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INCLUSIVE SEEDS: A MULTI-INFORMANT APPROACH TO DISENTANGLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ATTITUDES TOWARD MIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICIES AND THE PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF NATIVE ITALIAN AND MIGRANT ADOLESCENTS.

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English Abstract

Understanding how adolescents develop positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies is vital, given the key role these policies play in fostering greater social cohesion. This development cannot occur in isolation and cannot be attributed solely to the personal characteristics of adolescents. Instead, it is profoundly influenced by various contexts, ranging from the most proximal to the more distal, in which adolescents are embedded. At the same time, the study of inclusive orientations cannot be limited to the majority ethnic group. Still, it should also include the minority group, as both actively participate and have to adjust to contemporary multicultural societies. In light of this, the present dissertation tried to capture the influence of different factors related to the micro- (i.e., family and school) and macro- (i.e., municipality) contexts to understand better how adolescents with and without a migrant background develop positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies and adjust to contemporary multicultural societies. The first chapter provided an overview of the main theoretical underpinnings of the current dissertation, which is informed by ecological systems theory. Chapter 2 presented evidence from an initial study where a new instrument was developed to assess adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies, exploring individual and generational differences. Finally, the influences of family (Chapter 3), school (Chapters 4 and 5), and municipality (Chapter 6) contexts in shaping adolescents' inclusive attitudes and psychosocial adaptation were examined.

In Chapter 2, the psychometric properties of the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale were evaluated, and possible differences in inclusive attitudes among adolescents based on their personal characteristics were examined. In addition, differences between adolescents and two key adult figures (i.e., parents and teachers) were assessed, indicating that adolescents occupied a middle ground between their parents and teachers, highlighting the importance of considering the various life contexts (e.g., family and school) in which adolescents are embedded.

Delving deeper into understanding the influence of various contexts, Chapter 3 examined how the family context, through intergenerational transmission processes, could influence adolescents' inclusive orientations. The study's findings highlighted that fathers played a fundamental role in shaping their children's inclusive attitudes, and this influence was consistent across both majority and minority families. At the same time, specific characteristics, such as the father's political orientation and the support this figure provides, could make this process bidirectional or strengthen it.

Moving to the school context, Chapters 4 and 5 emphasized how adolescents' personal development in this domain and school management of diversity could significantly impact youth inclusiveness and psychosocial adaptation, respectively. In particular, developing a more stable educational identity among adolescents, whether from a migrant background or not, was associated with more positive attitudes toward integration policies. Furthermore, a school environment where teachers treated their students equitably promoted greater school attachment, facilitating better social adaptation among students, regardless of their background. However, the interest shown by teachers in students' cultural backgrounds could negatively affect migrant youth.

Finally, Chapter 6 analyzed the role of ethnic and cultural diversity within the macro-context (i.e., municipality) in light of adolescents' personal experiences and characteristics. The results showed how the context could negatively affect adolescents, both with and without a migrant background, depending on their intergroup experiences.

Lastly, the concluding chapter (Chapter 7) summarized and discussed the main findings of the current dissertation in light of its strengths and limitations. Additionally, it highlighted the main theoretical and practical implications of this work. This dissertation underscored the importance of adopting an ecological approach when building interventions to foster adolescents' inclusiveness and psychosocial adjustment.

Keywords. Inclusive Attitudes, Adolescence, Contexts, Integration Policies, Psychosocial Adjustment.

Abstract Italiano

Comprendere come gli adolescenti sviluppano atteggiamenti positivi verso le politiche di integrazione è fondamentale, data l'importanza di queste politiche nel promuovere una maggiore coesione sociale. Questo sviluppo non può avvenire in isolamento e non può essere attribuito unicamente alle caratteristiche personali degli adolescenti. Al contrario, è profondamente influenzato da vari contesti, che vanno dai più prossimi ai più distali, in cui gli adolescenti sono immersi. Allo stesso tempo, lo studio degli orientamenti inclusivi non può essere limitato al gruppo etnico maggioritario, ma dovrebbe includere anche il gruppo minoritario, poiché entrambi partecipano attivamente e devono adattarsi alle società multiculturali contemporanee. Alla luce di ciò, la presente tesi ha cercato di comprendere l'influenza di diversi fattori legati ai contesti micro- (famiglia e scuola) e macro- (comuni) per comprendere meglio come gli adolescenti con e senza un background migratorio sviluppano atteggiamenti positivi verso le politiche di integrazione dei migranti e si adattano alle società multiculturali contemporanee. Il primo capitolo fornisce una panoramica delle principali basi teoriche della presente tesi, basata sulla teoria dei sistemi ecologici. Il Capitolo 2 presenta prove di uno studio iniziale in cui è stato sviluppato un nuovo strumento per valutare gli atteggiamenti degli adolescenti verso le politiche di integrazione dei migranti, esplorando le differenze individuali e generazionali. Infine, vengono esaminati le influenze dei contesti familiare (Capitolo 3), scolastico (Capitoli 4 e 5) e municipale (Capitolo 6) nella formazione degli atteggiamenti inclusivi e nell'adattamento psicosociale durante l'adolescenza.

Nel Capitolo 2, sono state valutate le proprietà psicometriche della scala Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP), esaminando allo stesso tempo le possibili differenze negli atteggiamenti inclusivi tra gli adolescenti, basate sulle loro caratteristiche personali. Inoltre, sono state esaminate differenze tra adolescenti e due figure adulte chiave (genitori e insegnanti), evidenziando come gli adolescenti occupino una posizione intermedia tra i loro genitori e insegnanti, anticipando l'importanza di considerare i vari contesti di vita (ad esempio, famiglia e scuola) in cui gli adolescenti sono immersi.

Entrando più nel vivo del comprendere l'influenza dei vari contesti, il Capitolo 3 analizza come il contesto familiare, attraverso i processi di trasmissione intergenerazionale, sia in grado di influenzare gli orientamenti inclusivi degli adolescenti. I risultati dello studio hanno evidenziato come, in famiglie con o senza background migratorio, sia il padre a rivestire un ruolo fondamentale, influenzando gli atteggiamenti dei propri figli. Allo stesso tempo, specifiche caratteristiche, come l'orientamento politico del padre e il supporto ricevuto da quest'ultimo, possono rendere questa trasmissione bidirezionale e più forte, rispettivamente.

Passando al contesto scolastico, i Capitoli 4 e 5 evidenziano come lo sviluppo personale degli adolescenti in questo ambito e la gestione della diversità da parte della scuola possano influenzare significativamente l'inclusività e l'adattamento psicosociale degli adolescenti, rispettivamente. In particolare, lo sviluppo di un'identità scolastica più stabile tra adolescenti con o senza background migratorio è associato a atteggiamenti più positivi verso le politiche di integrazione. Inoltre, un contesto scolastico in cui gli insegnanti trattano equamente i propri studenti sembra favorire un maggiore attaccamento scolastico, che a sua volta facilita un miglior adattamento sociale degli studenti, indipendentemente dal loro background culturale. Tuttavia, l'interesse mostrato dagli insegnanti verso il background culturale può avere effetti negativi sugli studenti con background migratorio.

Nel Capitolo 6, è stata analizzata l'importanza della diversità etnica e culturale del macrocontesto (comune) alla luce anche delle caratteristiche personali e delle esperienze intergruppi degli adolescenti. I risultati hanno mostrato come il contesto possa avere effetti negativi sull'inclusività degli adolescenti, sia con che senza background migratorio, a seconda delle loro esperienze intergruppi.

Infine, il capitolo conclusivo (Capitolo 7) riassume e discute i principali risultati della presente tesi, alla luce dei suoi punti di forza e limitazioni. Inoltre, vengono evidenziate le principali implicazioni teoriche e pratiche di questo lavoro. La tesi sottolinea l'importanza di adottare un

approccio ecologico nella costruzione di interventi che possano promuovere l'inclusività e l'adattamento psicosociale degli adolescenti.

Parole Chiave. Atteggiamenti Inclusivi, Adolescenza, Contesti, Politiche di Integrazione, Adattamento Psicosociale.

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1 Chapter

General Introduction

General Introduction

Ethnic and cultural diversity is a defining characteristic of modern societies. In 2020, there were 281 million migrants worldwide, representing 3.6% of the global population (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). That same year, in the European Union, there were about 1.9 million migrants from non-EU countries (EUROSTAT, 2022). Italy, where the studies of this dissertation were conducted, is one of the European countries with the highest proportion of individuals with a migrant background (United Nations, 2019), accounting for 10.6% of its population (ISTAT, 2023). Migrants in Italy originate from a wide range of countries, primarily from Eastern Europe (e.g., Romania, Albania, and Ukraine), North Africa (e.g., Morocco), and Asia (e.g., China). Most are second-generation immigrants, while first-generation immigrants come to Italy mainly for work or family reasons, such as family reunification (ISTAT, 2023).

This increasing ethnic and cultural diversity presents significant challenges for both individuals with and without a migrant background. The former refers to the minority group[1] in Italy, consisting of individuals either born in a different country or with at least one parent born abroad (e.g., European Commission, 2023), while the latter represents the majority group, consisting of individuals born in the residing country along with their parents. On the one hand, individuals from the majority group may perceive the changes resulting from multiculturalism as a threat, which could lead to more intergroup tensions instead of harmony (Kunst et al., 2021). On the other hand, individuals with a migrant background have to adjust to the host societies by overcoming various barriers (e.g., educational, cultural, or economic; Medarić et al., 2022). To foster greater cohesion and harmony between these two groups, focusing on the integration process and the factors that can facilitate it becomes essential.

[1] As ethnic and cultural diversity is strongly tied to migration in Italy (the context of the present study), the terms "ethnic minority", "with a migrant background", and "migrant" are interchangeably used in this dissertation.

How to Foster Integration in Contemporary Multicultural Societies

According to the Acculturation Theory (Berry, 1997), integration is one of the possible outcomes of the encounter between majority and minority members. In this vein, integration is ensured when individuals with a migrant background balance their identification with the host culture while maintaining a strong connection with their heritage culture (Berry, 2009). Notably, integration depends not only on the minority groups' perspective but also on that of the majority groups and their reciprocal influence as theoretical advances in the acculturation literature, such as those proposed by the Interactive Acculturation Model (Bourhis et al., 1997) and the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (Navas et al., 2007), have emphasized. Indeed, acculturation strategies endorsed by the minority groups (i.e., integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization) can correspond to different degrees to their preferences and to the expectations of the majority group depending on the specific areas of their life (e.g., political versus family; Navas et al., 2007). At the same time, while members of the majority group prefer integration or assimilation attitudes in most life spheres, minority members try to adjust to the mainstream culture in areas necessary for social integration, such as the labor market, but not in their private areas, such as religion (Navas et al., 2007).

In addition to considering different perspectives of minority and majority groups across multiple life domains, the Intergenerational Integration Model (Esser, 2004) underscores that the integration of people with a migrant background can be conceived as a reflection of their opportunity to participate in the social system, to experience low social inequality and differentiation. These aspects can lead to a society characterized by less conflict and more cohesion (Esser, 2004). Thus, a key approach to enhance them is by focusing, at the country level, on policies that guarantee equal rights (e.g., equal rights to work), opportunities (e.g., political participation), and security (e.g., permanent residence) for people with a migrant background (Solano & Huddleston, 2020).

Societies that promote diversity and develop policies supporting the integration of people with a migrant background can reduce the risk of acculturative stress and its negative consequences for ethnic minority and majority groups (Rudmin, 2010). At the same time, the naturalization intentions (i.e., the desire to acquire citizenship; Politi et al., 2022) and civic engagement (i.e., volunteer activities; Manatschal & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014) of individuals with a migrant background increase when integration policies are more inclusive. Furthermore, the development and implementation of these policies not only facilitate the integration of people with a migrant background but also promote greater social cohesion (Green et al., 2020; Watters et al., 2020), enhancing inclusiveness (Kim & Byun, 2019; Schlueter et al., 2020), and reducing anti-immigrant prejudices (Kende et al., 2022) among members of the majority group. Inclusive integration policies are also particularly important for new generations, as evidence shows how they can foster more positive inter-ethnic attitudes (Kim & Byun, 2019) and greater support for migrants' rights (Barber et al., 2013) among adolescents from the majority group.

Given the importance of these integration policies, specific tools have been proposed to monitor to what extent countries implement policies that promote the integration of people with a migrant background. The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX; Solano & Huddleston, 2020) pursues this goal by understanding how much countries implement various policies (i.e., labor market mobility, family reunification, access to nationality, anti-discrimination, political participation, education, health, and permanent residence) emphasizing the importance of considering individuals' different life domains in the integration process (Navas et al., 2007). However, while instruments like the MIPEX focus on the country's overall approach to integration, little is known about how individuals, especially youth, perceive these policies and which factors can influence these perceptions. Understanding this might help to capture future support for migrant integration policies and, ultimately, foster social cohesion rather than conflict.

The Perception of the Surrounding World During Adolescence

During adolescence, youth form and consolidate their perspectives toward themselves (Crocetti, 2018) and the world around them (Eger et al., 2022), making this developmental period pivotal for shaping societal attitudes and developing inclusive orientations that set the foundation for their future adult perspectives (Rekker et al., 2015). The way adolescents approach the increasing diversity surrounding them and, thus, the likelihood of developing more or less inclusive attitudes may depend on certain individual characteristics of adolescents (Svensson & Syed, 2023). In this regard, *sex* seems to play an essential role in the development of attitudes toward minority groups, both for adolescents and adults (for a meta-analysis, see Dozo, 2015). Specifically, females are generally found to be more likely than males to reject racial exclusion and show greater sensitivity to fairness and integration issues, particularly in ethnically diverse settings (Killen et al., 2011), likely due to gender socialization practices that foster greater empathy and other orientation in girls (Van der Graaff et al., 2014).

Adolescents from different *age groups* might also differ in their openness to others. For instance, adolescents refine their cognitive competencies as they grow up, reducing their dichotomous thinking in favor of a more nuanced view of reality . Similarly, adolescence is a crucial phase for the advancements of morals (Bajovic & Rizzo, 2021) and socio-emotional competencies, such as empathy (Van der Graaff et al., 2020), that guide their approach to the social world. These advancements can promote the development of tolerant and inclusive attitudes toward diverse others (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2021), supporting adolescents' adjustment to current multicultural societies. However, as adolescents grow up, they can also show decreased social trust when perceiving others as a possible threat to their future job transitions (Flanagan & Stout, 2010), leading to less positive intergroup attitudes. Given the combination of these contrasting forces, it is therefore unclear whether adolescents become more inclusive with age or if, on the contrary, their intergroup attitudes do not show mean level changes due to these opposite factors, as shown by recent evidence on the development of prejudice (for a meta-analysis, see Crocetti et al., 2021).

Furthermore, beyond the role of sex and age groups, the *ethnic background* of adolescents might influence their attitudes toward diversity. Specifically, prior research has indicated that adolescents with a migrant background tend to have low anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g., Hjerm, 2009) and display significant decreases in xenophobia over time (van Zalk et al., 2013). However, this tendency can be moderated by generational status, with studies indicating that second-generation immigrant adolescents report higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes compared to their first-generation peers and very similar attitudes to those of the majority group (e.g., Valentova & Berzosa, 2012). Thus, to better understand what influences support for migrant integration policies among adolescents with a migrant background, it is crucial to examine the influence of these personal characteristics.

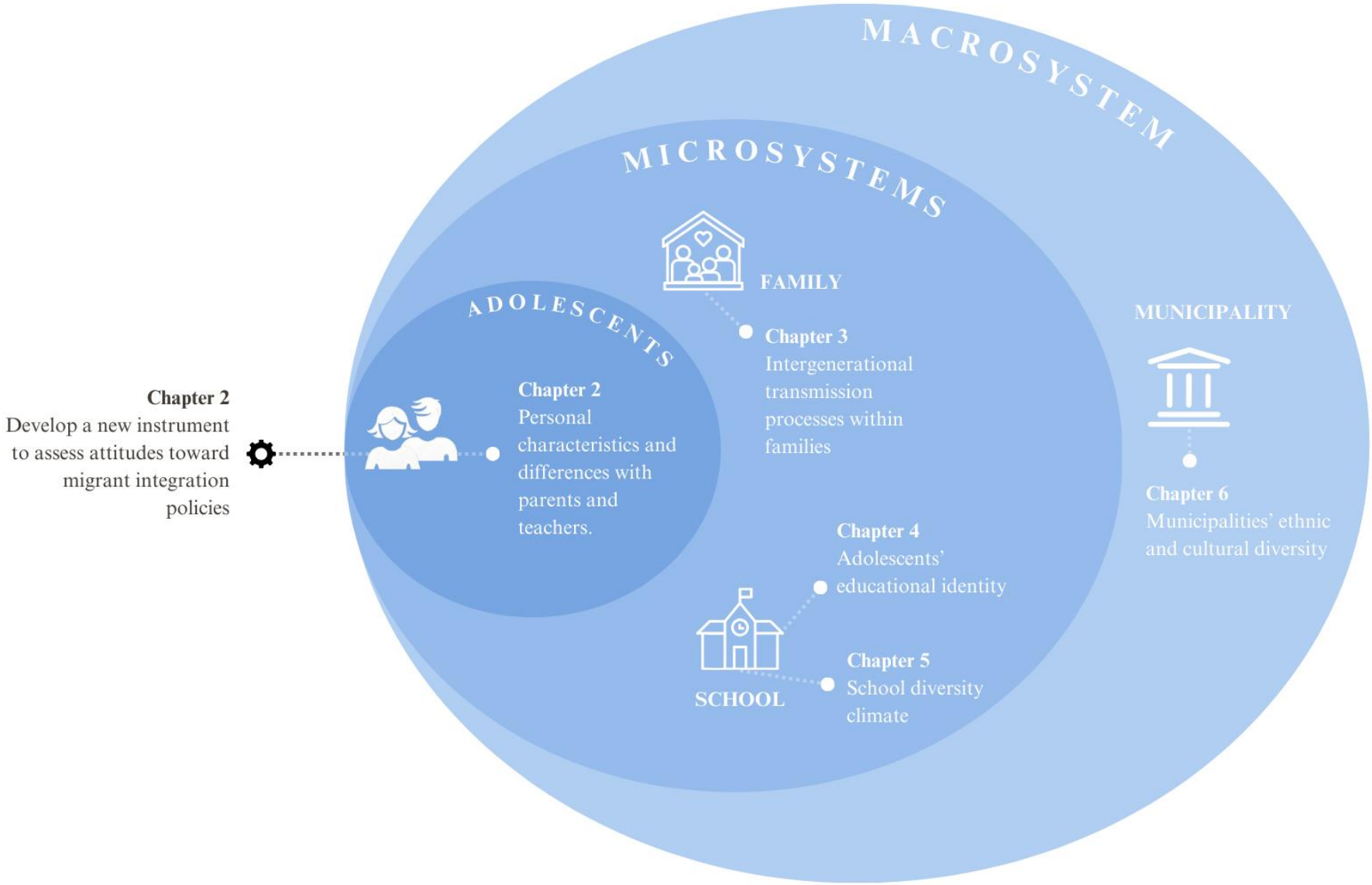
Building upon this evidence, in a first study relying on a cross-sectional and multi-informant design in **Chapter 2**, a new instrument such as the Attitudes Toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) Scale was developed and validated using two different samples of adolescents and adults (i.e., parents and teachers). Then, a second study examined possible differences among adolescents in their inclusive attitudes based on their personal characteristics (i.e., sex, age group, ethnic background, and school type). Furthermore, potential generational differences in the level of inclusive attitudes between adolescents and key adult figures during this life stage, such as their parents and teachers, were examined, thereby anticipating the importance of the various life contexts (e.g., family and school) in which adolescents are embedded.

From the Closest to the Distal: The Importance of the Contexts

According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the various contexts in which adolescents are embedded, ranging from microsystems where they have direct experiences to macrosystems that influence them directly and indirectly, play a crucial role in shaping their development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Within the microsystem, family dynamics and parental values (Degner & Dalege, 2013), along with the school environment (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2014), provide foundational experiences that can shape adolescents' perceptions of diversity. The

macrosystem encompasses societal norms that influence individual behaviors and can shape how adolescents perceive intergroup relations (Brenick & Romano, 2016). At the same time, specific characteristics of this macrosystem, such as the high ethnic and cultural diversity within it (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), can have important implications for adolescents' inclusiveness. In light of this, the present dissertation sought to understand the contribution of these different micro- (i.e., family and school) and macro- (i.e., municipality) contexts in shaping adolescents' inclusiveness and psychosocial adjustment, with the ultimate goal of highlighting the importance of fostering inclusive environments at all levels, thus contributing to the creation of more cohesive societies (for an overview of each study's context, see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Overview of the different contexts considered in each study



Family Context

Family is one of the primary socialization contexts for adolescents, with parents significantly influencing their development of attitudes, values, and beliefs. Cross-sectional research highlights substantial similarities between parents' and adolescents' values (for a review, see Degner & Dalege, 2013), such as openness to change (Dubrov & Tatarko, 2018), prosocial orientations (Albert & Ferring, 2012), and collectivist values (Albert et al., 2009). However, cross-sectional studies fail to reveal the mechanisms behind the intergenerational transmission, processes that occur over time (Crocetti et al., 2023), where parents can directly (Acock & Bengtson, 1980) or indirectly (Glass et al., 1986; Min et al., 2012) children. Nevertheless, these processes are not strictly unidirectional, with adolescents that can also play an active role (Acock & Bengtson, 1980; De Mol et al., 2013; Kuczynski et al., 2016), negotiating and potentially influencing their parents' values (Akyil et al., 2016; Barni et al., 2023). Additionally, several personal characteristics of family members (e.g., adolescents' sex; Filler & Jennings, 2015), along with various family dynamics (e.g., perceived parental support; Augustijn, 2022; Brown et al., 2018; Miklikowska, 2016) may affect how the intergenerational transmission processes unfold, thus facilitating or hindering the transmission of inclusive attitudes.

In light of this, **Chapter 3** sought to disentangle how parents' and adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies are intertwined over time, exploring whether adolescents adopt their parents' values and attitudes or if, vice-versa, they also exert an influence on their fathers and mothers. Furthermore, it examined which factors can either amplify or reduce the strength of intergenerational transmission processes considering personal characteristics of both adolescents (i.e., sex, age) and their parents (i.e., political orientation), and cultural (i.e., family ethnic background) and relational (i.e., discussion of current events, perceived support from fathers and mothers) family characteristics. Understanding this provides insight into how positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies are passed across generations, fostering inclusivity in diverse societies.

School Context

Together with the family environment, school represents a crucial developmental and acculturative context (Schachner et al., 2018) in which adolescents not only acquire knowledge and develop their identity (Branje, 2022; Verhoeven et al., 2019) but also experience a wide range of diversity, providing them with a foundation to navigate differences and adapt to the complexities of a rapidly changing society. How adolescents develop personal characteristics related to this domain, such as their educational identity (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2017), can impact how they perceive the diversity surrounding them (Bobba et al., 2023).

At the same time, how the school addresses such diversity, and thus its ability to foster a positive diversity climate, in which teachers provide *equal treatment, support for contact and cooperation* between students from different ethnic groups, and show *interest in children's cultural backgrounds* (Schachner et al., 2016), can have significant effects on the psychosocial adjustment of its students, both with and without a migrant background (Baysu et al., 2023; Schachner et al., 2019). Furthermore, fostering a positive climate toward diversity in schools could also have an impact on adolescents' attitudes toward integration policies. A supportive and inclusive school environment can facilitate the development of more positive intergroup attitudes among adolescents, as it encourages meaningful interactions and reduces biases between adolescents from different ethnic groups. This, in turn, may contribute to a broader acceptance of diversity and inclusive societal policies (for a review, see Bardach et al., 2024).

This interplay between adolescents' personal development and the school's diversity management highlights the powerful interplay between individual growth and the broader educational environment in shaping inclusive societies. However, some knowledge gaps hinder a comprehensive understanding of how personal and contextual school factors shape, on the one hand, adolescents' inclusiveness and, on the other hand, their general psychosocial adjustment. Specifically, while abundant evidence links identity statuses to individual (e.g., well-being; (Hatano et al., 2016) and interpersonal (e.g., family relations; Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008)

outcomes (for a review, see Crocetti, 2018), research on social outcomes remains limited, particularly concerning the link between adolescents' educational identity and inclusive attitudes. In light of this, it is still unclear whether educational identity statuses are associated with how adolescents perceive the diversity surrounding them and their chances of developing inclusive orientations. Given this knowledge gap, **Chapter 4** examined if and how youth in various educational identity statuses (i.e., achievement, early closure, moratorium, searching moratorium, and diffusion statuses) differed in their positive attitudes toward integration policies over time and if these differences are replicated in the two subsamples of adolescents with and without a migrant background.

Furthermore, while evidence on the positive link between school diversity climate and academic achievement has been provided for both ethnic majority and minority students (Baysu et al., 2023; Schachner et al., 2019, 2021), the focus on social adaptation has been primarily on those with a migrant background and on their acculturative tasks (e.g., intercultural competence, Schwarzenthal et al., 2020; language skills, Yough et al., 2023). At the same time, other factors, such as adolescents' sense of attachment to the school context (Willms, 2003), given their importance in promoting positive outcomes for both majority and minority students (for a review, see Slaten et al., 2016), can further unravel the mechanisms underlying the relationship between diversity climate and students' psychosocial adjustment (e.g., Schachner et al., 2021). In light of this knowledge gap, **Chapter 5** examined how each dimension of school diversity climate (i.e., perceived teachers' support for contact and cooperation, equal treatment, and interest in children's backgrounds) influenced the academic achievement and social well-being of ethnic majority and minority students. At the same time, to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which such a climate can lead to greater psychosocial adjustment among students, this study considered the crucial role of adolescents' sense of school belonging.

Municipality Context

While adolescents' experiences of microsystems, such as family and school, can play a crucial role in shaping their inclusiveness, youth's direct and indirect interactions with various macrosystems, such as the municipalities they live in, can also significantly influence their attitudes toward migrant integration policies. In this vein, contexts with high ethnic and cultural diversity present a Janus-faced nature, offering challenges (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and opportunities (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) for adolescents, regardless of their migrant background (e.g., Meeusen et al., 2019). On the one hand, this diversity can create perceptions of threat that can negatively impact not only the majority's intergroup orientations (e.g., Davidov et al., 2020; Meuleman et al., 2020) but also the minority's inclusiveness, since they may also see other newcomers as a perceived danger (e.g., Meeusen et al., 2019; Philip et al., 2010). On the other hand, positive intergroup interactions that might be experienced in highly diverse contexts can foster inclusive attitudes among adolescents with (for a review, see Tropp et al., 2022) and without a migrant background (e.g., Shook et al., 2016). At the same time, the extent to which adolescents capitalize on these opportunities or succumb to the challenges often depends on their personal characteristics (e.g., sex, Dozo, 2015). However, it is not clear how these various factors interact in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies.

In light of this, **Chapter 6** aimed to understand the impact of *municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity* (i.e., the percentage of people with a migrant background over the total population) in shaping the inclusive attitudes of native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background. Furthermore, this study examined the possible municipality's influence next to, and in interaction with, adolescents' *personal experiences* (i.e., positive and negative intergroup experiences) and *characteristics* (i.e., sex, age group, financial situation, and, in case of adolescents with a migrant background, their immigrant generation).

In conclusion, various factors ranging from the most immediate to the more distal contexts for adolescents were considered to shed light on what can effectively promote or, conversely, hinder the development of inclusive orientations and better psychosocial adjustment during adolescence.

Outline of the Present Dissertation

The present dissertation sought to disentangle the development of adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies and their psychosocial adjustment by adopting an ecological approach, aiming to capture the role of multiple contexts in which youth are embedded, along with the study of factors moderating potential influences (see Figure 1). As briefly outlined above, the empirical studies included in this dissertation are organized into five chapters. As a first step, a new instrument was developed to assess adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies, exploring individual and generational differences (Chapter 2). Next, the influence of family context in shaping adolescents' inclusive attitudes was examined (Chapter 3). Following this, personal (Chapter 4) and contextual (Chapter 5) characteristics related to the school environment were addressed to understand how they are associated with adolescents' inclusiveness and psychosocial adjustment, respectively. Finally, the influence of the macro-context, such as the municipality in which adolescents live and its interaction with youth personal experiences and characteristics, was tackled (Chapter 6). In doing so, the dissertation considered both adolescents with and without a migrant background.

Study Designs and Samples

The empirical studies (from Chapter 2 to Chapter 6) included in the current dissertation relied on data from the IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents" project (GA 101002163). Adolescents, their parents, and teachers were drawn from 15 high schools in different municipalities across various rural and urban areas of the Emilia-Romagna region. This specific context was chosen since it represents the region with the highest percentage of individuals with a migrant background both in the general population (12.8%; Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2023) and in the school context (11.8%; Unione Italiana del Lavoro [UIL] Scuola, 2023) compared to all other Italian regions. Detailed information concerning the design and the overview of each study's sample included in the present dissertation are reported in Table 1.

Table 1.

Information on study design and sample of the studies included in the dissertation

Chapter	Design	Sample	Construct	Source
	Study 1 Cross-sectional September/October 2021 Multi-informant (Pilot Sample: Adolescents and Adults)	356 Adolescents (41.10% female, 58.90% male; 82.30% native Italians, 17.70% migrants) 200 Adults (69.00% female, 31.00% male; 91.50% native Italians, 8.50% migrants)	Attitudes toward migrant integration policies	The Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale was developed to assess the extent to which adolescents and adults show positive attitudes toward policies aimed at promoting the integration of people with a migrant background. Eight items based on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX; Solano & Huddleston, 2020) were used to address this goal. The scale asks participants to rate how important different policies aimed at promoting the integration of people with a migrant background are on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1, "Not at all important" to 5, "Absolutely important"). Participants receive this prompt "You will be presented with several policies for the integration of people with a migrant background. Please, rate how important it is that Italian national programs support policies to foster…" followed by one item for each policy area, as for example "…family reunion (e.g., accommodation, residence period)".
Chapter 2	Study 2 Cross-sectional January/February 2022 Multi-informant (Adolescents, Parents, and Teachers)	1,156 Adolescents (51.59% female, 48.41% male; 79.8% native Italians, 20.2% migrants) 1,288 Parents (56.90% mothers, 43.10% fathers; 90.10% native Italians, 9.9% migrants) 284 Teachers (68.30% female, 31.70% male; 97.9% native Italians, 2.1% migrants)	Attitudes toward migrant integration policies Affective prejudice (Adolescents) Affective prejudice (Parents and Teachers) Cognitive prejudice	Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale. Feeling thermometer (Haddock et al., 1993; for the Italian version, see Bobba & Crocetti, 2022), asking adolescents to rate how much they like different outgroups (i.e., Romanians, Albanians, Moroccans, Chinese, and Ukrainians were chosen since they are the most represented groups of foreigners in Italy according to ISTAT, 2020) on a scale from 0° (at all) to 100° (very much). Single-item "How much do you like foreign people?" (Haddock et al., 1993; for the Italian version, see Albarello & Rubini, 2011) on a scale from 0° (at all) to 100° (very much). Prejudice scale (Brown et al., 2008). Adolescents, their parents, and teachers rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1, "completely disagree" to 5, "completely agree").

Chapter 3	Longitudinal T1: January/February 2022 T2: January/February 2023	809 Adolescents (49.81% female, 50.19% male) 1261 Parents (56.70% mothers, 43.30% fathers) *86.88% native Italian families, 13.12% migrant families	Attitudes toward migrant integration policies (Adolescents and Parents) (T1-T2)	Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale.
			Political Orientation (T1)	Fathers' and mothers' political orientation was assessed with an ad hoc item [i.e., "Politically do you consider yourself to be?], which parents rated on a scale from 0 (left-wing) to 10 (right-wing).
			Discussion of current events (T1)	The extent to which adolescents discuss current events with their parents was assessed with an ad hoc item [i.e., "Do you discuss current events (e.g., news, political events) within your family?"], which the adolescents rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 "Never" to 5 "Always").
			Perceived support from mother (Adolescents) (T1) Perceived support from father (Adolescents) (T1)	The extent to which adolescents feel supported by their mothers and fathers was assessed separately with a shortened version of the "Support" subscale of the Network Relationship Inventory (NRI) (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; for the Italian version, see Crocetti et al., 2011). Adolescents rated items on a Likert-type scale (from 1 "Not at all" to 5 "Very much").
Chapter 4	Longitudinal T1: January/February 2022 T2: April/May 2022 T3: September/October 2022 T4: January/February 2023 T5: April/May 2023) T6: September/October 2023 T7: January/February 2024	1,594 Adolescents (47.16% female, 52.84% male; 79.94% native Italians, 20.06% migrants)	Attitudes toward migrant integration policies (T1-T7)	Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale.
			Identity processes in the educational and interpersonal domains (T1)	Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments scale (U-MICS; Crocetti et al., 2008; Italian validation by Crocetti et al., 2010). Adolescents rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1, "completely disagree" to 5, "completely agree").

Chapter 5	Longitudinal T1: January/February 2022 T2: April/May 2022 T3: September/October 2022 T4: January/February 2023	1,156 Adolescents (51.65% females, 48.35% males; 79.69% native Italians, 20.31% migrants)	Perceived School Diversity Climate (T1)	School Cultural Diversity Climate Scale (Schachner et al., 2016; for the Italian version, see Karataş et al., 2023). Adolescents rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1, " completely false" to 5, "completely true ").
			School Belonging (T2-T3)	School Belonging scale (Wang et al., 2011). Adolescents rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1, "completely false" to 5, "completely true").
			Academic Achievement (T1, T4)	Adolescents were requested to report their school grade average. In the Italian high school context, grades range from 1 (extremely negative) to 10 (excellent), with 6 (sufficient) being the threshold of passing mark evaluation.
			Social well-being (T1, T4)	Mental Health Continuum –Short Form (MHC-SF; Keyes, 2005; Italian validation by Petrillo et al., 2015). Adolescents rated on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 6 (every day).
Chapter 6	Longitudinal T1: January/February 2022 T2: April/May 2022 T3: September/October 2022 T4: January/February 2023 T5: April/May 2023) T6: September/October 2023 T7: January/February 2024	1,348 Adolescents (48.58% female, 51.42% male; 81.23% native Italians, 18.77% migrants) from 153 municipalities	Attitudes toward migrant integration policies (T1-T7)	Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale.
			Quality of intergroup contact experiences (T1-T7)	Intergroup Contact Scale (Hayward et al., 2017; Italian validation by Karataş et al., 2023). Adolescents scored on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).
			Financial Situation (T1)	A single ad-hoc item asking "How would you describe your family's financial situation?" which adolescents rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 "very bad" to 5 "very good").
			Municipality ethnic and cultural diversity (T1)	The percentage of people with a migrant background over the total population was extracted from the official website of the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT, 2023). Data from January 1, 2022, were selected to obtain an index corresponding to the first time of data collection with adolescents.

2

Chapter

A Near-Mint View Toward Integration: Are Adolescents More Inclusive Than Adults?

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Abstract

The increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary societies has raised the importance of integration policies for people with a migrant background. Tools like the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) have been developed to evaluate different countries' integration approaches. If, on the one hand, focusing on what governments are doing to promote integration is necessary, on the other hand, it is of utmost importance to consider individuals' attitudes toward these policies. **Study I.** A pilot study with 356 adolescents (41.1% female, 58.9% male; M_{age}=15.38) and 200 adults (69% female, 31% male; M_{age}=47.43) was conducted to test the psychometric proprieties of the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale. **Study II.** A total of 1,156 adolescents (51.6% female, 48.4% male; M_{age}=15.69), 1,288 parents (56.9% mothers, 43.1% fathers; M_{age}= 49.39), and 284 teachers (68.3% female, 31.7% male; M_{age}= 45.55) were involved in a study to evaluate how attitudes toward integration policies differ within generations (e.g., ethnic majority and minority groups), within families (e.g., adolescents versus their fathers), and across (i.e., adolescents, parents, and teachers) generational groups. Latent mean comparisons indicated that attitudes toward integration policies varied significantly across sex (for adolescents and parents), ethnic background (parents only), and school track (adolescents) groups. Regarding differences within family dyads, adolescents reported more positive attitudes toward integration policies than their fathers and mothers. Finally, teachers showed more positive attitudes compared to adolescents and their parents. Overall, this study highlights nuanced intergenerational differences, with adolescents standing in between the different positions of their parents and teachers.

Keywords. Integration, AMIP, adolescents, parents, teachers.

Public Significance Statements

Integration of people with a migrant background is essential to foster cohesion and well-being in contemporary societies. This study demonstrated that the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale can be a reliable tool to evaluate to what extent individuals from different generations hold positive attitudes toward policies aimed at promoting the integration of people with a migrant background. Adolescents reported more positive attitudes toward integration policies compared to their parents but not to their teachers, who reported the highest level of inclusiveness. Understanding the attitudes toward integration policies of individuals from different generations and with different roles might be a starting point to develop possible interventions in different contexts and to unveil which agents (e.g., teachers) can play a crucial role in promoting social cohesion.

A Near-Mint View Toward Integration: Are Adolescents More Inclusive than Adults?

Adolescents are growing up in increasingly diverse societies. In 2020, the number of migrants worldwide was 281 million - 3.6% of the world population (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). In the same year, the European Union had an estimated 1.9 million migrants from non-EU countries (EUROSTAT, 2022). Such increasing diversity poses great challenges for individuals with a migrant background (i.e., individuals born outside the destination country or with at least one parent born outside the destination country; European Commission, 2023) who have to adjust to the host societies. At the same time, countries have developed complex policies in order to manage the constant migration flows, some facilitating and others hindering the integration of people with migrant backgrounds (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). While assessing these policies provides a view of the countries' overall approach to integration, less is known about the extent to which adolescents endorse them, showing inclusive orientations.

Adolescence is a crucial period of life for developing social perspectives and attitudes that are likely to influence youth's views and their social interactions with different outgroup members in the broader society (Albarello et al., 2020). The development of inclusive attitudes is strongly affected by the contexts within which adolescents are embedded (e.g., family, school) and the main actors of these contexts (e.g., parents, teachers). In fact, in line with the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, 2005), development can be conceived as a process of continuity and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings that need to be studied in their ecological contexts. In the developmental trend of these attitudes, some youth embrace social diversity and develop inclusive attitudes. Others, in contrast, are more resistant to it and appear less tolerant toward ethnic minorities than adults (Janmaat & Keating, 2019). Consistent with these considerations, the current study aims to understand differences within (e.g., sex) and across (e.g., adolescents compared to their parents) generational groups in developing positive attitudes toward integration policies. Understanding how individuals approach the integration of people with a migrant background is essential to identify which factors influence the inclusiveness and adjustment

of majority and minority group members to current multicultural contexts (Bagci & Rutland, 2019) and lead to a well-integrated society (Esser, 2004).

The Country Level: Approaches to the Integration of People with a Migrant Background

The integration of people with a migrant background is crucial to promote the cohesion of current multicultural societies and addressing gaps in the living conditions between majority and minority group members (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). According to the Acculturation Theory (Berry, 1997), integration is one of the possible outcomes of the encounter between majority and minority members. In this vein, integration is ensured when individuals with a migrant background balance their identification with the host culture while maintaining a strong connection with their heritage culture (Berry, 2009).

Notably, integration does not only depend on the minority groups' perspective but also on that of the majority groups and their reciprocal influence. Thus, theoretical advances in the acculturation literature, such as those proposed by the Interactive Acculturation Model (Bourhis et al., 1997) and the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (Navas et al., 2007), have emphasized the importance of considering the perspective of both minority and majority groups in the acculturation process. In this vein, these two groups may differ in their acculturation strategies (i.e., integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization) and expectations (e.g., the acculturation strategies that minorities would prefer) depending on the specific areas of their life (e.g., political versus family; Navas et al., 2007).

In addition to considering different perspectives of minority and majority groups across multiple life domains, the Intergenerational Integration Model (Esser, 2004) underscores that the integration of people with a migrant background can be conceived as a reflection of their opportunity to participate in the social system (e.g., access to the labor market), to experience low social inequality (e.g., equal opportunity), and differentiation (e.g., a decline of ethnic boundaries). These aspects can lead to a society characterized by less conflict and more cohesion (Esser, 2004).

A key approach to enhance them is given by focusing on policies that, at the socio-cultural level, can promote integration.

Countries differ in the extent to which they implement national and local policies to manage cultural diversity (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). In this vein, some societies try to provide more social support and foster integration with policies that promote, for example, multicultural education and the health care of people with a migrant background (Berry, 2003). In contrast, other societies deny diversity through assimilation policies (i.e., individuals have to embrace the majority culture at the expense of their culture of origin), while others still pursue segregation or marginalization (i.e., exclusion of individuals of the ethnic minority group) (Berry, 2003). Thus, these policies are not always integration-oriented, with negative consequences for both ethnic majority and minority individuals. In fact, societies that promote diversity and develop policies supporting integration can reduce the risk of acculturative stress and its heinous consequences for minority and majority groups (Rudmin, 2010).

Due to the importance of social cohesion (Nolan & Whelan, 2014), specific tools have been proposed to monitor to what extent countries implement policies that promote the integration of people with a migrant background. The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) pursues this goal by understanding how much countries implement various policies (i.e., labor market mobility, family reunification, access to nationality, anti-discrimination, political participation, education, health, and permanent residence) (Solano & Huddleston, 2020) emphasizing the importance of considering individuals' different life domains in the integration process (e.g., family, labor market; Navas et al., 2007). According to the MIPEX, three dimensions (i.e., basic rights, equal opportunity, and secure future) help describe each country's overall approach to integration. In this sense, integration is ensured when governments develop and implement policies that guarantee equal rights (e.g., equal rights to work), opportunities (e.g., political participation), and security (e.g., permanent residence) for people with a migrant background (Solano & Huddleston, 2020).

Moreover, the development of these policies not only facilitates the integration of people with a migrant background but also appears to influence individuals' attitudes. That is, individuals from the general population who live in countries with well-developed integration policies tend to report more positive attitudes toward people with a migrant background than those who live in countries where integration policies are less-developed (Gregurović, 2021). Therefore, country-level approaches to integration appear to be intertwined with individual inclusive attitudes. Nevertheless, while the former has been monitored by the development of specific assessment methods, such as the MIPEX (Solano & Huddleston, 2020), the latter is still understudied, and there is a lack of research on similarities and differences in inclusiveness within and across different generations. In this vein, do adolescents within a given social context differ in their inclusiveness? Are they more or less inclusive than previous generations?

The Individual Level: Attitudes Toward Integration

Adolescence is a crucial moment for the development of attitudes, defined as negative or positive evaluations of a particular entity (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Specifically, at this life stage, advancements in cognitive (Kuhn, 2009) and social competencies (Meeus, 2019) allow youth to form and consolidate their approaches to society and others (Bobba et al., 2023). Nowadays, young people live in contexts characterized by greater diversity than in previous generations (Janmaat, 2015). How they approach such diversity might depend on several individual (e.g., sex) and socio-contextual (e.g., family) factors.

Individual factors

Among individual factors, *sex* seems to play an essential role in the development of attitudes toward minority groups, both for adolescents and adults (for a meta-analysis, see Dozo, 2015). Specifically, females were found to be more open to diversity than males by showing more positive attitudes toward people with a migrant background (Rekker et al., 2015). These differences might result from specific gender socialization practices leading girls to be more other-oriented than males (Van der Graaff et al., 2014).

Additionally, adolescents from different *age groups* might also differ in their openness to others. For instance, during the second half of this life period, adolescents refine their cognitive competencies, showing a reduction of their dichotomous thinking in favor of a more nuanced view of the reality (e.g., multiple categorizations; Albarello et al., 2020). Similarly, adolescence is a crucial phase for the advancements of both moral (e.g., meta-moral cognition; Bajovic & Rizzo, 2021) and socio-emotional competencies (e.g., empathic competencies; Van der Graaff et al., 2020) that guide their approach to the social world. These advancements can promote the development of tolerant and inclusive attitudes toward diverse others (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2021), supporting adolescents' adjustment to current multicultural societies.

Furthermore, beyond the role of sex and age group, the *ethnic background* might influence attitudes toward diversity. Specifically, prior research has indicated that adolescents with a migrant background tend to have low anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g., Hjerm, 2009) and display significant decreases in xenophobia over time (van Zalk et al., 2013). Majority and minority group members also differ in their acculturation expectations, with the former preferring integration or assimilation attitudes in most life spheres, while the latter tries to adjust to the main culture in areas necessary for social integration (e.g., labor market) but not in their private areas (e.g., religion) (Navas, 2007).

Socio-contextual factors

Beyond individual differences, the development of adolescents' attitudes and beliefs is inevitably influenced by the multiple contexts in which they are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, 2005). In this vein, the family context plays an essential and dynamic role in shaping adolescents' attitudes. On the one hand, in line with intergenerational transmission and social modeling theory (Bandura, 1977), *parents* can significantly influence adolescents' development by acting as models whose values and beliefs are transmitted to their children (for reviews, see Degner & Dalege, 2013). On the other hand, according to generational theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991), adolescents and their parents are part of different generations since they represent an aggregate of individuals differentiated by age. When individuals are part of the same generation group, they share not only

the same age but also similar beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes. Being of different ages means being exposed to different life events and historical conditions. Thus, depending on the age and historical background, this exposure affects generations' behavior, values, and beliefs differently (Howe & Strauss, 2000). In this vein, today's adolescents could bring new attitudes and beliefs toward diversity in an attempt to differentiate themselves from their parents and, more in general, from the older generations (ter Bogt et al., 2001).

Together with the family context, schools are significant for adolescents' socio-emotional, personal, and interpersonal development (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, 2005). Along this line, how *teachers* approach cultural diversity might shape the quality of intergroup contact and intergroup attitudes (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2021; Karataş, Eckstein, et al., 2023). For instance, a positive school climate supporting equality and inclusion among students of diverse backgrounds and creating more opportunities to learn about cultural diversity was associated with the ethnic majority and minority adolescents' socio-emotional adjustment and academic achievement (e.g., Schachner et al., 2021; Schwarzenthal et al., 2018). Additionally, the frequency adolescents discuss political issues at school is associated with their attitudes toward immigrants. Specifically, the more adolescents are exposed to political discussions in the classroom, the less their anti-immigrant attitudes will be (Kudrnáč, 2021). Finally, the *school track* (e.g., lyceum, vocational) that adolescents attend seems to play a role in influencing their attitudes. Multiple factors can account for this, such as school ethnic diversity (e.g., Thijs & Verkuyten, 2014), school climate (e.g., Karataş et al., 2023), and family socio-economic status (e.g., Maaz et al., 2008). However, the evidence unraveling how adolescents' attitudes depend on their school track is still limited. Thus, school authorities, specifically teachers, can have a crucial role in promoting a learning environment that facilitates the positive adjustment of adolescents in diverse societies (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2014).

The theoretical and empirical findings reviewed so far provide a complex picture of adolescents' inclusive attitudes as influenced by several adult figures (i.e., parents and teachers). A

question may arise: are adolescents more or less inclusive than their elders? In this regard, some pieces of evidence suggested that young people are generally more tolerant than adults (Dalton, 2015; Milkman, 2017) and perceive individuals with a migrant background more as strengths rather than threats to their countries (Gregurović, 2021). Conversely, other findings suggested that prejudice against ethnic minorities has increased compared to the past, stating that the new generations are less tolerant than the previous ones, especially toward foreign and immigrant workers (Hjerm, 2009; Janmaat & Keating, 2019; Keating & Janmaat, 2020).

Aims and Hypotheses

Building upon these mixed results, the current study aims to unravel individuals' differences in attitudes toward policies aimed at the integration of people with a migrant background. Which factors help discern less inclusive adolescents and adults from the more inclusive ones? Can youth be conceived as agents of change, or do they tend to polarize the views and beliefs of the previous generation? To answer these questions, in the current research, we developed a new scale to assess individuals' attitudes toward integration policies (Study I) by asking participants to evaluate how important integration policies are for them. Then, we examined differences in individual-level evaluation of these policies within generations (e.g., female versus male adolescents), within families (i.e., adolescents, their mothers, and their fathers), and across generational groups (i.e., adolescents, parents, and teachers) (Study II).

Regarding within-generations differences, we expect females, older adolescents, and adolescents with a migrant background to show more positive attitudes toward integration policies than males, younger adolescents, and adolescents from the majority group, respectively. Conversely, no specific hypotheses were developed for differences in attitudes toward integration based on adolescents' school track. Regarding within-family differences, the current study took mainly an exploratory approach to understand whether adolescents' attitudes toward integration policies are in line with the ones of their mothers and fathers (according to social modeling and intergenerational transmission theory; Bandura, 1977) or if they significantly distance themselves

from their parents' view (in line with generational theory; Strauss & Howe, 1991). At the same time, while we expect that adolescents can differ from their teachers, we do not expect to find significant differences between parents' and teachers' attitudes toward integration policies since they are largely part of the same generational group (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Overview of the Present Studies

The current research aims to study individuals' attitudes toward the integration of people with a migrant background. Since there is a lack of available instruments to assess them, as a preliminary step, we developed a new scale building upon the index that evaluates the country-level overall approach to integration (i.e., MIPEX). Specifically, we formulated a multiple-item measure assessing individuals' endorsement of integration policies as an indicator of their general attitudes toward policies aimed at the integration of people with a migrant background and tested its psychometric proprieties and convergent validity. Moving into the primary goals of the current study, we then examined whether attitudes toward the integration policies significantly differ within generations (e.g., ethnic majority and minority groups), within families (e.g., adolescents versus their fathers), and across (i.e., adolescents, parents, and teachers) generational groups.

Study I: The Development of the Attitudes Toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) Scale

Study I aimed to develop a new scale, the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale, assessing individual attitudes toward policies aimed at the integration of people with a migrant background and to examine its factorial structure.

Method

Development of the AMIP Scale

Based on Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX; Solano & Huddleston, 2020), we formulated a multiple-item measure consisting of eight items, each assessing the extent to which individuals show positive attitudes toward each policy area considered in the MIPEX (i.e., labor market mobility, family reunification, access to nationality, anti-discrimination, political

participation, education, health, and permanent residence). We then tested the psychometric properties of this instrument in adolescents and adults.

Participants

Study I included 356 adolescents who reported their sex (41.1% female, 58.9% male; M_{age}=15.38, SD_{age}=1.13, range: 13.52 – 18.63 years) and their ethnic background by indicating their nationality, the nationality of their parents (82.3% were native Italians, and 17.7% had a migrant background - i.e., either they were born outside Italy or had at least one parent born outside Italy) in the first part of the questionnaire. In addition to adolescents, also 200 adults (i.e., parents and teachers) indicated their sex (69% female, 31% male), age (M_{age}=47.43, SD_{age}=6.66, range: 26 – 68 years), and ethnic background (91.5% were native Italians, 8.5% had a migrant background) and took part to Study I. As a preliminary check, we conducted missing value analyses for all participant samples (i.e., adolescents and adults). The Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test conducted on the study variables yielded a normed χ^2 (χ^2/df = 35.566/50) of 0.71, indicating that data were likely missing completely at random. Therefore, all participants were included in the analyses.

Procedures

The present study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Alma Mater Studiorum Univerisity of Bologna (Italy) as a pilot of the ERC-Consolidator project IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents". This pilot study involved adolescents from a high school with multiple educational tracks (i.e., lyceum and technical) in the North-East part of Italy, together with their parents and teachers. The research was first presented to and approved by the school principal. Then, students, parents, and teachers received written and oral information about the study. Active consent was obtained from parents for both their own and their children's participation. Additionally, active consent was also obtained from adolescents of age while their underage peers provided their assent to participate in the project. Further, teachers also provided their consent to take part in the study. Participation in the

study was voluntary, and adolescents and adults were informed that they could withdraw their consent at any time. Data collection was conducted in October 2021.

Measures

Participants completed an online questionnaire including socio-demographic questions (e.g., age, sex, and birth country) and the AMIP scale.

***Attitudes Toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) Scale*.** The AMIP scale was developed to assess the extent to which adolescents and adults show positive attitudes toward policies aimed at promoting the integration of people with a migrant background. Eight items based on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) were used to address this goal. The scale asks participants to rate how important different policies aimed at promoting the integration of people with a migrant background are on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1, "Not at all important" to 5, "Absolutely important"). Participants receive this prompt "You will be presented with several policies for the integration of people with a migrant background. Please, rate how important it is that Italian national programs support policies to foster…" followed by one item for each policy area, as for example "…family reunion (e.g., accommodation, residence period)". The complete list of items is provided in Appendix 1. Cronbach's alphas are reported in Table 1.

Table 1.
AMIP scores and reliability across the two studies

		M	***SD***	**α**
Study I	Adolescent Sample	3.65	0.77	.91
	Adult Sample (Parents + Teachers)	3.63	0.81	.94
Study II	Adolescent Sample	4.00	0.74	.91
	Parent Sample	3.78	0.73	.92
	Teacher Sample	4.15	0.65	.92

Note. Means (*M*), Standard Deviations (*SD*), and Cronbach's alphas (α)

Transparency and Openness

Data. The data for Study I can be retrieved from OSF link https://osf.io/h84eb/.

Analytic Methods. The analytic codes and outputs needed to reproduce all analyses are available as SPSS syntax (SPS) or Mplus output (.dat) at https://osf.io/h84eb/.

Results

Since the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) is a newly developed scale, in order to examine its factorial structure, we conducted Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFAs) using SPSS Version 28 for Windows. As a preliminary step, we tested the factorability of the samples consisting of adolescents and adults (i.e., their parents and teachers) and the adequacy of the item correlation matrix. Regarding the factorability of the samples, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures were .89 and .91 for the adolescent and adult samples, which were above the recommended values of .60 (Beavers et al., 2013) and indicated that both samples were appropriate to perform our analyses. Regarding the adequacy of the correlation matrix, the eight items appeared to be highly correlated, as evidenced by the significant Bartlett sphericity test in both the adolescent (χ^2 (df)=1284.68(28), $p < .001$) and adult (χ^2 (df)=996.07(28), $p < .001$) samples. Therefore, we could proceed with exploring the factorial structure of the scale across the two samples of participants. Two principal components EFAs were conducted with direct oblimin rotation in the adolescent and adult samples. Overall, both EFAs highlighted that a single-factor solution was the best fitting and the most parsimonious (the one-factor solution was the only one meeting the eigenvalue criteria >1). All eight items showed high factor loadings, ranging between .715 and .848 for adolescents and between .771 to .922 for adults, respectively (for means, standard deviations, factor loadings, and item-total correlations, see Table S1 of the Supplemental Materials). These single-factor models explained 62.10% and 73.23% of the variance for adolescent and adult samples, respectively. Descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations) for the overall scores of adolescents and adults are provided in Table 1. Data, analysis codes, and outputs can be retrieved from https://osf.io/h84eb/.

Discussion

Overall, this pilot study provided initial support for the construct validity of the AMIP scale. Specifically, the results of the two EFAs performed indicated that the single-factor structure of the scale, assessing attitudes toward integration policies, fit the data well. To confirm the EFAs results, we further tested the psychometric properties and the convergent validity of the AMIP scale in a larger sample of adolescents, their parents, and teachers in Italy (Study II). This set the stage for further analyzing differences and similarities in attitudes toward integration across multiple generations of individuals.

Study II: The Intergenerational Differences in Attitudes Toward Integration

Study II has three purposes. First, we aimed to unravel individual (i.e., sex, age group, ethnic background, and school track) similarities and differences in attitudes toward policies that promote the integration of people with a migrant background within different generations. Secondly, the study aimed to underscore consistencies and discrepancies within families (e.g., adolescents versus fathers) in their attitudes toward integration policies. Finally, we aimed to understand whether the attitudes toward integration policies varied across different generational groups (i.e., adolescents, parents, and teachers).

Method

Participants

Participants included in Study II were drawn from an ongoing longitudinal research project, the IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents" project, involving an ethnically diverse sample of adolescents, their parents, and teachers. A total of 1,156 adolescents participated in the study and provided their demographic information in the first part of the questionnaire. Adolescents were asked to indicate their sex (51.6% female, 48.4% male; M_{age}=15.74, SD_{age}=1.20, range: 13.79 – 20.04 years) and to specify their nationality and that of their parents in order to establish their ethnic background (79.8% of the participants had an Italian background, 20.2% had a migrant background). Moreover, adolescents

with a migrant background have been living in Italy for an average of 9.01 years (range: 1 – 17 years), and 68.5% of them are second-generation immigrants (31.5% first generation). A total of 1,288 parents (56.9% mothers, 43.1% fathers; M_{age}= 49.39, SD_{age}=5.03, range: 33 – 77 years), and 284 teachers (68.3% female, 31.7% male; M_{age}= 45.55, SD_{age}=9.97, range: 22 – 65 years) participated in the study. Additionally, among the adolescents sample, youth attended the 1st (49.4%) and 3rd (50.6%) year of several high schools in Italy's North-Eastern part. Specifically, the majority attended a lyceum (45.6%), followed by those (31.9%) attending a technical school and those (22.5%) in a vocational track. The distributions of participants across the educational tracks varied significantly according to their ethnic background, χ^2 (df)=29.730(2), $p < .001$. Specifically, adolescents with a migrant background were significantly under-represented in lyceums and significantly over-represented in vocational schools compared to their ethnic majority peers.

Among the parent sample, 90.1% of the participants had an Italian background, whereas the remaining (9.9%) had a migrant background. Moreover, parents with a migrant background reported that they have been living in Italy for an average of 24.79 years (range: 1 – 56 years), and 78% of them are first-generation immigrants, while the remaining 22% are second-generation immigrants. The majority (49.7%) of fathers reported they had high school diplomas, followed by those (29.5%) with a higher educational level (i.e., university degree or higher) and those (20.8%) who held less than a high school diploma. The educational levels reported by the mothers were as follows: 51.1% had a medium (i.e., high school diploma), 36.4% had a high (i.e., university degree or higher), and 12.5% had a low (i.e., lower than high school diploma) educational level. Among the teacher sample, 97.9% of the participants had an Italian background, whereas the remaining (2.1%) had a migrant background.

The Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test conducted on the study variables yielded a normed χ^2 (χ^2/df = 450.915/291) of 1.549, indicating that data were likely missing completely at random. Therefore, all participants were included in the analyses. Missing

data were handled with the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) procedure available in M*plus* (Kelloway, 2015).

Procedures

The present study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Alma Mater Studiorum Univerisity of Bologna (Italy) as part of the ERC-Consolidator project IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents". This longitudinal research involved adolescents from several high schools in the North-East part of Italy, together with their parents and teachers. Schools were selected through a stratified (by track and level of urbanization) randomized method, and principals were approached to present the project. Upon their approval, the study was then presented to students and their parents, who also received written and oral information about the study. Active consent from parents was obtained prior to their own and their children's participation. Active consent was also obtained from adolescents of age while their underage peers provided their assent to participate in the project. Further, teachers also provided their consent to take part in the study. Participation in the study was voluntary, and adolescents and adults were informed that they could withdraw their consent at any time. Data collection was conducted between January and February 2022.

Measures

Participants completed an online questionnaire including socio-demographic questions (e.g., age, sex, and birth country) and the AMIP scale as described in Study I. To test the convergent validity, participants also reported their level of affective and cognitive prejudice.

Adolescents' Affective Prejudice. The affective component of prejudice was assessed using the Feeling thermometer (Haddock et al., 1993; for the Italian version, see Bobba & Crocetti, 2022), asking adolescents to rate how much they like different outgroups (i.e., Romanians, Albanians, Moroccans, Chinese, and Ukrainians were chosen since they are the most represented groups of foreigners in Italy according to ISTAT, 2020) on a scale from 0° (at all) to 100° (very much). The scale was reversed to simplify the interpretation of results, with higher scores indicating higher

prejudice. A total affective prejudice score was computed using the mean level of liking expressed for these different outgroups. Cronbach's alpha was .92.

Parents' and Teachers' Affective Prejudice. The extent to which parents and teachers display daily affective prejudice against foreigners was assessed using the single-item "How much do you like foreign people?" (Haddock et al., 1993; for the Italian version, see Bobba & Crocetti, 2022) on a scale from 0° (at all) to 100° (very much). The item was reversed to simplify the interpretation of results, with higher scores indicating higher prejudice.

Cognitive Prejudice. To evaluate the cognitive component of prejudice, five items were adapted from Brown et al. (2008). Adolescents, their parents, and teachers rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1, "completely disagree" to 5, "completely agree"). A sample item is "Foreign people should be marginalized in Italian society". Cronbach's alphas were .87, .84, and .82 for adolescents, parents, and teachers, respectively.

Transparency and Openness

Data. The data for Study II can be retrieved from OSF link https://osf.io/h84eb/.

Analytic Methods. The analytic codes and outputs needed to reproduce all analyses are available as SPSS syntax (SPS) or Mplus output (.dat) at https://osf.io/h84eb/.

Results

Preliminary analysis

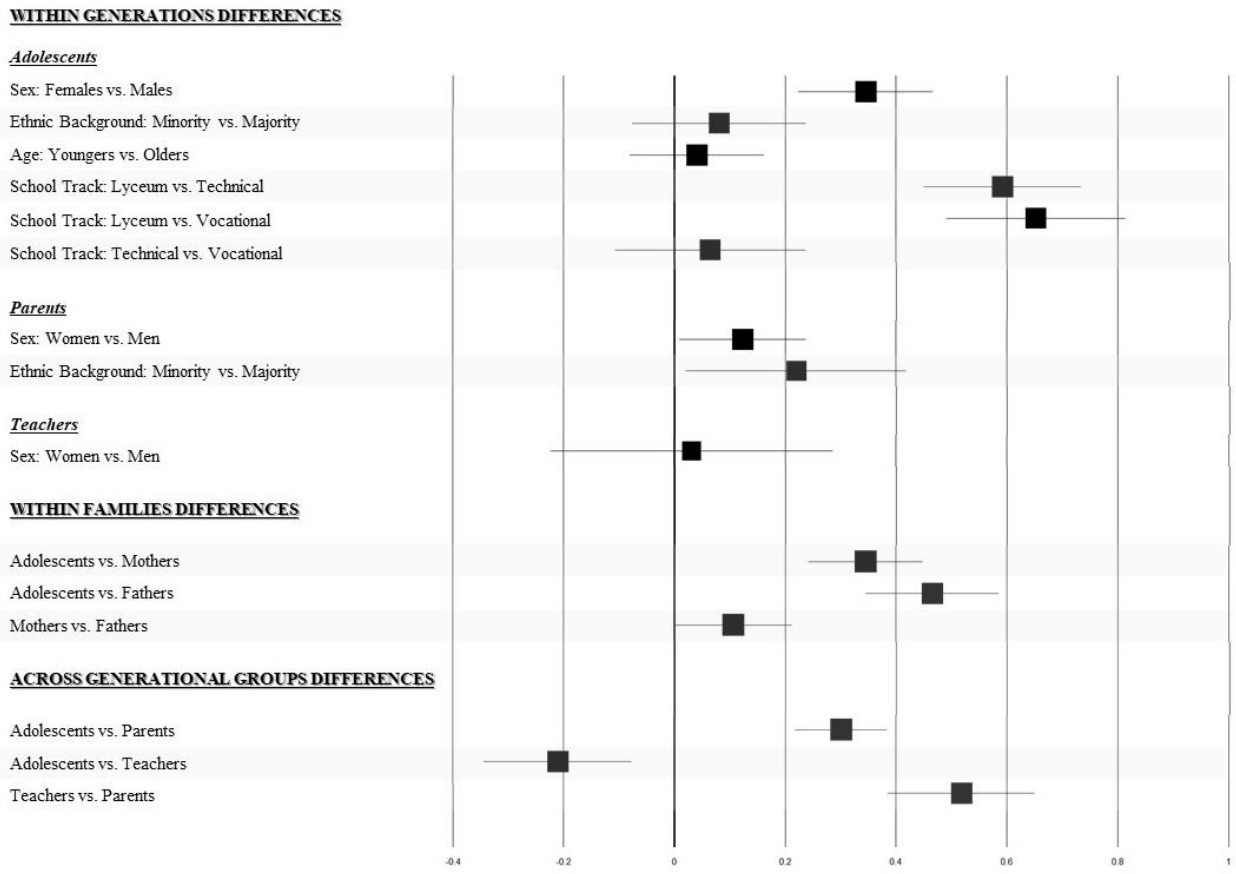
As a preliminary check, we tested the psychometric properties of the AMIP scale by conducting Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs) across the three samples of participants. CFAs were performed in M*plus* 8.6 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017a). The procedures followed and the results of these analyses are reported in the Supplemental Materials (Table S2 and Figure S1). Overall, the one-factor solution proved to be the best-fitting model. Additionally, the convergent validity of the AMIP scale was assessed, highlighting meaningful negative associations with both prejudice scales (see Table S3 of the Supplemental Materials). Last, we tested measurement invariance (van de Schoot et al., 2012) both within the adolescent sample (i.e., sex, age groups, ethnic background, and

school track) and across the three groups of participants (i.e., adolescents, their parents, and teachers). Full or partial scalar measurement invariance, which is the minimum requirement to compare latent mean scores (Byrne, 2012), was reached in all cases (see Tables S4 and S5). Therefore, we could proceed with the main analyses. The means and standard deviation of the AMIP scale are reported in Table 1.

Main analyses

The main goal of the current study was to examine similarities and differences in attitudes toward policies aimed at the integration of people of a migrant background within generations (e.g., females versus males), within families (e.g., adolescents versus fathers), and across the three generational groups (i.e., adolescents, parents, and teachers). To this end, we compared the latent mean scores of participants' AMIP scores. Furthermore, to estimate the size of the differences, Cohen's *d*s and their intervals were computed. Cohen's *d* values around |.20|, |.50|, and |.80| can be interpreted as indicative of small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively (Cohen, 1988). The effect sizes of group comparisons are reported in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Effect sizes of within and across group comparison: Forest Plot Note



Note. Error-bars represent 95% confidence intervals (CIs). The positive effect sizes indicate that one group (e.g., females) scored higher than the opposite one (i.e., males). The size of the square is proportional to the sample size of the corresponding group comparison: larger sample sizes are represented by larger squares.

Within Generations Differences. Focusing on the adolescent sample, latent mean scores were compared to assess whether participants significantly differed in their attitudes toward the integration of people with a migrant background depending on their sex, age groups, and ethnic background. Results revealed that adolescents significantly differed based on sex (p<.001). Specifically, girls (M= 4.12) reported more positive attitudes toward integration (d [95% C.I.]= 0.30 [0.22, 0.38]) compared to males (M=3.87). There were no differences based on the age group (p=.560) or ethnic background (p=.323) of adolescents[2]. To assess differences based on adolescents'

[2] Ancillary analyses were conducted to assess whether there was a relation between participants' immigrant generation and years spent in Italy and their AMIP scores. Specifically, comparing participants' means there were no differences based on the immigrant generation of both adolescents (p=.288) and parents (p=.089). In addition, the correlation between the time spent in Italy by adolescents with a migrant background and their AMIP scores was not significant (r=−.037, p=.778).

school track, latent mean comparisons analysis using the Multiple Indicators Multiple Causes (MIMIC) model (Muthén & Muthén, 2017a) was performed. Specifically, we constrained the same factor structure to hold across groups, and we regressed the factor indicators of the AMIP scale on covariates representing dummy coded variables corresponding to the different school tracks. The AMIP scale model displayed an adequate fit (χ^2 = 153.850, df = 32, CFI = .962, RMSEA = .060 [.051, .070]), and results yielded this pattern of findings for latent mean differences: Lyceum > (Technical Schools = Vocational Schools). Students attending a lyceum scored significantly (*p*=<.001) higher on the AMIP scale (*M*= 4.22) compared to those in technical (*M*=3.82, *d*= 0.59 [0.45, 0.73]) and vocational high schools (*M*= 3.77, *d*= 0.65 [0.49, 0.82]).

Moving to the parent sample, latent mean scores were compared based on sex and ethnic groups. Results showed that women (*M*= 3.82) report significantly (*p*=.034) more positive attitudes toward integration (*d*= 0.12 [0.01, 0.24]) compared to men (*M*=3.73). Additionally, parents from the ethnic minority group (*M*= 3.93) reported significantly (*p*=.030) higher levels of AMIP scores (*d*= 0.22 [0.02, 0.42]) compared to those from the majority group (*M*=3.77). Finally, regarding teachers, we only examined sex-latent differences due to the limited number of ethnic minority participants. Results highlighted that women and men teachers did not differ significantly (*p*=.785).

Within Family Differences. To assess possible differences within families in attitudes toward integration policies, we conducted repeated measures analyses comparing dyads (i.e., adolescents-mothers, adolescents-fathers, fathers-mothers). Results indicated significant differences in the attitudes toward integration within adolescent-mother dyads (*F*= 46.56 $p < .001$, η^2=.070), adolescent-father dyads (*F*= 63,07 $p < .001$, η^2=.118), and mother-fathers dyad (*F*= 3.93 $p < .05$, η^2=.010). Results yielded this pattern of findings: Adolescents > Mothers, Adolescents > Fathers, Mothers > Fathers. In particular, adolescents reported more positive attitudes toward integration policies than their mothers (*d* [95% C.I.]= 0.35 [0.24, 0.45], $p < .001$) and fathers (*d* [95% C.I.]=

0.47 [0.35, 0.59], $p < .001$). At the same time, mothers reported slightly more positive attitudes toward integration policies compared to fathers (d [95% C.I.]= 0.11 [0.00, 0.21], $p < .05$).

Across Generational Groups Differences. To assess whether attitudes toward policies aimed at the integration of people with a migrant background significantly differed across generations, we conducted a MIMIC model comparing adolescents', parents', and teachers' AMIP scores. The MIMIC model reported an adequate fit (χ^2= 460.129, df= 32, CFI= .950, RMSEA = .073 [.067, .079]). Results yielded this pattern of findings for latent mean differences: Teachers > Adolescents > Parents. In particular, adolescents reported more positive attitudes toward integration policies than their parents (d= 0.30 [0.22, 0.38], $p < .001$). At the same time, teachers showed more positive attitudes compared to both adolescents (d = 0.20 [0.06, 0.33], p = .002) and parents (d = 0.52 [0.39, 0.65], $p < .001$). Mean scores for all groups are reported in Table 1.

Discussion

Integration of people with a migrant background is crucial for supporting the cohesion of current societies (Scheepers et al., 2002) and their populations' general adjustment and well-being (Tatarko et al., 2021). In this regard, countries can play an essential role by fostering the development and implementation of policies favoring the integration of people with a migrant background (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). While the country-level approaches to integration can be assessed by several tools (e.g., MIPEX), there is a lack of instruments able to capture individual attitudes toward integration policies (Callens, 2015).

To address this gap, the current research developed and tested the psychometric properties of the AMIP scale, a measure to assess individuals' attitudes toward different integration policies. Study I provided preliminary evidence of its factorial structure. Study II confirmed its factorial structure and indicated convergent validity (i.e., by showing a meaningful negative association with affective and cognitive prejudice). Moreover, in this second study, heterogeneity in the extent to which these policies are endorsed within generations (e.g., ethnic majority and minority groups), within families (e.g., adolescents versus fathers), and across generational groups (i.e., adolescents,

parents, and teachers) was addressed. Specifically, we found significant differences within the adolescent sample based on sex and school track. At the same time, parents, but not teachers, displayed differences related to their sex and ethnic background. Finally, adolescents reported more positive attitudes toward integration policies compared to their parents but not compared to their teachers, who showed the most positive attitudes.

Who Supports Integration? Explaining Differences in Adolescents' Attitudes

The first goal of the current study was to examine similarities and differences within the generation of adolescents in attitudes toward policies aimed at the integration of people with a migrant background. To this end, we assessed whether adolescents' levels of inclusiveness varied across sex, age, ethnic background, and school track groups. Results highlighted significant differences based on youth's sex and school track.

Regarding sex differences, females appeared more inclusive, showing more positive attitudes toward policies aimed at the integration of people with a migrant background than their male peers. This finding aligns with prior research highlighting specific sex differences in intergroup attitudes and inclusiveness (Rekker et al., 2015), which may be linked to higher levels of empathic competencies in females (e.g., Van der Graaff et al., 2014; for a review, see Meeus, 2019). In turn, high levels of empathic competencies are usually associated with less prejudice toward ethnic minorities (Bobba & Crocetti, 2022).

Beyond sex differences, adolescents from different age groups (i.e., 13- and 16-year-olds) were not found to differ in their attitudes toward integration. That is, regardless of their age, they reported similar levels of inclusive orientations. This finding is in contrast with the perspective that as adolescents grow older and advance in cognitive maturation, they can acquire more social skills that enable them to display more openness toward diversity in general (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2021; Miklikowska, 2018).

Interestingly, there were no differences between adolescents with Italian and migrant backgrounds in their attitudes toward integration. This finding appears to be in contrast with prior

research indicating that adolescents with a migrant background showed low anti-immigrant attitudes (Hjerm, 2009) and displayed significant decreases in xenophobia and increases in tolerance over time (van Zalk et al., 2013) compared to adolescents from majority groups. Thus, these results suggest that adolescents, regardless of their migrant background, share a common perspective toward the importance of integration policies, and notably, their consistently high scores on the AMIP scale indicate a positive scenario in which both minority and majority groups hold a similar mindset.

Finally, a substantial difference emerged based on the type of school youth attended. Specifically, adolescents in higher school tracks preparing them for university studies (i.e., lyceums) showed more positive attitudes toward the integration policies than those enrolled in technical or vocational schools. This result can be explained in light of the representation of minority groups within these different schools and how these contexts might differently promote the equality and inclusion of ethnic minority students. Specifically, in our sample, the percentage of adolescents with a migrant background in vocational and technical schools was higher than in the lyceums, in line with national statistics (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2020). Prior research has found that adolescents tend to display less favorable attitudes toward members of the ethnic minority group when they are overrepresented in their classroom, compared to classrooms where they are underrepresented (Vervoort et al., 2011; Wilson-Daily et al., 2018). Thus, these results build upon prior research suggesting that school ethnic diversity per se is not enough to foster inclusive orientation among adolescents (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2014; Vermeij et al., 2009). However, multiple factors could account for these differences among adolescents from different schools. For instance, the family's socio-economic background could play an important role. Specifically, the more parents show a high level of education, the more their children are likely to be enrolled in a high-track school (Maaz et al., 2008). In turn, high parental socio-economic status (e.g., educational level) has been previously linked to more positive attitudes among adults (Meeusen et al., 2013) and adolescents (Crocetti et al., 2021; Miklikowska, 2016). Furthermore, how schools and teachers

approach such diversity might be a fundamental factor tipping the scale for the development of more inclusive orientation among the current youth generation (Rosenthal et al., 2019). Taken together, these results among different groups of adolescents give us a broader picture of their approach to diversity and which factors can explain heterogeneity in their attitudes toward integration.

Do Adolescents' Differences Also Emerge Among Adults?

Building upon the differences found within the generation of adolescents, the current study examined whether the individual characteristics of parents (i.e., sex, ethnic background) and teachers (i.e., sex) explain heterogeneity in their attitudes toward policies aimed at the integration of people with a migrant background. Regarding sex, parents displayed a pattern similar to that of adolescents, with mothers reporting more positive attitudes toward integration policies than fathers. This, again, is in line with the psychological literature that underlined that men display more prejudice than women (for a meta-analysis, see Dozo, 2015). Conversely, similar sex differences did not emerge among teachers. It should be noted, however, that the teacher sample was limited in size and unbalanced in terms of sex distribution, with more females than males in line with the national school' statistics (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2020). Consequently, these factors might have affected the results and prevented the replication of findings observed among adolescents and parents. Overall, more research is needed to clarify the role of sex in influencing individuals' attitudes toward ethnic minority groups.

Interestingly, the ethnic background also played a role in differentiating parents' levels of inclusiveness. Specifically, being from the majority group was associated with less positive attitudes toward integration. A possible explanation for this difference might be linked to the majority group members' perception of ethnic minorities. In line with the competition theory (Quillian, 1995; Semyonov et al., 2006), ethnic majority individuals tend to perceive members of the minority group as a threat to the economic and political systems, especially when they are highly present in a social context with high rates of unemployment (Hjerm, 2009; Markaki &

Longhi, 2013). Consequently, these perceptions could also promote less favorable attitudes toward their integration within society, endorsing policies that limit the rights and opportunities granted to the ethnic minority (Gregurović, 2021).

Migrants' Integration Policies Within Families and Across Generational Groups

The second goal of the present study was to examine similarities and differences across the generations of adolescents, parents, and teachers. Are young people more inclusive than their elders? Overall, this study provided a nuanced pattern of differences. First, adolescents reported more positive attitudes toward the integration policies than their parents. The dyadic analyses also confirmed these results, according to which adolescents reported more positive attitudes toward integration policies compared to their mothers and fathers. While these findings point out differences within-family members, in line with generational theories' assumptions (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991), it should be noted that they were characterized by small-to-moderate effect sizes, thus highlighting that intergenerational transmission processes are still operating (for reviews, see Degner & Dalege, 2013).

Second, differences emerge also in the adolescents-teacher comparison but in the opposite direction, with the latter found to overcome the former in their attitudes toward integration policies and to be the most inclusive group of participants in the current study. Taken together, these findings underline that comparing adolescents with the older generations is not clear-cut but depends on the target group. Notably, adolescents develop their social attitudes in interaction with the different models provided by their main socialization contexts (i.e., family and school). In this vein, teachers, as the group with the most positive attitudes toward integration policies, can be regarded as crucial social agents able to promote inclusiveness and openness to diversity. This is in line with prior research highlighting how teachers endorsing cultural pluralism and treating students equally regardless of their ethnic background can create an educational environment where youth can engage in more positive intergroup relations (Juang & Schachner, 2020; Karataş, Eckstein, et al., 2023).

Theoretical and practical implication

The current study has important theoretical implications. We developed a novel instrument (i.e., the AMIP scale) to investigate majority and minority members' attitudes toward different policy areas (based on the MIPEX; Solano & Huddleston, 2020) aimed at integrating people with a migrant background. Understanding the majority's point of view will enable future research to delve into possible inconsistencies between their perceptions (i.e., how important they consider these factors) and their concrete behaviors (i.e., what they do to facilitate the implementation of these policies). Additionally, considering the minority perspective would shed light on other discrepancies between how much these policies are essential for themselves and how much they perceive that society promotes them. Exploring these perspectives and discrepancies align with the importance of considering individuals' actual behaviors and preferences (Navas et al., 2007) and would provide valuable insights to deepen the dynamics that drive the integration process.

Beyond the theoretical aspects, this study also has important practical implications. An instrument able to capture individuals' attitudes toward different integration policies could serve as a social thermometer to guide politicians and administrators in choosing which policies could be developed or strengthened, knowing citizens' perspectives. Simultaneously, identifying potential disparities between citizens' perceived importance of specific policies and their actual implementation could serve as a driver for addressing these gaps and ensuring that government decisions align with public priorities. Finally, instruments that assess individuals' attitudes toward integration policies, as the AMIP scale does, could raise awareness of the importance of promoting social contexts characterized by cohesion (Nolan & Whelan, 2014) and well-being (Berry & Hou, 2017).

Strengths, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research

This set of studies should be considered in light of both their strengths and limitations, which suggest future research directions. First, this contribution provided systematic evidence that the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale can be used to assess the attitudes

toward policies aimed at the integration of people with a migrant background at the individual level. However, since the scale was developed and tested in the Italian context only, future studies could benefit from examining its psychometric proprieties across different cultural contexts. Further, the present research gives us a more complex picture of how different generational groups (i.e., adolescents and adults) and different model agents (i.e., parents and teachers) from two main social contexts (i.e., family and school) differ in their attitudes toward integration policies. However, these differences emerged from one-time comparisons, which did not allow us to study the influences at play. Thus, future longitudinal research with an interactional approach would help understand the development of these attitudes over time and the possible reciprocal influences between adolescents and their elders, clarifying which adult model has the most substantial impact on youth. Finally, this research included both the majority and minority groups' perspectives. However, the number of ethnic minority participants was limited, and we could not account for the heterogeneity of the various migrant backgrounds (for instance, differentiating between European and non-European migrants). Thus, more studies are needed with a larger and more representative sample of people with a migrant background, also considering their migration history and how this aspect can influence their perspective toward integration policies.

Conclusion

The current study aimed at understanding whether attitudes toward policies in favor of the integration of people with a migrant background differ within generations (e.g., ethnic majority and minority groups), within families (e.g., adolescents versus mothers), and across generational groups (i.e., adolescents, parents, and teachers). To achieve these goals, we developed and tested the psychometrics proprieties and convergent validity of the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale. Assessing individuals' scores on the AMIP scale, we identified significant heterogeneity within each group examined. Specifically, we found significant differences within the adolescent sample based on sex and school track but not on age groups and ethnic background. At the same time, parents, but not teachers, displayed differences related to their sex and ethnic

background. Comparisons within families and across generational groups highlighted that adolescents reported more positive attitudes toward integration policies compared to their parents. At the same time, teachers showed higher positive attitudes than both the adolescent and parent samples, emerging as the most inclusive groups in the current study.

Overall, adolescents appear as a group in between, with their parents and teachers on the opposite sides of a continuum toward the integration of people with a migrant background. Would youth choose to endorse the approach of one or the other modeling agent, or would they set a new direction of their own? Future studies could benefit from adopting a longitudinal design to unravel the reciprocal influences at play.

Constraints On Generality

This study was conducted with two different samples from the Italian context. In Study I, a smaller sample of adolescents (from a single high school) and adults (i.e., parents and teachers) from the North-East of Italy, in the region Trentino-Alto Adige, was selected to explore the validity of a new scale assessing individuals' attitudes toward integration policies. This sample of adolescents, their parents, and teachers for the pilot study was drawn from one large school that comprised different tracks (e.g., academic-oriented, vocational), thus leading to a highly heterogeneous school context. Additionally, a larger sample of adolescents, their parents, and their teachers from the North-East of Italy, in the region Emilia-Romagna, was selected to examine differences among their attitudes toward these policies. The choice of the Italian context is closely related to the study's purpose. Italy has been considered one of the major immigrants destination countries in Europe (United Nations, 2019), with more than six million migrants from various countries, mainly Eastern Europe (e.g., Romania, Albania, and Ukraine), North Africa (e.g., Morocco), and Asia (e.g., China). In particular, for this study, we focus on the Northern part of Italy, given the higher concentration of students with a migrant background in this area (65.3%) compared to central (22.2%) and southern Italy (12.5%) (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2020). Moreover, the larger sample of adolescents for Study II was selected within the context of Emilia Romagna since it represents the

Italian region with the highest percentage of students with a migrant background (17.1% of the total number of students versus a national average of 10.3%; Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2020). In addition, to increase the representativeness, it was used a stratified sampling approach considering the three different school tracks (i.e., vocational, technical, and lyceum) characterizing the Italian school system and the urbanization level of the area where the schools are located (i.e., densely-populated areas, intermediate-density areas, and thinly-populated areas) (ISTAT, 2020). We believe the results will be reproducible with adolescents and adults from similar subject pools serving as participants. However, some constraints also limit the generalizability of the current results. First, given the small number of teachers for Study I, we could not analyze the results separately from those of parents as we did in Study II. Moreover, the results might differ in less multicultural and heterogenous contexts. Thus, future studies could also consider how the contexts' ethnic composition influences attitudes toward integration policies. Finally, considering that the political climate influences these attitudes and a new national government was elected after the end of the data collection, future results may differ from those observed in this study.

Appendix 1
Complete list of items of the AMIP scale

Prompt: "You will be presented with several policies for the integration of people with a migrant background"

Item number	English	Italian
	Please, rate how important it is that Italian national programs support policies to foster…	*Indica quanto ritieni importante che i programmi nazionali italiani sostengano politiche per favorire…*
Item 1	labor market mobility (e.g., immediate access to labor market, training courses, recognition of academic qualifications)	la mobilità nel mondo del lavoro (per esempio, accesso immediato al mondo del lavoro, corsi di formazione, riconoscimento delle qualifiche accademiche)
Item 2	family reunion (e.g., accommodation, residence period)	il ricongiungimento familiare (per esempio, alloggi, permessi di soggiorno)
Item 3	education (e.g., access to various education levels, educational guidance, provision of support to learn the language)	l'educazione (per esempio, accesso a vari livelli di educazione, supporto educativo, assistenza per l'apprendimento della lingua)
Item 4	health (e.g., health entitlement, information concerning health services)	la salute (per esempio, diritto all'assistenza sanitaria, informazioni riguardo ai servizi alla salute)
Item 5	political participation (e.g., right to vote, membership in political parties)	la partecipazione politica (per esempio, diritto al voto, possibilità di iscrizione a partiti politici)
Item 6	permanent residency (e.g., economic resources, renewable permit)	la residenza permanente (per esempio, risorse economiche, permessi rinnovabili)
Item 7	access to Italian nationality (e.g., citizenship for immigrant children, dual nationality for first-generation, naturalization requirements)	l'accesso alla cittadinanza italiana (per esempio, cittadinanza per bambini immigrati, doppia cittadinanza per immigrati di prima generazione, requisiti per la naturalizzazione)
Item 8	anti-discrimination (e.g., laws against discrimination, social protection)	il contrasto della discriminazione (per esempio, leggi contro la discriminazione, protezione sociale)
Response Scale	1 = Not at all important 2 = A little important 3 = Quite important 4 = Very important 5 = Absolutely important	1 = Per niente importante 2 = Poco importante 3 = Abbastanza importante 4 = Molto importante 5 = Del tutto importante

Supplementary Materials

Table S1

Means, standard deviations, factor loadings, and item-total correlations for each item in Study I

	Adolescent sample				Adult sample			
	M	***SD***	**λ**	***r***	***M***	***SD***	**λ**	***r***
Please, rate how important it is that Italian national programs support policies to foster…								
1. labour market mobility (e.g., immediate access to the labour market, training courses, recognition of academic qualifications)	3.53	0.92	.76	.68	3.72	0.93	.82	.76
2. family reunion (e.g., accommodation, residence period)	3.57	0.93	.78	.70	3.57	0.96	.86	.81
3. education (e.g., access to various education levels, educational guidance, provision of support to learn the language)	3.85	0.98	.85	.78	4.06	0.78	.79	.72
4. health (e.g., health entitlement, information concerning health services)	4.00	0.99	.83	.76	4.03	0.81	.80	.74
5. political participation (e.g., right to vote, membership in political parties)	3.35	1.05	.72	.63	3.23	1.05	.86	.82
6. permanent residency (e.g., economic resources, renewable permit)	3.55	0.96	.80	.73	3.36	1.09	.90	.87
7. access to Italian nationality (e.g., citizenship for immigrant children, dual nationality for first-generation, naturalization requirements)	3.55	0.98	.79	.73	3.32	1.05	.87	.83
8. anti-discrimination (e.g., laws against discrimination, social protection)	3.80	1.06	.76	.69	3.81	1.01	.86	.82

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation; λ = factor loading; *r* = item-total correlation coefficient.

Testing the Psychometric Properties of the AMIP Scale

As a preliminary step, we tested the psychometric properties of the newly developed Attitudes towards Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale. To this end, we first conducted Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs) across the three samples of participants involved in Study II, that is, adolescents, their parents, and teachers. Further, we assessed the convergent validity of the AMIP scale by examining its correlations with affective and cognitive ethnic prejudice. Lastly, we examined whether measurement invariance could be established across the three samples, as well as within each group. Additional data, analysis codes, and outputs can be retrieved from https://osf.io/h84eb/.

Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Building upon the results of the EFAs, the fit of the one-factor model in the three samples was evaluated based on the following criteria. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) with values higher than .90 and .95 are indicative of an acceptable and very good fit, respectively. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) with values below .08 and .05 are indicative of an acceptable and very good fit, respectively (Byrne, 2012). Additionally, the RMSEA's 90% confidence interval's upper bound lower than .10 indicates an acceptable fit of the model (Chen et al., 2008). Results are reported in Table S2. As can be inferred, the results of the CFAs indicated that the one-factor solution provided a good fit to the data, with the exception of the RMSEA values, which were above the cutoff of .80 in all three models. Modification indices suggested that adding correlations between two pairs of items would improve model fit. A common reason for error covariance is that items assess overlapping constructs or elements, as was the case for the suggested correlations (Byrne, 2012). Specifically, modification indices suggested a correlation between items 3 and 4, which pertain to the rights of education and health, respectively. These rights can be considered basic human rights, especially in the Italian legislative system, which provides free education and health service opportunities for all citizens. Moreover, modification indices also suggested a

correlation between items 6 and 7, which examine issues of permanent residency and access to nationality. Including these two pairs of error correlations significantly improved the model fit. Thus, these correlations were also retained in the following steps. The factor loadings of the one-factor solution are reported in Figures S1a, S1b, and S1c, for the adolescent, parent, and teacher samples, respectively.

Convergent Validity of the AMIP Scale

To further validate the AMIP scale, we assessed whether individual attitudes toward policies aimed at the integration of people with a migrant background would significantly correlate with their levels of ethnic prejudice. To this end, we examined Pearson's correlations between AMIP scores and affective and cognitive prejudice scores in the total sample, and then separately for each group of participants. Adolescents, parents, and teachers all reported on their levels of affective (i.e., disliking members of ethnic minority groups) and cognitive (i.e., endorsing negative statements and beliefs about ethnic minorities) prejudice levels. For details on the measures employed, see the main manuscript. Results are reported in Table S3. As can be inferred, the AMIP scores displayed significant negative associations with both the affective and cognitive dimensions of prejudice both in the total sample and within each subgroup.

Multigroup Measurement Invariance

Upon confirming the factorial structure of the AMIP scale, we tested whether measurement invariance could be reached both across the three samples and within each group based on specific individual characteristics (i.e., sex, age cohort, ethnic background). To this end, we conducted consequential multigroup CFAs (Van de Schoot et al., 2012). First, we tested the configural models, which function as baseline models. The fit of these models was evaluated based on the following criteria. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) with values higher than .90 and .95 are indicative of an acceptable and very good fit, respectively. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) with values below .08 and .05 are indicative of an acceptable and very good fit, respectively (Byrne,

2012). Additionally, the RMSEA's 90% confidence interval's upper bound lower than .10 indicates an acceptable fit of the model (Chen et al., 2008). In order to establish metric (i.e., constraining factor loadings to be equal across groups) and scalar (i.e., constraining intercepts to be equal across groups) invariance, changes in fit indices from one model to the next (i.e., from the configural to the metric, and from the metric to the scalar) were evaluated (e.g., Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Specifically, a significant $\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$ (Satorra & Bentler, 2001), and $\Delta CFI \geq -.010$ supplemented by $\Delta RMSEA \geq .015$ (Chen, 2007) are indicative of non-invariance.

Measurement Invariance Across Adolescent, Parent, and Teacher Samples

Consequential multigroup CFAs were performed to assess whether the AMIP scale was invariant across the three groups of participants. Results are reported in Table S4. As can be inferred, full scalar invariance could be established across adolescents and teachers and teachers and parents couples. Conversely, regarding the invariance across adolescent and parent groups, only partial scalar invariance was reached by freeing the intercepts of items 4, 6, and 7. Overall, the minimum requirement to conduct latent mean score comparisons was met across all groups, and therefore we could proceed with the main analyses.

Measurement Invariance Within Groups of Each Sample of Participants

Consequential multigroup CFAs were performed to assess whether the AMIP scale was invariant across sex, age cohorts, ethnic background, and school track groups in the adolescent sample. Results are reported in Table S5. Further, we also assessed whether the measure held invariant across sex and ethnic background groups for parents, and sex groups for teachers. Results are reported in Table S6. As can be inferred, full scalar invariance could be established across all groups of adolescents, parents, and teachers. Therefore, we could proceed with the latent mean comparison analyses.

Table S2
Fit indices of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis in each group of participants

	Model fit					
Models	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]
Adolescent Sample						
One-factor model	207.048	20	.931	.903	.038	.094 [.083, .106]
One-factor model with two error correlations	108.003	18	.967	.948	.029	.069 [.057, .082]
Parent Sample						
One-factor model	310.698	20	.914	.880	.046	.110 [.099, .121]
One-factor model with two error correlations	163.861	18	.957	.933	.036	.082 [.071, .094]
Teacher Sample						
One-factor model	169.133	20	.842	.779	.065	.165 [.143, .189]
One-factor model with two error correlations	69.191	18	.946	.916	.045	.102 [.077, .128]

Note. χ^2 = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = confidence interval.

Table S3
Convergent validity of the AMIP scale

Total Sample			
	1.	2.	3.
1. Affective ethnic prejudice	-		
2. Cognitive ethnic prejudice	.498***	-	
3. AMIP score	-.424***	-.521***	-
Adolescent Sample			
	1.	2.	3.
1. Affective ethnic prejudice	-		
2. Cognitive ethnic prejudice	.463***	-	
3. AMIP score	-.412***	-.489***	-
Parent Sample			
	1.	2.	3.
1. Affective ethnic prejudice	-		
2. Cognitive ethnic prejudice	.543***	-	
3. AMIP score	-.480***	-.539***	-
Teacher Sample			
	1.	2.	3.
1. Affective ethnic prejudice	-		
2. Cognitive ethnic prejudice	.530***	-	
3. AMIP score	-.420***	-.558***	-

Note. *** $p < .001$

Table S4
Multigroup measurement invariance of AMIP scale across samples

	Model fit						Model comparisons			
Models	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]	Models	$\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Adolescents vs. Parents										
Configural (M1)	272.480	36	.961	.940	.033	.076 [.068, .085]				
Metric (M2)	340.994	43	.951	.936	.075	.078 [.071, .086]	M2-M1	73.905 (7)***	-.010	.002
Partial Metric (M2a)	327.840	42	.953	.938	.070	.078 [.070, .085]	M2a-M1	58.348 (6)***	-.008	.002
Scalar (M3)	418.575	49	.939	.931	.081	.082 [.075, .089]	M3-M2a	109.386 (7)***	-.014	.004
Partial Scalar (M3a)	355.738	46	.949	.938	.076	.077 [.070, .085]	M3a-M2a	26.032 (4)***	-.004	-.001
Adolescents vs. Teachers										
Configural (M1)	179.674	36	.962	.941	.033	.078 [.066, .089]				
Metric (M2)	216.076	43	.954	.940	.092	.078 [.068, .088]	M2-M1	36.949 (7)***	-.008	.000
Scalar (M3)	252.220	50	.946	.940	.093	.078 [.069, .088]	M3-M2	36.578 (7)***	-.008	.000
Parents vs. Teachers										
Configural (M1)	240.141	36	.955	.930	.037	.087 [.077, .098]				
Metric (M2)	262.845	43	.952	.937	.062	.083 [.074, .093]	M2-M1	16.634 (7)*	-.003	-.005
Scalar (M3)	280.871	50	.949	.943	.068	.079 [.070, .088]	M3-M2	6.717 (7)	-.003	-.004

Note. M = model; χ^2 = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = confidence interval; Δ = change in the parameter.
* $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table S5

Multigroup measurement invariance of AMIP scale within the adolescent samples

Note. M = model; χ^2 = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square

	Model fit						**Model comparisons**			
Models	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]	Models	$\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Sex invariance										
Configural (M1)	124.251	36	.968	.950	.031	.068 [.055, .082]				
Metric (M2)	138.290	43	.966	.955	.049	.065 [.053, .075]	M2-M1	10.794 (7)	-.002	-.003
Scalar (M3)	156.289	50	.962	.957	.057	.064 [.052, .075]	M3-M2	15.903 (7)*	-.004	-.001
Ethnic background invariance										
Configural (M1)	138.024	36	.966	.947	.031	.073 [.061, .086]				
Metric (M2)	154.739	43	.963	.951	.052	.070 [.058, .082]	M2-M1	13.558 (7)	-.003	-.003
Scalar (M3)	168.741	50	.960	.955	.055	.067 [.056, .078]	M3-M2	9.975 (7)	-.003	-.003
Age cohort invariance										
Configural (M1)	120.682	36	.969	.952	.030	.067 [.054, .080]				
Metric (M2)	131.887	43	.968	.958	.040	.063 [.051, .075]	M2-M1	6.638 (7)	-.001	-.004
Scalar (M3)	162.342	50	.959	.955	.044	.065 [.054, .077]	M3-M2	35.303 (7)***	-.009	.002
School track invariance										
Configural (M1)	134.331	54	.970	.953	.033	.065 [.051, .079]				
Metric (M2)	155.027	68	.967	.959	.058	.060 [.048, .073]	M2-M1	10.794 (7)	-.002	-.003
Scalar (M3)	191.752	82	.959	.958	.071	.062 [.050, .073]	M3-M2	15.953 (7)	-.004	-.001

Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = confidence interval; Δ = change in the parameter.

* $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table S6

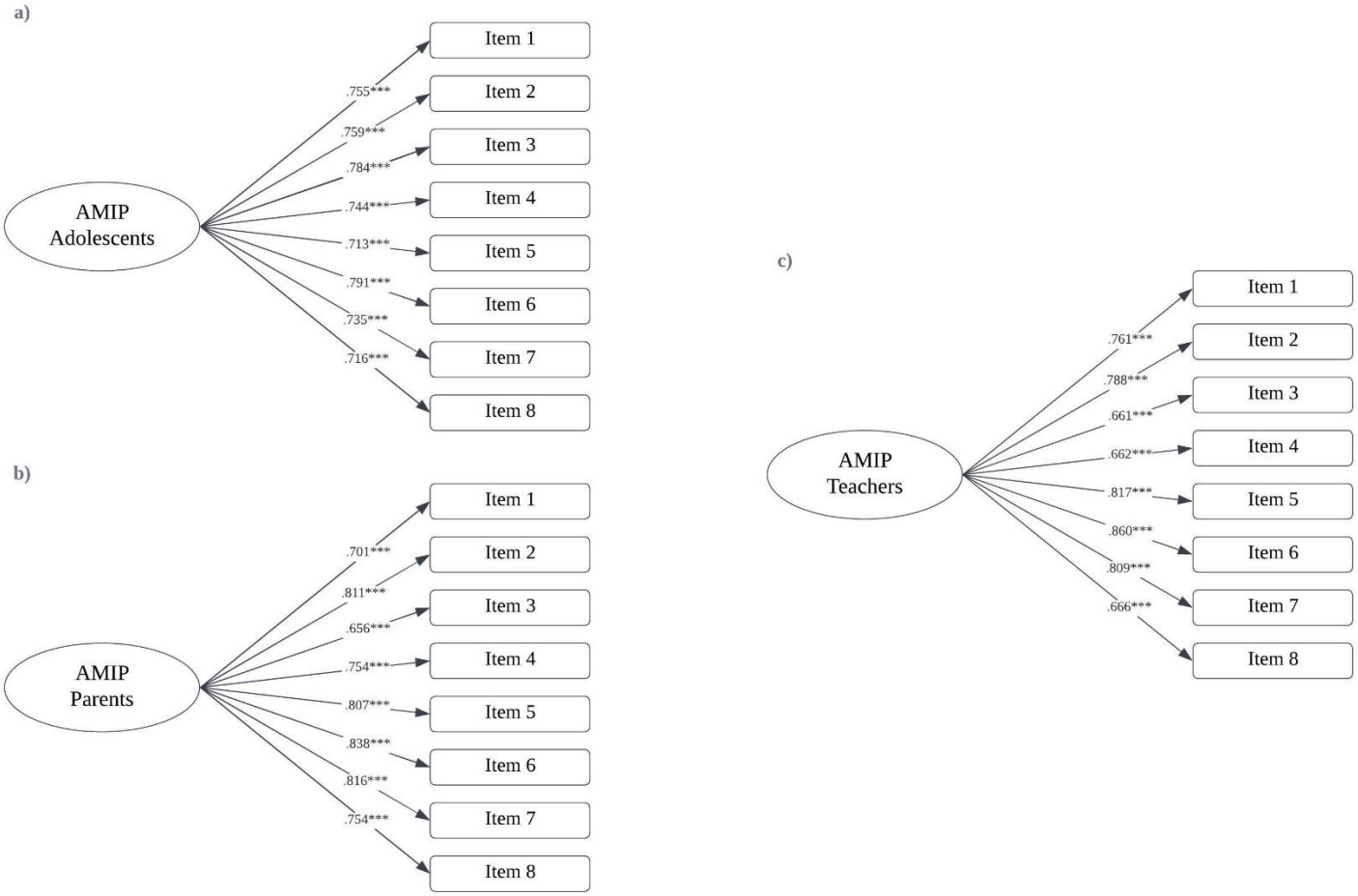
Multigroup measurement invariance of AMIP scale within the parent and teacher samples

Note. M = model; χ^2 = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = confidence interval; Δ = change in the parameter.

** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

	Model fit						Model comparisons			
Models	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]	Models	$\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Sex invariance - Parents										
Configural (M1)	195.729	36	.954	.928	.038	.086 [.074, .098]				
Metric (M2)	221.313	43	.948	.933	.074	.083 [.072, .094]	M2-M1	23.940 (7)**	-.006	-.003
Scalar (M3)	250.623	50	.942	.935	.082	.082 [.072, .092]	M3-M2	26.010 (7)***	-.006	-.001
Sex invariance – Teachers										
Configural (M1)	98.493	36	.939	.905	.054	.113 [.086, .140]				
Metric (M2)	106.557	43	.938	.919	.081	.104 [.079, .129]	M2-M1	7.087 (7)	-.001	-.009
Scalar (M3)	113.201	50	.939	.931	.091	.096 [.073, .120]	M3-M2	3.631 (7)	.001	-.008
Ethnic background invariance – Parents										
Configural (M1)	196.766	36	.954	.928	.038	.086 [.074, .098]				
Metric (M2)	205.604	43	.953	.939	.049	.079 [.068, .090]	M2-M1	7.042 (7)	-.001	-.007
Scalar (M3)	225.234	50	.950	.944	.053	.076 [.066, .086]	M3-M2	12.816 (7)	-.003	-.003

Figure S1.
Standardized factor loadings of the AMIP scale across the adolescent (a), parent (b), and teacher (c) samples



Note. *** $p < 0.001$

3

Chapter

One Way or Another…or Both: Different Roles of Fathers, Mothers, and Adolescents in the Intergenerational Transmission of Inclusive Attitudes

Maratia, F., & Crocetti, E. (2024). One way or another…or both: Different roles of fathers, mothers, and adolescents in the intergenerational transmission of inclusive attitudes. *Family Process*, *63*(4), 2505-*2526.* https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.13023

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the processes of intergenerational transmission of attitudes toward migrant integration policies in families with adolescents. Participants included 809 adolescents (M_{age}=15.61, range: 13.87–20.04 years), 545 fathers (M_{age}=51.19, range: 38–77 years), and 716 mothers (M_{age}=48.11, range: 33–68 years) involved in a longitudinal study with two assessments and a time-lag of one year between them. Each family member completed the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale. In addition, adolescents reported their perception of discussion of current events with parents and the level of support they receive from them. The cross-lagged model highlighted a unidirectional transmission, with fathers' but not mothers' attitudes toward migrant integration policies influencing adolescents' attitudes. Furthermore, it has been examined which factors can either amplify or reduce the strength of intergenerational transmission processes considering individual characteristics of both adolescents (i.e., sex, age) and their parents (i.e., political orientation), and cultural (i.e., family ethnic background) and relational (i.e., discussion of current events, perceived support from fathers and mothers) family characteristics. Individual factors (i.e., fathers' political orientation) and family relational characteristics (i.e., perceived support from fathers) moderated the transmission processes. The transmission was bi-directional when fathers reported being left-wing politically oriented and stronger when adolescents reported high support from their fathers. Thus, this study underscores the complexity of the family context, highlighting that the transmission of inclusive attitudes does not always operate in one way (e.g., from parents to children) or another, but in some cases, simultaneously.

Keywords. Families, Parents, Adolescents, Transmission, Attitudes, Integration, AMIP

One Way or Another…or Both: Different Roles of Fathers, Mothers, and Adolescents in the Intergenerational Transmission of Inclusive Attitudes

Nowadays, families navigate through social contexts characterized by increasing ethnic and cultural diversity, with the global migrant population reaching 281 million in 2020 (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). Such diversity poses complex challenges for families from both majority and minority groups. On the one hand, families from the majority group may perceive the changes resulting from multiculturalism as a threat, which could lead to more intergroup tensions instead of harmony (Kunst et al., 2021). On the other hand, families with a migrant background (i.e., families with adolescents born outside the destination country or with at least one parent born outside the destination country; European Commission, 2023) have to adjust to the host societies overcoming various barriers (e.g., educational, cultural, or economic; Medarić et al., 2022). Integration policies implemented by countries can help to manage these challenges by facilitating the adjustment of migrant families while at the same time fostering more social cohesion and well-being, which can also benefit families from the majority group (Esser, 2004).

Various actors play a key role in the development of these policies. National integration policies proposed by governments are intertwined with public opinion, and their endorsement and implementation also depend on citizens' inclusive or non-tolerant attitudes (Callens, 2015). Thus, it is essential to understand which factors can promote individuals' openness to these policies. In this vein, focusing on young people is fundamental to understanding how inclusive attitudes are formed in a critical formative phase of life, such as adolescence, where the development of positive values (Padilla-Walker et al., 2018) and more inclusive attitudes (Albarello et al., 2020) is strongly affected by the contexts within which young people are embedded (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007).

Family represents the first socialization context for adolescents, with parents acting as a point of reference, transmitting values and attitudes to their children over time (Crocetti et al., 2023; Degner & Dalege, 2013). Thus, this study aimed to identify which figure (e.g., fathers) can

influence other family members' (e.g., children) inclusiveness by transmitting their attitudes. Moreover, this study sought to investigate which characteristics of adolescents, parents, and families can be crucial to facilitating the intergenerational transmission processes.

The Integration of Migrant Families

The integration of people with a migrant background is becoming vital in today's diverse societies. The European Union in 2022 registered the presence of 1.9 million migrants from non-EU countries (The Statistical Office of the European Union [EUROSTAT], 2022). In Italy, where the study was conducted, in the same year, the number of individuals with a migrant background was around six million (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica [ISTAT], 2023), making this country one of the major immigrant destinations in Europe (United Nations, 2019). Migrants come from various countries, mainly Eastern Europe (e.g., Romania, Albania, and Ukraine), North Africa (e.g., Morocco), and Asia (e.g., China). Most of them (56.3%) come to Italy for work reasons, with an additional 40.3% for family reasons, such as family reunions (ISTAT, 2023). Furthermore, Italy represents one of the European countries with the highest concentration of high school students (10%) with a migrant background (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2020; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] & European Commission, 2023). This increasing diversity is also observed in the regional context of this study, the Emilia-Romagna region in the North-East part of Italy, which records the highest presence of individuals with a migrant background both in the general population (12.8%; Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2023) and in the school context (11.8%; Unione Italiana del Lavoro [UIL] Scuola, 2023) compared to all other Italian regions. Given these numbers, managing such diversity becomes crucial and requires a better understanding of the best strategies to promote the positive integration of families with different cultural backgrounds into society.

A 'successful' integration process is ensured when migrant families experience positive outcomes in different life domains (Ager & Strang, 2008). These domains are related to four main themes: markers and means (i.e., access to employment, housing, education, and health), social

connection (i.e., the creation of social bridges, bonds, and links), facilitators (i.e., overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers while experiencing safety and stability), and foundation (i.e., citizenship and rights). These areas are essential for a positive integration process, and each appears to be interconnected. For instance, promoting good housing conditions for migrants can simultaneously increase opportunities for social connection (Ager & Strang, 2008). One way to foster these positive outcomes is to promote at the country level the creation and implementation of new policies that encompass these key domains (European Commission, 2020). According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX; Solano & Huddleston, 2020), comprehensive integration is ensured when governments develop policies that ensure basic rights, equal opportunities, and a secure future for people with a migrant background.

The development and implementation of integration policies largely depend on the political agendas of the government of a given country. Political movements and, therefore, governments in Italy and most of Eastern and Western Europe are organized along the left-right wing distinction, indicating individuals' political attitudes and beliefs (Wojcik et al., 2021). While left-wing parties generally remain open to the cultural, social, and political integration of individuals with a migrant background, right-wing parties tend to emphasize immigration-related issues (Massetti, 2015) and advocate for anti-immigrant political agendas (Santi Amantini, 2022). However, in countries where integration policies are more developed, positive outcomes, such as higher individual inclusiveness (Gregurović, 2021) and overall greater social cohesion (Albarosa & Elsner, 2022), are achieved. If several instruments, like the MIPEX, have been proposed to monitor to what extent countries implement integration policies, less is known about how individuals perceive them. In this vein, it should be crucial to understand better how attitudes toward migrant integration policies are developed in the formative period of adolescence and if the family context positively or negatively influences these inclusive attitudes.

Parents and Children Similarities: When is Transmission?

Adolescence is a crucial period for the development of inclusive attitudes. In this period, youth become more autonomous and develop their own identities (Crocetti, 2018) while experiencing a wide range of diversity. The way they approach this diversity and, thus, the likelihood of developing more or less inclusive attitudes may depend on certain individual characteristics of adolescents (Svensson & Syed, 2023). In this regard, both sex (Maratia et al., 2024) and ethnic background (van Zalk et al., 2013) appear to influence adolescents' attitudes and orientation toward minority groups, suggesting that being female and having a migrant background are generally associated with more openness to diversity. Furthermore, as adolescents grow up and refine cognitive abilities and moral reasoning, they might show more empathic competencies (Bobba & Crocetti, 2022), consequently developing a more inclusive orientation toward diverse others (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2021). Nevertheless, together with individual characteristics, contexts, from the most proximal (e.g., family) to the more distal (e.g., culture) ones, can also influence adolescents' inclusiveness (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011).

Family is one of the primary socialization contexts for adolescents, with parents significantly influencing their development of attitudes, values, and beliefs. A vast corpus of literature based on cross-sectional studies (for a review, see Degner & Dalege, 2013) has pointed substantial similarities in adolescents' and parents' values that are crucial for their adjustment to society, such as openness to change (Dubrov & Tatarko, 2018), prosocial orientations (Albert & Ferring, 2012), and collectivist values (Albert et al., 2009). Furthermore, parents and their children hold similar attitudes that help them navigate into their intergroup relationships, such as positive or negative attitudes toward migrants (Jaspers et al., 2008), political attitudes (e.g., party identification; Meeusen & Boonen, 2022), and ideological orientation (Rico & Jennings, 2016).

Although these studies consistently point to similarities in adolescents' and parents' values and attitudes, their cross-sectional design does not allow for uncovering intergenerational transmission processes. Intergenerational transmission represents a series of processes through which one generation influences the next generation directly or indirectly (Vollebergh et al., 2001).

On the one hand, parents can influence adolescents' development by acting as models (Wiese & Freund, 2011) and directly communicating their own values, attitudes, and beliefs (Acock & Bengtson, 1980). Indeed, according to the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), children learn from their parents' attitudes or beliefs and create a view of society similar to those of their parents. On the other hand, growing up within a particular social context and inheriting their parents' social status may result in children indirectly internalizing values, norms, and beliefs prevalent within their family's social sphere (Glass et al., 1986; Min et al., 2012). Whether direct or indirect, the transmission of values and attitudes from parents to children represents processes that occur over time (Crocetti et al., 2023). Thus, a longitudinal approach is necessary to unravel this type of influence.

Results from studies with at least two-time points have confirmed that parents can influence their children's cultural values (Perez-Brena et al., 2015; Vollebergh et al., 2001), political orientations (e.g., right-wing party preferences; Oepke, 2008), and their attitudes toward people with a migrant background (Gniewosz & Noack, 2015; Miklikowska et al., 2019) over time. However, it is not clear which is the potential role of each family member in these transmission processes. For instance, despite evidence suggesting that mothers typically spend more time with their children (Folbre et al., 2005), and thus have more opportunities to socialize and influence them (Jaspers et al., 2008), longitudinal studies show that parents have a similar impact on adolescents' attitudes and beliefs (e.g., Boonen, 2017; Gniewosz & Noack, 2015).

Furthermore, intergenerational transmission is not necessarily a unidirectional process in which parents have unilateral influences on their children but can also be conceived as an interactive process in which children can influence their parents (Acock & Bengtson, 1980; De Mol et al., 2013; Kuczynski et al., 2016). Thus, these processes could also be bidirectional, wherein adolescents have an active role in negotiating their new values and attitudes with those of their parents and vice versa (Akyil et al., 2016; Barni et al., 2023). In this regard, only a few studies have highlighted this interactive effect (e.g., Perez-Brena et al., 2015), with the majority of the results

indicating that the impact of parents on their children is more substantial than the other way around (Vollebergh et al., 2001), and this may be since parents hold more stable beliefs and attitudes than their children (Crocetti et al., 2016). In light of this, more longitudinal research is needed to disentangle reciprocal associations between parents' and their children's attitudes toward migrant integration policies and to tackle which factors can moderate it over time.

Promoters and Hindrances of the Intergenerational Transmission Processes

The intergenerational transmission processes are complex phenomena that can be enhanced or hampered by different individual and contextual factors (Meeusen & Boonen, 2022). In this vein, how this phenomenon unfolds over time can depend on each family member, considering both *adolescents'* (i.e., age and sex) and *parents'* (i.e., political orientation) individual characteristics. In addition, *family-related* characteristics pertaining to their ethnic background and relationships (i.e., discussion of current affairs and perceived support from parents) can moderate the transmission processes of inclusive attitudes.

Family members' characteristics

Adolescents' *sex* might play an important role in the parent-child influence. For instance, some evidence has shown that adolescents' gender role attitudes are more influenced by their same-gender parents (Filler & Jennings, 2015). Furthermore, when examining political orientation, specifically regarding right-wing preferences, congruence among adolescents and their parents was stronger in father-son dyads than in father-daughter dyads (Van Ditmars, 2023). In contrast, other studies demonstrated the absence of any gender-match effect in the association between parents' and children's attitudes (Augustijn, 2022; Bucx et al., 2010; Degner & Dalege, 2013; Duriez et al., 2008; Meeusen & Dhont, 2015). Thus, there is no conclusive evidence yet about the moderating role of adolescents' sex.

Besides their sex, adolescents' *age* and developmental processes can also affect the transmission of values and beliefs from parents to adolescents. In this vein, school, specifically classmates, represent an important point of reference for adolescents' intergroup attitudes, helping

them navigate the social world (Albarello et al., 2020; Thijs & Verkuyten, 2013). Thus, the more adolescents grow up, become autonomous, and interact with peers, the more parents' influence is expected to decrease and leave space for the influence of peers (Alfieri & Marta, 2012; De Goede et al., 2009). Some supporting evidence of this principle has been provided in a meta-analysis on values related to the work sphere (Cemalcilar et al., 2018) according to which fathers-child similarities of their work values (e.g., work ethics) decrease over time, while peers' influence gains more importance. However, longitudinal evidence that has simultaneously analyzed the impact of parents and classmates on adolescents' attitudes has found that despite the significant effect of peers, the influence of parents remains significant over time (Bobba, Branje, et al., 2024). Thus, while peers may gain importance over time, parents maintain their influence. In light of this, adolescents' age should be further considered to understand better if it moderates the transmission of positive attitudes toward integration policies.

In addition to adolescents, mothers' and fathers' characteristics can play a significant role in modulating the intergenerational transmission processes. Parents' *political orientation* may impact inclusive attitudes. How individuals see immigration has become an organizing principle of political attitudes (Rekker, 2016). At the same time, populist right-wing parties with an anti-immigrant agenda have increased (Santi Amantini, 2022). Thus, aligning with right-wing parties may negatively influence families' inclusiveness, with evidence suggesting that individuals who support far-right parties show negative attitudes toward integration policies (Howard, 2010). However, if parents' political orientation is likely to affect family members' inclusiveness directly, less is known about their potential moderating role in the transmission processes. Thus, how can this aspect reinforce the transmission of attitudes from parents to their children and vice-versa? To answer this question, it is crucial to uncover further the factors that can moderate the intergenerational transmission of positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies.

Family-related characteristics

Since family represents a complex system, adolescents' and parents' characteristics are not the only factors to consider to understand what facilitates the transmission processes. In this vein, the family's *ethnic background* and *relationships*, such as the discussion of current events and the perceived support from fathers and mothers, can play a crucial role in promoting the transmission of values and attitudes.

Family ethnic background might impact family members' views regarding different intergroup topics (for a review, see Hughes et al., 2006). Families from minority groups have been found to engage in frequent cultural, racial, and ethnic socialization practices. Through this transmission of information about their background, parents also aim to inform their children of potential challenges and social barriers they may face (Elias et al., 2022; Ream, 2023). These socialization practices could make adolescents with a migrant background more aware of the importance of integration policies to overcome these barriers. As a result, they may exhibit more positive attitudes toward these policies and, generally, a greater similarity with their parents than adolescents from majority groups.

Together with family cultural background, family relational factors play a crucial role in the transmission processes. Since the transmission of attitudes and values represents a social learning process (Kuczynski & Parkin, 2007), the likelihood of families engaging in *discussion* about topics such as intergroup relations could represent another important factor in facilitating the transmission of positive attitudes toward the integration policies. For instance, the more intergroup attitudes are openly discussed within the family context, the more parent and adolescent similarities increase (Degner & Dalege, 2013). Furthermore, when adolescents can discuss social issues and political topics with their parents, they are likely to show political attitudes (Meeusen & Boonen, 2022) and prejudice levels (Meeusen & Dhont, 2015) similar to those of the latter.

Finally, if engaging in discussion of these current events with parents is likely to facilitate the social learning process, it is of utmost importance to consider also the climate in which these discussions occur. In this regard, the *support* adolescents perceive from their parents can play a

significant role. For instance, the greater the emotional proximity and perceived support between parents and their children, the more the family transmission of attitudes and values is facilitated (Augustijn, 2022; G. L. Brown et al., 2018; Miklikowska, 2016). In conclusion, considering all these factors, ranging from individual to family ones, could highlight which characteristics and processes may facilitate the transmission of positive attitudes toward integration policies and promote inclusivity in ethnically and culturally diverse societies.

The Present Study

Given the importance of integration policies in promoting more general well-being within societies, this study aimed to understand how attitudes toward these policies are developed in families with adolescents. In particular, we sought to disentangle how parents' and adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies are intertwined over time. Given that parents are likely to have more stable attitudes than their children, we expected a predominant unidirectional effect, with mothers' and fathers' attitudes toward migrant integration policies predicting adolescents' attitudes more than the other way around.

Furthermore, we examined which factors can either amplify or reduce the strength of intergenerational transmission processes considering individual characteristics of both adolescents (i.e., sex, age) and their parents (i.e., political orientation) and cultural (i.e., family ethnic background) and relational (i.e., discussion of current events, perceived support from fathers and mothers) family characteristics. While we examined some of these factors (i.e., adolescents' sex and parents' political orientation) with an exploratory approach because of the inconclusive or limited evidence available in the literature, we formulated more specific hypotheses for others. Specifically, considering adolescents' age, we hypothesized that parents' influence will decrease when adolescents grow up. Concerning family-related characteristics, we expected the transmission processes to be more robust in families with a migrant background. Moreover, we predicted that high levels of discussion of current events and fathers' and mothers' support would facilitate the intergenerational transmission processes of inclusive attitudes.

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were drawn from the ongoing of the longitudinal project IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents". For the purpose of this study, adolescents and their parents participated in two assessments (T1 and T2) with a time-lag of one year between them. At T1, participating adolescents were 809 (49.81% female, 50.19% male; M_{age}=15.61 years, SD_{age}=1.12, range: 13.87 – 20.04 years). They were from two age groups: first- (M_{age}=14.58 years, SD_{age}=0.40, range 13.87 – 16.79) or third-year (M_{age}=16.64 years, SD_{age}=0.47, range 15.84 – 20.04) students from secondary high schools in the Emilia-Romagna region in the North-East part of Italy. The majority of adolescents (86.88%, M_{age}=15.62 years, SD_{age}=1.11, range 13.87 – 20.04) were native Italians, while 13.12% (M_{age}=15.55 years, SD_{age}=1.18, range 13.88 – 18.29) had a migrant background (i.e., either they were born outside Italy or at least one of their parents was born outside Italy). Most of the families with a migrant background were from Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia; though a small number of families came from America, Western Europe, and Oceania. In-depth details about the countries of origin of families with a migrant background are reported in the Supplementary Materials (see Table S1). Furthermore, regarding the marital or relationship statuses of the families, most parents (75.03%) were married, while 14.73% were divorced, 8.12% cohabitating, 1.62% were widowed, and 0.50% were single.

In addition to adolescents, a total of 545 fathers (M_{age}=51.19 years, SD_{age}=5.03, range: 38 – 77 years) and 716 mothers (M_{age}=48.11 years, SD_{age}=4.68, range: 33 – 68 years) took part in the study. Regarding parents' educational level, most of them had a medium (i.e., high school diploma; 50.09% fathers, 51.85% mothers), followed by those with a high (i.e., university degree; 29.46% fathers, 36.04% mothers), and those with a low (i.e., elementary or middle school degree; 20.45% fathers, 12.11% mothers) educational level. Furthermore, fathers (30.36% left-wing, 39.70%

moderate, and 29.94% right-wing) and mothers (37.02% left-wing, 43.47% moderate, and 19.50% right-wing) reported their political orientation.

All adolescents participated in the first assessment (T1), and 74.59% of them participated in T2. Regarding parents, they were included in the study if they participated at least in one of the two assessments (T1 or T2). The majority of them participated in both waves (53.58% fathers, 61.87% mothers), followed by those who took part only at T1 (41.28 % fathers, 32.96% mothers) or at T2 (5.14% fathers, 5.17% mothers). As a preliminary check, we conducted missing value analyses for all participant samples (i.e., adolescents, fathers, and mothers). Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test yielded a normed χ^2 (χ^2/df = 2058.874/1802) of 1.14, indicating that data were likely missing completely at random. Therefore, all adolescents (N=809) who joined the study at T1 and parents (545 fathers and 716 mothers) who took part at T1 or T2 were included in the analyses, and missing data were handled using the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) procedure in M*plus* 8.1 (Kelloway, 2015; Muthén & Muthén, 1988-2017).

Procedures

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Alma Mater Studiorum Univerisity of Bologna (Italy) as part of the ERC-funded IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents" project. This longitudinal research involved adolescents from several high schools in the Emilia-Romagna region in the North-East part of Italy, together with their parents. All the adolescents who participated in the study resided in Italy. Schools were selected through a stratified (by track and level of urbanization) randomized method, and principals were approached to present the project. Upon their approval, the study was then presented to students and their parents, who also received written and oral information about the study. Active consent from parents was obtained prior to their own and their children's participation. Active consent was also obtained from adolescents of age while their underage peers provided their assent to participate in the project. Participation in the study was voluntary, and adolescents and adults were informed that they could withdraw their consent at any time. The two

data collections were conducted in January and February 2022 (T1) and January and February 2023 (T2).

Measures

Adolescents and their parents completed a questionnaire including socio-demographics (e.g., age, sex, and birth country) and a measure of attitudes toward migrant integration policies. In addition, adolescents reported their perception of discussion of current events with parents and the level of support they receive from them.

Attitudes Toward Migrant Integration Policies

Adolescents' and parents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies were assessed with the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies scale (AMIP; Maratia et al., 2023). The instrument consists of eight items based on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). Participants received this prompt: "You will be presented with several policies for the integration of people with a migrant background. Please, rate how important it is that Italian national programs support policies to foster…" followed by one item for each policy area, as for example "…family reunion (e.g., accommodation, residence period)". For each item, participants indicated their response on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 "Not at all important" to 5 "Absolutely important"). Cronbach's Alphas at T1 and T2 were .90 and .90 for adolescents, .91 and .93 for fathers, and .92 and .91 for mothers, respectively.

Discussion of Current Events with Parents

The extent to which adolescents discuss current events with their parents was assessed at T1 with an ad hoc item [i.e., "Do you discuss current events (e.g., news, political events) within your family?"], which the adolescents rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 "Never" to 5 "Always").

Perceived Support from Fathers and Mothers

The extent to which adolescents feel supported by their fathers and mothers was assessed at T1 with a shortened version of the "Support" subscale of the Network Relationship Inventory (NRI; Furman & Buhrmester, 2004; for the Italian version, see Crocetti et al., 2011). Specifically, the

shortened version of this scale included four items (e.g., "How much does your father/mother treat you like you're admired and respected?"), which the adolescents rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 "Not at all" to 5 "Very much"). At T1 Cronbach's Alphas were .88 and .87 for support perceived from fathers and mothers scales, respectively.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviation, and within-time correlations for all study variables are displayed in the Supplementary materials (see Table S2). As a preliminary step, we tested the measurement invariance of the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale over time and across respondents. Results indicated that full metric invariance was reached (see Table S3). Therefore, we could proceed with the main analyses. Data, analysis codes, and outputs can be retrieved from the following OSF link: https://osf.io/by94k/.

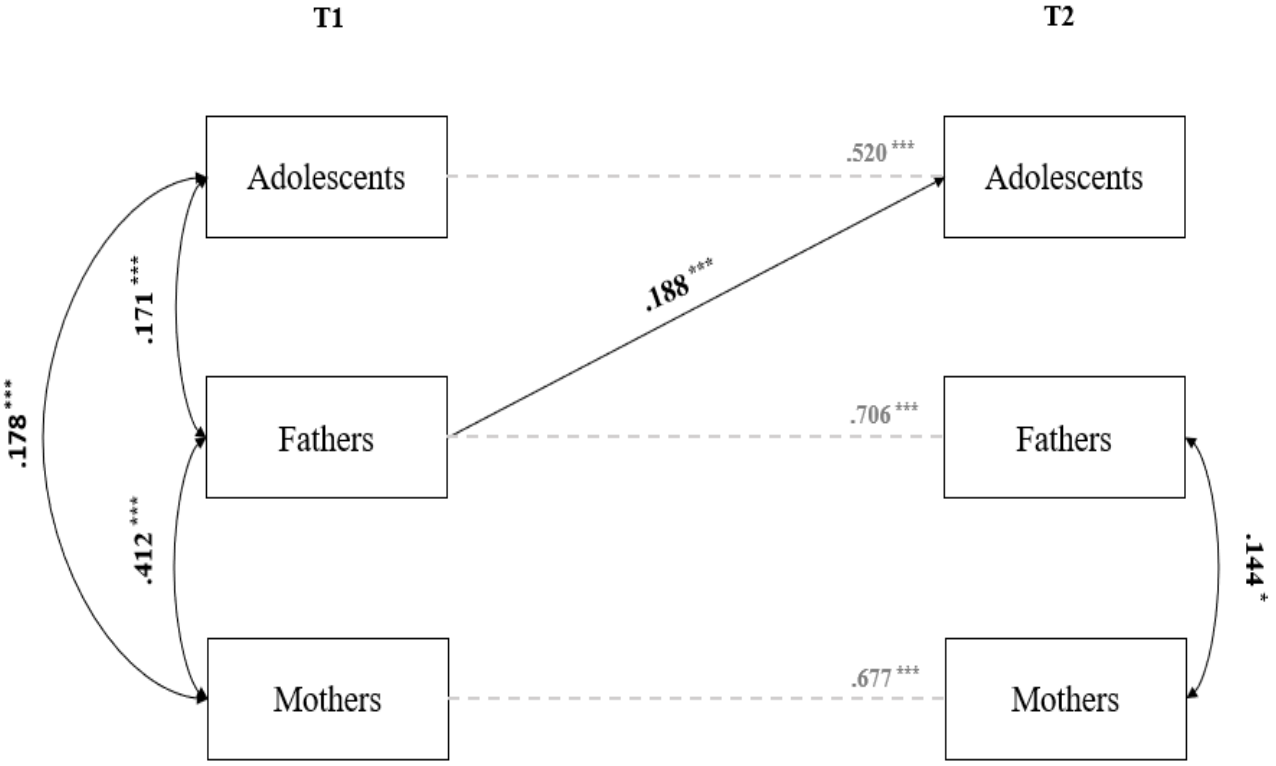
Cross-Lagged Analyses

For the main purpose of the study, we conducted cross-lagged panel analyses to model associations among adolescents', fathers', and mothers' attitudes as assessed with the AMIP scale (e.g., adolescents' AMIP at T1 predicting fathers' AMIP at T2, fathers' AMIP at T1 predicting adolescents' AMIP at T2), controlling for one-year (e.g., adolescents' AMIP at T1 predicting adolescents' AMIP at T2) stability paths, and within-time correlations (e.g., correlation between adolescents' and fathers' AMIP at T1). The model was fully saturated. Furthermore, for each moderating variable, we conducted multigroup analyses to test the same model separately for each group, and the Wald test was used to perform pairwise comparisons.

Main results

Significant stability paths, cross-lagged effects, and within-time correlations are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Results of the Cross-Lagged Panel Model



Note. * *p*<.05; *** *p*<.001

As can be seen from cross-lagged paths, fathers, but not mothers, had a significant and positive effect on adolescents' AMIP over time, while adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies did not predict parents' attitudes. Fathers (Wald test=8.61, *p*=.003) and mothers (Wald=4.485, *p*=.034) showed higher stability levels of their AMIP scores over time compared to their offspring, while no differences between fathers' and mothers' stability of their attitudes over time emerged. Finally, at T1, adolescents' scores correlated positively and significantly with both fathers' and mothers' scores, which were highly intertwined. At T2, only this latter association between fathers' and mothers' attitudes toward integration policies remained significant.

Multigroup analyses

We conducted multigroup tests to examine whether the results were moderated by adolescents' characteristics (i.e., sex, age), parents' characteristics (i.e., political orientation), and cultural (i.e., family ethnic background), and relational (i.e., discussion of current events, perceived support from fathers and mothers) family characteristics. Thus, we compared different groups of adolescents based on their sex (i.e., male vs. female) and age (i.e., first-year vs. third-year high school students). Furthermore, we identified different groups of parents based on their political orientation (i.e., left-wing, moderate, and right-wing). Moving to family-related characteristics, we distinguished between families with (i.e., either adolescents were born outside Italy or at least one of their parents was born outside Italy) and without (i.e., adolescents and their parents were born in Italy) a migrant background. Finally, regarding family relational characteristics, for each moderator, we identified two different groups (e.g., low support vs. high support) of youth using the mean scores of adolescents on each variable at T1. Detailed results of the cross-lagged effects and within-time correlations linking adolescents' and parents' attitudes that differed significantly across groups, as indicated by the results of the Wald tests, are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Standardized results of the cross-lagged panel model with moderators

Groups		Cross-lagged paths T1 → T2						Correlations T1			Correlated changes T2		
		A → F	A → M	F → A	M → A	F → M	M → F	A ↔ F	A ↔ M	M ↔ F	A ↔ F	A ↔ M	M ↔ F
	Total	.047	.059	.188***	.063	.059	.028	.171***	.178***	.412***	-.035	.020	.144*
Family members' characteristics													
Adolescents' sex													
	Male	.123	.006	.260***	.062	.042	.021	.145*	.157*	.362***	-.074	.063	.192*
	Female	.040	.111*	.131	.068	.086	.019	.198***	.212***	.458***	.114	-.060	.134
Adolescents' age													
	Younger	.114	.044	.155**	.128	.047	.044	.163**	.189**	.449***	-.117	.100	.183*
	Older	-.010	.066	.225***	.010	.059	-.026	.182**	.168**	.379***	.092	.054	.130
Fathers' political orientation													
	Left	**.211$_a$****	-.030	.162	.176	.063	**-.111$_a$**	.159	.310***	.474***	-.144	**.397$_a$*****	**-.026$_a$**
	Moderate	.066$_{ab}$	.136	.167**	.021	.134	-.026$_{ab}$	.076	.177*	.378***	.087	**-.052$_b$**	**.381$_b$****
	Right	**-.091$_b$**	.171*	.224**	.134	-.117	**.109$_b$**	.240**	.053	.292***	-.040	**-.141$_b$**	.079$_{ab}$
Mothers' political orientation													
	Left	-.004	.102	.155*	.061	.038	-.004	.179*	.163**	.383***	**.242$_a$**	**.204$_a$****	.114
	Moderate	.056	.090	.209**	.069	.098	.005	.090	.097	.346***	-.166$_{ab}$	**-.063$_b$**	.113
	Right	.065	-.030	.325*	-.086	-.021	.177	.273**	.168*	.381**	**-.167$_b$**	**-.140$_b$**	.190
Family-related characteristics													
Ethnic background													
	Italian	.057	.061	.195***	.058	.037	.009	.175***	.186***	.421***	-.069	.019	.130
	Foreign	-.184	.022	.102	.095	.281	.190	.162	.140	.298**	.533	.114	.599**
Discussion of current events													
	Low	.009	.089	.224*	-.026	.100	**-.112**	.233***	.210***	.450***	-.129	-.092	.161
	High	.096	.057	.182**	.098	.039	**.128***	.129*	.138*	.409***	.041	.061	.047
Support from father													
	Low	-.021	.128*	**-.002**	.173	.019	**-.162**	.167*	.107	.507***	.016	**-.119**	.142
	High	.078	.020	**.281*****	.036	.064	**.097**	.174**	.234***	.367***	-.052	**.120**	.179
Support from mother													
	Low	-.004	-.009	.205*	-.023	.023	-.022	.208**	.142*	**.510*****	.053	.015	.132
	High	.067	.108*	.174**	.138**	.079	.081	.145**	.233***	**.338*****	.188	.046	.131

Note. A = Adolescents; F= Fathers; M=Mothers. Bold font indicates significant differences across groups. In the case of more than two groups, subscript letters within columns indicate significant coefficient differences, as emerged from the Wald test.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Family Members' Characteristics. Regarding both adolescents' sex (i.e., male vs female) and age (i.e., first-year vs. third-year high school students), the Wald tests showed no significant differences.

Regarding parents' characteristics, fathers ' political orientation (i.e., left-wing, moderate, right-wing) moderated the cross-lagged paths and the correlated changes of the association between adolescents' and parents' AMIP. Adolescents significantly and positively influenced fathers' attitudes over time when the latter reported having a left-wing rather than a right-wing political orientation (Wald test= 6.68, p=.009). At the same time, when fathers are left-wing compared to when they are moderate (Wald test=8.397, p=.003) or right-wing (Wald test=6.522, p=.010), the correlated changes between adolescents' and mothers' AMIP was stronger. Mothers' political orientation moderated only the correlated changes between parents' and adolescents' attitudes toward integration policies. Specifically, the association between mothers' and adolescents' AMIP at T2 was stronger when mothers reported being left-wing than when they said being moderate (Wald test=4.79, p=.028) or right-wing (Wald test=4.96, p=.025). Finally, when mothers are left-wing rather than right-wing (Wald test=4.117, p=.042) politically oriented, the correlated change between adolescents' and fathers' inclusive attitudes was stronger.

Family-Related Characteristics. Regarding family characteristics, family ethnic background (i.e., native Italian vs. families with a migrant background) did not moderate the transmission processes. Only a significant moderating effect of fathers' perceived support was found concerning family relational characteristics. Fathers' significant and positive influence on adolescents occurred only for youth who perceived high levels of support from fathers and not for those who perceived low support (Wald test=7.63, p=.005).

Discussion

This study sought to disentangle intergenerational transmission processes by examining reciprocal associations among fathers', mothers', and adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies. Furthermore, the role of potential factors, ranging from individual ones (e.g., adolescents' age group) to cultural (i.e., family ethnic background) and relational ones (e.g., fathers' support), that may either facilitate or hinder these processes were examined. The main study findings are discussed below in light of their implications.

Intergenerational Transmission of Attitudes Toward Migrant Integration Policies

The primary purpose of this study was to unravel the family intergenerational transmission processes of attitudes toward migrant integration policies. In line with the hypothesis, this study found support for a unidirectional effect, with parents influencing adolescents' inclusive attitudes but not the other way around. This result is in line with studies suggesting that the impact of parents on their children is more substantial than vice versa (Vollebergh et al., 2001), especially when it comes to the study of attitudes. This predominance of parents' effects can be understood in light of the different degree of stability of attitudes toward integration policies shown by adults compared to adolescents, consistent with the principle that systems with a greater degree of stability are more likely to affect systems with a lower degree of stability (Asendorpf & Van Aken, 2003; Crocetti et al., 2016).

Furthermore, if baseline correlations are in line with cross-sectional evidence suggesting that parents equally influence their children (e.g., Boonen, 2017), the current study found that changes in adolescents' inclusive attitudes over time were associated only with fathers', but not with mothers' inclusive attitudes. This result may be attributed to the specific attitudes considered in this study and their relation with politics and policymakers. Regarding political participation, a consistent gender gap persists within families, where fathers generally exhibit greater political interest (Burns et al., 2001) and engagement (Boonen, 2017) than mothers. Furthermore, fathers tend to spend more time with their children than fathers from previous generations (McGill, 2014) and show increased

family involvement and emotional closeness to their children (Petts et al., 2018). In line with this reasoning, fathers can exert a stronger impact on the development of political attitudes of their offspring, including the attitudes toward integration policies, as shown by the present research.

The Moderators of the Parental Transmission

The second aim of this study was to understand which individual characteristics of both adolescents (e.g., adolescent age) and their parents (e.g., political orientation) can facilitate the intergenerational transmission of inclusive attitudes. Furthermore, cultural (i.e., family ethnic background) and relational (e.g., perceived support from fathers) family-related characteristics were analyzed to understand which factors can moderate parents' influence on their children. The results showed that fathers' individual characteristics and family relational factors can enhance intergenerational transmission processes.

Individual Characteristics of Family Members

Adolescents, their fathers, and their mothers are part of a complex system in which each family member has a high level of interdependence with the others (Scott et al., 2018). Thus, the individual characteristics of a specific member can play a crucial role in influencing the development of other family members over time. Concerning adolescents' characteristics, however, the present study found no effect of sex (i.e., male vs. female). This result does not confirm the presence of a gender-match effect according to which attitudes' similarities are more substantial in same-gender dyads (e.g., mother-daughter; Filler & Jennings, 2015). Instead, they highlighted that the association between parents' and children's inclusive attitudes is the same despite the sex of the adolescents, as suggested by previous evidence (Augustijn, 2022; Bucx et al., 2010; Degner & Dalege, 2013; Duriez et al., 2008; Meeusen & Dhont, 2015).

Similarly to what emerged with sex, adolescents' age groups (i.e., first-year vs. third-year high school students) did not moderate the family transmission of attitudes toward migrant integration policies, in contrast with results suggesting a reduction of family's influence as adolescents grow up and start to interact with significant others (Alfieri & Marta, 2012; De Goede

et al., 2009). Conversely, this result aligns with other evidence suggesting that parental influence regarding specific attitudes or values continues to be consistent throughout and can extend beyond adolescence. In particular, considering socio-political attitudes (e.g., political orientation), similarities between parents and their offspring persist as the latter have reached adulthood (Willoughby et al., 2021). In light of this, adolescents' and parents' attitudes toward integration policies, given their connection to the political context, may therefore show the same trend.

Moving to parents' characteristics, a nuanced pattern of findings emerged when considering their political orientation. First, this study found that when fathers are left-wing-oriented, the one-way transmission becomes bi-directional, with adolescents positively influencing their fathers' inclusive attitudes. This result suggests greater openness of left-wing fathers toward their children's views compared to fathers who are right-wing oriented. One possible explanation could be that individuals with right-wing preferences often exhibit more conservative and authoritarian attitudes (see Van Hiel et al., 2010) and a general resistance to change (Jost et al., 2003). This evidence is of particular interest, as it shows that, on the one hand, left-wing parents show more openness toward their children's perspectives. On the other hand, fathers' influence on adolescents' inclusive attitudes was the same despite the political orientation of the former.

Second, the findings highlighted that parents' political orientation moderated the correlated changes. Specifically, when both parents reported being left-wing, the correlations between adolescents' and mothers' attitudes became more robust over time. Additionally, when mothers reported to be left-wing, the correlation between adolescents' and fathers' attitudes became stronger. Overall, these results highlight that adolescents' and parents' inclusive attitudes become intertwined over time, especially in left-wing families in which views of themes related to immigration can represent a pivot of political attitudes (Rekker, 2016).

In light of these results, more studies are needed to understand the role of fathers' and mothers' political orientation in the transmission of positive intergroup attitudes and which are the factors (e.g., openness to change) that could make the transmission processes not a one-way transfer

from parents to children but a two-way process where the latter also can make the difference. In this vein, the results proved to be quite interesting, suggesting that, under specific conditions (i.e., left-wing fathers), adolescents may also have an active role in the intergenerational transmission processes, as hypothesized by advancements of intergenerational transmission theories and research (e.g., Akyil et al., 2016; Barni et al., 2023; De Mol et al., 2013; Kuczynski et al., 2016; Miklikowska, 2016).

Is it a Matter of Culture or Relationships? The Importance of Feeling Supported

The individual characteristics of fathers, mothers, and their children alone may not be sufficient to disentangle the intergenerational transmission processes, a complex and dynamic phenomenon such as the context in which it is embedded. Indeed, it may be necessary to consider other aspects related to the family system, such as its culture (i.e., ethnic background) and relationships (i.e., family discussion of current events and perceived support from parents). In this study, a predominance of relational factors was documented.

Although this study hypothesized a moderating effect of family ethnic background (i.e., native Italian vs. families with a migrant background), the results did not support the expectations. Fathers' positive influence on adolescents' inclusive attitudes was the same whether they have a migrant background or not. These results align with evidence suggesting that family relational characteristics may have a crucial role (G. L. Brown et al., 2018; Miklikowska, 2016) in moderating the transmission processes.

To unravel this possible influence of family relational factors, this research focused on two facets by examining whether the frequency with which adolescents discuss current events with their parents and the perceived support they receive from the latter might exert an effect on the transmission of positive attitudes towards integration policies. On the one hand, this study did not find any moderating effect of family discussions, in contrast to the hypothesis that increased frequency of discussion would lead to more opportunities for socialization and thus heightened parental transmission (e.g., Meeusen & Boonen, 2022). On the other hand, results indicated that the

quality of these relationships, as indicated by the support perceived by adolescents, moderates the transmission from father to child and the correlated changes between mothers' and adolescents' inclusive attitudes. This evidence aligns with prior research in which adolescents reporting greater parental support exhibited attitudes (i.e., prejudices) more in line with those of their parents (Miklikowska, 2016). In addition to corroborating these earlier findings, this result again underscores the paternal figure's key role in transmitting these attitudes. Indeed, only the support perceived by adolescents from their fathers moderates the transmission processes of attitudes toward integration policies. Specifically, the more adolescents report receiving support from their fathers, the stronger the positive influence exerted by the latter on their children's inclusive attitudes. Thus, through their supportiveness, fathers establish a relational foundation that can foster alignment with their children's views, as previous research has already suggested (Augustijn, 2022; G. L. Brown et al., 2018; Miklikowska, 2016).

Taken together, these results highlight that family relational factors are more relevant than the family's cultural aspects in moderating the influence of fathers on their children's attitudes toward migrant integration policies. Furthermore, the quality of these relationships, specifically the extent to which adolescents feel supported by their fathers, rather than their quantity, in terms of frequency of discussions, plays a crucial role in the intergenerational transmission processes. Thus, emotional warmth and supportiveness within family relationships profoundly impact adolescents' inclusiveness and their propensity to embrace fathers' attitudes towards integration policies, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of familial influence over time.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study advances the theoretical understanding of the family intergenerational transmission processes and their individual or family-contextual moderators. In this vein, analyzing the impact of each family member's characteristics over time provides a greater understanding of the potential reciprocal nature of this phenomenon (Acock & Bengtson, 1980) and allows for more robust associations (Branje et al., 2020). The results have indeed indicated that, when considering

attitudes toward migrant integration policies, the transmission is primarily a unidirectional phenomenon, with fathers but not mothers influencing their children's attitudes. Nevertheless, when considering specific parents' characteristics (i.e., political orientation), the transmission of attitudes can become bidirectional, with adolescents influencing their fathers. Furthermore, by focusing on the cultural and relational characteristics of the family, this study highlights the conditions under which it is possible to enhance the transmission processes. Specifically, it allows for a deeper exploration of the effect of adolescent-perceived support from parents, and in particular fathers, on family transmission, a facet that has been studied in a few previous studies (Augustijn, 2022; G. L. Brown et al., 2018; Miklikowska, 2016).

Together with theoretical insights, the current study has important practical implications. The results have shown how the likelihood of transmitting inclusive attitudes from generation to generation is greatly influenced by the quality of family relationships, particularly the support perceived by fathers. Therefore, to successfully promote parent-child value transmission (Augustijn, 2022; G. L. Brown et al., 2018; Miklikowska, 2016), therapists working with families might explore how parents communicate with their children, emphasizing the importance of warm relationships and language while taking into account the different meanings of closeness depending on the family's culture (Akyil et al., 2016). Furthermore, this study has demonstrated how transmission can sometimes be bidirectional, meaning that parents, specifically left-wing political-oriented fathers, are also open to their children's values and attitudes. This finding could help to understand what promotes the negotiation of different values between parents and children rather than a polarization of their ideals and attitudes, which often leads to family conflicts (Iyengar et al., 2018). In this sense, therapy could be a valuable space for parents and children to analyze the similarities and differences in their values (Akyil et al., 2016), thus discussing how different political orientations may affect their relationships (C. S. Chan et al., 2018) and, thus, the values and attitudes transmission.

Limitations and Future Directions

Overall, this study should be considered in light of some shortcomings that can suggest venues for future research. In this vein, a longitudinal study with two annual waves may not fully disentangle the complexity of the family transmission processes. Indeed, although this study focused on two cohorts of students from different age groups, following adolescents for the entire high school period would make it possible to understand better how parental influence changes over time. Furthermore, future studies could further enrich available knowledge by considering the transition from adolescence to young adulthood, which still represents a critical life stage for developing attitudes (e.g., Bobba et al., 2023; Rekker, 2016).

Second, the more significant influence exerted by fathers rather than mothers on adolescents' attitudes toward integration policies could be explained by the fact that the attitudes analyzed in this study are closely tied to politics. Numerous studies have shown the continued presence of a gender gap (Boonen, 2017; Burns et al., 2001; Marien et al., 2010) in family dynamics regarding political engagement. For this reason, future studies should investigate whether the current results are replicated when considering different intergroup attitudes, such as prejudices.

Finally, it should be noted that specific characteristics of the context of this study, such as ethnic diversity concentration and the political scenario, may influence the study results. Italy has been considered one of the major immigrant destination countries in Europe (United Nations, 2019), and Emilia-Romagna, the specific context of the current study, is a region characterized by unique features in terms of the concentration of people with a migrant background (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2023). Furthermore, during the first two years of the study, the Italian political scenario changed, moving from a left-wing government to a right-wing one. The higher concentration of individuals with a migrant background (Kunst et al., 2021), on the one hand, and the different approaches to integration policies between these two political alignments (Geddes & Pettrachin, 2020), on the other hand, may have played a role in influencing the salience of immigrants-related attitudes (Bobba, Thijs, et al., 2024) and their transmission. Future studies should also examine how

varying ethnic compositions and political landscapes might affect the transmission of attitudes toward integration policies and whether this study's findings apply to other contexts.

Conclusion

This longitudinal study involving three family members (adolescents, their fathers, and mothers) demonstrates the intergenerational transmission of attitudes toward migrant integration policies, with fathers having a stronger positive effect than mothers on adolescents' inclusive attitudes. Furthermore, when considering the moderating effect of specific individual factors (i.e., fathers' political orientation), this study found that this transmission could become bi-directional, with adolescents also influencing their fathers' attitudes toward migrant integration policies. Finally, the more the adolescents reported a high level of fathers' support, the more their attitudes align with the latter's. Thus, the current study underscores the complexity of the family context, highlighting that the transmission of inclusive attitudes does not always operate in one way or another but, in some cases, both simultaneously.

Supplementary Materials

Table S1.

Country of origin of family with a migrant background.

	Fathers' country of origin		Mothers' country of origin		Adolescents' country of origin	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Albania	3	12.49	9	13.83	3	11.52
Argentina	1	4.17	1	1.54	-	-
Australia	-	-	1	1.54	1	3.85
Bolivia	-	-	-	-	1	3.85
Brazil	-	-	1	1.54	-	-
Cambodia	-	-	-	-	1	3.85
Canada	1	4.17	-	-	-	-
China	3	12.49	4	6.14	1	3.85
Ivory Coast	-	-	2	3.08	-	-
Croatia	-	-	1	1.54	-	-
Denmark	-	-	1	1.54	-	-
Egypt	-	-	1	1.54	1	3.85
Ethiopia	-	-	-	-	1	3.85
France	-	-	1	1.54	-	-
Germany	1	4.17	4	6.14	-	-
Ghana	-	-	1	1.54	1	3.85
India	1	4.17	1	1.54	2	7.68
Israel	1	4.17	-	-	-	-
North Macedonia	1	4.17	1	1.54	-	-
Morocco	1	4.17	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	-	-	1	1.54	-	-
Nepal	-	-	-	-	1	3.85
Nigeria	2	8.32	3	4.62	3	11.52
Netherlands	1	4.17	-	-	1	3.85
Paraguay	-	-	1	1.54	-	-
Poland	-	-	3	4.62	-	-
Czech Republic	-	-	1	1.54	-	-
Republic of Moldova	-	-	3	4.62	1	3.85
Dominican Republic	1	4.17	1	1.54	1	3.85
Romania	5	20.83	7	10.75	2	7.68
Russia	-	-	2	3.08	-	-
Serbia	-	-	2	3.08	-	-
Slovakia	-	-	2	3.08	-	-
Spain	-	-	1	1.54	1	3.85
South Africa	-	-	1	1.54	1	3.85
Sweden	-	-	1	1.54	-	-
Switzerland	1	4.17	2	3.08	-	-
Togo	-	-	1	1.54	1	3.85
Tunisia	1	4.17	3	4.62	-	-
USA	-	-	1	1.54	1	3.85
Vietnam	-	-	-	-	1	3.85
Total	24	100%	65	100%	26	100%

Note. *n*=Number of participants; %= Percentage of participants.

Table S2

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables.

	M	*SD*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1. ASex			-															
2. AgeG			.03	-														
3. Fed			.01	-.03	-													
4. Fpo			-.02	.09	-.16**	-												
5. Med			-.07	.02	.43**	-.10	-											
6. Mpo			-.12**	.05	-.06	.40***	-.16***	-										
7. Abackgr			.06	-.08*	.03	.04	-.05	.09*	-									
8. Fdisc T1	3.60	0.98	.02	.04	.08	-.01	.14***	-.04	-.12***	-								
9. Suppf T1	3.84	0.84	-.07	.01	.04	-.01	.09*	-.03	-.12***	.14***	-							
10. Suppm T1	4.08	0.75	-.07	.01	.01	.00	.10*	-.01	-.08*	.13***	.51***	-						
11. AAMIP T1	4.05	0.71	.18***	-.04	.13**	-.13**	.10**	-.23***	.03	.09**	.21***	15***	-					
12. FAMIP T1	3.72	0.79	.03	-.03	.28***	-.37***	.20***	-.27***	.08	.06	.027	.02	.20***	-				
13. MAMIP T1	3.82	0.69	.00	-.08*	.21***	-.28***	.25***	-.39***	.09*	.13**	-.01	-.02	.20***	.42***	-			
14. AAMIP T2	3.87	0.71	.20***	.00	.22***	-.21***	.18***	-.28***	.04	.10*	.155***	.15***	.56***	.36***	.27***	-		
15. FAMIP T2	3.63	0.81	-.09	-.04	.30***	-.34***	.15*	-.24***	.01	.12*	.11	.11	.20***	.72***	.38***	.30***	-	
16. MAMIP T2	3.76	0.69	.06	-.10*	.27***	-.32***	.28***	-.37***	.05	.10*	.02	.03	.22***	.36***	.71***	.23***	.36***	-

Note. ASex= Adolescents' sex; ASex: 0=male, 1=female. AgeG= Adolescents' age group; AgeG: 0=first year, 1=third year. Fed= Father educational level; Med= Mother educational level; Fed/Med: 0=none, 1=high school, 2=master degree. Fpo= Father political orientation; Mpo= Mother political orientation; Fpo/Mpo: from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right). Abackgr: adolescents' ethnic background; Abackgr: 0=Italian, 1=Foreign. Fdisc= Family discussion of actuality; Suppf/Suppm= adolescents perceived support from father/mother; AAMIP= Adolescents' Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies; FAMIP= Fathers' Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies; MAMIP= Mothers' Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Longitudinal and Multigroup Measurement Invariance of Study Variables

As a preliminary step, the measurement invariance of the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies scale (AMIP) was tested over time and across respondents. First, longitudinal measurement invariance of the AMIP scale for adolescents, fathers, and mothers was tested. Next, multigroup measurement invariance of AMIP scale was tested across the adolescents', fathers', and mothers' samples.

For both longitudinal and multigroup invariance, configural and metric levels were tested, since metric invariance is the minimum requirement for cross-lagged panel analyses. To this end, the configural models function as baseline models and should therefore display a good fit, evaluated based on the following criteria: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) with values higher than .90 and .95 indicative of an acceptable and very good fit; the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) with values below .08 and .05 indicative of an acceptable and very good fit (Byrne, 2012); and the RMSEA's 90% confidence interval's upper bound lower than .10 indicating an acceptable fit of the model (Chen et al., 2008). In order to establish metric invariance (i.e., constraining factor loadings to be equal across time and/or groups), changes in fit indices from the configural to the metric model were evaluated (e.g., Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Specifically, a significant $\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$ (Satorra & Bentler, 2001), and $\Delta CFI \geq -.010$ supplemented by $\Delta RMSEA \geq .015$ (Chen, 2007) indicates non-invariance. Results are displayed in Table S3. As can be inferred, full metric invariance was reached in all analyses.

Table S3
Longitudinal and multigroup measurement invariance of the AMIP scale

						Model comparisons			
Models	χ^2	df	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]	Models	$\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Longitudinal Invariance									
AMIP (Adolescents)									
Configural (M1)	422.607	95	.923	.043	.067 [.060, .073]				
Metric (M2)	443.044	102	.920	.052	.066 [.059, .072]	M2-M1	15.563 (7)	-.003	-.001
AMIP (Fathers)									
Configural (M1)	310.757	95	.928	.044	.066 [.058, .074]				
Metric (M2)	341.835	102	.920	.071	.067 [.060, .075]	M2-M1	32.809 (7)	-.008	.001
AMIP (Mothers)									
Configural (M1)	395.604	95	.925	.047	.68 [.061, .75]				
Metric (M2)	404.704	102	.925	.051	.066 [.059, .073]	M2-M1	5.490 (7)	.000	-.002
Multigroup Longitudinal Invariance									
AMIP									
Configural (M1)	2365.573	1041	.912	.053	.040 [.038, .042]				
Metric (M2)	2506.296	1076	.905	.065	.041 [.039, .043]	M2-M1	139.775 (35)	-.007	.001

Note. M = model; χ^2 = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = confidence interval; Δ = change in the parameter.
* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

4

Chapter

If I Know Myself, I Can Welcome You: Identity Roots of Intergroup Solidarity

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Abstract

While implementing integration policies is crucial for countries to foster cohesion and well-being, it is equally important to understand how individuals, especially youth, endorse such policies and the factors that influence this form of intergroup solidarity. Adolescents' identity statuses can influence various individual and interpersonal outcomes, but little is known about their relation with societal outcomes. Schools are crucial contexts where adolescents develop their educational identity, which is influenced by characteristics such as their ethnic background and, in turn, can influence how youth perceive the diversity around them. This study examined whether youth intergroup solidarity (i.e., positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies) differed over time based on their educational identity statuses (i.e., achievement, early closure, moratorium, searching moratorium, and diffusion) and if these differences are replicated among native Italian and migrant adolescents. A total of 1,594 adolescents (M_{age}=15.69 years, SD_{age}=1.22, 52.84% male, 79.94% native Italians) participated in a three-year longitudinal study with seven assessments. Adolescents in the achievement status of their educational identity exhibited the highest level of intergroup solidarity; adolescents in the early closure, moratorium, and searching moratorium statuses reported intermediate levels; and adolescents in the diffusion status reported the lowest level of intergroup solidarity. These results were confirmed among native Italian and migrant adolescents. This study highlighted that youth intergroup solidarity is rooted in adolescents' educational identity. Promoting a stable identity in this domain could foster greater support for integration policies, ultimately facilitating their implementation and enhancing their benefits for social cohesion and well-being.

Keywords. Integration Policies, Intergroup Solidarity, Societal Well-being, Adolescence, Identity Statuses.

If I Know Myself, I Can Welcome You: Identity Roots of Intergroup Solidarity

In increasingly divided societies, marked by economic, political, and social upheavals between individuals with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (United Nations, 2020), it is essential for countries to promote migrant integration policies, not only to level these differences (Solano & Huddleston, 2020) but also to promote greater solidarity between citizens (Berry, 2011) and enhance their well-being (Sand & Gruber, 2018; Tatarko et al., 2021). Furthermore, since the implementation of these policies is intertwined with public opinion (for a review, see Baum & Potter, 2008), it is important to understand how much individuals endorse such policies and what factors may influence this form of intergroup solidarity. Understanding the development of intergroup solidarity is especially crucial during adolescence when young people develop social perspectives (Albarello et al., 2020) while forming their own identity (Branje et al., 2021). Adolescents cope with the task of identity formation in various ways, and as a result, they can be in different identity statuses (Marcia, 1966; Meeus, 2011). A large corpus of research shows that identity statuses are characterized by distinct profiles, especially regarding psychosocial adjustment indicators and the quality of family and peer relationships (for a review, see Crocetti, 2018). In contrast, less is known about how adolescents in different identity statuses differ in their intergroup relations.

In this regard, educational identity emerges as a crucial domain, with schools serving as primary developmental and acculturative contexts (Schachner et al., 2018) where adolescents encounter diversity while engaging in identity tasks (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2023). The way adolescents develop their identity in this domain (Bobba et al., 2023), as well as their ethnic background (Crocetti, Fermani, et al., 2011), may impact their intergroup orientations. The current study aimed to examine whether adolescents' intergroup solidarity (i.e., positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies) differed over time based on their educational identity statuses (i.e., achievement, early closure, moratorium, searching moratorium, and diffusion) and if these

differences are replicated for native Italian (i.e., adolescents and their parents were born in Italy) and migrant (i.e., youth or at least one of their parents were born outside Italy) adolescents.

Integration Policies, Intergroup Solidarity, and Well-being

Modern societies are characterized by the interaction and coexistence of individuals with and without a migrant background (European Commission, 2023). Focusing on the integration process and the factors that can facilitate it is essential to enhance solidarity between these two groups. Integration can be facilitated when governments implement policies that foster equal rights, opportunities, and security for migrants (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). These policies not only facilitate migrants' integration but also promote greater well-being (Sand & Gruber, 2018; Tatarko et al., 2021) and social cohesion (Green et al., 2020), enhancing individuals' intergroup solidarity rather than threat (Schlueter et al., 2020) and promoting more positive interethnic attitudes (Kim & Byun, 2019) and greater support for migrants' rights (Barber et al., 2013) among youth.

Given their importance, tools like the Migrant Integration Policy Index (Solano & Huddleston, 2020) monitor to what extent countries implement policies promoting the integration of migrants. However, these policies do not operate in a vacuum but are intertwined with public opinion (for a review, see Baum & Potter, 2008), which can significantly influence their implementation and effectiveness. For this reason, it becomes essential to understand the extent to which individuals, especially youth, endorse these policies. In this vein, evidence suggests that specific personal characteristics of adolescents, such as their sex (Maratia et al., 2024), can influence their support for integration policies. Thus, focusing on the factors that drive adolescents' endorsement of such policies can help understand the development of intergroup solidarity among youth and shed light on what could facilitate the implementation of migrant integration policies, enhancing their benefits for social cohesion and well-being.

The Impact of Identity Formation on Individuals and Society

The roots of adolescents' well-being and inclusive perspectives can be traced back to how they cope with their most important developmental task, forming and consolidating their sense of

identity (Erikson, 1950, 1968). The three-factor identity model focuses on three pivotal identity processes (Crocetti, Rubini, & Meeus, 2008). The *commitment* process indicates a feeling of certainty about chosen goals and values, which is often associated with stability and security. *In-depth exploration* involves an active evaluation and reflection on one's current commitments and can represent a double-edged sword, as it can lead to the *reconsideration of commitment*, which represents an identity crisis that implies a potential change in actual commitments after comparing them to alternative options.

Based on specific combinations of these three processes, adolescents can be in five different identity statuses (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008; Meeus, 2011). The *achievement status* consists of individuals scoring high on commitment and in-depth exploration but low on reconsideration of commitment. The *early closure status* reflects a moderately high commitment with low in-depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment. The *moratorium status* is characterized by low commitment and low in-depth exploration but high reconsideration of commitments, while the *searching moratorium status* combines high levels of all the processes. Finally, the *diffusion status* portrays low levels of commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment (Crocetti, 2018).

A wide corpus of evidence shows that adolescents in various identity statuses differ significantly along several psychosocial aspects. Most research focuses on correlates at the individual (e.g., well-being; Morsünbül et al., 2016) and interpersonal (e.g., relationship with family members; Albert Sznitman et al., 2019) levels. Specifically, regarding individual outcomes, adolescents in the achievement status, followed by those in early closure, generally show more psychosocial adaptive patterns (Schwartz et al., 2011), including lower levels of loneliness and depressive symptoms (e.g., Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008; Park et al., 2023; Raemen et al., 2022), than adolescents in searching moratorium, moratorium, and diffusion. Regarding interpersonal relationships, adolescents in identity statuses characterized by a high degree of commitment (i.e., achievement and early closure) report better communication quality with their

mothers (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008) and a more positive family climate (Albert Sznitman et al., 2019). Thus, displaying a more stable identity is associated with positive individual and relational outcomes.

In contrast, the societal and collective aspects intertwined with specific identity statuses have received less attention so far (for a review, see Crocetti, 2018). Most studies exploring these associations focus on the likelihood that identity formation is linked with adolescents' social participation. In this vein, adolescents in the achievement status report higher scores of values-oriented volunteer functions (Marinica & Negru-Subtirica, 2020) and social responsibility (Crocetti et al., 2012), demonstrating a stronger aspiration to contribute to their communities. Conversely, adolescents in the diffusion status report low commitment to civic activities (Crocetti et al., 2012). How identity development is associated with other adolescents' social outcomes is still unclear. In particular, it remains uncertain whether and how identity development might influence youth intergroup solidarity and, in turn, how they perceive the high ethnic and cultural diversity that they experience in multiple life domains, such as education.

Educational Identity and Intergroup Solidarity

Education represents the primary and normative life domain for adolescents during this life stage (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2017), and their educational identity is shaped by the values and goals that revolve around this domain (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2023). Schools are a crucial developmental and acculturative context (Schachner et al., 2018) in which adolescents not only acquire knowledge and develop their identity (Branje, 2022; Verhoeven et al., 2019) but also experience a wide range of diversity (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2014), providing them with a foundation to navigate differences and adapt to multicultural society.

How adolescents approach ethnic and cultural diversity and, in turn, the chances to develop intergroup solidarity can be influenced by their identity processes in the educational domain. In this regard, some evidence suggests that adolescents' in-depth exploration of their educational identity is associated with lower prejudice toward other ethinc groups (Bobba et al., 2023). Therefore, actively

reflecting on the importance of their academic choices serves as a protective factor for adolescents, reducing the development of negative intergroup attitudes and increasing the chances of showing greater solidarity. However, more research is needed to tackle how adolescents in different educational identity statuses could exhibit greater intergroup solidarity than others.

Furthermore, other factors, such as adolescents' ethnic background, might play a role in this association. Students from migrant families are more likely to be in the (searching) moratorium (Crocetti, Fermani, et al., 2011; Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008) or diffusion statuses (Schwartz et al., 2011) compared to their peers from the ethnic majority group, which, in turn, could impact their intergroup solidarity. In light of this, it is of utmost importance to understand how educational identity statuses are associated with adolescents' positive attitudes towards integration policies to comprehend better what can promote greater intergroup solidarity among adolescents with and without a migrant background.

The Current Study

Adolescence is crucial for embracing social perspectives and developing a more or less stable identity across different life domains, such as education. While abundant evidence links identity statuses to individual (e.g., well-being) and interpersonal (e.g., family relationships) outcomes, research on social outcomes is limited. Consequently, it is still unclear whether educational identity statuses are associated with how adolescents perceive the diversity surrounding them. This study examined whether youth intergroup solidarity (i.e., positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies) differed over time based on their educational identity statuses (i.e., achievement, early closure, moratorium, searching moratorium, and diffusion). Furthermore, this study aims to understand if these differences are replicated among native Italian and migrant adolescents.

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were drawn from the ongoing longitudinal ERC-Consolidator project IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents". A total of 1,594 adolescents (47.16% female, 52.84% male; M_{age}=15.69 years, SD_{age}=1.22, range:13.69–20.04 years) participated in seven assessments (T1 to T7) between 2022 and 2024. Adolescents were from two age groups: first-year (M_{age}=14.65 years, SD_{age}=0.53, range:13.69–17.63 years) and third-year (M_{age}=16.80 years, SD_{age}=0.63, range:15.74–20.04 years) students enrolled in secondary high schools in the Emilia-Romagna region, located in the North-East of Italy. Youth reported their parents' educational level, indicating that most parents had a medium (i.e., high school diploma; 47.52% fathers, 47.56% mothers), followed by those with a high (i.e., university degree; 23.98% fathers, 32.08% mothers) and a low (i.e., elementary or middle school degree; 28.50% fathers, 20.36% mothers) educational level. Most adolescents (79.94%, M_{age}=15.63. years, SD_{age}=1.17, range:13.69–20.04 years) were native Italians, while the remaining 20.06% (M_{age}=15.95 years, SD_{age}=1.38, range:13.87–19.40) had a migrant background. Migrants adolescents come from Eastern Europe (e.g., Albania; 34.17%), Asia (e.g., China; 27.84%), and Africa (e.g., Morocco; 25.32), America (e.g., Brazil; 7.60%), Western Europe (e.g., Germany; adolescents 3.80%), and Oceania (i.e., Australia; 1.27%). Most were second-generation immigrants (73.76%), while the remaining 26.24% were first-generation immigrants. The ethnic composition of the sample is consistent with recent national and regional statistics (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2022).

Among the total sample, 23.65% of adolescents participated in all seven assessments, while 16.12%, 8.59%, 9.47%, 8.09%, 14.49%, and 17.25% participated in six, five, four, three, two, and one assessment, respectively. The Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test yielded a normed χ^2 (χ^2/df=8149.485/6394) of 1.27, indicating that data were likely missing completely at random. Therefore, the total sample of 1,594 participants was included in the analyses, and missing data were handled with the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) procedure in M*plus* 8.9 (Kelloway, 2015; Muthén & Muthén, 1988-2017).

Procedures

The present study was approved by Ethics Committee of Alma Mater Studiorum Univerisity of Bologna (Italy) as part of the IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents" project. This longitudinal research involved adolescents from several high schools in the North-East part of Italy. Schools were selected through a stratified (by track and level of urbanization) randomized method, and principals were approached to present the project. Upon their approval, the study was presented to students and their parents, who also received written and oral information about it. Active consent from parents and young adults was obtained before their children's participation, while underage adolescents provided their assent to participate in the project. Participation in the study was voluntary, and adolescents were informed they could withdraw their consent anytime. The seven data collections were conducted in January-February 2022 (T1), April-May 2022 (T2), September-October 2022 (T3), January-February 2023 (T4), April-May 2023 (T5), September-October 2023 (T6), January-February 2024 (T7).

Measures

Adolescents completed a questionnaire including socio-demographics (e.g., age, sex, parents' educational level, and birth country) and measures of their intergroup solidarity (i.e., positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies) and their three educational identity processes (i.e., commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment). Information regarding the reliability of each measure is provided in the Supplementary Materials (see Table S1).

Intergroup Solidarity

Adolescents' intergroup solidarity was assessed using the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies scale (AMIP; Maratia et al., 2023). The instrument consists of eight items based on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). Participants received this prompt: "You will be presented with several policies for the integration of people with a migrant background. Please, rate how important it is that Italian national programs support policies to foster…" followed by one item

for each policy area, as for example "…family reunion (e.g., accommodation, residence period)". For each item, participants indicated their response on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 "Not at all important" to 5 "Absolutely important").

Educational Identity

Commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment in the educational domain were measured using the Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale (U-MICS, Crocetti et al., 2008; Italian validation by Crocetti et al., 2010). The instrument consists of 13 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (completely false) to 5 (completely true). Sample items include: "My education gives me certainty in life" (commitment; 5 items), "I think a lot about my education" (in-depth exploration; 5 items), and "I often think it would be better to try to find a different education" (reconsideration of commitment; 3 items).

Strategy of Analyses

Descriptive analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Version 28.0 for Windows. The remaining analyses were conducted in M*plus* 8.9 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017), using Maximum Likelihood Robust (MLR) estimator (Satorra & Bentler, 2001).

Two preliminary steps were undertaken before conducting the main analyses. First, it was tested whether the measure of intergroup solidarity, the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies scale (AMIP), showed longitudinal invariance. The full procedure is detailed in the Supplemental Materials. Second, data-driven cluster analysis was conducted to identify adolescents in various educational identity statuses. This procedure was preferred over other methods, such as Latent Profile Analysis, to maintain consistency with the existing literature and allow for greater comparability, as cluster analysis has been the most widely employed approach for identifying identity statuses (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2014; Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008; Luyckx et al., 2008). Specifically, the scores for the identity processes were standardized, and in the first step, a hierarchical cluster analysis was conducted. Cluster solutions with two, three, four, five, and six clusters were compared based on three criteria: theoretical meaningfulness of each cluster,

parsimony, and explanatory power (i.e., the cluster solution had to explain approximately 50% of the variance in each identity dimension). In the second step, initial cluster centers obtained from the hierarchical cluster analysis were used as non-random starting points in iterative *k*-means clustering. This second step was applied to assign an identity status to each participant.

Regarding the main aim of this study, Latent Growth Curve (Duncan & Duncan, 2009; Preacher, 2018) analyses in M*plus* were conducted to examine mean-level changes in intergroup solidarity among adolescents. Latent growth curve analyses allow the estimation of the intercept (i.e., the variable level at the beginning of the study) and the slope (i.e., the rate of change). Through the Satorra and Bentler's (2001) scaled difference chi–square test statistic and changes in fit indices, three models (i.e., intercept–only model; linear model; free–change model) were compared to determine which growth curve best captured observed changes in adolescents' intergroup solidarity (Preacher, 2018). Multigroup Latent Growth Curve model and pairwise parameter comparisons using the Wald test were then conducted to examine differences in growth parameters based on adolescents' educational identity statuses.

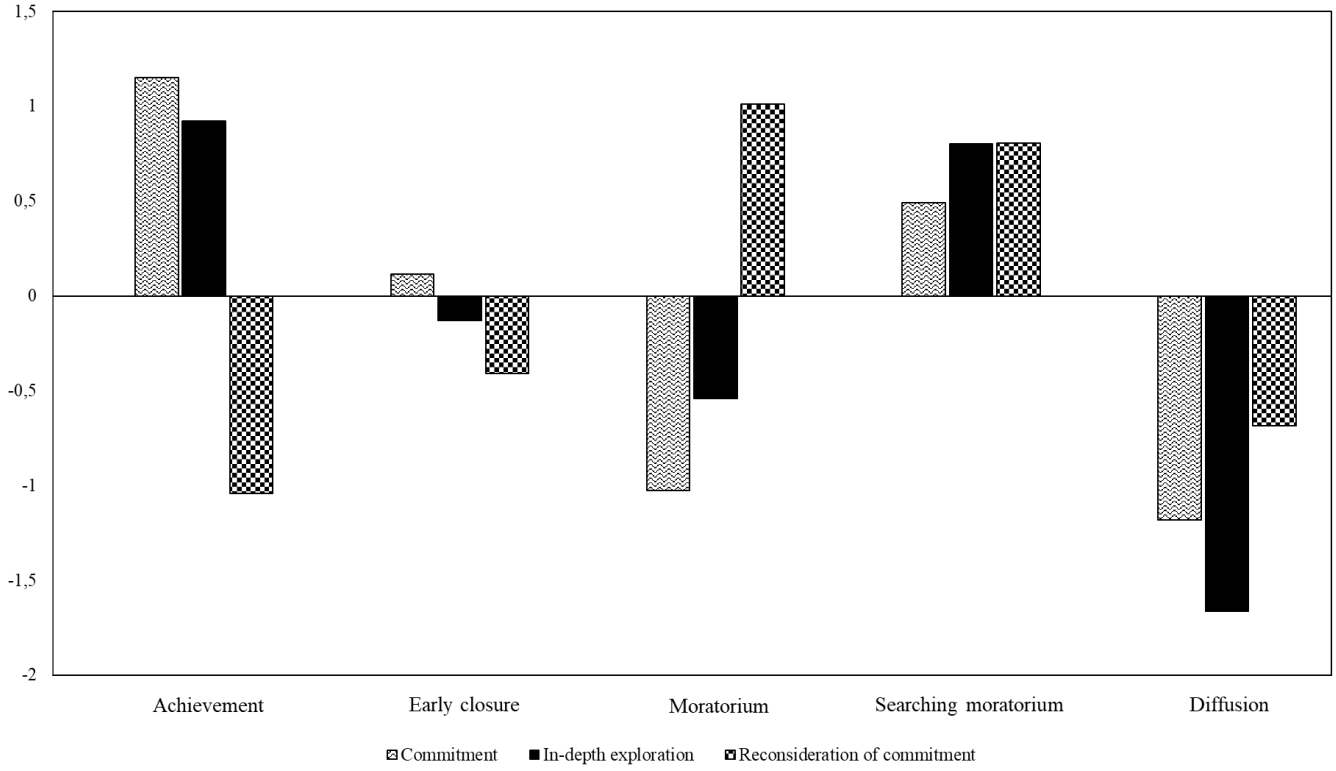
As sensitivity analyses, first, Multigroup Latent Growth Curve analyses were conducted accounting for covariates such as sex, age group (i.e., first- vs. third-year high school students), and socioeconomic status (i.e., parents' educational level). Second, to better understand the moderation role of ethnic background, the main analyses were performed separately for native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviation, and within-time correlations for all study variables are displayed in the Supplementary Materials (see Table S1). Regarding the longitudinal invariance of the intergroup solidarity measure, results indicated that partial scalar invariance was reached (see Table S3). Moving to the cluster analyses, the z-scores of commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment for the final five clusters are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Z-scores for commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment for the five educational identity statuses.

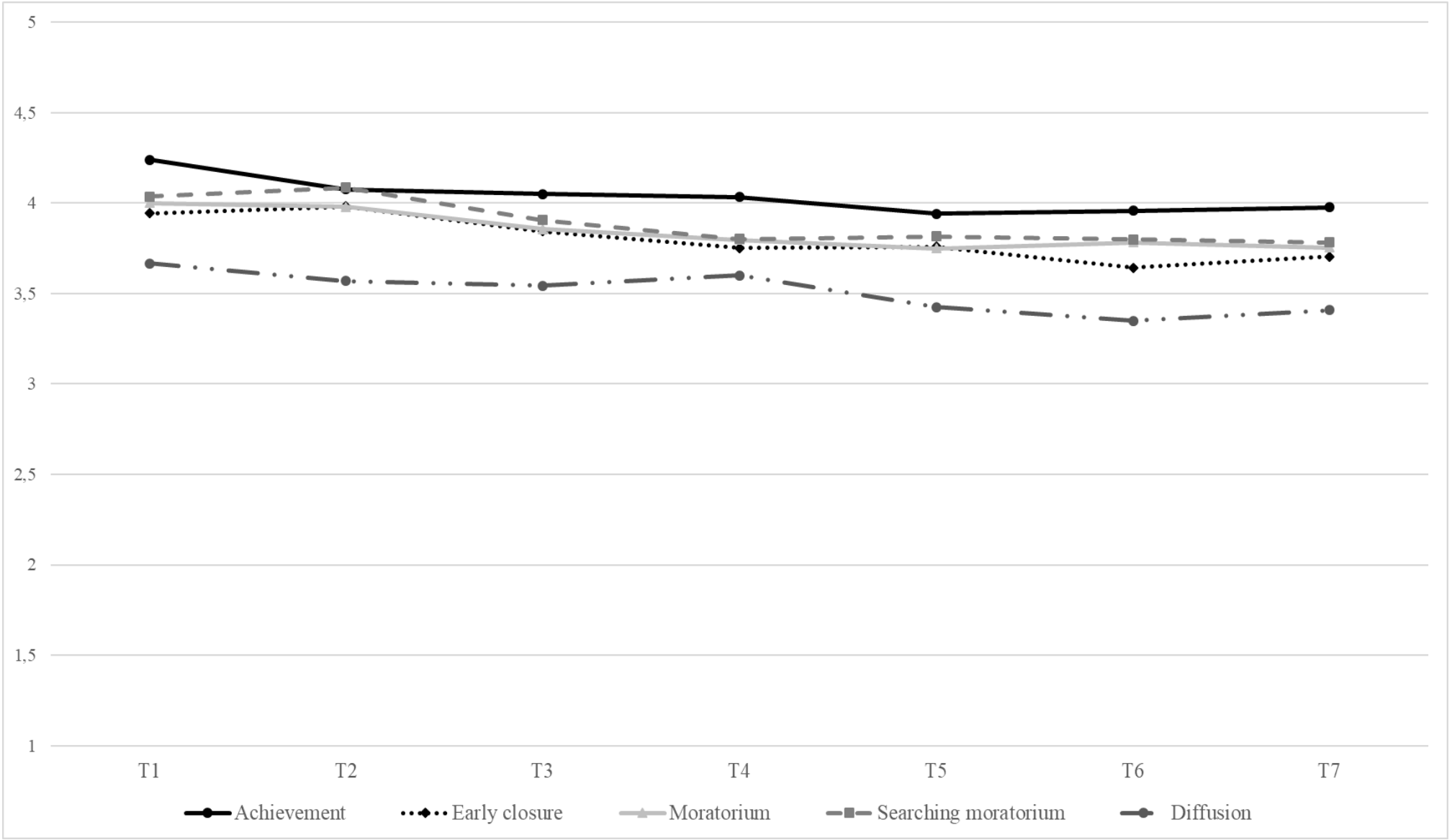


The first cluster (achievement, *n*=183; 16.71% of the sample) comprised individuals who scored high on commitment and in-depth exploration and low on reconsideration of commitment. The second cluster (early closure, *n*=361; 32.97% of the sample) comprised individuals who scored moderate on commitment and low on in-depth exploration and on reconsideration of commitment. The third cluster (moratorium, *n*=233; 21.28% of the sample) consisted of adolescents scoring low on commitment and in-depth exploration but high on reconsideration of commitment. The fourth cluster (searching moratorium, *n*=216; 19.73% of the sample) consisted of individuals scoring moderately high on commitment and high in-depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment. The fifth cluster (diffusion, *n*=102; 9.31% of the sample) comprised individuals scoring low on all three dimensions. This five-cluster solution explained 62%, 59%, and 62% of the variance in commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment, respectively.

Main Analyses

The results of the Latent Growth Curve analyses indicated that the model that fitted the data significantly better was the free change model (see Table S3). Variances of attitudes toward migrant integration policies intercepts and slopes were statistically significant, indicating interindividual differences in levels and rates of change. Therefore, it was possible to conduct Multigroup Latent Growth Curve analyses to understand if adolescents' intergroup solidarity differed over time based on their educational identity. Estimated growth curves for the five clusters of educational identity are reported in Figure 2.

Figure 2.
Estimated growth of intergroup solidarity of adolescents in different educational identity statuses.



Results of intercept comparisons (see Table 1) highlighted that adolescents in the achievement status showed more positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies compared to youth in the early closure (Wald test=22.15, $p<.001$), moratorium (Wald test=11.87, $p<.001$), searching moratorium (Wald test=7.27, $p<.01$), and diffusion (Wald test=49.62, $p<.001$) statuses. Adolescents in the early closure, moratorium, and searching moratorium statuses did not differ from each other and reported intermediate levels of intergroup solidarity. Adolescents in the diffusion status reported less favorable attitudes toward migrant integration compared to adolescents in the early closure (Wald test=14.69, $p<.001$), moratorium (Wald test=18.22, $p<.001$), and searching moratorium (Wald test=19.54, $p<.001$) statuses. The slopes of the attitudes toward migrant integration policies did not differ among adolescents regardless of their identity statuses.

Table 1.
Multigroup Latent Growth Curve Analyses of intergroup solidarity

	Growth Factors	
	Intercept *M* (σ^2)	**Slope *M* (σ^2)**
Achievement Status	4.24_{a}^{***} ($.156^{**}$)	$-.044_{a}^{***}$ ($.004^{**}$)
Early Closure Status	3.94_{b}^{***} ($.267^{***}$)	$-.040_{a}^{***}$ ($.003^{**}$)
Moratorium Status	4.00_{b}^{***} ($.291^{***}$)	$-.041_{a}^{***}$ ($.005^{**}$)
Searching Moratorium Status	4.04_{b}^{***} ($.253^{**}$)	$-.042_{a}^{***}$ ($.004^{**}$)
Diffusion Status	3.67_{c}^{***} ($.212^{***}$)	$-.043_{a}^{*}$ ($.011^{*}$)

Note. *M*= mean; σ^2= variance.
Subscript letters within columns indicate significant coefficient differences, as emerged from the Wald test pairwise comparisons. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Sensitivity analyses

As sensitivity analyses, first, the results of the model controlling for covariates confirmed the findings obtained in the model without covariate adjustments (for a detailed report, see Supplementary Materials), with differences between each status remaining unchanged.

Second, analyses were conducted in the two subgroups of native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background. Employing the Chi-Square Test ($\chi^2(4)=19.71$, $p=.001$), significant differences in the distribution of adolescents with and without a migrant background along the five identity statuses were detected (see Table S5). Migrant adolescents were more likely to be in the status of searching moratorium compared to their native Italian peers. Then, Multigroup Latent Growth Curve analyses were performed separately among adolescents with and without a migrant background. Importantly, the profile of the statuses in terms of showing more or less intergroup solidarity documented in the total sample was generally confirmed in both groups (for a detailed report, see Supplementary Materials, Table S7), indicating that adolescents in the achievement status showed the highest levels of intergroup solidarity, while the diffusion status exhibited the lowest.

Discussion

Integration policies are crucial for promoting intergroup solidarity and societal well-being (Solano & Huddlestone, 2020). At the same time, their implementation appears intertwined with public opinion (for a review, see Baum & Potter, 2008), making it important to understand how much individuals, especially adolescents, endorse these policies and which factors influence this form of intergroup solidarity. A large corpus of research shows that identity statuses are characterized by distinct profiles, especially in terms of personality, mental health, adjustment indicators, and quality of family and peer relationships (for a review, see Crocetti, 2018). In contrast, less is known about how adolescents in different identity statuses differ in their social and intergroup relations. Given this knowledge gap, this study examined if adolescents' intergroup solidarity differed over time based on youth's various educational identity statuses. Overall, adolescents in the achievement status showed the highest levels of intergroup solidarity, while adolescents in the diffusion status showed the lowest. These results were replicated among native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background and highlighted the role of educational identity status in shaping adolescents' intergroup solidarity.

Adolescents' Intergroup Solidarity and Educational Identity Statuses

The main differences based on adolescents' educational identity statuses concerned the initial levels of intergroup solidarity. Adolescents in the achievement status, which generally display the best profile in terms of personal characteristics (e.g., Morsunbul et al., 2016) and interpersonal relationships (e.g., Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008), in the present study also showed better societal outcomes, exhibiting higher levels of intergroup solidarity than youth in other statuses. This result aligned with other evidence suggesting that adolescents in the achievement status show high social responsibility, demonstrating a strong desire to contribute to their communities (Crocetti et al., 2012). More stable identity patterns are indeed associated with greater civic engagement and prosocial values (e.g., Berzonsky & Kuk, 2022), including pro-diversity and pro-equality values (Erentaitė et al., 2019) and increased openness to interreligious dialogue (Rydz & Romaneczko, 2022). Thus, the enhanced clarity regarding themselves in the educational domain and their openness to experience may enable adolescents in the achievement status to navigate the surrounding world better, manifesting greater intergroup solidarity.

Youth in the early closure, moratorium, and searching moratorium statuses exhibited a similar profile. Thus, adolescents in the early closure, who typically share with their peers in the achievement status a similar profile in terms of psychological well-being (Schwartz et al., 2011), differed from them in more complex matters like views and engagement towards the surrounding world (Crocetti et al., 2012), showing, in this case, slightly less intergroup solidarity. Adolescents in the moratorium status, often depicted negatively in terms of well-being because of their high levels of anxiety and distress, especially compared to those in early closure (e.g., Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008), when it comes to societal issues, they did not differ from the latter, indicating that, depending on the outcome, these adolescents can also show more adaptive patterns. Adolescents in the searching moratorium status, whose choices are often influenced by external pressure (Meeus et al., 2012), showed a favorable profile regarding intergroup solidarity, paraphs

due to their high levels of in-depth exploration, a process associated with less ethnic prejudices among youth (Bobba et al., 2023).

Finally, adolescents in the diffusion status reported the lowest levels of intergroup solidarity compared to their peers in other statuses. Thus, the less favorable outcomes these adolescents experience at the individual (e.g., Bogaerts et al., 2021; Hatano et al., 2016) and interpersonal (Albert Sznitman et al., 2019) levels of their lives were also confirmed from a broader perspective. These results might draw attention to evidence suggesting that these adolescents are less engaged socially, registering lower social responsibility (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2012). Similarly, adolescents who avoid identity issues may also be more vulnerable to extremist narratives (e.g., Isenhardt et al., 2021; Meeus, 2015) and exhibit higher levels of intolerance (Ozer et al., 2023) and fearful globalization attitudes (Senejko & Łoś, 2016). Overall, this result might reflect a disinterest that extends not only toward adolescents' identity commitments but also toward society and others, decreasing their sense of intergroup solidarity.

It should be emphasized that regardless of their identity status, adolescents showed above-average attitudes toward integration policies, providing a positive picture of their intergroup solidarity. Thus, whenever differences between adolescents in various identity statuses are presented, they should be viewed in terms of greater or lesser intergroup solidarity. Furthermore, these five groups differed mainly in the initial levels of these attitudes but not in the rate of change, which showed a similar negative trend for all adolescents, suggesting that other changes that occur over time (e.g., decreased social trust; Flanagan & Stout, 2010) may negatively impact their intergroup solidarity (for a meta-analysis, see Crocetti et al., 2021). Although this form of intergroup solidarity decreased over time, mean scores remained above average, providing a similar picture compared to the beginning of the study, with the differences between the various statuses still visible.

Zooming on Italian Native Adolescents and their Peers with a Migrant Background

This study also explored whether the results were replicated among native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background. Regarding potential differences in the distribution in various identity statuses, migrant adolescents were more likely to be in the searching moratorium status than their native Italian peers. This result align with other evidence that finds the same differences between ethnic majority and minority families (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2011) and can be explained by the more intensive identity crisis these adolescents experience across different identity domains (e.g., ethnic and educational), compared to youth form the ethnic majority group (for a review, see Erentaitė et al., 2018).

While differences in the distribution across the various identity statuses were found, native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background did not differ in their level of intergroup solidarity based on their educational identity status. Indeed, for both groups, the achievement and diffusion statuses represented the two poles of the spectrum, with the achievement status associated with more favorable attitudes toward migrant integration policies and the diffusion status linked to less intergroup solidarity. These results thus demonstrated that youth intergroup solidarity is rooted in their educational identity, regardless of their ethnic background.

Practical Implications: From Individual to Societal Well-Being

The current study has interesting practical implications, especially in the school context, where adolescents develop cognitive skills and pursue academic goals (for a review, see York et al., 2019), while shaping orientations toward the surrounding world (Schwarzenthal et al., 2018). Schools, therefore, serve as the foundation where the citizens of tomorrow are shaped, and their future adult perspectives are formed (Rekker et al., 2015). This study has shown that the development of adolescents' identity within this specific domain can have far-reaching effects, fostering more intergroup solidarity among adolescents. As such, the research underscored the importance of interventions promoting educational or vocational identity development (for a meta-analysis, see Crocetti et al., 2024). These interventions would not only support academic achievement and more stable career paths for youth (e.g., Sugimura et al., 2023) but also encourage

greater intergroup solidarity among adolescents, both with and without a migrant background. At the same time, such interventions could generate a virtuous cycle effect, indirectly facilitating the implementation of integration policies and their benefits in terms of greater cohesion (e.g., Green et al., 2020; Schlueter et al., 2020) and well-being (e.g., Sand & Gruber, 2018; Tatarko et al., 2021) at the broader societal level.

Strengths, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research

This study, which contributed to disentangling the development of intergroup solidarity (i.e., positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies) among adolescents within different educational identity statuses, should be considered in light of its strengths and limitations, which suggest future research directions. A key strength of this study was its focus on the school environment, a crucial setting for adolescents' identity formation (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2023). However, identity unfolds across multiple domains (Dimitrova et al., 2018), which this study did not consider. Thus, it could be important to explore how other identity domains, such as the interpersonal one, given the crucial role of peer relationships for adolescents (Ragelienė, 2016), might also influence the development of intergroup solidarity among youth.

Additionally, since the study focused on the development of intergroup solidarity, it was conducted in the Italian region (i.e., Emilia-Romagna) with the highest ethnic diversity in the school population (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2022). This setting allowed for a nuanced exploration of individuals' intergroup relations and solidarity (Verkuyten, 2022). However, this choice introduced a limitation, as the findings may not be fully generalizable to less diverse school environments. Consequently, more research in other contexts with different degrees of ethnic and cultural diversity is needed.

Furthermore, the longitudinal design represented a major strength, providing insights into how intergroup solidarity evolved and varied according to youth educational identity statuses. However, other factors that could account for differences in the rate of change of youth solidarity were not considered (e.g., increased threat; Crocetti et al., 2021). This limited a more

comprehensive understanding of other processes involved, especially considering that adolescents showed decreased intergroup solidarity over time, regardless of their educational identity. Thus, future studies could focus on identifying factors beyond educational identity that may influence the development of intergroup solidarity during adolescence.

Conclusions

While the link between identity statuses and adolescents' individual and interpersonal outcomes has been consistently investigated, less is known about whether and how identity development affects their level of intergroup solidarity. This study highlighted the association between educational identity status and adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies, indicating that adolescents in the achievement status showed the highest level of intergroup solidarity, while those in the diffusion status reported the lowest. These results were replicated among adolescents with and without a migrant background. This study highlighted that youth intergroup solidarity is rooted in adolescents' educational identity. Thus, knowing themselves in this domain and deeply exploring the importance of what they study can help youth navigate the diversity of the surrounding world and foster higher intergroup solidarity.

Supplementary Materials

Table S1

Cronbach's Alphas, means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables.

	α	*M*	*SD*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Background				-									
2. Commitment	.887	3.14	0.83	.01	-								
3. In-depth exploration	.739	3.13	0.68	-.00	.57***	-							
4. Reconsideration of commitment	.773	2.96	0.88	.13***	-.30***	-.23	-						
5. Intergroup solidarity T1	.911	4.00	0.73	.02	.13***	.22***	-.14	-					
6. Intergroup solidarity T2	.869	3.98	0.65	.05	.13***	.30***	-.01	.54***	-				
7. Intergroup solidarity T3	.898	3.91	0.68	.03	.17***	.20***	.02	.48***	.54***	-			
8. Intergroup solidarity T4	.912	3.81	0.71	.02	.13***	.18***	-.05	.55***	.54***	.66***	-		
9. Intergroup solidarity T5	.901	3.79	0.71	.05	.13***	.19***	-.05	.50***	.55***	.63***	.65***	-	
10. Intergroup solidarity T6	.920	3.75	0.73	-.05	.10***	.18***	-.02	.50***	.50***	.61***	.61***	.64***	-
11. Intergroup solidarity T7	.915	3.78	0.73	.12	.12***	.19***	-.03	.52***	.52***	.61***	.63***	.68***	.73***

Note. α=Cronbach's Alphas; *M*=Means; *SD*=Standard Deviations; Background: Adolescents' ethnic background; Background: 0=Italian, 1=Migrant.
Intergroup Solidarity=Positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies; T=Time

*** $p < .001$

Longitudinal and Multigroup Measurement Invariance of Intergroup Solidarity

As a preliminary step, it was tested whether the measure of intergroup solidarity, the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies scale (AMIP), showed longitudinal invariance. For longitudinal configural, metric, and scalar levels were tested. To this end, the configural models function as baseline models and should therefore display a good fit, evaluated based on the following criteria: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) with values higher than .90 and .95 indicative of an acceptable and very good fit; the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) with values below .08 and .05 indicative of an acceptable and very good fit (Byrne, 2012); and the RMSEA's 90% confidence interval's upper bound lower than .10 indicating an acceptable fit of the model (Chen et al., 2008). To establish scalar invariance (i.e., constraining factor loadings and intercepts to be equal across time and/or groups), changes in fit indices from the configural to the metric and scalar model were evaluated (e.g., Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Specifically, a significant $\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$ (Satorra & Bentler, 2001), and ΔCFI $\geq$ -.010 supplemented by ΔRMSEA $\geq$ .015 (Chen, 2007) indicates non-invariance. Results are displayed in Table S3. As can be inferred, partial scalar invariance was reached.

Table S2

Longitudinal and multigroup invariance of the measure of intergroup solidarity

						Model comparisons			
Models	χ^2	df	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]	Models	$\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Longitudinal Invariance									
Configural (M1)	3060.069	1295	.927	.047	.030 [.029, .032]				
Metric (M2)	3163.236	1337	.924	.052	.030 [.029, .032]	M2-M1	104.148 (42)***	-.003	.000
Full scalar ($M3_a$)	3547.613	1385	.910	.064	.033 [.031, .034]	$M3_a$-M1	449.098 (48)***	-.014	.003
Partial scalar ($M3_b$)	3416.044	1361	.915	.062	.032 [.031, .033]	$M3_b$-M1	313.958 (24)***	-.009	.002

Note. M = model; χ^2 = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = confidence interval; Δ = change in the parameter. The row highlighted in gray indicates the selected model following the comparison. Following standard procedures for partial scalar invariance testing, equality constraints on two item intercepts were released

*** $p < .001$

Table S3.
Latent Growth Curve analyses of adolescents' intergroup solidarity

	Growth Factors		Model fit					Model comparisons			
	Intercept *M* (σ^2)	Slope *M* (σ^2)	χ^2	*df*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]	Models	$\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$ (Δdf)	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
M1: Intercept–only model	3.829^{***} ($.285^{***}$)		258.331	26	.829	.862	.078 [.069, .087]				
M2: Linear model	3.967^{***} ($.258^{***}$)	$-.051^{***}$ ($.005^{***}$)	50.085	23	.980	.982	.028 [.018, .039]	M2–M1	$181.942\ (3)^{***}$	-0.151	0.050
M3: Free–change model	3.963^{***} ($.263^{***}$)	$-.044^{***}$ ($.004^{***}$)	24.418	18	.995	.994	.016 [.000, .030]	M3–M1	$25.135\ (5)^{***}$	-0.015	0.012

Note. *M*=Mean; σ^2= Variance; χ^2= Chi-square; *df*= Degrees of freedom; CFI= Comparative Fit Index; TLI= Tucker–Lewis Index; RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation and 90% confidence interval; Δ= change in parameter. The row highlighted in gray indicates the selected model following the comparison.
*** $p < .001$

Table S4.

Observed means and standard deviations of participants' intergroup solidarity based on their educational identity statuses.

	T1		T2		T2		T4		T5		T6		T7	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Achievement	4.25	0.63	4.10	0.70	4.10	0.69	4.06	0.69	4.04	0.67	4.01	0.72	4.05	0.72
Early Closure	3.94	0.68	4.00	0.62	3.90	0.65	3.81	0.69	3.80	0.67	3.72	0.71	3.80	0.70
Moratorium	4.00	0.75	3.96	0.63	3.91	0.72	3.80	0.77	3.77	0.75	3.77	0.78	3.73	0.76
Searching Moratorium	4.08	0.73	4.09	0.61	3.99	0.61	3.87	0.67	3.87	0.69	3.81	0.63	3.90	0.71
Diffusion	3.60	0.84	3.63	0.69	3.58	0.63	3.59	0.75	3.55	0.93	3.56	0.88	3.60	0.80

Note. T=Time; *M*=Means; *SD*=Standard deviation.

Sensitivity analyses

Covariates

As sensitivity analyses, the Multigroup Latent Growth Curve Model was conducted by accounting for covariates such as sex, age group (i.e., first- vs. third-year high school students), and socioeconomic status (i.e., parents' educational level). The results of this model confirm the findings obtained in the model without covariate adjustments, highlighting the same initial differences in intergroup solidarity levels among adolescents based on their educational identity.

Regarding the main effect of these covariates, for what concern *sex*, results indicated that females (b=.056, $p < .001$) reported more positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies than males at the beginning of the study. However, no significant differences emerged in the rate of change in this form of intergroup solidarity over time based on adolescents' sex. Regarding the *age group* (i.e., first- vs. third-year high school students), while results indicated no difference in the intercept of adolescents' intergroup solidarity, a difference emerged on its slope. In particular, older students (b=.005, $p < .001$) exhibited a more pronounced decline in their level of intergroup solidarity over time compared to younger students. Finally, regarding the socioeconomic status (i.e., parents' level of education), results indicated that students from higher socioeconomic (b=.082, $p < .001$) backgrounds reported higher levels of intergroup solidarity at the beginning of the study compared to youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. However, no significant differences emerged in the rate of change in intergroup solidarity over time based on youth socioeconomic status.

Moderation by Ethnic Background

To better understand the moderation role of ethnic background, first, the cluster distribution of native Italian and migrant adolescents was assessed (see Table S5). Second, Multigroup Latent Growth Curve analyses were performed separately for native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background. The cluster The results of the Latent Growth Curve analyses indicated that the model fitting the data significantly better for native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background was the free change model (see Table S6). However, when conducting multigroup analyses for migrant adolescents, the free-change and

linear models failed to converge. Therefore, the more parsimonious intercept-only model was adopted for this sub-sample. Estimated growth curves for the five clusters of educational identity in the two sub-samples are reported in Figures S1 and S2.

Results of intercept comparisons (see Table S7), highlighted that *native Italian adolescents* in the achievement status reported the highest level of intergroup solidarity, showing more positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies compared to youth in the early closure (Wald test=23.95, $p < .001$), moratorium (Wald test=14.33, $p < .001$), searching moratorium (Wald test=7.12, $p < .01$), and diffusion (Wald test=50.43, $p < .001$) statuses. Furthermore, native Italian adolescents in the early closure, moratorium, and searching moratorium statuses did not differ from each other and reported intermediate levels of intergroup solidarity. In addition, native Italian adolescents in the diffusion status of their educational identity reported the lowest level of intergroup solidarity, showing less favorable attitudes toward migrant integration policies compared to adolescents in the early closure (Wald test=13.88, $p < .001$), moratorium (Wald test=13.73, $p < .001$), and searching moratorium (Wald test=16.85, $p < .001$) statuses.

Regarding *adolescents with a migrant background*, although youth in the achievement status differed from those in the diffusion status (Wald test=5.05, $p < .05$), showing higher level of intergroup solidarity than the latter, they did not differ from adolescents in the early closure, moratorium, and searching moratorium statuses. At the same time adolescents in the early closure, moratorium, and searching moratorium statuses did not differ from each other. Additionally, adolescents in the diffusion status differed from those in the moratorium status (Wald test=4.28, $p < .05$), showing lower levels of intergroup solidarity than the latter, but they did not differ from youth in the early closure and searching moratorium statuses. Finally, the slopes of the attitudes toward migrant integration policies did not differ among native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background, regardless of their identity statuses.

Table S5.
Native Italian and migrant adolescents' distribution in each educational identity status

	Native Italian Adolescents	Migrant Adolescents
Statuses	*n* (%)	*n* (%)
Achievement	158 (17.48)	25 (13.09)
Early Closure	312 (34.51)	49 (25.65)
Moratorium	189 (20.91)	44 (23.04)
Searching Moratorium	158 (17.48)	**58 (30.37) (+)**
Diffusion	87 (9.62)	15 (7.85)

Note. Observed values indicated in bold are significantly different from expected values: (+) indicates that the observed value is higher than the expected value.

Table S6.
Latent Growth Curve analyses of native Italian and migrant adolescents' intergroup solidarity

	Growth Factors		Model fit					Model comparisons			
	Intercept *M* (σ^2)	Slope *M* (σ^2)	χ^2	*df*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]	Models	$\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$ (Δdf)	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Native Italian Adolescents											
M1: Intercept–only model	3.815*** (.285***)		224.920	26	.830	.863	.080 [.071, .090]				
M2: Linear model	3.957*** (.251***)	−.051*** (.005***)	39.283	23	.986	.987	.024 [.010, .037]	M2–M1	173.433 (3)***	-0.156	0.056
M3: Free–change model	3.960*** (.255***)	−.045*** (.004***)	17.504	18	1.00	1.00	.000 [.000, .025]	M3–M1	21.933 (5)***	-0.014	0.024
Adolescents with a migrant background											
M1: Intercept–only model	3.893*** (.279***)		66.914	26	.809	.845	.075 [.053, .097]				
M2: Linear model	4.014*** (.300***)	−.050*** (.006)	42.332	23	.910	.917	.055 [.027, .080]	M2–M1	16.834 (3)***	-0.101	0.020
M3: Free–change model	3.953*** (.297***)	−.037** (.004)	22.724	18	.978	.974	.031 [.000, .065]	M3–M1	17.969 (5)**	-0.068	0.024

Note. *M*= mean; σ^2= variance; χ^2= chi-square; *df*= degrees of freedom; CFI= Comparative Fit Index; TLI= Tucker–Lewis Index; RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation and 90% confidence interval; Δ= change in parameter. The row highlighted in gray indicates the selected model following the comparison.
** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table S7.
Multigroup Latent Growth Curve analyses of intergroup solidarity

	Growth Factors		
	Native Italian Adolescents		Migrant Adolescents
Statuses	Intercept *M* (σ^2)	Slope *M* (σ^2)	Intercept *M* (σ^2)
Achievement	4.25_{a}^{***} ($.164^{**}$)	$-.049_{a}^{***}$ ($.004^{*}$)	4.15_{a}^{***} ($.325^{***}$)
Early Closure	3.94_{b}^{***} ($.269^{***}$)	$-.039_{a}^{***}$ ($.003^{**}$)	3.86_{ab}^{***} ($.271^{***}$)
Moratorium	3.98_{b}^{***} ($.328^{***}$)	$-.041_{a}^{***}$ ($.006^{**}$)	4.06_{a}^{***} ($.226^{***}$)
Searching Moratorium	4.04_{b}^{***} ($.207^{**}$)	$-.044_{a}^{***}$ ($.003^{*}$)	4.01_{ab}^{***} ($.249^{***}$)
Diffusion	3.65_{c}^{***} ($.206^{***}$)	$-.047_{a}^{*}$ ($.014^{*}$)	3.61_{bc}^{***} (.199)

Note. *M*= mean; σ^2= variance.
Subscript letters within columns indicate significant coefficient differences, as emerged from the Wald test pairwise comparisons.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Figure S1.
Estimated growth of intergroup solidarity of native Italian adolescents in different educational identity statuses

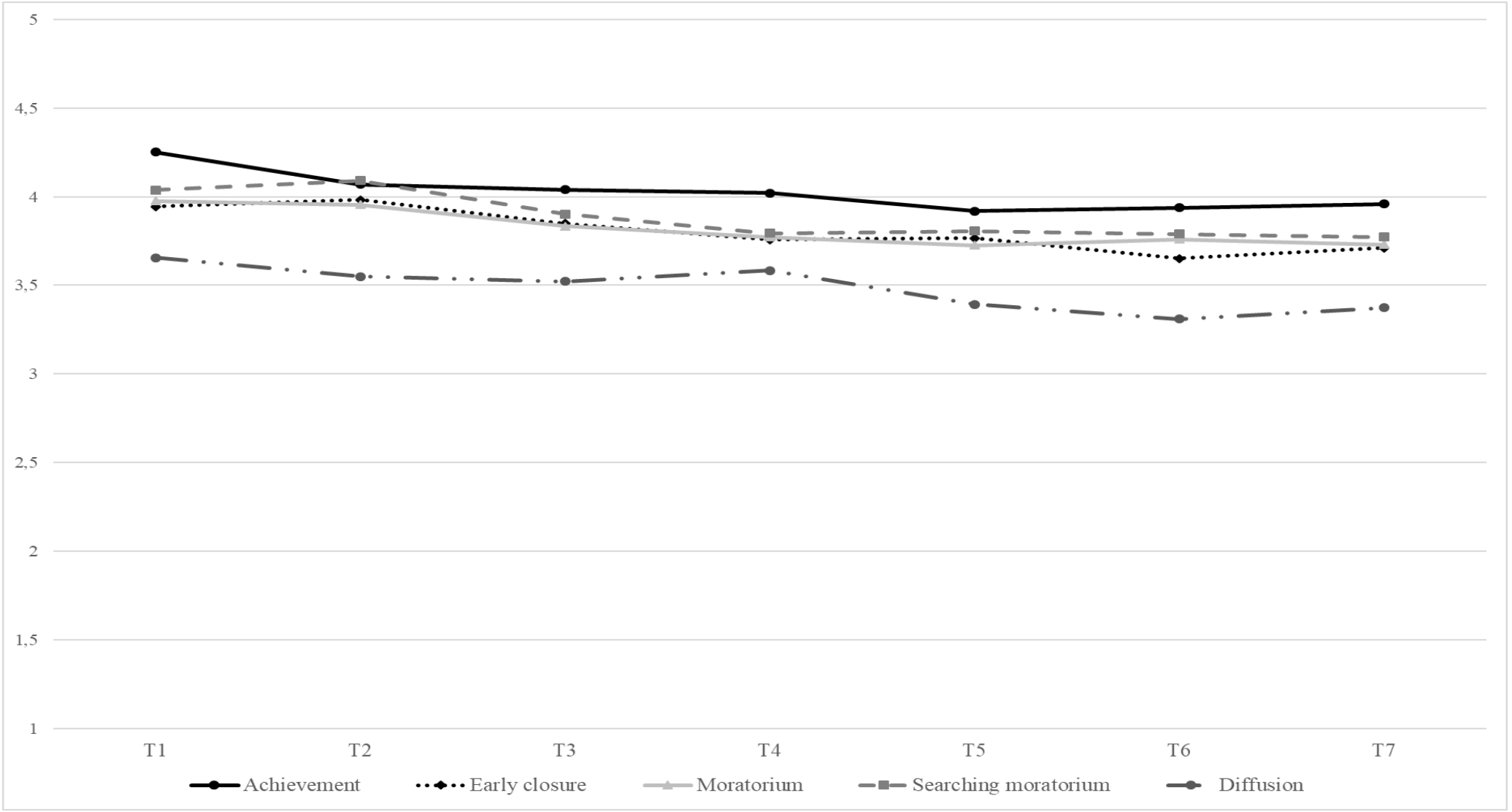
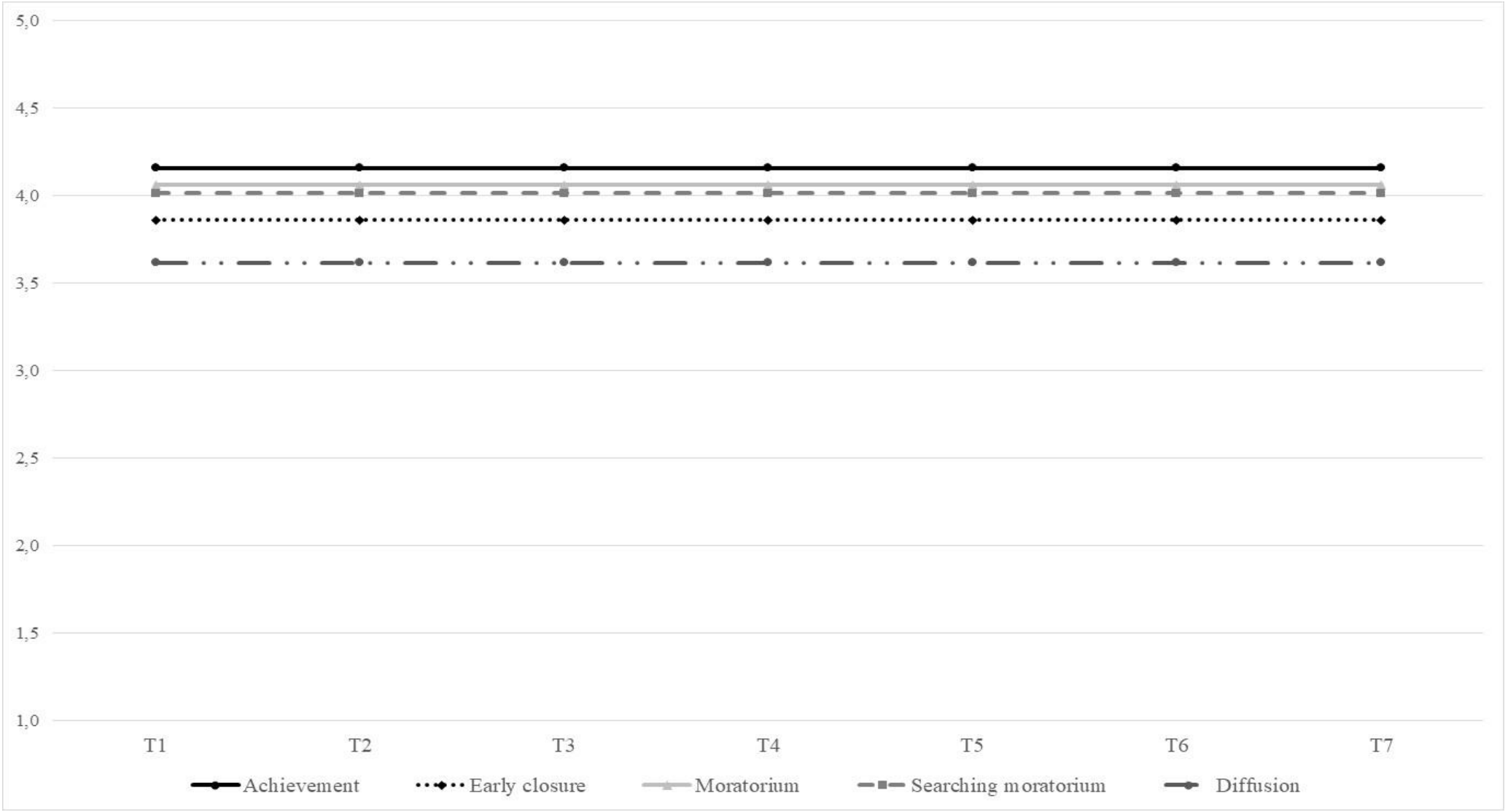


Figure S2.
Estimated growth of intergroup solidarity of migrant adolescents in different educational identity statuses



5
Chapter

From Inclusive Schools to Inclusive Societies: The Relation Between School Diversity Climate and Adolescents' Psychosocial Adjustment

Maratia, F., Bobba, B., Cohen, A., Kwanele, B., Norris, A., Lizárraga, J.R., Elsinbawi, M., & Crocetti, E. (2024). From inclusive schools to inclusive societies: School diversity climate and adolescents' psychosocial adjustment. *Manuscript under review.*

Abstract

Schools are increasingly culturally diverse. Yet, it is unclear whether school diversity climate influences academic achievement and social well-being of both ethnic majority and minority students and the role of school belonging in explaining this effect. A total of 1,156 adolescents (M_{age}=15.69, 51.65% females and 48.35% males) residents of the Emilia-Romagna region, Italy, completed four assessments across one year. Most participants (78.96%) belonged to the majority group (i.e., both they and their parents were born in Italy), while 21.04% had a migrant background (i.e., themselves or at least one of their parents was born outside Italy). Results highlighted meaningful associations between school diversity climate and adolescents' psychosocial adjustment. Concurrently, both perceived equal treatment and support for contact and cooperation were associated with adolescents' higher levels of social well-being and academic achievement. Longitudinally, perceived equal treatment by teachers led to a higher sense of school belonging, contributing to increased social well-being. Students' ethnic backgrounds moderated the impact of school diversity climate on youth's social well-being. Overall, findings highlight how inclusive schools can generate more inclusive societies.

Keywords. Schools, Adolescence, Diversity Climate, Academic Achievement, Social Well-being

From Inclusive Schools to Inclusive Societies: The Relation Between School Diversity Climate and Adolescents' Psychosocial Adjustment

Schools represent one of the first contexts in which youth experience a wide range of ethnic and cultural diversity and form their views of the surrounding world (Schwarzenthal et al., 2018). Therefore, schools stand at the forefront of cultural exchanges (Verkuyten, 2022), and the success of diversity integration relies on the ability of school institutions to foster a climate in which teachers support contact and cooperation between adolescents from different ethnic groups, provide equal treatment for all students regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, and show interest in children's backgrounds (Schachner et al., 2016). An inclusive diversity climate can influence the adjustment and well-being of adolescents (for a review, see Wang et al., 2020). However, while the effects of a positive school diversity climate on academic achievement have been highlighted among both majority and minority students (e.g., Schachner et al., 2019), limited attention is given to their social adjustment. A school climate that promotes contact and cooperation among culturally diverse students could also lead to positive intergroup relationships (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), which, in turn, may have positive effects on the well-being of adolescents despite their cultural backgrounds (for a review, see Marinucci et al., 2021). Yet, it is still unclear how school diversity climate is associated with the psychosocial adjustment of ethnic majority and minority adolescents. In this vein, does a school diversity climate influence the academic achievement (i.e., grade point average) and social well-being (e.g., the feeling of being socially integrated and having an active role in society; Keyes, 1998) of ethnic majority and minority students? What are the mechanisms (e.g., school belonging) that either foster or hamper the effects of a positive diversity climate at school? Understanding this will allow for a more in-depth understanding of psychological dimensions of immigration and may inform evidence-based interventions.

Beyond Classrooms: Bridging the Gap from Inclusive School to Inclusive Societies

Worldwide, schools have become contexts characterized by increasing ethnic and cultural diversity. Italy, where the current study was conducted, represents one of the European countries

with the highest concentration of students with a migrant background (11.3% of the school population; Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione [MIUR], 2022). Pupils with a migrant background come from various countries, mainly Eastern Europe (e.g., Romania, Albania, and Ukraine), North Africa (e.g., Morocco), and Asia (e.g., China), and most of them are second-generation immigrants (66.4%; MIUR, 2022). Emilia-Romagna, the regional context of this study, records the highest number of adolescents from migrant backgrounds in both the general (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2022) and school (MIUR, 2022) population compared to all other Italian regions.

Increased diversity of schools can significantly influence youth's experiences in this context, impacting their academic and socio-emotional development (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Adolescents with a migrant background face not only developmental tasks, such as formining and consolidating their identity (Crocetti et al., 2023), but also acculturative tasks related to navigating across multiple cultural systems (Motti-Stefanidi, 2023). Overcoming these challenges becomes complex as these students are often in schools with fewer material resources (e.g., shortage of technology materials) or with a higher concentration of academically struggling students, which may affect their access to tertiary education and increase the chances of academic drop-outs (European Commission et al., 2023). Moreover, when examining the consequences of an ethnic and culturally diverse environment, it is essential to consider not only the minority but also the majority group (Kunst et al., 2021). Indeed, both ethnic majority and minority individuals may perceive the changes resulting from multiculturalism as a threat, which could lead to more intergroup tensions instead of harmony (Meeusen et al., 2019). Therefore, how schools deal with this high concentration of diversity could make a difference in overcoming adverse outcomes and facilitating the adjustment of all their students.

Schools can positively manage multiculturalism by fostering a diversity climate in which teachers provide *support for contact and cooperation* between students from different ethnic groups and *equal treatment* for all students, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds (Schachner et al., 2016). However, treating students in the same way could be a double-edged sword, flattening adolescents'

cultural differences and favoring an assimilation process of ethnic minority students into the mainstream culture rather than embracing cultural pluralism (Karataş, Eckstein, et al., 2023; Schachner et al., 2019). Relatedly, teachers' *interest in children's cultural backgrounds* could promote an open exchange and communication between students' various cultures, leading to perceiving cultural diversity as a worthwhile learning opportunity (Schwarzenthal et al., 2018; Thijs & Verkuyten, 2013). Overall, a school diversity climate may, thus, promote positive academic outcomes for both ethnic majority and minority students (Baysu et al., 2023; Schachner et al., 2019).

School Diversity Climate and Adolescents' Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is mostly described in terms of grade point averages and serves as a pivotal gauge for all students' socio-cultural adaptation and social mobility (for a review, see York et al., 2019). Adolescents' academic achievement has important implications for their current adjustment (e.g., life satisfaction; Clark & Malecki, 2019) and future challenges (e.g., occupational goals; Zhao et al., 2019). Academic and social adaptation are intertwined, especially for ethnic minority students. As ethnic minority students reach positive outcomes in their educational paths, they are more likely to overcome acculturative tasks (e.g., intercultural competence; Novikova et al., 2022), successfully adjust to society (Zhang et al., 2022), and attain a higher social status (Fang, 2020). Furthermore, in a positive loop, the more youth are integrated into society, the higher their academic adjustment (Berry & Hou, 2017).

Nevertheless, migrant students often report lower academic achievement (European Commission et al., 2023). This may be partially due to individual (e.g., linguistic barriers; Koehler & Schneider, 2019) and contextual (e.g., school segregation; Ma, 2019) factors that can make the adjustment of ethnic minority students more difficult. These conditions heighten the risk of experiencing academic failure, which can adversely affect adolescents' well-being (Motti-Stefanidi, 2019). Such failures are more likely to occur when minority students experience discrimination and feel unsupported in the school environment (Baysu et al., 2023).

In schools where teachers support contact between adolescents from different groups, treat students equally, and show interest in students' backgrounds, the risk of experiencing these failures decreases, leaving space for better academic outcomes (Baysu et al., 2023; Schachner et al., 2019, 2021). Remarkably, the positive effects of a diversity-supportive climate extend beyond students with a migrant background. Prior research has highlighted that a school-inclusive climate can contribute to higher academic achievement of all students, regardless of their ethnic background (Schachner et al., 2019, 2021). Thus, schools' approach to diversity represents a significant factor for better adaptation among both majority and minority students, not only at the academic level but also in the broader social context.

School Diversity Climate and Adolescents' Social Well-being

Adolescents are embedded in a context characterized by multiple layers, such as micro- (e.g., family) and macro-systems (e.g., society; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007), and have experiences with several institutions (Emler & Reicher, 1987). Schools represent one of the first institutions youth engage with (Rubini & Palmonari, 2022). Therefore, students' future relationships and orientation toward the surrounding world might also depend on how they perceive and relate to this first institution. Understanding their responsibilities and the expectations of school authorities, such as teachers, offers adolescents valuable insights into their societal roles (Rubini & Palmonari, 2022). The enhancement of their social skills, increased awareness of their role, and more frequent interaction with institutions could, therefore, impact adolescents' sense of integration in the broader society.

In this vein, schools can influence adolescents' *social well-being*, referring to individuals' sense of belonging and active social engagement (Keyes, 1998). Social well-being pertains to individuals' sense of commonality and confidence in their positive contributions to society and trust in other people and institutions (Keyes, 1998, 2005). Consequently, whether adolescents trust the school institution and its key actors can significantly impact their social well-being (Pilkauskaite-Valickiene & Gabrialaviciute, 2015). This could be particularly important for students with a

migrant background, given the challenges they face in the integration process (Motti-Stefanidi, 2019; Zhang et al., 2022).

So far, most studies have focused on the effects of school diversity climate on ethnic minority students' adjustment, considering, for instance, their mental health (e.g., depression; Schachner et al., 2016), life satisfaction (e.g., Schachner et al., 2019, 2021) and self-esteem (e.g., Oczlon et al., 2021). Studies that have taken a social stance have explored the association between school climate and ethnic minority students' social adjustment in terms of whether they successfully overcome acculturative tasks (e.g., intercultural competence, Schwarzenthal et al., 2020; language skills, Yough et al., 2023). In contrast, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the impact of a positive school diversity climate on adolescents from the majority group. However, a climate where contact and cooperation among students from diverse backgrounds are supported can foster cross-group friendships (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). These intimate relationships, in turn, can mitigate prejudices and foster positive outcomes for adolescents' well-being, regardless of their backgrounds (for a review, see Marinucci et al., 2021). Thus, to advance the understanding of factors enhancing adolescents' social integration, it is crucial to examine whether promoting a school diversity climate can foster the social well-being of ethnic majority and minority students and which mechanisms underlie this association.

Unveiling the Mechanism: The Role of School Belonging

How can a diversity climate promote adolescents' academic achievement and social well-being? To address this question, it might be useful to tackle the role of school belonging. Adolescents' *school belonging* refers to the sense of attachment to this context (Willms, 2003), and it can be conceived as a bridge facilitating the transition from adapting to the specific school context to achieving broader social adaptation (Albarello et al., 2021), given its importance in promoting psychosocial well-being, as well as prosocial behaviors (Allen et al., 2021).

Prior research has highlighted a divide in the sense of school belonging between ethnic majority and minority youth. Specifically, students with a migrant background generally report

lower levels of school belonging than their native peers (M. Chan et al., 2023). Thus, it is important to understand which contextual conditions can bridge the gap between ethnic majority and minority youth and foster their positive adjustment.

Schools can enhance migrant students' sense of belonging by fostering a positive climate toward diversity. Evidence shows that the more schools promote an inclusive climate, the more adolescents with a migrant background report high levels of school belonging (Heikamp et al., 2020). Remarkably, the positive effects of an inclusive diversity climate on school belonging appear to extend beyond the students with a migrant background. Specifically, evidence shows that a positive school diversity climate (Schachner et al., 2019), rather than a discriminatory one (Baysu et al., 2023), can enhance the school belonging for all students, regardless of their ethnic background.

Promoting greater school belonging is of utmost importance, considering its numerous beneficial effects. High levels of school belonging are associated with students' higher academic achievement (e.g., better grades in mathematics; Schachner et al., 2021), more positive attitudes toward learning (Baysu et al., 2023), and reduced school drop-out rates (for a meta-analysis, see Korpershoek et al., 2020). These positive effects apply especially to students with a migrant background and extend to their majority peers (for a review, see Slaten et al., 2016).

Beyond the positive effects on academic achievements, evidence highlighted associations between school belonging and adolescents' well-being. School belonging has been linked to higher life satisfaction, positive emotional well-being, and lower behavioral problems (Arslan et al., 2020). This attachment to the school seems to play a significant role in the social well-being of adolescents with a migrant background. Specifically, the more ethnic minority students feel they belong to the school environment, the higher their social well-being is (Hurem et al., 2021). However, it is not entirely clear how school belonging can influence the social well-being of all students, regardless of their background.

Considering these positive effects on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment, school belonging can be conceived as a possible mediator of the relation between school diversity climate

and students' academic and social adaptation. Evidence showed that adolescents' high level of school belonging mediates the effects of the positive diversity climate on ethnic minority and majority students' different indicators of academic achievement, such as math and reading scores (e.g., Schachner et al., 2021), grades in main curriculum subjects (Schachner et al., 2019), and academic engagement (Heikamp et al., 2020). Furthermore, a mediating effect of school belonging on ethnic minority students' social skills has been documented (In et al., 2019). However, it is still unclear whether the school diversity climate could directly and indirectly promote, via school belonging, the academic achievement and social well-being of both majority and minority groups.

The Present Study

Adolescents' psychosocial adaptation is profoundly influenced by their school experience. While evidence on the positive link between school diversity climate and academic achievement has been provided for both ethnic majority and minority students, the focus on social adaptation has been primarily on those with a migrant background and on their acculturative tasks. Thus, it is still unclear whether the school diversity climate can directly and indirectly, via school belonging, influence the academic achievement and social well-being of all students. In light of this knowledge gap, the purpose of the current study was to examine how each dimension of school diversity climate (i.e., perceived teachers' support for contact and cooperation, equal treatment, and interest in children's backgrounds) influences academic achievement and social well-being of ethnic majority and minority students, and whether school belonging mediates these associations and youth's ethnic background moderates them.

Methods

Participants

Participants for this study were drawn from the ongoing longitudinal ERC-Consolidator project IDENTITIES “Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents”. A total of 1,156 adolescents (M_{age}=15.69, SD_{age}=1.20 at T1, 51.65% females) were followed for four waves across one year. They were from two age groups: first-

(49.44%, M_{age}=14.65, SD_{age}=0.48) or third-year (50.56%, M_{age}=16.80, SD_{age}=0.60) students from secondary high schools located in the North-East of Italy (i.e., Emilia-Romagna region). Most adolescents had an Italian background (79.69%, M_{age}=15.69, SD_{age}=1.14), while the remaining (20.31%, M_{age}=15.97, SD_{age}=1.39) had a migrant background (i.e., either they were born outside Italy or at least one of their parents was born outside Italy). Most of the adolescents with a migrant background in the current study come from Eastern-Europe (e.g., Albania; 35.90%), Asia (e.g., Pakistan; 26.92%), and Africa (e.g., Nigeria; 24.36%), the remaining come from America (e.g., United States; 7.7%), Western-Europe (e.g., Germany; 3.84%), and Oceania (i.e., Australia; 1.28%). Furthermore, most were second-generation immigrants (70.19%), while the remaining were first-generation immigrants (29.81%). Thus, the ethnic composition of the current sample is consistent with recent migration statistics specific to the national and regional school context (MIUR, 2022).

Students were enrolled in different school tracks. Specifically, some attended a university-oriented track (45.63%), followed by those enrolled in a technical (31.86%) and a vocational (22.51%) school. Regarding parents' educational level, approximately half of the adolescents' mothers (47.59%) had a medium educational level (i.e., high school diploma), while some (33.21%) had a high (i.e., university degree or higher) and a few (19.20%) a low (i.e., up to middle school diploma) educational level. Concerning fathers, most of them (47.45%) had a medium educational level, followed by those with low (28.14%) and high (24.41%) educational levels.

Most adolescents participated in all four assessments (53.63%), while almost all (87.11%) completed at least two assessments. The completion rate at the item level was very high at the first (89.88%), at the second and third assessments (59.95%) that were combined for further analyses (see below), as well as at the fourth and final (58.82%) wave. The Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test conducted on the study variables (i.e., perceived school diversity climate, school belonging, academic achievement, and social well-being) yielded a normed χ^2 (χ^2/df = 1,379.59/1,833) of 0.75, indicating that data were likely missing completely at

random. Therefore, the total sample of 1,156 adolescents was included in the analyses, and missing data were handled with the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) procedure available in M*plus* (Kelloway, 2015).

Procedure

The present study was approved by Ethics Committee of Alma Mater Studiorum Univerisity of Bologna (Italy) as part of the IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents" project. This ongoing longitudinal research involves adolescents from several high schools in Italy. Schools were selected through a stratified (by track and level of urbanization) randomized method, and principals were approached to present the project. Upon their approval, the study was presented to students and their parents, who received written and detailed information. Parents provided active consent for underage adolescents, while older youth provided their active consent to participate in the project. Underage youth also provided their assent to take part in the study. Adolescents were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their consent anytime.

The ERC-Consolidator project IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents" started in 2022 and included multiple annual, monthly, and daily assessments. The current study used adolescents' data from four assessment points (i.e., T1: January/February 2022; T2: April/May 2022; T3: September/October 2022; and T4: January/February 2023). These assessment points spanned across one solar year and two academic years. More specifically, the first and second waves occurred in the middle and at the end of adolescents' first or third high school year, respectively, while the third and the fourth assessments occurred at the beginning and in the middle of their following year (i.e., second or fourth), respectively. At each wave, adolescents completed online questionnaires on Qualtrics during school hours, with researchers and research assistants present in the classroom to answer any questions. Adolescents were required to create a personal code (unique to each youth) to pair their answers over time and to protect their anonymity.

Measures

Participants Demographics. Participants' socio-demographic information (e.g., age, sex, nationality) was collected at T1.

Classroom Ethnic Diversity. Archive information concerning the percentage of ethnic minority students in each classroom was obtained from the school principals at T1.

Perceived School Diversity Climate. Adolescents' perceived teachers' support for contact and cooperation, equal treatment, and interest in children's cultural background were measured at the beginning of the study (T1) with a shortened version of the School Cultural Diversity Climate Scale (Schachner et al., 2016; for the Italian version, see Karataş et al., 2023). It comprises 11 items that adolescents scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*completely false*) to 5 (*completely true*). Sample items include: "Teachers in your class encourage Italian children and children of immigrant background to help each other with homework" (perceived support for contact and cooperation by teachers; 4 items, $\alpha = .86$), "Teachers in your class are equally friendly with Italian children and children of immigrant background" (perceived equal treatment by teachers; 4 items, $\alpha = .73$), and "Teachers in your class are interested in where the students of immigrant background are from" (perceived interest of teachers in children's cultural background; 3 items, $\alpha = .84$).

School Belonging. Adolescents' sense of belonging to the school was assessed at T2 and T3 with the School Belonging scale (Wang et al., 2011). It includes three items which adolescents scored on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale, ranging from 1 (*completely false*) to 5 (*completely true*). Cronbach's Alpha were .76 and .77 at T2 and T3, respectively. For the current analysis, these two scores were averaged to capture the youth's sense of belonging in between two academic years.

Adolescents' Academic Achievement. At both the beginning (T1) and end (T4) of the current study, adolescents were requested to report their school grade average. In the Italian high school context, grades range from 1 (*extremely negative*) to 10 (*excellent*), with 6 (*sufficient*) being the threshold of passing mark evaluation.

Adolescents' Social Well-Being. Social well-being at the beginning (T1) and at the end (T4) of the study was assessed using the social well-being subscale of the Mental Health Continuum –Short Form (Keyes, 2005; Italian validation by Petrillo et al., 2015). It includes five items (e.g., "How often did you feel that you had something important to contribute to society?") referred to the last four months, which adolescents rated on a 6-point Likert type scale from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*every day*). Cronbach's Alphas were .75 and .83 at T1 and T4, respectively.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

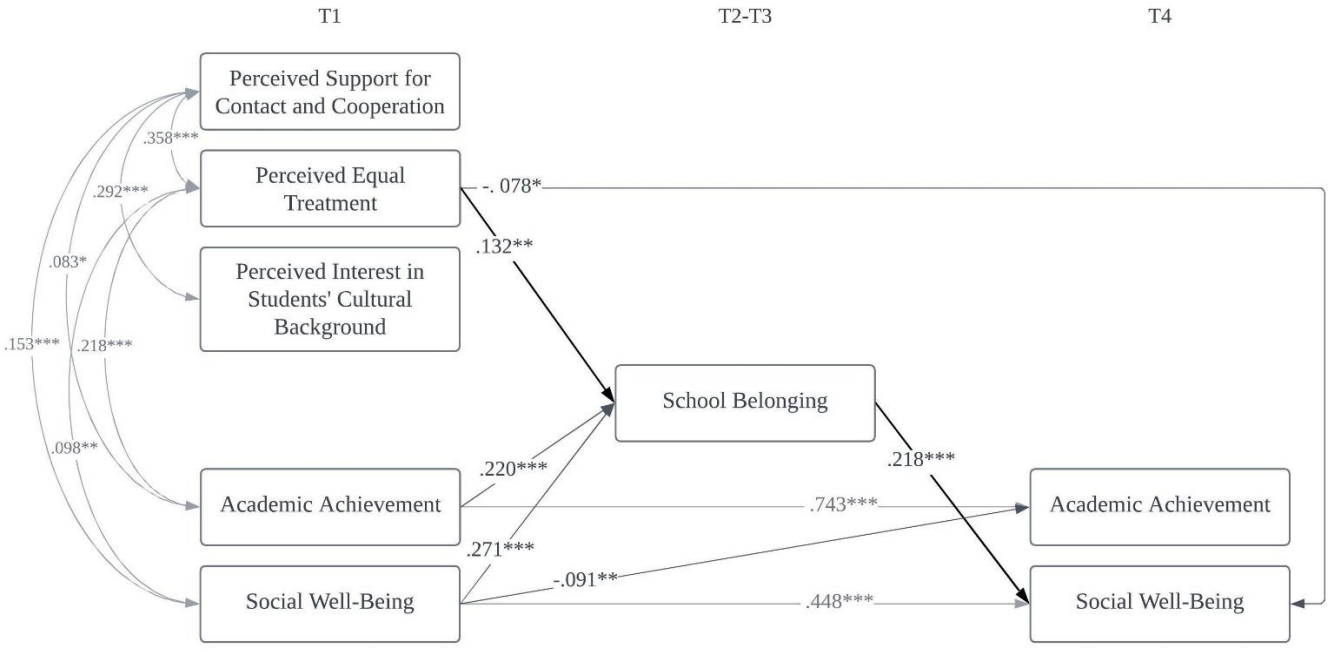
Descriptive analyses were computed using IBM SPSS Version 28 for Windows. Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables are reported in Table S1 of the Supplemental Materials. All the remaining analyses were conducted in M*plus 8.6* (Muthén & Muthén, 2017a), using Maximum Likelihood Robust (MLR) estimator (Satorra & Bentler, 2001). Analyses were conducted using *Type=Complex* to account for the nested structure of the current data (i.e., students nested within classrooms).

As a first preliminary step, mean-level changes, and rank-order stability of the outcome measures (i.e., social well-being and academic achievement) were examined. Regarding mean-level changes, two repeated measure analyses of variances (ANOVAs) were conducted. Adolescents displayed a significant increase in their social well-being (F=200.19, p<.001; η^2=.22), but general stability in academic achievement (F=0.50, p=.824; η^2=.00). Regarding rank-order stability, Pearson's test-retest correlations were computed (see bolded values in Table S1 of the Supplemental Materials) with coefficients equal or higher than 0.60 indicative of high stability. As can be inferred, social well-being displayed moderate (r=.50, p<.001), while academic achievement displayed high (r=.73, p<.001) rank-order stability. Furthermore, as a second preliminary check, longitudinal measurement invariance of the social well-being scale was examined. Partial metric invariance could be established (see Table S2 of the Supplemental Materials), the minimum requirement for conducting models with observed variables.

Path Analysis Models

The current study aimed to understand whether adolescents' perceptions of their school diversity climate would contribute to changes in their adjustment (i.e., academic achievement and social well-being) directly and indirectly, via school belonging, and whether youth's ethnic background would moderate these influences. To this end, a path analysis model with observed variables was first estimated on the entire sample. In this model, youth's perceptions of school diversity climate at the beginning of the study (T1) were included as predictors of later school belonging and students' adjustment. Moreover, starting levels (at T1) of academic achievement and social well-being were included as predictors of later levels of both school belonging (at T2-T3) and adjustment outcomes (at T4). Subsequently, this model was replicated in a multigroup framework to examine the moderating effect of adolescents' ethnic background, and the Wald test statistic was used to identify significant differences in direct and indirect associations, within-time correlations, and correlated changes among the groups. All models were fully saturated. Significant regression paths and correlations are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Significant standardized results of the path analysis model



Note. For the sake of clarity, only significant paths and correlations are displayed. Bold arrows indicate a chain of significant indirect effects. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

As can be seen, at T1, both perceived equal treatment and support for contact and cooperation were associated with higher levels of social well-being and academic achievement. Regarding longitudinal direct paths, perceived equal treatment was directly associated with a small decrease in social well-being. However, it indirectly led to a significant increase in adolescents' social well-being via its positive effect on school belonging (standardized indirect effect=.029 [.008, .050], *p*=.006), which was found to be a strong predictor of relative increases in social well-being.

Adolescents' ethnic background was found to significantly moderate two direct and one indirect association. Regarding direct paths, perceived interest of teachers in students' cultural background at T1 was associated with significantly lower levels of school belonging for ethnic minority (β=-.243, *p*=.010), but not for ethnic majority (β=.003, *p*=.959) youth (Wald=4.21, *p*=.040). Additionally, the effect of school belonging on changes in social well-being was found to be significantly stronger for ethnic minority (β=.382, *p*=.000) compared to ethnic majority (β=.183, *p*=.000) students (Wald=4.57, *p*=.032). Regarding indirect paths, perceived teachers' interests in students' background led to significant decreases in social well-being of ethnic minority (indirect effect=-.132 [-.229, -.034], *p*=.008) but not ethnic majority (indirect effect=.001 [-.023, .025], *p*=.967) adolescents (Wald=6.10, *p*=.013).

Sensitivity Analyses

As ancillary sensitivity analyses, the main path analysis model was tested including participants' sex, school year at the beginning of the study (i.e., first or third), and classroom ethnic diversity (i.e., the percentage of ethnic minority students in the class) as covariates. Specifically, these variables were regressed on all the other variables included in the model. Results are reported in Table S3 of the Supplemental Materials. Being female was associated with higher levels of perceived support for contact and cooperation, perceived teachers' interest in students' cultural background, and academic achievement at the beginning of the study. However, it was also linked

to lower levels of social well-being at both time points. Moreover, attending the third year of high school was associated with lower levels of social well-being at T1. Last, classroom ethnic diversity was significantly linked only to students' achievement. Specifically, at higher percentages of ethnic minority students in the classroom, adolescents reported lower levels of academic achievement at the end of the study. Regarding differences between the model with and without covariates, except for a couple of effects (perceived equal treatment T1→social well-being T4; social well-being T1→academic achievement T4) which were of small dimension (i.e., $\beta < .10$) in the main model and became non-significant when accounting for covariates, results were largely replicated, highlighting the robustness of the current findings.

Discussion

How schools approach diversity is crucial in supporting adolescents' adjustment to the school context (Schwarzenthal et al., 2018) and their social integration (Rubini & Palmonari, 2022). While evidence on the link between school diversity climate and academic achievement has been provided for both ethnic majority and minority students (e.g., Schachner et al., 2019, 2021), the focus on social adaptation has been primarily on those with a migrant background, examining their psychological well-being (e.g., Kutsyuruba et al., 2015; Oczlon et al., 2021; Schachner et al., 2016) and acculturative tasks (e.g., Schwarzenthal et al., 2020; Yough et al., 2023), rather than general social well-being. In this regard, the current study advanced our understanding of how each dimension of school diversity climate (i.e., perceived teachers' support for contact and cooperation, equal treatment, and interest in children's backgrounds) influenced directly and indirectly, via school belonging, academic achievement and social well-being of ethnic majority and minority students, and whether youth's ethnic background moderated these influences. Overall, perceived equal treatment by teachers indirectly led to a significant increase in all adolescents' adjustment via its effect on school belonging. Furthermore, adolescents' ethnic background was found to moderate direct and indirect associations, suggesting that teachers' interest in students' cultural backgrounds might adversely affect their sense of school belonging and social adaptation. These findings

highlighted the role of school diversity climate in shaping adolescents' social adjustment, raising awareness of schools' role in advancing inclusive societies.

Can School Diversity Climate Boost Grades and Promote Social Well-Being?

As a primary focus, this research sought to investigate the associations between school diversity climate and adolescents' academic achievement and social well-being, and whether youth's ethnic background would moderate them. Regarding adolescents' academic achievement, results indicated that, at the beginning of the study, the perception of a school climate in which teachers support contact between adolescents from diverse groups and provide equal treatment to the students was associated with adolescents' better grade point average, regardless of their ethnic background. These results align with prior cross-sectional evidence highlighting that an inclusive school diversity climate was associated with higher academic achievement for ethnic majority and minority students (Schachner et al., 2019, 2021). However, it should be noted that most of these studies have examined the associations between school diversity climate and adolescents' academic achievement by focusing on specific subjects (e.g., better grades in mathematics; Schachner et al., 2021) rather than the overall students' grade point average. Furthermore, when considering longitudinal paths, the present study showed that such associations disappear, indicating that school diversity climate did not influence students' academic achievement over time. Yet, prior longitudinal studies have mostly focused on the link between school diversity climate and adolescents' educational adjustment in terms of better academic self-concept (Schachner et al., 2016). Considering this, more longitudinal research is needed to understand how school diversity climate and adolescents' academic achievement, in terms of overall better grade point average, are intertwined over time.

Regarding the association between school diversity climate and adolescents' social well-being, the results indicated that at T1, the perception of teachers' support for contact and cooperation and the feelings of being treated equally were associated with higher levels of adolescents' social well-being. These associations align with previous cross-sectional findings,

indicating that these two dimensions of school diversity climate were associated with adolescents' better psychological well-being (e.g., Oczlon et al., 2021) and positive acculturation outcomes (e.g., Schwarzenthal et al., 2020). However, when examining over-time associations, only the relation between perceived equal treatment and adolescents' social well-being remained significant but in the opposite direction. Specifically, this perception was associated with a decrease in adolescents' social well-being. This finding contrasts with previous longitudinal research, which found perceived equal treatment to positively affect adolescents' psychosocial adjustment (Schachner et al., 2016). Nevertheless, in the current study, the negative effect of perceived equal treatment was relatively small and became non-significant when accounting for covariates. Moreover, this association should also be considered in light of other explanatory mechanisms, such as the sense of belonging to the school context (Baysu et al., 2023; Schachner et al., 2019).

From Inclusive Schools to Inclusive Societies: School Belonging as a Key Mechanism

The influence of school diversity climate on the adolescents' academic and social adjustment needs to be considered, bearing in mind other crucial factors related to the school and students' subjective experiences. For this reason, this study assessed whether school belonging mediates the link between school diversity climate and adjustment of students with and without a migrant background. Results indicated that only the perception of teachers' equal treatment was directly associated with school belonging and indirectly associated with adolescents' social well-being. The more adolescents felt treated equally by their teachers, the higher their sense of school belonging was. Subsequently, the increased attachment to the school led to higher levels of social well-being among students with and without a migrant background.

This finding, combined with the former one suggesting a negative, albeit small, longitudinal effect of perceived equal treatment on social well-being, underscores a nuanced role played by this component of the school diversity climate. Being treated equally by teachers has long-term positive effects only when it promotes a sense of belonging to the school context. Thus, experiencing fairness and justice in this primary institution set the basis for developing positive intergroup

relations in the school context (Karataş, Eckstein, et al., 2023) and a sense of integration in the broader society (Emler & Reicher, 1995; Rubini & Palmonari, 2022).

If, on the one hand, being treated equally positively influences the social adaptation of all adolescents, when considering students' migrant background, another aspect of the school diversity climate has an opposite effect. Specifically, for ethnic minority adolescents, the perception of teachers' interest in their cultural background was associated with a reduced sense of school belonging and, in turn, hindered their social well-being. This outcome may stem from two contrasting factors. On one hand, teachers may feel hesitant to discuss cultural differences in the classroom, particularly when they are unfamiliar with these topics, as such discussions could be perceived as labeling or stereotyping by their students (Schwarzenthal et al., 2018). On the other hand, teachers might address the issue of multiculturalism in a superficial way (Civitillo et al., 2017), conveying stereotypical assumptions and perceptions about their students' cultural backgrounds (Armenta et al., 2013). In both scenarios, these factors could hinder the creation of a classroom climate where diversity is seen as a valuable learning resource (Schwarzenthal et al., 2018; Thijs & Verkuyten, 2013), ultimately limiting its positive impact on the social adaptation of ethnic minority students (for a review, see Bardach et al., 2024).

These results highlighted how certain aspects of the school diversity climate can promote students' social adaptation while others can hinder it. This study, in line with previous research (e.g., Schachner et al., 2019), suggests the importance of considering the different impacts of each dimension of school diversity climate in promoting adolescents' school belonging and social adjustment, bridging the gap from inclusive schools to inclusive societies. School represents a microcosm of our larger society, and students learn how to navigate our social structures based on their experiences in this context. Thus, it is crucial to understand how to effectively leverage each aspect of the school diversity climate to foster an environment characterized by high inclusiveness.

Practical Implications

The current study has important practical implications. The results suggested that while being treated equally by teachers is crucial in promoting greater school belonging for students regardless of their migratory background, teachers' interest in their students' cultural backgrounds could negatively affect ethnic minority students. These results might indicate a gap in teachers' training in managing diversity within the school context (e.g., Abdullahi et al., 2024; Civitillo et al., 2023; Ulbricht et al., 2024), as they are often unaware of the negative consequences of negative intergroup experiences in their classrooms (e.g., Alvarez & Farinde-Wu, 2022; Spencer & Ullucci, 2022). Along this line, culturally relevant pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014) aimed at promoting a context in which cultural diversity is conceived as a valuable learning resource that could represent a solid tool to help teachers address issues related to the social adaptation of ethnic minority students.

The current findings provide additional insight into the crucial role of school belonging, which is especially relevant for the well-being of ethnic minority students. Therefore, future interventions should tackle this important feature of the school context, considering that students with a migrant background usually report a lower sense of belonging (e.g., Baysu et al., 2023; Chan et al., 2023). In this vein, prior research has highlighted the effectiveness of interventions targeting adolescents' behavioral (for a review, see Allen et al., 2022) and socio-emotional (Pollak et al., 2024) skills in enhancing students' positive relationships with classmates and their overall connectedness to the school context.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study contributed to disentangling direct and indirect longitudinal associations between school diversity climate and the academic achievement and social well-being of ethnic majority and minority adolescents. However, some limitations should be considered. First, this study only considered students' perceptions regarding the school diversity climate. Prior research demonstrated the importance of considering teachers' perspectives and the congruence or incongruence with adolescents' (Debnam et al., 2021). Specifically, it has been observed that the greater the

incongruence in perceptions between adolescents and teachers regarding school equity, the lower the adolescents' sense of school belonging was. In this context, future studies should consider both perspectives and their degree of congruence to understand better how the school diversity climate can influence students' adjustment.

Second, the current four-wave study did not cover all five high school years. This constraint limits the possibility of obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of how school diversity climate impacts adolescents throughout high school, especially considering that certain negative events, such as conflicts with teachers, hold greater significance in later years than earlier ones (Ansari et al., 2020). This heightened significance could affect the teacher-student relationships and, consequently, the adolescents' perceptions of school climate (Liang et al., 2020). Future research could benefit from uncovering the short- and long-term associations between adolescents' perceptions of the school diversity climate and their adjustment.

Last, given the importance of ethnic diversity for the current study, it should be noted that the data for this research were collected in an Italian region characterized by unique features regarding concentrations of people with a migrant background (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2022). This region was chosen due to the highest concentration of individuals with migrant backgrounds in the student population (MIUR, 2022). Thus, generalizations of current findings warrant caution. More research in other contexts with heterogeneous levels of ethno-cultural diversity is needed.

Conclusion

While the link between school diversity climate and academic achievement has been consistently investigated for both ethnic majority and minority adolescents, less was known about whether and how the school management of cultural diversity can affect adolescents' social well-being. This study advanced the understanding of the role played by each dimension of school diversity climate. Perceived equal treatment by teachers led to a significant increase in social well-being by enhancing the school belonging of both ethnic majority and minority students. In contrast, teachers' interest in students' cultural backgrounds adversely affects school belonging and, in turn,

the social well-being of ethnic minority adolescents. These findings highlighted the role of school diversity climate in shaping adolescents' social adjustment, raising heightened awareness of how inclusive schools can generate inclusive societies.

Supplementary Materials

Table S1

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables.

	M	*SD*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Sex												
2. School year			.03									
3. Ethnic background			.04	-.02								
4. Perceived SCC T1	3.85	0.79	.08*	-.09**	-.02							
5. Perceived ET T1	4.10	0.64	.05	-.03	-.07*	.36***						
6. Perceived ICB T1	3.33	0.82	.09**	.03	.00	.29***	.04					
7. Academic achievement T1	7.10	0.88	.16***	-.03	-.11***	.08**	.22***	.07*				
8. Social well-being T1	2.81	1.06	-.27***	-.10***	-.04	.15***	.10***	.05	.03			
9. School belonging T2-T3	3.34	0.78	-.03	-.11***	-.12***	.17***	.21***	.05	.25***	.28***		
10. Academic achievement T4	7.29	0.85	.17***	.02	-.08*	.10**	.22***	.03	**.73*****	-.03	.19***	
11. Social well-being T4	3.44	1.10	-.24***	-.05	-.06	.11**	.03	.04	.04	**.50*****	.31***	.02

Note. Sex: 0 = male, 1 = female; School year: 0 = first year, 1= third year. T = Time; SCC = support for contact and cooperation; ET = equal treatment; ICB = interest in students' cultural background. Bolded values indicate rank-order stability coefficient of the study outcomes.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Longitudinal Measurement Invariance of Social Well-Being

As a preliminary step, configural and metric levels of longitudinal measurement invariance of the social well-being scale were tested. To this end, the fit of the configural model, which functions as baseline model, was evaluated based on the following criteria. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) with values higher than .90 and .95 indicative of an acceptable and very good fit, respectively. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) with values below .08 and .05 indicative of an acceptable and very good fit, respectively (Byrne, 2012). Additionally, the RMSEA's 90% confidence interval's upper bound lower than .10 indicates an acceptable fit of the model (Chen et al., 2008). In order to establish metric invariance (i.e., constraining factor loadings to be equal across time), changes in fit indices from the configural to the metric model were evaluated (e.g., Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Specifically, a significant $\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$ (Satorra & Bentler, 2001), and $\Delta CFI \geq -.010$ supplemented by $\Delta RMSEA \geq .015$ (Chen, 2007) are indicative of non-invariance. Results are displayed in Table S2. Partial metric invariance (which is the minimum requirement for path analysis models with observed variables) was established for social well-being.

Table S2
Longitudinal Measurement Invariance

	Model fit						Model comparisons			
Models	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]	Models	$\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Configural (M1)	63.440	29	.985	.977	.029	.031 [.020, .041]				
Metric (M2)	105.962	33	.969	.958	.052	.042 [.033, .051]	M2-M1	48.860 (4)***	-.016	.011
Partial Metric (M2b)	84.567	31	.977	.967	.042	.037 [.028, .047]	M2b-M1	20.198 (2)***	-.008	.006

Note. M = model; χ^2 = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = confidence interval; Δ = change in the parameter. In M2b, factor loadings of two items were released.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Sensitivity Analyses

As ancillary sensitivity analyses, we checked whether the path analysis model's results would change when accounting for adolescents' (i.e., sex and school year at the beginning of the study) and classroom's (i.e., percentage of ethnic minority students) demographics. Specifically, participants' sex (0 = male, 1 = female) and school year (0 = first, 1 = third) and classroom's ethnic diversity were included as predictors of all the variables. Results are reported in Table S3.

As can be inferred, when compared with results reported in the manuscript, only a few differences were found. Specifically, in this model equal treatment was not significantly linked to later social well-being. Additionally, social well-being at the beginning of the study was not significantly associated with changes in academic achievement over time. These differences concern effects that were small in magnitude (i.e., $\beta < .10$) in the original model (and lost significance in the current one). Additionally, the indirect effect of perceived equal treatment on social well-being via school belonging lost significance when accounting for the covariates (indirect effect: .022 [.000, .044], $p = .054$). Regarding the moderating effect of ethnic background, when accounting for the role of covariates, the effect of perceived interest by teachers in students' background was not significantly indirectly associated with social well-being via school belonging for both ethnic majority (indirect effect = .020 [-.011, .051], $p = .210$) and minority (indirect effect = -.066 [-.166, .034], $p = .198$) youths (Wald=2.21, p=.137).

All in all, results from the main model were largely replicated. Therefore, including participants' sex and school year and classroom ethnic diversity as covariates did not change the analyses substantially. This shows the robustness of current findings.

Table S3

Standardized results of path analysis models with covariates

Stability paths	**T1 → T4**
Academic achievement	.753***
Social well-being	.408***
Regression paths	
Support for contact and cooperation T1 → School belonging T2-3	.051
Support for contact and cooperation T1 → Academic achievement T4	-.031
Support for contact and cooperation T1 → Social well-being T4	.059
Equal treatment T1 → School belonging T2-3	.119*
Equal treatment T1 → Academic achievement T4	.074
Equal treatment T1 → Social well-being T4	-.048
Interest in students' background T1 → School belonging T2-3	.026
Interest in students' background T1 → Academic achievement T4	-.014
Interest in students' background T1 → Social well-being T4	-.061
Academic achievement T1 → School belonging T2-3	.256***
Academic achievement T1 → Social well-being T4	.022
Social well-being T1 → School belonging T2-3	.317***
Social well-being T1 → Academic achievement T4	-.055
School belonging T2-3 → Academic achievement T4	-.042
School belonging T2-3 → Social well-being T4	.185***
Correlations	
Support for contact and cooperation ↔ Equal treatment T1	.397***
Support for contact and cooperation ↔ Interest in students' background T1	.320***
Support for contact and cooperation ↔ Academic achievement T1	.071
Support for contact and cooperation ↔ Social well-being T1	.211***
Equal treatment ↔ Interest in students' background T1	.070
Equal treatment ↔ Academic achievement T1	.182***
Equal treatment ↔ Social well-being T1	.106**
Interest in students' background ↔ Academic achievement T1	.014
Interest in students' background ↔ Social well-being T1	.139**
Academic achievement ↔ Social well-being T1	.060
Academic achievement ↔ Social well-being T2	.032
Covariates	
Sex → Support for contact and cooperation T1	.106*
Sex → Equal treatment T1	.060
Sex → Interest in students' background T1	.114**
Sex → Academic achievement T1	.196***
Sex → Social well-being T1	-.282***

Sex → School belonging T2-3	-.040
Sex → Academic achievement T4	.039
Sex → Social well-being T4	-.108**
School year → Support for contact and cooperation T1	-.051
School year → Equal treatment T1	-.046
School year → Interest in students' background T1	.064
School year → Academic achievement T1	-.016
School year → Social well-being T1	-.103*
School year → School belonging T2-3	-.076
School year → Academic achievement T4	-.062
School year → Social well-being T4	.009
Ethnic diversity → Support for contact and cooperation T1	.074
Ethnic diversity → Equal treatment T1	-.071
Ethnic diversity → Interest in students' background T1	.064
Ethnic diversity → Academic achievement T1	-.088
Ethnic diversity → Social well-being T1	-.033
Ethnic diversity → School belonging T2-3	-.044
Ethnic diversity → Academic achievement T4	-.118*
Ethnic diversity → Social well-being T4	-.018

Note. Sex: 0 = male, 1 = female; School year: 0 = first year, 1= third year. T = Time. Results highlighted in grey were marginally significant in the main model but lost significance in the current one.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

6
Chapter

The Janus-Faced Nature of Multicultural Societies: Examining the Interplay of Contextual and Personal Factors in Shaping Adolescents' Support for Migrant Integration Policies

Maratia, F., Thijs, J., & Crocetti, E. (2024). The Janus-faced nature of multicultural societies: Examining the interplay of contextual and personal factors in shaping adolescents' support for migrant integration policies. *Manuscript under review.*

Abstract

This study explored how ethnic and cultural diversity at the municipal level interacts with personal experiences (i.e., quality of intergroup contact) and characteristics (e.g., sex) in affecting the support for migrant integration policies among adolescents with and without a migrant background in Italy. To this purpose, 1,095 native Italian adolescents (47.42% female, 52.58% male; M_{age}=15.62 years) and 261 with a migrant background (47.67% female, 52.33% male; M_{age}=15.87 years) from different municipalities located in the Emilia-Romagna region, Italy, participated in seven assessments (T1 to T7) between 2022 and 2024. Multilevel analyses indicated that, while municipalities' diversity had no direct effect, adolescents' personal experiences and characteristics were associated with their support for migrant integration policies. Furthermore, interactions between contextual diversity and personal factors played a crucial role. Specifically, for native Italian male adolescents and for those experiencing high levels of positive and negative intergroup contact, the high diversity of their municipality harmed their support for migrant integration policies. Conversely, for adolescents with a migrant background, this support was negatively affected by municipalities' diversity when they reported low levels of positive contact with Italians. This study highlights the Janus-faced nature of multicultural societies, presenting challenges and opportunities for adolescents.

Keywords. Integration Policies, Threat, Intergroup Contact, Personal Characteristics, Adolescents.

The Janus-Faced Nature of Multicultural Societies: Examining the Interplay of Contextual and Personal Factors in Shaping Adolescents' Support for Migrant Integration Policies

Ethnic and cultural[3] diversity is a defining characteristic of modern societies, as the number of people with a migrant background is increasing worldwide (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). In this diverse global landscape, it is crucial to develop and implement national and local policies that foster migrant integration and, in turn, promote social cohesion and mutual understanding between natives and newcomers (Green et al., 2020). However, it is not clear whether and to what degree individuals personally endorse these policies and which factors can foster or hamper their support. Understanding this is crucial, especially for youth, who are the adult citizens of tomorrow. During adolescence, youth form and consolidate their perspectives on the world around them (Eger et al., 2022), making this developmental period pivotal for shaping societal attitudes and developing inclusive orientations that set the foundation for their future adult perspectives (Rekker et al., 2015). These future perspectives may, in turn, potentially influence national and local integration policies, as their development and implementation are intertwined with public opinion (for a review, see Baum & Potter, 2008).

The various contexts in which adolescents are embedded, from microsystems in which they have direct experiences to macrosystems that can influence them also indirectly (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007), together with personal characteristics (Maratia et al., 2024), are likely to interact in explaining their intergroup orientations. Contexts with high ethnic and cultural diversity present a Janus-faced nature, offering challenges (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and opportunities (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) for adolescents, regardless of their migrant background. The current study aims to unravel how this contextual ethnic and cultural diversity, along with time-specific adolescents' intergroup contact experiences and personal characteristics, alone and in combination, influence the

[3] The term “ethnic and cultural diversity” in this study is preferred to other related constructs, such as “ethnic composition”, as it better align with the Italian context of the study, which is characterized by the presence of multiple ethnic groups that differ significantly in terms of both geographical origin and cultural background, as evidenced by national and regional statistics, as well as by the characteristics of the study’s participants and municipalities, presented in the manuscript.

support for migrant integration policies among adolescents living in different municipalities of the Emilia-Romagna region in Italy. This was examined among youth with and without a migrant background, because it is essential to consider both groups of adolescents in research on ethnic and cultural diversity (see Kunst et al., 2021), also considering that they all will be active members of tomorrow's society and therefore play a crucial role in the implementation of future integration policies.

The Importance of Integration Policies

Modern societies are marked by the interaction between individuals with and without a migrant background. While the former represents those born in a country different from the residing one or with at least one parent born abroad, the latter are those born in their living country along with their parents (e.g., European Commission, 2023). To foster cohesion and harmony between these two groups, focusing on the integration process and the factors that can facilitate it becomes essential. On the one hand, the way individuals from different groups deal with their own culture and the new one represents a pivotal aspect of the integration process (Berry, 2005), on the other, this process significantly hinges on how it is managed and facilitated by the host country (Bourhis et al., 2010).

Integration can be facilitated when governments implement policies that foster equal rights, opportunities, and security for people with a migrant background (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). Societies that promote diversity and support integration policies can reduce the risk of acculturative stress (Rudmin, 2010) and its negative consequences for ethnic minority and majority groups[4]. Simultaneously, the naturalization intentions (i.e., the desire to acquire citizenship; Politi et al., 2022) and civic engagement (i.e., volunteer activities; Manatschal & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014) of individuals with a migrant background increase when integration policies are more inclusive. These policies not only facilitate the integration of people with a migrant background but also promote

[4] As ethnic and cultural diversity is strongly tied to migration in Italy (the context of the present study), the terms “ethnic minority” and “with a migrant background” are interchangeably used in this paper.

greater social cohesion (Green et al., 2020), enhancing the inclusive attitudes of majority members (Schlueter et al., 2020). Furthermore, integration policies are particularly important for new generations, as evidence shows that adolescents from the majority group in countries with more inclusive policies report more positive inter-ethnic attitudes (Kim & Byun, 2019) and greater support for migrants' rights (Barber et al., 2013).

Given their importance, tools like the Migrant Integration Policy Index (Solano & Huddleston, 2020) monitor to what extent countries implement policies promoting the integration of people with a migrant background. However, little is known about how youth perceive these policies and which factors can influence these perceptions. Understanding this might help to capture future support for migrant integration policies and, ultimately, foster social cohesion rather than conflict.

The Janus-Faced Nature of Multicultural Societies

Among the factors that could influence individuals' support for migrant integration policies, the ethnic and cultural diversity in their living environment could play a crucial role. This increasing diversity presents both challenges, in terms of threat perceptions that can negatively affect intergroup relations (Scheepers et al., 2002), and opportunities, such as positive intergroup experiences that can enhance social cohesion and mutual respect (Allport, 1954). Therefore, to better understand adolescents' intergroup orientations, examining both sides of modern multicultural societies is essential.

Ethnic and Cultural Diversity as a Threat

Looking at the negative side, high ethnic and cultural diversity can spark perceptions of threat and resource competition among majority group members (Scheepers et al., 2002). These perceptions can be realistic, as in the case of demographic and economic threats (Meuleman et al., 2020), or symbolic, related to cultural differences perceived as a danger to the national identity and values (Davidov et al., 2020). Whether linked to more tangible or symbolic factors, these perceptions negatively affect majority individuals' inclusive orientations toward newcomers, as

indicated, for instance, by their opposition to migrants' civil rights (Scheepers et al., 2002). These threat perceptions can also influence majority adolescents' inclusiveness, leading to a reduction in their prosocial behavior (Abrams et al., 2015), as well as in their perception of the outgroup's humanity (Albarello & Rubini, 2022) and morality (Constantin & Cuadrado, 2021), along with a general increase in ethnic prejudice (Nesdale et al., 2005). Although most research has focused on the majority perspectives, the influx of migrants may also evoke feelings of threat in ethnic minority group members, who may perceive other ethnic groups and newcomers as a threat to their current status and adaptation (Callens et al., 2019) and positive self-image (Oliver & Wong, 2003). This happens especially when ethnic minorities experience work disparities, have a strong identification with the nation where they reside (e.g., Meeusen et al., 2019; Philip et al., 2010), and when other minority groups are perceived as more privileged than their own group (Burson & Godfrey, 2018). Thus, since ethnic minority groups may also be more reluctant to admit new arrivals (Just & Anderson, 2015), it is reasonable to think that a high ethnic and cultural diversity may also adversely affect their support of migrant integration policies, even though they might benefit from those.

In light of this, the present study focused on the Italian context, which is characterized by a significant presence of individuals with a migrant background from diverse regions and origins, mainly Eastern Europe (e.g., Romania, Albania, and Ukraine), North Africa (e.g., Morocco), and Asia (e.g., China; ISTAT, 2023). In 2022, the number of individuals with a migrant background (including first- and second-generation immigrants) in Italy was around six million, making this country one of the major immigrant destinations in Europe (ISTAT, 2023). This trend is particularly pronounced in the specific regional context of this study, Emilia-Romagna, which registers the highest percentage of individuals with a migrant background (12.8%; Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2023) compared to all other Italian regions. Given this high concentration of individuals with a migrant background, this study focused on specific municipalities of this region, examining whether the high ethnic and cultural diversity, in terms of the percentage of people with a migrant

background over the total population, had negative consequences for adolescents' support for migrant integration policies.

Ethnic and Cultural Diversity as an Opportunity

Ethnic and cultural diversity can bring not only challenges but also opportunities for positive intergroup contact experiences (Allport, 1954). Such positive experiences, characterized by respect and warmth, are associated with inclusive outgroup orientations of majority group members (for a meta-analysis, see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), also among youth (for a review, see Tropp et al., 2022). Adolescents who report positive intergroup experiences tend to exhibit more positive attitudes toward other ethnic groups (e.g., Laurence, 2020) and reduced ethnic prejudice (e.g., Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014). Conversely, negative intergroup contact experiences, such as intimidating or unfriendly interactions, are associated with higher ethnic prejudice, thus hampering adolescents' development of inclusive orientations (Karataş, Rubini, et al., 2023).

By shifting to the perspective of individuals with a migrant background, encounters with natives may represent opportunities to navigate the mainstream job market (Kanas & Van Tubergen, 2009), improve their language skills (Chiswick & Miller, 2001), and experience greater psychosocial adjustment (Kenfack et al., 2024). Furthermore, the likelihood of having positive contact experiences with natives is associated with ethnic minorities' positive attitudes toward the majority group and other minorities (Mähönen & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2016). Conversely, negative contact experiences with majority groups are (indirectly) linked to negative inter-minority attitudes (Brylka et al., 2016). Similarly, adolescents with a migrant background show more inclusive attitudes (Bentsen, 2022) and openness to intergroup relations (e.g., Árnadóttir et al., 2022) after engaging in positive intergroup interactions with other ethnic groups, including natives (Shook et al., 2016). By contrast, negative contact experiences with natives lead to higher avoidance of the majority group (Prati et al., 2021) and negative attitudes toward them (Hayward et al., 2017).

Overall, positive contact between natives and those with a migrant background can enhance the opportunities provided by multicultural societies, encouraging adolescents from various cultural

backgrounds to embrace different perspectives and boosting social cohesion. In contrast, negative experiences can generate the opposite effect, leading to the erosion of intergroup relations. In line with this evidence, it could be assumed that contact experiences directly affect adolescents' support for migrant integration policies. Moreover, the former might also explain temporal variations in the latter, as adolescents' intergroup contact experiences can change over time and impact their inclusiveness differently according to the developmental phase in which they happen (Merrilees et al., 2023). The present study addresses this possibility by using a longitudinal design with time-specific measures of intergroup contact and support for integration policies, also examining whether these contact experiences interact with the context, particularly the diversity at the municipal level where adolescents live, to mitigate the potential negative consequences of living in a highly diverse environment (e.g., Hewstone, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2010). Additionally, other personal characteristics of adolescents can be crucial for comprehensively understanding the factors shaping the support for migrant integration policies among youth.

The Role of Adolescents' Characteristics

The likelihood of having inclusive orientations toward individuals with a migrant background may also depend on the specific personal characteristics of adolescents. In this regard, sex appears to influence adolescents' attitudes and orientation toward minority groups, with evidence suggesting that females show more inclusive attitudes than males (e.g., Maratia et al., 2023). Alongside sex, age can play a dynamic role in distinguishing between more or less inclusive youth. On the one side, as adolescents grow up and refine cognitive abilities and moral reasoning, they might show more empathic competencies, developing a more inclusive orientation toward diverse others (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2021). On the other side, they can also show decreased social trust when they perceive others as a possible threat to their future job transitions (for a meta-analysis on the development of prejudice in adolescence, see Crocetti et al., 2021). In addition to this, adolescents from families with higher socioeconomic status tend to display more positive attitudes toward ethnic minorities (Kim & Byun, 2019).

Most of the above evidence pertains to native majority adolescents. However, research with adults suggests that personal characteristics like sex and socioeconomic status (Burson & Godfrey, 2018) may similarly influence minority attitudes toward other migrants. In addition, second-generation immigrant adolescents have been found to report higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes compared to their first-generation peers and very similar attitudes to those of the majority group (e.g., Valentova & Berzosa, 2012). Thus, to better understand what influences support for migrant integration policies among adolescents with a migrant background, it is crucial to examine the influence of these personal characteristics.

Furthermore, it is unclear if these characteristics can also moderate the impact of contextual ethnic and cultural diversity on adolescents' support for migrant integration policies. However, it is reasonable to think that just as males and females, as well as first- and second-generation migrants, differ in their inclusive attitudes, they might also differ in how they respond to the diversity surrounding them. Similarly, adolescents with low socioeconomic status or those who, as they grow up, start to think about their future career paths might perceive this high presence of people with a migrant background as a competition for resources and job opportunities, perceptions that could thus increase their sense of threat, just as has been found among adults (e.g., Scheepers et al., 2002). Therefore, it would be important to understand whether these personal characteristics similarly affect the support for migrant integration policies among native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background and whether they interact with municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity.

The Present Study

To date, it is unclear how the presence of ethnic and cultural diversity affects adolescents' support for migrant integration policies in combination with their personal contact experiences and characteristics. For these reasons, this longitudinal study with both native Italian adolescents and their peers with a migrant background aims to understand the impact of *municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity* (i.e., the percentage of people with a migrant background over the total population) next to, and in interaction with, adolescents' time-specific *personal experiences* (i.e.,

positive and negative intergroup contact natives have with individuals with a migrant background, and vice versa) and *characteristics*, such as their sex (i.e., male vs. female), age group (i.e., first- vs. third-year high school students), and financial situation (i.e., low vs. high), and, in case of adolescents with a migrant background, their immigrant generation (i.e., first vs. second).

Regarding main effects, it is expected (based on the notion of threat) that a municipal context characterized by high ethnic and cultural diversity is associated with less support for migrant integration policies among adolescents with and without a migrant background. Moreover, it is anticipated that positive (versus negative) intergroup contact experiences that native Italian adolescents had with those with a migrant background, and vice versa, are associated with stronger (versus weaker) support for migrant integration policies. Regarding personal characteristics, being female (compared to male), having a high (versus low) financial situation, and being a first-generation (compared to second-generation) immigrant are expected to be associated with greater support for migrant integration policies. Regarding age, given that competing forces can lead to either more or less inclusive attitudes, we did not advance specific hypotheses. Lastly, concerning the interactions between contextual diversity and adolescents' experiences and characteristics, there is the general expectation that the latter modify the impact of the context in line with their anticipated main effects. Thus, it is hypothesized, for example, that the effect of contextual diversity is more positive when adolescents experience more positive intergroup contact.

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were drawn from the ongoing longitudinal ERC-Consolidator project IDENTITIES “Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents”. A total of 1,348 (48.58% female, 51.42% male; M_{age}=15.66 years, SD_{age}=1.20, range 13.79–20.04 years) participated in seven assessments (T1 to T7) between 2022 and 2024 and were recruited from two age groups: first- and third-year students from secondary high schools in the Emilia-Romagna region located in the North-East part of Italy.

Native Italian adolescents were 1,095 (47.42% female, 52.58% male; M_{age}=15.62 years, SD_{age}=1.16, range 13.79–20.04 years) from 146 municipalities. Adolescents with a migrant background were 253 (46.40% female, 53.60% male; M_{age}=15.84 years, SD_{age}=1.37, range 13.87–19.40 years) from 61 municipalities. Most of the adolescents with a migrant background in the current study (or their parents) came from Africa (e.g., Morocco; 33.32%), Asia (e.g., China; 28.06%), and Eastern Europe (e.g., Albania; 28.06%), while the remaining came from America (e.g., Brazil; 5.30%), and Western Europe (e.g., Germany; 5.26%). Most were second-generation immigrants (75.66%), while the remaining 24.34% were first-generation immigrants. In this vein, the ethnic composition of the current sample is consistent with recent official migration statistics in Italy (ISTAT, 2023) and the Emilia-Romagna region (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2023). Indeed, this great diversity is also found in the selected municipalities, which, at the beginning of the study, registered an average percentage of 11.30% (range 3.72%–21.66%) of people with a migrant background over the total population (for detailed information, see Table S1 in the Supplementary Materials).

Among the total sample, 27.60% of adolescents participated in all seven assessments, while 18.40%, 9.79%, 9.50%, 7.86%, 14.09%, and 12.39% participated in six, five, four, three, two, and one assessments, respectively. As a preliminary check, missing value analyses were conducted. The Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test yielded a normed χ^2 (χ^2/df=38,881.222/37,500) of 1.05, indicating in both cases that data were likely missing completely at random. Therefore, the total sample of 1,348 adolescents was included in the analyses, and missing data were handled with the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) procedure in M*plus* 8.9 (Kelloway, 2015; Muthén & Muthén, 2017a). Specific information regarding participation in the waves and missing value analyses for Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background are provided in the Supplementary Materials.

Procedures

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Alma Mater Studiorum Univerisity of Bologna (Italy) as part of the ERC-funded IDENTITIES "Managing identities in diverse societies: A developmental intergroup perspective with adolescents" project. This longitudinal research involved adolescents from several high schools in the North-East part of Italy. Schools were selected through a stratified (by track and level of urbanization) randomized method, and principals were approached to present the project. Upon their approval, the study was presented to students and their parents, who also received written and oral information about it. Active consent was obtained from parents (and the adolescents, if over eighteen), while youth provided assent to participate in the project. Participation in the study was voluntary, and adolescents and adults were informed that they could withdraw their consent anytime. The seven data collections were conducted in January and February 2022 (T1), April and May 2022 (T2), September and October 2022 (T3), January and February 2023 (T4), April and May 2023 (T5), September and October 2023 (T6), January and February 2024 (T7). At each wave, adolescents completed online questionnaires on Qualtrics during school hours, with researchers and research assistants present in the classroom to answer any questions. Adolescents were required to create a personal code (unique to each youth) to pair their answers over time and to protect their anonymity. The study combined their responses with official data regarding their municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity (ISTAT, 2023).

Measures

Municipalities' Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

The information regarding the municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity (i.e., the percentage of people with a migrant background over the total population) was extracted from the official website of the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT, 2023). Data from January 1, 2022 were selected to obtain an index corresponding to the first time of data collection with adolescents (T1). For detailed information regarding the percentage of people with a migrant background and the most represented nationality in each municipality, see Table S1 in the Supplementary Materials.

Quality of Intergroup Contact Experiences

The quality of adolescents' intergroup contact during leisure time was assessed using the Intergroup Contact Interactions Scale (ICIS; Karataş et al., 2023) validated in the Italian context. Participants were asked to think about their intergroup contact experiences if they had any. More specifically, native Italians were asked to think about their experiences with individuals with a migrant background. In contrast, migrant adolescents were asked to consider their experiences with native Italian individuals. Then, adolescents had to report the quality of these intergroup experiences, rating 10 items on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Sample items include: "They have been polite to you" (positive intergroup contact; 5 items) and "They have been rude to you" (negative intergroup contact; 5 items). Cronbach's Alphas across the seven waves ranged between .91 and .96 for positive intergroup contact and .86 and .94 for negative intergroup contact.

Adolescents Personal Characteristics

Adolescents reported their sex (i.e., male or female) and age group (i.e., first- or third-year high school students). As an indicator of their socioeconomic status, adolescents reported their family financial situation which was assessed with a single ad-hoc item asking "How would you describe your family's financial situation?" that youth rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 "very bad" to 5 "very good"). Finally, regarding the immigrant generation of adolescents with a migrant background, this was determined by considering their country of birth and that of their parents.

Support for Migrant Integration Policies

Adolescents' support for migrant integration policies was assessed using the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies scale (AMIP; Maratia et al., 2023). The instrument consists of eight items based on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX; Solano & Huddleston, 2020). Participants received this prompt: "You will be presented with several policies for the integration of people with a migrant background. Please, rate how important it is that Italian national programs support policies to foster…" followed by one item for each policy area, for example "…family

reunion (e.g., accommodation, residence period)". For each item, participants indicated their response on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 "Not at all important" to 5 "Absolutely important"). Cronbach's Alphas across the seven waves ranged between .87 and .92.

Strategy of Analyses

Descriptive analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Version 28.0 for Windows. The remaining analyses were conducted in M*plus* 8.9 (Muthén e Muthén, 2017), using Maximum Likelihood Robust (MLR) estimator (Satorra & Bentler, 2001). Two separate multilevel models — one for native Italian adolescents and one for adolescents with a migrant background — were conducted in M*plus* to examine the influence, alone and combined, of contextual ethnic and cultural diversity, personal experiences, and personal characteristics on youth support toward migrant integration policies. As preliminary steps, a) longitudinal invariance of the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale was established (the full procedure is detailed in the Supplemental Materials), and b) the intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) of the scale scores were examined with an unconditional model to determine whether it was possible to proceed with the main analyses.

Then, a three-level nested design was used to construct the final multilevel models for the two samples, where repeated measurements over time (Level 1) are nested within adolescents (Level 2), who in turn are nested within municipalities (Level 3). This model aimed to understand how intergroup experiences over time (Level 1), along with the personal characteristics (e.g., sex and age group) of adolescents (Level 2) and the ethnic and cultural diversity of the municipalities (Level 3), are associated, alone and combined, with youth' support for migrant integration policies. It should be noted that, for both samples of adolescents with and without a migrant background, this study focused on municipalities located in the Emilia-Romagna region in the northeast part of Italy, in which at least one participant rated their support for migrant integration policies at the beginning of the study. This choice has been pursued to increase the number of clusters (i.e., municipalities) available for the analyses, as evidence suggests that a small number of subjects per cluster do not

lead to significant bias when the final goal is to analyze fixed effects, as long as the number of clusters is adequate (Snijders, 2005). The number of selected municipalities for both samples exceeds the recommended number for conducting multilevel analyses (>30 clusters; McCoach, 2019).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviation, and within-time correlations for the study variables for both samples of native Italian and migrant adolescents are displayed in the Supplementary Materials (see Table S2 and Table S3). Regarding the longitudinal invariance of the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) scale, results indicated that partial scalar invariance was reached (see Table S4). Regarding the intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) of native Italian adolescents' support towards migrant integration policies, results indicated that most of the variance was at the within- (44.40%) and between-person (51.00%) levels, while just 4.60% of the variance was explained by the municipality level. Regarding adolescents with a migrant background, results indicated that most of the variance in their support towards migrant integration policies was at the within- (47.60%) and between-person (51.30%) levels, respectively, while just 1.10% of the variance was explained by the municipality level. The little variance at the third level indicates few systematic differences between municipalities and thus no main effect of diversity. However, this does not rule out the possibility of interactions (see Snijders & Bosker, 2012). Therefore, it was possible to proceed with the main analyses.

Multilevel Analyses

Regarding the main analyses, this study found the effects of the study variables, alone and combined, at different levels for both samples of adolescents with and without a migrant background. The fit of the various models was tested at each step to ensure robustness (see Table 1), and unstandardized regression coefficients of the multilevel models for both native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background are reported in Table 2.

Table 1
Multilevel models fit indices

Models with native Italian adolescents

	Model fit				AMIP Residual variance		
Model	LL (df)	AIC	BIC	Δ-2LL	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Model 1 Dependent variable only	-4255.259 (4)	8518.517	8544.534		.223***	.256***	.022*
Model 2 Predictors only at Level 3	-4254.210 (5)	8518.420	8550.941	2.098 (4)	.223***	.257***	.020*
Model 3 Predictors at Level 3 and 1	-1878.824 (9)	3775.647	3827.530	4750.722 (5)***	.191***	.159***	.011
Model 4 Predictors at Level 3, 1, and 2	-1716.521 (15)	3463.041	3548.532	324.606 (3)***	.184***	.153***	.014*

Models with adolescents with a migrant background

	Model fit				AMIP Residual variance		
Model	LL (df)	AIC	BIC	Δ-2LL	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Model 1 Dependent variable only	-777.149 (4)	1562.299	1581.303		.240***	.263***	.000
Model 2 Predictors only at Level 3	-773.956 (5)	1557.912	1581.667	6.386 (4)	.240***	.249***	.004
Model 3 Predictors at Level 3 and 1	-544.779 (9)	1107.559	1147.810	458.354 (5)***	.206***	.204***	.004
Model 4 Predictors at Level 3, 1, and 2	-493.871 (15)	1017.742	1083.696	101.816 (3)***	.204***	.174***	.013

Note. LL = Log Likelihood; df = Degree of freedom; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion; BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion; Δ = change in fit indices; AMIP=Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies scale.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2
Unstandardized regression coefficient for the support for integration policies among Italian and migrant adolescents

	Model with native Italian adolescents		**Model with migrant adolescents**	
	b	***SE***	***b***	***SE***
Level 3 Predictor				
Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity	-.010	.007	-.021	.012
Level 2 Predictors and Interactions				
Sex	.138***	.038	-.002	.086
Age group	.052	.038	.222**	.084
Family' financial situation	.004	.004	-.043	.062
Immigrant generation			.109	.101
Sex * Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity	.023*	.023	.012	.022
Age group * Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity	.000	.000	-.005	.022
Family financial situation * Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity	-.006	.006	-.007	.016
Immigrant generation * Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity	-	-	-.031	.023
Level 1 Predictors and Interactions				
Positive intergroup contact	.182***	.020	.208***	.050
Negative intergroup contact	-.151***	.018	-.093**	.043
Positive intergroup contact * Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity	-.013**	.005	.023*	.011
Negative intergroup contact * Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity	-.009*	.005	.013	.009

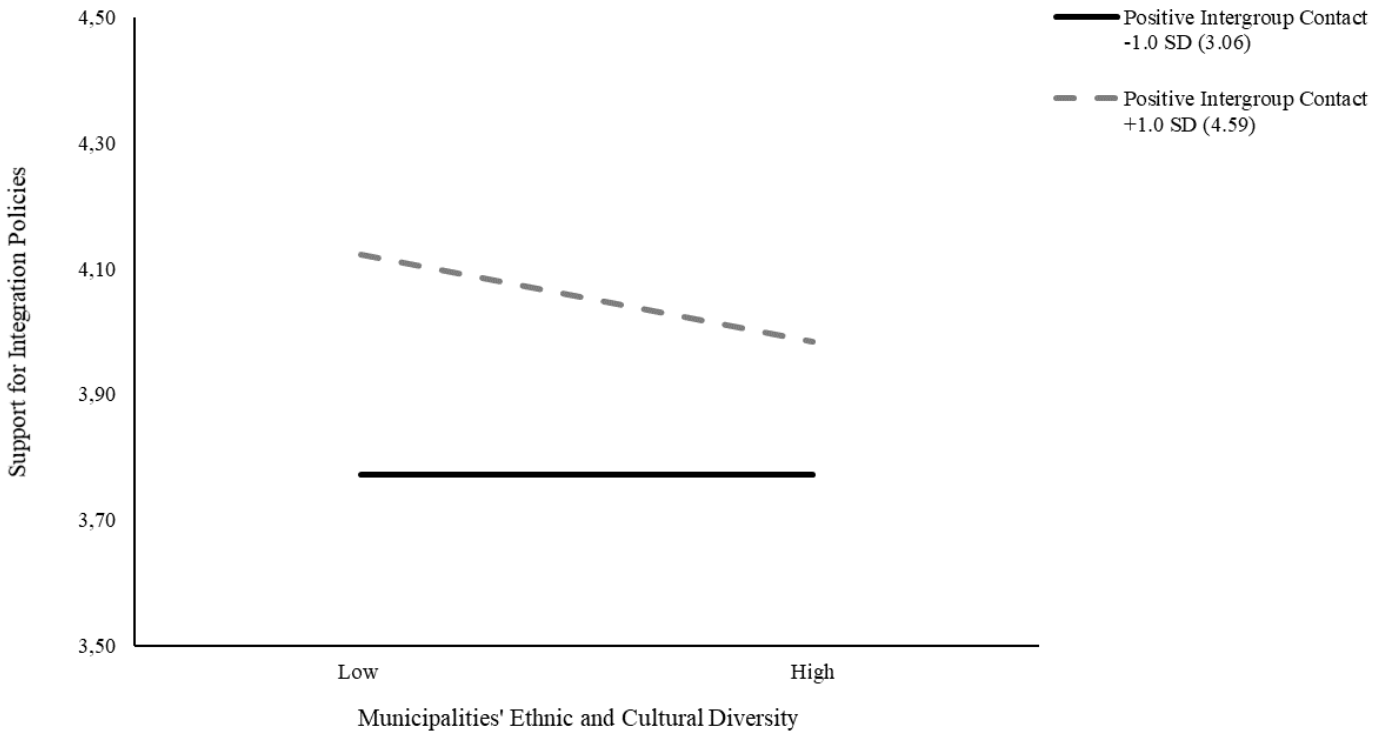
Note. *b*=Unstandardized regression coefficient*; SE*=Standard Errors; Sex: 0=male, 1=female. Age group: 0=first year, 1=third year; Immigrant generation: 0=first-generation, 1=second-generation.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Model with Native Italian Adolescents

Main Effects. Regarding main effects, results of the model with native Italian adolescents (see Table 2) indicated that, at Level 3, municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity was not directly associated with their support for migrant integration policies. Furthermore, at Level 1, the quality of contact experiences native Italian adolescents had with members of other ethnic groups at a given time is associated with their support for migrant integration policies. Specifically, positive (b=.182, p<.001) and negative contact experiences (b=-.151, p<.001) were associated with higher and lower levels of this support, respectively. Lastly, concerning personal characteristics at Level 2, only adolescents' sex (b=.138, p<.001) was positively associated with support for migrant integration policies, indicating that being female was associated with higher support for these policies among native Italian adolescents.

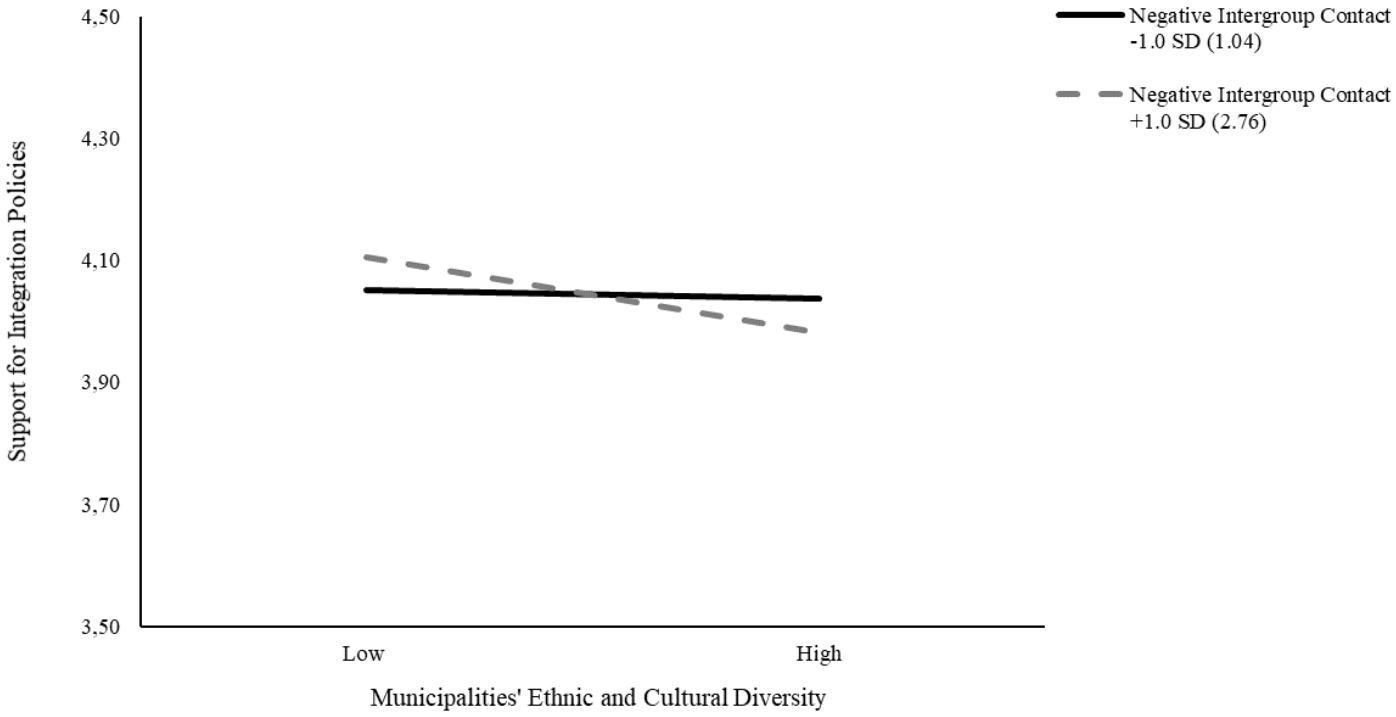
Interactions between Levels 1 and 3. While there was no main effect of context, interactions between municipalities' diversity and positive (b=-.013, p<.01) and negative (b=-.009, p<.05) intergroup contact experiences were negatively associated with adolescents' support for migrant integration policies. Surprisingly, simple slope analyses revealed that, for native Italian adolescents who reported high levels of positive contact with other ethnic groups at a given time, high ethnic and cultural diversity in the municipality negatively affected their support for migrant integration policies over time (1 $SD > M$, b=-.020, p<.05). In contrast, in adolescents with low levels of positive contact, contextual diversity had no significant effect (1 $SD < M$, b=.000, p>.05). Thus, native Italian adolescents with high levels of positive contact and that lived in highly diverse municipalities reported less support for migrant integration policies compared to those with high positive intergroup contact but in less diverse contexts (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Interaction effect of positive intergroup contact and municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity on native Italian adolescents' support for integration policies



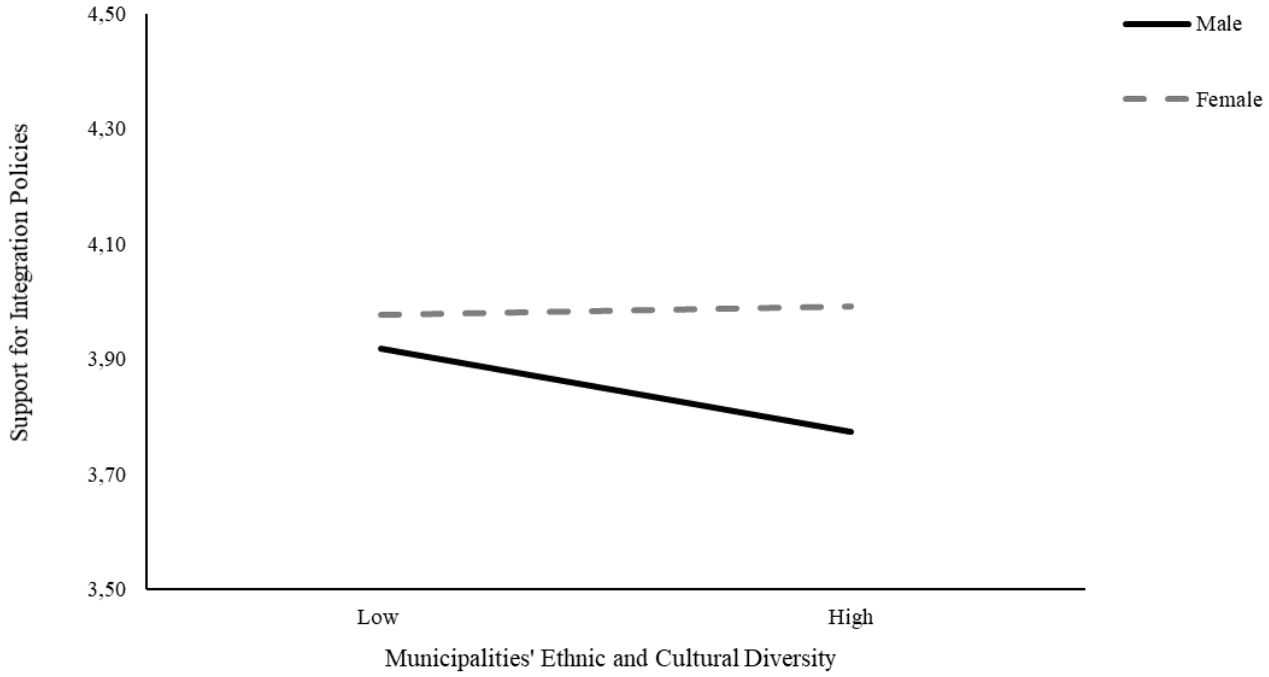
Regarding negative contact, simple slope analyses showed that for native Italian adolescents who reported high levels of negative contact with other ethnic groups, high ethnic and cultural diversity in the municipality negatively affected their support for migrant integration policies (1 *SD* > *M*, *b*=-.018, *p*<.05). Conversely, for adolescents with low levels of negative contact, contextual diversity had no significant effect (1 *SD* < M, *b*=.002, *p*>.05). Thus, adolescents reporting high levels of negative contact in diverse contexts showed less support for migrant integration policies compared to those with high negative contact but in less diverse contexts, while if the contact is neutral (neither too positive nor too negative), the municipalities' diversity has no impact (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Interaction effect of negative intergroup contact and municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity on native Italian adolescents' support for integration policies



Interactions between Levels 2 and 3. Regarding interactions between contextual and personal characteristics, only one positive interaction emerged between municipalities' diversity and adolescents' sex (b=.023, p<.05). Simple slope analysis revealed that municipalities' high ethnic and cultural diversity harmed male adolescents' support for migrant integration policies (1 *SD* < *M*, b=-.021, p<.05), but it had no significant effect on female adolescents (1 *SD* > *M*, b=.002, p>.05). Hence, male but not female adolescents reported lower levels of support for migrant integration policies in contexts characterized by high ethnic and cultural diversity (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Interaction effect of sex (i.e., male vs female) and municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity on native Italian adolescents' support for integration policies

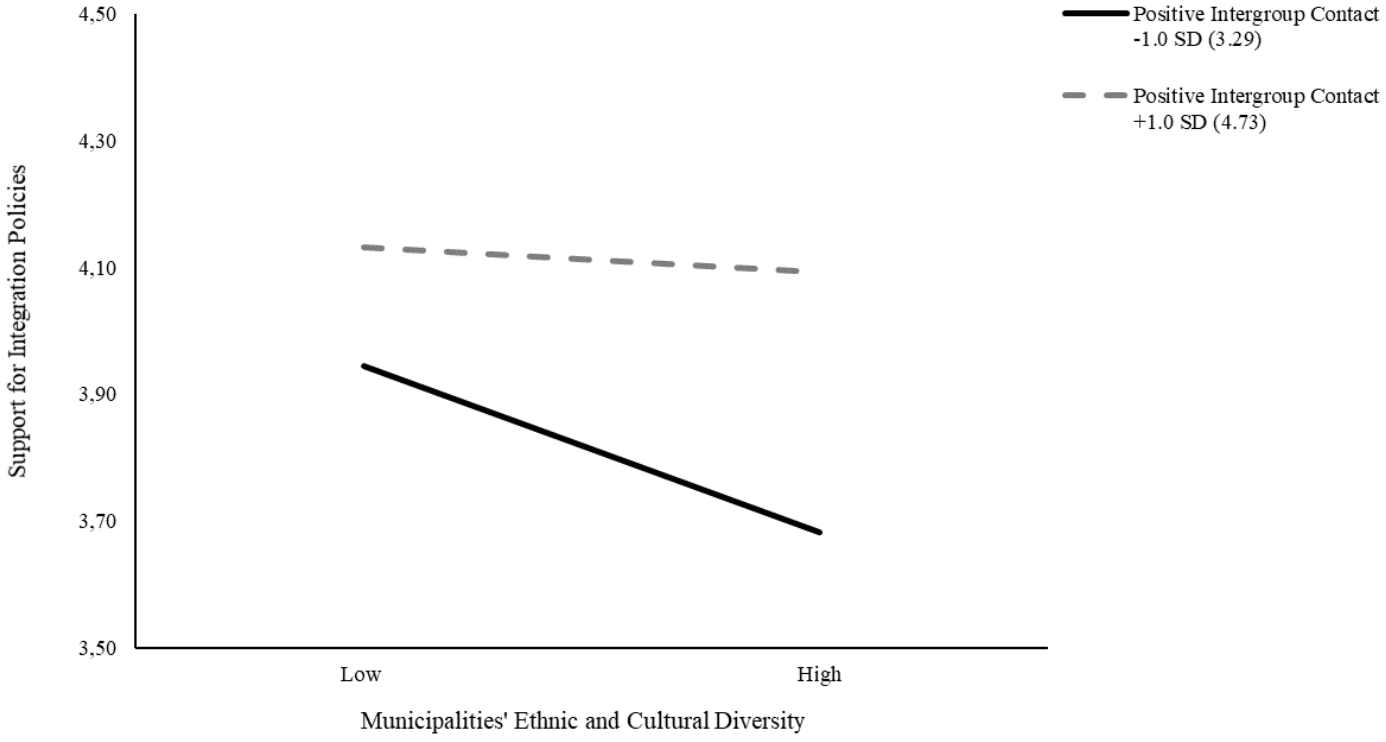


Model with Adolescents with a Migrant Background

Main Effects. Results of the model with adolescents with a migrant background (see Table 2) indicated that, at Level 3, municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity was not associated with the level of support for migrant integration policies among migrant adolescents. However, at Level 1, the quality of contact experiences adolescents with a migrant background had with native Italian adolescents directly influenced their support for migrant integration policies. Specifically, positive (b=.208, p<.000) and negative contact experiences (b=-.093, p<.01) with Italians were associated with higher and lower levels of support for migrant integration policies among migrant adolescents, respectively. Finally, concerning personal characteristics at Level 2, only migrant adolescents' age group (b=.222, p<.01) was associated with their support for integration policies, indicating that migrant adolescents from third-year high school showed higher support for these policies than first-year high school youth.

Interactions between Levels 1 and 3. Only one significant positive interaction emerged between municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity and adolescents' positive intergroup contact with native Italians (b=.023, p<.05). Specifically, for adolescents with a migrant background who reported lower levels of positive contact with native Italians, simple slope analyses (see Figure 4) revealed that municipalities' high ethnic and cultural diversity negatively affected their support for migrant integration policies (1 *SD* > *M*, b=-.040, p<.01). Conversely, in adolescents with a migrant background reporting higher levels of positive contact with native Italians, contextual diversity had no significant effect (1 *SD* > *M*, b=-.006, p>.05).

Figure 4
Interaction effect of positive intergroup contact and municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity on migrant adolescents' support for integration policies



Interactions between Levels 2 and 3. Regarding interactions between variables at levels 2 and 3, the results indicated that no significant interactions were found in the model with migrant adolescents.

Discussion

This study examined how municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity (i.e., the percentage of people with a migrant background over the total population), personal experiences (i.e., positive and negative intergroup contact), and characteristics (i.e., sex, age group, financial situation, and immigrant generation) shape the support for migrant integration policies among native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background. Results indicated that, while municipalities' diversity had no overall effect, adolescents' personal experiences and characteristics were associated with their support for migrant integration policies. Furthermore, interactions between contextual diversity and personal factors played a crucial role, providing a nuanced picture of how different contextual and personal factors interact in promoting more or less support for these policies among youth.

Does the Context Affect Adolescents' Support for Migrant Integration Policies?

Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity alone did not affect adolescents' support for migrant integration policies. This finding was confirmed for native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background. While this finding aligns with other evidence suggesting that the number of individuals with a migrant background alone does not affect anti-immigrant attitudes (Hjerm, 2007) or the level of inter-ethnic inclusive attitudes (Semyonov et al., 2004), it seems to contradict threat theory, which assumes that a high ethnic and cultural diversity within societies would lead to negative intergroup attitudes among adolescents (e.g., Mitchell, 2019). However, it should be noted that the specific context of this study, the Emilia-Romagna region, register a more favorable economic situation compared to many other Italian regions (ISTAT, 2021), which can potentially reduce the sense of realistic threat related to competition for economic resources (Meuleman et al., 2020). Thus, more abundant resources and less competition for material goods

may lead to a weaker connection between ethnic and cultural diversity and less support toward integration policies. Importantly, this study contributes to the literature by highlighting that, although there was no support for the threat perspective overall, the interactions between contextual diversity and (some of) adolescents' personal experiences and characteristics indicate that this diversity is associated with less support for integration policies under particular conditions, as further discussed below.

Intergroup Contact and Support for Migrant Integration Policies

Main Effects

Regarding native Italian adolescents, the results showed how the quality of intergroup contact experiences with other ethnic groups significantly affects their support for migrant integration policies. Specifically, time-specific positive and negative contact experiences can foster or hamper native Italian adolescents' support for migrant integration policies, respectively. These findings are consistent with the extensive literature supporting intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), suggesting that positive contact experiences, rather than negative ones, have beneficial effects on individuals' outgroup attitudes. Thus, the quality of intergroup contact experiences is crucial in promoting more harmonious intergroup relations between majority and minority groups (Laurence, 2020), and this study found that it increased their support for integration policies.

Similarly, for adolescents with a migrant background, positive and negative time-specific contact experiences that migrant adolescents have with native Italians were associated with high and low levels of support for such policies, respectively. This result aligns with other evidence linking positive and negative intergroup contact experiences with natives to higher or lower levels of inclusive attitudes among members of minority groups, respectively (e.g., Brylka et al., 2016; Mähönen & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2016). Furthermore, this result can be explained by the secondary transfer effect of intergroup contact, according to which intergroup contact effects extend to the target group and other uninvolved groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

These results, therefore, indicate that the quality of intergroup experiences plays a crucial role in influencing the levels of support for migrant integration policies, not only among native Italian adolescents but also those with a migrant background. This underscores the importance of considering not only the majority but also minority groups and the potential outcomes of their contact experiences to understand better the dynamics that can promote cohesion within multicultural societies. However, while the main effects provide a relatively clear picture, the results become more nuanced when we focus on the interaction between these experiences and the characteristics of the context.

How Intergroup Contact Experiences Moderate the Impact of Context

In this study, the high ethnic and cultural diversity in municipalities negatively affected the support for migrant integration policies among native Italian adolescents who reported more positive intergroup contact over time. Although this result may seem counterintuitive and in contrast with evidence suggesting a positive moderation role of intergroup contact (Hewstone, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2010), it could reflect that adolescents who engage in positive intergroup relationships and thus have fruitful experiences with diversity may perceive the need for integration policies as less urgent. Furthermore, aligning with evidence in favor of the threat theory (e.g., Mitchell, 2019), in this study, municipalities' high ethnic and cultural diversity was associated with decreased support for migrant integration policies among native Italian adolescents who reported high levels of negative intergroup contact, underscoring how negative experiences can further exacerbate the detrimental effects of a context characterized by high diversity. Nonetheless, it should be noted that native Italian adolescents with high positive intergroup contact showed greater support for migrant integration policies, even in diverse contexts, compared to those with lower positive contact. Similarly, in less diverse contexts, adolescents with high levels of negative contact showed less support for these policies than those with lower levels of negative contact. This underscores that the quality of intergroup contact remains crucial for promoting more acceptance in multicultural settings (Hewstone, 2015).

Moving to adolescents with a migrant background, this study found only a significant interaction between context and positive contact experiences with natives in influencing their support for migrant integration policies. In particular, the results showed that for migrant adolescents who reported low levels of positive contact with native Italians, high contextual ethnic and cultural diversity negatively affects their support for migrant integration policies. This result may indicate that minorities in highly diverse contexts could be more skeptical about integration if they have fewer positive experiences with natives. Furthermore, these findings highlight the potential of intergroup contact in moderating the negative effect of highly diverse contexts (e.g., Meeusen et al., 2019; Philip et al., 2010), at least for adolescents with a migrant background. Thus, encouraging such interactions could improve social cohesion and support for migrant integration policies in increasingly diverse societies.

Personal Characteristics and Adolescents' Support for Migrant Integration Policies

Main Effects

Regarding personal characteristics, sex was found to influence native Italian adolescents' support for migrant integration policies. Specifically, results showed how females from the majority group reported higher support for migrant integration policies than their male peers, aligning with literature suggesting that females are generally more inclusive than males (e.g., Dozo, 2015), perhaps due to gender-specific socialization practices that encourage girls to be more other-oriented than boys (Van der Graaff et al., 2014). In contrast, the same difference based on sex does not appear among migrant adolescents, indicating that they equally perceive the importance of migration policies for society regardless of their sex.

Regarding the age group, this study found that older adolescents with a migrant background, but not native Italians, showed greater support for migrant integration policies than younger ones. On the one hand, cognitive maturation (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2021), increased awareness of political thinking (Rekker et al., 2015), and the personal relevance of these policies may lead to greater support toward them among adolescents with a migrant background. On the other hand, for

Italian adolescents, the influence of competing forces (e.g., cognitive maturation versus threat perceptions; Crocetti et al., 2021), along with the belief that these policies are less personally relevant or generally more distant and abstract, might explain why their perception of the importance of these policies remains unchanged with age.

The financial situation of both native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background showed no effect on their level of support for migrant integration policies. This evidence contradicts studies associating lower socioeconomic status with lower pro-immigrant attitudes among natives (for a meta-analysis, see Dražanová et al., 2023). However, one possible explanation could be that majority adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are also those who report higher levels of contact and more friendships with minority group members (Damen et al., 2021), thereby potentially benefiting more from these experiences. These increased interactions may also benefit migrant youth, fostering greater mutual understanding.

Finally, in contrast to evidence suggesting that second-generation immigrant adolescents report higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes compared to first-generation immigrants (e.g., Valentova & Berzosa, 2012), this study did not find any differences based on the generational status of migrant adolescents. While this lack of differences could be attributed to the limited number of first-generation immigrant adolescents, it highlights that whether adolescents are first- or second-generation immigrants appears not to influence their inclusivity, indicating that, in this study, both groups perceive the importance of these policies equally.

How Personal Characteristics Moderate the Impact of Context

In addition to understanding their main effects, this study aimed to examine how personal characteristics interact with the ethnic and cultural diversity of the context in shaping the levels of support for migrant integration policies among native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background. While no interaction effect between personal characteristics and context emerged for adolescents with a migrant background, an interaction between sex and municipality' diversity did emerge for native Italian adolescents. Specifically, high ethnic and cultural diversity in

municipalities appears to negatively impact support for migrant integration policies among male adolescents, while it does not affect females. Thus, for native Italian male adolescents, high diversity might pose perceived challenges or threats, potentially leading to less supportive attitudes toward integration policies. This difference may be explained by the tendency of male adolescents to be less altruistic and more competitive than females (Horn et al., 2022). This heightened competitiveness among males could foster a greater sense of threat, potentially resulting in more negative outcomes in terms of intergroup relations. In contrast, greater altruism and lower competitiveness may enable female adolescents to demonstrate resilience and adaptability in diverse environments, buffering against negative perceptions and enhancing their appreciation of multiculturalism. Overall, this finding adds important evidence to understanding the dynamics underlying the longstanding differences observed between males and females in their inclusive attitudes (for a meta-analysis, see Dozo, 2015).

Limits and Future Directions

Overall, this study should be considered in light of some shortcomings that can suggest venues for future research. Despite the large number of municipalities considered in the study, the small number of subjects in some units may present a methodological issue, limiting the ability to fully capture the complexity of interactions at higher levels, which typically involve random effects (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002).

Furthermore, although this study focused on various municipalities, it did not consider the levels of cultural segregation within them and specifically pertains to the Italian cultural context. In this regard, some studies have demonstrated how intergroup contact experiences can yield different effects in residential environments that are more or less ethnically and culturally segregated (Hewstone, 2015) or how personal characteristics (e.g., sex; Dražanová et al., 2023) may exert different influences depending on the specific cultural context. Therefore, future studies could consider the levels of ethnic and cultural segregation in the neighborhoods where adolescents

reside, as well as whether personal characteristics interact with context diversity in the same way as this study in other cultural settings.

Simultaneously, this study did not consider the levels of development and implementation of integration policies. Adolescents' intergroup attitudes can also vary depending on how governments develop and implement integration policies (Kim & Byun, 2019). Consequently, future studies could focus on understanding how the impact of context diversity and adolescent experiences and characteristics varies across different countries, as well as regions and municipalities, with different levels of implementation of integration policies (MIPEX; Solano & Huddlestone, 2020) and how this affects the level of support for migrant integration policies among youth.

Conclusion

The current study highlights the combined contributions of contextual and personal factors in shaping the support for migrant integration policies among native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background. While the municipalities' high ethnic and cultural diversity has no overall effect, significant associations between adolescents' personal experiences (i.e., quality of intergroup contact) and characteristics (e.g., sex and age group) and their support for migrant integration policies emerged. Moreover, interactions between contextual and personal factors also played a role. In particular, for native Italian adolescents who were male or experiencing high levels of positive or negative contact, the high diversity of their municipality harmed their support for migrant integration policies. Conversely, for adolescents with a migrant background, this support was negatively affected by the contextual diversity when they reported low levels of positive contact with native Italians. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for navigating the complexities of contemporary society and promoting greater support for integration policies among individuals from different ethnic and cultural groups, which might enhance social cohesion. While Janus in Roman mythology can look only to the past and the future, today's societies can uncover

the complexities of the present times to effectively prepare for what lies ahead. Knowing how adolescents respond to current multicultural contexts is crucial for grasping what societies will be like tomorrow.

Supplementary Materials

Table S1
Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity at January 1, 2022

Municipalities	Total population	% of people with a migrant background	Most Represented Nationalities				
			First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Albareto	2,072	3.72	Romania	Pakistan	United Kingdom	Ukraine	Moldova
Albinea	8,788	5	Morocco	Romania	Ukraine	Albania	Georgia
Alta Val Tidone	2,906	9.53	Romania	Ukraine	Albania	Morocco	Moldova
Anzola dell'Emilia	12,313	11.69	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Moldova	Pakistan
Argelato	9,693	9.24	Romania	China	Albania	Pakistan	Morocco
Argenta	20,995	11.99	Pakistan	Romania	Morocco	Ukraine	Ghana
Bagnacavallo	16,398	12.93	Romania	Morocco	Senegal	Albania	Nigeria
Bagnara di Romagna	2,405	11.89	Albania	Romania	Ukraine	Poland	Morocco
Bagno di Romagna	5,618	6.39	Romania	Morocco	Ukraine	Senegal	Poland
Baiso	3,218	10.38	Morocco	Romania	India	Poland	Ghana
Bellaria-Igea Marina	19,495	11.47	Albania	Romania	Ukraine	Morocco	Bangladesh
Bentivoglio	5,700	10.33	Romania	Morocco	Ukraine	Sri Lanka	Tunisia
Bologna	387,842	15.27	Romania	Bangladesh	Philippines	Pakistan	China
Bomporto	10,144	10.51	Romania	Morocco	Tunisia	Albania	China
Bondeno	13,872	13.76	Morocco	Romania	China	Albania	Moldova
Borgo Tossignano	3,240	11.98	Morocco	Albania	Romania	Tunisia	Pakistan
Borgonovo Val Tidone	8,026	20.17	India	Morocco	Albania	Romania	Ukraine
Brisighella	7,189	9.6	Albania	Morocco	Romania	Ukraine	Moldova
Cadelbosco di Sopra	10,638	10.58	Romania	India	China	Morocco	Moldova
Calestano	2,060	20.68	Sri Lanka	Albania	Morocco	Ukraine	Romania
Campagnola Emilia	5,500	14	Pakistan	India	China	Romania	Morocco
Campegine	5,292	14.7	India	Morocco	Romania	Senegal	Ukraine
Camposanto	3,261	18.58	Morocco	Turkey	Pakistan	Romania	Tunisia

Caorso	4,701	13.64	Morocco	Romania	Egypt	India	Nigeria
Carpaneto Piacentino	7,649	8.96	Romania	Morocco	Albania	India	Egypt
Carpi	71,402	14.5	Pakistan	Romania	China	Tunisia	Moldova
Carpineti	3,884	7.8	Morocco	Albania	India	Romania	Georgia
Casalecchio di Reno	35,784	11.82	Romania	Albania	Philippines	Morocco	Pakistan
Casalfiumanese	3,367	12.44	Morocco	Romania	Albania	Ukraine	Poland
Casalgrande	18,857	7.54	Morocco	Albania	Romania	China	Ghana
Casola Valsenio	2,541	10.07	Albania	Pakistan	Romania	Morocco	Bangladesh
Castel Bolognese	9,535	14.46	Albania	Romania	Morocco	China	Tunisia
Castel Guelfo	4,516	8.1	Romania	Morocco	Pakistan	Albania	Tunisia
Castel Maggiore	18,500	8.48	Romania	China	Ukraine	Moldova	Morocco
Castel San Pietro Terme	20,666	9.33	Romania	Morocco	Pakistan	Albania	Tunisia
Castellarano	15,319	7.14	Morocco	Ghana	Romania	Albania	China
Castell'Arquato	4,577	8.41	Romania	Ukraine	India	Egypt	Kosovo
Castello d'Argile	6,565	10.02	Romania	Morocco	Pakistan	Tunisia	Albania
Castrocaro Terme e Terra del Sole	6,272	10.6	Romania	Nigeria	Morocco	Albania	North Macedonia
Cavriago	9,835	9.08	Morocco	Albania	Romania	China	Tunisia
Cento	35,228	11.22	Morocco	Pakistan	Romania	Albania	China
Cervia	28,758	10.82	Romania	Albania	Senegal	Bangladesh	Ukraine
Cesena	96,168	10.19	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Bulgaria	Nigeria
Cesenatico	25,958	8.13	Albania	Romania	Morocco	Bangladesh	Ukraine
Collecchio	14,556	10.76	Romania	Albania	Moldova	India	Nepal
Colorno	8,958	16.42	India	Tunisia	Romania	Albania	Senegal
Conselice	9,491	15.46	Romania	Morocco	Albania	North Macedonia	Tunisia
Coriano	10,441	7.25	Romania	Ukraine	Morocco	Albania	North Macedonia
Corniglio	1,740	4.83	Romania	India	Ukraine	Moldova	Serbia
Correggio	25,008	10.71	Pakistan	India	Romania	Ukraine	Morocco
Cotignola	7,353	8.31	Romania	Morocco	Senegal	Moldova	Albania

Crevalcore	13,598	16.08	Morocco	Romania	Pakistan	China	Moldova
Dozza	6,533	8.46	Romania	Morocco	China	Albania	Tunisia
Fabbrico	6,610	16.29	Pakistan	India	China	Ukraine	Turkey
Faenza	58,899	12.58	Albania	Romania	Morocco	Moldova	Senegal
Farini	1,078	4.27	Albania	Ukraine	France	Moldova	Morocco
Felino	9,150	12.1	Sri Lanka	Albania	Romania	Moldova	India
Finale Emilia	14,978	14.55	Morocco	Romania	China	Ukraine	Moldova
Fontanelice	1,931	10.72	Morocco	Romania	Albania	Ukraine	Tunisia
Fontevivo	5,577	14.36	Romania	India	Albania	Morocco	Moldova
Forlì	116,558	12.98	Romania	China	Albania	Morocco	Ukraine
Forlimpopoli	13,113	9.22	Albania	Romania	Morocco	Bulgaria	Senegal
Fornovo di Taro	5,863	15.13	Morocco	Albania	Romania	Tunisia	Ghana
Fusignano	8,075	13.87	Morocco	Romania	Senegal	North Macedonia	Poland
Gambettola	10,659	14.39	Albania	Bulgaria	Romania	Morocco	China
Gattatico	5,712	9.82	India	Morocco	Romania	Albania	Ukraine
Gazzola	2,096	6.25	Romania	Ukraine	India	Senegal	Albania
Gemmano	1,121	11.33	Morocco	Romania	Ukraine	Germany	Russia
Gossolengo	5,711	4.29	Albania	Morocco	Romania	Ecuador	Bulgaria
Gragnano Trebbiense	4,538	13.44	India	Albania	Romania	Morocco	Senegal
Granarolo dell'Emilia	12,578	8.18	Romania	Albania	Moldova	Morocco	Pakistan
Grizzana Morandi	3,883	11.1	Morocco	Romania	Pakistan	Tunisia	Nigeria
Imola	69,551	10.31	Romania	Morocco	Albania	Ukraine	Tunisia
Langhirano	10,661	21.66	Albania	Morocco	Romania	India	Sri Lanka
Longiano	7,225	7.32	Bulgaria	Romania	Morocco	Albania	China
Lugo	31,919	12.18	Romania	Morocco	Albania	Ukraine	China
Massa Lombarda	10,590	19.95	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Pakistan	Tunisia
Medesano	10,693	10.56	Romania	Morocco	Albania	Moldova	Tunisia
Medicina	16,646	8.54	Romania	Morocco	Pakistan	Ukraine	Albania

Medolla	6,352	9.89	Romania	Morocco	Moldova	Tunisia	India
Meldola	9,881	12.66	Romania	Morocco	Senegal	Albania	Bulgaria
Mercato Saraceno	6,812	10.91	Morocco	Romania	Albania	Burkina Faso	Ukraine
Mirandola	24,135	15.04	Romania	Morocco	China	Moldova	Albania
Misano Adriatico	13,913	8.74	Albania	Romania	Ukraine	Senegal	Morocco
Modena	184,971	15.37	Romania	Morocco	Philippines	Ghana	Albania
Montecchio Emilia	10,384	8.37	Romania	Albania	Ukraine	Morocco	India
Montechiarugolo	11,154	11.05	Romania	India	Moldova	Albania	Senegal
Monterenzio	6,161	13.15	Romania	Moldova	Pakistan	Ukraine	Morocco
Mordano	4,591	10.89	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Sri Lanka	Ukraine
Neviano degli Arduini	3,428	10.53	India	Morocco	Romania	Sri Lanka	Albania
Noceto	13,115	10.34	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Moldova	India
Nonantola	16,022	10.45	Morocco	Romania	Ghana	Ukraine	Tunisia
Novellara	13,337	14.68	India	China	Pakistan	Romania	Morocco
Novi di Modena	10,001	15.32	China	Pakistan	Morocco	Romania	India
Ozzano dell'Emilia	13,922	7.13	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Ukraine	Moldova
Parma	195,436	17.55	Romania	Moldova	Albania	Philippines	Nigeria
Piacenza	102,364	19.21	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Egypt	Ecuador
Pianoro	17,586	8.98	Romania	Morocco	Moldova	Ukraine	Albania
Pieve di Cento	7,153	9.13	Morocco	Albania	Romania	Tunisia	China
Podenzano	9,025	8.96	Albania	Romania	Ukraine	Morocco	North Macedonia
Ponte dell'Olio	4,614	10.66	Romania	Morocco	Egypt	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Pontenure	6,511	16.07	Romania	Albania	Morocco	India	North Macedonia
Poviglio	7,096	13.47	India	Morocco	Romania	China	Senegal
Predappio	6,237	11.93	Romania	Morocco	North Macedonia	Burkina Faso	Poland
Quattro castella	13,123	5.72	Morocco	Romania	Ukraine	Albania	India
Ravarino	6,214	13.73	Romania	Morocco	Tunisia	Albania	China
Ravenna	155,836	11.33	Romania	Albania	Nigeria	Ukraine	Senegal

Reggio Emilia	169,908	16.76	Albania	China	Romania	Morocco	Ukraine
Reggiolo	9,123	11.14	Pakistan	India	China	Romania	Morocco
Riccione	34,603	9.26	Ukraine	Albania	Romania	China	Russia
Rimini	149,169	13.15	Romania	Albania	Ukraine	China	Senegal
Riolo Terme	5,767	13.3	Albania	Romania	Morocco	Tunisia	Moldova
Rivergaro	7,023	8.67	Albania	Romania	Morocco	Ukraine	China
Rolo	4,016	18.65	Pakistan	China	India	Bangladesh	Romania
Roncofreddo	3,379	11.01	Bulgaria	Morocco	Romania	Albania	Senegal
Rottofreno	12,200	11.84	Romania	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Morocco	Tunisia
Rubiera	14,765	9.61	Romania	Albania	Morocco	China	India
Russi	12,107	12.8	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Moldova	Senegal
Sala Baganza	5,802	14.56	Sri Lanka	Romania	Albania	Moldova	Senegal
Sala Bolognese	8,462	7.11	Romania	Morocco	Pakistan	Tunisia	Albania
San Felice sul Panaro	10,679	15.26	Morocco	Romania	China	Sri Lanka	Ghana
San Giorgio di Piano	9,163	10.61	Romania	China	Morocco	Bangladesh	Pakistan
San Giorgio Piacentino	5,605	7.65	Albania	Morocco	Romania	Tunisia	Burkina Faso
San Giovanni in Persiceto	27,869	8.72	Romania	Morocco	China	Pakistan	Albania
San Lazzaro di Savena	32,606	8.45	Romania	Moldova	Ukraine	Albania	Morocco
San Leo	2,818	11.46	Morocco	Romania	Albania	Ukraine	Senegal
San Pietro in Casale	12,661	14.08	Romania	Pakistan	Morocco	Albania	Nigeria
Santa Sofia	4,018	12.92	Morocco	Romania	Albania	Bulgaria	China
Sant'Agata Bolognese	7,335	9.56	Morocco	Romania	India	Pakistan	Tunisia
Santarcangelo di Romagna	22,184	8.53	Albania	China	Morocco	Romania	Ukraine
Sant'Ilario d'Enza	11,205	12.05	India	Albania	Morocco	Romania	Ukraine
Sarmato	2,950	15.93	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Bosnia and Herzegovina	India
Sarsina	3,303	10.38	Morocco	Romania	Bulgaria	Ukraine	Nigeria
Sasso Marconi	14,798	7.7	Romania	Albania	Morocco	Ukraine	Moldova
Savignano sul Rubicone	17,797	16.31	Albania	Morocco	China	Senegal	Romania

Scandiano	25,767	7.27	Morocco	Albania	Romania	China	Ukraine
Sissa Trecasali	7,842	11.12	Romania	India	Morocco	Albania	Tunisia
Sogliano al Rubicone	3,147	8.13	Morocco	Romania	Albania	Bulgaria	Serbia
Solarolo	4,393	13.75	Albania	Romania	Morocco	China	Serbia
Soliera	15,425	9.29	Romania	China	India	Morocco	Tunisia
Sorbolo Mezzani	12,719	11.55	Romania	Moldova	Morocco	Tunisia	Albania
Terenzo	1,162	9.9	Sri Lanka	India	Romania	Egypt	Tunisia
Terre del Reno	9,878	10.78	Morocco	Romania	Pakistan	Albania	China
Torrile	7,686	12.95	Romania	Moldova	India	Senegal	Albania
Traversetolo	9,454	13.74	Albania	Romania	Morocco	Senegal	India
Travo	2,165	8.08	Romania	Ukraine	Albania	Morocco	Bangladesh
Valsamoggia	31,605	11.97	Romania	Morocco	Albania	Ghana	Ukraine
Varano de' Melegari	2,592	7.99	Romania	Morocco	Senegal	Albania	India
Verghereto	1,763	7.49	Romania	Morocco	Moldova	Ukraine	Belarus
Verucchio	10,045	8.59	Albania	Morocco	Romania	Senegal	Ukraine
Viano	3,338	6.23	Morocco	Romania	India	Albania	Ukraine
Ziano Piacentino	2,441	12.45	Romania	Albania	Bulgaria	Ukraine	India
Zola Predosa	19,117	7.53	Romania	Morocco	Albania	China	Moldova

Note. First= The first most represented nationality; Second= The second most represented nationality; Third= The third most represented nationality; Fourth= The fourth most represented nationality; Fifth= The fifth most represented nationality.
Source. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica [ISTAT] Stranieri residenti al 1° Gennaio – Last data extracted on January 2, 2024
http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCIS_POPSTRRES1

Participation Across Study Waves and Missing Values for Native Italians and Migrant Adolescents

Among the sample of native Italian adolescents, 29.59% of them participated in all seven assessments, while 19.09%, 9.86%, 9.86%, 7.85%, 12.60%, and 10.87% participated in six, five, four, three, two, and one assessment, respectively. Regarding adolescents with a migrant background, 18.97% of them participated in all seven assessments, while 15.42%, 9.49%, 7.91%, 7.91%, 20.55%, and 18.97% participated in six, five, four, three, two, and one assessment, respectively. As a preliminary check, missing value analyses for the two samples (i.e., native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background) were conducted. The Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test yielded a normed χ^2 (χ^2/df=33,426.103/32,614) of 1.02 for the sample of native Italian adolescents and χ^2 (χ^2/df=9,598.086/8,888) of 1.12 for the sample of adolescents with a migrant background, indicating in both cases that data were likely missing completely at random. Therefore, the total samples of 1,095 native Italian adolescents and 253 adolescents with a migrant background were included in the analyses, and missing data were handled with the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) procedure in M*plus* 8.9 (Kelloway, 2015; Muthén & Muthén, 2017a).

Table S2

Sample of adolescents with an Italian background: Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables.

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1. Sex			-																								
2. Age Group			.00	-																							
3. FIN	3.63	0.77	-.01	-.16***	-																						
4. PCON T1	3.92	0.73	.13**	-.01	-.03	-																					
5. PCON T2	3.88	0.73	.18***	.02	.00	.51***	-																				
6. PCON T3	3.8	0.77	.22***	-.01	.01	.45***	.51***	-																			
7. PCON T4	3.76	0.71	.19***	-.02	-.04	.49***	.61***	.59***	-																		
8. PCON T5	3.82	0.80	.11	-.09	-.00	.39***	.49***	.60***	.62***	-																	
9. PCON T6	3.84	0.86	.15*	-.09	-.16**	.40***	.44***	.56***	.59***	.67***	-																
10. PCON T7	3.67	0.85	.11	.00	-.05	.37***	.61***	.62***	.57***	.59***	.58***	-															
11. NCON T1	1.66	0.69	-.11*	-.04	-.02	-.55***	-.38***	-.41***	-.42***	-.37***	-.42***	-.30**	-														
12. NCON T2	1.81	0.84	-.12*	.01	.06	-.42***	-.52***	-.45***	-.56***	-.41***	-.50***	-.52***	.48***	-													
13. NCON T3	1.87	0.82	-.21***	.02	.04	-.41***	-.44***	-.62***	-.55***	-.55***	-.52***	-.54***	.52***	.59***	-												
14. NCON T4	1.95	0.82	-.15**	.01	.05	-.40***	-.45***	-.51***	-.61***	-.52***	-.49***	-.56***	.53***	.64***	.7***	-											
15. NCON T5	2.02	0.99	-.11	.02	.05	-.41***	-.37***	-.46***	-.52***	-.60***	-.52***	-.47***	.48***	.53***	.66***	.57***	-										
16. NCON T6	2.01	0.98	-.16**	.03	-.01	-.34***	-.42***	-.39***	-.54***	-.41***	-.58***	-.48***	.33***	.64***	.67***	.63***	.64***	-									
17. NCON T7	2.18	0.96	-.16*	-.09	.03	-.36***	-.45***	-.54***	-.46***	-.46***	-.44***	-.51***	.32***	.47***	.63***	.47***	.59***	.65***	-								
18. AMIP T1	4.01	0.72	.20***	-.01	.00	.35***	.38***	.40***	.45***	.26***	.25***	.43***	-.43***	-.37***	-.35***	-.38***	-.38***	-.37***	-.35***	-							
19. AMIP T2	3.97	0.65	.14***	.02	-.03	.31***	.37***	.40***	.37***	.34***	.35***	.46***	-.27***	-.40***	-.39***	-.35***	-.22**	-.35***	-.25**	.54***	-						
20. AMIP T3	3.92	0.67	.11**	-.01	-.03	.29***	.34***	.50***	.39***	.41***	.39***	.48***	-.29***	-.35***	-.50***	-.38***	-.41***	-.35***	-.33***	.50***	.55***	-					
21. AMIP T4	3.82	0.72	.21***	.03*	-.02	.26***	.41***	.42***	.46***	.49***	.44***	.61***	-.27***	-.38***	-.43***	-.50***	-.44***	-.40**	-.41***	.56***	.53***	.65***	-				
22. AMIP T5	3.79	0.70	.21***	.09*	.03	.32***	.32***	.42***	.40***	.46***	.38***	.46***	-.30***	-.23***	-.40***	-.40***	-.37***	-.29***	-.37***	.48***	.53***	.63***	.65***				
23. AMIP T6	3.78	0.73	.12**	.08	.00	.28***	.33***	.41***	.37***	.44***	.39***	.53***	-.29***	-.28***	-.41***	-.40***	-.35***	-.34***	-.38***	.49***	.50***	.61***	.60***	.66***	-		
24. AMIP T7	3.80	0.73	.23***	.08	-.02	.32***	.36***	.48***	.49***	.46***	.39***	.62***	-.29***	-.35***	-.46***	-.45***	-.39***	-.40***	-.42***	.52***	.51***	.62***	.65***	.69***	.72***	-	
25. MUNDIV	11.28	3.49	-.02	-.04	-.01	-.09	-.06	-.06	-.09	-.08	-.04	-.14*	.01	.00	.10*	.14*	.10	.16**	-.00	-.08*	-.08*	-.02	-.05	-.07	-.06	-.02	-

Note. Sex= Adolescents' sex (0=male, 1=female). Age Group= Adolescents' age group (0=first year, 1=third year); FIN= adolescents' family financial situation; T= Time; PCON= Positive contact during leisure time; NCON= Negative contact during leisure time; AMIP= Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies; MUNDIV=Municipalities' percentage of ethnic and cultural diversity. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table S3

Sample of adolescents with a migrant background: Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables.

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
1. Sex			-																									
2. Age Group			.16**	-																								
3. IMGEN			-.15*	-.05	-																							
4. FIN	3.50	0.76	.01	-.24***	-.03	-																						
5. PCON T1	4.04	0.80	-.04	-.06	.09	.01	-																					
6. PCON T2	3.99	0.67	-.05	-.01	-.03	.06	.354**	-																				
7. PCON T3	4.15	0.63	-.12	.13	.08	.09	.48***	.44***	-																			
8. PCON T4	3.99	0.72	.16	.04	.23*	.00	.22	.52***	.44***	-																		
9. PCON T5	3.93	0.81	.04	.13	.83	.03	.42**	.43***	.45***	.55***	-																	
10. PCON T6	4.08	0.71	.09	-.03	.14	.15	.26	.23	.43**	.56***	.50***	-																
11. PCON T7	3.90	0.66	-.05	.10	.01	-.14	.47*	.29	.45*	.47**	.55***	.62***	-															
12. NCON T1	1.73	0.79	.04	-.05	-.05	.01	-.57***	-.35**	-.56***	-.20	-.40**	-.28	-.34	-														
13. NCON T2	1.85	0.76	-.01	-.04	-.03	.00	-.11	-.64***	-.33**	-.34**	-.40**	-.12	-.26	.41***	-													
14. NCON T3	1.79	0.80	.11	-.15	-.10	-.04	-.37**	-.47***	-.41***	-.29*	-.27*	-.24	-.58***	.53***	.61***	-												
15. NCON T4	1.89	0.82	-.18	-.04	-.24*	-.00	-.01	-.50***	-.37**	-.70***	-.41***	-.48***	-.43**	.12	.29*	.28*	-											
16. NCON T5	1.94	0.86	.03	-.27***	-.05	.03	-.08	-.27*	-.43**	-.28*	-.63***	-.39**	-.53***	.34*	.34***	.36**	.31*	-										
17. NCON T6	1.98	0.95	-.02	-.14	-.10	-.06	-.03	-.33**	-.34*	-.38**	-.54***	-.61***	-.61***	.24	.44***	.34*	.49***	.72***	-									
18. NCON T7	2.05	0.88	-.06	-.06	.11	.18	-.19	-.30	-.03	-.45**	-.39*	-.48**	-.60***	.29	.40*	.15	.40**	.53***	.66***	-								
19. AMIP T1	4.04	0.72	-.07	.02	.05	-.04	.47***	.24**	.29*	.06	.31*	.26	.14	-.11	.00	.02	.08	-.21	-.09	-.23	-							
20. AMIP T2	4.06	0.65	.16*	.18*	-.05	-.02	.33**	.35***	.26*	.18	.47***	.27*	.20	-.17	-.20*	-.17	-.12	-.22	-.22	-.34*	.56***	-						
21. AMIP T3	3.99	0.69	.11	.05	-.07	.01	.35**	.29*	.40***	.37**	.26	.16	.31	-.03	-.02	-.22*	-.37**	-.10	-.11	-.37*	.48***	.52***	-					
22. AMIP T4	3.85	0.69	.03	.15	.08	-.04	.18	.39***	.21	.42***	.42***	.27*	.33*	-.25	-.28*	-.18	-.31**	-.30**	-.28*	-.41**	.42***	.55***	.64***	-				
23. AMIP T5	3.90	0.71	.17	.25**	-.13	-.01	.30*	.26*	.10	.36**	.49***	.28*	.27	-.19	-.13	.05	-.37***	-.37***	-.20	-.35*	.60***	.63***	.59***	.60***	-			
24. AMIP T6	3.74	0.72	.12	.22*	-.05	.01	.04	.24*	.25	.32*	.33*	.44***	.49***	-.16	-.19	-.04	-.28*	-.43***	-.51***	-.49***	.44***	.45***	.52***	.55***	.47***	-		
25. AMIP T7	3.81	0.72	.26*	.16	-.02	-.00	.05	.20	-.01	.43***	.28*	.48***	.29*	-.12	-.27	-.07	-.37**	-.20	-.58***	-.50***	.40***	.48***	.52***	.62***	.52***	.75***	-	
25. MUNDIV	12.48	3.34	.01	.00	.01	.07	-.08	-.25**	-.12	-.10	-.34***	-.16	-.18	.09	.24**	.13	.07	.29***	.08	.11	-.13	-.22**	-.15	-.06	-.23*	-.08	-.09	-

Note. Sex= Adolescents' sex (0=male, 1=female). Age Group= Adolescents' age group (0=first year, 1=third year); IMGEN=Adolescents' immigrant generation (0=first generation, 1=second generation) FIN= adolescents' family financial situation; T= Time; PCON= Positive contact during leisure time; NCON= Negative contact during leisure time; AMIP= Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies. MUNDIV=Municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Longitudinal and Multigroup Measurement Invariance of Study Variables

As a preliminary step, the longitudinal measurement invariance of the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policies scale (AMIP) was tested over time. The longitudinal invariance was conducted on the total sample of adolescents with and without a migrant background. For longitudinal invariance, configural, metric, and scalar levels were tested. To this end, the configural models function as baseline models and should therefore display a good fit, evaluated based on the following criteria: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) with values higher than .90 and .95 indicative of an acceptable and very good fit; the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) with values below .08 and .05 indicative of an acceptable and very good fit (Byrne, 2012); and the RMSEA's 90% confidence interval's upper bound lower than .10 indicating an acceptable fit of the model (Chen et al., 2008). In order to establish scalar invariance (i.e., constraining factor loadings and intercepts to be equal across time and/or groups), changes in fit indices from the configural to the metric model were evaluated (e.g., Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Specifically, a significant $\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$ (Satorra & Bentler, 2001), and $\Delta CFI \geq -.010$ supplemented by $\Delta RMSEA \geq .015$ (Chen, 2007) indicates non-invariance. Results are displayed in Table S4. As can be inferred, partial scalar longitudinal invariance of the AMIP scale was reached.

Table S4
Longitudinal measurement invariance of the AMIP scale

						Model comparisons			
Models	χ^2	df	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]	Models	$\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Longitudinal Invariance									
Configural (M1)	3036.906	1295	.924	.048	.032 [.031, .033]				
Metric (M2)	3135.052	1337	.922	.052	.032 [.031, .033]	M2-M1	98.063 (42)***	-.002	.000
Full scalar (M3a)	3494.361	1385	.908	.064	.034 [.033, .035]	M3a-M2	417.214 (48)***	-.014	.002
Partial scalar (M3b)	3366.542	1361	.913	.062	.033 [.032, .035]	M3b-M2	285.413 (24)***	-.009	.001

Note. M = Model; χ^2 = Chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = Confidence Interval; Δ = Change in the parameter.
* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

7 Chapter

General Discussion

General Discussion

The development of positive attitudes toward integration policies represents a crucial aspect, as the formation and implementation of these policies do not depend solely on a country's political agenda (Natter et al., 2020), but they appear to be intertwined with public opinion (for a review, see Baum & Potter, 2008). However, while much attention has been given to how integration policies are developed at the country level, little consideration has been given to how people endorse these policies and to which factors can either hamper or foster the development of positive attitudes toward them. Furthermore, it is also essential to understand this during adolescence, a period when youth develop intergroup orientations (Verkuyten, 2022) that will likely influence their future perspectives as adults (Rekker et al., 2015) and help us understand what societies will look like in the future. Similarly, it is crucial to not focus solely on adolescents from the majority group, as is often the case when discussing inclusive attitudes, but also on those from minority groups, as all will be active members of tomorrow's societies. At the same time, the advantages these policies can bring with them will benefit both majority (e.g., Kim & Byun, 2019) and minority (e.g., Manatschal & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014) groups, with the ultimate goal of generating more cohesive societies (Green et al., 2020).

In light of these considerations, the present dissertation sought to disentangle the development of attitudes toward migrant integration policies by adopting an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007), aiming to capture the role of multiple contexts in which youth are embedded, along with the study of factors moderating potential influences. In this last chapter, the main findings from each study will be presented and discussed to tackle the complex dynamics that contribute to the development of these intergroup attitudes. Then, critical common themes that serve as the basis for this dissertation's theoretical and practical implications will be highlighted. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of this work and new ideas for future research will be discussed.

A New Resource for the Toolbox of Scholars and Policy Makers

In **Chapter 2**, a new scale was designed to assess individuals' attitudes toward migrant integration policies. The Attitudes Toward Migrant Integration Policies (AMIP) Scale showed strong psychometric properties in both a pilot study (Study 1) and a subsequent study (Study 2), which also aimed to investigate possible differences among adolescents based on their personal characteristics (i.e., sex, age, ethnic background, and school type). The results revealed differences between male and female adolescents, with the latter showing more positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies, aligning with previous research linking individuals' sex with positive intergroup orientation (e.g., Dozo, 2015). Regarding age, no significant differences were found between younger and older adolescents, suggesting that competing forces, such as cognitive maturation (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2021) and decreased social trust (Flanagan & Stout, 2010), might be at play and, as a result, the attitudes toward migrant integration remain unchanged at the mean level across age groups (for a review with similar considerations related to the development of prejudice, see Crocetti et al., 2021). Interestingly, there were also no significant differences in inclusive attitudes among native Italians and migrant adolescents, indicating that both groups of youth recognize the importance of the integration policies in the same way, thus suggesting that there are no divergent opinions on this matter, creating a more fertile ground for cohesion rather than conflict. Finally, students in high-track schools (lyceums) showed more positive attitudes toward integration policies than those in technical or vocational schools. These differences may stem from the varying representation of ethnic minorities in these educational settings, as classrooms with higher minority representation have been linked to less favorable attitudes among majority group members (Vervoort et al., 2011).

In addition to assessing differences among adolescents, Study 2 included two key adult figures (i.e., parents and teachers) for adolescents to evaluate potential generational differences. The findings revealed that adolescents occupy a middle ground between their parents and teachers, showing more inclusive attitudes than the former but less than the latter. These results indicated that

comparisons between adolescents and older generations are complex and underscore the importance of understanding the influence of various socialization contexts in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies.

Fostering Inclusiveness in Adolescence at Different Levels

According to the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007), adolescents are shaped by the various contexts in which they are embedded. In light of this, the present dissertation tried to capture the influence of different factors related to the micro- (i.e., family and school) and macro- (i.e., municipality) contexts to understand better how adolescents develop positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies and adjust to contemporary multicultural societies.

Home as a Classroom: The Family's Role in Shaping Intergroup Perspectives

The family context is the main focus of **Chapter 3** of this dissertation, in which a study examined the intergenerational transmission processes within families (Degner & Dalege, 2013) of the attitudes toward migrant integration policies and various individual and family-related factors that can moderate this transmission. The findings revealed a unidirectional effect, with parents influencing adolescents' inclusive attitudes, which is consistent with existing literature suggesting that parental influence is generally stronger than that of children (Vollebergh et al., 2001), maybe due to the greater degree of stability of their attitudes and beliefs (e.g., Asendorpf & Van Aken, 2003; Crocetti et al., 2016). However, changes in adolescents' attitudes toward integration policies over time were only associated with fathers' inclusive attitudes, highlighting a possible gender gap within families, where fathers generally exhibit greater political interest (Burns et al., 2001) and engagement (Boonen, 2017) than mothers.

Among the factors that can either foster or hinder the strength of these transmission processes, while adolescents' sex and age did not significantly moderate the transmission, the political orientation of fathers, but not mothers, did. When fathers are left-wing oriented, the one-way transmission becomes bi-directional, with adolescents positively influencing their fathers'

inclusive attitudes, suggesting greater openness of left-wing fathers toward their children's views than right-wing fathers. The study also highlighted the importance of relational factors, especially the quality of these relationships, over cultural ones, such as the family's ethnic background. Indeed, perceived support from fathers has been found to enhance the intergenerational transmission of inclusive attitudes from fathers to adolescents, suggesting that emotional support fosters alignment with their children's views (Augustijn, 2022; G. L. Brown et al., 2018; Miklikowska, 2016) and can be crucial in shaping inclusive perspectives. Overall, this chapter emphasizes the complex nature of intergenerational transmission within families, but other contexts, such as the school environment, can also play a crucial role in adolescents' development.

Learn about Inclusiveness and Psychosocial Adaptation at School

In **Chapters 4** and **5**, the objective was twofold. On the one hand, the aim was to examine how adolescents' development of personal characteristics related to this domain, such as their educational identity (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2017), could foster inclusive attitudes toward diversity. On the other hand, the focus was on how the management of these diversities by the school (Schachner et al., 2016) could promote better psychosocial adaptation for adolescents with and without a migrant background. Thus, these chapters underscore the intricate interplay between adolescents' personal development and the educational setting in shaping attitudes toward diversity and promoting better psychosocial adjustment.

Personal Identity as Catalysts for Inclusiveness in Educational Settings. By examining inclusive attitudes of youth in various educational identity statuses (i.e., achievement, early closure, moratorium, searching moratorium, and diffusion statuses; Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008), the findings of **Chapter 4** revealed that adolescents in the achievement status of their educational identity exhibited the most positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies. At the same time, adolescents in early closure, moratorium, and searching moratorium statuses showed similar intermediate levels. In contrast, adolescents in the diffusion status were the least inclusive. These results align with evidence linking adolescents' identity certainty with higher volunteer activities

and civic engagement (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2012; Marinica & Negru-Subtirica, 2024), pro-diversity and pro-equality values (Erentaitė et al., 2019), and more openness toward interreligious dialogue (Rydz & Romaneczko, 2022). Conversely, the less inclusive outcomes that adolescents in the diffusion status registered might draw attention to evidence suggesting that these adolescents are less engaged socially (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2012), registering lower social responsibility or integration (Schwartz et al., 2011).

Regarding possible differences among adolescents with and without a migrant background, results showed how both groups exhibited similar patterns. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of the educational domain in fostering more inclusive orientations among adolescents with and without a migrant background, significantly influencing how they perceive the diversity around them. Additionally, how schools manage this diversity has crucial implications for adolescents' psychosocial adjustment and could play a relevant role in shaping more inclusive societies.

School Diversity Climate as Catalysts for Adolescents' Psychosocial Adjustment. If the previous chapter focused on how adolescents consolidate inclusive orientations as a result of personal development in the educational domain, **Chapter 5** shifts attention to how the school, and especially its teachers, can promote youth's psychosocial adaptation by fostering a positive climate toward diversity (Schachner et al., 2016). The findings indicated that, over time, only a direct negative relation between perceived equal treatment and adolescents' social well-being was significant. Although this finding contrasts with previous longitudinal research, which found perceived equal treatment to positively affect adolescents' psychosocial adjustment (Schachner et al., 2016), this association should also be considered in light of other explanatory mechanisms, such as the sense of belonging to the school context (Baysu et al., 2023; Schachner et al., 2019). Indeed, when looking at the indirect associations, perceived equal treatment by teachers positively influenced students' school belonging and, in turn, their social well-being. Thus, experiencing fairness and justice in this primary institution may set the basis for developing positive intergroup

relations in the school context (Karataş, Eckstein, et al., 2023) and a sense of integration in the broader society (Emler & Reicher, 1987; Rubini & Palmonari, 2022).

Moreover, for ethnic minority adolescents, teachers' interest in cultural backgrounds was associated with reduced school belonging and social well-being, highlighting the need for careful consideration of how such interest is perceived. Indeed, this interest may lead to feelings of objectification rather than inclusion (Schwarzenthal et al., 2018), especially when teachers convey stereotypical assumptions and views of their students' cultural backgrounds (Armenta et al., 2013) and are not trained to cope with ethnic and cultural diversity in their classrooms (Pevec-Zimmer et al., 2024).

The results of both chapters underscore the complex interplay between personal and contextual factors in shaping adolescents' inclusiveness and psychosocial adjustment, indicating that some aspects may promote these two facets while others may hinder them. Understanding these nuances is vital for leveraging the school environment, ultimately contributing to developing more inclusive societies.

Diverse Lenses: Adolescents' Personal Experiences and Characteristics Shaping Macro-context Perceptions

Together with the microsystems, the macro-context represents the main focus of **Chapter 6**, in which a study investigated how municipalities' ethnic and cultural diversity, personal experiences (positive and negative intergroup contact), and individual characteristics (sex, age group, financial situation, and immigrant generation), alone and in combination, shape inclusive attitudes among native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background.

Regarding main effects, while overall ethnic and cultural diversity in municipalities did not significantly affect support for these policies, individual experiences and characteristics were found to play a crucial role. Positive intergroup contact experiences led to more inclusive attitudes among both native Italian adolescents and those with a migrant background, while negative contact experiences led to less inclusive attitudes. These results align with evidence suggesting the crucial

role of positive and negative intergroup experiences in shaping inclusive orientations among both majority (for a review, see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and minority members (e.g., Brylka et al., 2016; Mähönen & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2016). Additionally, while sex differences emerged among native Italians (in line with findings of Chapter 2), the age group influenced migrant adolescents' inclusive attitudes, with older adolescents demonstrating greater support. In contrast, financial status did not significantly impact adolescents' inclusiveness, regardless of their ethnic background.

Moving to the interaction effects, this study found that, for native Italians, high diversity in municipalities negatively affects youth inclusiveness when they experience either positive or negative intergroup contact. While the direction of the moderation of adverse contact experiences is not surprising, the negative effect of the context combined with adolescents' positive experiences may be somewhat counterintuitive and in contrast with evidence suggesting a positive moderation role of intergroup contact (Hewstone, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2010). However, this result might also reflect that adolescents who engage in positive intergroup relationships and thus have fruitful experiences with diversity may perceive the need for integration policies as less urgent. Conversely, among migrant adolescents, ethnic and cultural diversity negatively affects their support for migrant integration policies, perhaps suggesting that they could be more skeptical about integration if they have fewer positive experiences with natives. Finally, for native Italian male adolescents, but not for females, the high diversity harms their inclusive attitudes, maybe due to their tendency to be less altruistic and more competitive than females (Horn et al., 2022), which could heighten their perception of challenges or threats in diverse environments.

Overall, this study highlighted the importance of personal experiences and characteristics in moderating the impact of the high ethnic and cultural diversity of macro-contexts on adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies, underscoring the need to consider both majority and minority groups in fostering inclusive dynamics in multicultural contexts.

Theoretical Present of the Current Dissertation

The current dissertation developed a novel tool (i.e., the AMIP scale) to investigate individuals' attitudes toward migrant integration policies related to different areas (based on the MIPEX; Solano & Huddleston, 2020), enhancing the understanding of how youth endorse these policies during the crucial life phase of adolescence. However, it is essential to note that all the studies of this dissertation focused on the positive dimension of intergroup attitudes, specifically assessing how adolescents support and recognize the importance of integration policies. Theoretically, this approach is quite different from examining these issues in terms of negative attitudes, such as prejudice or discrimination (e.g., van Zalk et al., 2013). In Chapter 2, for example, the correlation between this new measure and other tools assessing affective and cognitive prejudice was examined, revealing that although negative correlations were present, they were not strong (see Study 1, Chapter 2). This result underscored that positive and negative aspects of intergroup relations are theoretically distinct, highlighting the importance of considering both sides.

Furthermore, all the studies included in this dissertation not only considered the ethnic majority group perspectives, as is often the case when focusing on intergroup attitudes, but also those of the ethnic minority group, advancing our understanding of how both of these crucial groups that characterize contemporary societies perceive and endorse these policies. In doing so, it highlighted the power of personal characteristics in shaping these attitudes and added important evidence on how proximal contexts, such as family and school, and more distal ones, such as municipalities, can influence adolescents' inclusiveness and psychosocial adjustment (for a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing the development of inclusive attitudes and the psychosocial adjustment of native Italian and migrant adolescents, see Figure 2).

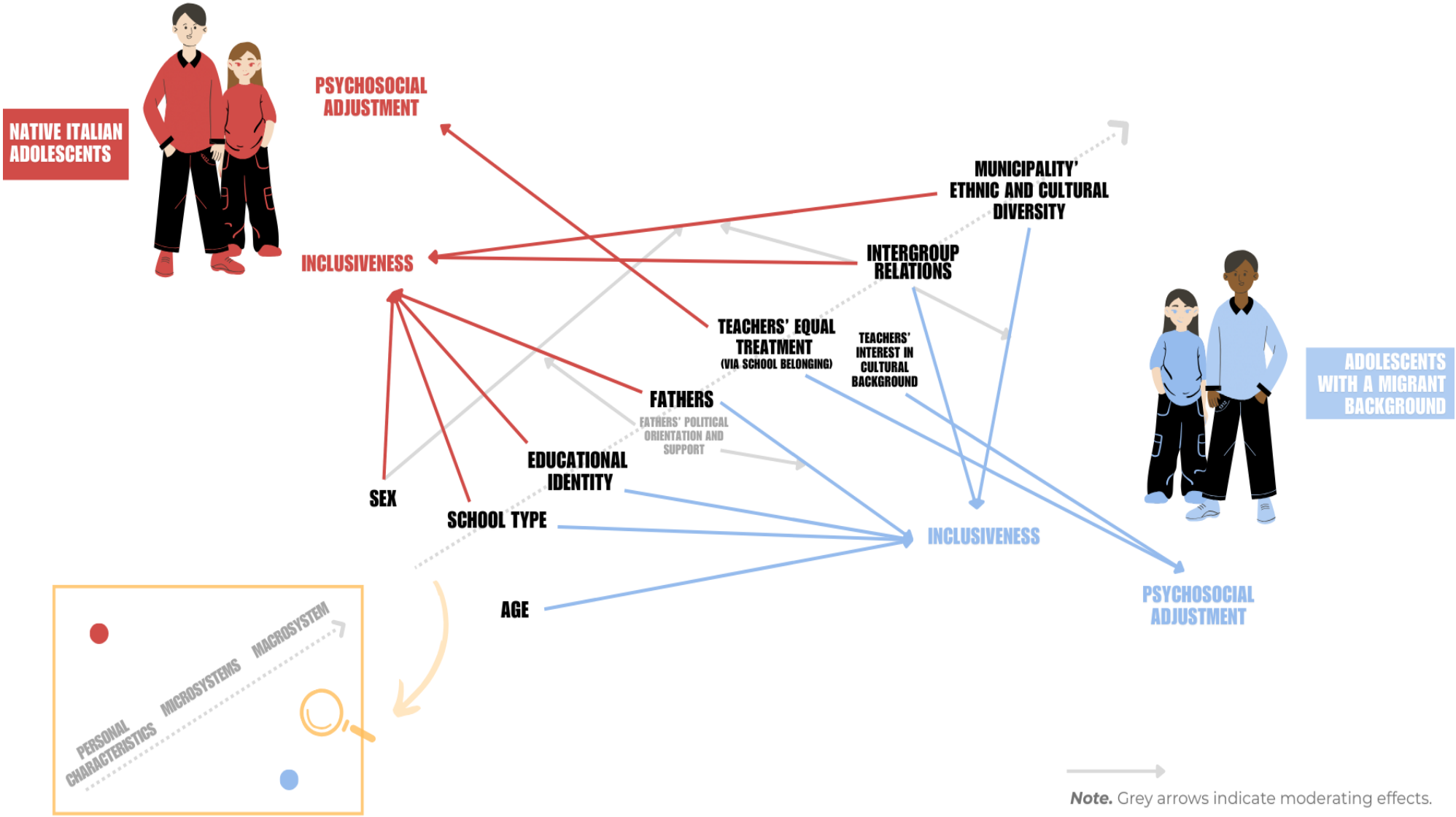
More specifically, for native Italian adolescents, these studies highlighted the importance of certain personal characteristics, such as sex (Chapter 2), or other more related to their school environment, like the type of school they attend (Chapter 2) and the development of their educational identity (Chapter 4), in influencing positive orientations toward diversity. Additionally,

relationships within the family, particularly with the father (see Chapter 3), and other external relationships, such as intergroup contact (Chapter 6), played a crucial role in shaping positive attitudes toward integration policies. Personal traits (i.e., sex) and social interactions (i.e., intergroup contact) also seem to influence how these adolescents perceive and are impacted by the diversity of their broader macro-context (Chapter 6), affecting their levels of inclusiveness. Furthermore, schools that foster an equitable climate for diversity can enhance students' sense of attachment to the school and promote better social adaptability among Italian adolescents (Chapter 5).

Regarding adolescents with a migrant background, these associations are largely confirmed. For this group, the type of school they attend (Chapter 2) and their identity in the educational domain (Chapter 4) significantly shaped their perception of ethnic diversity. Similarly, the importance of relationships, both within the family (Chapter 3) and in the broader context of intergroup relations (Chapter 6), emerged as a factor influencing their levels of inclusiveness and the impact of macro-level diversity on them. However, important differences arise regarding which personal characteristics influence inclusive attitudes and how schools can facilitate their psychosocial adaptation. For example, while sex did not seem to affect migrant-background adolescents, their age group did (Chapter 6), indicating that not only competing forces (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2021) but also cultural differences might play a role in the development of inclusive attitudes over time. Additionally, while equal treatment in schools indirectly supported their psychosocial adjustment, teachers' interest in their cultural background can sometimes negatively affect their adjustment (Chapter 5).

In conclusion, examining adolescents with and without a migrant background provides a more comprehensive understanding of how these groups differ and resemble each other in developing inclusive orientations and adjusting to society, ultimately underscoring the importance of considering both groups (Meeusen et al., 2019) to understand better what fosters at different levels greater social cohesion.

Figure 2.
Factors influencing the development of inclusive attitudes and the psychosocial adjustment of native Italian and migrant adolescents



Practical Implications of the Present Dissertation

This knowledge becomes crucial for informing future interventions on multiple levels. At the individual level, for example, considering the longstanding differences observed between males and females (e.g., Dozo, 2015), particularly in the majority group, interventions could focus on understanding what drives greater inclusivity in girls, with the goal of applying these insights to help their male peers benefit as well. For instance, identifying and promoting behaviors (e.g., altruistic behaviors; Horn et al., 2022) or perspectives (e.g., emphatic concern; Rochat, 2022) that may foster inclusivity in females could be used to design programs encouraging similar attitudes among males.

At the family level, to successfully promote parent-child value transmission, therapists working with families could explore how parents communicate with their children, emphasizing the importance of warm and supportive relationships (Augustijn, 2022; Brown et al., 2018; Miklikowska, 2016) and the need to navigate differing opinions constructively to avoid the risk of family conflicts (Iyengar et al., 2018).

In the school context, interventions could focus, on the one hand, on promoting the development of educational identity (for a review, see Crocetti et al., 2024), which could encourage greater inclusiveness and awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity among adolescents. On the other hand, culturally relevant pedagogies (Pevec-Zimmer et al., 2024), which frame cultural diversity as a valuable learning resource, could help teachers address potential gaps in their training for managing diversity in the classroom (e.g., Abdullahi et al., 2024; Civitillo et al., 2017; Civitillo & Juang, 2020; Ulbricht et al., 2024) and ultimately improve the social adaptation of their students.

At the macro-context level, settings with high diversity could benefit from interventions that promote more positive intergroup experiences and dialogue between majority and minority communities on the importance of integration policies for society, which remain essential tools for fostering social cohesion (Green et al., 2020), even when positive interactions are already present. Additionally, applying an instrument, like the Attitudes toward Migrant Integration Policy (AMIP)

scale, that captures individuals' attitudes toward different integration policies could serve as a social thermometer, guiding policymakers and administrators in designing or strengthening policies, knowing citizens' perspectives, and, therefore, possible gaps between public opinion and actual policy implementation. At the same time, an instrument to assess these attitudes can help evaluate the effectiveness of any interventions explicitly aimed at increasing positive attitudes toward these policies among individuals.

In conclusion, it becomes clear that fostering more inclusive attitudes during adolescence and promoting better social adaptation among youth requires action on multiple levels. By addressing individual, familial, educational, and societal factors, we can contribute to a more inclusive environment where ethnic and cultural diversity is valued and social cohesion is strengthened, reducing the potential for intergroup tensions.

Strengths, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research

The set of studies included in this dissertation should be considered in light of both their strengths and limitations, which suggest future research directions. One of the strengths of this dissertation was its examination of the influence of various personal characteristics on the development of inclusive attitudes, demonstrating how these associations are somewhat nuanced. However, the reliance on self-reported data could introduce biases, such as social desirability, as participants may have responded in a way they perceived as more socially acceptable rather than reflecting their true thoughts and behaviors (Lintonen, 2004). Furthermore, depending on the specific cultural context, personal characteristics may exert different influences. For instance, in a meta-analysis examining the influence of various individual characteristics across different countries on individuals' attitudes toward immigration (Dražanová et al., 2023), the differences typically observed between males and females did not emerge, suggesting that such influences may be context-specific, depending on particular cultural framings. Therefore, future research could explore whether the influence of personal characteristics on adolescents' inclusiveness is replicated in other cultural settings.

In addition to investigating individual correlates of inclusive attitudes, this study highlighted the key role played by the main contexts in which adolescents are embedded, demonstrating the importance of family, school, and municipal contexts. However, other agents within these contexts, such as siblings in the family setting, classmates in the school context (Bobba, Branje, et al., 2024), friends in the out-of-school context (Benner et al., 2015), and neighbors in the municipality (Burgess & Platt, 2021), can also significantly promote more or less positive intergroup attitudes. Similarly, research has shown that neighborhood characteristics, such as ethnic and cultural segregation, can profoundly impact intergroup relations and the overall influence of contextual diversity (Hewstone, 2015). Consequently, future studies could explore how other key contexts for the development of adolescents affect how they perceive and endorse integration policies.

Additionally, since the study focused on the development of positive attitudes toward migrant integration policies, it was conducted in a highly diverse national (i.e., Italy; ISTAT, 2023) and regional (i.e., Emilia Romagna; Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2023) context. This setting allows for a nuanced exploration of intergroup relations and individuals' inclusiveness (Verkuyten, 2022). However, this choice introduces a limitation, as the findings may not be fully generalizable to less diverse environments, where different social dynamics could influence adolescents' attitudes toward migration and integration. At the same time, adolescents' intergroup attitudes can also vary depending on the extent to which governments develop and implement integration policies (Kim & Byun, 2019), which in turn is influenced by the political agenda of a given country (Natter et al., 2020). Consequently, more research in other contexts with various degrees of ethnic and cultural diversity and different political scenarios and levels of implementation of integration policies is needed.

Conclusion

Considering the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of current societies, it is crucial to understand how youth develop their attitudes toward migrant integration policies and adjust to the surrounding multicultural world. Based on the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner &

Morris, 2007), the present dissertation sought to disentangle how adolescents develop attitudes toward migrant integration policies and adjust to society by adopting an ecological approach, aiming to capture the role of multiple contexts in which youth are embedded, along with the study of factors moderating potential influences. In doing so, a new instrument was developed to assess adolescents' attitudes toward migrant integration policies, exploring individual and generational differences (Chapter 2). Such an instrument that assesses the positive aspects of intergroup relations, rather than focusing solely on negative ones, could be crucial for guiding policymakers and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions to foster greater inclusion. Furthermore, this dissertation examined the influence of family (Chapter 3), school (Chapters 4 and 5), and municipality (Chapter 6) contexts in shaping adolescents' inclusive attitudes and, in the case of school, their psychosocial adaptation.

Overall, the findings offered important take-home messages for researchers and practitioners in intergroup relations. At the same time, the results of each study provided valuable insights into structuring these interventions across multiple levels. This is especially important given the significant role highlighted in this dissertation regarding the influence of various contexts, such as family dynamics, school environments, community settings, and personal characteristics, including youth's ethnic backgrounds, on fostering the development of inclusive orientations and better psychosocial adjustment during adolescence.

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If you have made it this far, thank you for taking the time to delve into my dissertation. And if you happened to end up here by chance, thank you in the same way. In this final section, you will find only non-scientific words. These words reflect the more human side of this work, and I hope they convey that behind the research, there are people with their own lives, experiences, passions, and emotions driving them to keep moving forward.

So, where to start? Beginning anything is always the hardest part, and writing this paragraph has been no exception. Starting this journey was not easy either; from the outside, it might seem short, but it is actually quite long when I reflect on all the emotions, people, and events that have defined it. Certainly, if I have reached the end of this journey, it is not thanks only to my own determination to finish something beautiful yet complex but also — as emphasized throughout this work — to the key people in different "contexts" of my life. For this reason, I want to extend a few heartfelt thanks.

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After this journey, if there is one thing that has become clearer to me, it is that everything needs to follow a certain order and logic. For this reason, a paragraph should now go to my "peers group", my friends. However, things here get more complicated because friends do not start out as such but become friends along the way. People's roles in my life change over time and take on

different forms. So forgive me if things seem a bit disordered; I have done my best to bring a little order, first and foremost, within myself.

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Thanks also to the Social Lab and especially to **Sara**, whose strength has been a source of inspiration for me, and to **Stefano**, with whom I share the same levels of stubbornness that, nonetheless, have not prevented either of us from appreciating the best in each other. A thank you also to **Giulia**, who does not strictly belong to any of these labs but, in her own way, with her extraordinary personality, has been part of them, leaving a mark on each of us, especially on me, as I still cannot free myself of her since an internship from a long time ago. In conclusion, heartfelt

thanks to all of you, not only because this journey would have been a thousand times more difficult without you but also because our relationship went beyond the professional realm, becoming something far more beautiful, strengthened by shared joys and sorrows, until it became a pure friendship.

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A separate paragraph should be dedicated to **Valeria**, who, although sharing with the others, just mentioned the significant shift from colleague to friend, now plays an even more important role in my life. Thank you, Valeria, for being the person who has shared almost every work and non-work experience with me. We were together when we traveled throughout Emilia Romagna — the specific regional context of this study, just in case that was not clear (sorry, I needed to lighten the mood a bit) — to collect all the data that ultimately gave life to this thesis, sometimes trying to brighten up these trips with excellent local food or with wonderful and surprising conversations with our favorite students. We were together even when we were physically apart. We were together when my father had surgery in the usual mild Italian August weather. We were together when we welcomed Crusca into our lives, who, though not human, brought out a range of new emotions we had never experienced before. In short, we were together in many moments, and I thank you for each one with all my heart.

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experiences. Thank you to you and everyone else who shared the non-work aspects with me, helping me understand the importance of life beyond work.

Lastly, and not in terms of importance but in keeping with the greatest sense of order, I thank those who, though initially strictly work-related figures, underwent an inevitable transformation in my life, eventually becoming guides and mentors. Heartfelt thanks to **Camilla**, who was the first person to introduce me to the world of research, thus contributing to the development of my love for this field, and who believed in my potential even when I had almost given up on pursuing a Ph.D. Thank you, **Elisabetta**, for believing in my abilities and offering me opportunities I would have hardly found elsewhere. Thank you for allowing me to make this love for research more concrete, teaching me everything you could, and guiding me through an extremely challenging journey, ultimately helping me understand the importance of commitment in every aspect of our lives. Finally, thank you, **Jochem**, for listening to and valuing all my ideas and creating moments of discussion that I found wonderful, sometimes even including a game of chess (ps. I let you win those last games at the bar). Working with you has been a true pleasure, and I feel I have come away deeply enriched by this experience.

I conclude by once again thanking those who have read this work and made it to the end. It is only through sharing that our work gains meaning, and I believe that even sharing these life stories, which may seem ordinary but are, in reality, filled with struggle, intense desire, and deep sentiment, represents an integral part of any work involving people.