Potential of Asylum Applicants: Analysis of "Social Component" Data relating to Applicants' Social StructureAnnual Report 2020
Heß, Barbara

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Tätigkeitsbericht, Jahresbericht / annual report

Federal Office
for Migration
and Refugees

Potential of Asylum Applicants: Analysis of "Social Component" Data relating to Applicants' Social Structure

Annual Report 2020

Barbara Heß

Forschung

Research Centre
Migration, Integration and Asylum

Content

At a Glance

The so-called „social component" data are collected by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in the course of first-time asylum applications on the basis of information provided by applicants. The data offer an initial overview of the qualification structure and previous occupations of those seeking protection. In this report, adult asylum seekers of the year 2020 are considered.

In 2020, around 47,240 persons of legal age submitted a first-time asylum application in Germany. Around 31,660, or about 67%, provided information on socio-structural characteristics, education and their most recently pursued occupation.
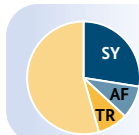
First-time applicants from Syria made up the largest group with around 13,000 persons, followed by persons from Afghanistan (around 4,500) and Turkey (around 4,100). Around 46% of the adult first-time applicants thus came from one of these three countries.
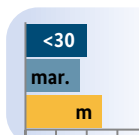
Nearly half of the adult asylum applicants were under 30 years of age, about 46% were married, and about 63% were men. The female share has risen as a whole in recent years, but has been declining again since 2019.
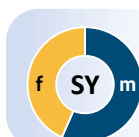
At 43.4%, there were fewer female than male first-time applicants from Syria. In 2015, the proportion of women from Syria was only 21.2%, rising to 58.1% in the following years up to 2018. Since 2019, however, it has been declining again.
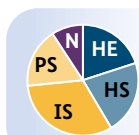
18.3% of those providing information cited a higher education institution (HE) as the highest educational institution attended, 21.5% a high school (HS), 32.5% an intermediate school (IS) and 17.9% a primary school (PS). 9.8% stated that they had no formal schooling (N).
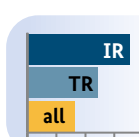
Of the ten main countries of origin, applicants from Iran reported the highest level of education: Around 84% had attended a high school at least. Turkey also shows a high share here, at around 60% (average across all countries: 39.8%).

Slightly less than one third of the asylum seekers were not in paid employment prior to coming to Germany ("housework, pension, school, studies" or "out of work" = ooW). Of those most recently employed (W), most were employed in manual trades.

The highest level of education was to be found among applicants with a previous occupation in the category "teaching professions", while the lowest level of education was found among those in the fields of "agriculture, forestry and fishing" or "manual trades".

1.   Introduction

This report comprises an analysis of the "social component" data for the year 2020. Information relating to applicants' so-called "social component" is collected in the course of first-time asylum applications. The report builds on previously published reports on "social component" data, which published similar analyses on first-time asylum applicants from 2015 through to the first half of 2020 (see overview at the end of this report). Official asylum statistics of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) provide a further data source for this publication.

The analyses appear in the series of publications "Reports on Migration and Integration", which is published by the Research Centre of the Federal Office and spans the data reports which appear periodically. In addition to this pub-lication, this also includes the "Migration Monitoring"[1] and the "Freedom of Movement Monitoring" (series 1 and 2 respectively).

The analysis of "social component" data provides an over-view of the social structure of first-time asylum applicants, the highest educational institution they have attended and their most recently pursued occupations. When "asylum seekers" are referred to in this analysis, this refers exclu-sively to persons of legal age who submitted a first-time asylum application to the BAMF within the year 2020. The report is restricted throughout to persons of legal age, as for minors the educational or vocational qualification pro-cess is often still in progress. Information on marital status is also of little significance for minors.

---

1   From the 2020 annual report, new title "Monitoring on educational and labour migration".

2. Database

The BAMF official asylum statistics for the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020 and an analysis as per 22 March 2020 of "social component" data relating to persons submitting first-time asylum applications in 2020 provide the source of data for this report. The "social component" data are collected in the course of interviewing fist-time asylum applicants and thus do not originate from a scientific survey, but are part of administrative statistics.

The answers are based on self-reports by the respondents. It cannot therefore be ruled out that the interviewees' behaviour may be influenced by strategic, culturally conditioned or gender-specific factors. Since the data is collected in the context of the asylum process, it cannot be ruled out that individual applicants "upgrade" their educational and professional qualifications, in the erroneous belief that this will improve their standing in the asylum process. In addition, the school systems and the qualitative requirements pertaining to the acquisition of training qualifications and the pursuit of occupations and professions vary greatly between the different countries of origin. This gives rise to difficulties regarding the collection of information and the classification and comparability of schooling and vocational qualifications, particularly when the categories which are customary in Germany[2] are applied as standard criteria. It is therefore advantageous that an interpreter is present during the interview, so that language problems or comprehension problems should not arise. In addition, the interpreters are usually familiar with the educational and professional systems of both countries and can thus provide assistance in classifying the highest educational institution attended or the profession practiced. Despite certain limitations, the "social component" data are therefore well suited to making reliable statements on the educational structure and previous employment monitoring developments and identifying trends.

Coverage of the "social component" questions is very high, with a substantial majority of applicants providing information on their education or previous occupation in the initial survey in recent years. In the analyses conducted through 2018, the percentage of "social component" responses was consistently between 70% and 80%, and as high as around

85% for 2019. In 2020, the figure was only 67%. This is due to the fact that with the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic in Germany, traffic in the Federal Office was reduced as part of the protective measures from spring 2020. Instead of submitting applications in person, a digital application procedure was introduced. Interviews on travel routes and the social and professional background of asylum seekers were put on hold. However, the fact that the response coverage does not correspond to 100% is not problematic insofar as there are no systematic reasons for failure - the structure of the interviewees with regard to age, gender and country of origin does not diverge systematically from the total population of first-time asylum applicants as per the official asylum statistics (see chapter 3.2.4).

The Covid 19 pandemic has not only temporarily changed the processes of the asylum procedure. The data of the official asylum statistics also show that the number of asylum applications has decreased overall as well as for most of the main countries of origin during 2020. Of the main countries of origin in 2019, only Syria (increase of 630 persons) and Afghanistan (increase of 238 persons) saw slight increases in asylum applicants. Algeria and Vietnam are also distinguished by an increase in the number of applicants compared to 2019, and have thus been added to the list of the ten main countries of origin.

While in 2019 a total of 87,845 persons of legal age had applied for asylum, in 2020 the number was only 47,244. This means that the number has almost halved.

---

2   This refers to the curricula of the different types of schools in Germany (incl. primary school, 'Hauptschule' (~ secondary school), 'Realschule' (~ middle school), high school, 'Gesamtschule' (~ comprehensive school), vocational schools, special needs schools) and the different types of vocational training, as well as the dual system of vocational education and training which is common in Germany.

3. Countries of Origin and Social Structure

This chapter presents analyses of the total number of asylum applicants and the respective subgroups (first-time applicants, first-time applicants of full age) as well as the gender breakdown, marital statuses and age breakdown. In addition, the ten most frequent countries of origin are identified, which are examined in more detail in the following chapters. Both data from the official asylum statistics and the "social component" data serve as sources here. In order to draw conclusions on the representativeness of the "social component" data, they are compared with the official asylum statistics with regard to the aspect of age structure.

Figure 1: Asylum applicants in 2020 with corresponding subgroups

Asylum applicants: 122,170   **2020**

First-time asylum applicants: 102,581

First-time asylum applicants of legal age: 47,244

First-time asylum applicants of legal age providing information on social component: approx. 31,660

Source: BAMF official asylum statistics for 2020

In 2020, the BAMF registered a total of 122,170 persons filing an asylum application (Figure 1). This included 102,581 first-time applicants. Of these, 47,244 were of legal age.[3] Around 67% of these persons provided answers to the "social component" questions. This results in a population of some 31,660 first-time asylum applicants of legal age for the purpose of "social component" analyses. The number of responses may vary depending on the question, as not all persons answered all questions.

3.1 Main Countries of Origin

The number of adult first-time applicants fell sharply in 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic. As in previous years, the largest share of adult first-time asylum applicants came from Syria (Table 1; 13,011 first-time applications). Their share of the total was 27.5%, significantly higher than in 2019 (14.1%). Afghanistan was in second place in 2020 with 4,459 initial applications from adult applicants, closely followed by Turkey with 4,097 and Iraq with 3,996 applications, corresponding to shares between 9.4% and 8.5%. With 2,062 persons and thus 4.4%, proportionately fewer persons came from Iran than in 2019 (7.0%). At 1,558 persons (3.3%), almost as many persons came from Georgia in 2020 on a proportional basis as in 2019. However, as with other countries, the absolute number has decreased as the overall number of applications has decreased significantly (see above). The other main countries of origin Nigeria, Algeria, Vietnam and Somalia each have shares in the total number of adult asylum applicants between 2.4% and 1.7%.

Table 1: First-time asylum applicants of legal age from all countries of origin and the ten main countries of origin in 2020 and difference to the previous year

	Country of origin	Number in 2020	Share 2020 in %	Share 2019 in %	Difference to share 2019 in percentage points
1	Syria	13,011	27.5	14.1	+13.4
2	Afghanistan	4,459	9.4	4.8	+4.6
3	Turkey	4,097	8.7	8.6	+0.1
4	Iraq	3,996	8.5	6.8	+1.7
5	Iran	2,062	4.4	7.0	-2.7
6	Georgia	1,558	3.3	2.7	+0.6
7	Nigeria	1,113	2.4	5.7	-3.4
8	Algeria	1,064	2.3	1.1	+1.2
9	Vietnam	1,011	2.1	0.9	+1.3
10	Somalia	798	1.7	1.6	+0.1
	Sum of main countries of origin	**33,169**	**70.2**	**54.8***	**+15.4**
	Other	14,075	29.8	45.2	-15.4
	Total	**47,244**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source: BAMF official asylum statistics for 2020

*Main countries of origin in 2019 with Guinea, Pakistan and the Russian Federation instead of Algeria, Vietnam and Somalia.

---

3   Persons who have not reached the age of majority also include children born in Germany to asylum applicants, who are then also counted as first-time applicants. See also footnote 5.

Due to the sharp increase in the proportion of first-time applicants from Syria, the proportion of people who came from the ten main countries of origin increased from 54.8% in 2019 to 70.2%. The distribution was thus more homogeneous than in 2019 and again similar to the distribution in 2018 (when 68.5% came from the ten main countries of origin). For all other main countries of origin, there was little change in the share of the total. Compared to 2019, Nigeria has the largest decrease with a decrease of 3.4 percentage points, Afghanistan has the largest increase after Syria (+13.4 percentage points) with an increase of 4.6 percentage points.

3.2 Social Structure: Gender, Marital Status and Age

The following sections present overviews of the fundamental characteristics pertaining to the gender, marital status and age of first-time asylum applicants, as well as comparisons between the official asylum statistics and the "social component" database with regard to the age factor, in order to assess the representativity of the latter.

3.2.1 Gender

With regard to the gender of adult first-time asylum applicants, the analyses from the official asylum statistics show that – as in previous years – the majority of applicants were male. At the same time, the share of men has initially fallen in recent years: while in 2017 64.3% were male, in 2018 this figure was only 59.7%. However, at 60.1%, the proportion of males in 2019 was again slightly higher than in the previous year; for 2020, this showed a further increase to 63.3% (Figure 2). Thus, the share of male first-time applicants increased significantly again. Without exception, all countries that were already among the main countries of origin in 2019 (Syria, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Georgia and Nigeria) have a higher proportion of men in 2020 than in 2019.

In previous years, more female applicants came from Syria than male applicants. However, the declining trend with regard to Syrian men in recent years (in 2017, 48.3% were male, in 2018 41.9%) did not continue: the share of men was already slightly higher in 2019 (44.4%) than in 2018, it was 56.6% in 2020. It thus increased significantly. The share

Figure 2: Gender of first-time asylum applicants of legal age from all countries of origin and the ten main countries of origin in 2020 (in per cent)
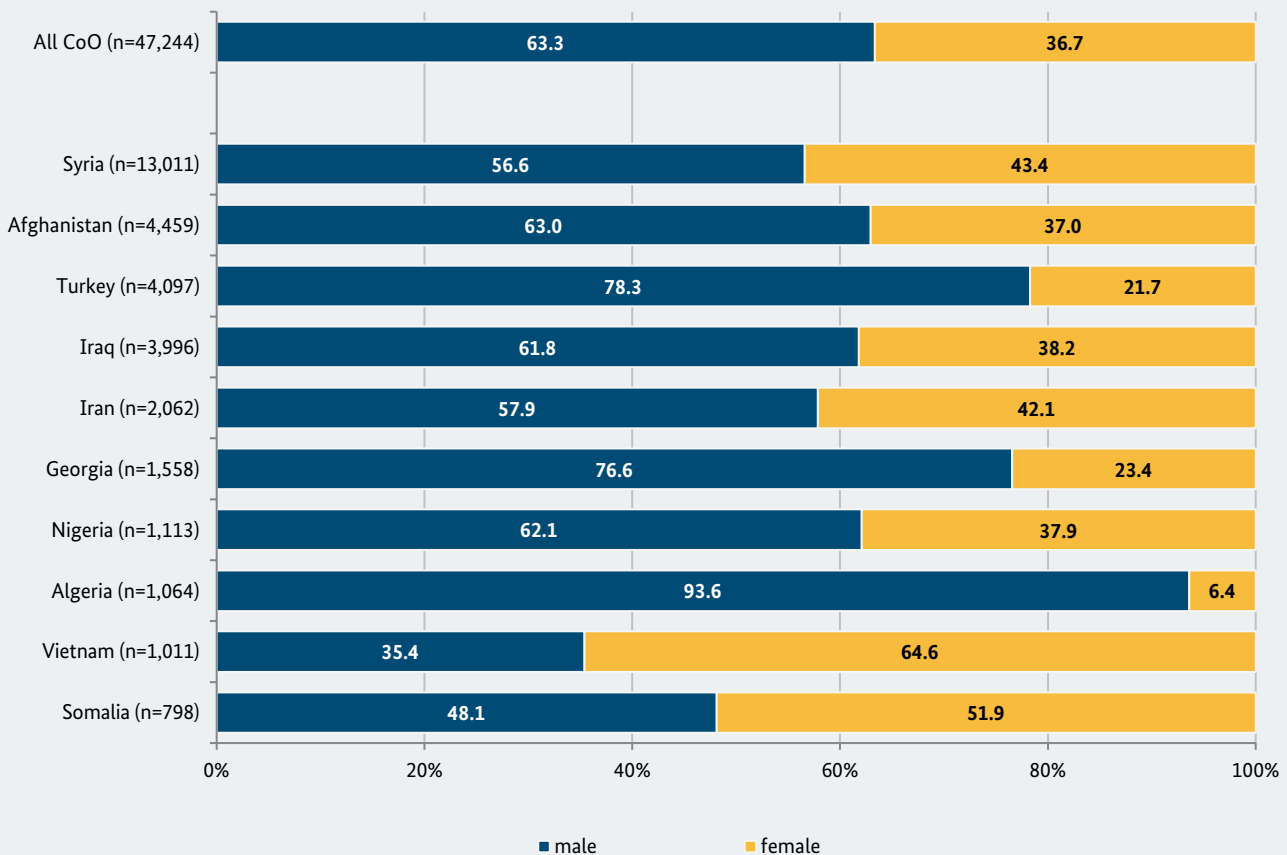
Source: BAMF official asylum statistics for the year 2020

of women was thus again below 50% and, at 43.4%, is still above average but not noticeably high.

In 2020, Vietnam had the largest share of female applicants among the main countries of origin, with a share of around two-thirds. Somalia also had a higher share of women than men, although only slightly (at 51.9%).

By contrast, hardly any women came from Algeria. At 6.4%, the proportion of female first-time applicants was by far the lowest among the countries listed here. A similar low share of women (and still significantly lower than in 2019) was also shown by adult first-time applicants from Turkey (21.7%, 2019: 28.5%) and Georgia (23.4%, 2019: 28.9%).

3.2.2 Marital Status

Looking at the first-time asylum applicants of legal age from the "social component" database, it can be seen that slightly more persons were single (47.3%, Figure 3) than married (45.7%). 7.0% reported other marital status.[4] Compared to 2019, slightly fewer first-time applicants were married (2019: 46.6%) and slightly more were single (2019: 46.3%).

Syria had a particularly low proportion of single persons, at just under one third (32.0%). The second and third smallest shares of single people were found in Georgia with 38.9% and Iran with 39.7%. However, compared to 2019, the share increased in all three countries. Algeria (86.5%), Vietnam (77.8%) and Nigeria (77.6%) had an above-average proportion of single persons. Accordingly, only very few married persons came from these countries, which may also be due to the very young average age (see Figure 4).

In this connection it should be pointed out that these statistics do not provide any indication as to whether the spouses of the married asylum applicants are resident in Germany or whether the applications were filed for individuals or as a family.

---

4   This includes persons who are separated, widowed, in a civil partnership or whose partner has died.

Figure 3:   Marital status of first-time asylum applicants of legal age from all countries of origin and the ten main countries of origin in 2020 (in per cent)

	married	single	other
All CoO (n=44,743)	45.7	47.3	7.0
Syria (n=12,437)	62.2	32.0	5.8
Afghanistan (n=4,218)	53.8	40.0	6.2
Turkey (n=4,020)	42.9	50.1	7.0
Iraq (n=3,874)	53.1	40.6	6.2
Iran (n=1,991)	49.5	39.7	10.7
Georgia (n=1,412)	49.1	38.9	12.0
Nigeria (n=1,052)	19.2	77.6	3.2
Algeria (n=875)	11.1	86.5	2.4
Vietnam (n=996)	6.8	77.8	15.4
Somalia (n=763)	43.5	45.9	10.6
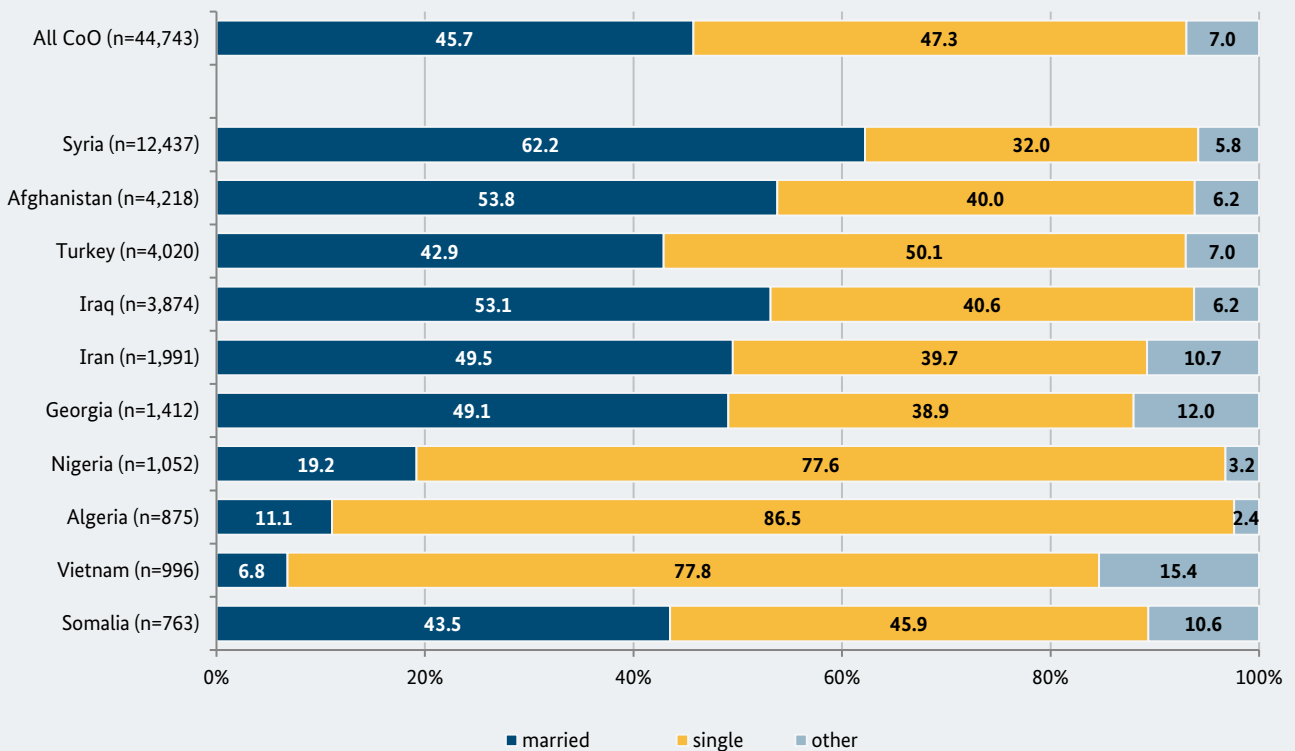
Source: „social component" database (22.03.2021)

Figure 4: Age breakdown of first-time asylum applicants of legal age from all countries of origin and the ten main countries of origin in 2020 (in per cent)
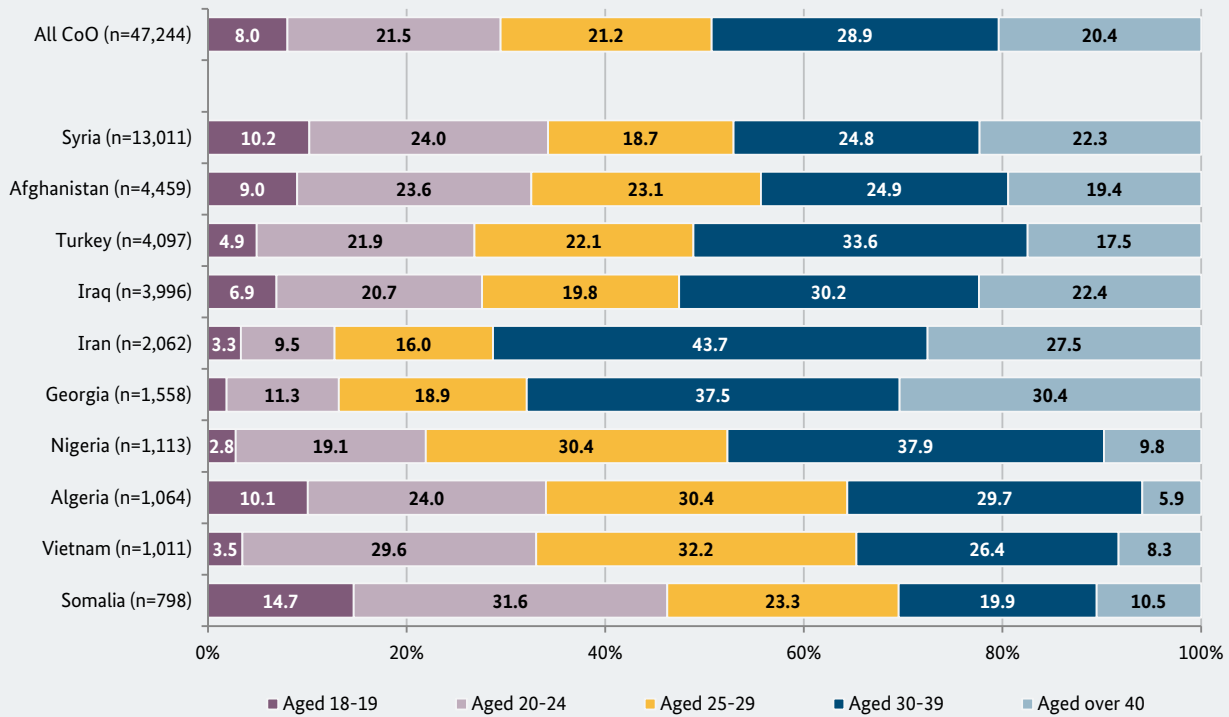
Source: BAMF official asylum statistics for the year 2020
Shares under 2% are not shown.

3.2.3 Age

As in recent years, the age structure[5] of the asylum applicants of legal age was dominated by young people: just over half (50.7%) were under 30 years of age according to the data of the official asylum statistics (Figure 4). The share of people aged 18-19 was 8.0%, and those aged 20-24 represented 21.5%. A similar share (21.2%) were between 25 and 29 years old. 28.9% were in the next oldest group between 30 and 39 years old, and persons aged 40 and over accounted for around one fifth at 20.4%.

In 2019, the share of asylum applicants of legal age under 30 was 47.4% and therefore slightly lower. While this share changed little for Georgia, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan, it fell by over 10 percentage points for Nigeria (2020: 52.3% under 30, 2019: 63.0%). In contrast, proportionately more people under 30 came from Syria (52.9%) and Turkey (48.9%) (2019:

44.0% and 42.0% respectively). Looking at Nigeria, it is noticeable that compared to 2019, the proportion of 18 and 19 year olds has also decreased, from 4.1% to 2.8%.

In 2020, Somalia, Algeria and Vietnam, which were newly included in the main countries of origin, had a particularly "young" age structure. Around two thirds of these first-time applicants were under 30 years of age. Somalia had an above-average proportion of 18- and 19-year-olds (14.7%). Together with Nigeria, these three countries also had the lowest shares among the main countries of origin for persons over 40 years of age, with shares between 5.9% and 10.5%.

In contrast, a comparatively "old" age structure was recorded among Iranian and Georgian persons, as in previous years. The proportion of persons over 30 years of age was 71.3% (Iran) and 67.9% (Georgia). At 27.5% (Iran) and 30.4% (Georgia), these countries also had the highest proportions among the main countries of origin of persons aged 40 and over.

---

5 It should be noted here that only persons aged over 18 are included in the analyses. Their share of all first-time asylum applicants has fallen continually in recent years, from 68.9% in 2015 to 46.1% in 2020 (cf. Figure 1). This trend indicates the rising number of children and juveniles in the asylum process, some of whom were born in Germany. In 2020 as a whole, first-type asylum applications for children aged under one and born in Germany accounted for 25.9% of the total volume of first-time applications (cf. https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Statistik/AsylinZahlen/aktuelle-zahlen-dezember-2020.html, 16.03.2021)

3.2.4 Comparison of Official Asylum Statistics and „Social Component" Data

As "social component" data are not available for all first-time asylum applicants, it is conceivable that these data might deviate systemically from the overall data, if only certain groups (proportionately more women than men, or younger rather than older interviewees) were to provide information on the "social component", for example. For the purposes of comparison, Figure 5 thus shows the age structure (from age 18 to 65) of male and female first-time asylum applicants in 2020. It is also indicated how many of these persons have provided information on their schooling which is available in the "social component" database. The information on schooling has been chosen here by way of example - similar patterns apply for other "social component" data.

The age structure curves for the persons on whom details of schooling are on record show a virtually parallel course to the curves for all first-time asylum applicants as per the official asylum statistics. This indicates that the data on schooling do not contain any conspicuous systematic distortions and thus provide an accurate representation of the population, despite a lack of information in some areas.

It is additionally discernible that the high share of particularly young asylum applicants, particularly in the 18-19 and 20-24 age groups (cf. Figure 4), is primarily attributable to male applicants. While no pronounced gender differences are observable among older persons, a substantial disparity is particularly evident among the very young applicants, with the female share markedly lower than the male component.

Figure 5: Age distribution and gender of 18- to 65-year-old asylum seekers in 2020 (official asylum statistics and „social component" data)
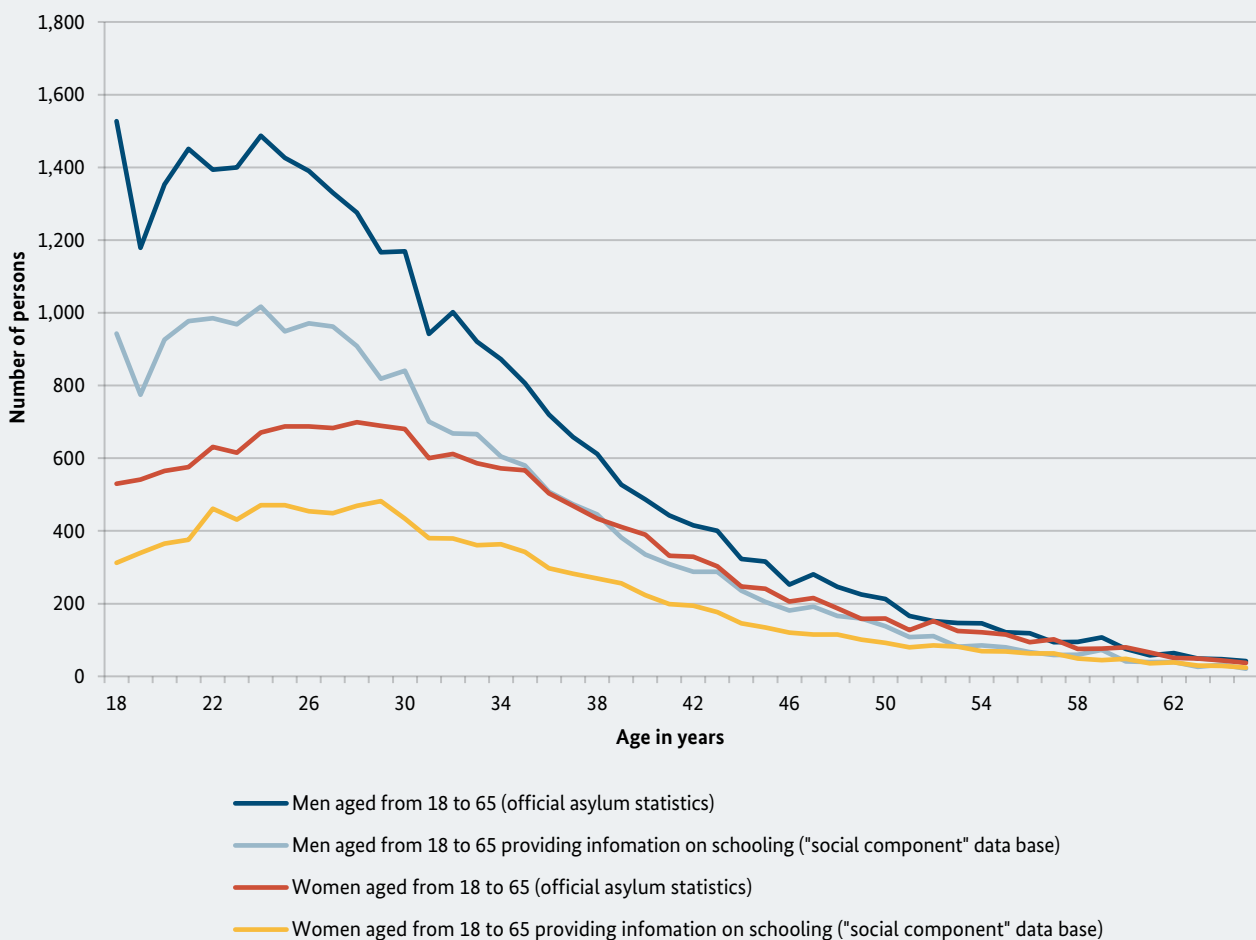
Source: BAMF official asylum statistics for the year 2020 and „social component" database (22.03.2021)

4. Qualification and Occupational Background

The question as to the education acquired in the country of origin is of relevance to many areas of integration in Germany. Good qualifications can be conducive to finding employment more quickly, for example. With regard to the educational measures on offer (in particular integration courses), it is also important whether the applicants include any persons who have had little or no schooling to date and/or are illiterate. For the purposes of integration into the labour market, it is also of significance what work experience the asylum applicants have, as if they are granted protection they may remain in Germany for a prolonged period and take up employment. With regard to the analysis of both these aspects, however, assessment of the "social component" information is problematic due to the limited comparability of the different school and occupational systems specific to the respective countries of origin, in view of which this information can only serve to provide general indications. This disadvantage is offset by the high numbers of cases, the likes of which are rarely attained in sociological studies.

4.1 Education in the Country of Origin

Assessing education in the country of origin on the basis of "social component" information provides an approximate indication of the level of qualification. In contrast to sociological surveys, information is collected in abridged form only, as although the interviewees are asked about the highest educational institution they have attended, they are not asked whether they (formally) completed their education there. It also remains unknown how long the relevant institutions were attended. As such, it is not possible to draw any conclusions about the potential recognition of qualifications in Germany.

The five categories considered below comprise:

- Higher education institution: university, technical college
- High school: eleven or more years' secondary schooling
- Intermediate school: vocational school, intermediate school

- Primary school: up to four years' schooling, including special needs school
- No formal schooling: not literate, applicant has not attended a formal school

In interpreting the data, it must be noted that only persons aged 18 and over are considered here. In most countries, this age threshold is below the university entrance age. This means that there may be people among the young interviewees in particular who have not yet completed their education and would presumably have acquired further educational qualifications in their country of origin, if their education had not been prevented or interrupted by their fleeing the country.

Of the 31,655 first-time asylum applicants in 2020 who provided information on their schooling, 18.3% reported having attended a higher education institution (Figure 6). Another 21.5% reported having attended a high school as their highest educational institution. At 32.5%, the most commonly reported educational institution was an intermediate school. Only primary school attendance was reported by 17.9%, while 9.8% arrived in Germany without any formal schooling.

Compared to 2019, there was a significant decrease in the share of those with attendance of a higher education institution (from 24.0% to 18.3%), but a slight increase in the proportion of those with a high school education (increase from 19.9% to 21.5%), middle school education (increase from 29.8% to 32.5%), and elementary school education (increase from 17.0% to 17.9%). The share of applicants with no formal schooling also increased slightly, from 9.2% to 9.8%. Overall, at 39.8%, around two-fifths of adult first-time applicants cited a higher education institution or a high school as their highest educational institution. In 2019, this figure was 43.9%, so this proportion has fallen by around four percentage points.

As in previous years, Iranian and Turkish asylum applicants of legal age had an above-average level of education. In the case of Iran, however, 2020 also shows a decline. While in 2019 86.7% had still attended a higher education institution or a high school, in 2020 this figure was only 83.8%. This is mainly due to the group of those who attended university,

Figure 6: **Highest educational institution attended by first-time asylum applicants of legal age from all countries of origin and from the ten main countries of origin in 2020 (in per cent)**

	Higher education institution	High school	Intermediate school	Primary school	No formal schooling
All CoO (n=31,655)	18.3	21.5	32.5	17.9	9.8
Syria (n=7,878)	12.2	21.2	37.5	22.3	6.7
Afghanistan (n=3,243)	10.8	20.4	22.6	20.9	25.3
Turkey (n=3,004)	37.5	22.5	26.8	11.3	
Iraq (n=2,992)	10.5	13.8	33.6	28.1	14.0
Iran (n=1,621)	45.8	38.1	11.3	3.6	
Georgia (n=1,062)	20.5	24.3	52.9		
Nigeria (n=768)	10.3	15.5	33.2	29.8	11.2
Algeria (n=585)	10.6	18.6	50.9	17.1	2.7
Vietnam (n=586)	9.4	47.4	36.9	6.1	
Somalia (n=519)	5.4	8.7	23.9	25.2	36.8
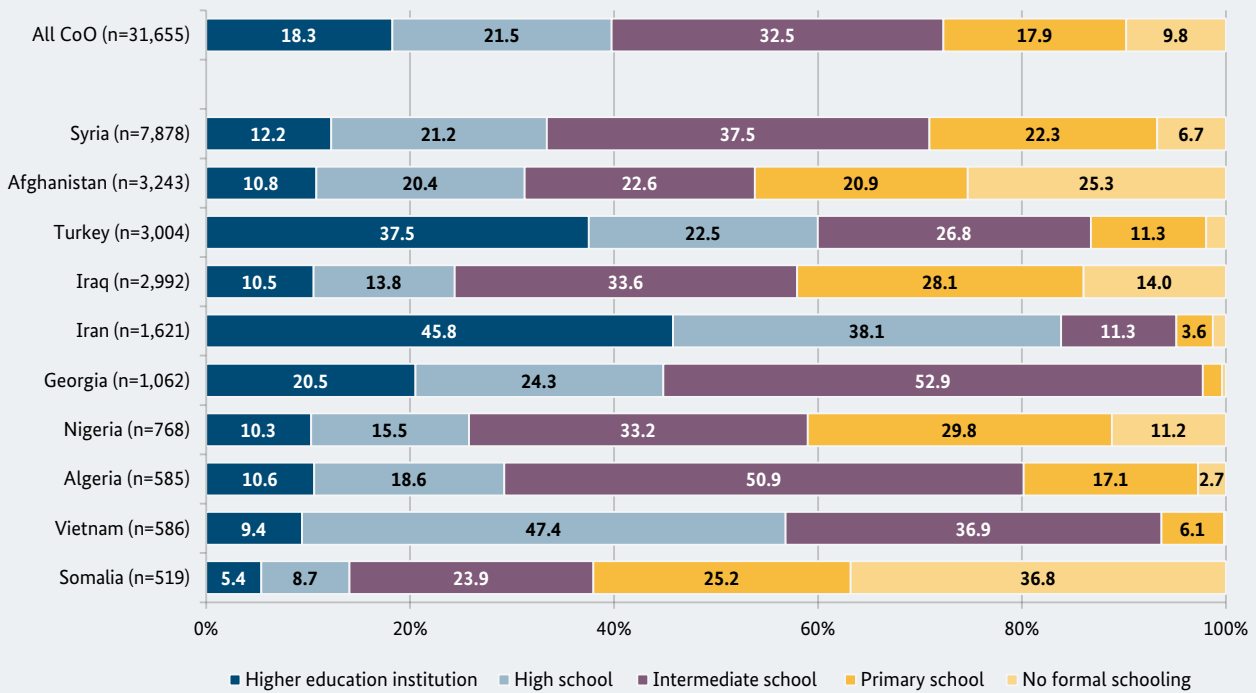
Source: „social component" database (22.03.2021)
Shares under 2% are not shown.

where the proportion fell from almost half (49.5%) in 2019 to 45.8% in 2020. Nevertheless, the proportion of this group remains high and Iranian first-time applicants continued to have the highest average education among the ten main countries of origin.

Among first-time applicants from Turkey, there was also a decline from 52.3% to 37.5%, especially among persons with a university education. On the other hand, proportionately more persons had attended a high school, an intermediate school or a primary school. Overall, the share of persons attending a higher education institution or a high school fell from 68.9% to 60.0% and thus by almost nine percentage points.

Another country with above average education in 2020 was Vietnam. More than half of the persons from this country (56.8%) attended a higher education institution or a high school as their highest level of education, although the share attending higher education institutions was below average at 9.4%, one of the lowest proportions among the main countries of origin. On the other hand, the share of all first-time applicants of legal age from Vietnam attending a high school was at 47.4%, which is the highest proportion among the main countries of origin. Vietnam also had the lowest proportion of persons without formal schooling (0.2%).

While in 2015 to 2017 there were above-average numbers from Syria who had attended a higher education institution or a high school, in 2018 and 2019 the proportions attending a higher education institution were already below average and the proportion attending high school was only slightly above average. In 2020, the proportion with high school attendance is now also slightly below average. In this year, of the first-time applicants from Syria who were of age, only 12.2% stated that they had attended university (average: 18.3%), while 21.2% had attended a high school (average: 21.5%). Thus, only one third of the adult Syrian first-time applicants had attended an educational institution above secondary school.

As in 2019, a particularly large number of persons with an intermediate school education came from Georgia, and hardly any person without any school education. The figures for attending a high school or university were slightly above average. At 52.9%, more than half of them attended an intermediate school, which is also the highest figure among the ten main countries of origin. Only 0.4% had no formal schooling, which is a negligible share.

Algeria also showed a high proportion of persons attending an intermediate school at 50.9%. There were also few people from this country without formal schooling (2.7%). However, the share of first-time applicants with tertiary

education was very low at 10.6% and slightly below average for those with upper secondary education (18.6%). Slightly lower proportions with secondary education, but overall a similar pattern, can be seen for Afghanistan and Nigeria. However, the share with primary education was significantly higher for Nigeria (29.8%). This share was the highest among the ten main countries of origin. On the other hand, fewer persons had attended secondary school and the proportion of persons without formal schooling was 11.2%, which was higher than the average of 9.8%. For persons from Iraq, this proportion was even higher at 14.0%. Also from this country few persons attended a higher education institution (10.5%) or a high school (13.8%), but an above-average number of persons attended a middle school or primary school.

Education was lowest on average for persons from Somalia and Afghanistan. For Afghanistan the share for persons with university (10.8%) or high school (20.4%) education were below average but still somewhat higher than for Algeria, Nigeria or Iraq. But the share of persons with secondary school education was very low at 22.6%. In contrast, the proportion with no formal schooling was strikingly high, at around a quarter (25.3%). This proportion was only surpassed by Somalia at 36.8%. Somalia also had the lowest proportion of persons with higher education (5.4%) or secondary education (8.7%).
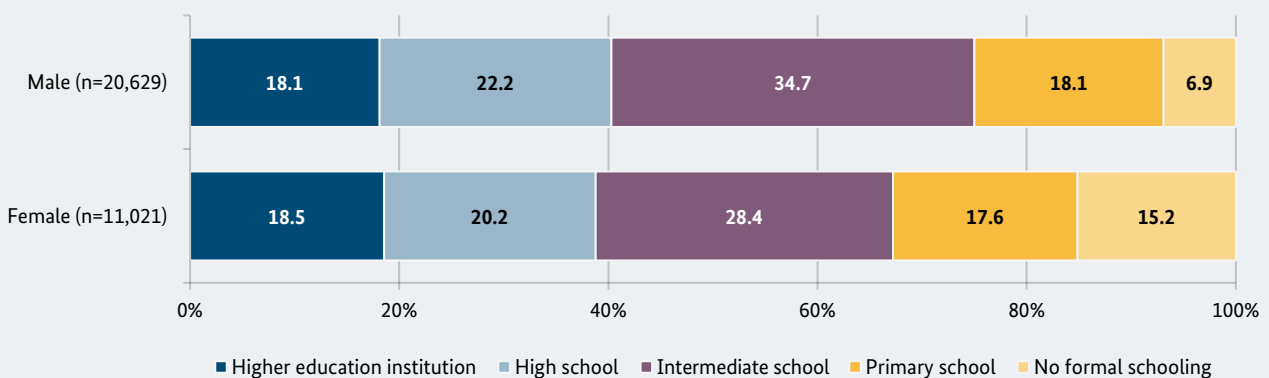
If one adds up all persons who indicated at least secondary school attendance as their highest institution, it becomes apparent that, on average across all countries, 72.3% of adult first-time applicants have attended at least a secondary school. Somalia is far behind with only 38.0%, and Af-

ghanistan, Iraq and Nigeria also show below-average values between 53.8% and 59.0%. In contrast, Georgia (97.7%), Iran (95.1%) and Vietnam (93.7%) have extremely high values.

If we look at the breakdown of highest educational institution attended by gender (Figure 7), differences can be seen especially in the area of lower education. In the case of higher educational institutions, the share of people with a university education was slightly smaller among men (18.1%) than among women (18.5%), but the share with a high school education was slightly larger (22.2% vs. 20.2% among women). This may be due to the higher than average proportion of males aged 18-20 who have not yet had the opportunity to attend college. The overall percentage of attending a higher education institution and high schools is in a similar range for both genders (males 40.3%, females 38.7%). However, compared to 2019, these figures have decreased by about 4 percentage points for males and about 5 percentage points for females.

Greater differences emerge with regard to the other educational establishments: While 34.7% of men had attended an intermediate school, the corresponding figure for women stands at only 28.4%. The share of primary school attendance is almost the same, at 18.1% for men and 17.6% for women, but 15.2% of women had not attended school, compared to only 6.9% of men. As considerably more men than women of legal age have filed a first-time asylum application in recent years, the higher share of persons who have attended intermediate school has a correspondingly greater impact on the overall average. The percentage differences between men and women were of a similar order in 2019, and no fundamental change is to be observed here.

Figure 7:   Highest educational institution attended by first-time asylum applicants of legal age from all countries of origin by gender in 2020 (in per cent)

	Higher education institution	High school	Intermediate school	Primary school	No formal schooling
Male (n=20,629)	18.1	22.2	34.7	18.1	6.9
Female (n=11,021)	18.5	20.2	28.4	17.6	15.2

Source: „social component" database (22.03.2021)

4.2 Most Recent Occupation

The most recently pursued occupation must not necessarily relate to the country of origin, as persons who have fled their home country may have lived for some time in a transit country and pursued their most recent occupation there. For this characteristic, the "social component" data specifies 33 occupational categories, plus "Out of work" and "Housework, pension, school or studies". In the interests of clarity, a number of categories have been grouped together for analysis purposes.

As mentioned above, assigning applicants to the occupational groups in the course of collecting the appurtenant data is problematic, as the systems in the countries of origin vary considerably. In addition, certain groups (spanning entire sectors, for example) may overlap. Similarly, it is not possible to draw any conclusions as to the position held or the qualifications required for the pursued occupation, nor as to how much time has elapsed since the most recently pursued occupation. It is, however, possible to draw up initial findings indicating which areas particularly large numbers of first-time asylum applicants fall into. In addition, the pursued occupations can subsequently be linked to the academic qualifications (Chapter 4.3).

Of all 31,662 adult first-time applicants who answered the question on their last occupation, the largest share among those last employed was in "manual trades" (8.7%, table 2). Services came second with 7.7%. "Auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work " accounted for the third largest share (6.4%). Construction was fourth with 6.0%. This order is the same as the previous year, but the percentages increased somewhat in all four activities. In fifth place (instead of "engineering, IT, electrical and technical professions" in 2019) was "agriculture, forestry, fishing" with 5.7%.

"Wholesale and retail", "engineering, IT, electrical and technical professions" and "office work, banking, insurance" had similar proportions, ranging from 4.1% to 3.7%, with a decrease in these categories compared to 2019. The other occupational categories all had proportions of 3.3% or less. There were particularly low proportions of 'soldiers' (1.2%) and people in "executive position, science, corporate management" (0.8%). Overall, the distribution of the last occupation is more homogeneous than in 2019, with the five most frequently mentioned categories comprising over one-third (34.5%) of all categories overall, up from 30.6% in 2019.

Table 2: Most recently pursued occupations of first-time asylum applicants of legal age in 2020

Fields of activity / last profession	number of persons	share in %	share of men in %	share of women in %
Manual trades	2.769	8.7	11.4	3.7
Services	2.426	7.7	8.3	6.4
Auxiliary work. industrial. factory and warehouse work	2.027	6.4	7.5	4.3
Construction	1.892	6.0	9.1	0.1
Agriculture. forestry. fishing	1.815	5.7	7.3	2.8
Wholesale and retail	1.293	4.1	4.7	2.9
Engineering. IT. electrical and technical professions	1.255	4.0	5.4	1.2
Office work. banking. insurance	1.165	3.7	3.1	4.7
Teaching professions	1.035	3.3	2.1	5.5
Automotive	943	3.0	4.6	0.0
Hotel and catering trade	935	3.0	3.7	1.5
Artistic profession. fashion	741	2.3	2.1	2.7
Street trading. petty trading	702	2.2	2.7	1.2
Medical. chemical professions. laboratory work	630	2.0	1.6	2.7
Public service. church. public safety and security	621	2.0	2.6	0.8
Transport and tourism	610	1.9	2.8	0.4
Soldier	390	1.2	1.8	0.1
Executive position. science. corporate management	241	0.8	0.8	0.7
Other	**996**	**3.1**	**3.0**	**3.5**
Housework. pension. school or studies	**6.063**	**19.1**	**6.6**	**42.8**
Out of work	**3.113**	**9.8**	**8.7**	**12.0**
Total	**31.662**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: „social component" database (22.03.2021)

As in previous years, the category "housework, pension, school or studies" accounted for the largest number of people. The proportion in 2020 was 19.1% and slightly higher than in 2019 (18.3%). The share of people "out of work" was 9.8% and therefore lower than in 2019 (10.7%). Adding these two groups gives a proportion of 28.9%. Thus, 71.1% of adult asylum applicants were previously employed, similar to the figure for 2019 (71.0%).

There were clear differences between the sexes in terms of the last occupation held: Among women, the largest proportion in paid employment was in "services" (6.4%), "teaching professions" (5.5%) and "office work, banking, insurance" (4.7%). All three shares have decreased compared to 2019.

Among men, as in previous years, the category "manual trades" ranked first with 11.4% of all first-time applicants. Construction remained in second place with 9.1%. Services followed with 8.3%, with "auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work" right behind with 7.5%. In fifth place was "agriculture, forestry, fishing" with 7.3%, followed by "engineering, IT, electrical and technical professions" with 5.4%, in which many occupational groups sought in Germany are found.

The greatest disparities are to be found in the category "housework, pension, school or studies", however. Here, the female share was 42.8%, an increase of more than 5 percentage points compared to 2019 (37.5%). For men, this share was 6.6%, similar to the 2019 figure (6.2%). Another difference was seen among asylum seekers without work: Self-reported, it was 8.7% for men (2019: 9.2%) and 12.0% for women (2019: 13.0%). This share has thus decreased for both men and women.

When looking at the ten main countries of origin, there were differences in the distribution of occupational categories in 2020 - as can already be assumed from the different educational structure. Table 3 shows which shares of first-time asylum applicants from the respective countries of origin were employed in which occupational categories. The colouring indicates which percentage values were particularly low (light colouring) or particularly high (dark colouring).

In the three most frequently mentioned fields of activity "manual trades", services and "auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work", Syria was mainly represented in "manual trades" (11.4 %). However, Afghanistan (10.0%) also showed high shares here. The shares were even higher for Algeria (16.4%) and Nigeria (13.8%). Both countries also showed above-average figures in the area of services, at 11.4% and 12.0% respectively. In addition, 10.3% of persons from Somalia reported having worked in the services sector.

Along with "agriculture, forestry, fishing" at 6.9% and "auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work" at 6.7%, these three categories were quantitatively most significant paid activities. Vietnam showed the highest shares in the latter two areas, with a share of 18.4% ("auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work") and 16.7% ('agriculture, forestry, fishing') respectively.

A high proportion of persons from Georgia were last employed in construction (13.6%) or in "auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work" (7.3%). Services were in third place with 6.7%. Since a particularly large number of well-qualified refugees came from Iran, the share of auxiliary activities, construction or agriculture and forestry was relatively low, while above-average values were seen in the area of "engineering, IT, electrical professions, technical professions" (11.8%) "office, banking, insurance" (9.6%) and services (8.3%).

There were no outstanding but nevertheless high proportions of persons from Iraq and Turkey between 5.3% and 8.5% in the four most frequently mentioned fields of occupation. As in previous years, Turkey was characterised by a high proportion in the area of teaching professions (9.8%), which was also by far the highest proportion in this field of occupation.

A high incidence in the fields of "housework, pension, school or studies" is noticeable for persons from almost all countries of origin. The highest proportion was among applicants from Syria (28.2), closely followed by Iraq with 26.9% and Afghanistan with 26.2%. Somalia was the fourth country to show a very high proportion here, with 22.4%. In contrast, only a small number of persons who had previously worked in this field came from Vietnam (5.1%), Nigeria (5.9%) and Algeria (6.6%).

On average, 9.8% were without work. Here, the variance among the ten main countries of origin is also very large: more than a fifth of persons from Somalia (22.7%) and Vietnam (20.1%) stated that they had previously been without work. The figure for Nigeria (16.1%) was also above average, while the figures for persons from Turkey (5.2%) and Iran (3.7%) were very low.

Table 3: First-time asylum applicants of legal age from the ten main countries of origin and their most recently pursued occupations, 2020

Occupational fields / most recent occupation	Syria (n=7,745)	Afghanistan (n=3,304)	Turkey (n=2,989)	Iraq (n=2,979)	Iran (n=1,607)	Georgia (n=1,060)	Nigeria (n=768)	Algeria (n=587)	Vietnam (n=586)	Somalia (n=581)
Manual trades	11.4	10.0	5.9	7.9	7.8	5.2	13.8	16.4	4.3	3.1
Services	6.5	6.6	7.6	7.8	8.3	6.7	12.0	11.4	8.0	10.3
Auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work	5.3	5.4	5.3	6.2	2.6	7.3	8.1	8.5	18.4	6.7
Construction	5.3	6.7	8.5	5.7	3.1	13.6	4.7	8.5	4.1	1.2
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	6.2	7.9	4.7	5.1	1.6	4.3	4.2	6.0	16.7	6.9
Wholesale and retail	2.9	3.6	3.7	3.7	5.3	4.1	5.3	4.1	6.3	4.1
Engineering, IT, electrical and technical professions	3.3	2.2	5.5	2.7	11.8	4.1	3.6	3.7	1.5	0.5
Office work, banking, insurance	1.4	2.6	5.1	2.7	9.6	4.3	2.2	2.6	1.7	1.2
Teaching professions	3.4	3.0	9.8	1.9	4.2	1.7	0.8	1.4	0.3	1.9
Automotive	3.0	2.4	2.1	3.6	2.6	4.4	5.7	4.6	0.7	1.4
Hotel and catering trade	2.3	0.8	5.9	2.9	1.5	4.0	1.6	4.3	3.8	4.5
Artistic profession, fashion	2.8	3.1	1.5	1.7	4.7	2.3	3.9	1.2	1.4	1.0
Street trading, petty trading	1.0	2.4	1.7	1.9	2.4	1.7	4.3	4.6	2.0	4.3
Medical, chemical professions, laboratory work	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.4	4.1	2.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	2.9
Public service, church, public safety and security	0.9	2.1	5.2	3.0	1.2	4.2	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.7
Transport and tourism	1.4	1.4	1.5	2.1	1.7	3.2	2.3	1.0	1.7	1.0
Soldier	0.6	1.4	2.5	1.6	1.0	2.5	1.0	1.4	0.0	0.5
Executive position, science, corporate management	0.3	0.4	1.2	0.3	3.3	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.0	0.2
Other	2.7	2.5	4.8	2.6	5.0	3.1	1.8	4.1	2.2	2.4
Housework, pension, school or studies	28.2	26.2	10.4	26.9	14.4	10.0	5.9	6.6	5.1	22.4
Out of work	9.1	7.3	5.2	8.3	3.7	10.7	16.1	7.3	20.1	22.7
All occupational fields	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Percentage share: | 0-2.4% | 2.5-4.9% | 5-9.9% | 10-19.9% | 20% or more |

Source: „social component" database (22.03.2021)

4.3 Links between Occupation and Education

With regard to the information on occupations, in addition to assigning the interviewees to the respective occupational fields it is also of interest which qualification requirements pertained to the occupations concerned. While the available data do not permit a detailed assessment here, the submitted information on the highest educational institution attended does allow the appurtenant qualifications to be inferred. It is not possible to determine whether attendance of the cited educational institution was also a precondition for pursuing the stated most recently pursued occupation, however.
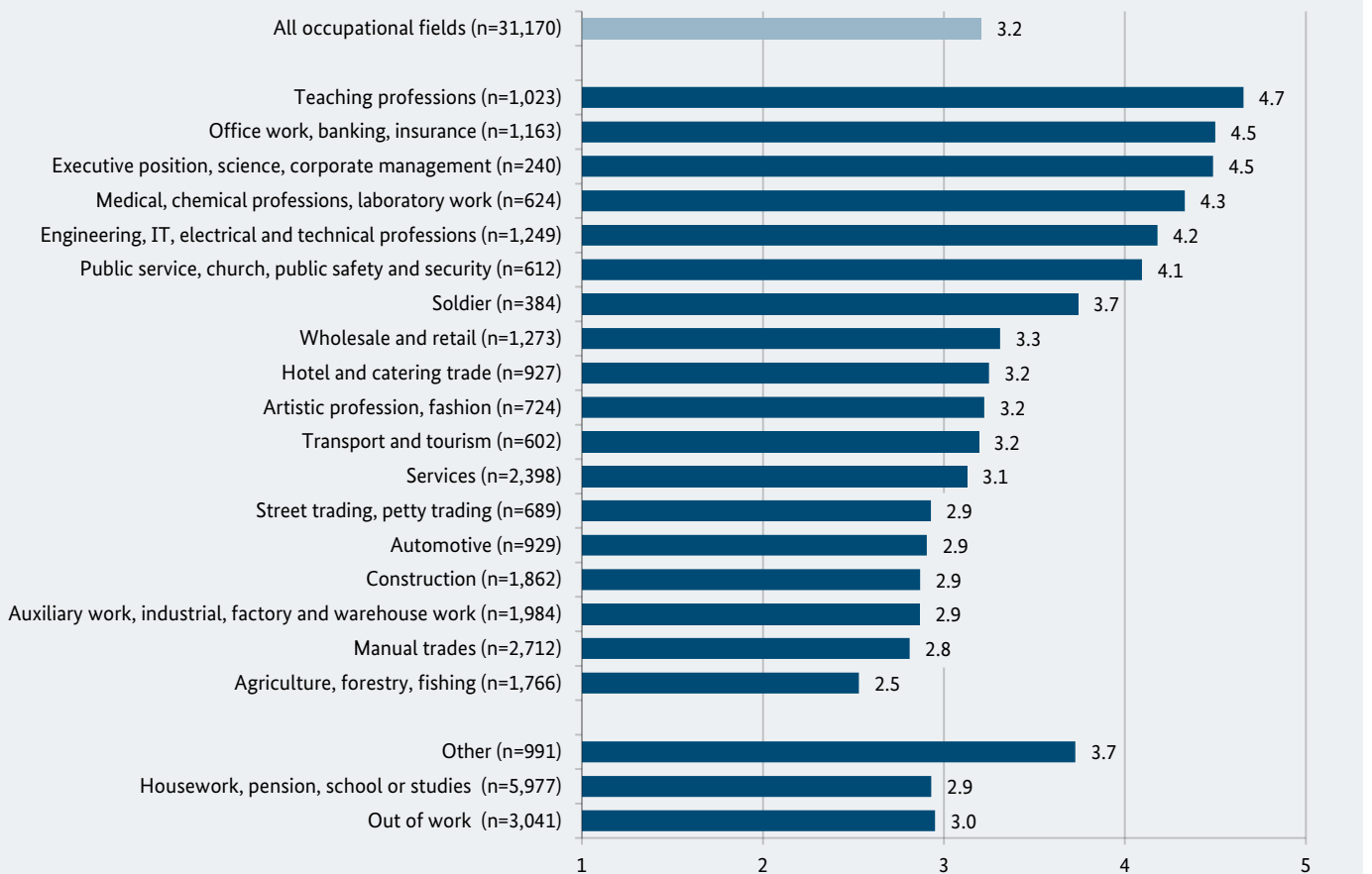
Figure 8 shows so-called educational mean values by occupational fields. This provides an indication of the areas in which persons with a predominantly higher level of education and those with a lower level of education were most recently employed. The educational mean values are obtained by applying values to the schooling categories (1 = no formal schooling to 5 = higher education). The educational

mean value for each occupational field can be obtained by multiplying these values by the share of correspondingly educated persons per occupational group. This method can only provide a rough assessment, however, as education does not constitute a numerical variable and classification is subject to the above-stated reservations.

Calculation of the educational mean values results in an overall average across all occupational fields of 3.3. This has hardly changed compared to previous years, and there were also only minor deviations in the individual categories. As in previous years, the highest average value was in the area of "teaching professions" with 4.7, followed by "office work, banking, insurance" and "executive position, science, corporate management" with 4.5 in each case. Close behind were "medical, chemical professions, laboratory work" with 4.3 as well as people in the area of "engineering, IT, electrical professions, technical professions" who can be classified at least partially in the MINT[6] area (4.2). People in the field of "public service, church, public safety and security" also had above-average educational averages (4.1).

6   MINT=mathematics, computer science, natural science and technology

Figure 8:   Educational mean values of first-time asylum applicants of legal age from all countries of origin in 2020 by occupational fields

Occupational field	Value
All occupational fields (n=31,170)	3.2
Teaching professions (n=1,023)	4.7
Office work, banking, insurance (n=1,163)	4.5
Executive position, science, corporate management (n=240)	4.5
Medical, chemical professions, laboratory work (n=624)	4.3
Engineering, IT, electrical and technical professions (n=1,249)	4.2
Public service, church, public safety and security (n=612)	4.1
Soldier (n=384)	3.7
Wholesale and retail (n=1,273)	3.3
Hotel and catering trade (n=927)	3.2
Artistic profession, fashion (n=724)	3.2
Transport and tourism (n=602)	3.2
Services (n=2,398)	3.1
Street trading, petty trading (n=689)	2.9
Automotive (n=929)	2.9
Construction (n=1,862)	2.9
Auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work (n=1,984)	2.9
Manual trades (n=2,712)	2.8
Agriculture, forestry, fishing (n=1,766)	2.5
Other (n=991)	3.7
Housework, pension, school or studies (n=5,977)	2.9
Out of work (n=3,041)	3.0

Source: „social component" database (22.03.2021), n=31,170 (all persons submitting information both on the highest educational institution attended and their most recently pursued occupation)

On the other hand, asylum applicants who had previously worked in the fields of "agriculture, forestry, fishing" (2.5) had low educational mean scores. The mean values for those who had worked in "manual trades", in construction, in "auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work", in the automotive sector or in the area of "street trading, petty trading" were also below average at 2.8 and 2.9 respectively. For persons who had previously been "without work", a slightly higher value of 3.0 can be found. It is noticeable that the five most frequently mentioned areas of activity (see Table 3) all had a below-average mean education value.

A special area with regard to occupational fields concerns persons in the category "housework, pension, school, studies" (educational mean value 2.9), who were neither primarily active on the labour market, nor assignable to the "social component" category "out of work". This category, grouping together persons living in highly diverse situations without any income of their own, is considered in a separate analysis (Figure 9). As this group contains around four times more female than male asylum applicants, the thickness of the bars additionally represents the ratio between the sexes.

While 92.5% of the adult men included in the category "housework, pension, school or study" reported having attended an intermediate school, high school or higher education institution, the figure for women was only 56.6%. The figure clearly shows that the share of those who had no formal schooling or attended primary school as the highest educational institution were much lower among men, 0.9% and 6.7% respectively, than among women, 21.4% and 22.0% respectively. The percentage differences were low for intermediate school attendance, but again significant for higher educational institutions: 40.6% and 22.4% of men from the "housework, pension, school or study" field had attended a high school or higher education institution respectively. For women, the shares were only 17.9% and 7.8% respectively.

The high number of women in the groups with no or little schooling suggests that many women have never taken up an occupation outside the home. However, as Figure 7 shows that the share of (former) students is higher as a whole among women than among men, the high share of women may also be attributable to the fact that men with low levels of education who were not in employment prior to coming to Germany tend to refer to themselves as having been "out of work" rather than assigning themselves to the "housework" category.

Figure 9: Schooling of first-time asylum applicants of legal age in 2020 in the occupational field "Housework, pension, school or studies" by gender (in per cent)
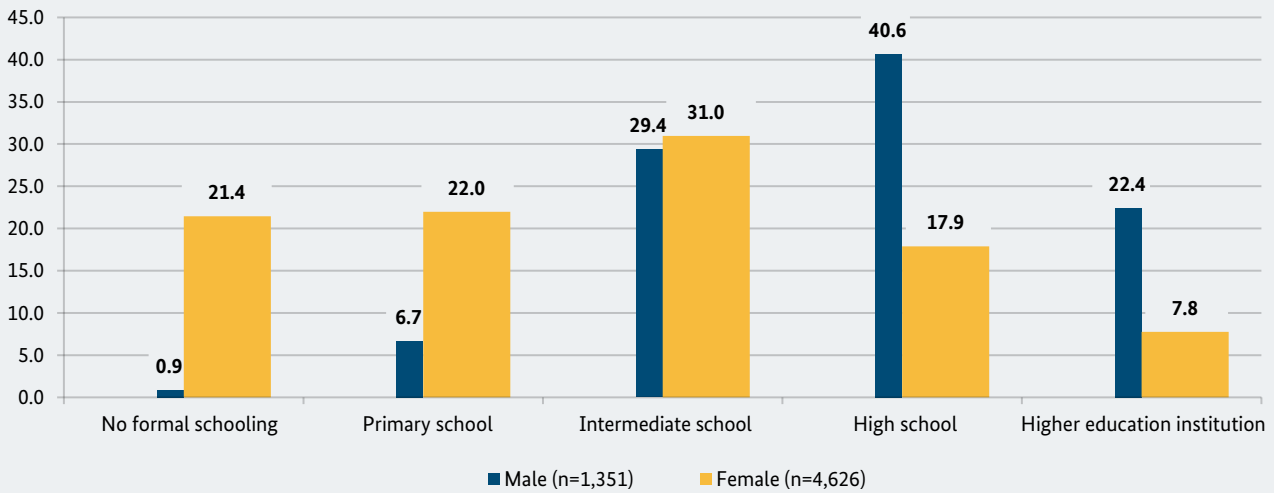
Source: „social component" database (22.03.2021), n=5,977 (all individuals with information on both the highest educational institution attended and gender, as well as the last occupation)

5. Summary: Characteristics of First-Time Asylum Applicants from the Main Countries of Origin in 2020

In order to provide a synoptic overview, the key characteristics pertaining to the respective main countries of origin in 2020 are presented here in tabular form and – where possible – the trend in comparison to 2019 as a whole is indicated in graphic form by means of arrows. This is intended solely to provide a rough overview - details are to be found in the corresponding chapters. With regard to the trend in comparison to the previous year, the number of arrows

indicates the percentage[7] changes, while the direction of the arrows shows whether the trend concerned is upward, downward or virtually constant (see the legend at the bottom of the table).

_____

7   A change from 20 % in 2019 to 30 % in 2020 represents an increase of 50 %, for example (at an absolute increase of 10 percentage points).

Table 4: Summary of main countries of origin and comparison with 2019

First-time asylum applicants of legal age in 2020		
Characteristics in 2020		**Comp. to previous year 2019**
Syria		
Share of total	Remains the largest group comprising 13,011 persons, share of 14.1% (2019) has risen to 27.5%	⬆⬆⬆
Female share	After an increase in recent years, a further decline to 43.4% after 2019	⬇⬇
Share of married persons	Small decrease in the share from 65.6% (2019) to 62.2% in 2020	⬇
Share of under 30 year-olds	Share of younger people under 30 increased from 44.0% in 2019 to 52.9% in 2020	⬆⬆
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	Share has fallen, as it has in recent years, and was around one third (33.4%) in 2020	⬇
Occupational fields	High shares previously in "housework, pension, school or studies" (28.2%) and in manual trade (11.4%)	
Afghanistan		
Share of total	Sixth in 2019, barely more in 2020 (4.459 people) than in 2019, but second in percentage terms (9.4%)	⬆⬆⬆
Female share	Share slightly reduced from 39.2% in 2019 to 37.0% in 2020	⬇
Share of married persons	At 50.4%, more than half were already married in 2019, further increase to 53.8% in 2020	⬆
Share of under 30 year-olds	55.7% were under 30 years old, very small decrease compared to 2019	➡
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	After a high increase from 2018 to 2019, the share is now declining again from 36.4% in 2019 to 33.4% in 2020	⬇
Occupational fields	High shares in "housework, pension, school or studies" (26.2%) and manual trade (10.0%)	
Turkey		
Share of total	Third largest group with 4,097 persons, share similar to 2019 (8.6%) at 8.7	➡
Female share	Further decline in the share of women from 28.5% in 2019 to 21.7%, almost 80% were men	⬇⬇
Share of married persons	Significant decrease in married people, in 2020 42.9% were married (2019: 56.8%)	⬇⬇
Share of under 30 year-olds	48.9% of first-time Turkish applicants were under 30 years old, increase compared to 2019 (42.0%)	⬆⬆
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	Very high share at 60.0%, but significantly lower than 2019 (68.9%) and 2018 (73.9%)	⬇
Occupational fields	High shares in "teaching professions" (9.8%), but less than in 2019 (15.1%)	

First-time asylum applicants of legal age in 2020		
	Characteristics in 2020	Comp. to previous year 2019
Iraq		
Share of total	Share increased from 5.7% in 2019 to 8.5% in 2020 with 3,996 people	⬆⬆⬆
Female share	Small decrease in the share of women to 38.2 % (2019: 41.4 %)	⬇
Share of married persons	At 53.1 %, almost the same share as in 2019	➡
Share of under 30 year-olds	Very small decrease from 49.2 % (2019) to 47.4 % (2020)	➡
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	hare at 24.4% slightly lower than in 2019 (26.4%)	⬇
Occupational fields	High shares in "housework, pension, school or studies" (26.9 %) and in manual trade (7.9 %)	
Iran		
Share of total	Sharp drop in share from 7.0% in 2019 to 4.4% in 2020, just over 2,000 first-time applicants	⬇⬇⬇
Female share	The share of women in 2020 was 42.1 %, almost identical to 2019	➡
Share of married persons	At 49.5 %, only just under half were married in 2020, a decline compared to 2019 (56.1 %).	⬇
Share of under 30 year-olds	28.7 % were under 30 years old, small share but almost identical to the previous year	➡
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	Slight decrease from 86.7 % to 83.8 %, remains highest share among the main countries of origin	➡
Occupational fields	Particularly high share in the field of "engineering, IT, electrical occupations, technical occupations" (11.8 %)	
Georgia		
Share of total	1,558 adult first-time applicants in 2020 (3.3%), up from 2.7% in 2019	⬆⬆
Female share	Significant decrease from 28.9% in 2019 to 23.4% in 2020	⬇⬇
Share of married persons	Share in recent years around 50%, 2020 at 49.1% slightly lower than 2019	⬇
Share of under 30 year-olds	Share at 32.1 %, identical value to 2019, low share compared to the other main countries of origin	➡
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	At 44.6%, similar high value as in 2019	➡
Occupational fields	High share in construction (13.6 %)	
Nigeria		
Share of total	With 1,113 people, Nigeria has a share of 2.4 %, share has declined by more than half	⬇⬇⬇
Female share	Small decrease from 40.9 % in 2019 to 37.9 % in 2020	⬇
Share of married persons	Share increased from a very low 14.8% in 2019 to 19.2%, but remains comparatively low	⬆⬆
Share of under 30 year-olds	Share of people under 30 year-olds fell from 63.0% to 52.3%	⬇⬇
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	Increase from a very low 23.1% in 2019 to 25.8% in 2020	⬆
Occupational fields	Many previously without work (16.1%), in manual trades (13.8%) or in services (12.0%)	
Algeria		
Share of total	At 1,064 persons and 2.3%, similar to Nigeria and Vietnam	was not among the ten main countries of origin in 2019
Female share	Share of women was the lowest among the main countries of origin at 6.4%	
Share of married persons	Only 11.1 % were married	
Share of under 30 year-olds	Almost two thirds (64.4 %) were under 30 years old	
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	Only 29.2 % had attended a high school or a higher education institution	
Occupational fields	High shares in manual trades (16.4 %) and in services (11.4 %)	

First-time asylum applicants of legal age in 2020		
Characteristics in 2020		**Comp. to previous year 2019**
Vietnam		
Share of total	With 2.1 % and 1,011 persons in ninth place	was not among the ten main countries of origin in 2019
Female share	Highest proportion of women (64.6 %) among the main countries of origin	
Share of married persons	Hardly any married applicants (6.8 %), lowest proportion among the main countries of origin	
Share of under 30 year-olds	Almost two thirds (65.3%) were under 30 years old	
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	High level of education, 56.8 % had attended a high school or a higher education institution	
Occupational fields	Very high shares in "auxiliary work, industrial, factory and warehouse work" (18.4 %) and "agriculture, forestry, fishing" (16.7 %), many persons previously without work (20.1 %	
Somalia		
Share of total	798 people, or 1.7% of the total, came from Somalia	was not among the ten main countries of origin in 2019
Female share	With 51.9 %, slightly more women than men came	
Share of married persons	43.5 % were married	
Share of under 30 year-olds	Similar to Algeria and Vietnam, there was a high proportion of young people under 30 years of age (69.5 %)	
Sahre of applicants with high schoor or higher education	Lowest share among the main countries of origin with only 14.1 %	
Occupational fields	High share in service sector (10.3%), many previously without work (22.7%) or in "housework, pension, school or studies (22.4%)	

very strong increase (over 35%)

marked increase (over 15% to 35%)

slight increase (over 5% to 15%)

roughly the same (-5% drop to +5% rise)

slight decrease (under -5% to -15%)

marked drop (under -15% to -35%)

very strong decrease (under -35%)

Note: Changes measured in percent, not percentage points
Source: "Social component" database (22.03.2021)

6. Focal topic: First-time Asylum Applicants of Legal Age from Syria from 2015-2020

For several years, Syria has been the most important country of origin among asylum seekers in Germany in quantitative terms. However, the absolute number of Syrian refugees applying for asylum in Germany is now declining. In addition, the gender distribution has changed significantly over the years. And while in 2015 an above-average number of Syrians stated that they had most recently attended university or high school, this proportion has also declined in recent years. Due to the numerical significance of this group, this chapter examines the development of its social and educational structure in recent years.

a) Total number and gender ratio

In 2015 and 2016, a particularly high number of adult asylum applicants came from Syria: With a total of 116,560 persons in 2015 and 164,505 persons in 2016, over 100,000 Syrians filed initial applications (Table 5). The particularly high figure in 2016 can be explained by the fact that many persons who had already arrived in 2015 were only able to formally submit their asylum application in 2016. In the following years, the number of applications decreased significantly. Whereas in 2017, 18,510 persons of legal age from Syria filed an initial application, in 2019 the number was only 12,381. In 2020, there was a small increase (13,011).

In addition to a significant decrease in the total number, it is also noticeable that the share of women has decreased significantly. In 2015 and 2016, the number of male first-time applicants was far higher than the number of female

applicants. In the following years 2017-2019, the situation was reversed, and it was not until 2020 that there were again more male than female first-time applicants of legal age from Syria.

The share of women among first-time Syrian applicants has thus varied considerably during the period under review. While in 2015 only about one fifth were women (21.1 %), in 2016 the proportion had already risen to almost one third (32.7 %). In 2017, more women than men from Syria applied for asylum for the first time (51.7%). In 2018, this figure was once again significantly higher at 58.1 %, but this proportion fell again in 2019 and 2020 and has been below half again since 2020 at 43.4 % (Figure 10).

The significant increase in the share of women up to 2018 may also be related above all to the fact that Syrian female spouses wanted to immigrate to join their partners already living in Germany as part of their own asylum application. For Syrians entitled to subsidiary protection, the right to family reunification was suspended between March 2016 and July 2018 - as it was for all persons with this protection status. Only as of August 2018 was immigration of immediate family members (spouses and minor children) to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection possible again. Comparing the development of the share of women for Syria with the average for all countries of origin shows that the proportion of women was below the overall average in 2015, but has always been above the average since 2016, despite the decline in 2020.

Table 5: Number of adult asylum applicants from Syria by gender, 2015-2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	**116,560**	**164,505**	**18,510**	**14,576**	**12,381**	**13,011**
Male	91,957	110,639	8,942	6,114	5,500	7,364
Female	24,603	53,866	9,568	8,462	6,881	5,647

Source: Official asylum statistics for the years 2015-2020

Figure 10: Share of women among first-time asylum applicants of legal age, 2015-2020, Syria and all countries of origin, distribution in per cent
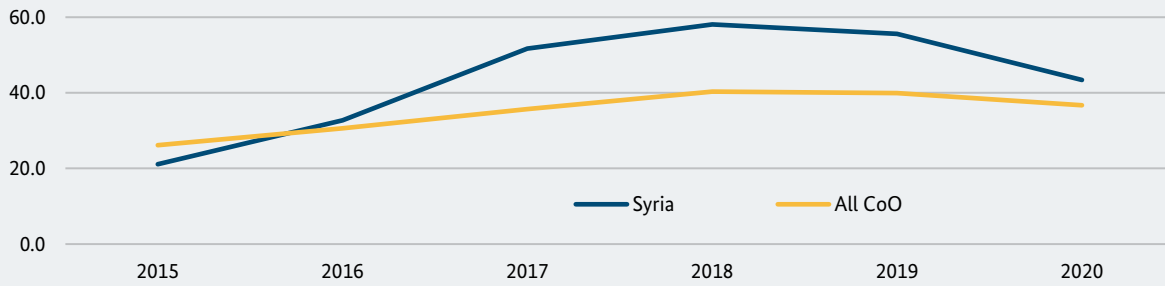
Source: Official asylum statistics for the years 2015-2020

b) Age groups

In addition to the change with regard to gender, we will now examine the changes in age structure of the asylum applicants from Syria. Figure 11 shows only minor variations. In the age group 18-19 years, about 10-11 % of the adult first-time applicants from this country of origin were enclosed in all years. In the age group 20-24, there was a small decrease between 2016 and 2019, with 2020 nearly matching the 2015 figure (24.0% in 2020 vs. 25.0% in 2015). This age group had the lowest share in 2018 at 17.3%. The trend in the share in the age group 25-29 was similar: it fell steadily from 21.9 % to 15.0 % in 2019, while in 2020 there was an increase to 18.7 %. There were hardly any changes

in the age group 30-39, with shares ranging between 23.4% and 25.3% in all years.

The situation is different for older Syrians: the proportion of those over 40 was initially very low in 2015 and 2016, at 17.6% and 19.2% respectively. It initially jumped to 27.9% in 2017 and was above 30% in 2018 and 2019. Then in 2020, it turned back to 22.3%.

Thus, the overall age distribution in 2020 is little different from that of 2015, while in the intervening years the increased proportion of older applicants, particularly in the age group over 40, led to a higher average.

Figure 11: Age distribution of first-time asylum applicants of legal age from Syria, 2015-2020, distribution in percent
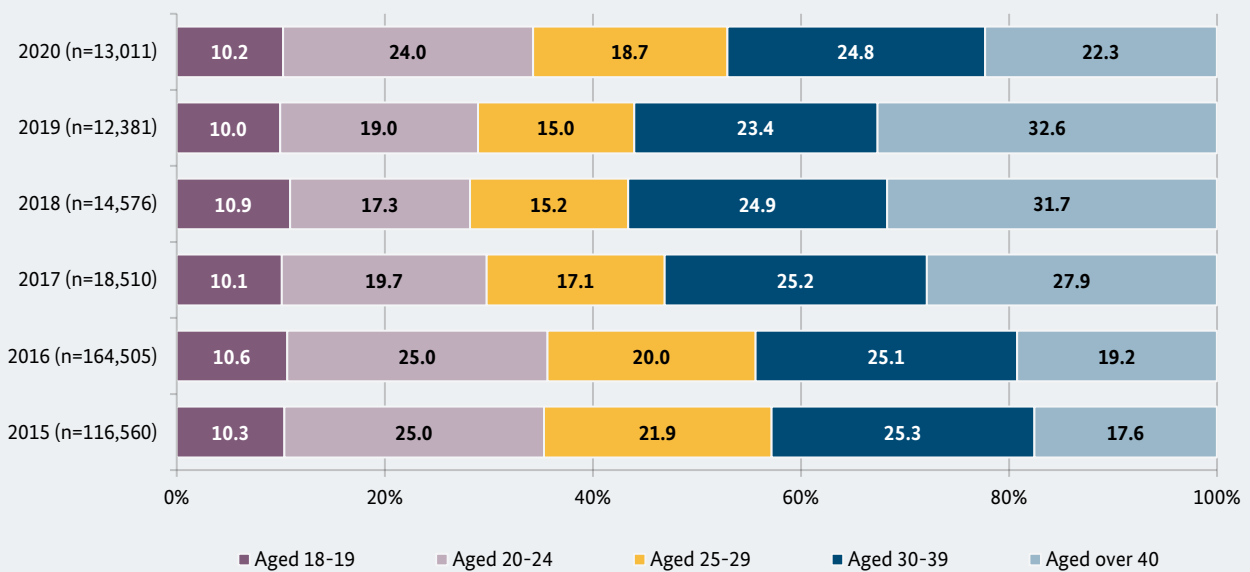

Source: Official asylum statistics for the years 2015-2020

c) Marital status

As already noted under a), due to the temporary suspension of family reunification for men and women eligible for subsidiary protection between March 2016 and July 2018, it can be assumend that an increased number of married persons filed asylum applications. Figure 12 shows that this is true. While just over half of first-time applicants from Syria who were of legal age were married in 2015 (52.9%), the proportion had already risen to 56.5% in 2016. In 2018, more than two-thirds (67.0%) of first-time applicants from Syria who were of legal age were married, the highest figure in the period under review, before a slight decline to 65.6% and 62.2% in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Figure 12: Marital status of first-time asylum applicants of legal age from Syria, 2015-2020, distribution in per cent
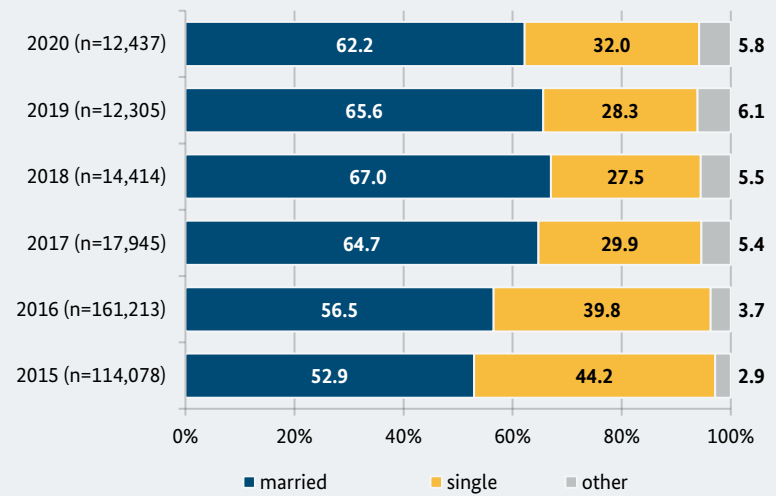
Source: „social component" database for the years 2015-2020
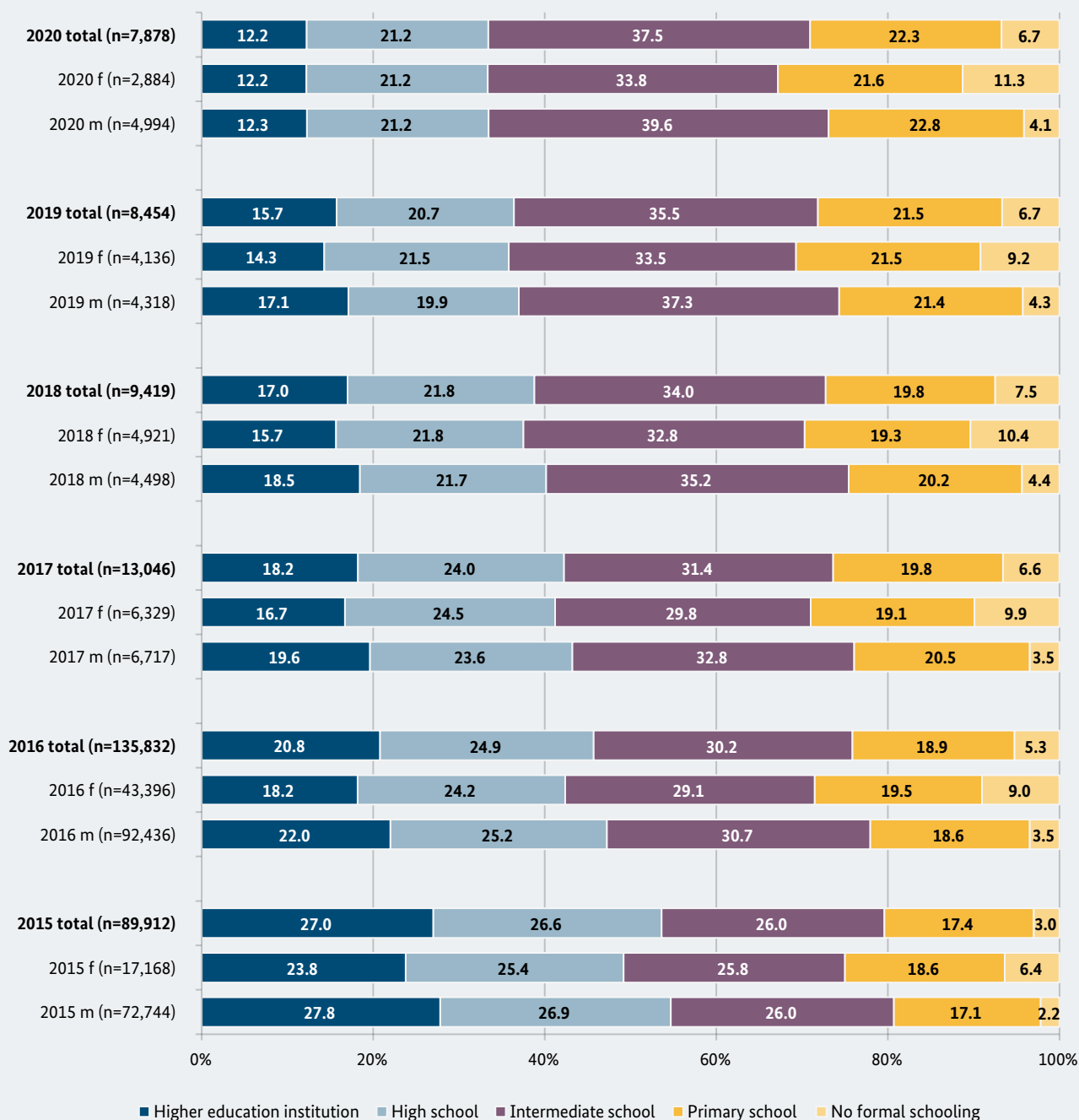
d) Highest educational institution attended

In terms of the highest educational institution attended, the asylum applicants of legal age from Syria in 2015 were far above the average for all countries of origin. Only 3.0% had no formal schooling, and less than a fifth had attended primary school as their highest institution. In contrast, 27.0% had attended a university and over a quarter had indicated a high school as their highest educational institution (Figure 13). Thus, 53.6%, or over half, had attended at least a high school, with a maximum of primary education (elementary school and no formal schooling) for only about a quarter.

However, the proportion of people attending higher education fell sharply in the following years. While about one-fifth had attended a university or similar in 2016 (20.8%), only 18.2% did so in 2017, and the proportion fell further to 12.2% in 2020. The proportion of people attending high school also declined, albeit to a lesser extent. From 26.6% in 2015, it fell over the years to 20.7% in 2019, with a small increase to 21.2% in 2020. However, the overall share of those with high school or university education from Syria was still lower in 2020 than in 2019 (33.4% vs. 36.4%) and does not approach the 2015 peak (53.6%). First-time applicants from Iran and Turkey had significantly higher proportions here (cf. Chapter 4.1).

It is interesting to see whether this development has taken place to a different extent among men and women and whether the increase and subsequent decline in the share of women among first-time applicants from Syria plays a role. However, a comparison of the two sexes shows that the share of both men and women who have attended university has fallen over the years, with the share of men who have attended university exceeding the proportion of women in all years. However, this difference was very small in 2020 (male 12.3%, female 12.2%), while in other years it ranged from around 2 to 4 percentage points. The trend in the other education categories has also been almost parallel, and no major differences can be observed. On average, women from Syria have about three times higher proportions in the category "no formal schooling" than men, but this gap has also hardly changed over the years; the shares have increased for both men and women.

Overall, a change in the educational structure of adult asylum seekers from Syria can be seen over the past few years, which can be seen in lower shares of formally high educated persons. This change occurred to a similar extent among men and women. Apparently, this development is not related to the changing gender ratio, but to other characteristics of the refugees.

Figure 13: Highest educational institution attended by first-time asylum seekers of legal age from Syria, 2015-2020, distribution in percent

Category	Higher education institution	High school	Intermediate school	Primary school	No formal schooling
2020 total (n=7,878)	12.2	21.2	37.5	22.3	6.7
2020 f (n=2,884)	12.2	21.2	33.8	21.6	11.3
2020 m (n=4,994)	12.3	21.2	39.6	22.8	4.1
2019 total (n=8,454)	15.7	20.7	35.5	21.5	6.7
2019 f (n=4,136)	14.3	21.5	33.5	21.5	9.2
2019 m (n=4,318)	17.1	19.9	37.3	21.4	4.3
2018 total (n=9,419)	17.0	21.8	34.0	19.8	7.5
2018 f (n=4,921)	15.7	21.8	32.8	19.3	10.4
2018 m (n=4,498)	18.5	21.7	35.2	20.2	4.4
2017 total (n=13,046)	18.2	24.0	31.4	19.8	6.6
2017 f (n=6,329)	16.7	24.5	29.8	19.1	9.9
2017 m (n=6,717)	19.6	23.6	32.8	20.5	3.5
2016 total (n=135,832)	20.8	24.9	30.2	18.9	5.3
2016 f (n=43,396)	18.2	24.2	29.1	19.5	9.0
2016 m (n=92,436)	22.0	25.2	30.7	18.6	3.5
2015 total (n=89,912)	27.0	26.6	26.0	17.4	3.0
2015 f (n=17,168)	23.8	25.4	25.8	18.6	6.4
2015 m (n=72,744)	27.8	26.9	26.0	17.1	2.2

■ Higher education institution ■ High school ■ Intermediate school ■ Primary school ■ No formal schooling

Source: „social component" database for the years 2015-2020

Social Component Analyses published to Date

Heß, Barbara (2020): Potenziale von Asylantragstellenden: Analyse der „SoKo"-Sozialstrukturdaten. Halbjahresbericht 2020. Reports on migration and integration, Series 3, Research Centre for Migration, Integration and Asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (available in German only).

Heß, Barbara (2020): Potenziale von Asylantragstellenden: Analyse der „SoKo"-Sozialstrukturdaten. Jahresbericht 2019. Reports on migration and integration, Series 3, Research Centre for Migration, Integration and Asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (available in German and English).

Heß, Barbara (2020): Potenziale von Asylantragstellenden: Analyse der „SoKo"-Sozialstrukturdaten. Halbjahresbericht 2019. Reports on migration and integration, Series 3, Research Centre for Migration, Integration and Asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (available in German only).

Heß, Barbara (2019): Potenziale von Asylantragstellenden: Analyse der „SoKo"-Sozialstrukturdaten. Jahresbericht 2018. Reports on migration and integration, Series 3, Research Centre for Migration, Integration and Asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (available in German and English).

Heß, Barbara (2019): Volljährige Asylantragsteller in Deutschland im ersten Halbjahr 2018. Sozialstruktur, Qualifikationsniveau und Berufstätigkeit. Edition 03|2019 of the Brief Analyses drawn up by the Research Centre at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg (available in German only).

Schmidt, Hans-Jürgen (2018): Volljährige Asylantragsteller in Deutschland im Jahr 2017. Sozialstruktur, Schulbesuch und Berufstätigkeit im Herkunftsland, Edition 03|2018 of the Brief Analyses drawn up by the Research Centre at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg (available in German only).

Neske, Matthias (2017): Volljährige Asylantragsteller in Deutschland im ersten Halbjahr 2017. Sozialstruktur, Qualifikationsniveau und Berufstätigkeit, Edition 03|2017 of the Brief Analyses drawn up by the Research Centre at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg (available in German only).

Neske, Matthias (2017): Volljährige Asylerstantragsteller in Deutschland im Jahr 2016. Sozialstruktur, Qualifikationsniveau und Berufstätigkeit, Edition 02|2017 of the Brief Analyses drawn up by the Research Centre at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg (available in German only).

Neske, Matthias/Rich, Anna-Katharina (2016): Asylantragsteller in Deutschland im ersten Halbjahr 2016. Sozialstruktur, Qualifikationsniveau und Berufstätigkeit, Edition 04|2016 of the Brief Analyses drawn up by the Research Centre at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg (available in German only).

Rich, Anna-Katharina (2016): First-time asylum applicants in Germany in 2015. Social structure, level of qualifications and employment, Edition 03|2016 of the Brief Analyses drawn up by the Research Centre at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg (available in German and English).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barbara Heß is a research associate at the Research Centre for Migration, Integration and Asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Division FIII - Migration and Integration: Monitoring and Series of Reports).

Contact:
barbara.hess@bamf.bund.de

Visit us:
www.facebook.com/bamf.socialmedia
@BAMF_Dialog