



What is the status of integration in Norway?

Indicators, status and development trends in 2024





IMDi

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Indicators, status and development trends in 2024

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Preface

IMDi's Indicator Report provides an overview of the status of immigrants and their Norwegian-born children. This year's edition of the Indicator Report is the fifth report in the series. The purpose of the report was to compile the most recently available knowledge about integration in different areas of society, such as working life, education and qualifications, living conditions, and political and social participation. This knowledge base contributes to providing more targeted policy, more effective measures and a more fact-based public debate about immigrants and integration.

The findings in this year's report show positive developments in many of the integration indicators. More people with immigrant backgrounds are completing upper secondary school and enrolling in higher education, and the differences in employment rates between immigrants and the rest of the population have decreased in recent years. The status of children of immigrants has been described as the litmus test for integration. The report shows that there are small differences between people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population when concerning indicators such as school results and workforce participation. They have stronger social networks, and there is a high degree of social mobility in this group.

However, the report also identifies areas in which greater effort is required. People with immigrant backgrounds more often experience financial difficulties and poorer living conditions. Immigrants are also slightly less likely to participate in organised activities and volunteering. People born in Norway to immigrant parents feel integrated more than they feel accepted as who they are in Norwegian society. Children of immigrants also experience more discrimination than those themselves who have immigrated.

Like the previous year, 2024 was characterised by the arrival of high numbers of Ukrainian refugees. This has resulted in a record number of participants in the Introduction Programme (introduksjonsprogrammet) for newly arrived refugees. We see that displaced people from Ukraine have a relatively high transition to work after they have completed the Introduction Programme.

Successful integration depends on good dialogue between many different stakeholders, directorates and cooperative partners. IMDi hopes that this year's report will help strengthen the knowledge and cooperation between all parties involved to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities, rights and obligations in a diverse society.

Libe Rieber-Mohn

Director, The Directorate of Integration and Diversity
(IMDi)



Summary

The population with immigrant backgrounds in Norway

The past 50-60 years have seen a major change in the composition of Norway's population: Immigrants made up only 1.5 per cent of the Norwegian population in 1970, while by the start of 2024 that number had risen to 16.8 per cent for immigrants and 4 per cent for people born in Norway to immigrant parents.

Immigrants are a diverse group of people. Half of the immigrants in Norway come from European countries, one in three are from countries in Asia, and 12 per cent come from countries in Africa. A relatively small proportion (just under 5 per cent) comes from countries in North, Central and South America and Oceania. Immigrants come to Norway for a variety of reasons. Some come to work, study or be reunited with their families, while others may be fleeing war or humanitarian crises.

What are the integration outcomes for immigrants and their Norwegian-born children?

There is considerable variation in terms of the outcomes of the integration indicators within the immigrant population. The outcomes of the indicators vary according to national background, period of residence, generation or level of education. For example, a number of indicators show that women with refugee backgrounds and short periods of residence in Norway have poorer outcomes than other groups. People born in Norway to immigrant parents, particularly girls, do better than their immigrant peers in several areas.

The findings in this year's report show positive developments in many of the indicators. Among other things, this is true for kindergarten attendance, completion of upper secondary education, enrolment in higher education, employment, and living conditions.

An increasing number of children and young people with immigrant backgrounds are enrolling in **education and qualifications**. More are attending kindergarten, completing upper secondary education and enrolling in higher education. At the same time, we still see differences in educational indicators between people with immigrant backgrounds and the rest of the population. On average, immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents achieve lower grades in primary and lower secondary school than the general population. People born in Norway to immigrant parents enrol in higher education at higher rates than the rest of the population, and this group has a high degree of social mobility. However, immigrant boys complete upper secondary education at lower rates than both immigrant girls and the population without an immigrant background, despite the completion rate having increased significantly since 2015. There are now fewer minority youth who are not working, studying or training than was the case ten years ago.

Immigrants are less frequently **employed** than the rest of the population, however, since 2015 the employment rate has increased more among immigrants than in the rest of the population. This has reduced the disparities between these two groups from 14 percentage points in 2015 to 12 percentage points in 2023. At the same time, since 2021 we have seen a sharp decline in labour market participation among immigrants with a period of residence of less than four

years. This can be explained by record numbers of refugees arriving from Ukraine. Unemployment among immigrants is almost five times as high as in the rest of the population, however these differences have been reduced since the pandemic year of 2020. People born in Norway to immigrant parents are more often employed than their immigrant peers, but have lower employment rates than the population without an immigrant background. However, the differences in the employment rates between people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of population have decreased by five percentage points since 2015.

Immigrants more often experience challenges with their personal **finances** than the rest of the population. On average, immigrants have a lower median income and are overrepresented among people with persistent low incomes. 28 per cent of immigrants live with persistent low incomes, compared to seven per cent among the rest of the population. The proportion of children with immigrant backgrounds who live in persistent low income households has declined in recent years. The most probable explanation for this is low immigration due to the pandemic and lockdowns. Higher prices, rising interest rates and large refugee arrivals, make it uncertain as whether this positive development will continue.

On average, immigrants in Norway have lower mortality rates and higher life expectancy than the population without an immigrant background, however, the health of immigrants worsens in relation to their period of residence in Norway. This means that the longer immigrants have lived in the country, the more their health situation more closely resembles that of the rest of the population. Immigrants, people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population consider their quality of life and health to be about equally as good, however immigrants are more likely to experience mental health problems.

Both immigrants and their children have lower rates of **political participation** than the rest of the population. A significantly lower proportion of immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents exercise their right to vote than the rest of the population. This low proportion has remained relatively stable, both over time and between generations. This applies both to parliamentary elections and municipal and county council elections. 80 per cent of the population without an immigrant background voted at the 2021 parliamentary election, compared with 50 per cent of immigrants and 52 per cent of people born in Norway to immigrant parents. While the proportion of people with immigrant backgrounds in the electorate who are eligible to vote has risen, the under-representation of immigrants in the municipal councils has increased in recent years.

Social integration is challenging to measure and is largely based on subjective experiences and attitudes. Rewarding social relationships in everyday life help to expand networks and create trust and a sense of belonging, while the absence of these relationships can result in loneliness and exclusion. Immigrants are slightly less likely to participate in organised activities and volunteering. People with immigrant backgrounds often experience unfair treatment, hate speech, discrimination and violence than the rest of the population. 66 per cent of people with immigrant backgrounds report that they have experienced discrimination during their lives, compared to 40 per cent among the rest of the population.

People born in Norway to immigrant parents have stronger social networks than immigrants, and have more contact with people without immigrant backgrounds. They see themselves as Norwegian to a much greater extent, and feel much more integrated than those who have themselves immigrated. However, they do not feel that others view them as Norwegian to the same extent, and the result of this is a wider disconnect between their own identity and the recognition of others. They report more discrimination than immigrants, and they experience discrimination as being more upsetting.

This year is the first time since 2016 that we have observed the population being less positively inclined towards immigration. Fewer people than before believe that most immigrants make a beneficial contribution to Norwegian working life, and more people believe that immigrants are a source of insecurity in society.

Immigrants are overrepresented both among those who commit crimes and among the victims. However, overrepresentation varies in terms of factors such as gender, age, living conditions, national background, level of education and type of offence. Research shows that being outside of work or education, as well as experiencing challenging living conditions, are associated with higher levels of crime. Young men are overrepresented among people charged with crimes. This applies both among those with and without an immigrant background. Men with and without immigrant backgrounds are also more likely to be victims of crime than women. People born in Norway to immigrant parents, both women and men, are more exposed to violence and abuse than both immigrants and the rest of the population.

Young people with immigrant backgrounds are more likely than others to be exposed to negative social control. Negative social control not only takes place between adults and young people, it also takes place between young people themselves – and it takes place at school. Girls face expectations of having to behave decently and respectably, and boys encounter pressures related to masculinity and control of their sisters.

What contributes to and what hinders successful integration?

The integration process is unique to each immigrant, because it is influenced by a number of personal and societal factors. At a general level we see that educational background and Norwegian language skills are key factors for greater participation and integration in society. An individual's level of educational and language skills are particularly critical to participation in the Norwegian labour market, because there is increasing demand for highly qualified workers.

According to most of the indicators, a longer period of residence in Norway also gives better integration outcomes. Among other things, this applies to Norwegian language skills, completion rate of upper secondary education, labour market participation, income and

living conditions. Immigrants with the longest period of residence in Norway feel a stronger connection to Norway and have a higher rate of participation in civil society.

On the other hand, there are several factors that may hinder integration, such as unemployment, exclusion, financial difficulties, poor living conditions and negative social control.

Discrimination can be an obstacle to achieving good living conditions, to entry into the labour market, to deriving benefit from education and training and to access to the housing market. Discrimination can lead to a weakened sense of belonging to the community and less trust both in society and in other people.

Being exposed to negative social control and honour-related violence can represent a barrier to good integration, and it can have poor health outcomes for those exposed to it. Individuals who experience negative social control and honour-related violence may suffer harm that results in mental and physical health challenges, and those exposed to this may require extensive and long-term health care.

Integration of refugees from Ukraine

Norwegian society has experienced the arrival of large numbers of Ukrainian refugees since the spring of 2022. 32,400 Ukrainian refugees were settled during 2023, and this group now makes up the largest refugee group in Norway. In addition, 23,000 Ukrainian refugees were registered as participants in the introduction programme in 2023, and 45 per cent went directly into work after the programme was completed. About one in five Ukrainian refugees are working, and employment is rising in line with the length of time they have resided in Norway. The high numbers of newly arrived refugees have resulted in strong growth in social welfare spending, and the number of Ukrainian social welfare recipients has increased every month since March 2022. The lack of Norwegian and English language skills, as well as health challenges and mental health problems, are important reasons for why Ukrainian refugees are outside the workforce and cannot use their qualifications in the labour market. It is also important to remember that many of the Ukrainian refugees are still participating in the introduction programme, and that rates of employment increase significantly after the programme has ended.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background and purpose

Immigration to Norway in the past 50-60 years has changed the composition of the country's population. Immigrants currently make up nearly 17 per cent of the population in Norway, compared to 1.5 per cent in 1970 (Statistics Norway, 2024m, 2024n). People born in Norway to immigrant parents make up four per cent of the population (Statistics Norway, 2024n). The status of immigrants and their Norwegian-born children is therefore important to the development of society as a whole.

In 2019, IMDi was commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Research to develop a set of indicators to measure and describe integration in different areas of society. The set of indicators was to be presented through an annual report that would replace "Mål for integrering" (Integration goals), a memorandum on integration in Norway that had been attached to the National Budget for 15 years prior to 2019 (Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion 2015; Kirkeberg et al. 2019).

This year's edition is the fifth report in the series. The purpose of the report is to collect, compile and present the most recently available knowledge about integration as of August 2024. The selected indicators show how the integration of people with immigrant backgrounds in Norway is progressing in areas such as working life, education and qualifications, living conditions and political and social participation. The report particularly examines differences between immigrants, people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population, and developments over time.

The report is based on knowledge compiled from a number of sources. A particularly important source is publicly available statistics from Statistics Norway (SSB). We also obtain statistics prepared by IMDi, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) and other stakeholders in the integration field. These statistics are well-suited for comparing outcomes for immigrants, their Norwegian-born children and the rest of the population in a number of areas, as well as for monitoring changes over time. The figures from these sources are less suitable for elucidating the causes and mechanisms behind the development. Therefore, in the report we supplement the statistics with recent research in the field.

The report focusses primarily on integration outcomes at the national level. For some of the indicators, developments can also be monitored at county and municipal level. These categorised statistics are available on the Statistics Norway and IMDi websites.

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 the status of integration in Norway. The indicators that are included in the different reports may therefore vary somewhat from year to year. In preparing the indicators for this year's report, IMDi has had good dialogue with several adjacent directorates and cooperative partners with regard to their knowledge requirements and focus areas, including Bufdir, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir), NAV, the Gender Equality and

Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO) and the Norwegian State Housing Bank (Husbanken). We hope this makes the report relevant and useful to more people.

1.2. Key terms and definitions

Integration can be understood in different ways in different contexts, and there are differing viewpoints on what the term means in relation to the area of immigration (Proba, 2019). Assessments of whether integration can be considered successful may change over time, and also depend on societal norms and integration policy objectives. Integration can also be understood both as a process and as a state: One *integrates* and one *is integrated* (Proba 2019).

In order to describe the integration process, it is common to apply a broad definition of integration as being “The two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies in which they live, whereby migrants are incorporated into the social, economic, cultural and political life of the receiving community.” (International Organization for Migration - IOM). Successful integration often means that people with immigrant backgrounds have the opportunity to achieve the same socioeconomic benefits as the majority population when taking their prerequisites into consideration (OECD/EU 2018). This is often referred to as *structural integration*. Furthermore, *social integration* will also involve social participation and inclusion, while *political integration* includes political participation and representation, as well as whether people have trust in key societal institutions (Barstad and Sørlien, Molstad 2020). At the same time, successful integration involves the majority community and stakeholders in the field of integration taking an active role in accepting, including and building relationships with immigrants.

Integration is an extensive term that can be difficult to measure directly. It is therefore appropriate to describe the success of integration by using a number of quantifiable indicators.

In order to measure integration we also require a basis for comparison – something with which we can compare the outcomes of the indicators (OECD/EU, 2018). In this report, the immigrant population’s outcomes in the various indicators are therefore compared to the outcomes for the rest of the population. At the same time, it is important to note that not all differences between minorities and the majority indicate a lack of integration (Barstad and Sørlien Molstad, 2020). 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). The approach entails that, through their integration process, immigrants get closer to achieving the same outcomes as the majority population in some areas of society, while they preserve their distinctive characteristics in other areas.

With this understanding as a starting point, it is important to pay attention to how these differences develop over time and generations. For most immigrants, it will take time to

acquire relevant skills, learn Norwegian, find employment and create a social network. It is therefore also important to examine the importance of period of residence. ***Period of residence*** in Norway is the term used to describe the number of years that have passed since the immigrant arrived in the country (calculated from the first registered date of residence) (Statistics Norway, 2024k).

The immigration category is in line with Statistics Norway's standard for grouping people according to immigration background, whereby we primarily use the categories of: immigrants, people born in Norway to immigrant parents and people without immigrant backgrounds. ***Immigrants*** are people who have immigrated to Norway themselves, were born abroad to two foreign-born parents and have four foreign-born grandparents. ***People born in Norway to immigrant parents*** have two foreign parents and four foreign grandparents. ***People with immigrant backgrounds*** refers to both immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents. We group the remainder under ***the rest of the population/people without immigrant backgrounds***. These are broad categorisations and in many cases the differences within each category are greater than the differences between them. At the same time, this categorisation is appropriate because it makes it possible to measure integration by examining the development of indicators over time.

Reason for immigration refers to the reason for initial immigration to Norway. All first-time immigrants with a non-Nordic background who have come to Norway since 1989 are entered in the registers of the immigration authorities as having one of the following reasons for immigration: refugee, family reunification, work, education or other. Because citizens of the Nordic countries can freely move to Norway, there is no information about Nordic citizens' reasons for immigration. (Kirkeberg, 2023).

When grouping people according to ***country of origin*** in this report, some distinctions are made between immigrants from EU/EEA countries, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (hereafter referred to as Country Group 1) and immigrants from countries in Asia, including Turkey, Africa, Latin America, Oceania outside Australia and New Zealand, and European countries outside the EU/EEA (hereafter referred to as Country Group 2). This is the same categorisation that Statistics Norway has used since 2008 (Høydahl, 2008).

In the chapter on social integration, Country Group 1 refers to immigrants from the EU/EEA, United Kingdom, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand minus "new" EU countries in Eastern Europe. Country Group 2 consists of countries incorporated into the EU in 2004 or later (Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania). Country Group 3 consists of countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania except Australia and New Zealand and Europe outside of the EU/EEA, United Kingdom and Nordic region.

1.3. Content of the report

Integration is a complex phenomenon and takes place in the interaction and dialogue between people with immigrant backgrounds and the rest of the population in both formal and informal social arenas. The indicators in this report are divided into five thematic areas, which highlight key aspects of the integration process: 1) education and qualifications, 2) employment, 3) financial situation and living conditions, 4) political integration, and 5) social integration. This form of categorisation is based on recommendations and existing frameworks for integration metrics both in Norway and internationally (see, for example, OECD/EU 2023; Barstad and Sørlien Molstad, 2020; Proba, 2019).

To begin with, we will present some basic facts and key figures about immigrants to Norway and people born in Norway to immigrant parents. The composition of the population with immigrant backgrounds by gender, reason for immigration, period of residence and educational level is an important context through which to better understand the outcomes in the various indicators. This is described in more detail in Chapter 2.

Having relevant education and qualifications is a crucial prerequisite for successful integration. Chapter 3 presents indicators in the field of education, and takes a closer look at participation, completion and results among immigrants and their Norwegian-born children at various stages of the education process - from kindergarten to higher education.

Chapter 4 describes immigrants' ties to the labour market. Indicators such as employment rate, working hours and unemployment are supplemented by selected indicators for working environment. We also examine differences in dropout rates from work and education among young people with and without an immigrant background.

In addition to labour market participation, personal finances and living conditions play a role in integration. A predictable financial situation coupled with good health and quality of life, can encourage immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents to participate in multiple arenas. These topics are described in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 takes a closer look at political participation and active civic participation, and provides an overview of areas such as trends in electoral participation, political representation and trust in social institutions.

Chapter 7 looks at a number of areas related to contact and social interaction that take place between people with and without immigrant backgrounds in various formal and informal arenas in everyday life. The indicators in this chapter include trust in others, social ties, participation in volunteering and leisure activities, as well as attitudes towards immigration and discrimination. We also look at the right to live a free life, which is defined as the absence of negative social control.

During 2022, 2023 and thus far in 2024, Norwegian society has experienced mass arrivals of Ukrainian refugees. The experiences of this group in Norway and their integration process is therefore an important topic in this year's indicator report. Chapter 8 is a summary of available research and statistics which describe the situation for Ukrainian refugees in Norway.

Integration indicators

Education and qualifications

- Kindergarten attendance
- Results in primary and lower secondary school
- Completion rate for upper secondary school
- Participation and completion in higher education
- Participation in the Introduction
- Programme Norwegian language test results

Work

- Employment rate
- Working hours
- Working environment
- Sick leave
- Unemployment
- NEET



Financial situation and living conditions

- Income
- Persistent low-income
- Children in persistent low-income households
- Ownership status for housing
- Living conditions
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Quality of life

Political integration

- Electoral participation
- Political participation
- Political representation
- Transition to Norwegian citizenship
- Media use
- Institutional trust



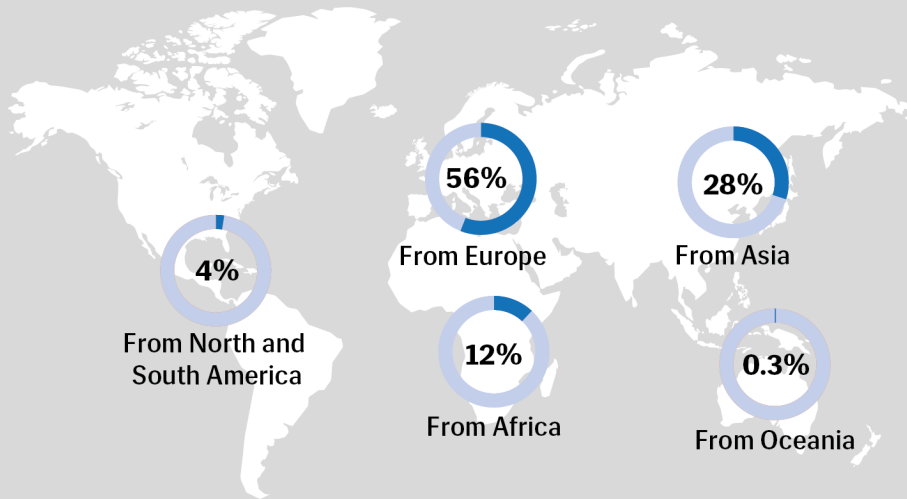
Social integration

- General trust
- Social networks and contact
- Sense of belonging and acceptance
- Participation in volunteering
- Children's participation in leisure activities
- Attitudes towards immigration and integration
- Racism and discrimination
- Crime
- Negative social control



What are the characteristics of the population with immigrant backgrounds in Norway?

Where do immigrants come from?

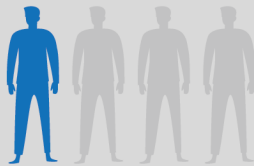


931 081

immigrants in Norway in 2024.
17 per cent of the population

221 459

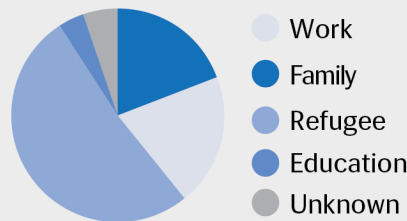
people born in Norway to immigrant parents in 2024.
4 per cent of the population



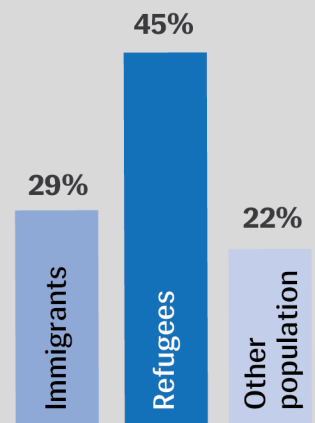
26%

of immigrants have lived in Norway for less than 5 years

Reason for immigration



Education



have a primary and lower secondary school education or less

3 out of 10 immigrants...



4 out of 10 people born in Norway to immigrant parents...



2 out of 10 in the rest of the population...



...reside in the most central municipalities in Norway.

2. The population with immigrant backgrounds in Norway

Immigration

2.1 How many immigrants are there in Norway?

At the start of 2024 there were approximately 931,000 immigrants residing in Norway. There were also just over 221,000 residents who were born in Norway to immigrant parents. Together, these two groups currently make up 20.8 per cent of the Norwegian population (Statistics Norway, 2024n).

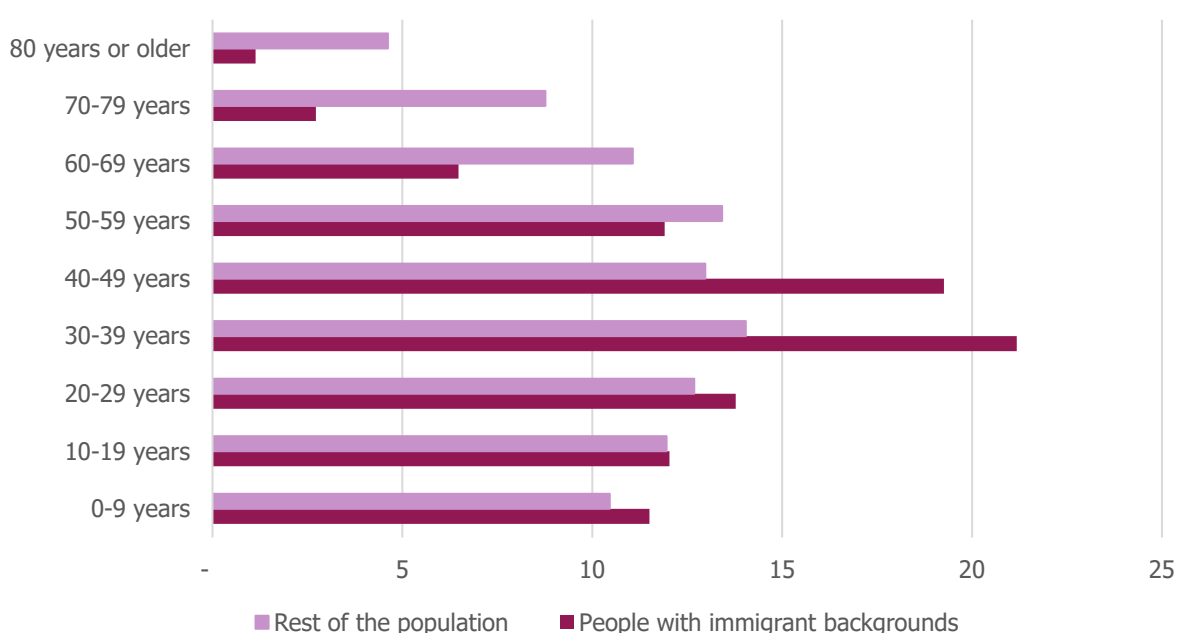
Figure 2.1 shows developments in emigration from and immigration to Norway since 1997. Since that year there have been major changes in the immigrant groups that have come to Norway. In the 1970s, immigration to Norway primarily consisted of family reunification for labour immigrants. Up until the 2000s, immigration largely consisted of asylum seekers and refugees due to events such as the Vietnam War, the Balkan Wars and conflicts in the Middle East. The expansion of the EU in 2004 to include countries such as Poland and Lithuania saw a sharp increase in labour immigration, followed by family reunification. A huge number Syrian refugees arrived during the refugee crisis in 2015-2016, and the wave of refugees from Ukraine in 2022 and 2023 produced a historic increase in the number of immigrants (Statistics Norway, 2024m).

Figure 2.1. Immigration, emigration and net immigration to Norway. 1997–2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024r).



The composition of the immigrant population is different to the rest of the population in terms of gender and age. Three of five people with immigrant backgrounds are aged 20-64, while three of five in the rest of the population is in the same age range. Immigrants have a lower percentage of older people than the population at large. People born in Norway to immigrant parents is a group consisting of a very high number of young people, and very few elderly people. Immigrants consists of both fewer older and younger people than the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2024x, 2024aw). It is expected that the immigrant population of the future will consist of more elderly people and more people with a longer period of residence (Thomas, 2024).

Figure 2.2. People with immigrant backgrounds and the rest of the population, divided according to age. 2024. (Statistics Norway 2024x, 2024aw).



At the start of 2024, 49 per cent of people with immigrant backgrounds were women, and 51 per cent were men. A majority of immigrants from European and African countries and Oceania are men, while women dominate in groups from Asia and North and South America (Statistics Norway, 2024v).

In terms of family and household composition, a higher proportion of immigrants live alone, while a majority of the rest of the population live in households consisting of two people. At the same time, immigrants more often live in large households with five or more people, and it is also more common for multiple families or generations to live in the same residence (Steinkellner, Krokedal and Andersen, 2023).

People born in Norway to immigrant parents make up four per cent of the population (Statistics Norway, 2024ai). This is a relatively small percentage of the population, however this group is still very interesting to look at from an integration perspective. Due to the fact

that 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 parents 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 2024, nearly seven of ten people born in Norway to immigrant parents were below the age of 18 (Statistics Norway, 2024aw).

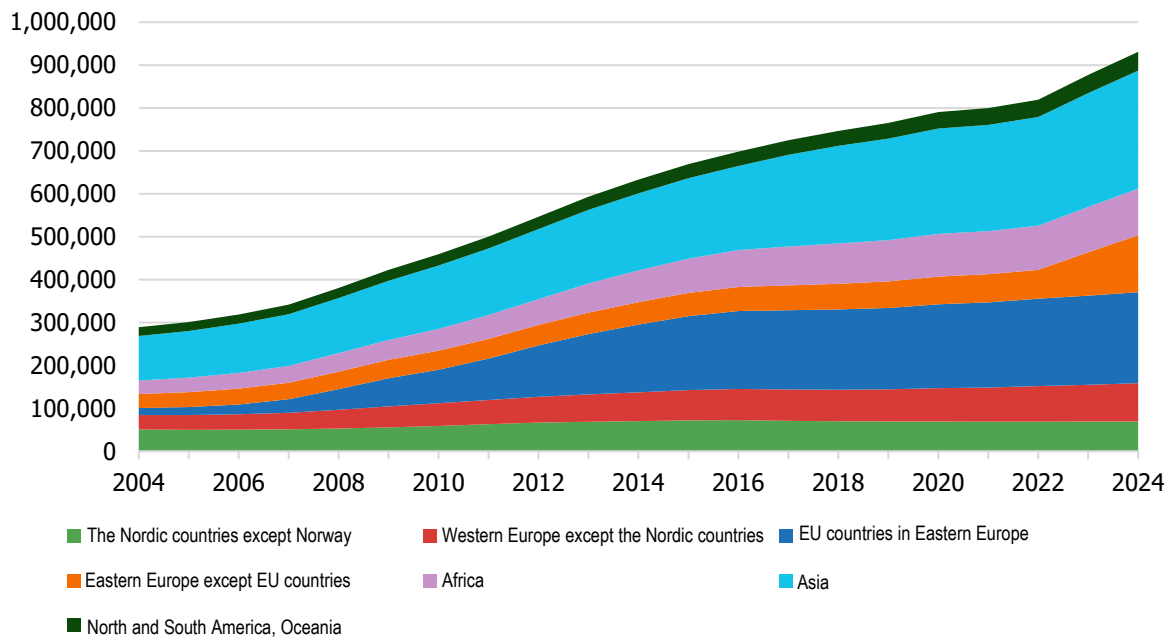
Immigrants by country of origin

2.2 Half of the immigrants come from European countries

At the start of 2024, about half of the immigrants in Norway were from a Nordic or European country. One of three immigrants come from countries in Asia, while 13 per cent are from countries in Africa. A relatively small proportion (just under 5 per cent) comes from countries in North, Central and South America and Oceania (Statistics Norway, 2024bc)

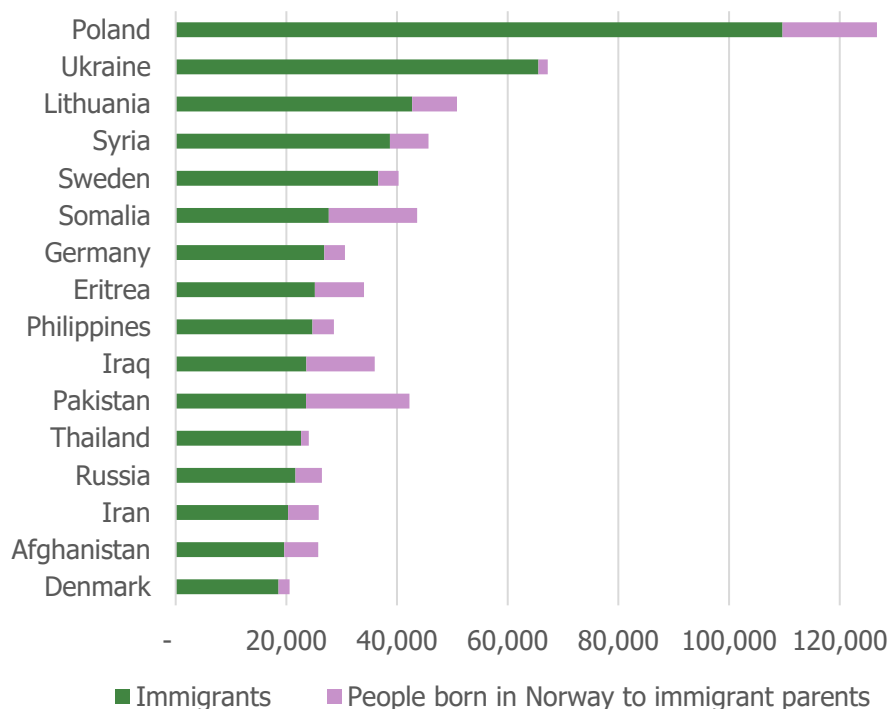
Figure 2.3 shows how the composition of the immigrant population by country of origin has changed over the past 20 years. Since the enlargement of the EU in 2004, the share of immigrants from EU countries in Eastern Europe has increased significantly. At the start of 2024, 20 per cent of all immigrants in Norway were from one of these countries, compared to just six per cent in 2004. Immigrants from the Nordic countries on the other hand, make up an increasingly lower proportion of the immigrant population. This proportion has decreased from nearly 18 per cent to less than seven per cent.

Figure 2.3. Immigrants by country of origin (world region). 2004–2024. Number (Statistics Norway, 2024ax)



Broken down by individual country, immigrants from Poland make up the largest immigrant group in Norway. More than 109,600 Polish immigrants were residing in Norway at the start of 2024. The large increase in the number of Ukrainian refugees has resulted in people of Ukrainian national origin becoming the second largest immigrant group in Norway. More than 65,500 Ukrainians were residing in the country at the start of 2024 compared to about 6,500 Ukrainians just two years earlier (Haug, 2024). Other countries with large immigrant groups in Norway in 2024 are Lithuania (42,700 people), Syria (38,700 people), Sweden (36,200 people), and Somalia (27,800 people) (Statistics Norway, 2024bc).

Figure 2.4. Immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents by country of origin. 2024. Number (Statistics Norway, 2024bc)



The majority in the relatively young group of people born in Norway to immigrant parents have a background from Asia (40 per cent), while almost the same number (38 per cent) have parents who migrated from a European country. One of five people born in Norway to immigrant parents has parents from countries in Africa (Statistics Norway, 2024ax). When divided according to country of origin, most of those born in Norway to immigrant parents have backgrounds from Pakistan, Poland, Somalia, Iraq and Vietnam. Three of ten people born in Norway to immigrant parents have backgrounds from one of these five countries (Statistics Norway, 2024bc).

Settlement pattern

2.3 Trends towards decentralisation

As shown in figure 2.5, almost three of ten immigrants live in one of the seven most central municipalities in the country. The corresponding proportion for the population as a whole is almost two of ten (Statistics Norway, 2024u).

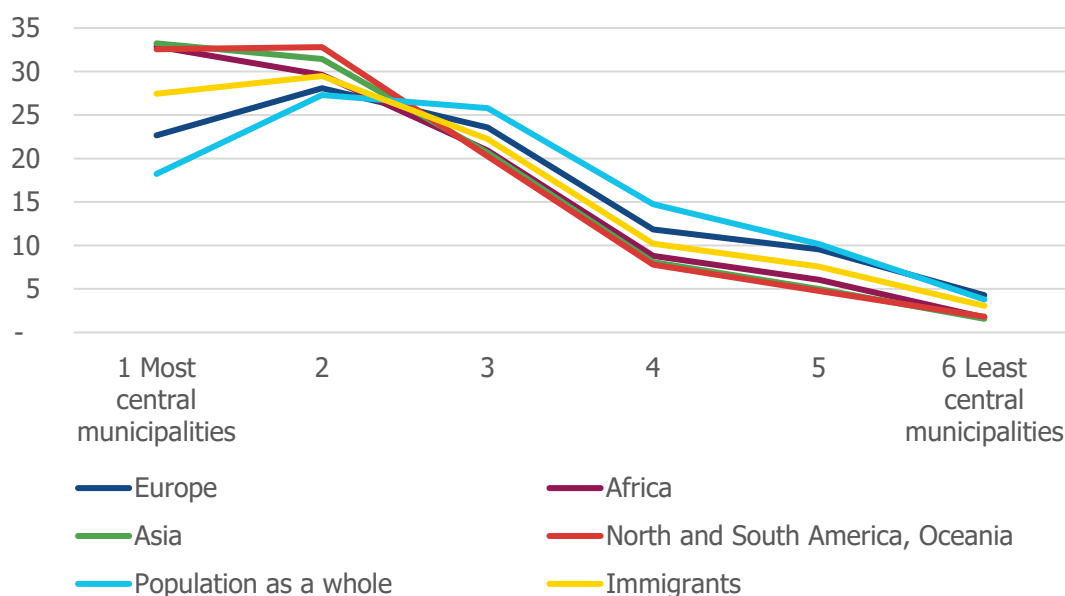
The number of immigrants who live centrally also varies between different national groups.

How is the centrality of the municipalities calculated?

A centrality index has been formulated for all municipalities in Norway. Centrality is measured by looking at travel time to workplaces and service functions from all inhabited constituencies in the municipality. Based on the index, Norwegian municipalities are divided into six groups, ranging from the most central to the least central. The seven municipalities that are the most central are Oslo, Lørenskog, Skedsmo, Bærum, Rælingen, Asker and Drammen.

Immigrants from European countries are less concentrated in the most central municipalities. One of four European immigrants live in the most central municipalities in Norway, compared to one of three in the other immigrant groups.

Figure 2.5. Distribution according to the centrality classification of the municipality of residence for the population as a whole and for immigrants. 2024. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024v, 2024x)



The differences between the groups described above have decreased over the past decades, and we can see trends towards clear decentralization in immigrant settlement patterns in Norway since 2000. There are several possible reasons for this. Among other things, recent arrival cohorts of immigrants have, in part, spent their initial period of residence in Norway in less central locations. There is also an increasing trend towards immigrants remaining in their first municipality of residence. In addition, fewer immigrants than before are moving to more central areas (Tønnessen, 2022).

The settlement pattern is linked to reasons for immigration. Since one of the goals of integration policy is managed and dispersed settlement, refugees are settled in municipalities across the country. Since the outbreak of war in February 2022, Ukrainian refugees have been settled in all but one of the country's municipalities. Immigrants who have come to Norway due to education most often reside in more central municipalities where university colleges and universities are located. Newly arrived resettlement refugees are often settled at less central locations. Labour immigrants are particularly inclined to settle in coastal municipalities in Northern and Western Norway. 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 the same municipality (Guldbrandsen et al., 2021).

When compared with other immigrant groups, we also see that the settlement pattern among refugees changes to a greater extent in line with their 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 still a lower share than for refugees settled prior to 2011, as Statistics Norway's monitor for secondary migration shows (Strøm, Kirkeberg and Epland, 2020). The trend since 2011 is that refugees are increasingly remaining in the municipality that they were settled in. One explanation for this is that the Introduction Programme for new arrivals in Norway appears to give people with refugee backgrounds a stronger connection to the municipality they first settle in (Strøm, Kirkeberg and Epland, 2020).

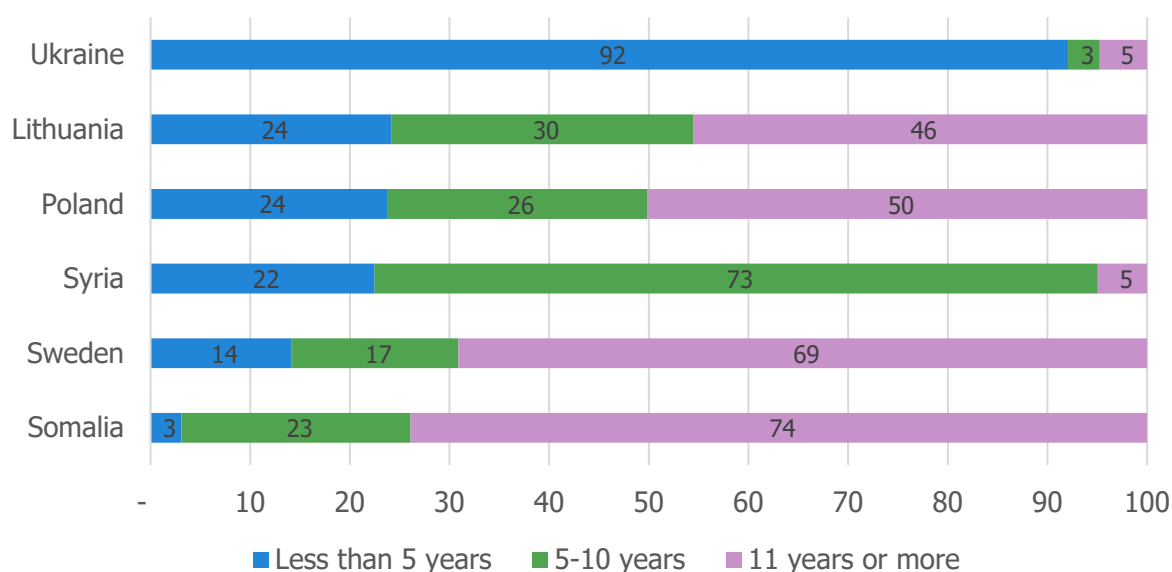
Period of residence

2.4 Higher proportion with short period of residence in 2024

Integration is a time-consuming process. It will take some time for most immigrants who settle in Norway to acquire relevant skills, find a job, learn the language and form social ties. It is therefore not surprising that there is often a positive correlation between period of residence and several of the integration indicators in this report. Both employment and participation in voluntary organisations increase with the period of time spent in Norway, and immigrants with a longer period of residence often have both higher incomes and better living conditions.

The proportion of immigrants with a short period of residence decreased in the years up to 2022 in line with the continually decreasing number of new immigrants settling in Norway. In January 2022, one of five immigrants had lived in Norway for less than five years. This situation has changed markedly as a result of the large influx of refugees from Ukraine. As of the present date, more than one in four immigrants (26 per cent) has resided in Norway for less than five years. In addition, 23 per cent have resided in Norway for between five and ten years, and about half (51 per cent), have resided in Norway for eleven years or more (Statistics Norway, 2024aj).

Figure 2.6. Immigrants from select countries, by period of residence. 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024aj).



There are significant variations in the distribution by period of residence between immigrants from different countries. Figure 2.6 shows this distribution for the six countries with the highest number of immigrants in Norway. 69 per cent of immigrants from Sweden and 74 per cent of immigrants from Somalia have lived in Norway for 11 years or more. The equivalent shares for immigrants from Poland and Lithuania are 50 and 46 per cent, respectively. Immigrants from Ukraine stand out as having a very high proportion with a short period of residence in Norway. 92 per cent of all Ukrainian immigrants in Norway have lived in the country for less than five years, and 98 per cent have lived in the country for less than two years.

Reason for immigration

2.5 Escape the biggest cause of immigration last year

Immigrants come to Norway for a variety of reasons. While some come to work, study or be reunited with their family, others are fleeing, for example, war or humanitarian crises. Since 1990, 32 per cent of all immigrants who have arrived in Norway have come to work. Ten per cent have come to study, 23 per cent have come as refugees, while 34 per cent have come for family reunification or family establishment. Two per cent have immigrated for other or unknown reasons (Statistics Norway, 2024h).

The gender and age composition varies between immigrant groups with different reasons for immigration. It is predominantly women who come to Norway because of family (66 per cent) or to study (60 per cent). For labour immigrants, as many as three in four are men. There is also a preponderance of men among refugees in Norway, despite the proportion of women having risen slightly over the past five years. The vast majority of children under the age of 18 come to Norway as refugees or to be reunited with their families (Statistics Norway, 2024h).

In 2023, about 71,800 non-Nordic citizens immigrated to Norway. Escape was the biggest cause of immigration last year, which was primarily attributed to the arrival of almost 32,400 refugees from Ukraine. Other national groups with high refugee arrivals in 2023 were Syrians (2,190 people), Congolese (670 people) and Afghans (310 people) (Kirkeberg, 2024). In total, refugees from Ukraine now make up the largest refugee group in Norway. Other large refugee groups come from Syria, Somalia, Eritrea and Iraq (Strøm, 2024).

Figure 2.7. Immigration to Norway, by reason for immigration. 2004–2023. Number (Statistics Norway, 2024w).

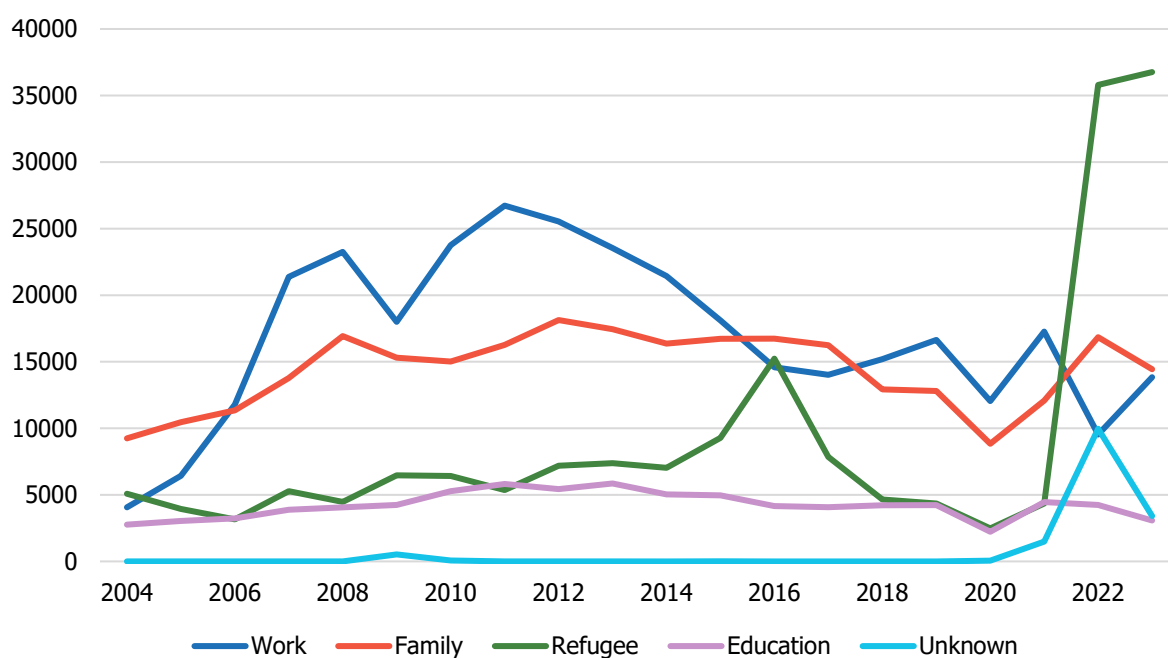


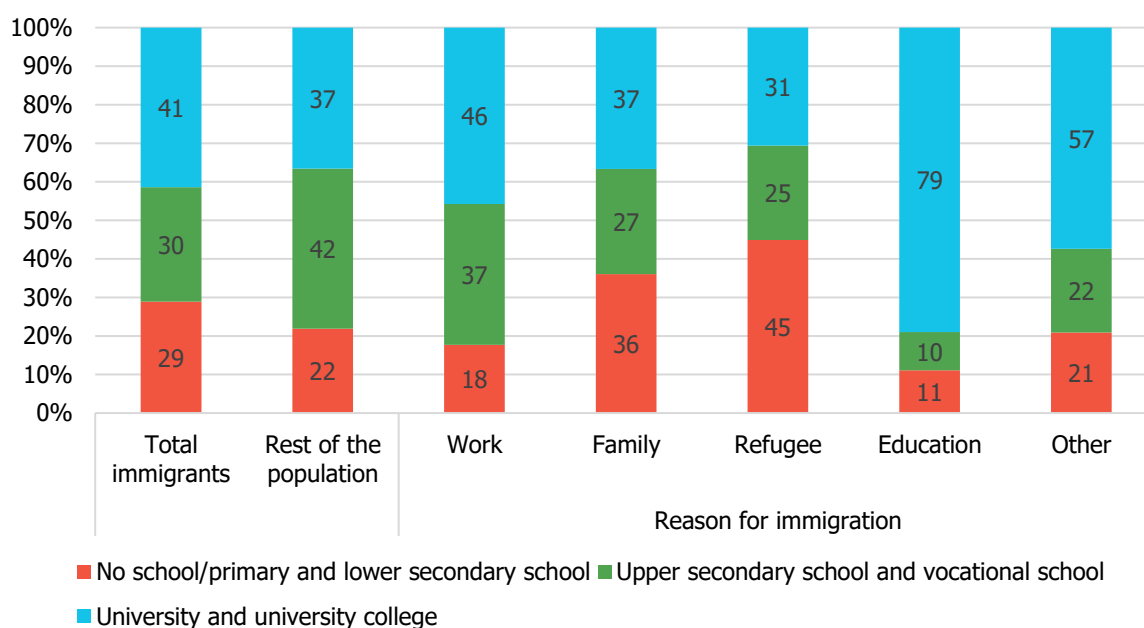
Figure 2.7 also shows that the number of immigrants with unknown reasons for immigrating has been relatively high in recent years. This is primarily due to the fact that the reason for immigration is not registered for EEA nationals, who often come because of work or family reunification (Kirkeberg, 2024). Pursuant to the EU directive on the right to free movement, EEA citizens and their families can freely enter and stay in other member states (Norwegian Government, 2011). In other words, immigrants from these countries do not have to register with the police or immigration authorities when entering Norway. The largest national groups for which there is sparse information about their reasons for immigration are Poland, Lithuania, Spain and Romania (Kirkeberg, 2024).

Educational level

2.6 Significant differences in education between different immigrant groups

Compared to the rest of the population, there is a larger share of immigrants who have no education or only have primary and lower secondary school education. In 2023, 29 per cent of immigrants had either not completed schooling or primary and lower secondary school were the highest levels completed, compared to 22 per cent among the rest of the population. However, the proportion with a university or university college education was slightly higher among immigrants than the rest of the population, at 41 and 37 per cent, respectively (Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8. Educational attainment, by immigration category and reason for immigration, 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024ac, 2024c).



The figure also shows that there are significant differences in educational attainment between immigrants with different reasons for immigration. Four of five who have come to Norway to study have post-secondary education. Among labour immigrants, 46 per cent have post-secondary education, which is a relatively large share. The distribution according to educational attainment among labour immigrants has remained unchanged since 2022. The proportion of refugees with an upper secondary school education or higher increased from 47 per cent in 2021 to 56 per cent in 2023. This increase was most probably due to the arrivals from Ukraine.

Education and qualifications

Kindergarten attendance

95%

non-minority language speaking children



86%

minority language speaking children



Smaller differences since 2013

Primary and lower secondary school points

39 immigrants

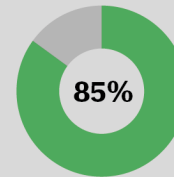
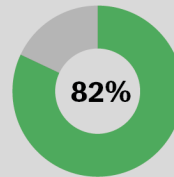
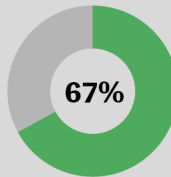
41 people born in Norway to immigrant parents

43 rest of the population

Stable differences since 2009



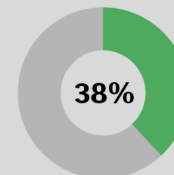
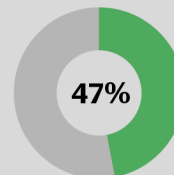
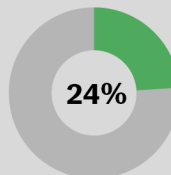
Completed upper secondary school within 5 years



Stable differences since 2009



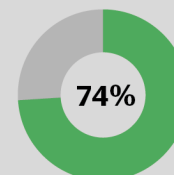
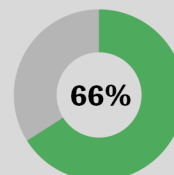
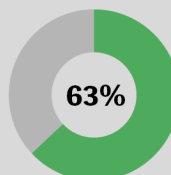
Enrolled in higher education



Smaller differences since 2020



Students who complete bachelor's degrees



Stable differences since 2018

immigrants

people born in Norway to immigrant parents

rest of the population

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3. Education and qualifications

Education can be both a goal in itself and a means of success in other areas of society. Education provides people with opportunities to utilise their potential, to understand and assert their rights, and provides the possibility of social and financial mobility. For immigrants and their Norwegian-born children, the foundations that are laid through school and education provide opportunities to participate in the labour force and acquire more resources for which to create a good life in Norway. It is therefore important that children and young people with immigrant backgrounds do not fall behind in the school system. For their part, adult immigrants need to have the opportunity to develop and use their skills in line with their own needs and labour market requirements.

It is also important to have knowledge about the path taken by immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents through the educational and qualifications systems in order to develop measures to ensure a good transition from education to work. For example, we know that a lack of education is an important cause of the disparities in employment rates between immigrants and the rest of the population. This is especially evident for refugees (Olsen, 2020). Immigrants who have completed their education in Norway also have higher rates of employment than immigrants whose education is from another country. This applies irrespective of the level of education, but the difference is greatest for refugees who have completed higher education (Bye 2021; Official Norwegian Report – NOU, 2021).

Kindergarten attendance

3.1 Kindergarten attendance is increasing most among the youngest children

Attending kindergarten is good for the language development, school results and integration of children who speak minority languages. A number of Norwegian studies have found positive effects of kindergarten attendance and schemes such as “early start” and “free core hours” (Bråten et al. 2014; Drange 2018, 2021; Drange and Havnes, 2015).

The proportion of minority language children aged 1–5 years attending kindergarten increased from 78 per cent to 87 per cent in the period 2015–2023 (Statistics Norway, 2024ap). This share is still lower than the share of children in this age group who do not speak a minority language, but the differences have declined since 2015.

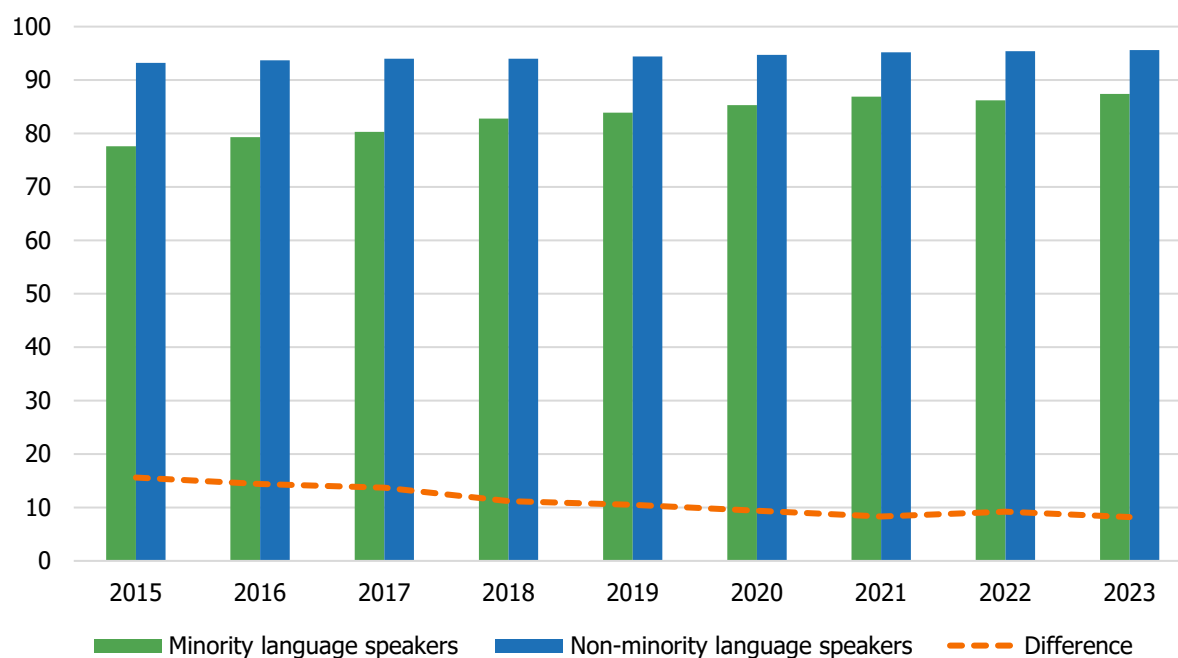
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How are children who speak a minority language in kindergarten defined?

In this report, 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.

The proportion of children with a minority language background in the figure 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.

Figure 3.1. Kindergarten attendance, children aged 1–5, broken down by language background. 2015–2023. Percentage (IMDi 2024c; Statistics Norway, 2024ap).



When broken down by age, the proportion who attend kindergarten is lowest among one and two-year-olds who speak a minority language (IMDi, 2024c). At the same time, we see the highest increase in kindergarten participation among the youngest children. For one-year olds who speak a minority language, this share increased from 40 per cent in 2015 to 61 per cent in 2023. Among children who do not speak a minority language, 88 per cent of one-year olds attend kindergarten. From the time they turn three years of age, close to 94 per cent of children who speak a minority language and more or less every child who does not speak a minority language attend kindergarten (IMDi, 2024c).

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Research has identified several possible reasons for lower kindergarten attendance among children with immigrant backgrounds (Bove and Sharmahd, 2020; Van Lancker and Pavolini, 2023). The financial situation and level of education of parents may be reasons for some of the differences in kindergarten attendance (Drange and Telle, 2015; Van Lancker and Pavolini, 2023). More conservative gender norms may also partially explain the differences in kindergarten use between families with and without immigrant backgrounds (Seibel and Hedegaard, 2017; Van Lancker and Pavolini, 2023). Other explanations are that kindergarten is an institution that some immigrant groups have had little or no knowledge of. Access to information, language barriers and different and unknown cultural codes thus contribute towards further complicating the picture (Lund 2022; Sønsthagen, 2020).

Results in primary and lower secondary school

3.2 Stable differences in primary and lower secondary school results

What is the difference between primary and lower secondary school points and grades?

Grades are assessments of student performance in some subjects on a scale of 1 to 6. Primary and lower secondary school points are calculated by adding together all the final grades on the diploma (final assessment and exam grades), and dividing this by the number of grades. The average is then multiplied by 10. Primary and lower secondary school points provide an overall picture of how a student is performing at school and form the basis for admission to upper secondary school.

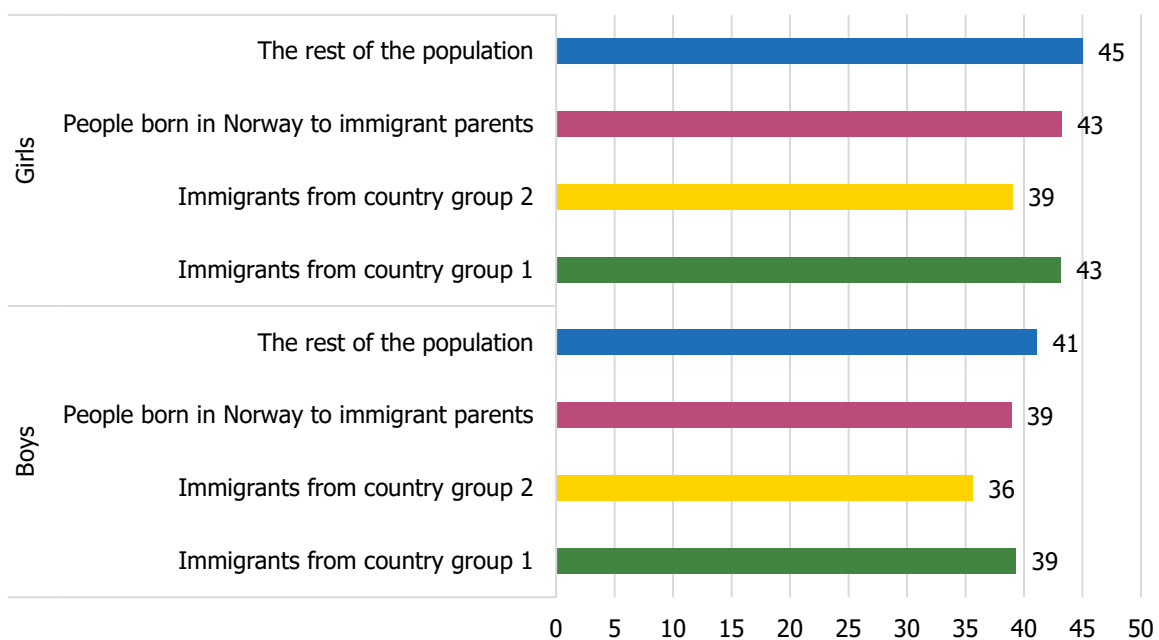
Primary and lower secondary school points are used as an indicator of results achieved from primary and secondary education and formal qualification to upper secondary school. The grades achieved in primary and lower secondary school have a positive correlation with completion of upper secondary education (Perlic, Stolpe Foss and Moafi, 2020).

There are systematic differences in average primary and lower secondary school points for children with different immigrant backgrounds. On average, immigrants have lower grades on completion of compulsory primary and lower secondary schooling than the rest of the population. In 2023, the difference was just over 4 points, i.e. a difference of close to half a grade. There are also significant differences in grade levels achieved within the immigrant population. Immigrants from Country Group 1 and people born in Norway to immigrant parents have an average of about 4 primary and lower school points more than immigrants from Country Group 2 (Statistics Norway, 2023n). Similar differences are also found when looking at results from national tests in English, reading and arithmetic. In particular, children with backgrounds from Country Group 2 have lower average scores in all three tests than students from the rest of population (Statistics Norway, 2023i). Figure 3.2 shows that

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the primary and lower secondary school results also vary according to gender. Girls attain more primary and lower secondary school points than boys, regardless of the immigrant category and country of origin.

Figure 3.2. Primary and lower secondary school points, by immigrant category and gender. 2023 (Statistics Norway, 2023n).



The grade level attained in primary and lower secondary school has increased at the same pace over time for both immigrants and the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2023h). This means that the distance between these groups has remained virtually unchanged since 2009.

The socioeconomic background of students, such as their parents' level of education or household income, appears to be strongly correlated with primary and lower secondary school results. Grades are, on average, lower among students who have parents with a lower level of education or who live in a low-income household than among students with highly educated parents or parents with high incomes (Ekren and Arnesen, 2022). This is the case for students both with and without immigrant backgrounds. If socioeconomic characteristics are taken into account, the differences between students in different immigrant categories are significantly reduced (Statistics Norway, 2023n).

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Upper secondary school completion rate

3.3 Four out of ten immigrant boys do not complete upper secondary school

Young people with immigrant backgrounds completing or failing to complete upper secondary school can have a major impact on their future participation in the workforce and integration into society. According to the OECD (2018), dropping out of upper secondary school is an important risk factor for exclusion among young people in Norway. Young people who do not complete upper secondary school are seven times more likely to end up outside of work and education than their peers (OECD, 2018).

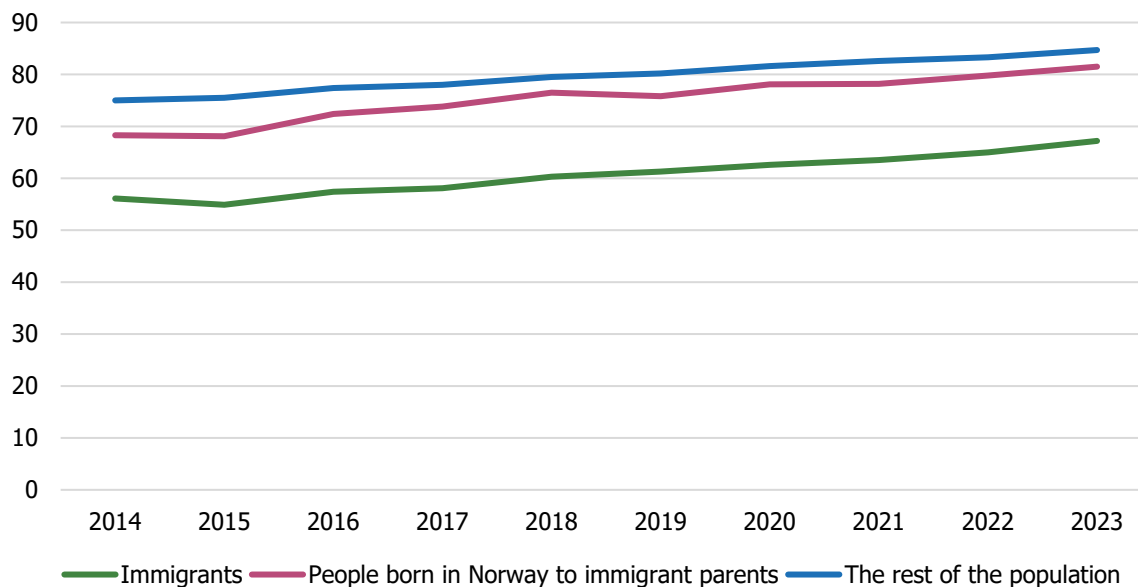
How are upper secondary school completion rates measured?

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 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 proportion of immigrants, people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population that complete upper secondary school in the five or six-year period after starting upper secondary school increased in the period from 2014-2023. During this entire period, the completion rate among immigrants was at a lower level than among people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population, and was 67 per cent in 2023 compared to 82 per cent, and 85 per cent, respectively.

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Figure 3.3. Share of pupils who have completed upper secondary education or training within five/six years after starting school, by immigrant category, 2014-2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024au).

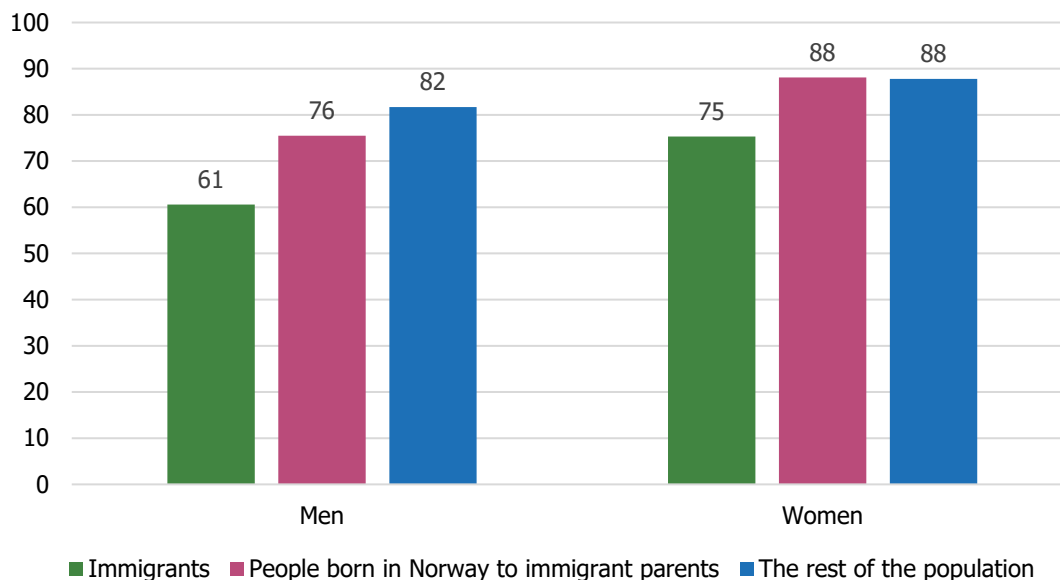


For immigrants, people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population, the completion rate is generally lower among boys than among girls. This proportion is lowest for immigrant boys (Figure 3.4). In 2023, 61 per cent of male immigrants completed upper secondary school within five or six years, compared to 49 per cent in 2015. The corresponding share among boys in the rest of the population was 82 per cent in 2023 and 72 per cent in 2015. The difference between boys in the rest of the population and immigrant boys decreased by 3 percentage points during this period.

In addition to girls having a higher completion rate, there were also smaller differences between girls with and without immigrant backgrounds. In 2023, girls born in Norway to immigrant parents had the same completion rate as girls without immigrant backgrounds (88 per cent).

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Figure 3.4. Share of pupils who have completed upper secondary education or training within five/six years, by gender and immigrant category 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024au).



In addition to gender, there appears to be a positive correlation between the rate of completion and period of residence in Norway. Among students who had been living in Norway for three to five years, 61 per cent completed upper secondary school. The corresponding share for students with a period of residence of ten or more years was 77 per cent in 2023 (Statistics Norway, 2024av).

Immigrants have a lower completion rate than people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population, and this includes both those who choose vocational programmes, and those who take general studies programmes. In 2023, 57 per cent of immigrants completed their vocational programmes. For people born in Norway to immigrant parents the completion rate was 66 per cent, while the figure was 74 per cent for the rest of the population. For general studies programmes, the completion rates for these three groups were 82, 88 and 92 per cent respectively (Statistics Norway, 2024au). Students who live centrally are more likely to choose a general studies programme. Immigrants, on the other hand, more often choose vocational programmes, irrespective of how central they may live (Lervåg, Ye and Steffensen, 2024). Selecting general studies programmes is most common among Norwegian-born girls with immigrant parents (76 per cent), while the majority of immigrants (60 per cent) choose vocational programmes. General studies programmes are chosen by a larger proportion of girls than boys, with the exception of girls who immigrated when they were six years or older (Kalcic and Jiaying, 2023).

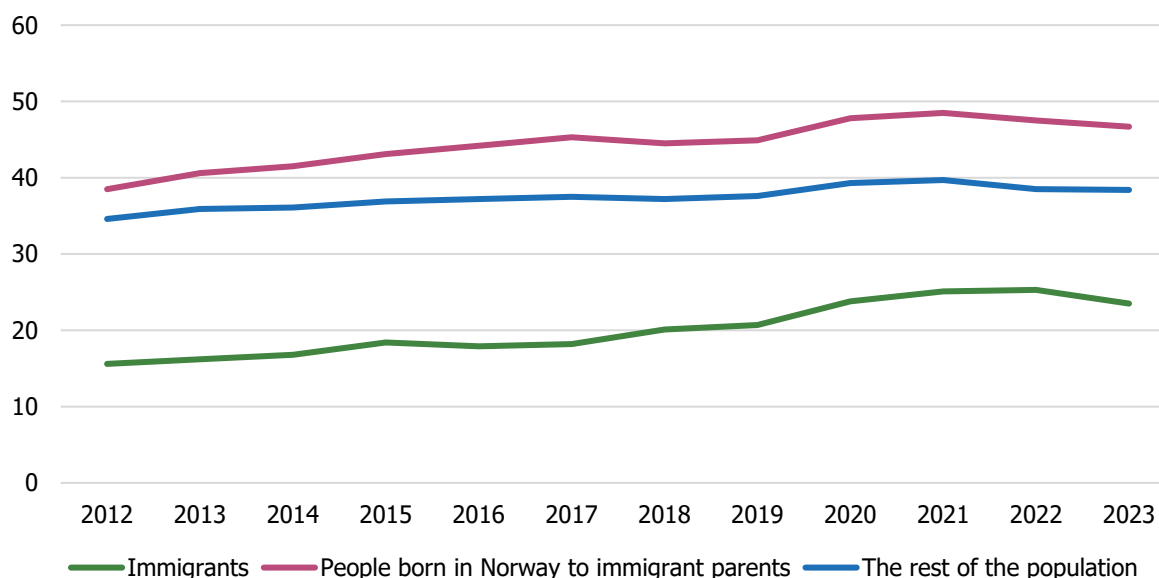
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Higher education participation and completion rates

3.4 Nearly half of people born in Norway to immigrant parents enrol in higher education

The proportion of people aged 19–24 who enrol in higher education has increased steadily since 2012, both among young people with immigrant backgrounds and in the rest of the population. People born in Norway to immigrant parents stand out by virtue of the fact that 47 per cent were enrolled in higher education in 2023. The corresponding figures for immigrants and the rest of the population were significantly lower at 24 and 38 per cent respectively.

Figure 3.5. Proportion of students aged 19-24 in higher education in Norway, as a percentage of registered cohort, by immigrant category. 2012–2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024y, 2024l).



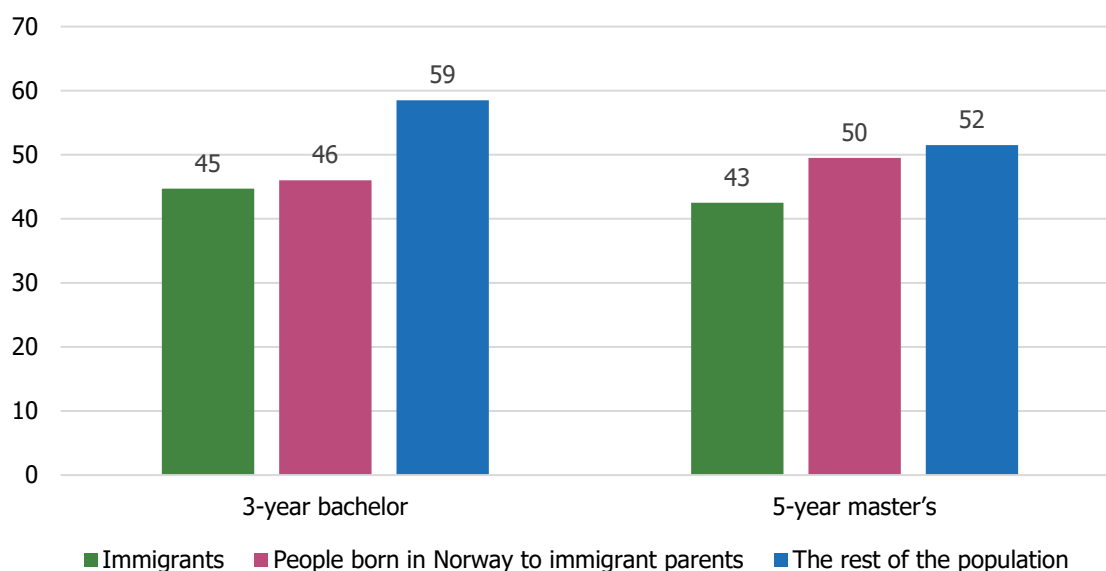
People born in Norway to immigrant parents are overrepresented in higher education (ISF, 2019). However, there are major differences between people born in Norway to immigrant parents based on their parents' countries of origin, both in terms of commenced and completed higher education. People born in Norway to immigrant parents from India, China, Sri Lanka or Vietnam are particularly likely to pursue higher education. A lower proportion of people born in Norway to immigrant parents from Turkey, Iraq, Chile and Morocco enrol in higher education (Kirkeberg et al., 2019). There are also differences between men and women, even if their parents have the same countries of origin. Among people born in Norway to immigrant parents from Somalia, 41 per cent of women are enrolled in higher education, compared to 26 per cent of men (Kirkeberg et al., 2019). In terms of educational attainment, 56 per cent of people born in Norway to immigrant parents aged 30 to 34 have higher education, compared to 53 per cent in the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2024ac).

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Several studies have examined why people born in Norway to immigrant parents are overrepresented in higher education and often take more prestigious education, even when they have more difficult starting points than people without immigrant backgrounds (Borgen and Hermansen, 2023; Friberg, 2019; Kindt, 2017, 2018; Ljunggren and Orupabo, 2020; Orupabo, Drange, and Abrahamsen, 2020). These explanations indicate that there is not only encouragement and support from family, but also explicit expectations regarding children's educational choices that are based on the parents' perception of higher education as being the only "correct" choice. It may also be about stronger family orientation, and that the children feel they owe it to their parents to work hard to realise the opportunities they have been given. However, many also state that their educational choices are less about pressure, and more about interests and self-realisation. A final interpretation is that the high level of ambition among people born in Norway to immigrant parents is also a means of achieving acceptance and counteracting low expectations that the majority population may have of them.

Students with immigrant backgrounds have lower higher education completion rates than the rest of the population. 45 per cent of immigrants who start a three-year bachelor's programme complete their bachelor's degree at the stipulated time. As the figure below shows, the equivalent share for the rest of the population is 59 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.

Figure 3.6. Number of students who completed their education at the stipulated time, by type of educational programme and immigrant category. 2016–2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024ay, 2024az).



Like upper secondary school, the share that completes bachelor's and master's degrees is generally higher for women than for men. For immigrants, the completion rate also varies somewhat in line with the reason for immigration. Those who have immigrated to study or work are most likely to complete their degree at the stipulated time. Refugees who have

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started a programme in higher education complete their programme at lower rates than other immigrants (Statistics Norway, 2024ba).

Participation in the Introduction Programme (introduksjonsprogrammet)

3.5 Record-high participation in the Introduction Programme

A key objective of integration policy is for immigrants to participate more in the labour market and civil society (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2024). To achieve this, it is crucial that recently arrived immigrants and refugees are offered and complete qualification initiatives that can help give them stable ties to the labour market. The purpose of these qualification initiatives is to close the gap between the skills immigrants and refugees bring from their home countries and the skills the Norwegian labour market requires. Qualification services such as the Introduction Programme, Norwegian language and social studies training and other training, follow-up and work-oriented measures are important in this context.

Approximately 32,500 people participated in the Introduction Programme in 2023. That figure is significantly higher than the previous year, when there were about 17,900 registered participants in the programme (IMDi, 2024b). The proportion of women among programme participants has increased significantly in recent years. In 2017, there was a clear preponderance of men in the Introduction Programme (63 per cent), while the proportion of female participants was 37 per cent. Six years later, in 2023, women made up the majority – nearly two-thirds of the participants in the programme (IMDi 2024a). The age composition among participants also changed slightly during the same period, with an increasing proportion of older participants aged 46 and over (Statistics Norway, 2024ad).

Who participates in the Introduction Programme?

The Introduction Programme is a training programme designed to prepare refugees for participation in the Norwegian labour market and civil society. All refugees between the ages of 18 and 55 who arrive in Norway will participate in the Introduction Programme. The same applies to family members who arrive in the country later. Displaced persons from Ukraine with collective protection have the right, but not the obligation, to participate in the Introduction Programme.

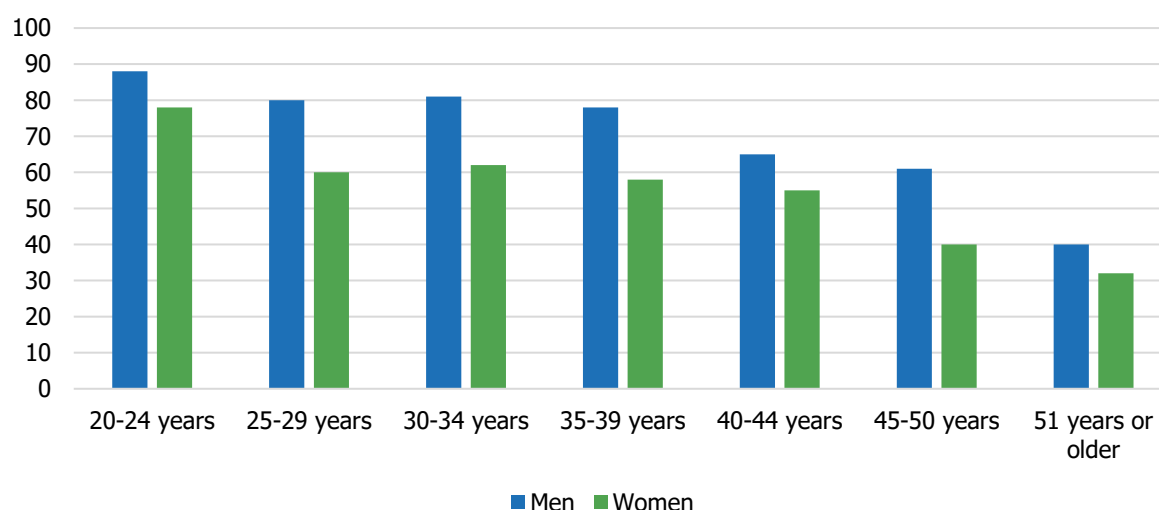
Participants in the Introduction Programme are given the opportunity to learn Norwegian and gain basic insights into Norwegian civil society. Participants also receive training in and knowledge about the Norwegian labour market, and education if they so require. The aim is that the participants will be able to commence employment or education once they have completed the programme (IMDi, 2021).

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In total, 65 per cent of the people who completed the Introduction Programme in 2021 were working or studying one year later. This is four percentage points higher than those who completed the programme 2020 (Statistics Norway, 2023j).

The composition of the participant group correlates with results after the completion of the Introduction Programme, because the proportion that transitions to work or education varies significantly with gender and age. Figure 3.7 illustrates this. The proportion that transitioned to work or education one year after completing the programme is highest among the youngest participants and decreases with age for both men and women.

Figure 3.7. Share in work or education one year after completing the Introduction Programme, by gender and age. 2022. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024ak).



A significantly higher proportion of men transition to work or education one year after completing the Introduction programme. Among men who completed the programme in 2021, 75 per cent were working or studying the following year, compared to 58 per cent of women. The transition to work or education in 2021 increased from the previous year for both genders. Over the past five years there has been a higher percentage increase in the proportion of women who are working or studying than for men, i.e. the gender disparities when concerning status in the labour market one year after completion of the Induction Programme have decreased (Statistics Norway, 2023j).

Research shows that female refugees and reunified family members who have participated in the Introduction Programme are somewhat more likely to find employment in both the short and long term than those who have not participated. At the same time, we do not see better wage development among women who participate in the Introduction Programme when compared with those who have not participated (Ugreninov and Turner, 2023).

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Norwegian language test results

3.6 Better Norwegian language test results among women

Norwegian language skills are an important prerequisite for immigrants being able to participate in different arenas in Norwegian society. Among other things, the research literature shows a positive correlation between immigrants' language skills and health, income and employment (Chiswick and Miller, 2015; Djuve et al., 2017; Kindt and Bjørnset, 2023; Kjøllesdal, Gerwing and Indseth, 2023; Lunde and Lysen, 2022).

Pursuant to the Norwegian Integration Act, immigrants aged 18 to 67 with a residence permit that provides grounds for a permanent residence permit have a right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language training and social studies. (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2021). Examples of groups included under the scheme are refugees, their reunified family members and reunified family members of Norwegian citizens. In other words, the target group for Norwegian language training is larger than the target group for the Introduction Programme. In 2023, just over 47,000 people participated in Norwegian language training – making this the highest ever number of participants. One in two participants was from Ukraine. Other large groups included immigrants from Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan and Congo (Lunde, 2024).

Approximately 34,200 Norwegian language tests were taken during 2022. The proportion of women among those who take Norwegian language tests has increased significantly over the past few years in line with a higher proportion of women among participants in the Introduction Programme. In 2022, two-thirds of Norwegian language tests were taken by women. In comparison, approximately 50 per cent of the tests in 2017 were taken by female participants. Half of the candidates were under the age of 36 in 2022. At the same time,

How is the proficiency level measured after the Norwegian language test is taken?

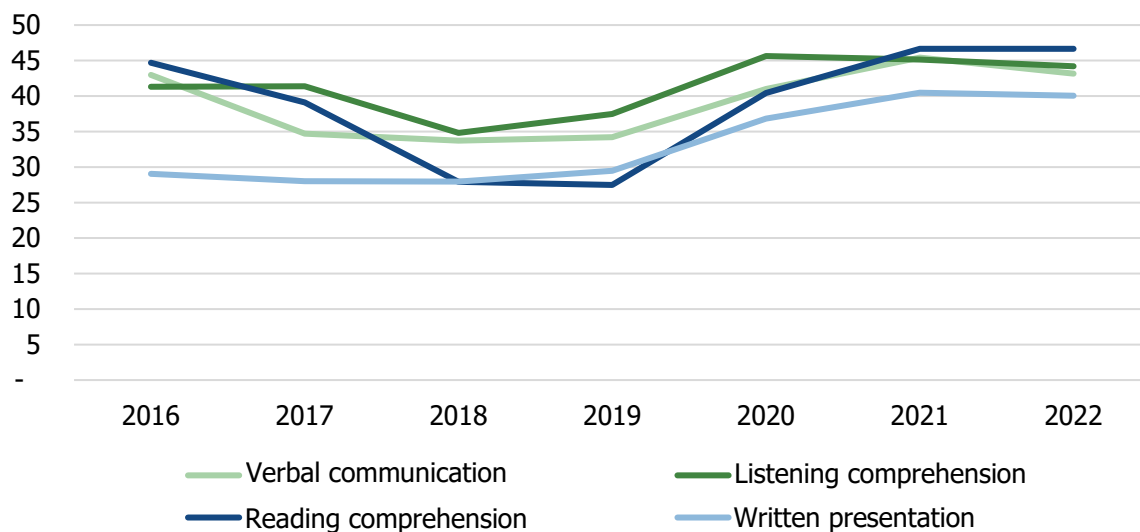
The Norwegian language test consists of four segments in listening comprehension, reading comprehension, written presentation and oral communication. It is possible for a person to take the test segments multiple times during a calendar year. The results of the Norwegian language test are evaluated based on a framework that divides language skills into three overall levels: basic user (A), independent user (B) and advanced user (C). Each of these levels consists of two sub-levels (A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2).

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there has been an increasing proportion in older age groups among those taking the tests (Statistics Norway, 2022b).

The results from the test segments indicate that immigrants have the greatest difficulty in acquiring writing skills. On the whole, the share that achieved the independent user level (B1 or higher) on the tests increased from 32 per cent in 2019 to 44 per cent in 2022.

Figure 3.8. Share of Norwegian language tests achieving proficiency level B1 or higher, by test segment. 2016–2022. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2022b).

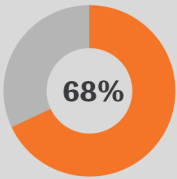


Participants receiving Norwegian language training who have completed higher education more often achieve proficiency level B1 or higher. Furthermore, the Norwegian test results vary by gender and age. Just under half (46 per cent), of the tests completed by women were graded at independent user (B1 or higher) compared to 40 per cent of the tests completed by men. The cohort aged 26-35 has the largest share of tests graded at level B, at 51 per cent. Thereafter, the share of tests at this level declines with age (Statistics Norway, 2022b).

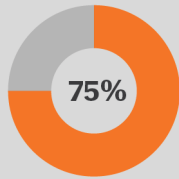
Work



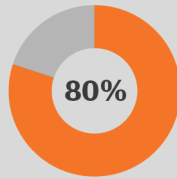
Employment rate



immigrants



people born in Norway to immigrant parents



other population

↑ Smaller differences since 2015

Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)

21%

of young immigrants are not in work and education

8%

of young people in the rest of the population

↑ Smaller differences since 2015

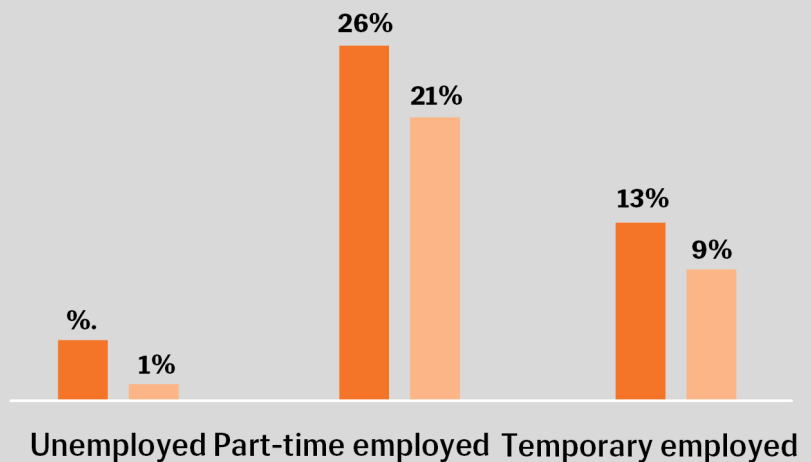
Overqualified

40% of immigrants

14% in the rest of the population

— Stable differences since 2015

- Immigrants
- Rest of the population



— Stable differences since 2022

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4 Work

An overarching goal of integration policy is for more people to enter and gain a lasting foothold in the labour market. Work gives one greater financial independence, self-realisation, participation and networks. A high employment rate is also crucial for the welfare state, for reducing poverty, for evening out social disparities and for achieving gender equality (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2024).

Immigrants are a complex group, and participation in the labour market varies in terms of country of origin, reason for immigration, period of residence, gender, age and existing skills. Labour immigrants have a higher employment rate than refugees and reunited family members. Women with refugee backgrounds in particular have low employment rates. The working conditions of many immigrants are typified by temporary and involuntary part-time employment and low incomes. Therefore, a key objective in integration policy is to contribute to more immigrants having a stable connection to the labour market (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2024).

Employment rate – immigrants

4.1 Employment rate is lowest for recently arrived refugees

On average, immigrants have lower employment rates than the rest of the population. In 2023, 68 per cent of immigrants were employed, compared to 80 per cent in the rest of the population (Olsen, 2024). At the same time, there are significant differences between groups in terms of reason for immigration, period of residence and gender.

How is the employment rate defined?

A person is considered employed if the person performed income-generating work of at least one hour in duration during the reference week, or has such work, but was temporarily absent due to illness, holiday, paid leave or similar (Register-based Employment Statistics, Statistics Norway).

The employment rate among labour immigrants is about on par with the rest of the population. Unlike other immigrants, period of residence does not influence this percentage (Statistics Norway, 2023m). It often takes longer for refugees and their reunited family members to enter the workforce. Most people in this group participate in the Introduction Programme during the first years, and it can take time to acquire relevant skills.

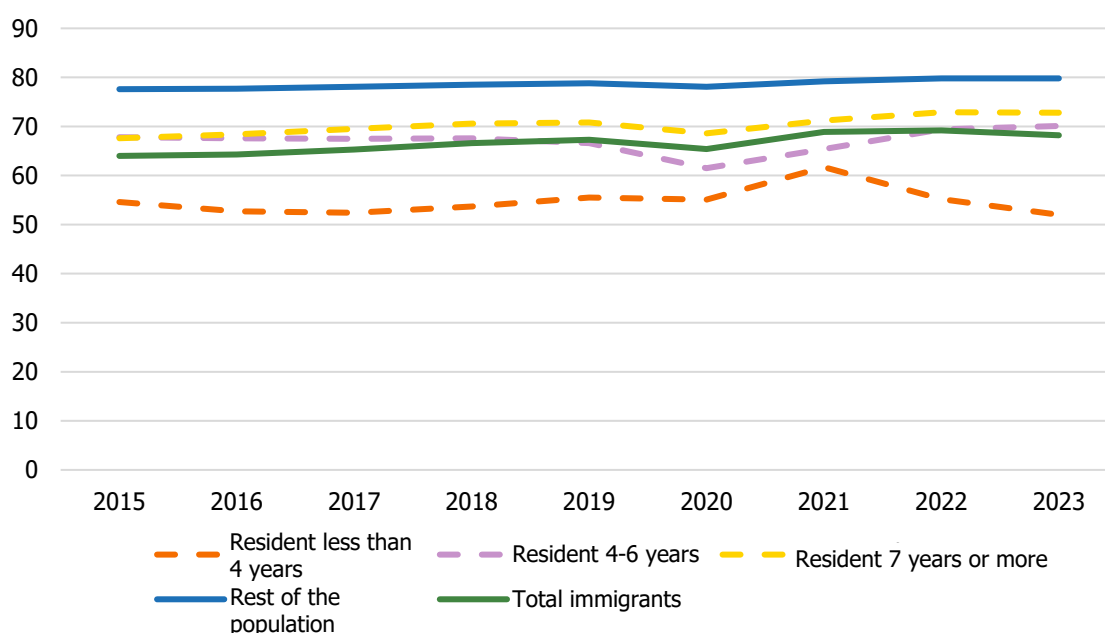
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Figure 4.1 shows the development in the employment rate for immigrants and the rest of the population since 2015. These differences were relatively stable until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Infection control measures in connection with the pandemic 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 (Indseth et al. 2021; NOU 2022).

As a result of the very high numbers of arrivals of Ukrainian refugees, since 2022 we have seen a clear decrease in the employment rate among immigrants with a short period of residence in Norway. The proportion of people with a period of residence of less than four years who are employed fell from 62 per cent in 2021 to 52 per cent in 2023.

Despite this decline, on average immigrants had a higher employment rate in 2023 than in 2015. In other words, the difference in the total proportion of people employed between immigrants and the rest of the population decreased during this period. Immigrants from Africa had the highest growth in the proportion of people employed, from 44 per cent in 2015 to 62 per cent in 2023. Immigrants from Eritrea experienced the strongest growth, which was 34 percentage points during the same period (Statistics Norway, 2024an).

Figure 4.1. Employment rate, by age, period of residence and immigrant background. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024b, 2024an)

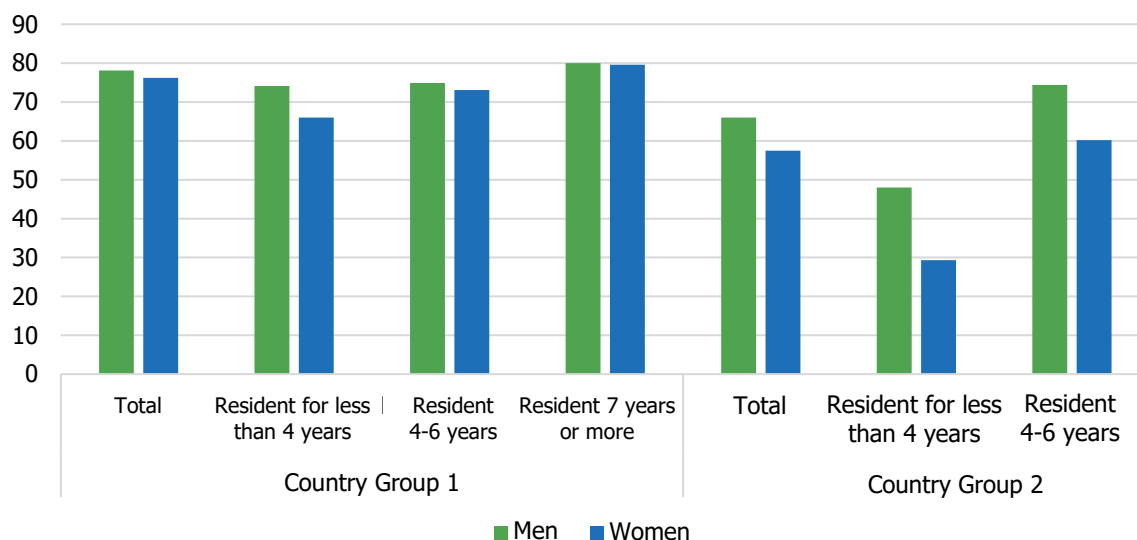


A larger proportion of immigrant men are employed than immigrant women. In 2023, 72 per cent of immigrant men and 64 per cent of immigrant women were registered as employed (Statistics Norway, 2024am). As shown in Figure 4.2, there is a particularly low employment rate among immigrant women in Country Group 2. The figure also shows that the gender

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differences in employment are greatest among recently arrived immigrants, i.e. those who have lived in Norway for less than four years. These differences level out in proportion to the period of residence in Norway. For immigrants in Country Group 1 who have resided in Norway for seven or more years, there are virtually no differences in the employment rates of men and women.

Figure 4.2. Employed immigrants (ages 20-66) by period of residence, country of origin and gender. 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024an).

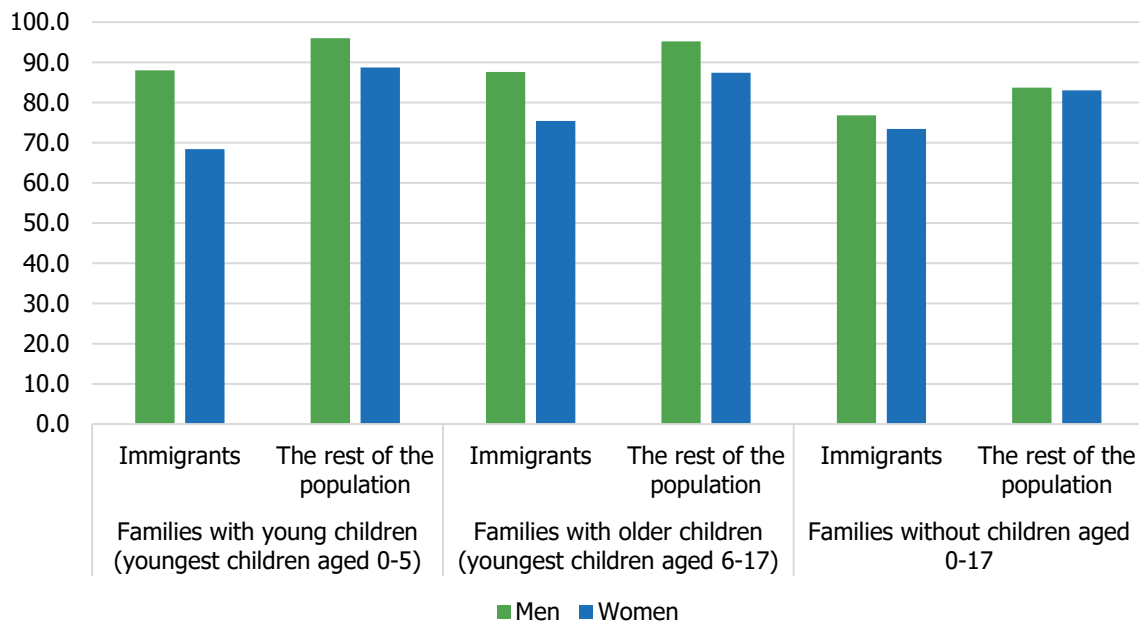


Research points to several reasons for lower labour market participation among immigrant women. These reasons include few formal qualifications, limited Norwegian language skills, poor health and discrimination (Umblijs, 2020). Furthermore, starting a family has a more negative effect on the connection immigrant women have to the labour market than for women without immigrant backgrounds. A study of immigrant women’s connection to the labour market shows that this correlation is stronger in more religious immigrant communities, despite them having immigrated to countries that promote gender equality in the labour market (Kanas and Müller, 2021). Immigrant women from some countries are also more likely to stay at home longer with their children than women in the rest of the population (Umblijs, 2020).

Figure 4.3 compares the proportion of workforce participation among men and women aged 25-44 in different family phases. Immigrant women in families with young children, i.e. families where the youngest child is under 6 years of age, clearly stand out as having the lowest proportion who either have or are looking for income-generating work.

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Figure 4.3. Proportion of workforce participation by gender, immigration category and family type among people aged 25-44, 2022. Percentage Statistics Norway, 2024ar).



Employment rate - people born in Norway to immigrant parents

4.2 Small gender differences among people born in Norway to immigrant parents

As shown earlier in the report, most people born in Norway to immigrant parents are relatively young – seven out of ten are under the age of 18. However, it is interesting to look at their connection to the workforce when compared with immigrants and the rest of the population, particularly in light of the relatively large proportion of people born in Norway to immigrant parents who are enrolled in higher education.

Several studies show that, on average, people born in Norway to immigrant parents do better in the labour market than their parents, but worse than the rest of the population. At the same time, significant differences are found within this group, and these are often linked to background factors such as gender, and their parents’ country of origin and level of education (Hermansen 2016; Umblijs, 2020).

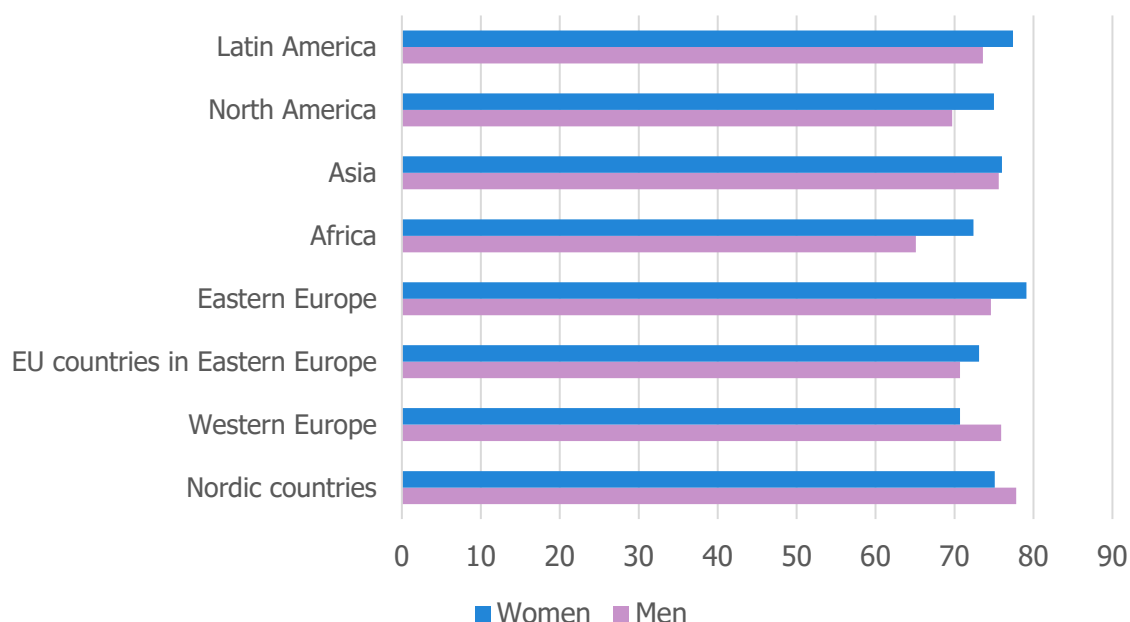
In 2023, 75 per cent of people born in Norway to immigrant parents between the ages of 20 and 66 were employed, compared with 68 per cent of immigrants. Of the population without immigrant backgrounds, 80 per cent were employed (Statistics Norway, 2024ao). The differences in employment rates between people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population were marginally higher in 2023 than they were in 2022. However,

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with the exception of the pandemic year in 2020, the primary trend since 2015 has been a decrease in the differences in the employment rates between these groups.

We see small gender differences in employment rates among people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population, and workforce participation is higher among women than among men in this group. In 2023, 74 per cent of men born in Norway to immigrant parents were employed, while the corresponding proportion for women born in Norway to immigrant parents was 76 per cent. When broken down according to the parents' country of origin, the proportion employed was lowest among Norwegian-born men with backgrounds from African countries. Just under two out of three in this group were employed in 2022 (Statistics Norway, 2024ao).

Figure 4.4. Employment rate among people born in Norway to immigrant parents, by gender and the parents' country of origin. 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024ao).



In recent years, multiple studies have identified possible reasons for people born in Norway to immigrant parents having both higher labour market participation and smaller gender differences in terms of participation than immigrants (Egge-Hoveid and Sandnes, 2015; Hermansen, 2017; Midtbøen and Nadim, 2022; Olsen and Bye, 2023). The high levels of education among both women and men in this group are highlighted as being an important explanation for this. Other factors that may have contributed to evening out the differences in employment rate are the Norwegian unitary school system, which has a high degree of standardization and little variation in quality and learning content between schools, as well as free higher education. In addition, schemes such as paid parental leave and subsidized kindergarten places encourage and enable both men and women to find employment (Kitterød and Nadim, 2020; Midtbøen and Nadim, 2022). Studies also show that people born

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in Norway to immigrant parents appear more likely to adapt to Norwegian gender equality norms when concerning work and caring for children (Birkelund et al. 2014; Kirkeberg et al. 2019; Kitterød and Nadim, 2020; Lund, 2024; Nadim and Midtbøen, 2023).

Working hours

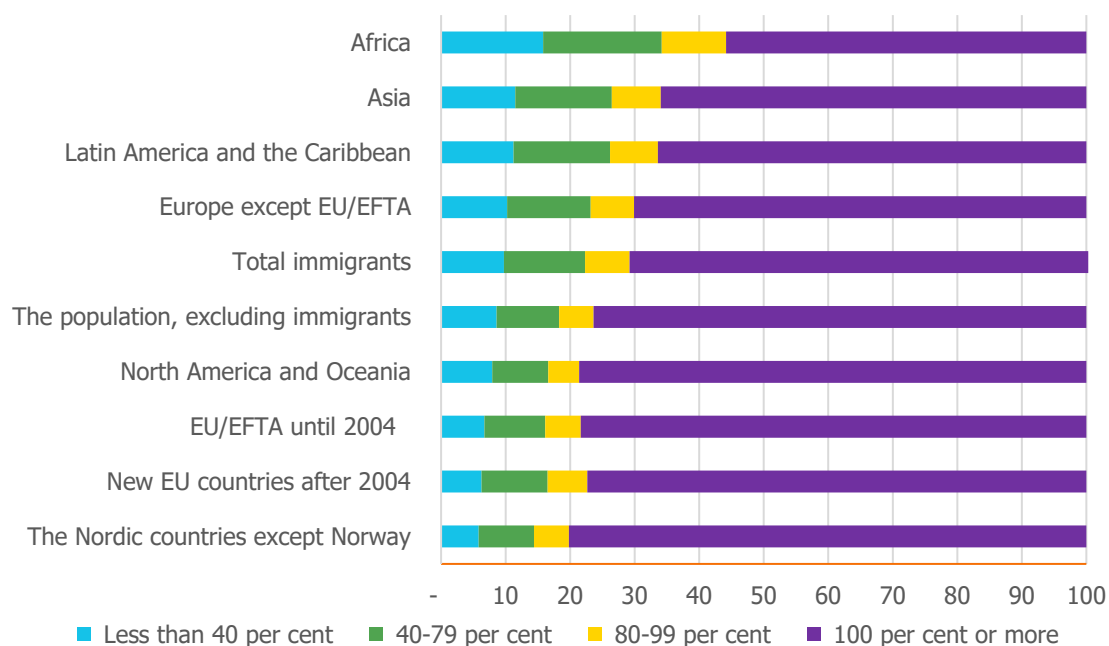
4.3 Four of ten immigrant women work part time

Immigrants work part-time relatively more often than the rest of the population. In 2023, 26 per cent of immigrants were employed in part-time positions, compared to 21 per cent for the rest of the population. Since 2015, the proportion of part-time employees has decreased (Dzamarija, 2022) in both groups, and the differences in the proportion of part-time employees between immigrants and the rest of the population have been reduced during this period. In 2015, 34 per cent of immigrants worked part-time, while the corresponding proportion for the rest of the population was 28 per cent (Statistics Norway, 2024aq, 2024b).

Women are generally overrepresented among part-time employees. In 2023, women had approximately twice the rate of part-time employment compared to men, and this applied for employees both with and without immigrant backgrounds. The highest proportion of part-time employees is found among immigrant women (36 per cent). Among women without an immigrant background, 30 per cent work part-time. Among men, 17 per cent with an immigrant background and 14 per cent with no immigrant background are employed part-time (Statistics Norway, 2024b, 2024aq).

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Figure 4.5. Distribution by percentage of FTE, employed immigrants by country of origin. 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024aq).



As shown in Figure 4.5, the part-time status among immigrants also depends on country of origin. Part-time work is relatively more common among immigrants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, while 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 the proportion of full-time employees between immigrants from different world regions must be viewed in the context of the types of occupations they have. Immigrants from Africa and Asia are overrepresented in industries in which part-time work is common, such as cleaning and sales and service jobs (Pettersen, 2024).

Figures from the labour force survey show that immigrants more often have involuntary part-time work. More people from the immigrant population than among the rest of the population report that they have to work part-time because they cannot find a full-time job and that they want longer working hours (Lien, 2022).

Working environment

4.4 Poorer working environment and more uncertain everyday working life

Employment rate and job percentage are important indicators of workforce integration, but they do not tell us much about how immigrants experience their everyday working life, what

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opportunities and barriers they face, and whether their connection to work is stable and lasting. Other key aspects that can shed light on the situation of immigrants in the labour market include working conditions, working environment, wage development and career opportunities.

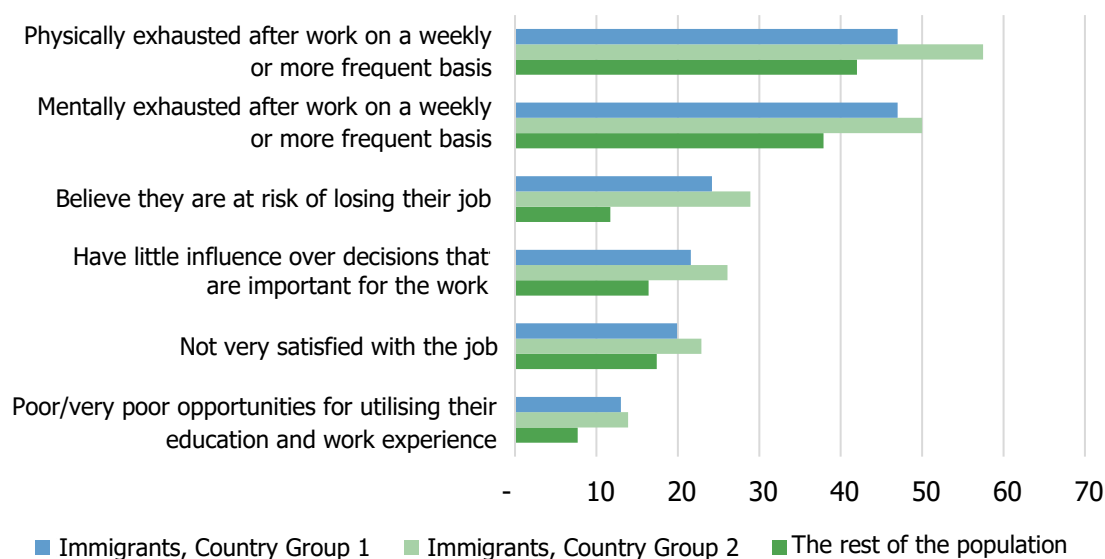
Research and statistics that are currently available indicate that immigrants are overrepresented in occupations that involve physically burdensome work tasks, that they experience more work-related health problems, and that they have a more uncertain connection to the workforce. Research also shows that immigrants experience several stress factors in the working environment, such as discrimination, harassment, threats due to ethnic background and a lack of social support (Akay and Ahmadi, 2022). Workplace injuries are also more prevalent among immigrants (Sterud et al. 2018).

Figures from Statistics Norway's survey of living conditions indicate that immigrants are more often exposed to a poor working environment than the rest of the population. This applies most to immigrants from Country Group 2, of whom over half experience being physically or mentally exhausted after work on a weekly or more frequent basis.

Nearly three in ten immigrants in Country Group 2 also experience that they are at risk of losing their job, compared to just over one in ten in the population at large (Statistics Norway, commissioned). A 2018 study shows that immigrants are twice as likely to lose their jobs (in the private sector) as people without immigrant backgrounds. Losing one's job has particularly negative consequences for immigrants from Country Group 2 in terms of future job prospects and wage development. Researchers have found no clear explanation for this connection, however have noted that limited language skills may have more of an impact on opportunities for finding new work than lack of education or seniority (Bratsberg, Raaum and Røed, 2018).

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Figure 4.6. Selected working environment indicators, according to two-part country of origin. 2022. Percentage (Statistics Norway, commissioned).



What is meant by over-qualification?

Formal overqualification refers to people who have completed university college and university education, but who are employed in occupations that do not require higher education (Villund, 2014).

Immigrants also experience having poorer opportunities to use their education and work experience in the workplace than people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population, and they are, to a greater extent, overqualified for the jobs they are employed in. This applies irrespective of country group, but the proportion of overqualified people decreases in line with period of residence (Larsen, Rogne and Birkelund, 2018). In 2021, four of ten immigrants worked in occupations that required lower qualifications than their education would suggest. In the rest of the population, 14 per cent were overqualified for their jobs. These differences have remained fairly stable since 2015 (Edelmann and Villund, 2022).

The everyday working lives of immigrants are also typified more by temporary work than the rest of the population. At the end of 2023, 13.8 per cent of immigrants aged 20-66 were employed in temporary positions, compared to 9 per cent for the rest of the population. Immigrants from African countries are particularly overrepresented among temporary employees. 22 per cent from this country group worked in temporary positions in 2023

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(Statistics Norway, 2024b, 2024j). This is due to the fact that many immigrants from Africa work in health and social services – which are among the industries with the largest proportion of temporary positions (Taha, 2023). Nordic immigrants have the lowest share of temporary employees among all immigrants (8 per cent) (Statistics Norway, 2024b, 2024j)

Research suggests that the differences in employment between immigrants and employees without an immigrant background vary by profession. There are fewer differences in regulated professions in health, law, finance, education and public administration, and in industries with a high proportion of trade union members. For example, immigrants in professional occupations such as doctor, dentist, nurse and teacher have significantly less risk of being subjected to wage discrimination than immigrants in other occupations (Drange and Helland, 2018). One explanation is that a limited supply of labour in some industries greatly reduces the employer's ability to discriminate. Research suggests that education which leads to a profession in the healthcare sector provides immigrants with labour market protection and thus smaller differences in wages between people with and people without immigrant backgrounds (Drange, 2016). At the same time, not all of the differences in working environment and working conditions can be explained by occupation. Wage differences exist between employees with and without immigrant backgrounds who are otherwise equal in terms of a wide range of characteristics, such as education, gender, age and career path. The differences occur within the same industry and occupation, as well as within individual businesses (Fedoryshyn and Falch-Monsen, 2024; Kolsrud et al., 2016).

Sick leave

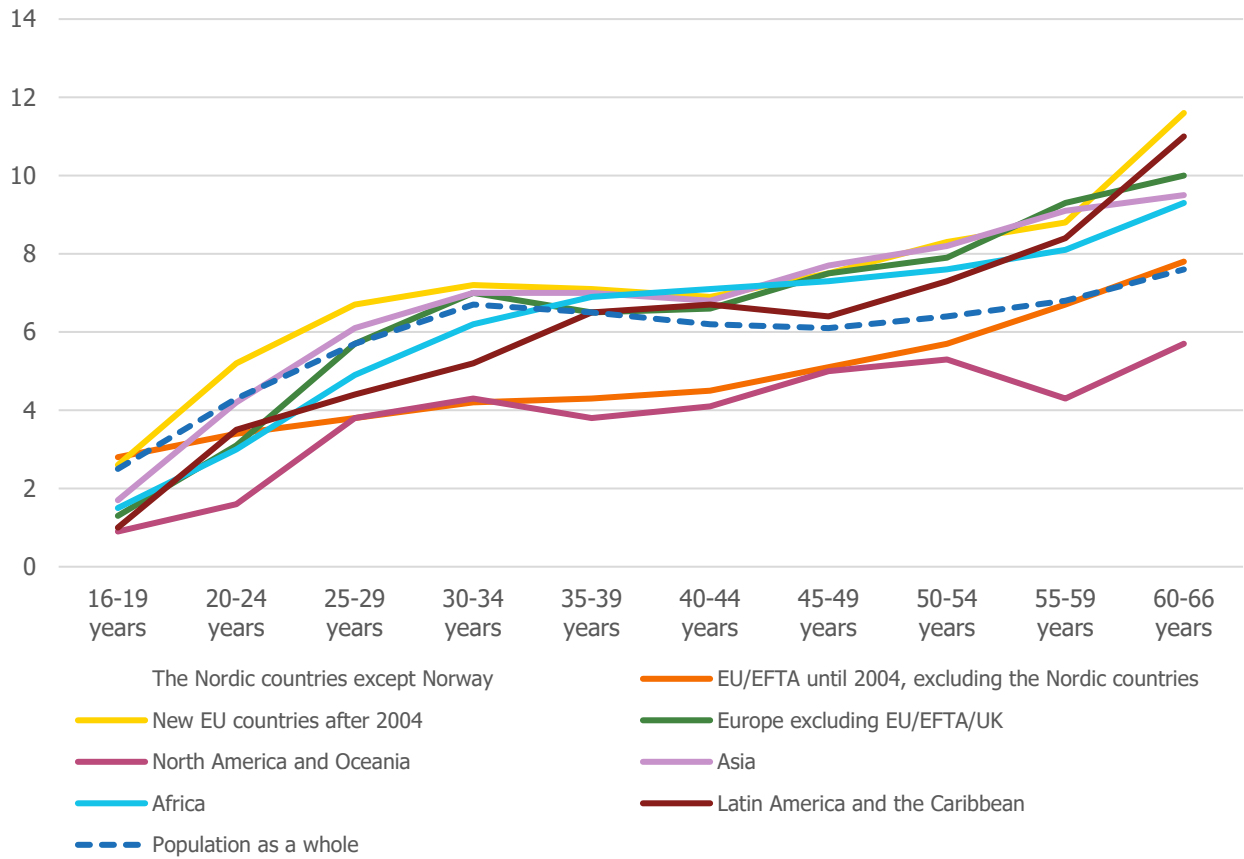
4.5 Sick leave increases more with age among immigrants

Norway has a higher level of sick leave and more widespread long-term sick leave than several other European countries (Lien, 2019; Ugreninov, 2023). On average, immigrants have slightly higher doctor certified sick leave than the rest of the population. In Q1 2024, 6.7 per cent of immigrants had doctor certified absence from work, compared to 5.5 per cent for the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2022c, 2024p).

However, variations can be found behind these average figures when looking at different immigrant groups. Women both with and without immigrant backgrounds have higher rates of sick leave than men. In addition, sick leave increases with age at a faster rate among immigrants than in the rest of the population (Bruer-Skarsbø, 2020). Immigrants from new EU countries and Latin America and the Caribbean have the highest rates of sick leave among those between the ages of 60 and 66, at twelve and eleven per cent respectively (Statistics Norway, 2022c, 2024e).

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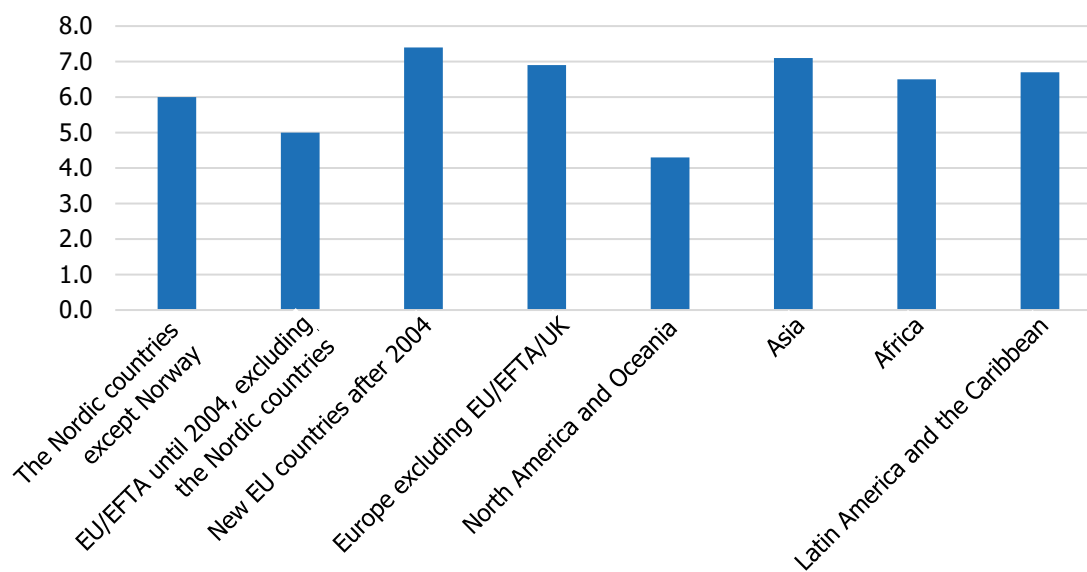
Figure 4.7. Doctor certified sick leave among immigrants and the entire population, by age and country of origin. Q1 2024. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2022c, 2024e)



There are also differences in sick leave percentages for immigrants from different country groups. The highest rates of doctor certified sick leave are found among immigrants from the new EU countries (7.4 per cent), while immigrants from North America have the lowest rates of sick leave (4.3 per cent) (Statistics Norway, 2024at) (Figure 4.7).

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Figure 4.8. Doctor certified sick leave among immigrants, by country of origin. Q1 2024. Percentage Statistics Norway, 2024at).



Rates of doctor certified sick leave also vary according to the occupations immigrants work in. Not surprisingly, the sick leave percentage is higher in jobs where employees are more exposed to a harmful working environment and physically demanding work. For example, these include occupations relating to cleaning, sales and transport (Hansen et al. 2014). Nursing assistants, workers in the process industry and employees in sales and service occupations also have higher rates of sick leave (Bruer-Skarsbø, 2020).

The research literature points to several reasons for differences in sick leave between immigrants and the rest of the population. On the one hand, immigrants, especially those from Country Group 2, are overrepresented in jobs with more physically burdensome work tasks, a more uncertain connection to the workforce or a poorer working environment (With, 2019). This can impact one's health and increase the rate of sick leave. On the other hand, some immigrant groups are in better health than the rest of the population when they arrive in Norway. This phenomenon is referred to as the "healthy immigrant" effect, and can be explained by the fact that it is often the healthiest and most resourceful people who choose to move to another country (Dzamarija, 2022; Ichou and Wallace, 2019).

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Unemployment

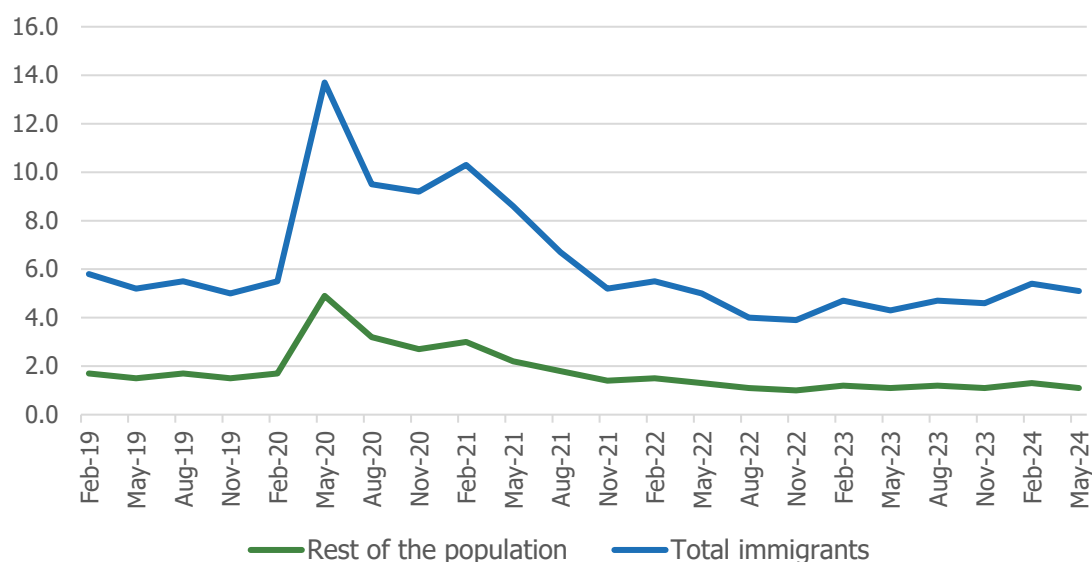
4.6 Unemployment lasts longer for immigrants

What does it mean to be unemployed?

Statistics compiled by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) of the "totally unemployed" include people who have been out of income-generating work for the past two weeks, and who are looking for and available to work. Being unemployed therefore means that the person is actively looking for work and is available to start work but has not received a job offer.

Unemployment among immigrants is almost five times as high as in the rest of the population. In both groups, unemployment is highest among those between the ages of 25 and 29. In May 2024, the unemployment rate was 5.1 per cent among immigrants, while the corresponding figure for the rest of the population was 1.1 per cent. Men have a higher unemployment rate than women, both in the immigrant population and in the rest of the population. In particular, immigrants from countries in Africa are overrepresented among unemployed immigrants. 6.7 per cent with backgrounds from this continent are registered as unemployed. When divided according to age, unemployment is highest among those between the ages of 25 and 29, and this applies to people both with and without immigrant backgrounds (NAV, 2024).

Figure 4.9. People registered as totally unemployed as a percentage of the workforce. 2019–2024. Percentage. (NAV, 2024; Statistics Norway, 2020).



* Prior to 2021, the statistics for people registered as totally unemployed were compiled and published by

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Statistics Norway. NAV has assumed responsibility for publishing these statistics since 2021. Therefore, the figures from before and after 2021 are not directly comparable.

Figure 4.9 shows that the difference in the unemployment rate between people with and without immigrant backgrounds was particularly high in the pandemic year of 2020. The differences between the groups have been reduced since the second quarter of 2021, but increased again at the start of 2024.

Compared to the rest of the population, immigrants are also more likely to be long-term unemployed, which means being unemployed for at least six consecutive months. In 2024, 30 per cent of unemployed immigrants were long-term unemployed, compared to 26 per cent of unemployed people in the rest of the population (NAV, 2024). The duration of unemployment is an indication of the extent to which different groups encounter barriers to transitioning to work. The longer a person has been unemployed, the lower the likelihood of being employed, and the probability of transitioning to health-related benefits increases. These negative consequences of long-term unemployment are more applicable to immigrants than the rest of the population (Kann, Dokken and Yin, 2019).

NEET

4.7 Young immigrants are more vulnerable to exclusion

Young people who are not in employment, education or employment schemes are often referred to as "NEET". This is a heterogeneous group that is composed of young people in different life situations. Some fall under this designation because they choose to take a year off after completing their education. Others may experience more prolonged periods of exclusion even if they want to work or study, for example due to unemployment or disability. Prolonged exclusion is also linked to a weaker connection to the workforce and poorer income development later in life (Normann and Hetland, 2021).

In 2023, 7.5 per cent of all young people in Norway under the age of 30 were not in work, education or employment schemes (OECD, 2023).¹ This is a lower percentage than the

¹ The proportion of young people in the 15–29 age group who were, as a whole, in the NEET categories in Norway in 2022 was between 7 and 11 per cent, depending on which figures and sources of data are used as a starting point. This proportion is higher in register data than in sample surveys, such as the Labour Force Sample Survey (AKU). The AKU is better at including those people who are in informal education, and to a lesser extent those who are far outside the workforce and who cannot be reached through questionnaires. Register data may include people who are registered in the National Population Register but are not engaged in activities and who may, in reality, be residing abroad or involved in more informal training activities or similar.

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average for other OECD countries, which was 14.7 per cent in 2023 (OECD, 2023). However, there is a higher probability of young immigrants ending up in the NEET group than young people in the rest of the population, and they more often experience long-term exclusion. Figures from Statistics Norway show that 20.9 per cent of young immigrants were not in work, education or training in 2022, compared to 7.5 per cent of young people in the rest of the population² (Statistics Norway, 2024d). The proportion of young immigrants in the NEET group is therefore higher in Norway than in other European countries

In part, this can be explained by Norway having a higher share of immigrants who only have primary and lower secondary school education. Low educational attainment and dropping out of upper secondary school are the greatest risk factors for NEET status among young people in Norway (OECD/EU, 2018). Other potential risk factors include demographic characteristics, socioeconomic backgrounds of parents, and physical and mental health (Phyhn, Radlick, and Sveinsdottir, 2021).

Figure 4.10. NEET percentage among young people aged 15-29. 2008–2022. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024d).

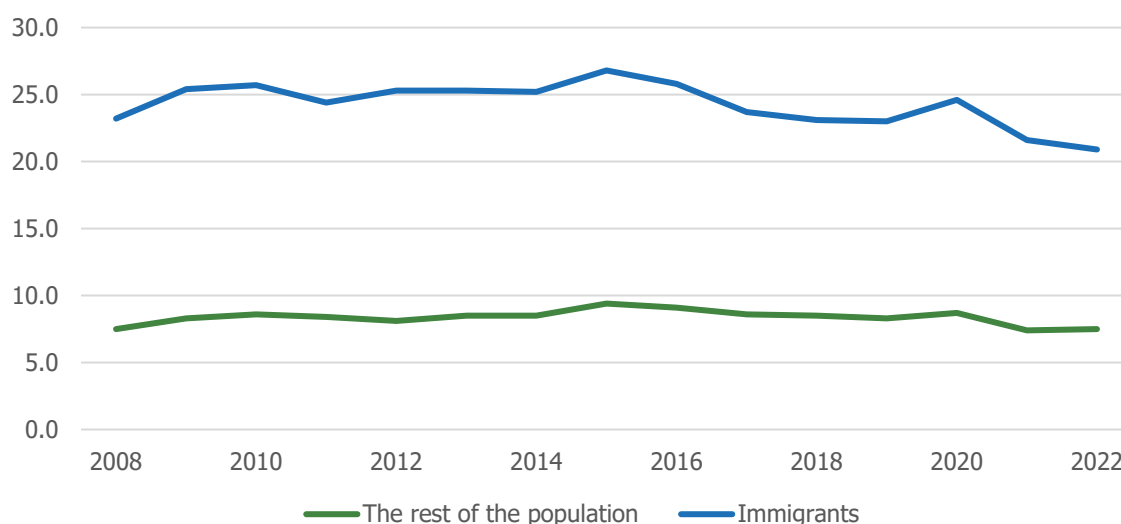
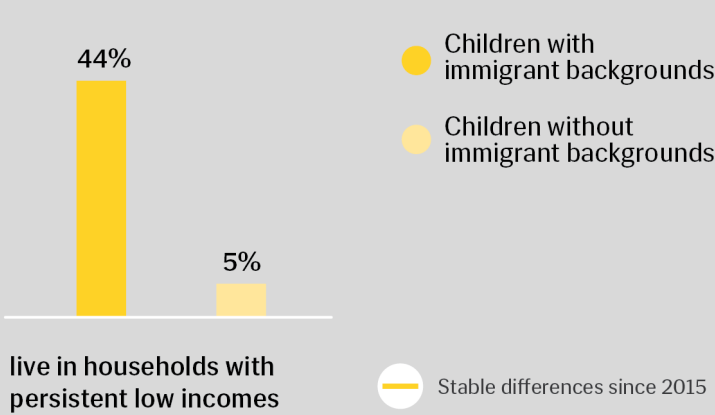


Figure 4.10 shows that the proportion of young people outside of work and education has decreased among immigrants since 2015, while the proportion in the rest of the population has seen little change. In other words, there has been a decrease over time between immigrants and the rest of the population in terms of the proportion of young people in the NEET group. While the differences have declined, there are still major differences in the proportion of NEET between immigrants and the rest of the population.

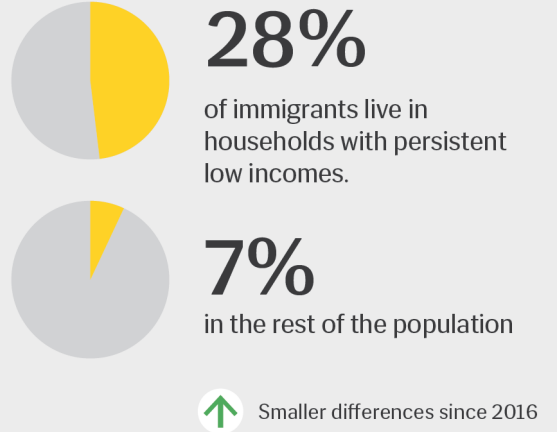
² The OECD combines figures from both the AKU and register data in its presentations. This impacts the results, and the figures therefore differ from Statistics Norway's figures in this report (register data).

Financial situation and living conditions

Children in persistent low income households

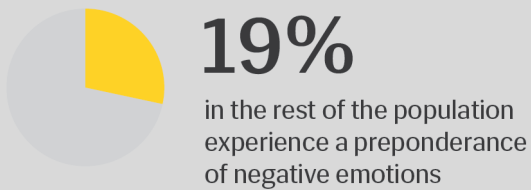


Persistent low income



Mental health

1 in 4 of immigrants experience a preponderance of negative emotions



Crowded housing:

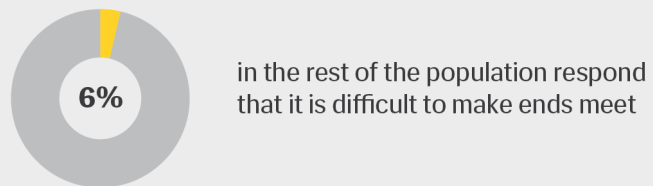
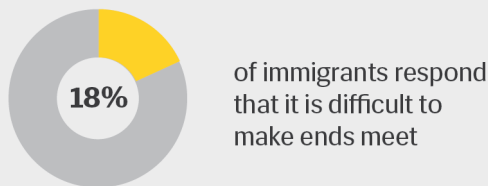


40% of children with immigrant backgrounds live in households with persistent low incomes.

5% of children without immigrant backgrounds live in households with persistent low incomes.

Smaller differences since 2015

Financial difficulties



Larger differences since 2013

5 Financial situation and living conditions

There are important connections between financial situation, health and living conditions (Barstad, 2020). A safe financial situation and good living and housing conditions are essential for ensuring good integration. For example, housing conditions such as owning your own home or living spaciously, are linked to more active participation in local volunteering and leisure activities, and to better health (OECD/EU, 2023; Revold and With, 2022). Significant differences in income and living conditions between people with and without immigrant backgrounds can increase the risk of marginalization and prevent immigrants from participating in different social arenas.

People with immigrant backgrounds face several barriers to integration in the form of poor living conditions, persistent low income and unsatisfactory housing conditions, which prevent participation in important arenas (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2024). Economic growth that contributes to work for all, equitable distribution, universal welfare schemes and good public services are necessary prerequisites for reducing inequality, and for promoting good living conditions for everyone (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2023).

The interaction between health, labour force participation, educational opportunities and participation in other social arenas is important from an integration perspective. Good health increases opportunities for labour market participation, which is one of the cornerstones of successful integration. The workplace is often an arena for experiencing recognition and mastery, which in turn can have a positive impact on health. On the other hand, barriers to integration such as poor Norwegian language skills or weak sense of belonging to the community, constitute an increased risk of health challenges (Norwegian Institute of Public Health, 2024).

Income

5.1 20 per cent lower income

Immigrants have a lower average income than the population as a whole. In 2022, the median income for immigrants was approximately NOK 352,000, compared to NOK 446,000 for the population as a whole. The income disparity between immigrants and the entire population was therefore approximately NOK 94,000, which is an increase compared to 2021, when the difference was NOK 89,000 (Statistics Norway, 2022).

Income levels within the immigrant population vary according to reason for immigration and period of residence. In Figure 5.1, the median income for different immigrant groups is shown as a share of the entire population's median income. In 2022, refugees had a median income of NOK 271,000. This amounts to 61 per cent of the Norwegian population's median income, a reduction of four percentage points from 2021. Among other things, this reduction is due to the large number of Ukrainian refugees who arrived during 2022 only having resided in Norway for

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parts the year, and therefore not having been in Norway for a full income year.³ Caution should therefore be exercised when interpreting the change in figures between 2021 and 2022.

Figure 5.1. Median income for immigrants as a proportion of the entire population's median income, by reason for immigration. 2016–2022. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2022a).

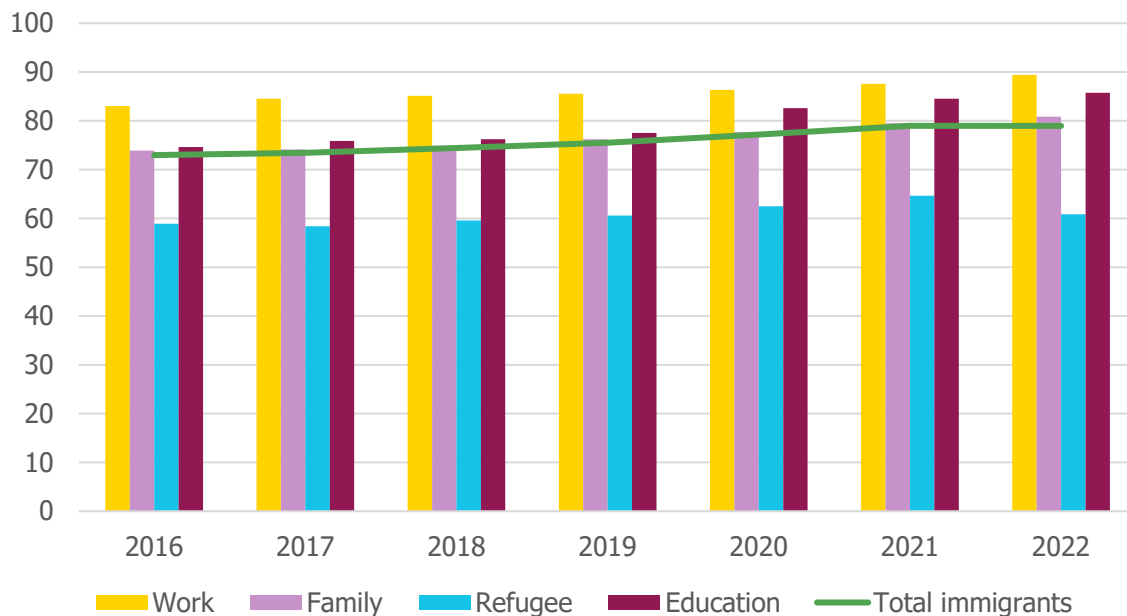


Figure 5.1 shows a slight decrease in the income disparity between immigrants and the rest of the population during the period 2016–2022. While awaiting new figures from Statistics Norway, it is important to make the proviso that the Norwegian economy was characterised by uncertainty in 2023, which included interest rate hikes, inflation on goods and services, and high numbers of refugee arrivals. It will therefore be of particular interest to monitor the consequences these factors have had for income development in different immigrant groups.

A higher proportion of immigrants receive social assistance than the rest of the population, and in 2023, 69 per cent of such payments were made to immigrants. Refugees have a specific need for social assistance, and the number of recipients is influenced by refugee flows. The proportion of immigrants receiving social assistance decreased from nine per cent in 2017 to seven per cent in 2021. The proportion of people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population who receive social assistance is somewhat lower at four and two per cent respectively since 2015 (Kjeka Broen, 2023; Lima, 2024). There was an increase in social assistance payments from 2022 and 2023, and the majority of this increase was due to high numbers of newly arrived Ukrainian refugees (Lima, 2024).

³ Median income is the amount of income that divides a distribution into two groups of equal size, after the income has been sorted in ascending (or descending) order. If the distribution applies to households, there will be as many households with incomes above the median income as below it (Statistics Norway, income and wealth statistics for households).

Persistent low income

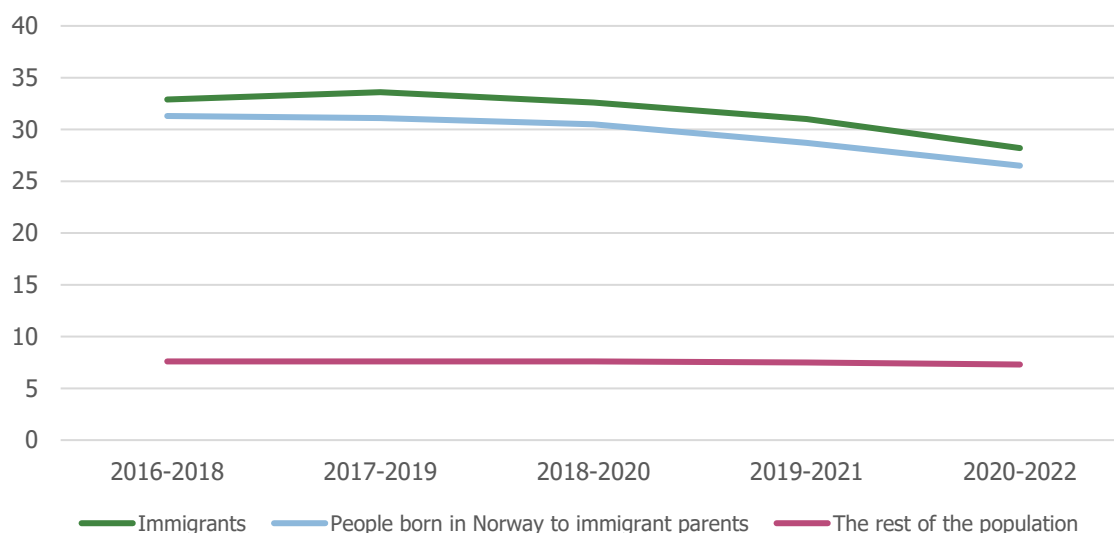
5.2 Immigrants more often experience financial difficulties

How is persistent low income measured?

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). Low income and persistent low income are often used as indicators of poverty.

In the period 2020–2022, 28 per cent of all immigrants and 27 per cent of people born in Norway to immigrant parents lived in households with persistent low incomes, compared to seven per cent in the rest of the population. The proportion was particularly high among immigrants (35 per cent) and people born in Norway to immigrant parents from Country Group 2 (30 per cent). 19 per cent of immigrants from Country Group 1 live with persistent low incomes, and for people born in Norway to immigrant parents from Country Group 1 this figure is 13 per cent (Statistics Norway, 2024as).

Figure 5.2. People aged 0-39 in households with persistent low-incomes. Three-year period, by immigrant background 2016–2022. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024as).

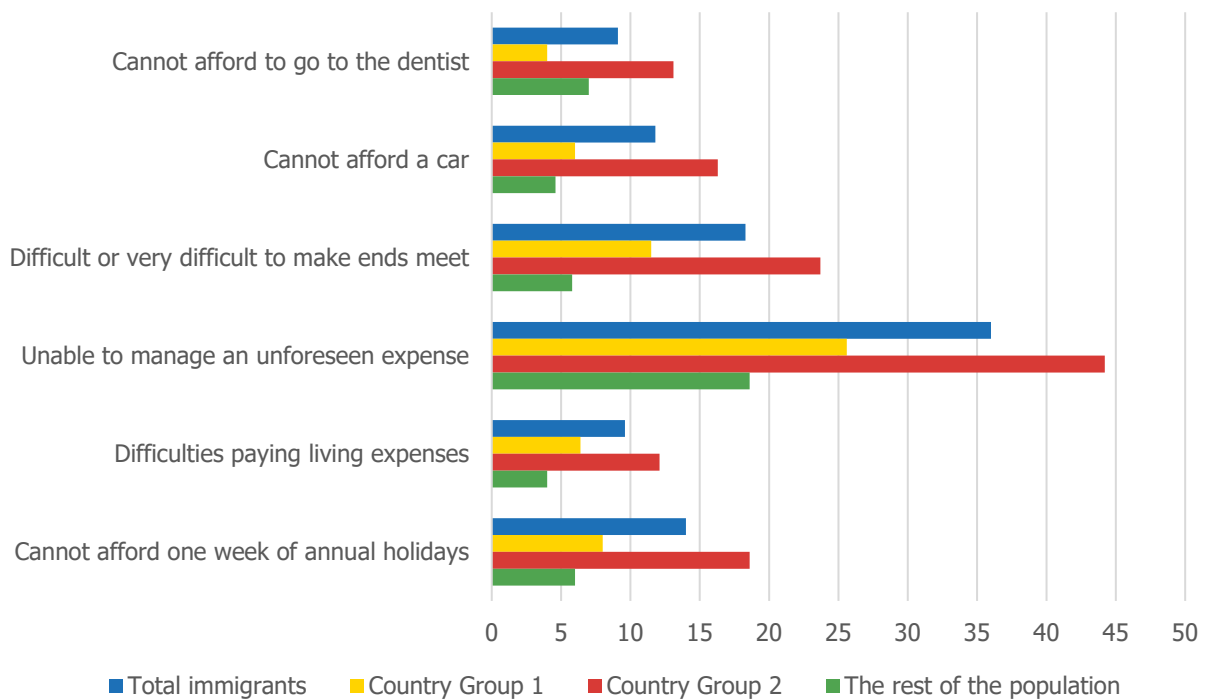


Immigrants more often experience challenges in their financial situation than the rest of the population. The proportion who report that it is difficult or very difficult to make ends meet is three times as high as in the rest of the population, (6 per cent versus 18 per cent) (Statistics Norway, 2024i). Country Group 2 in particular faces challenges related to personal

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finances. In this group, one in four reports that it is difficult to make ends meet, 13 per cent report that they cannot afford to go to the dentist, and a total of 44 per cent report that they are unable to manage an unforeseen expense. From 2015 to 2023, the difference in perceived challenges with personal finances and benefits increased somewhat between the immigrant population and the population at large (Statistics Norway, 2024g, 2024h, 2024i).

Figure 5.3. Perceived challenges with access to benefits, financial flexibility and payment difficulties by country of origin. 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024g, 2024h, 2024i)



Children in persistent low income households

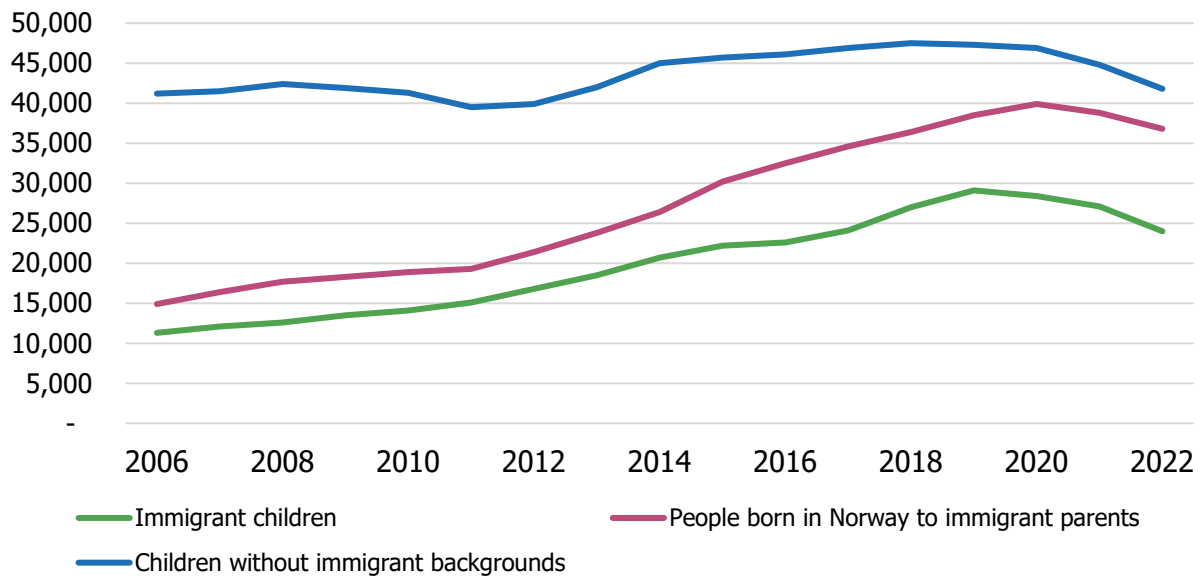
5.3 Immigrant children still heavily overrepresented

For the first time in a decade, a slight decrease in the number of children growing up in persistent low-income households was recorded in 2021. Approximately 110,700 children lived in households with persistent low incomes in 2021, compared to 115,000 the previous year. This figure further decreased to 102,600 children in 2022. This positive development was observed among children both with and without immigrant backgrounds, but children with immigrant backgrounds are still strongly overrepresented. Two out of ten children in Norway have immigrant backgrounds, however among the children who grow up in persistent low-income households, a total of six out of ten have immigrant backgrounds (Normann, 2024).

Figure 5.5 shows that the number of children in persistent low-income households has increased for people with immigrant backgrounds since 2006. This trend reversed in 2021, and in 2022, immigrant children experienced the largest reduction in persistent low income at 3.1 percentage points.

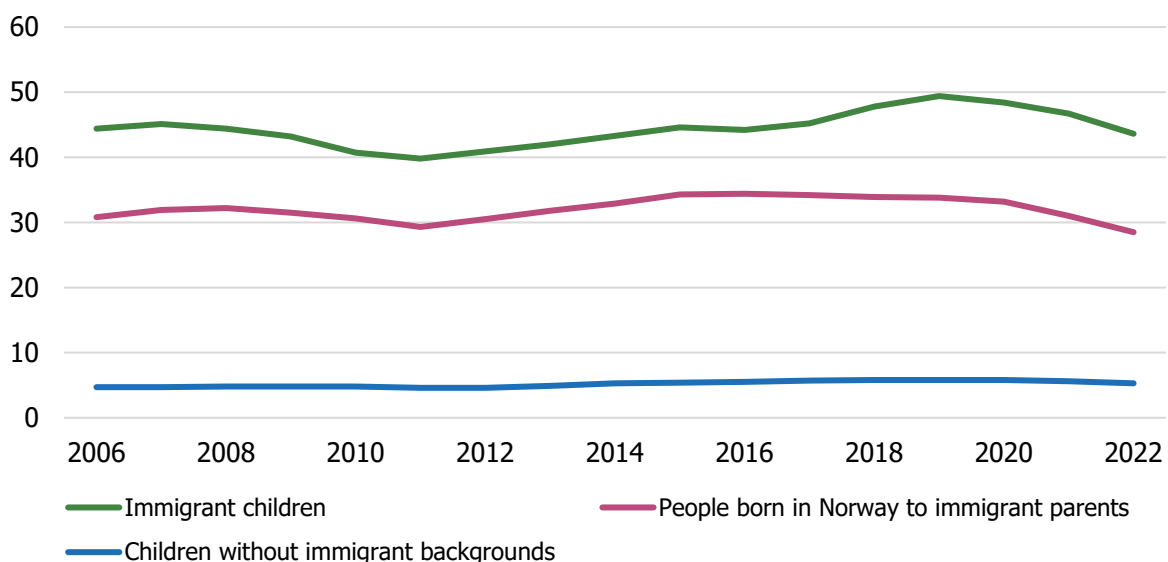
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Figure 5.4. Children in households with persistent low incomes by immigrant background. 2022. Figure (Normann, 2024)



While the *number* of children with immigrant backgrounds living in persistent low income households is at a significantly higher level than in 2006, the *proportions* have remained relatively stable, and are at approximately the same level as in 2015. Both the number and proportion decreased in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Nevertheless, as shown in Figure 5.5, children with immigrant backgrounds are strongly overrepresented.

Figure 5.5. Children in households with persistent low incomes, proportion with immigrant backgrounds. 2022. Percentage (Norman, 2024)



The decrease in persistent low-incomes may be due to low immigration during the period resulting from, among other things, the lockdown of the country caused by the pandemic.

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Low immigration means there will be an increase in the average period of residence and newly arrived refugees are particularly susceptible to having persistent low incomes. Since spring 2022, Norway has accepted a record high number of Ukrainian refugees. This group is not included in the figures of persistent low incomes, because the statistics do not include people who have resided in Norway for less than three years. The Ukrainian refugees who arrived in 2022 will be included in the statistics for the period 2022–2024. With higher prices, interest rate increases and large numbers of arrivals in 2022 and 2023, there is considerable uncertainty about whether the positive developments in the period 2020–2022 will continue.

The likelihood of growing up in a persistent low income household varies significantly according to the country of origin of the children's families and reason for immigration. Children with refugee backgrounds are particularly susceptible to living in persistent low-income households. When divided according to country of origin, the proportion living in low-income households is highest among children with a background from Syria (74 per cent in 2022). The proportion was also high among children with a background from Somalia (70 per cent) (Normann 2024). In comparison, approximately twelve per cent of children in families with backgrounds from the Philippines, and seven per cent in families with backgrounds from India, live in persistent low-income households (Statistics Norway, 2024ag).

When concerning children with backgrounds from Poland and Lithuania, countries from which there are a high number of labour immigrants, we see a reduction in the proportion of children who grow up in persistent low-income households from around 30 per cent in 2015 to 15 per cent in 2022 (Normann 2024; Statistics Norway, 2024ag).

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. Children with immigrant backgrounds are slightly more likely than other children to live with a single parent. In addition, 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 and Normann, 2021).

Poor families with children more often report that they cannot afford a holiday and that they have high housing costs. They also more frequently report that the children do not participate in leisure activities and that the children are in poorer health. There are more low-income families than high-income families with children who report that their children do not attend kindergarten. Children in low-income families are more likely to have lower grades, to not complete upper secondary school, and to end up outside the workforce as adults (Ministry of Children and Families, 2023).

People born in Norway to immigrant parents who grow up in low-income households have a higher rate of graduation and labour-market participation than immigrants and people 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 and Grendal, 2021). This in turn suggests that there is high educational and income mobility in this group, something which has been previously described in several studies (Hermansen, 2016; Kirkeberg et al., 2019).

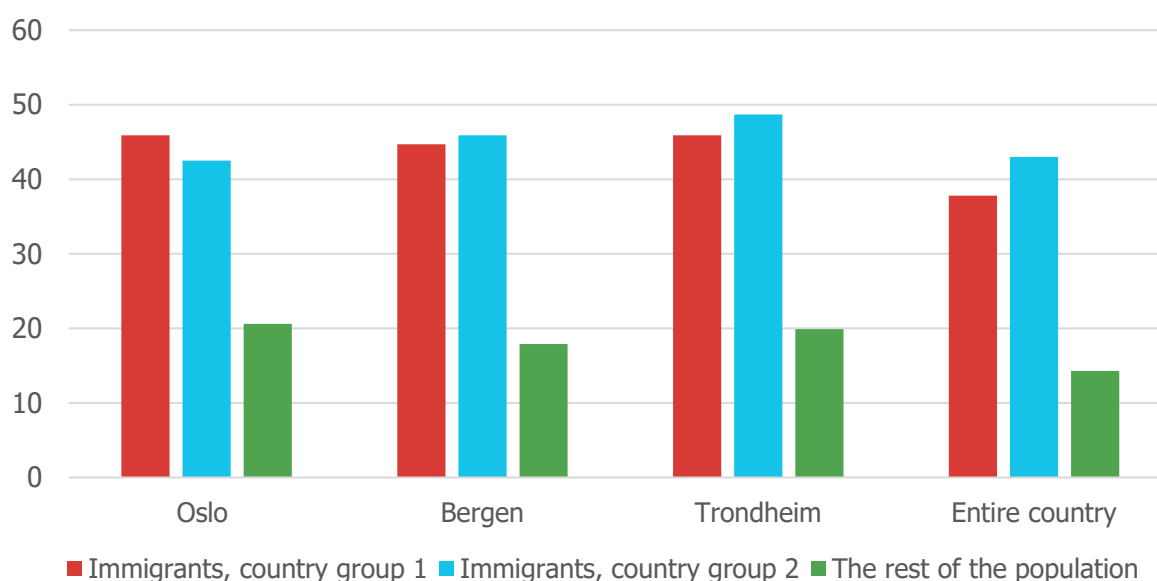
Home ownership status

5.4 Immigrants more likely to rent their home

While almost 90 per cent of the non-immigrant population own their home, it is more common among immigrants to rent. In 2023, 38 per cent of immigrants from Country Group 1 rented their home. This proportion has fallen by three percentage points since 2015. 43 per cent of Country Group 2 lived in rented housing. This proportion has increased by three percentage points since 2015 (Statistics Norway, 2023k).

The personal finances of immigrants, reasons for immigration, plans for future establishment in Norway or conditions in the local housing market often determine whether they rent or own their home. Becoming established in the housing market requires a high income level, and immigrants are overrepresented in low-income households. On average, immigrants with the longest periods of residence in Norway have higher incomes than those with shorter periods of residence in Norway. This may be part of the explanation for why the proportion who own their homes increases in line with the period of residence (Normann, 2021). Previous studies also show that labour immigrants are more likely to rent than buy a home, and that this is due to uncertainty regarding how long they will be staying in Norway (Ødegård and Andersen, 2021).

Figure 5.6. Proportion who rent their homes, by immigrant background and place of residence. 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2023).



Regional differences in the housing market also influence the proportion who rent their home. It is more difficult to enter the housing market in large cities such as Oslo, Bergen or Trondheim. It is therefore not surprising that a relatively higher number of people in these municipalities rent their homes, both among immigrants and the population at large. In the City of Oslo, 46 per cent of immigrants are from Country Group 1. 42 per cent of immigrants are from Country Group 2, compared to 21 per cent in the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2023k).

Living conditions

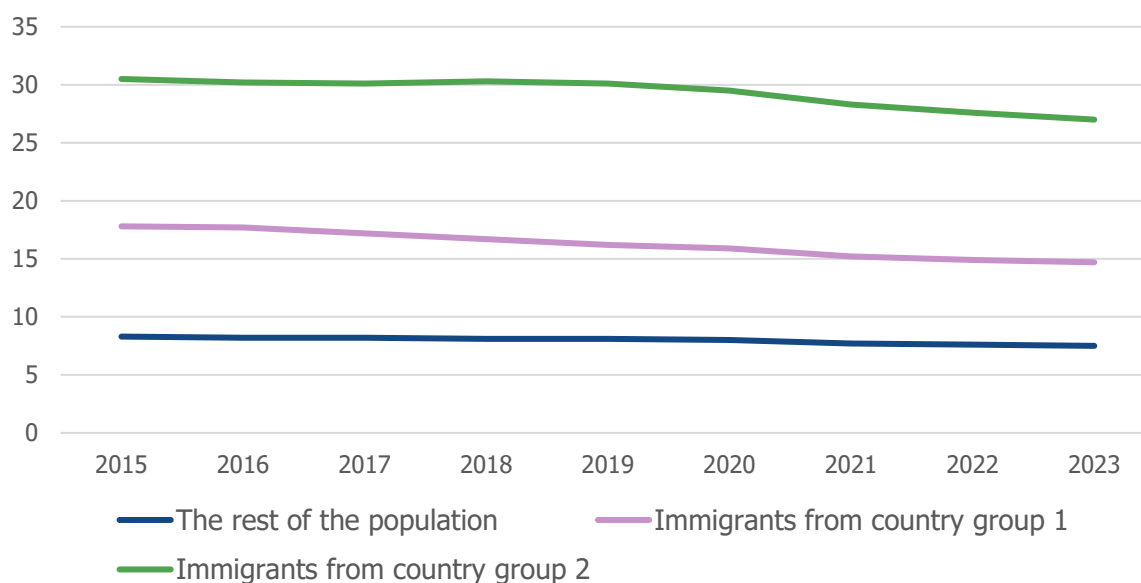
5.5 One in five immigrants have cramped living conditions

What are cramped living conditions?

Households are considered cramped if the following two conditions are met: 1. The number of rooms in the dwelling is less than the number of people or if one person lives in one room. 2. The size of the dwelling (the "per person floor space") amounts to less than 25 square metres per person (Statistics Norway).

Immigrants generally live in more cramped conditions than the rest of the population. There is also significant variation between different immigrant groups. In 2023, 15 per cent of immigrants from Country Group 1 and 27 per cent from Country Group 2 had cramped living conditions. The proportion of people in the rest of the population living in cramped conditions was much lower, and amounted to eight per cent. In addition, Figure 5.7 shows that there has been a slight reduction in the differences in cramped living conditions since 2015 (Statistics Norway, 2024a).

Figure 5.7. Proportion living in cramped conditions, by immigrant background. 2015–2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024a).



The proportion with cramped living conditions is higher among refugees and those who arrived in Norway through family reunification and lower among labour immigrants and immigrants from Nordic countries. This means that cramped living conditions are associated with the reason for immigration. Larger households and low-income households more often have cramped living conditions, and younger people more often live in cramped conditions than older people. Cramped living conditions decrease slightly in relation to period of residence (Arnesen, 2020).

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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, 32 per cent lived in detached housing in 2023, compared to 48 per cent of immigrants from Country Group 1. In the rest of the population, 57 per cent lived in detached housing in 2023. Correspondingly, the proportion of immigrants from Country Group 2 who lived in blocks of flats was twice as high as for the rest of the population (36 per cent vs 19 per cent). In Country Group 1, 24 per cent lived in blocks of flats (Statistics Norway, 2023).

Physical health

5.6 Immigrants have higher life expectancy

There are significant differences when it comes to health in different immigrant groups. Their health status varies according to gender, age, country of origin, reason for immigration and period of residence in Norway (Texmon and Thonstad, 2024). According to the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, refugees and older immigrants may be particularly susceptible to poor health (Spilker et al., 2022).

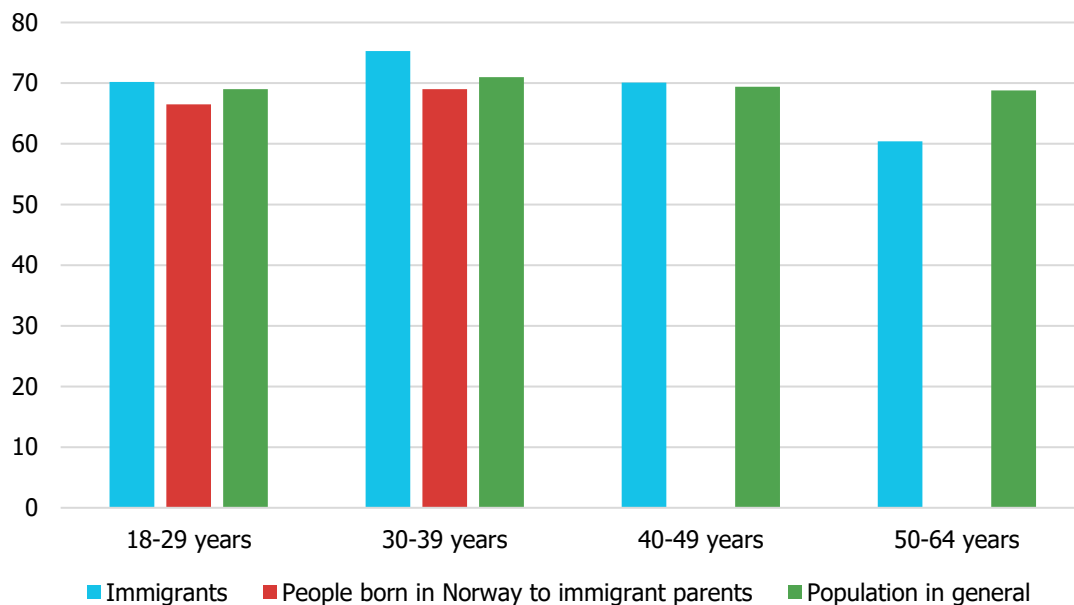
Immigrants are often in better physical health than the population at large when they come to Norway. Among the reasons for this is the “healthy immigrant effect”.⁴ However, the health of immigrants deteriorates the longer they reside in Norway. This may be due to the fact that, on average, immigrants have poorer living and housing conditions, lower incomes and possibly poorer physical and psychosocial working environments than the rest of the population (Dzamarija, 2022).

Figure 5.8 shows the proportion of immigrants, people born in Norway to immigrant parents and people without immigrant backgrounds, broken down by age, who consider their own health to be good or very good.

⁴ See Chapter 4.5, Sick Leave, for a definition of the “healthy immigrant” effect.

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Figure 5.8. Proportion who consider their own health to be good or very good, by age and immigration category⁵. Average from the quality of life survey. 2020–2023. Percentage (Texmon and Thonstad, 2024)



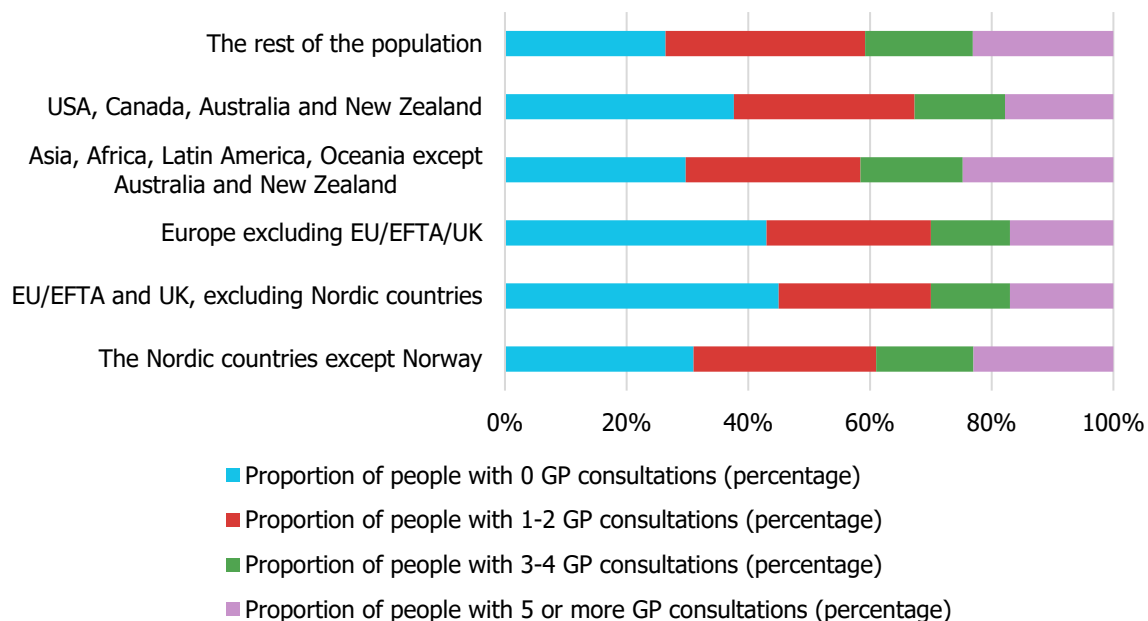
There are minor differences between the three aforementioned groups in the average assessment of own health. The exception is among people aged 50-64. While only 60 per cent of immigrants in this age group consider their own health to be good or very good, the corresponding proportion among people without immigrant backgrounds is 69 per cent (Texmon and Thonstad, 2024). More knowledge is required about why immigrants consider their health to deteriorate with age, while the opposite is true for people without an immigrant background, however a possible explanation could be that the immigrant population has, on average, poorer living conditions (Dzamarija, 2022; Texmon and Thonstad, 2024).

The average use of health services such as general practitioner or emergency room is lower among immigrants than in the general population. 63 per cent of immigrants had at least one consultation with their general practitioner during 2023, compared to 74 per cent in the population without an immigrant background. The use of general practitioners varies significantly according to an immigrant's country of origin. Immigrants from countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania (other than Australia and New Zealand) use general practitioner services more often than other immigrant groups. Other factors that affect the number of general practitioner visits are age, gender and period of residence in Norway (Lunde and Texmon, 2013).

⁵ Since people born in Norway to immigrant parents is a young population group, we do not have figures for the oldest age groups.

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Figure 5.9. General practitioner consultations, by country of origin. 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024ae, 2024af).

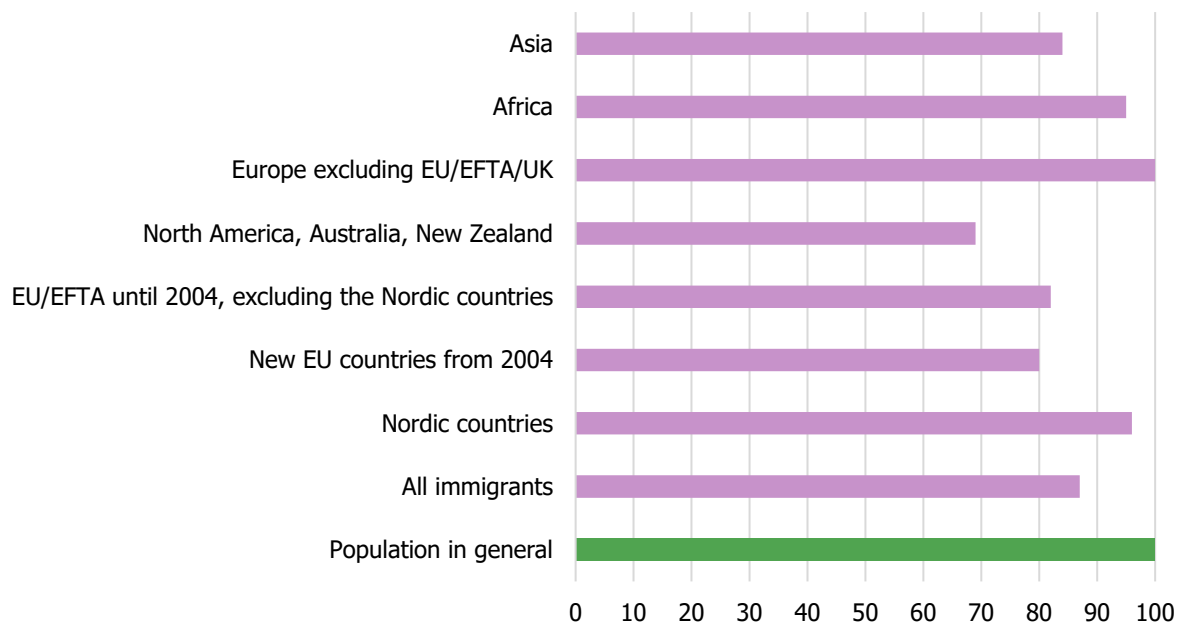


More knowledge is required about the extent to which the differences described above arise due to barriers to access to health services among immigrants and their Norwegian-born children. Examples of such barriers may include lack of information about health and care services, language barriers, financial challenges, inadequate knowledge of diversity among employees and perceived discrimination (Spilker et al. 2022).

On average, immigrants in Norway have lower mortality rates and higher life expectancy than the population without immigrant backgrounds (Wallace et al. 2022). For example, in 2019, immigrant women had almost two years higher life expectancy at birth than Norwegian-born women, while immigrant men had just over one year higher life expectancy than Norwegian-born men (Spilker et al. 2022). As shown in Figure 5.10, the mortality rate among immigrants aged 50 to 69 in the period 2018–2022 was 87 per cent relative to the rest of the population (Texmon and Thonstad, 2024). The mortality rate is calculated based on death rates, which is the number of deaths during a period per 1,000 people (Texmon and Thonstad, 2024).

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Figure 5.10. Relative mortality rates for immigrants aged 50-69, by country of origin. Rest of the population = 100. 2018–2022. Percentage (Texmon and Thonstad, 2024)



At the same time, the mortality rate varies between different immigrant groups. Among other things, it appears as if country of origin, reason for immigration and period of residence provide some explanation for the mortality rates. Immigrants who have come to Norway for work or to study have lower mortality rates than refugees (Dzamarija, 2022). The mortality rate also increases in line with period of residence and is highest among immigrants who have lived more than 40 per cent of their lives in Norway, i.e. the longer the immigrants have lived in Norway, the more similar they become to the rest of the population (Dzamarija and Syse, 2016).

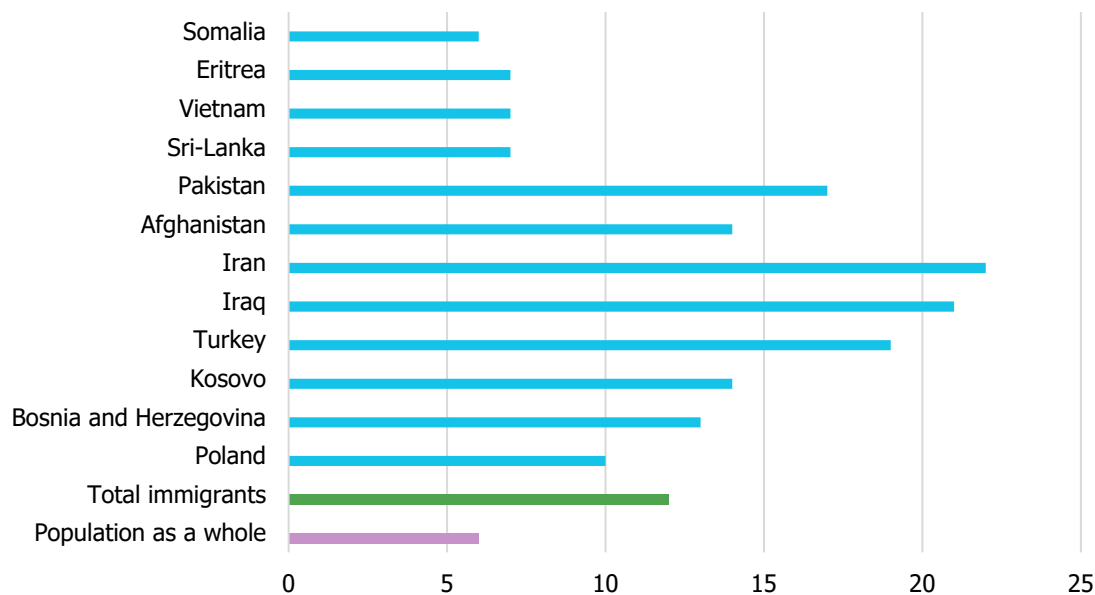
Mental health

5.7 Mental health problems most common among immigrants

Immigrants generally have poorer mental health than the general population. According to the 2016 living conditions survey of the immigrant population, the proportion who experienced mental health problems was twice as high among immigrants as in the entire population – twelve versus six percent (Vrålstad and Wiggen, 2017). The proportion who report mental health problems varies according to country of origin. While just over one in five immigrants from Iran and Iraq report mental health problems, the proportion of Somali immigrants who report having mental health problems is equal to the proportion in the population as a whole (six per cent) (Vrålstad and Wiggen, 2017).

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Figure 5.11. Proportion with mental health problems. 2017. Percentage (Vrålstad and Wiggen, 2017)



On average, immigrants with a high level of education and high incomes have better mental health than other immigrants (Spilker et al. 2022). There is also a correlation between discrimination and health outcomes, whereby perceived discrimination is associated with poorer mental health and other health problems (Spilker et al. 2022). For example, immigrants who have experienced discrimination in different arenas are twice as likely to suffer from mental health problems as those who have not experienced discrimination (Kjøllestad et al. 2019).

However, when it comes to self-assessed mental health there are small differences between immigrants and the rest of the population. While 33 per cent of immigrants have a high level of satisfaction with their own mental health, this applies to 30 per cent in the rest of the population⁶ (Statistics Norway, 2023b).

International research shows that refugees – both adults and children – on average have more mental health problems than other immigrant groups (Blackmore et al. 2020). While 16 to 19 per cent of adult refugees in Norway visit their general practitioner due to mental health problems, the corresponding figure for the rest of the population is 10 to 12 per cent (Straiton, Reneflot and Diaz, 2017). Both more and updated knowledge are required about the extent of and mechanisms behind mental health among immigrants in Norway.

⁶ Some immigrant groups may be underrepresented among the respondents in this survey. This particularly applies to immigrants from the Middle East, Africa Central and South Asia and EU countries in Eastern and Central Europe. There are grounds to assume that the average quality of life in the immigrant population would be lower if a larger proportion from these countries responded to the survey.

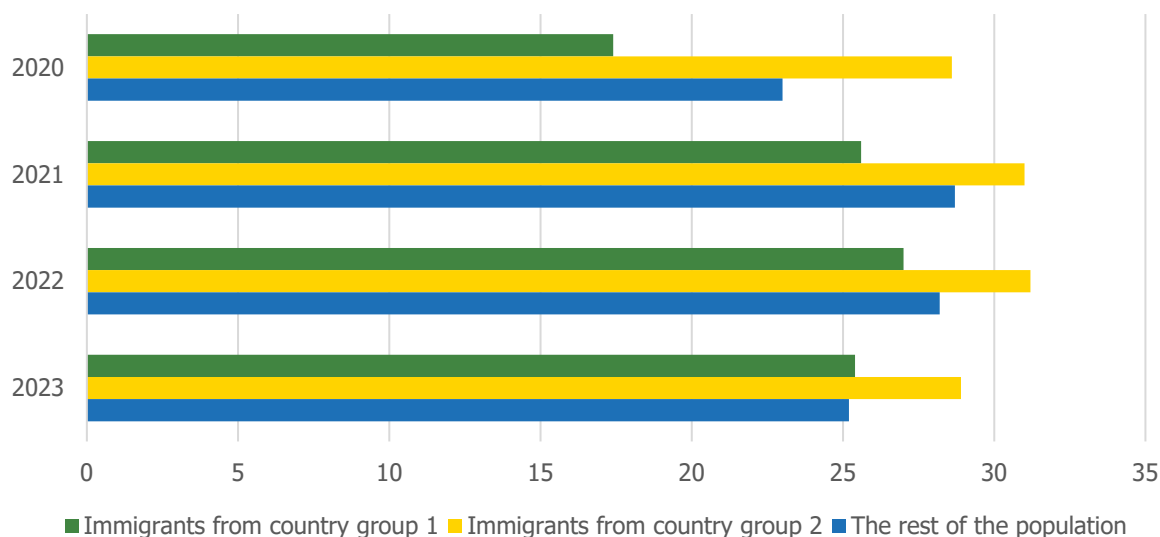
Quality of Life

5.8 Immigrants from Asia and Africa have the lowest quality of life

Quality of life is a comprehensive term and relates to subjective opinions of how satisfied someone is with their own life situation and everyday life. Quality of life is closely associated with living conditions and health, and is measured using a number of indicators such as satisfaction with life, meaning and mastery, as well as the absence of mental health problems and negative emotions.

Statistics Norway's quality of life survey shows that, on average, the immigrant population has about the same self-assessed quality of life as the rest of the population.⁷ 27 per cent of immigrants reported low satisfaction with life in 2023, compared to 25 per cent in the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2023b). At the same time, the survey shows major differences in perceived quality of life between immigrants from different regions of the world. Immigrants from the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia are the least satisfied with their lives. In this group, 37 percent had low satisfaction in 2022. The highest quality of life is found among immigrants from American and Western European countries, of whom 18 per cent are not satisfied with their lives (Dalen and Larsson, 2022).

Figure 5.12. Proportion with low satisfaction with life, by country of origin. 2020–2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2023b).

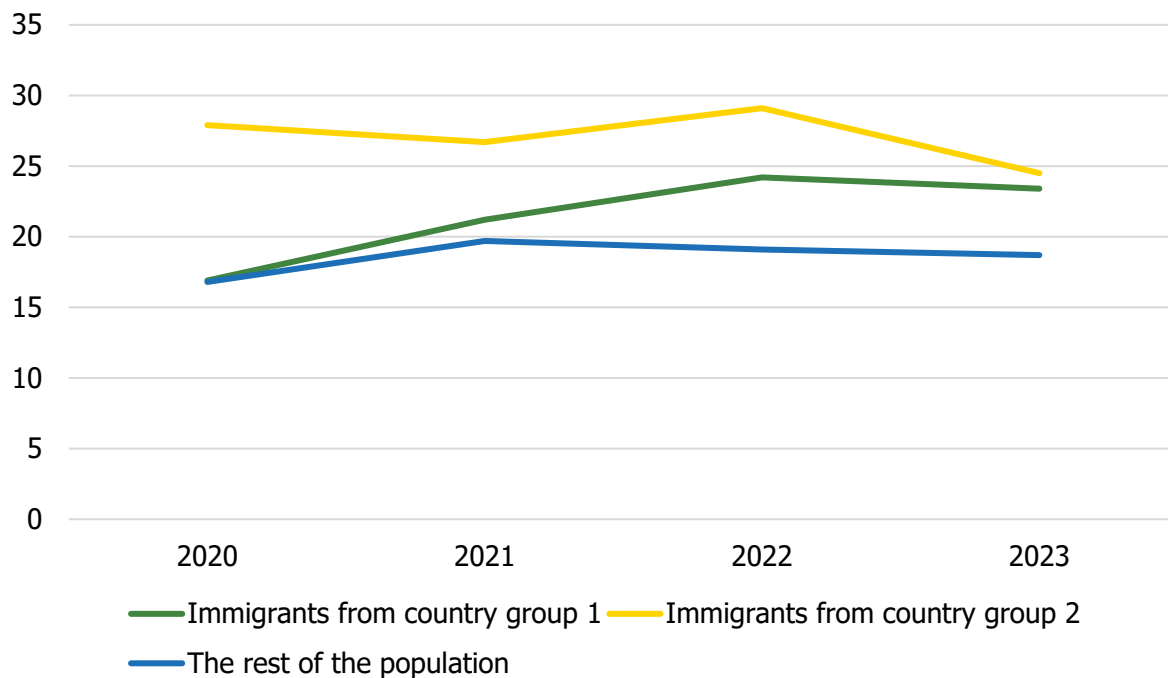


⁷ Some immigrant groups may be underrepresented among the respondents in this survey. This particularly applies to immigrants from the Middle East, Africa, Central and South Asia and EU countries in Eastern and Central Europe. There is reason to assume that the average quality of life in the immigrant population would be lower if a larger proportion of people from these countries responded to the survey.

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In addition to country of origin, factors such as low income, unemployment and disability are associated with poorer quality of life. This applies to people both with and without immigrant backgrounds. Young people and people who live alone are also among the groups that are more susceptible to poorer quality of life (Dalen and Larsson, 2022).

Figure 5.13. Proportion of people with a predominance of negative emotions. 2020–2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2023o).



While the survey does not reveal clear differences between immigrants and the rest of the population in terms of quality of life, immigrants more often report having a predominance of negative emotions, such as being worried, anxious, lonely or stressed. Among immigrants, this proportion increased from 23 per cent in 2020 to 27 per cent in 2022, and decreased to 24 per cent in 2023. In the rest of the population, this proportion increased from 17 per cent to 19 per cent during the same period. Immigrants from Country Group 2 have the highest proportion with a predominance of negative emotions, followed by immigrants from Country Group 1 (Statistics Norway, 2023o).

Political integration

Electoral participation



50%
of Norwegian citizens, immigrants participated in the 2021 parliamentary elections



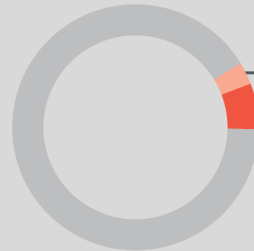
52%
of Norwegian citizens, born in Norway to immigrant parents



80%
of Norwegian citizens without immigrant backgrounds

↓ Larger differences compared to 2019

Political representation



3% of municipal council members have immigrant backgrounds

6% of candidates in municipal elections have immigrant backgrounds

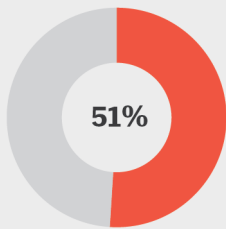
↓ Immigrants increasingly more underrepresented since 2017

Trust in institutions

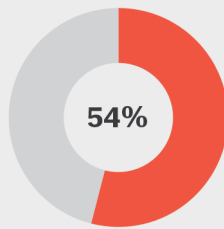


immigrants and the rest of the population have a high level of trust in the police

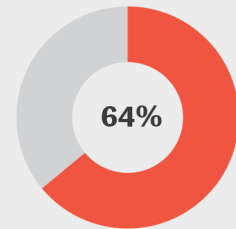
Use of media



people born in Norway to immigrant parents read online newspapers on an average day



immigrants read online newspapers on an average day



in the rest of population read online newspapers on an average day

6 Political integration

Active civic participation, co-determination and democracy are important values in Norwegian society. Political integration relates to whether immigrants participate and are represented in the political arenas, as well as the extent to which they have trust in the political system, government authorities and public institutions in Norway (Proba, 2019).

Electoral participation

6.1 Immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents have lower electoral participation

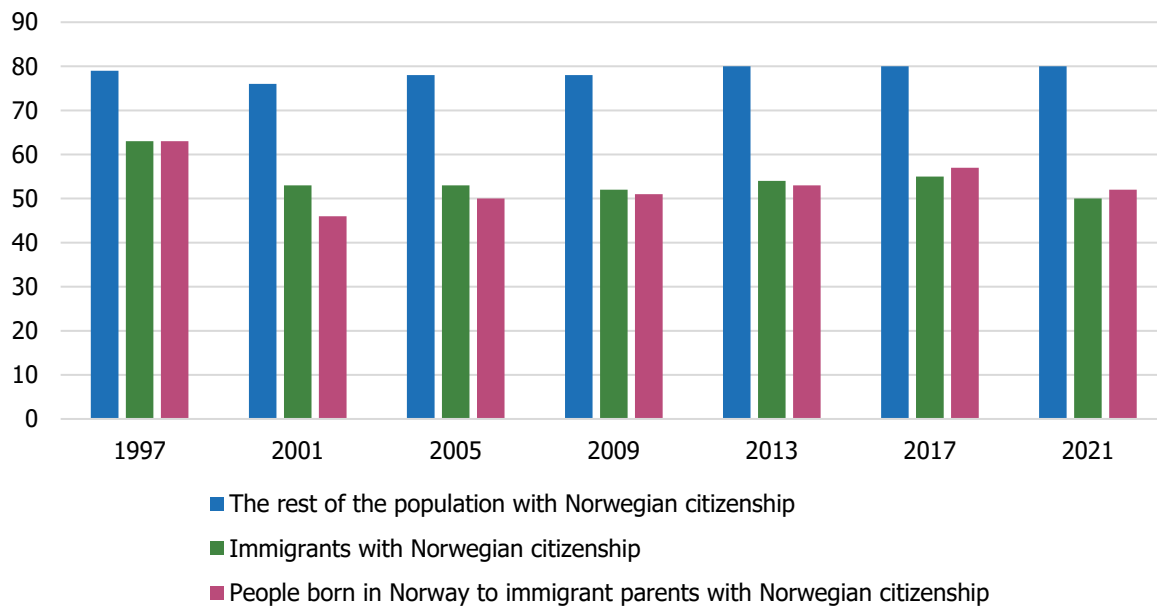
Who is eligible to vote in elections in Norway?

Only Norwegian citizens can vote in parliamentary elections in Norway. However, foreign citizens with at least three years of legal residence in Norway can vote in municipal and county council elections.

The proportion of eligible voters with immigrant backgrounds has grown in recent years. Whether or not immigrants exercise their right to vote can be used as a measure of how well they are integrated into Norwegian society. Low participation can be viewed as a sign of low integration, while high participation is considered a sign of high integration (Kleven, 2019). There are different perspectives on whether high electoral participation is a goal in itself. Elections represent a central form of political involvement. Elections enable people to influence policymaking and to have their voices heard. Elections are also an important basis for legitimacy and contribute to an affiliation with and loyalty to the political system. Significant differences in electoral participation can therefore be an indicator that the political system lacks legitimacy among some groups. Electoral participation can also be understood as an expression of affiliation and commitment (NOU, 2011).

Both immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents vote less than the rest of the population. This applies both to parliamentary elections and municipal and county council elections.

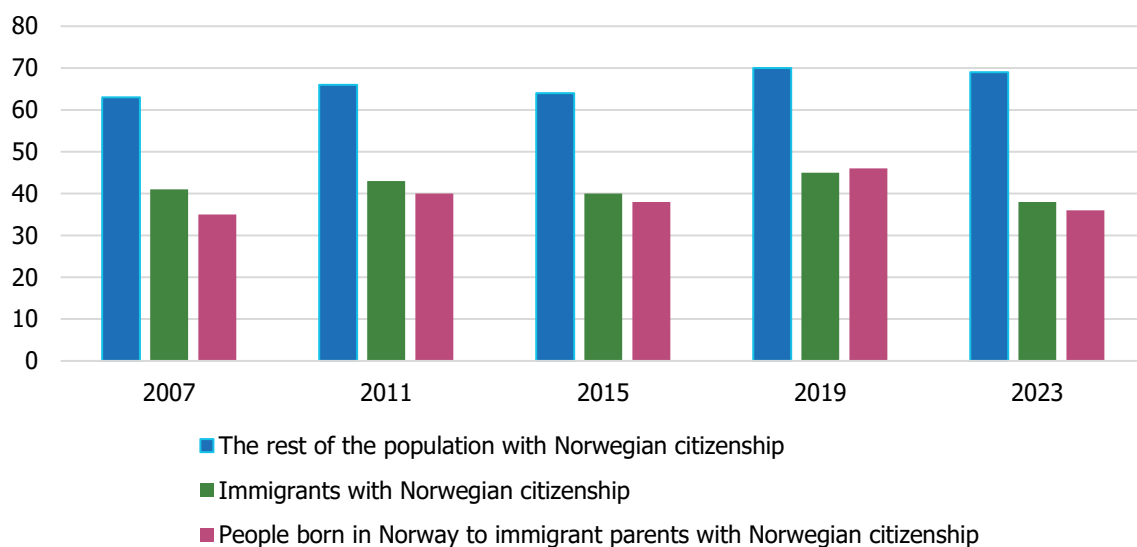
Figure 6.1. Electoral participation at the 1997-2021 parliamentary elections, by immigration category. Percentage (Corneliussen, 2024)



The differences in electoral participation between immigrants and the population without immigrant backgrounds have remained relatively stable for parliamentary elections, with a marginal increase in differences from 2017 to 2021 (Figure 6.1). Electoral participation among immigrants decreased from 55 per cent in 2017 to 50 per cent in 2021. Among people born in Norway to immigrant parents, electoral participation decreased from 57 per cent in 2017 to 52 per cent in 2021. The decrease was highest among people born in Norway to parents from African countries - 53 per cent in 2017 compared with 45 per cent in 2021 (Kleven et al., 2022).

Figure 6.2 shows that while there were about the same number of people without an immigrant background who voted in the municipal council and county council elections in 2023 as in 2019, the proportion who exercised their right to vote decreased both among immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents.

Figure 6.2. Electoral participation by immigration category in municipal and county council elections. 2007–2023. Percentage (Corneliussen, 2024)



Electoral participation also varies with gender. Participation is higher among women than among men for voters both with and without immigrant backgrounds. For immigrants, the proportion of women who voted at the 2021 parliamentary elections was four percentage points higher than for men, (52 per cent versus 48 per cent). Corresponding figures for people born in Norway to immigrant parents were 57 per cent versus 47 per cent, while among Norwegian citizens without an immigrant background, 82 per cent of women and 79 per cent of men voted at the 2021 parliamentary elections (Statistics Norway, 2022d).

Voting is also influenced by country of origin. At the parliamentary elections, participation among immigrants from Nordic and Western European countries increased from 71 per cent in 2017 to 74 per cent in 2021, while among immigrants from African and Asian countries, participation decreased from 54 per cent in 2017 to 48 per cent in 2021 (Kleven, 2021).

There is also a correlation between level of education and electoral participation. On average, electoral participation is higher among immigrants with a high level of education than among those with a lower level of education. At the same time, the positive importance of education for electoral participation is lower among immigrants than the rest of the population (Kleven and Bergseteren, 2022).

There is a weak positive correlation between period of residence and electoral participation among immigrants. The extent to which period of residence is of importance to electoral participation also varies according to which countries immigrants are from. For example, electoral participation is, on average, 47 per cent for Norwegian citizens who immigrated from North America and Oceania 5 to 9 years ago, while this figure rises to 65 per cent for the same group that has resided in Norway for more than 20 years. The corresponding figures for

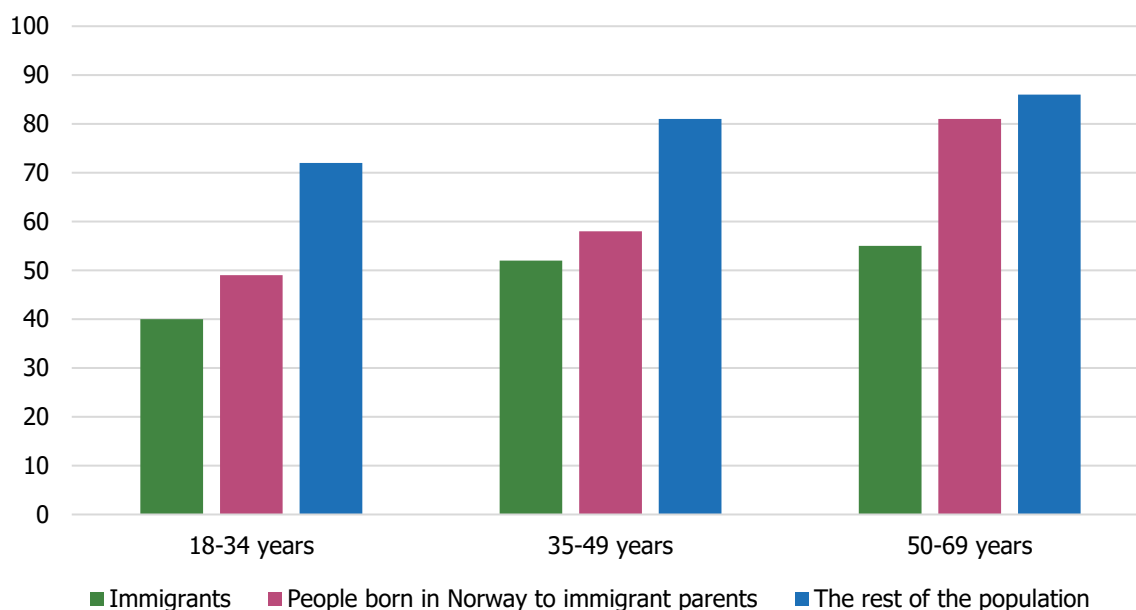
Norwegian citizens who immigrated from Africa are 43 and 45 per cent respectively (Kleven and Bergseteren, 2022).

Research suggests that information and awareness campaigns in different languages that are targeted at immigrant communities, organisations and networks have a positive impact on electoral participation (Bergh, Christensen and Matland, 2020, 2021; Kleven and Bergseteren, 2022). Electoral participation among immigrants would probably be lower without these types of mobilisation initiatives (Kleven and Bergseteren, 2022). In addition, immigrants who settle in neighbourhoods with high electoral participation and who are involved in local social networks are more likely to vote (Bratsberg et al., 2021).

People born in Norway to immigrant parents have grown up in Norway, have completed all of their schooling here and have grown up with the same institutional frameworks as people without immigrant backgrounds (Kirkeberg et al., 2019). While the preceding sections of this report have shown there are minor differences between people born in Norway to immigrant parents and the rest of the population when concerning indicators such as school results, education levels and employment, we do not see the same trend when it comes to exercising the right to vote. The level of electoral participation among people born in Norway to immigrant parents is closer to that of immigrants than the population without immigrant backgrounds.

Part of this difference may be due to the fact that people born in Norway to immigrant parents are a relatively young population group, and that electoral participation increases with age, both among those with and without immigrant backgrounds (Corneliusson, 2024). This is shown in Figure 6.3, where we see that the difference in electoral participation between people born in Norway to immigrant parents and people without immigrant backgrounds is lower among the oldest age groups (Kleven et al., 2022). Growing up in countries with democratic institutions contributes to higher electoral participation, particularly among women born in Norway to immigrant parents (Finseraas, Kotsadam and Polavieja, 2022).

Figure 6.3. Electoral participation at the 2021 parliamentary elections, by immigration category and age. Percentage. (Kleven et al, 2022).

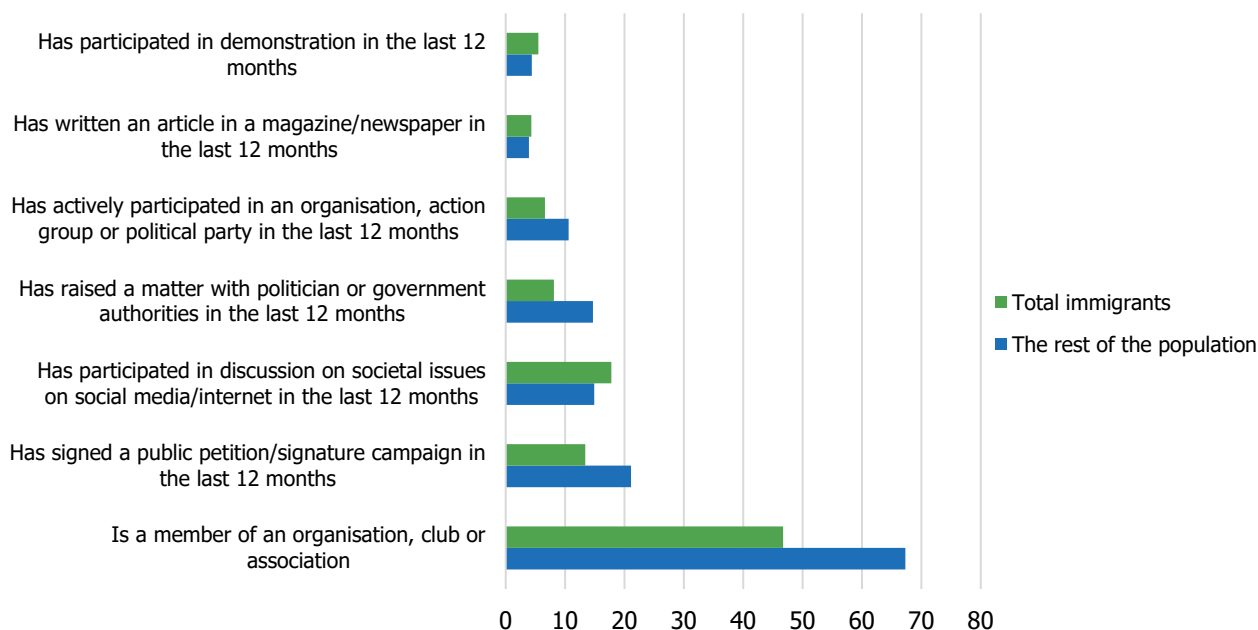


Political participation

6.2 Immigrants have lower levels of political participation

Electoral participation is only one form of political participation. A significantly higher proportion of the majority population than immigrants are members of a political organisation, club or association – 67 per cent versus 47 per cent (Figure 6.4). When compared with membership, relatively few people engage in non-organised forms of political participation, such as bringing issues to the attention of politicians or public authorities, participating in discussions about societal issues on social media, or writing newspaper articles. This applies both to immigrants and the rest of the population.

Figure 6.4. Political participation based on activity in the last 12 months. 2022. Percentage (Living Conditions Survey, Statistics Norway, 2022).



Multiple studies show that political participation among immigrants is related to socioeconomic background (See, for example, Dalen, Flatø and Friberg, 2022 and; Eimhjellen and Arnesen, 2018). Immigrants in full-time employment, who have higher levels of education and good Norwegian language skills are more likely to be politically engaged (Dalen, Flatø and Friberg, 2022). While immigrants have lower electoral participation, this group has a relatively strong interest in Norwegian politics and civil society, and those who show the greatest interest in politics and social relations in their country of origin are also the same people who are most interested in political matters in Norway (Dalen, Flatø and Friberg, 2022).

Analyses of political participation among minority young people reveal similar patterns to those among adults with immigrant backgrounds. Participation in political organisations and elections is lower in this group than among young people in the majority population. Girls participate more in political activities than boys, and this applies to young people with both majority and minority backgrounds. It is somewhat surprising that socio-economic resources have no pronounced significance, and the primary factor which explains the differences in political participation among young people is whether or not they come from families that are organisationally active and willing to engage in discussions, (Ødegård and Fladmoe, 2017).

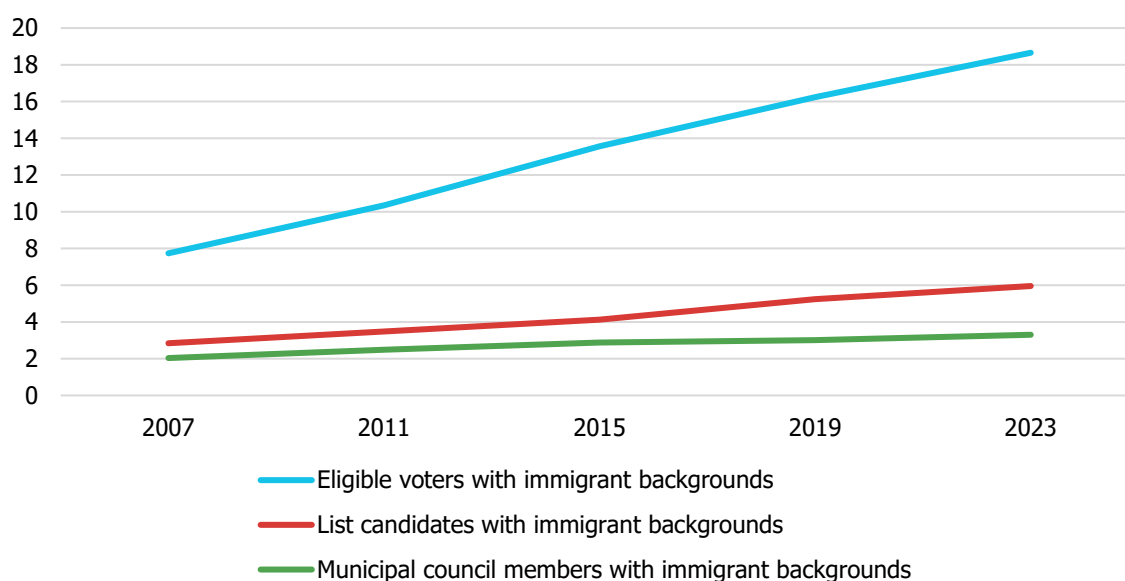
Political representation

6.3 Immigrants are underrepresented in politics

10 per cent of employees in the Stortinget (Norwegian Parliament) had immigrant backgrounds in 2023, compared to eight per cent in 2016 (Statistics Norway, 2024f). While the proportion of people with immigrant backgrounds in the electorate who are eligible to vote has risen, the under-representation of immigrants on the municipal councils has increased. In the 2023 municipal elections, over 800,000 people with immigrant backgrounds were eligible to vote, almost 3,200 stood as candidates for election, and just over 300 were elected to a municipal council.

The share of municipal council members with immigrant backgrounds has grown marginally since 2007, from two per cent to three per cent in 2023. There was also a small increase in the share of candidates for political office who had immigrant backgrounds (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5. People with immigrant backgrounds as a share of eligible voters, candidates and representatives in municipal elections, 2007–2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2023d, 2023e, 2023f, 2024s).



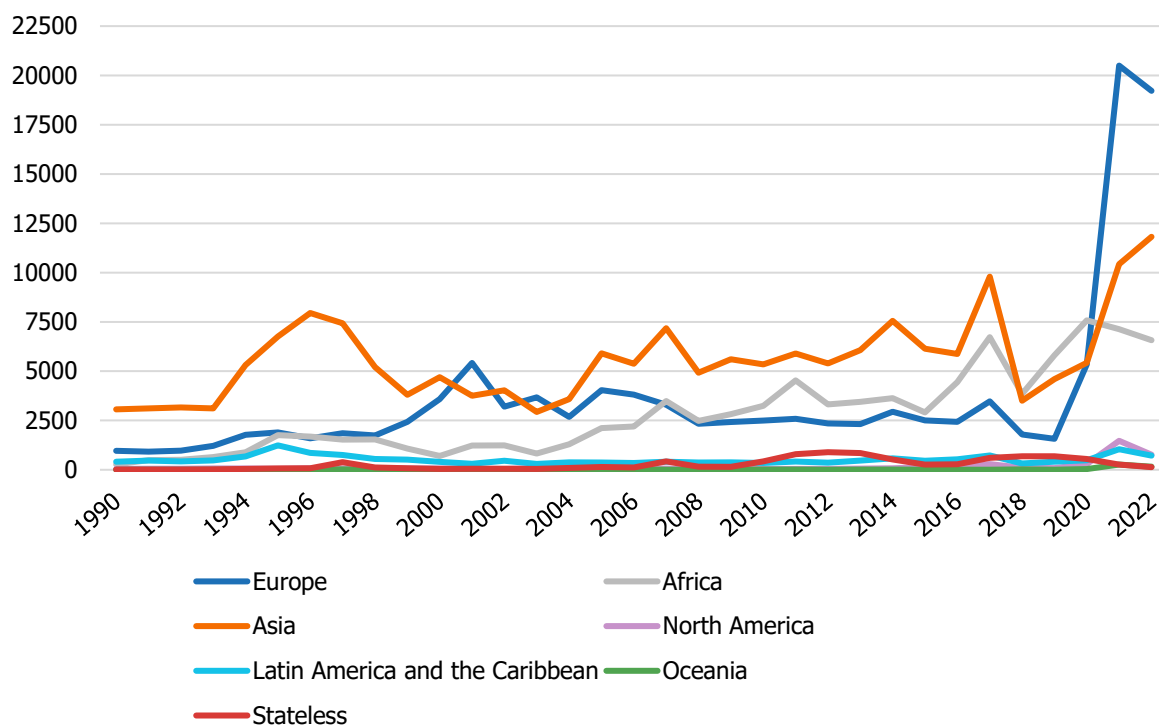
Transition to Norwegian citizenship

6.4 There are still many who obtain Norwegian citizenship

In 2022, just over 39,000 people were granted Norwegian citizenship. Half of those granted citizenship in 2022 had citizenship from another European country. There has been a significant increase in transitions to Norwegian citizenship since 2020. This relates to the statutory

amendment of 1 January 2020, which permitted one or more additional citizenships to Norwegian citizenship. 38 per cent of all transitions to Norwegian citizenship since 1977 occurred between 2020 and 2023 (Arnesen and Corneliusen, 2024). Since the aforementioned statutory amendment, Swedes have been the largest country group to be granted Norwegian citizenship, while in previous years the majority who were granted Norwegian citizenship were from countries outside of Europe (Molstad, 2022).

Figure 6.6. Transition to Norwegian citizenship, by country of origin. 1990–2022. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2023g).



In the final three years before the statutory amendment for dual citizenship came into effect in 2020, two out of ten people who received Norwegian citizenship had lived in Norway for eight or more years. A relatively higher number of people with long periods of residence have obtained citizenship since the statutory amendment entered into force. In 2021, five out of ten of those granted citizenship had a period of residence of eight years or longer (Molstad, 2022). One possible explanation for this may be that many European citizens waited until the statutory amendment regarding dual citizenship had entered into force before applying for Norwegian citizenship.

The relationship between naturalisation – being accepted as a new citizen of a country – and different integration outcomes such as social integration, employment, wage development and electoral participation is well-documented in the international research literature (Bevelander and Pendakur, 2011; Goodman, 2023; Hainmuller, Hangartner and Pietrantuono, 2017; Peters, Schmeets and Vink, 2020; Peters, Vink and Schmeets, 2018).

For example, a study from Switzerland found a causal link between being granted citizenship and long-term social integration. The link is stronger if not many years pass from when someone immigrates until they are granted citizenship (Hainmuller et al., 2017).

In Norway, researchers have examined the link between naturalisation and sense of belonging to Norwegian society (Erdal, Doeland and Tellander, 2018; Erdal and Midtbøen, 2023). These findings show that citizenship has something to say about one's sense of belonging, but that this link is not unambiguous. For example, some immigrant groups report that they see citizenship as a means of acknowledging their sense of belonging, while others have a more pragmatic and practical relationship to citizenship (Erdal, Doeland and Tellander, 2018). Several also report that they find some form of security in obtaining a Norwegian passport, including as evidence of national affiliation, as insurance against being deported and as protection when people question how Norwegian they are (Erdal, Doeland and Tellander, 2018).

Use of media

6.5 Immigrants are increasing their use of digital media

Keeping up-to-date with news and public discourse can be an indicator of social engagement, sense of belonging and participation. Therefore, in this chapter we describe whether, and how, different parts of the population use news media.

Media use among people with immigrant backgrounds largely reflects the use of media by the population at large, particularly when age is taken into consideration (Schiro, Foss and Bekkengen, 2023). 85 per cent of the immigrant population access daily news on one or more of the most common media channels (newspaper, online newspaper, radio, TV or social media). 53 per cent of people with an immigrant background read online newspapers on an average day, compared to 64 per cent among the population as a whole. Among people aged 25-44, four out of five people born in Norway to immigrant parents read online newspapers daily. This is a marginally higher proportion than for the same age group in the population as a whole (Schiro et al., 2023).

Nine out of ten people with immigrant backgrounds who read newspapers or online newspapers read newspapers in Norwegian, while 25 per cent read newspapers in English, and 20 per cent read newspapers in another language (Schiro et al., 2023). While people with immigrant backgrounds are somewhat more internationally oriented when it comes to the news they read, a lower proportion in this group reads Norwegian local and district newspapers than the population as a whole. There are minor differences in the news that is read by people with immigrant backgrounds from Country Groups 1 and 2 (Schiro et al., 2023).

Figure 6.7. Media use on an average day according to immigrant category. 2022. Percentage (Schiro et al., 2023).

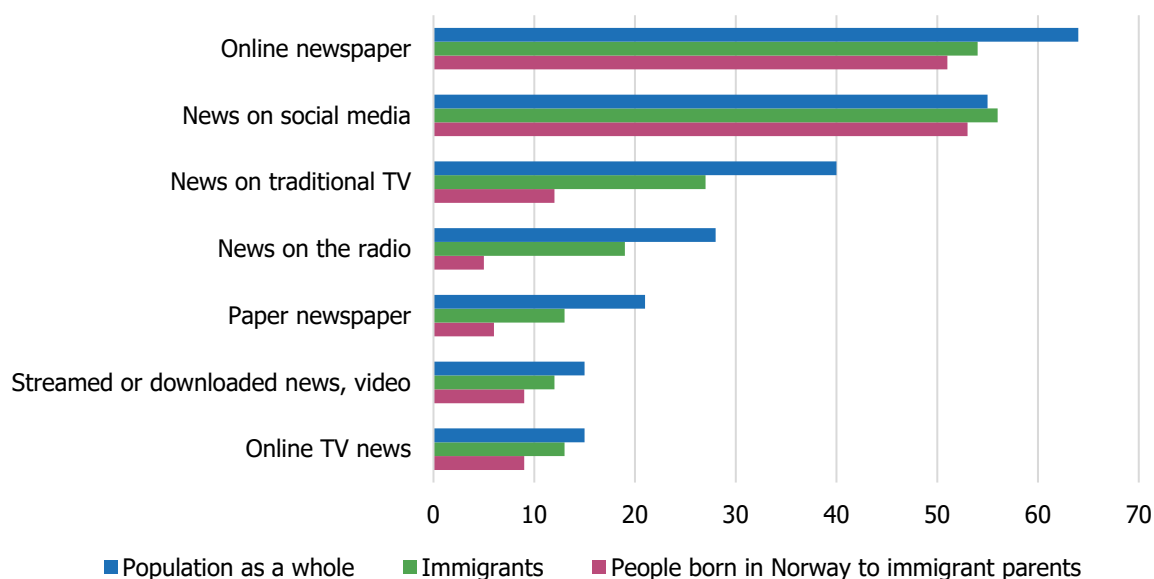


Figure 6.7 shows that social media and online newspapers are the most common platforms for consuming news. This applies both to people with an immigrant background and to the population as a whole. 27 per cent of immigrants and 12 per cent of people born in Norway to immigrant parents watch news on traditional TV on an average day. Among the population as a whole, four out of ten watch news on traditional TV. Nearly two out of ten immigrants listen to news on the radio, and of these, nine out of ten listen to the radio in Norwegian. However, people with immigrant backgrounds are more than three times as likely to listen to the radio in languages other than Norwegian and English than the population as a whole (Schiro et al., 2023).

Institutional trust

6.6 There are varying degrees of trust in different social institutions

A high level of trust among the population is an important factor for a well-functioning society. It is common to distinguish between trust in other people in society (horizontal or general trust) and trust in societal institutions (institutional or vertical trust). Institutional

What is institutional trust?

Institutional trust, also known as vertical trust, refers to the trust people have in key societal institutions, such as the government, state apparatus, police or health services.

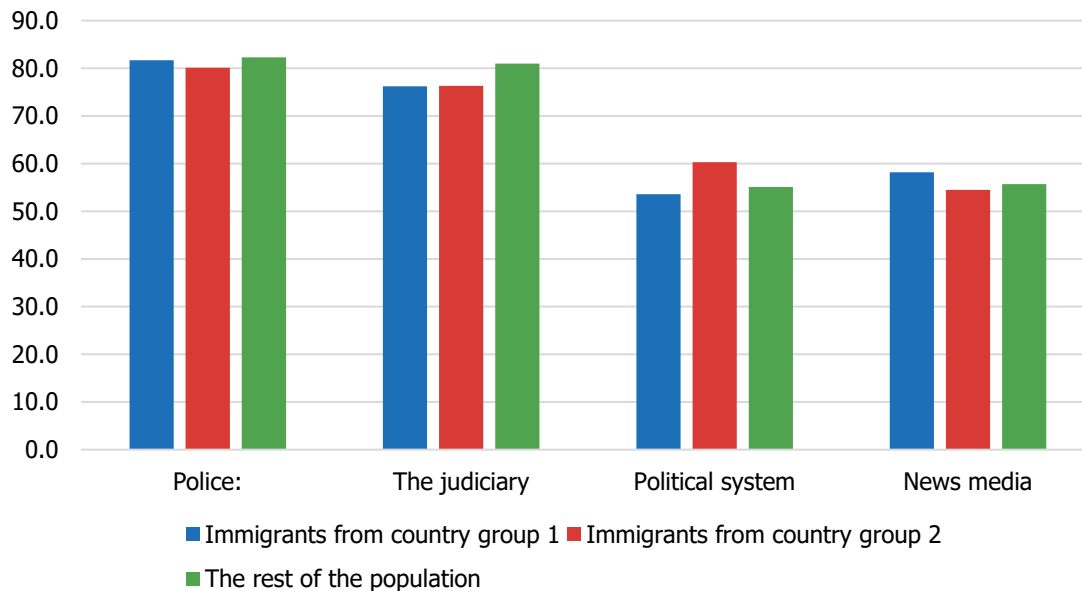
trust is shaped by specific experiences with institutions, and has a direct consequence for the relationship between the state and its citizens (Andreasson, 2017; Dalen et al. 2024; Dalen, Flatø and Friberg, 2022).

Several studies have found that immigrants express a higher level of trust in institutions than the rest of the population (Röder and Mühlau, 2012; Støren, 2019). There are differences in trust in the political system between immigrants from different countries. For example, immigrants from Eritrea express a particularly high degree of trust (69 per cent), while the share with the least degree of trust is found among Polish immigrants (28 per cent) (Støren, 2019). International research has found that immigrants with low expectations of the state in their countries of origin develop a high level of trust when they encounter institutions that provide more equitable and fair treatment (Quaranta, 2024; Röder and Mühlau, 2012). The level of institutional trust among immigrants decreases in line with period of residence, however this may also be due to immigrants from certain countries and with different reasons for immigration being categorised differently in terms of period of residence (Støren, 2019).

Immigrants who came to Norway as children, and people born in Norway to immigrant parents, express about the same degree of institutional trust as the population as a whole at the same age (Støren, 2019). These two groups have largely grown up under the same institutional conditions as the majority population.

Statistics Norway's living conditions survey has found virtually no differences in the level of trust in various institutions between immigrants and the rest of the population. In both groups, eight out of ten expressed a high level of trust in the police and the judiciary in 2022. Trust in the political system and the news media was somewhat lower. Fewer than six out of ten respondents reported a high level of trust in these institutions (Figure 6.8).

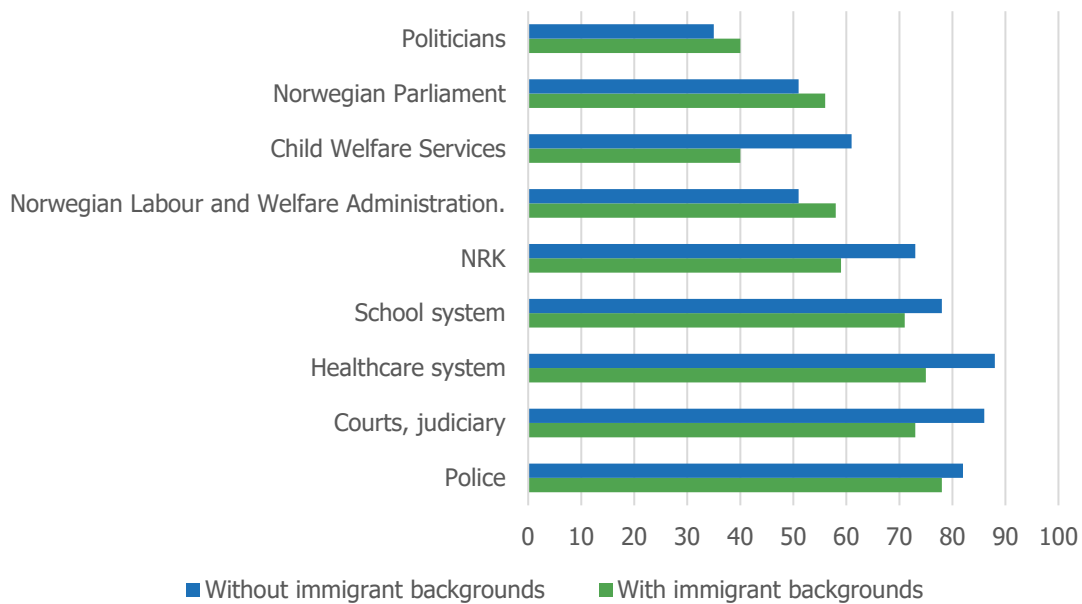
Figure 6.8. Proportion who express a high level of trust in various institutions, by immigrant category. 2022. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2022e).



A 2023 survey found that immigrants have a relatively high level of trust in institutions. The same survey also found that the degree of institutional trust among immigrants varies according to the applicable social institution (Dalen et al., 2024). As illustrated in Figure 6.8, there is a high level of trust in the police, school system, health care system, and courts/judiciary among people both with and without immigrant backgrounds. The population with an immigrant background has less trust in the child welfare services than the rest of the population, and greater trust in the Norwegian Parliament and politicians. People with immigrant backgrounds also express a higher level of trust in NAV (Dalen et al. 2024; Friberg, Volckmar-Eeg and Andresen, 2024).

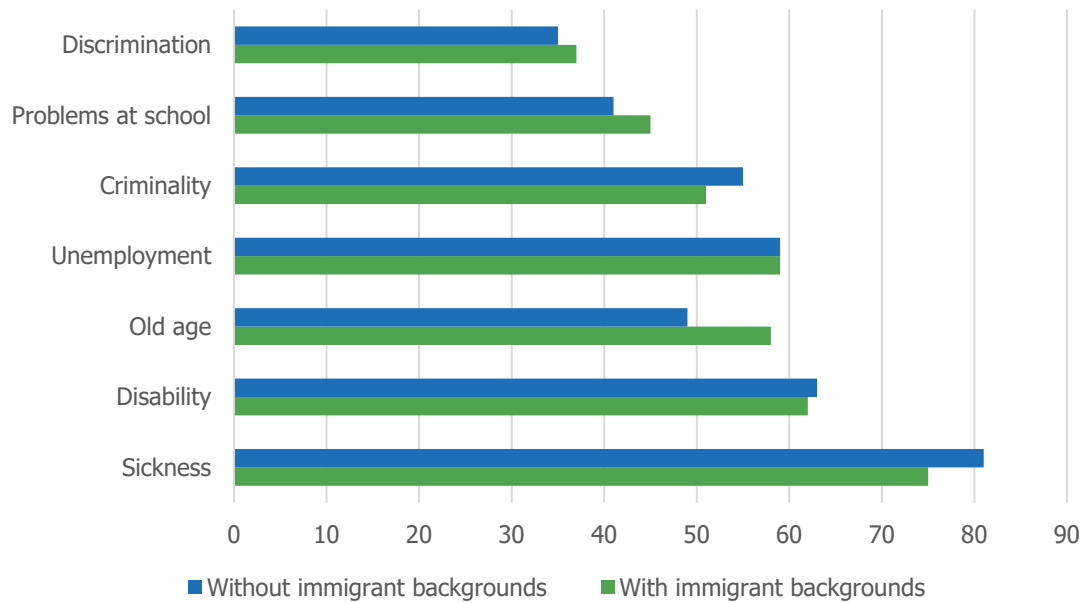
Furthermore, on average, people born in Norway to immigrant parents express a lower level of institutional trust than immigrants, women express less trust than men, younger people express less trust than the elderly, and people who have completed upper secondary school or higher education have, on average, less trust than people with a low level of education (Dalen et al., 2024).

Figure 6.9. Proportion of the population with a very high or reasonably high level of trust in the following Norwegian institutions. 2023. Percentage (Dalen et al., 2024).



Belief that you will receive the help you need from the state can be interpreted as trusting that society is there to assist you, and that you are viewed as an equal part of that society (Dalen et al., 2024). As shown in Figure 6.9, there are relatively minor differences between people with and without immigrant backgrounds in terms of the degree of trust in obtaining the help that they need in different situations.

Figure 6.10. Proportion of the population who have a high level or relatively high level of trust that they will obtain help from the state in the event of various types of incidents or conditions. 2023. Percentage (Dalen et al., 2024).

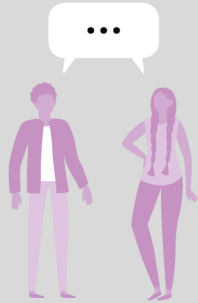


Among people born in Norway to immigrant parents, a negative correlation has been found between growing up in persistent low-income households and the degree of institutional trust (Støren, 2019). Experiencing differential treatment has a negative correlation with trust in the political system. This applies both to immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents (Støren, 2019).

The same can apply to trust in the police. Studies show that young men with minority backgrounds experience more frequent police checks without them receiving explanations as to why they are being checked. Several people experience that the checks are due to their skin colour or ethnic background. These types of experiences can challenge the trust that this group has in the police (Solhjell et al., 2019; The Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, 2022).

Social integration

Contact with immigrants



... Among friends and acquaintances

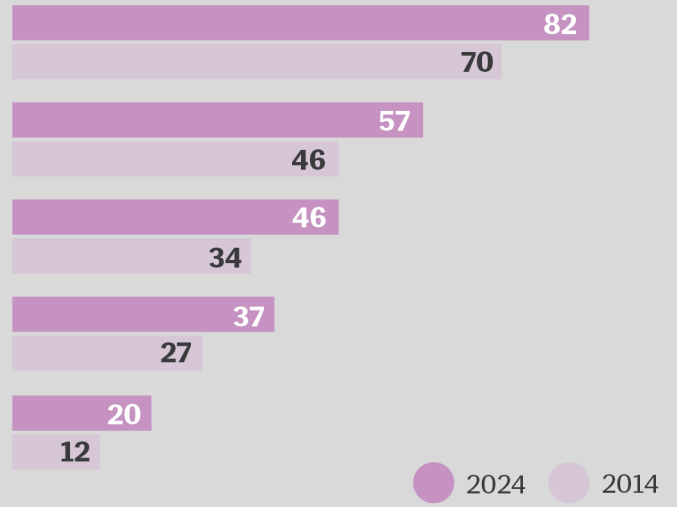
... In the neighbourhood

... In close family

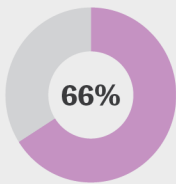
...All arenas

...At work

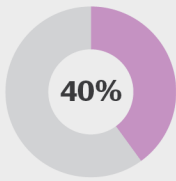
More contact since 2014



Discrimination



of immigrants have experienced discrimination



in the rest of the population

Acceptance

9 out of 10

people born in Norway to immigrant parents feel integrated, but only 7 out of 10 feel accepted

Attitudes towards immigrants

83% believe immigrants make an important contribution to working life

22% believe immigrants are a cause of insecurity in society

Decline in positive attitudes since 2023

Trust in other people

57% of immigrants find that most people can be trusted

69% in the rest of the population



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5 Social integration

Interpersonal contact in different formal and informal arenas, in both small and large communities, is of crucial importance in the integration process. Rewarding social relationships in everyday life help to expand networks and create trust and a sense of belonging. However, the absence of these relationships can result in loneliness, exclusion or segregation. Experiences with negative attitudes or discrimination can have negative consequences for integration, health and quality of life.

Social integration, also known as everyday integration, is a two-way process that is about building bridges between the minority and majority. 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. These efforts will contribute towards immigrants experiencing a greater sense of belonging and participation in society by us counteracting segregation and promoting joint meeting places and having a common understanding of the fundamental values and norms in Norwegian society (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018). Another important aspect of social integration is self-determination, or the freedom to decide for oneself how to live one's life.

Unlike, for example, indicators of connection to the labour force and education, for which good indicators exist, social integration is more difficult to measure. For this we need to rely more on subjective experiences and attitudes in different groups of the population. This also makes it more difficult to measure and compare indicators of social integration over time, and there may be greater uncertainty associated with the research findings related to certain topics in the field.⁸

General trust

⁸ It is also worth remembering that the most marginalized groups in society are probably not included in surveys.

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7.1 Immigrants have less trust in other people

Several studies have examined the connection between the trust immigrants have in other people and previous experiences and socialisation in their home country (Dinesen, 2012; Nannestad et al., 2014). Immigrants in Norway often come from countries where a low level of trust is more prevalent, and this can have a sustained effect on their level of trust, even after having immigrated. However, studies also show that immigrants adapt to the higher level of horizontal trust in the receiving country. The empirical evidence therefore points in both directions.

What is meant by general trust?

Horizontal trust can be defined as the tendency to trust other people, and this type of trust is therefore also called interpersonal trust. It is common to distinguish between **general trust**, i.e. trust in strangers in a society, and specific trust, which is about how much one trusts specific people or groups.

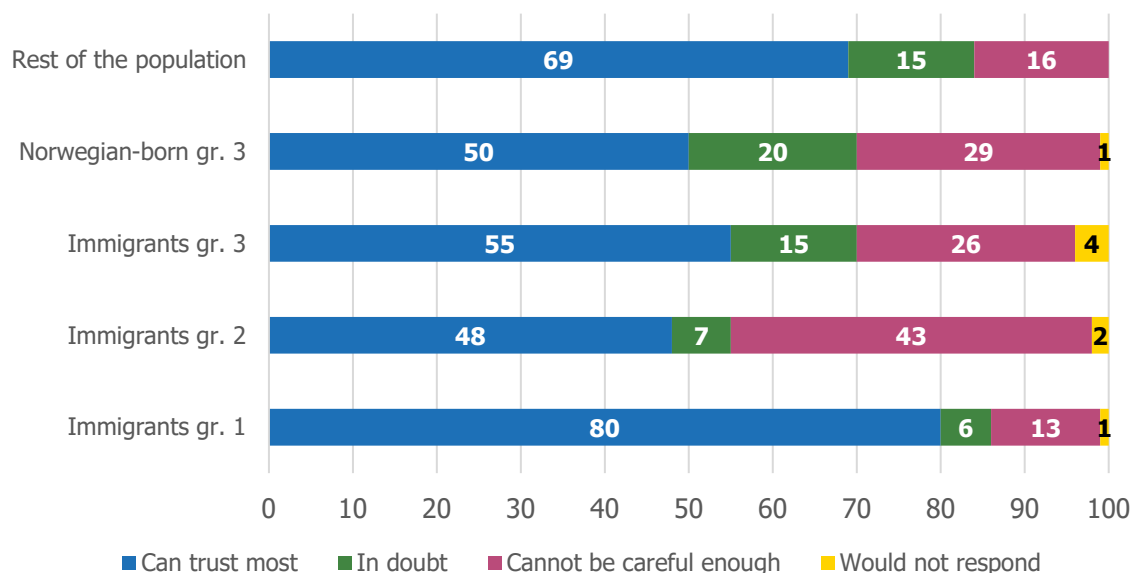
In the context of integration, general trust is a difficult metric to use, because it is uncertain whether it should be understood as a prerequisite for integration, or as a result of integration (Dalen et al., 2024).

A question that is often used when measuring horizontal (general) trust is: "Do you think you can generally trust most people, or do you think you cannot be careful enough when encountering other people?" In response to this question, 57 per cent of people with immigrants background stated that most people can be trusted, compared with 69 per cent of people without immigrant backgrounds (Dalen et al., 2024). Several studies have found that, on average, people with immigrant backgrounds are somewhat less trusting of other people than the rest of the population (Dalen et al., 2024; Dalen, Flatø and Friberg, 2022; Støren, 2019; Vrålstad and Wiggen, 2016).

General trust also varies between different groups with immigrant backgrounds. Immigrants from Country Group 1 (Western Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand) distinguish themselves by the fact that they are far more likely to state that other people can be trusted. A total of 80 per cent believe this, compared to 48 per cent in Country Group 2 (new EU countries in Eastern and Central Europe), 55 per cent in Country Group 3 (countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America) and 50 per cent among people born in Norway to immigrant parents from Country Group 3. When divided among individual countries, people from Germany and Sweden express the highest level of trust, while people from Poland, Syria and Lithuania express the lowest level of trust (Dalen et al., 2024).

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Figure 7.1. General trust, measured by the question "Would you say that you can generally trust most people, or do you think you cannot be careful enough when encountering other people?" 2023. Percentage (Dalen et al., 2024).



Part of the explanation for the differences between people born in Norway to immigrant parents and immigrants can be age, because people born in Norway to immigrant parents are a relatively young group. Older people with immigrant backgrounds are more inclined to trust others than young people (Dalen et al., 2024). Other characteristics that may have a positive correlation with horizontal trust include longer period of residence, better Norwegian language skills and a stronger connection to the labour force (Dalen, Flatø and Friberg, 2022; Støren, 2019). Unemployment, poor finances and the experience of being discriminated against can have a negative correlation with trust in other people (Støren, 2019).

Social networks and contact

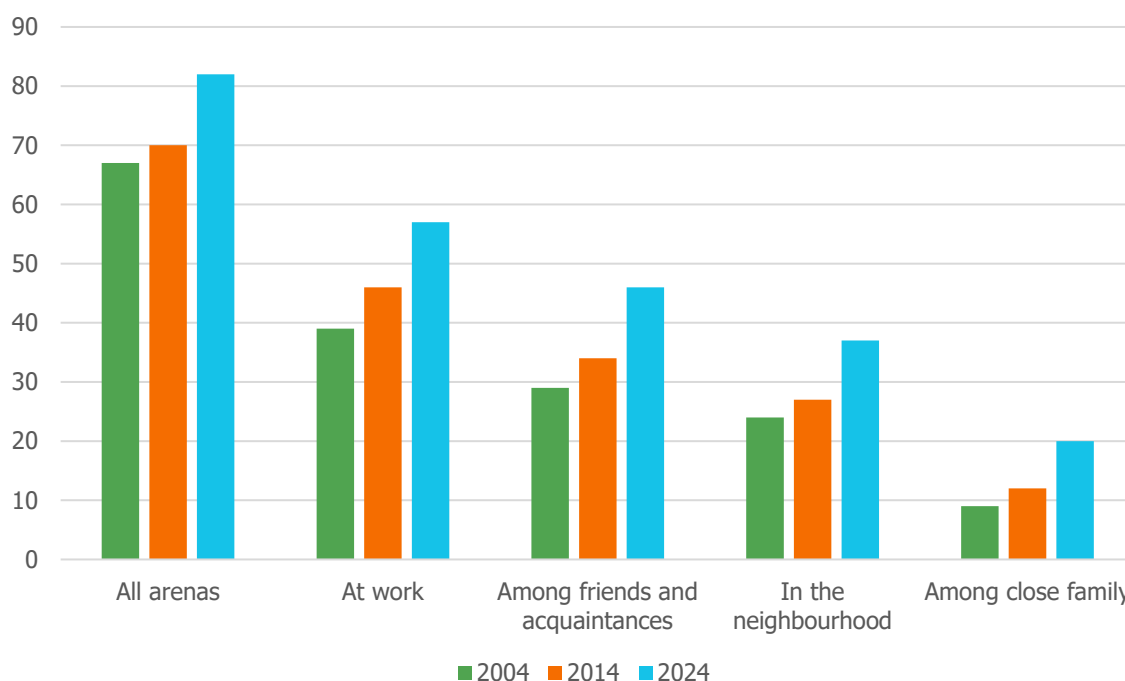
7.2 Increasingly more contact with immigrants in different arenas

As the number of immigrants in Norway increases, so does the number of people in the general population who have contact with them. The proportion of the population who report that they have contact with immigrants increased from two of three in 2004 to over four of five in 2024 (Statistics Norway, 2024ab). Most of those who have contact with immigrants report that their experiences in this regard are positive. Women and young people are more positive than men and older people (Strøm and Molstad, 2021). Figure 7.2 shows the increased contact between immigrants and the rest of the population across different arenas.

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When asked about their relations with immigrants, a large majority responded that they would be comfortable having an immigrant as a close colleague (95 per cent). 84 per cent responded that they would be comfortable with having a son or daughter who wanted to marry an immigrant. However, these figures decreased by two and three percentage points respectively from 2023 (Statistics Norway, 2024bb).

Figure 7.2. Contact with immigrants, by arena. 2024. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024ab)

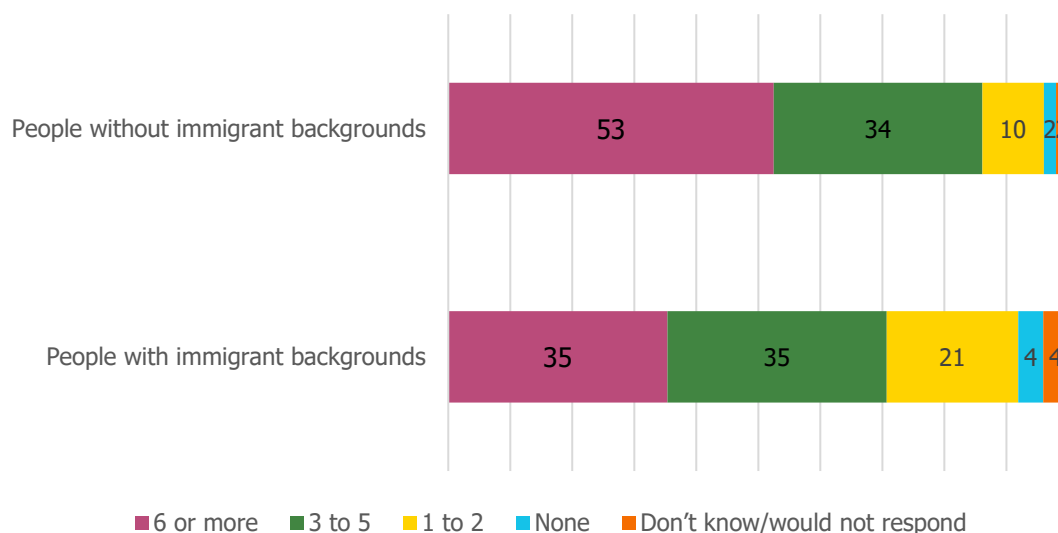


There is a correlation between personal contact with immigrants and more positive attitudes towards immigration and greater trust in general (Brekke et al., 2024; Finseraas et al., 2019). It is particularly those who have contact with people with immigrant backgrounds in connection with work, volunteering or leisure activities who are more positive towards immigration (Brekke et al., 2024; Strøm, Molstad and Arnesen, 2023). At the same time, it is not a simple task to demonstrate whether someone becomes more positively inclined towards people with immigrant backgrounds by meeting them, or whether it is those who are already positively inclined who seek out arenas where they can meet people with immigrant backgrounds (Brekke and Fladmoe, 2022).

People with immigrant backgrounds report that they have significantly fewer close relations who they can count on receiving help from if they experience significant personal problems than people without immigrant backgrounds. For example, 21 per cent report that they only have one or two people who they can count on, compared to ten per cent among people without immigrant backgrounds (Dalen et al., 2024).

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Figure 7.3. Response to the question: "How many people are you so close to that you can count on their help if you have major personal problems?" 2023. Percentage (Dalen et al., 2024).



Sense of belonging and acceptance

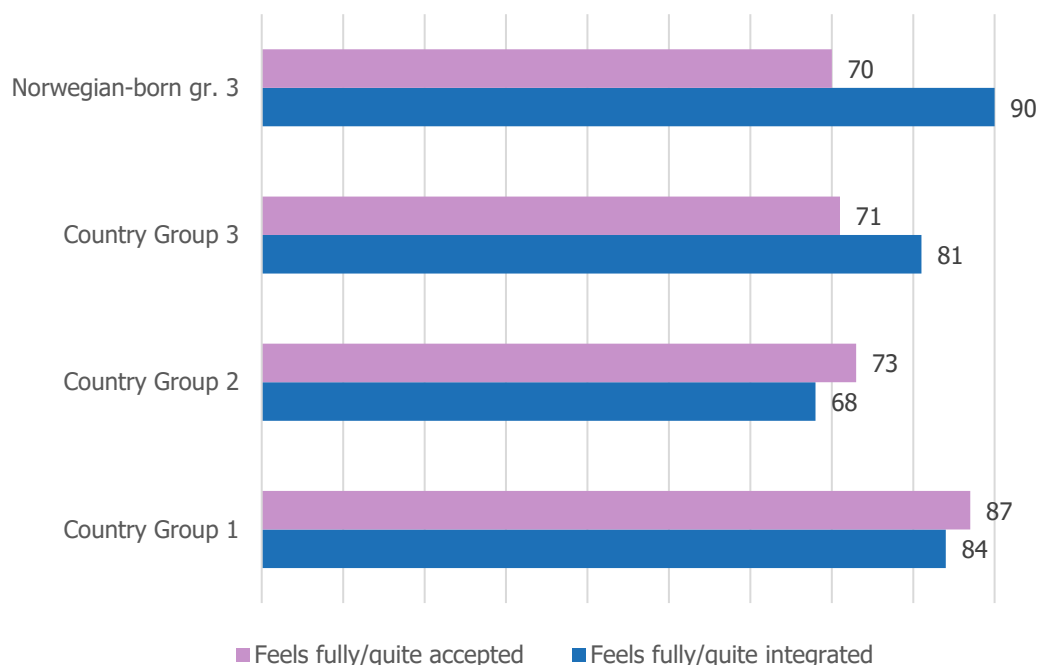
7.3 People born in Norway feel integrated but not accepted

The population of Norway is becoming increasingly more diverse, and the concept of "Norwegianness" is not unambiguous. Young people with immigrant backgrounds gradually acquire an identity as Norwegian. At the same time, a significant proportion experience that others do not recognize them as being Norwegian (Friberg, 2021). The question of perceived "Norwegianness" can be problematic, because it suggests that immigrants must or should identify as being Norwegian. However, it can be a question that reveals one's connection to the community and sense of belonging in Norway. A study of immigrants' everyday lives and integration shows that 56 per cent of people with immigrant backgrounds consider themselves as being Norwegian. A significantly lower proportion, 32 per cent, believe that others view them as being Norwegian. There is thus a large disconnect between one's own perception of "Norwegianness" and how others may view this. Furthermore, this disconnect is about the same for Norwegian-born children of immigrants as for their parents (Dalen et al., 2024).

In the same study, 80 per cent of people with immigrant backgrounds responded that they feel integrated into Norwegian society. 74 per cent feel accepted. The gap between feeling integrated and accepted is widest for people born in Norway to immigrant parents. In this group, 90 per cent reported that they feel integrated, but only 70 per cent feel accepted.

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Figure 7.4. Proportion who feel completely or relatively integrated and completely or relatively accepted in Norwegian society. 2023. Percentage (Dalen et al., 2024).



It may appear paradoxical that children of immigrants who are born and raised in Norway feel less accepted than their parents. This is a known phenomenon and is referred to in the research literature as the integration paradox (Dalen et al., 2024; Midtbøen and Kitterød, 2019; Schaeffer and Kas, 2023). Increased integration does not necessarily entail a stronger experience of acceptance and sense of belonging. There can be a number of different reasons for this. Immigrants and their Norwegian-born children who participate in multiple social arenas and have more contact with the rest of the population are more exposed to unlawful discrimination and exclusion. Another theory is that the more integrated someone is, the more inclined they are to interpret different experiences as discrimination, because they have higher expectations of receiving equal treatment and greater awareness about discrimination as a social problem.

Findings suggest that the likelihood of feeling both integrated and accepted is higher for people with immigrant backgrounds who have more contact with people without immigrant backgrounds (Dalen et al., 2024). The research indicates that the integration paradox is primarily explained by immigrants and their Norwegian-born, highly educated children, being more aware of discrimination and having higher expectations for equality and inclusion in society.

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Participation in volunteering

7.4 Poor Norwegian language skills are the biggest obstacle to volunteering

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. Research also reveals a positive, albeit weak link between volunteer work and quality of life (Skiple, Eimhjellen and Christensen, 2024).

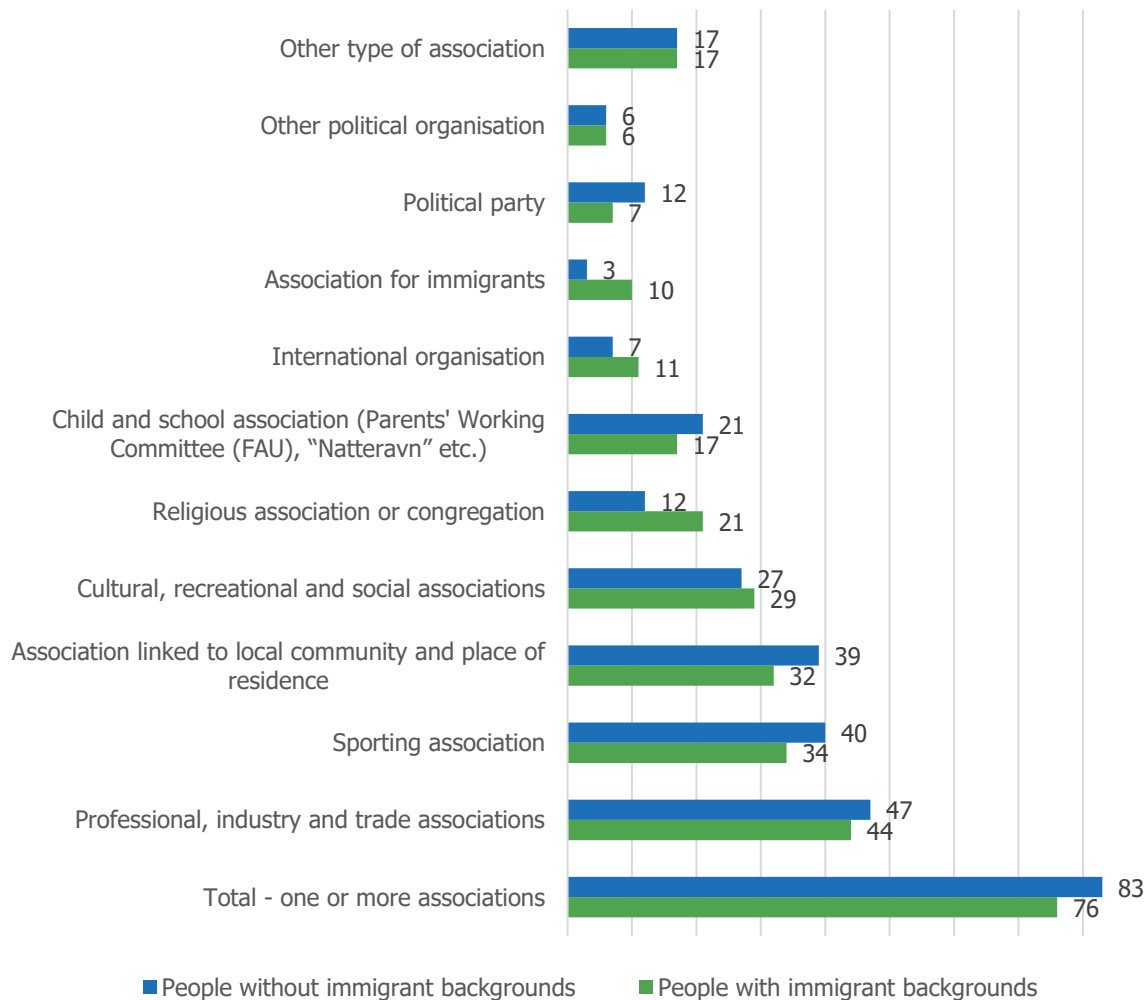
Immigrants participate to a somewhat lesser extent in organised activities and volunteer work than the rest of the population (Eimhjellen et al., 2023; Eimhjellen, Bentsen and Wollebæk, 2020; Haugland and Dalen, 2023; Jacobsen et al., 2021). Gender, age, education and Norwegian language skills can influence the likelihood of participating in volunteering. Immigrant women, older immigrants and immigrants with low levels of education and poor Norwegian language skills have lower participation rates (Eimhjellen and Arnesen, 2018).

The participation and representation of immigrants in volunteering may also vary depending on the type of organisation or how the voluntary efforts are organised. For example, immigrants participate to a lesser extent the more formalized the involvement is, and the more time it takes to participate (Statistics Norway, 2022f).

Findings from a survey of the immigrant population show that 76 per cent of people with immigrant backgrounds have participated in at least one voluntary association in the past two years, and the same applies to 83 per cent of people without immigrant backgrounds (Dalen et al., 2024).

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Figure 7.5. Proportion who have participated (member, attended meetings and/or contributed as a volunteer) in different types of associations over the past two years. 2023. Percentage (Dalen et al., 2024).



Having inadequate Norwegian language skills is the single factor that most immigrants highlight as preventing them from participating in volunteer work. A lack of information and knowledge about what characterises volunteering in Norway can also constitute barriers to participation. Other reasons may include factors related to life situation, financial challenges, bureaucracy and lack of meeting places (Espegren, Mjelde and Danielsen, 2022).

In addition, some immigrants come from countries with different traditions and systems for volunteering, and different means of organisation. Experiences from one's country of origin provide different prerequisites for inclusion in volunteer work in Norway. When compared to volunteering in other countries, volunteering in Norway generally has a strong link to the government authorities through financial support, cooperation and agreements, and this link

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can represent a challenge for some. For immigrant groups who have experience with less bureaucratic volunteer work from their country of origin, it can take time to understand and build trust in Norwegian civil society. Experiences with government authorities and public institutions in one's country of origin can vary between different immigrant groups, and this can contribute towards explaining the scepticism towards organisations that cooperate with the government authorities (Espegren, Mjelde and Danielsen, 2022).

Children's participation in leisure activities

7.5 Financial situation plays a major role in whether children participate in leisure activities

Having the opportunity to participate and be active in one's leisure time is a fundamental right of all children and young people, cf. Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Being involved in leisure activities contributes to a sense of belonging, community and mastery, as well as to better physical and mental health (Eime et al., 2013). Leisure activities are also an important integration arena. While young people with minority backgrounds who participate in volunteering or sport are more socially engaged, no equivalent effect is found among young people without minority backgrounds (Ødegård and Fladmoe, 2020).

There are differences between children and young people with and without immigrant backgrounds in terms of how many participate in leisure activities (Bakken and Strandbu, 2023; Myrli and Mehus, 2015; Walseth and Strandbu, 2014). This particularly applies to organised sports, which is the single activity that organises the most children and young people.

A 2023 survey revealed that 63 per cent of young people with minority backgrounds participated in sports during their teenage years. The corresponding figure for young people without immigrant backgrounds was 79 per cent (Bakken and Strandbu, 2023). Furthermore, 20 per cent of young people with minority backgrounds have never participated in organised sports. The same applies to 6 per cent of young people without minority backgrounds. The degree of participation is higher among young people with immigrant backgrounds who were born in Norway, or who came to Norway before the age of five. However, there are also more people in this group than young people in general who have never participated (Bakken and Strandbu, 2023).

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Figure 7.6. Participation in sports during childhood. 2023. Percentage (Bakken and Strandbu, 2023)

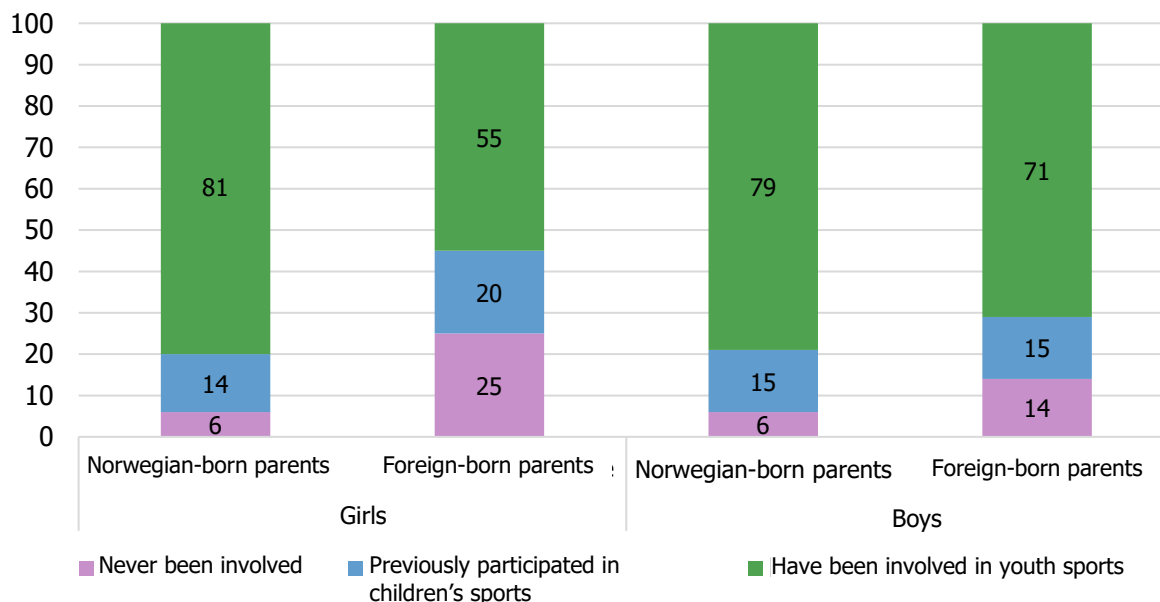
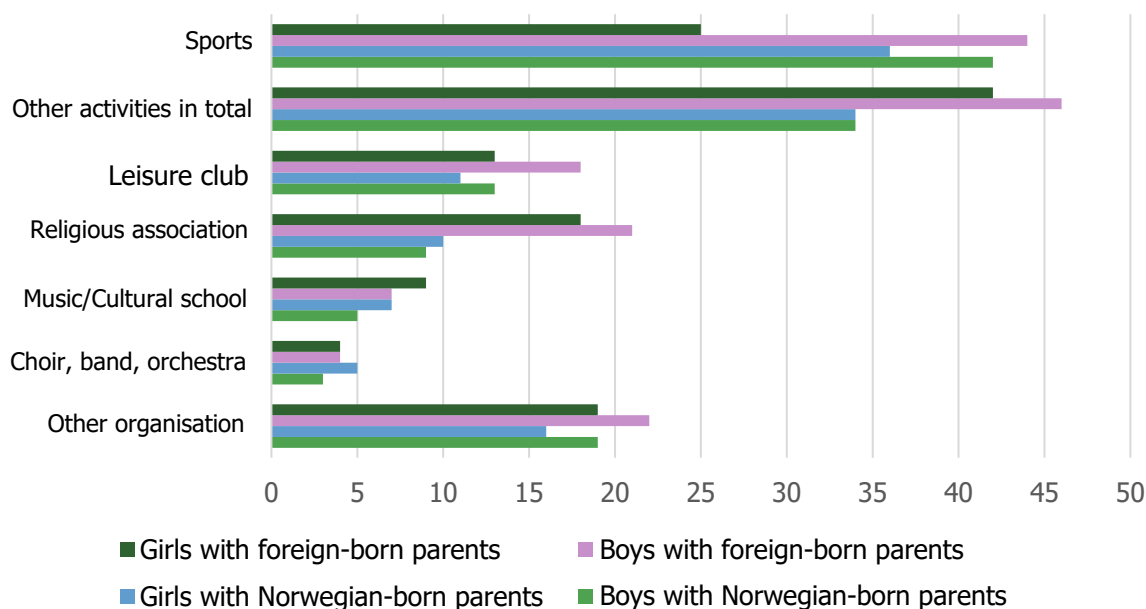


Figure 7.6 shows that girls with immigrant parents in particular are overrepresented among those who have never participated in organised sports. 25 per cent of this group has never participated, compared to 6 per cent of girls with Norwegian-born parents. The gap is smaller among boys with and without minority backgrounds. Girls also stop participating in sports at an earlier stage than boys. Socioeconomic background explains part of the difference between the groups with and without minority backgrounds, particularly for boys (Bakken and Strandbu, 2023).

Figure 7.7 shows how many girls and boys have participated in leisure activities in the last month. This provides a more nuanced picture of the level of participation among minority young people. Both girls and boys with immigrant backgrounds participate in a broader range of other organised leisure activities than girls and boys without minority backgrounds. Among other things, girls with immigrant backgrounds are somewhat more often involved in religious associations, music or cultural schools or other associations (book clubs etc.) (Bakken and Strandbu, 2023).

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Figure 7.7. Participation in leisure activities during the last month. 2023. Percentage (Bakken and Strandbu, 2023).



Differences in class backgrounds and financial situation are part of the explanation for why fewer children and young people with minority backgrounds participate in organised leisure activities (Bakken and Enstad, 2023; Jacobsen et al., 2021; Strandbu, Bakken and Sletten, 2019). In addition, research points to factors such as discrimination, the ability of parents to follow up their children's activities, culture and traditions as barriers to participation in leisure activities (Nygård, 2022; Strandbu, Bakken and Sletten, 2019).

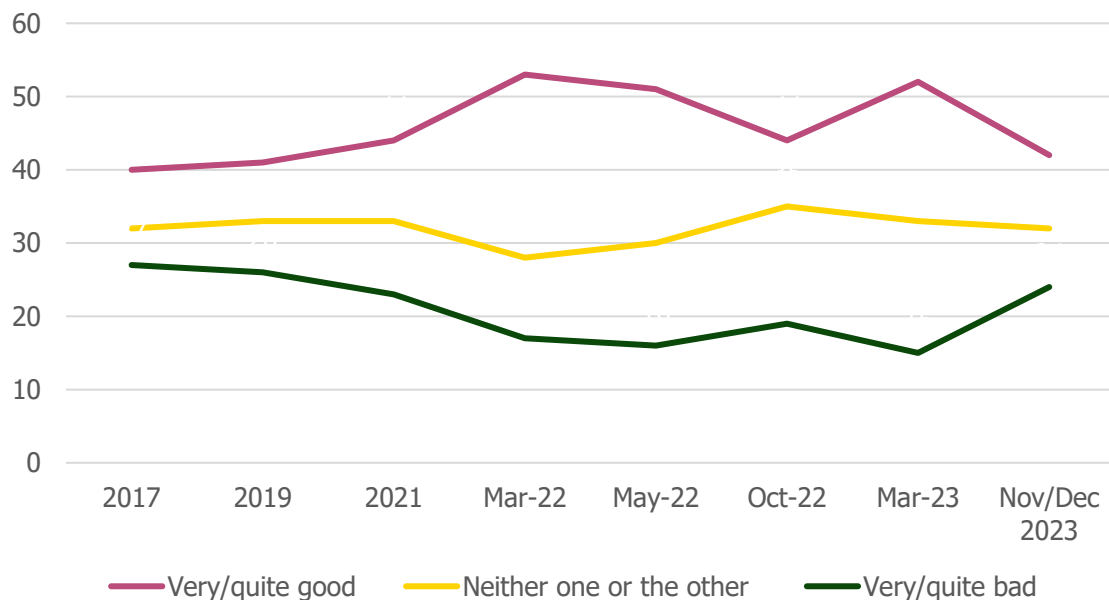
Attitudes to immigration and integration

7.6 The positive trend has reversed

Every year a number of comprehensive surveys of the population's attitudes to immigrants and immigration are conducted. These surveys include Statistics Norway's survey of attitudes (Statistics Norway, 2024z) and IMDi's Integration Barometer (Brekke et al., 2024).

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Figure 7.8. "Do you think that immigration is generally a good thing or a bad thing for Norway?" 2017–2023. Percentage (Brekke et al., 2024).



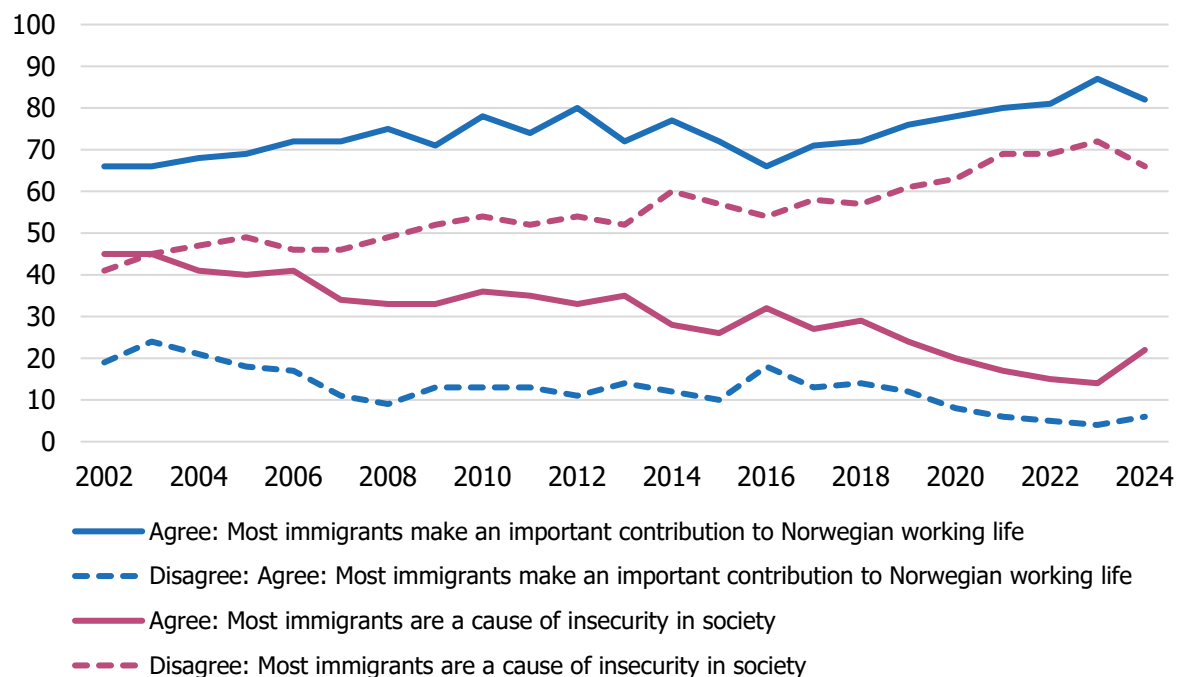
Variations in attitudes over time can be viewed in the context of various events and cycles in society. After the large influx of Syrian refugees in 2015, the share who believe that immigrants generally make useful contributions to the Norwegian labour market fell to 66 per cent, which was the lowest level since 2004 (Molstad, 2021). In the months following the outbreak of war in Ukraine in 2022, a significant increase in positive attitudes towards immigration and greater support among the Norwegian population for accepting refugees were registered. At the end of 2021, four out of ten people believed that Norway should accept more refugees. In March 2022, six out of ten gave the same response. The proportion who believed immigration is good for Norway, and that integration is, on the whole, going well, increased significantly over the same short period of time (Brekke and Fladmoe, 2022).

In the autumn of 2023, attitudes towards immigration had returned to the same level as before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The proportion who believes that the integration of immigrants into Norwegian society is going well is now at a higher level than before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. However, the population is still divided on its view of integration. About four out of ten people believe that integration is not going well, just under three out of ten believe that it is going well, and almost four out of ten respond with "none of the above". More people believe that integration is going better in the area where they live than in society in general, and those who live in less central areas are more positive (Brekke et al., 2024).

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Statistics Norway's survey of attitudes reveals that, for the first time since 2016, there is a decrease in the proportion of people who have positive attitudes towards immigrants. This may be due to the return to a normal state of affairs after a few years of considerable focus on refugees from Ukraine (Molstad and Arnesen, 2024). In 2023, 87 per cent responded that most immigrants make an important contribution to Norwegian working life. This proportion has decreased by five percentage points in 2024. More people are also of the opinion that immigrants are a source of insecurity in society. 14 per cent had this opinion in 2023, and 22 per cent in 2024 (Statistics Norway, 2024z)

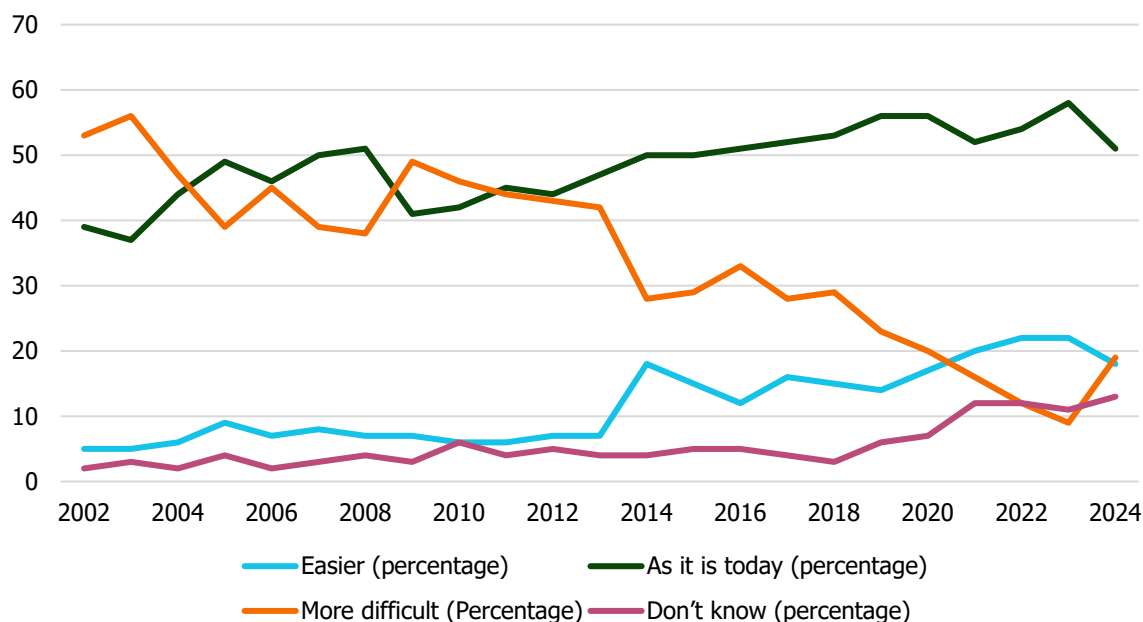
Figure 7.9. Percentage who strongly/somewhat agree and strongly/somewhat disagree with two statements. 2002–2024. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024z).



This indication of a change in attitudes is also clear when it comes to attitudes regarding the right of refugees and asylum seekers to be able to stay in Norway (Figure 7.10). While the proportion who believe it should be easier for refugees and asylum seekers to stay in Norway increased steadily between 2016 and 2023, this trend has reversed in 2024. However, half of respondents believe the system should remain in its current form (Statistics Norway, 2024aa).

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Figure 7.10. Attitudes towards the right of refugees and asylum seekers to stay in Norway. Should it be easier, more difficult or the same as it is today? 2002–2024. Percentage Statistics Norway, 2024aa).



However, in some areas, the population are split on their view of immigration. Among other things, attitudes to immigration may depend on the country of origin, reason for immigration or religion.

There are more people who believe that Norway should accept a larger number of labour immigrants and refugees than is presently the case, than those who believe that the country should accept a larger number of asylum seekers and family members. More people than before state that foreign labour is important to ensure the provision of welfare services (Brekke et al., 2024).

Furthermore, research shows that religious minorities, and especially Muslims, face some negative attitudes and prejudices in Norwegian society (Moe and Døving, 2022). For example, 41 per cent of the population report that they are sceptical of people with Muslim beliefs, and 60 per cent believe that Islamic values are not compatible with the fundamental values in Norwegian society (Brekke et al., 2024). In comparison, 16, 19 and 23 per cent respectively believe that Christian, Jewish and Buddhist values are incompatible with fundamental values in Norwegian society (Brekke and Fladmoe, 2022). 30.7 per cent of the population has what can be characterised as pronounced prejudices against Muslims by supporting claims such as "Muslims themselves bear much of the blame for growing hatred of Muslims", that "Muslims pose a threat to Norwegian culture", and that "Muslims do not fit into a modern Western society" (Moe, 2022).

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Attitudes towards immigration and religious minorities vary between different parts of the Norwegian population. Women are more positive about immigration than men, and people with higher education are more positive than people with lower levels of education. People who often have contact with immigrants are consistently more positive in their attitudes towards immigrants than those who rarely have contact with immigrants. Historically, young adults have been more positive towards immigrants than older people. The difference between younger and older people has now decreased. This may be partly due to the fact that younger men have become slightly more negative towards immigration. There are also clear differences in attitudes between different voter groups, where people who vote for the Socialist Left Party (SV), Red Party (Rødt), Green Party (MDG) and Liberal Party (Venstre) are the most positive, while people who vote for the Progress Party (Frp) and Industry and Business Party (INP) are the most negative (Brekke et al., 2024).

Racism and discrimination

7.7 Children of immigrants experience more discrimination

Racism and discrimination can be obstacles to achieving good living conditions, to entry into the labour market, to deriving benefit from education and training and to access to the housing market. This can lead to negative outcomes between different population groups. Discrimination can lead to a weakened sense of belonging to the community and less trust both in society and in other people.

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It can be difficult to detect and measure discrimination. A number of different methods are used for this in studies of discrimination, including experiments, observation and surveys that examine immigrants' own experiences.

What is meant by racism and discrimination?

The Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act defines **discrimination** as "direct or indirect differential treatment." Pursuant to the Act, direct differential treatment "means treatment of a person that is worse than the treatment that is, has been or would have been afforded to other persons in a corresponding situation", while indirect differential treatment "means any apparently neutral provision, condition, practice, act or omission that results in persons being put in a worse position than others."

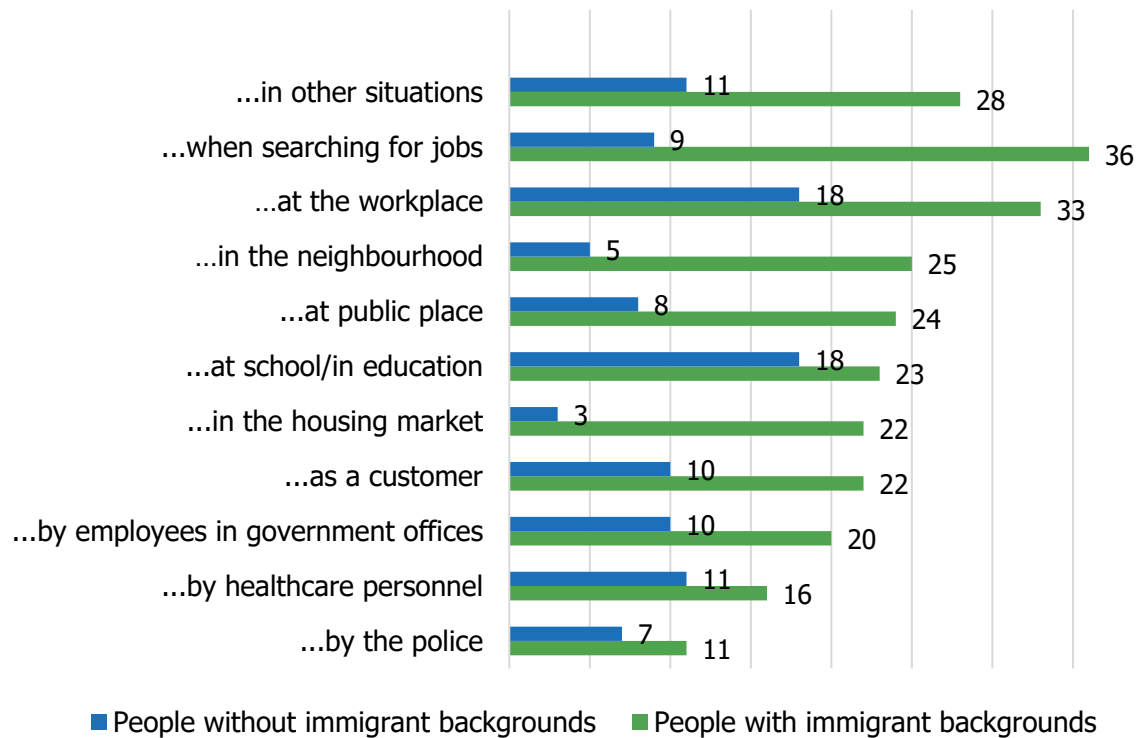
Racism can be defined as ideas, ideologies, statements or actions that divide people into "races" or ethnic groups, where some are claimed to be of less value than others (Proba, 2024a). Racism is not referred to as grounds for discrimination in the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. Section 185 of the Norwegian Penal Code prohibits discriminatory or hateful statements based on someone's skin colour, ethnicity, religion, life stance, sexual orientation or disability.

The difference between racism and discrimination is not clearly defined, however the concept of racism has traditionally had a greater emphasis on intentionality, while discrimination focusses more on behaviour, practice and outcomes. In Norwegian social research, the concept of discrimination has been more commonly used than the concept of racism.

66 per cent of people with immigrant backgrounds report that they have experienced discrimination during their lives, compared to 40 per cent of the rest of the population. In other words, immigrants and their Norwegian-born children are significantly more susceptible to discrimination than the rest of the population. Discrimination occurs in many different social arenas. As shown in Figure 7.11, most people report that they have experienced discrimination in the workplace or when looking for work (Dalen et al. 2024).

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Figure 7.11. Have experienced being discriminated against or treated worse than others in different arenas during their lives. "Have experienced discrimination..." Percentage (Dalen et al., 2024).

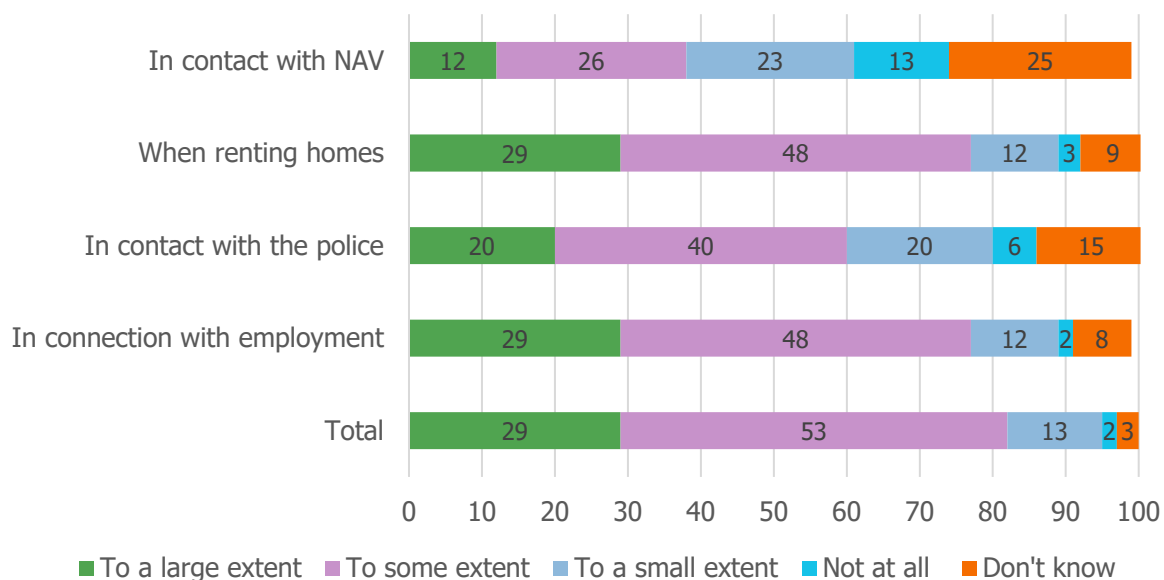


Discrimination is considered one of the biggest barriers to integration, both among immigrants themselves and in the population as such (Brekke and Fladmoe, 2022; Dalen, Flatø and Friberg, 2022) Eight out of ten people believe that discrimination against immigrants takes place in Norway. In 2023, 29 per cent of the Norwegian population responded that discrimination occurs to a large extent. This is more than a tripling compared to 2013, when nine per cent were of the same belief. In addition, more than half of the respondents in 2023 (53 per cent) stated that discrimination occurs to some extent (Brekke et al., 2024). This indicates that there is a growing and fairly common perception among the population that discrimination of immigrants occurs.

Figure 7.12 shows that almost eight out of ten people believe that discrimination occurs in employment and when renting out homes. Six out of ten people believe discrimination takes place in contact with the police, and four out of ten believe it occurs in contact with NAV (Brekke et al., 2024).

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Figure 7.12. Proportion of the population who agree or disagree that discrimination occurs, and in what arenas it occurs. 2023. Percentage (Brekke et al., etc. 2024).



In Norway, (access to) the workforce is the arena where most research has been conducted on the prevalence of racism and discrimination. Applicants with immigrant backgrounds are significantly less likely to be called in for a job interview (Birkelund et al., 2019; Midtbøen, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Midtbøen and Rogstad, 2012). Unfair discrimination against ethnic minorities occurs at all stages of the recruitment process – including in public enterprises (Bjørnset, Sterri and Rogstad, 2021). Discrimination also occurs in connection with wage setting and development, however there is significant variation between sectors, industries and job types when concerning the extent of this (Alecun and Drange, 2019; Bratsberg, Raaum and Røed, 2017; Drange, 2016; Drange and Helland, 2018).⁹

School and education are another arena where racism and discrimination have an impact on integration. There is a correlation between perceived discrimination, racism and educational achievements. Discrimination can lead to a reduction in academic confidence and less belief in success at school, lower well-being, poorer results, socio-emotional difficulties (for example, depression) and negative behavioural consequences (for example, drug use and anti-social behaviour) (Wollscheid et al., 2022). In a recent survey, 21 per cent of respondents with parents born outside of Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand reported that they had been exposed to racist speech at school in the past year (Proba, 2024a). Among children of immigrants who enrol in higher education, it is found that

⁹ See also Chapter 4.4 on working environment and everyday working life.

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even the expectation of encountering discrimination can lead to them lowering their hopes for their educational pathway and career (Orupabo, 2018; and Abrahamsen, 2020).

Discrimination also takes place in the rental market. People with immigrant backgrounds more often rent their homes than the rest of the population, however are less likely to have a rental application approved (Andersson, Jakobsson and Kotsadam, 2012; Flage, 2018). A field experiment demonstrated that the probability of receiving a positive response from landlords is more than 16 percentage points lower for applicants with Arabic-sounding names than for applicants with Norwegian-sounding names with the same job, and that there is no less discrimination in the current rental market than there was ten years ago (Benedictow et al., 2023). Statistics from the Anti-discrimination Tribunal also show that they have received 30 reports of ethnic discrimination in the housing market since 2018. On the whole, these make up a relatively small proportion of all complaints the ombudsman receives (Anti-discrimination Tribunal, 2024). There is reason to believe that there are dark numbers and that many do not report matters to the Anti-discrimination Tribunal, often because it is difficult to prove the exact reason.

People born in Norway to immigrant parents experience being discriminated against on the basis of ethnic background, skin colour and religion/life stance to a greater extent than immigrants. 75 per cent in this group responded that they have experienced discrimination due to ethnic background, 53 per cent due to skin colour and 32 per cent due to religion/life stance (Dalen et al., 2024).

How is hate speech defined?

The Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud uses a broad, social science definition, which includes both lawful and unlawful hate speech. According to this definition, hate speech is degrading, threatening, harassing or stigmatising speech which affects an individual's or a group's dignity, reputation and status in society by means of linguistic and visual effects that promote negative feelings, attitudes and perceptions based on characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity and age (The Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, 2015).

Racism or other negative attitudes towards ethnic groups can be expressed as hateful or derogatory speech (Dalen, Flatø and Friberg, 2022). More immigrants experience different forms of hate speech and violence compared to the population at large.¹⁰ Among people with immigrant backgrounds, 12 per cent report that someone has said something hateful to

¹⁰ See Chapter 7.8 Crime

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them in the past year, compared to 6 per cent in the rest of the population. Immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents from Asia, Africa and Latin America are particularly vulnerable (Dalen et al., 2024). For example, 17 per cent of people born in Norway to immigrant parents from this group report that they have experienced someone having said something hateful to them, compared to 14 per cent of their parents, 11 per cent of immigrants from new EU countries in Eastern and Central Europe and 6 per cent of immigrants from Western Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand.

Young people with ethnic minority backgrounds more often experience hate speech on the basis of ethnicity, skin colour or religion/life stance than young people who have parents born in the Nordic region. This group is particularly vulnerable if a person belongs to a religion other than Christianity, and if a person goes to school with a low percentage of students with an immigrant background. The risk of being exposed to hate speech increases significantly if the person belongs to multiple different minority groups, for example if they are LGBTQ+, have a family background from an indigenous group, are a national minority, or have a visible physical disability (Nadim and Fladmoe, 2021).

Criminality

7.8 Immigrants more often exposed to violence and fraud

Crime and immigration receive a great deal of attention in the public debate, and are often linked to how “successful” the integration of immigrants has been. Crime can be viewed as an indicator of a lack of social integration because criminal behaviour suggests failure to adhere to common norms and rules of behaviour in a society (Proba, 2019). Good and factual discussions about crime and integration require a good knowledge base.

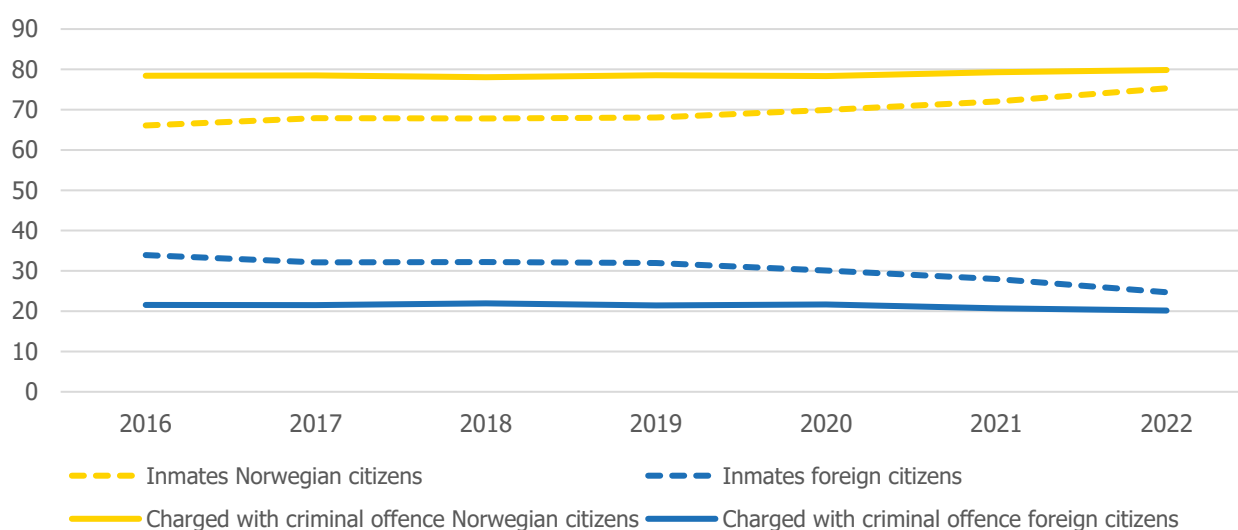
Furthermore, it is important to be aware of underlying factors that can explain crime among immigrants – both as offenders and victims. Immigrants and the rest of the population have different population compositions, and this can provide some explanation for the crime statistics. For example, the immigrant population consists of a larger proportion of young men than the population without immigrant backgrounds, and young men are also overrepresented in the crime statistics. However, gender and age do not fully explain the difference. Crime is linked to both social and economic factors such as poor living conditions and unemployment (Andersen, Holtsmark and Mohn, 2017). People with challenging living conditions are more susceptible to violence and abuse, and there is also a higher proportion of people with immigrant backgrounds who are not in work and education (Dale et al., 2023; Fossanger, Fjelldalen and Mohn, 2024).

Since 2015, the total number of people charged with criminal offences per year has decreased from about 80,000 to 60,000. The proportion of people with foreign citizenship

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charged with criminal offences has remained relatively stable at just over 20 per cent during the same period (Statistics Norway, 2024a). The number of prison inmates decreased from about 4,000 people in 2015 to just under 3,700 in 2022. This decrease is primarily due to a fall in the number of prison inmates with foreign citizenship. In 2022, prison inmates with foreign citizenship accounted for 24 per cent of all inmates, compared to 34 per cent in 2015 (Statistics Norway, 2023a).

Figure 7.13. Prison inmates and people charged with criminal offences, by citizenship. 2016–2022. Percentage.



Young men, both with and without immigrant backgrounds, are more often charged with criminal offences. This also applies when taking into account differences in gender and age composition. However, this overrepresentation decreases over time, and applies to virtually all groups of offenders and all groups of immigrants (Andersen and Mohn, 2017).

However, there are significant variations in terms of country of origin and different groups of offences (Statistics Norway, 2019). Overrepresentation is generally highest for immigrants from Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and South and Central America. This overrepresentation decreases if we adjust for gender and age, and disappears for immigrants from Poland. Immigrants from the Nordic region are equally likely as the rest of the population to be charged with criminal offences, and immigrants from Western Europe and North America are underrepresented (Andersen and Mohn, 2017). Immigrants with refugee backgrounds have the highest proportion of people charged with crimes, while people who have immigrated due to education have the lowest rates (Andersen, Holstmark and Mohn, 2017).

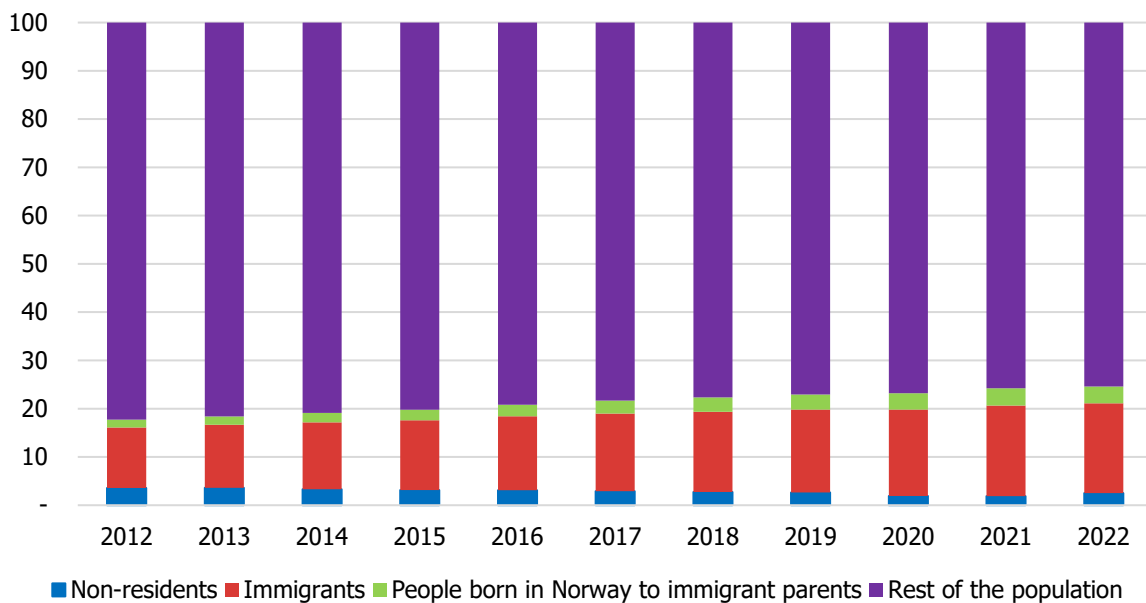
People with immigrant backgrounds who are born in Norway are also overrepresented when compared with the rest of the population (Andersen and Mohn, 2017). The average figures for

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the years 2015–2017 show that the annual proportion of Norwegian-born men with immigrant parents in the 15–35 age group who were charged with criminal offences was 6.6 per cent, compared to 4.1 per cent for the rest of the population (Statistics Norway, 2019).

In 2022, over 28,000 immigrants, over 5,000 Norwegian-born children and over 144,000 people in the rest of the population were victims of reported criminal offences. Immigrants and the children of immigrants are relatively more frequently registered as victims of reported criminal offences than the population at large. In 2015, immigrants accounted for 14 per cent of all victims, while the figure for Norwegian-born children of immigrants was 2 per cent. Up until 2022, these proportions had increased to 19 and three per cent respectively (Fossanger, Fjelldalen and Mohn, 2024).

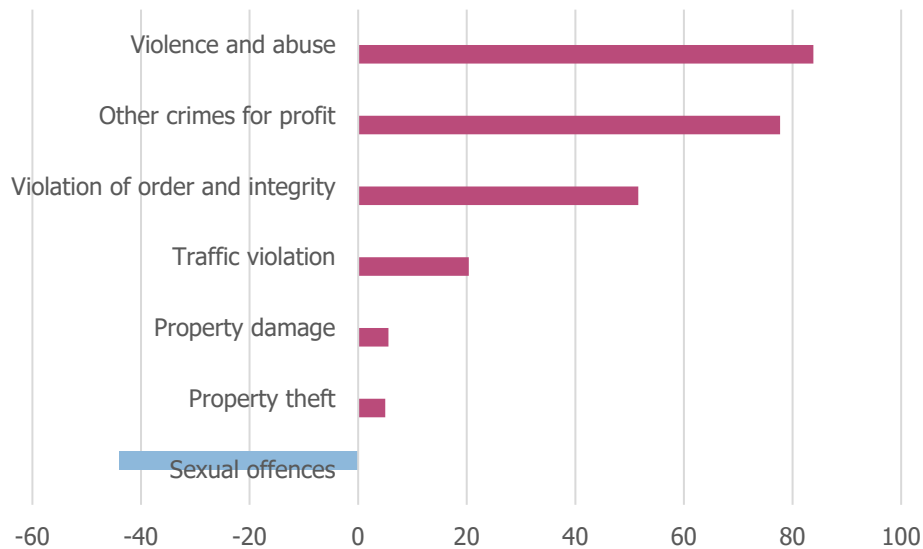
Figure 7.14. Victims of reported criminal offences, by immigration background. 2012–2022. Percentage (Fossanger, Fjelldalen and Mohn, 2024).



There is significant variation between different groups and different types of criminal offences. Immigrants are heavily overrepresented among those who are susceptible to violence, abuse, threats and fraud. Of young immigrants, 12.8 per cent report that they have been exposed to violence or threats in recent months, compared to 6.9 per cent of young people in the entire population (Vrålstad and Wiggen, 2017). However, there are far fewer registered victims of sexual offences among immigrants.

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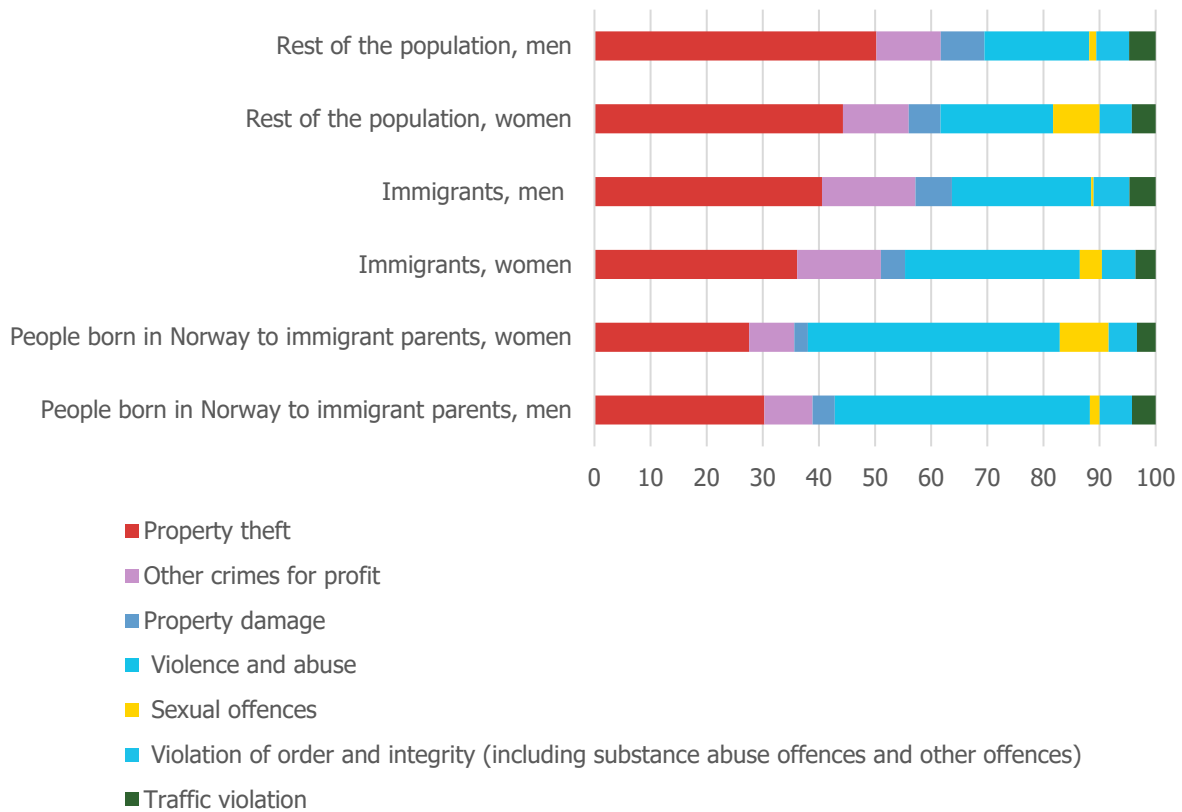
Figure 7.15. Over and under representation of immigrants as victims of reported criminal offences (compared to the rest of the population). Annual average 2017-2022. Percentage overrepresentation (Fossanger, Fjelldalen and Mohn, 2024).



Men with and without immigrant backgrounds are more likely to be victims of criminal offences than women. A clear exception to this is sexual offences. Immigrant men are most susceptible to crimes for profit, while the rest of the population is most susceptible to property theft. People born in Norway to immigrant parents, both women and men, are the most susceptible to violence and abuse. The latter group consists of a large number of children and young people, and they are therefore less susceptible to crime for profit (Fossanger, Fjelldalen and Mohn, 2024).

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Figure 7.16. Victims of reported criminal offences, by immigration background, gender and primary offence group. Annual average 2017-2022. Percentage (Fossanger, Fjelldalen and Mohn, 2024).



Immigrant children and young people are heavily overrepresented as victims of domestic abuse, compared to both the rest of the population and children born in Norway to immigrant parents. Domestic violence includes various forms of violence and abuse between current and former family members, and also includes children who witness the violence (Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS), 2023). An average of 300 male immigrants are registered as victims of domestic abuse each year, of whom nine out of ten are children under the age of 18. The corresponding figure for women is 35 per cent. However, overrepresentation among female immigrants is greatest in the 12-16 age group, where the number of victims is over seven times as high as for girls of the same age in the rest of the population (Fossanger, Fjelldalen and Mohn, 2024).

Updated and accessible knowledge is required about the links between crime and possible underlying factors, such as unemployment, financial difficulties and poor living conditions. We need to understand more about the mechanisms behind being susceptible to and committing criminal acts.

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Negative social control

7.9 The right to live a free life

Everyone has the right to live their lives free from negative social control, honour-related violence, forced marriage and genital mutilation. This right is reflected both in our national laws and in international conventions that Norway has committed to (NOU, 2024). Efforts to combat these serious forms of control and abuse have long been part of Norwegian integration policy. As time has progressed, parents using more diffuse forms of control, pressure, threats and restrictions that strongly violate the autonomy and life development of children and young people has also become an important issue (Friberg and Bjørnset, 2019). Children and young people have extensive legal protections which grant them the right to a private life and a greater degree of self-determination as they get older. These principles also manifest themselves in the field of integration.

What are negative social control, involuntary stays abroad, forced marriage and genital mutilation?

The Action Plan *Freedom from negative social control and honour-related violence* defines **negative social control** as pressure, supervision, threats or coercion that systematically restrict someone in their life or repeatedly prevents them from making independent choices about their own life and future.

Involuntary stays abroad involves children and young people being sent to their parents' country of origin, or that parents bring their children to their country of origin and leave them there against their will.

Forced marriage is understood as being a marriage where one or both spouses cannot choose to remain unmarried without being subjected to violence, deprivation of liberty, other criminal or unlawful conduct or undue pressure.

Gender mutilation is understood as being different types of procedures that damage a woman's genitalia, and that can have serious physical and psychological consequences for the person subjected to such procedures. Among other things, gender mutilation can result in infections, chronic pain, sexual problems, birth complications and increased risk of stillbirth.

Honour-related violence is understood as violence triggered by the family or group's need to maintain or re-establish honour and reputation. This takes place in families in which the individual is expected to submit to the collective, and where patriarchal honour codes are prominent.

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Strict social control can limit the ability of young people to participate in society, while also contributing towards shielding them from negative influence. A distinction can be made between parental involvement – in the form of parents who pay close attention to where their children are, and who they are with – and parental restrictions – in the form of parents limiting the ability of young people to participate in social activities. A new study has found that *parental involvement* is positively associated with multiple integration outcomes, such as completing upper secondary school, transitioning to higher education and less use of social welfare. However, *parental restrictions* are also linked to failure to complete upper secondary school and increased use of social welfare (Friberg and Sterri, 2023).

Research shows that young people with immigrant backgrounds, and particularly girls with backgrounds from Asia and Africa, are the most vulnerable to parental restrictions. For example, this may include being allowed to associate with friends of the opposite sex in their spare time, have a girlfriend or boyfriend or participate in activities (Friberg and Bjørnset, 2019; Smette et al., 2021). The degree of parental restrictions varies according to country of origin, socioeconomic status, period of residence, characteristics of the local community, school grades, religious affiliation and degree of religiosity of the parents (Smette et al., 2021).

Negative social control not only takes place between adults and young people, it also takes place between young people themselves – and it takes place at school. Students control each other on the basis of sexual orientation, gender expression and religious practice, particularly in connection with fasting during Ramadan. Among other things, control is exercised between couples and ex-couples, and in the form of peer pressure, which can be, for example, pressure about what clothes to wear and pressure to use intoxicating substances. Girls and boys experience different forms of control. Girls face expectations of having to behave decently and respectably, and boys encounter pressures related to masculinity and control of their sisters (Proba, 2024b). Nearly one in ten high school students responded that they are controlled by fellow students in the classroom or during break times (Proba, 2021).

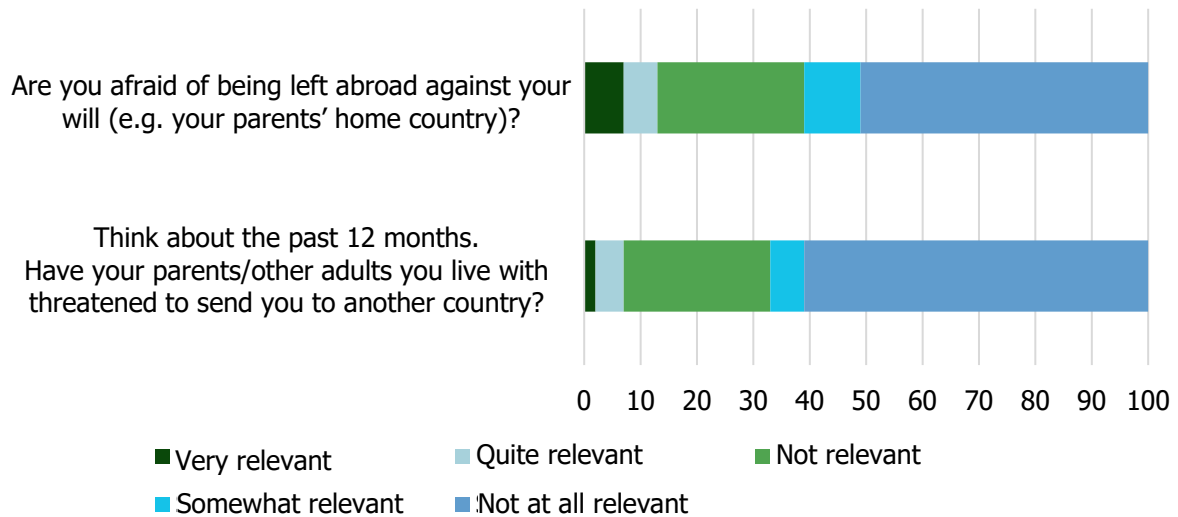
Recent years have seen an increased focus on involuntary stays abroad in surveys of negative social control, honour-related violence and forced marriage. The motives vary, and may include a desire for a stronger cultural foundation, alternative schooling, family situation, preventing “Norwegianization”, removing young people from an environment of substance abuse, or behavioural problems (Ministry of Health and Care Services, 2020; Lidén, Bredal and Reisel, 2014; NOU, 2024). Involuntary stays abroad can cause people, and particularly children and young people, to lose their connection to Norway, Norwegian language skills, schooling and access to public benefits. Such stays are also linked to concerns about violence, deprivation of liberty, forced marriage and genital mutilation (NOU, 2024). Somalia is a country where genital mutilation is a relatively widespread practice. However, several studies reveal that there has been a change in attitude among the Somali community in Norway, and that most Somali immigrants abandoned this custom after they immigrated to Norway (Friberg and Bjørnset, 2019).

In a 2021 survey, 13 per cent of high school students with immigrant backgrounds reported that they were afraid of being abandoned abroad against their will. Of those, seven per cent

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said they had been threatened with this. Very few report that they have actually been subjected to an involuntary stay abroad (see Figure 7.17) (Proba, 2021).

Figure 7.17. Fear of involuntary stay abroad 2021. Percentage (Proba, 2021).



Research shows that queer people with immigrant backgrounds constitute one of the groups that is particularly vulnerable to negative social control (Proba, 2021). For example, several in this group are concerned about being exposed as queer, because this can result in an increased risk of threats, violence, persecution or ostracism by family in their home country or others in the same minority community in Norway (Akin et al., 2022). One in three people experience exclusion from minority communities on the basis of their sexual identity (Eggebo, Karlstrøm and Stubberud, 2020).

Some LGBT+ refugees who have recently arrived in Norway experience unsafe living conditions at asylum reception centres. Research has also documented that some people do not feel safe in a class environment in the Introduction Programme and during Norwegian language training. This may involve exclusion, pressure or coercion related to prioritising care tasks (Proba, 2024a). Queer people with longer periods of residence also report loneliness and an absence of social networks (Akin et al., 2022).

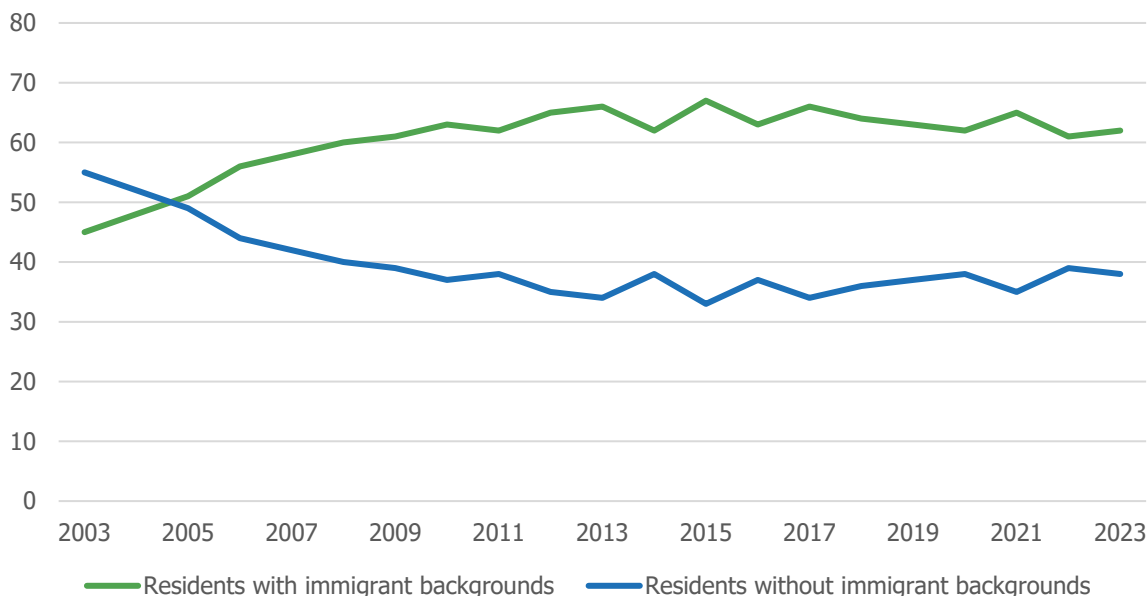
Domestic violence includes various forms of violence and abuse between current and former family members, and also includes children who witness the violence (Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS), 2023). The most serious form of honour-related violence is honour killing. Between 2000 and 2022, 24 murder cases were identified as possible honour killings. These cases accounted for 3.8 percent of the total number of murder cases during the same period. About one-third of the perpetrators were of Pakistani

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origin. The other perpetrators had national backgrounds from Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and India. More than half of the perpetrators were either partners or ex-partners of the victim (Norwegian Police, 2024). It is probable that there are significant dark numbers, and that more murders are committed in the victim's country of origin.

Crisis Centres (Krisesenter) is a service offered to women, men and children exposed to domestic violence. 2,193 people resided at crisis centres in 2023. 89 per cent of the residents were women, and six out of ten residents had an immigrant background. In other words, immigrant women are strongly overrepresented among the residents. Since 2005, people with immigrant backgrounds have accounted for more than half of the stays at the crisis centres (between 51 and 67 per cent) (Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir), 2023). This overrepresentation has remained relatively stable, with shares of over 60 per cent since 2009.

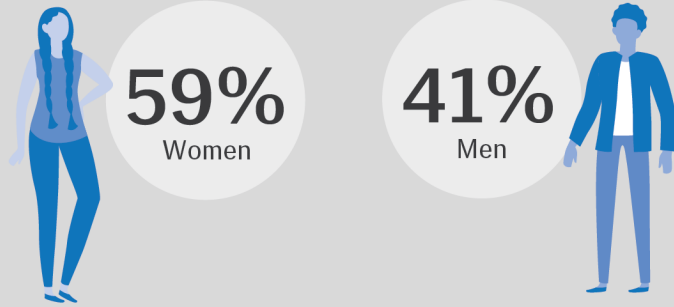
Figure 7.18. Proportion of residents and stays at crisis centres by immigrant background. 2003–2023. Percentage (Bufdir, 2023)



In 2023, 35 per cent of all crisis centre residents had been exposed to negative social control, and seven per cent had been exposed to honour-related violence. Among residents with immigrant backgrounds, 11 per cent had been exposed to honour-related violence – an increase from 8 per cent in 2022. Psychological violence, physical violence, and threats were the most common causes of people needing to stay in crisis centres (Bufdir, 2023).

Refugees from Ukraine

Gender balance



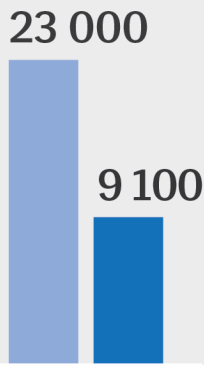
65 000

Ukrainians in Norway at the end of 2023

6 500

Ukrainians in Norway at the start of 2022

Introduction Programme



In 2023, 23,000 Ukrainians participated in the Introduction Programme, and 9,100 of these participants completed the programme that same year.

45%

transitioned directly to work

Education

4 of 10



among all immigrants have higher education

6 of 10



adults from Ukraine have higher education

Financial situation

1 of 10

struggle to make ends meet

1 of 2

are satisfied with their financial situation

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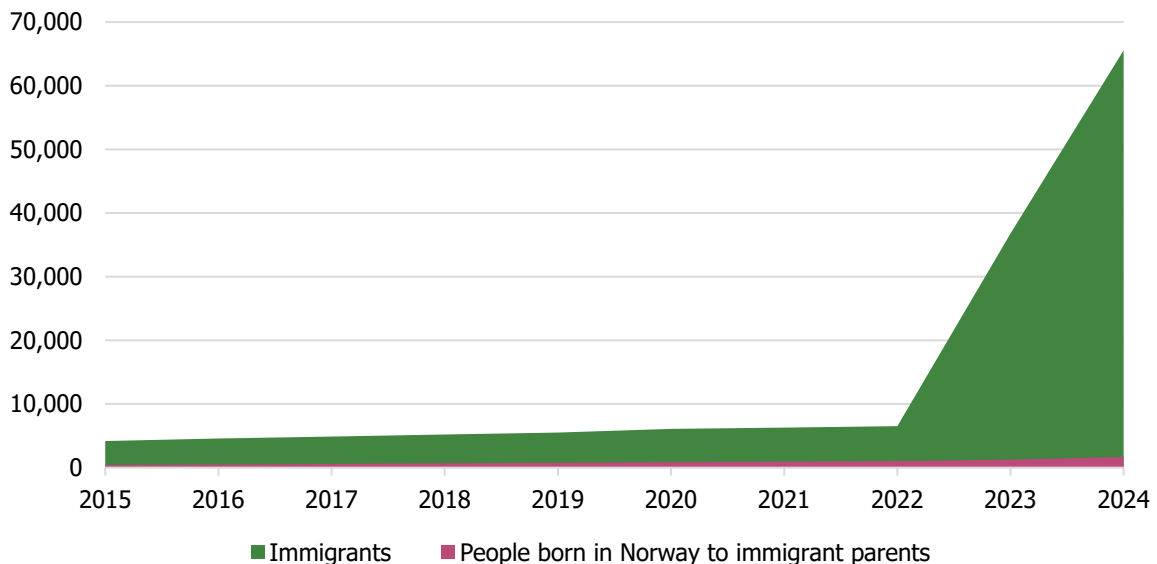
8 Integration of refugees from Ukraine

8.1 Demographics

One third of the refugees from Ukraine are children.

Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainians made up a relatively small immigrant group in Norway. At the beginning of 2022, about 6,500 people of Ukrainian origin were registered as residents in the country. In addition, there were just over 1,000 people born in Norway who had parents with Ukrainian backgrounds. Family immigration was the primary reason for immigration among Ukrainians who were in Norway at the start of 2022. Nearly six out of ten Ukrainian immigrants had come to Norway for family reasons (3,600 people), while two out of ten were registered as labour immigrants. The remainder (19 per cent) had come to study, and only a small group of around 120 people were registered as refugees (Dzamarija, Molstad and Østby, 2022).

Figure 8.1. Immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrants with Ukrainian backgrounds. 2015–2024 (Statistics Norway, 2024bc).



Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022, there has been a record increase in the number of Ukrainians in Norway. This is illustrated in Figure 8.1. An average of 680 applications for collective protection per week were registered in 2023 (Norwegian Directorate of

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Immigration (UDI), 2024). In the autumn of 2023, this number increased to over one thousand applications per week, but dropped again at the end of the year. This may have been due to changes in the regulations for displaced Ukrainians that were initiated in December 2023 (Ministry of Justice and Public Security and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2023).

At the beginning of 2024, more than 65,000 immigrants from Ukraine were registered in Norway and nearly 1,700 people born in Norway to Ukrainian parents (Statistics Norway, 2024ai). 32,400 Ukrainians were settled during 2023, and 31,000 were settled in 2022 (Kirkeberg, 2024). This group therefore makes up the second largest immigrant group in Norway as of January 2024, and the largest refugee group (Haug, 2024; Kirkeberg, 2024). As of 2023, Ukraine was the largest immigrant group in 77 municipalities (Statistics Norway, 2024m).

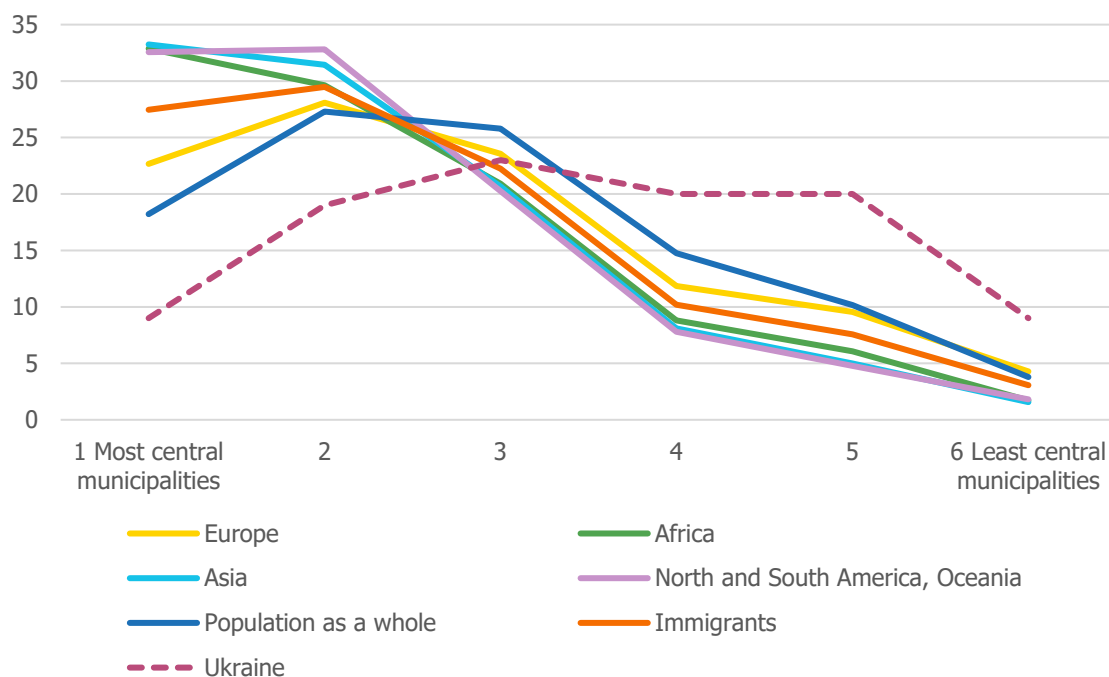
Travel restrictions have been imposed on Ukrainian men since the start of the war, and this has resulted in a large predominance of women and children among the refugees from that country. One in three newly arrived refugees from Ukraine in 2022, equivalent to almost 10,000 people, were children. In 2022, 69 per cent of Ukrainian immigrants in Norway were women. In 2024, the proportion of women is 59 per cent (Statistics Norway, 2024bc).

Ukrainian refugees distinguish themselves from other refugee groups by having a higher proportion of elderly people. Five per cent of Ukrainian refugees are aged 66 or older. For other asylum seekers, this figure is around one to two per cent (Hernes et al., 2023).

As shown in Figure 8.2, Ukrainians residing in Norway are more widely dispersed around the country than other people with immigrant backgrounds.

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Figure 8.2. Centrality. Immigrants and people born in Norway to immigrant parents, by region, statistical variable, year, immigration category and country of origin. 2024. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024v, 2024x).

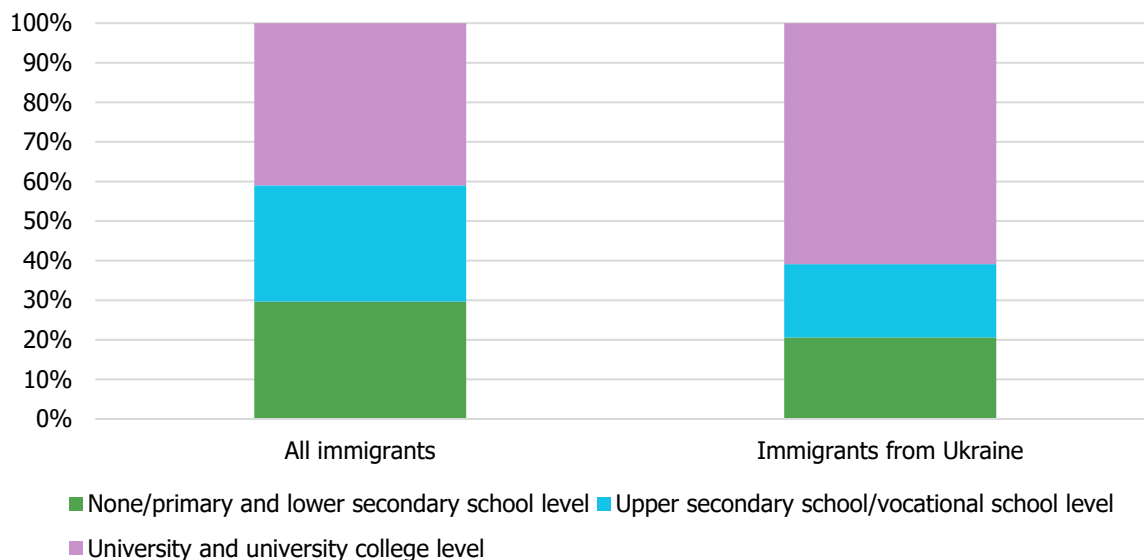


For example, 15 per cent of this group lives in Oslo and Akershus, compared to 36 per cent of the entire immigrant population (Statistics Norway, 2024ai). Refugees generally live less centrally than others in the population. A very large proportion of Ukrainians in Norway are refugees, and this could explain some of the difference in centrality between Ukrainians and immigrants as a whole. Most Ukrainians reside in Western Norway (11 per cent) and Rogaland (10 per cent) (Statistics Norway, 2024ai).

As shown in Figure 8.3, on average Ukrainian refugees have a higher level of education than other refugee groups. There is also little variation in education level within this group when comparing, for example, women and men or different age groups (Hernes et al., 2022). The level of education varies depending on when a person arrived in Norway. Those who came to Norway immediately after the outbreak of the war had more education than those who have arrived later. 69 per cent of those who arrived in early 2022 had higher education, compared to 44 per cent of those who came towards the last six months of 2023 (Hernes et al., 2023).

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Figure 8.3. Highest completed level of education among immigrants from Ukraine. 2023. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024a).



8.2 Education and qualifications

Two out of three consider the Introduction Programme to be too short

Of Ukrainians with children, 31 per cent have children in kindergarten, 70 per cent have children who attend primary and lower secondary school, and 15 per cent have children who attend upper secondary school. Ukrainian refugees are very satisfied with the kindergarten and school services in Norway. However, 37 per cent of those with children under the age of 18 responded that their children engage in Ukrainian distance learning instead of, or in addition to, Norwegian schooling. 18 per cent responded that they were previously engaged in distance learning but have ended this. Parents explain that they want their children to follow Ukrainian teaching due to uncertainty about the future, temporary protection and barriers to higher education in the event of their return to Ukraine (Hernes et al., 2023).

The large increase in the number of people with temporary collective protection in Norway from and including spring 2022 resulted in several temporary adaptations to integration-related rules, including the Norwegian Integration Act. These adaptations entail more flexibility and opportunities for shorter and somewhat different services in connection with the Introduction Programme and Norwegian language training for Ukrainian refugees. Participation in the Introduction Programme is voluntary for people with collective protection. At a minimum, the programme must consist of work and education related

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content and an offer of language training, and the group is entitled to free Norwegian language training for up to one year. For those with children under the age of 18, courses in parental guidance are also included in the Introduction Programme (IMDi, 2022).

Surveys of refugees' own experiences with the Introduction Programme reveal a high level of satisfaction with the programme and Norwegian language training both among participants from Ukraine and among participants with backgrounds from other countries (IMDi, 2023). Eight out of ten people in both groups consider the Introduction Programme to be beneficial and relevant to their further professional careers. About nine out of ten responded that they enjoy participating in Norwegian language training, and that they have a good relationship with their teachers and programme advisors.

However, a high proportion of Ukrainian refugees (68 per cent) responded that there is too little time for learning, and that the duration of their Introduction Programme is too short (IMDi, 2023). The majority consider their Norwegian language skills to be poor. Among refugees who came to Norway in 2023, 54 per cent responded that they cannot speak any Norwegian, and 43 per cent responded that they have poor Norwegian language skills (Hernes et al., 2023).

8.3 Work

One in five Ukrainian refugees are working

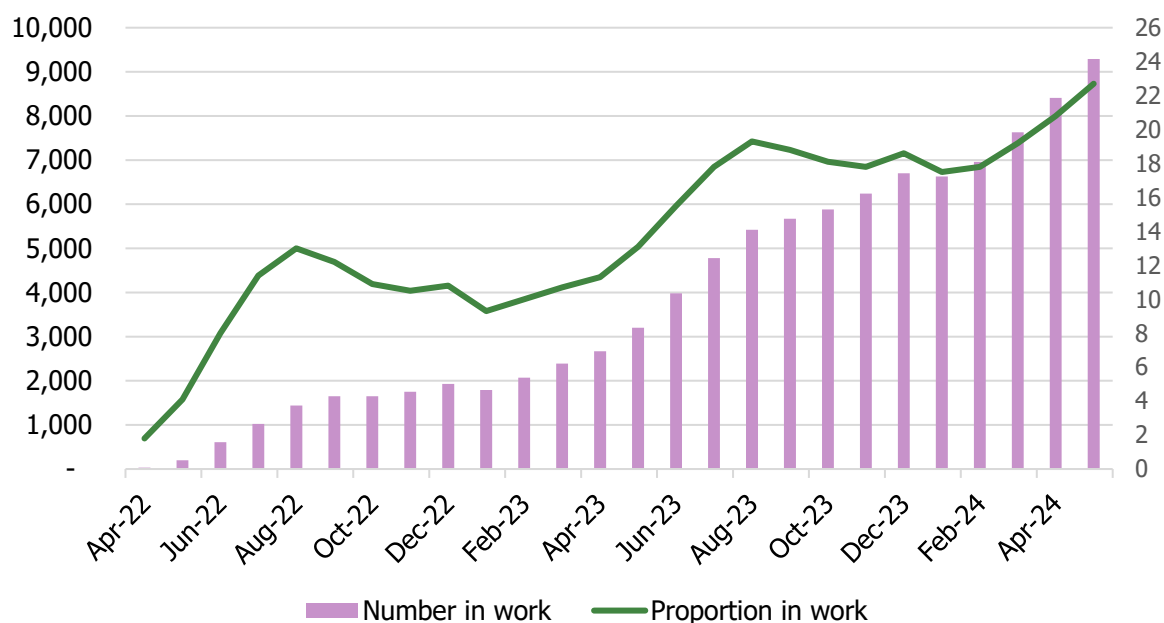
Surveys of Ukrainian refugees show that this group expresses a strong desire to participate in work. In 2023, 84 per cent of the refugees from Ukraine responded that they wanted to work if their stay in Norway becomes long-term. In addition, six per cent viewed themselves as pensioners and four per cent wanted to study (Hernes et al., 2023).

As shown in Figure 8.4, employment rates among Ukrainian refugees have increased gradually over the past two years. At the end of May 2024, 22.7 per cent of Ukrainian refugees aged 20-66 were employed.¹¹

¹¹The figures do not include people who are self-employed.

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Figure 8.4. Ukrainians between the ages of 20 and 66 who immigrated after the invasion in February 2022, by residence status, number employed and percentage employed. April 2022 – May 2024. Percentage (Statistics Norway, 2024q).



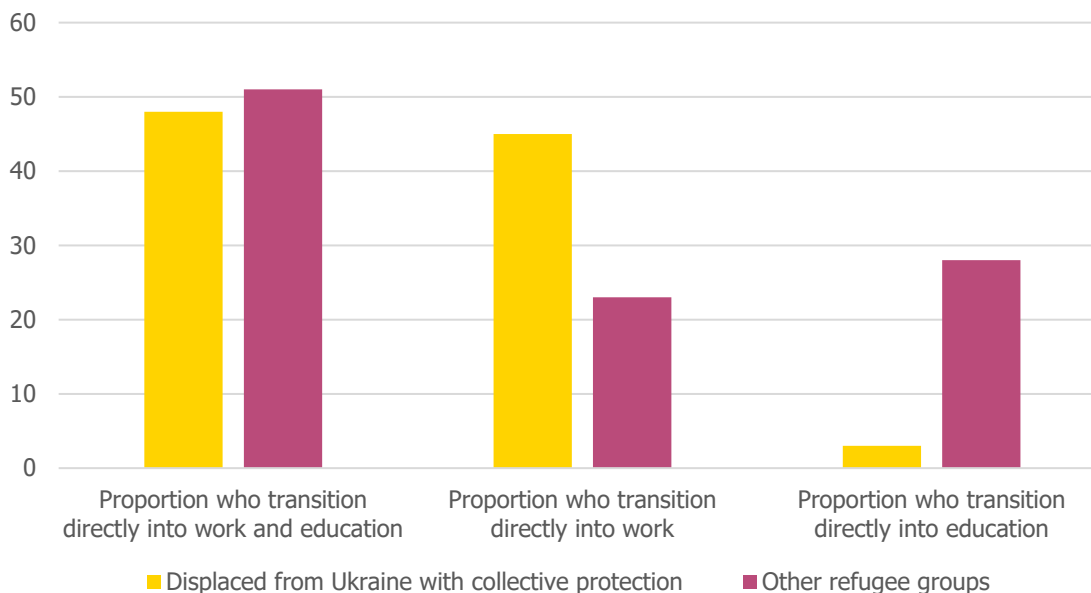
As is the case with other refugees, research shows that the employment rate increases with period of residence. For Ukrainian refugees with a period of residence of nearly two years, almost one in three is employed (Simson, Sørbo and Myklathun, 2024).

The low average employment rate among Ukrainian refugees can be partly explained by the fact that a large majority in this group are still participating in the Introduction Programme (Berge and Skjæveland, 2024; Olsen 2024; Statistics Norway, 2024n).

In 2023, just over 23,000 participants from Ukraine were registered in the Introduction Programme. Of these, 66 per cent were women (Statistics Norway, 2024o). While there were only about 150 people who completed the Introduction Programme in 2022, this figure rose to around 9,100 people in 2023. 45 per cent of Ukrainians transitioned directly to work after completing the Introduction Programme compared to 23 per cent of other participants. Only three per cent of Ukrainians transitioned to education, compared to 28 per cent among other participants (IMDi, 2024b).

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Figure 8.5. Proportion of participants who transition directly to work and education after completing the Introduction Programme. Displaced people from Ukraine and other refugee groups. 2023. Percentage (IMDi, 2024b).



About 70 per cent of Ukrainian refugees have participated in the Introduction Programme. Among those who have been in Norway for two years, approximately 40 per cent are registered as looking for work or having reduced capacity for work, and a large proportion of this group participates in labour market initiatives. Over 4,000 Ukrainian refugees were participating in labour market initiatives at the end of February, and the majority were engaged in work experience, receiving wage subsidies or involved in training initiatives (Simson et al. 2024).

There are relatively significant regional differences in terms of employment (Kvalø, 2024; Simson et al., 2024). In Oslo, 39 per cent of Ukrainian refugees were employed after having completed the Introduction Programme, while this applied to about 60 per cent of Ukrainian refugees residing in Troms, Nordland and Finnmark. The Northern Norwegian counties have a shortage of labour, a factor which may explain the significant differences in employment rates between counties (Kvalø, 2024). Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and provider responsibilities may explain some of the differences, while other explanations may, for example, be differences in how the Introduction Programme is conducted (Simson et al., 2024).

There are also gender differences in employment rates. Of those who have completed the Introductory Programme, the employment rate for men is 52 per cent and 46 per cent for women. Male refugees from Ukraine more often work full-time than women. Seven out of ten

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Ukrainian men who are employed after the Introduction Programme work full-time, while this applies to four out of ten women (Kvalø, 2024).

As mentioned, Ukrainian refugees have, on average, a higher level of education than other refugees. However, many of them have jobs that require few formal qualifications. For example, one in four Ukrainians who are employed work in sales and service occupations (Simson et al., 2024).

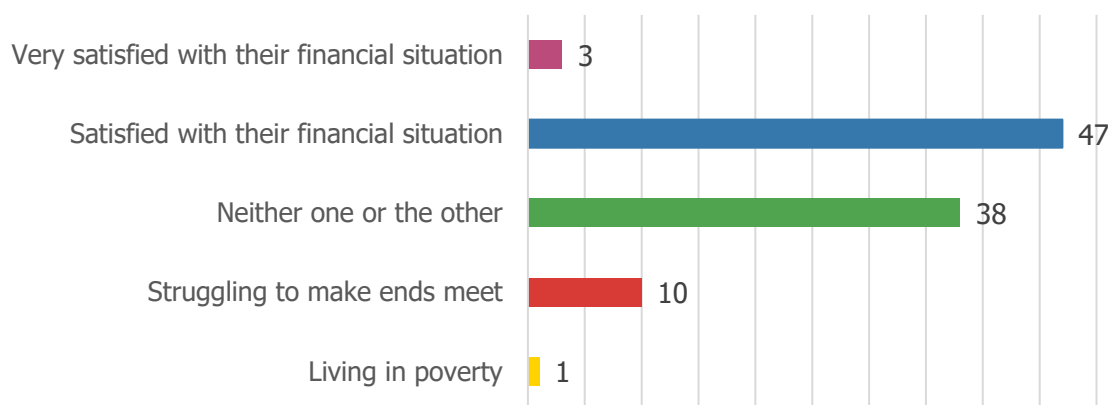
Inadequate Norwegian and English language skills are important reasons for why Ukrainian refugees are not working and cannot use the qualifications that they bring with them at the workplace. Other barriers may include not having a network, few vacancies in the local labour market, health and family situation (Hernes et al., 2023).

8.4 Financial situation and living conditions

Half of the Ukrainian refugees report poor health

Half of the Ukrainian refugees consider their financial situation to be satisfactory. One in ten struggle to make ends meet, but only one per cent state that they live in poverty. The group who most report financial difficulties are those who recently arrived in Norway, and who are waiting to be registered and settled (Hernes et al., 2023).

Figure 8.6. Assessment of the household's current situation. Refugees from Ukraine. 2023. Percentage (Hernes et al., 2023).



The high numbers of newly arrived refugees have resulted in strong growth in social welfare spending, and the number of Ukrainian social welfare recipients has increased every month

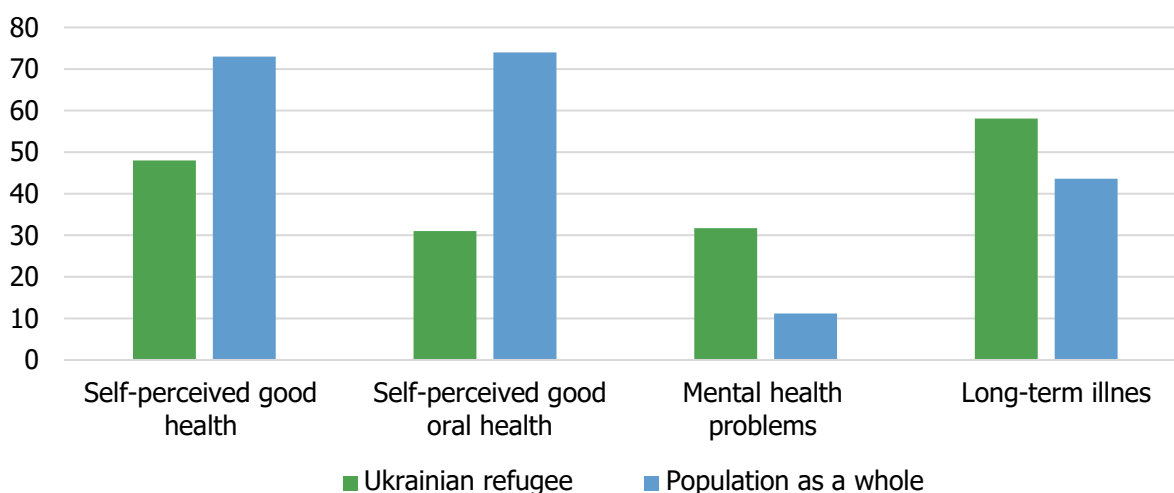
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since March 2022. In 2023, an average of almost 11,000 Ukrainians received social welfare in any given month, an increase of about 7,000 from 2022. In December 2023, over 15,000 Ukrainians received social welfare, accounting for 21 per cent of all recipients that month. Relatively few refugees receive social welfare during the first month they are settled, and five months after being settled, at most, up to half of the Ukrainian refugees receive social assistance. Among those who have been here the longest, the proportion of social welfare recipients decreases from about six months after settlement, and increases again after 17 months. This may be due to people having completed the Introduction Programme, but not having started work (Lima, 2024).

The Ukrainian refugees report having poorer health than the rest of the population. About half of this group rated their health as good or very good in 2022, compared to three out of four in the population at large. Elderly refugees aged 50 and over are more likely to experience health challenges than those under the age of 50. Only one in four over the age of 50 considered that they were in good health (Labberton et al., 2023). Nine per cent of Ukrainian refugees state that physical/mental health is a major barrier to finding work in Norway, and 41 per cent believe that health challenges are a barrier to some extent (Hernes et al., 2023).

Experiencing psychological problems such as anxiety, restlessness, worry, nervousness and despair about the future is three times as common among refugees from Ukraine as among the population as a whole. They also report more long-term physical or mental health challenges than what is the case for the Norwegian population. 58 per cent of the Ukrainian refugees reported that they had long-term illnesses, while the corresponding share was 44 per cent in the population at large (Labberton et al., 2023).

Figure 8.7. Self-perceived health among Ukrainian refugees and the population as a whole. 2022 (Labberton et al., 2023).



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When concerning information about health services, nine out of ten report that they have received information about health services in Norway, and that they know how to contact a doctor or healthcare specialist. Furthermore, seven out of ten report they have received the health services they require. The proportion that has not received adequate access to health services, or that has insufficient information about these service is highest among newly arrived Ukrainian refugees. People who arrived during the spring of 2022 or immediately after the outbreak of the war, are most likely to experience good access to information and health services (Labberton et al., 2023). This may indicate that the proportion that receives information about and access to health services increases in line with their period of residence in Norway. Another possible reason is that the health status of the refugees who left the country during the early stages of the war may differ from the health status of those who have been exposed to the consequences of ongoing war over an extended period of time.

8.5 Political and social Integration

More want to stay

In the spring of 2022, there was uncertainty about the number of refugees who would be coming from Ukraine, and what rights they would receive. Several political changes were quickly implemented, and this has simplified and streamlined the processes associated with receiving, settling and integrating Ukrainian refugees.

These changes have also posed challenges in providing refugees and service providers with continually updated information. Different practices related to settlement and integration in the municipalities have also led to confusion among refugees. In a 2022 survey of Ukrainian refugees, 70 per cent stated they had not received enough information from government actors (Hernes et al., 2022). Among other things, the principal challenges were unclear and insufficient information, as well as difficulties navigating between different websites to find relevant information. Language was highlighted as being a barrier. The study also noted that the information provided has improved over time, particularly when concerning more information in Ukrainian and Russian on government websites (Hernes et al., 2022). More information is still required, including opportunities for higher education, what happens after the Introduction Programme, and how to start one's own business in Norway (Hernes et al., 2023).

Despite some uncertainty and insufficient information during the first months of mass arrivals, this did not overshadow the Ukrainian refugees' enormous gratitude and trust in both the Norwegian reception apparatus and society in general. The refugees reported having positive experiences when in contact with government actors in Norway, and this

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applied to both national and local actors (such as the police, NAV, UDI, IMDi and the municipalities). A 2023 survey shows that this group is the most satisfied with the police, immigration authorities, kindergartens, teachers in the Introduction Programme, Norwegian language training and schools (Hernes et al., 2023).

Ukrainian refugees have had very good experiences with the manner in which they have been received by the Norwegian population. Many said they felt welcome in Norway and in the local communities where they were settled. The refugees are also very satisfied with the help they have received from voluntary organisations.

However, the everyday lives of this group are characterized by worry and uncertainty related to whether they will be permitted to stay in Norway when the temporary permit for collective protection expires. Research shows that the uncertainty associated with temporary status influences the individual choices and strategies of refugees for their own integration (Hernes et al., 2023). This uncertainty is also challenging for various actors in the integration field as it makes it difficult to plan for the future, for example, when scaling up services and housing at a local level.

Despite having a relatively short period of residence in Norway and uncertainty related to temporary protection needs, Ukrainian refugees express a strong sense of belonging to Norway and a desire to remain in the country (Hernes et al., 2022, 2023; Kjeøy and Tyldum, 2022). In 2022, almost one in three responded that they want to return to Ukraine. In 2023, just over one in ten gave the same response. On a scale of 1 to 5, Ukrainians score the reception they received in Norway at well above 4. Nearly half report that their children have Norwegian friends, and 50 per cent report that their children participate in leisure activities. Of the adults, 11 per cent report that they have close Norwegian friends, and more than 50 per cent state that they have Norwegian acquaintances (Hernes et al., 2022, 2023).

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Figure 8.8. Overall assessment of the experience of being welcomed in Norway. 2022–2023. Percentage (Hernes et al., 2022, 2023)



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