownership are often presented as part of the successful migrant experience and an important path to socio-economic integration. When asked about their interest in entrepreneurship, migrants are more likely than the native born to say they have thought about starting their own business and to plan to launch one in the next 12 months, revealing migrants' entrepreneurial spirit (Figure 7). Newcomers are the most likely to say their communities are good places for entrepreneurs forming new businesses and are the most positive about the ease of starting a business. While newcomers' enthusiasm may decrease over time, plans to start a business among migrants remain twice as high as the native born. These data demonstrate migrants' potential socio-economic contribution through self-employment in their new country.

Figure 7: Migrants are the most likely to plan starting a business

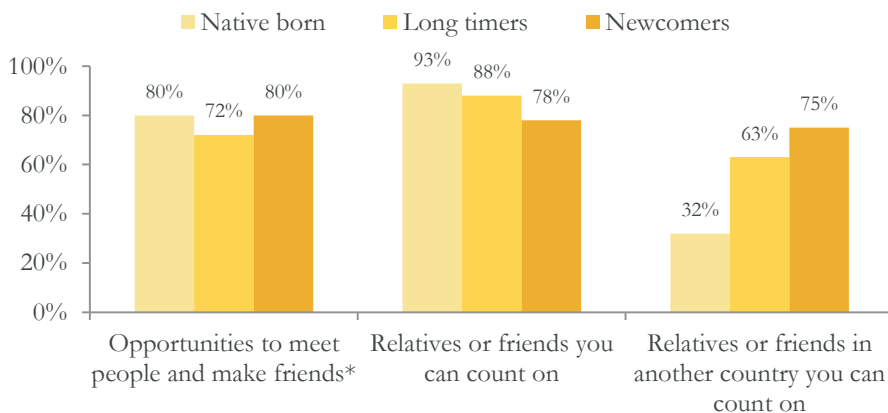


*Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education. *Data collected in 2010 only. ^Data collected in 2009 only; excludes Belgium, Finland, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.*

The **social** domain addresses several aspects of individuals' social connections and relationships. Migrants' social and family connections are less widespread, even among long timers, than those of the native born (Figure 8). On average, migrants report fewer close friends and relatives they speak with at least every two weeks. Migrants' social time, measured as the average number of hours individuals say they spend with friends or relatives the day before the survey, also trails that of the native born. This is particularly true for newcomers who report an average of 5.3 hours of social time during the previous day, compared with 6.2 hours for the native born.

Figure 8: Migrants report fewer social connections than the native born

Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education. Data collected in 2010 only.

Figure 9: Long timers' international social network wanes over time

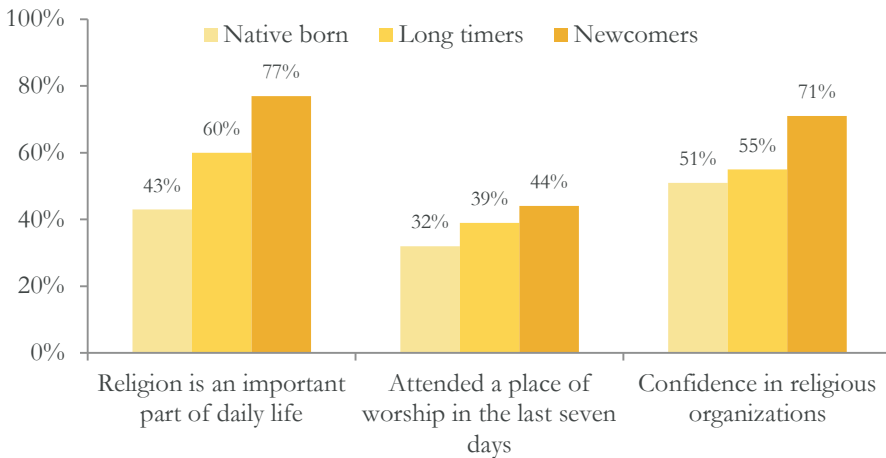
*Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education. *Data collected in 2010 only.*

Long timers are the least likely to report satisfaction with the opportunity to meet people and make friends in their communities (Figure 9). While strong majorities of all three groups say they can count on relatives or friends to help them if they were in trouble, newcomers are the least likely to report having such a network. Migrants' social networks also extend to other countries, and are particularly prevalent among newcomers. These findings suggest that with time, migrants rely less on their connections in their home country while they have yet to establish a well-developed social network in the country where they currently live.

The **religion** domain gauges the role of religion in individuals' lives. For many, religion plays important social and community functions, in addition to the guidance that religious teachings can provide. Religious celebrations and services bring people together and can help them establish their first social connections in a community.

The importance of religion in the lives of migrants is much higher than for the native born, especially among newcomers (Figure 10). Newcomers are far more likely than long timers and the native born to say religion is an important part of their daily lives, to report attendance at a religious service, and to have confidence in religious institutions. More research is needed to determine if lower religiosity among long timers is the result of a decline in religiosity in their new country, or if religion always played a lesser role in their lives compared with the newcomer cohort.

Figure 10: Religiosity is highest among newcomers



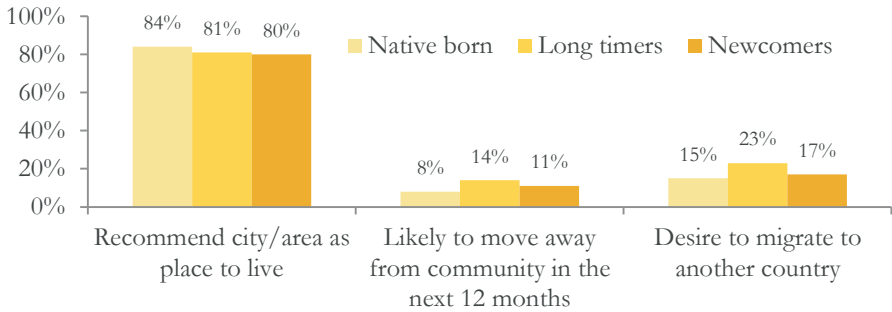
Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

The **community** domain measures attitudes toward and attachment to one's community, the community's openness to diverse groups, and civic participation.

Large majorities of all three groups are satisfied with their city or area as a place to live and would recommend it to others. At the same time, migrants (especially long timers) are more likely than the native born to say they plan to move away from their community in the next 12 months or would like to migrate to another country (Figure 11). Approximately one-third of long timers who desire to migrate say they would like to move back to their home country. These findings suggest that some migrants may not be fully attached to their area/country of residence. This may be the result of migrants being

more mobile by nature, rather than being dissatisfied with the area/country or feeling a sense of nostalgia.

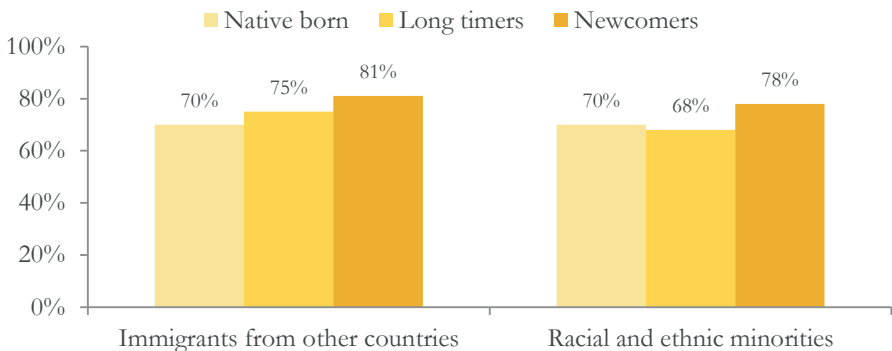
Figure 11: Migrants less attached to their current community



Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

Perceptions of community openness to diversity based on race, ethnicity, or any other attribute are another important measure to better understand the migrant experience. Gallup's data show that when migrants move to their new country, they have a positive perception of their new community's attitude toward immigrants and racial/ethnic minorities (Figure 12). But long timers perceive their local community to be less accepting of diversity, which is closer to the perceptions of the native born.

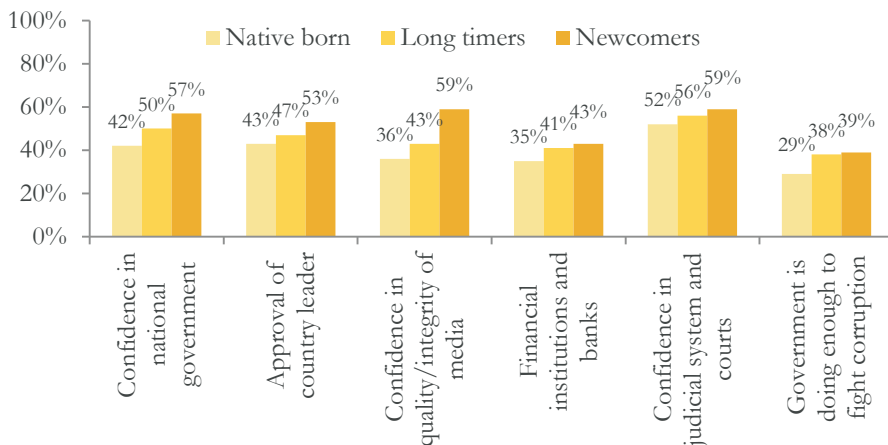
Figure 12: Long timers less likely than newcomers to say their communities are good places to live for diverse groups



Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

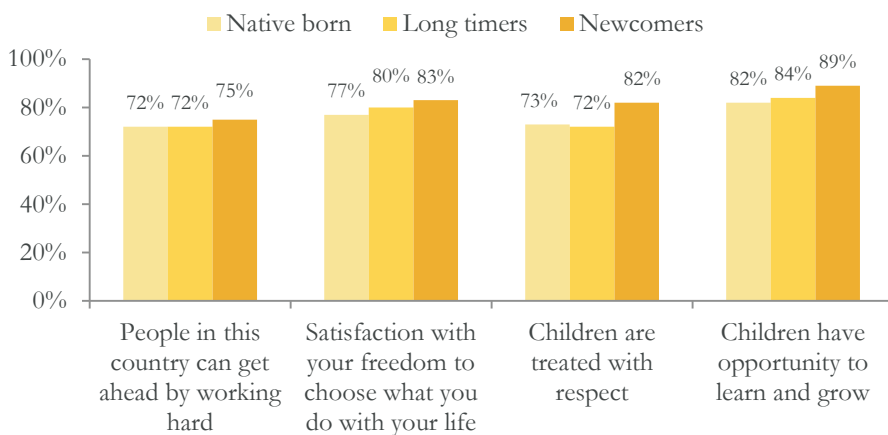
The **national institutions** domain seeks to measure individuals' attitudes toward the various aspects of the country where they currently reside, including institutional confidence, corruption, and potential for personal growth.

Figure 13: Institutional confidence is highest among migrants, especially newcomers



Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

Figure 14: Strong majorities in all three groups are positive about personal freedoms, meritocracy, and youth development



Note: Data are adjusted by age, gender, and education.

Migrants' attitudes toward their adopted country's national institutions such as the national government and the judicial system are important for the integration debate. Despite the claims that migrants allegedly reject

their new country's institutions, our results show that migrants, especially newcomers, are more positive than the native born toward performance of their adopted country's various governing institutions.

With this relatively positive attitude toward the institutional framework of their adopted country, migrants also express confidence in their ability to improve their personal situation. Many migrants believe they can get ahead by working hard and are satisfied with the freedom to choose what they do with their life.

Such attitudes about living in a free and meritocratic environment, combined with migrants' interest in business creation, may provide critical elements for migrants' fusion into the socio-demographic fabric of their new community. Migrants believe that their country of residence provides an environment conducive to bettering their lives, while also providing opportunities for young people. Many migrants, especially newcomers, believe children are treated with respect and have opportunities to learn and develop.

Conclusion

Quantifying the migrant experience in major life domains -subjective wellbeing, physical, financial, career, social, religion, community, and national institutions- provides a comprehensive picture of newcomers' and long timers' overall wellbeing. In the 15 European countries studied, Gallup's data reveal that migrants are not as well off as the native born residents. The current findings reveal that while migrants' financial wellbeing improves with their length of residence in their adopted country, their life evaluation remains relatively flat. These results suggest that factors other than economics are at play in migrants' evaluative wellbeing.

Evaluative and experiential wellbeing ratings are lower among migrants, as well as social connections and attachment to their local community. Financial wellbeing improves with length of stay in the country; however, migrants still do not reach the level of the native born after five years in their new country. This analysis reveals that compared with native born residents, migrants -especially newcomers- are more likely to be in the workforce, more likely to be unemployed/underemployed, and those working are less likely to be in their "ideal" job. At the same time, migrants exhibit a higher entrepreneurial spirit than the native born, and in this way have the potential to make important contributions to job creation and economic success of a country.

Migrants -especially newcomers- show greater confidence in various national institutions than the native born, including more confidence in the national government, country leadership, judicial system, financial institutions, and the media. In addition, migrants are positive about their adopted country in terms of personal freedom, meritocracy, and youth development. Therefore, as a whole, migrants are not only accepting of their adopted country's institutions, but are even more aligned attitudinally than native born residents.

Some measures of wellbeing show improvement with length of stay in migrants' adopted country -financial wellbeing and job status appear to improve and negative experiences decline. In other areas, newcomers are significantly more positive than long timers, suggesting higher optimism and expectations that could decline over time. Perceptions of acceptance of racial/ethnic diversity, ease of starting new businesses, confidence in national institutions, level of personal freedom, and youth development are higher among newcomers than long timers. However, these "rose-coloured glasses" may come off after migrants live in their adopted country for more than five years.

Further research will attempt to better understand the calculus of migration. The migrant experience involves benefits *and* costs. Regardless of the reasons why individuals leave their country of origin, be it for political, economic, or other reasons, the quest for a better life in a foreign land also means a loss in other personal ways. Such costs can translate into negative emotional experiences and a sense of isolation as individuals miss relatives and friends or even their own way of life. As such, Gallup will attempt to provide a measure of what migrants "gain" and "lose" as compared with those who stay in their home country.

References

- Cantril, H. (1965). *The pattern of human concerns*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Deaton, A. (2008). Income, health, and well-being around the world: Evidence from the Gallup World Poll. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 22 (2): 53-72.
- Deaton, A., Fortson, J. and Tortora, R. (2010). *International Differences in Wellbeing*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- European Commission (2010). Eurostat regional yearbook.
- Kahneman, D. and Riis, J. (2005). Living, and thinking about it: Two perspectives on life. In: F.A. Huppert, N. Baylis & B. Keverne (Eds.), *The science of well-being*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, pp. 285-304.
- Stiglitz, J. E., Sen, A., and Fitoussi, J.P. (2009). *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*.
- Testa, M. A. and Simonson, D. C. (1996). Assessments of quality-of-life outcomes. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. 334(13): 835-840.

Appendix 1: Demographic Profile

	Native Born	Long Timers	Newcomers
15 to 29-year-olds	21%	23%	50%
30 to 44-year-olds	25%	31%	38%
45 to 59-year-olds	25%	25%	10%
60 years old and older	29%	21%	2%
Up to 8 years of education	22%	17%	22%
9 to 16 years of education	64%	61%	63%
Completed university	15%	22%	16%
Men	47%	46%	55%
Women	53%	54%	45%
Christian	75%	59%	68%
Muslim	1%	16%	17%
Secular	20%	15%	9%
In the workforce	55%	63%	74%
Unemployed	8%	13%	20%
Underemployed	19%	28%	42%
Born in the European Union	100%	40%	32%
Born in the rest of Europe		10%	10%
Born in Latin America		12%	34%
Born in developing Asia		5%	3%
Born in the Commonwealth of Independent States		10%	3%
Born in the Middle East North Africa region		13%	7%
Born in other regions		2%	2%
Very high human development		41%	24%
High human development		38%	47%
Medium human development		14%	24%
Low human development		8%	5%

TMiE 2012

Turkish Migration in Europe: Projecting the next 50 years

Venue: Regent's College London, Regent's Park, NW1 4NS UK

TMiE aims to bring researchers, scholars, policy makers and practitioners together to discuss current and potential future trends, patterns and possibilities for Turkish migration in Europe. Below is a selection of planned special sessions.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Prof Tariq Modood (Bristol University, UK)

Prof Thomas Faist (Bielefeld University, Germany)

Prof Philip L. Martin (University of California Davis, USA)

Prof Kemal Kirişçi (Boğaziçi University, Turkey)

Conference Chairs: Ibrahim Sirkeci (Regent's College London), Philip L Martin (University of California, Davis), Franck Düvell (University of Oxford), Zeynep Engin (London Centre for Social Studies).

Special Sessions for the Academic Stream:

- Household and Migration (Convenor: J. Cohen)
- Turkish State and Its Relations with Turkish Migrants/Diaspora (Convenor: K. Kirişçi)
 - Law and Migration in Turkey (Convenor: K. Kirişçi)
 - Conflict and Migration (Convenor: I. Sirkeci)
- Turkey as an Immigration Country (Convenor: K. Kirişçi)
- International Institutions, Europeanization and Turkish Migration Policies (Convenor: K. Kirişçi)
 - Other and Otherness in Turkish Migration (Convenor: TBC)

Special Sessions for the Policy/Practitioner Stream:

- Civic and Political Participation of the Turkish-speaking Populations in Europe (Convenors: K. Oktem (TBC), Z. Engin)
- Potential Impact of Turkish Migration in the Event of Turkey Acceding to the EU (Convenors: A. Mehmet MVO, Z. Engin)

Postgraduate Workshop Sessions:

- Postgraduate Workshop: Methods in Migration Studies (Convenors: F. Düvell, M. Hebing, M. Luca, I. Sirkeci)