

Demographic profile of Syrians in Norway

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Introduction

Norway did not have a strong tradition of Syrian immigration before the war in Syria broke out. Before 2011, the annual immigration of Syrian citizens to Norway was below 100, and as late as in January 2011, less than 1,500 immigrants from Syria were living in Norway. In January 2018, the number had increased to 27,400 – almost 20 times higher. Many of these had arrived as asylum seekers during the fall of 2015. In fact, the number of Syrian asylum seekers that arrived in Norway only during the month of October 2015 was higher than the number of all Syrian immigrants registered in the Norwegian population in January the year before.

Figure 1 shows how the number of Syrians in Norway evolved from a relative stable level around 2011, with a sharp increase the last few years. The number of children born in Norway with immigrant parents from Syria is still relatively low, which is not surprising since the large majority of Syrians in Norway have a short duration of stay.

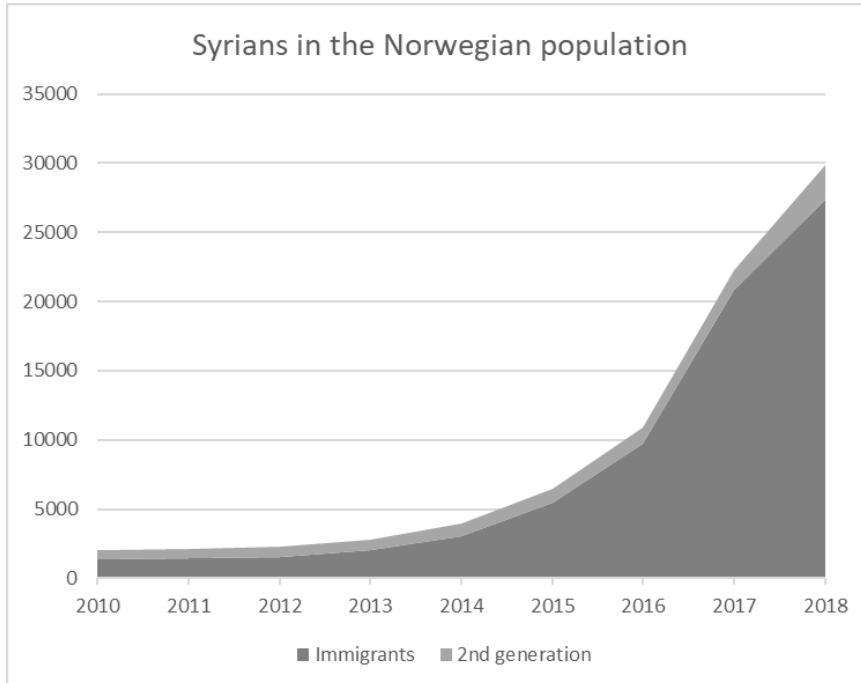


Figure 1: Syrian immigrants and people born in Norway with immigrant parents from Syria. The figure does not include asylum seekers waiting for application answer.

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/innvbef)

Figure 1 includes all immigrants from Syria, refugees and others, but it does not include asylum seekers waiting for application answer. To be included in the Norwegian population register, you must have been granted protection. The processing time for asylum applications usually takes from a couple of months to more than a year (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, 2018a), so a large part of the asylum seekers that came in 2015 were not granted asylum and included in the Norwegian population register until 2016.

The sharp increase in Syrian asylum seekers – and the following increase in Syrian citizens officially immigrating to Norway – is shown in Figure 2. ‘Immigrations’ include all legal migrant statuses, but primarily asylum seekers who have been granted protection, family migrants and so-called resettlement refugees (quota refugees). Resettlement refugees are usually people who are registered

as refugees by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and who are taken directly to Norway from refugee camps.¹

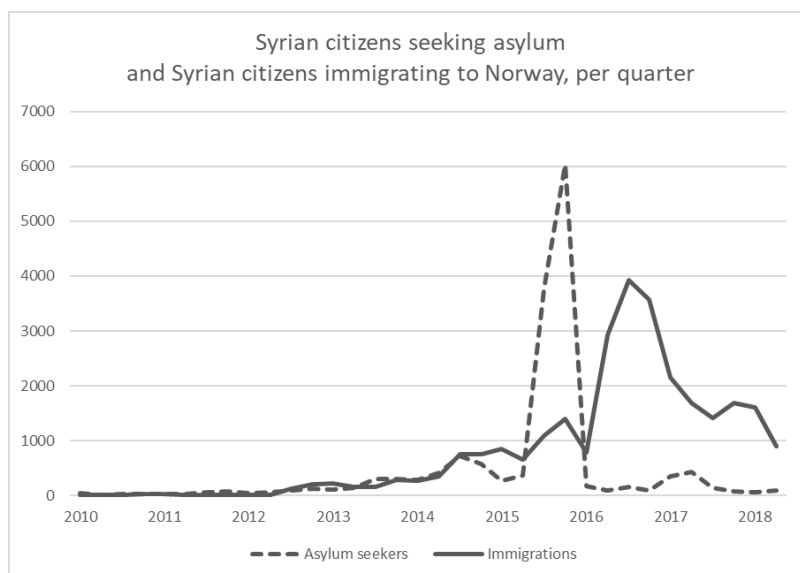


Figure 2: Syrian citizens seeking asylum and immigrating to Norway, per quarter.

Source: The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (www.udi.no/en/statistics-and-analysis/statistics/) and Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/folkemengde/)

In the rest of this chapter, we use Statistics Norway's data from the Norwegian population register on immigrations of Syrian citizens and immigrants from Syria. Immigrants are defined as people who have immigrated to Norway, who are born abroad with foreign-born parents and grandparents, who have a legal permission to stay (such as a granted asylum) and who intend to stay for at least 6 months. Syrian immigrants in Norway are defined not by citizenship, but by origin country.

¹ The number of Syrian resettlement refugees taken to Norway was 2,667 in 2017, 2,902 in 2016 and 1,684 in 2015 (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, 2018b)

Syrian immigrants living in Norway in 2011

There were relatively few Syrian immigrants in Norway in January 2011 – only 1,497 persons. This is a low number even by Norwegian standards. At the same time, about 500,000 immigrants were living in Norway - more than 50,000 were Polish and more than 30,000 were Swedish. Ranked by origin country, the Syrians were number 50 on the list of immigrant groups (Statistics Norway, 2018a).

Age and duration of stay: similar to other immigrants

The majority of Syrian immigrants in Norway in 2011 were men, whereas 46 per cent were women (Table 1), so the female share was slightly lower than for all immigrants in Norway (49 per cent). The age distribution of Syrian immigrants was slightly younger than the age distribution of all immigrants in Norway at that time, as shown in Figure 3. As can be read from Table 1, the men were somewhat older than the women.

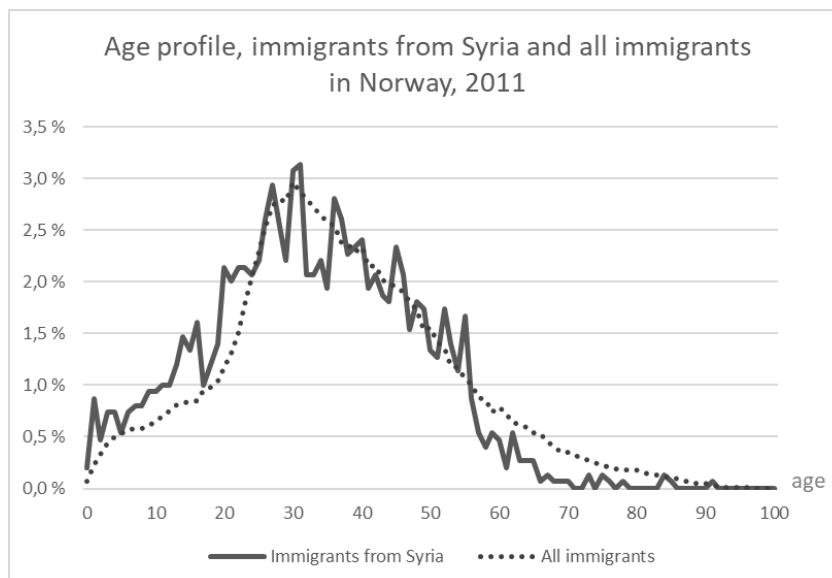


Figure 3: Age distribution among immigrants from Syria and all immigrants in Norway, 2011.

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

Table 1: Immigrants from Syria living in Norway in 2011, by sex and age groups.

Age	Men		Women	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
0-4 years	17	2%	28	4%
5-9 years	34	4%	23	3%
10-14 years	46	6%	38	6%
15-19 years	53	7%	45	7%
20-24 years	76	9%	81	12%
25-29 years	83	10%	104	15%
30-34 years	97	12%	91	13%
35-39 years	91	11%	88	13%
40-44 years	87	11%	64	9%
45-49 years	83	10%	59	9%
50-54 years	70	9%	33	5%
55-59 years	43	5%	17	2%
60-64 years	19	2%	7	1%
65 years or more	9	1%	11	2%
Total	808	100%	689	100%

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

Most of the Syrian immigrants in Norway had a relatively short duration of stay – about 60 per cent had less than 10 years since immigration. This was, however, not very different from the pattern among all immigrants in Norway at that time, as shown in Figure 4.

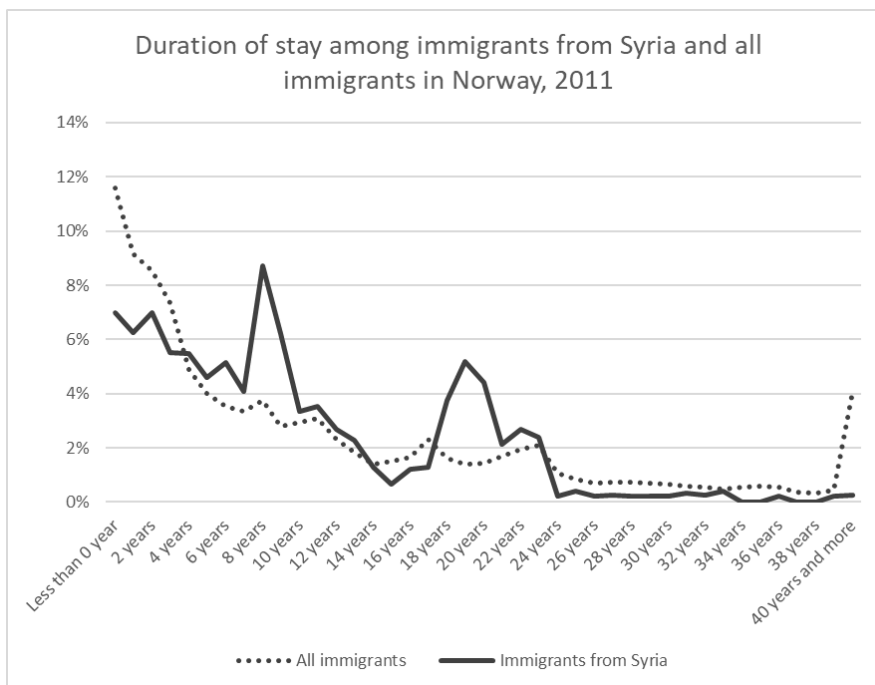


Figure 4: Duration of stay, distribution among immigrants from Syria and all immigrants in Norway, 2011.

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/innvbef)

The majority were Norwegian citizens

More than 60 per cent of the immigrants from Syria in Norway in 2011 had become Norwegian citizens. 24 per cent were Syrian citizens, and 14 per cent had another, or unknown, or no citizenship. Among the latter group were a large share of stateless people, a category which includes many Palestinians. Almost 3 per cent of the Syrian immigrants in Norway had a Swedish passport.

Among those with short duration of stay, quite a few were still Syrian citizens, as Table 2 shows. According to the Norwegian Nationality Act, one of the requirements for acquisition of citizenship is that the person has lived in Norway for at least seven of the last ten years (with certain exceptions) (Pettersen, 2012). Among the Syrian immigrants in Norway with long duration of stay, the large majority had become Norwegian citizens.

Table 2: Immigrants from Syria living in Norway in 2011, by citizenship and duration of stay.

	Syrian	Other	Norwegian	Total
0-9 years	360	194	346	900
<i>Per cent</i>	40 %	22 %	38 %	100 %
10 years or more	6	19	572	597
<i>Per cent</i>	1 %	3 %	96 %	100 %
Total	366	213	918	1,497
<i>Per cent</i>	24 %	14 %	61 %	100 %

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

Many refugees and family migrants

Since 1990, most people moving to Norway have been obliged to specify their reason for migration to the Norwegian immigration authorities. Among the Syrians immigrants living in Norway in 2011, 45 per cent were registered as refugees. This includes all who have immigrated for refugee reasons, including those who are given permission to stay on humanitarian grounds, so this category is not limited to e.g. convention refugees only. The other large group is people who immigrated for family reasons, including those who immigrate to (re-)unite with a refugee. While most men had come as refugees, most women came as family immigrants. In addition, some Syrians had arrived as Nordic citizens, who do not have to specify their reason for immigration, and some had come for work or education.

Table 3: Immigrants from Syria living in Norway in 2011, by sex and reason for first immigration.

	Refugee	Family	Nordic	Work or education	Unknown	Total
Men	416	275	41	43	33	808
<i>Per cent</i>	51 %	34 %	5 %	5 %	4 %	100 %
Women	258	390	20	9	12	689
<i>Per cent</i>	37 %	57 %	3 %	1 %	2 %	100 %
Total	674	665	61	52	45	1,497
<i>Per cent</i>	45 %	44 %	4 %	3 %	3 %	100 %

'Unknown' includes people who arrived in Norway before 1990.

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

Most adult women were married

Most of the adult immigrant women from Syria in Norway in 2011 were married, as shown in Table 4. Only 16 percent of women age 18 or more were unmarried, and 16 per cent had ‘other’ marital status, i.e. they were either divorced, separated or widows. Among men, the number of unmarried was higher, and in the age group 18-29 years the majority (80 per cent) of men were unmarried. For women in the same age group, less than 40 per cent were unmarried.

Table 4: Adult immigrants from Syria living in Norway in 2011, by marital status, sex and age.

	Men			Women		
	Unmarried	Married	Other	Unmarried	Married	Other
18-29 years	143	33	3	80	117	7
<i>Per cent</i>	80 %	18 %	2 %	39 %	57 %	3 %
30-39 years	54	101	33	9	141	29
<i>Per cent</i>	29 %	54 %	18 %	5 %	79 %	16 %
40 years +	26	224	61	3	132	56
<i>Per cent</i>	8 %	72 %	20 %	2 %	69 %	29 %
Total	223	358	97	92	390	92
<i>Per cent</i>	33 %	53 %	14 %	16 %	68 %	16 %

‘Other’ includes separated, divorced and widows/widowers

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

The immigrant women from Syria gave birth to 69 children in Norway in 2011. This is a small number to calculate a total fertility rate (TFR) from, but an estimated TFR would be around 3.8 - 4 children per women. This is somewhat higher than the corresponding TFR among women in Syria in 2010-2015, which is estimated at 3.1 children per woman (United Nations 2018). However, high fertility is not uncommon right after migration (Andersson, 2004), and many of the women from Syria in Norway had relatively short duration of stay.

Many lived in Oslo, Larvik and Kristiansand

Most of the Syrian immigrants in 2011 lived in the Southern and Eastern part of Norway. About 24 per cent lived in the capital of Oslo, and there were also relatively large groups in the towns of Larvik (8 per cent) and Kristiansand (7 per cent) on the South Eastern coast. Almost half of the Syrians (43 per cent) lived in the six most populous municipalities of Norway – Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger, Bærum and Kristiansand – whereas 70 per cent of Norway's municipalities (301 of 429) had no Syrian immigrants in 2011.

As shown in Table 5, 68 per cent lived in Eastern Norway, which is a higher share than for the Norwegian population in general (50 per cent). Very few Syrian immigrants – only 6 per cent – lived in Trøndelag or further north. Among the Norwegian population in general, 19 per cent lived in Trøndelag or Northern Norway in 2011.

Table 5: Syrian immigrants and total population in Norway by region of residence, 2011

	Syrian immigrants	Per cent, Syrian immigrants	Per cent, total population
Eastern Norway	1,022	68 %	50 %
Southern Norway	154	10 %	6 %
Western Norway	234	16 %	26 %
Trøndelag	29	2 %	9 %
Northern Norway	58	4 %	10 %
Total	1,497	100 %	100 %

Eastern Norway includes the counties Østfold, Akershus, Oslo, Hedmark, Oppland, Buskerud, Vestfold and Telemark, Southern Norway includes Aust-Agder and Vest-Agder, Western Norway comprises Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane, Møre og Romsdal, Trøndelag includes Sør-Trøndelag and Nord-Trøndelag, and Northern Norway comprises Nordland, Troms and Finnmark.

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/innvbef and www.ssb.no/folkemengde)

The Syrian immigrants tended to live in central municipalities. Figure 5 shows their distribution across municipalities with different degrees of centrality (Statistics Norway 2018b). One third of the Syrian immigrants lived in the most central municipalities, which comprises Oslo and seven neighbouring municipalities. Among the

total population, only one in five lived in these central municipalities. On the other hand, only ten per cent of the Syrian immigrants lived in municipalities with a centrality level of 4, 5 or 6 – that is, the least central municipalities, where 30 per cent of the general population lived.

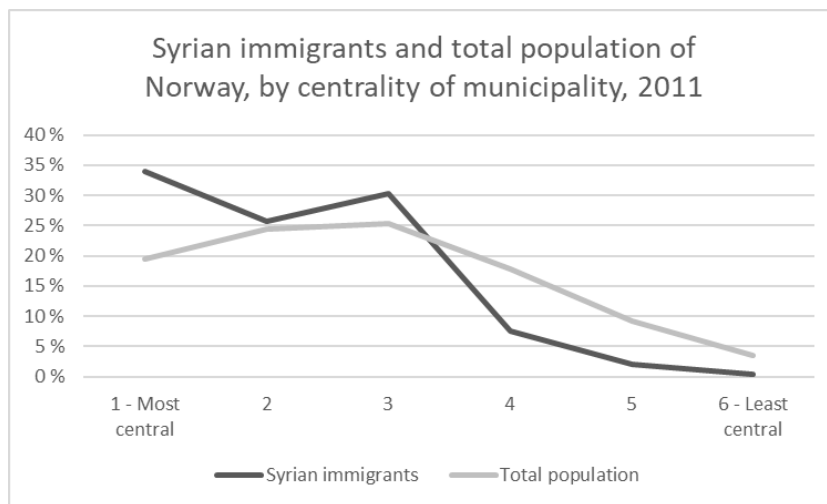


Figure 5: Syrian immigrants and total population in Norway by centrality of municipality, 2011.

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/innvbef and www.ssb.no/folkemengde)

In- and out-migration of Syrians 2011-2018

Among all foreign nationals who immigrated to Norway in 2016, the Syrians were by far the largest group with 11,000 immigrations – almost twice as much as the second largest group, the Polish citizens. In 2017, the Syrians citizens continued to represent the largest group, with 7,000 immigrations (Statistics Norway, 2018c). The increase in immigrations of Syrian citizens was remarkably sharp in 2016, as shown in Figure 6 and Table 6. Many of those who were registered as immigrated this year had arrived as asylum seekers during the fall of 2015, and got their residence permits in 2016. In 2017 the number of immigrations decreased markedly, and quarterly data show that this decrease continued through the first half of 2018 (Figure 1 and Table 6).

Compared with the immigrations, the number of emigrations of Syrian citizens has been very low, although there has been an increase lately (from 24 emigrations in 2015 and 2016 to 88 in 2017) which seems to continue in 2018.

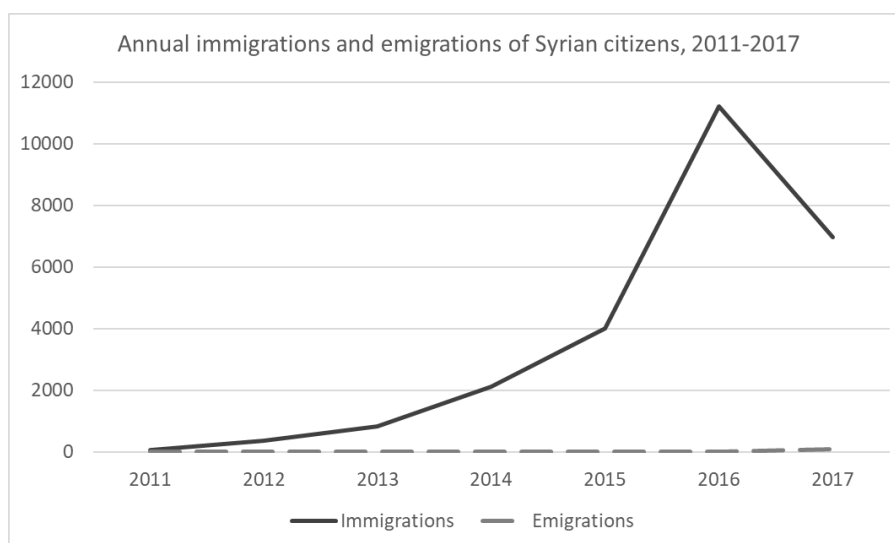


Figure 6: Annual immigrations and emigrations of Syrian citizens, 2011-2017.

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/flytting)

Table 6: Annual immigrations, emigrations and net migration of Syrian citizens, 2011-2018 (1st half of 2018)

	Immigration	Emigration	Net migration
2011	67	11	56
2012	368	8	360
2013	841	11	830
2014	2,131	13	2,118
2015	4,010	24	3,986
2016	11,208	24	11,184
2017	6,962	88	6,874
2018 (1st half)	2,511	57	2,454

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/flytting and www.ssb.no/folkemengde)

Emigration: Few leave, but some go to Sweden

Although relatively few Syrians emigrated from Norway between 2011 and 2017, a total of 275 immigrants with Syrian background left the country in this period. This includes Syrian immigrants with all citizenships. Around half of them were citizens of Syria, while 22 per cent had Norwegian passport, and a relatively high share - 13 per cent - were Swedish citizens. Almost two thirds of the emigrants were men, and more than half of them were unmarried.

The Norwegian register data on emigrations is less accurate than other demographic information, because some people leave the country without informing the population register (Pettersen, 2013). Information is also inadequate with regards to which countries the emigrants move to. For the Syrian immigrants who left Norway in the 2011-2017 period, 21 per cent had Sweden as their recorded destination country, whereas 5 per cent had Syria and 4 per cent had Turkey. However, for as much as 51 per cent of the Syrian emigrants, there population register has no information on destination country.

Syrians in Norway in 2018

By January 1st 2018 almost 27,400 Syrians immigrants were living in Norway. That is more than 18 times as much as in 2011 (Table 7). In addition, around 350 Syrian asylum seekers were waiting for their asylum application to be processed (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, 2018c). Among the 27,400, less than 5 per cent were also in Norway in 2011. Syrian immigrants now constitute half a percent of the total Norwegian population of 5.3 million, compared with only 0.03 per cent before the war broke out in Syria in 2011.

Table 7: Immigrants from Syria living in Norway, in total, as share of the Norwegian population and as share of all immigrants in Norway, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Immigrants from Syria living in Norway	1,497	1,571	2,009	3,080	5,450	9,710	20,823	27,392
Share of the total population (per cent)	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.11	0.19	0.40	0.52
Share of all immigrants in Norway (per cent)	0.30	0.29	0.34	0.49	0.81	1.39	2.87	3.67

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/innvbef)

From the 50th to the 5th largest immigrant group

The share of all immigrants in Norway that are Syrians increased more than tenfold between 2011 and 2018 – from 0.3 to 3.7 per cent. Now the Syrian immigrants are the 5th largest immigrant group in Norway (after the Polish, Lithuania, Swedish and Somali), up from the 50th in 2011.

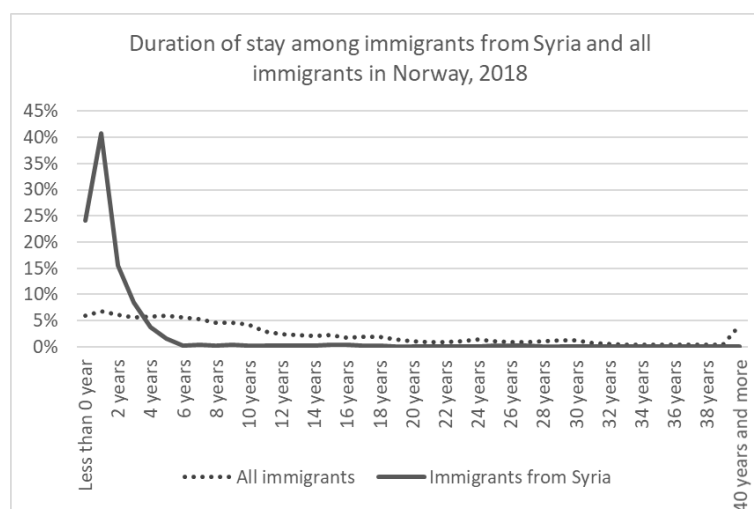


Figure 7: Duration of stay among immigrants from Syria and all immigrants in Norway, 2018.

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/innvbef)

Compared with the total immigrant population in Norway, the Syrian immigrants have markedly shorter duration of stay (Figure 7).

Almost two of three Syrian immigrants - 64 per cent - had a duration of (registered) stay in Norway of 1 year or less.

A high share of children

The age profile of Syrian immigrants in 2018 is quite different from that in the general Norwegian immigrant population and in the total Norwegian population (Figure 8). In particular, a high share of the Syrian immigrants are children, the 6- and 7-year olds are the largest cohorts (these figures do not include Norwegian-born children with Syrian immigrant parents). 30 per cent of the Syrian immigrants in Norway were 15 years or less, 50 per cent were 25 years or less in January 2018. The difference to the age profile of the Syrian immigrants in 2011 (Figure 2) is also striking.

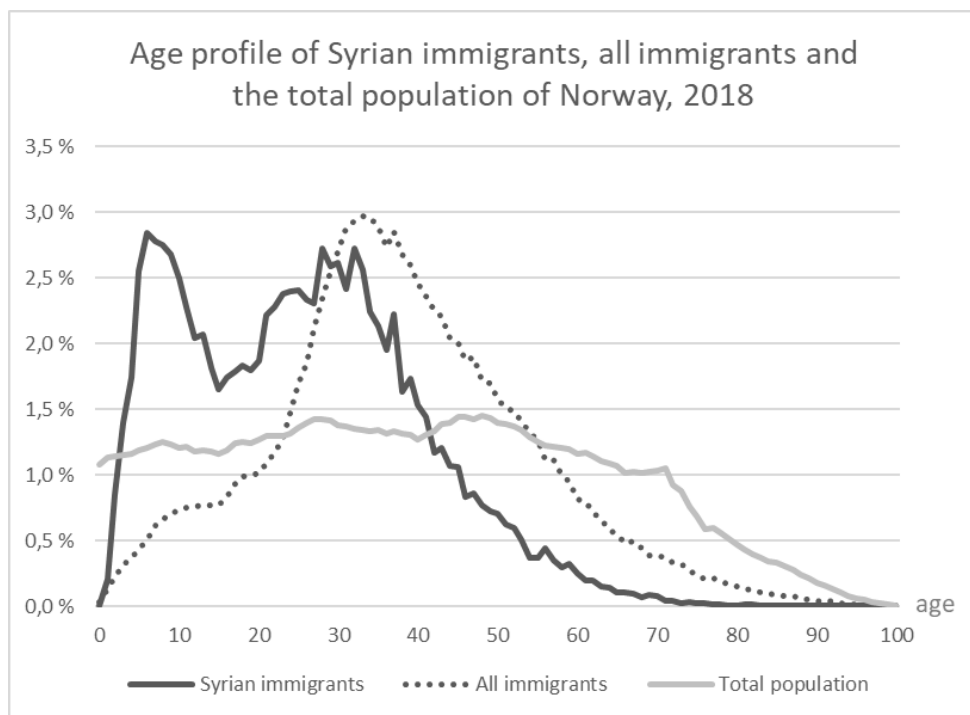


Figure 8: Age profile of Syrian immigrants, all immigrants and the total population of Norway, 2018.

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

Large majority of men, particularly in the 20's

Of the Syrian immigrants in Norway, 16,700 or 61 per cent are men. This is a higher percentage than in 2011, and it is also markedly higher than among all immigrants in Norway, where 52 per cent are men. As shown in Table 8, as much as 27 per cent of all Syrian men are 20-29 years old. In this age group, there are more than twice as many men as women.

Table 8: Immigrants from Syria living in Norway in 2018, by sex and age groups.

Age	Men		Women	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
0-4 years	582	3%	568	5%
5-9 years	1,979	12%	1,745	16%
10-14 years	1,561	9%	1,372	13%
15-19 years	1,479	9%	934	9%
20-24 years	2,160	13%	892	8%
25-29 years	2,320	14%	1,064	10%
30-34 years	2,132	13%	1,307	12%
35-39 years	1,596	10%	1,054	10%
40-44 years	1,090	7%	665	6%
45-49 years	737	4%	421	4%
50-54 years	492	3%	276	3%
55-59 years	302	2%	186	2%
60-64 years	161	1%	96	1%
65 years or more	115	1%	106	1%
Total	16,706	100%	10,686	100%

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

Mainly Syrian citizens

The overwhelming majority – 85 per cent of all Syrian immigrants in Norway – are citizens of Syria (Table 9). Only 8 per cent have a Norwegian passport. 7 per cent have other, unknown or no citizenship, most of these have no registered citizenship.

Table 9: Immigrants from Syria living in Norway in 2018, by citizenship and duration of stay.

	Syrian	Other	Norwegian	Total
0-9 years	23,207	1,937	1,059	26,203
<i>Per cent</i>	89 %	7 %	4 %	100 %
10 years or more	28	37	1,124	1,189
<i>Per cent</i>	2 %	3 %	95 %	100 %
Total	23,235	1,974	2,183	27,392
<i>Per cent</i>	85 %	7 %	8 %	100 %

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

It is not surprising that most of the Syrian immigrants in Norway are Syrian citizens. As shown in Figure 7, a large majority of them have a too short duration of stay to fulfil the criteria for achieving Norwegian citizenship. However, among the relatively few who have 10 years or more since migration to Norway, 95 per cent have a Norwegian passport (Table 9).

Even though the large majority are Syrian citizens, more than one third of the Syrian immigrants emigrated to Norway from another country: 18 per cent came from Lebanon, 9 per cent from Turkey and 3 per cent from Jordan.

Nearly 4 out of 5 are refugees

99 per cent of all the Syrian immigrants in Norway have arrived either as refugees or family migrants. The large majority, nearly 4 out of 5, are refugees (Table 10). Among these refugees, seven out of ten had arrived as asylum seekers, including some who were relocated from Italy and Greece. The rest were resettlement refugees (or quota refugees), who usually are registered as refugees by the UNHCR and who are given a residence permit in Norway before they arrive. The number of resettlement refugees is decided annually by the Norwegian parliament, and the number of resettlement refugees from Syria increased from around 750 in 2014 to 2,900 in 2016, before it declined somewhat to 2,700 in 2017 (Dzamarija et al, 2018).

Table 10: Immigrants from Syria living in Norway in 2018, by sex and reason for first immigration.

	Refugee	Family	Nordic	Work or education	Unknown	Total
Men	14,235	2,288	44	107	32	16,706
<i>Per cent</i>	85 %	14 %	0 %	1 %	0 %	100 %
Women	7,083	3,540	32	17	14	10,686
<i>Per cent</i>	66 %	33 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	100 %
Total	21,318	5,828	76	124	46	27,392
<i>Per cent</i>	78 %	21 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	100 %

*'Unknown' includes people who arrived in Norway before 1990

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

For some of the most recently arrived immigrants, the share of refugees is even higher. Among those with 3 years since immigration, more than 90 per cent are refugees (Figure 9).

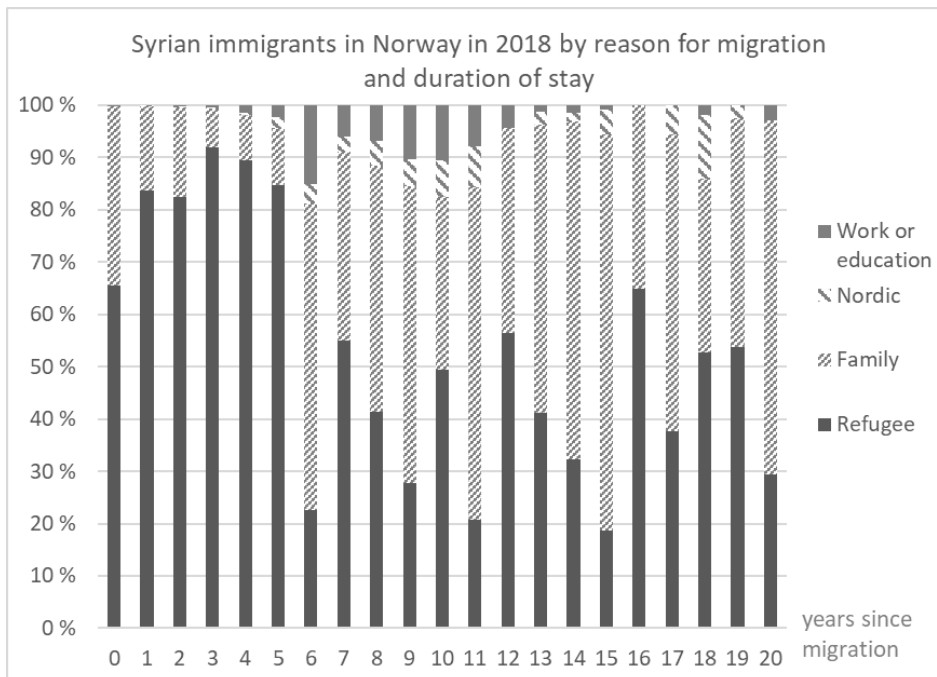


Figure 9: Syrian immigrants in Norway in 2018 by reason for migration and duration of stay. Per cent.

Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

For immigrants with longer duration of stay, family migrants constitute a larger share, the refugees' share is lower and Nordic citizens, work and education migrants make up a higher portion.

Figure 9 also shows that the share of family migrants is higher among those with less than one year of stay compared to among those with 1 to 5 years of stay. This may reflect the large increase in refugees some years ago, refugees whose family members later are allowed to immigrate to Norway.

Most men are unmarried

In 2018, 51 per cent of all adult Syrian immigrant men in Norway were unmarried (Table 11). This is partly due to the high share of men in their 20s, as shown in Table 8. Among adult men under 30 years of age, 84 per cent were unmarried and only 15 per cent were married. For women in this age group, the situation was quite different: 63 per cent were married and only 34 per cent were unmarried. However, the number of women age 18-29 years was less than half of the number of men.

Table 11: Adult immigrants from Syria living in Norway in 2011, by marital status, sex and age.

	Men			Women		
	Unmarried	Married	Other	Unmarried	Married	Other
18-29 years	4,324	775	55	784	1,434	58
<i>Per cent</i>	84 %	15 %	1 %	34 %	63 %	3 %
30-39 years	1,393	2,214	121	159	2,049	153
<i>Per cent</i>	37 %	59 %	3 %	7 %	87 %	6 %
40 years +	260	2,414	223	89	1,294	367
<i>Per cent</i>	9 %	83 %	8 %	5 %	74 %	21 %
Total	5,977	5,403	399	1,032	4,777	578
<i>Per cent</i>	51 %	46 %	3 %	16 %	75 %	9 %

'Other' includes separated, divorced and widows/widowers
Source: Statistics Norway (own calculations)

Marriages among the youngest adults is relatively uncommon in the general Norwegian population. Among persons aged 19-24 only 1 per cent of Norwegian men and 3 per cent of Norwegian women were married as of January 1st 2018, whereas the corresponding share among the Syrian immigrants in Norway was 8 per cent among men and as much as 53 per cent among women. Since most of these Syrian immigrants have arrived recently, most of them probably were married at arrival.

Syrian immigrant women gave birth to almost 700 children in 2017, and their total fertility rate was 3.8, approximately the same as in 2011.

Many in Northern and Southern Norway

In Norway, newly arrived refugees and their families are subject to a placement policy where a central agency assigns new refugees to live in one of the municipalities in Norway after their arrival, as a strategy to accelerate integration and discourage emergence of socially segregated ethnic communities in metropolitan areas (Valenta & Bunar, 2010). The placement is based on agreements between national authorities and the municipalities on how many refugees each municipality is willing to take. The refugees have strong economic incentives to stay in the assigned municipality, at least for the first couple of years when they are supposed to follow an introductory program for newly arrived refugees.

As shown in Figure 7, a large majority of Syrian immigrants in Norway in 2018 have short duration of stay. Combined with the placement policy, this may explain parts of their geographical distribution. Compared with the general population, many Syrian immigrants live in the south or the north of Norway (Table 12). Whereas half of the general population live in Eastern Norway, only 42 per cent of the Syrian immigrants do. The change is striking from 2011, where 68 per cent lived in Eastern Norway and only 2 per cent lived in Trøndelag and 4 per cent in Northern Norway (Table 5).

Table 12: Syrian immigrants and total population in Norway by region of residence, 2018

	Syrian immigrants	Per cent, Syrian immigrants	Per cent, total population
Eastern Norway	11,394	42 %	50 %
Southern Norway	2,457	9 %	6 %
Western Norway	7,212	26 %	26 %
Trøndelag	2,641	10 %	9 %
Northern Norway	3,688	13 %	9 %
Total	27,392	100 %	100 %

Eastern Norway includes the counties Østfold, Akershus, Oslo, Hedmark, Oppland, Buskerud, Vestfold and Telemark, Southern Norway includes Aust-Agder and Vest-Agder, Western Norway comprises Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane, Møre og Romsdal, Trøndelag includes Sør-Trøndelag and Nord-Trøndelag, and Northern Norway comprises Nordland, Troms and Finnmark.

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/innvbef and www.ssb.no/folkemengde)

The Syrian immigrants also tend to live in much less central municipalities in 2018 than in 2011. In fact, their residence pattern is even less central than that of the general Norwegian population, as shown in Figure 10. While only 3 per cent of the general population live in the least central municipalities, 7 per cent of the Syrian immigrants do.

This very rural pattern of residence may seem even more remarkable when comparing the Syrian immigrants to all immigrants in Norway. As Figure 10 shows, immigrants in general tend to live in the most central municipalities of Norway.

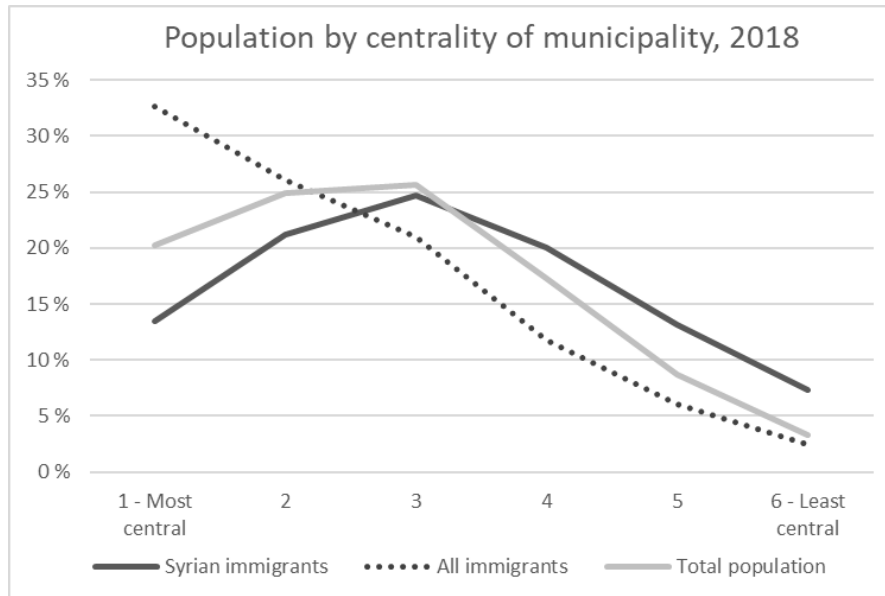


Figure 10: Syrian immigrants, all immigrants and total population in Norway by centrality of municipality, 2018.

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/innvbef and www.ssb.no/folkemengde)

Others with a Syrian background

In addition to the 27,400 Syrian immigrants described above, about 2,500 persons are born in Norway to immigrant parents from Syria as of 2018. Moreover, around 300 are born in Norway with one immigrant parent from Syria. In 2011, the corresponding numbers were 660 and 190.

These are still very young; two of three were 5 years or younger in January 2018. The number of new-borns with Syrian parents increased threefold from 2016 to 2017, when 680 of the babies born in Norway had two parents from Syria.

Education: Fewer have attained upper secondary or higher education

For many immigrants in Norway, information on educational attainment is inadequate. Among the almost 17,000 Syrian immigrants aged 16 or older who entered the Norwegian registers from 2012 to 2017, educational information is missing for about half the men and as much as 61 per cent of the women. For these, Statistics Norway estimates (imputes) values of their educational attainment for use in statistics. For the Syrians who arrived before 2012, the share with missing information is much lower, and estimated values are only needed for 10 per cent of the men and 9 percent of the women in 2017 (Dzamarija et al, 2018).

Table 12: Educational attainment among Syrian immigrants¹ in Norway aged 16 years and older in 2017, as of October 2017. Per cent.

	No education	Below upper secondary education	Upper secondary and tertiary vocational education	Higher education, short²	Higher education, long²
Immigrated from 2012 to Sept 2017	2.3	66.8	5.5	19.9	5.5
Immigrated before the end of 2011	1.5	45.6	23.5	18.6	10.8

Source: Statistics Norway (Dzamarija et al, 2018)

Statistics Norway does not have data on educational level for all immigrants. These figures include estimated values for those with missing data.

¹ Persons aged 16 years or older in 2017.

² 'Higher education, short' comprises higher education of a duration up to and including 4 years of duration. 'Higher education, long' comprises higher education of a duration over 4 years.

Table 12 shows the educational level of the Syrians who immigrated to Norway after 2011 (the newcomers) compared with that of the Syrians who arrived up until and including 2011. The table shows

educational attainment for adult immigrants (age 16 or older) as of October 2017, which means that those who immigrated before 2012 have had longer time to obtain education in Norway, as well as more time for information on education obtained abroad to be registered.

More than two thirds of the adult Syrian immigrants who arrived after 2011 have educational attainment below the upper secondary level. Among those who arrived until and including 2011, less than half have not attained upper secondary education or higher.

The proportion of Syrian immigrants with upper secondary education or tertiary vocational education is relatively low, particularly among the newcomers, where only 5.5 per cent have this as their educational attainment. Among those who arrived before 2012, 23.5 per cent have attained this level of education, compared with 40 per cent of the total population in Norway.

About 25 per cent of the newcomers from Syria have completed higher education (short or long): 21 per cent of women and 28 per cent of men. This is below the national average (33 per cent) for the whole population aged 16 years and older. Among the Syrians who immigrated before 2012, 30 per cent of the men and 29 per cent of the women have attained either short or long higher education.

In Table 13 the educational attainment of all Syrian immigrants in Norway (as of October 2017) is compared to that of other groups of immigrants, as well as the non-immigrant population.

Table 13: Educational attainment of the population¹, as of October 2017. Per cent.

	No educa- tion	Below up- per second- ary educa- tion	Upper sec- ondary and tertiary vo- cational edu- cation	Higher education, short	Higher education, long
Immigrants with country back- ground from					
Syria	2.2	65.2	6.9	19.8	5.9
EU/EFTA, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.	0.4	19.2	35.1	25.3	19.9
The rest of the world ²	3.0	40.2	23.6	20.0	13.2
Non-immigrants³	0.1	25.2	42.4	23.9	8.5

Source: Statistics Norway (Dzamarija et al, 2018)

Statistics Norway does not have data on educational level for all immigrants. These figures include estimated values for immigrants with missing data.

¹ Persons aged 16 years or older in 2017.

² Asia (without Syria), Africa, Latin America, Oceania without Australia and New Zealand and Eastern European Non-EU countries

³ The figures for this group does not include persons with unknown educational attainment.

As shown in the table, the share of immigrants with educational attainment below upper secondary level is also relatively high among the immigrants in Norway from Asia (without Syria), Africa, Latin America, Oceania without Australia and New Zealand and Eastern European Non-EU countries. However, the educational attainment among immigrants from Syria seems to be lower.

The relatively low share of Syrian immigrants with long higher education may partly reflect the younger age structure among adult immigrants from Syria (see also figure 8). In the age group 16-24 years very few have yet attained a long higher education, because it normally means more than 4 years in higher education. In the general

population of this age, less than 1 per cent have attained long higher education. More than 26 per cent of all adult immigrants from Syria are in this age group, compared with 14 per cent among non-immigrants and 11 per cent among all immigrants in Norway.

However, the younger age structure does not explain the whole difference in educational level between immigrants from Syria and the total Norwegian population. Figure 11 shows the highest educational attainments of Syrian immigrants and the total Norwegian population, by different age groups. Syrian immigrants are in general overrepresented in the lower educational levels in all these age groups.

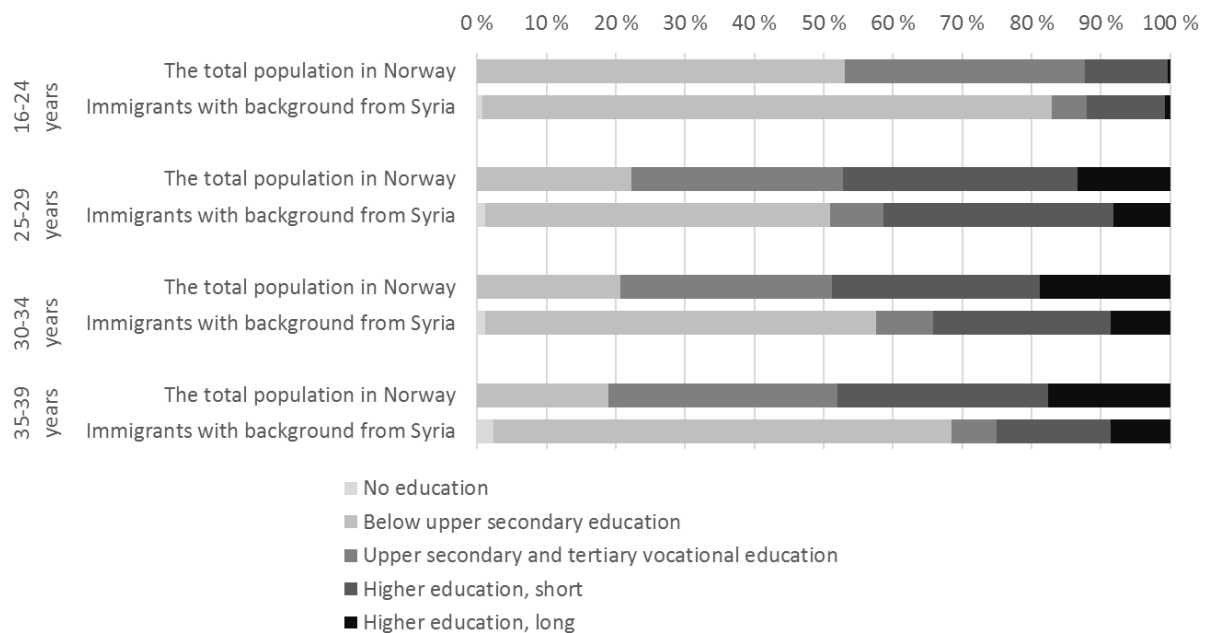


Figure 11: Syrian immigrant and the total population in Norway by educational attainment October 2017, age groups.

Source: Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/utniv and own calculations).

Statistics Norway does not have data on educational level for all immigrants. These figures include estimated values for immigrants with missing data.

Figures for the total population do not include persons with unknown educational attainment.

Summary: change from 2011 to 2018

The demographic profile of Syrians in Norway changed dramatically from 2011 to 2018. First, the size of the Syrian immigrant population increased from less than 1,500 to 27,400 – more than an 18-fold growth.

Second, the share of children is much higher than it was in 2011. In 2018, 30 per cent of the Syrian immigrants in Norway are 15 years or younger, compared with 14 per cent in 2011. It is also a much higher share than for immigrants in Norway in general where 9 per cent is 15 years or younger in 2018.

Third, a higher share of the Syrian immigrants are unmarried young adult men. The majority of men is higher in 2018 than in 2011, and of all Syrian immigrant men, 27 per cent are 20-29 years old, compared with 20 per cent in 2011. Among the young adult Syrian immigrant men, more than 8 out of 10 are unmarried.

Forth, a higher share of the Syrian immigrants are registered as refugees – 78 per cent in 2018 compared with 45 per cent in 2011. Family migrants constitute the second largest group. While immigrants who came for other reasons (work, education, Nordic or unknown) made up about 10 per cent of the Syrian immigrants in 2011, they are barely visible in the figures for 2018.

Fifth, most of today's Syrian immigrants have a very short duration of stay. In January 2018, almost two of three Syrian immigrants had one year or less since (formal) migration to Norway. In 2011, only 13 per cent had such a short duration of stay.

Sixth, a higher share of them are Syrian citizens – 85 per cent in 2018 compared with 24 per cent in 2011. Since a large share of the Syrian immigrants have not stayed in Norway long enough to achieve citizenship, we may expect an increasing share with Norwegian passport in the years to come.

Seventh, the Syrian immigrants' geographical distribution is much more rural and less central than in 2011, and it is also less central than for the general Norwegian population. Refugees are subject to a placement policy with strong economic incentives to stay in the assigned municipality, at least for the first couple of years.

Finally, more than two thirds cent of the adult Syrian immigrants who arrived after 2011 have educational attainment below the upper secondary level. Among those who arrived until and including 2011, less than half have educational attainment below this level.

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