

# **Income Trajectories of Immigrants across Countries: The Impact of Years of Residency and Period of Arrival**

Master's Degree Programme in Inequalities, Interventions and New Welfare State  
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Master's thesis

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the income trajectories of immigrants across various countries, focusing on the impact of years of residency and the period of arrival in the host countries. The research analyzed data from the Luxembourg Income Study 2024 (LIS) for ten different countries to examine how country-specific issues, such as immigration laws, labor market changes, and social welfare policies, influence immigrant income trajectories over time. Using regression analysis, the study evaluates the income ranks of immigrant groups over different periods of arrival, including an examination of how the years of residency affect economic changes.

The data show that European and non-European nations have considerable disparities in terms of economic mobility. Results suggest that Canada is a forerunner in facilitating immigrant integration due to its proactive policies, which include language help, employment inclusion programs, and a robust welfare system. In comparison, the United States has more uneven results, with impediments such as labor market fragmentation and low social support impeding long-term economic mobility. Analysis seems to indicate that European nations such as Sweden and Denmark have more consistent advancement due to their robust welfare systems and open immigration policies. In the case of Greece and Spain, it might be that the more shaky inclusion could be associated with economic issues and/or weaker social security programs.

Through the perspective of human capital theory, the study demonstrates how the acquisition of knowledge and abilities over time adds to immigrants' prosperity, particularly in nations with robust labor market integration strategies. Assimilation theory highlights the significance of social integration in generating upward mobility, stating that increased engagement in the labor market and society is associated with higher income results.

In general, the study emphasizes the relevance of specific immigration policies, social assistance programs, and labor opportunities in promoting immigrants' economic success, with significant disparities in results identified across European and non-European nations.

**Keywords:** Income trajectories, income rank, years of residency, period of arrival, integration.

## **1. Introduction**

This study aims to assess how the year of residency and the period of arrival influence immigrant's economic outcomes and compare these dynamics across different countries. Data were extracted from Luxembourg Income Study 2024 for ten different countries to analyze. The Statistics and Data (Stata) software application was used to run the statistical analysis and data visualization i.e. regression and graph. The regression analysis was applied to know and visualize how the income level is influenced by years of residence and the arrival period.

Researchers argue that economic welfare is not evenly distributed among all social cohorts in society where some groups are still in worse condition than others. Consequently, this economic differential has widespread socio-demographic problems (Härtull, 2018). A wide range of research has been conducted about intergenerational earnings and income inequalities in Europe. However, it is also important to evaluate the situation of immigrants regarding income distribution and equality.

Studies showed that Immigrants help foster the host country's economic growth, but their initial incomes are lower, and achieving equivalence of income takes time (Huang & Kathryn, 2019). The entry gap in earnings and the rate of wage harmonization over time vary greatly between countries. Some factors influence wage assimilation such as gender, immigrant skill, year of arrival, and ethnicity (Huang & Kathryn, 2019). Another study conducted based on immigrants in the US found that the income gap between local people and immigrants was almost 30% in some cases (Lubotsky, 2007). Meanwhile, some researchers argued that assimilation in terms of income takes more than 20 years for non-EU immigrants (Adsera & Chiswick, 2007).

## **2. Length of assimilation, human capital, and the distribution of income**

### **2.1. Assimilation theory**

Assimilation theory emphasized a one-sided, mono-directional manner of immigrant acculturation leading to higher social mobility because it asserted that immigrant assimilation is a vital requirement for maintaining societal cohesiveness (Warner & Srole, 1945).

Economic assimilation for immigrants is one of the most important issues in terms of social assimilation in the host country. Some previous research stated that wages are closely linked to both an individual's and their child's well-being, and immigrants' capacity to get to parity with natives serves as an important indicator for assimilation (Case, Lubotsky, & Paxson, 2002; Kim et al., 2013).

Immigrant economic assimilation has been approached in research in many ways. Economic assimilation is essential to reduce the earnings gap among natives and achieve higher socioeconomic mobility (Villarreal & Tamborini, 2018). In recent studies, the socioeconomic level of immigrants over time and between generations is emphasized as one of the most important indicators of assimilation. According to sociological research, immigrants often make significant progress toward closing the socioeconomic gap with natives, as seen by outcomes like academic achievement and employment position (Alba & Nee, 2003; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Waters & Jiménez, 2005). Some authors have argued that the economic development of immigrant parents is strongly associated with the opportunities and well-being of the next generation (Condliffe & Link, 2008; Villarreal & Tamborini, 2018). Examining income trajectories over time is essential to analyze immigrants' mobility into the host society. According to prior studies using repeated cross-sectional surveys and decennial census data, newer immigrants to the US have tended to suffer from lower immigrant growth (Borjas, 2015).

Due to the lack of suitable data, researchers' ability to analyze immigrants' economic assimilation is challenging. This research paper tries to uncover the impact of years of residence and period of arrival on immigrants' income levels in different countries. The research might help to understand the socio-economic gap between natives and immigrants which is very important for immigrants' assimilation.

## **2.2. Human capital theory**

An economic and social theory known as "human capital theory" views training, education, and other human capital investments as a type of capital. It implies that investing in one's own education and skill set may help people become more productive and generate more economic production. Many economists have debated and refined the concept, with Gary Becker being one of the main participants in this discussion.

According to the principle of human capital, people are just as productive as tangible capital like technology or equipment (Becker, 2009). This theory examines how people invest in their education and training to improve their skills and expertise (Mincer, 1974). According to the theory, those who invest in their human capital may expect to earn more money in the form of more income and better employability (Heckman, 2000), which means that early investment promotes later economic outcomes.

Research on immigrants may benefit from human capital theory in several ways as it offers a framework for comprehending how investments in skills, education, and training can affect economic results. One study exploring the relationship between assimilation, education, and earnings for immigrants explains that to improve their human capital and increase their competitiveness in the job market of their new nation, immigrants frequently invest in education and skill development (Chiswick, 2018). Chiswick also explained that for immigrants, language competency is a vital part of human capital as it affects their capacity to interact, obtain education, and find work. This theory explains earnings disparities among immigrants based on their education and skills (Borjas, 1987). Borjas also stated that the self-selection process, where immigrants with higher human capital may choose to migrate, affects their earnings outcomes. Immigrants with higher levels of education often experience greater economic mobility, aligning with the human capital theory's emphasis on education as an investment (Friedberg, 2000). This theory suggests that policies supporting immigrants' education and skill development can enhance their economic contributions (Duleep & Regets, 1999).

Human capital theory is closely related to income disparities between immigrants and local populations. The theory suggests that individuals' education, skills, and training contribute to their productivity and, consequently, their earning potential. Human capital theory posits that higher levels of education lead to increased earning potential. Immigrants with varying levels of education may experience income disparities compared to local populations (Borjas, 1987). Immigrants may face occupational segregation, where they are concentrated in certain industries or occupations. This segregation can impact earnings and contribute to income disparities (Kanas & Van Tubergen, 2009). Human capital theory also considers work experience as a factor influencing earnings. Immigrants may face challenges in translating their experience from their home country into comparable opportunities in the host country (Duleep & Regets, 1999). Differences in the

recognition of foreign educational credentials can affect immigrants' ability to fully utilize their human capital in the host country, contributing to income disparities (Friedberg, 2000).

Human capital theory describes how years of residence and time of arrival affect immigrants' economic success. Immigrants gradually acquire host-country-specific skills such as language fluency, cultural understanding, and professional networks, which boost their productivity and income. The timing of their entrance influences the initial value of their human capital, since economic conditions, immigration rules, and labor market demands at the time dictate how their abilities are used. These characteristics illustrate the dynamic interaction of acquired and environmental human capital in influencing immigrants' economic integration.

Researchers often combine human capital theory with other perspectives to offer a more comprehensive understanding of income gaps between immigrants and local populations.

### **2.3. Income Level of Immigrants and Years of Residency**

The relationship between years of residency and earnings is one of the most important components of immigrant economic integration (Chuatico, Haan, & Finlay, 2023). Research reveals that the more time immigrants live in a host nation, the more favorable their economic prospects are (Bansak, Simpson, & Zavodny, 2020). This rise can be due to increasing knowledge of the local job market, improved language abilities, and better social networks (Gericke, Burmeister, Löwe, Deller, & Pundt, 2018).

In Canada, compared to native-born workers, immigrants frequently face an early economic disadvantage, their incomes rise dramatically after around ten years of residency when they acclimate to the Canadian job market (Crossman, Hou, & Picot, 2021). Similarly, in Germany, the disparities in income between immigrants and locals gradually get less as immigrants gain the necessary credentials and become more fluent in the language (Beyer, 2017).

Therefore, studies claim that when immigrants first arrive in a new country, their earnings are lower than that of natives, but their income eventually rises. In high-income nations, first-generation immigrants' incomes after 20–30 years in the host nation are nearly equal to native incomes. Some immigrant groups, however, never catch up to the natives (Huang & Kathryn, 2019). However, the speed and level of fiscal integration greatly rely on the host country's laws and regulations, economic circumstances, and social context.

#### **2.4. Period of Arrival and Income Level**

Although years of residence are important for economic integration, the arrival time also greatly impacts how much money immigrants make. When immigrants arrive during economic expansion, they often have greater job options and earn more money than during recessions (Kaushal, Reimers, & Reimers, 1965). The financial background during the arrival period significantly impacts immigrants' earning trajectory (Fellini & Guetto, 2019).

Due to the recession's restrictions on employment possibilities and salary growth, immigrants who came to the United States before the 2008 financial crisis often did better than those who arrived subsequently (Holzer, 2020). Some researchers stated that the arrival cohorts of immigrants are important to evaluate income assimilation. Researchers have highlighted larger trends in pay inequality that affect all workers, which have made the relative earnings disparities of U.S. immigrants—who typically lie at the bottom end of the earnings distribution—even more pronounced for U.S. immigrant arrival cohorts throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Butcher & DiNardo, 2002; Lubotsky (2011)). However, Canadian studies have highlighted the declining wages of all new workers, including foreign-born and native-born individuals (Green & Worswick, 2012). According to certain United States economic studies, compared to previous immigrants, current immigrants seem to be having less success in closing the socioeconomic gap with locals over their working professions (Borjas, 2015).

The flow of immigrants to all developed countries is increasing notably every year. Various problems related to immigrant people are also emerging day by day. For example, a study found that immigrant children are facing substantially higher poverty risks and unstable poverty trajectories (Obućina & Ilmakunnas, 2020). Active participation in the labor force and income equality are very important for immigrant people to mitigate the possible socio-economic problems in the host country. In real terms, immigrants are recognized as a population at risk for lower income and wealth, as well as challenges assimilating into the host community (Bárcena-Martín & Pérez-Moreno, 2017).

The majority of OECD nation studies demonstrate that the poverty rate among immigrants is much higher than that of natives and that household variables have a considerable impact on the difference in poverty between immigrants and natives and this gap varies across countries (Muñoz de Bustillo & Antón, 2011; Pedersen, 2011). The studies showed that immigrant economic

performance is influenced not just by labor market eligibility criteria but also by institutional features of a given nation, such as labor market access limits and immigrant status-related components of the social security system (Galloway, Gustafsson, Pedersen, & Osterberg, 2009; Lelkes & Zólyomi, 2011; Muñoz de Bustillo & Antón, 2011). A previous study conducted in Sweden analyzing data from 1985-2016 found that income volatility is higher among immigrant people than among native Swedish people (Friedrich, Laun, & Meghir, 2021). Villarreal and Tamborini (2018) suggested that in addition to their lower human capital, new immigrants' poorer wage growth may also be the consequence of discriminatory experiences in the job market and larger society due to their race and ethnicity. In reality, for many immigrants, a key motivation to migrate is the opportunity to improve their financial well-being. Income plays a critical role in overall financial well-being and has a direct impact on immigrants' capacity to assimilate into the society of their new nation (Bárcena-Martín & Pérez-Moreno, 2017).

This study aims to assess how the year of residency and the period of arrival influence immigrant's economic outcomes and compare these dynamics across different countries.

### **3. Aims, Data and Methods**

The research aims are the following:

- To analyze the income level of immigrants based on their years of residence in the host country.
- To evaluate how the period of arrival affects the economic outcomes of immigrants.
- To compare the income dynamics of immigrants across different countries, providing a broad understanding of immigrant integration in diverse contexts.

#### **3.1. Data**

This study utilizes data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) 2024 dataset, which includes information on immigrants living in various host countries. The research only included immigrants who are above 18 years old to discuss the labor market condition and income level. Key variables in the dataset include:

- Country of Residence (cname): Represents the country where the immigrant resides (e.g., the United States, the United Kingdom, Austria, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greece, Spain, and Luxembourg).
- Income (p11): A variable capturing the income levels of immigrants, which is used to create income rankings. The personal wage income variable was considered to analyze income level in the analysis.
- Years of Residence (yrsresid): The number of years an immigrant has lived in the host country.
- Year of Arrival (arrival): The year the immigrant arrived in the host country. There was no separate or specific variable about the date or year when the immigrants arrived in the host country. To get the arrival year, the researcher has calculated the years of residence with the current year.
- Age (age): This research included immigrants who were 18 years above. Researchers considered this age as suitable for the labor market force.

The dataset includes both demographic and economic data that allow for the analysis of immigrant income trajectories concerning their years of residence and period of arrival.

Several new variables were generated to facilitate the analysis:

- Income Rank (rank\_inc): The income variable (p11) was converted into a rank percentile using the Stata, dividing income into 100 equal quantiles to assess the relative income position of immigrants for all years together.
- Years of Arrival (a): The difference between the current year and the year of arrival was calculated, representing how many years an immigrant has been in the host country.
- Arrival Cohorts (arrival): Immigrants were grouped into cohorts based on the decade of their arrival (1950-2020). This classification helps analyze the impact of arrival timing on income outcomes.
- Years of Residence (resid): The number of years of residency was categorized into 5-year intervals (e.g., 0-5 years, 6-10 years) to examine income dynamics at different stages of integration.

### **3.2. Methods**

The methodology employed in this study provides a comprehensive approach to analyzing the income dynamics of immigrants in different countries. Through regression models and visualization techniques, this analysis explores how years of residence and the timing of arrival influence immigrants' economic integration. The findings, supported by graphical representation, contribute to understanding the broader patterns of immigrant assimilation and economic outcomes across a range of countries.

To assess the relationship between residence duration, arrival cohort, and income rank, the following steps were carried out:

**Regression Analysis:** For each country, a regression model was applied with income rank as the dependent variable. The independent variables included years of residence (resid), arrival cohort (arrival), and age (age). An interaction term between years of residence and arrival cohort was also included to capture the combined effect of these variables.

**Visualization:** Marginal effects were visualized, with the income rank plotted against years of residence, grouped by arrival cohort. These plots were generated for each country to represent how income ranks evolve visually.

**Graphical Representation:** All individual graphs for each country were visualized. A combined graph, showing the income dynamics across countries was created.

## 4. Results

This section presents the results of the analyses, focusing on the relationship between years of residence, arrival cohort, and income rank for immigrants across various countries. The findings are discussed in terms of the effect of these variables on income outcomes, with a particular emphasis on the differences across countries and residence durations.

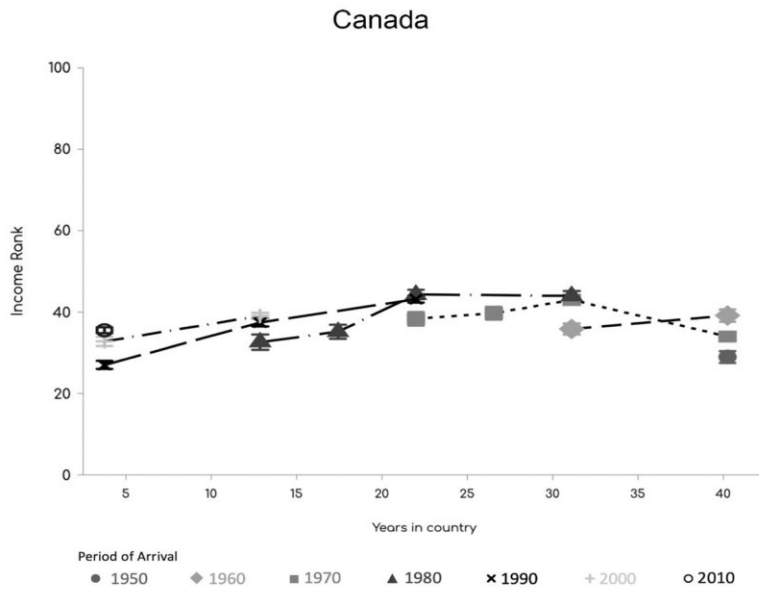
### 4.1. Descriptive results

Country Name	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Total
Austria	42	655	523	1025	1922	1382	1498	7047
Canada	1136	2367	6666	5021	8111	5758	4474	33533
Denmark	22	192	22072	64474	106062	78152	80498	351472
Germany	559	2741	3954	4770	8306	5217	7328	32875
Greece	21	100	219	604	2666	1119	141	4870
Luxembourg	1435	2350	3598	3628	6941	9410	1823	29185
Spain	27	277	407	279	160	10	0	1160
Sweden	1149	2186	2947	4008	5713	4905	1357	22265
UK	828	1808	1712	1567	2565	7196	2959	18635
USA	6361	12793	23568	39547	49061	40350	12200	183880
<b>Total</b>	11580	25469	65666	124923	191505	153499	112278	684922

**Table 1: Period of Arrival**

Table 1 shows the total number of immigrants in the dataset, categorized by nation and time of arrival. These values indicate the sample sizes in the LIS dataset and should not be considered to be representative of real migration trends. Variations between nations or periods may be due to differences in dataset coverage or sampling methods, rather than real-world changes in immigration trends. While the table provides a glimpse of the immigrant populations included in the dataset, it does not provide an overview for studying larger migration trends.

## 4.2. The relationship between a period of residence and arrival on income dynamics of immigrants



*Figure 1: Income rank of immigrants in Canada*

The substantial increase in income rank as years in the country increase shown in all immigration groups makes Canada's graph (Figure 1) noteworthy. It is indicating that Canada's immigration policies—such as government assistance, job integration, and language programs—effectively encourage economic assimilation. Within the first ten to fifteen years, even those who came later, in the 2000s,

exhibit significant indicators of income increase. Notable increases are also shown in the early cohorts (arrivals in the 1970s and 1980s), suggesting that Canada's policies may have facilitated quicker integration for younger and older immigrant groups. The Canadian record highlights the value of proactive immigrant integration tactics that can lower labor market participation obstacles and promote quicker economic growth.

The graph (Figure 2) shows how immigrants' income ranks evolve with the number of years they have lived in the USA, broken down by their period of arrival (from 1950 to 2010). For all groups, income rank generally improves during the first 20–30 years, reflecting the process of settling in, gaining skills, and adapting to the job market. However, after reaching a peak around this time, income rank begins to decline, likely due to aging, reduced workforce participation, or other

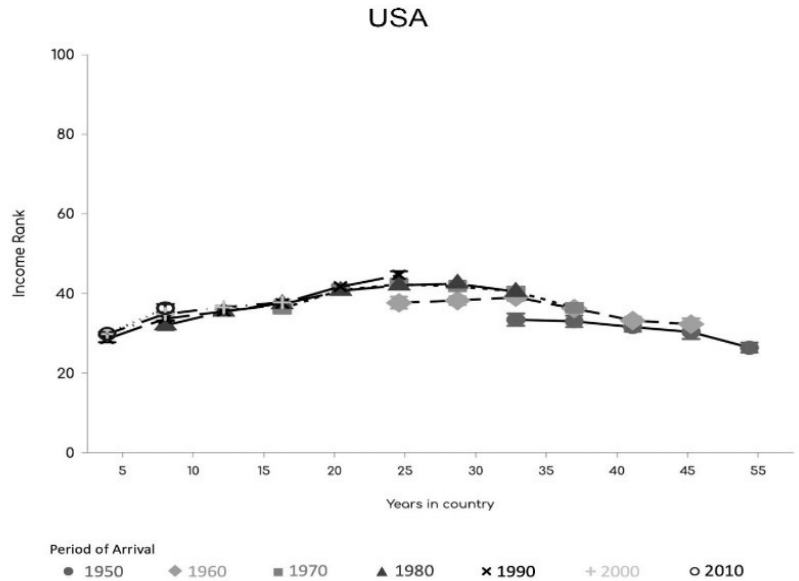


Figure 2: Income rank of immigrants in USA

long-term challenges. Interestingly, those who arrived in earlier decades, such as the 1950s and 1960s, tend to achieve higher income ranks compared to more recent arrivals, like those from the 1990s or 2000s. This suggests that earlier immigrants may have benefited from more favorable economic conditions or policies, while newer cohorts face tougher economic integration, potentially due to changes in the job market or immigration systems. The graph underscores how economic outcomes for immigrants have shifted over time.

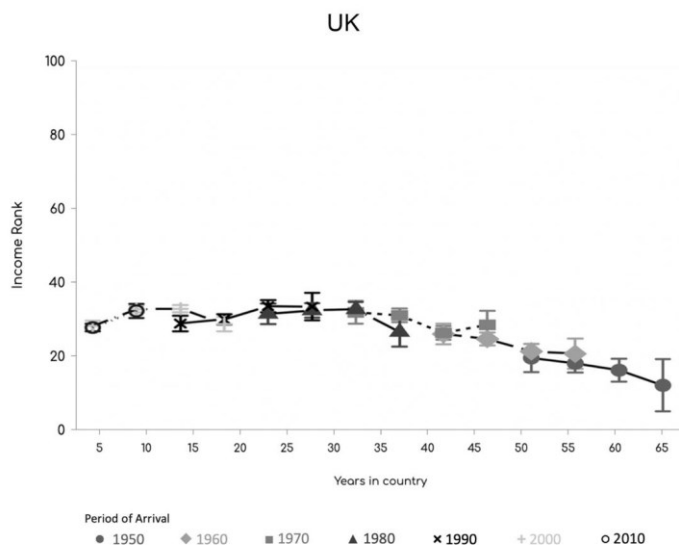
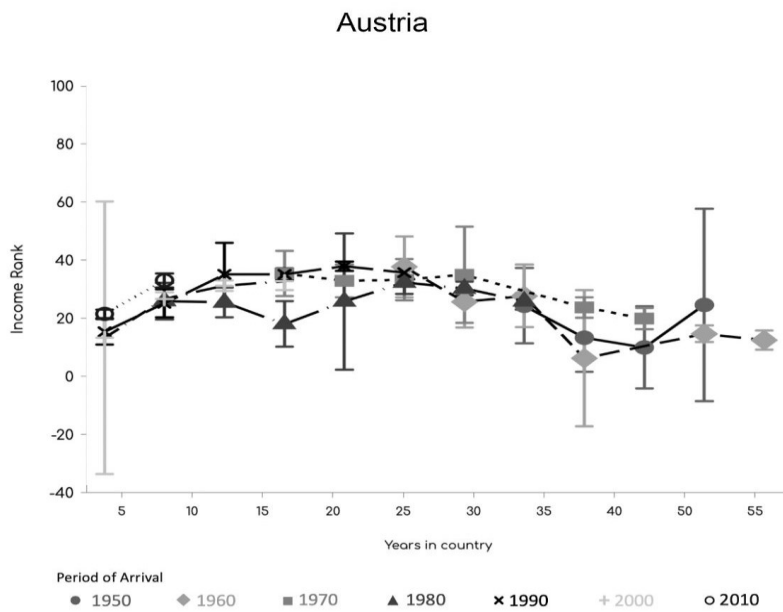


Figure 3: Income Rank of Immigrants in UK

The graph (Figure 3) shows how the income rank of immigrants in the UK changes over time, based on their years of residency and period of arrival (1950–2010). Overall, immigrants experience a gradual increase in income rank during their first 20–30 years in the country, though the improvement is less dramatic compared to patterns seen in the USA. After reaching a modest peak, income rank begins to decline

steadily beyond 30–40 years of residency, which may reflect aging, retirement, or ongoing structural challenges. Interestingly, there's less variation between different arrival cohorts, meaning that earlier arrivals (e.g., 1950s and 1960s) don't seem to enjoy significantly higher ranks than more recent ones. This suggests that economic mobility for immigrants in the UK is generally slower and less pronounced, highlighting potential barriers to long-term integration and advancement.

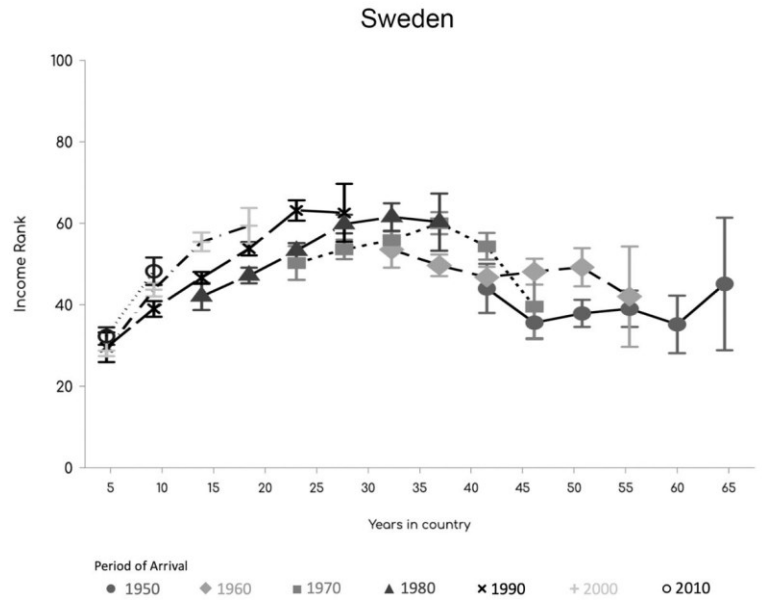


**Figure 4: Income Rank of Immigrants in Austria**

This graph (Figure 4) demonstrates a steady rise in the income rank of immigrants over time in Austria. The biggest income increases are seen by immigrants who have been in the nation for 10 to 20 years, especially those who came in the 1970s and 1980s. After around 30 years of residence, the increase in income rank seems to level off, with income convergence getting closer to that of the local

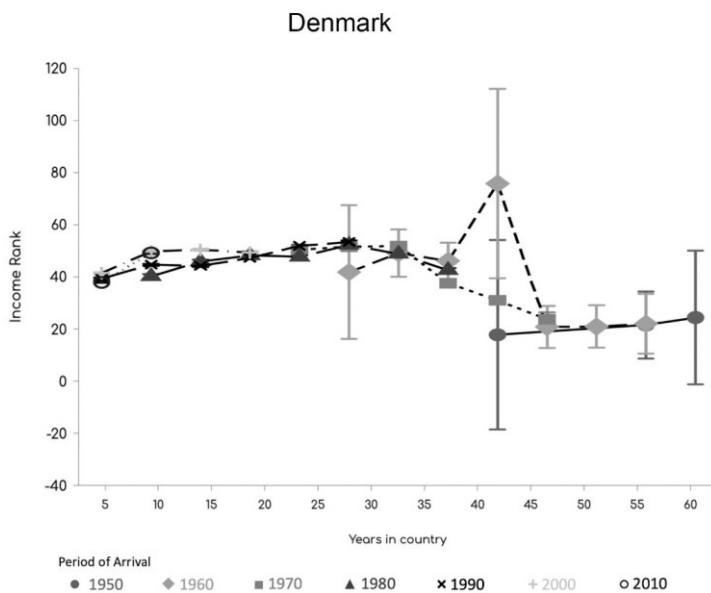
population but never quite achieving parity. According to this pattern, there are still obstacles to long-term economic integration, maybe because of labor market fragmentation or educational recognition, even though Austria's economic assimilation procedures may be successful for specific immigrant groups.

The graph (Figure 5) shows how well Sweden has done regarding immigrant income integration across all cohorts. As a result of their effective integration into the labor market, the income trajectory does pull back each period of arrival, as they seem to reach the peak in less time spent within the country. Sweden's immigration policies prioritizing social inclusion and labor market access appear to have been successful, as evidenced by the significant upward trends observed in recent cohorts, such as those entering in the 1990s and 2000s. Despite global concerns, the 2010s cohort shows rapid rises in income rank, demonstrating sustained effectiveness in integrating newcomers.



**Figure 5: Income Rank of Immigrants in Sweden**

Sweden's strong welfare systems, which benefit immigrants from social security, education, and development, may be responsible for the consistent growth throughout cohorts. These programs allow immigrants to attain upward economic mobility. But after 30 to 40 years of residency, income rank drops, as it does in other nations, maybe as a result of aging or lower labor force participation. Sweden's overall success in promoting immigrant economic advancement is seen in this graph.



**Figure 6: Income Rank of Immigrants in Denmark**

By categorizing immigrants by years of residence and arrival period (1950–2010), the graph (Figure 6) shows how their income level varies over time in Denmark. Overall, income rank has improved steadily but more slowly than in nations like Canada, especially for immigrants who came before the 1990s. The influence of Denmark's stricter immigration laws in the 1980s and 1990s, which could have limited financial prospects and delayed these groups' assimilation, may be reflected in

this pattern. The 1960s cohort's dramatic increase in income rank at about 40–45 years of residency is a prominent aspect of the graph. Denmark's economic inflation and structural changes during that time may have contributed to this oddness by giving this group distinctive, temporary job chances. This rise is not maintained, though, since income rank finally stabilizes at a lower level following a steep decline. This trend emphasizes how changes in policy and general economic conditions affect immigrant income patterns.

On the other hand, immigrants who arrived after the 2000s show a faster rise in income rank. More advantageous immigration laws and changing labor market dynamics that have made it easier to access economic opportunities may be accountable for this development. It implies that perhaps as a result of changes focusing on inclusion and labor market engagement, Denmark has achieved notable progress in integrating newer immigrant generations. The graph also shows that past obstacles, such as restrictive laws and slower economic progress in previous decades, still influence the general trends in immigrant income integration. This confluence of economic considerations, policy-driven modifications, and incremental improvement offers important insights into the difficulties and developments in Danish immigrant integration.

This graph (Figure 7) shows how the income rank of immigrants in Spain has changed over time, broken down by years of residency and arrival (1950–2010). While there are discernible variations based on the time of arrival of immigrants, general trends show moderate gains in income rank for the majority of cohorts.

In the case of prior cohorts, such as those who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s, the income rank only slightly increases during their stay in the nation. This pattern

indicates little economic mobility, which is probably a reflection of Spain's labor market circumstances and economic structure in the middle of the 20th century. Due to Spain's less varied economy at the time, immigrants had fewer options to dramatically raise their financial status.

The income rank of cohorts entering the 1970s shows a more pronounced rising trend, growing gradually until around 35–40 years of residency. This development comes at the same time as Spain's economic modernization and EU membership, which resulted in industrial expansion, labor market expansion, and economic reforms. Their income rank of 1950s, 1960s, however, drops dramatically after peaking, possibly as a result of aging, decreased labor force participation, or the difficulties of sustaining high income levels as one ages. The income rank for the 1980s cohort only slightly improved with time, indicating the difficulties of Spain's explosive economic growth in that decade, which was complemented by structural inefficiencies and the late 2000s economic collapse.

All things considered, the graph demonstrates how the job market, immigration laws, and economic fluctuations in Spain have influenced the income paths of immigrants.

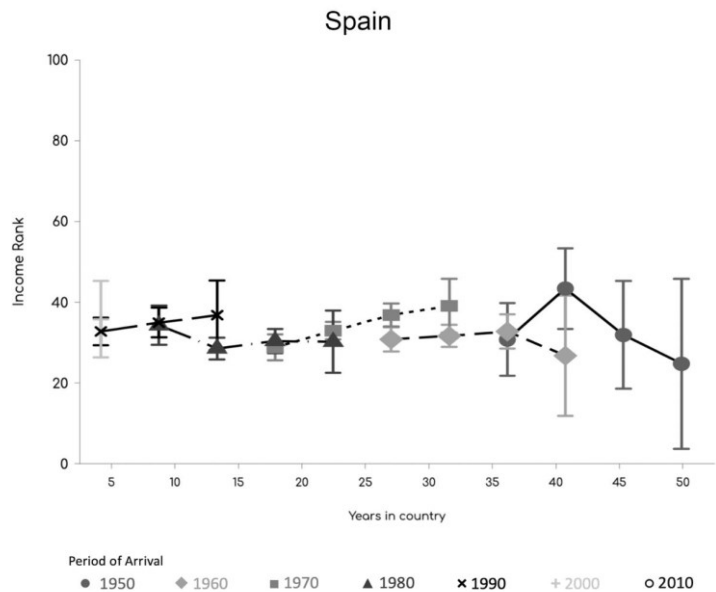
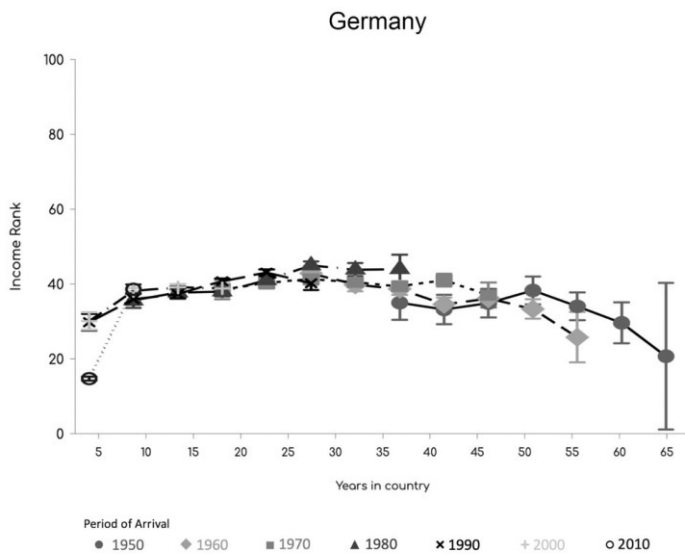


Figure 7: Income Rank of Immigrants in Spain



**Figure 8: Income Rank of Immigrants in Germany**

With noticeable differences between cohorts, the graph (Figure 8) illustrates the immigrants' income ranks' steady rise throughout their stay in Germany. The upward trajectory of immigrants who entered in the 1980s is constant but slow which is typical of Germany's guest worker program, which concentrated on filling labor shortages rather than long-term economic integration. Previous cohorts (such as those from the 1950s) show slight economic growth over

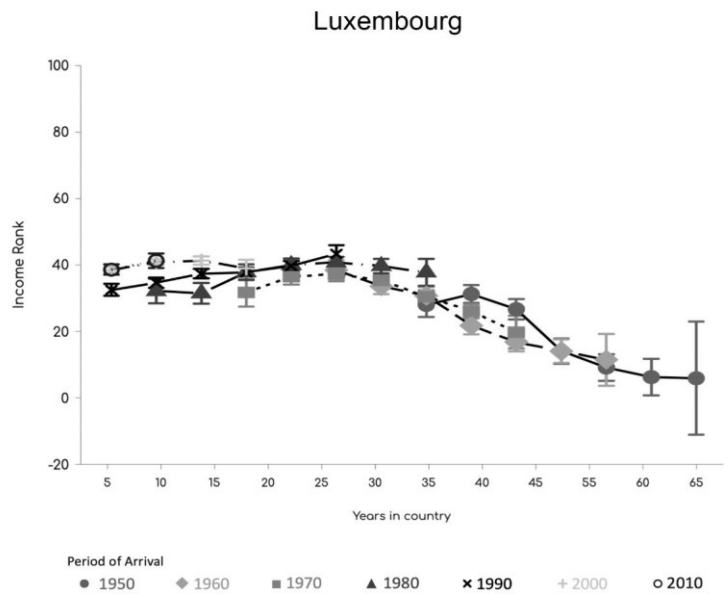
several decades then declines after a certain period, perhaps as a result of fewer structural obstacles when they first arrived. On the other hand, recent cohorts, such as those who arrived in the 2000s and 2010s, appear to have made greater progress in subsequent years, indicating that immigration and integration policies have changed to become more helpful.

However, despite 20 to 30 years of residency, there are few income rank variations in terms of reaching the mid-point, which suggests structural issues including divided labor markets, a failure to recognize foreign credentials, and possible discrimination. While newer cohorts show more variety and slower assimilation directions, the graph also shows some convergence among previous generations following decades in the nation. These patterns highlight the necessity of consistent efforts to eliminate systemic obstacles and establish fair chances for all immigrant groups, despite when they arrived in Germany, and they are indicative of the country's larger socioeconomic and legislative developments.

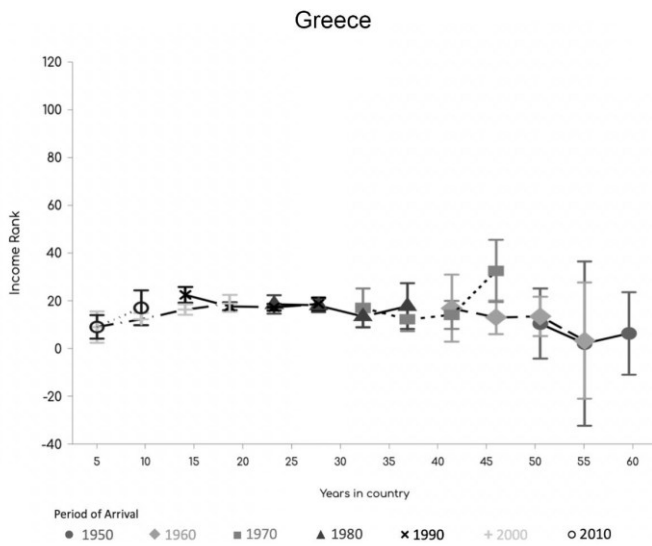
The Luxembourg graph (Figure 9) shows how immigrants' income ranks have changed over time, according to the number of years they have been there. It shows clear patterns for various arrival cohorts. Prior cohorts, including those who came in the 1950s and 1960s, show stability but little room for upward mobility over time, as seen by their comparatively stable income levels. This might be a result of Luxembourg's traditionally small and restricted economy, which limited its potential for

major growth. The modest but steady rise in income rank among immigrants from the 1970s and 1980s suggests that they have been gradually assimilated into the economy. However, the rate of upward mobility is slow, which may be a reflection of difficulties moving into higher-paying industries.

Data for newer cohorts, including those who arrived in the 2000s and 2010s, reveal almost similar variations in their growth combined with higher beginning income ranks. This could draw attention to the rising difficulties in early integration, which could be caused by heightened competition, modifications to immigration laws, or inconsistencies between the experience and skills of recent immigrants and the demands of the job market. One interesting pattern in the graph is the drop in income rank for several cohorts after around 40 years, which may be related to lifecycle factors like retirement or decreased labor force participation. This implies that long-term immigrants have particular financial difficulties as they get older, either as a result of inadequate pension benefits or a dependence on lower-paying occupations throughout their professional lives. The case is the same for native people also.



**Figure 9: Income Rank of Immigrants in Luxembourg**



**Figure 10: Income Rank of Immigrants in Greece**

made matters worse by restricting employment prospects for foreign workers and impeding substantial salary increases. This demonstrates how crucial employment opportunities and financial stability are to the achievement of immigrant financial integration.

## 5. Discussion

The study's objectives—analyzing immigrants' levels of income based on their years of residency, assessing how the period of arrival impacts financial results, and contrasting income patterns across different countries—provided important insights toward immigrants' financial integration. This discussion includes the key findings with the theoretical structure and literature studied previously, concentrating on how immigration laws and regulations, social welfare mechanisms, and employment trends influence immigrant financial status trajectories. As Borjas (1994) points out, knowing these patterns is crucial for assessing immigrant groups' long-term integration opportunities (Duncan & Trejo, 2018).

Significant differences between European and non-European nations are revealed by data from these 10 countries, which show a wide range of patterns in immigrant income integration. These disparities are caused by several variables, such as immigration laws, prevailing economic

The economic assimilation trend for Greece over the years is flatter, according to the graph (Figure 10). There are little income rank gains among immigrants who arrived in the 1990s and 2000s, indicating that wage integration is a significant obstacle for Greece's relatively recent immigrant community. Greece has historically engaged in less extensive integration efforts than other European nations like Denmark or Sweden, which might be one reason for this. Furthermore, Greece's recession, especially in the 2010s, probably

conditions, social welfare programs, and the general employment prospects of immigrants. It becomes apparent why certain nations are more effective than others at promoting the economic mobility of immigrants when these elements and their effects are understood.

The study's comparative research of income mobility finds strong trends in how years of residence affect immigrant income levels across nations. According to the conceptual framework of the theory of human capital and prior research (Crossman et al., 2021), immigrants typically experience significant income growth in the period after their arrival, especially among nations with consisting immigration regulations such as Canada and Sweden. Immigrants in these nations have demonstrated upward mobility, which may be ascribed to their availability of labor market chances, social assistance services, and inclusive welfare structures.

For example, in Canada, post-1990 immigrant cohorts have experienced significant wage improvements, thanks to the nation's points-based immigration framework, which promotes human capital and job market involvement (Okafor, 2024). In summary, Canada provides a more effective framework of immigrant income mobility than the United States, owing to its social programs and active assistance from the government, which is opposed significantly to the US's fragmented and market-driven structure, where immigrants confront substantial obstacles over time. Overall, Canada stands out for its quick and obvious income rank convergence for immigrants, particularly those who arrived after the 1990s. This achievement is largely due to the nation's aggressive immigration policy. The 1990s and 2000s cohorts, in particular, show a fast increase in income rank over time. Furthermore, older cohorts (1970s and 1980s) exhibit significant income improvements, indicating that Canada's immigration policy has been beneficial over a long period.

Similarly, Sweden's robust welfare state and inclusive immigration policies have supported immigrants' long-term upward mobility (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2011). Thus, Sweden is a pioneer in terms of financial integration in Europe. Results show, that Sweden has consistent and persistent upward income mobility, particularly during the 1990s, and continues into the 2010s cohort, which shows an accelerated climb in income rankings. Sweden's success may be due to its strong welfare system and inclusive social policies, which guarantee that immigrants are entitled to basic services like healthcare, education, and child care, as well as the ability to engage in the job market without facing systematic impediments.

However, the study discovered that in nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom, immigrants' economic mobility slows or even reverses after a lengthy time of stay.

According to a prior study, immigrants in the UK endure decreased income growth beyond the first 20-30 years due to variables such as labor market fragmentation, restricted access to social benefits, and increasing racial prejudice (Dustmann & Frattini, 2014). The results reveal progressive wage gains throughout the first 20-30 years of immigrant residency, upward mobility is less prominent when compared to nations such as Sweden or Denmark. Immigrants in the UK face a persistent fall in income rank beyond a certain threshold, indicating systemic inequities in the labor market. Limited access to decent jobs, prejudice, and restricted aid programs for immigrants all contribute to this stagnation. Furthermore, economic austerity policies imposed in the UK have adversely affected immigrant populations, hampering their long-term economic success.

The United States provides a mixed visual: while immigrants experience wage increases in their early years, this often peaks or drops over time, owing to job competition, inadequate social safety nets, and tough immigration laws (Cadena, Duncan, & Trejo, 2015). While most immigrants receive some wage growth during their first 20-30 years in the nation, this pattern slows or even reverses for many in subsequent years. After hitting a high, their income rank tends to fall, which can be linked to a variety of structural impediments, including aging, decreased employment participation, and declining opportunities in certain industries. Immigrants from the 1950s and 1960s, who arrived at a period of rapid economic expansion and labor demand, often have higher income levels than those entering in the 1990s or 2000s.

Immigrants' economic results are heavily influenced by their arrival era. Immigrants who arrive during periods of beneficial policy changes or economic success tend to have better integration results than those who arrive during times of economic downturn or restrictive immigration laws (Fellini & Guetto, 2019). As seen in the Canadian and Swedish cohorts, immigrants who came in the 1990s and 2000s showed more income level divergence with time than those who entered earlier. Canada's proactive strategy for immigration, involving a points-based assessment system and social assistance for immigrants, has permitted swift assimilation into the labor marketplace, resulting in long-term financial prosperity (Wrońska, 2023). Similarly, Sweden's comprehensive

social programs, such as universal healthcare and education, helped immigrants achieve prosperity and advancement (Goudian, 2024).

Immigrants coming during less favorable times, such as the 1980s and 1990s, experienced severe economic integration difficulties, notably in the United States and the United Kingdom. The labor market in the United States, characterized by greater rivalry, wage stagnation in low-skilled industries, and tight immigration laws, has resulted in slower earnings increases for early immigrants (Borjas, 2018). Furthermore, Germany's previous guest labor initiatives, which emphasized low-wage labor, resulted in lower incomes for many immigrants who entered in the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, Immigrants in Germany have mixed economic mobility. However, newer cohorts in Germany, notably those who arrived in the 2000s and 2010s, have enjoyed wage gains as a result of immigration and labor market policy reforms (Ersanilli, 2012). Historically, Germany's guest worker programs (which began in the 1950s) erected institutional hurdles to ongoing economic growth, since many immigrants were first brought in to meet low-income earners, shortages of labor, and there were low job opportunities for previous generations. However, during the last two decades, Germany has adopted more open immigration and employment policies. Immigrants from the 2000s and 2010s cohorts had higher beginning income ranks, with significant improvements over time. This reflects Germany's evolving immigration policy and improved assistance for foreigners in the job market. Despite these advancements, obstacles persist, notably in the integration of refugees and labor segmentation in the marketplace, where specific immigrant groups continue to confront considerable impediments to economic parity.

A notable conclusion of this study is the substantial difference in immigrant economic mobility between European and non-European nations. In non-European nations such as Canada and the United States, the existence or lack of comprehensive immigration laws and social assistance systems has an impact on immigrant financial success (Woroby, 2015). Canada's proactive immigration strategy, which emphasizes human capital, language acquisition, and labor market involvement, has resulted in greater economic mobility for immigrants (Papademetriou & Hooper, 2019). The country's diversity and social policies, which offer vital support such as healthcare, education, and unemployment assistance, have helped immigrants integrate into the economy over time (Wilkinson & Garcea, 2017).

In contrast, the United States' market-driven immigration approach, which provides little social assistance and depends mainly on labor market pressures, has produced a mixed image of financial integration for immigrants. While immigrants' wages improve initially, they frequently stagnate or drop after a few decades due to labor market fragmentation and a lack of a substantial welfare state (Dustmann & Frattini, 2014). This is exacerbated by tighter immigration policies and racial discrimination, which hamper long-term financial success for numerous immigrant groups (Remennick, 2013).

Sweden and Denmark are Europe's leading countries in terms of immigrant economic mobility. Both nations have comprehensive social welfare programs and inclusive immigration laws to guarantee that immigrants have a chance at healthcare, education, and job opportunities (Friedrich et al., 2021). Sweden, in particular, has had steady and large upward economic mobility for immigrant cohorts, particularly during the 1990s, thanks to its robust welfare state and labor market inclusion (Berger, Engzell, Eriksson, & Molinder, 2023). Denmark similarly enjoys positive income mobility, notably those who arrived in the 1990s, but the country has struggled to balance economic integration with public worries about immigration (Ireland, 2004). The 1990s cohort has a significant gain in income rank, followed by a modest decrease. This variation might reflect the economic insecurity of the early 2000s, as well as difficulties with labor market integration despite the availability of generous social benefits. Nonetheless, Denmark remains one of the top achievers in terms of economic mobility, mainly due to its extensive welfare state, which promotes integration through access to education, healthcare, and work opportunities.

In contrast, Germany's historical dependence on guest worker programs produced long-term hurdles to economic mobility for many immigrants, particularly those who arrived in the 1950s and 60s. However, recent policy changes have resulted in some gains in the economic integration of younger immigrant cohorts, notably those who have migrated between the 2000s and 2010s (Brücker, Jaschke, & Kosyakova, 2019). While the United Kingdom is a popular immigration destination, it offers a more mixed image, with many immigrants seeing little upward mobility after 20-30 years of residency. Discrimination, labor market fragmentation, and limited welfare access are all systemic challenges that impede long-term economic integration (Strain-Fajth, 2023).

Southern European nations, such as Greece and Spain, have encountered substantial obstacles in integrating immigrants, owing to inadequate social systems and the economic implications of the 2008 financial crisis. Immigrants in these countries have had little economic mobility, with many continuing in low-wage sectors due to minimal social assistance and poor labor market integration (McMahon, 2018). Spain's immigrant cohorts in the 1980s had moderate wage improvements, but the 2008 financial crisis impacted immigrant communities especially hard, producing stagnant wages or even falls for those entering in the 1990s and 2000s. The recession, along with high unemployment rates and insufficient social assistance for immigrants, has had a substantial impact on their economic prospects. Similarly, Greece has had lower upward mobility, with new immigrant generations unable to get beyond the lowest income brackets due to economic stagnation, insufficient social services, and a lack of sustainable integration initiatives.

Austria and Luxembourg demonstrate moderate upward mobility, although improvement is gradual, owing to labor market fragmentation and inadequate social integration programs (Afonso, 2013). Both *Austria* and *Luxembourg* exhibit modest upward mobility, with Luxembourg showing a higher upward tendency for newer immigrants than Austria. However, Austria's earlier immigrants (those who came in the 1970s and 1980s) show slower growth. Despite their robust economy, both nations have challenges in integrating immigrants over time. In Austria, the lack of qualification recognition and employment inequality impede immigrants' advancement, particularly those from previous cohorts. Luxembourg, with its highly internationalized workforce, has witnessed a little increase in immigrants' income ranks, but workforce integration issues remain.

Therefore, the analysis in this study has provided a spectacular result in terms of the economic trajectories of immigrant people in all ten different countries. Comparatively, all countries denote different trends of economic mobility throughout the times. It is quite clear that the length of residence is associated with income growth and that there are differences between countries in how strong this is. However, in many countries, there's surprisingly little difference between arrival cohorts. The objectives of this study align with the overall outcome of data analysis.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the influence of years of arrival and years of residence on income trajectories among immigrants in various nations. This study focused on ten countries in and outside of Europe and highlighted the diverse economic trajectories of immigrant cohorts, demonstrating how immigration policies, labor market conditions, and social welfare systems all play an important role in shaping their economic outcomes. The study aims, which intended to investigate how the duration of residence and the date of immigration impact immigrant income dynamics, have been thoroughly addressed using both theoretical frameworks and empirical data.

Results contribute to the research literature both in empirical and theoretical ways.

First, the results show that immigrant economic mobility varies significantly across European and non-European nations. Non-European nations, such as Canada, with their comprehensive immigration policies and powerful social safety systems, have shown clear progress for immigrants, particularly those who entered after the 1990s. In contrast, the United States, with its more divided immigration rules and competitive labor market, paints a more uneven picture, with earnings decreasing or stagnant for many immigrant groups over time. Despite hurdles such as labor market fragmentation and economic cycles, European nations such as Sweden and Denmark, which have robust welfare systems and proactive integration strategies, have had noteworthy accomplishments in facilitating immigrant financial integration.

Second, the study contributed to the theoretical framework of human capital and assimilation theory.

The human capital theory is a fundamental theoretical framework driving this study, positing that immigrants' economic prospects are heavily influenced by their skills, education, and labor market experience (Borjas, Freeman, Katz, DiNardo, & Abowd, 1997), (Mincer, 1974). This idea also explains this study's findings, as it can be assumed that immigrants who stay longer in the host country tend to get greater levels of education, skills, and appropriate job experience and have higher income mobility, particularly in countries with open labor markets and social safety systems, such as Canada and Sweden. These countries' investments in human capital, such as language training, education, and skill recognition, assist immigrants in improving their economic

situation over time. This is consistent with the human capital theory's claim that investing in people's skills and talents increases their ability to attain economic success.

Assimilation theory, which argues that immigrants eventually acquire the norms, attitudes, and practices of their host community, also contributes to the observed income mobility trends (Warner & Srole, 1945). According to this notion, the higher the level of assimilation, the greater the likelihood of economic success (Piracha, Tani, Cheng, & Wang, 2023). Immigrants have more economic mobility in nations such as Canada, Sweden, and Denmark, where integration programs are in place to assist them in assimilation into the economy and larger society. These nations promote integration through supporting policies in education, employment, and social welfare, allowing immigrants to keep their cultural identity while still thriving economically. In contrast, in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, where assimilation has frequently been a more difficult process due to prejudice against races and limited integration initiatives, immigrants tend to have slower financial mobility, supporting the notion that assimilation issues limit upward economic mobility.

However, this study acknowledges several limitations, including the inability to account for personal variables that may influence income mobility, such as gender, ethnicity, and family structure. Also, lack of control for education, country of origin, and other socio-demographic factors were important limitations for this research. Some countries do not have data from every decade, which was another notable limitation of this study. Although not all nations have data from the 1950s and 1960s, the author believes it is crucial to include these earlier cohorts in the study. They give essential historical background and enable for a more in-depth assessment of long-term integration patterns in nations with available data. While cross-country comparisons will concentrate on overlapping time periods, including previous cohorts improves the overall narrative by emphasizing how income trajectories have changed, particularly in reaction to shifting migration policy and socioeconomic conditions. Future studies might look at how these characteristics interact with immigration policy to have a better understanding of immigrant income trajectories.

To summarize, immigrant economic integration is a multidimensional process driven by a range of elements such as immigration timing, years of residence, and the host country's structural characteristics. This thesis has shown that immigrant income mobility is influenced not just by

individual human capital, but also by policies and social structures that facilitate their integration into the labor market and larger society. Countries that engage in inclusive policies and recognize the different demands of immigrant communities can create an environment in which immigrants can succeed economically, benefiting both the immigrants and the host nation.

*Note: I didn't use any AI to conduct data analysis or write my thesis. I have used some AI-based tools and platforms a few times to get ideas about specific topics, theories, and definitions. Besides, I have used some paraphrasing and grammar-checking tools to improve my writing and thesis standard.*

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