



**IMDi**

Integrerings- og  
mangfoldsdirektoratet

# Integration indicators

Status and trends in 2022





**Kapittelittel**

## Preface

With this report, IMDi presents the most recently available knowledge about the integration of immigrants in Norway, as of August 2022.

A successful integration is critical for how Norway will be doing. To succeed with integration, it is important that decision-makers, professionals and the general public have access to sound knowledge to ensure that political processes and public debates are as fact-based as possible.

IMDi's indicator report provides a picture of how successful integration is overall and of trends in the following areas: education and qualification, work and finances, everyday integration and the right to live a free life.

In 2020 and 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic made its mark on Norway and the rest of the world. Infection control measures had significant consequences for social and economic activities. Some immigrant groups were hit harder than the rest of the population, both through higher rates of infection and hospitalisations and in the labour market. That the indicators in this year's report suggest that the pandemic has not had persistent negative consequences for integration is therefore a welcome finding. The positive trend we saw prior to the pandemic, with smaller differences between immigrants and the rest of the population in the labour market, has returned. We still don't know the scope of the long-term effects of the pandemic.

Though the indicators show positive trends, the focus on integration will be very important going forward. Due to the war that broke out in the Ukraine at the start of the year, IMDi will be settling a historical number of refugees in 2022. We have seen great willingness to help and massive efforts in municipalities, local communities and the voluntary sector, which we greatly appreciate. Moving forward, we will closely follow up on refugees from the Ukraine and other countries, and follow their integration indicator results with great interest.

**Libe Rieber-Mohn**

*Director*

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## Summary

The number of immigrants in Norway has more than tripled in the last twenty years. At the entry to 2022, more than one million people in Norway had an immigrant background. In total, they represent backgrounds from more than 200 countries. This means that immigrants are a diverse group, not just in terms of their countries of origin but also in terms of their age, skills, health and life situation, period of residence in Norway, etc. Immigrants also come to Norway for various reasons: to work, study, reunite with family or because they have been forced to flee.

That immigrants are not a homogeneous group is reflected in the variations in the indicators in this report. For many indicators, we observe significant differences, not just between immigrants and the rest of the population but also between different immigrant groups. For example, for several indicators, immigrants with refugee backgrounds and short periods of residence in Norway are further apart from the rest of the population than labour immigrants.

### **What are the integration outcomes for immigrants...**

This report uses a definition of integration as "a process where unreasonable and involuntary differences between immigrants and the majority diminish over time and between generations" (Østby, 2016). Given this understanding of integration, a key question is how the differences between immigrants and the rest of the population develop with length of residence in Norway. Furthermore, it is important to pay attention to how children born in Norway to immigrant parents score on the indicators compared to the rest of the population.

The findings in this year's report indicate that the average differences between immigrants and the rest of the population have either remained stable or decreased in most areas. Among other things, this is true for completion of upper secondary education, enrolment in higher education, employment, income and living conditions.

However, in some areas the differences are increasing. For example, children with immigrant backgrounds are increasingly overrepresented in the statistics on children in households with persistent low income. In 2010, 44 percent of children growing up in persistent low-income families had immigrant backgrounds. Since 2013, children with immigrant backgrounds have comprised more than half of all children growing up in households with persistent low-income. In 2020, this share was 59 percent.

Immigrants are also increasingly underrepresented in political office. This negative development has been observed since 2007. Voter turnout is also significantly lower among immigrants compared to the rest of the population. The differences increased in 2021 compared to previous elections.

As in previous years, this year's report also shows that a longer period of residence in Norway leads to better integration results for most indicators, including completion rates in upper secondary education, labour-market participation, income and living conditions. Immigrants who have a longer period of residence in Norway are also more connected to Norway and have a higher rate of participation in civil society.

### **... and for their children born in Norway?**

Children born in Norway to immigrant parents still have worse outcomes on several indicators than their peers in the rest of the population. At the same time, in several areas they do better than their immigrant peers, for instance in terms of labour market participation. They enrol in post-secondary education at higher rates than the rest of the population and a larger share is more educated than their parents. Studies of those born in Norway to immigrant parents show that this group has a high degree of social mobility (Ekren, Grendal, 2021; Kirkeberg et al., 2019).

At the same time, there is significant variation in the integration results for those born in Norway to immigrant parents. For example, they are overrepresented in the share pursuing higher education and in the share that has not completed upper secondary training.

### **Education and Norwegian language skills are the keys to successful integration**

There are no clear answers to the question of why integration is generally going well. The integration process is unique to each immigrant, as it depends on a number of personal and societal factors. However, at a general level we can nevertheless point to education and knowledge of Norwegian as key factors for increased participation and integration in society. Educational level and language skills are often critical to labour market participation, as there is an increasing need for qualified workers in Norway. Furthermore, immigrants with good Norwegian skills feel relatively more integrated and accepted in society.

On the other hand, there are several factors that may hinder participation in society and that over the longer term may have a negative effect on an individual's integration. Health challenges is one example of such a factor. We know that refugees in particular have poorer physical and mental health compared to the rest of the population. They also have a lower felt quality of life. At the same time, we have insufficient knowledge of how such challenges relate to participation in the labour market, in education and in other areas of society; more research is needed in these areas.

Negative social control and honour-related violence are other examples of barriers that may hinder integration. Such control may take a variety of forms, such as parental restrictions or influence over the choice of a spouse. Negative social control can have adverse health consequences and can also inhibit participation in education, work and civil society. Youth with a minority background are subject to negative social control at higher rates than their

peers without an immigrant background, especially related to their activities and relationships outside of school, such as those involving dating and sexuality. In recent years, IMDi's minority advisor scheme has been strengthened in schools across the country, and quantitative reports show that more youth receive help.

### **Lower rate of participation in civil society**

An increasing number of people is positive to immigration. The Covid-19 pandemic does not appear to have had a negative impact on attitudes. However, immigrants are more likely than the rest of the population to experience various forms of discrimination and hate, which there is growing awareness of in society.

Along with increasing numbers of immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents, there is increasing contact and interaction between these groups and the rest of the population. This is true for both formal and informal meeting places.

However, immigrants are less likely to participate in political office and in the voluntary sector compared to the rest of the population. Research points to poorer Norwegian language skills and lower incomes as some of the explanation for this. Children and youth with immigrant backgrounds are also less likely to participate in leisure activities than young people in the majority population, and participation is lowest among immigrant girls.

### **The Covid-19 pandemic and integration**

In many ways, immigrants were hit harder by the Covid-19 pandemic than the majority population. Among other things, people with immigrant backgrounds were significantly overrepresented in statistics on infections and hospitalisations. The infection control measures in 2020 and 2021 also had significant negative consequences for immigrants' participation in the labour market. Many immigrants worked in industries that were significantly affected by the lockdowns.

The impact the pandemic had on integration seems to have stabilised thus far and for many indicators we now see the same trends as prior to the pandemic. In 2021, the differences in the employment rate for immigrants and the rest of the population had not only returned to their pre-Covid levels but were at their lowest since 2015. This was true for both men and women. The pandemic also does not seem to have led to higher rates of attrition in upper secondary education and the income differences between immigrants and the rest of the population has remained stable. This is an important finding that may indicate that compensation schemes during the pandemic had their intended effect. It will be interesting to take a closer look at the trends in income difference when statistics for 2021 are available.

It is also worth emphasising that many of the indicators in this report describe overarching trends. At the same time, we know that during the pandemic some immigrant groups were more impacted than others in various ways. It may thus have had greater negative

consequences for the integration of these groups than is apparent when we only look at averages for people with immigrant backgrounds. For example, teachers and IMDi's minority advisors have noted that it was challenging to follow up on children with immigrant backgrounds when schools were closed. In the years ahead, it will therefore be necessary to closely follow the potential long-term consequences of the pandemic for the various immigrant groups, and in particular for the most vulnerable groups.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and purpose

In 2019, the Ministry of Education and Research tasked IMDi with developing a comprehensive set of integration indicators. The set of indicators was to replace a memorandum on integration in Norway that has been attached to the National Budget for the past 15 years: *Mål for integrering* ("Integration goals", The Government, 2015).

This is the third report. The purpose of the report has been to obtain and compile the most recent knowledge available about integration as of August 2022, presented through a set of indicators, showing the status and trends within integration in Norway. In particular, the report looks at differences between people with immigrant backgrounds and the rest of the population and how these differences develop over time.

The purpose of developing the set of indicators is to ensure that it is always socially relevant and flexible. IMDi works continuously to further develop and evaluate the indicators on which this publication is based in order to provide the most precise and relevant picture possible of integration in Norway. The indicators that are included in the different reports may therefore vary somewhat. In preparing the indicators for the 2022 report, IMDi has had a good dialogue with several interfacing directorates and partners about the knowledge they need and their focus areas, to ensure that the report is broadly relevant and useful.

## 1.2 Concepts and definitions

**Integration** is understood in different ways in different contexts and there is no comprehensive definition with broad support (Enes et al., 2019). It is inherent to the concept that it must be understood as a process, which in theory can be fast or slow and go well or poorly. However, what the reasonable criteria are for assessing integration is not obvious. This report uses an understanding of integration in which it can be considered successful if "unreasonable and involuntary differences between the minority and the majority diminish over time and between generations" (Østby, 2016).

With this understanding as a starting point, it is important to pay attention to how these differences develop over time, as well as how children born in Norway to immigrant parents are doing. In addition to timelines for average differences, it is also important to assess the significance of the period of residence. **Period of residence** in Norway means the number of years from the date of the first immigration to the country.

In line with Statistics Norway's definitions (Kirkeberg et al., 2019), **immigrants** are persons born outside of Norway to two foreign parents. People born in Norway to **immigrant parents** have two foreign parents and four foreign grandparents. **Persons with an immigrant background** refers to both immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents. Everyone else is referred to as the rest of the population. These groups are broad and in many cases the differences within each category are greater than the differences between them. At the same time, these divisions are appropriate because they form the basis for measuring integration by assessing developments in the indicators over time.

**Reason for immigration** is the reason for the first immigration to Norway. Because citizens of the Nordic countries can freely move to Norway, there is no information about Nordic citizens' reasons for immigration.

Since 2008, Statistics Norway has divided immigrants' **countries of origin** into country group 1 and country group 2. Country group 1 includes the EU/EEA member countries as well as the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Country group 2 includes countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania except Australia and New Zealand and Europe outside of the EU/EEA (Høydahl, 2008).

## 1.3 Content of the report

The report is based on and structured in accordance with the four focus areas for the government's integration strategy *Integrering gjennom kunnskap (2019-2022)* ["Integration through knowledge (2019-2022)"]: education and qualifications, work and finances, everyday integration and the right to live a free life. The overarching goal of the strategy is greater participation in the labour market and civil society. Labour market participation is a particularly central goal, with education and qualifications being the most important keys to success (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018).

Before showing the status and trends in the indicators for each of the four focus areas, we present basic facts about immigration in Norway. The composition of the population with immigrant backgrounds by sex, reason for immigration, period of residence and educational level is an important context through which to better understand the outcomes in the various indicators. We discuss this in further detail in chapter 2. In this chapter, we also

present information about immigrants' health and infection rates during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chapter 3 describes education indicators by looking at immigrants' participation, completion and results at various stages of the education process - from daycare to adult qualifications and instruction in Norwegian and social studies.

Chapter 4 describes immigrants' ties to the labour market. Indicators such as employment rates, working hours and unemployment rates are supplemented by select indicators for job quality as well as knowledge of immigrants' incomes and living conditions. We also take a closer look at how immigrants' employment rates were affected by the restrictions associated with Covid-19 in 2020 and 2021.

Chapter 5 looks at a number of areas related to everyday integration, or in other words integration through contact and social interaction that takes place in various formal and informal everyday spaces (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018). The indicators in this chapter include trust, social ties, participation in the voluntary sector, voter participation, political representation, attitudes to immigration and discrimination.

Finally, chapter 6 looks at new and relevant knowledge about negative social control and IMDi's work in this field.

# 2. The population with immigrant backgrounds in Norway

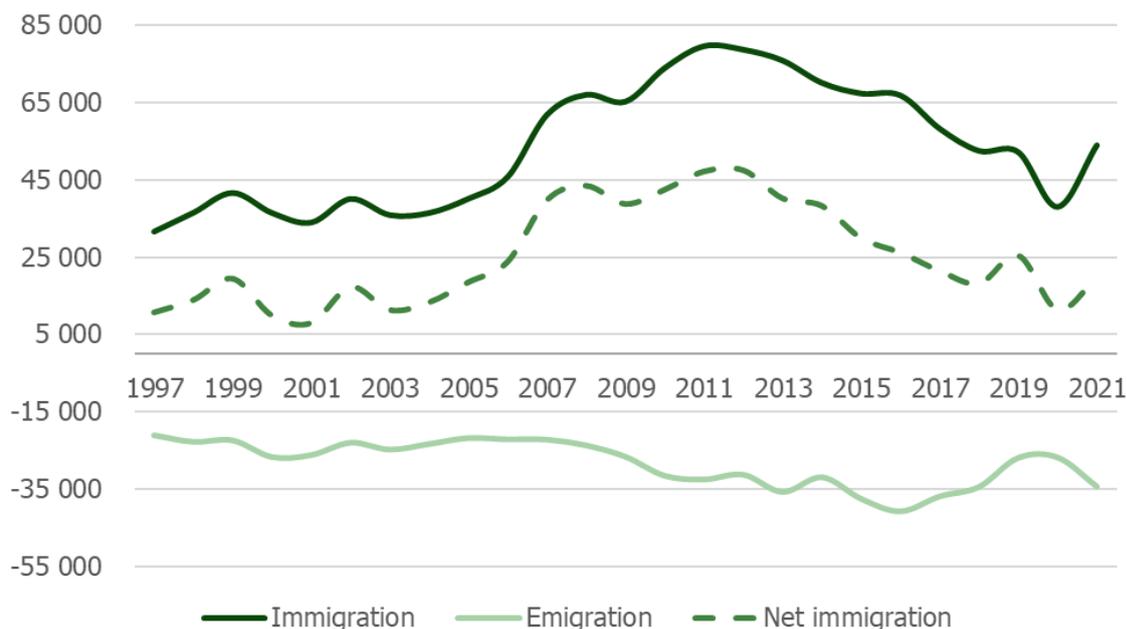
## Immigration

### 2.1 How many immigrants are there in Norway?

At the entry to 2022, 819,400 immigrants were resident in Norway. There were 205,800 residents who were born in Norway to immigrant parents. In total, the two groups represent 18.9 per cent of the population of Norway. Due to the Covid restrictions, we saw little growth in the number of immigrants in 2020 – the lowest growth since 2002. During 2020, the number of immigrants resident in Norway grew by 9,600 persons. The growth in the number of immigrants rose again in 2021 ([Steinkellner, 2022](#)). There were 19,300 more immigrants resident in Norway at the entry to 2022 compared to January 2021.

Despite the increase in the number of new immigrants between 2020 and 2021, figure 2.1 shows that net immigration to Norway is still lower compared to the peak in 2011, when nearly 80,000 persons immigrated. During 2021, about 54,000 immigrants arrived in Norway. Since 2011, there has been a decreasing trend in the number of new immigrants. At the same time, some immigrants left the country during the same period, which has led to a decrease in net immigration for most years since 2011.

**Figure 2.1. Immigration, emigration and net immigration to Norway** ([Statistics Norway, 2022a](#))



Due to the Russian invasion of the Ukraine in February 2022, several million Ukrainians have fled the country. In August 2022, 22,688 asylum seekers from the Ukraine were registered in Norway. Women and children represent 83 per cent of this group ([UDI, 2022](#)).

In August 2022, nearly 15,000 Ukrainian refugees were registered as resident in Norwegian municipalities ([IMDi, 2022](#)). Considerable uncertainty remains about how the war in the Ukraine will develop and how long it will last, and thus also about how long Ukrainian refugees will remain in Norway and how many will choose to return.

The composition of the population with immigrant backgrounds in terms of age and sex is somewhat different from the rest of the population. Three of four immigrants are aged 20-59, while one of two of the rest of the population is in the same age range. In other words, there are comparatively fewer children and elderly immigrants compared to the rest of the population ([Statistics Norway, 2022b](#); [Statistics Norway, 2022c](#)). The proportion of older immigrants (60 years of age or older) has remained stable at about 11 per cent for the past 20 years. The equivalent proportion in the population overall is 24 per cent. This means that only seven per cent of seniors in Norway are immigrants. Older immigrants are a small but growing group. In 2001, 27,000 resident older immigrants were registered, against 90,000 in 2022 ([Dzamarija et al., 2022](#)).

In January 2022, 48 per cent of immigrants were women and 52 per cent were men. A majority of immigrants from European and African countries are men, while women dominate in immigrant groups from Asia and North and South America ([Statistics Norway, 2022d](#)).

People born in Norway to immigrant parents represent a relatively small share of the population: 3.8 per cent ([Steinkellner, 2022](#)). This group is nevertheless very interesting from an integration perspective. Their parents primarily immigrated as adults. Because they are born and raised in Norway, they will have a different skill set with which to succeed in Norway compared to their parents. Children born in Norway to immigrant parent tend to spend their entire childhood in Norway and to mostly be socialised in Norway. This means that their childhoods are characterised by the same institutional frameworks as those of children who do not have immigrant backgrounds (Kirkeberg et al., 2019). The majority of this group is still quite young. At the start of 2022, nearly three of four people born in Norway to immigrant parents were below the age of 18.

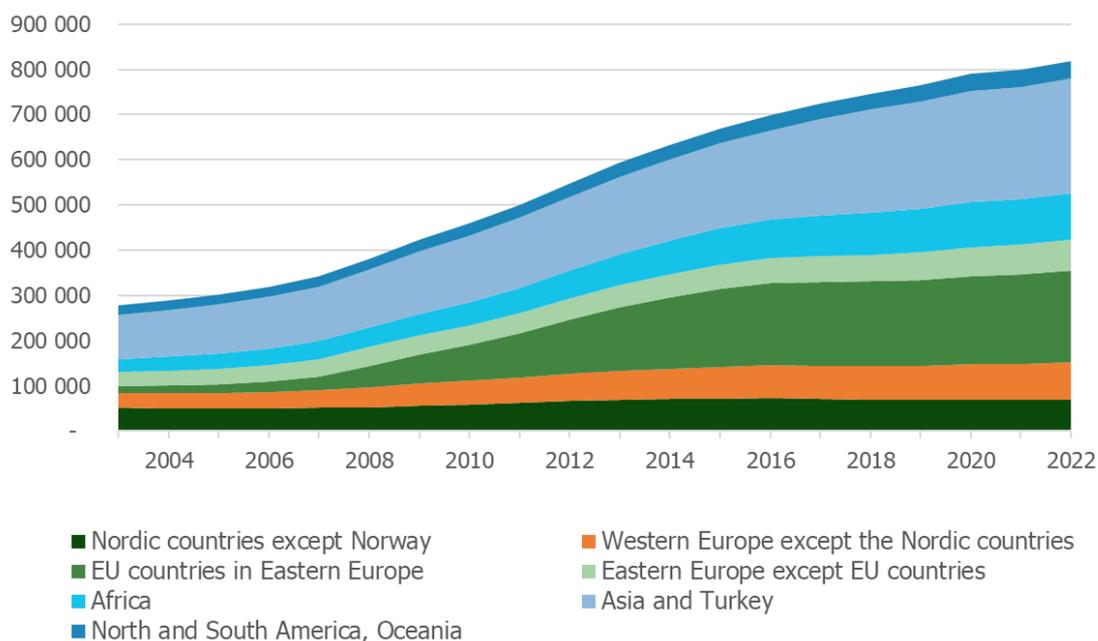
### Immigrants by country of origin

## 2.2 Half of the immigrants come from European countries

In 2021, about half of the immigrants in Norway were from a Nordic or European country. Some 31 per cent of immigrants come from countries in Asia, and 13 per cent from countries in Africa. A relatively small share of 5 per cent comes from countries in North, Latin and South America as well as Oceania ([Statistics Norway, 2022e](#)).

Figure 2.2 shows that the composition of the immigrant population by country of origin has changed over the past 20 years. Since the enlargement of the EU in 2004, the share of immigrants from EU countries in Eastern Europe has increased significantly. At the entry to 2022, a fourth of all immigrants in Norway was from one of these countries, compared to just six per cent in 2003. The proportion of immigrants from the Nordic countries more than halved in the same period, from 18 to 8 per cent.

**Figure 2.2. Immigrants by country of origin (world region).** ([Statistics Norway, 2022e](#))



By individual country of origin, immigrants from Poland form the largest immigrant group in Norway. At the entry to 2022, more than 105,000 Polish immigrants lived in Norway; 3,000 more than the previous year. This was the largest increase in the number of residents for any nationality ([Statistics Norway, 2022f](#)).

In 2022, other countries with large immigrant groups in Norway are Lithuania (42,000 people), Sweden (36,000 people), Syria (34,000 people) and Somalia (28,000 people) (Statistics Norway, 2022).

The composition by country of origin varies by age, among other things. For example, six of ten older immigrants (60 years of age or older) are from Europe, and three of ten are from Asia. In 2021, the older immigrants lived in every Norwegian county, but like immigrants in general, older immigrants are also centralised in Viken and Oslo counties (Dzarmarija, 2022).

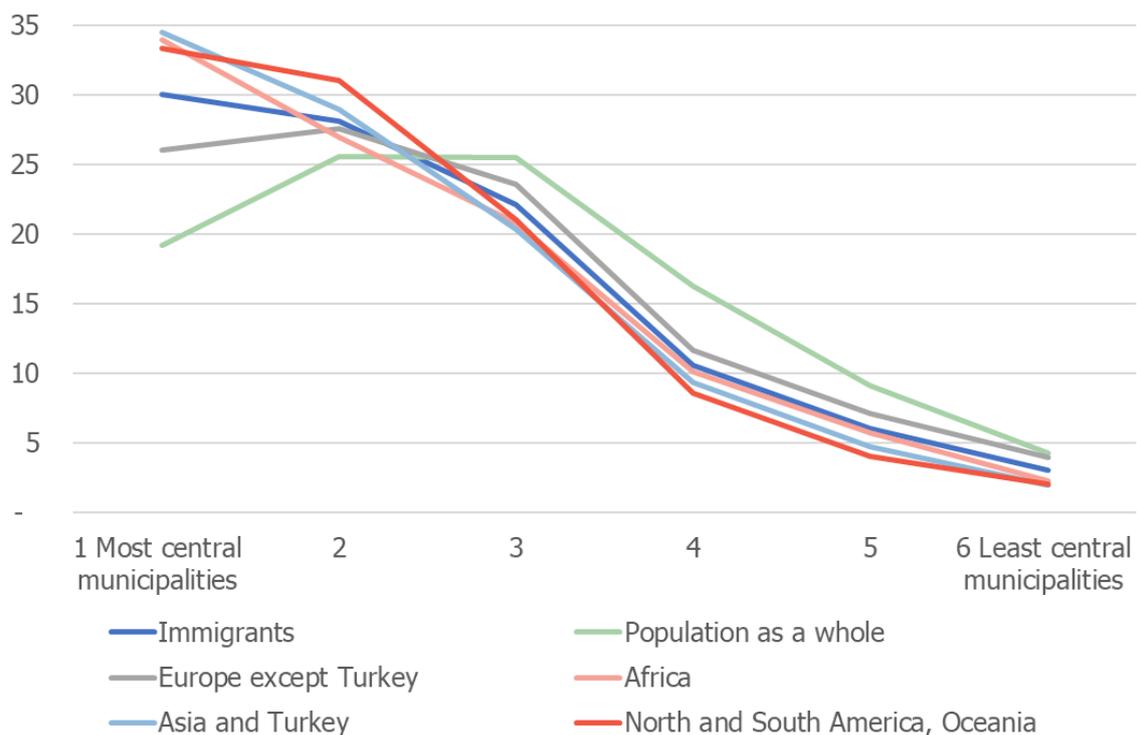
Among those born in Norway to immigrant parents, which as previously mentioned is a fairly young group, the largest share have Asian backgrounds (43 per cent). Further, about a third of this group have parents who immigrated from European countries, and a fifth have parents from countries in Africa ([Statistics Norway, 2022e](#)). By country of origin, most of those born in Norway to immigrant parents have backgrounds from Pakistan, Poland, Somalia and Iraq. Three of ten of those born in Norway to immigrant parents have backgrounds from one of these countries.

## Settlement pattern

### 2.3 Immigrants live more centrally than the rest of the population

As shown in figure 2.3, in 2022 three of ten immigrants lived in one of the seven most central<sup>1</sup> municipalities. The equivalent share among the population as a whole is two of ten. In other words, more immigrants live centrally than is true for the rest of the population. However, the proportion that lives centrally varies between the different countries of origin. Immigrants from European countries are less concentrated in the central municipalities than immigrants from other countries. For other immigrant groups, there are marginal differences in the proportion that lives in the most central municipalities, though immigrants from Asia including Turkey are the most concentrated in central municipalities.

**Figure 2.3. Distribution according to the centrality classification of the municipality of residence for the population as a whole and for immigrants. 2022** ([Statistics Norway, 2022g](#); [Statistics Norway, 2022h](#))



The settlement patterns relate to the reason for immigration, or in other words whether individuals have arrived as refugees and been settled in specific municipalities, or whether

<sup>1</sup>The municipalities that are the most central are Oslo, Lørenskog, Skedsmo, Bærum, Rælingen, Asker and Drammen. Read more about the categorisation of municipalities according to centrality [here](#).

they have arrived in connection with work or family immigration. Many coastal municipalities in northern Norway and western Norway have a large share of labour immigrants. Immigrants who have arrived in Norway for education are of course most commonly resident in the more central municipalities, while recently arrived refugees are often settled in less central municipalities. There is often a correlation between the proportion of family immigrants in the municipality and the proportion of labour immigrants and/or refugees living in a municipality (Guldbrandsen et al., 2021).

The settlement patterns among refugees may also change somewhat with period of residence. As a starting point, refugees are settled in less central regions compared to the settlement pattern of the rest of the population. However, within five years of settlement some choose to move, in particular to the most central municipalities in Norway. Among refugees settled in 2011 and 2012, around 20 per cent moved away from their first municipality of residence within five years of settlement.

This is a lower share than for refugees settled prior to 2011, as Statistics Norway's monitor for secondary migration shows (Strøm et al., 2020). Thus, the trend since 2011 shows that refugees are increasingly remaining in the municipality they are settled in. One explanation for this is that the introduction programme for new arrivals in Norway appears to give those with refugee backgrounds a stronger connection to the municipality they first settle in.

People born in Norway to immigrant parents live more centrally than both immigrants and the rest of the population. Among those resident in a separate household, 63 per cent live in the six most central municipalities in the country. In comparison, the equivalent share is 32 per cent for immigrants and 21 per cent for the rest of the population (Guldbrandsen et al., 2021).

## Period of residence

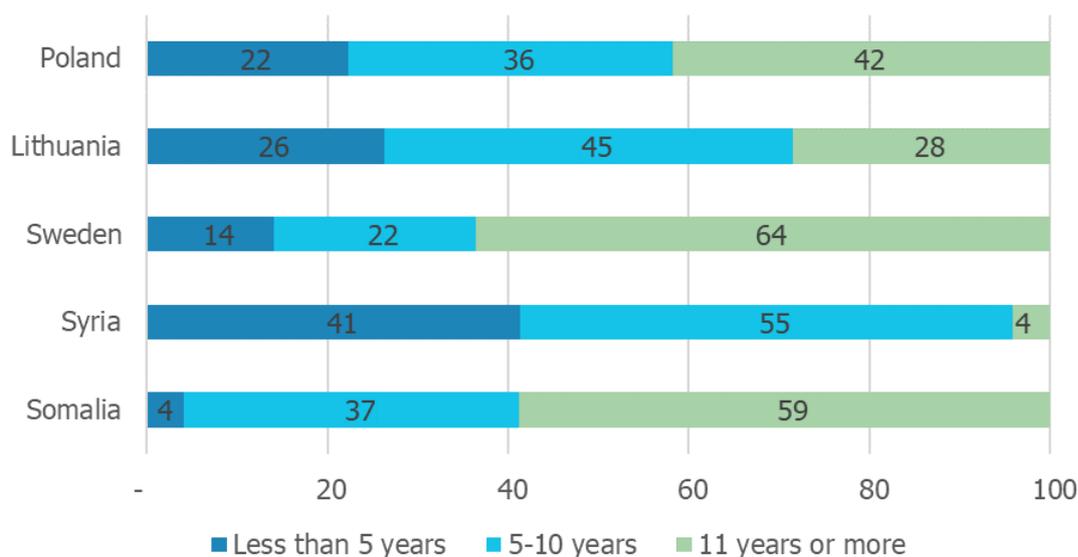
### **2.4 Every fifth immigrant has a period of residence of less than five years**

Integration is a process that takes time. It will take some time for most immigrants who settle in Norway to acquire relevant skills, find a job, learn the language and make social connections in the community. It is therefore not surprising that there is a positive correlation between period of residence and a number of indicators of integration. Both employment and participation in voluntary organisations increase during the first few years after arrival in Norway, and immigrants with a longer period of residence tend to have both higher incomes and better living conditions.

The share of immigrants with a short period of residence has decreased in recent years, in line with the persistently decreasing number of immigrants settling in Norway every year. In

2022, every fifth immigrant had lived in Norway for less than five years. Five years previously, in 2017, every third immigrant had lived in Norway for less than five years. At the same time, in 2022, just under half (45 per cent) of all immigrants had lived in the country for less than ten years, while the equivalent share was 59 per cent in 2017 ([Statistics Norway, 2022i](#)).

**Figure 2.4. Immigrants from select countries, by period of residence. 2022**  
([Statistics Norway, 2022i](#))



There are variations in the distribution by period of residence between immigrants from different countries. Figure 2.4 shows this distribution for the five countries with the highest number of immigrants in Norway in 2022. Sixty-four per cent of immigrants from Sweden and 59 per cent of immigrants from Somalia, or in other words well over half of these groups, had lived in Norway for 11 years or more. The equivalent shares for immigrants from Poland and Lithuania are 42 and 28 per cent, respectively. Immigrants from Syria stand out here, in that they have the smallest share who have lived in Norway for 11 years or more, at 4 per cent, and the largest share who have lived in Norway for less than 5 years, at 41 per cent.

### Reason for immigration

## 2.5 Many of those with a short period of residence are labour migrants

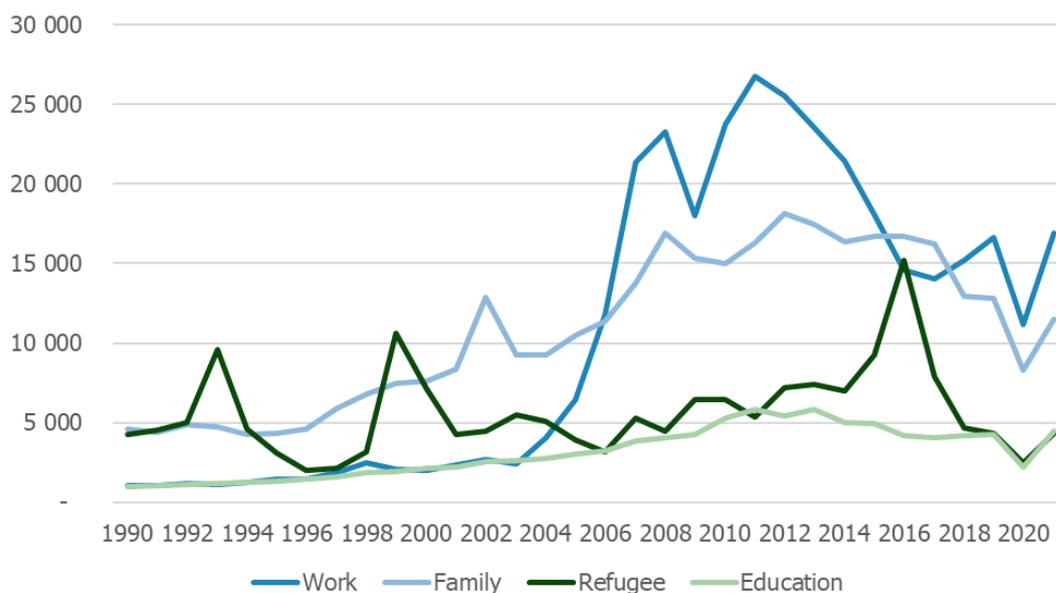
Immigrants come to Norway for a variety of reasons. While some come to work, study or be reunited with their family, others may be fleeing war or humanitarian crises.

About 38,600 non-Nordic<sup>2</sup> citizens immigrated to Norway in 2021. This is thus about the same figure as before the Covid pandemic. Work is the most important reason for immigration for non-Nordic citizens. In 2021, 16,900 labour migrants came to Norway. The next-largest group was people who immigrated for family reunification purposes, at 11,500 people. 4,300 refugees were granted a residence permit based on their need for protection. About 4,400 people were granted a permit for educational purposes (Kirkeberg, 2022).

Since 1990, 34 per cent of all immigrants who have arrived in Norway have come to work. Ten per cent have come to study, 19 per cent have come as refugees, while 36 per cent have come for family reunification or family establishment in Norway. One per cent had other reasons to immigrate (Statistics Norway, 2021q).

Among other things, figure 2.5 shows the number of newly arrived refugees and labour migrants who have arrived in Norway from 1990 to 2022. The graph also shows that this figure varies from year to year, which often relates to international issues and labour market fluctuations.

**Figure 2.5. Immigration to Norway, by reason for immigration. 1990-2021**  
(Statistics Norway, 2021q)



In 2021, nine of ten labour migrants were from European countries. Nearly all refugees came from countries in Asia and Africa (Statistics Norway, 2021q).

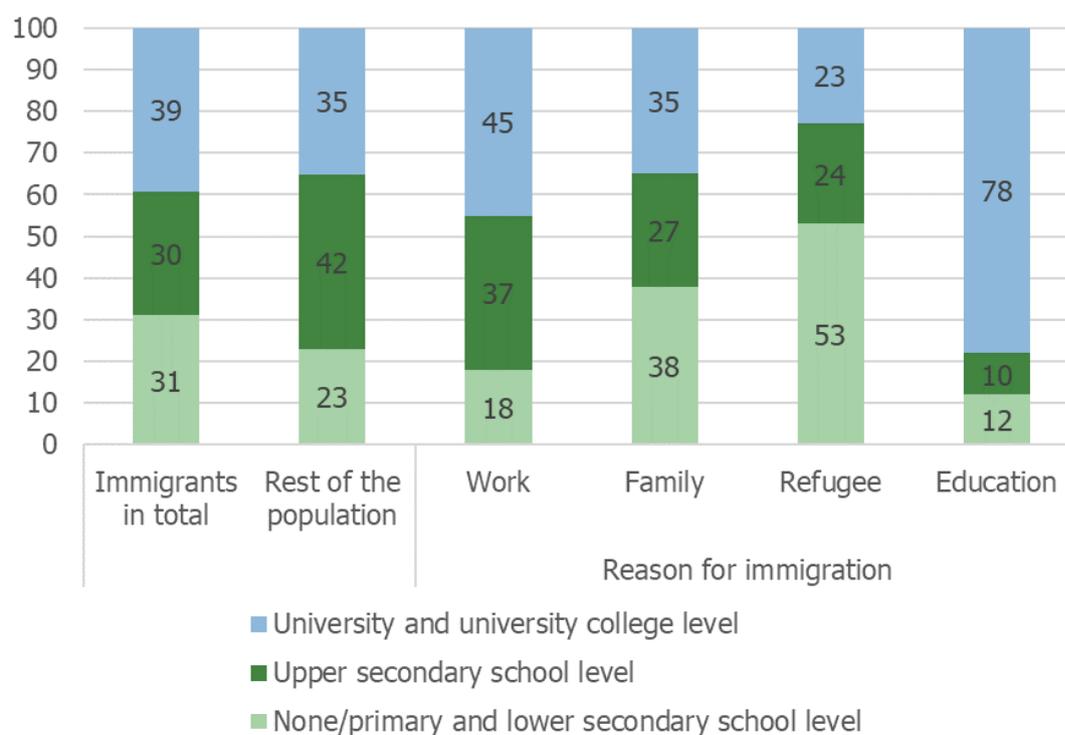
<sup>2</sup>We do not know the reason for the immigration of Nordic citizens as there is [free movement to Norway for this group](#)

## Educational level

### 2.6 More than half of the refugees had little to no education

Compared to the rest of the population, there is a relatively larger share of immigrants who have no education or only have primary and lower secondary school education. In 2021, 31 per cent of immigrants had lower secondary school as their highest level of educational attainment, while for the rest of the population this figure was 23 per cent. On the other hand, the share with a university or university college education was also slightly larger among immigrants compared to the rest of the population, at 39 and 35 per cent, respectively (figure 2.6).

**Figure 2.6. Educational attainment, by immigration category and reason for immigration. 2021** ([Statistics Norway, 2021a](#)).



At the same time, the figure shows that there are significant differences in educational attainment between immigrants with different reasons for immigration. More than half of the refugees in Norway have no education at the upper secondary school level. Three of four who have immigrated to study have post-secondary education. Among labour migrants, 45 per cent have post-secondary education; this is a relatively large share.

### 2.7 Refugees have the poorest health

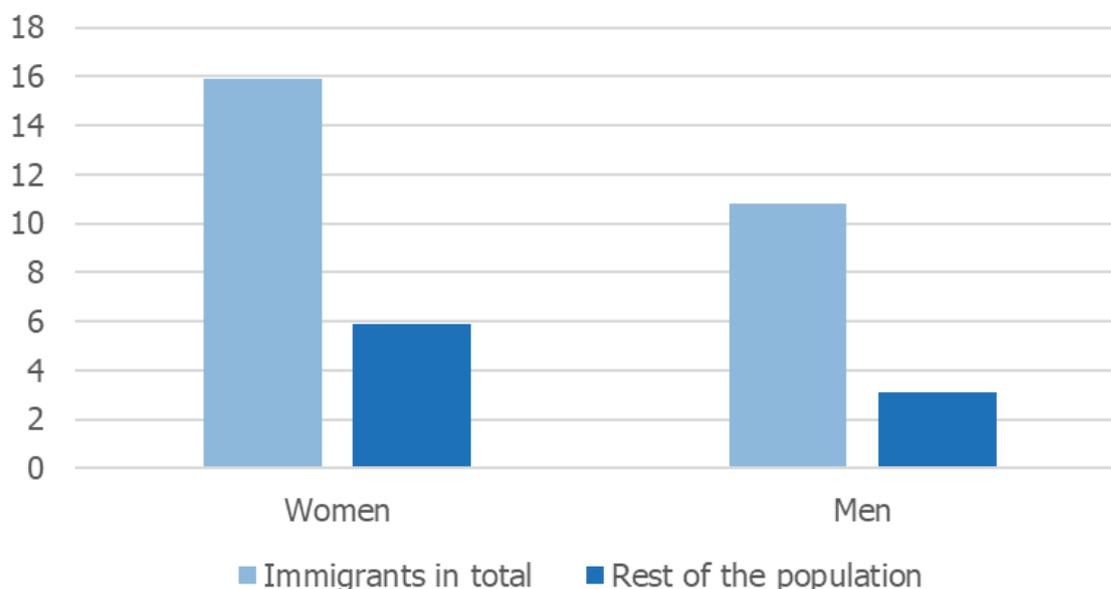
There are significant health differences in various groups in the population with immigrant backgrounds. There is greater variation between different immigrant groups than between immigrants as a group and the rest of the population. In addition to significant differences between immigrants with different countries of origin, there is also significant variation between women and men. There are also differences in health when we look at immigrants' reasons for immigration and periods of residence in Norway. Refugees are in poorer health than those who come to Norway for family reunification, work or education (Norwegian Institute of Public Health, 2018).

Research shows that immigrants often are in good health at the time of immigration, and that their health declines over time. In other words, a long period of residence in Norway is related to poorer health ([Kjøllestad et al., 2019](#)). Immigrants with a long period of residence and poor knowledge of Norwegian are especially likely to develop various health problems (Norwegian Institute of Public Health, 2022). People with higher education who work and have good incomes are also in better health. Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between health and good social integration. An sense of being discriminated against and feeling disconnected to both Norway and the country of origin, are associated with poorer mental health ([Kjøllestad et al., 2019](#)).

The survey of living conditions among immigrants from 2016 shows that immigrants' have poorer perceived health than the general population. The occurrence of chronic illness and disability is about the same among immigrants as in the population. Nevertheless, 73 per cent of immigrants assessed their health as very good or good, compared to 83 per cent in the rest of the population.

However, a greater proportion of immigrants have mental health problems, as shown in figure 2.7. This share is particularly large for men and women from Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan, and for women from Afghanistan. A greater share of women than men reported mental health problems, both in the rest of the population and in immigrant groups, except for groups from Eritrea, Somalia and Iraq (Vrålstad & Wiggen, 2017).

**Figure 2.7. Self-reported mental health problems, by immigrant category and sex. Per cent** (Kjøllestadal et al., 2019)



Studies from various countries find that immigrants – likely somewhat surprisingly – have a lower mortality rate than the rest of the population. In Norway too, we find a significantly lower mortality rate among immigrants than in the rest of the population (Syse, Dzamarija, 2016). At the same time, the mortality rate varies between different immigrant groups, which reflects the differences in immigrant health described above. Among other things, it looks like country of origin, reason for immigration and period of residence impact mortality rates.

The oldest immigrants (aged 60-79) who arrived in Norway for work or education have the lowest mortality rate, while refugees and Nordic immigrants in the same age group have the highest mortality rates. No immigrant group mentioned above have a higher mortality rate than the rest of the population. Furthermore, the mortality rate is lower for immigrants with shorter periods of residence in Norway, but becomes more similar to the rest of the population after many years in the host country. There may be various explanations for the higher mortality rates associated with longer periods of residence in Norway. One explanation may be that immigrants in general have poorer living conditions, housing, lower incomes and perhaps more strenuous work. Another explanation may be that immigrants adopt the poor habits of the host country. Yet another explanation may be that the strain of leaving their home country, family, eating habits and culture causes stress that over time lead to poorer health (Dzamarija et al., 2022).

### 2.8 Complex causes of high rates of Covid-19 infections

The Covid-19 pandemic hit immigrants harder than the rest of the population and immigrants were overrepresented among confirmed Covid cases and hospitalizations. From February 2020 to June 2021, the share of confirmed covid cases among people with immigrant backgrounds was 4.7 per cent, while the equivalent share for the population without immigrant backgrounds was 1.6 per cent. People born in Norway to immigrant parents also had rates of infection that were nearly four times higher than for those born in Norway with no immigrant backgrounds ([Indseth et al., 2021](#)).

At the same time, there is significant variation in rates of infection and hospitalisation within the population with immigrant backgrounds, and some groups were more heavily impacted than others. This is particularly true for immigrants from Pakistan, Somalia, Iraq, Turkey and Afghanistan. On the other hand, immigrants from China, the USA, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands had a lower rate of confirmed infections than the population without immigrant backgrounds ([Indseth et al., 2021](#)).

Several issues have been identified that may have contributed to higher rates of infection in some immigrant groups. Among other things, these related to socio-economic factors (profession, level of education, living conditions and income), behaviour and network (social connections, compliance with advice, international travel), personal characteristics (age composition, family size, medical risk and genetic issues), communication (language skills, media use, receptivity for information, digital barriers) and the degree of integration/exclusion (trust in authorities, belonging, degree of participation in society) ([Indseth et al., 2021](#)).

In other words, the causes are complex and may have had varied impacts, including at different times during the pandemic, in different immigrant groups.

# 3. Education and qualifications

Education is an important source for understanding the world and improving one's life, among other things. Developing knowledge and skills can be goals in themselves and be key tools for success in other important areas, such as labour market participation, independence and diminishing differences in living conditions.

Education and qualifications are therefore key to integration and constitute the first of four priority areas in the government's integration strategy (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018). Among other things, it is critical to integration that children and youth with immigrant backgrounds do not fall behind in the school system, and that adult immigrants have the opportunity to develop their skills in line with their own needs and the needs of the labour market.

In the Norwegian labour market, where skilled workers are in particular demand, it is often important to have completed upper secondary school in order to succeed. That a significant share of the immigrant population, refugees in particular, only have primary and lower secondary school is an important cause of the differences in employment between immigrants and the rest of the population (Olsen, 2020). Immigrants who have completed education in Norway also have higher rates of employment than those whose education is from another country. This applies regardless of the level of education, but the difference is greatest for refugees who have completed higher education (Official Norwegian Report – NOU, 2021:2).

## Kindergarten attendance

### 3.1 Kindergarten attendance is increasing the most among the youngest children

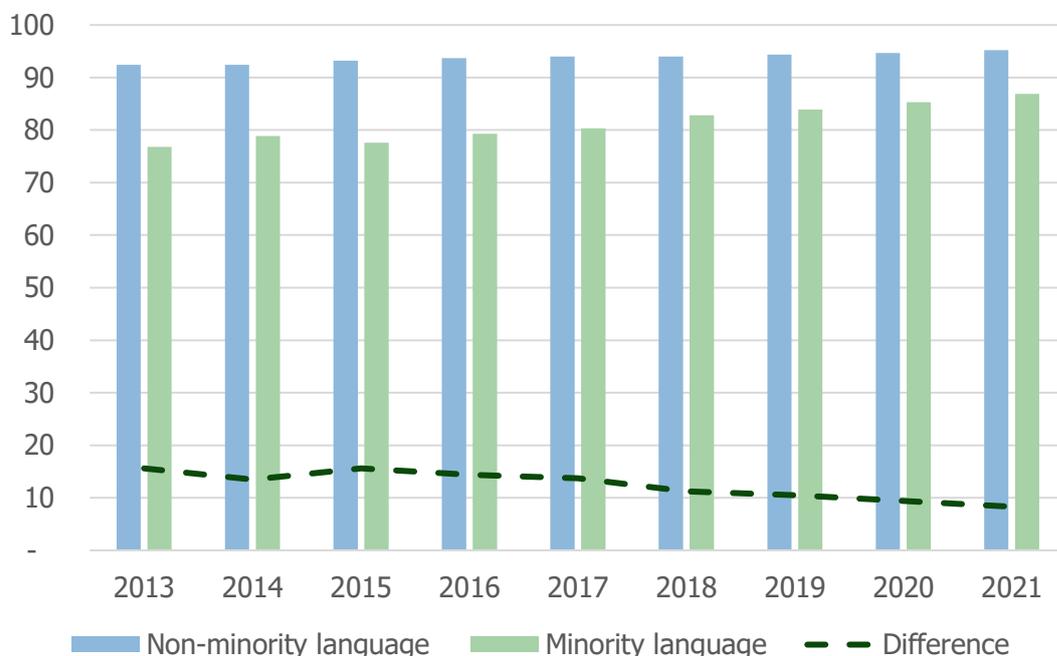
Attending kindergarten is good for the language development and integration of children speaking minority<sup>3</sup> languages. A number of Norwegian studies have found that kindergarten

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<sup>3</sup> In this context, children who speak a minority language are defined as children who have a first language other than Norwegian, Sami, Swedish, Danish or English. There are no available statistics about kindergarten attendance that make it possible to distinguish between immigrant children, children born in Norway to immigrant parents and children without immigrant backgrounds.

attendance and schemes such as “early start” and “free core hours” have positive effects (see for example Drange, 2016, 2018; Drange and Havnes, 2015; Bråten et al., 2014).

Figure 3.1. Kindergarten attendance, children aged 1–5 years, by language background (IMDi, 2021a)



The proportion of children aged 1–5 years who speak a minority language and attend kindergarten<sup>4</sup> has increased from 77 per cent to 87 per cent in the period from 2013–2021. This share is still lower compared to children in this age group who do not speak a minority language, but the differences have declined since 2013 (IMDi, 2021a).

The statistic is also available for children in the various age groups. The greatest differences are found among children aged one and two years old. At the same time, it is among the youngest children that we see the largest increase in the share attending kindergarten in the period from 2013-2021. For one-year olds speaking a minority language, this share has increased by 19 percentage points in this period, and constituted 58 per cent in 2021. Among children who do not speak a minority language, 85 per cent of one-year olds attend kindergarten. From the time they turn three, more than 90 per cent of children speaking a

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<sup>4</sup> The proportion of children with a minority language background refers to the number of children with a minority language background in kindergarten, divided by the total number of children with immigrant backgrounds. The proportion of children with a non-minority language background refers to the number of children with a non-minority language background in kindergarten, divided by the total number of children who do not have an immigrant background.

minority language and more or less every child who does not speak a minority language attend kindergarten ([IMDi, 2021a](#)).

There may be various reasons for the lower rate of kindergarten attendance for children with immigrant backgrounds, such as finances, route to the kindergarten, knowledge of kindergarten as an institution, language challenges, application procedures and social and cultural norms. Financial schemes such as free core hours and the dissemination of information are therefore important tools in increasing kindergarten attendance for families who speak a minority language (Bufdir, 2018).

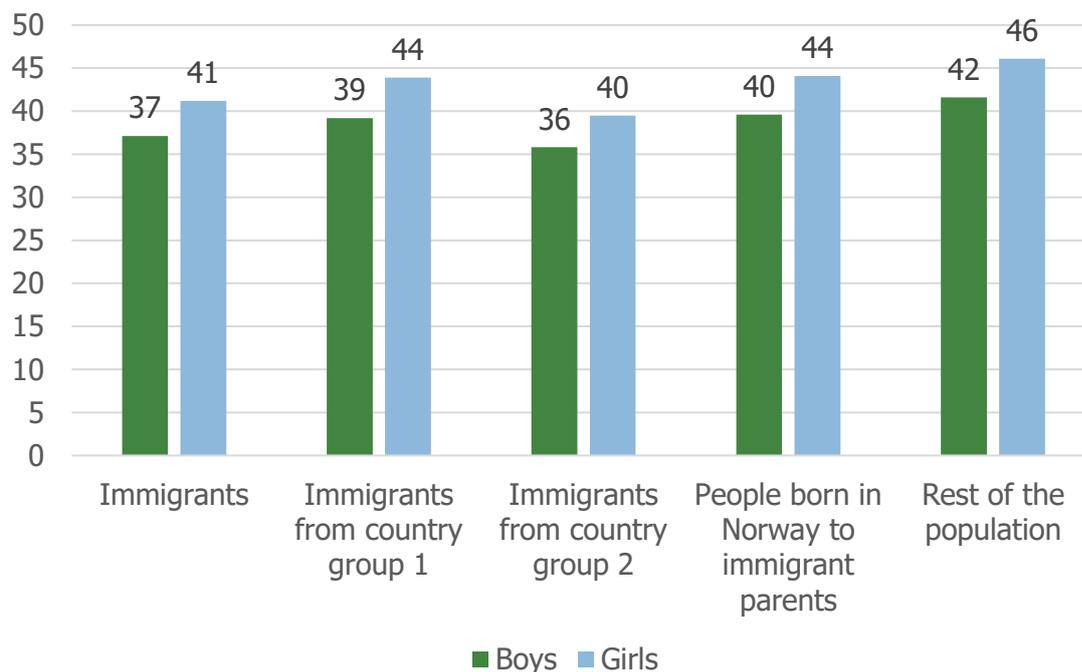
## Results in primary and lower secondary school

### **3.2 Stable differences in primary and lower secondary school results**

School results from compulsory education (measured in “school points”) are used as an indicator of results achieved from primary and secondary education and formal qualification to upper secondary school. Furthermore, grade attainment in primary and lower secondary school is the single-most important factor for completion of upper secondary education or training.

If we look at immigrant background and sex, there are systematic differences in average points from primary and lower secondary school. On average, immigrants have lower grades on completion of lower secondary school compared to the rest of the population. In 2021, the difference was about five points, which corresponds to half a grade. The primary and lower secondary school points for those born in Norway to immigrant parents are on average two points lower than for the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2021b).

**Figure 3.2. Employment rate, by immigrant category and sex. 2021** ([Statistics Norway, 2021b](#))



The above figure shows that results vary by sex and country of origin. Immigrants from country group 1 have an average of 4 points more than those from country group 2. Girls attain more points from primary and lower secondary school than boys, regardless of the immigrant category and country of origin. The grade level in primary and lower secondary school has increased at the same rate over time for all groups in the figure, such that the differences between these groups have been fairly stable since 2009<sup>5</sup>.

### Upper secondary school completion rate

## 3.3 Increasing numbers complete upper secondary school

To measure upper secondary school completion rates, Statistics Norway looks at the completion status for pupils at a particular point in time after they started upper secondary

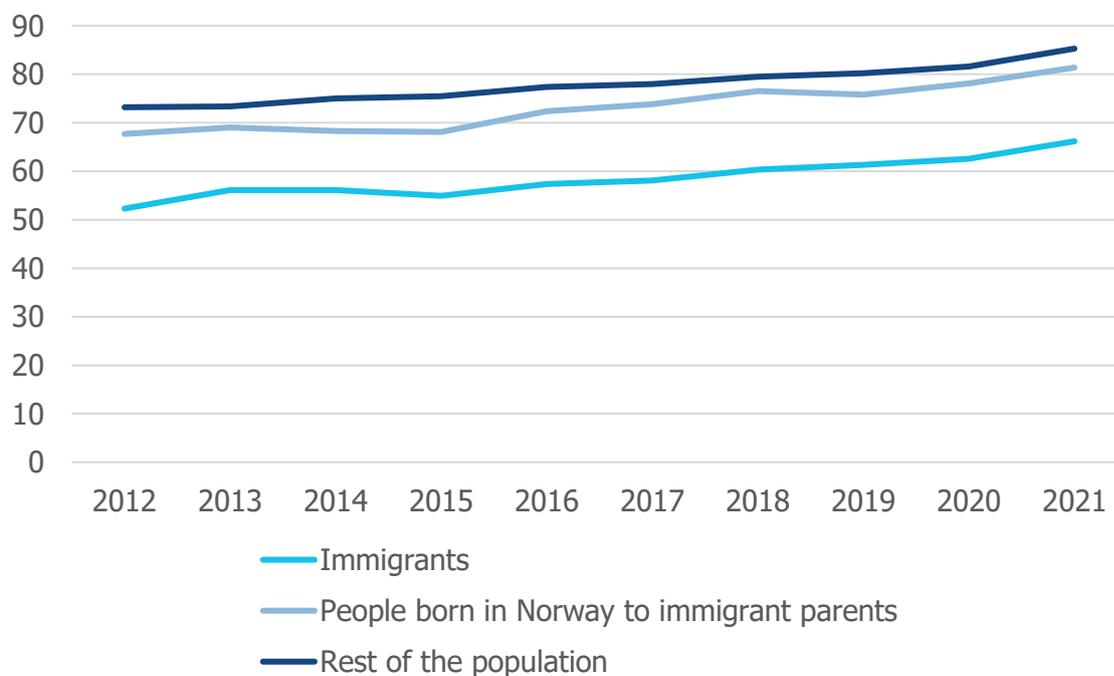
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<sup>5</sup> Due to the government's decision to cancel exams in primary and lower secondary school in 2020 and 2021, primary and lower secondary school points are only based on final assessment grades and are therefore not directly comparable to primary and lower secondary school points from other school years.

school. Pupils who started in one of the general studies programmes, where the stipulated time to completion is three years, are followed for five years in the statistics. Pupils who started one of the vocational programmes, where the stipulated time to completion generally is four years, are followed for six years from their start date.

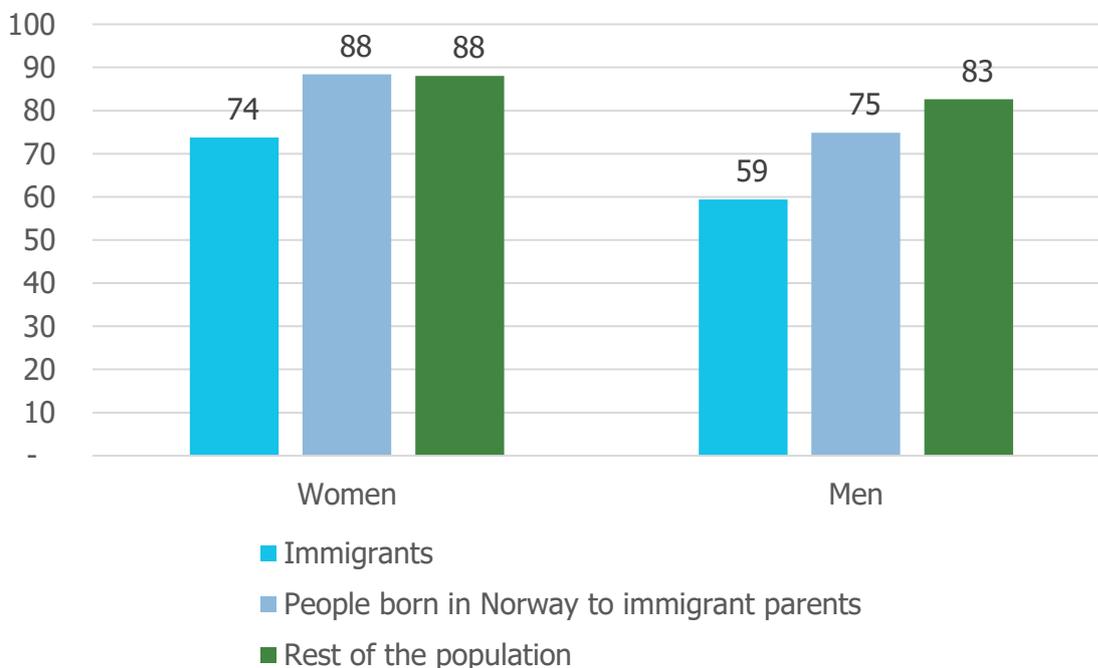
The shares of immigrants, people born in Norway to immigrants parents and the rest of the population that completes upper secondary school in the five or six-year period after starting upper secondary school increased in the period from 2014-2021. Among immigrants, this share has been relatively lower compared to those born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population, at 66 percent, 81 per cent, and 85 percent, respectively, in 2021 (figure 3.3.). As also shown in the figure below, the differences in the rate of completion for those born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population are lower and have declined over time.

**Figure 3.3. Percentage of pupils who have completed upper secondary school within five/six years of starting upper secondary school, by immigrant category** ([Statistics Norway, 2021c](#))



For immigrants, those born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population, the completion rate is generally lower for men, and this share is the lowest for immigrant men (figure 3.4). In 2021, 59 per cent of male immigrants completed upper secondary school within five/six years. The corresponding share among men in the rest of the population was 83 per cent. In addition to girls having a higher completion rate, there were also smaller differences between girls with and without immigrant backgrounds. Girls born in Norway to immigrant parents had the same completion rate in 2021 as girls without an immigrant background, at 88 per cent.

**Figure 3.4. Percentage of pupils who completed upper secondary school within five /six years of starting upper secondary school, by sex and immigrant category. 2021** ([Statistics Norway, 2021c](#))



In addition to sex, the completion rate varies with period of residence in Norway as well as the educational programme selected.

Among pupils resident in Norway for less than three years, 63 per cent completed upper secondary school within five/six years, while the equivalent share for pupils with a residence period of ten years or more was 74 per cent in 2021 (Statistics Norway, 2021s).

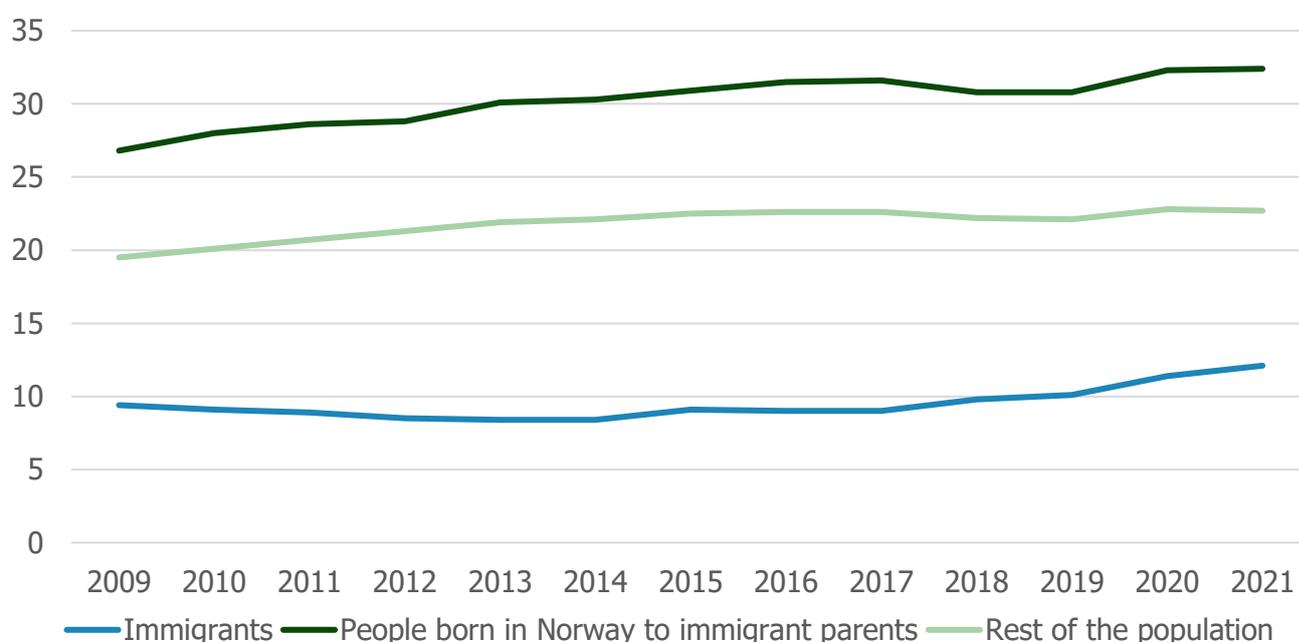
The completion rate for pupils who start vocational education programmes is lower than for those who start programmes in general studies, regardless of whether or not the pupils have immigrant backgrounds. However, immigrants have lower completion rates in both educational tracks compared to the rest of the population. In 2021, 59 per cent of immigrants completed vocational programmes, while 77 per cent completed programmes in general studies. In the rest of the population, the completion rate was 77 per cent for vocational programmes and 92 per cent for academic programmes. Among those born in Norway to immigrant parents, the completion rates for both educational tracks are nearly identical to the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2021c).

## Enrolment in higher education

### 3.4 higher education is highest among those born in Norway to immigrant parents

The proportion of people aged 19–34 years who enrol in higher education has increased steadily since 2009, both among young people with an immigrant background and in the rest of the population. Those born in Norway to immigrant parents stand out, as one of three aged 19–34 were enrolled in higher education in 2021. The equivalent share was 12 per cent for immigrants and 23 per cent in the rest of the population. In all groups, the share was highest for women. Of women aged 19–34 born to immigrant parents, 37 per cent were students in 2021 ([Statistics Norway, 2021d](#)).

**Figure 3.5. Students aged 19–34 in higher education in Norway, as percentage of registered cohort, by immigrant category** ([Statistics Norway, 2021d](#))

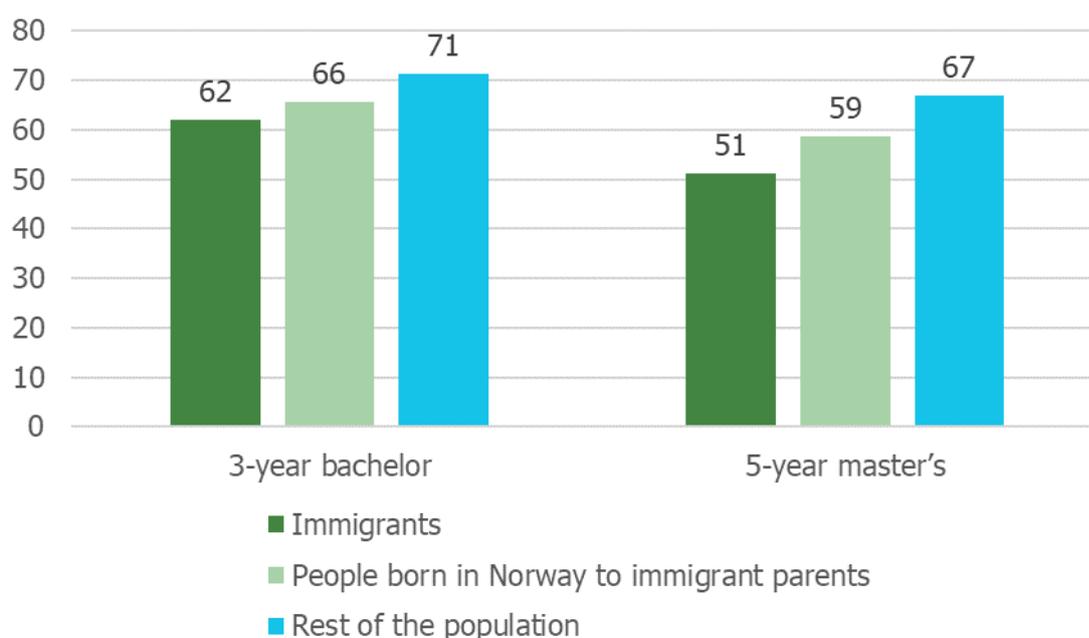


The Institute for Social Research describes the education pattern for people born in Norway to immigrant parents as polarised: those born in Norway to immigrant parents are overrepresented both in higher education and among those who have not completed upper secondary school (ISF, 2019). However, there are significant differences between those born in Norway to immigrant parents when we look at their parents' countries of origin. This is true when we look at both enrolment in and graduation from higher education. Those born in Norway to immigrant parents from India, Sri Lanka or Vietnam are particularly likely to pursue higher education. A smaller share of those born in Norway to immigrant parents from Turkey, Iraq or Morocco enrol in higher education (Kirkeberg et al., 2019).

### 3.5 Lower completion rates among students with immigrant backgrounds

Students with immigrant backgrounds have lower higher education completion rates compared to the rest of the population. Of immigrants who start a three-year bachelor's programme, 62 per cent complete it within five years. As the figure below shows, the equivalent share for the rest of the population is 71 per cent. For five-year master's programmes, the completion rate is also the lowest among immigrants and the highest in the rest of the population, as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 3.6. Number of students who completed their education within two years of the stipulated time, by type of education and immigrant category. 2021**  
(Statistics Norway, 2021e; [Statistics Norway, 2021f](#))



As is true for upper secondary school, the share that completes bachelor's and master's degrees is higher for women than for men, both for those with and without immigrant backgrounds. For immigrants, the completion rate also varies somewhat with the reason for immigration. Those who have immigrated to study or work are most likely to complete their degree. Refugees who started a programme in higher education complete their programme at lower rates than other immigrants ([Statistics Norway, 2021g](#)).

### 3.6 Positive development in Norwegian test results

The main objective of Norway's integration policy is to ensure that immigrants participate more in the labour market and in society as a whole. To achieve this, it is crucial that recently arrived immigrants and refugees are offered and complete qualifications that can help give them permanent ties to the labour market. The qualification measures shall fill the gap between the skills refugees bring from their home countries and the skills the Norwegian labour market requires. In this context, the introduction programme and instruction in Norwegian and social studies<sup>6</sup> are important.

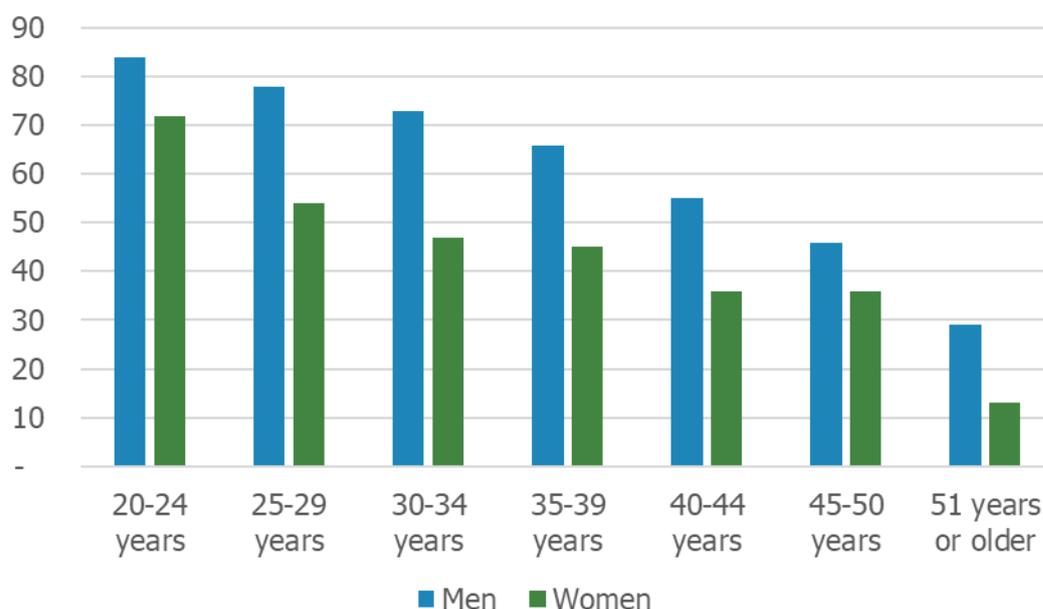
In 2021, 10,554 people participated in the introduction programme. The national goal is for 70 per cent of participants in the introduction programme to be working or in school within one year of completing the programme. Among the participants who completed the introduction programme in 2018, 66 per cent were in work or education in 2019. However, this share fell to 61 per cent for those who completed the programme the following year. This is most likely due to the challenging labour market situation in 2020 that resulted from the infection control measures instituted in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the same time, there is significant variation in terms of sex and age. In the 2019 cohort, 69 per cent of the men and 46 per cent of the women were working or studying in 2020. Among men, the share that transition to work or study increased by 7 percentage points in the period from 2015-2019. In 2020, we see a decrease of four percentage points. For women, this share has been relatively stable during the same period, but here too we see a decrease of two percentage points between 2019 and 2020 (Statistics Norway, 2020).

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<sup>6</sup> In this report, we describe participation and results in two qualification programmes: the introduction programme and instruction in Norwegian and social studies. There are also a number of other schemes that provide qualifications intended to increase participation in the labour market and society as a whole: training for asylum seekers in reception centres, the "Jobbsjansen" ["job opportunity"] scheme, and adapted vocational education and training.

**Figure 3.7. Share in work or education one year after completing the introduction programme, by sex and age. 2020** (Statistics Norway, 2020)



The share that transitions to work or education one year after completing the programme is largest among the youngest participants. The share decreases with age, with the exception of women aged 45-50.

As a result of the new integration act, extensive changes have been made to the introduction programme for participants starting as of 1 January 2021. In future, we will be able to see the effect of the act by measuring these participants' ties to the labour market over time.

As part of the introduction programme, participants receive instruction in Norwegian and in social studies. However, the target group for training in Norwegian and social studies is broader. For example, immigrants aged 16 to 67 (18 to 67 as of 2021) with a residence permit that can form the basis for a permanent residence permit, have a right and obligation to receive instruction in Norwegian and social studies. This is where there are fewer participants in Norwegian and social studies training in recent years. In 2021, 22,200 people participated, which is a 15 per cent decline from the previous year. Since 2017, the number of participants has halved.

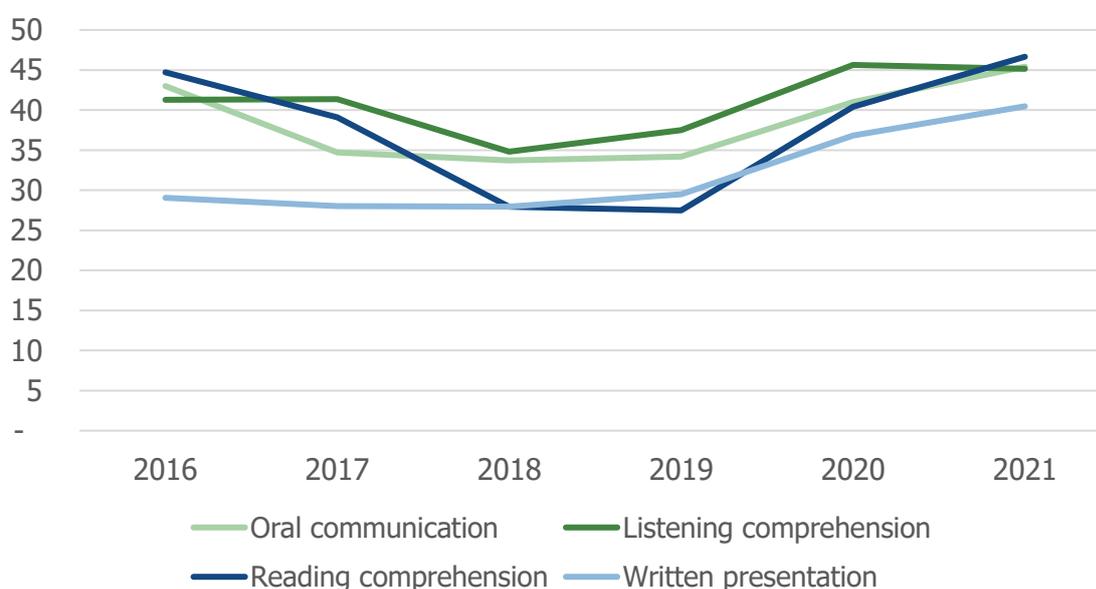
In 2021, there were participants from 136 countries. More than half of the participants came from six countries: Syria, Eritrea, Thailand, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Turkey ([Lunde, 2022](#)).

About 36,400 Norwegian tests were taken in 2021. The Norwegian test consists of test segments in listening comprehension, reading comprehension, written presentation and oral

communication. The results of the Norwegian tests are divided into the following skill levels: A2 or lower (basic user) and B1 or higher (independent user).

The results of the test segments indicate that acquiring written Norwegian skills is the most difficult for immigrants, in that the results on this test are somewhat lower than for the other test segments. At the same time, there was a positive development in the share that passed the Norwegian test at the independent user level for all test segments, as shown in the figure below. All in all, the share that achieved the independent user level on the tests increased from 32 per cent in 2019 to 44 per cent in 2021.

**Figure 3.8. Share of Norwegian tests achieving proficiency level B1 or higher, by test segment** ([Statistics Norway, 2021h](#)).



Participants receiving Norwegian language instruction who have completed higher education are more likely to achieve proficiency level B1 or higher. Furthermore, the Norwegian test results vary by sex and age. Just under half, or 47 per cent, of the tests completed by women were graded at level B1 or B2, against 41 per cent of the tests completed by men. The cohort aged 26-35 has the largest share of tests graded at level B1 or B2, at 53 per cent. Thereafter, the share of tests at this level decline with age ([Statistics Norway, 2021h](#)).

Participants in the introduction programme who have completed the Norwegian test at the independent user level are generally better connected to the labour market than those who tested at the basic level. In 2019, two-thirds of those who passed the test at the

independent user<sup>7</sup> level were employed, while this was true for less than half of those who passed at the basic level ([Lunde, Lysen, 2022](#)).

## Education during the Covid-19 pandemic

### 3.7 Lockdowns and a high rate of absences during the pandemic

The Covid pandemic continued to impact kindergartens, primary and lower secondary schools in 2021 as well. There were significant geographical differences in infection rates and infection control measures, and local outbreaks meant that many kindergartens and schools had to close in whole or in part for some periods.

The organisation into “yellow” and “red” levels in 2020 and 2021 placed high demands on kindergarten staff and impacted staff, children and parents. Among other things, staff had to divide the children into cohorts, adapt the physical environment and plan how to organise the kindergarten day.

Kindergartens were also impacted by a lot of absences among children and staff. Though infection control measures have led to restrictions for children, research shows that it had a low impact on children’s wellbeing while the measures were in effect (Os et al., 2021). The parents of children in kindergarten were also generally happy with the organisation of the kindergartens. The Covid situation does not seem to have changed parents’ satisfaction with kindergartens in general, though there are changes in the level of satisfaction within specific areas. For example, during the pandemic parents were happier with the cleanliness of the kindergartens while satisfaction with the food offered declined. Many parents also missed informal communication when dropping off and picking up their children ([Ministry of Education and Research, 2021](#)).

Schools were also impacted by lockdowns, by “red” level infection control measures during some periods, a high workload for teachers and school administrators and a high rate of absences among pupils and staff. The physical presence at school for the youngest pupils was generally given priority. At the lower and upper secondary school level, a larger share of the pupils did online schooling from home for some of the time.

Many pupils found they were less motivated and learnt less when schools were closed and teaching moved online in spring 2020 (Andersen et al., 2021). A study done among pupils in Oslo showed that pupils from lower socioeconomic segments were overrepresented among

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<sup>7</sup> The population includes previous participants in the introduction programme from 2005-2018 who took the Norwegian test in the period from 2014-2020.

those who did not have adequate digital equipment and internet access at home. The study also found that immigrant youth were overrepresented in this group (Bakken et al., 2020).

For teachers, it was more challenging to communicate and follow up on the pupils through digital means. This was especially true for pupils at a low academic level and vulnerable pupils (Andersen et al., 2021). For example, it was more difficult to provide sufficient follow up of pupils with language challenges due to their minority background ([Caspersen et al., 2021](#)). The pandemic may therefore have contributed to exacerbating existing social differences between pupils.

When we look at the indicators in education, there are thus far few signs that the pandemic has had a negative impact on attendance, completion rates and grades for children and youth with immigrant backgrounds. It is nevertheless uncertain what the consequences of the lockdowns and restrictions will be in the longer term.

## 4. Work and finances

Norwegian society is built on a goal of having small socioeconomic differences (Meld. St. [Report to the Storting] 13, 2018–2019). Major differences in living standards between immigrants and the rest of the population can hinder integration. Work is considered very important to inclusion and integration. Working promotes independence, self-realisation and network building. Furthermore, it gives an increased sense of belonging, prevents poverty, and decreases inequality. The goal of high employment rates among immigrants is also significant socioeconomically, and is a prerequisite for a well-functioning welfare state model in the longer term (NOU 2021:2).

We know that many jobs held by immigrants tend to be characterised by being temporary, part-time and low pay. It is therefore a key goal in the government's integration strategy that more immigrants gain a stable and secure foothold in the labour market (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018). To achieve this goal, immigrants must have more opportunities to acquire formal skills. Among other things, the new integration act makes it possible for such skills to be gained within the framework of the introduction programme.

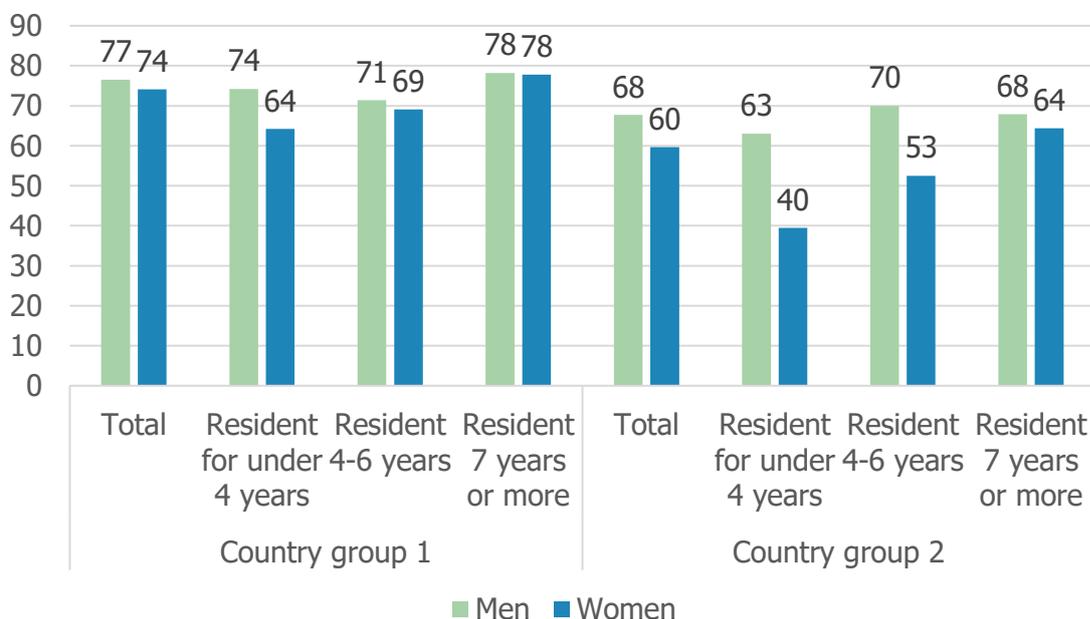
## Reason for immigration, period of residence and employment

### 4.1 Employment rate is lowest for recently arrived refugees

On average, immigrants have lower employment rates than the rest of the population. In 2021, 69 per cent of immigrants were employed, against 79 per cent in the rest of the population. At the same time, there are significant differences between groups in terms of sex, period of residence, reason for immigration and level of education.

A larger share of immigrant men are employed compared to immigrant women. This is especially true for immigrants from country group 2, as shown in figure 4.1. The figure also shows that the sex differences in employment are largest among recently arrived immigrants, or in other words those who have lived in Norway four years or less, and equalize with period of residence in Norway. For country group 1, there are almost no differences in the employment rates of men and women who have lived in Norway for seven years or more. For country group 2, men who have lived in Norway seven years or more still have a slightly higher employment rate than women with an equivalent period of residence, but here too the differences are small.

**Figure 4.1. Employed immigrants by period of residence, country background and sex. Per cent. 2021** ([Statistics Norway, 2021i](#))

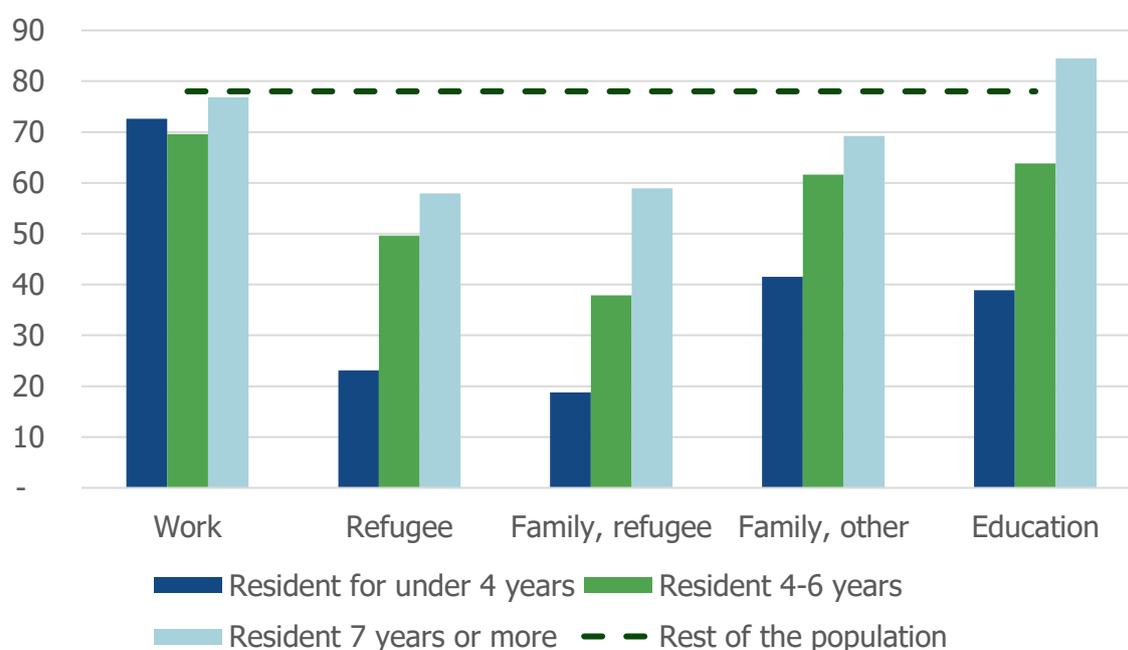


The employment rate is highest among labour immigrants, regardless of their length of residence, and is approximately on par with the rest of the population. For refugees and those who have arrived through family reunification with refugees, it often takes longer to

acquire relevant skills and start working. Most of this group participate in the introduction programme for the first years after being settled in a municipality.

For refugees who have lived in Norway for more than six years, the employment rate was twice as high as for those with a shorter period of residence, at 58 against 23 per cent. For those who have arrived through family reunification, the share is three times bigger after six years, at 59 against 19 per cent. At the same time, research has found a stagnation in labour market participation after the rapid increase during the first 6-8 years after settlement (Bratsberg et al., 2016, 2017; Røed et al., 2019). Employment also does not increase with longer periods of residence at the same rate for all refugee groups. For example, recently arrived male refugees start working faster than recently arrived female refugees (Olsen & Askvik, 2021).

**Figure 4.2. Employment rate, by period of residence and reason for immigration. Per cent. 2020** ([Statistics Norway, 2020b](#))

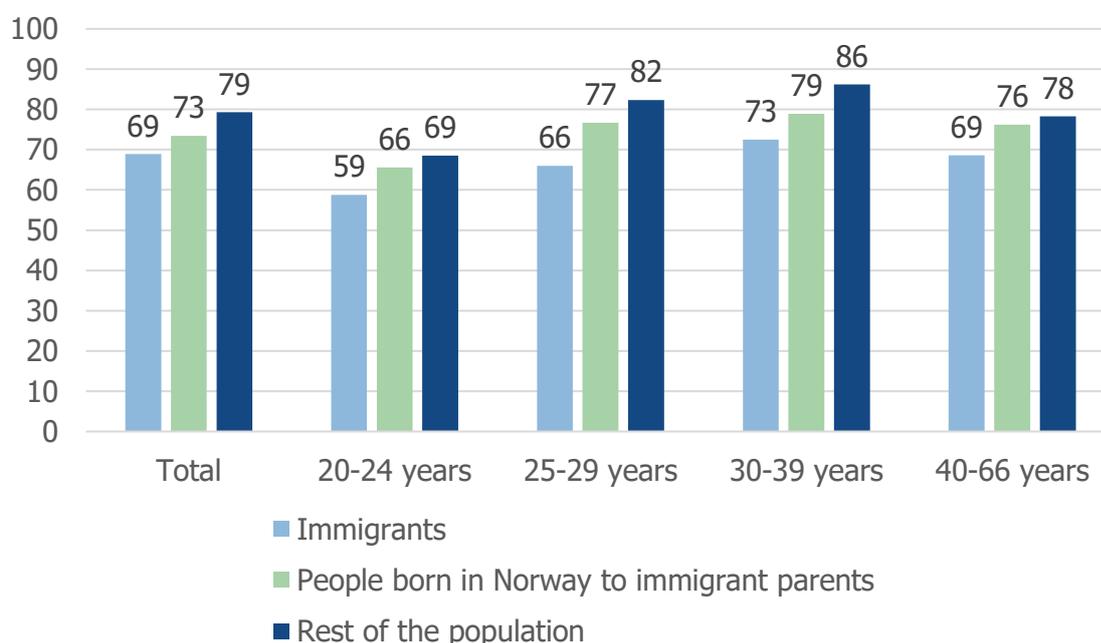


### 4.2 Positive development in the employment rate of people born in Norway to immigrant parents

As previously mentioned, most of those born in Norway to immigrant parents are relatively young – three of four are under the age of 18. Nevertheless, it is interesting to monitor this group's participation in the labour market, compared to immigrants and the rest of the population.

Figure 4.3 shows that the employment rate for people born in Norway to immigrant parents is somewhere between the employment rates for immigrants and for the rest of the population. This is true both when we compare to the rest of the population and when we break it down by different age groups. 73 per cent of those born in Norway to immigrant parents were employed in 2021, compared to 69 per cent of immigrants. In the population without immigrant backgrounds, 79 per cent were employed.

**Figure 4.3. Employment rate, by immigrant category and sex. Per cent. 2021** ([Statistics Norway, 2021j](#)).



At the same time, the employment rate for those born in Norway to immigrant parents varies with their parents' country of origin. People aged 25-39 and born in Norway to immigrant parents from India or Vietnam have the highest employment rate, which is on par with the employment rate of their peers without immigrant backgrounds. This applies to

both sexes. For those born in Norway to immigrant parents from Turkey, Pakistan, Chile or Morocco, the employment rate is lower (Kirkeberg et al., 2019).

As for immigrants, the differences in the employment rates between those born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population was lower in 2021 than in the previous year. This positive development with declining differences has been registered since 2015<sup>8</sup>, with an exception for the pandemic year of 2020.

## Working hours

### 4.3 Four of ten immigrant women work part time

A larger share of the immigrant population is employed in part-time positions<sup>9</sup> than the rest of the population. In 2021, 27 per cent of immigrants worked part-time, against 23 per cent of the rest of the population. In general, women are more likely to work part-time than men. In 2021, women had twice the rate of part-time employment compared to men. This was true for employees both with and without immigrant backgrounds. However, immigrant women have the largest share of part-time employment at 39 per cent, compared to 32 per cent for women without immigrant backgrounds and 18 per cent for men with immigrant backgrounds ([Statistics Norway, 2021k](#)).

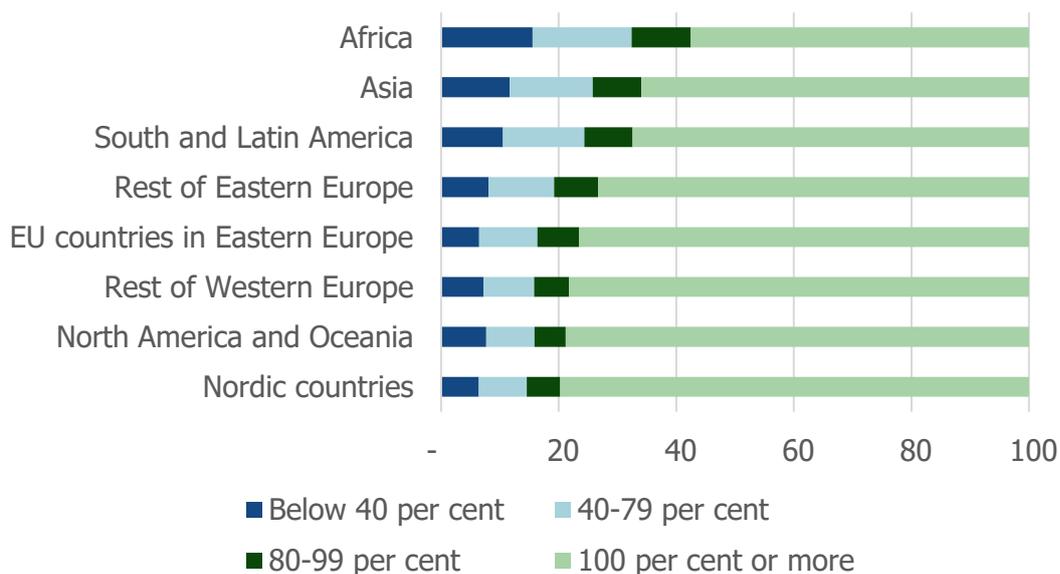
Figure 4.4 shows that the part-time status among immigrants also depend on country of origin. Part-time work is relatively more common among immigrants from Africa, Asia and Latin and South America. On the other hand, immigrants from European countries, North America and Oceania have a lower rate of part-time work compared to the rest of the population. The differences in full-time work between immigrants from different world regions must be seen in the context of the types of jobs they have, among other things. Immigrants from Africa and Asia are overrepresented in industries in which part-time work is common, such as sales and service jobs and cleaning.

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<sup>8</sup> As of 2015, the employment statistics from Statistics Norway are based on new data for employees (the "A-ordningen"). Therefore, the figures from before 2015 are not directly comparable to those from 2015 onwards.

<sup>9</sup>Statistics Norway defines part-time as any position that is less than full-time.

**Figure 4.4. Distribution by percentage of FTE, employed immigrants by country background. 2021** (Statistics Norway, 2021k)

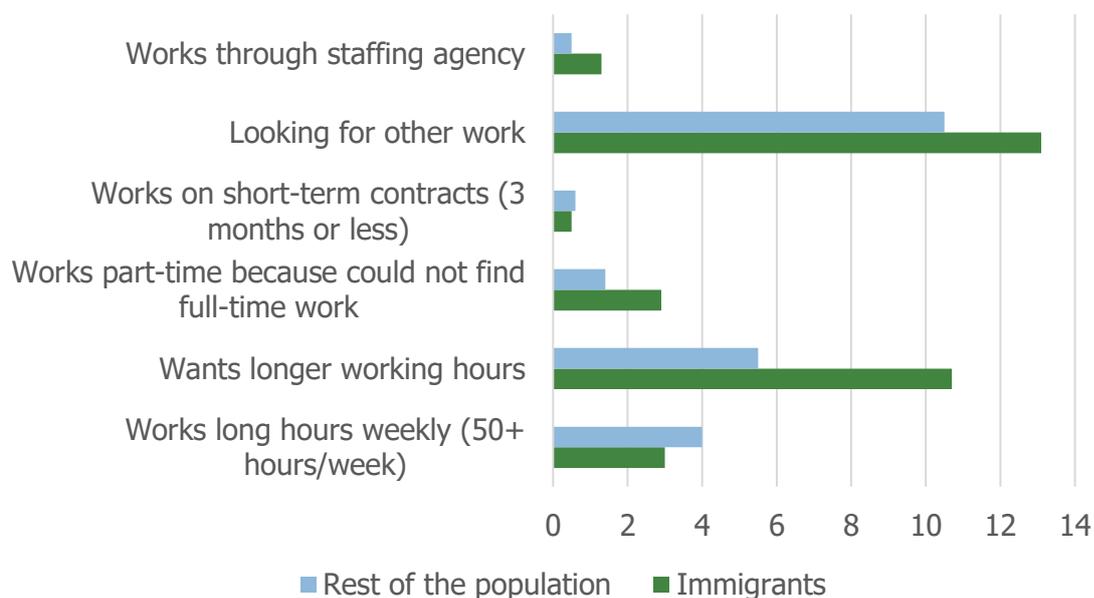


## Job quality

### 4.4 Immigrants are more likely to be overqualified for their jobs

Though the rate of employment and rate of full-time work are important indicators of integration, these indicators nonetheless do not paint the entire picture of immigrants' ties to the labour market. These indicators tell us little about how immigrants experience their workday compared to the rest of the population. To show more aspects of employment, the UN and others have developed a set of indicators for measuring job quality (UN, 2015). Figure 4.5 shows a selection of the UN indicators for job quality, divided by immigrant category.

**Figure 4.5. Select job quality indicators, by immigrant category, 2021. Per cent. (Lien, 2022)**



Immigrants score lower than the rest of the population on four of six indicators in the figure, and this suggests a number of inequalities in the work situation of the two groups. Among employed immigrants, 13 per cent are actively looking for new job. In the rest of the population, this share is 10 per cent. Furthermore, immigrants are three times more likely than the rest of the population to have to work part-time because they cannot find full-time work. This applies to three per cent of immigrants compared to one per cent of the rest of the population. Compared to the rest of the population, twice as many immigrants also want longer working hours (Lien, 2022).

At the same time, the figure above also helps confirm that short-term contracts are not common in the Norwegian labour market. In fact, there are fewer immigrants working on contracts lasting three months or less than the rest of the population, though the differences are minimal. On the other hand, we know that the rate of temporary employment is higher for immigrants than for the rest of the population. Among other things, this may relate to temporary employment being common in industries in which immigrants are overrepresented, such as in sales and service jobs (Aamodt, 2020). In 2020, 10.1 per cent of employed immigrants held temporary positions against 7.2 per cent of the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2020d). The rate of temporary employment was highest among immigrant women and immigrants from country group 2.

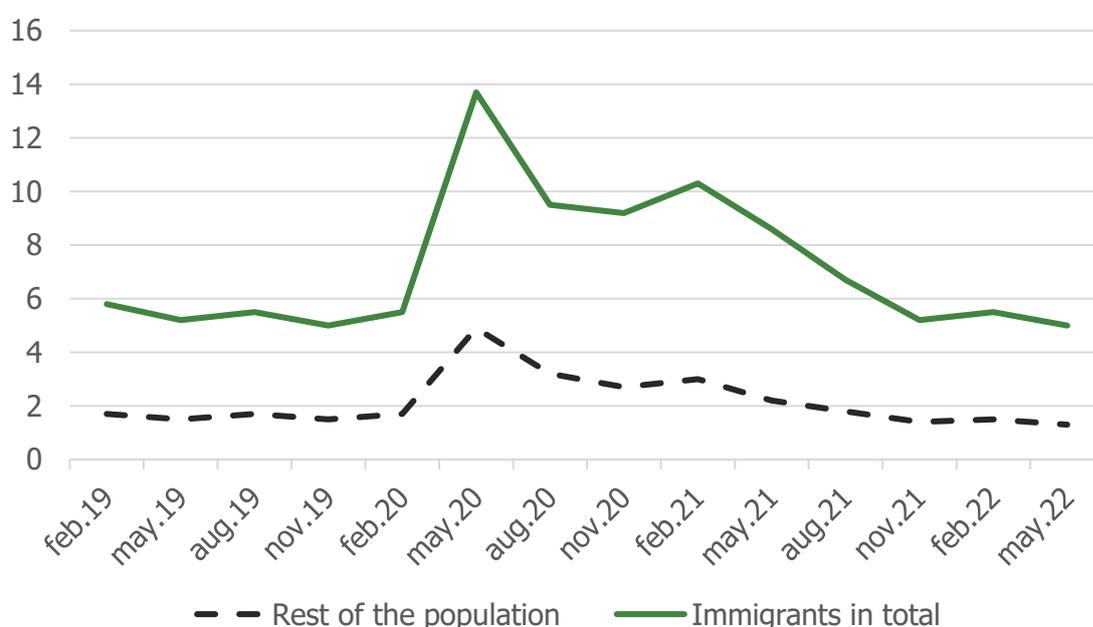
Immigrants were also more likely to be overqualified for their jobs. In 2021, four of ten immigrants worked in professions with lower skill requirements than their education indicated. In the rest of the population, 14 per cent are overqualified for their jobs. These differences have remained fairly stable since 2015 (Edelmann, Villund, 2022).

## Unemployment

### 4.5 More and longer term unemployment among immigrants

By definition, the unemployed are people able to work who have tried to find work and are available for work, but have no job offer (Statistics Norway, 2020e). Among immigrants, the unemployment rate is three times as high as in the rest of the population. Several studies also show that immigrants are unemployed for longer period than people born in Norway, and that a period of unemployment has a more negative impact on immigrants in terms of future employment and income than it does for the rest of the population (Kann et al., 2019).

**Figure 4.6. Unemployed as percentage of workforce, by immigrant category (Statistics Norway, 2020e; NAV 2022)**



Measured as a percentage of the workforce, five per cent of immigrants were unemployed at the end of 2019. The equivalent share for the rest of the population was 1.5. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit the labour market in the spring of 2020, many employees were laid off and there were relatively fewer new jobs in the market. This led to a dramatic increase in the unemployment rate (Olsen, 2021a). The unemployment rate increased to 13.7 per cent for immigrants and to 4.9 per cent for the rest of the population. However, over the course of 2021, the unemployment rate started falling again, both for immigrants and for the rest of the population. In the first quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate was on par with the first quarter of 2020.

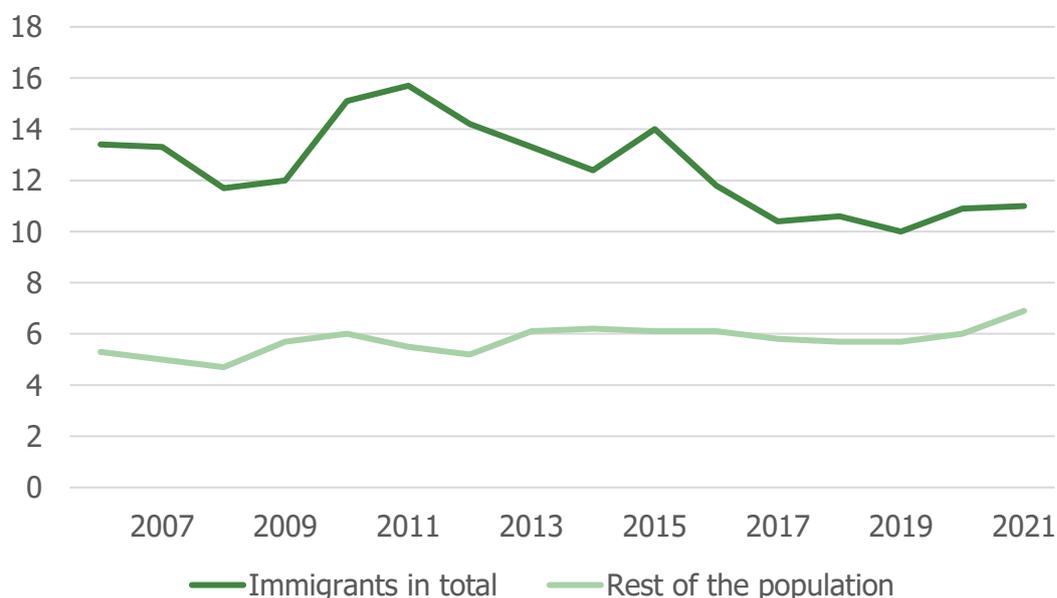
## NEET - youth not in employment, education or training

### 4.6 Young immigrants more likely to be left behind

Youth who are not in employment, education or training are often referred to as “NEET”. In Norway, 7.4 per cent of all youth under age 30 were in this category in 2021. This is lower than the average for other European countries, which in 2020 was 13.7 per cent (Eurostat, 2021).

Immigrants are more likely to end up in the NEET group than majority youth. In part, this can be explained by there being a larger share of immigrants who only have primary and lower secondary school education. Low educational attainment is the primary risk factor for NEET status among young people in Norway (OECD, 2018). In 2021, 11 per cent of young immigrants were not in employment, education or training, against 7 per cent in the rest of the population.

**Figure 4.7. NEET share by sex and immigrant category. Per cent. 2006-2021 (Aamodt, 2022)**



Among immigrants, the NEET share is larger for women than for men. In 2021, 9 per cent of young immigrant men were in this category, while the equivalent figure for immigrant women was 13 per cent. For the rest of the population, the reverse is true: the share for young men was larger than for young women, at 7 and 6 per cent respectively. In other

words, the NEET share is biggest for immigrant women and the sex differences in the NEET share is also larger for immigrants.

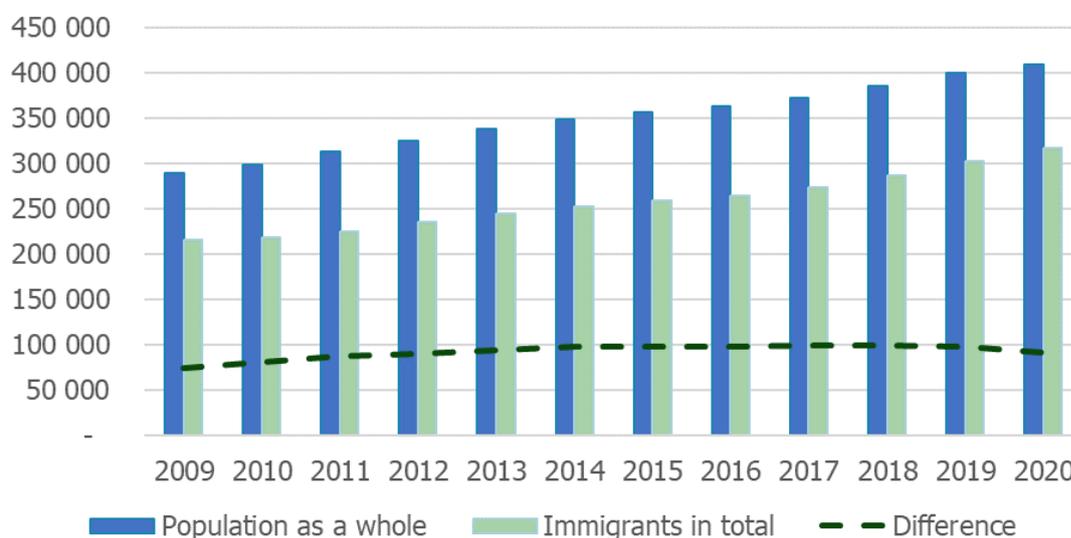
As shown in figure 4.7, the share of youth not in employment, education and training has declined for immigrants in the past 10 years, while there has been a slight increase in this share in the rest of the population.

## Income

### 4.7 No increase in income inequalities during the pandemic

As a group, immigrants have a lower average income than the population as a whole. In 2020, this difference was about NOK 90,000, which is a slight decline compared to 2019, as shown in figure 4.8. Among other things, this may be because reduced incomes among workers impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown was compensated through benefits, such as unemployment benefits or salary loss compensation ([Arntzen, Hattrem, 2021](#)). In other words, the benefit schemes helped ensure that the income inequalities between immigrants and the rest of the population did not grow in 2020, despite the overrepresentation of immigrants in industries that were the hardest hit by the lockdown.

**Figure 4.8. Median income after tax, the whole population and immigrants.**



Immigrants' income levels vary and are closely related to labour force participation. Immigrant groups with low employment rates are also at greater risk of falling below the

low-income threshold. For example, the median income is lowest among refugees and highest among labour migrants.

Regardless of their reason for immigration, immigrants' income levels rise with longer periods of residence in Norway (Statistics Norway, 2020f).

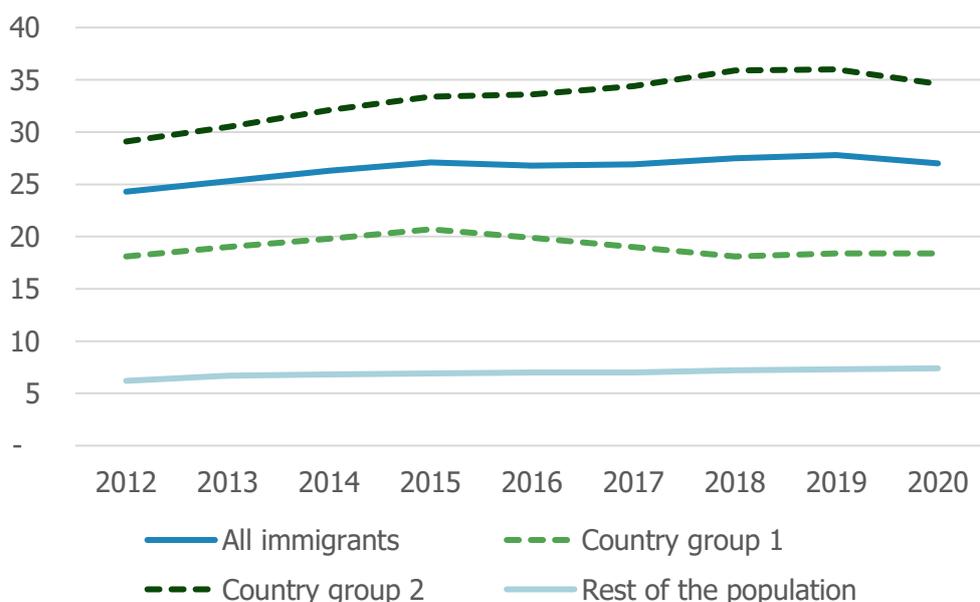
### Persistent low income

## 4.8 Children of immigrants are more likely to grow up in families with persistent low incomes

Low income is defined as income (after tax and adjusted for household size) that is below 60 per cent of the national median income. Persistent low income is defined as having a low income for a period of three years (Epland, Normann, 2021).

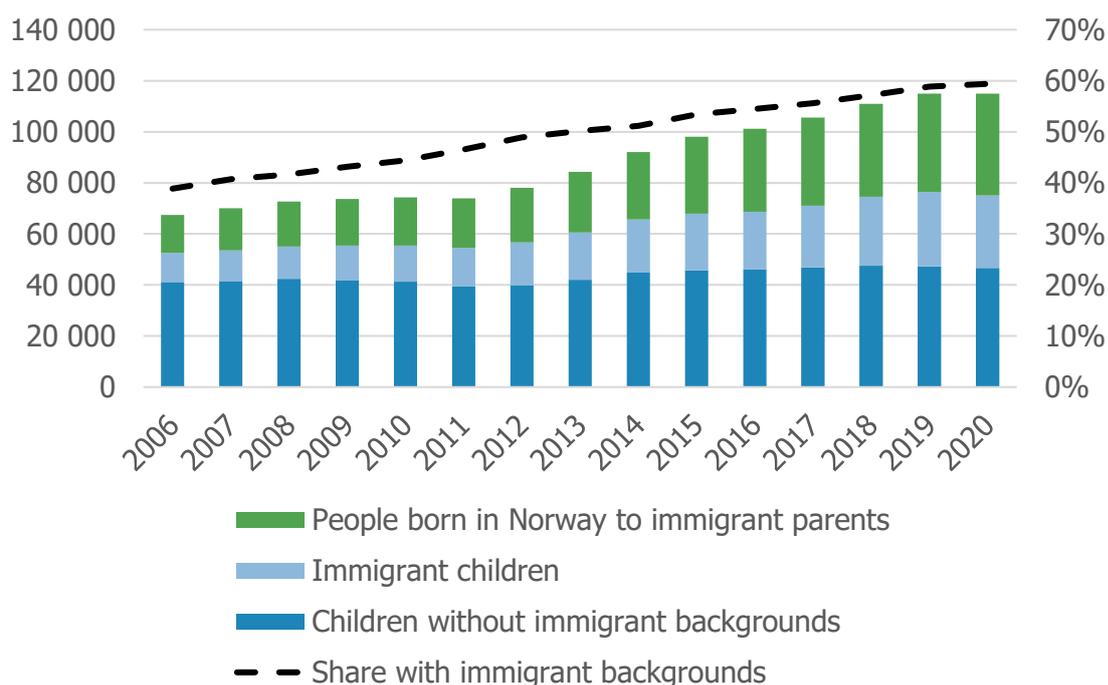
In the period from 2018-2020, 27 per cent of immigrants and 7 per cent of the rest of the population were in this category. The share of immigrants from country group 2 in this category was particularly large. As much as 35 per cent of this group experienced persistent low incomes during this period. This was twice the rate of immigrants from country group 1. Figure 4.9 illustrates this.

**Figure 4.9. Share with persistent low income, by immigrant category (IMDi, 2020).**



As shown in figure 4.10, increasing numbers of children grow up in households with persistent low incomes. In 2020, 115,000 children grew up in such households (Epland, Normann, 2021). Of these children, 59 per cent had immigrant backgrounds; this includes children born abroad as well as those born in Norway to immigrant parents. In comparison, this share was 39 per cent in 2006. In other words, children with immigrant backgrounds are increasingly overrepresented among children living in households with persistent low incomes.

**Figure 4.10. Children in households with a persistent low incomes, number and share with immigrant backgrounds. (Statistics Norway, 2020g)**



The likelihood of living in persistent low income households varies significantly with the country of origin of the children’s families. Three of four children with a Syrian background and two of three children with a Somali background lived in low-income families in 2020. However, the same was true for less than ten per cent of children in families from India or Bosnia-Herzegovina (Statistics Norway, 2020h). Household size and composition are closely related to persistent low incomes in families with children and may help explain the differences by country of origin. For example, children with immigrant backgrounds are slightly more likely than other children to live with a single parent. At the same time, children with immigrant backgrounds are more likely to live in large households.

The number of labour-market participants in the household and the period of residence in Norway are also factors that impact the families’ income levels (Epland, Normann, 2021).

Looking at children in low-income households over a period of nine years produces a clearer image that children with immigrant backgrounds are significantly overrepresented among

those with the most difficult financial circumstances during much of their childhoods. Income mobility is also clearly lower in this group compared to the rest of the population (Normann, 2021).

Children who grow up in low-income households generally have lower grades in primary and lower secondary school and are less likely to complete upper secondary school or higher education. As adults, a smaller share of this group work.

Those born in Norway to immigrant parents and who grow up in low-income households have a higher rate of graduation and labour-market participation compared to immigrants and persons without immigrant backgrounds in the same situation. This suggests that those born in Norway to immigrant parents are less impacted by growing up in low-income households (Ekren, Grendal, 2021). In turn, this suggests that there is a high educational and income mobility in this group. This has also been described in other studies of those born in Norway to immigrant parents ([Kirkeberg et al., 2019](#)).

## Living conditions

### 4.9 Immigrants live in more crowded housing

While almost 90 per cent of the non-immigrant population own their home, it is more common among immigrants to rent. In 2021, 38 per cent of immigrants from country group 1 and 42 per cent from country group 2 rented their home.

Though the difference in the share that rents is small between the two groups, there is significant variation within each country group. For example, the ownership rate is high among immigrants from Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Pakistan and lower among immigrants from Somalia (Normann, 2017). The differences in home ownership between the two country groups and the rest of the population have remained relatively stable since 2015.

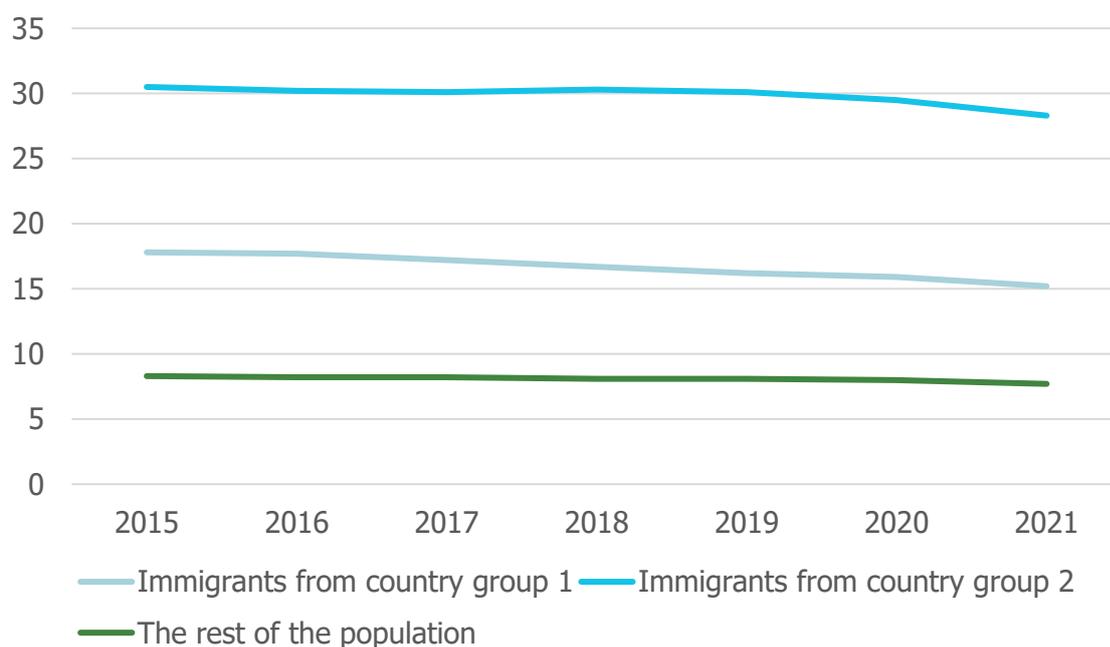
A possible cause of the lower ownership rate among immigrants is that entry to the housing market requires a sufficiently high income level. As already noted, immigrants are overrepresented among low-income households. On average, immigrants with longer periods of residence in Norway have higher incomes than those with shorter periods of residence in Norway. The share that owns their home therefore also increases with longer periods of residence in Norway (Normann, 2017).

Immigrants also generally live in more crowded housing than the rest of the population (as shown in figure 4.11), but in this context there is significant variation between different immigrant groups. In 2021, 15 per cent of immigrants from country group 1 and 28 per

cent from country group 2 lived in crowded housing<sup>10</sup>. Eight per cent of the rest of the population live in crowded housing. Figure 4.11 also shows that the differences described above have been fairly stable since 2015.

The share that lives in crowded housing is relatively larger among refugees and those who arrived in Norway through family reunification and relatively smaller among labour immigrants and immigrants from Nordic countries. In addition to the reason for immigration, crowded housing relates to household size, age, income and to some degree to period of residence in Norway (Arnesen, 2020; Dzamarija, 2022).

**Figure 4.11. Crowded housing by immigrant category** (Statistics Norway, 2021m)



If we look at housing type, immigrants are less likely to live in detached housing than the rest of the population. This is particularly true for immigrants from country group 2. In this group, 31 per cent lived in detached housing in 2021, compared to 48 per cent of immigrants from country group 1. In the rest of the population, 58 per cent lived in detached housing in 2021. The share of immigrants from country group 2 who lived in blocks of flats was twice as large as for the rest of the population, at 38 and 18 per cent, respectively (Statistics Norway, 2021n). In country group 1, 24 per cent lived in blocks of flats.

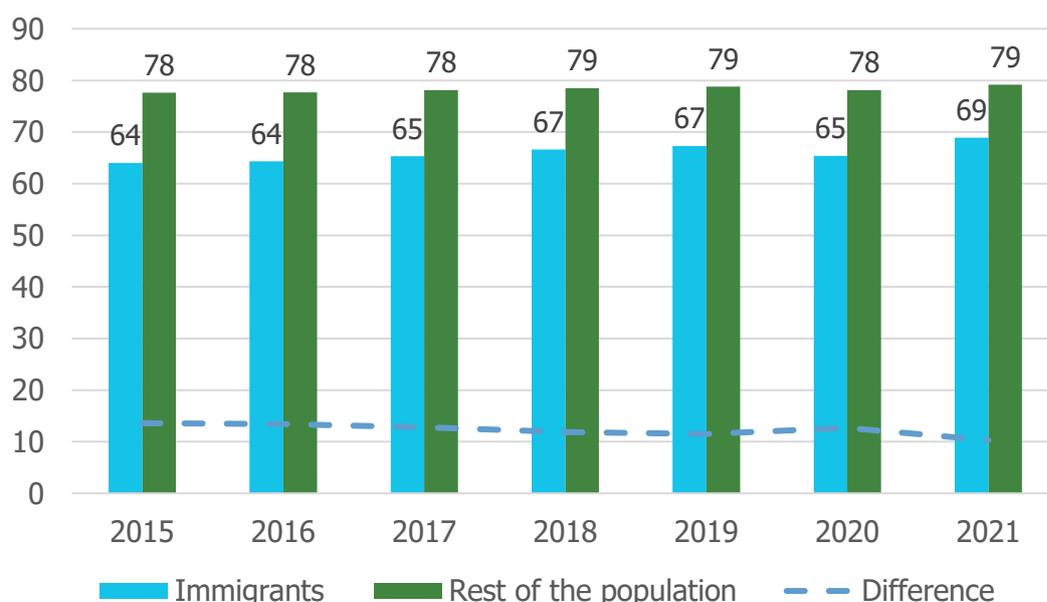
<sup>10</sup> Households are considered crowded if: 1. The number of rooms in the dwelling is smaller than the number of people or if one person lives in one room, and 2. The size of the dwelling (the "per person floor space") amounts to less than 25 square metres per person.

## Employment and the Covid-19 pandemic

### 4.10 Increased employment the year after the pandemic started

The Covid-19 pandemic had greater consequences for immigrants' labour-market participation compared to the consequences it had for the rest of the population. In 2020, a decline in the share of employed immigrants was registered, which had not occurred since 2015<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, there were growing differences in the employment rates of immigrants and the rest of the population, as shown in figure 4.12. The employment rate of immigrants aged 20-66 declined from 67.3 per cent in Q4 of 2019 to 65.4 per cent in Q4 of 2020. In the rest of the population, this share declined from 78.8 per cent to 78.1 per cent.

Figure 4.12. Employment rate for persons aged 20-66, by immigrant category. Per cent. (Statistics Norway, 2021i)



The statistic for 2021 shows that this negative development was short-lived. During 2021, immigrants' employment rate increased by 3.5 percentage points, from 65.4 per cent to 68.9 per cent. In the rest of the population, the employment rate increased by 1.1. percentage points, to 79.2 per cent. This indicates that not only has the positive trend stabilised, the

<sup>11</sup>As of 2015, the employment statistics from Statistics Norway are based on new data for employees (the "A-ordningen"). This means that the figures up to 2014 are not directly comparable to the figures after 2014.

reduced differences in employment rates that were observed prior to 2020 have continued in 2021.

In 2021, the differences in employment rates between immigrants and the rest of the population were at their lowest since 2015. This was true for both sexes and for immigrants from country groups 1 and 2 (Statistics Norway, 2021i).

The increase in 2021 must be seen in the context of the strong growth in the industries that were hit hard by the Covid-19 measures, such as the hotel and service industries and business services. In these industries we see a greater increase in the number of immigrant employees than in the number of other employees ([Olsen, 2022](#)).

## 5. Everyday integration

Everyday integration takes place in meetings between people, whether physically or digitally, in formal or informal arenas, and in small and large communities. Integration is about creating trust, belonging, networks and participation (the Government's integration strategy 2019-2020).

The various forms of contact and interaction between immigrants and the rest of society is often called "everyday integration". These aspects of integration are about people's subjective perceptions, experiences and feelings, and interpersonal social relationships in everyday life (Dalen et al., 2022).

In line with the government's integration strategy, the goal of everyday integration is for immigrants to feel a greater sense of belonging and to participate more in society. This requires both effort from each immigrant and that immigrants are met with openness and are given the opportunity to participate in the same way as others are. To succeed in everyday integration, prevent segregation and promote an understanding of the fundamental values of Norwegian society, measures have been implemented that include facilitating shared meeting spaces and interactions between immigrants and the rest of the population (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018).

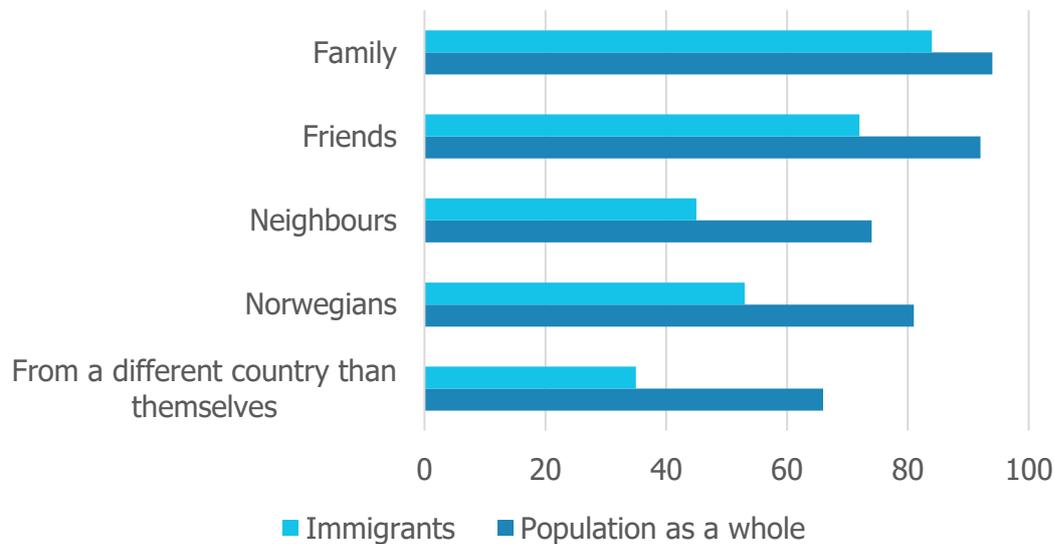
### 5.1 Lower trust in other people among immigrants

Trust among the population is an important underlying factor for several aspects of a well-functioning society – including economic growth, democratic processes and good health (Rothstein 2001; Bergh and Bjørnskov 2012; Dalen et al., 2022). In 2016, the Brochman II Committee was appointed to study, among other things, whether immigration poses a challenge for trust and cohesion in society. In its report, the Committee argued that the experience of cohesion and societal trust is best fostered by focusing on the inclusion of immigrants through the most important social institutions, such as the labour market and education. The Committee emphasised that successful integration is an important prerequisite for maintaining trust and cohesion in Norwegian society (Official Norwegian Report NOU, 2017:2).

A distinction is generally made between horizontal trust and vertical trust. Horizontal trust, also known as generalised or interpersonal trust, may be defined as the tendency to trust other people, whether complete strangers or specific groups of people (such as one's own family, people in one's own neighbourhood or ethnic minorities) (Dalen et al., 2022). Vertical trust, also known as institutional trust, refers to people's trust in key societal institutions, such as the police or health institutions (Dalen et al., 2022).

A question that is often used when measuring horizontal trust is: "Would you generally say that people are trustworthy, or that you can never be too careful when dealing with others?" Several studies have found that immigrants on average are somewhat less trusting of others than the rest of the population (Vrålstad and Wiggen 2017; Dalen et al, 2022; Støren, 2019). This is true for trust in Norwegians generally, in other immigrants and in neighbours. Figure 5.1 illustrates this.

**Figure 5.1. Percentage with complete or a high degree of trust in groups of others (Dalen et al., 2022)**



\*not including Norwegians without immigrant backgrounds

At the same time, there is variation between different immigrant groups in terms of their degree of trust. First, there is a connection between trust in people generally and country of origin. Research also shows that immigrants adapt to the level of trust in the countries in which they settle. For instance, studies among immigrants in Norway indicate that immigrants with longer periods of residence, better knowledge of Norwegian and stronger attachments to the labour market have slightly higher horizontal trust than immigrants who do not score as highly on these questions (Dalen et al., 2022; Støren, 2019).

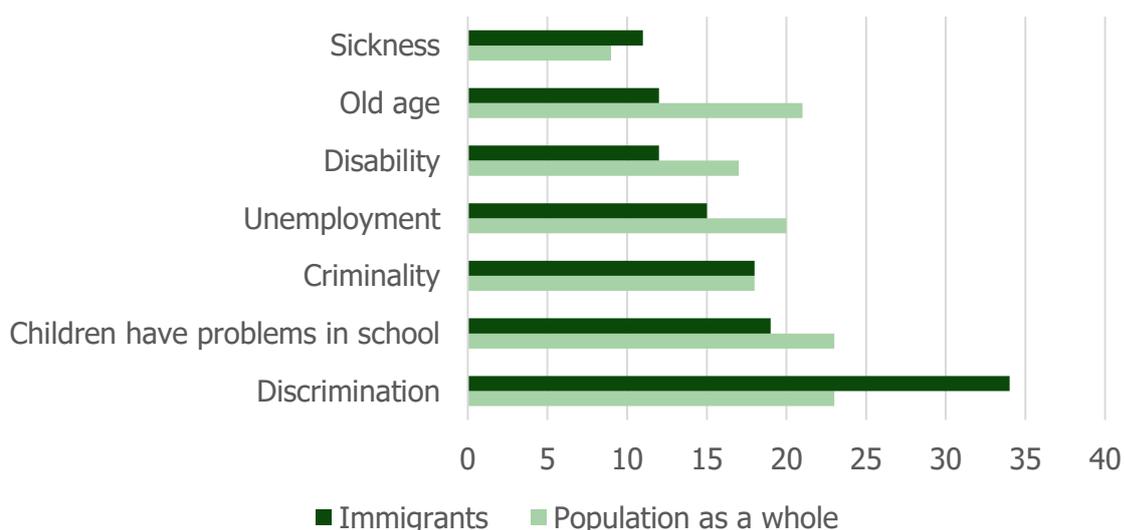
In terms of vertical trust, the findings are not as clear. Institutional trust seems not to be significantly associated with immigrants’ employment rate or Norwegian skills. Some research indicates that immigrants with higher education have greater trust in institutions than those with less education. In contrast to horizontal trust, which increases with longer periods of residence, research has found that those with longer periods of residence generally have less trust in institutions than those with shorter periods of residence (Dalen et al., 2022).

In Statistics Norway’s survey on living conditions among immigrants, the following question is asked: “On a scale of 0 to 10, how much confidence do you, personally, have in the political system in Norway?” (Vrålstad & Wiggen, 2017). The findings show that 41 per cent of respondents express great confidence in the political system. This is significantly higher than in the population as a whole, where 26 per cent have great confidence in the political system.

However, the “Everyday integration - a pilot study about trust, belonging, participation and discrimination in the immigrant population”, which was carried out by Fafo in 2022, showed that immigrants have slightly less trust in institutions than the rest of the population (Dalen et al., 2022).

The degree of institutional trust among immigrants also varies according to the institution in question. The health system, schools, police and courts are the institutions that enjoy the greatest levels of trust among both immigrants and the rest of the population, while trust in the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, media, politicians and child welfare services is lower. In the same study, respondents were also asked whether they were confident that they will receive the help they need from Norwegian authorities, should they experience difficulties in their everyday lives. This question was meant to give respondents a more concrete situation to relate to than the more general questions about trust. The findings are shown in the figure below.

**Figure 5.2. Percentage that feels uncertain about whether they would receive the help they need from the authorities in specific situations (Dalen et al., 2022)**

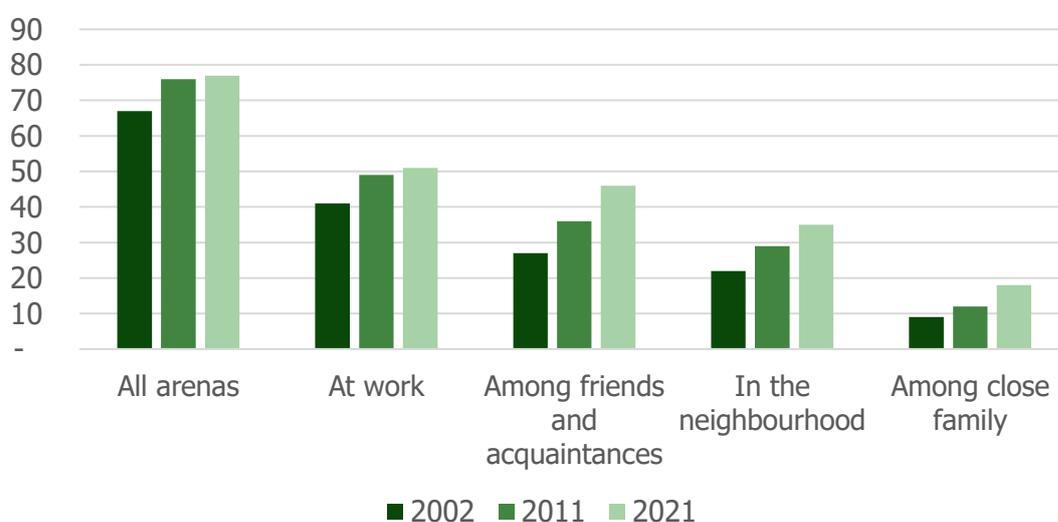


As shown in figure 5.2, immigrants are more confident than the population as a whole that they will receive the help they need from the authorities in old age or in the event of disability, unemployment or if their children have problems in school. They are as confident as the population as a whole that they will receive help if they are the victims of crime. Two areas stand out: illness and discrimination. Eleven per cent say that they do not trust that they would receive the help they need should they become ill, which is higher than for the population as a whole. About one in three immigrants in the survey (34 per cent) say that they do not trust that they would receive the help they need if they experience discrimination. This is significantly higher than in the population as a whole (23 per cent).

## 5.2 Increasing contact with immigrants in different arenas

As the share of immigrants in the population has grown over the past twenty years, greater numbers of people have personal contact with immigrants. The share that say they have contact with immigrants has increased from two of three in 2002 to four of five in 2021 (Statistics Norway, 2021o). Among those who say they have contact with immigrants, 43 per cent say that this contact occurs weekly. Another 39 per cent say they have daily contact with immigrants, while 13 per cent say they have monthly contact with immigrants. In the Integration Barometer 2020, a survey by the Institute for Social Research (ISF) on behalf of IMDi, three of ten say they speak with someone with an immigrant background monthly. Five of ten say they speak with immigrants at least once a week. There is some variation from year to year in how often respondents have contact with immigrants, but overall we see that the contact has increased over time. Furthermore, most of those who have contact with immigrants say that their experiences in this regard are generally positive. It is also common to have contact with several immigrants. 37 per cent state that they have contact with more than ten immigrants (Statistics Norway, 2021o).

**Figure 5.3. Arenas for contact with immigrants (Statistics Norway, 2021o)**



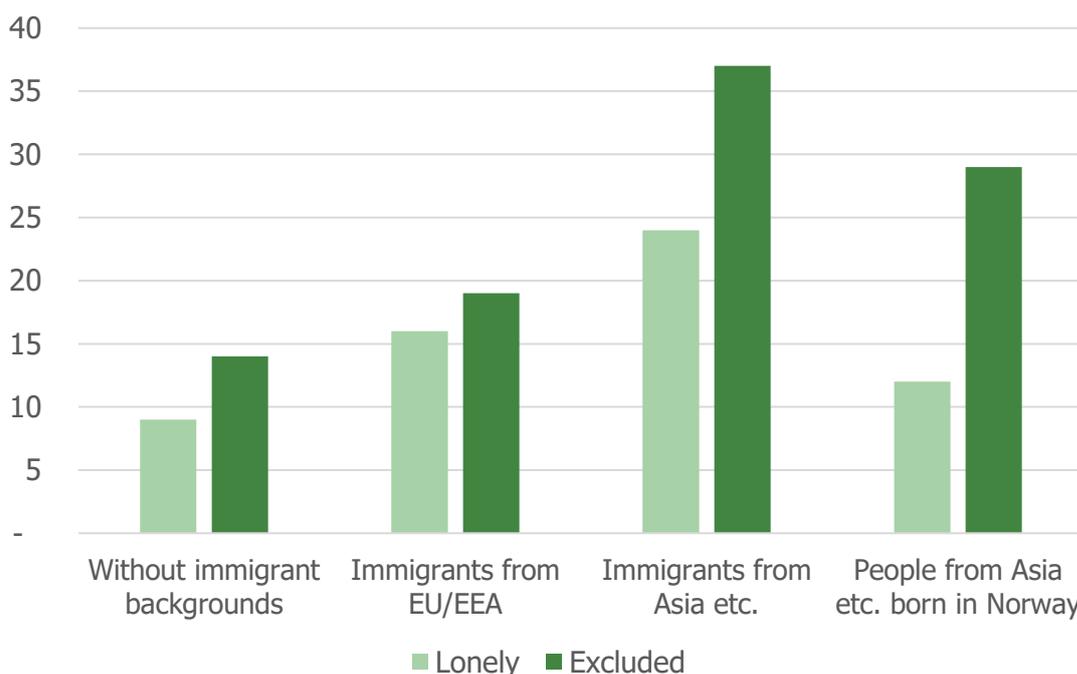
Contact between immigrants and the majority population takes place in different ways. Some have immigrants in their immediate family or among their friends. Others encounter immigrants as neighbours, colleagues at work, or in other ways. Figure 5.3 shows that today more people have contact with immigrants in all of the abovementioned areas compared to 2002. The increase has been greatest in terms of contact with immigrants in the immediate family, followed by contact with immigrants as friends and acquaintances. In 2021, twice as many had immigrants in their immediate family compared to 2002, an increase from 9 to 18

per cent, while the share who knew or were friends with immigrants grew from 27 to 46 per cent in the same period.

Immigrants from Asia etc., as well as those born in Norway to parents from Asia etc., experience loneliness and social exclusion more often than the rest of the population. This is shown in figure 5.4. Immigrants from Asia, Africa, etc., are most vulnerable. In this group, as many as 37 per cent - roughly one of three - feel excluded from society, compared to 14 per cent for the population without immigrant backgrounds. Of those born in Norway to parents from Asia, 30 per cent feel excluded. This is twice as many as in the population without immigrant backgrounds (Barstad, 2021a). These are also high numbers.

The share that feels lonely was also nearly three times as large among immigrants from Asia etc., at 24 per cent compared to 9 per cent for those without immigrant backgrounds (Barstad, 2021a). The differences in loneliness between those without immigrant backgrounds and those born in Norway to parents from Asia etc. are slightly smaller, though the share that reports being lonely is still a bit bigger in the latter group.

**Figure 5.4. The proportion of people who experience loneliness or exclusion, by immigrant category. (Barstad, 2021a)**



Statistics Norway has looked at possible causes of the fact that some immigrants – primarily from Asia, Africa, etc. – are more likely to experience loneliness and social exclusion. Statistics Norway’s analyses show that the significant differences in loneliness can largely be explained by immigrants from Asia, Africa, etc. having less education, poorer finances, slightly poorer health and that they participate less in the labour market (Barstad, 2021a). In terms of social exclusion, the differences between the groups cannot be explained by

socioeconomic factors to the same degree as for loneliness. Immigrants from Asia, Africa etc., experience social exclusion more often, even when adjusting for differences in living conditions.

## Participation in volunteering and leisure activities

### 5.3 Language skills and finances are among the barriers to higher participation

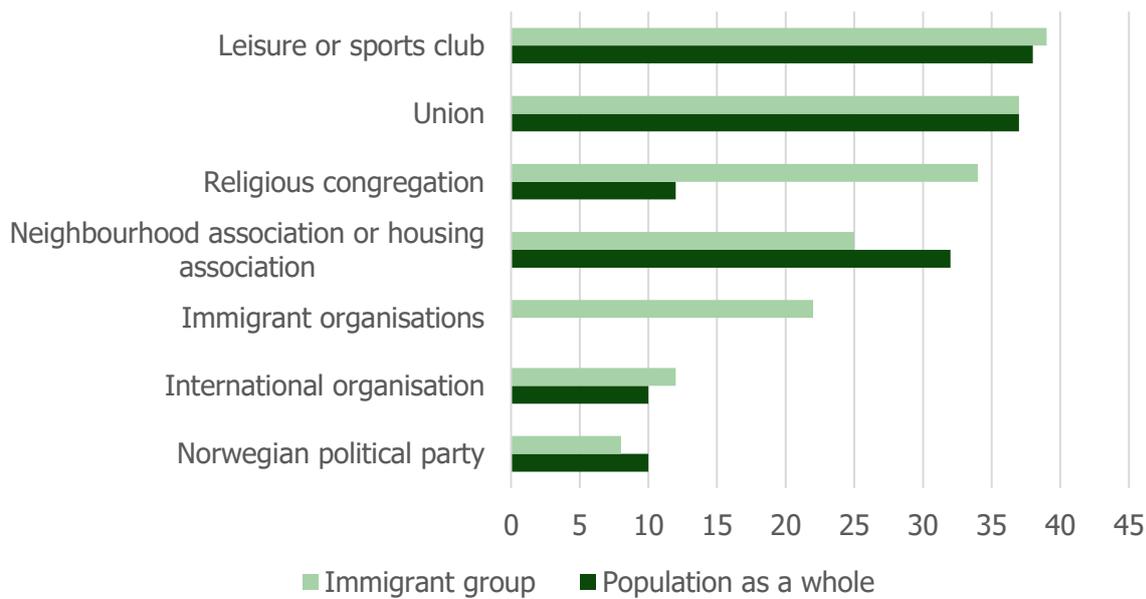
Voluntary organisations are important arenas for integration and participation in the community. Through participation in voluntary work and various leisure activities, people have access to more social meeting spaces and get the opportunity to build social networks and to be included in local communities.

In recent years, several studies have looked at participation in volunteering and leisure activities in various parts of the population with immigrant background (Eimhjellen et al., 2021; Jacobsen et al., 2021; Dalen et al., 2022). This research indicates that immigrants are slightly less likely to participate in organised activities and volunteering compared to the rest of the population.

Participation is highest in sports organisations, both for immigrants and for the rest of the population. Dalen et al. found few differences between their immigrant respondents and a representative selection of the entire population (the control group) in terms of participation in leisure and sport activities, international associations, unions and political parties in the period 2019-2021. At the same time, there are significant differences between the control group and immigrants in terms of the share that participates in religious congregations. Twelve per cent of the control group reported that they participated in religious congregations, compared to 34 per cent of the immigrant group. Furthermore, about one of five immigrants participate in organisations related to their home country. These findings are shown in figure 5.5.

Many immigrants participate in such communities to create and maintain social networks and avoid social isolation. This may be particularly important for recently arrived immigrants. For some immigrants, immigrant organisations may also function as bridge-builders and springboards for participation in society (Government, 2021).

**Figure 5.5. Percentage that has been a member of or participated in meetings and volunteer work for the following associations or organisations 2019-2021 (Dalen et al., 2022)**



Immigrants' participation rate varies by country of origin. People with a Polish background are particularly underrepresented in leisure activities and volunteer work. Other than country of origin, various studies have found that women, those with less education, and those with shorter periods of residence and poorer knowledge of Norwegian are less likely to participate (Eimhjellen et al., 2021, Dalen et al., 2022). Furthermore, religious faith and religiosity are linked to participation in voluntary organisations. Immigrants who are more active in religious organisations also have higher rates of participation in secular organisations. In general, Muslims are the most active in secular voluntary work, while Christians are the least active (Barstad, 2019).

The research has uncovered some important barriers to immigrants' participation in Norwegian majority organisations. These are linked to poor finances, poor language skills, unclear expectations of and lack of knowledge about volunteer work and organisations, lack of social connections to people and communities who recruit for such organisations, and a lack of coordination by local authorities in regard to inclusion efforts and strategies (Eimhjellen et al., 2021, Dalen et al., 2022).

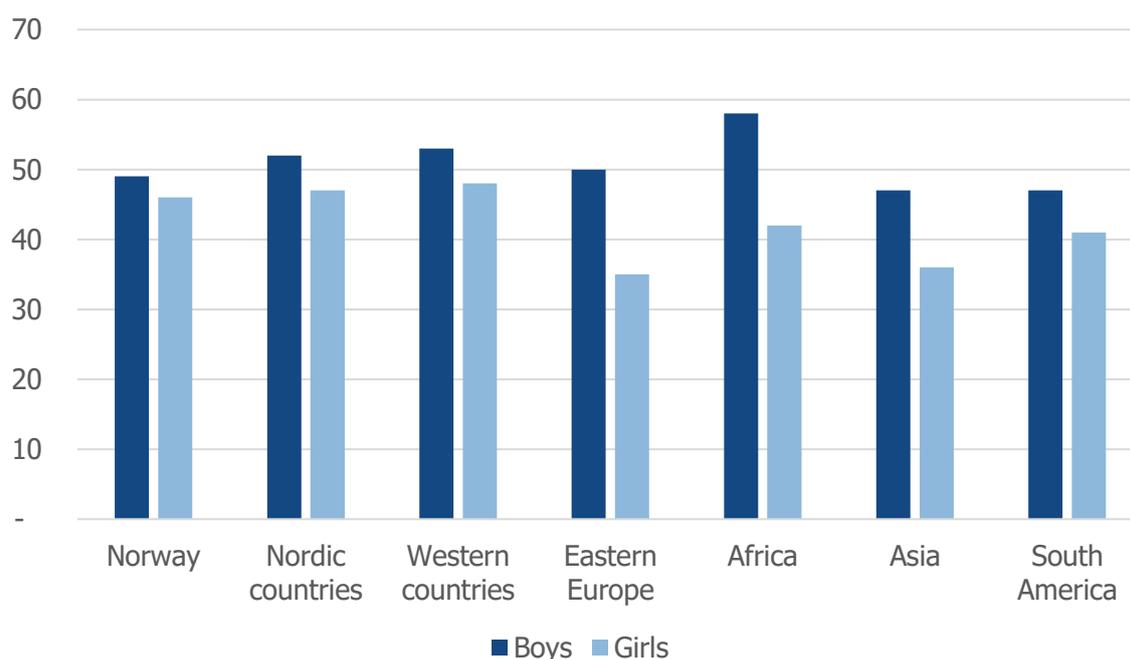
### Children's participation in leisure activities

## 5.4 Lowest participation and highest attrition among immigrant girls

Results from the national Ungdata study shows that the participation rate for pupils in upper secondary school varies in accordance with their families' socioeconomic status and their parents' countries of origin. Figure 5.6 shows that pupils in upper secondary school with

parents from countries in Asia and Eastern Europe participate slightly less in organised leisure activities than their peers. There are also significant sex differences among pupils with parents born abroad compared to pupils with parents born in Norway. Among those with parents born in Norway, 49 per cent of boys and 46 per cent of girls participate regularly in organised leisure activities, a difference of three percentage points between the sexes. Among youth with immigrant backgrounds from Africa and Eastern Europe, the equivalent difference was five times as great, at 16 and 15 percentage points, respectively (see figure 5.6).

**Figure 5.6. Regular participation in organised leisure activities, by sex and parents' country of origin. Upper secondary school pupils (Jacobsen et al., 2021)**



Broken down by type of activity, minority girls were the most underrepresented in sports. This is particularly true of those with backgrounds from Africa and Asia. Boys with backgrounds from Africa and Asia had about twice the participation rate in sports compared to girls with the same backgrounds (Jacobsen et al., 2021).

In addition to lower participate rates in activities among girls with immigrant parents, the share who have left after starting sports is highest among minority girls (Solstad et al., 2022).

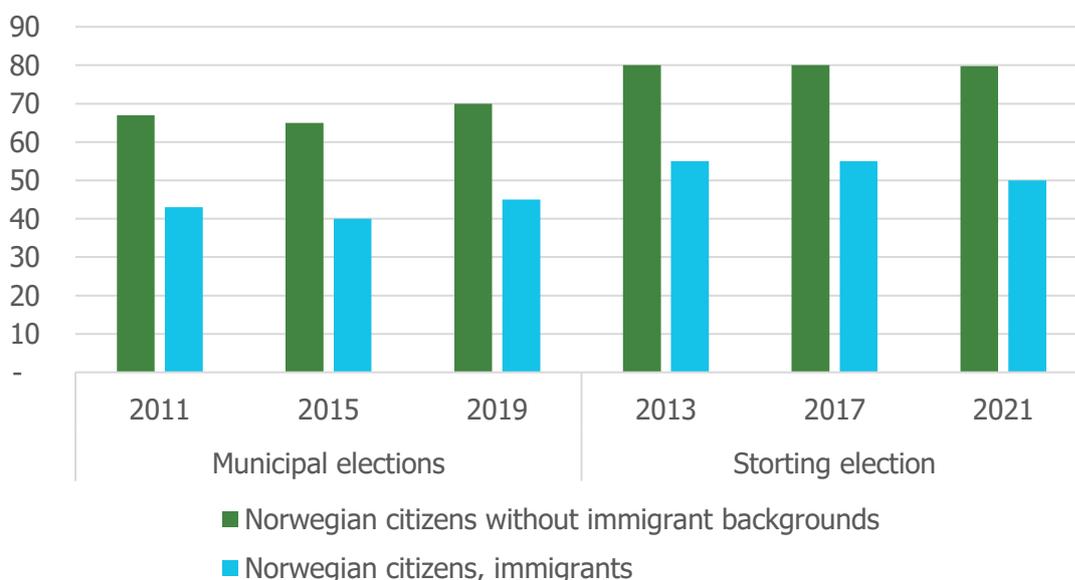
## Voter participation

### 5.5 Half of eligible immigrant voters cast their vote in 2021

Only Norwegian citizens can vote in elections for the national Storting. However, foreign citizens with at least three years of legal residence in Norway can vote in municipal elections.

The figure below shows that immigrants are less likely to vote than the rest of the population, both in national and municipal elections. The voter turnout differences were stable until the 2021 Storting election, where the turnout among immigrants dropped from 55 to 50 per cent. The equivalent share for the population without immigrant backgrounds remained stable at about 80 per cent. Since the voter turnout also dropped among immigrants who have had the right to vote in several elections, the decline cannot be caused by lower voter turnout rates among those who have become Norwegian since 2017. The pandemic impacted the 2021 election, but we do not know whether this in turn impacted voter turnout. Thus far, research has not pointed to any possible causes of the increased differences in voter turnout in 2021.

**Figure 5.7. Voting in national and municipal elections among persons with Norwegian citizenship, 2013-2017** (Kleven, 2017; Statistics Norway, 2019a; Kleven, 2021)



Voting is significantly impacted by country of origin. In the national elections for the Storting, voter turnout increased among immigrants from Nordic and Western European countries, from 71 per cent in 2017 to 74 per cent in 2021. Among immigrants from African and Asian countries, voter turnout declined from 54 per cent in 2017 to 48 per cent in 2021 (Kleven, 2021).

Voting also varies by sex: women are more likely to vote than men, and this is true both for those with and those without immigrant backgrounds. In 2021, the sex differences were greatest among those born in Norway to immigrant parents, where 57 per cent of women voted compared to 47 per cent of men. For immigrants, the share of women who voted was 3 percentage points higher than for men, at 52 against 49 per cent. Among Norwegian citizens without immigrant backgrounds, 78 per cent of men and 81 per cent of women voted in the 2021 elections for the Storting (Statistics Norway, 2021p).

Among those born in Norway to immigrant parents, voter participation decreased from 57 per cent in 2017 to 52 per cent in 2021. The decrease was largest among those born in Norway to parents from African and Asian countries, from 54 per cent in 2017 to 49 per cent in 2021 (Kleven, 2021).

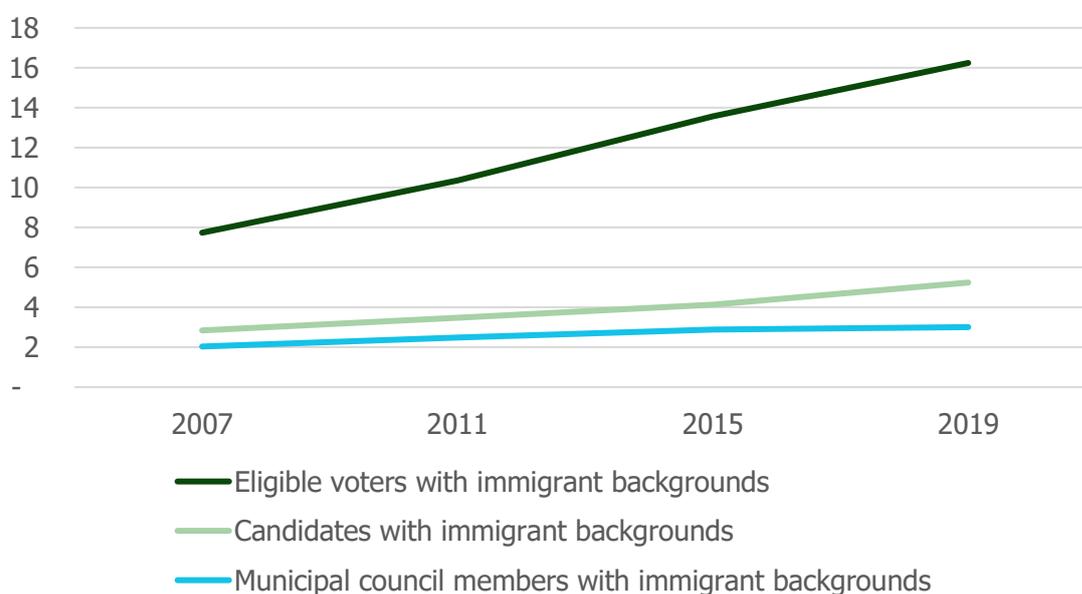
## Political participation

### **5.6 Immigrants are underrepresented in politics**

The number of eligible voters with immigrant backgrounds has grown in recent years. At the same time, the underrepresentation of immigrants in important political institutions has also grown. In the 2019 municipal elections, just over 680,000 people with immigrant backgrounds were eligible to vote, about 2,800 ran for election, and just under 300 were elected to a municipal council.

The share of municipal council members with immigrant backgrounds has grown only marginally since 2007, from 2 per cent to 3 per cent in 2019. There was also a small but insignificant increase in the share of candidates for political office who had immigrant backgrounds (figure 5.8).

**Figure 5.8. People with immigrant backgrounds as a proportion of eligible voters, candidates for office and representatives in municipal elections, 2007–2019 (Statistics Norway, 2019b, 2019c, 2019d, 2019e)**



## Attitudes to immigration and integration

### 5.7 Increasingly positive attitudes towards immigration

Every year a number of comprehensive surveys of the population’s attitudes to immigrants and immigration are conducted, such as Statistics Norway’s survey of attitudes (Statistics Norway, 2021r) and IMDi’s Integration Barometer (Brekke, Fladmoe, 2022). The findings suggest that attitudes to immigration are increasingly positive.

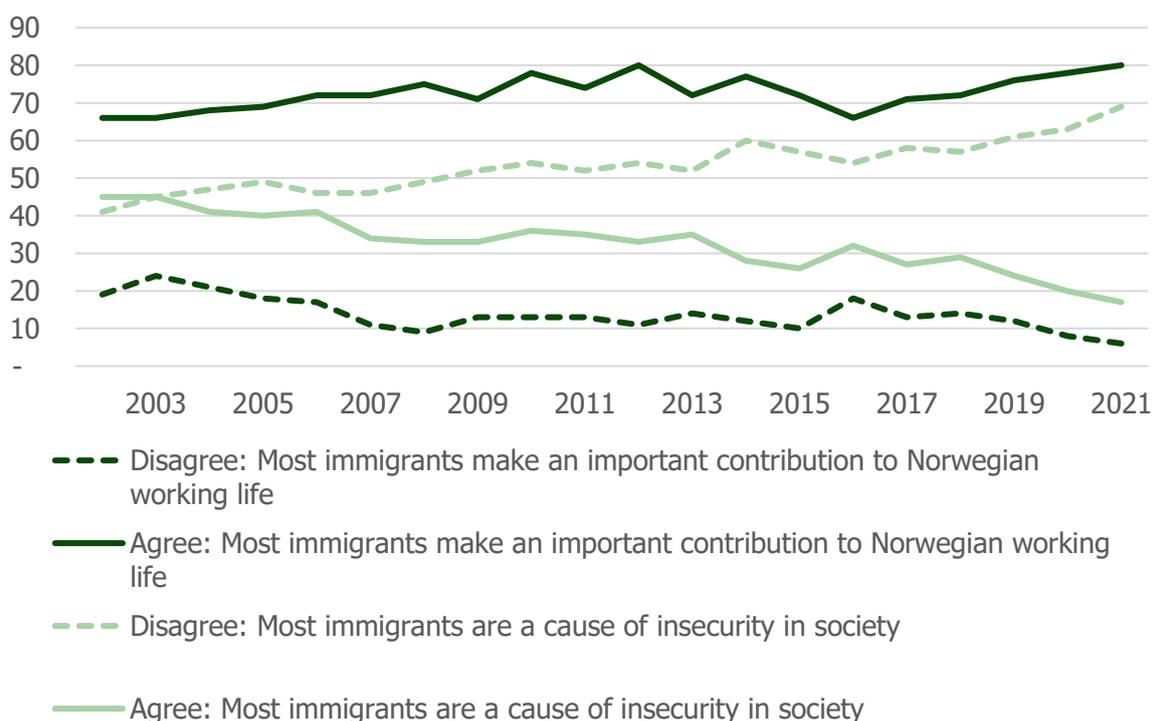
However, in some areas the population is nevertheless split in its view of immigrants. In 2021, 44 per cent of respondents said that immigration was mainly good for Norway. 23 per cent said that immigration is bad for the country (Brekke, Fladmoe, 2022). Attitudes to immigration also depend on immigrants’ reasons for immigration, countries of origin and religion. The population is more positive to increasing the number of refugees than to receiving more labour migrants or people who arrive through family reunification. Furthermore, just over half of the population (54 per cent) said that Islamic values are incompatible with the basic values of Norwegian society. In comparison, on the same question related to Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism, 16, 19 and 23 per cent said that the values of these religions are incompatible with the basic values of Norwegian society. In other words, a significantly larger share believe that there is incompatibility between Islamic

values and Norwegian values than believe that the values other religions represent are incompatible with the values of Norwegian society.

Whereas four of ten believe that immigration is good for Norway, only two of ten say that integration is going well. Of the respondents in the Integration Barometer survey, 44 per cent believe that integration is going badly or very badly in Norway, and 63 per cent believe that integration problems are caused by cultural differences. On the other hand, nearly as many (57 per cent) point to discrimination as a barrier to integration (Brekke, Fladmoe, 2022).

Figure 5.9 below shows that positive attitudes to immigrants have increased over time, though annual variations have been registered that must be viewed in light of various societal events and shifts. After the large influx of Syrian refugees in 2015, the share that believes that immigrants generally make useful contributions to the Norwegian labour market declined by 21 per cent, which is the lowest level since 2004 (Molstad, 2021).

**Figure 5.9. Percentage who strongly/somewhat agree and strongly/somewhat disagree with two statements. 2002-2021** (Statistics Norway, 2021r)



Another example of an event with an immediate effect on attitudes to immigrants is the influx of refugees due to the war in the Ukraine. At the end of 2021, 40 per cent of respondents in the Integration Barometer survey said that they wanted to receive more refugees. About a month after the war broke out, in March 2022, 60 per cent wanted to receive more refugees. The share that believes immigration is good for Norway also

increased from 44 per cent to 53 per cent, while the share that believes integration is generally going well grew from 22 per cent to 27 per cent (Brekke, Fladmoe, 2022).

Immigrants were overrepresented in the Norwegian statistics on infections during the Covid-19 pandemic, and some immigrant groups were particularly badly affected. A number of factors may explain this, such as challenges related to communication, social norms, homes, living conditions, employment, language skills and knowledge of health issues (Indseth et al., 2021).

The conclusions from several surveys done in 2020 and 2021 suggest that the pandemic has not had a negative impact on people's attitudes to immigrants (Brekke, Fladmoe, 2022; Molstad, 2021). In terms of the possible causes of immigrants being overrepresented among those infected, the population is split in its views about what they consider to have caused this. Those who are already critical to immigration explain these figures by poor compliance with infection control measures, while those who are positive to immigration focus on structural issues such as crowded housing and work-related exposures (Brekke, Fladmoe, 2022).

## Discrimination

### **5.8 Greater awareness about discrimination of immigrants**

Discrimination is considered one of the biggest barriers to integration, both among immigrants themselves and in the population as such (Dalen et al., 2022; Brekke, Fladmoe, 2022).

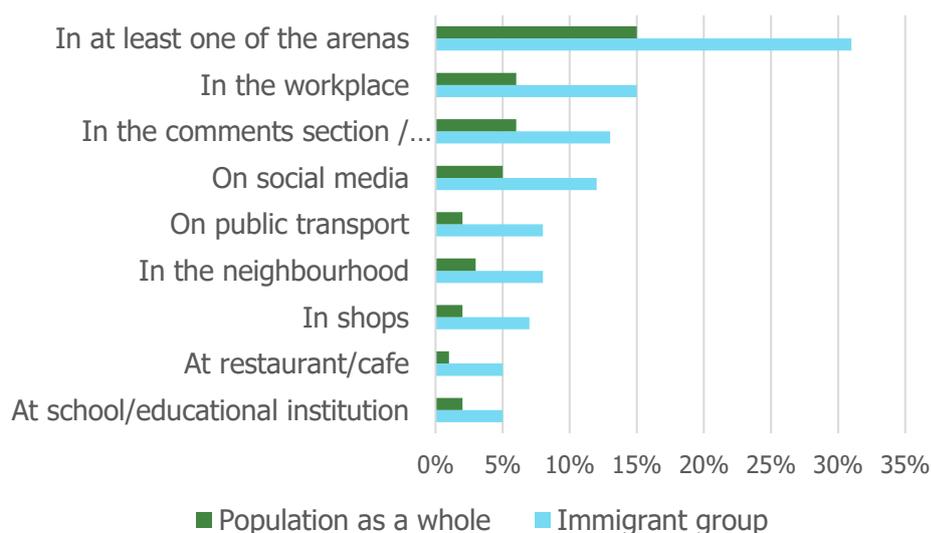
Among other things, the Integration Barometer asks whether respondents believe that discrimination of immigrants takes place. In 2021, one of three in the population believed that discrimination occurs to a great extent. This is more than a tripling compared to 2013, when nine per cent believed that discrimination occurred to a great extent. Furthermore, nearly half of the 2019 respondents said that discrimination occurs to some extent. This indicates that there is a growing and fairly common perception that discrimination of immigrants occurs in Norway (Brekke, Fladmoe, 2022).

In Fafo's pilot study on everyday integration, about half of the respondents with immigrant backgrounds said that they had been subjected to poorer treatment than others in the past year, compared to about 20 per cent in the population as a whole. Workplaces and job application processes were the most common situations in which respondents with immigrant backgrounds reported experiencing poorer treatment than others. Of the immigrant respondents, 26 per cent answered "yes" to the question of whether they had been treated worse than others when applying for a job or in the workplace in 2021. In the population as a whole, the equivalent share was 10 per cent.

Somali immigrants stand out in that they report the most discrimination. Polish immigrants are the least likely to experience discrimination. Skin colour and ethnicity are most commonly identified as the cause of the discrimination, but a number of Somali and Pakistani immigrants also point to religion (Dalen et al., 2022).

The pilot study also found that immigrants are much more likely than the rest of the population to experience various forms of hate. The figure below shows that this takes place in many different spaces.

**Figure 5.10. Have experienced hate in various spaces (Dalen et al., 2022)**



Of the respondents with immigrant backgrounds, 32 per cent reported that they had experienced hate in at least one of these spaces in the past year. In the control group, the share was 15 per cent. The study shows that hateful expressions are most commonly made in the workplace, followed by comment sections online and in social media (Dalen et al., 2022).

## Everyday integration and the Covid-19 pandemic

### 5.9 How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact the everyday lives of immigrants?

The quality of life survey conducted in 2020 suggests that some aspects of immigrants' lives worsened after the introduction of the Covid-19 measures. This was particularly true for immigrants from country group 2 (Barstad, 2021b). This group saw a significant increase in the share that experienced worry compared to other immigrants and the rest of the population, while at the same time the survey of this group found the clearest decline in positive feelings such as joy, relaxation and calm.

It is unclear whether a higher infection rate in Norway or in the immigrants' countries of origin may have impacted the level of worry as quickly as observed in March 2020. The figures from the quality of life survey suggest that the increase in the sense of worry among immigrants may be linked to a more precarious financial and social situation. Furthermore, there was a decrease in the share of immigrants from country group 2 who felt confident that they would receive help from the state in the event that they got sick. This may indicate that information from the health authorities did not reach immigrants to the same extent as it reached the rest of the population (Barstad, 2021b).

# 6. The right to live a free life

Negative social control and honour-related violence are persistent challenges that threaten the fundamental freedom to make decisions over one's own life. Work to combat negative social control is therefore an increasingly important topic in Norwegian integration policy. The action plan *Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour Based Violence (2021-2024)* shall help develop and strengthen work in this field. The action plan contains five priority areas: efforts for newly arrived refugees, knowledge and competence for comprehensive support services, strengthened legal protection, preventing involuntary stays abroad, and international cooperation ([Ministry of Education and Research, 2021](#)).

Negative social control is a complex phenomenon that may entail a number of forms and tools of control. There is no sharp boundary between social control and negative social control. Social control turns negative when the rights of the youth are violated or when the youth experience undue pressure, threats or force. The experience of control is subjective. It is therefore important to distinguish between negative social control and other forms of social control, which may be both acceptable and desired. Negative social control is also a sensitive topic, which may be difficult to detect. All of these factors mean that it is challenging to define and measure negative social control ([Proba, 2021](#)).

## Definitions

### 6.1 What is negative social control and honour-related violence?

In the action plan, negative social control is understood as **pressure, surveillance, threats or force that systematically limit someone's life or repeatedly prevent them from making independent choices about their own life and future**. The assessment of whether a pattern of action constitutes negative social control considers the age and maturity of the controlled party as well as the principle of the child's best interest ([Ministry of Education and Research, 2021](#)).

**Honour-related violence** is understood as violence triggered by the family or group's need to maintain or re-establish honour and recognition. This takes place in families and groups in which the individual is expected to submit to the collective, and where patriarchal honour codes are prominent. **Forced marriage** is defined as a marriage where one or both spouses cannot choose to remain unmarried without being subjected to violence, deprivation of liberty, other criminal or improper conduct or undue pressure. ([Ministry of Education and Research, 2021](#)).

## Operationalised concepts and indicators

### 6.2 How to measure negative social control?

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, negative social control is a complex phenomenon that cannot be measured directly. To measure the scope of negative social control, it is therefore necessary to use multiple indicators.

Several studies have tried to operationalise the concepts of negative social control and honour-related violence. The Proba social analysis focuses on three aspects that are important to include when measuring negative social control. First, certain types of behaviours such as control, surveillance, threats, violence, etc. Second, that the person(s) who exercises control has a certain motivation, such as the maintenance the family's traditions, norms or honour. Third, that the control has some degree of seriousness and violates the child's rights ([Proba, 2021](#)).

Based on available knowledge and the survey questions from several previous studies of its scope from Norway, Sweden and Denmark, Proba has developed a set of indicators of negative social control. The indicators are grouped into the following nine topics: 1) friendship, 2) school and education, 3) leisure, everyday life and lifestyle, 4) freedom of religion and opinion, 5) romantic relationships and sexuality, 6) relationships with parents and siblings, 7) degree of autonomy in life choices, 8) reactions from parents, and 9) involuntary stays abroad.

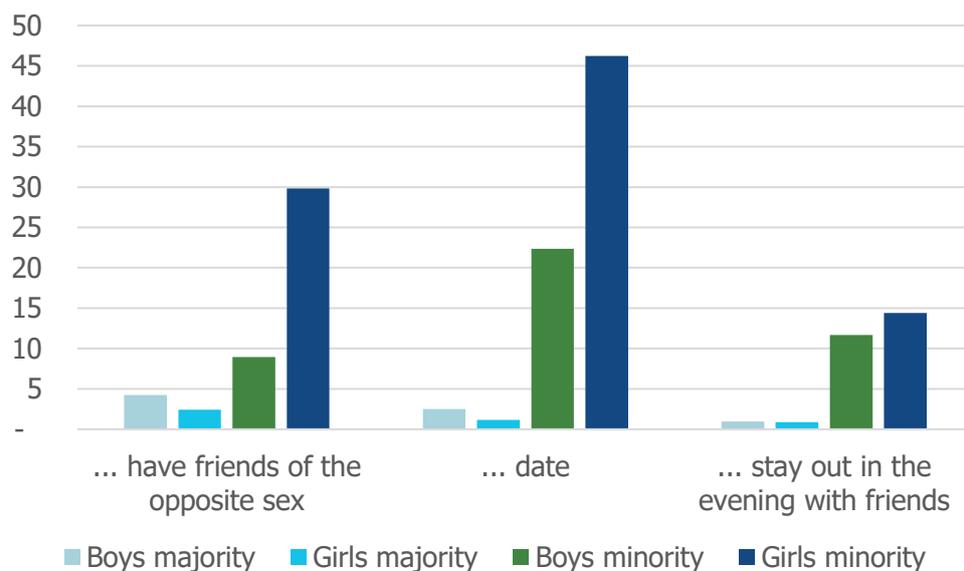
## Who experiences negative social control most often?

### 6.3 Girls with immigrant backgrounds are most vulnerable

The work to combat negative social control and honour-related violence is about prevention, detection and helping people who are subjected to these forms of violence and control. Youth who break with the norms of their extended families may be particularly vulnerable to negative social control and honour-related violence.

Both boys and girls with minority backgrounds are subjected to negative social control more often than their peers of the same sex and without immigrant backgrounds (Smette et al., 2021; Proba, 2021). Parental restrictions are also strongly gendered for minority youth, while for majority youth the gender differences are significantly lower (Figure 6.1.).

**Figure 6.1. The proportion of pupils in the final year of upper secondary school in Oslo (2018) who are not allowed to ...** ([Smette et al., 2021](#))



Several studies have shown that young LHBTIQ+ people, whether they have immigrant backgrounds or not, are more vulnerable to restrictions than others ([Eggebø et al., 2018](#); [Proba, 2021](#)).

Negative social control and honour-related violence occur both among newly arrived refugees and among immigrants with long periods of residence in Norway. Certain groups of immigrants are more vulnerable to this type of violence and control. Youth who have parents born in the Middle East, North Africa, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and South and East Asia are more likely to experience negative social control (Friberg, Bjørnset, 2019). Religion and the degree of religiosity in the family significantly impacts whether someone is subjected to negative social control. Muslim girls and Hindu or Buddhist boys generally experience the highest degree of parental restrictions. Christians are slightly more vulnerable to parental restrictions compared to those who say they are not religious ([IMDi, 2021b](#); Friberg, Bjørnset, 2019). The educational level of the parents is also linked to children’s experiences of restrictions. Children in families where both parents have higher education are less likely to say that they have experienced negative social control ([Proba, 2021](#)).

At the same time, negative social control is not limited to any individual group, but impacts various parts of the population, including the majority.

## Parental restrictions

### 6.4 Negative social control particularly related to dating and sexuality

Negative social control may be measured by looking at the extent to which parents limit their children's right to decide over their own lives. This may be about the right to decide over one's own body, the freedom to choose one's own friends, leisure activities, religion, clothes, education and person to date.

Very few pupils in upper secondary school have restrictions placed on their participation in school and leisure activities ([Proba, 2021](#)). An analysis that looks at parental restrictions among youth in Oslo identified restrictions related to activities and relationships outside of school hours as much more common than school-related restrictions ([Smette et al., 2021](#)).

Dating and sexuality are the areas where the highest number of pupils experience control and restrictions, in particular if youth date someone of another religion or the same sex. One of ten believe that their parents would not accept sex outside of marriage, and two of ten believe that their parents would not accept sex with someone of the same sex. Dating and sexuality is also where researchers find the biggest differences in the frequency of negative social control between youth with and without immigrant backgrounds ([Proba, 2021](#)).

More than one of ten pupils with immigrant backgrounds are afraid to be left abroad against their will. On the question of the reason they think they may be sent abroad, most respond that their parents want them to have an alternative schooling. About three of ten believe it is because their parents want the pupil to be raised in their family's culture, and about the same number believe it is due to their having brought shame on the family's honour ([Proba, 2021](#)).

## Influence on the choice of spouse

### 6.5 Stronger influence on choice of spouse in some immigrant groups

In Statistics Norway's survey of immigrants' living conditions, married and engaged immigrants below the age of 40 were asked about the extent to which someone else influenced their choice of partner and the timing of their marriage or engagement. More than three-quarters of the respondents stated that others had had little or no influence on these choices. The only exceptions were immigrants from Pakistan and to a lesser extent Turkey: 35 per cent of the married or engaged Pakistani immigrants stated that others had

had a major influence in these areas. Among the immigrant sample as a whole, this figure was 11 per cent. Among those born in Norway to immigrant parents, youth with a Pakistani background were most likely to report that others had had an influence in these areas. Among Muslims born in Norway to immigrant parents, one of five said that others greatly influenced the circumstances around their choice of partner and timing ([Barstad, 2021a](#)).

The questions asked in the survey cannot detect the scope of forced marriages or indicate a distinction to what would be legal interference. However, it may give an indication of how many are exposed to pressures related to such important life choices, and whether there are differences between youth with backgrounds from various countries ([Dalgard, 2018](#)).

### The work of IMDi's minority advisors

## 6.6 Increasing numbers of children and youth are followed up by minority advisors

It is a goal that children, youth and adults subjected to negative social control and honour-related violence get the right help as early as possible. Action plans in the area help ensure that the skills in the support services develop continuously, so as to enhance the ability to detect and help those vulnerable to such control. The specialised services for negative social control and honour-related violence have been strengthened since IMDi's minority advisor scheme was expanded and IMDi's professional team for the prevention of negative social control and honour-related violence was established<sup>12</sup> (IMDi, 2021b). The focus on prevention and detection of control and violence means that more vulnerable people are being identified and helped.

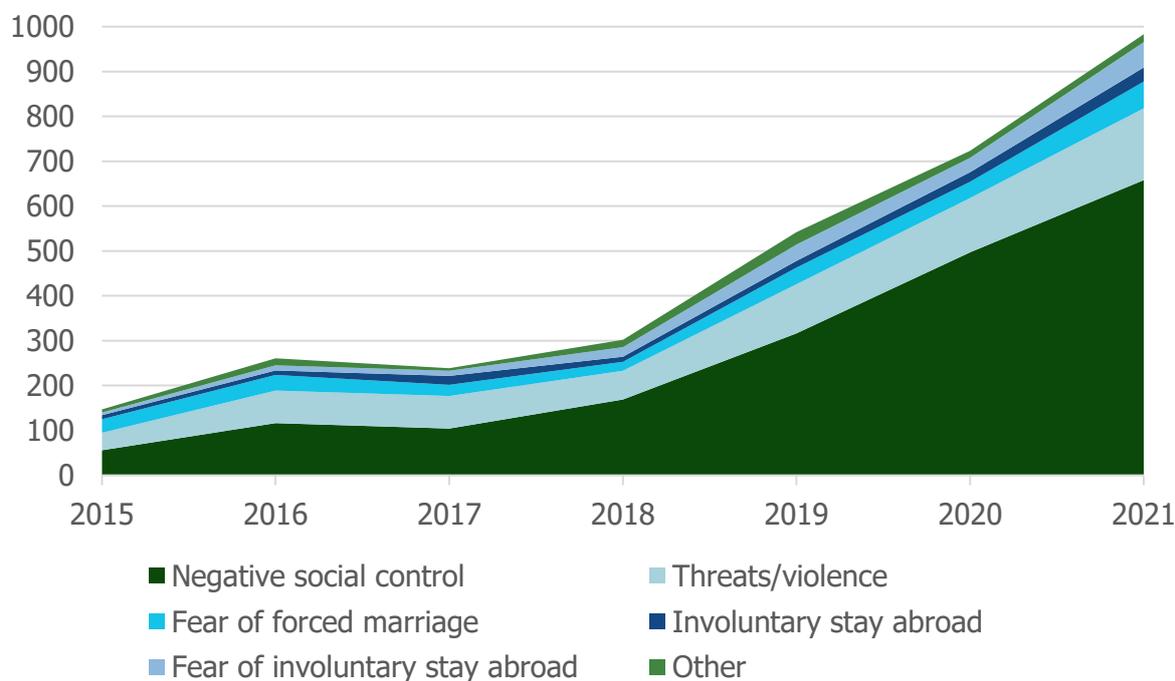
IMDi has 59 minority advisors at select lower and upper secondary schools and adult education centres across the country. The role of the minority advisors is to help ensure that more children and youth who are at risk of or are being subjected to negative social control or honour-related violence receive advice, guidance and follow-up in line with their needs and rights. Over time, the number of minority advisors has increased, resulting in the identification of more cases. In 2021, the minority advisors have provided advice and guidance in 983 cases. This is an increase of 35.9 per cent from 2020. The increase must be seen in light of the scheme being expanded by 11 new positions in 2019 and by another 10 positions in 2021. As in previous years, the main concerns in most cases is about negative

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<sup>12</sup> Specialised services include the Expert Team for the prevention of forced marriage, female genital mutilation and negative social control; integration advisors; the National Team for building competency on negative social control and honour-related violence; minority advisors; the mentor scheme for youth subjected to negative social control, honour-related violence and forced marriage; and the Nora online portal.

social control (67 per cent). The cases mainly relate to girls/women and mainly involve people from Syria, Somalia and Pakistan ([IMDi, 2021c](#)).

**Figure 6.2. Overview of cases registered by minority advisors by category** ([IMDi, 2021c](#))



## The work of integration advisors

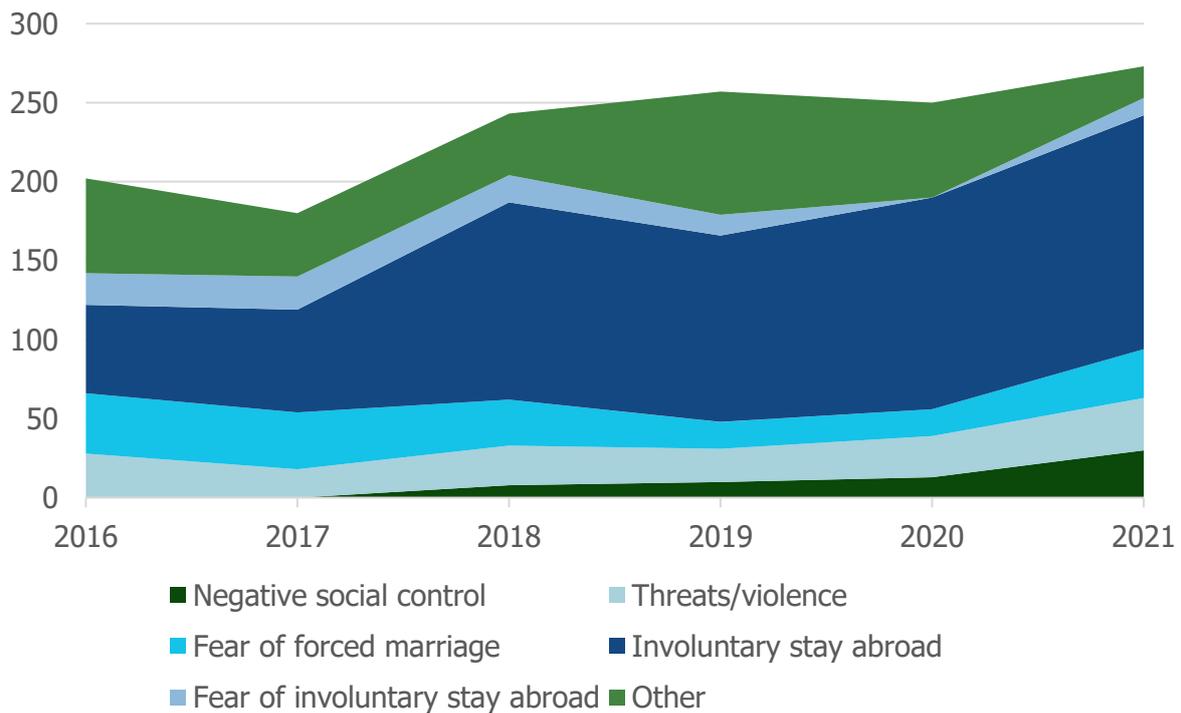
### 6.7 Registered cases of involuntary stays abroad

A number of children and youth grow up in transnational families in which their extended family in other countries influence how the children in the family are raised in Norway. Transnational family lives may be positive and enriching for multicultural children and youth. They may also be problematic and/or violate Norwegian law and international conventions. In cases where children and youth in Norway challenge the norms and expectations of their extended family, they may experience negative social control and honour-related violence from their family and network, both in Norway and in other countries. For example, they may be subjected to involuntary stays abroad, where deprivation of liberty, genital mutilation or forced marriage may occur.

The transnational perspective is reflected in the organisation of the specialist services combatting negative social control and honour-related violence. In addition to the minority advisors in Norway, four specialists on integration cases (integration advisors) are stationed in Norwegian embassies in select countries. Currently, integration advisors are stationed in

Islamabad, Ankara, Amman and Nairobi. The integration advisors provide consular assistance to individuals who are victims of transnational negative social control and honour-related violence. In 2021, the integration advisors provided advice and guidance in 273 new cases, of which half (148) were about people staying abroad involuntarily. 12 per cent of the cases were categorised as violence/threats, followed by negative social control (11 per cent) and fear of forced marriage (11 per cent). As in 2020, the majority of those asking for assistance were girls/women.

**Figure 6.3. Overview of cases registered by integration advisors, by category. (IMDi, 2021c)**



The number of reported cases of negative social control and honour-related violence does not provide an overview of the full scope of these problems. It is likely that there are more cases of negative social control and honour-related violence than those that are identified by the support system today (Bredal et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the main trend in the figures reported by the minority advisors and integration advisors suggest that an increasing number of those who are at risk are being identified and receive the assistance they need.

### 6.8 More challenging to reach youth during the pandemic

In 2021, the work of the minority advisors was heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Changes to the infection control measures appear to be a factor that impacts the number of detected cases. In periods of stricter measures, it has been more challenging to uncover new cases. It is likely that the more open borders in 2021 have made international travel more possible than in 2020. In the same time period, the minority advisors have registered an increase in the number of cases that relate to fear of involuntary stays abroad and fear of forced marriage ([IMDi, 2021c](#)).

The pandemic has also impacted the work of the integration advisors, in particular in the first half of the year, when they had limited capacity due to the infection control measures and local lockdowns. Due to the gradual normalisation in several countries and the easing of travel restrictions, the integration advisors found that there was a slight increase in travel and an increase in the need for consular services over the course of the year ([IMDi, 2021c](#)).

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