

Informal care and Migration in Europe

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Abstract

Ageing in a country of residence different from one's country of birth (i.e., following migration) may significantly influence patterns of informal care provision. Informal care is defined as assistance offered to relatives or close contacts—such as a spouse, parent, child, grandchild, or friend—and encompasses tasks including household maintenance, personal hygiene, and administrative support. Existing research has predominantly focused on the impact of immigrant status on childcare provision, while comparatively neglecting the provision of care to elderly parents and other kin. This study examines the relationship between migration background and informal care provision, extending the analysis beyond childcare to include elder care. We further disaggregate care provision by type of task, recipient, and intensity of involvement. Additionally, we account for heterogeneity by distinguishing individuals according to age at migration, thereby revealing substantial variation in caregiving behaviours. Drawing on data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) from 2015 to 2025, our findings indicate that individuals who migrated during childhood exhibit a higher likelihood of providing assistance not only to parents but also to other family members, friends, and neighbours. In contrast, those who migrated during adulthood demonstrate a lower propensity to engage in such caregiving activities. These differences cannot be fully attributed to compositional factors such as geographic proximity or health status. The results underscore the need for further research to elucidate the mechanisms underlying these disparities.

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