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Labour market integration of migrant mothers

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This chapter explores the relationship between family formation and labour market outcomes among migrant women. After analysing the short- and longer-term effects on employment outcomes, it presents the factors shaping these results: from individual characteristics to institutional arrangements (parental leave, formal childcare and part-time arrangements). Finally, the chapter reviews some of the policies to support the employment of migrant mothers, focusing on the best practices.

In Brief

Key findings

- Gender gaps in labour market outcomes persist despite educational gains among native- and foreign-born women. The effect of children – known as motherhood or child penalties – largely accounts for the remaining gaps and tends to be more pronounced for migrant women.
- Roughly half of migrant mothers with small children (0-4) are employed in OECD countries, a 20 percentage point gap compared to their native-born peers. Belgium, France, Germany and Slovenia display the highest employment gaps, exceeding 30 percentage points; Hungary, the Czech Republic, Chile and Costa Rica, the lowest, and not exceeding 10 percentage points.
- The employment of migrant mothers is more sensitive to the age and number of children compared to their native-born peers, suggesting that childcare constraints are higher for the former. Migrant mothers also report higher levels of involuntary part-time employment: one in four would like to work more hours, compared to one in seven of their native-born peers. While individual preferences and cultural factors are often cited as main barriers to maternal employment, these indicators suggest that migrant mothers are often trapped in inactivity due to childcare responsibilities.
- Migrant mothers' labour supply responds to various factors: family formation immediately after arrival limits the accumulation of human capital and time spent in the labour market before childbirth which, in turn, restricts access to parental leave policies. Once employed, elementary occupations – in which they are overrepresented – offer little financial incentive or institutional support to return to work after childbearing.
- Migrant mothers tend to use formal childcare at lower rates than their native-born peers and often face barriers to access, including financial costs, lack of institutional knowledge and language barriers, shortage of publicly subsidised spaces and/or lack of culture-sensitive provision. As family networks are more limited for them, migrant mothers also rely less on informal childcare arrangements.
- The employment of migrant mothers has positive implications on the labour market outcomes of their children, showcasing the importance of role modelling. For native-born women with at least one parent born outside the EU, having a working mother during adolescence is associated with an increase of 13 percentage points in their employment rate. The positive association is particularly large in Germany (18 percentage points).
- The employment of migrant mothers (and migrant women, more generally) in domestic and care services also increases the availability of these services, allowing parents – both foreign – and native-born – to reconcile family responsibilities and paid work, and raising female employment.
- As family formation and migration tend to be intertwined processes for many female migrants, it is essential to account for both processes simultaneously when thinking of integration. Pre-departure counselling as well as targeted support immediately after arrival are complementary measures towards facilitating employment.
- Countries can remove obstacles faced by migrant mothers to participate in integration programmes, notably through flexible modalities, extended timelines, the provision of childcare services and/or lowering the threshold of participation. Several countries also offer integration support in preschool settings, targeting both parents and children simultaneously.

Introduction

The inclusion of women in the labour market is an important objective for equity considerations alone, but improved female labour market outcomes are also needed to ensure continued economic growth (OECD, 2023^[1]). Ageing populations and declining fertility rates – as evidenced in the previous chapter – mean that many countries will face a shrinking labour force in the coming years. In this context, women – and migrant women in particular – represent a significant, under-utilised source of skills.

In recent years, the educational achievement of girls has taken over that of boys in most OECD countries, but women's position in the labour market severely lags behind that of men (OECD, 2018^[2]). Recent OECD work shows that remaining gender gaps can be significantly attributed to the effect of children (OECD, 2023^[1]). Women who are mothers are more likely than childless women to work fewer hours, earn less than men, or opt out of the workforce entirely. The effect of children on labour market outcomes – often known as child or motherhood penalty – is also more pronounced for migrant women, but thus far research and attention from policy makers have been limited.

Across OECD countries, about half (52%) of foreign-born women with small children (0-4) are employed, a 20 percentage point gap compared to native-born mothers of the same age group (25-54). The employment gap between mothers and childless women is also twice as large for migrant women than for their native-born peers (-19 percentage points versus -9, respectively). While low employment among migrant mothers may reflect general factors affecting migrant labour market outcomes – lack of country-specific human capital and labour market experience, limited information and social networks, discrimination – the intersection of gender, migration and family formation also shapes specific constraints that require attention.

The labour force participation of migrant mothers responds to various factors such as the connection between migration and family formation, which may lead to childbearing immediately after arrival, restricting women's ability to acquire country-specific human capital and experience (see previous chapter); lower access to and uptake of family policies; lack of family networks, often critical in the provision of childcare; different social and gender norms influencing fertility choices and female employment; and lower socio-economic status or labour market attachment before childbirth. All these factors, explored across this chapter, contribute to explaining the large variation in how women respond to labour market incentives and enter and exit the labour market upon family formation.

Removing barriers to the reconciliation between paid work and family responsibilities is particularly important for migrant women and society as a whole as:

- Reduced labour market participation among mothers translates into foregone wages and experience at the individual level, as well as reduced household income and underutilised human capital at the societal level. This is especially true for migrant women who, on average, are more educated than their male counterparts across the OECD area (OECD, 2020^[3]).
- Despite the emphasis on the role of origin culture in the public debate,¹ evidence shows that institutional arrangements and job opportunities are also important in explaining how migrant women adapt their labour supply to family circumstances. In Canada, six in ten migrant mothers (with children under six) report willingness to work but not being able to do so due to childcare responsibilities. In the European OECD countries, the same is true for one in five migrant mothers of children under 14.
- Time use is more gendered among migrants than among the native-born, meaning migrant women tend to spend more time doing housework than their native-born peers. The relationship between housework and earnings is key to understanding migrants' integration as this type of work significantly contributes to decreasing wages for migrant women (Fendel, 2021^[4]).

- Language plays a key role in the creation of community and a sense of belonging, but migrant women who remain in the household to attend to family responsibilities can find themselves in isolation, with few opportunities to learn or practice the host language (OECD, 2021^[6]).
- Migrant women's access to the labour market is critical for their children's educational success and future labour market outcomes. Mothers' employment decisions can positively influence attitudes within their own families and lead to a more gender egalitarian division of work.

The key questions this chapter seeks to discuss are the following: what is the relationship between childbearing and labour market outcomes of migrant women in the short and long term? How do these trends differ from native-born mothers? What factors shape maternal employment rates among migrant women? What are the main factors hindering access to family policy among migrant families? What mainstream and other policies are in place to support the employment of migrant mothers and what do we know about their impact?

The first and second parts summarise the short- and longer-term effects of family formation on the labour force participation of migrant mothers, respectively, and how these effects compare to those observed among their native-born peers. The third part looks at factors shaping labour market outcomes for migrant mothers: human capital, sector and quality of jobs, migration channel and individual preferences. The fourth section describes how migrant women fare in terms of access to and uptake of family policy, focusing on parental leave and formal childcare. Finally, the chapter reviews some of the policies implemented by OECD countries to support the employment of migrant mothers focusing on the best practices.

Labour force participation of mothers

Earlier research emphasised the role of human capital in explaining gender inequality in the labour market (both in terms of participation and earnings), but educational gains for women in the latest part of the 20th century have put alternative explanations at the centre (Blau and Kahn, 2017^[6]). Persistent gender gaps in employment are now largely attributed to the effects of children on women's careers (Kleven, Landais and Sogaard, 2019^[7]). The so-called child or motherhood penalty can be understood as the impact of children on the labour market trajectories of women relative to men or relative to women with no children.

This impact may translate into lower employment, a reduction in the number of hours worked, and/or loss of earnings. The latter result from mothers' reduced labour force participation, but the penalty has proven to persist even after controlling for forgone work experience, education, training and reduced hours (Budig, Misra and Boeckmann, 2012^[8]). The mechanisms to explain the motherhood penalty range from loss of human capital due to prolonged periods of leave, employers' discrimination and choice of sectors or job types that allow more flexibility for family care at the expense of higher wages. All these effects are not short-lived and tend to have enduring consequences spanning a woman's career (Bazen, Joutard and Périvier, 2021^[9]).

The extent to which mothers participate in the labour market responds to a combination of observable sociodemographic characteristics at the individual level, as well as unobservable individual preferences. In addition, whether a mother works also depends on the support of family policies, which tend to have a broad set of objectives, among which raising female employment may be only one. In this regard, the effectiveness of family policies depends on their degree of coherence with other policies. Access to formal childcare, for instance, boosts maternal employment when taxation and parental leave policies are also supportive (Adema, Clarke and Thévenon, 2020^[10]).

This chapter compares the labour market participation of migrant mothers with that of their native-born peers. It considers sociodemographic differences and how both groups fare in different domains of family policy – access to early childhood education and care (ECEC), parental leave and part-time arrangements. Given that the chapter focuses on cross-country variation in maternal employment rates, it mostly employs cross-sectional data, which can be informative about women's situation in the labour market at different times in their careers and allow comparing sub-populations across various dimensions of labour force participation. The influence of family structures and roles are not analysed in this chapter.

Box 5.1. Challenges in calculating the child penalty

Calculating the actual effect of childbirth on employment outcomes among migrant women, and among women in general, poses methodological challenges. In general, the negative association between labour force participation and childbearing may be driven by causal influences in either direction or by additional factors that affect both, such as gender norms that may increase childbearing preferences and discourage maternal employment (see section on individual determinants for a definition of gender norms). Research that has tried to control for many of these factors and establish a “causal” impact of motherhood found that it is sizeable and has not decreased over recent years despite gains of women on other margins (Cortes and Pan, 2020^[11]; Kleven, Landais and Sogaard, 2019^[7]; Kleven et al., 2019^[12]; Holland and de Valk, 2017^[13]).

For migrant women, gender norms comprise not only those prevailing at destination but also those from their origin country because socialisation occurs from a very young age and migrants tend to carry with them the norms and values from their home countries. In addition, a proper analysis of mothers’ career paths would ideally involve observing their complete working lives and comparing them with those of childless persons with otherwise similar individual characteristics. This exercise would allow one to observe career path dependencies and the causal effect of children. But due to data limitations, such as lack of longitudinal data, most studies use cross-sectional approaches comparing parents with childless peers, where the effect of family formation can be confounded with selection effects or with structural factors that already determine employment positions before parenthood (Kil et al., 2017^[14]).

Overall, the limited research on motherhood and migration has attempted to explain differences between native- and foreign-born populations through the role of policies and institutions; gender norms influencing fertility behaviour and the allocation of time between unpaid care and paid work; or path dependencies determined by the timing of family formation, socio-economic status or unstable labour market trajectories before childbirth. Few studies use longitudinal data, explore the role of partner’s employment or distinguish between full- and part-time employment (Maes, Wood and Neels, 2021^[15]). To try to overcome this shortage of suitable data, a new line of research has recently introduced an event-study approach around the birth of the first child to estimate the motherhood penalty employing cross-sectional data. The approach consists in creating a synthetic population of “future parents” who are observably similar to the observed parents and analysing the change in employment and earnings of men and women after childbirth (Kleven, 2022^[16]).

Short-term effects of family building among migrant women

Family formation is associated with lower employment rates for women overall, but the penalty is higher for migrant women

Economic theories dating back to the 1970s suggest that within couples, women tend to increase their participation in household-related activities at the expense of their labour force participation due to implicit comparative advantages of men and women in these two spheres. Intra-household specialisation increases particularly upon childbearing (Becker, 1985^[17]). Because individual (potential) earnings tend to determine the allocation of time within a household, family formation and labour force participation have often been viewed as competing paths in the life course of a woman (Andersson and Scott, 2007^[18]).

However, increased access to subsidised formal childcare and paid parental leave, among other things, have gradually enabled the combination of paid work for women and family formation. In parallel, educational gains among women have increased their potential wages and consequently the costs of

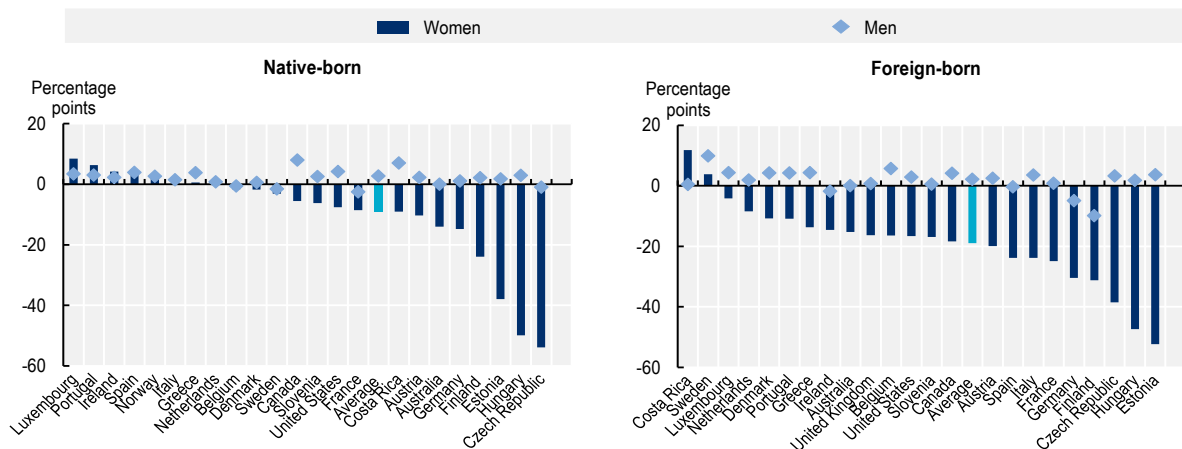
dropping out of the labour force after childbearing (Kleven, 2022^[16]). Indeed, across OECD countries, both native- and foreign-born women are, on average, more educated than their male peers, especially among the younger cohorts (OECD, 2019^[19]; OECD, 2020^[3]). Despite this, mothers – and migrant mothers in particular – still display lower employment rates than childless women.

Reduced labour market participation among mothers translates into foregone wages at the individual level, increased costs at the household level and underutilised human capital at the societal level. According to data from the 2019 EU labour force surveys, if barriers to work were removed among migrant mothers who report willingness to work and are unable to do so, European OECD countries could gain an additional 1.5 million workers. The number would increase to approximately 5 million if the employment rates of migrant mothers (with children under 14) rose to the levels of their native-born peers.

Figure 5.1 provides a first assessment of the role of childbearing in women’s careers by showing differences in employment rates between childless men and women, on the one hand, and parents of small children, on the other. Differences are not adjusted by age, education or number of children as these factors are explored below. Data only refer to partnered individuals, as the constraints faced by single women when making labour market decisions are likely to differ from those in a couple.


Figure 5.1. Having young children disproportionately affects the employment of migrant women

Differences in employment rates between partnered men/women with at least one child aged 0-4 and childless partnered men/women for native-born (Panel A) and foreign-born (Panel B) individuals, 2021 or latest year available



Note: Partnered individuals refer to those either married or in union. Parents are individuals with children aged 0-4 in EU countries, 0-6 in Canada, and 0-5 in the United States. Positive values mean higher employment rates for parents.

Source: Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>; Statistics Canada (2019^[21]), *Labour Force Survey (LFS)*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data>; INEC (2021^[22]), *Encuesta Continua de Empleo (ECE)*, <http://sistemas.inec.cr/pad5/index.php/catalog/REGECE>; US Census Bureau (2019^[23]), *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

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In the great majority of countries,² mothers consistently display lower employment rates than their childless peers regardless of their migration status. In the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary, for example, employment gaps exceed 30 percentage points for both native- and foreign-born women. Yet, the overall penalty is highest for migrant mothers: on average, their employment rate is 19 percentage points lower than for migrant women with no children, compared to an employment gap of 9 percentage points between native-born women with and without a child. In contrast, the employment rate of men is either virtually not affected by paternity and, in most cases, is associated with a premium, regardless of migration status.³

Box 5.2. Maternal employment: Definition and comparability

Unless otherwise specified, maternal employment is defined as employment-population ratios for women of prime working age with at least one child aged 0-4. The employment gap is an approximate measure of the effect of having a child on women's employment and allows comparing employment rates for native-born mothers relative to migrant mothers in the same country. The analysis focuses on mothers with small children because the migrant-native differentials around this age group tend to be the widest: the demand for care is particularly high at this stage of the child's development; gender norms regarding working mothers are arguably the strongest when children are very young; and women, in general, do not appear to anticipate the associated costs of motherhood. The focus on prime-working age allows to observe women during a period when they are likely to have completed formal schooling and may face childcare obligations, while ruling out a substantial outflow from employment into retirement.

There are, however, important methodological issues to consider in cross-country comparisons of maternal employment rates. Up until 2021 when harmonised data became available, many OECD countries followed ILO guidelines and counted individuals on full-time statutory (legal or contractual) maternity leave and those on full-time statutory (legal or contractual) parental leave as employed, as long as they were either expected to be on leave for a three-month period or less or continued to receive 50% of their wage and salary. Some countries, however, followed other rules: in Sweden, for instance, all parents on parental leave were counted as employed regardless of the length of the leave as long as they had a (regular) job to return to. Norway set an upper limit in the length of leave (12 months), after which women in leave were counted as employed only if they received at least 50% of their salary. Conversely, in Estonia, all individuals on parental leave were considered inactive (see OECD Family Database). Because this chapter mostly relies on 2019 data, these differences must be considered when interpreting data.

Across the OECD area, approximately half of migrant women with young children are employed, a gap of 20 percentage points compared to native-born mothers

The literature shows that the “child effect” varies across high-income countries and such differences have been mainly attributed to the structure of the labour market and institutional arrangements (namely, the provision of formal childcare and access to other family policies). But the effect has also proven to diverge across women with different educational backgrounds, household composition, and migrant or ethnic origin, suggesting that institutions critically interact with individual preferences.

On average across OECD countries, 52% of migrant women with small children are employed, compared to 72% of their native-born peers (Figure 5.2). While in more than half of the countries, the difference between these two groups exceeds 20 percentage points, there is significant cross-country variation. At one extreme, Belgium, France, Germany and Slovenia exhibit the largest differentials: the employment rate of migrant mothers is, respectively, 41, 35 and 32 percentage points lower than that of their native-born peers. Conversely, countries from Central and Eastern Europe – Hungary, the Czech Republic and Latvia – and Latin America – Chile and Costa Rica – display the smallest native-migrant gaps. Overall, gaps persist when controlling for age, education and number of children (Annex Figure 5.A.1 in Annex 5.A).

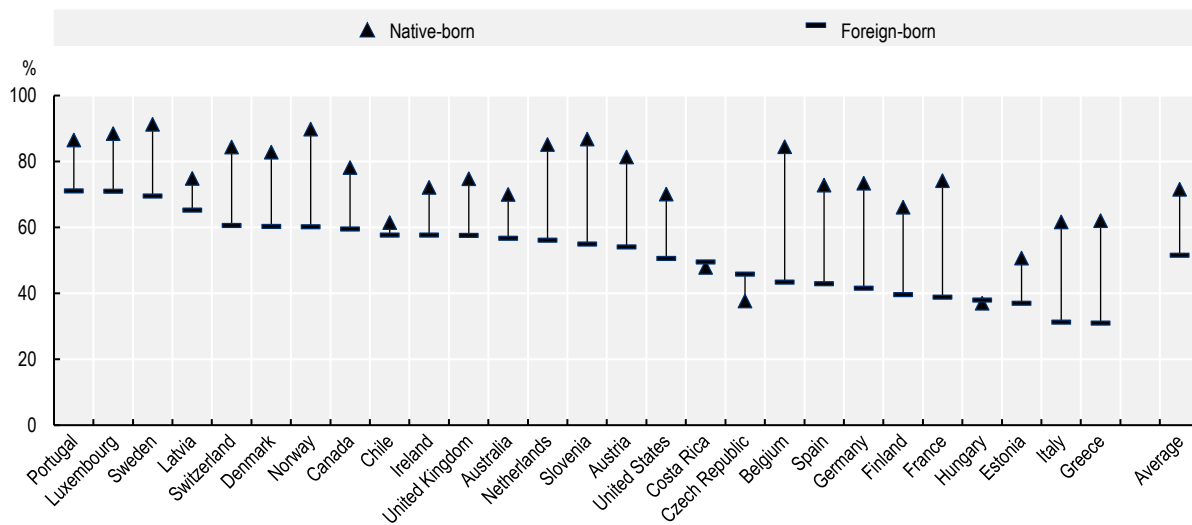
In Hungary and the Czech Republic, small gaps are also associated with low maternal employment rates for native-born women. Even though Central and Eastern European countries have been distinguished by high, full-time employment rates among women since the late 1950s, maternal employment rates in Hungary and the Czech Republic have consistently remained low (Javornik, 2016^[24]). Both countries are characterised by policies that support family caregiving: long parental leaves⁴ and family cash benefits,

which encourage the second earners in the household (usually mothers) to leave the workplace for prolonged periods and care for children at home (OECD, 2016^[25]). Not surprisingly, enrolment rates in ECEC for very small children (0-2) are some of the lowest among OECD countries (6 and 12% for the Czech Republic and Hungary, respectively). Further, highly educated mothers in Hungary with very small children only fare slightly better than their low-educated peers, thus contributing to reducing the migrant-native gap as well (OECD, 2022^[26]).

In Chile and Costa Rica, as in most Latin American countries, mothers find in informal jobs the flexibility needed for family-work balance, at the cost of poor employment conditions and prospects (Berniell et al., 2019^[27]). Job opportunities in the informal sector, where migrant women are generally overrepresented, contribute to lowering the employment gaps between native- and foreign-born mothers.⁵

Figure 5.2. The employment gap between native- and foreign-born mothers averages 20 percentage points across OECD countries

Employment rates of native- and foreign-born mothers with at least one child aged 0-4, 2021 or latest year available



Note: Data cover women aged 25-54 (15-64 in Switzerland). Mothers are defined as women with at least one child aged 0-4 (0-5 in the United States and 0-6 in Canada and Switzerland). For Costa Rica, data only cover mothers who are reported as the head of the household or the spouse/partner of the head of the household.

Source: ABS (2019^[28]), *Labour Force Status of Families*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-status-families>; Statistics Canada (2019^[21]), *Labour Force Survey (LFS)*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data>; Government of Chile (2020^[29]), *Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN)*; INEC (2021^[22]), *Encuesta Continua de Empleo (ECE)*, <http://sistemas.inec.cr/pad5/index.php/catalog/REGECE>; Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>; FSO (2021^[30]), *Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)*, <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/work-income/surveys/slfs.html>; US Census Bureau (2019^[23]), *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

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Conversely, in Belgium, France, Germany and Slovenia, low maternal employment rates among migrants contrast with above-average rates for native-born mothers, suggesting that women face migrant-specific challenges in these labour markets. A combination of factors, explored across the chapter, include:

- frequent shortages in the supply of public places in ECEC, particularly for very young children (Germany and France), which disproportionately affect lower income families;

- financial incentives in the form of home care allowances (Belgium, Germany,⁶ Slovenia), to which individuals with low labour market integration and higher barriers to accessing formal childcare may be more sensitive;
- compositional factors, including relatively higher shares of women who migrate for family reasons (France and Belgium), humanitarian protection (Germany),⁷ as well as higher shares of low-educated women in the migration stocks (France, Belgium, Germany);
- some of the highest inactivity rates among migrant women (Belgium, France and Germany). In the face of poor employment prospects, migrant women and especially those with low human capital, may choose the “motherhood track”;
- well-paid maternity leaves and employment-related criteria to access it (Belgium, France, Germany, Slovenia). The latter has been associated with higher migrant-native gaps in access.

Employment rates decrease with an additional child in the household, but the effect of the first child is larger for migrant mothers

The age and number of children in the household also influence women’s decision to participate in the labour market. Because the number of children tends to differ between native- and foreign-born households, these compositional differences are also important when explaining maternal employment rates among both groups (Khoudja and Fleischmann, 2017^[31]). For instance, foreign-born women are, on average, twice as likely to have a small child compared to their native-born peers of the same age.

In most OECD countries, employment rates of both native- and foreign-born women decrease with the number of children present in the household, but the effect is larger for the latter with the birth of the first child. Figure 5.3 shows the employment rates of women with one child and two or more children, relative to women with no children. The employment gap between childless women and women with one child is five times as large for migrant women compared to their native-born peers (on average, 16 versus 3 percentage points, respectively). When comparing childless women with mothers of two or more children, the employment gaps increase for both foreign- and native-born women to 27 and 9 percentage points, respectively, but the effect is only slightly stronger for the native-born given the low initial base.

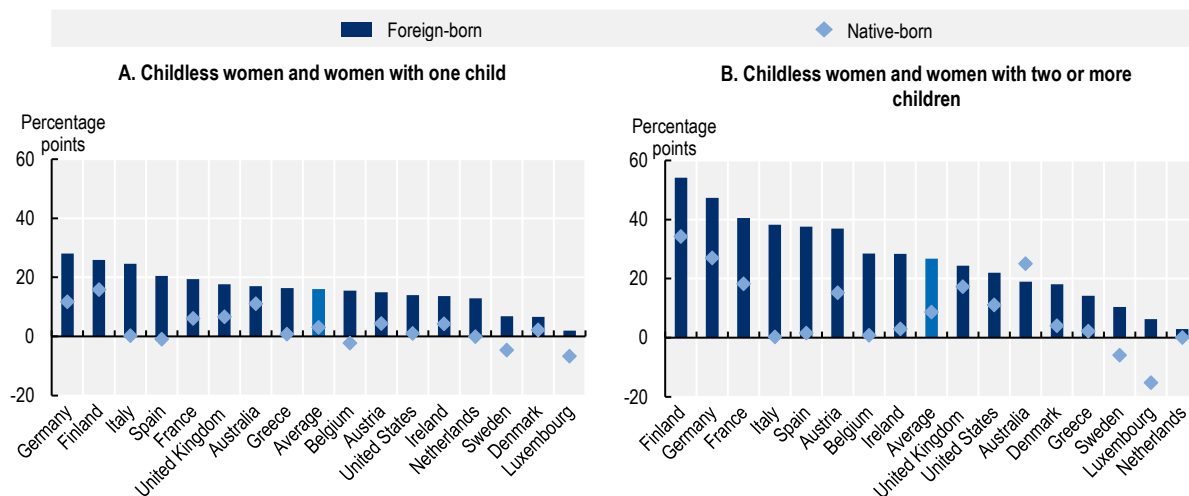
Migrant mothers of one child display relatively positive employment outcomes in Luxembourg, Denmark and Sweden, which are considered family-friendly countries in general. Further, longitudinal studies have shown that the likelihood of having a first child in Sweden are positively correlated with higher income, for both men and women, showing that labour market stability increases childbearing. Conversely, in Germany, Finland⁸ and Italy having one child introduces significant employment gaps for migrant women. Finland is an interesting case in that it provides the longest parental leave among OECD countries and a Child Home Care Allowance (CHCA), which is granted when a child under three is looked after at home. Migrant women – and refugees in particular – have been shown to use the CHCA at higher rates, which can be partially explained by the concentration of these women at the lower end of the income distribution, meaning that their opportunity cost of providing home care is lower (OECD, 2018^[32])

With more than one child, employment penalties increase the most for migrant women in Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and France. The former two countries are interesting cases in that the employment of native-born mothers is virtually not affected by the presence of children. Two interrelated trends, documented in the literature, can explain this: on the one hand, in Southern Europe – Italy, Spain and Greece – the negative impact of children on female activity is much smaller for highly educated women. On the other, European women are becoming mothers later in life, meaning native-born women tend to have children once they have reached a stable position in the labour market, which gives them better opportunities to privately organise family matters and externalise childcare responsibilities (González, 2006^[33]). This is particularly important in Italy and Spain, which report lower-than-average public spending on family benefits and ECEC, short supply of part-time employment and where employment instability is commonplace among women (Spain displaying the highest rate of temporary contracts among the foreign-

born in 2019 across EU-24 countries). Not surprisingly, migrant mothers, overrepresented at the bottom of the occupational spectrum and with more limited sources of family support, are less capable of balancing family and employment in these countries.

Figure 5.3. Employment penalties increase with the number of children, but at higher rates for migrant mothers

Differences in employment rates (%) between childless women and women with children (aged 0-4), by number of children and country of birth, 2019



Note: Data refer to women of prime working age (25-54). Mothers refer to women with children aged 0 to 4 (0-5 in the United States and 0-6 in Canada). Positive values mean higher employment rates for childless women.

Source: ABS (2019^[28]), *Labour Force Status of Families*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-status-families>; Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>; US Census Bureau (2019^[23]), *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

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Medium and long-term effects of family formation among migrant women

The employment of migrant mothers increases with the age of the children and does so at higher rates than for their native-born peers suggesting that childcare constraints are higher for the former

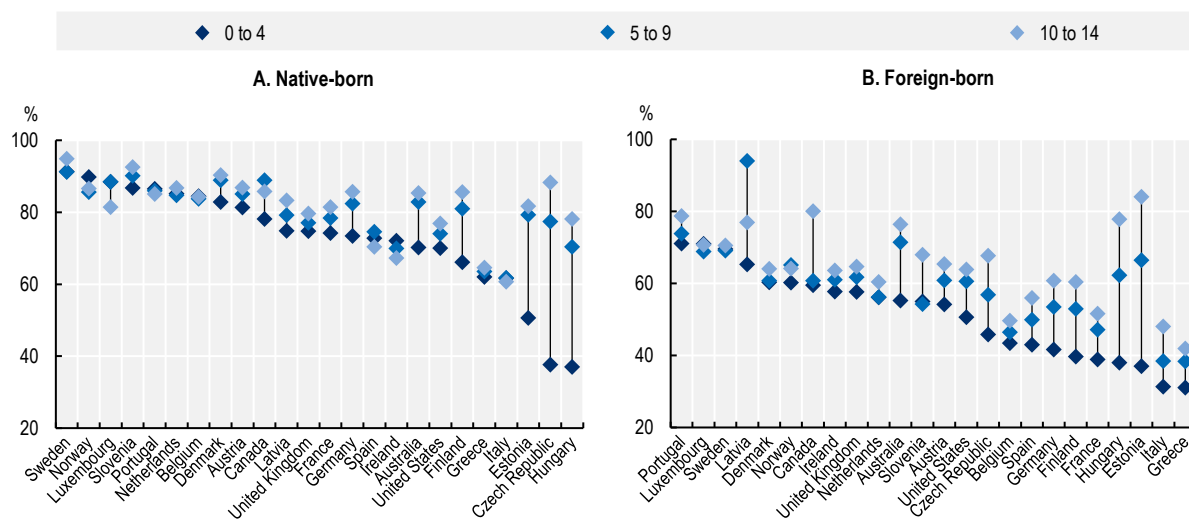
Maternal employment rates tend to increase along with the age of the youngest child. As the latter rises to five at least, employment rates increase for both native- and foreign-born mothers. This is not surprising as most OECD countries provide free access to ECEC to all children for at least the year before entering primary school and enrolment rates for children aged 3 to 5 average 83%, compared to 27% for children under three (OECD, 2022^[34]). In addition, as seen in the previous chapter, migrant women who arrive as adults tend to display elevated fertility after arrival, which may affect insertion into the labour market. In these cases, the duration of stay in the country is also associated with higher ages among children.

When the age of children rises from 0-4 to 5-9 and 10-14, the employment rates of migrant mothers increase, on average, more significantly than for their native-born peers (partially, because the employment rate of the native-born is already high). There is, however, significant variation across countries (Figure 5.4). As the youngest child turns at least five, the largest employment gains for both native- and

foreign-born mothers are observed in countries of Central and Eastern Europe – Estonia, Hungary and the Czech Republic –, Finland and Germany. These countries have in common some of the longest paid parental and home care leave available to mothers,⁹ suggesting that both native- and foreign-born mothers respond to policies that incentivise childcare at home. Employment rates continue to rise for foreign-born mothers when the youngest child is at least ten in countries of Central and Eastern Europe – Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic – and Canada (+19 percentage points compared to children aged 5 to 9).

Figure 5.4. As children age, employment rises at higher rates for migrant mothers compared to their native-born peers

Employment rates of native- and foreign-born women by age of children, 2019



Note: Data cover women aged 25-54. Mothers are defined as women with at least one child aged 0-4, 5-9 (6-12 and 6-13 for Canada and the United States, respectively) or 10-14 (13-17 and 14-17 for Canada and the United States, respectively).

Source: ABS (2019^[28]), *Labour Force Status of Families*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-status-families>; Statistics Canada (2019^[21]) a, *Labour Force Survey (LFS)*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data>; Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>; US Census Bureau (2019^[23]), *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

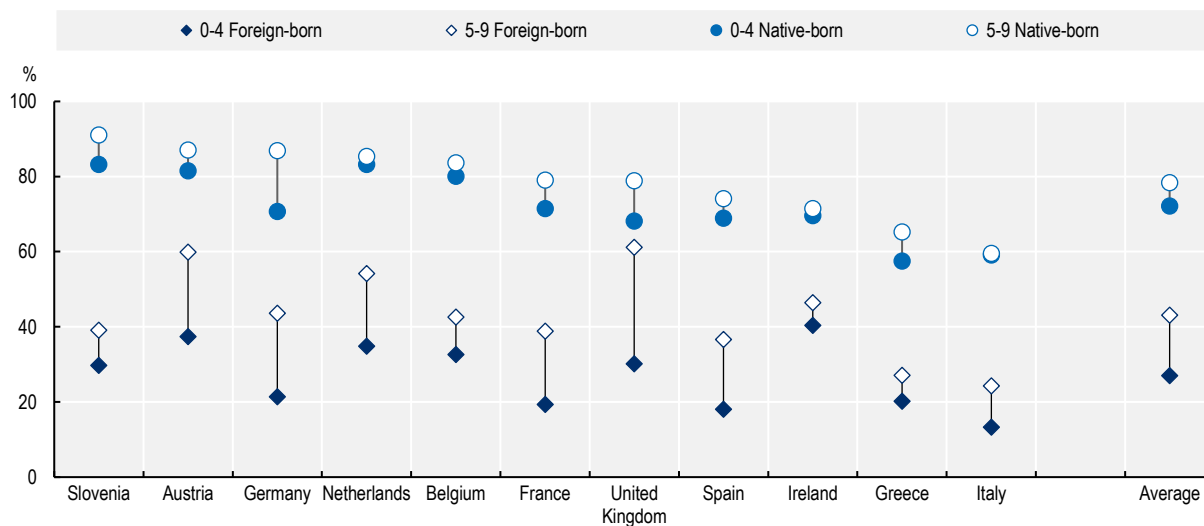
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Across all age groups, the largest migrant-native gaps are observed in Belgium and France. The employment rates among migrant mothers of elder children (aged 10 to 14) in those countries average 50 and 52%, respectively, and rank among the lowest, along with the countries of Southern Europe (Greece, Italy and Spain with employment rates of 42, 48 and 56%, respectively).

An alternative way to show employment evolution is through pseudo-cohorts that allow observing stable groups of individuals, rather than individuals over time (Figure 5.5). Data show that the employment of native-born mothers, already relatively high when children are below 4 years old, increases little as children grow up (ages 5 to 9). Conversely, the employment situation of migrant mothers, whose initial base is substantially lower across all countries, improves more significantly over time.

Figure 5.5. The employment of migrant mothers is more responsive to the age of children

Employment rate of native- and foreign-born mothers by age of children, 2015 and 2020



Note: The chart follows a synthetic cohort of mothers with children 0-4 in 2015 and 5-9 in 2020. Data cover women aged 25-40 in 2015 and aged 30-44 in 2020. A cohort groups individuals with the same attributes. If these attributes do not vary over time, changes in the behaviour of cohort members can be assessed by the difference in the cohort between periods.

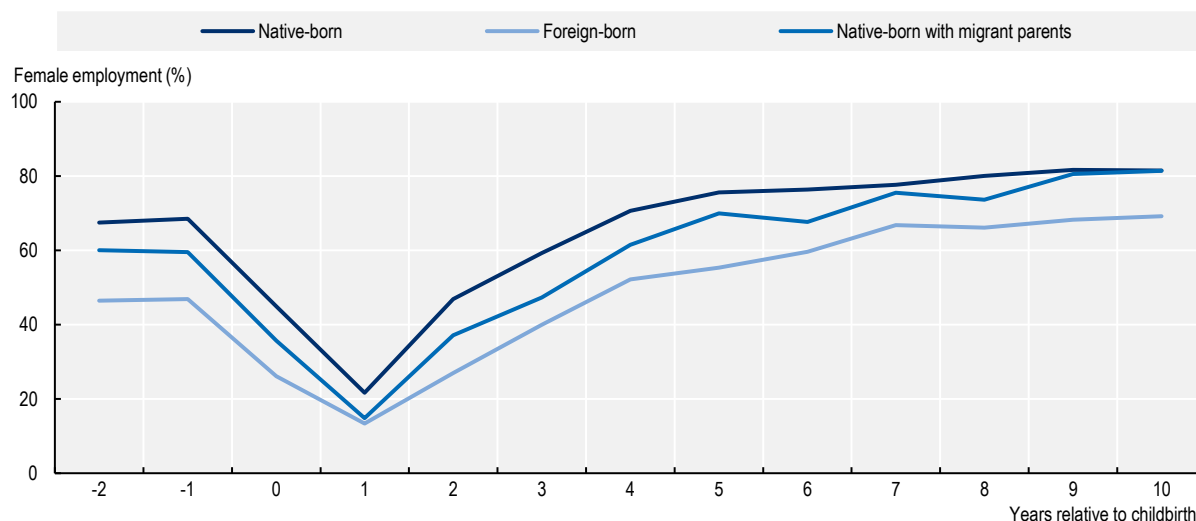
Source: Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

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Using longitudinal data available for Germany, Figure 5.6 shows that native-born and migrant mothers reduce their labour force participation following childbirth and experience a similar recovery as children age. After ten years, the employment gap between them is even lower than the observed one before childbirth. Significantly, intergenerational disadvantages persist with native-born women of migrant parentage displaying lower employment rates prior to and following childbirth, compared to native-born women with no migrant parentage.

Figure 5.6. As children age, the employment of migrant mothers recovers, but the level of employment is always higher for native-born women

Female employment around childbirth in Germany, 1990-2020



Note: Sample is restricted to women aged 16-50. Native-born refers to German-born women with German-born parents. Foreign-born refers to women born in a country other than Germany and children of migrants refer to native-born women who have at least one foreign-born parent. Employment includes full- and part-time employment, apprenticeship/education, minimal/irregular employment and workshop for disabled.

Source: Calculation by Pia Schilling based on DIW Berlin (2022^[35]), *German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP)*, https://www.diw.de/en/diw_01.c.678568.en/research_data_center_soep.html.

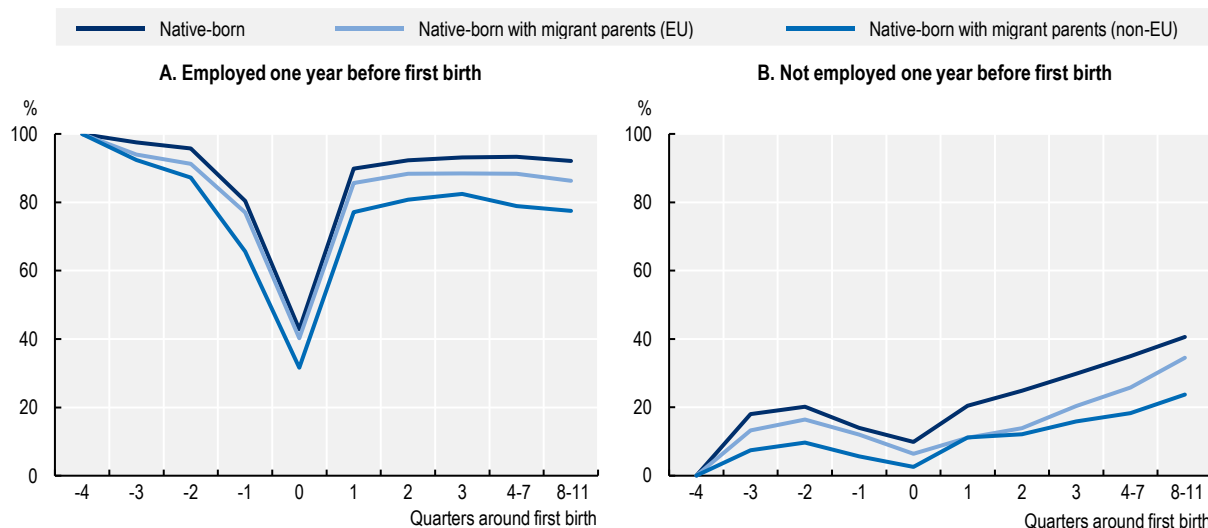
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Age at family formation and labour market attachment pre-childbirth – which is more unstable among migrants – is highly predictive of labour market outcomes after childbearing

In understanding the magnitude of “motherhood penalties” employment trajectories before childbirth emerge as a key explaining factor. Figure 5.7 shows the proportion of women who were employed in each quarter from one year before until three years after the birth of their first child in Belgium,¹⁰ distinguishing women who were employed (Panel A) and women who were not employed (Panel B) one year before the birth of their first child. In the former, the proportion of employed women decreases in the quarters preceding the first birth, drops to low values in the quarter of the birth (maternity leave) and recovers as the child becomes older, but typically remains lower than one year before motherhood. There are strong differences between origin groups: the proportion of employed women decreases more strongly after family formation among native-born women of migrant parents – particularly of non-European origin – than among women without a migrant parentage. For women who were not employed one year before parenthood, Panel B shows that the proportion of employed women increases for all origin groups, but less so among native-born women of migrant parents – especially of non-European origin. The results seem to suggest that the birth of a first child has a stronger impact on the labour market participation of women with migrant origin than is the case among women without it, with the largest difference emerging for women of non-European origin.

Figure 5.7. After family formation, employment decreases more sharply for Belgium-born women with migrant parents than for women with no migrant parentage

Share of women employed around the birth of their first child by origin group and observed pre-birth employment position



Note: Proportions of women employed were estimated separately for women who were employed and women who were not employed one year before the birth of their first child.

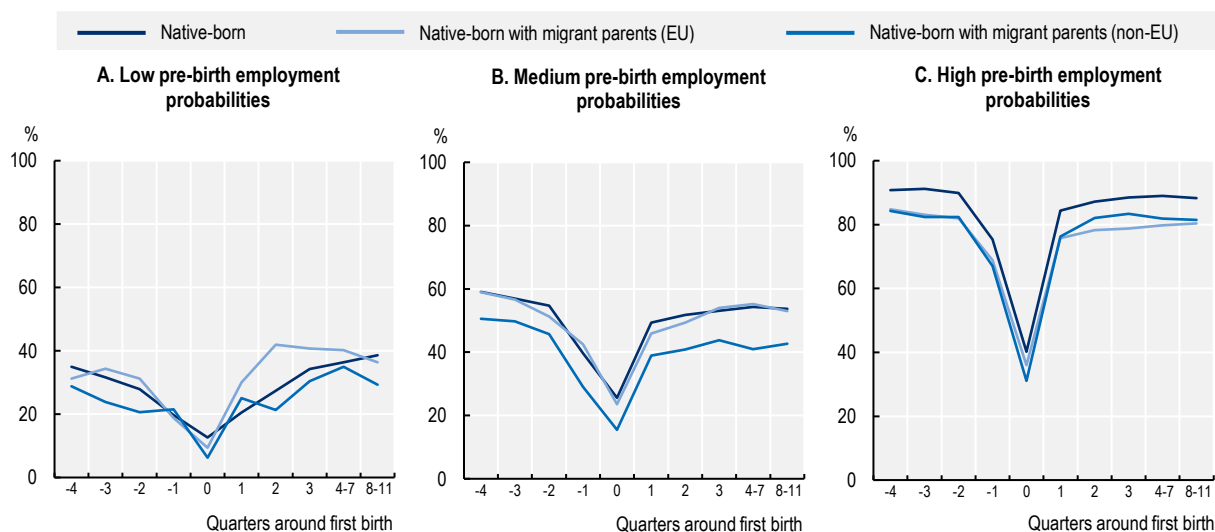
Source: Belgian Administrative Socio-demographic Panel based on Social Security registers, 1999-2010, calculations by Maes, J., J. Wood and K. Neels (2021^[15]), "Path dependencies in employment trajectories around motherhood: Comparing native versus second-generation migrant women in Belgium", <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-020-00801-1>.

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Alternatively, the pattern may reflect the lower employment stability that is typical of women with migrant parentage in the Belgian labour market, which implies that they are more likely than their native-born peers to drop out of employment and less likely to re-enter employment regardless of family formation. Figure 5.8 distinguishes between women in terms of their pre-birth employment probabilities – their probability of being employed given current age and socio-demographic profile estimated among all women who do not (yet) have children¹¹ – which offers a more robust indicator of women's pre-birth labour market attachment than observed employment positions at an arbitrary point in time. The proportion of employed native-born women with migrant parents – particularly of non-European origin – is already lower before the birth of their first child compared to native-born women with similar pre-birth employment probabilities. As the proportion of employed women largely follows the same patterns around the transition to parenthood among native-born women with and without migrant parentage, the impact of parenthood on employment seems similar across groups. In sum, differences between native-born women with native-born parents and native-born women with migrant parents in their employment trajectories around the transition to parenthood can largely be traced back to women's differential pre-birth labour market attachment.

Figure 5.8. Employment differences between women with and without migrant parentage can be largely traced to their labour market attachment before childbirth

Share of women employed around the birth of their first child by origin group and pre-birth employment probability



Note: Among women with low pre-birth employment probabilities, native-born women of EU-born parents are excluded from the analysis due to small sample size. Shares of women employed were estimated separately for women with low, medium and high employment probabilities one year before the birth of their first child. Among native-born-women (n=6 890), 88% were employed before the birth of the first child; among those with migrant parents from the EU (n=972) and those with migrant parents outside the EU (n=703), 79% and 61% were employed, respectively. Source: Belgian Administrative Socio-demographic Panel based on Social Security registers, 1999-2010, calculations by Maes, J., J. Wood and K. Neels (2021^[15]), “Path dependencies in employment trajectories around motherhood: Comparing native versus second-generation migrant women in Belgium”, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-020-00801-1>.

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Box 5.3. Childbearing and accumulated disadvantages among migrants in Belgium

Belgium not only exhibits the largest migrant-native employment gap among mothers, but one of the largest employment gaps overall, and the two trends are closely linked. Research shows that labour market inequalities shape childbearing decisions and employment transitions for migrant women leading to cumulative disadvantages over time. While Belgium-born women perceive a stable foothold in the labour market as a precondition to childbearing and consequently postpone the transition until this condition is fulfilled, migrant women – especially from non-EU countries – are more likely to have their first child in response to unemployment or inactivity. Once children are present, labour market inequalities result in strong migrant-native gaps in the uptake of family policies such as parental leave and formal childcare, which would potentially raise their labour force participation.

On the one hand, difficult access to stable employment for migrants severely limits their access to parental leave which is strongly conditioned on labour force participation. On the other hand, formal childcare is more accessible to parents with stable employment amplifying the migrant-native gap in the uptake of these services. In turn, migrant families are more likely to resort to alternative work-family strategies that will likely reinforce gender roles within the household.

Source: Maes, J., J. Wood and K. Neels (2021^[15]), “Path dependencies in employment trajectories around motherhood: Comparing native versus second-generation migrant women in Belgium”, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-020-00801-1>; Kil, T. et al. (2017^[14]), “Employment after parenthood: Women of Migrant Origin and Natives Compared”, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10680-017-9431-7>.

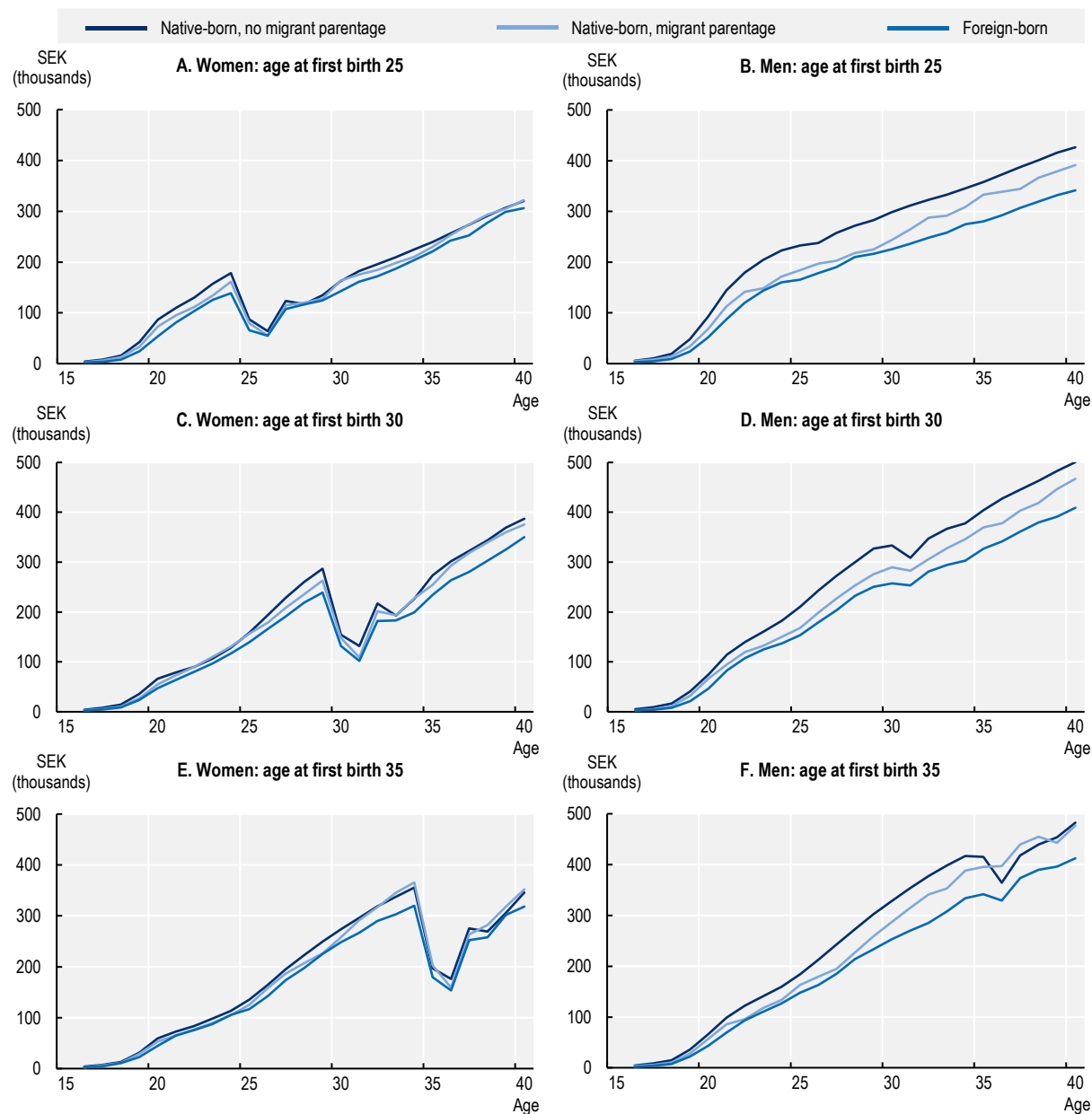
The motherhood penalty not only implies lower employment rates around childbirth and thereafter, but also lower earning profiles. Figure 5.9 displays mean earnings until age 40 in Sweden (in SEK 2020 prices) of both men and women according to the age at which they had their first child (ages 25, 30, 35 or none for the childless). Each figure displays the profile for Swedish-born of native-born parents; Swedish-born of two foreign-born parents and foreign-born who arrived in Sweden before age 16. Each profile includes both individuals who either had or did not have more children after that first birth.

The earning profiles of women who had their first child at the same age (or who remained childless by age 40) are remarkably similar regardless of their migration origin. Differences, however, are substantial depending on the age at first childbirth: those who became mothers at age 25 portray the lowest earnings. This is not surprising as the charts pool women with various educational levels and those with lower attainment (and lower earnings potential) are bound to be overrepresented among young mothers.

The similarity of the paths indicates that, for mothers, the age at birth is more important in the lifetime earnings than other factors. In the case of men, figures show much higher earnings levels than those of women and somewhat larger differences by migrant origin. Native-born men who become fathers in the late thirties also display a small dip in earnings around one year after birth which is likely due to the parental leave period.


Figure 5.9. In Sweden, the earnings profiles of mothers vary more by the age at first childbirth than by their migration origin

Mean real earnings (in thousand SEK, 2020 prices) of women and men with different migration origin, by whether they have a child and their age at first birth



Note: The figure only displays earnings and does not include allowances. Native-born with no migrant parentage refers to Swedish-born with two Swedish-born parents. Native-born with migrant parentage refers to Swedish-born with two foreign-born parents. Foreign-born refers to individuals who arrived in Sweden before age 16.

Source: Calculations by Stockholm University Demography Unit (SUDA), Stockholm University based on Swedish register data.

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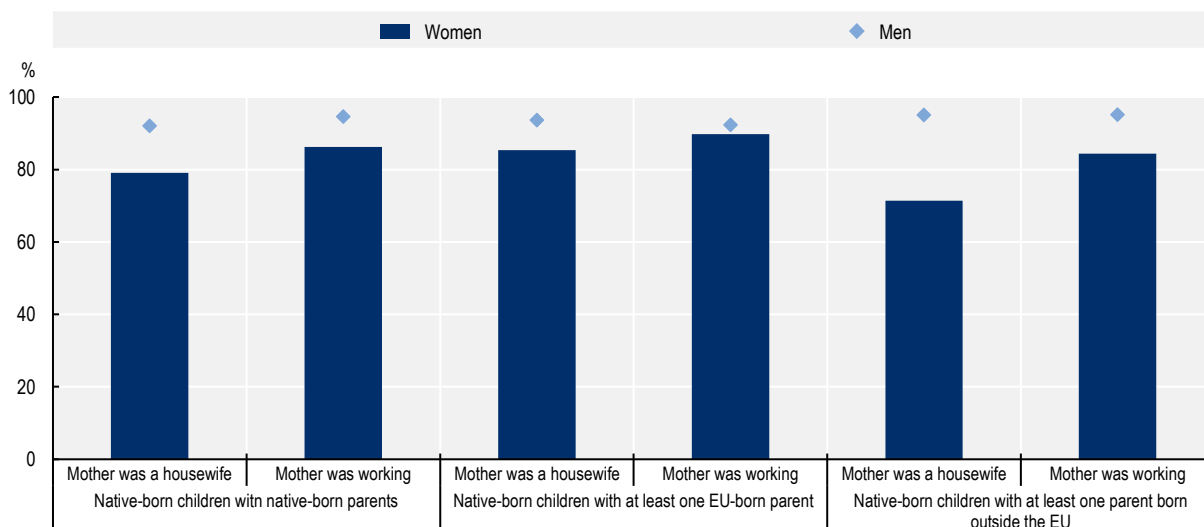
The employment of migrant mothers has positive implications for the labour market outcomes of their children

Migrant mothers can also be agents of change. Migration might propel female employment, as part of a family investment strategy to ensure financial security, particularly in the first years of arrival. Previous research emphasised the role of women as “tied migrants”; that is, they join the labour market mostly as a response to family income shocks and remain marginally attached to support their partner’s investment in local skills (Adsera and Ferrer, 2014^[36]). The family investment theory, however, has been contested as recent behaviour of migrant women in the labour market more closely resembles that of their native-born peers than often assumed.¹² Whether labour market attachment after arrival is driven by economic considerations or by a reversal of traditional gender roles, migrant women’s decision to work can drive attitudinal changes and redefine gender dynamics within families, with implications for later generations.

Migrant mothers’ labour market participation seems to have an important impact on the employment outcomes of their children, more so than for the latter’s peers with native-born parents. While this is observed for both genders, the association is particularly strong for women whose parents came from non-EU countries. Figure 5.10 shows employment rates of native-born individuals with different migration origin (children of native-, non-EU and EU-born parents). These individuals were asked what the employment status of their mother was when they were 14 years old (i.e. the mother was either fulfilling domestic tasks or care responsibilities, or was employed). It can be observed that while the male employment rate remains relatively stable regardless of their mother’s employment status, for women, having a working mother translates into higher employment rates. For women with parents born outside the EU, in particular, having a working mother is associated with an increase of 13 percentage points in the employment rate. In Germany, among women with at least one migrant parent, having a working mother is associated with an increase of 18 percentage points.

Figure 5.10. In EU countries, having a working mother at age 14 has a positive impact on the employment of migrants’ children, and daughters in particular

Employment rates of men and women by country of birth of their parents and working status of their mother when they were 14 years old, 2019



Note: Data cover population aged 25-54. Only financially non-vulnerable households are considered.

Source: Eurostat (2019^[37]), *EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-statistics-on-income-and-living-conditions>.

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Individual and social factors contributing to maternal employment

Any analysis of maternal employment among migrant mothers must consider the origin, migration channel, household and skill composition, employment trajectories before childbirth and age at migration, which is closely related to age at family formation (Vidal-Coso, 2018^[38]).

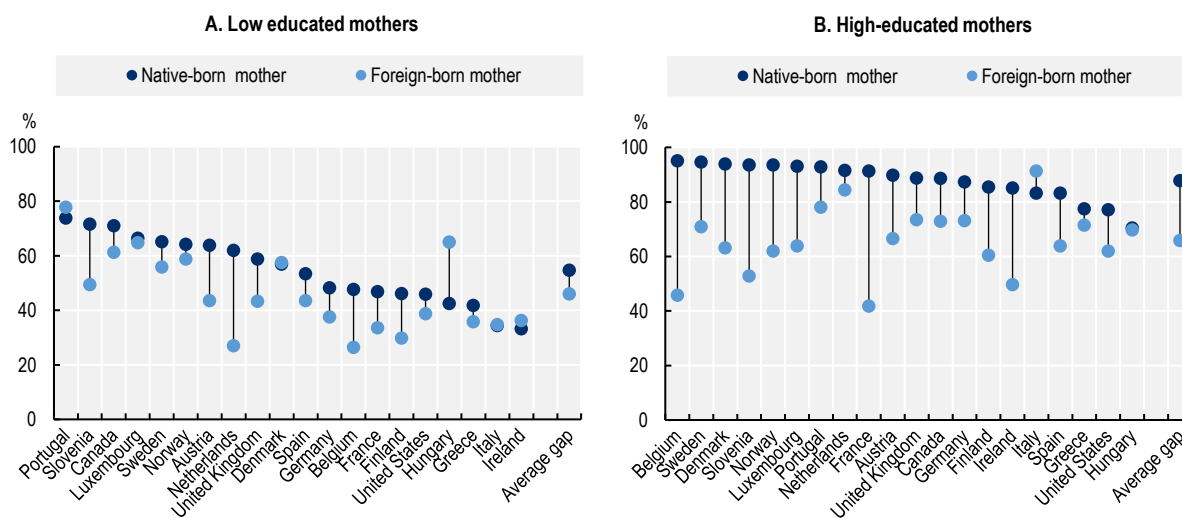
Education, skills and sector

In most countries, employment gaps between native- and foreign-born mothers are smaller among the low-educated

Women's educational attainment is negatively associated with motherhood gaps in the labour market, which may be the result of higher opportunity costs of dropping out of the labour market. Higher education has also been associated with more egalitarian gender role attitudes (Steiber, Bergammer and Haas, 2016^[39]). This is evident in Figure 5.11, which shows that highly educated native- and foreign-born mothers display significantly higher employment rates than their low-educated counterparts (+35 percentage points among the native-born and +25 percentage points among migrant mothers).

Figure 5.11. Migrant mothers have lower occupational returns on education, compared to their native-born peers

Employment rates of native- and foreign-born mothers with at least one child aged 0-14 by educational attainment, 2019



Note: Mothers are defined as women with at least one child aged 0-14 (0-17 in Canada and the United States). Data cover women aged 15-64. Source: Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>; Statistics Canada (2019^[21]), *Labour Force Survey (LFS)*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data>; US Census Bureau (2019^[23]), *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

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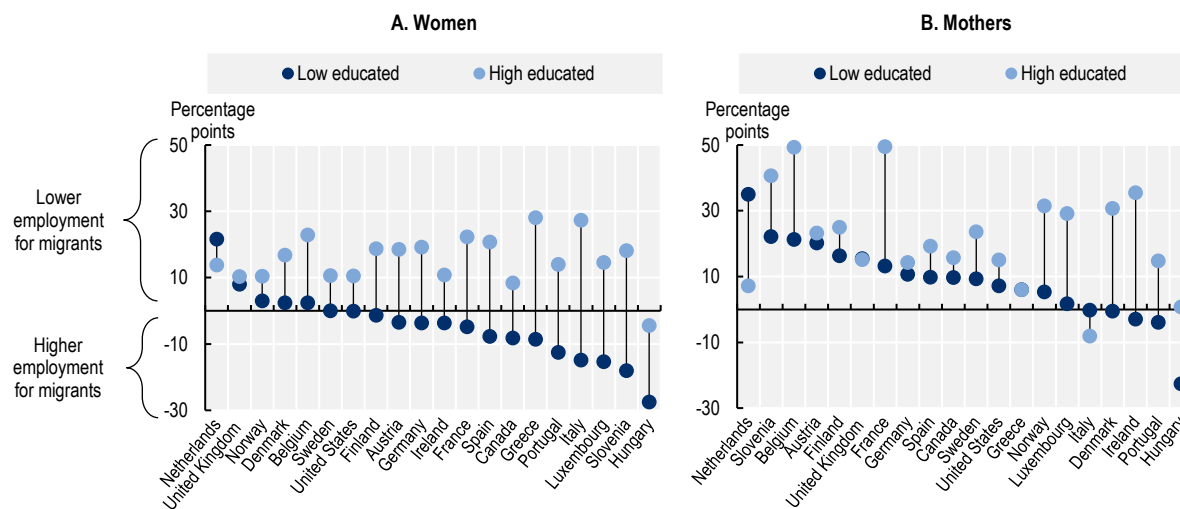
However, migrant mothers have lower occupational returns on education compared to their native-born peers, meaning that their employment rates do not increase as much with a higher education. This is consistent with overall employment trends among migrants. In general, low-educated migrants have either comparable or higher employment rates than their native-born peers across OECD countries. Conversely, highly educated migrants, in virtually all OECD countries, display lower employment rates, especially if they hold foreign diplomas. Panel A of Figure 5.12 shows that indeed in almost two-thirds of the OECD countries, low-educated migrant women display higher employment rates than their native-born peers.

Upon childbearing, however, the comparative advantage of low-educated migrant women reverses: in eight out of ten countries, migrant mothers with only an elementary education display lower employment rates than their native-born peers (Panel B, Figure 5.12). The employment gap is as high as 35 percentage points in the Netherlands. This is likely related to their occupation segregation, as will be explored further below: low-quality jobs, where migrant mothers with a lower education are overrepresented, increase the likelihood of labour market exits upon childbearing (Piasna and Plagnol, 2018^[40]).

Employment gaps also increase for highly educated migrant women upon childbearing, but they increase at lower rates than among the low educated. Again, high-educated mothers may be able to self-select into high-quality jobs in terms of job security, career progression and working time, allowing them to better reconcile childcare responsibilities and paid employment. Further, outsourcing care responsibilities is more common among highly educated women so even in the absence of public subsidised childcare or family networks, highly educated migrant mothers are more able to outsource care.

Figure 5.12. Employment gaps with the native-born increase for both low and high-educated migrants upon childbearing

Differences in employment rates between native-born and foreign-born women (Panel A) and mothers with at least one child aged 0-14 (Panel B), by educational attainment, 2019



Note: Data cover women aged 15-64. Mothers are defined as women with at least one child aged 0-14 (0-17 in the US and Canada). Positive values mean higher employment rates for native-born women/mothers.

Source: Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>; Statistics Canada (2019^[21]), *Labour Force Survey (LFS)*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data>; US Census Bureau (2019^[23]), *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

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Sector and quality of jobs

One in five migrant mothers are employed in an elementary occupation, where conditions are particularly negative to reconcile family responsibilities

Overall, women experience greater concentration in a more limited number of occupations than men and this is also true for migrants. There is also evidence that the occupational gap between migrants and the native-born is driven by factors other than age and education and that the unexplained occupational segregation is higher for migrant women than men (Frattoni and Solome, 2022^[41]; Palencia-Esteban, 2022^[42]).

“Female occupations” often include those that provide relatively better working conditions rather than better pay, like public sector jobs, which tend to have generous benefits like flexible hours and long parental leaves. In European OECD countries, however, migrant mothers (of children less than 14) are less likely to be employed in the public sector (-12 percentage points). The gap can be as high as 40 percentage points in Luxembourg and exceeds 20 percentage points in Southern Europe (Italy, Spain and Greece) and the Netherlands.

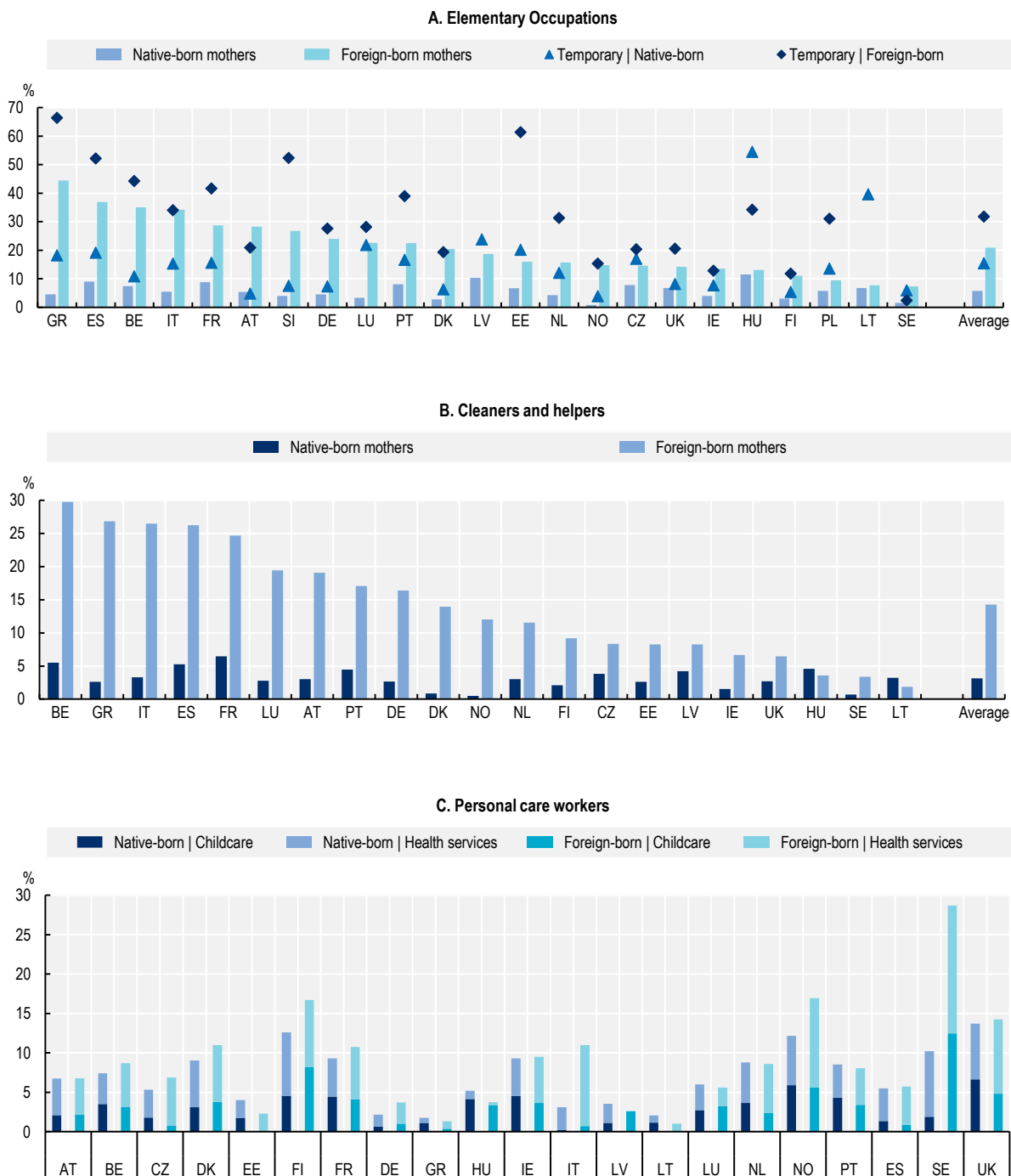
In European OECD countries, one in five migrant mothers are employed in elementary occupations,¹³ among which the most common is cleaners/helpers (on average 17%). This is particularly evident in Belgium and Southern Europe, where the share of this occupation in employment exceeds 25%. Not only are migrant mothers overrepresented in elementary occupations, but they are also twice as likely to hold temporary contracts in these occupations compared to their native-born peers (32% versus 15%, respectively).

While this occupational concentration does not differ for migrant women with no children, the implications for mothers are much more significant. Employment conditions in these types of occupations are detrimental in terms of labour market attachment after childbirth. Cleaners and helpers, for example, are a particularly low-paid job, even among the generally low pay elementary occupations and are generally excluded from contributory social insurance schemes, which might prevent migrant mothers from accessing parental leave.¹⁴ Low-paying occupations are also associated with lower opportunity costs of dropping out of the labour market upon childbearing. Further, casual or temporary contracts, which are twice as common among migrant mothers, may come to an end while a mother is on maternity leave, thus contributing to the postponement of motherhood or exit from employment (Piasna and Plagnol, 2018^[40]) (Figure 5.13). In the United States migrant mothers are slightly overrepresented in cleaning, personal care and production occupations compared to their native-born peers. In Canada, the same is true in sales and services occupations (Figure 5.14).

The second most common occupation among migrant mothers in European OECD countries is as personal care workers (both in health services and as childcare workers/teachers’ aides). Their shares in employment in these occupations are highest in the Nordic countries and the native-migrant gaps are smaller, averaging only 2 percentage points. Importantly, the availability and affordability of childcare and care services in health settings in these countries has counteracted the development of an informal market, which is distinct from several European countries. The implication is that migrants who become child and healthcare workers in Sweden, Norway, Finland or Denmark are generally formally employed, which allows them to benefit from better work conditions and entitlement to insurance benefits (Puppa, 2012^[43]). This contrasts with the case of Italy where the private care market is characterised by low wages, hard working conditions, high insecurity and limited chances of job mobility (van Hooren, 2014^[44]).

Figure 5.13. In European OECD countries, one in five migrant mothers are employed in an elementary occupation

Employment in elementary occupations as a share of total employment of native- and foreign-born mothers, 2019



Note: Mothers are defined as women with at least one child aged 0-14 (0-17 in Canada and the United States). Data cover women aged 15-64. In Panel A, temporary refers to temporary contracts as a share of total contracts in elementary occupations. Elementary occupations comprise those in ISCO one-digit category 900; cleaners and helpers correspond to ISCO three-digit categories 911. Personal care workers comprise those in ISCO three-digit categories 531 (childcare workers and teachers' aides) and 532 (personal care workers in health services).

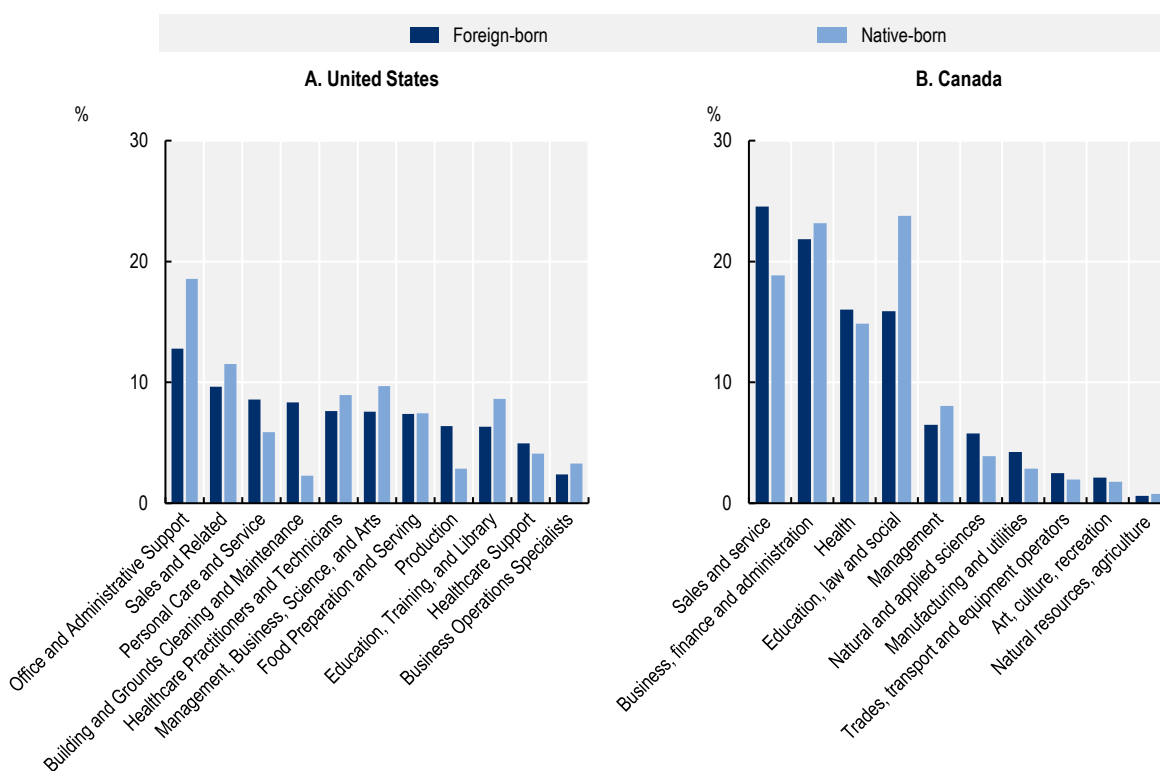
Source: Eurostat (2019_[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

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There are two important implications of this occupational distribution: first, these occupations are associated with poor working conditions for migrant women in most countries given the prevalence of informal and private care markets. Second, the employment of migrant mothers (and migrant women, more generally) in household and care services has proven to increase the availability of these services and allow native-born mothers to return to work after childbirth. This is especially true in contexts of high-income inequality or where social and family policies are less developed. Estimates by Farré, González and Ortega (2011^[45]) in Italy, for example, show that immigration can account for one-third of the increase in the employment rate of college-educated women by providing child and elderly care (before 2008). In the United States, Furtado and Hock (2010^[46]) find that a reduction in the cost of household services – led by low-educated migrants – allow tertiary-educated native-born women to reconcile childbearing and paid work.

Figure 5.14. In the United States and Canada, migrant mothers are overrepresented in cleaning and sales and services occupations, respectively

Employment by occupation (as a share of total employment) of native- and foreign-born mothers, 2019



Note: Mothers are defined as women with at least one child aged 0-17. Data cover women aged 15-64.

Source: Statistics Canada (2019^[21]), *Labour Force Survey (LFS)*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data>; US Census Bureau (2019^[23]), *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

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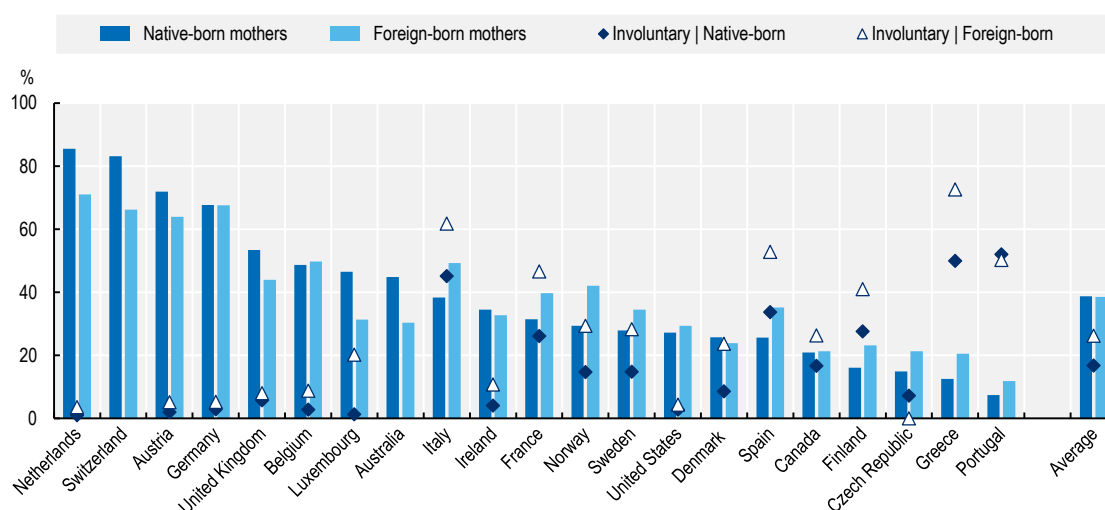
Both native- and foreign-born mothers opt for part-time employment but for migrant women, this is more often involuntary and precarious

In many OECD countries, mothers are less likely to work long hours and they frequently use part-time employment as a means of combining work with family responsibilities. Part-time employment, for instance, has been associated with higher fertility in Europe during the mid-90s (Adsera, 2011^[47]). However, part-time employment is highly gendered as it is usually women who take up part-time employment, especially after childbearing. As such, the effects of this type of arrangement on gender equality are disputed. On the one hand, it may allow women to combine family responsibilities and paid work instead of dropping entirely out of the labour force. But it can also marginalise them into low-end market niches (OECD, 2017^[48]). Part-time work is often associated with slower career progression, lower earnings and earnings-related pensions, and overall, lower job quality (OECD, 2019^[49]).

The quality of part-time employment can be affected by the skill set of workers in part-time jobs – as they are often related to lower-educated and -skilled positions – and whether it is “involuntary” or “voluntary”.¹⁵ A key issue for the labour market integration and career progression of migrant mothers (and migrant parents overall) is that they are unwillingly stuck in part-time work. In the EU, foreign-born mothers are more likely than their native-born peers to be unable to find a full-time job, even if they report wanting to work more. Across OECD countries, 25% of foreign-born mothers with at least one child aged 0-14 find themselves in this situation compared to 15% of their native-born peers (Figure 5.15). Involuntary part-time employment may result in lower wages, lower training opportunities, poorer career prospects for women and lower social security contributions which translate in higher vulnerability when facing unemployment, health problems and financing retirement (ILO, 2016^[50]).


Figure 5.15. Part-time employment is common among mothers, but it is more often involuntary among migrant women

Part-time employment (as a share of total employment) and involuntary part-time employment (as a share of total part-time employment) of native- and foreign-born mothers, 2022



Note: Mothers are defined as women with at least one child aged 0-14 (0-17 in Canada and the United States). Data cover women aged 15-64 (women aged 25-54 in Switzerland).

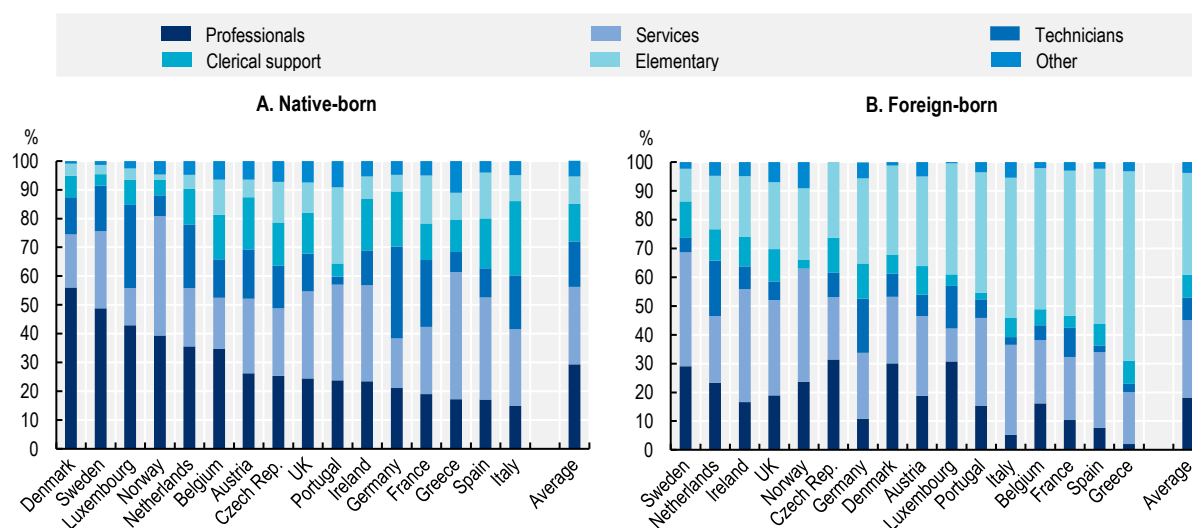
Source: Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>; FSO (2021^[30]), *Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)*, <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/work-income/surveys/slfs.html>; Statistics Canada (2019^[21]), *Labour Force Survey (LFS)*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data>; US Census Bureau (2019^[20]), *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

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Part-time employment is also more precarious for migrant mothers since it is often associated with temporary contracts: in 2019, one in four migrant mothers working part-time in European OECD countries had a temporary contract, compared to one in seven native-born mothers. This is also related to the occupational segregation of migrant women: for them, part-time employment is mostly concentrated in elementary occupations (Figure 5.16), whereas for their native-born peers, it mostly takes place within professional occupations. Because the cost of adjusting to part-time work is absorbed by the firms, this type of arrangement is only possible when the employment status is protected (Guirola and Sánchez-Domínguez, 2022^[51]). In this regard, low-skilled workers display less bargaining power than their higher-skilled peers (Adema, Clarke and Thévenon, 2020^[10]). Not surprisingly, professionals and managers¹⁶ are much more likely to access secure and protected part-time employment. Migrant workers, overrepresented in lower-skilled sectors, are less likely to benefit from the latter.

Figure 5.16. Part-time employment for migrant mothers is mostly concentrated in elementary occupations

Part-time employment as a share of total employment by occupation, native-and foreign-born mothers aged 15-64 with at least one child aged 0-14, 2019



Note: "Other occupations" include armed occupations, "Managers", "Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers", "Craft and related trades workers" and "Plant and machine operators and assemblers."

Source: Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

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Migration channel

Different migration channels are highly predictive of women's family and employment trajectories: Women who arrive as family migrants tend to display lower employment outcomes

Migrant women are highly heterogeneous regarding their reasons for migration and self-select into different migration channels. Migration category, in turn, is highly predictive of women's family and employment trajectories after arrival (Samper Mejía, 2022^[52]). Most women arrive in the OECD countries as family migrants (see previous chapter), which comprise very different types of profiles: persons marrying a

resident national or foreigner and joining him or her in the host country (that is, family formation), families joining a migrant who had migrated earlier (that is, family reunification) and family members accompanying a newly admitted economic migrant, student or refugee.

Research shows that, in general, the employment outcomes of women who arrive as family migrants tend to be less favourable than those of labour migrants. Their employment rates generally improve over time but often take many years to reach the employment rates observed for other migrant categories or for native-born individuals.

Lower employment outcomes among family migrants may be driven by several factors:

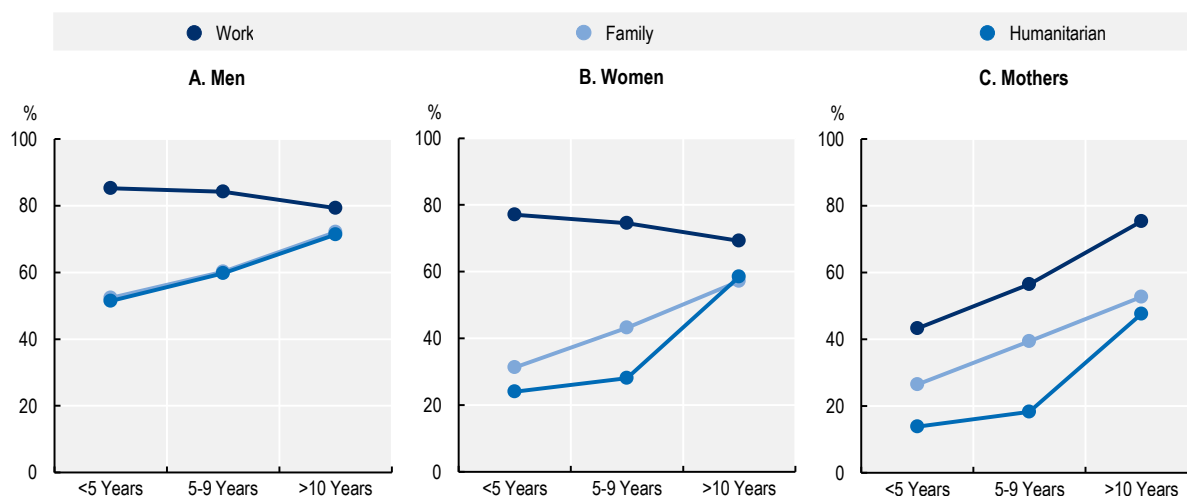
- Family formation before labour market insertion: women who arrive for family reasons may display elevated fertility patterns compared to their native-born peers, particularly after arrival, as the migration event and family formation are often temporally interrelated events (see previous chapter on fertility). Their employment and fertility trajectories might also differ from those of women who migrate for employment reasons, who may need more time to adjust and decide whether to have children (and even find a partner) in the host country (Mussino and Strozza, 2012^[53]).
- The effect of a spouse: if the principal migrant is a labour migrant, family migrants might also be less compelled to seek their income from employment compared with other migrants, who cannot rely on a steady spousal income. The vast majority of married migrants live with their spouse in host countries. The share of migrants whose spouse is absent in the host country remains below 20% in almost all OECD countries, and it falls with duration of stay (OECD, 2019^[54]).
- Family migrants might choose not to participate in the labour market of the host country but rather raise children or care for other family members. Survey results indicate that, among female family migrants in Australia and Germany, for example, caring for children is the main reason not to work. Such dynamics within couples and households are likely an important contributor to the slow labour market integration of family migrants. When planning to migrate to a particular country, couples likely divide such roles such that the person who has higher chances to be admitted as a labour migrant, international student, or refugee assumes the role of principal migrant (OECD, 2017^[55]).
- Administrative or legal obstacles to access the labour market: across OECD countries, there has been a general trend to facilitate labour market access to family migrants but some – albeit few – categories, mostly with temporary status, still find themselves locked out of the labour market, at least initially. Frequently these are spouses of temporary labour migrants with no prospects of remaining in the country. However, in a few countries, restrictions also apply to family migrants who are likely to remain¹⁷ (OECD, 2017^[56]).

Figure 5.17 shows that women who migrate for family or humanitarian reasons to the EU display similar employment trajectories, regardless of whether they have children or not: their employment rates are low within the first five year of arrival but improve significantly over time. Their employment rates, however, never attain the same levels as those displayed by women who emigrate for employment. When considering childbearing, employment rates fall for all categories of female migrants, including for those who migrate for employment, and the gap is particularly evident during the first five years of arrival.

In Australia, the employment rate of female migrants with a skilled stream visa was 76% in 2021, 18 percentage points higher than the employment rate registered for female family migrants (57%). The employment rate of female humanitarian migrants was substantially lower at 33%.¹⁸


Figure 5.17. Women who migrate for family reasons tend to display lower employment rates but their outcomes improve over time

Employment rates by declared reason for migration and duration of stay, 2021



Note: Data cover the OECD countries of the European Union and men and women aged 15-64. Chart shows employment rates with no controls and pooling countries.

Source: Eurostat (2021^[57]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

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Individual and social preferences

Social and gender norms, which differ across countries and between migrants and the native-born, influence fertility choices and female labour market participation

Fertility choices and the participation of women in the labour market not only reflect institutional arrangements in a given country but prevailing social and gender norms as well. Social norms are rules of action shared by people in a given society or group and define what is considered acceptable behaviour for members of that group (Cislaghi and Heise, 2020^[58]). Gender norms can be considered as the beliefs commonly held about the role of women in society (Fernandez and Fogli, 2005^[59]).

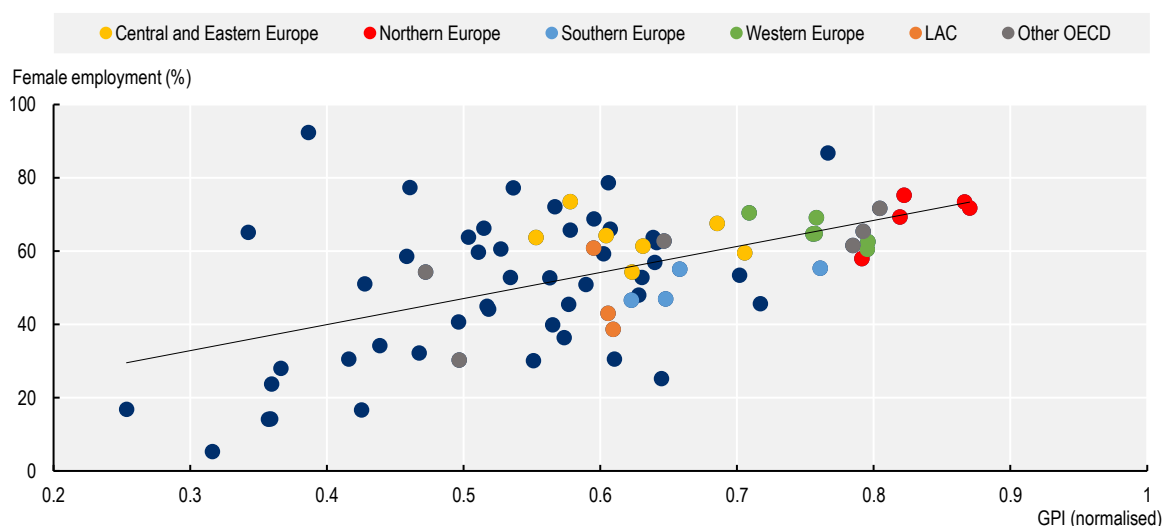
The unequal effects of children on their parents' careers, the persistence of these effects across generations, as well as the fact that, on average, women are more educated than men, make these norms an important element to consider in the explanation of child penalties (Kleven, Landais and Sogaard, 2019^[7]). Previous research suggests that family policies are shaped by their cultural context. Policies do not shape employment choices in a cultural void but, instead, interact with societal attitudes regarding the role of women. For example, very long parental leaves may reflect the notion that mothers *should* provide for young children at home. In this regard, gender norms may mediate the effect of family policies: parental leave policies and public childcare, for instance, are associated with higher earnings for mothers when cultural support for maternal employment is high (Budig, Misra and Boeckmann, 2012^[8]).

Figure 5.18 shows the correlation between progressive gender norms and female employment in selected OECD countries. Following Kleven (2022^[16]), a Gender Progressivity Index (GPI) is created using data from the joint European and World Value Survey (2017-21). The responses to five questions on the role of women in society are standardised. The questions are the following: Do you agree with the following statement: a) when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women; b) there is a duty

towards a society to have children; c) when a mother works for pay, the children suffer; d) on the whole, men make better business executives than women do; e) university is more important for a boy than for a girl. The standardised response is then indexed such that higher values correspond to stronger gender progressivity. The chart shows that there is a positive correlation between progressive gender values and female employment and that there is high cross-country variation regarding gender norms. The Nordic OECD countries, followed by those of Western Europe, display the highest levels of female employment and gender progressivity. There is also a positive relation between progressive gender values and maternal employment, as shown in Figure 5.19.

Figure 5.18. At a country level, there is a positive correlation between progressive gender values and female employment

Cross-country relation between gender progressivity and female employment rates, 2017-21



Note: Data refer to women of working age (aged 15-64). Northern Europe includes Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Norway; Western Europe includes Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Switzerland; Central and Eastern Europe includes Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia; Southern Europe includes Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain; LAC includes Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Costa Rica; and other OECD countries include Australia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, Türkiye, Israel.

Source: EVS/WVS (2022_[60]). *European Values Study and World Values Survey: Joint EVS/WVS 2017-22 Dataset (Joint EVS/WVS)*, <https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.21>.

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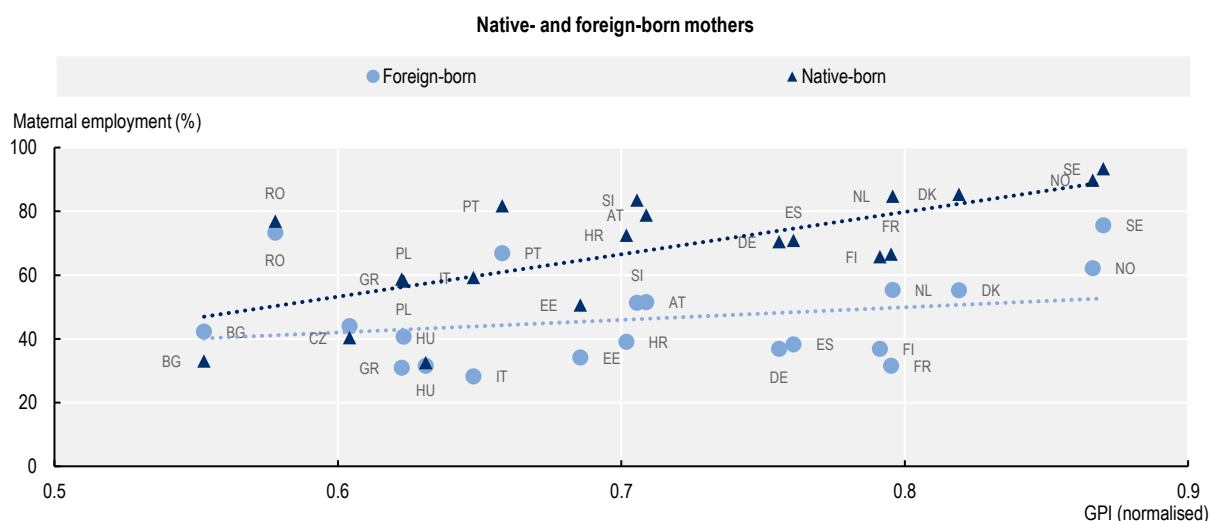
Finally, it is acknowledged that gender norms are learned in childhood in a process known as socialisation and are later reinforced or contested in family and the larger societal context. This means that the prevailing culture in the origin country likely influences attitudes and preferences within migrant families at the destination. Figure 5.19 shows that, indeed, maternal employment for migrant women is less sensitive to country-level gender norms, suggesting that, for them, the influence of gender norms in their country of origin are probably more significant.

However, cross-sectional data do not allow to understand how gender norms interact with institutional and economic incentives over time, but earlier research suggests that the transmission of these norms can happen vertically – from one generation to the next – or horizontally – through social interactions with peers and colleagues. In line with the theory of vertical transmission, Fernandez and Fogli (2005_[59]) find, for the United States, that the average labour force participation among children of migrants is predicted by the

average participation in the origin country of their parents and that similar patterns emerge for fertility rates. Similarly, Blau, Kahn and Papps (2008^[61]) show that, in the United States, female labour force participation among migrants and their children is strongly correlated with female labour force participation in the country of origin.

Figure 5.19. The employment of migrant mothers is less sensitive to country-level gender norms

Cross-country relation between gender progressivity and maternal employment rates, selected European countries



Note: Maternal employment rates for women aged 15-64 with at least one child aged 0-4.

Source: Eurostat (2021^[57]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>; EVS/WVS (2022^[60]), *European Values Study and World Values Survey: Joint EVS/WVS 2017-2022 Dataset (Joint EVS/WVS)*, <https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.21>.

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Boelmann, Raute and Schonberg (2021^[62]) find evidence of both channels of transmission when analysing differences in the labour force participation of women who grew up in East and West Germany, respectively. These two settings differed in female labour market participation, fertility patterns, and gender norms but institutions and economic conditions converged after reunification. The authors find that the child penalty in terms of female labour supply is smaller among East German mothers relative to their Western counterparts in similar institutional settings.

The influence of normative contexts has implications for migrant-native activity gaps. Analysing the labour market outcomes of the same origin group, children of Turkish migrants, across different destinations, Holland and de Valk (2017^[13]) conclude that employment gaps between native-born women with two native-born parents and daughters of at least one Turkish-born parent are smaller in countries with strong normative contexts – Sweden’s institutionalised culture of gender equality – whereas countries with family policies that do not explicitly support any single-family model – France and the Netherlands – amplify the gaps with daughters of Turkish-born parents.

Institutional determinants: Paid parental leave, formal childcare

Individual choices regarding maternal employment respond to individual preferences and macroeconomic conditions but are also mediated by the broader policy context. While there is a great variation in the role

and approach of family policy across countries, since the early 2000s, many OECD countries have increased their support to balancing work and family life, with a focus on facilitating women's employment and encouraging a more equal division of labour (Adema, Clarke and Thévenon, 2020^[10]). To achieve these objectives, countries have relied on a combination of instruments: ECEC provision, paid parental leave, and flexible work time regulations. However, family policies may also have unintended consequences such as reinforcing gender job segregation or increasing social inequalities between different groups of parents. For instance, part-time employment is an attractive option for mothers and fathers wishing to reconcile work and family responsibilities, but it is rarely a stepping stone to full-time employment and many mothers work part-time on a long-term basis (OECD, 2019^[49]). Similarly, parenting leave systems with stringent employment-related criteria may exclude recent immigrant parents who either had a child immediately after arrival or, simply, have had little time to gain relevant local experience, settle in the labour market and pay associated contributions to the insurance system.

Parental leave

Family policies may exacerbate inequalities: the design of parental leaves may exclude many migrant parents increasing social inequalities between parental groups

Paid parental leave is considered employment supportive, helping women remain attached to the labour market following childbirth. The positive employment effects are strongest when the period of leave is relatively short as long leaves may lead to human capital depreciation and facilitate employers' discrimination against women (OECD, 2016^[63]).

OECD countries generally offer three types of paid and unpaid family-related leave around childbirth: maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave (used by one or both parents), which in some countries is complemented with homecare leave of prolonged duration (Adema, Clarke and Frey, 2015^[64]). Even if there is a positive correlation between generous parental leave policies and women's labour market participation after childbearing, leave policies may create incentives for specific groups to stay out of the labour market. While research on access to and uptake of parental leave among migrant parents is limited, previous studies show lower uptake in the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain where eligibility criteria are related to labour market participation (Mussino, forthcoming^[65]).

Overall, migrant parents – and recent migrants, in particular – may be excluded from parental leave systems on account of their design and, specifically, due to their employment status or occupation, income level or their residency status in a country (Duvander and Koslowski, 2023^[66]). The use of parental leave is also mediated by the individuals' own financial resources with disadvantaged parents displaying lower take-up rates overall.¹⁹ In addition, there is evidence that migrants may lack knowledge about their parental leave rights and regulations, and this is particularly true among recent arrivals.

Employment histories

Most OECD countries link child and family income support with parental earnings and employment meaning that access to parental leave is often conditioned on periods of employment and/or contributory records (Daly, 2020^[67]). In this sense, the use of parental leave becomes a reflection of labour market participation (Mussino and Duvander, 2016^[68]). However, when pre-birth labour market integration is low or outside formal employment, the same policy may have a negative impact, resulting in a low benefit or no benefit at all during leave and a more disadvantaged situation afterwards given the extended period outside the labour market and the lack of income (Mussino and Duvander, 2016^[68]).

As seen in Chapter 4, migrants tend to display elevated fertility after arrival and have children at a younger age than the native-born. These patterns may lead to low pre-birth employment history, excluding parents

from parental leave systems, especially if they have not formally entered the social insurance system, have not formally been employed, or been registered as unemployed at destination. The longer the qualifying period – particularly if it is meant to be uninterrupted –, the less accessible it becomes to migrant parents with unstable careers (working under temporary contracts, on a part-time basis, or as self-employed). Migrants also tend to be underrepresented in the public administration, where benefits tend to be more generous in certain countries.

An alternative to employment-based criteria to access parental leave are universal benefits or tiered systems. In the former, leave rights are available to all parents residing in the country. In the latter, universal benefits are usually lower and more generous benefits are available to those meeting employment-related criteria (Duvander and Koslowski, 2023^[66]) (Table 5.1). Universal benefits might promote a more gendered use of leave (claimants are predominantly mothers as low benefits provide little incentives for fathers to claim them) but they reduce ethnic disparities in accessing parental benefits.²⁰ Tiered systems, on the other hand, might amplify social inequalities among groups of parents. In Sweden, where parents can receive an income-related benefit for 390 days or a parental benefit at the basic level when they cannot meet the employment criteria, roughly 12% of women and 4% of men received the latter in 2018. Among them, approximately three-fourths of recipients were migrants (Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2019^[69]).

Type of employment and occupation

Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands and Spain exclude self-employed workers from parental leave benefits. Although self-employment rates do not differ significantly between native- and foreign-born individuals, a non-negligible share of migrant parents might be excluded on this account. Finally, Italy excludes domestic workers from parental leave, among which migrant women are overrepresented.

Residency status

While entitlement to parental leave most often derives from employment (as opposed to nationality), some countries restrict access through residency criteria or waiting periods. Australia, for example, includes a newly arrived residents waiting period of two years, which applies to holders of permanent residence as well.

Lack of institutional knowledge

Overall, migrants may face challenges in accessing parental leave due to language barriers and lack of institutional knowledge. In Sweden, Finland and Norway, there is evidence of lack of information about parental leave rights and application procedures among native-born parents (Ellingsæter, Hege Kitterød and Misje Østbakken, 2020^[70]). Lack of information is likely to be more pronounced among their migrant peers. In Sweden, Mussino and Duvander (2016^[68]) also find different patterns of parental leave use among native- and foreign-born mothers, suggesting lack of knowledge of parental leave regulations, especially regarding the different options for flexibility. Migrant mothers tend to exhaust their leave immediately following childbirth, whereas Swedish-born mothers exploit the flexibility of the parental leave system to a larger extent and stay connected to the labour force when taking leave.²¹

Two features have proven to increase uptake of leave among migrant parents:

- **Earmarking:** Despite the increasing availability of paid leave options for fathers, their uptake of paternity and parental leave remains low. To encourage increased parental leave take-up by men, some countries have reserved non-transferable periods of parental leave for exclusive use by mothers and/or fathers (Fluchtmann, 2023^[71]). The so-called father's quota increases fathers' incentives to take leave in situations where the mother would generally be prone to take leave

(such as when the mother's earnings or work potential are lower than the father's). Because employment probabilities and wage potential are more polarised between migrant parents compared to their native-born peers, the earmarking of parental leave has a stronger economic incentive for the former. In Sweden, a reform that introduces a second quota month increased the uptake among foreign-born fathers at higher rates than among their native-born peers (Tervola, Duvander and Mussino, 2017^[72]).

- Flexibility: Parental leave systems that offer the possibility of using it at a part-time rate or postponing leave have also proven to be advantageous if the parent has an insecure labour market attachment as it provides continuity in employment, which can be particularly beneficial for migrant populations (Tervola, Duvander and Mussino, 2017^[72]).

Table 5.1. Typology of parental leave systems, 2022

	Employment-related criteria	Universal benefits	Tiered system	Exclusions on the self-employed, casual workers or part-time employees
Maternity leave	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom	Finland	Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden	Japan, Mexico
Parental leave	Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain	Austria, Czech Republic, Finland	France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden	Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain

Note: Tiered systems refer to those that provide universal benefits or employment-related benefits (or top-ups).

Source: OECD Policy Questionnaire 2022; Koslowski, A. et al. (eds.) (2022^[73]), *18th International Review on Leave Policies and Related Research*, <https://doi.org/10.18445/20220909-122329-0>; EIGE (2021^[74]), *Who is eligible for parental leave in the EU-28?*, <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/who-eligible-parental-leave-eu-28>; OECD (2023^[75]), "Family Indicators", *OECD Social and Welfare Statistics* (database), <https://doi.org/10.1787/efd30a09-en>.

Childcare

Children of migrant mothers tend to display lower participation rates in formal childcare both due to obstacles in access but also to lower uptake

In many OECD countries, access to affordable ECEC services is recognised as a crucial tool to reconcile paid work and family life, and thus support maternal employment and reduce gender inequalities (Alajääskö and Fluchtmann, 2023^[76]). High-quality ECEC has also positive effects on children's cognitive

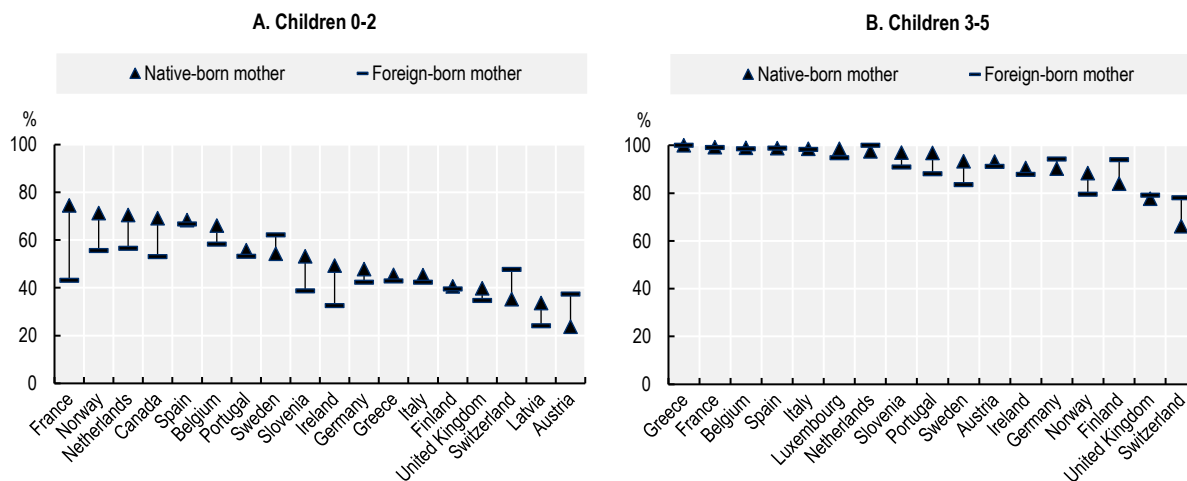
and social development and the effects are particularly strong for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Balladares and Kankaraš, 2020^[77]). In the context of migration, research has shown that time spent in preschool helps children of migrants to improve their language skills, with positive effects on their long-term integration (Van Lacker and Pavolini, 2022^[78]).

Overall, children from less advantaged backgrounds are much less likely to participate in ECEC than their better-off peers. Gaps in participation across socio-economic groups are often widest in countries that rely largely on private service provision (Adema, Clarke and Thévenon, 2020^[10]). Indeed, whether it pays off for a mother to work depends on her potential earnings and the costs of formal childcare/level of subsidies. Consequently, market-oriented childcare solutions may strengthen the inequalities in terms of labour force participation between native-born and migrant mothers (Steiber et al., 2015^[79]). Research also shows that children of migrant families are less likely to participate in ECEC but data on this group is more difficult to collect (European Commission, 2020^[80]). Aside from migrants' lower socio-economic status recent studies emphasise migrants' unfamiliarity with the receiving country's childcare system as a major barrier to formal childcare access (Seibel, 2021^[81]).

Figure 5.20 shows participation rates of children between 0 and 2 years old in formal childcare services by their mother's country of birth. While the average gap is small (52% among children of native-born mothers versus 46% among children of foreign-born mothers), countries like France, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia and the Netherlands exhibit differentials over 10 percentage points. Use of formal childcare increases for both groups as children age. Nine in ten children aged 3-5 use formal childcare services and the gap between those with foreign- and native-born parents is virtually non-existent in this age cohort.

Figure 5.20. Migrant mothers are less likely to use formal childcare

Use of formal childcare services by native- and foreign-born mothers for children aged 0-2 (Panel A) and aged 3-5 (Panel B), 2019



Note: Share of children enrolled in formal childcare during a typical week. Formal childcare services include preschool, compulsory school, centre-based services, day-care centres, and professional childminders. For Canada (2017 GSS Survey) data refer to children aged 1-3.

Source: Eurostat (2019^[37]), *EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-statistics-on-income-and-living-conditions>; Statistics Canada (2017^[82]), *General Social Survey (GSS)*, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data>.

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In France, despite the public provision of childcare, centre-based services are in short supply and private childminders dominate the sector, particularly for children under three.²² This limits the use of private childminders by those with low earnings (Adema, Clarke and Thévenon, 2020^[10]). An empirical assessment of a 2004 reform that increased childcare subsidies shows that the effect on labour force participation was significant albeit small, given that the number of available spaces remained unaltered. Yet, the effect was larger among mothers of more than two children and among very low-earning mothers (Givord and Marbot, 2015^[83]). In addition, proficiency in French has proven to be a significant predictor in the use of formal childcare, associated both with better access to information as well as closer cultural proximity to French institutions. The working status of parents has been a key determinant as well, as public and private institutions prioritise dual-working families when granting places (Eremenko and Unterreiner, 2022^[84]).

In Ireland, the main provider of childcare is still the private sector. While costs partially explain the migrant-native gap in the use of childcare, Röder, Ward and Frese (2017^[85]) also conclude that more negative views of non-parental care, lack of knowledge and even mistrust in the childcare system are important elements to consider. Similar factors contribute to the migrant-native gap in the use of childcare in Germany. In a survey among parents of one and two-year-old children, intercultural barriers were the main obstacle to accessing childcare cited by migrant parents (Expert Council on Integration and Migration, 2013^[86]). These two cases support the notion that many migrant parents prioritise language instruction and cultural sensitivity for their children when choosing childcare arrangements (Obeng, 2006^[87]).

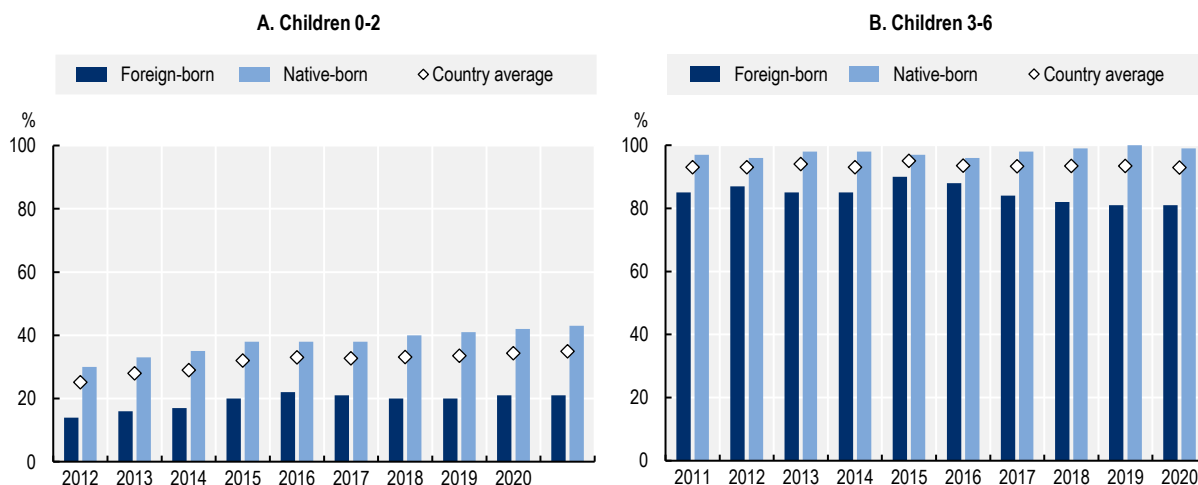
In a national study conducted in Canada, differences in the use of formal childcare by migrant and native-born parents were mostly explained by income and educational differences. Migrant parents were more likely to report high costs, personal preference to stay home with the child or unemployment as the main reasons for not choosing formal childcare. In Quebec, which introduced a universal childcare policy in 2001, differences in usage between migrant and native-born families are not significant, suggesting that when affordable, migrants use formal childcare at similar rates than their native-born peers (Kingsbury et al., 2021^[88]).

In Belgium, Biegel, Wood and Neels (2021^[89]) have shown that employment opportunities were an important factor in explaining migrant-native differentials in the uptake of formal childcare. Migrants' overrepresentation in flexible work arrangements and underrepresentation in full-time employment explain their lower uptake of formal care and higher uptake of informal care. Local availability of formal care had limited effects in accounting for migrant-native differentials.

In Germany, despite recent reforms²³ to increase childcare coverage, the market is still characterised by excess demand – particularly for children under three – and high variation across federal states, which has limited the effectiveness of such reforms (Boll and Lagemann, 2019^[90]; Muller and Wrohlich, 2014^[91]). Migrant-specific obstacles to accessing childcare include the decentralised and complex system that migrant parents must navigate. Recent research has also documented that because there are no mandatory standardised criteria to allocate slots in childcares and no accountability system to track enrolment decisions, there is a great amount of discretion when allocating slots, which may hamper migrant families' access to childcare (Hermes et al., 2023^[92]). Figure 5.21 shows that while take-up of formal childcare has increased for both native- and foreign-born children under three, it has done so at higher rates for native-born children, increasing the gap between both groups in the last decade.

Figure 5.21. The enrolment rate of migrant children in Germany is particularly low among very small children and the gap with their native-born peers has increased in the past decade

Use of childcare services in Germany by native- and foreign-born parents for children aged 0-2 (Panel A) and aged 3-6 (Panel B), 2011-20



Note: Share of children in day-care facilities plus children in publicly funded day care who do not also attend a day care facility or all-day school as a percentage of all children in the same age and population group. Foreign-born refers to children with at least one foreign-born parent.

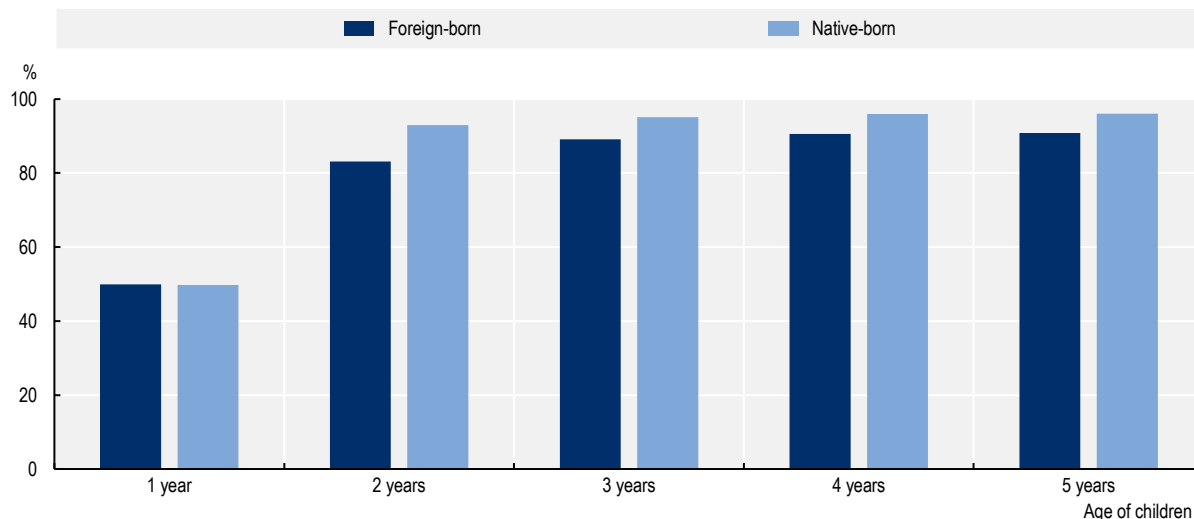
Source: Ländermonitor (2020^[93]), "Kinder nach Migrationshintergrund in Kindertagesbetreuung", <https://www.laendermonitor.de/de/vergleich-bundeslaender-daten/kinder-und-eltern/migrationshintergrund/kinder-nach-migrationshintergrund-in-kitas-und-kindertagespflege-4>.

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Sweden, like Denmark, Iceland and Norway, provide ECEC through large-scale publicly operated and/or publicly subsidised ECEC systems. Unlike other countries with direct public provision but with frequent public shortages, in Sweden, affordability is not an issue: only 2% of low-income households say they would like to make more use of childcare but cannot afford to do so (OECD, 2020^[94]). Available data reveal that, in this context, children of migrants participate in public services at high rates and display a low gap compared to children of Swedish parents (averaging 5% in 2021) (Figure 5.22). This trend has also been evident since the late 1990s. Children with migrant parents are more likely to be enrolled in municipal preschools, as opposed to private establishments. Longitudinal data suggests that a key enabler of participation in childcare among migrant families was not necessarily the expansion of services, but universal coverage. Early expansion of ECEC primarily benefited high-income and highly educated groups of parents, but improved availability reduced the migrant utilisation gaps.


Figure 5.22. In Sweden, preschool enrolment rates among migrant families are high

Enrolment rates of children in childcare, 2021



Note: Foreign-born children refers to children born abroad or children born in Sweden with both parents born abroad.

Source: Skolverket (2023^[95]), "Statistics on preschool, school and adult education", <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/statistik/sok-statistik-om-forskola-skola-och-vuxenutbildning>.

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Migrant mothers of small children are less likely to rely on family sources of childcare

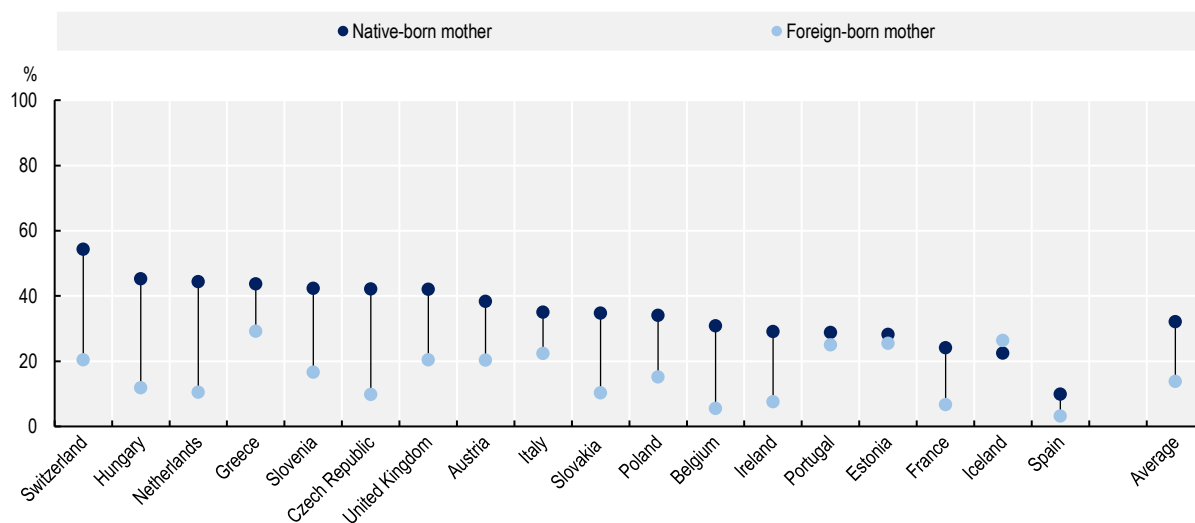
Where subsidised public childcare is unavailable, many mothers are only able to work if they can draw on their family and social networks for support. Research since the 1970s has repeatedly shown that mothers in Europe and the United States return to work sooner if they live close to a grandmother who can provide childcare (Buening, 2017^[96]). Similar findings emerge for migrant populations with migrants' parents – and especially mothers – helping out with housework and childcare and allowing migrants to work more hours in the United States and Canada (OECD, 2019^[54]).

Previous research by the OECD has shown that for migrants with children, the presence of a (grand) parent has positive effects on employment: in both European OECD countries and the United States, migrant women's employment probability is 6 percentage points higher than for comparable migrant women whose parents are not present in the household. Migrants also appear to work more hours per week when parents are present, in both European OECD countries and the United States. Hours worked appear higher by between 1% and 4%, where the largest effects again arise for women (OECD, 2019^[54]).

Migrant mothers, however, are not always capable of relying on social and family networks for childcare as shown in Figure 5.23, where approximately a third of native-born mothers report relying on informal and family childcare arrangements, compared to a tenth of their foreign-born peers. Several qualitative studies describe the strategies used by migrant families to balance work and care: bringing grandparents to live with the family, delegating the care to family members in the origin country, relying on the nuclear family or on informal childminders found via ethnic networks at destination (Röder, Ward and Frese, 2017^[85]).

Figure 5.23. Migrant mothers of small children are less likely to rely on informal childcare arrangements

Use of informal childcare by native- and foreign-born mothers for children aged 0-2, 2019



Note: Share of children relying on informal childcare during a typical week. Informal childcare refers to care by grandparents, other household members and relatives.

Source: Eurostat (2019^[37]), *EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-statistics-on-income-and-living-conditions>.

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To increase access to ECEC, several OECD countries target disadvantaged families through financial subsidies and implement specific measures to increase uptake among migrant families

To support the enrolment of younger children, in recent years many governments have lowered the age of mandatory enrolment or expanded the right to preschool education for younger children (Alajääskö and Fluchtman, 2023^[76]). But growing inequity in the economic, social and cultural backgrounds of children in ECEC centres is becoming a challenge in many OECD countries. While most countries have put in place policies and programmes to increase access among socially disadvantaged children, there are fewer examples of migrant-specific policies (Table 5.2).

To increase access, some countries have prioritised increased provision of childcare, either through investments in infrastructure and, consequently, in rising the number of places. In some cases, central governments provide financial support to ECEC mainstream services to promote the inclusion of children with a minority background or prioritise investment in remote or disadvantaged areas (Australia, Belgium). Many countries have also reformed their ECEC systems to make it more affordable for disadvantaged children at younger ages through financial subsidies, vouchers or free access for certain age cohorts. Most of these measures are means-tested.

Table 5.2. To increase access to ECEC, several OECD countries target disadvantaged families through financial subsidies

Measures to increase access to and uptake of ECEC, 2023

Countries with measures to increase ECEC provision	Countries with measures to increase access to and uptake among low-income families	Countries with specific measures to increase uptake among migrant families
Australia, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland	Australia, Austria, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United States

Note: Emphasis is given to measures that may concern migrant children, but additional measures to expand access to ECEC might be in place. Countries with measures exclusively targeting Ukrainian children are not included in the third column (Czech Republic, France, Lithuania). Source: OECD Policy Questionnaire 2022.

Uneven parental engagement with different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds can result in greater inequity. In addition to accessibility, the provision of inclusive services is critical to engage with migrant families. Denmark for instance, supports language learning among children between the ages of 2 and 3 inside and outside of ECEC and provides additional training to staff on communication, language and trust-building skills. Similarly, Slovenia has invested in the strengthening of social and civic competences of ECEC professionals, improving the attitudes and competences of teachers according to evaluations of the programme. In Germany, one of the funding areas of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) focuses on improving access to parental support among migrant parents with children of pre-school age. The FEAD also funds the work of counsellors/outreach workers to support the integration of disadvantaged, newly arrived citizens. Between 2017 and 2018 the Flemish Government in Belgium launched a programme, consisting of seven locally-adapted experiments, to increase parental involvement as a lever to increase ECEC enrolment among migrant families. The main impact of the programme was observed in the quality of relations between parents and school staff (European Commission, 2020^[80]).

Some countries have attempted to remove intercultural barriers through the translation of informational brochures or interpretation services (Austria, Norway), open pre-schools (Australia, France, Norway, Sweden), referral services (Australia, Ireland), the offer of bicultural services, intercultural training of staff, and hiring of staff from minority communities. Others engage in active recruitment policies (Belgium, Norway). Finally, some countries perform language assessments among children of young ages to ensure that, in the absence of ECEC attendance, they do not fall behind (Denmark, Korea, Norway) (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3. OECD countries rely on a variety of measures to increase access to and uptake of formal childcare among migrant families

Special measures or programmes to increase access to and uptake of ECEC among migrant families

Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tailored support to mainstream ECEC services to build their capacity and support children who do not speak English. - In-community support that prepares children for school, runs playgroups and connects families to local childhood activities, etc.
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free interpretation services for educational institutions in 61 languages via telephone or videocalls. - Nationwide standardised instrument to assess language skills among children with German as a second language from the age of 3. Individual results are used to support educational needs in elementary school.
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment to fund eligible organisations that support children and families with particular needs, including newcomers, families in underserved communities, families working non standardised hours, children from language minorities.
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial investment (0.02% of GDP between 2017/20) to increase access to ECEC among Venezuelan migrants. - Programmes to increase permanence in the educational system of migrants and returnees, which include school meals, humanitarian school corridors, school levelling, teacher training, and flexible educational models.
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bilingual children who do not attend day care and who need language stimulation must be enrolled in language stimulation in the form of a day care service 30 hours a week. - Ukrainian children are not covered by these rules.
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special referral programme led by the Department of Justice to facilitate access to asylum seekers and refugees.
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme aimed at enhancing service delivery that allows childcare centres to hire additional certified nursery teachers that can provide language support.
Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted support to children of multicultural families (home visit services, language and academic support).
Luxembourg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multilingual education programme for children aged 1-4 in childcare facilities, aiming at exposing children in their early stage and on a daily basis to French and Luxembourgish to stimulate and develop their overall potential through play.
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Governments may receive funds from the central government to provide free education (children 2.5-4) to disadvantaged groups. The criterion of disadvantage is determined at the local level but may include the educational level of the mother, her origin or duration of residence in the Netherlands.
New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding from the Ministry of Education to services in lower socio-economic communities for children with special needs or from non-English speaking backgrounds, and to services that provide early childhood education in a language and culture other than English for more than half the time.
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since 2018, earmarked grant for active information and recruitment of children with a minority language in municipalities with low ECEC participation. - Language assessment at the age of 2 or 4 by the child health's clinics. - Ad hoc measures to support Ukrainian children including temporary legislative measures, flexibility to implement contemporary kindergartens, and extra funding for the translation and development of school curricula. - Translation of materials about kindergartens by the Directorate of Education and Training. - Open kindergartens (with no or low fee) where a parent accompanies the child to pedagogical sessions one or several times per week. - Municipalities also receive earmarked grants to support language development among minority language children.
Slovenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bilingual kindergartens and kindergartens with Italian language, financed by the state budget. - Since 2022, guidelines for the integration of children with temporary protection in educational institutions including: lower group sizes for children from regional or ethnic minorities; recruitment of staff with specific training or background, bilingual ECEC (Slovenian and Hungarian) or Italian-based ECEC; salary increase or specific allowances for staff who provide bilingual classes; additional budget/lump sum for ECEC settings in ethnically mixed areas.
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open preschools for language and integration, which offer activities designed for foreign-born parents, including language courses, study and vocational guidance and recreational and cultural activities. The preschool pays special attention to the needs of foreign-born women, while also reaching out to fathers. The target group is newly arrived parents.
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The State Secretariat for Migration supports the cantons in better informing migrant families about existing early childhood education services and facilitating their access (translated information, counselling sessions for newcomers). - The SEM supports professional development trainings that educate childcare staff on how to deal with cultural diversity and early language development.
Türkiye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities aimed at raising awareness among public institutions (schools and municipalities) and migrants themselves about migrant children's right to formal education.
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training and mentorship programme targeting refugees (and women in particular) which helps them become licensed family childcare providers. The programme creates pathways for economic self-sufficiency among refugees, while increasing culturally and linguistically competent childcare options in the community. - Early Refugee School Impact Programme which facilitates childcare access, provides specialised training on cultural competencies for childcare providers, implements programmes that support the cognitive, social, and emotional readiness of young refugee children to enter school, facilitates parent integration and education programmes.

Source: OECD Policy Questionnaire 2022.

Specific policies to support employment among migrant mothers

For most women migrating to OECD countries, family formation is a parallel process which directly and disproportionately affects their socio-economic insertion compared to migrant men. Yet, few OECD countries explicitly consider women and those with children a priority in integration policy; even fewer provide tailored measures to address their needs (Table 5.4).

To improve the labour market integration of migrant women and help them reconcile paid work and family life, some OECD countries are increasingly turning to a diverse set of policies that emphasises three elements: removing obstacles to the participation in integration measures, designing mechanisms to build bridges and trust with migrant mothers, and actively promoting their labour market engagement through tailored programmes.

Table 5.4. Integration measures for migrant women and mothers available in OECD countries

Mainstream integration policies	Specific integration measures targeting women	Specific integration measures targeting women with children	Active Labour Market Policies with specific gender measures
Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany Greece, Ireland, Italy Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands New Zealand, Norway Slovak Republic, Spain Sweden, Switzerland	Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany Greece, Lithuania, Norway, Slovak Republic Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United States	Australia, Austria, Belgium Canada, Czech Republic Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden	Austria, Belgium, Canada Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, Sweden

Note: The second column means that the needs of migrant women are specifically considered and that there are tailor-made actions for them. In Belgium, the federal level co-ordinates integration policies, but there is no national integration policy at the federal level. In Switzerland, 4 out of 22 responding cantons were able to identify labour market measures aimed exclusively at women.

Source: OECD Policy Questionnaire 2022; Suri, M. et al. (2022^[97]), *Schlussbericht Geschlechtergleichstellung im Bereich arbeitsmarktliche Massnahmen*, https://www.seco.admin.ch/seco/en/home/Publikationen/Dienstleistungen/Publikationen_und_Formulare/Arbeit/Arbeitsmarkt/Informationen_Arbeitsmarktforschung/schlussbericht_geschlechtergleichstellung_amm.html.

Removing obstacles to participate in integration programmes is essential for migrant women with family and care responsibilities

Care and family responsibilities among migrant women²⁴ can stand in the way of job seeking and employment and prevent them from taking part in introduction programmes and language training. In France where adult migrants coming from a country outside the EU must undergo language training if their test scores are insufficient, women account for the largest share of non-compliers. The main reasons for non-compliance include being pregnant and having to take care of children at home (Lochmann, Rapoport and Speciale, 2019^[98]). In Norway, women participating in the introduction programme (NIP) cited proximity and easy access to childcare as major determinants of their ability and motivation to participate in the programme (Bredal and Orupabo, 2014^[99]). A combination of measures may increase the participation of migrant mothers and fathers who are constrained by childcare responsibilities, including:

- **Flexible modalities:** To ensure that migrant parents have the possibility to engage in integration measures, it is important that these are flexible and compatible with family responsibilities. Flexible delivery modes for integration include first and foremost offers on a part-time basis and during evening hours. Countries may also consider self-study material and e-learning options online, and to advertise this more widely. Indeed, both e-learning and self-study are already available in most OECD countries (OECD, 2017^[56]).

- **Childcare arrangements:** Many countries have increasingly recognised the importance of removing these obstacles and now provide childcare services or facilities during integration courses, which are key enablers to participation (see Annex Table 5.A.1 in Annex 5.A). In Australia, 12% of the participants of the English integration programme reported using the childcare arrangements provided as part of the programme; nine in ten said these arrangements enabled their participation.
- **Parental leave provisions:** As seen in the previous chapter, many migrant women – and especially those who arrive through family reunification – exhibit elevated fertility immediately after arrival in destination. These dynamics might hamper their participation in introduction measures when there is a strict time period to complete them. In Norway, under the new Integration Act, participants in the Introduction Programme for new arrivals (NIP) are entitled to 10 months of parental leave during the child’s first year. Before 2021, parents participating in the NIP faced the challenge that the overall duration of the right to free language training and social studies was not automatically extended for those on parental leave. This led to cases where the obligation of the municipality to provide free training ended before participants could reach their class goal, disproportionately affecting women, who are more likely to go on parental leave. Under the new regulation, municipalities are obliged to offer Norwegian language training and social studies after four months of parental leave (OECD, 2022_[100]).
- **Longer timelines for completion:** some countries allow migrants to resume integration activities once childcare constraints are lower, even after eligibility has expired. In Canada, for example, the government has adopted public initiatives to facilitate language and vocational training beyond the first years after arrival. Similarly, Sweden allows parents to postpone measures beyond the two-year limit if they had to pause or reduce their participation in the integration programme for childcare reasons. Norway, with its “Job Opportunities” programme, targets migrant women who are no longer eligible to the integration programme for new arrivals.
- **Offers with low-threshold participation in informal settings:** Women with care responsibilities may not be able to immediately or intensively engage in integration programmes that require a high threshold of participation. Some countries are experimenting with informal settings, such as Austria, which offers integration support in the immediate environment through women’s cafés or tandem projects. In Switzerland, the association Femmes/Männer-Tische (Femmes/Men’s Tables) offers low-threshold discussion groups for migrants, which take up women-specific concerns.

Building bridges is particularly important for recently arrived migrant mothers, as they may find themselves in isolation

Migrant women tend to have insufficient information about existing integration programmes and public structures due to relatively small social networks. If they have children close to arrival, they also risk finding themselves in isolation during parental leave. To build bridges, some countries favour integration policies in pre-school settings, have set up networks to reach out to migrant mothers or mentorship programmes targeting women.

- **Integration measures in preschool settings:** Australia, France, Norway and Sweden offer a variation of “open preschools”, integration measures simultaneously targeting parents and children. In France, Opening Schools to Parents for Children’s Success (OEPRE), is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Education and Interior providing workshops that focus on learning French language and values, and the functioning of the school system. Workshops are free, last between 60 and 120 hours per year, consist of small groups and benefit mostly mothers (80% of participants). In Sweden, open preschools offer language courses, study and vocational guidance and recreational and cultural activities, with an emphasis on women’s needs. Norway’s open preschools not only target migrant families, but their objective is similar in that it facilitates low-threshold pedagogical sessions where children can be accompanied by their carer, promoting network building. Australia

runs a similar programme called Community Hubs, embedded in primary schools that help bridge the gap between migrant families and the wider community by connecting families with each other, with their school, and with local services and support.

- **Dedicated networks to reach out to mothers:** Denmark, Sweden and Norway have set up dedicated networks to specifically reach out to migrant women in their immediate environment. In Denmark, the Neighbourhood Mothers are primarily women with an ethnic minority background, who volunteer in their local area by conveying important information to isolated migrant women (offers from the municipality and other associations) and helping them build social networks. Sweden's Community Mothers, recruits migrant women and mothers to reach out to and provide guidance to newly arrived migrant women and mothers in the local community. In Norway, District Mother (introduced in 2016), has trained 150 immigrant mothers to reach out and provide information to support stay-at-home migrant mothers. The aim is to improve immigrant mothers' connection to Norway by providing information on available social services, the Norwegian labour market, and support concerning parenthood and health.
- **Mentorship programmes:** In Denmark, the Danish Centre for Gender, Equality and Ethnicity (KVINFO) is an NGO that, between 2003 and 2017, ran a mentorship programme for women from refugee families and other migrant groups to empower them on decision-making and leadership by matching them with women who were firmly established in the Danish workforce. Germany's "Migrant Women are becoming entrepreneurs" was a pilot project in Frankfurt that ran between 2015 and 2017 to promote entrepreneurship among migrant women through mentoring and skills training. At the end of the pilot, 16 out of 22 participants set up businesses (Desideri et al., 2020^[101]).

Some mothers may require active support in labour market initiatives

Migrant mothers from countries where women are underrepresented in the labour market might need particular support to engage in labour market initiatives and employment. Some examples of successful initiatives include:

- **Programmes that recognise the heterogeneity of migrant mothers:** Whenever migrant women – and especially mothers – are specifically targeted, they tend to be treated as homogenous group with few countries making distinctions between categories of migration or levels of skills. In Canada, the pilot of Career Pathways for Racialised Newcomer Women offers different models based on skills, language levels and different initial distances from the labour market. The majority of participants are highly educated and bring with them work experience outside of Canada. Thus far, the results of the programme have been positive with participants showing gains in career adaptability measures and employment outcomes.
- **Programmes that take the parental role as the starting point:** In Flanders, a specific civic integration programme was developed for low-literacy parents with young children. The programme is open to parents who have at least one child under the age of three or are expecting a child and whose literacy levels stand in the way of participating in the regular integration programmes. This programme was set up after a successful pilot project on a customised civic integration programme for low-literate women with young children in 2016, funded by AMIF (EMN Belgium, 2022^[102]). In France, the programme AGIR supports refugees' integration in the labour market by ensuring access to a wide array of services including childcare and family allowances, under the premise that the process must be adapted to their family situation.
- **Programmes that provide tailored support to migrant mothers:** In Germany, "Strong at work – Mothers with a migration background are entering the labour market" (2015-2022), provided career orientation and individual support to migrant mothers with the aim of accompanying the re-entry of the participants in the labour market throughout various phases: from vocational orientation to the

beginning of an internship, and up to the first employment. Up until July 2019, the programme counted approximately 10 000 participants, with one in four having a refugee background. After completion, 37% of participants had secured a job or had undergone vocational training and two-thirds had a better idea of what to focus on professionally (employment, qualifications, internships, recognition).

- Programmes that provide tailored support to female family migrants or refugees: the Netherlands, through six pilot programmes at the municipal level, targeted migrant women who arrived either to join a beneficiary of international protection or a partner/family member. The VOI-Pilot (2019/21) identified potential participants through multiple channels (municipal caseworkers, signatories of the integration trajectory, and through NGOs) and ensured accessibility and follow-up (through buddy sessions, personal follow-ups and provision of childcare). The programme, however, was more successful in activating women in volunteering, internships or educational/training opportunities, rather than work experiences (EMN Netherlands, 2022^[103]). Similarly, across five EU countries – Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Hungary – Momentum and Co-operation is an initiative focused on reducing barriers faced by migrant and refugee women aged 18-35 through tailored support spanning multiple stakeholders including employers, public authorities, civil society and employment centres among others.
- Programmes that recognise informal skills: recognising and making visible skills obtained in a variety of contexts is of particular importance for migrant mothers, since family formation after arrival may limit their ability to gain labour market experience in destination. The Flemish Government has developed a system of Earlier Obtained Competences towards this end, which makes the competences and skills obtained in a variety of contexts (free time, school, work context) more visible, independently of where the competences were obtained. Through recognition of these competences, women with lower education can enjoy easier access to the labour market. Similarly, Sweden’s “Equal Entry Programme” (2018-2021) targets refugee women who are far from the labour market, by mapping their formal *and* informal skills and doing the same with potential employers. Results show that 15 months after a random control trial, the employment rates of female participants were 10 percentage points higher than non-participants. A recent evaluation also found that 37% of the women in the programme were employed or studying after the programme, compared to 27% in other, less individually focused programmes
- Programmes aimed at formalising employment: To regularise the labour market situation of migrant mothers working informally in traditionally female-dominated sectors, some European countries have experimented with measures aiming at formalising paid domestic work. Sweden, for example, provides tax incentives to clients of these kinds of services, while Belgium and France have implemented voucher schemes towards this end.

Conclusion

Family remains the most important driver for migration in OECD countries – whether in the form of family reunification, family formation or accompanying family – and understanding the integration of migrant families is key to formulating relevant integration policies.

Migrant mothers are key drivers in the education of their children and play an important role in the transmission of values. What is more, the labour force participation of migrant mothers has significant implications for the outcomes of their children.

Yet, migrant mothers face important barriers to employment. On average, their employment rates are 20 percentage points lower than for migrant women with no children. Compared to native-born mothers, their employment is also more sensitive to the number and age of children, suggesting that they face higher childcare constraints. In parallel, they report higher levels of underemployment and involuntary part-time

employment. Their individual and cultural preferences are often cited as main obstacles to their labour market integration, but the evidence suggests that they are frequently trapped in involuntary inactivity. What is more, in the past, such preferences have often shaped stereotypes and misconceptions, including on the policy side, where action often disregarded the specific needs of migrant mothers.

As family formation and migration tend to be intertwined processes, it is essential to account for both simultaneously when thinking of integration. Pre-departure counselling as well as targeted support immediately after arrival are complementary measures towards facilitating employment. Many mainstream integration programmes remain relevant for migrant mothers as long as they facilitate a “second chance” if completion is not achieved within the first few years of arrival. To avoid that migrant mothers miss out on targeted support offers due to family responsibilities, some countries allow for parental leave schemes in integration programmes, have extended the time limit for eligibility or have invested in programmes targeting those who have remained inactive for a prolonged period. Migrant women with children are prone to disproportionately benefit from these measures.

Equally important are removing obstacles hampering equal access to employment-supportive measures such as childcare services and parental leave schemes. Migrant mothers are sensitive to policy incentives, just as their native-born peers. Various policy tools, including parental leave, childcare and out-of-school-hours-care, and flexible working schemes can help parents balance work and family life. These policies work best when provided in a coherent manner that avoids gaps in support, e.g. between the end of parental leave and entering formal childcare, and gives parents a continuum of support throughout childhood (OECD, 2016^[25]).

Families play a key role in migration and settlement decisions and in longer-term integration. Not only are migration and employment decisions usually taken as part of a household unit, but the presence of partners, children and parents can shape integration outcomes. Migrant women who emigrate for family reasons often do not benefit from structured integration programmes, such as those available for humanitarian migrants, nor from a job offer as do labour migrants. In addition, whenever they are taken care of by their sponsor and do not rely on benefits, they may not be the target of integration measures or might altogether be excluded from them (OECD, 2017^[56]). In this sense, investing in a whole-of-family approach to migrant integration might simultaneously contribute to the stability of families and their well-being, while enhancing their participation in and contributions to their receiving society.

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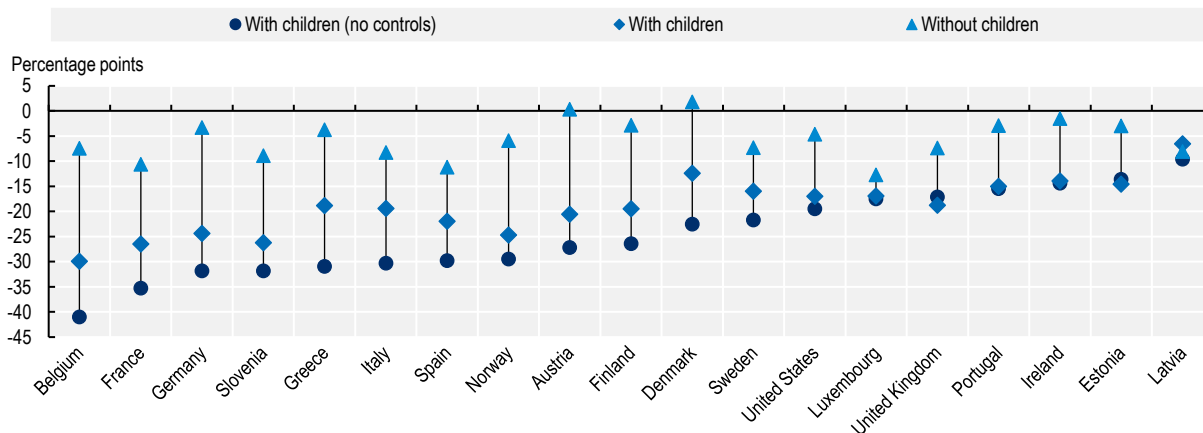
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Annex 5.A. Supplementary tables and figures

Annex Figure 5.A.1. Differences in employment rates between native- and foreign-born women, by motherhood status and adjusted by age, education and number of children



Note: For each marker, the figure shows the difference in percentage points between employment rates of foreign-born and native-born women aged 25-54. Negative values mean that native-born women have a higher employment rate than foreign-born women. Round markers show the differences for mothers with at least one child aged 0-4. Diamond markers show the differences for mothers with at least one child aged 0-4, controlling for age, education and number of children. Triangle markers show the differences for women with no children, controlling for age and education.

Source: Eurostat (2019^[20]), *European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>; US Census Bureau (2019^[23]), *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/fndp3l>

Annex Table 5.A.1. Availability of childcare services for migrants participating in introduction measures

	Childcare arrangements available
Australia	Yes
Austria	Yes (for language courses)
Belgium (Flanders)	No*
Canada	Yes
Chile	No
Colombia	Yes
Czech Republic	Yes
Denmark	Yes, in reception centres. In municipalities, migrants access ordinary Danish childcare
Estonia	Yes
Finland	Not systematically
France	Yes
Germany	Yes, though migrants in vocational language courses should apply for local services first
Greece	Yes, in reception centres. In municipalities, children attend ordinary nursery school
Iceland	Children of migrants access public kindergarten
Israel	Children of migrants access public school beginning at age 3
Italy	Yes, on local level
Japan	No
Korea	No
Latvia	Yes
Lithuania	Yes, in reception centres. In municipalities, children attend ordinary nursery school
Luxembourg	Migrants can access the same measures as all residents
Mexico	No*
Netherlands	Reimbursement of costs allowed
New Zealand	Yes (onsite during reception programme)
Norway	Yes, on local level
Poland	No
Portugal	Yes
Slovak Republic	No
Slovenia	Yes
Spain	No

Note: n/a= information is not applicable. A measure in Belgium (Flanders) to help pay for childcare and transportation ended on 01 January 2022. In Mexico, childcare spaces are available in the offices of COMAR for children accompanying applicants initiating international protection recognition procedures.

Source: OECD (2017^[56]), *Making Integration Work: Family Migrants*, Making Integration Work, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264279520-en>.

Notes

¹ According to a diagnostic by the European Migration Network and interviews with researchers in the Netherlands, the public and policy debate about the integration of migrant women focuses on the cultural aspects of integration. This is evidenced in statements by parliament members which reflect on the cultural challenges migrant women face and how these might differ from Dutch cultural norms (EMN Netherlands, 2022_[103]).

² In five countries – Luxembourg, Portugal, Ireland, Spain and Norway – native born mothers outperform their childless peers. In three others, there is a positive difference of less than 1 percentage point for native-born mothers (Italy, Greece and the Netherlands).

³ The evidence on the fatherhood premium remains inconclusive. While many studies have identified a positive wage gap between fathers and non-fathers, the effect varies by occupation, marital status, and race, among others. The premium has been explained by selection effects (high-earning men are more likely to become fathers), couple-level specialisation, increased work effort, age at childbirth which tends to be higher for men than for women, and (positive) employer discrimination, among other things.

⁴ Taking the paid maternity and paid parental leave entitlements together, mothers in Hungary can take paid leave for a total of 160 weeks – almost three times longer than the OECD average (54 weeks).

⁵ There is also evidence that the birth of the first child produces a strong increase in labour informality among working mothers in Chile but the effects are milder for highly-educated women. According to 2017 census data, migrant women were, on average, more educated than their native-born peers. These dynamics also contribute to explaining the small gap between both groups.

⁶ While there was a nationwide homecare allowance between 2013 and 2015 for parents who did not use public childcare (children aged 0-2), in 2015 it was abolished. Several German states, however, continued to pay a form of homecare allowance since (Fendel and Jochimsen, 2017_[112]).

⁷ According to the 2021 EULFS, on average, 7% of female migrants to the EU24 countries aged 15 years and older were humanitarian migrants. In Germany, the share is 12%.

⁸ The negative outcomes for both native- and foreign-born mothers in Finland must be interpreted with caution, as the country provides the longest parental leave available among OECD countries and parents in homecare leaves are classified as inactive in labour force surveys. The opposite is true in Sweden where women on leave are counted as employed if they have a regular job to return to and regardless of the length of the absence. Given the structure of the leave, parents are allowed to combine paid and unpaid days and stretch leave days throughout the child's preschool years.

⁹ Except for Germany, all four countries offer mothers more than 60 weeks of leave when combining (paid) maternity leave, (paid) parental and home care leave. They are ranked in the top ten countries along with the Slovak Republic, Latvia and Norway. Germany offers 58 weeks and ranks slightly below the EU average.

¹⁰ It should be noted that the sample becomes increasingly selective and small at higher ages of the first child since women are excluded from the analyses two quarters before their second child is born and higher-order childbearing patterns are potentially selective.

¹¹ We estimated and assigned the employment probabilities of women who do not (yet) have children, but who have similar socio-demographic characteristics in terms of i) age, ii) highest educational level, iii) origin group and generation, iv) region of residence, v) LIPRO (Lifestyle PROjections model) household position, vi) the interaction between origin group and age, vii) the interaction between origin group and educational level, viii) the interaction between origin group and LIPRO position, ix) the interaction between educational level and age and x) the interaction between LIPRO position and age.

¹² Across EU countries, for instance, they display faster convergence rates to native-born women in the labour market than male migrants; in Canada married migrant women follow exhibit similar rising participation and wage progression compared to married native-born women with similar skills (Lee, Peri and Viarengo, 2022_[105]; Adsera and Ferrer, 2016_[104]). And in the United States, the family investment model does not hold for married migrants (Blau et al., 2003_[110]).

¹³ These are occupations that require low levels of skills and competences but that may demand some physical effort. Migrant women tend to use much more physical and demanding skills than their native-born peers. With time of residence, and across countries, migrant women experience increases in the analytical requirements of their jobs but do not fully converge with their native-born peers (Adsera, Ferrer and Hernanz, 2023_[107]).

¹⁴ In Belgium there is service voucher scheme that subsidises household services (cleaning, washing, ironing) in order to create formal, low-skilled jobs that improve the work-life balance of the users and provide a leverage to other jobs. The service mainly employs women, of which almost half are migrants. The service, however, has failed to offer transitions to other jobs (EMN Belgium, 2022_[102]).

¹⁵ Involuntary part-time employment consists of work of less than 30 usual hours per week due to the impossibility of finding a full-time job. It is difficult to assess whether a worker's decision is truly voluntary or involuntary as it might be an outcome forced upon a worker by his or her ability to find full-time work or due to an external constraint, such as lack of appropriate childcare. Further, both economic and cultural factors may guide or even force an individual's selection into a set of working hours (OECD, 2019_[49]).

¹⁶ The chart groups managers with other occupations but the difference between native- and foreign-born mothers averages only 1%.

¹⁷ In cases where the sponsor is a national or holds permanent residence in the host country, it is relatively clear from the outset that his or her family members are also likely to remain in the host country for good. But immediate access to the labour market should also apply in cases when the sponsor holds a permit of limited duration that is more or less indefinitely renewable and effectively puts them in a permanent track. Most OECD countries do not provide full and immediate labour market access to family members unless the sponsor qualifies as a high-skilled migrant. In other cases, labour market tests are required or access is subject to work permits in specific sectors (Luxembourg).

¹⁸ For men, employment rates were 85%, 68% and 50% among migrants with a skilled stream, family and humanitarian visa, respectively.

¹⁹ In Sweden, father's earnings have a positive effect on the use of leave, but the effect is smaller at higher levels of earnings (Sündstrom and Duvander, 2002_[106]). Similarly, in Finland, paternity leave is more often used by fathers with higher education and higher income (Saarikallio-Torp and Miettinen, 2021_[108]). In

Canada, reforms aimed at widening eligibility criteria disproportionately increased use among low-income families (Margolis et al., 2018^[109]).

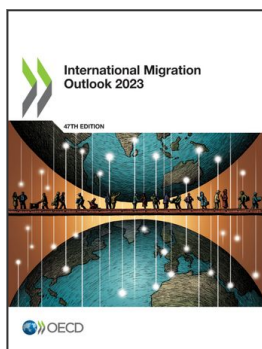
²⁰ In Sweden, where there is a tiered system, migrant mothers use parental leave more intensively than their native-born peers, due to their lower disposable income (Mussino and Duvander, 2016^[68]).

²¹ Labour-market legislation in Sweden allows for job-protected leave for the child's first 18 months and during any parental leave taken within 12 years of the birth. This means that it is possible to stretch one's days of leave over a longer period by mixing paid and unpaid days during the first 18 months, and using paid leave when the child is somewhat older.

²² The theoretical capacity for children under three in France is 59%. However, approximately 24% of children have a place in public structures and 35% in private facilities or arrangements (ONAPE, 2020^[111]).

²³ In 2013, two childcare reforms came into effect simultaneously: a legal entitlement to a place in formal childcare for children aged one year or older; and the introduction of a new benefit for families who do not use public or publicly subsidised childcare. Both reforms were unconditional on the parents' income or employment status (Muller and Wrohlich, 2014^[91]).

²⁴ Across the EU countries, foreign-born women, on average, report more care responsibilities than their native-born peers (49% versus 37%, respectively). In addition, in situations in which strong family or social networks are lacking, constraints related to family responsibilities are likely to be much higher.



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