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Original Article

Diverging pathways: the effects of initial legal status on immigrant socioeconomic and residential outcomes in France

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Drawing on a unique, large-sample survey from France, *Trajectories and Origins* (TeO), this article provides an empirical assessment of the effects of migrants' initial legal status on socioeconomic attainment focusing on three outcomes: household income, neighbourhood disadvantage, and concentration in immigrant neighbourhoods. Legal status effects are identified using a twofold strategy. First, our data comprise an exceptionally rich set of information on premigratory characteristics, which allows us to disentangle the effect of initial legal status from migratory selection processes. Furthermore, we implement an instrumental variable design to correct for the endogeneity of initial legal status. Findings show that some of the initial legal status effect is due to selection, whether measured by observable premigratory characteristics or other unobservable variables. Nonetheless, we also find robust evidence that refugees durably face socioeconomic disadvantage in terms of income and are more likely to live in immigrant-dense neighbourhoods. We discuss how these findings contribute both empirically and theoretically to the literature on the civic stratification of migrants' pathways: first, by highlighting that we should disentangle the long-term civic stratification mechanisms from sorting into legal status categories, and second, by stressing that the theory should be more specific about which legal status categories are decisive in creating hierarchies between migrants.

Introduction

The regulation of migration in modern nation-states entails the sorting of newcomers along legal lines of demarcation that define residency status. These legal distinctions upon arrival grant or deny rights and opportunities and determine access to citizenship and socioeconomic resources. Certain legal statuses allow migrants to enter the labour market immediately (i.e. work permits), while others provide a faster track to citizenship (i.e. marriage permits). These classifications further shape the degree of inclusion and reception that immigrants encounter. Work- or study-related migrants may be more favourably received and granted access to specific social benefits, while asylum seekers and those who migrated for family reunification purposes may be viewed with suspicion and subjected to stronger state control (Lochak 2006; Bellot 2015).

The concept of civic stratification refers to the role of legal status in forging categorical inequalities between groups (Morris 2003). This perspective theorizes that legal status serves not only to categorize immigrants and manage their entry and residence but also to durably stratify their socioeconomic outcomes in host societies. While initial approaches that build on civic stratification theory tend to be overarching, recent empirical research suggests the importance of investigating the specific stratifying effects that different categories of legal status may have for various outcomes (Lai 2021). Moreover, the theory is still unclear about when and for how long legal status matters. In particular, most studies investigating the role of legal status rely on data that measure current status and outcomes simultaneously, while the theory suggests long-term effects of initial legal status for immigrant socioeconomic attainment. Finally, while civic stratification perspectives assume a direct, independent impact of legal status on migrants' outcomes, empirical studies are confronted with the difficulty of disentangling

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these effects net of sorting into legal status categories. Immigrants' allocation to an initial legal status category is the result of a complex process that combines individual migration motivations, administrative and legal constraints, and selection processes prior to and during initial status acquisition.

In this article, we aim to measure the effects of migrants' initial legal status on later socioeconomic and residential outcomes. We draw on a unique, large-sample data source from France, the *Trajectories and Origins* (TeO) survey, which includes rare information on migrants' first residency permit and a wide range of premigration variables. We focus on five initial permit categories (refugee, student, worker, spouse of a French citizen, and family reunification) and measure their impact on socioeconomic attainment (household income) and residential attainment (neighbourhood income and the neighbourhood share of immigrants) as reported at the time of the survey. Our empirical strategy seeks to disentangle the effects of legal status from confounding factors implementing a series of different methodological approaches. The results first show that immigrants' outcomes vary by their initial legal status. Migrants who arrived in France with student, worker and French spouse permits tend to be more advantaged in socioeconomic outcomes, while refugees face greater disadvantage. Yet, some of these disparities disappear once premigration variables and/or individual heterogeneity are accounted for. These results suggest that most initial legal status categories are stratified prior to arrival and not stratifiers in the destination country *per se*. However, we consistently measure a negative effect of refugee status on respondents' income across diverse model specifications, suggesting a lasting impact of this legal category. In the conclusion, we discuss possible explanations for this refugee gap. More generally, our results challenge two assumptions of civic stratification: first, that legal status exerts a direct, independent effect on outcomes; and second, that all legal status categories translate into durable socioeconomic inequalities between migrants. Rather, we stress the need to be more attentive to why (selection or direct effects), for whom (which legal categories), and for what (types of outcomes) legal status operates as an inequality mechanism.

The effect of initial legal status: legal and symbolic mechanisms

Prior empirical research shows that migrants' socioeconomic attainment is stratified by their legal status. Employment-based migrants in the United States later report greater occupational mobility, higher wages, and hold more prestigious jobs relative to other entry status categories (Jasso *et al*. 2000; Massey and Malone 2002; Akresh 2006; Kreisberg 2019). Several studies also point to a 'refugee gap' relative to other categories of migrants in neighbourhood integration, employment, and earnings net of other factors (Connor 2010; Bakker *et al*. 2017; Fasani *et al*. 2022). Other research even suggests a durable effect of migrants' legal status, in particular their access to citizenship, on their children's educational outcomes (Catron 2019).

What explains the relative disadvantage of some legal and administrative categories of migrants? From the perspective of civic stratification, nation-states generate and feed a system of hierarchies of formal membership by implementing immigration laws and legal status categories (Brubaker 1992; Lockwood 1996; Morris 2003). Civic stratification focuses on dimensions of migrant disadvantage that are related to this hierarchy of formal membership, which are theoretically different from the informal or social mechanisms of migrant inequality typically posited in models of integration (such as differences in human capital, assimilation trajectories, or ethnoracial or religious discrimination) (Torres and Waldinger 2015; Catron 2019). Research in this vein therefore posits that legal status is a powerful stratifying process that structures immigrants' preliminary rights, access to resources, opportunities, and legitimacy (Meissner 2018). The effect of initial legal status on immigrants' socioeconomic attainment entails both legal and symbolic mechanisms (Safi 2020).

Legal mechanisms

While national and historical variations exist, migrants' working rights, durations of stay, and access to citizenship are determined by the type of visa or residency permit at the time of entry. Because it prescribes whether they are allowed to stay in the country and for how long, whether they are allowed to work and what jobs they can hold, how readily they and their children can access public service opportunities such as education and social housing, legal status directly impacts migrants' socioeconomic attainment.

In France, the development of immigration law and the criteria determining various legal statuses are closely intertwined with the dynamics of migration flows. Following the period known as the 'Glorious Thirties', during which governmental policies primarily aimed to 'facilitate' the entry and movement of post-colonial and south-European workers, a shift towards more stringent legal classifications commenced in the 1970s, coinciding with the onset of an economic crisis. Amidst widespread unemployment, a series of legislative changes aimed to curtail labour migration and restrict the arrival of immigrant families. Despite some variations depending on political parties in power, there has been a general trend of constraining permit access and imposing stricter conditions for asylum seekers.

As a result of decades of immigration legislation, immigrants' legal status in France has become closely tied to residency permits (*titres de séjour*), which grant different rights depending on the type of permit. Refugees face a specific disadvantage relative to other categories as they typically begin their stay with a relatively long and highly uncertain period during which their asylum application is being processed. Since 2005, they do not have the right to work upon arrival or throughout the application procedure (the period evolved from 1 year in 2005 to 6 months in 2018). However, they are provided with some financial aid and may receive help finding temporary housing. Governmental agencies tailored to the reception of asylum seekers—such as the *Délégation interministérielle à l'accueil et à l'intégration des réfugiés*—also assist these migrants in learning the language or seeking out employment, education and housing. Refugee status also may allow for faster access to citizenship, as they do not need to fulfill the 5-year residency requirement before applying (Carrillo 2015). In contrast, while the requirements in family reunification procedures were made increasingly strict in particular with regard to financial resources, once obtained, migrants with family reunion status benefit from long-term residency and are generally allowed to work (except for the 1977 decree which prevented them from working). When migrants are married to French citizens, they are allowed to work and benefit from a faster track to citizenship, with shorter eligibility requirements and lower rejection rates, although the period of eligibility for naturalization has increased over time (from 0 to 4 years in the 1945–2006 period). Student permits are granted residency for the period of study and allow some part-time working rights, but do not open up the right to long-term settlement. Migrants with work permits are granted different residency duration rights based on the nature of their employment contract.[1]

While the complexity of immigration law and the many back-and-forth changes implemented during the period do not establish a clear-cut and stable hierarchy of legal status categories, it is evident that the French spouse permit consistently comes with the most advantageous legal conditions, while students and, to some extent, workers are the most uncertain statuses in terms of longevity and prospects for renewal. Refugee and family reunion categories have experienced the most intense change in legislation generally toward stricter conditions for acceptance and reinforcement of expulsion measures; nonetheless once obtained, these legal statuses generally open the way to work and pathways to long-term residency and ultimately citizenship.

Symbolic mechanisms

In addition to differential access to rights, legal status categories also differ in socially perceived moral worth. Social representations of migrants based on legal categories result in a symbolic hierarchy of their perceived legitimacy and deservingness (Brown 2011; Menjívar and Abrego 2012). Studies in social psychology show that legal status categories are forms of group labels that have different stereotypical content that affect people's attitudes and behaviour. In Germany, for instance, the refugee label seems to trigger paternalistic stereotypes and pro-help attitudes whereas the economic migrant label evokes envious stereotypes and increases opposition to help (Kotzur, Forsbach and Wagner 2017; Kotzur *et al.* 2019; Wyszynski, Guerra and Bierwiaczonek 2020). Other recent experimental studies show that family-sponsored migrants and low-skilled labour migrants are often perceived at the bottom of the symbolic hierarchy, construed as an undesirable form of migration in comparison with the more 'deserving' category of labour migrants (Aalberg *et al.* 2012; Iyengar *et al.* 2013).

In France, debates around immigration policy in the early 2000s increasingly promote symbolic differences between legal status categories, with the distinction between 'chosen immigration' (i.e. labour migration that benefits France and its economy) and 'imposed immigration' (i.e. unwanted family reunification migrants and asylum seekers) (Lochak 2006). Workers and students may be seen as more desirable and with less suspicion than asylum seekers or migrants coming to join their spouses or families (Iyengar *et al.* 2013). Furthermore, French immigration policy has created a more stigmatized context of reception for asylum seekers since the 1980s, with more frequent refoulements at the border and refusals of refugee status (Spire 2007; Bellot 2015).

This symbolic hierarchy of legal status and their stereotypical content may further drive differential treatment behaviour in access to socioeconomic resources. Indeed, some statuses may directly undermine the ability to access socioeconomic resources because they expose their holders to discrimination. For example, to the extent that employers, landlords, housing agencies, or real-estate agents require documentation of applicants' legal status, this criteria could enter into decision-making and legal status may hence become a source of discrimination on job or housing markets (Ellerman 2020). In addition, employers, real-estate agents, or other goal-oriented agents may engage in statistical discrimination between migrants by associating different initial statuses with characteristics such as shorter and unstable residency conditions, lower reliability, lower language skills, or even lower productivity (Oreopoulos 2011).

The complexity of legal status categories and the fact that both legal and symbolic mechanisms can be at play make any clear-cut hypotheses about the effect of each category highly speculative. Our approach is

focused on providing empirical evidence informed by the literature reviewed above and using robust methodological analyses.

Disentangling the effects of legal status from migrant selectivity

Disparities in migrants' outcomes along initial legal status may also be attributable to differential selection into legal categories. Indeed, migrants' first residency permit is the result of an administrative process involving at least two forms of selection: first, migration drivers and the choice and/or ability of migrants to apply for a specific type of permit and second, the underlying legal regulations and bureaucratic processes that grant particular types of legal status.

There is a considerable amount of evidence that immigrants' economic and social capital prior to migration differ by initial legal status. In many destination countries, economic migrants are sponsored by employers based on their skills and prior labour market experience. They frequently sign employment contracts before they migrate or have jobs awaiting them immediately upon arrival. Employment-based migrants also tend to have higher levels of education relative to other migrants (Jasso *et al*. 2000; Akresh 2008). Likewise, student migrants are allowed entry on the basis of their potential for educational attainment and are often selected prior to migration by academic institutions. They also come from more highly educated backgrounds in their country of origin (Hou and Bonikowska 2017). Migrants marrying citizens are also more likely to have stronger social ties and greater exposure to their country of destination prior to migration (Jasso *et al*. 2000).

By contrast, family migrants and refugees are relatively disadvantaged in their premigration characteristics. They tend to report lower levels of educational attainment and less transferable skills in the receiving labour market (Akresh 2008). Furthermore, refugee migration is by definition more sudden and less selective (Hein 1993; Black 2001). Refugees frequently depart under difficult and traumatic circumstances from their sending countries, with little preparation for migration (Torres and Wallace 2013). Destination countries also impose fewer human capital and health requirements for refugees relative to other immigrants (Chiswick, Lee and Miller 2008). Refugees are therefore likely to be at a disadvantage from the start (Connor 2010; Bakker *et al*. 2017).

Of course, these premigratory characteristics affect migrants' outcomes in the destination country beyond their effect on initial legal status. As shown by the literature on immigrant selectivity, premigratory characteristics have lasting effects on immigrants' pathways in host countries (Borjas 1987; Fellini and Guetto 2019; Brunori, Luijkx, and Triventi, 2020). In particular, migrants who are 'positively selected' with regards to their human capital are expected to exhibit better socioeconomic outcomes in their countries of destination. Because migrant selectivity is involved in determining both initial legal status and socioeconomic outcomes, it is difficult to empirically disentangle the specific effect of initial legal status as theorized in the civic stratification literature. This is all the more true given that the few studies that explore the effect of initial legal status rarely include detailed information on immigrants' premigration characteristics. Selectivity is mainly measured through country or region of origin fixed effects (Jasso *et al*. 2000; Massey and Malone 2002; Chiswick, Lee, and Miller 2008; Hou and Bonikowska 2017), broad country of origin characteristics, such as Gross National Product (Borjas 1987; Hou and Bonikowska 2017), or relative measures of education (Ichou 2014; Feliciano 2020; Brunori, Luijkx, and and Triventi, 2020; Schmidt, Kristen, and Mühlau, 2021). In more rare cases, individual-level variables such as age at arrival or childhood demographics are controlled to capture immigrant selectivity (Chiswick, Lee, and Miller 2008; Hou and Bonikowska 2017; Kreisberg 2019).

Our approach allows us to identify the effect of initial legal status by controlling for the potential confounding effects of premigration characteristics. These include measures of economic and social capital prior to arrival, such as premigration employment experience, education, prior visits to France, and marital status, which prior literature suggests influence migrants' selection into legal status categories *and* later socioeconomic status (SES) outcomes.

Circumventing omitted variables bias

In addition to observable premigratory characteristics, the effect of initial legal status may be confounded by variables that cannot be directly measured or observed. For instance, observable premigratory characteristics may fail to capture negative selection as a result of harsh conditions in one's context of immigration. Refugees may endure persecution, traumatic experiences, and psychological distress in their home countries that have implications for their later socioeconomic outcomes or health (Akresh 2008; Torres and Wallace 2013). Likewise, social capital upon arrival can influence migrants' ability to navigate the legal application process, while also facilitating migrants' access to job and housing markets (Baker and Espitia 2000; Lu, Ruan and Lai 2013). Other sources of individual heterogeneity, such as cultural capital and soft skills such as autonomy, communication, organization, writing, accuracy, and time management, impact both the first residency permit on arrival and migrants'

socioeconomic attainment throughout their trajectory (Dietrich-Ragon and Grieve 2017; Kosyakova and Brücker 2020). Finally, legal status categories may also capture 'aspirations' or 'motivations' (Carling and Collins 2018), which are by definition highly endogeneous to immigrant outcomes.

We use an instrumental variable strategy to account for this potential endogeneity. Two variables in our dataset are candidates for instruments because they presumably affect initial legal status while hardly impacting current SES and neighbourhood attainment. These variables are language skills upon arrival and previous migration experience.

First, proficiency in the destination-country language is a key criterion in the application process for obtaining all types of permits. Language skills also facilitate migrants' ability to navigate complex administrative procedures during the application. Prior evidence shows that language skills vary by categories of migrants, following a gradient with students, spouses, and workers at the higher end of the spectrum and refugee and family reunion at the lower end (Jasso *et al.* 2000; Chiswick, Lee and Miller 2006; Akresh 2008; Connor 2010; Hou and Bonikowska 2017). While language proficiency has been shown to correlate with socioeconomic attainment (Chiswick, Lee and Miller 2005), language proficiency at entry is analytically different from the effect of language proficiency at the time of the survey. Language skills are time-variant and rapidly increase over migrants' length of stay whereas language proficiency upon entry is a fixed effect. Indeed, with our design, we show that once current language skills are controlled for, SES and residential outcomes do not depend on language proficiency upon entry.[2]

The second candidate for an instrument is previous migration experience, namely whether the respondent had previously migrated before entering the destination country. A prior personal experience of migration has been theorized as a form of 'migrant capital' or the 'resources needed to facilitate a migrant's entry into his or her desired destination country' (Paul 2011: p. 1860). Paul (2015) distinguishes different types of migrant capital (human, social, and cultural), all of which boost migrants' knowledge of the migration process, including information about visa categories, paperwork, and immigration laws and regulations. Prior empirical research shows that migrant capital increases familiarity with the migration process and promotes migration decisions (De Jong 2000; Paul 2011; Ivlevs and King 2012). Thus, previous migration experience can be assumed to influence the sorting of migrants into the type of initial legal status, affecting in particular categories such as student or worker because they are less dependent on external factors such as their spouse's situation or political and security conditions in the origin country. On the other hand, when migrants have had a prior migration experience in the same destination country, it may have some positive returns on their SES attainment due to having gained familiarity with the labour market or having developed social ties there (Hoxhaj 2015). Our measurement is different in that it captures broader migration trajectories that could include a prior migration from a third country (other than the country of birth). In addition, we account for prior familiarity with the destination country by controlling for whether migrants had ever visited France in the past. Consequently, we argue that previous migration history does not have a direct effect on migrants' outcomes in the long run and that any such effect passes through legal status attainment. For instance, as research on stepwise international migration suggests (Paul 2011, 2015), in the first step of their migration trajectory, migrants could enhance their human capital and accumulate various types of resources, which in turn would help them 'step up' in the civic stratification, obtaining a more desirable legal status in the next destination. Thus, the effect of previous migration history on current outcomes would be temporary and indirect, rather than long-lasting and direct. This is confirmed in our empirical analysis, as we show that prior migration experience is not significantly linked to current SES and neighbourhood outcomes.

Data and measures

We utilize data from Trajectories and Origins (TeO), a large-scale, cross-sectional survey of the French population collected between 2008 and 2009 (Beauchemin, Hamel and Simon 2018). TeO relies on a stratified sampling method from the French census that over-represents immigrant-origin populations in order to ensure that large-sample sizes for minority groups are available. Our descriptive analyses apply design weights to account for this over-representation. The sample of 21,176 respondents is representative of the population of metropolitan France aged 18–60.

Although the TeO survey is cross-sectional, the retrospective nature of the data provides a long-term view of migrants' trajectories at several points in time. The data include rare variables about migrants' initial legal status—measured by the first residency permit in detailed categories—as well as several other characteristics upon arriving in France. A wide range of questions were also asked to respondents about their situation in the country of origin prior to migrating, providing us with measures of economic and social capital to capture migrant selection. TeO thus offers two unique opportunities: first, to identify the long-term effects of initial legal status on socioeconomic

Table 1 Weighted descriptive statistics (mean and per cent)

	Refugee	Student	Worker	French spouse	Family reunification
Premigration characteristics					
Visit France before migration	5%	36%	30%	28%	14%
Type of work before migration					
Never worked	42%	66%	26%	31%	60%
Unskilled or unpaid	12%	3%	23%	12%	15%
Other	47%	30%	51%	57%	25%
Highest level of education before migration					
Primary school or less	15%	1%	31%	13%	29%
Lower secondary	25%	5%	21%	19%	29%
Higher secondary	36%	14%	26%	36%	30%
Higher education	23%	81%	21%	33%	11%
Married before migration	37%	7%	31%	61%	66%
Employment contract before arrival	1%	3%	24%	2%	1%
Age at migration	26.8	22.9	25.0	27.6	24.2
Time at arrival characteristics					
Initial housing temporary	37%	11%	16%	6%	7%
Residency permit within a year of arrival	80%	92%	70%	73%	94%
Time invariant					
Female	37%	46%	32%	69%	72%
Region of origin					
North Africa	3%	32%	25%	42%	51%
Sub-Saharan Africa	17%	17%	6%	10%	8%
Southeast Asia	20%	2%	0%	1%	1%
Turkey	11%	1%	5%	5%	13%
Portugal	2%	1%	25%	2%	11%
Spain/Italy	0%	2%	5%	2%	1%
EU27	6%	11%	18%	12%	3%
Other	41%	34%	15%	26%	13%
Time of the survey					
Age	43.9	40.2	46.8	39.5	40.3
Muslim	24%	38%	31%	50%	66%
French citizenship	49%	49%	24%	41%	25%
Married	77%	75%	80%	87%	82%
Current French ability					
Not at all	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Some French	60%	12%	48%	39%	58%
Very good comprehension and spoken	8%	6%	16%	13%	11%
All very good	31%	82%	35%	48%	31%
Education level					
No diploma	31%	3%	33%	24%	41%
Junior or vocational high school	25%	5%	31%	26%	37%
Vocational or regular bac	23%	11%	15%	23%	12%
University	22%	81%	21%	28%	10%
Current employment status					
Employed	69%	81%	78%	61%	54%
Student	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%

Table 1. Continued

	Refugee	Student	Worker	French spouse	Family reunification
Unemployed	16%	10%	10%	13%	12%
Retired/ stay at home	10%	6%	6%	24%	31%
Other	4%	1%	6%	2%	2%
Instruments					
Previous migration experience	21%	10%	14%	15%	5%
French proficiency on arrival					
Not at all	46%	11%	34%	20%	31%
Some French	36%	32%	43%	46%	49%
Very good comprehension and spoken	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
All very good	17%	56%	21%	33%	18%
Outcomes					
Household income (1–10; 1 = low income, 10 = high income)	4.6	7.4	5.9	5.4	4.4
Neighbourhood income disadvantage (1–10; 1 = high income, 10 = low income)	6.5	4.1	5.1	5.9	6.6
High immigrant neighbourhood (dichotomous)	62%	49%	50%	47%	56%
Total	12%	17%	31%	19%	21%
Observations	623	606	969	709	782

Source: TeO (2008).

attainment measured at the time of the survey, and second, to disentangle the direct effects of initial legal status from selection into legal status categories based on premigration characteristics.

Sample

We limit our analyses to the immigrant population only. In France, immigrants are defined as individuals born outside of France without French citizenship at birth. We include immigrants who arrived at age 15 or older (N = 6,142). Among these respondents, we restrict to those who reported valid responses to their first residency permit (N = 4,877). Finally, we drop observations with missing values on all dependent variables and covariates. The final sample size is 3,689 migrants.

Initial legal status

In France, the legal stratification of migrants is linked to the attribution of residency permits (called *titres de séjour*). To enter the country legally, migrants are first required to obtain a visa in the country of origin. The visa is only valid for a short period of time (between 3 months and 1 year). Before their visa expires, migrants who wish to remain in France must apply for a residency permit at the prefecture. The residency permit then enables legal settlement for a determined period of time.

Our key explanatory variable is the respondent's *first residency permit*. We use the TeO question that asks for what reason the respondent's first residency permit was issued. The original variable has ten responses: 'Refugee', 'Student', 'Worker', 'Marriage to a French citizen', 'Family reunification', 'Other', 'Exempt', 'Underway', 'Don't know', or refusal to respond. We focus on the five major categories: 'Refugee', 'Student', 'Worker', 'Marriage to a French citizen', and 'Family reunification'. As Table 1 shows, the largest categories in our sample are work permit holders (31 per cent), family reunification migrants (21 per cent) and those entering on a French spouse permit (19 per cent).

Those reporting other responses (1,265 respondents or about 20 per cent of all migrants in TeO) are dropped from the sample as the meaning of these categories is ambiguous. Respondents who reported 'Don't know' or 'Refused' may represent more legally vulnerable immigrants, including those who have yet to obtain a residency permit at the time of the survey. Those who are exempt from receiving a residence permit could be EU migrants who arrived in the post-Schengen era[3] or Swiss nationals.[4]

It should be emphasized here that the residence permit differs from the visa. Although most types of visas and permits overlap, the association between the visa (obtained prior to arrival) and the first permit

(obtained after arrival) is not always straightforward. For asylum seekers, who arrive by definition with no visa, the first permit is obtained when refugee status is granted, which may take several months or even years. For undocumented migrants, the first permit is issued upon regularization, which usually takes place after several years of arrival (if ever). TeO does not provide any information on the type of entry visa or whether the respondent arrived undocumented. Our data therefore measure the first official legal status and do not fully capture legal status upon arrival. To circumvent this limitation of the data, we also take into consideration when the first permit was issued. TeO reports the year in which migrants received their first permit. The large majority of respondents—nearly 80 per cent—received their permit in the same year that they arrived in France. For the rest, the first permit was delayed for reasons we cannot identify in the data. Drawing on the year of first permit and the year of arrival, we construct a dummy variable indicating whether respondents obtained their residency permit within a year of arriving in France. This variable is included as a control in all models, as we expect that migrants who received their permit relatively late would face a greater disadvantage on the job and housing markets.[5]

Finally, it is important to note that none of the respondents were French citizens at the time of migration. By the time of the survey, some acquired French nationality while others remained foreigners. We thus control for current citizenship status, as described below. However, the data provide no information about the residency permit at the time of the survey for those immigrants who did not become French citizens. Therefore, we can only investigate the effect of the first legal status, not its change over time.

Socioeconomic and residential outcomes

The dependent variables are three outcomes of socioeconomic and residential attainment measured at the time of the survey. The first outcome, *income*, is commonly used in past studies on immigrant selectivity and legal status effects (Jasso *et al*. 2000; Massey and Malone 2002). TeO data have the advantage of including information about household income per capita which is a robust and powerful proxy of socioeconomic attainment. The variable is divided into deciles according to the respondents' household monthly income, coded 1 for the lowest income households and 10 for the highest income households.

We use two neighbourhood-level variables, measured at the level of the French census block (*IRIS*). *Neighbourhood income disadvantage* measures household income per capita in the neighbourhood of residence, coded in deciles indicating 1 for the highest household income per capita neighbourhoods and 10 for the lowest income neighbourhoods. *High immigrant-dense neighbourhood* is a dummy indicating whether the respondent lives in a neighbourhood with high shares of immigrants. In TeO, neighbourhood immigrant shares are measured in deciles, with higher values representing higher concentrations of immigrants. As our sample is exclusively composed of migrants, it over-represents neighbourhoods with high shares of immigrants.[6] We therefore recoded this variable into a dichotomous outcome indicating whether the respondent lives in the top decile.

Covariates

Covariates included in the models refer to three moments in time: the premigration period, the time of arrival in France, and the time of the TeO survey ('current'). A fourth set of variables can be considered time invariant.

Premigratory characteristics

TeO covers a wealth of information on the situation of the respondent prior to migration. We include all such variables provided in the survey in order to capture the degree to which they are positively or negatively selected on economic and social capital. We consider information on whether respondents *visited France for less than a year prior to their arrival*. In addition, we control for the respondents' *type of last job prior to migration*, coded as 'Never worked prior to migration', 'Worked an unskilled or unpaid job prior to migration', or 'Other'. *Highest level of education prior to migration* is coded as 'Primary school or less', 'Lower-secondary', 'Higher-secondary', and 'Higher education'. We consider respondents' *marital status prior to migration*, a binary variable indicating whether the respondent reported being married prior to migration. We also examine an indicator variable measuring whether the respondent secured an *employment contract in France prior to migration*. Models also control for respondents' *age at migration*, which in conjunction with age at the time of the survey, helps capture the length of stay effects.

Time at arrival characteristics

Time at arrival characteristics include whether the respondent lived in *temporary housing immediately upon arrival*, such as in a housing centre for asylum seekers, a hostel for migrant workers, or accommodations temporarily lent to them by family or friends rather than a permanent or private dwelling.

Current characteristics

Our models control for several variables reflecting respondents' characteristics at the time of the TeO interview. *Current French citizenship status* is a

binary indicator measuring whether the respondent holds French citizenship at the time of the interview. Respondents' *current marital status* is a binary variable measuring whether the respondent reported being married. *Current French proficiency* is a categorical variable coded as 'Not at all', 'Some French', 'Very good comprehension and spoken French', and 'All very good'. We also examine respondents' *highest level of education* at the time of the survey, coded as 'No diploma', 'Junior or vocational high school', 'Vocational or baccalaureate degree', and 'University degree'. *Current employment status* is coded as 'Employed', 'Student', 'Unemployed', 'Retired/ Stay at home', or 'Other'. A dummy measures current *religion*, namely whether or not the respondent self-identifies as Muslim. Finally, we control for *age* at the time of the survey.

Time-invariant characteristics

Two other controls are reported at the time of the survey, although they may be considered time-invariant. These are *gender* and *region of birth*, coded as 'North Africa', 'Sub-Saharan Africa', 'Southeast Asia', 'Turkey', 'Portugal', 'Spain/ Italy', 'Other European Union countries', and 'Other'.

Descriptive comparisons in Table 1 suggest strong evidence of differential selection into legal status categories based on premigration variables. Respondents with student permits are by far the most highly educated prior to migration. Those who held work and family reunification permits reported the lowest levels of education prior to migration, with over half of respondents in both groups attaining only lower secondary schooling or less. Those who held student permits were also the most likely to have never worked prior to migration (66 per cent), and the least likely to have worked an unskilled or unpaid job (3 per cent). By contrast, only 26 per cent of those with work permits had not worked prior to migration, and a relatively high share of them (23 per cent) had worked in an unskilled or unpaid job.

Empirical approach

We first consider the effect of initial legal status, accounting for observables measured at different moments in the migration trajectory. Covariates are introduced incrementally: Model 1 includes current and time-invariant covariates and can be denoted as follows:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P_i + \beta_2 T_i + \beta_3 C_i + \epsilon_1$$

where Y_i represents our socioeconomic outcomes of interest, P_i represents initial legal status, T_i represents time-invariant characteristics, and C_i represents current covariates.

Model 2 adds premigratory (M_i) and time of arrival characteristics (A_i) as follows[7]:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P_i + \beta_2 T_i + \beta_3 C_i + \beta_4 M_i + \beta_5 A_i + \epsilon_2$$

Second, we implement an instrumental variable strategy to further correct for potential endogeneity related to omitted variable bias. To be valid, the instruments (Z_i) should impact the current socioeconomic outcomes (Y_i) only through their effect on initial legal status. We select two variables which meet this requirement: previous migration experience and French language skills at the time of arrival. Previous migration experience is a dichotomous variable measuring whether the immigrant has ever lived outside of their country of birth for at least one year prior to their arrival in France. French language skills on arrival is coded in four categories, 'Not at all', 'Other', 'Very good comprehension and spoken', and 'All very good'.

Our instrumental variable model is based on the following simultaneous equation:

$$P_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 T_i + \alpha_2 M_i + \alpha_3 Z_i + \epsilon_3$$
$$Y_i = \pi_0 + \pi_1 \widehat{P_i} + \pi_2 T_i + \pi_3 M_i + \pi_4 C_i + \pi_5 A_i + \epsilon_4$$

where T_i represents time-invariant covariates, M_i represents premigration characteristics, Z_i represents the instrumental variables, C_i represents current covariates, A_i represents upon-arrival characteristics, and $\widehat{P_i}$ represents predictions of initial permit status using the time-invariant, premigration, and instrumental variables.

As instrumental variable estimations are sensitive to model specifications, we use a variety of estimation strategies and compare results across models (Wooldridge 2010). Following Meng and Gregory (2005), we first implement a two-step strategy in which we estimate a multinomial logit predicting legal status (including the instruments) and plug the predicted probabilities into Equation 2 estimated using OLS (for household income and neighbourhood income disadvantage) or probit (for immigrant-dense neighbourhood) regressions. We bootstrapped the standard errors of the second equation. Full results for the multinomial two-step (Model 3) are reported in Supplementary Table A2. The second strategy relies on maximum likelihood estimation using a generalized structural equation model that includes a latent variable to account for the correlation between the two equations (STATA 2019). Full GSEM model results (Model 4) are included in Supplementary Tables A3–A5.

The choice of our instruments is grounded in the literature previously reviewed. Tests run on the instruments further suggest that these variables are empirically justified and satisfy the validity requirements: the models show that the instruments are consistently significant in determining the legal status outcome and consistently insignificant in predicting the socioeconomic outcomes (Supplementary Table A6). The significant Wald test for the instruments calculated from the first stage

of the multinomial two-step predicting legal status further indicates the relevance of the instruments.

Results

The effect of initial legal status controlling for observables

Table 2 presents the coefficients for initial legal status for the three outcomes before and after controlling for premigratory and time of arrival characteristics (Models 1 and 2). The models compare all legal categories of migrants to family reunification permit holders, one of the largest entry status groups in France in recent decades (d'Albis and Boubtane 2018). Asylum permit holders and students stand out in terms of household income. Relative to family reunification permit holders, refugees have significantly lower income in both models, while migrants who arrived as students report significantly higher income. Workers also show an income advantage, but this effect is accounted for by premigration and on-arrival determinants. As concerns the spatial outcomes, workers, students, and French spouse permit holders live in neighbourhoods with lower income disadvantage relative to family reunification migrants, net of controls. French spouse permit holders also have lower chances of living in less segregated areas, while refugees are more likely to do so.

To get a better sense of effect size and statistically significant differences between legal status categories, Figure 1 plots predictions for the three outcomes calculated from Model 2. The left-hand panel depicts the relative disadvantage of refugee permit holders and the advantage of students in terms of household income: net of controls, there is a gap of about 1 decile between the two groups. Income predictions for these categories are significantly different not only from family reunification permit holders but also from workers and migrants with a French spouse. Neighbourhood income disadvantage is significantly higher for the refugee and family reunification categories relative to students and workers, with the gap between refugees and students reaching over 1 decile. Refugee permit holders have a net probability of 58 per cent of living in high-share immigrant neighbourhoods, substantially higher than spousal permit holders, whose probability is just under 45 per cent.

Of course, immigrants' socioeconomic outcomes are also associated with their characteristics before and upon arrival (see full model results in Supplementary Table A1). Receiving the residency permit within a year of arrival tends to be positively associated with more advantaged outcomes, although the coefficients for household income and neighbourhood income fall short of statistical significance. Those who arrived at younger ages, received higher education, had a work contract in France, worked a salaried job prior to migration, and who lived in stable housing upon migration reported better income and spatial outcomes. Relative to North Africans, migrants originating from European countries have higher net incomes and live in more affluent and less immigrant-dense neighbourhoods. Religion also has a decisive influence on socioeconomic and residential attainment, with a distinct Muslim disadvantage observed across models.

Nonetheless, Table 2 documents that initial legal status continues to shape SES and residential outcomes beyond the effect of observables related to ethnoracial origin, premigratory, and current characteristics.

The effect of initial legal status, correcting for potential endogeneity

Table 3 compares the effects of initial legal status from the basic model (Model 2) with the instrumental variable models. The income disadvantage of refugee permit holders is robust across all models.[8] In contrast, the student income advantage observed in Model 2 loses significance in the instrumental variable specifications, suggesting that this effect may be due to omitted variables. The effects of legal status on the two spatial outcomes also seem sensitive to unobservables. The neighbourhood income advantage of students and workers relative to family permit holders, as well as the lower segregation of French spouses, is not found in either instrumental variable specification. However, there is some evidence that refugees are still more likely to live in immigrant-dense neighbourhoods, correcting for endogeneity, although this finding is not stable across specifications (Model M3c). Hence, these results suggest that initial legal categories have a lasting effect only on refugees' SES. For other permit holders, the correlations observed in descriptive analyses seem to be primarily accounted for by immigrant selectivity and individual heterogeneity.

Discussion and conclusion

Civic stratification posits that, through legal and symbolic channels, initial legal status is likely to shape migrants' socioeconomic outcomes. Yet, immigrants are not randomly assigned to legal categories upon entry, but are differentially selected into them on the basis of their premigration characteristics and other unobservables. Because such factors also influence migrant outcomes, it is difficult to empirically assess the net effect of initial legal status. This article aimed to go beyond previous research by using rarely available information on immigrants' initial legal status, giving broader consideration to these potential sources of migratory selection and individual heterogeneity and by exploring both SES and residential outcomes.

Table 2 Effects of initial legal status before and after controlling for premigratory and time at arrival characteristics

	Household income (OLS)		Neighbourhood income disadvantage (OLS)		High immigrant neighbourhood (Probit)	
	M1a	M2a	M1b	M2b	M1c	M2c
Ref: Family reunification						
Refugee	−0.48**	−0.41**	0.29	0.17	0.19*	0.17†
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.08)	(0.09)
Student	0.99***	0.83***	−1.05***	−0.87***	−0.06	−0.03
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.21)	(0.22)	(0.08)	(0.09)
Worker	0.29*	0.14	−0.64***	−0.61***	0.08	0.11
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Spouse	0.18	0.20	−0.28	−0.30†	−0.19**	−0.20**
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Controls						
Time invariant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time of the survey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time at arrival	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Premigratory	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	3,689	3,689	3,689	3,689	3,689	3,689

Source: TeO (2008).
Note: Table shows coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
$^{***}P < 0.001$, $^{**}P < 0.01$, $^{*}P < 0.05$, $\dagger P < 0.10$.

We found that student, worker, and spousal permits are associated with better outcomes relative to family reunification or refugee permits. These signs of advantage diminish somewhat but still persist when including premigration selection variables. This reflects the fact that some of the initial legal status effect is confounded with immigrant selectivity: immigrants who arrived with student, worker, or spousal permits achieve higher socioeconomic and spatial integration outcomes at least partly because they tend to be more positively selected prior to migration. Moreover, the relative advantage of these permit holders disappears in instrumental variable models, indicating that these effects are also due to other unobserved selection mechanisms. These categories of migrants likely have higher levels of soft skills as well as social or cultural capital—i.e. social ties with French citizens and greater knowledge of French culture and society—mechanisms that our data do not measure directly and which can be regarded as individual heterogeneity. The disappearance of the effect of these legal categories may be related to the fact that they also capture 'aspirations' or 'motivations' (Carling and Collins 2018). For example, while economic migrants largely base their decisions to migrate on their earning potential in the destination country, family reunification migrants may be motivated by non-economic factors (Chiswick, Lee and Miller 2005).

Yet not all initial status differences can be explained by premigratory or omitted variables. Our analyses point to a refugee income disadvantage that is robust across model specifications. This finding aligns with prior research showing the vulnerable status of refugees in Europe as well as a lasting refugee gap in employment, earnings and occupation in several contexts (Connor 2010; Dumont *et al*. 2016; Bakker *et al*. 2017). Prior studies have often interpreted the net effect of refugee status, after accounting for factors such as education and language skills, as resulting from the trauma and poor mental health that characterize the refugee experience. However, by controlling for premigratory characteristics and unobservables, our findings suggest a direct effect of refugee status itself. This is in line with recent studies that have linked refugee disadvantage to policy-related factors in the United States (Kreisberg, Gleeson and De Graauw 2022) and in Germany, where the lack of initial working rights has scarring effects on refugees' economic integration (Marbach *et al*. 2018).

Indeed, strict legislation implemented in France in the 1980s has created a harsh legal context for asylum seekers, facilitating refoulement at the border and making the procedure for obtaining refugee status more difficult. Compared to other categories, asylum seekers are at a greater risk of experiencing some period of undocumented status (Dumont *et al*. 2016).

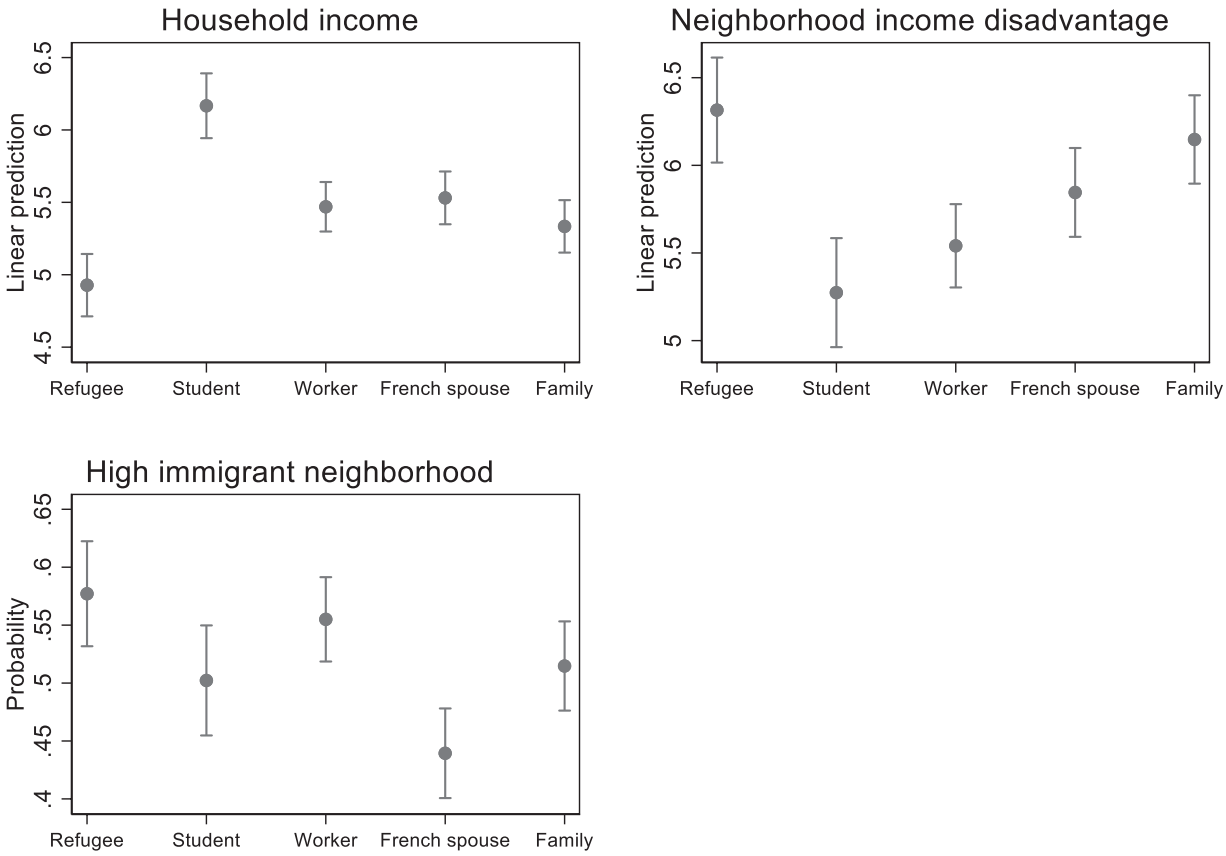

Figure 1 Predictions of SES and residential outcomes by initial legal status from M2. *Source*: TeO (2008).

Undocumented immigrants in France experience high occupational and residential segregation and are concentrated in low-paying occupations and in poor, immigrant-dense neighbourhoods (Moliner 2015). This period of illegality is likely to have lasting effects on asylum seekers' socioeconomic integration even after refugee status is granted. And even for asylum seekers who were never undocumented, their rights are nonetheless restricted as they must wait several months after arrival to apply for a work permit (d'Albis and Boubtane 2018). The difficult and lengthy administrative procedure that refugees have to go through as well as restricted and vulnerable rights at entry may thus explain the lower net income of refugees.

At a more symbolic level, the social stigma attached to refugees has intensified in France, along with the rise of anti-foreigner sentiment, immigration restrictions, and changes in the composition of migrant flows starting in the 1980s, during which more asylum seekers began to arrive from African or Middle Eastern countries. Seen as less 'desirable' or even 'unassimilable' (particularly for those who are perceived as Muslims), these 'new asylum seekers' make up the majority of the refugee permit holders analysed in this article (nearly 80 per cent of the initial refugee permit recipients in our sample arrived after 1980). They tend to be contrasted in the public debate with more favourably received 'chosen' migrants (i.e. students or workers) (Lochak 2006). The negative social connotation attached to refugee status may result in greater housing or labour market discrimination.

Higher concentration in immigrant-dense neighbourhoods was also observed for refugees net of other factors and after accounting for selection. Research from other European contexts shows that the residential sorting of refugees is strongly contingent on housing integration policies, which may channel them into the same areas (see for instance Adam *et al.* 2021 in Germany; Andersson *et al.* 2010 in Sweden). Refugees may further seek to rely on the benefits and solidarity available from co-ethnic networks, whether in terms of residential choices or job searches (Aslund 2005), which could explain the higher immigrant proportion in their neighbourhoods. Living in immigrant-dense areas can hence be interpreted as a resource rather than as a form of disadvantage. This interpretation is

Table 3 Effects of initial legal status from two instrumental variable model specifications

	Household income (OLS)			Neighbourhood income disadvantage (OLS)			High immigrant neighbourhood (Probit)		
	Basic model (M2a)	Mlogit two-step (M3a)	GSEM (M4a)	Basic model (M2b)	Mlogit two-step (M3b)	GSEM (M4b)	Basic model (M2c)	Mlogit two-step (M3c)	GSEM (M4c)
Ref: Family reunification									
Refugee	−0.41**	−2.15***	−1.27**	0.17	0.82	0.93	0.17†	0.66†	0.33
	(0.15)	(0.64)	(0.45)	(0.21)	(0.92)	(0.68)	(0.09)	(0.35)	(0.31)
Student	0.83***	0.60	−0.02	−0.87***	−0.70	−0.13	−0.03	−0.01	0.12
	(0.15)	(0.51)	(0.44)	(0.22)	(0.68)	(0.66)	(0.09)	(0.30)	(0.29)
Worker	0.14	−0.10	−0.74†	−0.61***	−0.26	0.17	0.11	0.48	0.27
	(0.13)	(0.64)	(0.45)	(0.18)	(0.87)	(0.67)	(0.08)	(0.37)	(0.30)
Spouse	0.20	−0.92	−0.67	−0.30†	1.11	0.46	−0.20**	−0.40	−0.04
	(0.13)	(0.61)	(0.44)	(0.18)	(0.82)	(0.67)	(0.07)	(0.35)	(0.28)
Controls									
Time invariant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time of the survey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time at arrival	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Premigratory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Instrumented	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
N	3,689	3,689	3,689	3,689	3,689	3,689	3,689	3,689	3,689

Source: TeO (2008).
Note: Table shows coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
$^{***}P < 0.001$, $^{**}P < 0.01$, $^{*}P < 0.05$, †$P < 0.10$.

confirmed by the fact that living in immigrant-dense neighbourhoods is not necessarily associated with spatial disadvantage, as refugees were not more likely than other groups to live in poor neighbourhoods.

Our findings have several theoretical implications for the civic stratification perspective. First, they challenge the assumption that all legal status categories exert direct effects on migrant outcomes. Given the significance of premigration characteristics, migrant selectivity needs to be acknowledged as a key mechanism of legal status disparities within the migrant population, and should be systematically accounted for in empirical studies. Research on civic stratification should therefore better attend to the indirect (selection) and direct (causal) effects of legal status. Second, by investigating multiple categories and several outcomes, our results show the heterogeneity of mechanisms underlying the effects of legal categories. Future theoretical endeavours could advance our understanding of why some specific legal categories count more and for longer. Finally, our results shed some light on the relative salience of legal status with respect to other forms of inequality, such as religion and country of origin. Our results documented a disadvantage for Muslims and African-origin migrants net of legal status and controls. The effect of country of origin in particular tends to outweigh that of legal status.[9] This might have to do with the fact that origin is an ascriptive variable that remains stable and correlates with relatively unchanging ethnoracial markers (skin colour, religion). Despite the powerful inequality mechanisms embedded in migrants' initial legal status, the latter is likely to change over the life course which may alleviate its long-term effects (re-categorization into a more advantaged status or naturalization which is a form of civic equality achievement). Civic stratification perspectives could therefore benefit from attending to the ways that formal (i.e. legal) and informal (i.e. ethnoracial) sources of inequality compare and intersect.

This study nonetheless presents some limitations that future research could aim to overcome. First, our data do not allow us to determine whether respondents arrived undocumented. This limitation may not be consequential in France, where less than 7 per cent of immigrants are estimated to be undocumented (Pew Research Center 2019). Yet it is still likely to result in an underestimation of the effect of legal status categories as initial undocumented status is shown to exert a lasting negative effect on immigrants' attainment (Kreisberg 2019). Second, future studies should

consider the effects of initial status in the context of immigrant families. In particular, the impact of family reunification status may vary across the legal status of the family member the migrant is reuniting with. While we control for the citizenship status of the spouse, we do not have information about the potential heterogeneity of initial legal status within households.

From a methodological point of view, the instrumental variable approach implemented in this article cannot be interpreted as providing straightforward causal estimates; the weakness of the instruments used is indeed a serious drawback as is often the case in social science studies that strive to find good instruments. We cannot rule out the possibility that both language skills at entry and prior migration experience have direct effects on the socioeconomic and residential outcomes even if we argue, relying on the rare prior literature, that these variables have analytically stronger effects on the first residence permit and likely weaker ones on the outcomes at the time of the survey. The use of the instrumental variable approach in this article should be understood as adding to the range of methodological approaches used in order to more rigorously identify the effects of initial legal status.

Finally, more research is needed to trace post-migration mediating factors which link initial legal status to current socioeconomic outcomes. Migrants whose legal status is tied to a citizen spouse or who obtained a diploma from a French university typically benefit from a faster track to citizenship, which could be a pathway through which initial legal status influences socioeconomic outcomes given that naturalization fosters socioeconomic integration (Bratsberg, Ragan and Nasir 2002; Fougère and Safi 2009; Steinhardt 2012). Furthermore, initial legal status may shape different socialization paths leading to marriage with French citizens. Student or worker permit holders, for instance, could have greater opportunities for intermarriage via their exposure to privileged higher education institutions and job integration.[10] While we control for current citizenship, marital status, and retrospective premigration information, future studies should use longitudinal data to explore potential mediating pathways in-depth.

Notes

1. For more details on the legislative changes governing residency permits, see the detailed overview published by Le Monde (2019).
2. Schuss (2018) uses lagged language skills as an instrumental variable to measure the effect of current language proficiency on labour market integration in Germany. Their approach provides further support for our assumption that initial language proficiency does not correlate with current socioeconomic attainment once current language proficiency is accounted for.
3. Until the 1985 Schengen Agreement, which permitted the free circulation of European citizens within the Schengen area, European migrants in France required entry visas and residency permits just like migrants of any other origin. The agreement went into effect in 1995, after which date migrants from Schengen states are no longer subject to any legal process to enter, live, study, or work in France.
4. As a robustness check, we ran all analyses including these ambiguous legal status categories to ensure the results are not sensitive to the exclusion of the sample. Results do not change.
5. To determine whether our findings are sensitive to the permit issuance date, we further conducted a robustness check excluding migrants who did not receive their permit within a year of arrival. The main findings do not change.
6. Seventy-one per cent of our respondents live in the top two deciles of the neighbourhood immigrant distribution.
7. As migrants' current characteristics are likely correlated with premigratory and time of arrival variables, we check for multicollinearity in the models using variance inflation factors (vif). All scores are under the standard threshold of 10 whereby multicollinearity is considered to be problematic (Hair *et al*. 1995). The highest VIF scores are found for current education and premigration educational attainment (vif ≥ 2 and <6).
8. Given that instrumental variable designs are sensitive to model specifications, we further tested for evidence of a refugee income disadvantage in a generalized structural equation model that predicts initial legal status as a dichotomous outcome indicating refugee (1) vs. other permits (0). Results are robust to this specification.
9. For comparison, Supplementary Table A1 shows, for instance, that the coefficients in the household income and neighbourhood income equations for European origin migrants vs. North Africans are larger than those found for any legal status categories. The comparison of the marginal effects computed out of the probit models (analyses not shown but available upon request) demonstrates similar patterns: higher disparities are found between European origin migrants and North Africans than between any legal status categories.
10. Supplementary analyses (not shown here but available upon request) indicate that rates of marriage to a French native are particularly high among initial student permit holders. For example, while only 7 per cent of student permit holders in our sample are married prior to migration, 75 per cent of these respondents are married by the time of the survey (Table 1). Among respondents who were unmarried prior to their arrival in France but who reported being married at the time of TeO collection, 56 per cent of student permit holders compared to 19 per cent of family reunification permit holders had a native-born French spouse.

Supplementary data

Supplementary data are available at *ESR* online.

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