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BACKGROUND PAPER WORKING GROUP IV

Women and girls on the move: refugees, migration and integration

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Introduction: Gender and migration

International migration is a complex phenomenon driven by a wide range of factors, from individual decisions, to social dynamics (e.g. gender, labour market structuration), to structural forces (e.g. inequalities, conflict, environmental stressors). Gender is a social construction and thus not a fix property; combined with other factors (e.g. class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, migratory status) it shapes every aspect of migration, from the motivations and decisions to migrate, to the social networks upon which migrant men and women rely, to the consequences of their movement and their participation in the societies of origin and destination. Migration, in turn, impacts the conception and perception of gender, and male and female migrants' gender roles in different contexts.

This background paper focuses on the situation of *women and girls on the move* across G7 countries. It first provides an overview of female migration in G7 countries, with an emphasis on vulnerable populations. It then analyses integration practices across G7 countries and cooperation prospects in the wider Mediterranean sub-region. Lastly, the paper provides some points of reflection to steer the discussion.

Female migration to G7 countries: an overview

Today, 48% of the 244 million international migrants are women. Female migrants outnumber male migrants in more developed countries (52% of the total). G7 countries host 37% of the total international migrant stock, and 40% of the female share. Although the share of international migrants with respect to the total population varies widely across the G7¹, all countries have a slight majority of women among immigrants overall² (see Annex, Figure 1).

Family reunification is just one, though the most common form of admission of female migrants in G7 countries. Female migrants are also admitted through free movement, for the purpose of business, study, employment marriage, and for humanitarian or international protection reasons. Many female migrants, unfortunately, are victims of trafficking, subjected to exploitation.

Notwithstanding increasing efforts on the collection, harmonization and coordination of migration data, in many countries sex-disaggregated data are scarce. It is thus difficult to accurately describe female migrants' distribution per migration category in G7 countries³. In what follows, the paper provides an overview of female migration across the G7, based on exiting information.

¹ 22% in Canada, to 15% in Germany, 14% in the United Kingdom and the United States, 12% in France, 10% in Italy, and less than 2% in Japan.

² 55% in Canada and Germany, 52% in France, Japan and the United Kingdom, and 51% in Italy and the United States. The diversity of origins of female migrants (except from Africa) is noticeable in Canada, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. African and Latin American women are less represented than their male counterparts in the United States. In Germany, most female migrants are Latin American, and in Japan, most female migrants are Asian.

³ Canada: out of the total number of permanent resident permits of 2015 attributed to female migrants 60% were for economic reasons; 27% for family reunification; 11% for protection reasons (resettled refugees) and 1.5% for other reasons (Statistics of Canada 2015). France: out of the first permits issued in 2015 to female migrants 47% are for family reasons, 31% for education, 5% for work and 17% or other reasons (Eurostat 2015). Italy: out of the first

Female migrant labour market participation in G7 economies is generally lower than that of native women, but slowly increasing in all countries (see Annex, Figure 2). Female migrant workers are generally concentrated in highly feminized sectors (e.g. education, health, social, care and domestic work). Many jobs in these sectors are precarious, temporary, and low-paid. Female migrants' confinement in these jobs results from the conflation of economic factors (e.g. increasing female labour market participation, labour market polarization, labour demand in feminized sectors that cannot be outsourced); social factors (e.g. social networks, the gender and ethnic segregation of labour markets); demographics (e.g. population ageing, long-term care needs); and policy choices (e.g. welfare policies increasingly relying on the privatization of care; migration policies shaping admission, residence, access to and conditions of work).

For instance, the gender-segregation of international labour markets, underlies the demand for migrant female care work in affluent societies, leading to the creation of global care chains, which shape the gender roles of female migrant workers and their male relatives. While female migrants are generally perceived as 'followers', many female domestic workers may be the pioneer migrants, become breadwinners, and may help initiating family reunification processes for male spouses and children. Care chains also exemplify how inequalities between women affect and are affected by migration: through their engagement in care work, female migrant workers allow other women to participate in the labor market and contribute to the wealth of receiving societies.

Migration policies play an important role in female migrants' conditions of entry, residence, work and integration. Some G7 countries have specific admission schemes for domestic and care workers, including quotas. Generally speaking, domestic and care work (a highly feminized sector in all G7 countries)⁴, is conceived of as a low-skilled and temporary employment with little prospects for permanent residence, naturalization or family reunification (as female migrants employed in this sector are usually unable to meet eligibility criteria). In addition, policies that do not allow migrant workers to change employers or sector of employment, reduce their options to cope with potential abuse, or achieve social mobility outside of the sector, perpetuating their de-skilling.

Female migrants in G7 countries are generally skilled⁵ (see Annex, Figure 3), and the immigration rates of highly-skilled women to G7 countries are increasing faster than those of low-skilled women. However, highly-skilled female migration is poorly understood⁶.

permits issued in 2015 to female migrants, 70% are for family reasons, 14% for education, 4% for work and 12% for other reasons (Eurostat 2015). Information from other G7 countries disaggregated by status or sex is not available.

⁴ Statistics on domestic work are scarce as this is a highly privatized sector, often undeclared and unregulated. The most recent global estimates on domestic work account only for declared work and are disaggregated by sex but not by migratory status. It is thus difficult to estimate the share of migrant female workers among all domestic workers in G7 countries. Estimates of the total (regular) female domestic workers in G7 countries are as follows: Canada (2008) 70,300 (out of 72,800; 97%); France (2009) 500,600 (out of 589,900; 85%); Germany (2009) 191,000 (out of 203,000; 94%); Italy (2008) 370,200 (out of 419,400; 88%); Japan (2005) 26,700 (out of 27,300; 98%); United Kingdom (2008) 84,000 (out of 136,000; 62%); United States (2010) 606,300 (out of 667,000; 91%).

⁵ Among female immigrants, the share of those with tertiary education is 35% in Canada, 27% in the United States, 22% in Japan, 17% in France and the United Kingdom, 13% in Germany and 8% in Italy (OECD 2015).

Not only temporary migration policies targeting low-skilled sectors, but also selective admission policies targeting highly-skilled migrants tend to be discriminatory towards female migrants, or gender-blind at best. These policies often focus on sectors where women are underrepresented (e.g. engineering, information and communication technologies, finance), or tend to disadvantage women as main applicants (e.g. through age, education, skills and work experience requirements)⁷. Many of such policies also forbid accompanying spouses to work, irrespective of their level of education or qualifications (this is also applicable to other schemes such as family reunification or international protection), thus contributing to perpetuating gender inequalities.

Besides migration policies, female migrant labour market participation is shaped by nationality (some nationalities being privileged over others), the recognition of foreign diplomas and past work experience, language proficiency, and employers' discriminatory practices (see section on integration below).

Female international students are also an important pool of human capital for G7 societies, and contribute to these economies through study fees and local consumption more generally. Many countries are increasingly considering facilitating the stay of international students and their integration into the labour market through visa conversions.

Some female migrants are also in particularly vulnerable situations, and in need for protection. The following sections provide a brief overview of the situation of victims of trafficking and female refugees in G7 countries.

Trafficking in human beings: how to protect girls and women

Given the complexity and nature of the phenomenon, it is difficult to estimate the prevalence and characteristics of trafficking in human beings. The most reliable sources of data tend to be reported or identified incidences, by definition underestimated⁸.

Human trafficking can include, but does not require, movement. Anti-trafficking measures are based on a '3P' model: prosecution, protection and prevention. At the international level, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,

⁶ Data on female migrants admitted for business or study in affluent societies are scarce or difficult to access, and research on highly skilled migration has largely focused on sectors or migration categories where women are underrepresented (e.g. intra-corporate transfers).

⁷ Canada may be an exception as it has a gender-sensitive approach to skilled immigration policy (IOM-OECD 2014).

⁸ Since 2002, IOM records data on identified cases by the Organization worldwide, but data have not been systematically collected in all G7 countries. IOM records primary data on cases of assisted VoTs by the Organization. Between 2002 and 2017, for example, IOM has identified 1,316 victims of human trafficking (VoTs) exploited in one of the G7 countries, out of which 1,158 are women. Between 2010 and 2016, IOM identified 311 females exploited in G7 countries, of which 6% are girls. Almost half of the cases were linked to sexual exploitation, and around 40% to labour exploitation. During the same period of time, 17 VoTs, nationals of G7 countries, were identified by IOM, out of which 12 are women and girls (9 women, 3 girls). The information on exploitation type is incomplete. IOM assists approximately 7,000 VoTs every year. Its global dataset has 46,000 cases registered, 140 from nationalities, identified in 150 countries of destination. To fill the data gap, IOM developed the *Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative*, the world's first open access, multi-stakeholder repository of human trafficking case data.

supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol) places a special emphasis on women. Most G7 countries have acceded to the Protocol and committed to prosecution of traffickers enacting specific laws. Enforcing such laws remains crucial to avoid impunity⁹.

Protection efforts range from direct assistance to VoTs, to their non-criminalization, to promoting ethical recruitment, regulation of recruitment mediators, decent work and labour inspections, to preventing physical and 'cultural' isolation, to empowering VoTs to rebuild their lives. Building the capacity of potential employers and service providers who are likely to interact with VoTs to identify, refer and assist them is critical¹⁰. Incorporating anti-trafficking measures, including the scrupulous monitoring of supply chains of public and private sector corporations, and establishing channels to identify and report abuse can strengthen workers' access to justice.

Prevention, however, remains key to avoid the perpetuation of human trafficking. It concerns not only 'at-risk populations' who put their lives in the hands of traffickers because of lack of prospects, but also, and perhaps most importantly, 'consumers' of services and labour provided by VoTs. In this regard, governments must work with the private sector, survivors, communities, the civil society, non-governmental actors, and religious leaders to raise public awareness and address the deeply rooted factors and economic interests that underlie human trafficking.

With regards to female migrants, increasing knowledge sharing and collaboration among countries, information provision on immigration procedures and legal counselling, and safe reception

⁹ In **Canada** a national anti-trafficking taskforce coordinates, monitors, and reports on anti-trafficking efforts; however funding, interagency coordination, and the quality and range of services varies among provinces. In **France** African and Middle East women are particularly vulnerable to trafficking in Calais. Protective services are available for VoTs, but specialized services for children remain unavailable, and some services are only available for victims cooperating with law enforcement. In **Germany**, unaccompanied migrant children (UMC) are particularly at risk. Despite the continuous prosecution and conviction of sex traffickers (unlike for labour traffickers), weak sentences remain. In **Italy** VoTs originate from Nigeria, Romania, Morocco, China, and Eastern Europe. UMC (e.g. from Somalia, Eritrea, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Afghanistan) are at risk of trafficking. Italy has a national action plan and referral network, but enhanced coordination on anti-trafficking efforts is necessary. Foreign VoTs in **Japan** originate mainly from Asia (Filipino, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai), South America, and Africa, many entering through fraudulent marriage and recruitment (including cases within the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP)). Children of foreign and Japanese citizens who have acquired citizenship, and their foreign mothers, are also subjected to sex trafficking. Japan has not yet acceded to the 2000 UN TIP Protocol; weak sentences for traffickers, prosecution and conviction remain and specific protection and assistance measures for VoTs (e.g. network of shelters) are scarce. In the **United Kingdom** (UK) most foreign VoTs originate from Nigeria, Vietnam, Albania, Poland and Romania. UMC and foreign domestic workers in diplomatic households (as in the United States) are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. In 2015, the UK enacted the Modern Slavery Act and established an independent commissioner, who released a strategic plan (2015 to 2017) and a roadmap outlining UK's anti-trafficking priorities. In the **United States** foreign VoTs come from all over the world (but mainly Mexico and the Philippines). Migrant temporary workers are at particular risk of trafficking. The U.S. provides specialized services to VoTs, and increased funding for such services, as well as of the use of "Continued Presence", which allows victims to remain in the U.S. temporarily during the investigation of their traffickers (U.S. Department of State, 2016).

¹⁰ Service providers may include immigration and law enforcement authorities, diplomatic personnel, labor inspectors, journalists, healthcare and education professionals, social workers, religious leaders, among others. In France, for example, the Ministry of Education provides anti-trafficking awareness courses to students seeking a degree in hospitality and tourism to enable them to recognize indicators of child sex tourism (US Department of State, 2016: 13).

conditions for women and girls, can also prevent human traffickers to access and recruit them. Also, bearing in mind that armed conflicts may increase vulnerability of women and girls by disrupting livelihoods, the rule of law, family and other social support structures, and that refugee and IDP camps may become recruitment hubs for traffickers, women and girls escaping from violence should be protected and assisted throughout the migration journey.

Female refugees and asylum seekers in G7 countries

Female applicants constitute nearly a third of all asylum applicants in Europe¹¹ (see Annex, Figure 4). In the U.S. in 2015 women made up 48% of the 69,920 persons admitted with a refugee status. Through its resettlement program, Canada has admitted around 20,000 refugees in 2015 and 36,500 in 2016; women represent 51% of all permanent residents and 49% of resettled refugees (2015).

Asylum procedures and subsequent integration processes tend to be gender blind. For example, cultural norms governing kinship systems may place women in a subordinate position affecting the way in which their experiences (e.g. unique types of persecution experienced) and needs are identified and addressed. There is a need to ensure that the asylum determination process (including the legal basis for asylum, evidential requirements and procedural norms) is gender-sensitive to effectively address gender gaps.

The quality of support provided during the asylum process, including a greater understanding of different social and cultural norms, can help tackling gender inequalities. Canada and the United States have introduced gender guidelines into national refugee policy. Deploying more female staff to conduct asylum interviews (e.g. as in France and Germany), training staff to recognize and better address female refugees' needs, and providing the option to female (adults) to make independent claims (including in case of breakdown of marital relationships) rather than automatically subordinating their applications to those of male spouses or kin, can help fostering more gender-sensitive asylum processes.

Female migrants: a pathway to integration in G7 societies. Comparing practices

There is no agreed definition of, nor a standard 'best' approach to integration. Integration is multidimensional, and can be influenced by access to services and opportunities to engage socially, civically, culturally and politically in a community. As such, integration becomes tangible at the local level, as it is through daily interaction (e.g. at work, at school, at the playground, etc.) that new forms of identification and belonging are most likely to emerge.

G7 countries have different approaches to integration. Some countries do not have specific integration policies or have adopted a restrictive approach to migration at large. Others focus on specific populations (e.g. Italy and Germany on persons entitled to international protection), and yet others have a tradition of multi- and trans- culturalism (such as Canada).

¹¹ They make up 36% in Germany, 17% in France, 9% in Italy and 24% in the UK.

In terms of policy, enabling migrants to access sustained and predictable legal migration channels, dignified housing and healthcare, language and civic training, employment, the recognition of educational and professional credentials and opportunities for re-training and career development, are critical measures to facilitate integration. Gender mainstreaming across these measures is also key to avoid women migrants' self-exclusion owing to cultural or social norms or practicalities. Predictability and transparency are key, especially for refugees and asylum seekers, as the insecurity during the transition period before obtaining status and the length of the asylum procedure can severely impact their mental health and integration outcomes (Bakker et al. 2016a).

Housing provision (especially for asylum seekers) reveals different integration approaches. Some countries accommodate asylum seekers in reception centers or state-subsidized housing (e.g. Italy), others disperse them in different (often deprived) areas throughout the country (e.g. Germany, UK), and yet others rely increasingly on private sponsorship with little intervention of the state (e.g. Canada). Whatever the approach, housing provision should ensure the same quality standards as those expected for the general population to prevent marginalization. Indeed, many migrants are unable to meet the criteria to locate their own housing in the private sector, and face discrimination.

Healthcare is an essential aspect of wellbeing. Although some countries have universal public health coverage, migrants continue to experience discrimination and informational, cultural and language barriers to access healthcare services. Cultural and linguistic mediation and capacity building of service providers to address migrants' needs can help addressing these gaps.

Language proficiency is for many a pre-condition to participate in the society. Germany introduced integration programmes in 2005 comprising language and civic trainings, as well as social counselling for the first three years of residence (Carrera 2006). Similarly, in Canada soft-skills and language training courses are organized at provincial level. When adapted to migrants' specific needs (e.g. in terms of cost, schedules, accessibility and recognition, among others) language training and civic education courses can impact positively on the social and health outcomes of migrants.

Education, training and labour market participation go hand in hand. Many migrants face discrimination and difficulties to have their qualifications recognized to apply for suitable jobs. Employers' sensitization to prevent discrimination, the (early) recognition of diplomas (e.g. through bilateral or multilateral agreements and prior to departure), providing access to the labour market¹², to quality placement services and to vocational education and (re)training can help addressing some of these difficulties. Building the capacity of local administrations to offer inclusive services¹³, allowing migrants to change employers, facilitating the stay and integration of

¹² Italy has recently reduced the period during which asylum seekers are not entitled to work to two months.

¹³ The EU-funded project *ADMin4ALL: Supporting Active Inclusion of Disadvantaged Migrants In Europe* aims to increase the capacities of local administrations and other service providers at the local level in dealing with the multiple dimensions of long-term socio-economic inclusion of migrants and refugees at local level. This is done through training and peer mentoring among service providers, including front-line workers dealing with disadvantaged migrants. It is implemented in 12 municipalities across four countries: Italy (Bari, Florence, Naples and

international students into the labour market through visa conversions, can further support equal opportunity efforts. Countries wishing to attract and retain highly skilled workers must invest in family support and social integration (e.g. access to the labour market to spouses and to education for children) and offer prospects for long-term or permanent residence.

Lack of integration policy can impact negatively migrants' integration, as in some cases it implies the absence of even the most basic support. However, balanced policies are necessary to avoid the perpetuation of integration programmes, which may contribute to migrants' further stigmatization and exclusion, as well as neoliberal approaches that overemphasize migrants' individual responsibility. Increasingly, the inclusion of migrants into programs designed for citizens is gaining track. Acting upon structural social, cultural, and economic inequalities and policies and practices that discriminate against individuals based on gender, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, migratory status etc. are inclusion measures *per se*.

The relationship between gender and integration policies is also critical. Analyzing recent developments on this issue in a few European countries¹⁴, some scholars found that migrant women have moved from 'invisibility' to the core of the immigration and integration policy. They argue that migrant women's representation as 'uneducated and backward migrants' combined with concerns on their perceived problematic integration, gender inequality in migrant communities and protection needs have shaped immigration and integration policies (e.g. introduction of admission tests, sponsorship criteria – raising the income level, stricter family migration regulations). They further argue that the shift of focus from the socio-economic dimension of integration of female migrants (e.g. labour market participation) to their cultural integration (e.g. accentuating concerns about religious affiliation as inimical to the receiving societies) culturalizes the integration debate, and neglects the structural inequalities migrants face (Koffman, et al. 2015).

Looking to origin, transit and host countries: the need for cooperation in the wider Mediterranean and Africa

Migration is a reality that cannot be addressed by any single country in isolation. As such, greater **cooperation** among countries of origin, transit and destination to further strengthen **protection** (prior to departure, while in transit and upon arrival), **integration and development** is necessary to seize the opportunities that migration brings to all societies.

A frank and open dialogue at the Mediterranean level on these key areas, with special reference to women and girls, is likely to contribute to changing the negative narratives of migration, as well as to enhancing common understandings, information exchange and actions to promote migrants' wellbeing and countries' welfare.

Milan), Austria (Bruck an der Leitha, Tulln, Korneuburg), Poland (Poznań, Warsaw and Wroclav), and Romania (Bucharest and Cluj).

¹⁴ Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

A compact for the Mediterranean and Africa is already in place (*Valletta Summit Action Plan*). Dialogue within this framework could be strengthened to ensure greater policy coherence, so that actions undertaken in one dimension (e.g. cooperation on return and readmission) do not replace or undercut efforts the other areas (e.g. supporting good governance, stability, development, promoting human rights or regular migration avenues).

The Sustainable Development Goals provide an interesting framework to assess migration impacts on policy goals in different sectors, and the effects of sectoral policies on migration, irrespective of the countries' geo-political classification or income level. Such an approach is likely to foster greater cooperation, as it may help overcoming deeply rooted dichotomies (e.g. divisions between countries of 'origin and destination', 'rich and poor' 'North and South' and the like) that often hinder dialogue and consensus.

This approach further allows focusing on **policy coherence** as an outcome of increased cooperation: countries could assess how internal and external policies in key areas (e.g. poverty, food security, gender, health, education, employment, including more legal avenues for migration and decent work for all), and even in sectors which may not be perceived as directly related to migration (e.g. trade, energy, water and sanitation, environment and so on) affect and are affected by migration. As a consequence, countries could be in a better position to address policy incoherence and ensure that migration's impacts are thoroughly understood and addressed through internal and external policies, including development cooperation.

Points for discussion

Gender is a factor that shapes and is shaped by the migration experience. Women and girls make a large part of the immigrant population in G7 countries. Their participation in G7 societies is shaped by a number of factors that go from the conditions of movement to the conditions of admission and overall opportunities to thrive and contribute to these societies. Adopting a gender-sensitive approach to migration seems crucial to ensure that female (and male) migrants' capabilities contribute to their own wellbeing and to that of the societies they belong to. The following questions provide a few points to steer reflection in this regard:

- How much does knowledge, data and evidence on gender and migration, or stereotypes and misconceptions about migrant women currently influence migration policymaking across G7 countries?
- To what extent and how can current immigration policies (admission, residence, naturalization) for different purposes (work, study, family reunification, marriage, international protection) and immigrant selection methods be assessed against their gender impacts?
- How to ensure that private sector representatives (including actual or potential employers) are involved in gender-sensitive immigration and integration policymaking?
- To what extent are migration and gender equality in G7 countries in synergy?
- How to integrate gender and migration into different sectoral policies across G7 countries with a view to fostering both internal and external policy coherence?

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ANNEX

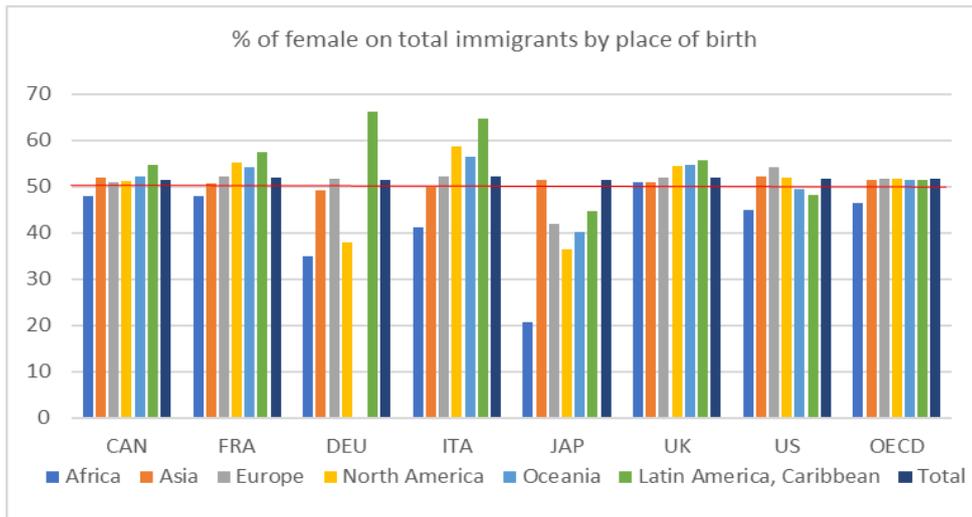


Figure 1: Female migrants as share of immigrants by place of birth in G7 countries

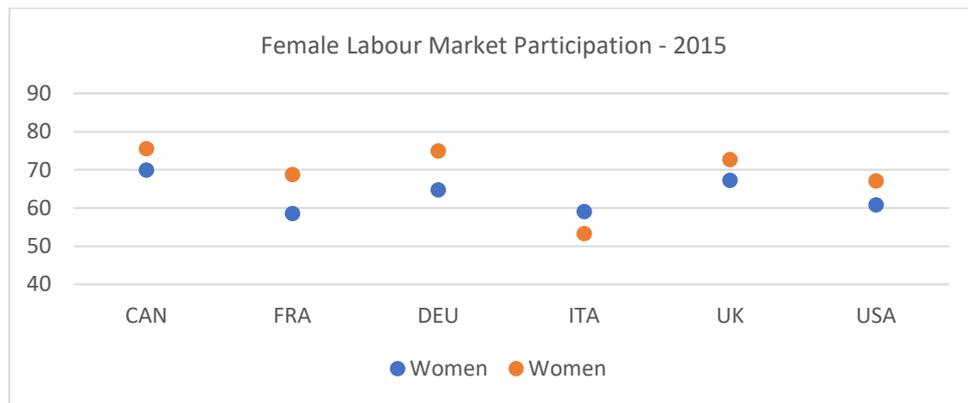


Figure 2: Female labour market participation in G7 countries

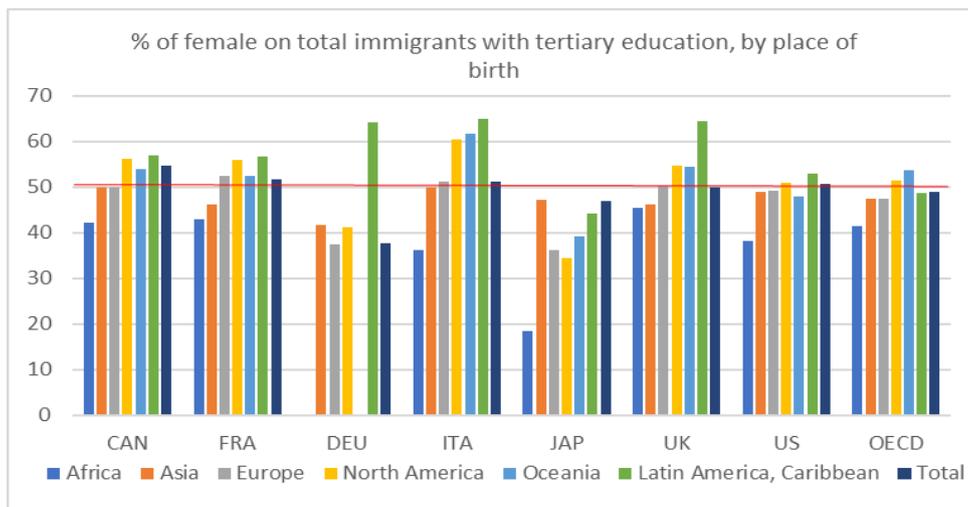


Figure 3: Female migrants with tertiary education in G7 countries

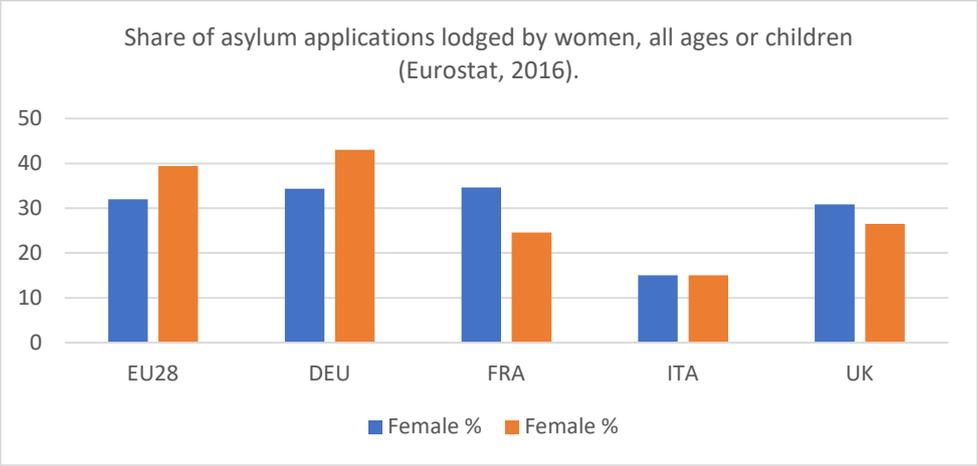


Figure 4: Female asylum seekers in select countries