

Balancing Cultural Heritage and Integration: Childcare Decisions Among Second Generation Immigrants in Europe

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Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is key to increasing female labour-market participation and supports children's social and cognitive development—especially for those from disadvantaged or migrant backgrounds. Yet, ECEC coverage still varies widely. Beyond structural barriers such as limited availability and affordability, cultural norms influence child-rearing practices, with differences between natives and migrants. However, the role of culture—particularly among second-generation (2G) immigrants—remains under-explored. Germany provides a compelling setting as it hosts a large and diverse population of first and second-generation immigrants. Using longitudinal data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), this study investigates how kinship intensity—capturing norms related to family ties—affects ECEC utilisation among second-generation immigrants. By focusing on individuals from different cultural backgrounds who were raised in the same institutional and economic context, this study aims to isolate the persistence of parental cultural norms in shaping behaviour toward institutional care for very young children. The findings contribute to the literature on cultural transmission, migrant integration, and inequality in early childhood education.