

# **Migrant Integration into the European Labor Market**

By

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### Abstract

This paper assesses two aspect of immigrants (economic and non-economic) in the European labor market using national level source EUROSTAT of the year 2014. The first segment examines how certain variables affects the participation rate of migrants in 35 European countries. Outcome suggests that immigrants who are more actively seeking employment and lack of native language skills are less compared to other immigrants are more incorporated in labor-market integration. The second segment portrays contrast among the first- and second- generation immigrants in terms of employment, income and at-risk-of-poverty rate. I find that employment and at-risk-of-poverty rate among second-generation migrants are higher and lower, respectively, compared to first-generation. But first-generation’s annual income is higher than second-generation.

**Keywords:** Migrant, Participation rate, First-generation, Second-generation

## 1.0 Introduction

The term 'migrant' generally functions as an umbrella term used to describe people that move to another country with the intention of staying for a significant period of time (OECD, 2018). Migration takes place due to various reasons, some may be for a better manner of living and some had to flee their birth country due to political unrest who seek refuge in the host country. Generally, we assume refugees as the focal point in terms of immigration but in reality, refugee is a microscopic part of the immigration group. It becomes unfair to only examine refugees to fully understand the level of migrant integration in the labor market. Hence, the word 'migrant' in this paper includes both economical immigrants as well as refugees.

Migrant labor market outcomes are generally found to improve over time as they acquire better knowledge of the host country and relevant human capital (qtd. in Zwysen, 2018). Inflows of migrants is not the main issue, rather the aftermath of this inflow is, in how the receiving countries will react. Furthermore, the first generation of migrants confront the most hardship to establish themselves in the host country. Migrants differ from each other in their resources and the extent of social welfare benefits they receive, their motivation and match with the host country, and their prospects of return migration. This affects their choices made in the country of residence, which in turn affects labor market outcomes (qtd. in Zwysen, 2018).

This research paper consist of two aspects of migrant integration in the European labor market. First section of the paper views how the participation rate of migrants into the European labor market is affected due to variables such as their health stats, education level, language skills, activity rate, unemployment rate, and employment through networking. Second section of the paper portrays comparisons between first generation migrants and second generation migrants

integrating in the labor market, through three variables: employment, income, and at-risk-of-poverty rate.

In the last decade, the overall percentage of migrants throughout the world has immensely increased which is creating many new opportunities for both the migrants as well as the natives of the host country. At the same time, the descendants of the migrants (second-generation migrants) are also partaking into the labor market which is not only creating noticeable gap against the natives but also their parents (first-generation migrants). Therefore, this grabbed my attention to understand how and why these factors are a part of restructuring the labor market of Europe.

As mentioned above, discussion of the research paper is divided into two parts. The next part of the paper provides an overview of the European labor market and immigration policies of Europe. Section 2.0 consist of various research papers done by acclaimed authors on the labor market integration of migrants. Section 3.0 established a regression model to see the effects of the factors (mentioned above) on the participation rate of the migrant labors. For the regression model, data were collected from EUROSTAT for 35 European countries of the year 2014. Data were also analyzed in this section. In section 4.0, differences between first-generation migrants and second-generation migrants are analyzed through previously noted variables. Section 5.0 concludes.

## **1.1 European Labor Market**

Labor market, especially European Union Member States, have yet to recover from the economic crisis that started in 2008. Since the crisis, real income of many EU countries decreased whereas income inequality and unemployment had risen. Despite the crisis, EU functioned to overcome its economy through umbrella funding of countries in danger of default, proposals for banking union

as well as the completion of linking the monetary union with an economic one; the latter is proposed with measures to ensure the stability pact's implementation in order to keep government budget deficits and debt in check (Ritzen, 2014).

Today's European labor market is also challenged by changes in the demographic composition of the labor force, as well as the increase in work complexities and processes (Cedefop, 2016). It's projected that Europe will face plunge in working age population and increase in old age dependency ratio. Studies – such as European Commission (2103) or Cedefop (The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) country forecasts – showed that the decline of working age population will, in some countries, reduce the labor force to the extent that potential economic growth will be at risk. To overcome the projected issue, Cedefop suggested that Europe needs to increase its labor market participation rate as well as immigration mobility.

In 2018, it was reported by European Commission in Annual Report on Intra-EU Labor Mobility 2020, that countries such as Germany, Spain, UK, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden had net migration flows of above +50,000. Except for Germany, where inflows from the two groups are more similar, the group of incoming TCNs (third-country nationals) are notably larger than incoming EU-28 (EU Member States as of 01 January 2019) movers (Fries-Tersch, 2021).

## **1.2 Immigration in Europe**

21.8 million non-EU nationals live in the EU which equals to 5% of the total population, according European Council. After Europe's migration crisis in 2015, EU adopted new policies for asylum seekers, skilled workers, students, and researches, and family reunification. Since 2015, two successful EU-sponsored resettlement programs have helped more than 70,000 for the most

vulnerable people in need of international protection find shelter in the European Union; 19,452 people were resettled in the EU under the 'First resettlement scheme of 2015' and almost 44,000 people were resettled under the 'Second resettlement scheme of 2017 (How the, 2021).

The inclusion of migrant in the labor market is key to ensure their effective integration into the host societies and their positive impact on the EU economy; this entails fully using their skills and realizing their economic potential (Integration, n.d.). The European Commission introduced 12 new and specific projects in 2017, under the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund to ensure effective integration of migrants in labor market.

One of the most highlighted migration policy of Europe is EU blue card. This this policy, the Council presidency and the European Parliament agreed upon entry and residence conditions for highly qualified non-EU nationals coming to live and work in EU. According to Council of the European Union, new clauses such as facilitating intra-EU mobility, making family reunification easier, and simplifying procedures for recognized employers, granting a very high level of access to the labor market, and establishing more inclusive admission criteria, were presented in the policy to attract and retain highly qualified workers, especially in sectors with skill shortage.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

**Brell et al, (2020)** finds that if asylum process is kept short, and early healthcare are provided and enabling refugees to enter the labor market easily, it will help in reduction of skill loss, improvement in effectiveness of human capital investment. Also helps in reduction of uncertainty of future residence. They used cross-sectional study and collected data from The UK's Survey of

New Refugees, the Australian Building a New Life in Australia survey, the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the “administrative” data sources.

**Zwysen, (2018)** used cross-national European data from the 2008 ad hoc module of the Labour Force Survey for analyzing migrant gap between refugee migrants and other migrants. This paper shows that refugee migrants with low language skills, qualifications which aren't recognized in the host countries and without host country nationality, have a disadvantage against other migrants. Therefore, acquiring the skills increases integration of refugee migrants into the labor market and the gap between economic and non-economic migrants decrease over time.

**Fasani et al, (2017)** used cross-sectional survey data finds that refugees migrants are 11.6 percent less likely to have a job and 22.1 percent more likely to be unemployed than migrants with similar characteristics. For unobserved variables, through DID analysis it is seen that entry cohorts admitted when refugee status recognition rates are relatively high integrate better into the host country labor market.

**Bevelander and Pendakur, (2012)** this cross-sectional study between Canada and Sweden states that the earning trajectories are higher in Canada than the Sweden but the non- economic refugee migrant groups have similar employment and earning rate in both the countries. They used data from Canadian Immigration Database (IMDB) post 1979 and 2007 Swedish Register Data.

**Dagnelie et al, (2018)** this time series analysis of how entrepreneurs in the host country who are from the same country of origin of the refugee migrant, aid them to integrate in the labor by hiring them in their business states that as the number of networking entrepreneurs increases, refugee migrants are more likely to get hired but if the networking employees increase, new migrants are less likely to be employed by about two percentage. Therefore, refugees “complement” networking



entrepreneurs and “substitute” for networking employees. They used data from Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS) (2005-2010).

**Cocquyt, (2018-2019)** qualitative analysis states that a refugee integration between two developed country, Switzerland and Belgium showed that Belgium had a lower employment rate of refugees than those of Switzerland. The author used secondary data as reference from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, European Council on Refugees and Exiles, EUROSTAT.

**Sarvimaki, (2017)** the author conducted time series data analysis on immigrants of various countries such as, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yugoslavia, Soviet Union, turkey, OECD, and other, integrating into the Finland labor market. The paper examines how the refugees from the mentioned countries differ from the native in terms of income, employment and social benefits. As a result, immigrants from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia had low employment and income rate but received higher social benefit than the other immigrants as well as natives through 1990-2013. Moreover, employment and income rate gap between the migrants and natives decreased but remained large overtime. Also, the equivalence-scaled social benefit gap continued regardless narrowed income gap.

**Algan et al, (2009)** the article studies the differences between first-generation and second-generation immigrants of the following countries: France, Germany, and UK, in terms of employment, earnings and education. For this research paper, data were collected from French Labour Force Survey (FLFS) (2005-2007), the German Microcensus (2005-2006), and the British Labour Force Survey (UKLFS) (1993-2007). This time series analysis shows that second-generation have a lower gap in education than the first-generations. As for income, UK have a higher gap for first-generation against natives, but improved outcomes for second-generation. Lastly, in employment sector, Germany and UK, the difference is similar for both first and second-

generation against natives but in France, second-generation immigrants are at a worse position than first-generation.

### 3.0 Methodology

For this study, I have conducted a cross-national data analysis with over 35 European countries of the year 2014. This analysis consists of one regression and one model to understand how the participation rate of both economical immigrants and refugees varies against the given variables.

#### 3.1 Model

$$\text{Participation rates} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Active rate} + \beta_2 \text{Unemp} + \beta_3 \text{Health} + \beta_4 \text{Educa} + \beta_5 \text{Lack of language skills} + \beta_6 \text{Emp Through Networkig}$$

The research was done on the basis of this model and regression showed the relation between the participation rates of the migrants with how much they are active in the labor market, their unemployment rate, health status, education attainment, lack of language skills, and employment through networking in the host country.

### 3.2 Variable Description

The first variable of the regression model is participations rate of both economic and refugee immigrants. Participation rate refers to the total number of individuals who are currently employed or in seeking employment. Therefore, participation rate of immigrants is the dependent variable which states the outcome of the study. Data for variable was collected from EUROSTAT (European Statistical).

Secondly, the variable active recent immigrants refers to how much the migrants are actively seeking employment at the given time period. This is first independent variable of the study. Thirdly, unemployment rates of the immigrants was used as the second independent variable for the study. This refers to the total number of people or individuals who aren't able to get a job for number of reasons. EUROSTAT was used to for data collection for both variables

Health status of migrants was used as the third independent variable of the study. This variable shows the relative wellbeing or illness of people. For this study, I have taken 'good' as the average level of health for the immigrants. Data from EURSTAT. Fourth independent variable is the education status of immigrants. This refers to the level of education attained by both economic and refugee migrants. For this research, I have taken upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4); data from EUROSTAT.

The fifth and last independent variable for the study is lack of language skills and employment through networking, respectively. Lack of language skills refers to immigrant's lacking in the language of the host country which is a very crucial factor to enter the labor market. Employment through networking refers to migrants who are believed to provide information on labor market conditions and opportunities to recent refugees and immigrants, as well as job referrals to firms

about foreign workers finding jobs or getting hired through network (qtd. in Dagnelie, 2018). Both variable's data was collected from EUROSTAT.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Below, Table 2 shows the outcome of the cross-national Regression of the model used for this study. Robust Standard Error is conducted to avoid heteroskedasticity in the regression model. Heteroskedasticity refers to data with unequal variability across a set of second, predictor variables. If heteroskedasticity is not omitted, standard errors will be biased, along with their corresponding t-statistics and confidence intervals. Significance tests will run either too high or too low.

**Table 1:** Variable Outcome of 35 countries, 2014

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Coefficient</b> (Standard Error) (Robust Standard Error)
Intercept	43.58453 (11.01138) (11.84557)
Active Recent Immigrants	0.4331224 (0.0888179) (0.1157077)
Unemployment Rate	0.088314 (0.1238974) (0.0939234)
Health Status	0.0242218 (0.0822981) (0.0640191)
Education Status	-0.0740594 (0.0890381) (0.0979124)

Lack of Language Skills	-0.1513977 (0.0517291) (0.0863214)
Employment Through Networking	0.2802789 (0.1893894) (0.1699981)
R-squared	0.8051

Level of Significance: <5%

### 3.4 Outcomes

The outcome of the regression is that the R-squared of this model is 0.8051 which shows that 80% of variation in the participation rate of the migrant is explained by explanatory variables: active recent immigrants, unemployment, health status, education status, lack of language skills, and employment through networking.

Active recent immigrants have a positive relation with participation rate which means that if the migrants' activeness increases by 1%, participation in the labor market will also increase by 1%. This explanatory variable is significant to this model. Through this outcome it can be predicted that the migrants might not have to face poverty.

Unemployment rate have a positive relation with participation rate which refers that if 1% unemployment among the migrants increases, participation in the labor market will also increase by 1% and this variable is insignificant to this model. It can be predicted that if higher percentage of migrants are unemployed, they will actively seek employment which will increase participation rate in the labor market.

Health status have a positive relation with participation rate of the migrants which shows that when refugee's health conditions are relatively good, they are highly motivated to seek employment more and thus participation in the market increases. Although, this variable is insignificant for this model.

Education status has a negative relation with participation rate. This shows that if education level of the migrants increases, participation rate of the migrants will decrease, meaning as more people would prefer to pursue their education first, less people or migrants will be participating in the labor market right after arriving in the host country. But this explanatory variable is insignificant for this model.

Lack of language skills has a negative relationship with participation rate meaning as lack of language skills increases, participation in the labor market will decrease. This refers that if the refugee's language skills are not good enough in the host country they won't be able to communicate with their employer and thus, receiving an employment would be hard. Therefore, this variable is a very crucial factor in this model as well as significant.

Employment through networking and participation rate of the migrants has a positive relation but insignificant for this model. Social networks are broadly defined as the group of migrants from the same country of origin or community as foreign workers (Dagnelie, 2018). Hence, entrepreneurs in contact with other migrants often hire them which creates more employment among migrants. Therefore, participation rate of migrants in the labor market increases.

## 4.0 Generation of Immigrants

To begin with, the word ‘first-generation migrants’ refer to immigrants who are fresh off the boat in the host country. Secondly, the word ‘second-generation migrants’ refer to the children of the first-generation migrants. Second-generation could have come with their parents initially or family reunification could take place. Furthermore, children born after first-generation’s arrival is also considered as the second-generation migrants.

Although the primary concern about immigration is the integration into the labor market, not only of the first-generation, but also of subsequent generations. As I have already mentioned, first-generation migrants suffer the most after their arrival in the host country, but the descendants of these migrants goes through different sort of hardship. After arriving into the host country, parent’s (first-generation) main struggle is to integrate into the labor market and settle down. But, their descendant’s (Second-generation) primary struggle is culture stock. It becomes tough for them to find a place in the new social and economic structure of the host country. Many Northern European countries have accumulated sizeable populations of immigrants, but the lack of long-term strategies and policies to integrate these into societal structures and the labor market is often cited as one reason for social and economic exclusion of the children of these immigrants (Algan, 2009).

In this section of the paper, I will compare and contrast between the first and second-generation immigrants. Previously, various studies were conducted to analyze the difference between generational immigrants and natives in terms of earnings and employment. Very few studies have been conducted to understand the differences among the generations of immigrants. Hence, I opt to analyze how the second-generation differ from the first-generation migrants. There are numerous reasons to why the integration of immigrants and their children matters. The more

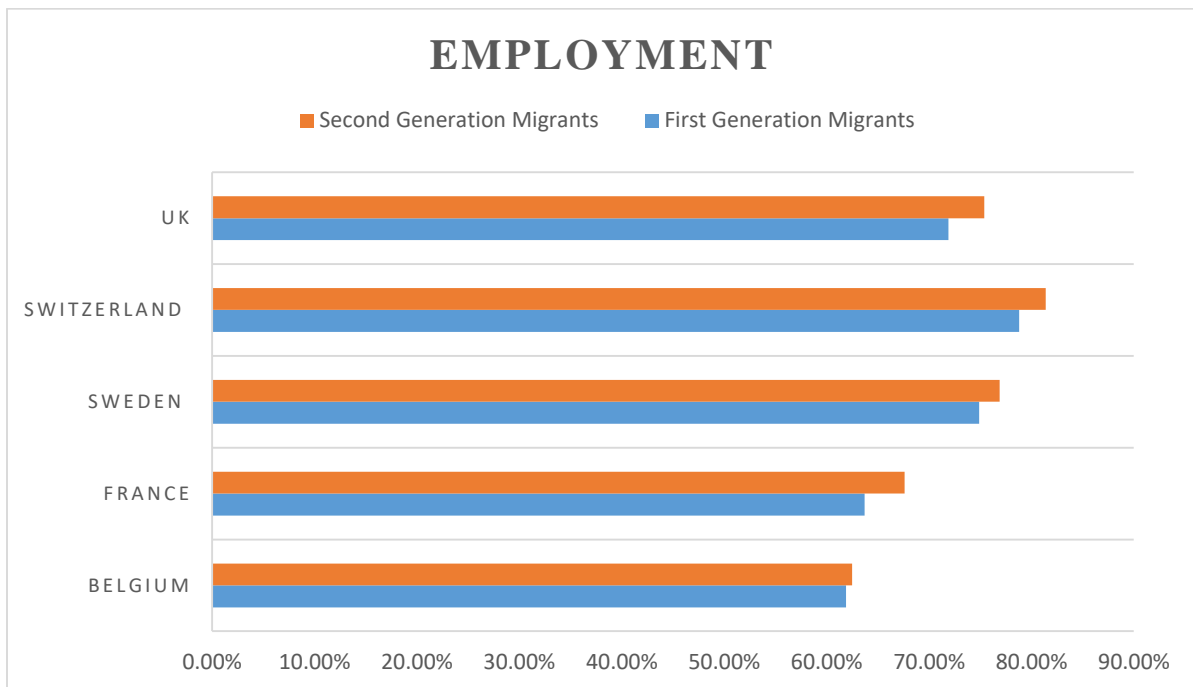
successful immigrants are in the labor market, the higher will be their net economic and fiscal contribution to the host economy (Algan, 2009).

### 4.1 First and Second Generation Comparison and Outcome

In this section of the paper, I will present and discuss comparative evidence on the performance of first- and second-generation immigrants in Belgium, France, Switzerland, Sweden, and UK; in terms of employment, income and at-risk-of-poverty rate.

#### *Employment*

**Table 2:** Employment Rate, 2014



Above table shows the difference in employment rates between first- and second-generation immigrants. All five countries chosen for the study, have the biggest and most-promising economy

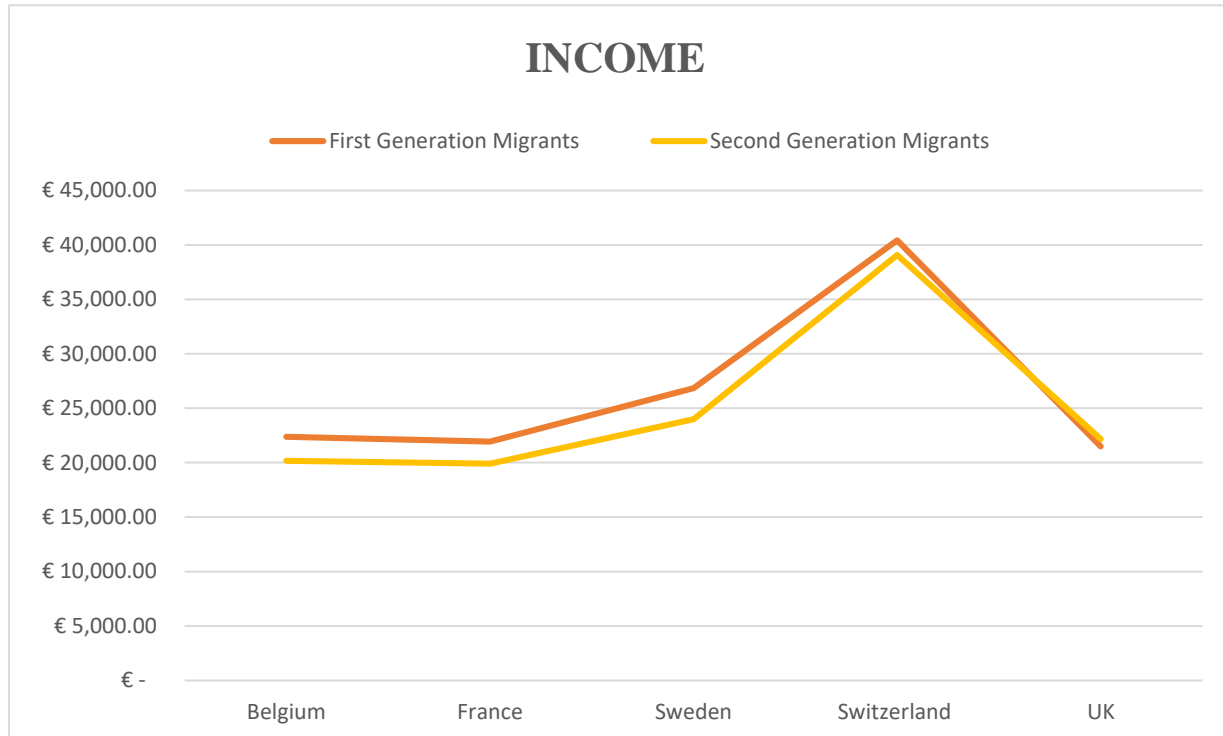


which are highly preferred by immigrants for migration. The figure portrays that more than 60 percentage of immigrant population are employed but first-generation migrant's employment rate is lower than second-generation. Second-gen's increased employment rate is due to more educational attainment and being more familiar to the work culture of the host country.

Most of first-gen migrants either have lower-secondary education or lack in language skills, they have tough time being employed. On the other hand, second-generation migrants have the opportunity to attain proper and upper-secondary education in the host-country. Also, they have the time to gain thorough language skills, as they arrive at a young age or being born in the host country. Hence, second-generation have the advantage to be employed more than first-generation.

Furthermore, second-gen migrants have an upper hand in employment rate because parents (first-gen) can provide connections and knowledge of the local labor market. Also, entrepreneurs within the migrant network facilitate labor-market integration of immigrants. Therefore, host countries should have certain programs who would act as a networking site for foreign-born immigrants to integrate in the labor market.

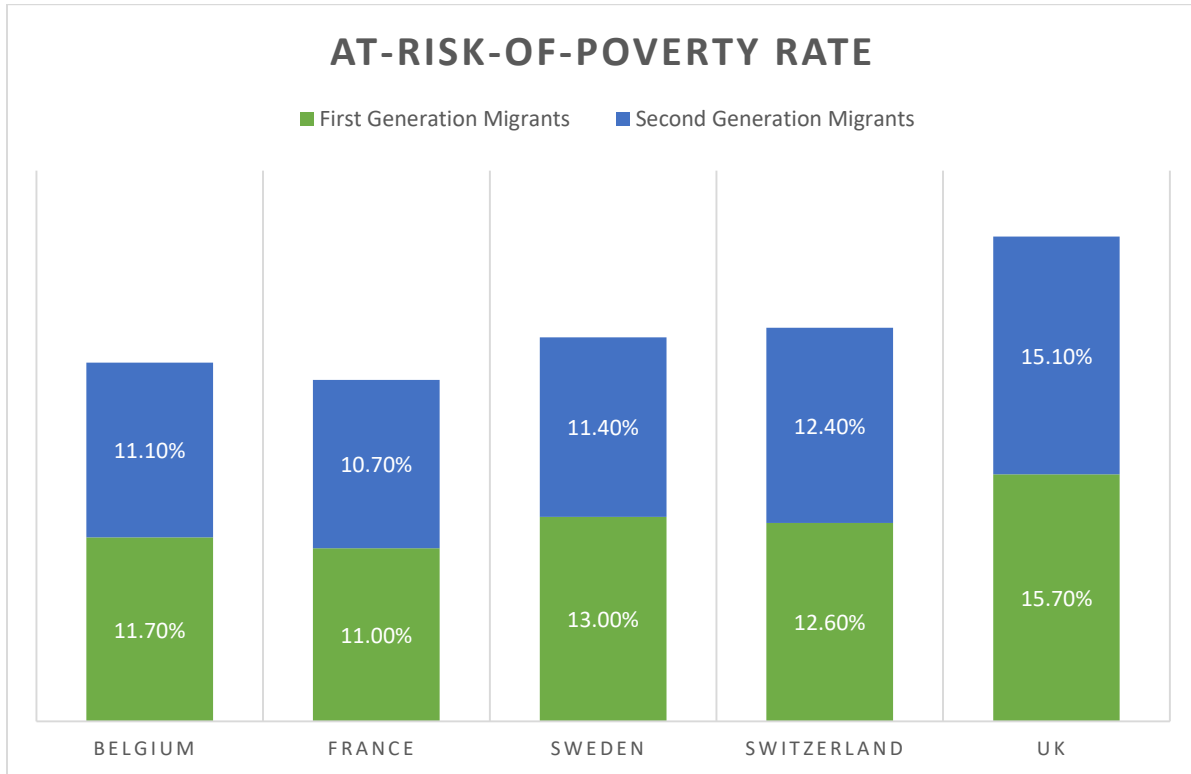
Secondly, we can see that Switzerland has the highest percentage of employment rate for both generation migrants and the gap is 2.6%, whereas, Belgium has the lowest percentage of employment rate for both generations but the gap is only 0.6%. This shows that despite Belgium having the lowest employment rate among other countries, they have better immigrant labor-market integration policy for them to be employed. France have the highest employment rate gap between first- and second-gen migrants of 3.9%.

*Income***Table 3: Annual Income, 2014**

In most of the selected countries except UK, first-gen immigrants have the highest income rate compared to second-generation. This is due to number of reasons. To begin with, second-generation's income decreases because their social welfare benefits declines comparative to the first-generation. Their main source of income is only their hourly wage. First-generations are provided with welfare benefits when they initially arrive as per the host country's immigrant policies. Thus, foreign-born migrant's income consists of social welfare benefits and their hourly wage which lead to increased income rate. Additionally, by the time second generation fully integrate into the labor market, first-generation becomes older which entails them to having more welfare benefits. Therefore, first-generation's income remains higher than second-gen migrants.

Secondly, income of second-generation decreases due to increased income inequality in European labor market. In recent years, due to increased wage-income inequality, second-generation income plunged in comparison to first-generation income despite having high employment rate. Moreover, due to increased taxation, tax burden has increased on second-generation. Since 2010, tax burden in the EU has consistently increased according to European Commission. In 2018, tax revenues, measured as percentage of GDP, increased slightly in the European Union (EU-27) up to 40.2% (Taxation, 2020).

In the figure, Switzerland's first-generation has the highest annual income among the other countries and the gap between first-and second-generation is € 1,370. In contrast, UK's first-generation has lower annual income compared to second-generation. In UK, second-generation have a higher income of € 22,181 whereas, first-generation has € 21,497. Despite France being the country who is most committed to social welfare benefits, the gap between France and Switzerland's first-generation income was € 18,489 in 2014.

*At-Risk-of-Poverty Rate***Table 4:** At-Risk-Of-Poverty Rate, 2014

Above table shows the percentage rate of first-and second-generation immigrants being at the verge of poverty. In 2014, it can be seen that about 16 percentage of immigrant population were at risk of poverty in UK. Among the chosen countries, UK has the highest rate of at-risk-of-poverty and France has the lowest risk of poverty. Although, Switzerland had highest employment rate and annual income, the first- and second-generation migrants are 12.60% and 12.40% vulnerable to poverty, respectively.

The figure shows a trend of lower risk of poverty among the second-generation migrants compared to foreign-born migrants. Despite the gap between generations are insignificantly small but second-generation is less likely to face threat of poverty. This could be due to more employment

advantage that they get initially while integrating in the labor market. Besides, most first-gen immigrant's household consists of spouse and/ or children with no extra income so, they face risk of poverty more often.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

To conclude, EU demographic scenario needs an upgrade. The labor force size of EU is decreasing as ageing population increases. Together with North-America and East Asia, the EU is moving forward longer-living, lower fertility, and higher-educated societies (Lutz, 2019). Therefore, the question arises: who will live and work in Europe in the coming decades? Immigration can be an answer as migration levels can have a large influence on the total population size and the size of the labor force (Lutz, 2019). Hence, we set out to study two aspects of immigrants integrating the labor market of the host country.

The first objective of this research was to understand how certain variables affects migrants to integrate in the European labor market. This cross-national regression outcome suggests that immigrants who are more actively seeking employment and their lack of native language skills are less compared to other immigrants are more presumably to integrate in the European labor market. Other variables in the regression model plays a certain role but insignificantly. It can also be predicted that this model may have unobserved variables which can have a greater effect on immigrants integrating in the labor market of Europe.

The second objective was to analyze comparative evidence of first-and second-generation immigrants, in terms of earnings, employment and at-risk-of-poverty. As a result, second-gen migrants have higher employment rate compared to first-generation. Thus, government should consider providing training programs and/ or networking programs which would assist immigrants

(right after their arrival in the host country) for labor-market integration. Secondly, it is seen that second-generation income rate is lower than first-generation. As a solution, tax burden should be minimized also income inequality needs to reduce. Lastly, first-generation is more at risk of poverty compared to second-generation. Usually, when a worker's personal income exceed the poverty threshold, they stop receiving poverty reduction welfare benefits. But one member's income is not competent for family of three so, they remain at risk of poverty. Hence, it is important that government extends the poverty threshold accordance to number of family member and workingman in a family.

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