

Camilleri, Anthony F.; Griga, Dorit; Mühleck, Kai; Miklavic, Klemen; Nascimbeni, Fabio; Proli, Daniela; Schneller, Chripa; MENON Network EEIG

## **Evolving Diversity II: Participation of students with an immigrant background in European Higher Education**

*Brussels, Belgium : MENON Network 2013, 88 S.*



### Quellenangabe/ Reference:

Camilleri, Anthony F.; Griga, Dorit; Mühleck, Kai; Miklavic, Klemen; Nascimbeni, Fabio; Proli, Daniela; Schneller, Chripa; MENON Network EEIG: Evolving Diversity II: Participation of students with an immigrant background in European Higher Education. Brussels, Belgium : MENON Network 2013, 88 S.  
- URN: urn:nbn:de:0111-opus-82818 - DOI: 10.25656/01:8281

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0111-opus-82818>

<https://doi.org/10.25656/01:8281>

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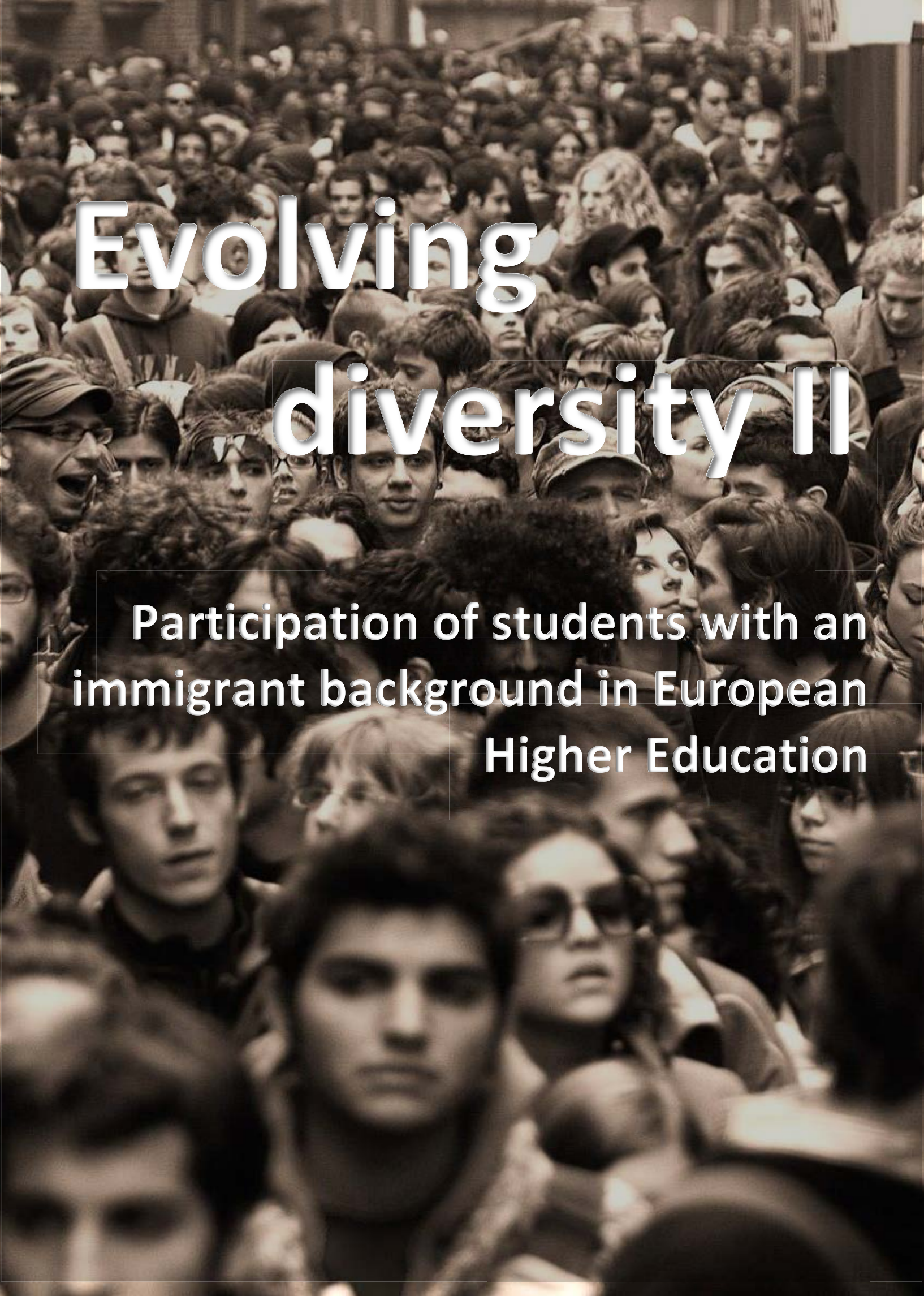


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# Evolving diversity II

Participation of students with an  
immigrant background in European  
Higher Education



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**Standard Number**

ISBN: 2-930429-29-1

EAN: 9782930429298

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The EQUNET Consortium

MENON Network EEIG	MENON	BE
SCIENTER	SCIENTER	IT
Centre for Education Policy Studies	CEPS	SI
HIS-Hochschul-Informationen-System GmbH	HIS	DE
Zentrum für Soziale Innovation	ZSI	AT
European Students' Union	ESU	BE
European Association of Institutions of Higher Education	EURASHE	BE
European Distance and E-Learning Network	EDEN	UK

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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## Country abbreviations:

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AT – Austria

BE – Belgium

BG – Bulgaria

CY – Cyprus

CZ – Czech Republic

DE – Germany

DK – Denmark

EE – Estonia

ES – Spain

FR - France

GR – Greece

HU - Hungary

IE – Ireland

IT – Italy

LT – Lithuania

LU - Luxembourg

LV – Latvia

NL – the Netherlands

NO – Norway

PL - Poland

PT – Portugal

RO – Romania

SE – Sweden

SI – Slovenia

SK – Slovakia

UK – United Kingdom

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# Chapter 1<sub>1</sub>

# Introduction

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## 1.1 The EQUINET report in context

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The EQUINET project was conceived as an independent research and networking initiative, with an aim to increase access to Higher Education for all marginalised and non-traditional groups based on a principle of equity. With the help of European Commission funding under the Lifelong Learning Programme, the project has brought together a consortium of renowned research organisations and stakeholder representatives to work on the project, ensuring a sound methodological base for the research presented here, and a wide audience to which to distribute the recommendations.

As originally conceived, the network has committed to research barriers arising as a result of the following:

- educational background (issues revolving around recognition of non-formal and informal education, or non-traditional types of formal learning such as access for young persons who have been schooled at home, and distance learners)
- socioeconomic conditions (issues revolving around access for people in employment, with family commitments, coming from divergent income groups, by level of dependency upon parents, etc.)
- structural problems in Higher Education (dealing with issues such as curricula, governance structures, admissions standards, funding policies, etc.).

The project initially set out to analyse the degree and nature of these barriers for individuals from five target groups, namely

- ‘traditional’ students (i.e., 18-22 year olds)
- persons with an immigrant background
- delayed-transition students

In terms of its networking activities, the EQUINET consortium believes that in order to have an impact on equity in Higher Education, as on any complex and multifaceted societal theme, it is fundamental to involve all possible categories of stakeholders and to mobilize all the existing advocacy and decision-making energies and dynamics that lay around the theme. Given the specificity of the theme addressed, EQUINET intends not to create a “new” network or a “network of networks” but rather to represent a thematic hub where institutions and individuals working on Higher Education and peers working on equity assurance can meet, exchange knowledge, and shape a more equitable future for European universities.

In line with this reasoning, EQUINET is aiming at building an evidence-based advocacy network that raises awareness on the issue of equity in Higher Education. The network deals with the following:

- policy advocacy, by contributing to shaping EU and, if possible, national policies in its field. Its main concern is to shape agendas by influencing legislation and guaranteeing the representation of interests at the European level (and at a national or regional level);
- dissemination and cross-fertilisation, by promoting the EQUINET research findings and by fostering the exchange of best HE equity practices among relevant stakeholders and communities. As a European dissemination network, it acts as a platform for mainstreaming and benchmarking of good practices at the member-states level.

## 1.2 A focus on persons with an immigrant background

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Following the first EQUINET report, entitled “Evolving Diversity,” the projects’ researchers found that high-quality data related to equity in conjunction with immigrant status was comparatively hard to come by when compared to other indicators such as socioeconomic status. Considering this, and the fact that a number of indicators in the same report, as well as in substantial academic literature suggested that immigration may play a significant role in discrimination in access across Europe, it was decided that the project could make a substantial contribution to the current body of knowledge by dedicating an entire report to the topic.

This report is divided into a number of sections to ensure a comprehensive treatment of the subject matter:

- Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework, comparing and contrasting a number of different sociological approaches that serve to describe and explain the performance of immigrants in Higher Education systems.
- Chapter 3 considers different sources of data on immigration in Europe, as well as the differing definitions of the terms ‘immigration’ and ‘immigrant’ as found in the reference literature.
- Chapter 4 sets out a picture of access to Higher Education for immigrants across Europe using cross-country comparisons.
- Chapter 5 describes some of the specific conditions, situations, and policy responses in specific states (specifically Germany, Norway, and the UK) to further illustrate the data presented in Chapter 4.
- Chapter 6 lays out conclusions to the research: summarising the findings, setting out considerations for further research, and taking into account policy considerations for the future.



# Chapter 2

## **Factors influencing the chances of immigrant and non-immigrant groups to access Higher Education in the EU countries**

**Author**

Dorit Griga





Several factors and approaches can be drawn in order to explain inequalities in the educational success of people with and without an immigrant background in general, as well as inequalities in their chances to access and graduate from Higher Education in particular. The selection chosen here has its background in the field of sociology of education. While presenting and discussing the effects of the individual factors, both general considerations and considerations that specifically target the transition to Higher Education are derived. Regarding students being entitled to enrol in corresponding institutions, it has thereby to be kept in mind that in the most cases they will already represent a positive selection of their group. In particular, this might hold for youths with an immigrant background: On the one hand, they have been shown to be overrepresented among early school dropouts in many European countries and to perform lower in school (OECD, 2006, 2010). On the other hand, they are more likely to make more challenging educational choices if they are given the opportunity and if controlled for their lower social origin and performances (Jackson, 2012). Thus, the considerations exemplified for youths with an immigrant background at the transition to Higher Education might be even less likely to hold for the whole cohort with an immigrant background in a specific country than in the reference population.

Within most of the sections, a separate paragraph will evolve the question of possible interactions with typical characteristics of the European educational systems giving an idea why the EU countries differ regarding the relative chances of youths with an immigrant background to enter Higher Education or to attain a Higher Education degree. Moreover, out of the factors presented, some will be taken up in the following chapter giving an overview on inequalities between immigrant and non-immigrant groups to attain a Higher Education degree in the EU countries.

## 2.1 Language

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One of the most important preconditions for educational success is having a good command of the language of instruction at school. Within the EU member states usually – with the exception of foreign languages – all contents are still taught in the official languages of the respective countries. However, in many European countries, a large share of people with an immigrant background has a mother tongue that differs from the official language in the country of destination. Often the descendants of these immigrants have a worse command of the official language when enrolling in school and encounter language barriers in school. From the perspective of assimilation theories, knowledge of the official language is regarded a precondition to successful structural integration of immigrants (Esser, 2006, 27, 57). Thus, acquisition of the official language of the country of receiving is regarded a crucial factor for the educational success of the descendants of these immigrants. In order to explain success in language acquisition of immigrants, Esser (2006) conceptualised his model according to which the acquisition of a new language is highly dependent on “motivation,” “access,” “ability” (e.g., intelligence, also age), and “costs” of learning (both direct and indirect costs). With regard to “motivation” apart from earnings at the labour market, a high degree of transferability and usability of a second language (as it is the case for English) is thereby assumed to increase the motivation to acquire that language. In contrast, a high level of social-cultural distances between immigrant groups and the majority group (e.g., in the case of hostility towards foreigners) will reduce motivation to learn the official language in the country of destination. With regard to “access,” the availability of learning opportunities, such as language courses, or interethnic contacts as well as friendships are referred to. As impeding factors, Esser mentions a high level of ethnic concentration, the prevalence of intra-ethnic contacts, as well as media of the country of origin available in the country of destination. In addition, differences in “ability” to acquire the official language of the country of destination may be observed between immigrant groups if some immigrant groups speak a language as their mother tongue that is part of the same family as the official language in the receiving country. Lastly, direct and indirect costs (e.g., costs for language courses and time constraints) may influence success in language acquisition. For obvious reasons, the evaluation of costs will differ between the social classes (see below).

### ***Age of immigration***

A factor at the individual level being highly connected to “access” is “age of immigration.” From a functionalist viewpoint, the relationship between the two variables is thereby explained by the time window for acquiring the official language in the country of destination (Söhn, 2011, 143). From such point of view, it is assumed that a younger age of immigration improves the opportunities for acculturation in general and for the acquisition of language proficiency in the official language in the receiving country. Confirming this reasoning, it has been shown empirically that a higher age of immigration goes along with worse educational chances (cf. OECD, 2006, 200-202). According to Esser, empirically, a bend in the learning function is thereby observed at the age of 10 to 12 years (2006). Potentially, there is also an advantage for children arriving before the age of school enrolment, because these children have the opportunity to visit a child care institution in these countries. For such institutions, Biedinger and Becker (2010) showed that, in particular, immigrant children can benefit from being enrolled in pre-school education.

### ***Generation***

A second factor that can be assumed to highly correlate with all determinants explaining language acquisition conceptualised in Esser’s model is “generation.” Thus, in the course of the generations, tendencies of language-related assimilation and, as a consequence, educational as well as labour market-related success are observed among immigrants. While, for example, with regard to first-generation immigrants a tendency towards monolingual assimilation prevails, a contrasting pattern is observed for second-generation immigrants. Because they grew up in the country of destination, these people will have had more access opportunities to acquire the official language than their first-generation counterparts. In line with this consideration, the gap in reading performance measured for 15-year-old students in PISA 2003 is smaller for second-generation immigrants than for first-generation immigrants in most European countries (OECD, 2006).

### ***Language competences of parents***

As another factor explaining success in language acquisition, Portes and Hao (2002) emphasize the importance of “parents’ competences” in the official language in the receiving country. A higher level of language proficiency attained by parents is – according to the authors – particularly important if children assimilate very fast. If parents are not able to catch up with their children, they might lose authority. In addition, as is argued by Kristen and Granato (2005) in their resource-orientated approach, knowledge in the official language is a precondition for parents to support their children when they do their homework. Moreover, language proficiency enables parents to inform themselves about procedures and rules in the educational system, in particular at critical points of the educational careers as for example the transition to an upper secondary school but also with regard to other points of interest such as changing a teacher’s recommendation regarding the type of secondary school if needed. Some studies in the United States, which controlled the subjectively estimated language proficiency of immigrants, showed the positive effect of language competences of parents on the competences performed by their children in school (Mouw and Xie, 1999, 246-247). Thus, the higher performance levels and educational attainments of people with an immigrant background with one native parent (instead of two immigrant parents) observed in some studies (cf. Becker, 2010) might be explained by this factor.

### ***Interaction with characteristics of the educational systems***

The importance of students’ language proficiency at the beginning of the educational career may differ between countries. Considering that several countries or sub-national entities have explicit curricula in place for language support (e.g., New South Wales, Denmark, some German Länder, Norway, Sweden, and Luxembourg), this might explain why in these countries smaller performance differences between immigrant and native students were observed (OECD, 2006). Apart from language courses, further characteristics of the school system might affect the extent to which language barriers encountered at the beginning of the educational career may prevent educational

success even in the long run. Thus, language barriers of students with an immigrant background might be particularly harmful to their educational careers in school systems that are stratified<sup>1</sup> and in which pupils are tracked into different types of secondary schools very early in their educational careers (e.g., Germany or Switzerland). In contrast, in comprehensive school systems, students with an immigrant background are given more time to overcome such obstacles (e.g., Finland and Sweden). In case the Higher Education entrance certificate is obtained at the end of secondary school, at that age, gaps in language proficiency should be comparatively small and be of less importance regarding the decision whether to continue to the next educational stage or whether to enter the labour market or pursue a vocational path. An analysis that showed that the chances of youths with an immigrant background of a disadvantaged social origin to attain a Higher Education degree decrease by the degree of stratification of the school system was conducted by Griga and Hadjar (2012).

## 2.2 Social background

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Considering that many people with an immigrant background in Europe are the descendants of classic labour immigrants or refugees, parts of the educational inequalities observed between people with and without an immigrant background can be explained through social origin. In order to explain such inequalities between the social groups, several theoretical approaches can be drawn. For example, due to the recent extension to ethnic origin (e.g., Kristen and Dollmann, 2010), the concept of primary and secondary effects of social origin from Raymond Boudon (1974) is often utilised. While, according to this concept, primary effects of social origin refer to differences in performance that are caused by social origin (e.g., lower performances among those of the lower classes due to less favourable endowment with economic, social, and cultural capital), secondary effects encompass influences of social origin on the evaluation of different educational opportunities available that are for example influenced by the motive to maintain the social status attained by the family. With regard to the former, the social strata differ a lot with regard to educational performances, attainment, dropout rates, as well as representation in different types of secondary schools or among those being eligible to enter Higher Education. In addition to primary effects, at the first important branching point in the educational system, secondary effects come into play. Thus, empirical research has shown that even when controlled for performances, the social classes differ in their transition behaviours, the socially more advantaged groups thereby being more likely to enter the academically more challenging educational tracks (e.g., for Germany and the transition to Higher Education: Becker and Hecken, 2009).

In order to explain the observed inequalities in educational decisions or secondary effects of social origin, rational choice approaches are often utilised (cf. Boudon, 1974; Breen and Goldthorpe, 1997; Esser, 1999; Mare, 1980). As a common denominator, in these approaches, an individual's educational career is typically conceptualised as a process of decision making that includes repeated transitions at certain junctures set by an educational system's institutions (Kristen, 1999). Thereby, the central assumption is that – given a specific set of educational alternatives – individuals will choose the most promising alternative given their subjective evaluation of returns to education, educational costs, and probabilities to pass the examinations. In his conception of returns to education, Esser (1999) differentiates between an absolute and a relative part. While the former refers to general advantages related to education, the latter is influenced to social class. Correspondingly, the motive to maintain the status of the family (cf. Esser, 1999) explains differences in the relative returns to education between the social classes by the intent to avoid downward mobility. According to this concept, members of the middle and upper classes risk downward mobility, if they do not enter the corresponding Higher Educational pathways, enabling them to secure their privileged positions in society. Therefore, descendants of middle and upper class families will be motivated to conserve their position within the status structure of a society by embarking into university studies.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “stratification” refers to the degree to which educational systems have clearly differentiated kinds of schools whose curricula are defined as “higher” or “lower” (Allmendinger 1989). In stratified school systems, these school tracks vary regarding their possibilities to progress in upper secondary schools.

Apart from returns to education, the decision to enter an institution of Higher Education – according to these approaches – is also influenced by both direct and indirect costs of Higher Education. In addition, there are opportunity costs to Higher Education. Being defined as the return of the best educational alternative available, these costs equal the salaries obtained by employees who have just entered the labour market or the salaries of the participants in the vocational education system in the countries where such system exists. Since these opportunity costs will appear considerably high, students with a disadvantaged social background will be more likely to abstain from enrolling in Higher Education and rather prefer a cheaper educational alternative or a direct entry in the labour market. Eventually, the estimated probabilities of accomplishing a Higher Education degree influence the decision of school graduates. Hence, differences between families regarding their resources that might influence the learning behaviour of their children may lead to differences in the grades and results obtained by their children in school. If, due to low performances in school, enrolling in Higher Education is judged a risky enterprise, the likelihood of choosing an alternative educational pathway increases. With regard to the relative importance of primary and secondary effects, the former tend to be more decisive at earlier educational transitions, while the latter have been shown to be particularly important at later transitions such as the transition to Higher Education (for Germany: Schindler and Reimer, 2010).

Moreover, differences in the educational chances in general and at the transition to Higher Education in particular observed between the social groups could be explained by recourse to conflict theories, for example, the one formulated by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977). According to their theoretical approach, the task of the educational system lies in the legitimization and reproduction of social inequality. Bourdieu and Passeron stress that the upper classes exploit Higher Education for social reproduction. Both the individual and social socialization of the “class habitus” and, as a consequence of it, social inequalities of achievement are key mechanisms for persistent inequality of educational opportunity to the disadvantage of the working classes. Thus, self-selection at the transition to Higher Education based on class-specific achievements constitutes the “illusion of equality of educational opportunity.” Considering that, given the current educational expansion at the tertiary stage, an increasing number of study places (in particular at prestigious institutions of Higher Education) are distributed among students not only on the bases of grades but also on selection interviews, more than a grade-based and thus rather meritocratic selection, such interviews are likely to eventually serve the interests of those being better endowed with any forms of economic, social, and, in particular, cultural capital.

### ***Interaction with characteristics of the educational systems***

The effect of social background on educational inequalities may differ between countries. In the analysis of corresponding differences, the stratification of the secondary school system (see above) is also here often cited as one explanation. If the theory of primary and secondary effects is considered, it seems likely that in stratified secondary school systems, students with a disadvantaged social background will less often receive and implement their recommendations to upper secondary schools that award the (full) Higher Education entrance qualification to their graduates. Studies revealing the unbalanced distribution of pupils in the different school tracks in stratified secondary school systems were conducted by Becker (2009), Horn (2008), and Blossfeld and Shavit (1993). Particularly, early tracking thereby enhances the socially selective distribution of pupils in the different types of secondary schools (Müller and Shavit, 1998, 506). In line with the empirical fact that the immigrant population to a large share consists of people with a disadvantaged social origin (compared to the destination society) in Europe, these considerations might, at least to some extent, explain why youths with an immigrant background are underrepresented in upper secondary schools in many European countries (e.g., for Germany, the Netherlands, or Switzerland) and why the extent to which this is the case, too, differs between countries.

Apart from the school system, the transition to Higher Education may account for inequalities in access to Higher Education that may be observed between the social groups. Thus, if the parameters influencing educational decisions are considered, in particular costs of Higher Education differ between countries (cf. Orr et al., 2011, 137).



While for example the UK government decided to increase tuition fees to up to £9000 in 2010, tuition fees were abolished in the last years in most German “Länder” that had introduced them only some years before. Another example is the Scandinavian countries where no tuition fees are charged. Regarding scholarships and grants which help to decrease students costs there is the question of whether they are distributed by forms of means-testing, universal entitlement or to the academically highest performing students, with the latter tending to reinforce inequalities owing to social origin (Marcucci et al., 2008; for Germany: Middendorff et al., 2009, 29). Apart from direct costs, countries also differ with regard to indirect costs, e.g., availability and prices of student houses or living costs in these countries (cf. Bohonnek, 2010).

Although (quantitative) inequalities in access to Higher Education owing to social origin are smaller in countries featured by educational expansion, according to conflict theorists (cf. Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977), new forms of inequalities are likely to arise in corresponding Higher Education systems in order to prevent that the lower strata can reap the returns of education. Correspondingly, expanded Higher Education systems are often characterized by a higher degree of vertical stratification, too. As typical examples, the French and British Higher Education systems are also featured by comparatively large differences in the prestige and reputation of individual institutions of Higher Education. Thereby, Boliver (2011) revealed for Britain that those with a disadvantaged social origin and/or an immigrant background are still underrepresented in the more prestigious institutions of Higher Education (with the exception of Chinese students). The explanation for such forms of maintained inequalities given by Bourdieu and Passeron would be self-selection taking place in selection interviews.

## 2.3 Educational aspirations

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Within sociology of education, educational aspirations are typically perceived as being stratified by social class and educational background. In particular, the motive to maintain the social status attained by the family as well as social origin-dependent considerations of costs, success probabilities, and benefits to education are thereby emphasised in order to explain the differences between the social strata. However, in the case of youths with an immigrant background, these considerations only hold to some degrees. Despite of the fact that they are of a lower social origin more often than non-immigrants, it has been shown by many studies that both immigrant parents as well as their children exhibit increased educational ambitions when compared to their non-immigrant peers (for Germany: Ditton et al., 2005; for France: Brinbaum and Cebolla-Boado, 2007; and for the Netherlands: Van de Werfhorst and Van Tubergen, 2007). Thus, the stratifying influence of social origin is lower among youths with an immigrant background. However, the positive effects on educational success that might result as a consequence of increased aspirations are often thwarted by the low performances of youths with an immigrant background observed in many European school systems. In particular, this is the case for early transitions in the educational cycle (cf. Becker und Schubert, 2011; Kristen und Dollmann, 2009; OECD, 2006). However, at later branching points and branching points featured by students’ choices, the increased educational ambitions pursued by youths with an immigrant background can influence their transition behaviour positively. Thus, studies focusing on educational choices at specific branching points and controlled for performances and social origin showed that youths with an immigrant background make more challenging educational decisions than their non-immigrant peers of the same social strata. This applies to both the transition to upper secondary and Higher Education (for England and Wales: Jackson, 2012; and Sweden: Jackson et al., 2012; for up. sec. ed. in Sweden: Jonsson and Rudolphi, 2011 and Finland: Kilpi-Jakonen, 2011; and for HE in Germany: Kristen et al., 2008; and Switzerland: Griga, 2012). The observed increased transition rates have been named “positive secondary effects of ethnic origin” (cf. Kristen and Dollmann, 2009) or “ethnic premium.” However, also regarding educational aspirations, differences between individual immigrant groups are observed (cf. Levels et al., 2008). As one explanation, “selection” is often referred to in the literature. Accordingly, immigrants are assumed to have more “drive” or higher ability than those who remain in their countries of origin (Feliciano, 2005).

With regard to the transition to Higher Education, several explanations are found in the literature that may explain the higher shares of youths with an immigrant background entering this educational track if controlled for their lower social origin and performances. Thus, students with an immigrant background might be able to perceive staying in education as an alternative to being unemployed. This could be the case if students with an immigrant background are less well informed about alternatives to Higher Education, for example, the dual system. Moreover, they might expect (or experience) discrimination when searching for an apprenticeship (Kristen et al., 2008). With respect to discrimination and ethnic closure respectively, Fibbi et al. (2006) showed for Switzerland that even after controlling for relevant intervening variables, the chances of applicants to be invited to a job interview for an apprenticeship were influenced by their nationalities. In line with this finding, an ethnic employment gap for youths with secondary or post-secondary education was detected in Sweden by Nekby et al. (2007). Similar studies have confirmed the results indicating ethnic closure in professions and branches characterized by manual work in Sweden (cf. Riach and Rich, 2002; Carlsson and Rooth, 2007). However, with regard to university-educated 30 year olds in Sweden, neither employment nor income gaps were observed (Jonsson and Rudolphi, 2010, 3). If students with an immigrant background do indeed expect discrimination at the labour market for low or medium skilled, they might refrain from choosing vocational education programmes. If, in contrast, the labour market for highly skilled is perceived as predominantly meritocratic, their subjectively estimated returns to Higher Education and, as a consequence, their ambition to strive for a Higher Education degree would increase. As another explanation that goes in the same direction, Jonsson and Rudolphi (2010, 3) indicate that immigrant parents might value education differently than native-born parents. Accordingly, they might pursue long-term plans, including the wish to return to their home countries. Given the enhanced transferability of a Higher Education degree, this would contribute additional value to the returns to Higher Education for this group of people.

However, despite high educational aspirations, the question has to be raised whether increased transitions observed for youths with an immigrant background are sustainable as well. Thus, it has for example been shown for Germany that youths with an immigrant background, being more likely to enter Higher Education, also exhibited an increased probability for Higher Education dropout (Burkhart et al., 2011, 54).

### ***Interaction with characteristics of the educational systems***

The characteristics of the educational systems will affect the impact of educational aspirations on educational success. For example, educational systems that impede choice and are marked by early in the school system will impede that high educational aspirations of youths with an immigrant background will turn into educational success in the case of lower performances or a lower degree of language proficiency at the beginning of the career (Schuchart and Maaz, 2007). In contrast, choice-driven educational systems featured by a comprehensive school system will be advantageous to youths with an immigrant background because it helps them to put into effect their increased educational aspirations. If the transition to Higher Education is regarded, one form of enabling and allowing for students' choices at a later point of time can be provided by means of alternative access to Higher Education in the form of accreditation of prior learning or work experiences. According to Orr et al. (2011, 26), in recent years, many developments in the area of recognition of prior learning and work experience have occurred across Europe. For example, in Sweden, nearly every third student uses an alternative route to enter an institution of Higher Education (Orr et al., 2011, 31). Another example is Great Britain with its long-standing tradition of the open-university concept. With regard to the assumption that alternative access opportunities might serve students with an immigrant background to bring into effect their high educational aspirations, Griga and Hadjar (2012) could show that such opportunities to Higher Education do indeed improve the chances of students with an immigrant background and a disadvantaged social origin to attain a tertiary degree when compared to their non-immigrant peers whose social origin is equally low.

## 2.4 Legal status

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Another factor that might influence educational inequalities between immigrant and non-immigrant groups could be institutional hurdles that are encountered by youths with an immigrant background who don't hold the citizenship of the country of destination. According to Söhn (2012), so far, the effects of such state-driven inequalities between immigrants and non-immigrants and also between individual immigrant groups have mostly been overlooked in empirical research. From a sociological viewpoint, the scope of such legal stratification between immigrant groups reaches from "illegal" immigrants, over foreigners with restricted and unrestricted residence permits, to immigrants that hold the citizenship of the country of destination (Söhn, 2012). In her considerations, Söhn differentiates between *immigration*- and *integration*-related mechanisms that influence educational chances of immigrants. With regard to second-generation immigrants, such mechanisms often influence the educational chances of these youths via the legal status that is held by their parents in the country of destination.

Referring to *immigration*-related mechanisms, she states that immigration inflows are always selective and thus differ between (the EU) countries. A certain extent of this selectivity can thereby be explained by the immigration procedures and criteria exposed by the country of destination. In addition, different "entry categories" are usually differentiated by national states for different types of immigrants. The specific criteria that are met or not met by different immigrant groups thus influence the chances to participate (politically but also with regard to the labour market) of immigrants as well as of their children. The type of immigration inflow regulated by national states in that way is economic migration, which is – at least in principle – politically desired. Depending on whether human capital is needed for low-skilled work (e.g., former labour immigrants from southern Europe in Switzerland or from Turkey in Germany) or whether workers are expected to be highly skilled and have a good command of the official language (e.g., in Canada), average resources that immigrants can provide to their children may vary between countries and entry category, respectively. In addition to politically desired economic immigration, undocumented immigration is per se not regulated. Moreover, a significant share of the immigrant population is composed by refugees. Also, with regard to this group of people with an immigrant background – due to the human rights – no selection according to politically desired criteria will occur. As a fourth group, relatives of immigrants that follow them at a later point of time are often mentioned in the literature as well as are often treated separately by the procedures in the countries of destination. Accordingly, the criteria that have to be met by this group are often somewhat easier to cope than for economic immigrants. Depending on the composition of the immigrant population in the EU countries, differences between countries in the educational chances and success of the population with an immigrant background are likely to be observed.

Regarding modes of *incorporation* that are applied by the countries of destination, Portes and Rumbaut (2001, 46-47) differentiate between "exclusion," "passive acceptance," as well as "active encouragement." Possible aspect that might determine the specific mode of incorporation – and in the consequence educational chances – might include regulation of family reunion, opportunities for political participation, anti-discrimination both in legal terms and in everyday practice, access to nationality, and long-term residence permits. With regard to the latter, Söhn (2012) expects that such permits will provide the motivational framework for educational aspirations in general (e.g., language acquisition) as well as for educational decisions at particular branching points in the educational career, such as the decision to invest in Higher Education or not. In fact, the exemplified modes of incorporation do thereby differ not only between countries but also between the different immigrant groups that are often incorporated differently according to their legal status or entry category. While for example among the EU member-states people are allowed to freely move and work and are thus actively encouraged to immigrate, other immigrant groups are likely to encounter a less favourable mode of incorporation in many EU member states with a more restricted access to social entitlements (e.g., financial transfers) as well as rights (e.g., participation at the labour market and recognition of educational degrees) (cf. Mohr, 2005). Being objected to different modes of incorporation, the educational chances of immigrants as of their children can be affected positively or negatively.

## 2.5 Gender

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In addition to the factors mentioned above, current research in the field of immigrant-specific inequalities in education has raised the question of a possible interaction of immigrant- and gender-specific inequalities in education. Acknowledging that a female advantage in education is typical for Western countries, this branch of research asks whether it can be observed in the case of youths with an immigrant background, too. Thereby, often youths from traditional or non-Western countries of origin are focused, since many of these countries are still featured by male advantage in education. In order to explain possible interactions between an immigrant background from these countries and a male or female gender, two lines of reasoning are typically referred to (cf. Fleischmann and Kristen, 2011). However, depending on the line of reasoning followed, opposing expectations can be formulated. While the first line of reasoning refers to differences in the gender role socialization between the majority and the immigration population, the second line of reasoning addresses the changes in females' returns to education. According to the gender role socialization argumentation, traditional orientations, as they are still very common in many non-Western countries, typically imply gendered task distributions. Thus, males are particularly expected to succeed at the labour market, while women are expected to marry early and raise the children (Van der Lippe and Van Dijk, 2002). In these instances, the returns to education are higher for boys than for women in these regions, resulting in a larger (relative) gender gap in the average incomes earned by men and women than in less traditional societies. In addition, family obligations might distract girls from focussing their educational careers and in the consequence impede that they succeed in education (Fuligni et al., 1999). In contrast, because they have more opportunities to get into contact with their peers in the majority population, boys with an immigrant background from such regions might also be advantaged because their possibilities to acquire the official language in the country of destination are improved when compared to their female counterparts (Dion and Dion, 2001). If this line of reasoning is followed, a smaller or even reversed gender effect compared to the European reference population would result for immigrant groups stemming from such non-Western regions (Fleischmann and Kristen, 2011).

According to the second line of reasoning, female students from more traditional backgrounds experience a contrast between the country of origin and destination with regard to the status and opportunities than can be achieved through education – even by women. Whereas educational attainment is less productive for females and more restricted to boys in a traditional context, the education of women in the country of destination involves a greater payoff. Therefore, the relative gains from education might be particularly large for females with an immigrant background from such regions. This contrast between the payoffs of education in the countries of origin and destination would thus function as an additional incentive to succeed in education (Abada and Tenkorang, 2009). And, in the consequence, the motivation of females stemming from non-Western countries to pursue an academic education might increase (Feliciano and Rumbaut, 2005). If this line of reasoning is followed, an educational premium for females would be expected for immigrant groups stemming from more traditional societies, too.

With regard to the relative importance of the two kinds of reasoning at the different branching points in the educational cycle, Fleischmann and Kristen (2011) expect that the latter line of reasoning is of particular importance at later stages in the educational career, for example, the transition to Higher Education. However, although current research in the field ofn-specific inequalities in education has started to consider the possible interaction of an immigrant background and a male or female gender, the number of studies yet is too small to draw final conclusions on the direction of such effects. Although the analysis conducted by Fleischmann and Kristen (2011) provides some evidence that boys with an immigrant background could encounter additional disadvantages with regard to completing upper secondary education, their analysis revealed no interaction effects with regard to other educational aspects (e.g., performances and attainment in Higher Education).

### ***Interaction with characteristics of the educational systems***

Referring to possible reinforcing or weakening effects produced by the national educational systems, only scarce theoretical considerations but – at least so far – no profound empirical evidences are found in the literature. As one



possible characteristic, Fleischmann and Kristen (2011) point to the degree of “dirigisme” in the educational system. Thus, countries with more open educational systems such as the British, Swedish, or US ones might allow for traditional gender preferences to be continued in the countries of destination. In contrast, the authors expect more dirigiste systems such as the French or German ones to provide a greater force for assimilation. As a result of the different characteristics of the educational systems, gender inequalities observed among immigrant groups who have their origins in non-Western regions may differ in different countries of destination. However, since empirical evidence is so scarce, more research should be undertaken on the question of a possible reinforcing or weakening effect of educational systems on gender disparities among immigrants in European countries before conclusions should be drawn.

# Chapter 3

# Data, methods, and terms

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Kai Mühleck



### 3.1 Data and data availability

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A key problem in the cross-country analysis of the Higher Educational participation of persons with an immigrant background is the availability of reliable and comparable data for a larger number of countries. Whereas for secondary education the PISA studies allow analysing participation and performance of students with an immigrant background impressively detailed and across a broad range of countries (cf. OECD, 2010a, b), possibilities are much more limited for research on Higher Education. Aggregated figures published by the OECD (2008, 248) or Eurostat (2011a, 128ff) often refer to tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6) and not to (academic) Higher Education (ISCED 5A and 6) the EQUINET project is interested in. Individual-level data allows us to tailor the analyses to our research questions. But available international data sets often hold too few respondents with an immigrant background and Higher Education to yield reliable and comparable results across a larger number of countries. Additionally, people with an immigrant background are a highly heterogeneous group. To get a differentiated picture, it is often necessary to look into subgroups, a fact making the problem of small numbers of respondents even more salient.

The data also limits which kind of inequalities in the distribution of Higher Education research can look at. As to our knowledge, there is no international data set that would allow investigating access to Higher Education for a larger number of countries. Also, there seems to be no international data set allowing analysing the participation of people with an immigrant background among current students for a larger number of countries. The European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) does not differentiate between academic and vocational forms of current education. The European Social Survey (ESS) would allow for this differentiation but holds far too few respondents to analyse a subgroup such as people with an immigrant background within the group of current students. EUROSTUDENT does provide an impressive range of aggregated indicators and figures on the social dimension for current students but no individual-level data. Participation of people with an immigrant background has not been a focus topic of the latest EUROSTUDENT report (cf. Orr et al., 2011).

But it is possible to analyse educational attainment of people with an immigrant background with the international data sets at hand. Again, the data sets are far from perfect. The problem of the small number of cases prevails for the ESS as well as for the EU-LFS. Even for a very large data set such as the EU-LFS, the number of cases is too small to allow calculating reliable results for all countries covered in the data set, let alone for subgroups among the group of people with an immigrant background. Still, the large number of respondents of the EU-LFS should provide figures of relatively high quality, and thus, it is chosen as the main data source for the empirical analyses presented in chapter 4. Alternative data sets are available that deserve being explored on their possibilities to tackle the problem.

#### 3.1.1 The European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS)

The EU-LFS is a European large-scale survey consisting of large household sample surveys conducted by the national statistics agencies. All EU and EFTA countries (except Liechtenstein) are participating in the EU-LFS. It is seen as the most important official European micro-database next to the European survey on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) with the EU-LFS being considerably larger (Eurostat, 2011b, 23f). National statistical offices are responsible for sample selection, conducting the interviews among households, and forwarding the results to Eurostat in accordance with the common coding scheme. Its main focus is on the labour market participation of respondents, but it also covers information on persons outside the labour force. The target population is all persons aged 15 years and over living in private households. Persons carrying out obligatory military or community service are not included in the target group of the survey, as is also the case for persons in institutions/collective households. In order to ensure high quality and comparability of the data, the national statistical institutes are obliged to use identical concepts and definitions, follow the guidelines of the International Labour Organisation, use common international classifications (e.g., NACE, ISCO, ISCED, and NUTS), and record the same set of characteristics in each country (cf. <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/microdata/lfs>).

Next to its core questions, the EU-LFS treats focus topics by the use of alternating ad hoc modules. The analyses in chapter 4 of this report are based on the ad hoc module of 2008 on the labour market situation of immigrants and their descendants. The ad hoc module as available to external researchers covers 26 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK).

While the core LFS already captures some information on immigrant background (e.g., country of birth, nationality, and years of residence in the country), the ad hoc module 2008 additionally provides information on the following:

- the year of acquisition of citizenship,
- country of birth of the father and of the mother<sup>2</sup>,
- total number of years of residence in this country,
- main reason for last immigration,
- duration of the current residence permit,
- restrictions to current legal access to the labour market,
- formal acknowledgement of education and related efforts,
- self-perceived language skills,
- help received in the host country in finding the current job or setting up own business,
- and the use of services for labour market integration in the two years following the last arrival.

Unlike for other information on the parents, the country of birth of the mother or the father is also available if they do not live in the same household as the respondent. Thus, it is possible to identify immediate descendants of immigrants.

Twelve countries with relatively small populations of immigrants were authorized to implement only a 4-variable short module (BG, CZ, DK, EE, LV, HU, MT, PL, RO, SI, SK, and FI). The target population was defined as all persons 15-74 years of age. In some countries, this range was limited (UK) or information derived from registers (Nordic countries).

Overall, 1.224.000 people responded to the Labour Force Survey in the EU-27. Of these, 85.000 were foreign born and 99.000/98.000 were descendants of a father/mother who was foreign born (in Germany: of a foreign nationality). In several countries, the sample size of foreign born is less than 2000; the results are nevertheless regarded as plausible (Eurostat, 2010). The measurement of second-generation immigrants is also regarded as plausible for most countries; only the Nordic countries are seen at a risk of underestimating the phenomenon due to the reliance on registers.

The large numbers of respondents and high-quality standards of the EU-LFS are its main advantages. It offers the opportunity of looking at the educational success of persons with an immigrant background for a relatively large number of European countries and it allows for looking at some subgroups within the group with an immigrant background. Still, even the EU-LFS is limited in this respect. As will be seen below, a varying number of countries needed to be excluded from the analyses because the number of respondents was too small to yield reliable figures at the standards set by Eurostat. Generally, Eurostat advises to interpret results on immigrant populations based on the EU-LFS with caution due to some technical limitations of the survey<sup>3</sup> (cf. Eurostat, 2011b, 23): (1) Very recently

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<sup>2</sup> In Germany, parents' actual and former nationality and not country of birth was asked.

<sup>3</sup> These limitations would apply to most other general population surveys as well.

arrived immigrants are likely to be underrepresented. (2) In most participating countries, collective households are not covered by the EU-LFS. Accordingly, people living in such households will be underrepresented. (3) Participation rates may be lower for persons with an immigrant background, e.g., due to language problems or fears that responses may impact on their residence permit. Non-response could be especially high among immigrants with poor knowledge of the language of the resident country. Thus, persons with an immigrant background responding to the survey may be “positively selected,” i.e., those with good command of the language of the host country, relatively high education, and relatively well integrated. As a consequence, the results on educational attainment would be positively skewed. The quality report on the EU-LFS ad hoc module of 2008 noted that high response rates among immigrants were hard to obtain (cited from Eurostat, 2011b, 23).

For the most part, the EU-LFS collects information on the parents of the respondent only if the father or the mother lives in the same household. Ad hoc modules are an exception to this and for some focal variables hold information on the parents in general (e.g., for the ad hoc module of 2008, the country of birth of the parents). For other characteristics of the parents, the information is not available if they live in another household, which is a major drawback for many sociological analyses. Most notably, it is not possible analysing the influence of the social status of the parents, a variable that is interesting from a theoretical point of view and has shown to influence educational attainment in a numerous empirical studies (see chapter 2 of this volume).

### **3.1.2 Alternative data sources**

#### **3.1.2.1 The European Social Survey (ESS)**

The ESS is a biannual general population survey running in more than 30 countries (surveys of 2008 and 2010; [www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org)). It is possible to identify first- and second-generation immigrants, and the ESS has already been used for the analysis of Higher Educational attainment of immigrants (Griga/Mühleck, 2011; Griga/Hadjar, 2012). Koucký et al. have used the ESS extensively for analysing the influence of the socioeconomic background on Higher Educational attainment (Koucký et al., 2007, 2009, 2010; see Koucký et al., 2007 for a detailed study on the suitability of the ESS for studying inequality in Higher Education). It is also possible to identify *current* students of Higher Education in the ESS, but samples of actual students would presumably be too small to allow for reliable analyses on the subgroup of current students with an immigrant background. Generally, the sample sizes provided by the ESS are considerably below that of the EU-LFS.

#### **3.1.2.2 EUROSTUDENT**

The EUROSTUDENT data covers a broad range of figures and indicators such as the demographic characteristics of the student body, modes of access and transition into Higher Education, the social make-up of the student body, types of accommodation, funding and state assistance, living expenses and student spending, student employment and time budgets, as well as internationalisation and mobility. The purpose of this data collection is to provide comparative data on the so-called social dimension of Higher Education in Europe (for more details, see Orr et al., 2011). EUROSTUDENT is one of the richest data sources on students in Europe, and it provides all its data and indicators freely available via the project’s website ([www.eurostudent.eu/](http://www.eurostudent.eu/)). Note that EUROSTUDENT to date only collects *aggregated* data indicators due to the project’s concept. Students with an immigrant background have not been a major focus of EUROSTUDENT IV, and thus, it has proven less useful for the purpose of this study. It offers only one indicator on the topic (the share of persons with an immigrant background within the student population), which does not allow assessing the degree of equity in this regard. Context information on the respective share of people with an immigrant background in the general population would be necessary but is hard to obtain.



### 3.1.2.3 REFLEX and HEGESCO

The REFLEX survey project covered Higher Education graduates of the year 2000. The project collected data in 15 countries (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and the UK plus Belgium-Flanders, Czech Republic, Portugal, Switzerland, Japan, and Estonia; [www.fdewb.unimaas.nl/roa/reflex](http://www.fdewb.unimaas.nl/roa/reflex)). The net number of cases in the final data set ranged from 645 in Portugal and 6.794 in Czech Republic. In recent years, a follow-up study called HEGESCO has been undertaken in Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Slovenian, and Turkey ([www.hegesco.org](http://www.hegesco.org)). Both projects are focussing on issues such as acquisition of competences in Higher Education, employability, and labour market success. Both data sets could be explored on their potential to analyse the influence of an immigrant background on topics such as study behaviour, success, competencies, and transition to work.

## 3.2 Methods

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The empirical research of this report consists of two parts: Firstly, chapter 4 presents results based on quantitative analyses of the EU-LFS data. It aims to sketch the European picture of Higher Educational attainment of second-generation immigrants. Based on the theoretical considerations presented in chapter 2, it gives empirical indications on how differences between second-generation immigrants and natives can be explained and some considerations on the reasons for country differences. Naturally, countries differ in multiple ways affecting the chance of people with an immigrant background to attain a Higher Education degree (e.g., differences in the socio-structural composition of the immigrants, in the immigration regime, or in the educational system). To further contextualise, chapter 5, secondly, treats three country cases (Germany, Norway, and the UK) referring to country-specific research results and examples of programmes supporting people with an immigrant background (and other groups) to access to and succeed in Higher Education. The method for chapter 5 was desk research.

The analyses in chapter 4 are based on crosstabs on the one hand and logistic regression models on the other. Regression models are the dominant method used in the social sciences to analyse the relationship between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables (“explanatory factors”). The dependent variable analysed in chapter 4 is the attainment of Higher Education. The focal explanatory factor is the immigrant background of persons. The dependent variable is binary, i.e., it takes on only two values: 1 (the person holds a Higher Education degree) and 0 (the person does not hold a Higher Education degree). One way to analyse binary dependents with regression models is the logistic regression model (for a treatment of the subject, see Kohler/Kreuter, 2009, 261ff). The logistic regression model can express the association between the dependent and the independent variable in the form of odds ratios. For the subject of this report, odds ratios have a very advantageous characteristic: they can be seen as a statistical expression of equitable chances. How that? Odds ratios put the chances of two groups into relation. Applied to the question of whether the chance to obtain a Higher Education degree is influenced by having an immigrant background or not, the odds ratio is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{share of persons having obtained higher education among persons with a migrant background}}{\text{share of persons having obtained higher education among persons without a migrant background}}$$

If the chances of both groups are equal, the odds ratio is 1. If the chances of persons with an immigrant background are smaller than those of persons without such a background, the odds ratio takes on values below 1. If the chances of persons with an immigrant background are larger than those of persons without such a background, the odds ratio takes on values above 1. If we decide normatively that having an immigrant background should not influence the chance to obtain Higher Education, equity is expressed by an odds ratio of 1. Deviations from 1 express inequities at the disadvantage of either persons with an immigrant background (values below 1) or at the disadvantage of persons without an immigrant background (values above 1). Thus, the odds ratio is directly related to a proportional notion of (in)equity (also see Introduction of chapter 4).

Another advantage of regression models in general is that one can use several independent variables. Thus, it is possible to control for the influence of variables that may interfere with both the dependent variable (e.g., holding a Higher Education degree) and other explanatory factors (e.g., having an immigrant background). As described above, the possibilities to control for important explanatory factors are limited in the EU-LFS. Most notably, it is unfortunately not possible to control for the socioeconomic status of the parents. In all regression analyses shown in chapter 4, the following variables have been used as control variables: the age of respondents, the squared age of respondents, and the sex of respondents. Note that age of respondents is aggregated to categories of five years in the anonymised data of the EU-LFS.

The analyses are restricted to the age group of those between 30 and 54 years. The lower threshold is chosen to exclude persons still studying. The upper threshold is chosen to mitigate differences in the age structure of people with or without an immigrant background and between countries. For reasons of comparability, this age group has been chosen for the rates presented in chapter 4 as well as for the regression analyses.

### 3.3 Definitions and terms

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**Europe/European:** “Europe” or “European” is used in this report as a summary term for a number of European countries. Which European countries the term actually refers to depends on the context. Thus, by using the term “Europe” or “European,” we do by no means claim that the results are representative for all European countries or certain subgroups, e.g., the 47 European countries involved in the Bologna process or the EU-27. The main data source of chapter 4 is the EU-LFS, which encompasses the 27 EU countries and all EFTA countries except Liechtenstein. Which European countries empirical results refer to exactly is evident from the respective table or figure in chapter 4.

**Higher education:** the term “Higher Education” is used in this report in the sense of *academic tertiary education* (as opposed to vocational tertiary education). In the analysis presented in chapter 4, Higher Education is measured as having a degree classified as ISCED 5a or 6. Thus, the main dependent variable is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the person holds an academic degree (ISCED 5A or 6) and coded 0 for all other degrees or no degree.

**Immigrant, immigrant background, second-generation immigrant:** According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), there is no universally accepted definition of the term “[im]migrant” at international level (<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-migration/key-migration-terms/lang/en#Immigration>, accessed 10/09/2012). Thus, the content and use of the term varies between sources and sometimes also within one source. Necessarily, the exact meaning of the terms “immigrant,” “immigrant background,” “second-generation immigrant,” or “native” also varies to some extent within this report, depending on the source of information referred to. The IOM describes the usage of the term as follows: “The term migrant was usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of ‘personal convenience’ and without intervention of an external compelling factor; it therefore applied to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family” (ibid., accessed 10/09/2012). However, with the statistical data at hand, it is often not possible to account for the motivation of immigration or whether the decision has been taken freely. Additionally, it may not always be possible to clearly distinguish between a free and a forced decision. How one would qualify a decision may even vary by time. A person may have been fleeing war or political prosecution but he or she may have later on freely decided to stay in the host country.

The definition of the United Nations does not use the motive of immigration as criterion but the duration of the stay: “The United Nations defines migrant as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists and businesspersons would not be considered migrants.



However, common usage includes certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work planting or harvesting farm products.” (ibid., accessed 10/09/2012). Also, with regard to Higher Education, one would want to distinguish between, on the one hand, “temporary student mobility” (Orr et al., 2011, 167) and, on the other hand, persons with an immigrant background who have entered the Higher Education system at some point in their life.

This report cannot solve the problem of defining the term immigrant and will not come up with a new definition consistently used throughout the report. Still, the following aspects indicate how the different terms have predominantly been used in this report and should be noted. Furthermore the term “second-generation immigrant” as used in the analyses of chapter 4 is defined as follows:

- If not specified differently, the text refers to *international* migration and not to regional migration. Therefore, we use the term *immigration* or *immigrant*, which implies the crossing of borders as to our understanding.
- The term “immigrant” refers to persons who have been immigrating themselves, i.e., they have been born in another country than the current resident country (first-generation immigrants). However, depending on the context, this group may also encompass other persons, e.g., those with a foreign citizenship or members of ethnic minorities.
- “Person with an immigrant background” is used as a comprehensive term, encompassing e.g., persons who have been born abroad, persons who have been born in the resident country but whose ancestors have been born abroad (for second-generation immigrants, this refers to the parents; for third-generation immigrants, this refers to the grandparents, etc.). Depending on the context, the term also encompasses persons with a foreign citizenship or whose ancestors have or had a foreign citizenship or members of ethnic minorities.
- “Second-generation immigrants” are born in the resident country, but their parents have been born abroad. Depending on the context, the term may also refer to persons whose parents have or had a foreign citizenship. In this report, persons are regarded as second-generation immigrants if both of their parents were born abroad (have a foreign citizenship) or if only one parent was born abroad (has a foreign citizenship). Some sources restrict second-generation immigrants to persons without a native parent (e.g., the PISA studies of 2009 and EUROSTUDENT IV). In chapter 4 of this report, people are defined as second-generation immigrants if they are born in the resident country but one or both of their parents are born abroad. Note, however, that for Germany, the immigrant status of the parents has been measured by the citizenship and not by the country of birth in the EU-LFS (Eurostat, 2010, 3).

The term “native” mostly refers to persons without any immigration background in the sense described above.

# Chapter 4

## Second-generation immigrants in Higher Education – sketching the European picture

Author

Kai Mühleck



## 4.1 Introduction

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This chapter sketches the participation of people with an immigrant background in European Higher Education. It does so with a certain perspective, i.e., the question whether the chances to obtain Higher Education are distributed equitably between people with or without an immigrant background.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. Chapter 4.1.1 describes and briefly discusses the notion of equity applied. Chapter 4.1.2 elaborates the focus and the limitations of the analyses. Theoretical considerations and hypotheses are presented in chapter 4.1.3. Note that these considerations are based on chapter 2 of this report. Chapter 4.2 presents the empirical analyses based on the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). It starts with a cross-country comparison on participation rates of second-generation immigrants (chapter 4.2.1). Chapter 4.2.2 is devoted to the question whether one native parent increases the chances for Higher Education among second-generation immigrants. Chapter 4.2.3 shows some evidence on differences in educational attainment among immigrants from different regions of origin. Chapter 4.3 summarizes the main conclusions to be drawn. Note that the overall conclusions of this report are presented in chapter 6.

### 4.1.1 Equity as proportionality

The notion of equity applied in this chapter is that of proportionality, i.e., the composition of the people who have obtained Higher Education “should reflect the diversity of the population” (London Communiqué, 2007, 5).<sup>4</sup> In other words, the chance to obtain Higher Education should be the same regardless of any migration background. This notion of equity can be applied to other social groups as well (males and females, higher and lower social strata, people with or without special needs, etc.). Note that it is a relative definition, relying on the comparison of different social groups. Equity would be achieved if all these groups would have the same chance for Higher Education. This definition has certain assets:

- (1) It is rather easy to understand and makes sense intuitively. For example, if we decide normatively that certain individual characteristics (e.g., stemming from a less affluent family, having an immigrant background, and being female) should not influence the chance to obtain Higher Education, it is straightforward to compare the chances of the group *with* that characteristic with the chances of the group *without* that characteristic. Obviously, the chances of both groups should be the same if our norm is fulfilled (i.e., the characteristic in question has no influence on the chance to obtain Higher Education).
- (2) It can be seen as in line with normative justice theories such as Rawls’ Theory of Justice (Rawls, 1971), giving it a more solid basis than just intuition.<sup>5</sup>
- (3) It is in line with the political interest formulated in the London Communiqué. Therefore, inequities in the sense of the London Communiqué are violating the expressed will of elected political leaders.

It has a statistical expression, the odds ratio (see section 3.2 on methods), and thus we have a tool for measuring the existence and size of inequity in the sense of relative chances.

But this definition has also some weaknesses. To name three of them:

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<sup>4</sup> “We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations” (ibid.).

<sup>5</sup> In Rawls’ ‘original position’, a purely hypothetical situation constructed to derive principles for a just society, “no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength and the like” (Rawls 1971: 12). Rawls describes this initial situation as “fair” (ibid.). It expresses the belief that no one should suffer (or gain) from circumstances he or she is not liable for, such as having a migrant background or not. Note that Rawls does not argue that natural assets may in no case lead to social inequality. However, as such inequalities are based on a ‘natural lottery’ and are “arbitrary from a moral point of view” (ibid.: 72), they are subjected to redistributions in favor of those less gifted (e.g. Rawls, 1971: 302).

- (1) It doesn't give an answer to the question of which social groups should have equal chances. There are several groups the literature typically looks at (e.g., females and people from lower social strata), but important disadvantaged groups may be overlooked. However, that does not limit its suitability for the analysis of one specific group we are interested in.
- (2) It is restricted to the relative perspective of justice, i.e., it does not help to judge whether the level of availability of a certain good is adequate in the outset. For example, the chance to obtain Higher Education could be the same among all groups but it might be very low for everybody. Thus, we need to consider the level of educational attainment as well.
- (3) Looking at the average endowment of social groups with a certain good, it ignores differences within this group. The group of people with an immigrant background is a case in point. This group is enormously heterogeneous with different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds affecting the chance for educational success. But this problem can be overcome by looking at subgroups or controlling for certain characteristics.

#### **4.1.2 Focus and limitations of the analyses**

The empirical analysis in this chapter will only deal with the second generation of immigrants, defined as persons born in the resident country but with one or both parents born abroad. The author has taken this decision mainly due to restrictions of the data. For an investigation of first-generation immigrants, we would need to exclude those who already have or could have obtained a Higher Education degree before entering the country of residence. In the EU-LFS (see chapter 3.1.1 for more information), this could be done by looking at first-generation immigrants only if they immigrated before a certain age. But against the standards set by Eurostat, this leaves us with too few respondents for reliable statistics for most countries.

Clearly, first-generation immigrants would also be an interesting group to look at. Besides the fact that they make up a considerable part of the population with an immigrant background, they could also serve as a means of comparison for the second-generation immigrants. Typically, first-generation immigrants are educationally less successful than second-generation immigrants (related to secondary education: OECD, 2010b, 70; related to Higher Education: Griga/Mühleck, 2011, 74). Furthermore, immigrants arriving before or during their early teens, the so-called 1.5 generation, can give an indication on the role language plays for educational success. It can be shown that the younger immigrants are at arrival, the better they mostly fare in the educational system (again related to secondary education: Heath/Kilpi-Jakonen, 2012; OECD, 2010b, 70). This is specifically true if immigrants come from a country with a different language than the resident country (Heath/Kilpi-Jakonen, 2012, 28). On the other hand, second-generation immigrants, unlike first-generation immigrants, have spent their whole life in the same national framework (with all its heterogeneities) as their native peers and faced the same educational system (again, with all its heterogeneities). To single out the effect an immigrant background has in one respective country, they are probably the most straightforward group to look at.

As regards Higher Education participation, the chapter simply looks at whether Higher Education has been obtained. For a more exhaustive treatment of the topic, it would be most interesting to also look at access to Higher Education and how people with or without an immigrant background fare while in the Higher Education system (e.g., time between access and graduation, problems during studying, dropout, mobility, and kind of degree). Qualitative dimensions of studying (e.g., subject and type of HEI) have not been treated either. Both limitations are mostly due to lack of data and to the scope of the report.

A last important restriction must be mentioned. Research has shown over and over again that the socioeconomic background is an important variable in explaining educational outcomes, and thus, it should, if possible, be controlled for when analysing the influence of an immigrant background (e.g., Beck et al., 2010; Griga/Mühleck, 2011; Kristen/Dollmann, 2010; OECD, 2010a, b). Being a household survey, the EU-LFS only holds information on the parents' socioeconomic status if they live in the same household as the respondent. Therefore, the socioeconomic

background cannot be taken into account in the statistical analysis. Still, known socioeconomic differences between the typical immigrant groups of the various countries can help to interpret the observed country differences.

Although the EU-LFS is far from perfect as a data source, it seems worth investigating its possibilities. Firstly, it is one of the largest (if not the largest) general population surveys in Europe, and the results obtained should be relatively reliable. Secondly, identifying shortcomings of the EU-LFS is an important outcome in itself as it could help enhance the quality and usability of this major European data set.

#### **4.1.3 Theoretical background and hypotheses**

The empirical analyses are guided by theoretical considerations described in more detail in chapter 2 of this report. They will be used to derive some hypotheses at this point. A main source of the considerations in chapter 2 is Boudon's (1974) work on how the social origin influences educational attainment. While Boudon refers to the socioeconomic status of the family when talking about social origin, his theory has since some years been applied for theorizing the effects of an immigrant background as well (e.g., Kristen/Dollmann, 2010; Griga/Mühleck, 2011; see Griga in this volume for more information and references). The three key thoughts of Boudon are as follows: (1) the educational career is seen as a sequence (the traditional educational career would be primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education). At each step, the individual decides between different educational alternatives (e.g., different types of schools or educational strands) and/or other activities (e.g., employment). (2) Individuals take their decisions based on evaluating the costs and benefits of the alternatives as they are aware of them (i.e., the subjectively expected utility of the alternatives; Boudon, 1974, 36). (3) The social origin affects these decisions by so-called primary and secondary effects (Boudon, 1974, 28-30). Primary effects refer to performance differences at preceding steps of education. Thus, low performance in secondary education may result in being not granted formal access to Higher Education or in forming the expectation that one would fail in Higher Education. Next to performance differences, there may be other factors influencing educational decisions, such as attitudes towards education, educational aspirations, and knowledge of the educational system. These factors are called secondary effects.

The assumption of primary effects for persons with an immigrant background is mainly derived from supposed language difficulties. Obviously, good command of the language of instruction is crucial for educational success and students are likely to be less competent if this language is different from the native language of their parents. Furthermore, parents may have difficulties in giving support to their offspring (e.g., by helping them with their homework or by communicating with school staff) if they are less comfortable with the language of the resident country. Given that these language difficulties exist, we assume negative primary effects of an immigrant background on the attainment of Higher Education. However, groups of immigrants differ in their language abilities. Most likely, persons with one native parent will have better command of the language of the resident country than those with two parents born abroad (see chapter 2 for an elaboration of this argument). Thus, we hypothesize that persons with an immigrant background but with one native parent are more likely to attain Higher Education than those with two parents born abroad.

Furthermore, the official language (or languages) of the resident country may be the same as in the country of origin or this language (these languages) may be very widespread. This is the case if, for example, residents of a Commonwealth country migrate to the UK or if Germans migrate to Austria or if British migrate to Ireland. Such immigrants will have no or little language problems and would, as a consequence, have relatively better chances to attain Higher Education than immigrants coming from a country with a different language. A hypothesis could be derived; however, with the data of the EU-LFS, this hypothesis could not be tested. The EU-LFS aggregates the information on the country of origin to rather large regions of origin. Thus, we can only use this information to help us in interpreting observed country differences.



Negative primary effects are also expected for people with a low socioeconomic background. Socioeconomic status and immigrant status are often intertwined. Thus, the typical labour immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s encouraged to immigrate by countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria, or Belgium were relatively low educated and engaged as unskilled or semiskilled workers. But countries with high wage levels may also attract highly skilled people looking for better career opportunities. For example, Switzerland observes an increasing proportion of highly skilled immigrants from Germany, France, and Italy at the beginning of this century (Wanner et al., 2009, 160). As spelled out before, the EU-LFS does not allow controlling for the socioeconomic background. But information on the composition of the immigrant population can be used in interpretative fashion when looking at country differences.

The secondary effects of an immigrant background on (higher) educational attainment are less clear in their supposed results than the primary effects. On the one hand, second-generation immigrants (and/or their parents) may be specifically motivated to succeed in education. As described in chapter 2, studies have shown for a number of countries that persons with an immigrant background often show Higher Educational aspirations than their native peers, increasing their likelihood to attain Higher Education. On the other hand, factors such as an unsecure resident status could lessen the motivation to invest in Higher Education. All in all, current research seems to give more evidence for positive secondary effects for persons with an immigrant background (see chapter 2).

To some extent, primary and secondary effects are pointing in different directions. Given that the PISA studies have revealed large gaps in reading performance for second-generation immigrants for most OECD countries (OECD, 2010b, 71), we expect strong primary effects that will mostly excel secondary effects. Thus, we expect lower rates of Higher Educational attainment among second-generation immigrants. But there are strong reasons to expect large country differences in this respect. As described above, typical immigrant groups of some countries are facing no or little language problems. One would not expect second-generation immigrants of these groups to have clearly lower chances to hold an academic degree. On the contrary, to the extent that positive secondary effects occur, they could be even more likely to attain Higher Education.

## **4.2 Attainment of Higher Education by second-generation immigrants**

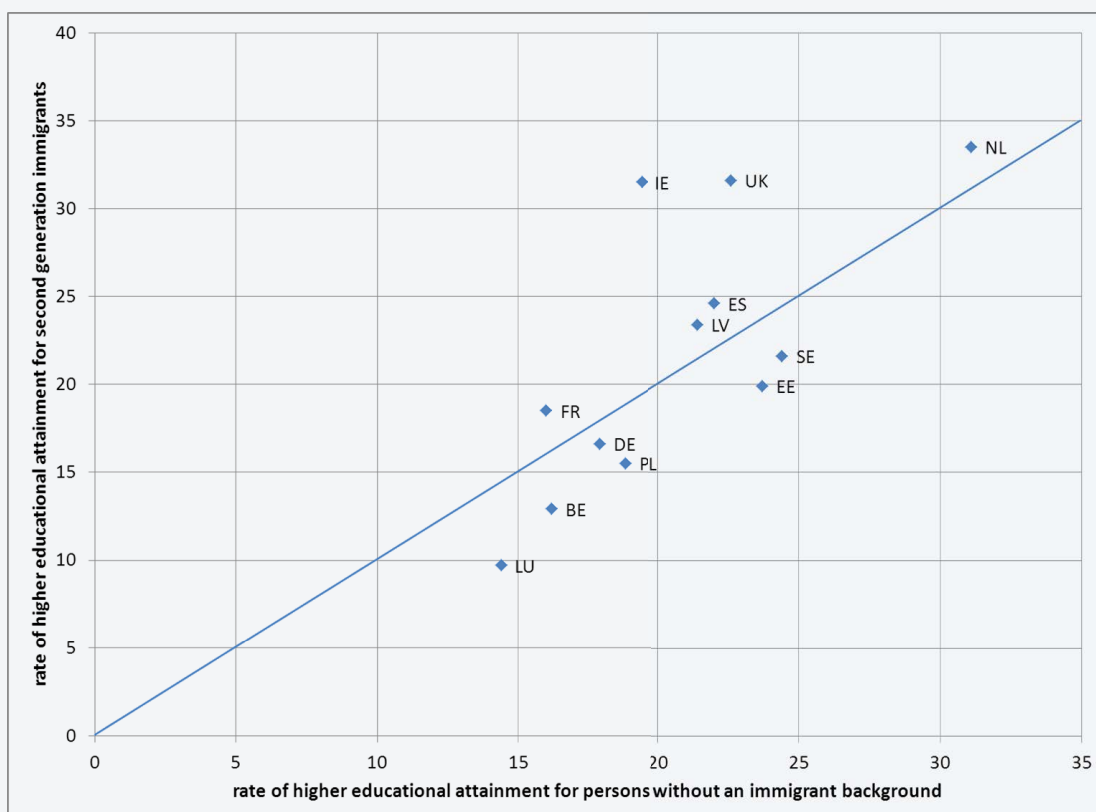
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### **4.2.1 Higher education attainment in cross-country perspective**

A first look at the rates of Higher Education attainment of second-generation immigrants as opposed to people with a native background reveals two things (Fig. 1). Firstly, European countries differ vastly in the relative chances of second-generation immigrants to obtain Higher Education. Secondly, and somewhat surprisingly, in quite some countries, second-generation immigrants are more frequently holding an academic degree than do their native peers. Most notably, this is the case for Ireland and the UK. To be sure, this does not mean that second-generation immigrants in these countries are educationally successful throughout. Second-generation immigrants are a highly diverse social group with different socioeconomic, cultural, and educational resources. Furthermore, we are only looking at academic Higher Education here. Whereas a considerable proportion of second-generation immigrants have graduated from Higher Education, others may have problems to gain a secondary degree.<sup>6</sup> In six countries (BE, DE, EE, LU, PL, and SE), the chances of second-generation immigrants are lower than those of people with a native background only.

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<sup>6</sup> Looking at academic and vocational tertiary education jointly already changes the picture to some extent (Eurostat, 2011: 129).

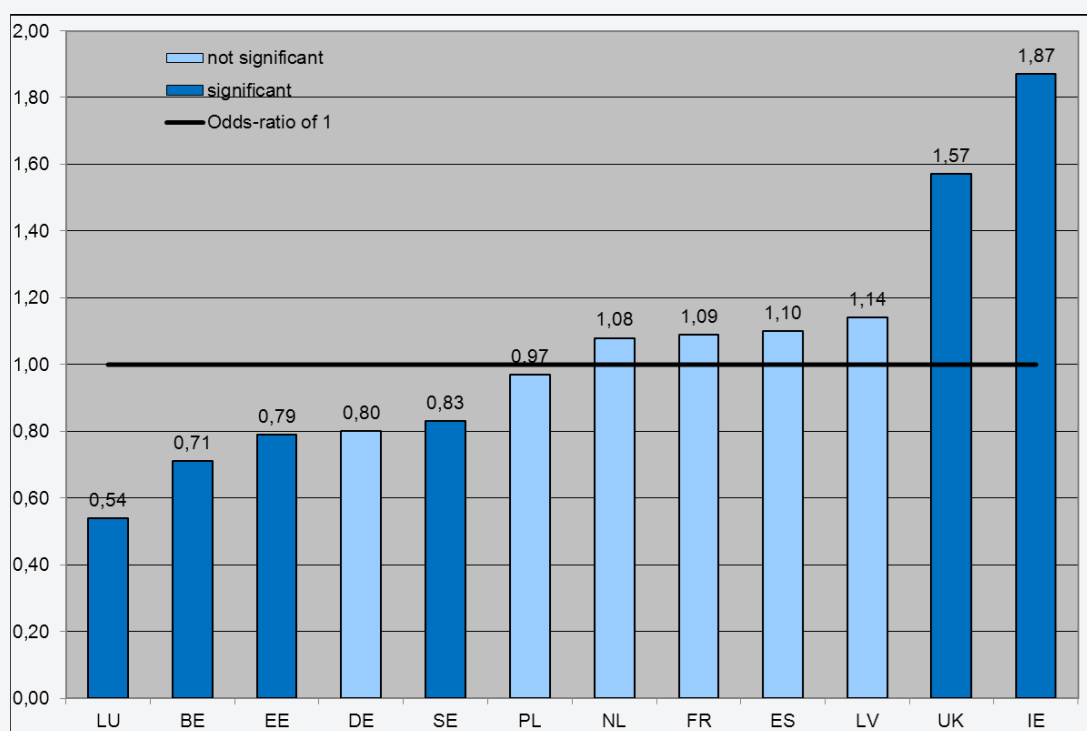


**Fig. 1 Rates of Higher Educational attainment (%): second-generation immigrants compared to persons without an immigrant background (aged 30-54 years)**

Data unreliable in at least one category: AT, BG, CY, CZ, DK, GR, HU, IT, LT, NO, PT, RO, SI, SK.

Source: EU-LFS, ad hoc module 2008, own calculations.

To investigate the proportion of chances more directly, Fig. 2 shows the odds ratios. An odds ratio of 1 indicates that the chance to hold a Higher Education degree is the same regardless of the migration background. Values below 1 mean that the chances for second-generation immigrants are smaller than those for people with a native background. Values above 1 indicate the contrary. For example, in Belgium, for a person with a second-generation immigrant background, the chance to hold an academic degree is only 71% of the chance of someone with a native background, as can be seen by the odds ratio of 0.71. In contrast, the chances for Higher Education of the average second-generation immigrant in the UK are 57% higher than those for the average native peer (odds ratio of 1.57) – a considerable advance.



**Fig. 2 Relative chances to obtain Higher Education (odds ratios): second-generation immigrants compared to persons with a native background (aged 30-54 years)**

Figures are odds ratios calculated by logistic regression models; control variables: sex, age, age squared.

Data unreliable in at least one category: AT, BG, CY, CZ, DK, GR, HU, IT, LT, NO, PT, RO, SI, SK.

Source: EU-LFS, ad hoc module 2008, own calculations.

The results tell a similar story than those shown in Fig. 1, but they are not identical. Firstly, the odds ratios in Fig. 2 have been calculated by regression analyses. In these analyses, age and sex of respondents were additionally controlled for (see section 3.2 on methods). Secondly, Fig. 2 shows if the observed differences between second-generation immigrants and natives are significant in the statistical sense. In six countries (DE, PL, NL, FR, and LV), the odds ratio does not deviate statistically significant from one (light blue). Thus, statistically, the chances to obtain Higher Education in these countries are equally distributed between natives and second-generation immigrants. Note that a non-significant result may also be due to data quality problems, such as too few respondents to allow for an exact estimation. The most important qualification of this result is that the average ignores the heterogeneity of the group of second-generation immigrants. Some subgroups may still have little chance to graduate from Higher Education, whereas others are pretty successful in this regard. Significant disadvantages for second-generation immigrants are to be observed for Luxembourg, Belgium, Estonia, and Sweden. Significant advantages can be found in the UK and Ireland.

All these factors, with the exception of the first one (the characteristics of the educational system), may produce not only country differences but also differences *within* the group of second-generation immigrants of a certain country. Another source of variation between second-generation immigrants is whether one or both parents are born abroad. Disadvantageous (and advantageous) will be mitigated if there's one native parent. By compositional effects, this may again yield country differences.

In this chapter, only a few of the factors mentioned can be checked, mostly due to limitations of data and to the limitations of the scope. However, looking at the major immigrant groups of the countries presented in Fig. 2 can help interpret the results to some extent. For Ireland and the UK, the analysis revealed a clearly higher likelihood for

second-generation immigrants to hold a Higher Education degree. In Ireland, more than 40% of the foreign-born population is born in the UK, which is the largest group of immigrants in the country by far (OECD, 2011, 392; figures from 2006). Other important countries of origin are the US or Australia. Language problems and negative primary effects are not to be expected for these groups of immigrants. For the UK, the picture is less clear as countries of origin are more diverse. Still, a large number of the main countries of origin have English as first or second official language (e.g., Ireland, South Africa, United States, Australia, India, or Pakistan; OECD, 2011, 399). At this background, the above average participation in Higher Education of second-generation immigrants in Ireland and the UK is less surprising.

However, language is obviously not the only explanation. In Luxembourg, two of the more important immigrant groups are French and Belgium, with French being one of the three languages of instruction in Luxembourg (OECD, 2011, 387). In Belgium, France and the Netherlands are among the more important countries of origin, with French and Dutch as languages of instruction (OECD, 2011, 393). As emphasised before, another important explanatory factor of educational success is the socioeconomic background of the immigrants. This factor cannot be considered in the analysis directly due to limitations of the data. But there is evidence that the relatively low chances of the second-generation observed in some countries are partially due to a low socioeconomic background. For example for Belgium, it has been shown that the low Higher Education participation of second-generation immigrants can be attributed, to a large extent, to the low socioeconomic background of this group (Griga/Mühleck, 2011, 73). Belgium, as Germany, had major guest-worker programs, mostly attracting less-skilled immigrants (Heath et al., 2008, 227). Today, this may well reflect in the relatively low proportions of Higher Educational attainment of Belgium's second-generation immigrants.

In 2009, 37% of Luxembourg's population was foreign-born, which is by far the largest proportion among the EU countries (OECD, 2011, 385). The largest group stems from Portugal. Other important countries of origin are (in descending order) France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Serbia and Montenegro (OECD, 2011, 393). Portuguese and Italian immigrants were attracted by the booming Luxembourgian economy in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1960s, immigration from Portugal was eased by a guest-worker agreement, allowing bringing over immediate family members (Kollwelter, 2007). Thus, Luxembourg's first generation of immigrants will presumably have consisted, to a larger part, of relatively low-skilled persons, which could be mirrored by the relatively low educational attainment of second-generation immigrants today. In line with that interpretation, Kollwelter (2007) sees the problems of persons with an immigrant background in Luxembourg's education as a main challenge to integration. He emphasises that Luxembourg's school system has an enormous number of dropouts. As reasons, he highlights the socially selective character of the education system and the trilingual instruction at school. Proficiency in Luxembourgian, German, and French is required for graduation from secondary school, posing a high challenge to persons who spoke different languages at home.

Migration to Sweden after World War II can be divided in three different phases (cf. Westin, 2006). The first phase (1950s and 1960s) is characterised by labour migration from Finland and Southern Europe (e.g., Yugoslavia and Greece). Major migration flows in the second phase (1970s and 1980s) were due to family reunification on the one hand and large numbers of refugees, especially from Iran and Iraq due to war or prosecution, on the other hand. In the third phase (1990s until today), large numbers of persons emigrated from former Yugoslavia due to war and family reunification. Furthermore, numbers of asylum seekers from Iraq increased considerably after the US invasion in 2003. The ten main countries of origin of the stock of Sweden's foreign-born population today are (in descending order) Finland, Iraq, former Yugoslavia, Poland, Iran, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Turkey (OECD, 2011, 398). Sweden is one of the major countries when it comes to providing protection to refugees (cf. [www.mipex.eu/sweden](http://www.mipex.eu/sweden)), and a considerable proportion of immigrants to Sweden are refugees, asylum seekers, and their families. The main motivation for emigration of these groups is not social advancement. Many of them may see their stay as temporary. In addition, their resident status will often be insecure, being threatened by deportation. Sweden's integration policies of today are assessed quite positively in international comparison (cf.

www.mipex.eu/sweden).<sup>7</sup> Still, integration of refugees and asylum seekers may well prove more complex than for classical labour immigrants, which could be one of the reasons for relatively low rates of Higher Educational attainment of second-generation immigrants in Sweden.

In Estonia, a large Russian minority exists that has not been granted the Estonian citizenship after Estonia's independence in 1991 (OECD, 2011, 276). The overwhelming majority of non-citizens with a foreign citizenship are Russians (nearly 90%). Even though Estonia has made an effort to clarify citizenship issues, about 7.5% of the population still have an "undetermined citizenship" (ibid.). As shown in Fig. 2, second-generation immigrants in Estonia have a 79% chance of attaining Higher Education than persons without an immigrant background. Presumably, this documents to a large extent the relatively lower chances of Russians or other minorities of the former Soviet Union in Estonia.

Also, the PISA studies give some indication of the influence of the socioeconomic background. It must be noted that PISA refers to pupils of 2009, whereas the results presented in Fig. 2 above refer to persons that were aged 30-54 years at approximately the same time (2008). Still, the situation of today's secondary education may to some extent mirror the situation when the latter cohorts went to school. With that caveat in mind, we will look at some of the results for the countries discussed in this chapter. In most OECD countries, pupils with an immigrant background have a relatively low socioeconomic background. Of the 12 countries shown in Fig. 2, this relationship is particularly strong in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Germany (OECD, 2010c, 71). Overall performance of pupils with an immigrant background is below that of pupils without such a background in most OECD countries. Of the 12 countries shown above, this difference is particularly large in (in descending order) Belgium, Sweden, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. It is relatively small in Estonia, Ireland, and the UK (OECD, 2010c, 69). In nearly all countries participating in PISA, performance differences are getting smaller if the socioeconomic background is accounted for. Luxembourg is among those countries where the influence of the socioeconomic background on performance differences is particularly strong (OECD, 2010c, 71). In three of the four countries with significantly lower Higher Educational attainment (BE, LU, and SE; cf. Fig. 2), pupils with an immigrant background are more likely to attend schools with a more disadvantaged socioeconomic intake (OECD, 2010b, 80), whereas this is not the case for Ireland and the UK. Rather, for the UK and Ireland, it has been found that schools attended disproportionately high by pupils with an immigrant background have a relatively better student/teacher ratio (OECD, 2010b, 80).

In the next step, persons with one or both parents born abroad will be looked at separately.

#### **4.2.2 One or two parents born abroad – does a native parent make a difference?**

From a theoretical point of view (see above and chapter 2 of this volume), we would expect second-generation immigrants with one foreign parent to have comparably better chances of attaining Higher Education. If one parent is a native speaker of the language of the resident country, language abilities will presumably be as good as of persons with two native parents. No problems are to be expected caused by little knowledge of the educational system as the native parent will most likely know it by her or his own experience. Communication of the parents with educational personnel shouldn't be a difficulty as well. A native-foreign family will be comparably well integrated and share the culture of the resident country. Lastly, such a family is less likely to emigrate again and should be relatively highly motivated for long-term investments, such as education. On the contrary, persons with one native and one foreign parent have a more diverse cultural background and will often be bilingual, which may well prove advantageous for educational success.

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<sup>7</sup> Note, however, that also the Swedish immigration and asylum policies have been criticised by the Red Cross in 2005 as being too restrictive (Westin 2006).



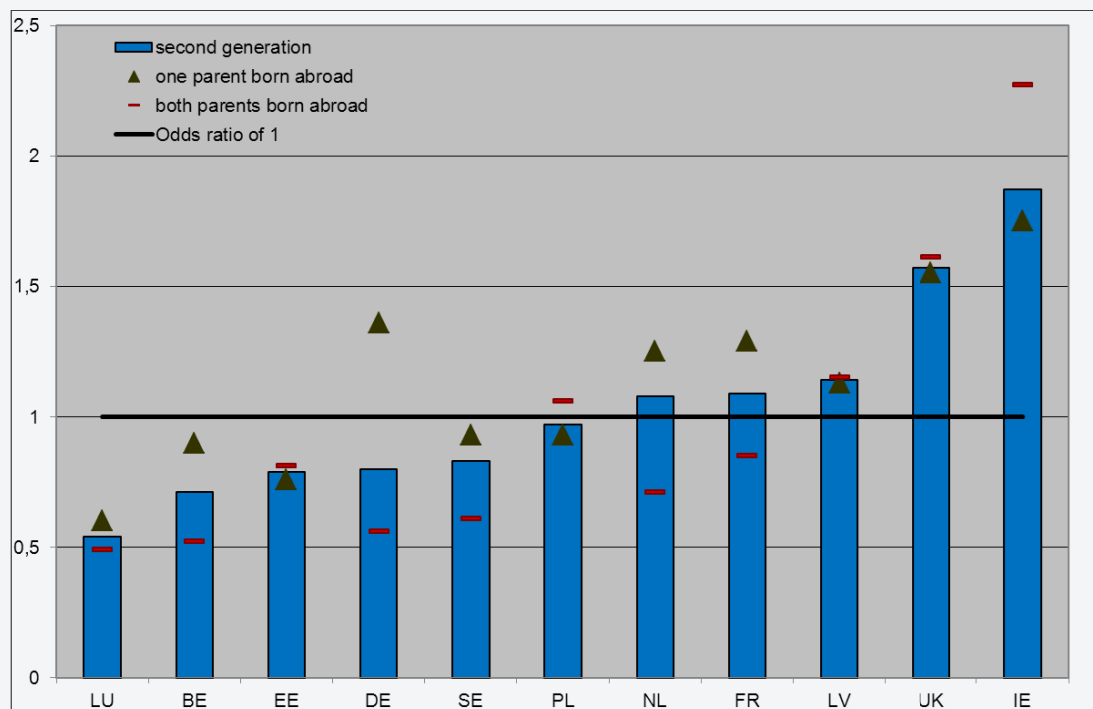


**Fig. 3 Proportions of second-generation immigrants with one or both parents born abroad (%; aged 30-54 years)**

Data unreliable in at least one category: AT, BG, CY, CZ, DK, ES, GR, HU, IT, LT, NO, PT, RO, SI, SK.

Source: EU-LFS, ad hoc module 2008, own calculations.

Comparing the composition of the second-generation immigrants across countries, we find three patterns: (1) in four countries (IE, NL, PL, and SE), between two thirds and three quarters of the second-generation immigrants have one native parent. (2) In five countries (BE, FR, LU, LV, and UK), more than half but less than two thirds have one native parent. (3) In two countries (DE and EE), for about two thirds of the second generation, both parents are born abroad.



**Fig. 4 Relative chances to obtain Higher Education (odds ratios): all second-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants with one or both parents born abroad (aged 30-54 years)**

Figures are odds ratios calculated by logistic regression models; control variables: sex, age, age squared.

Data unreliable in at least one category: AT, BG, CY, CZ, DK, ES, GR, HU, IT, LT, NO, PT, RO, SI, SK.

Source: EU-LFS, ad hoc module 2008, own calculations.

But does it really matter if second-generation immigrants have one or two parents born abroad and is the effect similar across countries? Fig. 4 shows that second-generation immigrants with one native parent by and large have better chance of obtaining Higher Education than those with two parents born abroad (for most countries, the black

triangles are above the red bars). This affirms our expectations but needs to be qualified as the result varies considerably across countries. For example, in Ireland, those with two parents born abroad seem to have better chances.

Table 1 reiterates the results pictured in Fig. 4. The first column presents again the odds ratios for the complete second-generation (equivalent to the height of the blue bars in Fig. 4). The stars next to the figures indicate whether the chance to attain Higher Education of second-generation immigrants deviates significantly from the chance of those without an immigrant background. As has been shown in Fig. 2 above, for six countries, significant differences can be observed with advantages for second-generation immigrants in Ireland and the UK and disadvantages in Belgium, Estonia, Luxembourg, and Sweden.

Columns (2) and (3) present the odds ratios for second-generation immigrants with one or both parents born abroad separately. Again, the reference group is the persons without an immigrant background. The stars indicate whether the differences between both groups of second-generation immigrants on the one hand and persons without an immigrant background on the other hand are statistically significant. First, we look at those with one native parent and one foreign-born parent (column (2)): second-generation immigrants with one native parent do not have significantly smaller chances for Higher Education than natives in all but one country investigated here (Luxembourg being the exception). In four countries (FR, IR, NL, and UK), they are even more likely to hold an academic degree. Looking at the group with two parents born abroad (column (3)) complements this picture: In six countries (BE, DE, EE, LU, NL, and SE), second-generation immigrants without a native parent have significantly smaller chances than people without an immigrant background. The two exceptions from this pattern are again Ireland and the UK.

Finally, it has been tested whether the chances of both groups of second-generation immigrants differ *from each other* significantly. The test results are shown in the last column: In five countries (BE, DE, LU, NL, and SE), the second-generation immigrants with both parents born abroad have significantly smaller chances to attain Higher Education than second-generation immigrants with one native parent.

**Table 1: Relative chances to obtain Higher Education (odds ratios): all second-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants with one or both parents born abroad (aged 30-54 years)**

Country	Odds ratios			X <sup>2</sup> -test for difference between (2) and (3)
	(1) second generation	(2) one parent born abroad	(3) both parents born abroad	
BE	0.71*	0.9	0.52*	Different
DE	0.80	1.36	0.56*	Different
EE	0.79*	0.76	0.81*	Not different
FR	1.09	1.29*	0.85	Different
IE	1.87*	1.75*	2.27*	Not different
LU	0.54*	0.6*	0.49*	Not different
LV	1.14	1.13	1.15	Not different
NL	1.08	1.25*	0.71*	Different
PL	0.97	0.93	1.06	Not different
SE	0.83*	0.93	0.61*	Different
UK	1.57*	1.55*	1.61*	Not different

\*) statistically significant at the 5% level; figures are odds ratios calculated by logistic regression models; control variables: sex, age, age squared. Data unreliable in at least one category: AT, BG, CY, CZ, DK, ES, GR, HU, IT, LT, NO, PT, RO, SI, SK.

Source: EU-LFS, ad hoc module 2008, own calculations.

How can these results be interpreted? In chapter 2 of this report and in the theoretical considerations above, it has been argued that the negative primary effects of an immigrant background are to be expected due to language problems. Furthermore, it has been argued that those with one native parent will presumably not differ much in their language abilities than persons without an immigrant background. The results shown in Table 1 confirm our

expectations and indicate the importance of language abilities for educational success. To qualify these results, keep in mind that only age and sex of respondents have been controlled for in the analysis. There may be other variables of influence, e.g., the social status of the parents. First-generation immigrants with a high social status may be more likely to marry a native person, and at the same time, their offspring has better chances to succeed in Higher Education.

Contrary to our expectations, in Ireland and the UK, second-generation immigrants with no native parent have significantly better chances for an academic degree than natives. However, in these countries, this is also the case for the second generation as a whole and for persons with one native parent. The groups of second-generation immigrants looked at here do not differ in this respect. From a theoretical point of view, we expected persons with one native parent to have relatively better chances as this group should face no or only minor language problems. Recall that by far the largest groups of immigrants in Ireland stems from the UK (OECD, 2011, 392). Obviously, for this group, no language problems should occur. Also, for the UK, many of the main countries of origin have English as first or second official language (OECD, 2011, 399).

All in all, the differences observed between second-generation immigrants with one or both parents born abroad as well as the country differences in this respect underscore the crucial role good command of the resident language has for educational success. However, there could be other reasons for the observed differences: Second-generation immigrants having one native parent will be, in all likelihood, more strongly embedded in the society of the resident country. Moreover, on average, they might have a higher socioeconomic background, which can't be controlled for in the analysis. Further research and better data would be needed to disentangle possible factors of explanation.

#### 4.2.3 Does the region of origin matter?

Finally, the group of second-generation immigrants will be differentiated by the region of origin of their parents. These regions are large groups of countries such as the EU15 (the 15 EU countries before the enlargement of the EU after the fall of the wall) or South and South East Asia. Obviously, this is less accurate than one would want to get but the anonymised data of the EU-LFS only offers such aggregations for data protection reasons. Still, even for these large regions, the number of available respondents mostly is too small to allow for reliable statistics. Therefore, the analysis will focus on just three countries: Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK. For these countries, at least two groups of immigrants can be analysed separately.

In all three countries, one main region of origin is the EU15. However, this label covers very different main countries of origin. Out of the EU15, main countries of origin for Germany are Italy and Greece (OECD, 2011, 390). For the Netherlands, main countries of origin within the EU15 are Germany, Belgium, and the UK (OECD, 2011, 394). For the UK, the countries are Ireland, Germany, and France (OECD, 2011, 399). This has to be kept in mind but it is no major drawback to the analysis, as we are more interested in the comparison of groups within one country than between countries.

**Table 2 Relative chances to obtain Higher Education (odds ratios): all second-generation immigrants and by region of origin of parents (aged 30-54 years)**

Country	Odds ratios			
	All second-gen. immigrants	EU15	Europe other than EU	South and South East Asia
<b>DE</b>	0.82	0.90	0.54*	--
<b>NL</b>	1.17*	1.06	--	1.24*
<b>UK</b>	1.52*	1.51*	--	1.89*

\*) statistically significant at the 5% level. Figures are odds ratios calculated by logistic regression models; control variables: sex, age, age squared.

Source: EU-LFS, ad hoc module 2008, own calculations.

The second important region of origin for Germany is Europe outside the EU. From official statistics, we know that by far the largest country of origin within this group is Turkey (OECD, 2011, 390). For the Netherlands and the UK, the second important region of origin is South and South East Asia. Again, the composition of this group will presumably differ between the two countries. For the UK, India is the main country of origin in the region, whereas it is Indonesia for the Netherlands (OECD, 2011, 394, 399).

The odds ratios in Table 2 show group differences for the Netherlands and Germany. Whereas in Germany second-generation immigrants with parents born in the EU15 do not have significantly smaller chances to obtain a Higher Education degree than their native peers, second-generation immigrants with parents stemming from countries outside the EU are only about half as likely to hold an academic degree than people without an immigrant background. In the Netherlands, second-generation immigrants with a background in the EU15 also do not differ from persons without an immigrant background. The group differentiation identifies a particularly successful group, which is the second-generation immigrants from South and South East Asia. This group is also considerably successful in the UK.

### 4.3 Conclusions

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The most obvious result of the analyses shown is the heterogeneity of the group of second-generation immigrants. Some groups have been shown to have significantly smaller chances to obtain Higher Education; others are not different from persons without an immigrant background. A third group has significantly better chances to access and succeed in Higher Education. Ignoring notable country differences, second-generation immigrants with two parents born abroad or with a background in certain regions have been shown to be specifically underprivileged with regard to Higher Education. Policies to support the access and success of second-generation immigrants in Higher Education need to identify those groups of immigrants specifically in need of support. Support initiatives should be targeted to these groups and tailor made for their needs.

Furthermore, the results hint to the crucial role language abilities play for educational success. It seems advisable that programmes for the support of immigrants in Higher Education should have a strong focus on improving command of the resident language.

Lastly, research has shown that the socioeconomic and educational background of persons strongly impacts the chance to obtain a Higher Education degree for both people with or without an immigrant background (e.g., Griga/Mühleck, 2011; for other references, see chapter 2 by Griga). It seems quite likely that for groups characterized by several disadvantageous factors, an immigrant background and a low socioeconomic and educational background could specifically gain from support programmes at the national level or at the level of individual Higher Education institutions.

# Chapter 5

# Selected case studies

## Authors

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## 5.1 Introduction (Klemen Miklavič, Chripa Schneller)

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The following chapter takes a closer look at students with an immigrant background in Higher Education in three countries: Germany, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

### *The choice of countries*

The countries were chosen for both theoretical and pragmatic reasons. As for the first, these countries show contrasting migration patterns in the period following World War Two until today. The Federal Republic of Germany had, for example, entered several bilateral agreements with Southern and Eastern European countries to meet labour shortages within its rapidly growing post-war economy, while migration to the UK was marked by its colonial history in vast parts of the world. Norway has seen a considerable leap forward in its economy and general wealth in the last decades, which was accompanied by the increasing necessity of labour force from abroad. The size of the immigrant population also differs markedly across these three countries, and, hence, also the percentage of students with an immigrant background across all educational sectors.

Pragmatic reasons for choosing these three cases comprise the availability of relatively advanced research at the national level in each of the cases. With the chosen cases, the authors aimed at illustrating the practice in the field of addressing the issue of students with an immigrant background in Higher Education. They should also be seen as a complement and understand the findings presented in previous chapters.

### *The structure of the case examples*

The country cases all follow a similar structure. First, the size of the tertiary student body with an immigrant background is determined. Since this will be a matter of definition, the commonly used classifications in each country, and specifically at the level of Higher Education, are introduced and critically reflected to answer the question “Who is a (HE) student with an ‘immigrant background’?”

Second, the main empirical findings on students with an immigrant background in national research are presented. In all case examples, access and transition to Higher Education, as well as retention in Higher Education, will be discussed on the basis of national data. “Does migration matter?,” as the second part of all case examples is entitled, will hence try to answer the question whether people with and without an immigrant background have equal chances to participate in Higher Education. It will summarise what we know about students with an immigrant background as a ‘group’ in each country.

The third section is dedicated to the possible interpretation and explication of the data. Conceptualisations deriving from the presented empirical findings in the selected countries and some hypotheses will be discussed. In this section, the authors draw on literature on the matter (students with an immigrant background in Higher Education) in the examined countries and compare the findings with the general literature on youth with immigrant background in other levels of education.

The fourth section will present examples of policy and practical initiatives in place to support students with an immigrant background, ranging from strategic frameworks at the national level to language support and tutoring at the institutional level. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the ways and approaches to which countries and institutions recur when dealing with the matter in question.

Each country case is concluded by final remarks, including an outline of the most characteristic findings and an outlook to a number of relevant issues identified in the examined countries.

The chapter will be rounded off by a discussion on challenges and opportunities in research and policy common to all three – and other European – countries.

### *Country cases as a complement to the statistical analyses*

The main benefit of presenting the country cases lies in the fact that there is a lack of internationally comparable data on students with an immigrant background in Higher Education. Chapter 4 of this report filled part of the knowledge gap based on data from the EU-LFS. The country cases complement the statistical analyses of Chapter 4 in focussing on the specific features of the countries in question, thus also exemplifying how national contexts vary. Looking at national research on student with an immigrant background will give a more detailed understanding of educational inequalities related to migration (see Chapter 2, Theoretical framework). Comparing the country cases will allow for identifying common challenges and opportunities, both for further research and action.

### ***The shortcomings of the country case studies***

Besides limited representativeness and comparability, the case studies present some additional shortcomings. First, the list of items discussed in the second part of the country cases (“Does migration matter”) is non-exhaustive. The perspective and the state of the art of research on students with an immigrant background in the various countries differ. As mentioned above, the minimum issues that are considered are access and transition to Higher Education (in most cases also the choice of subject), as well as retention in Higher Education.

Moreover, the report is limited to Higher Education (defined as academic tertiary education; see Chapter 3) and therefore largely neglects other educational levels. To sketch the full picture of students with an immigrant background in Higher Education, previous education experience (and pre-university attainment) would need to be considered. This is further discussed in Chapter 5.5. “Discussion of the case studies: main findings, challenges and opportunities.”

## **5.2 Students with an immigrant background in Higher Education – The German case (Chripa Schneller)**

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### **5.2.3 Definition: who has an “immigrant background”?**

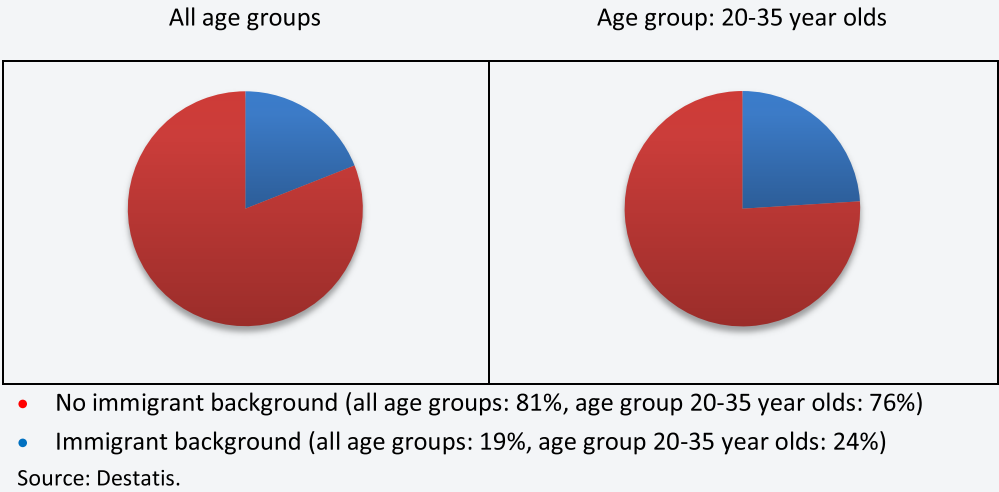
The Federal Republic of Germany, a country with a population of a little more than 80 million, has strongly been marked by migration in the past decades. In the 1950s and 1960s, it entered several bilateral agreements to meet labour shortages within its rapidly growing post-war economy. The first agreement on the recruitment of foreign workers – the so-called Anwerbeabkommen – was signed with Italy (1955) and followed by similar ones with Spain and Greece (both 1960), Turkey (1961), and Yugoslavia (1968). This targeted recruitment of workers, along with the subsequent immigration of their family members, as well as the inflow of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states (so-called Spät-Aussiedler) and the rising number of refugees and asylum seekers have led to a significant increase of the immigrant population in the country. Persons of Turkish provenance currently constitute the biggest group of the immigrant background population. It should also be noted that the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) had likewise reached accords with other (socialist) states, such as Poland (1965), Hungary (1967), Mozambique (1979), and Vietnam (1980), also to meet labour shortages. By the time of the German reunification in 1989, about 190.000 foreigners were registered in the GDR, of which ca. 90.000 contracted foreign workers. Approximately 60.000 of these were Vietnamese<sup>8</sup>.

Statistically, almost one fifth (19%) of the current German population is considered to have an “immigrant background.” This percentage is based on the definition by the German Federal Statistical Office within the framework of the Microcensus (a representative sample survey of the population and labour market in Germany). According to this definition, not only citizens with a foreign nationality are considered to have an “immigrant background,” but more broadly all those who have migrated to Germany after 1949 themselves or whose parents or

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<sup>8</sup> Hamburgisches WeltWirtschaftsinstitut (HWWI): focus MIGRATION Germany: <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/Germany.1509.0.html?&L=1>

grandparents have done so, regardless of their present nationality.<sup>9</sup> A German national with at least one grandparent with a (even previously) foreign nationality would hence be considered a person with an “immigrant background.”



**Fig. 5 Population with an Immigrant Background in Germany**

Applying this definition, the population with an immigrant background in Germany amounts to **19%**. Fig. 5 shows that, looking specifically at the age group of 20-35 year olds, it can be noted that almost one fourth of the population within this age group has an immigrant background, i.e., **24%**.

***Who is a “student with an immigrant background”?***

Stating the percentage and examining the specific situation of students with an immigrant background in German Higher Education poses a challenge. It should be noted first that, from a legal perspectives, foreign citizens with a German university entrance qualification (i.e., a German secondary education degree) are treated as equals to all German students since the mid-1990s. German Higher Education statistics, however, do not collect data on the immigrant background of students according to the above definition. They do not inquire and thus not reveal anything about the nationality of a student’s parents or even grandparents. The only distinction made in this regard is the nationality of students themselves. It is hence only possible (and necessary) to distinguish between two types of foreign students, next to German national students: 1) foreign, mobile students (often generally referred to as “international students,” who have “migrated” to Germany for the purpose of study) and 2) students with an immigrant background, who usually have a *German* university entrance qualification and whose parents may have migrated to Germany, but who have passed their previous education in Germany and have *not* migrated to Germany for the purpose of study. The official Higher Education data thus falls short of revealing how big the group of students with an immigrant background beyond the criterion of a student’s nationality really is.

There are, however, sample surveys to estimate the **number of students with an immigrant background in German Higher Education**. One of them is produced by the German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW) and Hochschul-Informationen-System (HIS).<sup>10</sup> The main criterion to distinguish “international students” (foreign, mobile students) from students with an immigrant background is the country, where students have obtained their university entrance qualification. Next to those that are registered at the university level according to their nationality, i.e., the above-mentioned foreigners (non-Germans) with a German university entrance qualification, three further groups of students with an immigrant background are considered in the DSW/HIS definition:

<sup>9</sup> DESTATIS: <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/MigrationIntegration.html>

<sup>10</sup> Isserstedt, W. et al. 2010. Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage der Studierenden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2009. 19. Sozialerhebung des DSW durchgeführt durch HIS Hochschul-Informationen-System, BMBF, Berlin, Bonn, 2010, retrieved at [www.sozialerhebung.de](http://www.sozialerhebung.de)

- a) students who have a second nationality other than German (dual citizens);
- b) students who did not receive German citizenship at the time of birth, but have acquired it in the course of their life (naturalised citizens);
- c) students who have at least one parent who does not have German citizenship (national citizens with at least one non-national parent).

The DSW/HIS sample survey has been carried out on a three-year since 2005. The latest survey (published in 2009) is based on ca. 16.000 questionnaires completed by students in German Higher Education institutions. According to this sample, the percentage of students with an immigrant background population amounts to **11%**.

The second most commonly used source to estimate the number of students with an immigrant background in Germany is a Microcensus data extrapolation.<sup>11</sup> The percentage of the group of students with an immigrant background identified by this means is **16%**.

The difference between these two may arise mainly from the fact that the Microcensus data consider the nationality of grandparents as well, while the DSW/HIS sample is based on parents' nationality. Other factors may be the variance in response rates according to subject area, social origin, etc., in the DSW/HIS data set.

What is most important to notice from both sample data sets is that the group of students with an immigrant background is *underrepresented* in Higher Education (11 or 16%), as compared to the percentage of people with an immigrant background in the overall population (19%). The difference is more striking if the age group of 20-35 year olds is considered as reference (24%).

## 5.2.2 Does immigration matter? Empirical findings

The available data on the number of tertiary education students with an immigrant background is limited. Three points, for which quantitative data is available and which seem to indicate that students with an immigrant background as a group deviate from those without, are chosen here to discuss the impact of an immigrant background on Higher Education paths. These points are 1) access to Higher Education, 2) choice of subject, and 3) dropout rates. They are non-exhaustive and provide the groundwork for the question dealt with in the following section: If migration does matter, *how* does it impact and what are adequate ways to support students with an immigrant background?

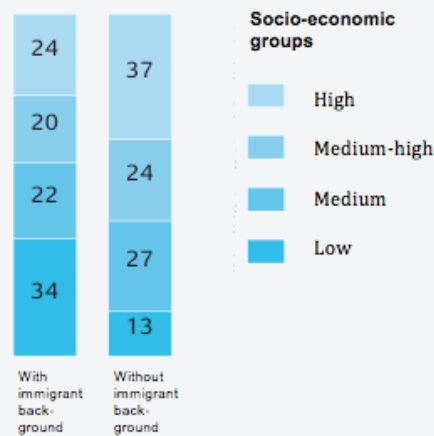
### 1) Access to Higher Education

DSW/HIS and Microcensus extrapolation data show, as stated in the previous section, that students with an immigrant background are underrepresented in Higher Education. To some degree, the underrepresentation of students with an immigrant background can be explained, however, by other factors, namely, the social background of students. The DSW/HIS sample shows that students with an immigrant background are more likely than non-immigrant background students to be from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (see Graph 2). As laid out in the preceding EQUINET publication, it can be stated that students from low socioeconomic background are generally underrepresented in Higher Education (Griga/Mühleck, 2010, 45 ff).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2010): Bildung in Deutschland 2010. Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zu Perspektiven des Bildungssystems im demographischen Wandel. Bertelsmann, Bielefeld.

<sup>12</sup> For an overview of theories of social differentiation in higher education, see: Griga, D. and Mühleck, K. 2010. "Access to HE and Socioeconomic Background", in A. F. Camilleri und K. Mühleck (eds.): *Evolving Diversity. An Overview of Equitable Access to HE in Europe*, Menon: 45-61.



**Fig. 6 Students in German Higher Education according to immigrant background and socioeconomic status (First course, in %)**

Source: DSW/HIS, 19. Sozialerhebung.

Few studies have been carried out to examine the transition of students with an immigrant background from secondary to Higher Education in Germany. Most of them look at a group of students with a *particular* immigrant background. Kristen et al. show, for example, that students with a Turkish immigrant background are more likely to pursue Higher Education once they have successfully obtained a Higher Education entrance qualification than their non-migrant counterparts.<sup>13</sup> It must be noted that the German secondary school system is rather selective as it classically separates students after grade four into various tracks. Only the highest track leads to the “Abitur,” the German Higher Education entrance qualification. According to the national statistical office, ca. 47% of a cohort obtains Higher Education eligibility each year<sup>14</sup> (year of reference: 2007).

Heine et al. have carried out one of the very few studies that examine the transition to Higher Education of *all* those students with an immigrant background, who have obtained the German “Abitur,” i.e., the secondary school certificate granting direct access to Higher Education (Heine et al., 2006).<sup>15</sup> They further distinguish this group of students according to the language they speak at home. Their findings show that students *not* speaking German at home are the most likely to continue to pursue Higher Education, instead of vocational training or directly seeking employment, for example, 83% of this group enrol in Higher Education – as opposed to 70% of all those holding a university entrance qualification. The ambition to study is also above-average among those that speak German, next to a second language, at home (75%). It can thus be noted that “the less pronounced the linguistic integration of students with an immigrant background (among those with a university entrance qualification, CS), the higher their ambition to pursue in Higher Education” (Heine et al., 2006, S. 26, translated CS). What sounds like a paradox can best be explained by the “intensity of pre-selection in the (German) educational system” (ibidem). As Karakasoglu points out, however, there is a strong need for education counselling for students from non-academic backgrounds, in particular for students with an immigrant background, who are often less familiar with the German Higher Education system.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See: Cornelia Kristen, D. Reimer, I. Kogan, 2008: Higher Education Entry of Turkish Immigrant Youth in Germany. In: International Journal of Comparative Sociology 49 (2-3) 2008, S. 128-151

<sup>14</sup> Bundesamt 2008a: Bildung und Kultur: Nichtmonetäre hochschulstatistische Kennzahlen 1980-2007. Wiesbaden

<sup>15</sup> Heine, C., Spangenberg, H., Sommer, D., 2006: „Studienberechtigte 2004: Übergang in Studium, Ausbildung und Beruf“, HIS Kurz-Information 5.

<sup>16</sup> Karakaşoğlu, Y./Nieke, W. (2002): Benachteiligung durch kulturelle Zugehörigkeit?, in: Weegen, Michael/Böttcher, Wolfgang/Bellenberg, Gabi/van Ackeren, Isabell (Hrsg.): Bildungsforschung und Politikberatung. Schule, Hochschule und Berufsbildung an der Schnittstelle von Erziehungswissenschaft und Politik, Weinheim und München 2002, S. 199-218



## 2) Choice of subject

DSW/HIS data and other (mainly regional) studies show that students with an immigrant background are underrepresented in certain subject areas. According to DSW/HIS data, they are, for example, less often enrolled in law, economics, and medicine, while they are overrepresented in law, business, and economic sciences (Isserstedt et al., 2010, S. 508). Furthermore, there are differences between students with a specific kind of an immigrant background. As mentioned in the first part of the article, the DSW/HIS data collected categorises students with an immigrant background in four groups: a) foreign students with a German secondary school leaving certificate (“Bildungsinländer”); b) students who have a second nationality other than German (dual citizens); c) students who did not receive German citizenship at the time of birth but have acquired it in the course of their life (naturalised citizens); and d) students who have at least one parent who does not have German citizenship (national citizens with at least one non-national parent). Groups a) and c) – “Bildungsinländer” and naturalised citizens – opt most markedly for law, business, and economic sciences, whereas dual citizens and students with one non-national German parent are overrepresented in linguistic or cultural studies, natural sciences, social sciences, educational sciences, and psychology. In Germany, there has further been an increased concern about teacher training, as persons with an immigrant background are underrepresented in the teaching professions, while classrooms are becoming more marked by the presence of students with an immigrant background. There are a few, often regional or local studies to examine the particular situation of students with an immigrant background in pedagogical courses.

While there are a few specific studies examining the choice of subject by particular groups of students with an immigrant background, in general, there is little knowledge about why certain subject areas are chosen less or more often by students with an immigrant background and what the relationship between the migration history and general socioeconomic factors in this decision is. Many subject areas, in which students with an immigrant background are underrepresented, are also those in which students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are generally represented below average.<sup>17</sup> Leenen/Grosch/Kreidt (1999) and a few others, however, have analysed the situation for specific immigrant groups and were able to show that students with an immigrant background are often faced with the challenge of “self-positioning,” i.e., of taking educational path decisions without specific guidance. With a view to the non-academic background of their parents, and with their unfamiliarity with the *German* tertiary education system, these students are thus in need of targeted academic counselling, also with a view to subject areas and types of Higher Education institutions.

## 3) Dropout rates, change of course

The DAAD/HIS study “Bildungsinländer 2011” was able to show that students with an immigrant background in Germany are more likely to drop out of Higher Education or to change courses than those without.<sup>18</sup> The authors write that “four in ten students with an immigrant background, who started studying mainly between 2002 and 2004 (reference group are graduates in 2008) are leaving the university without a first degree” (DAAD/HIS, 2011, S. 50, translation CS). It must be noted, however, that for the lack of available data “students with an immigrant background” are understood here as foreign nationals with a German university entrance qualification, thus neglecting those who are German nationals with a family migration history.

To date, there are only theories about why students with an immigrant background drop out or change courses more often. This could be linked to socioeconomic factors (students with an immigrant background are more likely to be self-funded, they might lack support on academic orientation/information by their families and friends, etc.).

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<sup>17</sup> DSW/HIS 2010.

<sup>18</sup> DAAD: „Bildungsinländer 2011 - Daten und Fakten zur Situation von ausländischen Studierenden mit deutscher Hochschulzugangsberechtigung.“ Bonn 2011.

### 5.2.3 Interpretation of the data

This section is dedicated to the possible ways of interpreting, i.e., reading, the data presented in the previous one. As the data and studies presented show, students with an immigrant background deviate from their German peers in terms of transition from secondary to Higher Education, choice of subject, and dropout/change-course behaviour. It should be noted again that the chosen points are non-exhaustive. The question at the core of this section is whether it is migration that matters in the transition to Higher Education or whether it is *nurture rather than nature* that counts, so for example whether socioeconomic factors are predominant. The question is decisive in identifying ways to support disadvantaged groups effectively.

As the data shows, students with an immigrant background are, on the one hand, underrepresented in Higher Education; on the other hand, they seem more ambitious to pursue Higher Education once they have obtained a Higher Education entrance qualification. In reading these findings, we need to consider various aspects. For one, as Heine et al. mentioned, the group of students having passed successfully through previous educational levels constitute a preselected group (Heine et al., 2006). In this vein, the selection and exclusion in Germany would occur at earlier stages of the education path. In fact, education statistics show that the majority of children with immigrant background, most prominently the largest group, i.e., students of Turkish descent, terminate their educational path at the end of compulsory level or without any qualification, are more likely to drop out of vocational training, and are generally underrepresented at the highest-track secondary school, which award the “Abitur,” i.e., the university entrance qualification (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2010).<sup>19</sup> Another way of reading the data proposes that while immigrant families more often belong to lower socioeconomic groups, their children anticipate and internalise their expectations to a high degree (Nauck, 1997).<sup>20</sup> They are thus motivated to pursue Higher Education to compensate the sacrifices made by their parents in migrating. A third way of reading the higher ambitions to study among the group of immigrant students at the end of secondary education, with a view to the seemingly lower socioeconomic status of their families, would be to re-assess the educational level of their parents more closely. As Bathke has shown for children born before 1989 in the former German Democratic Republic, their seemingly higher motivation to study – with socioeconomic factors accounted for – is partly due to the formally lower assessed highest qualifications and current occupational status of their parents.<sup>21</sup> *immigrant* parents might have an academic background, which is not recognised formally, and are thus working in lower-ranked professions. They would, however, motivate their children more strongly to pursue Higher Education. A last, but not to be neglected way of reading would be to consider the alternative choices of secondary school graduates with a Higher Education entrance qualification, “Abitur.” Kristen et al. write for students of Turkish descent, for example, that the high likeliness of these graduates to pursue Higher Education can also be explained by the fact that they are not as familiar with the alternative options, such as to pursue vocational training (at ISCED 5b level)<sup>22</sup> after they have obtained their “Abitur.” This would also offer a possible explanation why this group is more likely to study in classical universities rather than at other types of Higher Education (universities of applied sciences, Berufsakademie). Kristen et al. showed that this group prefers traditional subjects, which are more often offered by traditional universities.

The mentioned considerations in interpreting the underrepresentation, on the one hand, and the high transition rate, on the other hand, should also be taken into account when examining the effect of an immigrant background

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<sup>19</sup> Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2010: Bildung in Deutschland 2010. Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zu Perspektiven des Bildungssystems im demographischen Wandel. Bertelsmann: Bielefeld.

<sup>20</sup> Bernhard Nauck, (1997): Intergenerative Konflikte und gesundheitliches Wohlbefinden in türkischen Familien. Ein interkultureller und interkontextueller Vergleich, In: Nauck, Bernhard & Schönplüg, Ute: Familien in verschiedenen Kulturen. Der Mensch als soziales und personales Wesen; Bd. 13, Stuttgart: F. Enke Verlag, S. 324-354.

<sup>21</sup> Gustav W. Bathke, Jochen Schreiber, 1997: Soziale Herkunft deutscher Studienanfänger. HIS-Kurzinformation A 11/97, Hochschul-Informationen-System GmbH, Hannover.

<sup>22</sup> Cornelia Kristen, D. Reimer, I. Kogan, 2008: Higher Education Entry of Turkish Immigrant Youth in Germany. In: International Journal of Comparative Sociology 49 (2-3) 2008, S. 128-151.

on the choice of subject and dropouts as well. For the issue of dropouts or change of course, in particular, there is little consolidated knowledge about how these patterns are marked by an immigrant background. As mentioned before, this could be linked more strongly to socioeconomic factors (students are more likely to be self-funded, fewer academic role models, etc.). By way of an interim summary, it can be said that it is not entirely clear *how* migration matters in the transition to and successful completion of Higher Education. Undoubtedly, there is a need for academic counselling for students from non-academic backgrounds, in particular for those with an immigrant background whose families are unfamiliar with the *German* system of education, or whose first language is not German. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that socioeconomic factors, such as family income or parents' education, can be highly relevant issues, too. As Schindler and Reimer<sup>23</sup> write in their study on social selectivity in German Higher Education, "We find that scholastic performance, expected job security, study duration, monetary costs and preferences for study content considerably contribute to the creation of socially selective choice patterns of post-secondary careers" (Schindler/Reimer, 2011, 261).

#### 5.2.4 Initiatives to support tertiary students with an immigrant background in Germany

The following section provides an introduction to some initiatives in Germany that are targeted to support students with an immigrant background in Higher Education. Most of the presented initiatives are of a fairly young date, many of them are not even five years old. Some are implemented at national/regional, most of them at the institutional level.

The initiatives presented are grouped by thematic areas: 1) access to Higher Education; 2) mentoring during studies; 3) mentoring at the transition to the labour market, 4) supporting multilingualism; and 5) tailor-made programmes for "multinationals." It should be noted that the overview is not exhaustive but serves to give an idea of the kind of initiatives offered. The overview is based on the publication of a cluster workshop organised by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees<sup>24</sup> in 2011 and on a second cluster meeting "Migration – Mentoring – Bildung" organised by the University of Frankfurt<sup>25</sup> (project "Migmento," see below), also in 2011.

##### 1) Access to Higher Education

The following two projects are exemplary for some more that are designed to counsel secondary education students with an immigrant background and to support them in the transition to Higher Education:

- Project "MiCoach," University of Bremen<sup>26</sup>: the idea of this locally rooted initiative is to provide secondary education students with a mentor, who is a student at the University of Bremen. Further to personal insights to academic life and counselling on the choice of career, mentees are supported in the preparation for final secondary school exams and receive German language training, if necessary. In fact, the project is targeted at students with an immigrant background and at those whose mother tongue is not German.
- Project "Warum denn nicht?" ("Why not?"), University of Oldenburg<sup>27</sup>: this project, which is also institution-based, strives to encourage secondary school students with an immigrant background to pursue a Higher Education track via workshops and counselling. It also offers coaching to current students and soon-to-be graduates with an immigrant background.

##### 2) Mentoring during studies

<sup>23</sup> Steffen Schindler und David Reimer: Differentiation and social selectivity in German higher education. Higher Education. The International Journal of Higher Education Research, 2011: 61, Heft 3. S. 261-275.

<sup>24</sup> Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF), 2011: Integration von Studierenden mit Migrationshintergrund an deutschen Hochschulen. Bestandsaufnahme und Vernetzung (Vernetzungsworkshop). BAMF Nürnberg.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.gesellschaftswissenschaften.uni-frankfurt.de/studierende/migmento/termine/netzwerktagung.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.fb12.uni-bremen.de/de/interkulturelle-bildung/vertikal/projekte/mi-coach.html>

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.studentenwerk-oldenburg.de/psb/migration\\_bildung/index.html](http://www.studentenwerk-oldenburg.de/psb/migration_bildung/index.html)

While initiatives supporting students with an immigrant background in Higher Education are limited in numbers, mentoring projects for students with an immigrant background are the most common kind in Germany. The specific designs of the projects are highly diverse and reflect the different situations at Higher Education institutions in Germany. Some focus on providing academic guidance; others also provide financial support. The following examples are noteworthy:

- Project “Migmento,” University of Frankfurt<sup>28</sup>: this one-to-one mentoring initiative by the University of Frankfurt is targeted at students with an immigrant background in their first three semesters (mentees) and students with or without an immigrant background who have already studied for at least five semesters (mentors). Mentors and mentees are grouped by subject areas (e.g., natural sciences and medicine). The project also offers joint workshop and is geared towards reducing the high dropout rates of students with an immigrant background through personal counselling and group work.

Two similar projects worth mentioning here are the “Cross Cultural Mentoring” programme by the Berlin School of Economics<sup>29</sup> and the “Akademigra” project by the University of Passau.<sup>30</sup>

As mentioned in the previous section, there is currently a particular focus on teacher training in Germany and there are several initiatives to support students with an immigrant background in pedagogical courses, such as the one offered by the University of Hamburg:

- Project “ProSmile,” University of Hamburg<sup>31</sup>: In Hamburg, a city where almost 50% of all secondary school students have an immigrant background, students with an immigrant background are encouraged to become teachers and are supported during their university studies via the “ProSmile” project. The project offers support in scientific work (writing papers, etc.), language training, also with a view to multicultural classrooms, coaching (also for jobs during studies), and basic financial support.

Another initiative targeted at students with an immigrant background in teacher training is “Migramentor,” a joint project by the Humboldt University Berlin and Free University Berlin.

Furthermore, the private “Hertie-Stiftung” (Hertie Foundation) offers a national scholarship programme, for which students with an immigrant background, who are studying to become teachers, are eligible.

- Project “Horizonte,” Hertie Foundation: the project offers monetary support as well as tutoring for students in pedagogical courses or in their practical training to become teachers. The rationale is to lessen the discrepancy of primary and secondary school students with an immigrant background (almost 1/3 of all students) and teachers with an immigrant background (less than 5%).

### 3) Mentoring at the transition to the labour market

The University of Hildesheim offers a mentoring programme to specifically support the transition to the labour market:

- Project “ProKarriere Mentoring,” University of Hildesheim<sup>32</sup>: aimed at enhancing the employability of students and at fostering intercultural dialogue, this project offers one-to-one mentoring for students, who are matched with experienced mentors. Elements of the project are cluster workshops on career planning, “career-talks,” and group coaching. The project wishes to support students with an immigrant background in

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.gesellschaftswissenschaften.uni-frankfurt.de/studierende/migmento/index.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.hwr-berlin.de/service/career-service/mentoring/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://akademigra.net/akademigra-uberblick/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.epb.uni-hamburg.de/de/ProSMiLe>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.uni-hildesheim.de/index.php?id=3617>

particular, but is open at the same time to any student and mentor with or without an immigrant background.

#### 4) Supporting multilingualism

While the previous initiatives were designed to help meet specific challenges faced by students with an immigrant background, fewer projects are planned to exploit the opportunities that an immigrant background may entail, namely, the multilingual and multicultural disposition of these students.

- Project “PunktUm - Profilbildung und Mehrsprachigkeit für Studierende mit Migrationshintergrund” (Supporting multilingualism), University of Bielefeld<sup>33</sup>: while offering general counselling and guidance, the project is unique in its offering “Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency” training for students with an immigrant background. Currently, courses are offered in Turkish, Polish, and Russian, while at the same time students are supported in academic writing skills in German as their second language.

#### 5) Tailor-made programmes for “multinationals”

Programme “Secondos,” University of Regensburg<sup>34</sup>: “Secondos” is a term used in Switzerland to refer to the second (or third) generation of immigrants, thus to people with an immigrant background. The “Secondos” programme at the University of Regensburg is specifically designed for students who have a multicultural family background and who speak – at least basically – the language of their parents’ country of origin. It currently offers double degrees with – or at least the possibility of study periods at – partner universities in Croatia, Poland, Rumania, Russia, Ukraine, and Hungary.

### 5.2.5 Concluding remarks

This article explained how the term “immigrant background” is defined in the Federal Republic of Germany, both with regard to the overall population and with a view to tertiary education students in particular. Empirical findings from national research on the latter group, focusing on the issues of access/transition to Higher Education, choice of subject, as well as dropout/change of course, were presented. These findings were discussed according to their possible conceptualisation: how does an immigrant background specifically impact on student behaviour? In the last part of this article, some initiatives in place, which are geared towards supporting students with an immigrant background in Germany, were highlighted.

#### *Considerations for further research*

A challenge, which was only peripherally touched upon, but lies at the core of the debate in Germany, is the difference in performance of youth with an immigrant background in the previous levels of schooling. The OECD PISA studies attest Germany a high degree of impermeability within its multi-tier secondary school system and show that students with an immigrant background are overrepresented at the lowest schools and perform below average.<sup>35</sup> The cumulative effect of inequalities, also arising from social marginalisation, needs to be kept in mind in any further research looking at any specific part of the educational system. As pointed out, less than 50% of an age cohort obtains a direct Higher Education entrance qualification in Germany.

With a view to students with an immigrant background in Higher Education, the article showed that the topic in Germany is reasonably well covered in terms of empirical studies, in particular if compared to other (European) countries. Some clear patterns of the access and attainment of immigrant students in Higher Education could be

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<sup>33</sup> [www.uni-bielefeld.de/punktum/mehrsprachigkeit](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/punktum/mehrsprachigkeit)

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.uni-regensburg.de/europaeum/studium/secondos/index.html>

<sup>35</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2003, Where Immigrant Students Succeed: A Comparative Review of Performance and Engagement in PISA 2003, Paris: OECD.



identified. However, it must be noted that such patterns can only describe, not explain, the influence of an immigrant background on students' choices. Critical reflection is also needed as regards the varying definitions of the term "immigrant background." As described, some of the studies mentioned recur to the criterion of nationality for statistical analysis. The underlying challenge is the availability of data, which has been discussed at other points of this report as well (see Chapter 3). It is not clear whether findings based on the criterion of nationality can be generalised for students with German citizenship and an immigrant background, for example, according to the definition used by DSW/HIS (see section I).

As discussed in section III of this article, *further research is needed to draw valid conclusions* from our current knowledge about students with an immigrant background in German Higher Education. For example, the demonstrated higher ambitions to pursue Higher Education upon successful completion of upper secondary school levels need to be examined a) within the context of preceding educational levels and b) with a view to individual education and learning paths in the wider context of other social factors such as educational level and economic resources, as well as how students are socially embedded in the academic context (cf. Tinto, 2008).<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, what is true of preceding educational levels also holds good for c) employment trajectories, i.e., access to, attainment, and retention in the labour market. There is still rather limited research on students with an immigrant background in Germany dedicated to these aspects. This would be necessary to sketch the full picture of educational inequalities with a view to the effects of migration. On a different, yet relevant note, Esser (2008) regards the d) size of specific immigrant groups as a relevant factor for the process of assimilation/ acculturation.<sup>37</sup> This might also need to be considered in further examining students with an immigrant background in Higher Education.

What is missing in most studies on this "group" of students is a reflection on e) the effects of ascription, produced by the use of the term and the classification of students according to "with and without and immigrant background." On the basis of current research, no conclusions can be drawn as to whether and how students pertaining to the group "with an immigrant background" perceive this characteristic as meaningful in their decisions and how these students position themselves in the public discourse on the effects of migration. Mecheril writes that by using the term "migrants" (or immigrants), we might, unintentionally, position members of the group at an inferior position, ascribing them specific qualities arising from their immigrant background (cf. Mecheril, 2011, Migrationspädagogik<sup>38</sup>).

### ***Considerations for policy support***

Section IV gave an initial overview of some initiatives in place to support students with an immigrant background in German Higher Education. As shown, most of these initiatives are focused on mentoring during studies, which is explained by the fact that dropout rates among this group are above average. In Germany, there is presently a strong focus on teacher training. With a view to increasingly intercultural classrooms, several initiatives are geared towards attracting (and retaining) students with an immigrant background in the teaching professions.

The challenges in support initiatives, which are certainly also true for other countries, comprise the following:

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<sup>36</sup> Tinto, V. and Engle, J., 2008: *Moving Beyond Access: College Success for Low Income, First-Generation Students*. The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, Washington D.C.

<sup>37</sup> Hartmut Esser, 2008: Assimilation, ethnische Schichtung oder selektive Akkulturation? Neuere Theorien der Eingliederung von Migranten und das Modell der intergenerationalen Integration. In: Kalter, F. (Hg.): *Migration und Integration*. Sonderheft 48 der Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie. Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, S. 81-107.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Mecheril, María do Mar Castro Varela, Inci Dirim, Annita Kalpaka, Claus Melter: *Migrationspädagogik*. Reihe: Bachelor-Master. Beltz Verlag, Weinheim und Basel, 2010.

- a) The granting of support without excluding other groups, which are in need of support for the same underlying reasons (e.g., students from low socioeconomic backgrounds *without* an immigrant background). Support measures should clearly identify why they are provided for students with an immigrant background in particular. Language support, for example, if labelled academic writing and provided on the basis that students with an immigrant background are usually from non-academic families, might easily be interpreted as positive discrimination against students without an immigrant background, but with no academic family traditions either. Targeted support might need to consider the bilingual competences of students, or anticipate challenges that are indeed caused by an immigrant background, often due to outwardly visible characteristics such as name, appearance, and accent. Such challenges might be discrimination or biases on the labour market, but also within the Higher Education system. In general, if it is not possible to state that the need for support arises *solely* on the basis of an immigrant background, such initiatives should strive to remain open to students with similar needs, e.g., students from low socioeconomic backgrounds *without* an immigrant background. Two projects, which can be cited as good practice examples, as they strive for a balance between targeted support and openness, are “ProKarriere Mentoring” by the University of Hildesheim and the “Cross Cultural Mentoring” programme by the Berlin School of Economics.
- b) How to sensitize for challenges of students with an immigrant background without stigmatising this “group”? Reversing the considerations on exclusion, i.e., the inclusion of students as members of a specific group, also needs to be thought through. Support initiatives should be designed bearing in mind that students with an immigrant background might not feel equally addressed by the support offered to this diverse group. While clearly there is need for support, such as academic counselling, the communication of the offer with a view to the public discourse on the effects migration should be handled with care. As stated above, with a view to further research, the issue of ascription of specific qualities arising from an immigrant background needs to be considered carefully in initiatives aimed at supporting students with an immigrant background in Higher Education.

In concluding these reflections, which focused on Germany as a case example, also with a view to other countries, one might find inspiration in another field. They say that good architecture should aim for an equity between the pragmatic and the symbolic function. Maybe in pursuing equity in education, we might also need to aim for an equity between the pragmatic and the symbolic values of initiatives to achieve it.

## 5.3 Students with an immigrant background in Higher Education – The Norwegian case (Anthony F. Camilleri, Klemen Miklavič)

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### 5.3.1 Definition: who has an “immigrant background”?

Norwegian reports and statistics make reference to ‘immigrants’ and to ‘descendants’, which are equivalent to the more commonly used terms first-generation immigrants and second-generation immigrants, with the former referring to persons not born in Norway with two parents born abroad, and the latter referring to persons whose mother and father were born abroad, but who were born in Norway themselves. Unless otherwise indicated, this chapter uses these understandings of the terms throughout. The overwhelming majority of immigrants come from non-Western backgrounds, while only 0.6% come from Western backgrounds<sup>39</sup> (Støren, 2009), meaning that most studies tend to dismiss this group as statistically insignificant or focus predominantly on students from non-Western backgrounds.

In recent years, the majority of Norway’s population growth has been driven by immigration, without which the overall population would have contracted. According to Statistics Norway, 655.170 immigrants (or 13.2% of the population) were part of the immigrant population in 2012, of which 407.262 had claimed Norwegian citizenship.

#### *Characteristics of the immigrant population*

According to 2009 statistics presented by Statistics Norway, and quoted in the OECD Country Background Report on Norway, as part of its Thematic Review on Migrant Education, total participation in working life in the population above 15 years of age is 70%, with participation in working life being highest in the 35-49 age group, that is, 84% (OECD, 2009). The percentage of employed persons is higher among men than women, 73% and 67% respectively.

The percentage of employed among non-Western immigrants is 54%. This percentage varies considerably by origin, with the rate of employment amongst African immigrants being as low as 45%, while that of South Americans reaches 63%.

In the total population of the group of people with joint children, the percentage of active participation in working life is 87%. A total of 85% of the married couples with children are employed, while there is 75% participation in working life among singles with children.

Among non-Western cohabiting immigrants, 67% are employed. Among the married couples with children, 59% are employed, while in the category of singles 46% are employed. There are significant differences between different ethnic groups, which parallel those described above.

Children from an immigrant background are clearly more at risk of living in households with less financial resources than what children in general are. The most recent data suggest that children with an immigrant background from Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, or Latin America face a risk of living in a household with persistent low income that is five to six times higher than children in general. Of the total number of children in low-income households in Norway, 40% are children with an immigrant background (OECD, 2009). The immigrant children therefore are likely to originate in the less well-off groups in society, which brings up the issue of socioeconomic factor when looking at the immigrant population and to the question on relationship between ethnic origin and socioeconomic status affecting their lives and educational paths (see below).

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<sup>39</sup> Countries defined as “Western” in this chapter cover those of Northern Europe, Western Europe, and Southern Europe as defined by the United Nations Statistics Division.

5.3.2 Does immigration matter? Empirical findings

Although there is some tradition in researching the immigrant participation in Higher Education, there is more emphasis on the impact of an immigrant background on earlier schooling. There is also room for more empirical research in the field of labour and employment. Statistics are available for students who completed upper secondary education, and a study by NIFUStep (Støren, 2009) has observed the 1999/2000 cohort of upper secondary immigrants over the course of their studies until 2008. This study is the main data source of this chapter as it is a recent and comprehensive treatment of access, participation, and completion of Higher Education for persons with an immigrant background in Norway

1) Access to Higher Education

In Norway, immigrant-background students (graduates from the upper secondary level education) are over-represented compared to their ethnic Norwegian counterparts. Thus, according to Støren (2009), the following data is found for the 1999-2000 and 2002-2003 periods:

Table 3 Access to HE for Norwegian vs first and second generation non-Western students in Norwaw

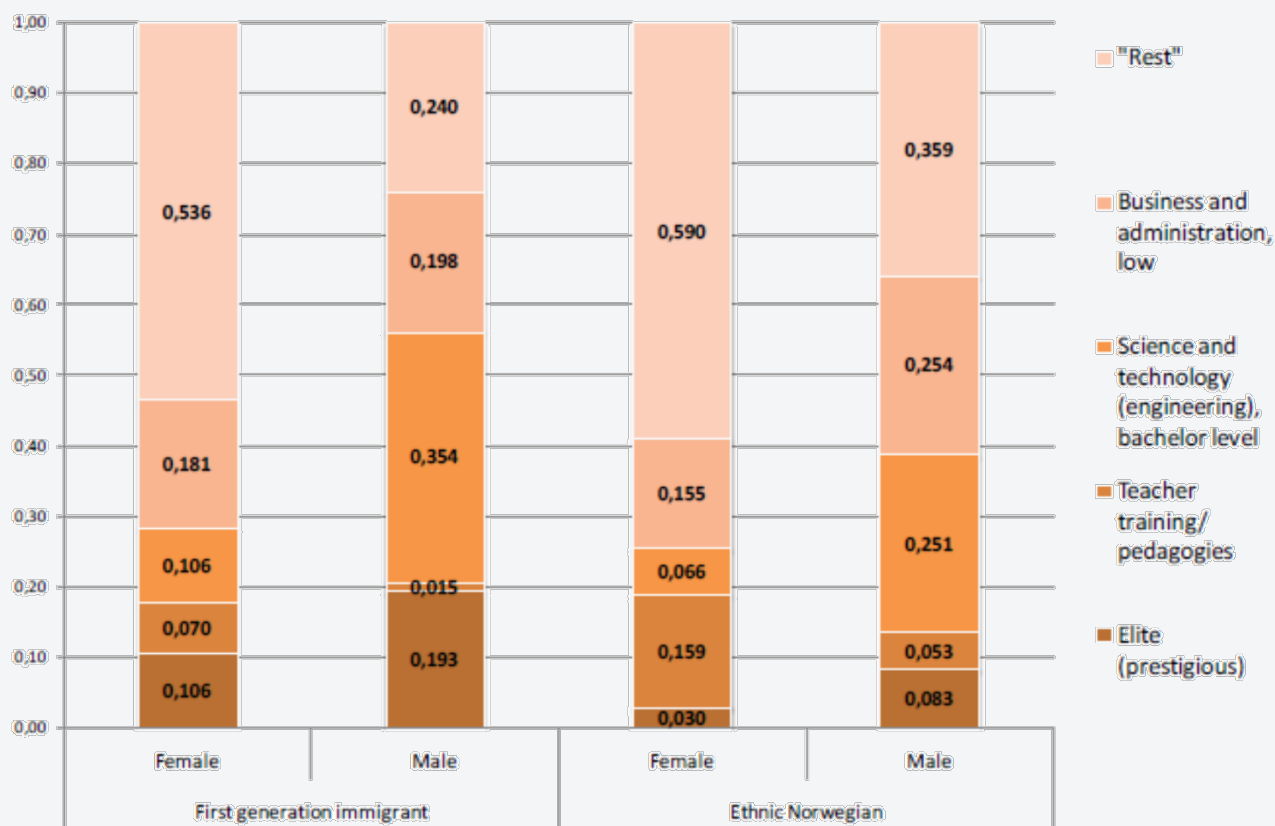
	Total 1999 and 2000 cohorts graduating from upper sec. level		Achieved university admission certification in 2002 or 2003	
	% enrolled in HE	<i>n</i>	% enrolled in HE	<i>n</i>
Ethnic Norwegian	24.2	92.970	48.5	44.722
First generation, non-Western	26.0	3.577	66.2	1.320
Second generation, non-Western	33.0	1.326	65.5	611

This data correlates well with other data for earlier cycles coming from OECD (2009), which shows higher transition rates from ISCED levels 3 to 4 for first-generation immigrant pupils, and even higher rates for second-generation immigrant pupils, when compared to their ethnic Norwegian counterparts. It should be noted that since the concerned pupils described above are those who made it through the selection at earlier stages of education, it is not possible to generalise a conclusion on the relative overall success of children with immigrant background in Higher Education as compared to ethnic Norwegians.

## 2) Choice of subject

Støren (2009) also considers the topic of subject choice in Higher Education:

Based on its 5-year observation period, the study estimates the probabilities of first-generation immigrants to enter various study programmes, as compared to ethnic Norwegians, with the following results:



**Fig. 7 Probability of ethnic Norwegians vs immigrant students to enter different fields of study in Norway**

The highlight conclusions of the study broadly reflect the discussion earlier in this volume regarding educational aspirations and include that students with immigrant (non-Western) backgrounds, when compared to ethnic Norwegians:

- choose science/technology/medicine-based subjects much more frequently
- are more likely to choose prestigious or 'elite' study programmes (and tend to enter these programmes even with lower grades)
- are less affected by the effects of parental education

## 3) Dropout rates, change of course

Dropout rates in Norway are found to be on average 16.6%. There is, however, a significant discrepancy between different groups. Thus, ethnic Norwegians show a dropout rate of 16.4%, with first-generation immigrants having a much higher dropout rate of 21.3%. However, second-generation immigrants show similar dropout rates at 17% (Støren, 2009).

This said, when considering the success of studies in terms of credit points, immigrants universally take longer to complete Higher Education than ethnic Norwegian students. Thus, for students who only attended bachelor studies, while ethnic Norwegians complete approximately 45 credit points per year, first-generation immigrants only manage 38, while second-generation immigrants manage 40. When those enrolled in master studies are considered, the



progression in terms of credit points is better equalised, with the numbers changing to 51 (Norwegians), 49 (first generation), and 51 (second generation).

In terms of performance, i.e., the grade at which each credit point is obtained, there is a clear link between lower grades throughout education from immigrants and the dropout rates/low progression rates. As each higher level of education progressively filters the lower achievers, we find the dropout/progression rates levelling out, until the masters level, where second-generation immigrants even surpass their ethnic Norwegian counterparts in terms of efficiency.

### 5.3.3 Interpretation of the data

This chapter is dedicated to some hypotheses and explications of the above-outlined findings about immigrant students. They are related to the literature on immigrants in Norway and more general conceptualisations and theories on immigrant groups in Europe, access, and success in Higher Education.

The findings that suggest that even though the immigrant families tend to belong to more disadvantaged social groups, they still incentivise their children in their study path and attainment can be explained as follows: Immigrant parents can behold a (relatively) higher level of education, which might not be recognised in the new (Norwegian) environment or is valued less in the new setting in comparison to the country of origin. Moreover, the relative position in the society of origin can be higher than in the society of destination (Heath et al., 2008, 223). This factor becomes even stronger considering that the immigrants reaching Higher Education are already a selected group (we will return to this below).

Another explanation for the educational attainment of immigrants can be related to the findings suggesting that socioeconomic status (measured by the education of parents) affects the achievements independently of ethnic origin, so the ethnic origin alone has less effect on the educational attainment and achievement than hypothesised by some scholars (Fekjaer and Birkelund, 2007, 320). This comes afloat when considering the levelling out of social differences by state intervention. Namely, the Norwegian financial support for students is relatively advanced, thereby reducing the economic barriers to access and opening the opportunities for economically disadvantaged groups. When economic barriers are considerably reduced, the ethnic background becomes a more outstanding factor, which in the case of Norway hints to a relatively superior affinity of immigrants to Higher Education.

The phenomenon of immigrant background youth being more ambitious in Higher Education has not only been found in Norway. It can be additionally explained with the family mobilisation effect, whereby the immigrant families tend to incentivise the aspirations of their children (Griga, in this publication). The family push effect is strengthened by the children's loyalty to their parents (Heath et al., 2008). Thus higher ambitions, good attainment, and achievements of immigrant students in Norway root also in the attitude of immigrant communities towards Higher Education as social institution and as a gateway to a better future. The weaker economic and social status of these communities can be a motive to see education as the principal means to emancipate themselves. In an attempt to describe this, some authors lean on *social capital* to ascend to concepts such as *intergenerational closure* denominating closer ties in the immigrant families, higher loyalty to the parents, and stronger role of parental advice (Zhou and Bankstone<sup>40</sup>). Specifically for Norway, the effect of social capital materialises in *parental monitoring*, which can be interpreted as a form of social capital (Lauglo, 1999) or somehow even Bourdieuan cultural capital if taken in a larger sense.

The tendency (of immigrant students) of choosing more prestigious programs can be therefore interpreted as a result of the stronger and more important family advice. This is particularly present in the case of the second-generation immigrants where the families have resided in Norway much longer and have had the opportunity to

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<sup>40</sup> In Støren 2011:173

develop networks (including those based on ethnicity groups), which may serve as additional driver to pursue Higher Education and choose prestigious programs (Støren, 2011, 173). Prestige in this case stands for the programs that are perceived as such in the larger public (e.g., health and law) or are internationally more recognised (e.g., engineering) as opposed to the nation-specific studies such as teacher education (ibid: 164).

However, there is another strong factor that should not be ignored when taking in consideration the Norwegian case of ambitious and successful immigrant students – the filtering throughout the educational path. At the earlier stages of education, the system appears more selective for the immigrant students, leaving only the top students progressing. This may partially explain why immigrant background students outperform native Norwegian students at the advanced levels of Higher Education. Moreover, the main selection and exclusion occurs much earlier. Namely, the majority of children with immigrant background terminate their educational path at the end of compulsory level or with vocational training (Fekjaer and Birkelund, 2007, 319). Therefore, already in the upper secondary school, the immigrant background students are more selected and most likely more positive towards education than other students. Fekjaer and Birkelund (2007) dismiss the thesis that ethnic composition negatively affects the school achievement and educational attainment at the so-called ghetto schools in Norway. The level of education of parents affects educational outcomes independently of ethnic composition, which reveals the problem of social background (deprivation) as superior to the problem of immigrant origin.

### **5.3.4 Examples of initiative to support tertiary students with an immigrant background in Norway**

#### ***Targeted lessons in Norwegian***

The Agency for Lifelong Learning offers a number of options for language courses for non-Norwegian students. Each incoming immigrant has the right 250 hours of Norwegian language training free of charge in-persona. These are complemented by additional web-based offerings, as well as specific language modules for work-based learning.

#### ***Network for a diverse learning environment***

The network is a resource centre, a colloquium where the members participate in a focused discussion and contribute with their experiences and knowledge. Participants from different university colleges in Norway, different faculties, and with different roles in the institution make sure that various perspectives are taken into consideration. There has been a missing link in terms of policy and practice coordination between the levels of adult education for immigrants and Higher Education, as well as between upper secondary school and Higher Education. Representatives from these institutions are also participants in the network.

### **5.3.5 Concluding remarks and further discussion**

The Norwegian case of immigrants in Higher Education shows some clear and tangible patterns of the achievements, attainment, access, and integration of immigrant youth in schools and Higher Education. However, there are some aspects that require more attention.

First of all, the Norway case is also a reminder that a large proportion of the immigrant children tend to end their education path with compulsory or lower vocational training. This is sometimes not clear in the studies dealing with the success, achievements, and attainment in Higher Education.

Similarly, when researching equality in Higher Education, the destination of graduates is seldom addressed. In other words, to understand the role of Higher Education in the social mobility of immigrant communities, more attention should be dedicated to the employment trajectories, related social status, and access to and discrimination on the labour market.

Further on, in Norway, as well as in some other countries (see chapter 5.5), there is an ongoing discussion on the issue of correlation between neighbourhood social deprivation and ethnic segregation. The two factors are

intertwined, but in the case of Norway, the neighbourhood deprivation appears to determine the life path of immigrants and their children.

Lastly, the Norwegian case brings us to the question whether it would be possible for all the ambitious and hard-working immigrant students to make it through selection and complete their studies if they were not able to benefit from Norwegian student support system, renowned as one of the most comprehensive and generous support schemes in Europe.

**5.4 Students with an immigrant background in Higher Education – The UK case (Anthony F. Camilleri, Daniela Proli)**

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**5.4.1 Definition: who has an “immigrant background”?**

In contrast to the two other countries highlighted in this report, i.e., Germany and Norway, the UK statistics do not revert to the concept of ‘country of origin’ for determining an immigrant background, but commonly use the concept of ethnicity or ethnic origin instead. Broadly speaking, ethnic origin implies one or more of the following: shared origins or social background; shared culture and traditions that are distinctive, maintained between generations, and led to a sense of identity and group; a common language; or a common religious tradition (Senior & Bhopal, 1994). The Higher Education Statistics Authority in the UK makes use of the following ethnic classifications (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2012), which are aligned with categories use in the UK census:

**Table 4 HESA ethnic classifications**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• White</li><li>• Irish Traveller</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Black or Black British – Caribbean</li><li>• Black or Black British – African</li><li>• Other Black Background</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Asian or Asian British – Indian</li><li>• Asian or Asian British – Pakistani</li><li>• Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi</li><li>• Chinese</li><li>• Other Asian background</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mixed – white and black Caribbean</li><li>• Mixed – white and black African</li><li>• Mixed – white and Asian</li><li>• Other mixed background</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Other ethnic background</li></ul>			

In terms of makeup of the general population by ethnicity (according to the above definition), in 2001, the UK showed the following division:

**Table 5 Division of UK Population by Ethnic Group in the 2001 Census. Source: (Office for National Statistics (uk), 2001)**

Ethnic group	Population	Proportion of total UK population
White British	50.366.497	85.67%
White (other)	3.096.169	5.27%
Indian	1.053.411	1.8%
Pakistani	747.285	1.3%
White Irish	691.232	1.2%
Mixed race	677.117	1.2%
Black Caribbean	565.876	1.0%
Black African	485.277	0.8%
Bangladeshi	283.063	0.5%
Chinese	247.403	0.4%
Other Asian (non-Chinese)	247.644	0.4%
Black (others)	97.585	0.2%
Other	230.615	0.4%

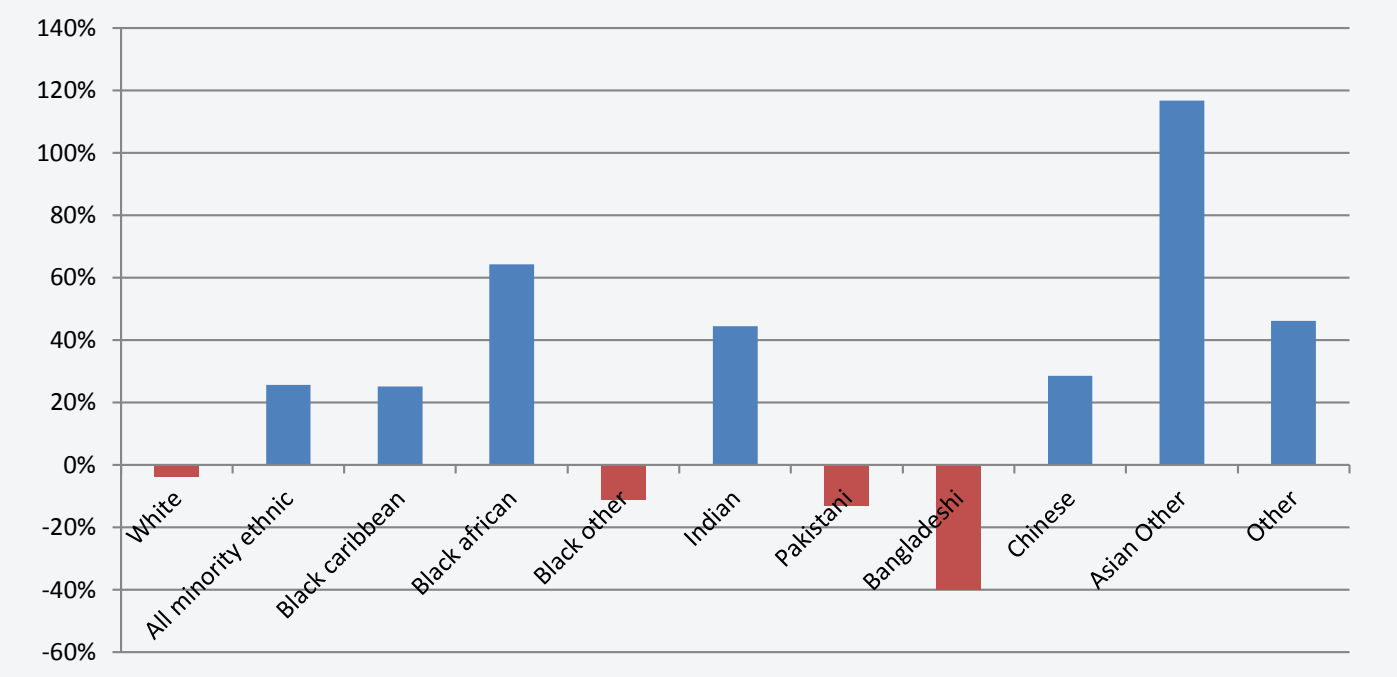
Thus, approximately 15% of the population might be considered to be of ethnically diverse (not White British) origin, while the proportion of 16-24 year olds in the same cohort (as per HESA data – see further on) make up 12% of the population. A strong policy encouraging students from other countries to study in the UK on temporary visas means that student numbers from various ethnic backgrounds will inevitably be inflated, account of which is taken further on in this chapter.

#### **5.4.2 Does immigration matter? Empirical findings**

The main source of statistics as to ethnic background of students in the UK is the Higher Education Statistics Authority, which collects data continually from all HE institutions in the United Kingdom to produce its report on Higher Education Student Enrolments and Qualifications Obtained at Higher Education Institutions in the UK. HESA includes ethnicity amongst the variables it collects, and thus, the majority of the studies referenced in this report use HESA statistics as their basis. However, there are still major loopholes in the quality and quantity of data available. Thus, for example, a 2008 Higher Education Academy/Equality Challenge Unit survey found that only 67% of HEIs in the UK compile and classify degree attainment by ethnicity (The Higher Education Academy, 2008).

1) Access to Higher Education

The most accurate data set available for considering access to Higher Education is comparing the 2000/1 census data against the HESA data for admissions to all Higher Education institutions for the same year.



**Fig. 8 Comparative Representation of Ethnic Groups in UK Higher Education vs 16-24 yr olds in general population (2000-2001)**

We find that within the UK, UK-domiciled<sup>41</sup> minority ethnic groups (either referred to as BME – black and minority ethnic – in this chapter) as a whole are actually over-represented when compared to their white counterparts (with the latter making up 88% of the cohort of 16-24 year olds but only 85% of the undergraduate population). This is largely reflected across the majority of ethnicities, with the only exceptions being for the Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and ‘Other Black’ students, which together make up 22% of the overall minority ethnic student population.

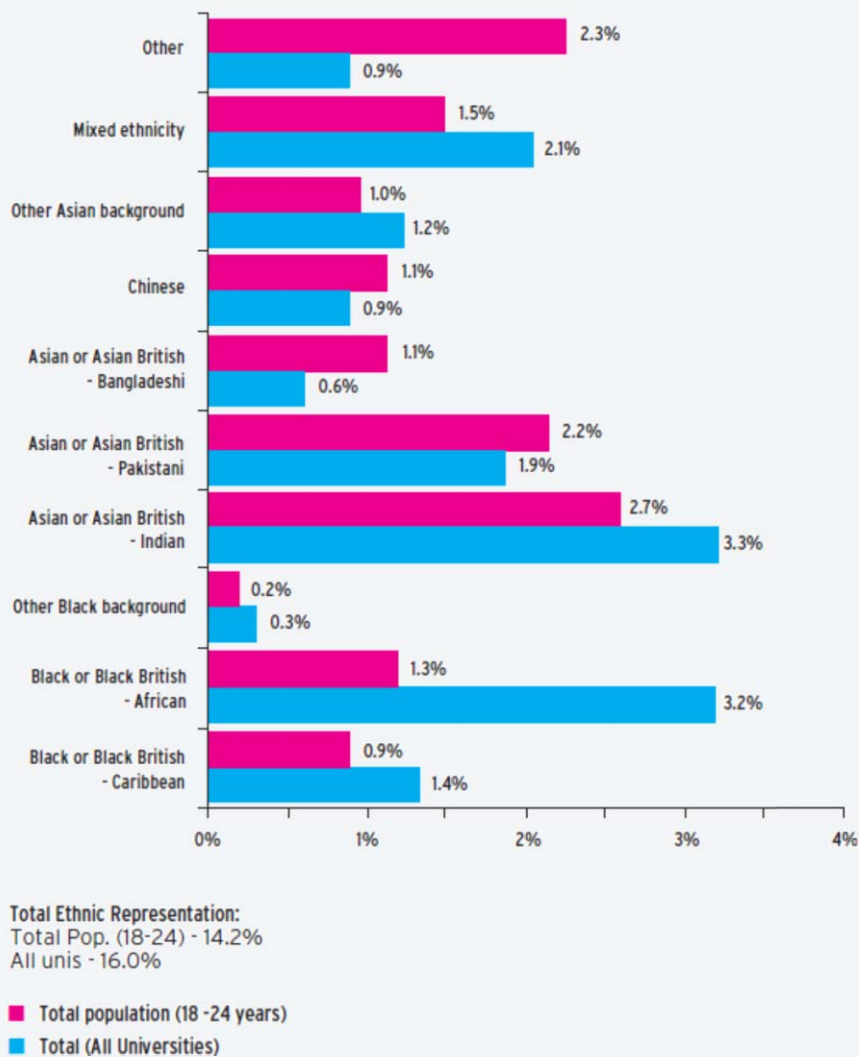
Within these patterns, the proportion of ethnic minorities in Higher Education has experienced steady growth since the 90s, reflecting to a large extent an overall growth of BME population in the UK. According to a 2010 report by Race for opportunity (RfO) “Race into Higher Education. Today’s diverse generation into tomorrow’s workforce,” the proportion of ethnic minorities in Higher Education almost doubled from 8.3% in 1995-1996 to 16.0% in 2007-03 (in line with the overall BME population duplication from 7.7% to 14.2% for the same years). The same trend is registered by the annual statistical reports released by ECU (Equality Challenge Unit) “Equality in Higher Education: statistical report.” According to ECU, the proportion of students from ethnic minorities entering HE has grown from 14.9% of the total student population in 2003-2004 up to 18.1% in 2009-2010 (ECU, 2011).<sup>42</sup>

Increased participation cuts across all sub-categories of BME students. However, both reports outline meaningful differences in access between different minority groups. British Bangladeshi and British Pakistani students remain the most underrepresented groups within Higher Education in the UK. British Indians are instead the best represented, followed by Black or Black British Africans who have almost tripled their university presence between 1995-1996 and 2007-2008 (RfO, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> Under UK legislation, international students in the UK on a study visa or Schengen-area countries who still have permanent residence in their home countries would not be considered as UK-domiciled.

<sup>42</sup> The report relies as a primary source on HESA data covering those years.





**Fig. 9 Representation of Ethnic Minority groups all UK Unis vs. 18-24 population 2007-2008**

*Source: Race for Opportunity (2010)*

**Table 6 BME student participation in Higher Education by academic year and ethnicity (2003-2004 to 2009/2010)**

	White	Black	Asian	Chinese	Other Asian	Other	BME
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All students							
03/04	85.1	4.4	5.9	0.9	1.2	2.4	14.9
04/05	84.5	4.7	6.1	0.9	1.2	2.5	15.5
05/06	83.9	5.0	6.1	0.9	1.3	2.8	16.1
06/07	83.4	5.2	6.2	0.9	1.3	3.0	16.6
07/08	82.8	5.4	6.2	0.9	1.3	3.3	17.2
08/09	82.2	5.7	6.3	0.9	1.4	3.5	17.8
09/10	81.9	5.9	6.3	0.9	1.4	3.7	18.1
First years							
03/04	85.1	4.7	5.5	0.9	1.3	2.5	14.9
04/05	84.3	5.1	5.7	0.9	1.3	2.7	15.7
05/06	84.0	5.2	5.7	0.9	1.3	2.9	16.0
06/07	83.6	5.4	5.8	0.9	1.3	3.0	16.4
07/08	83.0	5.6	5.8	0.9	1.3	3.4	17.0
08/09	82.4	6.0	5.8	0.8	1.5	3.5	17.6
09/10	82.2	6.0	5.8	0.8	1.5	3.6	17.8

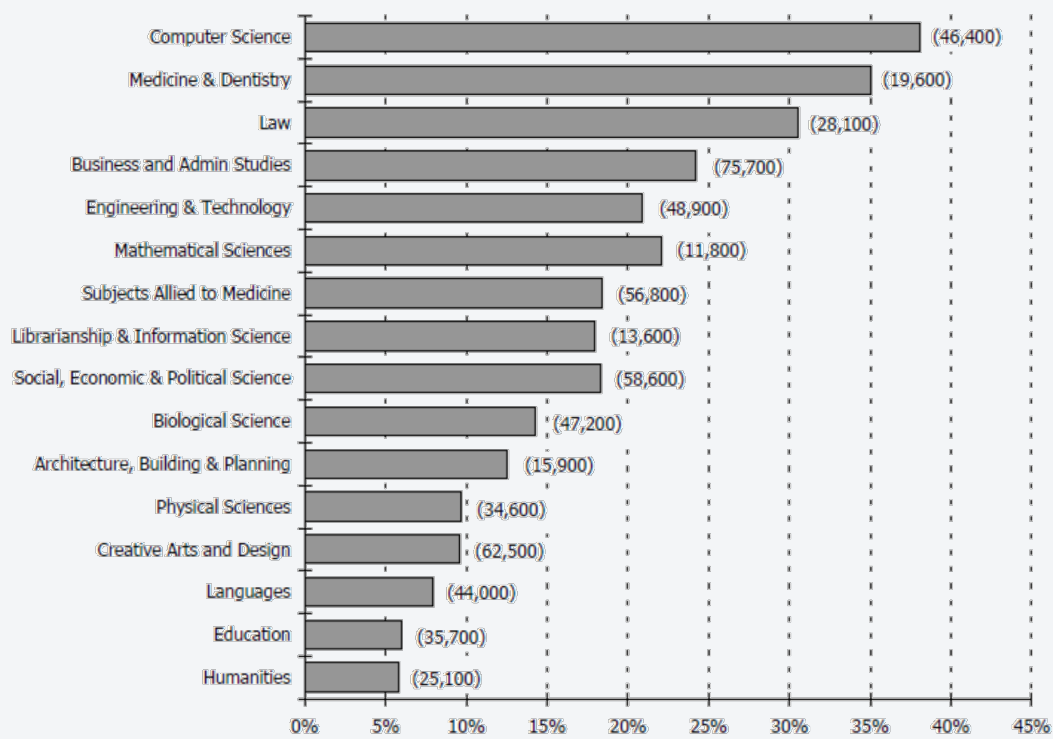
*Source: Equality Challenge Unit (2011)*

Evidence suggests an uneven representation of BME students in UK universities. With the exception of those with Chinese background, students from ethnic minorities tend to concentrate in “post-1992” Institutions and are far less represented in the “élite universities,” like Oxford and Cambridge (Connor et al., 2004; RfO, 2010).

One of the argument for that is that BME students tend to hold disproportionately higher vocational instead of academic qualifications. Similarly, ethnic minorities are underrepresented at the majority of Russell Group universities, which comprises major UK research-intensive universities committed to contribute to the UK’s innovation and economic prosperity. BME representation at these élite institutions is unbalanced and heavily regionalised: the four London-based universities, including the London School of Economics and King’s College, have a high proportion of BME students, but outside of London, their representation is by comparison poor, although it is higher in cities where there is already a large BME population (RfO, 2010).

2) Choice of subject

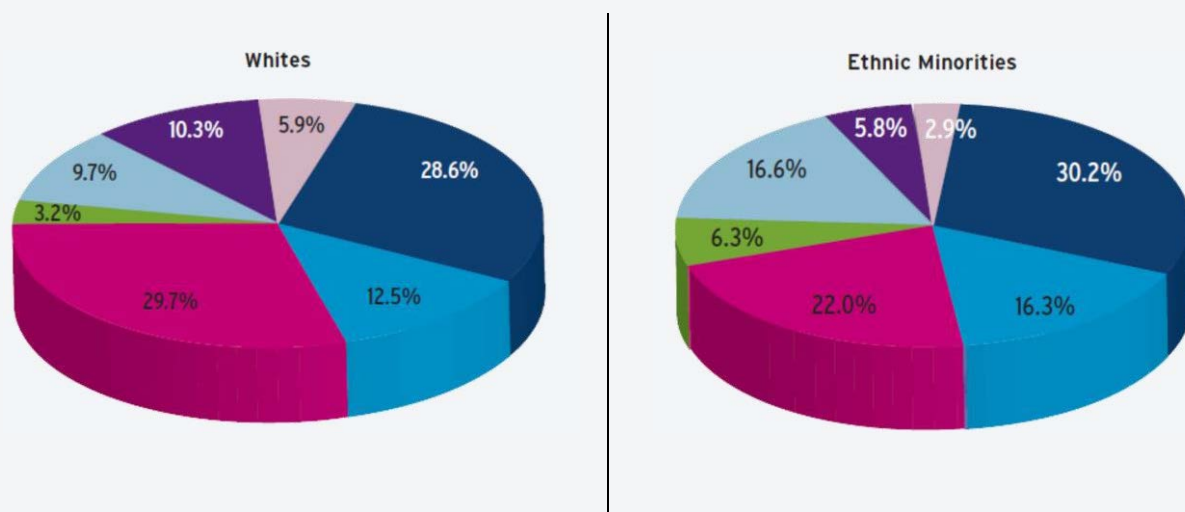
An analysis of data from the 2001 Census shows that minority ethnic students are much more likely to study computer science, medicine/dentistry, law, and business/administration. They are less likely to study humanities, education, languages, or creative arts and design.



**Fig. 10 Minority ethnic degree students (in aggregate) as percentage of total in each subject, England, at HEIs (excluding OU) during the census period (Connor, Tyers, Davis, & Tackey, 2003)**

Corollary data strongly indicates that ethnic minorities show different patterns of subject choice to native white students:

- An analysis of uptake of A2-level subjects (precursors to university entry) by non-white ethnic groups found a ratio of white to non-white of between 0 and 21 for the range of subjects analysed. Of the 64 subjects in the study, only 15 showed a ratio approaching 1 (between 0.6 and 1.3) (Vidal Rodeiro, 2007).
- An analysis of frequency distributions by subject study for UK-domiciled students awarded degrees by UK HEIs in 2004-2005 shows a similarly wide distribution in subject choices between native white students and students of various minority groups (Richardson, 2008).



**Fig. 11 Popular subjects of study White vs Ethnic UK Minorities (2007-2008)**

Source: RfO, 2010

### 3) Retention and attainment

In general, empirical findings seem to suggest that a higher than average HE participation rate for BME groups translates into lower than average overall attainment in the UK (Connor, Tyers, Davis, & Tackey, 2003). Students from ethnic minorities are less likely to be satisfied with their student experience, more likely to leave early, and less likely to gain a good honours degree (Connor, Tyers, Davis, & Tackey, 2003)

Dropout and completion rate Initial analysis carried out by HEFCE indicates that minority ethnic students show slightly higher dropout rates than the 1 in 10 first-year dropout rate shown by native white students, with black students showing higher dropout rates than Asian students. However, this phenomenon is age-dependent: younger students actually have lower dropout rates than natives, with older students being mainly responsible for the elevated indicator (Connor, Tyers, Davis, & Tackey, 2003).

When considering completion rather entry, this effect is magnified with students from ethnic minorities being significantly less likely to achieve good degrees than students from a white native background (Richardson, 2008). According to ECU report 2011, the percentage of students achieving a first class or upper second class has steadily increased for most ethnic groups between 2003-2004 and 2009-2010. However, an “attainment gap” between White and BME qualifiers still exists and has been increasing in the years (from 17.2% to 18.6% with a peak of 18.8% in 2005-2006). The attainment gap is highest between white and black students, where the difference was 29.8% in 2009/10.

**Table 7 UK-domicile qualifiers achieving a first class or upper second class honours degree by ethnicity over time**

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
White	63.1	63.8	64.7	65.5	66.4	67.2	67.9
Black	35.5	36.2	35.7	36.7	37.7	38.1	38.1
Asian	45.6	45.7	45.4	46.6	48.1	50.0	50.0
Chinese	51.2	49.1	52.6	51.8	53.1	55.4	56.8
Other Asian	50.8	50.6	48.2	48.5	48.9	50.6	49.8
Other	56.9	56.6	57.9	58.7	59.9	60.1	60.5

Source ECU, 2011

**Table 8 Migrant qualifiers achieving a first class or upper second class honours degree by ethnicity over time**

	1st/2:1				Gap	2:2/3rd			
	White		BME			White		BME	
	No.	%	No.	%		%	No.	%	No.
03/04	121820	63.1	15150	45.9	17.2	71200	36.9	17855	54.1
04/05	126560	63.8	16350	46.0	17.9	71710	36.2	19215	54.0
05/06	131130	64.7	17445	45.9	18.8	71495	35.3	20580	54.1
06/07	133065	65.5	19015	46.9	18.6	70015	34.5	21545	53.1
07/08	143140	66.4	20910	48.1	18.3	72465	33.6	22570	51.9
08/09	141970	67.2	22625	49.2	18.0	69380	32.8	23405	50.8
09/10	148500	67.9	24275	49.3	18.6	70225	32.1	25000	50.7

### 5.4.3 Interpretation of the data

In analysing the data above, especially from a cross-country comparative perspective, the UK's concept of ethnicity gains significant importance. From a reading of the statistics above, it would seem that the UK has higher percentages of minority groups entering Higher Education than most other European countries. In addition, data shows that growth in BME participation has largely grown in parallel with its share of the population. This is, however, subject to several caveats:

- The UK has a centuries-long history of immigration, reaching back from the legacy of the British Empire
- Ethnicity is self-identified and, as such, is not necessarily limited to first- and/or second-generation immigrants but also likely comprises persons born to second-generation immigrants
- Peer pressure may play a significant role in self-reporting, with persons claiming ethnicities either to make a statement on their 'being different' or to make a statement on fitting in. In both these cases, such statements would skew the data away from the actual ethnicities of the groups in question.

Thus, we are able to conclude that while the BME community in Britain generally seems to enjoy comparable opportunities for access to British white students, we are unable to use this data to gain a picture of access for the most at-risk group, namely, first-generation immigrants. Recent research, however, shows that significant ethnic and class inequalities exist in the student composition of elite/prestigious universities, with the ethnic inequalities being overwhelmingly due to universities' admissions decisions. The UK also shows a large 'open university' movement; it is likely that significant ethnic and class divisions between Open University students and ones in more 'traditional' institutions would also be seen.

In addition to this, differences in subject-choice seem to show a marked preference towards vocational professions<sup>43</sup> amongst BME students. Whether this is due to cultural/ethnic preferences or due to a perceived or real glass-ceiling effect in attaining positions in 'elite' professions is a question meriting further research and discussion.

While BME students still suffer from a significant 'attainment gap' after having entered Higher Education, all evidence points to a complex range of differently connected factors that affect BME students' attainment and produce this gap. These include previous education experience (and pre-university attainment); curriculum content

<sup>43</sup> Here meant to cover the groups "professionals" and "technicians and associate professionals" in the sense of the terms as used by CEDEFOP in its skill-forecasting exercises.

and design; teaching, learning, and assessment approaches; the learning environment; and direct and indirect racism.

Moreover, the disciplinary choice of BME students seems often to be one affected by parental influence, financial burdens, and employment opportunities in the field, rather than by personal interest and adequate entry qualification (Connor et al., 2004). This complexity makes it difficult for research to isolate one single major cause that could explain the attainment gap (Singh, 2011).

#### **5.4.4 Initiatives to support tertiary students with an immigrant background in the UK**

In terms of access, students from ethnic minorities have benefitted from the UK widening participation policies of the last twenty years, which supported the full take off of mass education at the tertiary level. According to Singh (2011), the BME student participation went through three phases: i) pre-1990s, when the issue was mostly neglected in HE; ii) the 90s, which saw massive expansion of HE and the widening participation agenda, strongly impacting on BME participation also as an unintended consequence of its focus on socioeconomic disadvantage; iii) 2000 to present, when focus on racial equality became more explicit in the policy agenda and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (now replaced by the single Equality Act of 2010) obliged HEIs to have a race equality policy and monitor and publish data on admission and progression of BME students and staff.

In fact, the existence of equality schemes in HEIs seems to be barely associated to concrete action plans and reporting mechanisms on progress. A study of 2007 found also very little evidence of any specific projects being undertaken at Institution's level to address BME success in general and/or differential degree attainment between ethnic groups in particular (Willott and Stevenson, 2007).

In general, the persisting attainment gap suggests that if UK Higher Education system performed well in increasing overall access of students from ethnic minorities (although with a still uneven representation in top-level institutions), less was done to ensure support and smooth progression within Higher Education careers. Despite increased awareness and legislative obligation, Higher Education institutions seem to experience a certain reluctance to develop explicit policy for BME when compared to school and further education (Tolley and Rundle, 2006). However, some interesting institutional initiatives exist and are mentioned in the section that follows.

Nationwide or regional programmes that exclusively target students from ethnic minorities (BME or BAME) do not seem to exist in the UK. Rather, this target group receives specific attention within broader initiatives aimed at supporting participation in Higher Education of disadvantaged groups. In most cases, these initiatives focus on cooperation between school and Higher Education to ensure students' motivation to progress and support in educational achievements (i.e., the Aim Higher Programme and Compact, illustrated below). Either, they relate to special access schemes to ensure affordance on the part of specific target groups, among which those from ethnic minorities (i.e., access agreements for HEIs who want to charge higher fees).

As anticipated at the institutional level, it is possible to find initiatives and projects aimed specifically at integration and support of students with an immigrant background. In that respect, for instance, in 2009, the Higher Education Academy and the ECU co-sponsored the one-year summit programme "Ethnicity, gender and degree attainment" involving 15 HEIs in developing and/or piloting initiatives to address the attainment gap that affected BME students. Other initiatives are related to mentoring and individual support in studying (an example from Leeds is reported below). Work has also been promoted on the so-called inclusive curriculum (i.e., the Race Equality toolkit of the University of Scotland).

#### ***Nationwide initiatives: the Aim Higher Programme***

Until July 2011, when it was closed as part of financial austerity measures, the AimHigher Programme was the British government's sterling initiative for improving overall progression to Higher Education. Working through 42



partnerships across England, the programme encompassed a wide range of activities to engage and motivate school and college learners who had the potential to enter Higher Education, but who were under-achieving, undecided, or lacking in confidence.

The programme particularly focused on students from schools from lower socioeconomic groups and those from disadvantaged backgrounds who live in areas of relative deprivation where participation in Higher Education is low. Within this classification, 'Blacks and ethnic minorities' were considered as a special targeting category for assistance and an Aim Higher National BME strategic group was established in 2005 to support increased BME participation by working at the national, regional, and local level. In 2009-2010, the partnerships worked with over 2.700 schools (including 188 Academies and 413 primary schools), 108 Higher Education institutions, 368 FE Colleges, and 114 Local Authorities.

#### ***Local Partnerships: Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) mentoring programme at the University of Leeds***

This programme targets ethnic minority students who have the potential to move on to Higher Education, but who are also at risk of leaving education early through lack of motivation or academic support. In particular, the project targets 14-19 years old school and college students from ethnic group identified as achieving under the national average: African Caribbean, Black Other, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi. Through the partnership between school and HEIs, the scheme links pupils with BME university students who act as role models and provide academic support and mentoring. The underpinning belief on which the initiative is built is that BME university students are more likely to understand complex issues and problems faced by BME pupils and can build a relationship of mutual trust.

The initiative is run by a partnership of local actors, including university, schools, and NGOs in the field of social inclusion and relies on different lines of funding (including, but not limited to, the Aim Higher Programme)

#### ***Institutional arrangements: Compact Schemes***

Similarly to Aim Higher, the Compact Scheme aims to encourage participation in Higher Education for students who may not normally consider going to university and encourage them to think of Higher Education as a possibility. According to the individual HEIs, students from ethnic minorities can be a primary target group for compact schemes.

Compact scheme is based on cooperation between school, colleges, and HEIs and might then involve reciprocal visits of staff and students, and other events that help pupils become familiar with the university and interested in what it offers and encourage them to apply.

#### ***Institutional initiative to support Racial Equality: the Racial and Equality Toolkit of the University of Scotland***

On the side of supporting BME students through race equality in university practice, the University of Scotland has developed a toolkit aimed at academic staff to assist them in supporting and mainstreaming this principle into all aspects of learning and teaching. The toolkit covers curriculum design, teaching, assessment, and institutional practices (<http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/raceequalitytoolkit/>).

### **5.4.5 Conclusions**

The UK system shows a particular pattern of access in that it provides a wide basic level of access to ethnic groups while at the same time qualifying that access by a number of factors, usually linked to the highest levels of upward social mobility. Thus, many ethnic groups, which were provided access to Higher Education, show high transition rates, tend to cluster in less prestigious and/or vocational subjects, and are at significantly higher risk of dropping out than native white British counterparts.

At this moment, these issues are not well-researched, and the reasons for such discrimination are not clearly understood. In addition, the link to previous levels of schooling and the employment trajectories of students after

graduation, while beyond the scope of this report, also need to be further investigated to give a holistic view of the situation of the sector.

In terms of policy support, previous schemes to target specific needs of BME populations have shown a large measure success; however, they have been discontinued. The signature policy of the current-day government in the field has revolved around three pillars:

- An increase in maximum yearly tuition fees to 9000 GBP per annum
- The possibility to cover those fees entirely by student loans
- An obligation on institutions implementing this scheme to provide special aid for students from disadvantaged backgrounds

This reform changes the entire system of financial incentives around Higher Education in the UK and will likely be the main driver for increasing or decreasing equity of access in coming years, and therefore, it deserves to be monitored carefully for signals of success or failure.

## **5.5 Discussion of the case studies: main findings, challenges, and opportunities (Klemen Miklavič, Chripa Schneller)**

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The three country cases have shed more light on the number of the empirical knowledge about and practical initiatives for students with an immigrant background in Germany, Norway, and the UK.

### ***Main findings***

Both in the quantitative research part of this study and in the case studies, the authors identified patterns among the group of students with an immigrant background or among specific sub-groups. In the case studies, the findings were further discussed and compared in the light of national research in the field. Among the common findings are that students with an immigrant background (in the case of the UK, BME students) are highly ambitious in the transition from secondary to tertiary education. In Germany and Norway, the “group,” however, is generally underrepresented in Higher Education, which may point to an early selection at preceding levels of education. In the UK, the underrepresentation is more specifically linked to the most prestigious universities, and is only true of very specific countries of origin. Patterns could be identified with a view to choice of subject in each country. They differ, however, across the countries selected. A phenomenon that was observed in all three countries was the higher risk of dropout among the group of students with an immigrant/BME background. The country chapters presented national research, which offer ways of explaining these phenomena.

The various hypotheses and interpretations, which can be drawn on the effect of an immigrant background on the choices of students, call for more in-depth, qualitative research about the phenomenon of immigrant background in education, and in the wider societal context, which is discussed below. By way of summarising the information in terms of common challenges and opportunities, the following aspects need to be considered.

### ***Terminology: who is considered a student with an immigrant background?***

The three country examples showed that the definitions used for identifying the population with an immigrant background, and in particular among the Higher Education student population, are very diverse. This is true for other countries as well. For further research and comparison in this field, commonly used classifications in each country, specifically at the level of Higher Education, need to be collected and critically reflected.

The lack of data for research at the international level is rooted in the fact that terminology and classifications of ‘migrants’ and ‘students with an immigrant background’ differ tremendously across the three countries highlighted – and beyond (see Introduction to Chapter 3 of this report). The discussion and research on immigrant background in

the UK, for example, is understood rather in terms of ethnicity than in terms of nationality or country of origin. In some other countries (e.g., the Netherlands), research uses the terms “allochtone” and “autochthone” students, as well as specific geographic origin in its classifications. The data presented in the case examples is hence not comparable across countries.

### **Research: interpretation of findings**

Examining the country cases, the authors came across various experiences and specifics regarding the access and participation and success of immigrants in Higher Education. The country chapters present the findings ranging from interpretation of quantitative data to qualitative and interpretative research in the field. In addition, Chapter 2 of this report is dedicated to factors influencing the chances of immigrant groups to access Higher Education in Europe. The three country reports also looked at transition of students with an immigrant background from secondary to Higher Education, but further addressed the choice of subject and dropout/change-course behaviour of this ‘group’. In this exercise, some salient issues and related interpretations emerged.

One of the issues encountered in the study was the unclear effect of the parents. Some literature suggests that there are cultural differences in the (educational) status of parents between country of origin and country of destination (e.g., Heath et al., 2008, 223). What results as lower education in the European statistics does not necessarily tell us enough about the social status of immigrants in the country of origin.

Another issue that surfaced in the country cases was the interaction between the effect of ethnic origin and the effect of social marginalisation. There is a lack of understanding to what extent socioeconomic status (measured by the education of parents) affects the achievements independently of ethnic origin. Some scholars (e.g., Fekjaer and Birkelund, 2007, 320) suggest that the ethnic origin alone has less effect on the educational attainment and achievement than hypothesised. Considering this, research and problem-solving should be more sensitive to social deprivation and marginalisation.

The studies revealed that students with an immigrant background that have obtained access to Higher Education are more ambitious in their choice of study. In explaining this phenomenon, future research should focus more on a) the nature and biographic characteristics of various immigrant groups (family mobilisation effect), as well as on b) the pre-selection throughout the educational system. For a): Further aspects to consider in this vein are generation of migration, language, legal status, gender, and specific aspects of the migration context such as country of origin and reason for migration (see also Chapter 2 in this report). The country cases proposed the family mobilisation effect, according to which immigrant families tend to incentivise the aspirations of their children (Heath et al., 2008; Nauck, 1997), as one hypothesis worth further testing. Thus, higher ambitions, good attainment, and achievements of immigrant students root also in the attitude of immigrant communities towards Higher Education as social institution and as a gateway to a better future. The weaker economic and social status of these communities can be a motive to see education as the principal means to emancipate themselves. In an attempt to describe this, some authors lean on *social capital* to ascend to concepts such as *intergenerational closure* denominating closer ties in the immigrant families, higher loyalty to the parents, and stronger role of parental advice (Zhou and Bankstone<sup>44</sup>). Regarding the latter, i.e., b) the selectivity of the educational system, further research should also address to what extent students with an immigrant background, who have obtained a Higher Education entrance qualification, constitute a pre-selected and a more highly ambitious group than their non-migrant peers (Heine et al., 2006).

The authors also came across considerable differences between immigrants according to their country of origin. Some results showed clear differences in educational attainment and achievement between groups of different origin. When considering immigration background, there has been too little understanding of the diversity and

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<sup>44</sup> In Støren 2011:173.

heterogeneity of immigrant population. This issue is especially sensitive, since the poor knowledge about cultures, social characteristics, and history might lead to stigmatisation and further marginalisation of some groups.

Overall, it can be said that while statistical analyses could identify patterns for the 'groups' of immigrant students (or ethnic minority students as in the UK case), such as their general underrepresentation in Higher Education, their relatively higher aspirations once they enter Higher Education, and their increased risks to dropout, **there is no single major cause that could explain the attainment gap of students with an immigrant background or ethnic minority students** (cf. Singh, 2011). A blend of factors, as described in this section (as well as in Chapter 2: Theoretical framework), is used to explain the difference in the participation of students with an immigrant background in Higher Education. Some of the factors are certainly related to migration, but it is difficult to generalise for the 'group' of students with an immigrant background. This is true for all country examples and all the varying definitions used.

### ***Research: further issues to be addressed***

As regards issues for further research, the country chapters called for considering the *destination of graduates on the labour market and in society*. Education alone is ever less representing the path to social emancipation of individuals and social groups. Therefore, more attention should be dedicated to the employment trajectories. Social status of graduates and access to and discrimination on the labour market should be observed in order to follow the levels of equality and to understand the mechanisms of reproduction, deprivation, and marginalisation of social groups.

Furthermore, the *role of the institutional reputation* or the *type of tertiary education institution* should be considered. In Europe, access to Higher Education has been widened in the World War II aftermaths. Especially the last few decades have seen the acceleration of this trend accompanied by the growing numbers and diversification of Higher Education institutions. When exploring equality and emancipation of individuals/groups in society, further attention should be paid to what kind of HE students pursue. For instance, in some countries (e.g., UK), the distinction and exclusivity occur through the ability to enrol in more prestigious universities. Where there are no outstandingly reputable universities, the difference lies in the ability to move abroad for studies, whereas in some other cases (e.g., Germany), the distinction is hidden in the difference between professional and academic educational tracks.

A last but no less important issue for future research are *early dropouts from education*. The fact that a large proportion of the children with an immigrant background tend to end their education path with compulsory or lower vocational training levels remains the crucial issue to be considered when dealing with the success, achievements, and attainment in the upper levels of education. The researchers should be vigilant on the effects of surging tuition fee policy and the loan schemes (notably in the UK). The increasing recourse to borrowing money and the consequent debt in the life of young people and their families will very likely further and substantially affect the perceptions, choice, study path, and success in Higher Education, in particular the vulnerable and deprived groups in society.

### ***Policy: considerations for actions to support students with an immigrant background***

For all countries, initiatives at various levels to support students with an immigrant background have been presented. The following aspects should be kept in mind when designing and implementing such support schemes.

In designing initiatives for students with an immigrant background, a key challenge is to identify the target group according to its needs. Selective aid presented in the country examples addressed specific 'migrant' issues ranging from religious considerations (timetables compatibility with religious holidays, etc.) over academic language support to tutoring with assistance of role models with an immigrant background. The objective of any such initiative should be to grant support for those in need with a careful check whether it leads to positive discrimination at the expense

of any other, likewise neglected, group. *Unjustified exclusion should be avoided.* For example, if it is not possible to state that the need for support, e.g., courses for academic writing, arises *solely* on the basis of an immigrant background, as the need for support could also be related to a low socioeconomic status, programmes should strive to remain open to students with similar needs, e.g., students from low socioeconomic backgrounds *without* an immigrant background.

Related to this, an important principle should be kept in mind, which can be captured as “*sensitisation without stigmatisation.*” It is important to sensitise for special needs within the student body and for the diversity of the student body as such. The challenge, in particular in offering support for special needs of students with an immigrant background, is to sensitise for their challenges without stigmatising them as members of a “group.” One initiative, which could be considered a good practice, is offered by the University of Hildesheim, Germany, “ProKarriere Mentoring,” which states to be ‘open to students with and without an immigrant background’.

Furthermore, the *effects of ascription* should be considered. A very young field of research looks at the effects of ascription: how do those that are part of the group ‘students with an immigrant background’ position themselves in this discourse? What are the effects of research and public discourse using the term? (cf. Mecheril, 2011, *Migrationspädagogik*<sup>45</sup>) Mecheril writes that by using the term “migrants,” we (unintentionally) position members of the group at an inferior position, ascribing them specific qualities arising from their immigrant background. This reflection should also be considered in initiatives aimed at supporting students with an immigrant background in Higher Education.

Last but not the least, it may be opportune to consider a paradigm shift in the way we look at immigrant background and education. Instead of focussing on “problems,” *opportunities* should be more strongly emphasised. Countries and HEIs should ponder on how the ‘cultural capital’ (foreign language skills, intercultural skills) of students with an immigrant background can be translated into an asset, rather than being perceived as a hindrance (or being ignored). A good practice example to be mentioned is the Programme “Secondos” at the University of Regensburg (see Chapter 5.2 Germany). It is specifically designed for students who have a multicultural family background and who speak – at least basically – the language of their parents’ country of origin.

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<sup>45</sup> Paul Mecheril, María do Mar Castro Varela, Inci Dirim, Annita Kalpaka, Claus Melter: *Migrationspädagogik*. Reihe: Bachelor-Master. Beltz Verlag, Weinheim und Basel, 2010.



# Chapter 6

# Conclusions

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## 6.1 Summary of findings

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Based on theoretical considerations presented in detail in chapter 2 and by applying a proportional concept of equity (see chapters 3 and 4.1), the Higher Educational attainment of second-generation immigrants has been analysed for 12 European countries (chapter 4). Firstly, the whole group of second-generation immigrants has been looked at without further differentiating between subgroups. The general expectation of lower chances to attain higher of second-generation immigrants has been confirmed for four countries showing significant disadvantages (Luxembourg, Belgium, Estonia, and Sweden). For six countries, no significant advantage or disadvantage for the group as such has been found (Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Latvia). In two countries, second-generation immigrants are even more likely to hold an academic degree than people without an immigrant background (the UK and Ireland). The two major findings of this first step of analysis are as follows: (1) in some countries, second-generation immigrants have significantly lower chances to attain Higher Education. (2) Countries differ enormously in the distribution of chances for Higher Education among persons with or without an immigrant background.

The observed country differences have been interpreted against the background of the characteristics and the composition of the immigrant population in the various countries. The results for the UK and Ireland corroborate the theoretical idea that good command of the language of the resident country plays a crucial role for Higher Educational attainment. For both countries, large proportions of immigrants stem from countries with English as first or second official. Furthermore, it is well-approved that educational success also depends on the socioeconomic background, and both factors, command of the resident country's language and socioeconomic background, may be, to some extent, interrelated. Thus, the observed country differences are likely to reflect to a considerable extent the differences in the socioeconomic composition of the population with an immigrant background. This could not be analysed directly with the data of the EU-LFS, but among the countries with significant disadvantages for second-generation immigrants are countries with major guest-worker programs in the 50s and 60s (Belgium) or acceptance of large inflows of labour immigrants in that period (Luxembourg). The relatively low skill level of many of these immigrants may still result in low educational attainment of many second-generation immigrants today. In contrast, if immigrants come from equally developed economies with similar wage levels, e.g., if British nowadays immigrate to Ireland, they will not aim at low paid jobs that are unattractive for the native population. Next to seeking for social advancement, immigration to Sweden is triggered to a large extent by war and prosecution in other countries. Refugees, asylum seekers, and their families may well have specific problems to integrate, e.g., due to an insecure resident status. In Estonia, one reason for the relatively low rates of Higher Educational attainment of second-generation immigrants may lay in the "undetermined citizenship" of considerable parts of the Russian minority in Estonia or other problems with their legal status.

Second-generation immigrants are a highly diverse group. Thus, even if the overall analysis has not shown significant disadvantages (or advantages) in Higher Educational attainment, this does obviously not mean that certain groups of second-generation immigrants are not facing problems in successfully attaining an academic degree. The possibilities of further differentiating between groups of immigrants with the EU-LFS are rather limited. Still, for eleven countries, it was possible to separately look at second-generation immigrants with one or both parents born abroad. The three main results are as follows:

- (1) In six countries, second-generation immigrants with both parents born abroad have significantly lower chances to attain Higher Education than persons without an immigrant background (Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Sweden). For Belgium, Germany, and Luxembourg, the group is most clearly disadvantaged with chances only about half as high as of persons without an immigrant background.
- (2) With the exception of Luxembourg, second-generation immigrants with one native parent have no significantly lower chances than persons without an immigrant background in any country investigated.

- (3) For five countries (Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Sweden), second-generation immigrants without a native parent have significantly smaller chances to attain Higher Education than second-generation immigrants with a native parent. The latter two findings are in line with our theoretical expectations and again hint to the importance of language competences for educational success. Note that the socioeconomic background could also be a reason for the differing chances of second-generation immigrants without or with a native parent if the latter group has a higher socioeconomic status.

In the last step, we have looked at the influence of the region of origin. Due to the limitations of the data, we could only analyse three countries and broad regions of origin (instead of countries of origin). The findings again fortified that subgroups of second-generation immigrants may be disadvantaged even if the overall group of second-generation immigrants is not statistically significantly disadvantaged (Germany). Furthermore, the findings underscored the heterogeneity of the group of second-generation immigrants and the necessity to differentiate as far as possible.

Next to the quantitative analysis of the EU-LFS, Germany, Norway, and the UK have been investigated more closely as country cases. These cases exemplify how the relationship of Higher Educational attainment and immigrant background is influenced by the specific situation in the different countries. By reviewing existing research on the countries in question, the case studies could tackle some issues more in depth than the international data allows for. In addition to country-specific results, some common patterns have emerged. To name three of them:

- (1) There is evidence that persons with an immigrant background tend to have relatively high educational aspirations. Persons with an immigrant background more frequently decide to enter Higher Education once they have qualified for access to Higher Education (Germany and Norway). Moreover, in Norway and Germany, they more frequently access more prestigious institutions or programmes even with lower grades. For the UK, the tendency was opposite, though with marked differences between ethnic minorities. The different pattern in the UK could be due to the fact that studying at an elite institution often goes together with higher tuition fees in the UK.
- (2) With a grain of salt, persons with an immigrant background tend to choose subjects with a clear perspective in the labour market in the three countries (such as medicine, law, engineering, or economics). This choice of subjects is typical for groups that see Higher Education as a means of social advancement and is also found for persons from lower socioeconomic strata.
- (3) In all three countries, persons with an immigrant background have higher dropout rates than natives. To some extent this may well be a consequence of the relatively lower socioeconomic status of persons with an immigrant background. Furthermore, it could be due to problems specific to the group of persons with an immigrant background, such as language problems or lack of knowledge of the educational system. Finally, it might also be related to the Higher Educational aspirations described above: If persons with an immigrant background strive for more prestigious programmes or institutions even with lower marks, this would presumably result in lower rates of success.

## 6.2 Outlook for further research

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Although the number of contributions on the question of educational attainment of persons with an immigrant background is growing and the theoretical basis for such analyses has become increasingly solid (cf. chapter 2 of this report), the subject is still quite new and a lot of research questions are still open. This is specifically true for the question of *Higher Educational* attainment of persons with an immigrant background. For the latter, the diagnosis of Heath et al. (2008) seems still valid: “Indeed [...] there would probably be no consensus even on the descriptive question of which countries exhibit more favourable environments for second-generational educational success” (Heath et al., 2008, 227). Even with a large general population survey as the EU-LFS, it is not possible to draw the

descriptive picture for the majority of the EU member states let alone for larger groups of European countries or worldwide. Thus, on one hand, research results would need to be extended to more countries. On the other hand, research needs to investigate the problem in more depth. The possibilities of looking at the issue in more detail are of course numerous. Five of them should be highlighted at this point (for some more suggestions, see chapter 5.5):

- (1) *Subgroups of persons with an immigrant background:* As has been emphasised before and underscored by our research results, the group in question is highly heterogeneous. Among the most important criteria for differentiating are socioeconomic status, country of origin, cultural background, language abilities, or time of arrival.
- (2) *Norms, values, and educational aspirations:* Educational aspirations influence educational success, and it has been shown that some groups of immigrants are characterised by relatively high aspirations. It has not yet been intensively studied how educational aspirations interact with other norms and values. This touches the question of how the cultural background influences educational success and thus also the country of origin. Investigations could yield insights on the interplay of characteristics of the educational system and norms and values. It must be emphasised that this is a most sensitive issue as misconceptions of cultural characteristics could lead to stigmatisation of certain immigrant groups.
- (3) *The qualitative dimension of Higher Education:* By widening access to Higher Education, qualitative differences within Higher Education have become more important. The outcomes of Higher Education are influenced by factors such as the subjects studied, the kind and status of the Higher Education institution attended, or activities beyond the formal curriculum that add to the competences and the cultural and social resources of students (Bathmaker et al., 2012). For example, it has been shown for the UK that some ethnic minorities are specifically low represented at elite universities, while other ethnic minorities are more likely to attend an elite university than the white majority (OECD, 2010c, 119). Qualitative differences are especially salient in Higher Education systems with broad participation and diverse institutions.
- (4) *Outcomes of Higher Education:* Research on the outcomes of (higher) education investigates the effect and influence of educational attainment on social positioning and social mobility of graduates in terms of their occupation (e.g., wage levels, adequate employment, risk of unemployment, or social status associated with the occupation) and a number of other dimensions (such as health, political participation, or satisfaction with life). Although results are not always unambiguous, the overall message is that the level of education has a positive effect on life in a variety of ways and is decisive for social advancement. A lot of this research takes the level of education for granted, whereas (higher) educational research often stops with completion of (higher) education. It could provide valuable insights if more Higher Education research would look beyond graduation to see the results of inequalities in educational attainment.
- (5) *System level factors:* Inequalities in Higher Educational participation of persons with or without an immigrant background are very much influenced by characteristics of the country, such as the structure of the overall educational system, student support schemes, or the immigration regime. First steps have been taken in this direction (Griga/Hadjar, 2012), but still, a lot of these factors have not been investigated systematically.

Extending the research to more countries and investigating the subject in more depth are to some extent incompatible goals. However, both ask for better data at the international level. The shortcomings of the EU-LFS have been described in more detail in chapter 3, but large household surveys such as the EU-LFS are hard to change, as adding further questions to the survey is very costly due to the large number of interviews. Another option is to enhance and further explore the analytical possibilities of surveys focussing on the Higher Education sector, such as EUROSTUDENT, REFLEX, and HEGESCO, or possibly, in the future, a study equivalent to PISA focussing on Higher Education, such as AHELO.



## 6.3 Policy considerations

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The chance to attain a Higher Education degree depends on the cultural, social, and material resources of a person on the one hand, and on the institutional setting within and beyond the Higher Education system on the other hand. As for the cultural (e.g., norms, values, or competences), social (e.g., social embeddedness, or availability and quality of networks), and material resources, the empirical analysis presented in this report and the review of existing research have hinted to several important differences between the group with an immigrant background and the group without an immigrant background. Moreover, it must be emphasised that the group with an immigrant background in itself is highly heterogeneous and, again, differs enormously in its resources. Thus, a key challenge to any policy activity is identifying the groups in need of support and their specific requirements (cf. chapter 5.5 for more considerations on support actions).

Among the cultural resources, the research results confirm the crucial role of good command of the language of instruction for educational success. Thus, it seems advisable that programmes in Higher Education supporting persons with an immigrant background put a strong focus on improving command of the resident language. Moreover, it is important to strengthen language competences at earlier stages of education to not let language problems prevent persons from qualifying for Higher Education in the first place. In parallel, the mastery of a second language – the immigrant's mother language – should be valued and strengthened, as it constitutes a major source of potential. Higher educational aspirations are a cultural asset of certain groups of persons with an immigrant background that could be picked up on by outreach initiatives of Higher Education.

It has been shown that persons with an immigrant background with one native parent have better chances to attain Higher Education than persons with both parents born abroad. Next to language competences and possibly a higher socioeconomic background, this could also be due to being more strongly embedded in the society of the resident country and the advantageous of a social network comprising persons with and without an immigrant background. Thus, any political actions furthering the segregation between immigrants and natives will presumably also negatively affect the chances of the former to attain Higher Education. In contrast, easy access to citizenship and a secure resident status are likely to add to the motivation of people to invest in their competences and education.

Attending Higher Education causes direct costs (e.g., fees, learning material, housing, and moving) and indirect costs (foregoing an earned income, at least partially). Depending on their socioeconomic background, students differ in their material resources and thus their ability and motivation to deal with these costs. As a consequence, in most countries, persons with a lower socioeconomic background are underrepresented in Higher Education. Other reasons for the smaller rates of Higher Educational attainment of persons with a lower socioeconomic background are the above-mentioned cultural resources (e.g., performance in school, knowledge of the educational system, and educational aspirations) and social resources (e.g., knowing people that have attained Higher Education). Lower rates of participation of persons with an immigrant background are to a considerable degree caused by a lower socioeconomic background. Political activities supporting Higher Education participation of socioeconomically disadvantaged persons help to support those groups with an immigrant background specifically in need of support. This refers to programs helping students to afford their living, grant programs, programs financing special activities such as international mobility, or other forms of material help. Generally, such programs should be open to all students with similar needs irrespective of having an immigrant background or not. This helps avoid positive discrimination, exclusion of persons in need, and stigmatisation (cf. chapter 5.5 of this volume).

The influence of institutional characteristics of the educational system on Higher Educational attainment of persons with an immigrant background is a question that deserves much more attention of future research. To focus on a few points:

- (1) Selectivity of the schooling system presumably plays a crucial role. If the schooling system is highly segregated and children are allocated to the different schooling paths at an early age, this will foster, in all likelihood,



social selectivity. That is, pupils with a less advantageous socioeconomic background will qualify for access to Higher Education to a smaller degree. To the extent an immigrant background and a lower socioeconomic background are interrelated, this would also affect chances to access Higher Education for persons with an immigrant background.

- (2) Research by Jackson et al. (2012) indicates that free access to Higher Education furthers participation of persons with an immigrant background. However, higher rates of access are countervailed to some extent by higher dropout rates.
- (3) Griga and Hadjar (2012) interpret their findings as evidence for the importance of alternative routes to Higher Education, such as accreditation of prior learning. Generally, alternative routes foster access to Higher Education for persons with a low socioeconomic background. Moreover, within this group, persons with an immigrant background specifically benefit from alternative routes.

Last but not the least, institutional settings are interrelated. For example, alternative routes to Higher Education are more important in countries with a highly segregated schooling system. Thus, any political actions need to take into account the overall situation in the specific country and should be part of an integrated strategy to enhance equity in Higher Education.

# Appendices

Annex 1: Bibliography

Annex 2: Indices of figures, boxes, and tables

Annex 3: Authors' Biographies



## Annex 1: Bibliography

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## Annex 2: Indices of figures, tables and graphs

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## Annex 3: Authors' biographies

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**Anthony F. Camilleri** studied law at the University of Malta, where he also chaired the national students' union KSU and served on the University Senate. He spent six years as a student representative, specialising in economic aspects of education, particularly student financing, alternative sourcing of funds and entrepreneurship. He has also acted as a Quality Assurance reviewer on different occasions on behalf of ENQA, ESU and EFQUEL.

Since 2007, he has been actively involved in multi-national EU funded research projects in the fields of social inclusion and innovation in educational pedagogies, and acts as project manager for EQUINET on behalf of SCIENTER.



**Dorit Griga** studied political science, economics and communication science at Freie Universität Berlin (DE) and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (ES). From 2004 to 2007 she worked as student research assistant in the department for labour market policy and employment at Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB). After graduating at Freie Universität Berlin (M.A.) in 2007 she started working for the European lifelong learning project at Bertelsmann-Stiftung. Then, from 2008 to 2010 Dorit Griga worked as researcher at HIS – Institut for Research on Higher Education. At HIS Dorit Griga conducted research within the EQUINET-project as well as other projects dealing with the issue of tuition fees and their impacts on equity and quality within higher education. In September 2010 Dorit Griga started working as researcher at University of Bern (CH). There, she is currently preparing her Ph.D. thesis which will focus the issue of migrant specific inequalities in higher education within the European Union.



**Kai Mühleck** works as senior researcher for the Hanover-based HIS-Institute for Research on Higher Education. At HIS he is researching in and heading national and international research project on topics such as inequalities in higher education participation, returns to higher education, or tracking of students and graduates. Another priority task of Kai is strengthening HIS' international research collaborations and acquiring international projects. Kai's areas of interest are social inequality, comparative higher education, and social science methods.

Before joining HIS, he worked as researcher and lecturer at Humboldt-University (2001-08). Kai Muehleck holds a doctorate in sociology from Humboldt-University (2007). For his first degree he studied political science, economics, and sociology at the Universities of Heidelberg and Manchester, graduating from Heidelberg in 2001 (M.A.).

**Klemen Miklavič** is an assistant researcher at the Centre for Educational Policy Studies, University of Ljubljana. His work has been dedicated to the field of higher education policy for more than a decade, dating back to student activism. After graduation, he continued to work as a consultant, expert or free lance researcher for a number of NGOs, intergovernmental organizations and research centres. During 2008 – 2009 he was employed at the OSCE Mission in Kosovo as a senior adviser responsible for higher education and ethnic minority issues. He has continued since then to nurture his interests in the role and meaning of higher education in society, especially in (post)conflict settings.



**Daniela Proli** got her Master Degree in Political Sciences from the University of Bologna in 2008. She then focused on social policy and welfare studies at European level, and also spent a period at the Utrecht University in order to broaden her knowledge in the field. In Sciento she is part of the Observatory area since 2008, contributing to several research and studies in the field of lifelong learning policy and of evolving scenarios of education and training in the knowledge society. Her main interest area concerns the development of the lifelong learning discourse and policy in the post-industrial society and its impact at social, political and institutional level.



**Chripa Schneller** studied at the Universities of Passau (Germany), Bologna (Italy), and Lisbon (Portugal) and holds a Master's degrees in cultural studies, economics and foreign languages. She is currently preparing her Ph.D. thesis at the University of Bremen, Germany, on the topic of self-positioning of students with an immigrant background in higher education. From 2007 to 2010, she served as Policy Officer at the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), in the field of internationalisation of higher education. She then served as Special Advisor for the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), with a focus on the development of the overall strategy and outreach of the ASEM Education Hub, the higher education initiative under the auspices of ASEF. In 2012 she joined the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), where she is in charge of cooperation with universities, covering networking, research and capacity-building programmes on the role of higher education in promoting lifelong learning.









EQUINET is a 3-year project researching the state of equity in Higher Education in Europe. The project aims to create an evidence-based policy advocacy network, so as to promote its conclusions as a way to promote better-informed policy making on equity issues in Europe.

This is the second of three reports, and is dedicated to improving the picture of equity in access to Higher Education in Europe for persons of immigrant origin. The report provides a theoretical framework for discussion of the topic, a statistical cross-country analysis of access-figures, as well as detailed country-studies for Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom. It is the result of a year of research conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of researchers originating from across Europe.