



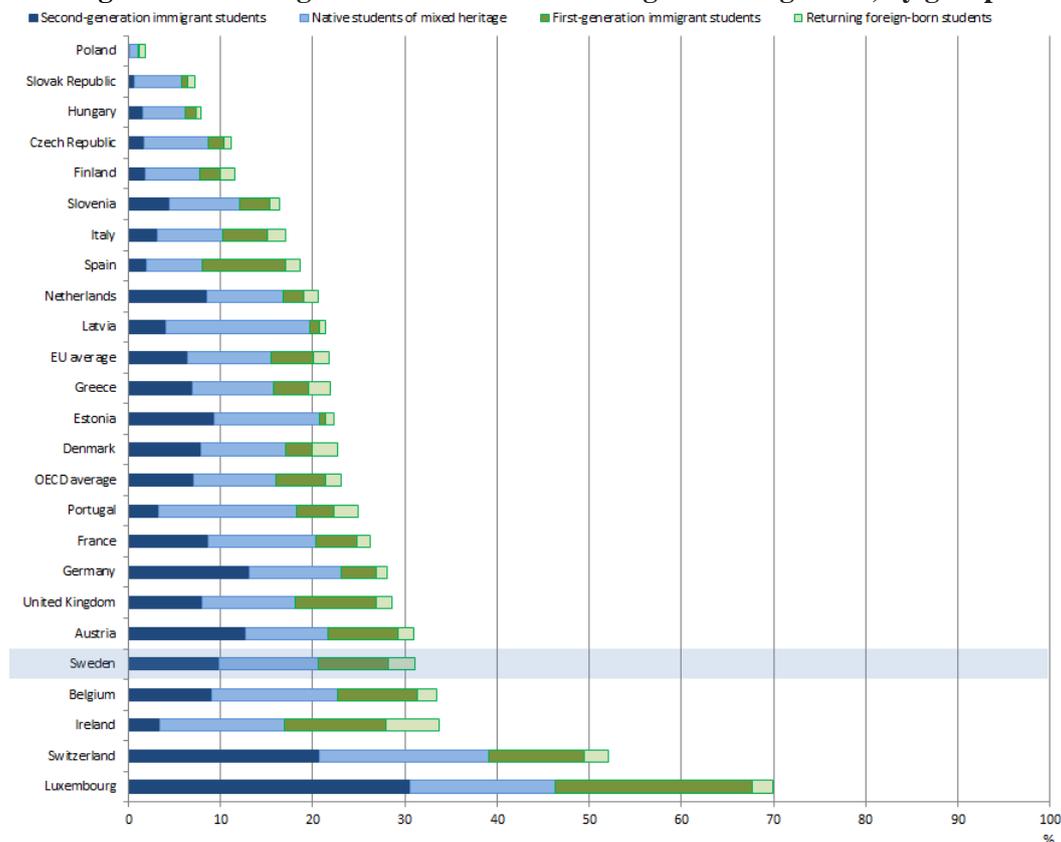
The resilience of students with an immigrant background: Factors that shape well-being

Sweden

In PISA 2015, almost one in three students in Sweden had an immigrant background, a share that is greater than the one at the OECD average level, where almost one in four students had an immigrant background. Compared to PISA 2003, the percentage of students with an immigrant background increased by nine percentage points in Sweden (six percentage points on average across OECD countries).

In PISA 2015, 11% of students were native-born with one foreign-born parent (native students of mixed heritage); 10% were native-born from two foreign-born parents (second-generation immigrant students); 3% were foreign-born with at least one native-born parent (returning foreign-born students); and 8% were foreign-born from foreign-born parents (first-generation immigrant students). 34% of first-generation immigrant had arrived to Sweden at or after the age of 12, a percentage that is greater than the OECD average of 29%.

Figure 1 Percentage of students with an immigrant background, by group



Source: [Figure 3.3](#).

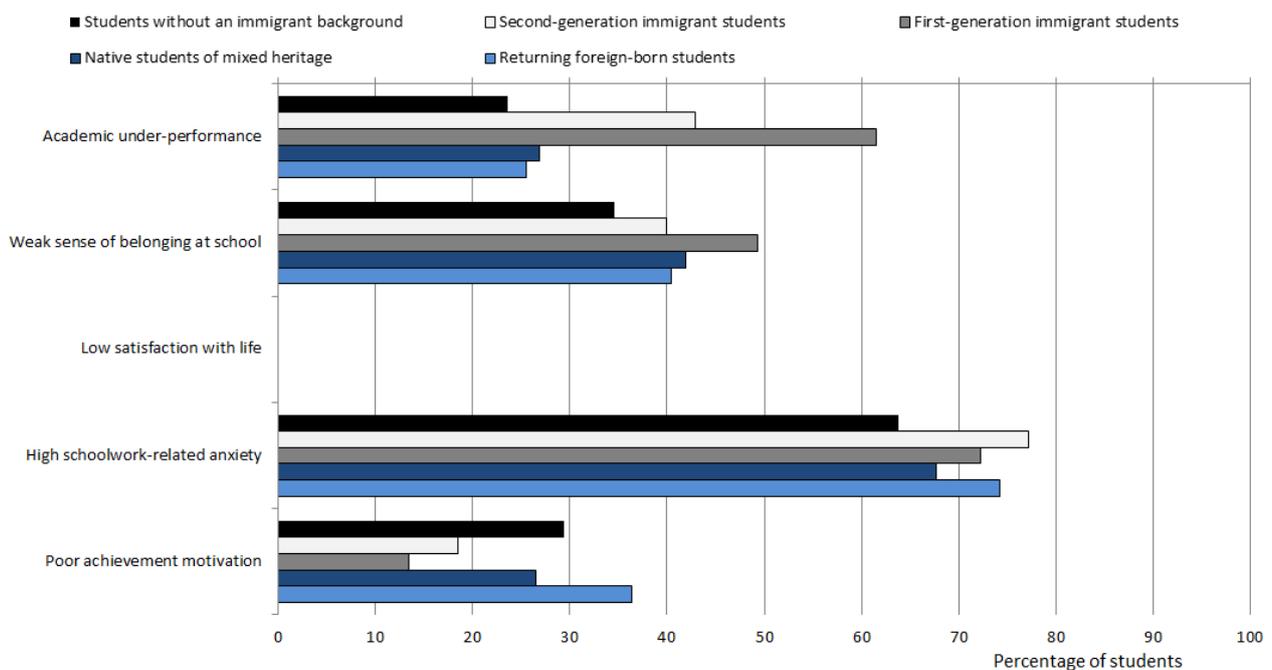


In PISA 2015, 76% of native-born students of native-born parents attained at least proficiency level 2 in the three PISA core domains – math, reading and science. By contrast, only 49% of immigrant students (either first- or second-generation) did so, a statistically significant difference of 27 percentage points. This difference is greater than the OECD average difference of 18 percentage points.

Similar to most OECD countries, in Sweden, the proportion of second-generation immigrant students who attained academic proficiency (57%) was greater than the proportion of first-generation immigrant students who did (39%). This difference of 19 percentage-points is greater than the OECD average of 11 percentage-points.

Unlike most OECD countries, immigrant students with at least one native-born parent (returning foreign-born students and native students of mixed heritage) are as likely to attain baseline academic proficiency as native students.

Figure 2 Academic and well-being outcomes, by immigrant background



Source: [Figure 1.1](#).

In PISA 2015, 65% of native students but only 60% of immigrant students reported a sense of belonging at school. The gap in the percentage of students reporting a sense of belonging at school between native and first-generation immigrant students was 15 percentage points, significantly above the OECD average gap of 9 percentage points. Foreign-born students who arrived at or after the age of 12 were 33 percentage points less likely to report a sense of belonging at school compared to native students, a difference that almost doubles the OECD average of 17 percentage points. Returning foreign-born students were as likely to report a sense of belonging at school as native students, but native students of mixed heritage were 7 percentage points less likely to report so.

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First- and second-generation immigrant students were 8 and 13 percentage points less likely, respectively, to report low levels of schoolwork-related anxiety compared to native students. Differences between students of mixed heritage and native students were not significant, but returning foreign-born students were 10 percentage points less likely to report low levels of schoolwork-related anxiety than native students.

On average across OECD countries, immigrant students show greater motivation to achieve than native students. In Sweden, immigrant students were 13 percentage points more likely than native students to report high achievement motivation, a difference that more than doubles the OECD average level (6 percentage points).

Factors that shape the well-being of students with an immigrant background

Linguistic barriers

In PISA 2015, in Sweden, about 3% of students without an immigrant background did not speak the language of PISA assessment at home. Conversely, about 44% of students with an immigrant background and 65% of immigrant students were non-native speakers.

Among foreign-born students, few spoke the language of the PISA assessment at home: 81% of first-generation immigrant students and 90% of foreign-born student who arrived at or after the age of 12 to Sweden were non-native speakers (respectively 20 and 17 percentage points above the OECD average). For first- and second-generation immigrant students and for returning foreign-born students, there is no statistically significant difference in the percentage of academically resilient among native- and non-native-speakers. By contrast, among native students of mixed heritage, non-native speakers were 17 percentage points less likely to be academically resilient compared to native-speakers.

Linguistic barriers are relevant to social well-being among certain groups of students with an immigrant background. Among first-generation immigrant students, non-native speakers were 13 percentage points less likely to report a sense of belonging at school compared to native-speakers. By contrast, for second-generation immigrant students, returning foreign-born students and native students of mixed heritage, there is no statistically significant difference in the percentage of students reporting a sense of belonging at school.

Socio-economic barriers

Across OECD countries, immigrant students are generally more socio-economically disadvantaged compared to native students. On average, their score on the PISA index of social, economic and cultural status (ESCS) is about one third of a standard deviation smaller. In Sweden, the difference in the PISA index of social, economic and cultural status (ESCS) between native and immigrant students is around half a standard deviation (about one third of a standard deviation at the OECD average level).

Compared to the parents of native students, the parents of first-generation immigrant students completed 1 year less of education and the parents of second-generation immigrant students completed 0.7 years less (0.4 and 0.6 less on average across OECD countries). Compared to the parents of native students, the parents of first- and second-generation immigrant students have an ISEI score of occupational prestige that is 8 and 9 points lower, respectively, which is just slightly above the OECD average of 7 points among both groups. Second-generation immigrant students are economically advantaged compared to first-

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generation immigrant students, as shown by their scores on the PISA index of household possessions. This difference was 0.22 points, more than double the OECD average of 0.09 points.

As was the case in most countries, returning foreign-born students were socio-economically advantaged compared to native students. Their ESCS score was 0.14 of a standard deviation higher. This is half the difference observed on average across OECD (0.28). Unlike most OECD countries, differences between students of mixed heritage and native students were not statistically significant.

Immigrant-native differences in socio-economic background explain almost one fourth of the observed gaps in academic performance. After accounting for students' socio-economic status, the immigrant-native gap in the percentage of students attaining baseline academic proficiency between native and immigrant students dropped from 27 to 20 percentage points (about six percentage point decrease). On average across OECD countries this percentage goes from 18 to 14 percentage points (a 4 percentage point decrease).

The positive effects of a more advantaged socio-economic background on academic performance were stronger for native than immigrant students. A 1-point increase in the ESCS index led to a 14 percentage-point increase in the likelihood of attaining baseline academic proficiency among native students but only 10 percentage-point increase among immigrant students. This implies that immigrant-native gaps in academic performance tend to widen when more socio-economically advantaged students are compared. As in most countries, immigrant-native gaps are largest in the middle tercile of the ESCS distribution, where the effects of the socio-economic background on academic performance are the weakest.

Immigrant-native differences in socio-economic background explain about one fifth of observed gaps in sense of belonging (about 1.5 times as much as on average across OECD countries). After accounting for students' socio-economic status, the immigrant-native gap in the percentage of students attaining sense of belonging between native and immigrant students dropped from 9 to 7 percentage points (a 2 percentage point decrease). Immigrant-native differences in socio-economic background also explain about one fifth of observed gaps in schoolwork-related anxiety (about one seventh on average across OECD countries).

School policies and the school environment

In Sweden, disciplinary climate was similar in the schools attended by the average immigrant and native students. However, truancy was relatively more spread in schools attended by the average immigrant student – a 2 percentage-point difference compared to the schools attended by the average native student, the same differences as that observed on average across OECD countries.

Differently from most countries, in Sweden, immigrant students were as likely as native students to be victims of frequent bullying.

Compared to native students, immigrant students were 11 percentage points and second-generation immigrant students as much as 15 percentage points more likely to report being victims of frequent unfair treatment from their teachers. Unfairly treated students were 12 percentage points less likely to attain baseline academic proficiency and report a sense of belonging at school.

In Sweden, immigrant students were nine percentage points more likely than native students to report receiving frequent feedback from their science teachers, after accounting for their science performance. However, this had no statistically significant effects on outcomes.

Compared to native students, immigrant students were eight percentage points more likely to have repeated at least one grade, after accounting for their academic performance and socio-economic status. First-

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generation immigrant students were 17 percentage points more likely and return foreign-born students were five percentage points more likely.

The expectations for the future of students with an immigrant background

In several countries and economies in PISA, students with an immigrant background, and especially immigrant student, were more likely to expect to complete tertiary education. In Sweden, immigrant students were 14 percentage points more likely to do so. However, after accounting for the socio-economic status and academic performance of students, immigrant students were 28 percentage points more likely to so expect, more than three times the OECD average of nine percentage points. The difference was particularly large for first-generation immigrant students.

Immigrant student with at least one native-born parent (return foreign-born students and native students of mixed heritage) were five percentage points more likely to expect to complete tertiary education compared to native students, after accounting for students' socioeconomic status and academic performance (about one percentage point on average across OECD countries).

In most, countries, immigrant students' ambitious educational expectations tend not to be matched by an equally strong academic performance. On average across OECD countries, immigrant students were four percentage points less likely than native students to expect to complete tertiary education and attain baseline levels of academic proficiency. However, in Sweden, there is no difference between immigrant and native students.

Immigrant students were 24 percentage points more likely to hold ambitious career expectations (expect to become managers, professionals or associate professionals and technicians) compared to native students, after accounting for their socio-economic status and academic performance (more than double the average difference across OECD countries). However, they were 14 percentage points less likely to hold ambitious but realistic career expectations and simultaneously attain baseline levels of academic proficiency.



Notes

1. Native-born students with one foreign-born parent living in single-parent households are also considered first-generation immigrant students
2. Foreign-born students with one foreign-born parent living in single-parent households are also considered first-generation immigrant students.
3. Foreign-born students with one native-born parent living in single-parent households are also considered returning foreign-born students.
4. Students who report a sense of belonging at school are Students who reported that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “I feel like I belong at school” and “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement “I feel like an outsider at school”.
5. Students who report low schoolwork-related anxiety are students who reported that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements “I often worry that it will be difficult for me taking a test” and “Even if I am well prepared for a test, I feel very anxious”.
6. Students who report high motivation to achieve are students who “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “I want to be the best, whatever I do”.
7. Occupational prestige is measured in PISA using the International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status (ISEI). Higher values on the scale indicate occupations with higher prestige

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For more information:

<http://www.oecd.org/education/school/strength-through-diversity.htm>