



8 Family Relations, Marriage and Children

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8.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises research studies and reports on integration and policies on migrant families in Europe in the past ten years (2011-2021). The focus is on post-2014 migrants of different ages, gender, vulnerability and migration status, (e.g., accompanied, unaccompanied and separated children, lone parents, and sexual/gender minorities).

Thematically, it covers various family-relations related topics³⁰, including marriage, spouses/parents, and children. For instance, family reunification/separation, family and marriage migration, and children’s access to education (or its lack, e.g., exclusion/segregation). The chapter is divided as follows.

³⁰ In the context of this chapter, family and family-related is used as synonym to refer to matters covering relations between spouses, parents and children.

Subchapter one introduces the range of the research on migration and integration. This sets up the stage for the literature that discusses specific aspects of family relations, marriage, and children in the countries covered by the review, namely the EU and affiliated states, UK, Norway, and Switzerland. Subchapter two is on the integration situation (inequalities) in relation to the research area in the focus of this chapter as a whole. In this context, norms about family unity and family relations play an important role as they structure the scope of the migration policy (both national and supranational). Also, accentuating the ‘nuclear family’ tends to push forward particular family and gender norms, overlooking the diversity of family relations, and contributing to some families remaining “invisible” (Kleiner and Thielen 2020). Subchapter three is on framing interventions and policy objectives. Subchapter four deals with instruments and tools. Subchapter five addresses the topic of the effectiveness of measures discussed in various initiatives. In conclusion, conceptualising this integration and the sustainability of these integration practices discussed, based on available evidence.

8.2 Research on family relations, marriage and children

The topic of integration of post-2014 migrants and their families is part of social sciences and migration studies’ ongoing debates on family migration, marriage migration, family unification, transnational spousal migration, and parents and children’s integration in education and the broader context of various European societies. An important part of these discussions is the understanding of family unity, which is also the focus of the legal studies, underlining that the right to family life interlinks with how integration is determined (Milius 2018).

The relevance of transnational ties, such as marriages and families, for integration is discussed in the literature dealing with the effects of migration on family life; this review included articles that discuss the topics such as bi-national couples, parenting and well-being. In this context, the issue of intra-EU migration notes a blind spot in the literature on family life and relations among European migrants.

The meta-data from the Migration Research Hub note various tendencies, both in terms of geographies and topics in the literature, on family-related topics.³¹ The “family relations and migration” taxonomy (without any further modification in the searching, e.g. year), on the Migration Research Hub presents 742 results. Geographically, most studies are focused on immigrants from Muslim countries in Europe (in the European context, family reunification and associated EU policies is often highlighted) or Latino immigrants in the United States. In the context of internal migration, Chinese rural-urban migration is prominent. Economic points are often highlighted, particularly the welfare systems of destination countries and the economic contributions of immigrants. Family relations within the migrant family or ties with members, usually children, left behind are also often

³¹ The meta data are gathered during the extensive reference checks conducted by the International Center for Migration Policy Development’s Research Intern Réka Szabó.

the foci of studies. Another common focus is of return migration and the status of the second-generation. Inequalities and their manifestation in the education or health care systems can influence immigrant children and adolescents to a great extent, as argued by the studies focusing on psychological or psycho-social effects and development. Tendencies are similar in the “family and marriage migration” search, but the appearing results are much more: 3397. There are more articles about LGBTQ issues, unaccompanied minors, and the fertility of immigrants.

According to the extensive review of the studies conducted in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, the authors concluded that most of the literature on family migration and integration scrutinises legal changes and policy arguments (Eggebo and Brekke 2019). There has been a change of heart on how its impact is perceived by the policymakers and the broader public, shifting from a rather enthusiastic view of being a “vehicle of integration” to now “failing” (Saskia Bonjour and Kraler 2015a). The latter lacks evidence; however, such representations and beliefs continue to shape political discourses (Saskia Bonjour and Kraler 2015a, 1409–10). In this context, the dominant position of migrants is them being the Other (dominantly identified as “Muslim family”), embodying traditional and patriarchal views. On the other hand, the national Self is identified with European values and belongs to Us. Such views situate how problems are framed, for example, transnational marriage migration is portrayed negatively as a sign of a lack of integration. Moreover, family migration policy encompasses different racialised dichotomies, placing families outside the imagined Us. This legitimises restrictive migration policies contributing to the construction of inequalities, as discussed below in more detail in relation to family migrants (s. Bonjour and de Hart 2013).

Geographically, literature on the EU countries dominates the field, with Germany, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries (e.g., Sweden, Denmark), and the UK as the leading regions. In the literature, integration is often framed as something dominantly relevant to non-European migrants; there is a lack of research on intra-EU migration dynamics. Some scholars address this gap and stress different aspects of familial and social networks’ embeddedness in a local (national) context (Koelet and de Valk 2016; Koelet, Van Mol, and De Valk 2017). This can be seen based on the evidence from the EUMARR survey,³² which focused on European binational couples as “forerunners of the European integration project in comparison to native European citizens”. The EUMAAR survey’s focus in Belgium showed that feelings of social loneliness after migration is not only something reserved for non-European migrants.

The post-2014 migratory movements led to a higher research interest on the situation concerning the integration of refugees and asylum seekers. In this regard, the authors focus on the integration of refugees and asylums seekers and their resettlement, taking both a country-specific and a comparative perspective. A prominent topic is the integration of migrant and refugee children as

³² EUMARR “Toward a European Society: Single Market, Binational Marriages, and Social Group Formation in Europe” was the first survey designed to collect comprehensive data (between 2012–2013) on binational and unination couples in Europe, their lives and lifestyles in eight major European cities, (see Koelet and de Valk 2016)

well as the regulation of their safety and prevention of gender-based violence. Furthermore, psycho-social aspects of belonging and integration situation, such as intimacy and access to health care, among newly arriving migrants or other groups (e.g., undocumented persons) are analysed in sociological and psychological approaches (Næss 2020; Bartolini 2021).

8.3 Integration situation (inequalities) in the context of

family, marriage and children

Integration discourses and the terminology in which policies about family migration, reunification and the right to family life and unity are expressed are significant for understanding inequalities and their practical consequences for migrating families (Kofman, Saharso, and Vacchelli 2015).

Family reunification and integration are relevant for various categories of migrants and their families, and their status (refugee/asylum seekers, labour migrants) plays an important role in policy arguments. The recent scholarship seeks to go beyond simplified views about women as passive or victims, questioning the role of gender norms in the processes of separation and waiting for unification (Saskia Bonjour 2018; Morris 2015; Welfens and Bonjour 2021; Wray 2015). In this context, as described by the authors for Finnish context, time is an important factor, as persons in the process can ‘age out’. Here, they can lose their right to family reunification as it is not acknowledged to be in the best interest of the child and even seen as hampering integration (Tapaninen, Halme-Tuomisaari, and Kankaanpää 2019, 9).

As shown in the comparative study on Polish migrants in Norway, Sweden, and the UK, decisions about family reunification, including migration of partners and children, situate labour market dynamics (e.g., level of its regulation), gendered dynamics, and broader power relations between couples. For instance, migrants’ economic integration is not an equally important factor for family reunification. Less regulated labour markets may support gender equality and assist couples to practice the double-earner family model, as decisions about migration of family members will not be postponed until the leading migrant (in this case, dominantly men) has a secure and permanent job. Paradoxically, migration to protected labour markets (i.e. Norway and Sweden) can, as an outcome, reinforce the traditional male-bread-winner model.

In the context of family migration, socio-economic requirements (e.g., labour market inclusion, language skill, income) have exclusionary functions as those with a weaker labour market position cannot engage in family migration. As noted by Kofman (2018), gender, in particular, contributes to inequality, especially for female sponsors who potentially already experience gender inequality in the labour market regimes, such as the pay gap and caring obligations for children and parents (Kofman 2018).

For instance, countries might justify stricter family migration regulations to prevent forced marriages and improve access to the labour market, which will enhance opportunities for leading an autonomous life. Based on evidence from Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK, research shows that female migrants were drawn at the centre of debates and policies on immigration and integration for specific gendered reasons targeting them as mothers. Namely, they are considered as “reproducers of the next generation”, and this generation should learn to have the cultural capital needed to become “a good (self-sufficient) citizen” (Kofman, Saharso, and Vacchelli 2015, 50).

Furthermore, research on the role of transnational ties in fostering or thwarting migrant women and men’s integration and their children describe integration processes as multifaceted. In this regard, the effectiveness of the tools and instruments in achieving policy goals, as further discussed in section five, relies on consulting migrants as actors of migration without losing sight of gendered inequalities in the context of transnational ties.

The post-2014 arrivals led to an increased focus on the integration of refugees and asylum seekers, especially in the countries of Greece, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Spain, and Turkey (Androusou and Iakovou 2020; Bunar 2019; Crul et al. 2019). The-post flight settings raise questions of the effects of lengthy procedures and assessments of the needs of vulnerable groups, as well as the scope of mechanisms of protection concerning various sub-categories of migrants, such as same-sex migrant couples and LGBTIQ+ asylum assessments (Mrazova 2019).

Based on the nation-state project and its power to include/exclude (‘visibility’ and ‘in the system’ and ‘invisibility’ as those who have to hide, e.g. rejected asylum seekers), undocumented refugee children can remain socially ‘invisible’ (Wahlström Smith 2018). Drawing on the ethnographic research in Sweden, Wahlström Smith (2018) argues that the socio-political context that requires almost all activities in which children can participate (from school to leisure) leads to anonymity to the local community in the host society. Moreover, it can affect their psycho-social health, and children report “embodied fear”. Their “hiding in plain sight” and need to stay ‘invisible’ is embedded in the Swedish societies’ regimes of ‘visibility’ of power relations. The author argues that children’s access to rights and support resources should not be taken for granted in ‘child-friendly states’ such as Sweden (Wahlström Smith 2018, 14).

8.4 Framing interventions and family-related policy objectives

In the policy discourses on migration and integration, the concept of family or family-related migration policy relates to legal recognition of marriage conceptualisations of ‘family unity’ and its members (e.g., spouses, parents, children). As noted by some authors, assumptions about the connections between “family migration” and “integration” are essential for the development of policies (Saskia Bonjour and Kraler 2015b). For instance, the Council of the European Union adopted the EU Directive 2003/86/EC on the Right to Family Reunification in 2003, which was the first part

of the Community Law about family migration. It states minimum requirements under which third-country nationals are permitted to bring family members in the light of their right to family life. Some Member States recognised the Directive as a policy that could give a legal ground for introducing pre-departure integration measures.

Political debates about family-related integration policy often invoke gender relations and how migrant women and men understand family norms or female employment. These discussions also raise various socio-economic, cultural and welfare concerns. With focusing on migration policy concerning admission policies in regard to, e.g. family migration or reunification, Kofman, Saharso, and Vacchelli (2015, 83) differentiate between three types of interventions: (1) pre-entry tests (language and knowledge of society), (2) minimum age of marriage, and (3) sponsorship criteria. In the pre-entry phase and criteria of admission, there is a stronger focus on female migrants, whereby the post-entry measures target men, as seen in the regulations about domestic violence or forced marriage.

Consequently, when framing problems, women are commonly addressed as someone who requires protection and men as potential threats. Combating forced marriage is commonly intersected with the government's measures of control, particularly immigration, citizenship applications and residence permits. In this regard, many EU countries guarantee the right to return and the right to independent resident permits for the third-country nationals who are forced marriages survivors. The preventive measures are commonly coupled with other actions, such as age requirements for family reunification. However, the age threshold for family reunification varies, and evidence concerning its effectiveness is inconclusive (Europäische Union 2014, 26).

As aforementioned, the EU Directive offered a possibility to adopt a regulation that limits the right to family reunification under a premise that it will support integration and prevent forced marriages. This led to changing the age threshold, even among the countries that did not participate in the Directive (e.g., UK, Denmark, and Ireland). Similar was with the rules concerning the age of both the spouse and sponsor. In 2008, the UK raised the threshold for seeking a visa to settle in the UK as a spouse. However, scholars and activists warn of a 'moral panic' created in the media and by the anti-immigration politicians' populist discourses on forced marriage as a 'social evil' that is linked to migration and specific ethnic and religious belonging. As noted by Patel (2014, 228):

[F]orced marriage has been used to feed into fears and anxieties about immigrant populations and is increasingly used to show that it represents a threat to societal values. The issues have been increasingly woven into prevailing narratives on the failure of multiculturalism, integration and national security.

Policy resources about ethnic minorities' transnational marriages often focus on binary stereotypes about male and female migrants' role in integration. Research on the role of transnational ties in fostering and thwarting migrant women and men's integration and their children show that integration processes are complex and multi-layered. Based on qualitative research findings among Pakistanis in the United Kingdom and Turks in Denmark, it is possible to understand various

dimensions of gendered inequalities among newly arriving migrant men. As the authors note, Muslim migrant husbands face and experience such inequalities when being able to silence their vulnerabilities. This is in contrast to these men’s presumed roles of a “powerful Muslim patriarch” or “coldly strategising economic migrant” that the authors detected in the discourse on transnational marriages in both countries (Charsley and Liversage 2015). They emphasise a need for an intersectional understanding of male marriage migrants’ gendered position as newcomers and Muslims, which impact the negotiation of power relations in the domestic and public sphere.

The post-2014 movement increased populist sentiments, which are not only reserved for one particular European state or only non-European migrant group; still, the Other is commonly associated with non-white Muslim migrants and their family members. For instance, in Germany, the “Law to Fight Child Marriage”, aimed at protecting girls from premature marriage, is currently under revision triggered by the case of a young Syrian refugee couple (husband was 21 and wife 14 at the time) that was, upon arrival, briefly separated from their joint temporary accommodation by the Child Protection Services. The Court withdrew the separation in 2016 as there was no evidence of forced marriage. This case triggered political discussions about post-2014 refugees coming from, for instance, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. Policies and discourse portrayed them as the backward Muslim Other, and women from these countries as in need of help, often lacking recognition of women’s emancipation and their religious belonging (Rath 2019).

Linking gendered-based violence with Islam has been already part of debates in the EU, and it is important for what various authors recognise as integration challenges. For instance, discussions about the provision and assistance that Muslim women survivors of domestic violence in Italy require situate well the relevance of integration discourses (Bucci 2012). Namely, populist parties put on the spot Islam-related family and marriage practices, e.g. polygamy, certain concepts of family law, or the role of women, all of which “make it unacceptable to integrate Muslim immigrants into Italian society” (Bucci 2012, 83). Sabbe et.al (2014) argues that forced marriage is intertwined with migration and integration on the one hand and domestic violence on the other. In addition, these are commonly linked to culture, religion and specific minority groups. Furthermore, even though it is a form of gendered-based violence targeting predominantly women, endangering their health and well-being, implemented solutions are mainly of a legal character, emphasising immigration and criminal matters concerning acts of forced migration (Sabbe et al. 2014, 176).

To describe this positioning of the family into the public domain, some authors employ the notion of ‘doing family’, which aims to stress both the state’s regulatory role and the migrant’s approaches – namely, their self-positioning as citizens and parents. This has been elaborated in the analysis of mothering techniques of Filipino and Thai women with migration backgrounds residing in Belgium in the ‘mixed family setting’ (Fresnoza-Flot 2018). Their strategies and self-positioning situate a broader socio-political context and an increase in state control concerning “binational marriages” (matrimonial relations between people of different ethnicities/nationalities).

Literature on transnational parenting has shown that separation negatively affects integration among different groups (e.g. in the Netherlands) (Haagsman, Mazzucato, and Dito 2015). Notably, parents depend on their agency and personal strategies (Vives and Vazquez Silva 2017). Scholarly work on both the Dutch and Danish spatial dispersal policies address issues around refugee integration into host societies while critically questioning inclusion into welfare settings and the impact of the size of the local community (e.g. urban and rural differences on integration) (Larsen 2013; van Liempt and Miellet 2021). In this context, possibilities to establish social ties is vital for integration. Moreover, uncertainties over family reunification as separation from family negatively affect migrants’ sense of feeling at home and their wellbeing (van Liempt and Miellet 2021, 2392).

Moreover, fear and other psycho-social aspects of family-related separation, especially in the encampment and resettlement, tend to be overlooked. Some authors identify various psycho-social issues resulting from family separation with prolonged process unification and waiting for family members. Jinan Bastaki (2019) argues that the refugee law and feminist advocacy still did not adequately consider the definition of “family” in refugee law and its harmful effect on adult refugee women seeking asylum with their families. As the definition tends to be the nuclear family, it results in excluding adult children who reached maturity during the process, which can have two unwanted results for the asylum-seekers – as either they or their families can receive protection, leaving the other in limbo. None of the EU Member States with a high number of asylum seekers permit parents to reunite with children older than 18 years automatically. Only Spain and Norway identify dependency as a category outside the nuclear family (Bastaki 2019, 182). As noted by the author, this allows adult single women seeking asylum with their families to be lawfully separated from their families during and after the asylum procedures. Therefore, separation is ignored in much of the literature, as it emerges as an opposite to a perceived idea about women’s autonomy and the “stereotype that Muslim women must always want to escape their families” (Bastaki 2019, 283).

Some of the integration challenges that authors link to inadequate or dissatisfactory accommodation could be overcome by engaging better policy on alternative housing options that aim to engage host societies families, as already practised in some EU countries.³³ Based on interviews with multi-stakeholders from various family hosting projects (also known as home-sharing and domestic hospitality) in France, it is possible to understand the rationale, contrast advantages, and disadvantages of such solutions for accommodating newly arrived refugees and the effects on future social work practice. The findings confirm that this type of hosting impacts personal capacity (e.g. language skills, mitigation of the cultural knowledge gap, and health improvement) to face integration challenges and external factors (e.g. employment and educational support, and the enhancement of social connections), which aid integration progresses (Ran and Join-Lambert 2020). Nevertheless, the scope of support is also related to hosting families’ capacities, such as their social connections and financial background, aiding access to formal and informal

³³ (Zill, Van Liempt, and Spierings 2021; van Liempt and Miellet 2021); See chapter on Housing for extensive discussion on the topic of accommodation.

education. Furthermore, this type of hosting can also have a negative impact, such as on privacy and experience of independence.

One further integration challenge that requires critical attention is the inclusion of Newly Arrived Migrant Children/Students (NMC or NAMS) in the educational system as well as envisaged support for parents. Despite their rights to equal and high-quality education, as guaranteed by the international resolutions and local regulations, scholars emphasise that there are gaps between the policy intentions and their practical outcomes. This has also been noted in the analysis of the Swedish Language Introduction Programs, which authors understand belonging to what is commonly seen as ‘refugee-only’ schools as legitimising a specific type of ‘inclusion through exclusion’ (Bunar and Juvonen 2021). Namely, such schools develop from ‘transitional classes to schools for newcomers’ due to a broader lack of recognition for children’s individual premigratory resources in this context overseen as there is a tendency of understanding their challenges to access education as ‘deficit’ (Nilsson and Bunar 2016). Instead, the authors call for more support-based inclusion programs that aim to shorten the time children spend in separated programs and thus make a quicker transition into the mainstream program. What is suggested is expanding options for training targeting teachers, such as in-service training and pre-service education in disciplinary literacy (Bunar and Juvonen 2021, 17).

The European Commission report covering main policy approaches notes different factors influencing NMC and NAMS integration into the host society’s formal education, however, most of them are not specific to education (Dumcius et al. 2012, 29). The authors summarise three common ones that parents and children face: access, participation and performance, also underlining a problem of segregation arising due to factors such as 1) residential segregation, 2) native flight or 3) accumulation of migrant students in schools for children with special needs (Dumcius et al. 2012, 30–31). This report records a diverse spectrum of policy measures at school having the following thematic focus: a) linguistic support, b) academic support c) parental involvement, and d) intercultural education and a friendly learning environment. Important takeaways from this study are the following. First, for inclusion, an integrated approach is crucial. Second, having NAMS as a separate target group in education is not a precondition for achieving a solid and inclusive integration policy. Third, to achieve effective implementation, they suggest national monitoring and regular control. For instance, in some countries (e.g., Italy and Sweden), it is up to school management to decide on how regulations are put in place of funds allocated. In 2013, when this report was published, there was still not a significant number of policies aiming to address NMC, which changed in the years to come, namely after 2014, when the number of school-age children arriving with parents or alone rose significantly.³⁴

³⁴ For instance, between 2015 and 2019 Sweden had 100,000 children asylum applicants, which is a significant number for a country of 10, 5 million inhabitants (see Bunar and Juvonen 2021, 2).

The authors of the five countries' (Turkey, Lebanon, Germany, Greece, and Sweden) comparison describe differences among Syrian refugee children, stating that despite EU regulations on including children in obligatory educational system children within three months,³⁵ in practice that is not the case, especially in countries with a high number of refugees, such as Greece and Turkey). Also, what remains the biggest challenge is segregation. Moreover, age differences concerning school admission into compulsory education are not cross-country identical. The status plays an important role for children who are in the asylum procedure. According to available findings, they have 10 to 50% less schooling, and often their study time is shorter than for children in regular school (Crul et al. 2019, 4) For instance, in Greece, to respond to the challenge of having to integrate a high number of refugee children in the aftermath of 2015, the Ministry of Education set up the Reception Facilities for Refugee Education. Similarly, in Turkey, Temporary Education Centres were established, aiming to provide for Syrian children schooling outside and inside the camps.

Framing interventions and policy objectives in the aftermath of 2014 situate a number of already existing integration-related discussions for newly arrived family members concerning family reunification and prevention of forced marriage. Regarding children, the focus is on inclusion in education which is achieved by adjusting existing policy to respond to broader socio-political factors, including the high number of arrivals at this time.

8.5 Overview of commonly used instruments and tools

targeting family, parents and children

To implement family-related policy objectives, states introduce diverse instruments and tools. These include the following type of measures: a) regulatory (based on legislation: laws, regulations, and directives) or command and control; b) economic or market-based (including financial incentives and sanctions, funding, and financial support); c) Informational and communication-based, which involve information campaigns, public statements, events, social media, and videos), and d) participatory. The reviewed literature on family relations, marriage and children mentioned some of these measures, which are summarised in the next paragraphs.

European discourses on the cultural integration or assimilation of migrants impact policies and how the migrants are targeted. In this context, temporality, that is, residing 'here' - the host society and 'there' – the country of origin, is seen through a lens of European time as a norm of what is considered modern and secular. In the research on parenting training policies in the Netherlands, the author notes that they have, as an explicit goal, an 'activation' of groups of parents whom some politicians and policymakers comprehend as 'lagging behind'. The state foresees various campaigns, spanning from sponsored swimming to support accessing the labour market. Therefore, regulatory

³⁵ See, article 14 paragraph 1, European Regulations 2003/9/EG.

policies such as parenting courses aim to 'bring' them – the Other, whose time is labelled as traditional, religious, and backwards - into 'our' (modern, European) space-time. In the author's words: "Distinctions between 'who has arrived in modernity and who has not' legitimate quite far-reaching policy interventions, ranging from ever more stringent migration laws to courses teaching 'modern', 'active citizenship'" (Van den Berg 2016, 23–24). In this context, mothering developed to be one of the key sites of policy interventions and tools of nation-building as their roles as parents extend to supporting the state to create future active citizens: their children. Also, parenting courses function as prevention measures against 'inactive' citizens.

Another example of regulatory measures is the puzzling differences in Germany's legal structures targeting accompanied and unaccompanied refugee children (Hillmann and Dufner 2019). Limited access to health and stark differences in accommodation arrangements for children travelling alone and with parents pose a range of ethical questions and the slight possibility to justify reasoning that set children travelling with their parents in a much worse situation. The limited access to health is not only insufficient, but some authors describe it as "bare emergency health care" (Hillmann and Dufner 2019, 5–6). Additionally, the difference in accommodation for accompanied and unaccompanied children possibly violates the principle of equality before the law as set in Art. 3 (1) of the German constitution, EU Directives concerning reception standards, and articles 18, 21 and 23 of EU Directive 2013/33/EU. The authors note that these findings contradict the widely known positive image of German refugee policy, which is in their view kept due to efforts of thousands of volunteers seeking to compensate for the gaps mentioned above in legal structures, explicitly regarding refugees' rights and options to access health.

Economic or market-based measures, (including financial incentives and sanctions, funding, and financial support) vary across countries, and consider the importance of social categories of difference (e.g., age, gender, status) of migration decisions making (e.g., unification) and integration.

The labour market integration of leading migrants and their family members in the context of family reunification differs between EU countries, their respective state welfare systems (e.g., socio-democratic, liberal provision of education, health care, and childcare), inter- EU migrants and third-country nationals. The place of residence of the migrant's spouse or partner is related to their economic integration, however not in a straightforward way, with age and gender playing significant roles, as shown for the Polish migrants in Sweden, Norway and UK (Ryndyk 2020). Surprising, only in the context of Scandinavian countries (and its more regulated labour market), the economic integration of Polish migrants turns out to be a significant predictor of their family reunification, which was, the authors argue, due to higher chances of finding a job in the UK as it has a less regulated labour market.³⁶ Important conclusion and takeaway for the Scandinavian countries'

³⁶ The authors note that when couples engage in migration decision-making (first stage) and family reunification in the country of immigration (second state), they bargain and wage both material and non-material costs and rewards that the move involves. In this regard, the type of employment (e.g. permanent/temporary) and frequency of unemployment are significant factors as

policy-makers are that family immigration into less regulated labour markets can improve gender quality as it facilitates a double-earner family model; decisions about uniting will be not postponed because the partner/husband cannot fulfil what is expected to be his gendered role as a provider. In the author's words, "[f]amily immigration into more protected labour markets, on the contrary, may result in the reinforcement of the traditional male bread-winner model" (Ryndyk 2020, 16). The longitudinal study (2003–2015), comparing labour market integration among asylum refugees, resettled refugees, and their reunited family members in Finland, shows how gender differences and employment/unemployment rates intersect among newly arrived migrants. The highest chances of getting employment have migrant men united with their families, most likely due to social ties; however, women do not share the same paths. One of the probable reasons is child work obligations. Contrary to this subgroup of women, resettled refugees integrated much faster, most likely as these women tend to already have children before the arrival (Tervola 2020). A study conducted in another Nordic country, Denmark, shed light on the period after many European countries cut welfare benefits for refugees, post-2015 (e.g., Germany and the Netherlands). Focusing on the effects of Denmark's Start Aid welfare reform targeting refugee immigrants showed that this reform did not only result in women withdrawing from the labour market, but it also had a negative impact on children's attendance in preschools and care facilities as well as youth crime rates. Namely, it had an opposite effect from what it was initially intended: encouraging self-sufficiency and autonomy (Andersen, Dustmann, and Landersø 2019).

Literature covering information and communication-based (information campaigns, public statements, events, social media, videos) measures is diverse; it captures well the importance of involving migrants themselves in the conceptualisation of the tools. In their article on Arabic speaking Iraqi and Syrian refugee families' integration in Germany, the authors note that media repertoires have a valuable role in facilitating the integration of refugees in various sociocultural contexts of their respective societies. However, they can also lead to isolation resulting from concentrating on the home countries' networks and Arabic content, which was the case among more mature research participants (i.e., parents). On the other hand, the findings showed that those who focus more on the locally offered content in the German language tend to be better included in the host societies. The authors note that integration policy should include more guidance on the targeted use of media practice to support the integration of newly arrived migrants (Rothenberger, Elmezeny, and Wimmer 2019, 17). For instance, in Sweden, a mobile application is employed to support newly arrived migrants in their language learning; mobile technology had a function of a mediating device that can potentially enhance social integration (Bradley, Lindström, and Hashemi 2017). A study conducted among newly arrived Arabic-speaking migrants who were involved in a language learning offered by the national introduction program targeting people who were granted asylum confirms these results about mobile technology. Namely, around 30% of interviewees employed their smartphones primarily to keep in touch with family and friends in their home

reuniting could be postponed due to a lack of economic security/limited welfare provisions. Also, spouse's (in this context, women, as leading migrants were predominantly men, between 2007–2017) chances of finding employment upon the second stage are crucial.

countries and use social media (Bradley, Lindström, and Hashemi 2017, 6). Importantly, the participants did express a wish to meet more local Swedes, but they did not practice Swedish via mobile apps. This result offers important feedback on how the app could be adjusted to connect better people who were granted asylum with locals who have mastered Swedish or are native speakers.

German NGO (Arbeitskreis Neue Erziehung e.V. – Association for New Education – with parents for parents) established in 1946, has a long history of fostering intercultural integration with a Parents Newsletter. One of the reasons for their success in publishing the newsletter was providing it in different languages, including Arabic, before an increase of refugee arrivals in 2014 and 2015. Reaching migrant families is central for their program, and the motto “with parent – for parents” is a key element of their activities and considerations for producing informational media. Furthermore, Arab parents are engaged in the preparations (Kyuchukov and New 2017, 220). One further reason why involving migrants directly in the preparation of informational-communicational based activities is that it allows a diversity of experiences, including negative ones, such as forced marriage and trafficking to be shared. As noted by the authors of the ASSIST report, first-hand narratives can improve the impact of any campaign points or information materials, especially regarding the use of language that appropriately and respectfully reaches the audience (Nusha Yonkova, Jennifer Okeke Campbell, and Mary Henderson 2020, 31).

The literature mentions various educational material and engagement methods among the participatory measures targeting migrant families and children. One of the methods is a peer-mentoring scheme for immigrant students in English secondary school as a part of the project ‘INTO: Intercultural tools to support migrant students in schools’ (funded by the EC and implemented in five EU countries. All students were newly arrived migrants (had arrived within two years), and the program involved mentors and mentees - all recruited among the student population - facilitators. One of the findings was that because all mentors and mentees had an experience of migration, their relationship could benefit as they had empathy for each other (Messiou and Azaola 2018, 148). This broad scope of support involved language, practical (e.g., timetables, policies), academic (e.g., help with homework, and reading) and also offering, upon wish and need, and pastoral support. The INTO project had positive results, improving mentees’ integration and self-assurance. In addition, the program supported people to make new friends, which was also helpful with adjusting to a new environment. Even though the scheme led to the development of different skills, mentors often had to find ad hoc and creative ways to overcome barriers, such as shyness or language, which many mentees struggled with in their early days of arrival. All in all, it raises awareness about needs and provisions and cultural sensitivity for diversity in schools and beyond. Also, for the long-term results, schools have to take an active role in implementing and setting in action such programs.

Based on the study’s findings conducted in Swedish preschools, it is evident that newly arrived children adopted various communicational strategies (e.g. invented language, body language, switching) to overcome language barriers and initiate play-together with peers (Skaremyr 2021).

For these reasons, the authors state that states need more holistic preschool pedagogy that understands children as agents, stating that “the communication, be it linguistic or para-linguistic, of newly arrived children should not be regarded as inadequate, but as active communicative acts allowing them to participate in the preschool practices” (Skaremyr 2021, 406).

8.6 Effectiveness and Outcomes of instruments and tools

in family-related policies

This section synthesises examples of instruments and tools (e.g., sponsorship and community-support programs) targeting specific sub-groups (such as refugees, families with children, newly arrived migrants, children & youth) employed across the countries focused upon in this review to point out the scope of their effectiveness and outcomes.

“Menschen stärken Menschen”, the sponsorship program of the Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), established in Germany in 2015, aims to support newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers with integration by linking them with the local population. It is a national initiative connecting NGOs and associations and programs – led by various actors, from schools, kindergartens, migrant associations, churches, mosques, and more, both at the regional and local level (BMFSFJ 2017). In total, 67% of sponsorship focuses on families (in German: Familienpatenschaften) and 41% on 1:1 sponsorship targeting minors. Since 2016, it has been accompanied with an impact analysis measuring its effectiveness. A report from 2017 names central factors of success of these initiatives (61% of questioned participants) being mutual sympathy and personal characteristics, for example, responsibility and openness of the involved parties (ibid., 53). In total, 81% said that sponsorship raises awareness about civil management on the local level (ibid., 73). These findings raise a question among community and sponsorship programs as catalysts of refugee integration and policymakers’ role in facilitating effective community engagement. Providing adequate training is crucial, as chances for achieving better results increase with qualified volunteers who can establish trust with beneficiaries (Susan Fratzke and Emma Dorst 2019).

A good example of a welcoming refugee program is the Portuguese Refugee Support Platform (PAR – Plataforma de Apoio a Refugiados). PAR was established in 2015 and has since continued with gathering networks of organisations and volunteers. Empirical research portraying the perspectives of families confirms what much of the literature had already mentioned on the topic of language, namely, investing in policies that facilitate a) learning of the host society’s language and b) access to the labour market are valuable tools (Barbosa et al. 2021). For these reasons, in the context of this country, they mention strengthening participation in the ‘Portuguese for All’ program and similar wide-reaching good practices. Also, reliable funding and support on the national level play a key role. This can be seen in Portugal, where the Office of the High Commissioner for Migration

structures and implements training programs for sponsors and operates a 24-hours hotline for sponsors and refugees, increasing effectiveness (Susan Fratzke and Emma Dorst 2019, 12).

Findings from Spain, Serbia, and Belgium on promoting effective educational and care measures for the integration of refugees notes that one of the obstacles to this is that refugees’ first languages are commonly not used in systematic ways. Schools seek to bypass these obstacles by engaging bilingual buddies; however, the success of such practices requires planning, organisation and adequate pedagogical structuring (Bunar 2019). In addition, good cooperation between schools and parents is necessary for the children’s educational success (Bunar 2019, 74). Empowering mothers, who are together with their children seen as an essential element of the integration process, is recognised as a vital part of education-related policies focusing on school-aged children in post-2014 Greece. To target these groups, tools of non-formal education, such as language training for mothers, were employed as a ‘tool’ to enhance results of the formal education, (i.e., of the refugee children in the state facilities).

In their evaluations of some of the programs targeting school children, scholars note that one of the biggest challenges and crucial instances of the success of such programs is the training of teachers (Androusou and Iakovou 2020). By applying the action research paradigm, they state that focused educational interventions among the refugee population can give future teachers valuable insights into the importance of connecting theory to practice and of collaboration (e.g., with parents). This is because learning in the context of flight is difficult, and there are various challenges, from fluidity to psycho-social problems, that people on the move face.

Being together with family members and overcoming fears of separation is also effective for integration, as shown by the research conducted in six EU Member States on the topic of integration of young refugees. In this regard, family reunification is recognised as one of the “key mechanisms for better integration of migrants and refugees”. Namely, separation from family members and uncertainties about their security “hinder effective participation in language courses, school and training and from finding a job”, all of which are central to integration (EU 2019, 11).

By drawing on Ager and Strang’s (2008) conceptualisation of successful refugee integration, and findings from Austria and the Netherlands, Alessi et al. (2020) note that the experience of LGBTQ refugees differs. As previously mentioned, various refugee and migrant subgroups might understand integration differently and access or involvement in some of the domains, such as social connections, employment, housing, education or health, varies based on their gender, age, sexual orientation, and religion. In this context, racialising discourses about refugees coming from predominantly Muslim countries also contributes to the overall situation of integration (Alessi et al. 2020). For instance, holding the intersecting identities of identifying as LGBTQ and being a refugee could prevent integration for some people, such as lacking access to crucial benefits (e.g. access to language classes) when they feel threatened (by other refugees). At the same time, membership in LGBTQ social identity categories may well aid in facilitating affirmative social bonds with other

sexual and gender minorities attending LGBTQ-supportive groups. Importantly, Alessi et. al.’s (2020) research participants acknowledged that, despite the pressure coming from a continuous confrontation with homophobic or transphobic refugees, they also trusted that the host societies’ laws and social customs could protect them (Alessi et al. 2020, 10).

The effectiveness of tools and instruments is dependent on specific sub-groups’ needs. Research among the LGBTIQ+ population in Italy shows that despite governments stressing the importance of socio-economic autonomy, access to work and social health remains a problem as there is a lack of institutional support for refugees, especially in the field of psychological support and economic assistance (Rosati et al. 2021). Support for transgender refugees is even more scarce, as only grassroots organisations provide it. For this minority group, difficulties at accessing employment, housing, and medical care are amplified through discrimination and hostility based on their expression of gender. Namely, their chances for integration are rendered as they do not receive adequate support. Importantly, some refugees had to flee their countries and families due to sexual and gender-based prosecution and thus already have limited options for help from networks such as the community of origin (e.g., members of the diaspora) to whom other refugees could turn to and thus increase, for example, their chances of employment. Finally, as research from Germany among newly arrived LGBTIQ* refugees indicated, based on numerous intersecting attributes, there are examples of discrimination across different categories of belonging (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, migration status) having negative effects on individuals’ mental health and day-to-day life (Golembe et al. 2020).

8.7 Conclusion

How can the sustainability of integration practices targeting families be understood? Reviewed literature emphasises various intersecting factors – from sensitivity when scrutinising family migrants and their children’s status to the importance of well-informed training. Some of the key elements raised in the literature would be programs that consult migrants themselves about their needs (e.g., access to language education) and the best ways to address them, particularly if they belong to some of the vulnerable categories. Also, cooperation on the national level and stable funding are essential, as well as fair distribution on a regional and local level. Furthermore, other authors mention the importance of feminist perspectives and cultural competence for addressing diversity issues, especially when specific practices can be misread as a case of negligence (Nusha Yonkova, Jennifer Okeke Campbell, and Mary Henderson 2020, 24). Also, a gender-sensitive approach to integration must include generous childcare provisions to support women in attending courses that can aid their inclusion.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) “Focus group on integration” final report states that insufficient income, accommodation, and social networks contribute to an unequal situation. Many refugees and asylum seekers have to spend a prolonged time in informal housing and temporary shelter. Such exceptionally precarious living arrangements contribute to

integration becoming a challenging goal to reach, and measures cannot be sustainable. One way to overcome this is to develop more personalised integration tools based on the assessments of skills and aspirations. The UNCHR recommends that asylum seekers and refugees, to achieve integration, should be included among disadvantaged workers early on and stay in this category for the first two years of their status of protection (UNHCR 2017).

Other authors noted that intersectionality could help policymakers understand inequalities, especially concerning sensitivity for diversity. It unveils how multiple minority identities interplay in the host society, such as ethnic and gender identities, that have a great impact on how family relations are structured.

Finally, this review did not record one definition of integration in the literature, and it emphasised the importance of taking into account that this is a highly gendered term often with the normative implications (e.g. religious belonging) concerning family-related policies, for instance, focusing on forced marriage or thresholds for age assessment (Spencer and Charsley 2021; Ager and Strang 2008). Also, as some scholars noted, various refugee and migrant sub-groups might understand integration differently (Korac 2003). Like numerous types of families, there are also various aspects of integration (e.g. spatial/temporal/geographical, individual/network-based) (Eggebo and Brekke 2019; Spencer and Charsley 2016, 6). This is one of the reasons to evaluate family-related measures as interrelated and multidirectional processes across various domains.

8.8 Bibliography

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