CHAPTER 3. LONGER-TERM SETTLEMENT INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS

This chapter focuses on indicators relating to settlement outcomes of migrants with more than 5 years residence in Australia. The indicators are based on the total overseas-born population[3]. They examine settlement outcomes experienced during each successive 5-year period of residence, extending to more than 15 years [4], providing a long-term

[3] The indicators are obtained from special tabulations of the 1996 Census of Population and Housing Census supplemented by the Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants Survey 1999 and the Survey of Mental Health and Well-being 1997. Indicators from the 1996 Census are presented for persons aged 15 years and over according to the age group of the person at the time of the Census. Four age groupings are used: 15-24 years, 25-44 years, 45-64 years, and 65 years and over. It should be noted that when tables of year of arrival in Australia are produced for people of a given age at the time of the 1996 Census, the longer the person has been in Australia, the lower was their age at the time when they arrived in Australia. Hence, where it is observed that social participation for an age group increases as the duration of residence in Australia lengthens, the result may be due either to length of time in Australia or to age at arrival.

Indicators are shown for all overseas-born persons as one category. As the composition by country of birth of overseas-born persons varies according to the year of arrival in Australia and to current age at the 1996 Census, the indicators that are shown according to age and duration of residence may reflect this changing birthplace composition.

The Labour Force and Other Characteristics of Migrants Survey has information on migration category, allowing indicators to be examined according to that variable. The migration categories listed in the survey are New Zealander, Refugee, Sponsored by family, Sponsored by another person or organization, Sponsored by employer, Unsponsored, and Other. In this study, the 'Sponsored by employer' category has been combined with the Unsponsored category to form a Skill migration category. The 'Sponsored by another person or organization category' is rather ambiguous and results are not presented for that category, which has relatively small numbers of respondents. Migrants in each category include the principal applicant as well as accompanying family members.

Indicators and benchmarks from the 1997 Mental Health Survey are presented for the overseas-born population according to whether they are born in the main English-speaking countries (United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America and South Africa) or other overseas country, and for the Australian-born. Data were not available from that survey on year of arrival for the overseas-born.

[4] The categories of years of arrival used in the 1996 Census were: Before 1981, 1981-1985, 1986-1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, and 1996. To provide large enough numbers in each category, the single-year categories from 1991 to 1996 have been combined into three two-year categories: 1991-1992, 1993-1994 and 1995-1996. For some analyses, the single category, 1991-96, has been used. The corresponding durations of residence are as follows:

Year of arrival category	Duration of residence (approximate years)
Before 1981	15+
1981-1985	10-15
1986-1990	5-10
1991-1992	3-5
1993-1994	1-3
1995-1996	0-1
1991-1996	0-5

perspective of immigrant adjustment that is particularly important in assessing settlement success. They are compared against benchmarks based on the Australian-born population and the total Australian population.

As in the previous chapter, the indicators are examined for men and women separately. Depending on the data source, they are presented by age at the time of the census or survey or age on arrival. Some indicators are also presented by level of qualifications or migration category.

Indicators of social participation

English proficiency

The English proficiency indicator from the 1996 Census is based on responses to two questions in the Census: whether the person spoke a language other than English at home; and how well does the person speak English if the answer was 'Yes' to the first question. A person who spoke only English at home or who spoke it very well or well is considered to be proficient in the English language.

Table 3.1 shows the English proficiency indicator for all overseas-born persons aged 15 and over by age and duration of residence in Australia in 1996. The differences by age are similar to that observed for this indicator during the first 3½ years of settlement in the previous chapter. Except for the oldest age group, over 90 per cent of former migrants speak English well or very well when they have been in Australia for at least 15 years, although for persons over age 45, there is little improvement in English proficiency in their first 10 years in the country. Overall, 82 per cent of the overseas-born population aged 15+ in 1996 spoke good English. Among the Australian-born population aged 15+ in 1996, proficiency in English is close to 100 per cent.

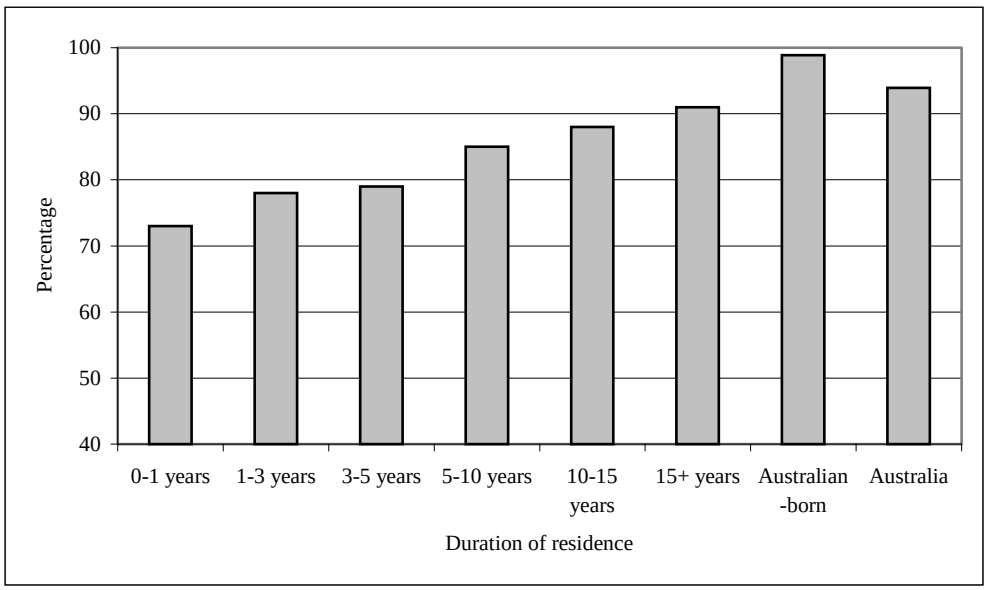
Table 3.1. Percentage speaking good English: overseas-born by age and duration of residence, 1996.

Age	Duration of residence						
(years)	0-1 year	1-3 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15+years	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
15-24	78	85	90	97	99	98	83
25-44	76	80	82	86	88	97	84
45-64	59	64	62	77	83	91	84
65+	51	56	48	59	65	83	73
Total 15+	73	78	79	85	88	91	82

Source: 1996 Census DIMA Table CS072

Indicators based on the Migrant Survey are similarly constrained to the following durations of residence: 0-8, 9-13 and 14-18 years.

Figure 3.1. Percentage speaking good English: overseas-born by duration of residence compared with Australian-born and total Australian populations, 1996.



Source: Appendix Table B3.1

Participation in education

The indicator for participation in education is based on the overseas-born population aged 15-24 in 1996 who arrived in Australia before 1991[5]. Table 3.2 compares this indicator with the same measure for the Australian-born and total Australian population in the same age group. Since the age distribution of the overseas-born population within the 15-24 age group is quite different from that of the Australian population in the same age group[6], comparisons are based on smaller age ranges such as 15-17, 18-19, 20-21 and 22-24.

Participation in secondary and tertiary education is generally higher among overseas-born youth than Australia-born youth. The exception is participation in vocational study by overseas-born youth under age 20.

[5] This excludes overseas students in this age group most of whom would have arrived within the five-year period before the 1996 Census. If included in the analysis, they would have inflated the participation rate in education as they formed a significant proportion of the overseas-born population in this age group. Comparable figures are also obtained for the total Australian population in this age group. Overseas students are included in the total Australian population. Compared to the total Australian population in this age group, their number is relatively small.

[6] Among migrants there are usually more people over age 20 than under, whereas in the Australian population the reverse is true.

Table 3.2. Participation in education: overseas-born aged 15-24 years with more than 5 years residence compared with Australian-born and the total Australian population, 1996.

Birthplace, sex and age group	Type of educational enrolment (%)				
	Secondary school	Tertiary: university	Tertiary: vocational/other	Not studying	Total
OVERSEAS-BORN POPULATION					
Males					
15-17	84.1	1.5	3.7	10.7	100
18-19	15.6	29.2	17.4	36.8	100
20-21	1.2	34.1	15.0	49.7	100
22-24	0.6	21.5	8.8	69.2	100
Total 15-24	25.6	20.5	10.4	43.6	100
Females					
15-17	86.4	2.2	3.0	8.4	100
18-19	13.8	37.7	15.2	33.3	100
20-21	0.9	38.5	12.5	48.1	100
22-24	0.5	19.8	8.5	71.2	100
Total 15-24	25.5	22.4	9.2	42.9	100
AUSTRALIAN-BORN POPULATION					
Males					
15-17	75.1	0.9	5.8	18.2	100
18-19	8.0	17.5	19.0	55.5	100
20-21	0.4	17.7	13.5	68.4	100
22-24	0.2	9.8	7.1	83.0	100
Total 15-24	24.3	10.1	10.3	55.4	100
Females					
15-17	80.3	1.2	4.2	14.3	100
18-19	7.6	25.7	15.8	51.0	100
20-21	0.4	23.5	10.0	66.1	100
22-24	0.2	10.7	7.0	82.2	100
Total 15-24	25	13.3	8.5	53.2	100
TOTAL AUSTRALIAN POPULATION					
Males					
15-17	76.1	1.0	5.7	17.3	100
18-19	9.9	19.0	18.9	52.3	100
20-21	0.8	20.5	14.0	64.7	100
22-24	0.3	12.2	7.9	79.6	100
Total 15-24	24.5	11.9	10.6	53.1	100
Females					
15-17	80.9	1.3	4.2	13.6	100
18-19	9.2	26.9	16.0	47.9	100
20-21	0.7	26.0	10.9	62.4	100
22-24	0.3	12.5	7.8	79.4	100
Total 15-24	25.0	14.8	8.9	51.3	100

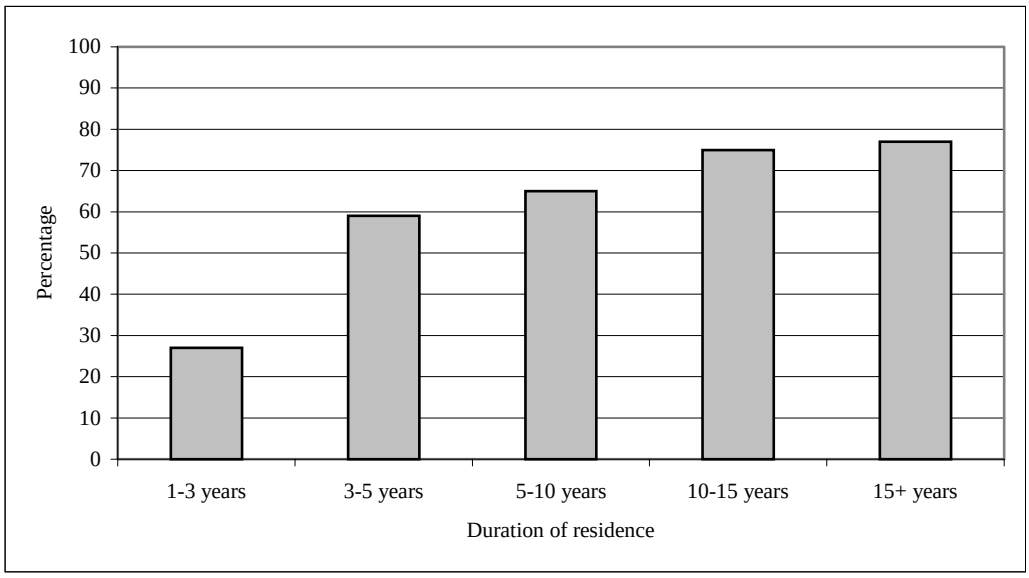
Source: 1996 Census, DIMA Tables x_2 and 6.2.

Citizenship

The citizenship indicator from the Census can be examined by duration of residence of the overseas-born that extends to more than 15 years. Figure 3.2 shows that the percentage of the overseas-born population who have taken Australian citizenship reaches almost 60 per cent for those resident for 3-5 years[7] and gradually increases as the length of time in Australia rises, reaching 76 per cent for those resident 15 years or more. Thus, moderate levels of social participation are indicated by this measure.

In 1996, 67 per cent of all overseas-born residents were Australian citizens. Citizenship rates by birthplace based on 1996 Census data have already been published by DIMA (1999).

Figure 3.2. Percentage Australian citizens: overseas-born by duration of residence, 1996.



Source: Appendix Table B3.2

[7] This percentage is lower than the figure indicated by LSIA data for principal applicants at 3 ½ years residence because census data for the total overseas-born include New Zealanders who are not included in LSIA1. The census figure also includes accompanying family members while the LSIA figure is based on principal applicants only.

Indicators of economic participation

Two sets of indicators are presented. Indicators from the 1996 Census are based on all overseas-born persons by age at census time, while those from the 1999 Migrant Survey are for migrants who arrived during 1981-99 and shown by age on arrival.

Participation in the labour force

The labour force participation indicator from the Census[8] shows that 53 per cent of the total overseas-born population aged 15+ were in the labour force compared with 64 per cent of the Australian-born population and 61 per cent of the total Australian population of the same age. These figures mask important differences by age and sex. They are also not comparable because some of the differences between the two figures are due to differences in the age structure of the two populations. The lower rate of the overseas-born is also affected by the lower participation of recent migrants and the presence of overseas students. It is therefore important to examine the rate by age and duration of residence of the overseas-born, particularly for comparison with the Australian-born population.

Overseas-born men have generally lower participation rates than all Australian-born men in the first 10 years of settlement (Figure 3.3). For those resident for 10 years or more, the participation rates of the overseas-born aged 25+ are very close to those of the Australian-born population in each of the three age groups. The largest differences between the participation rates for the overseas-born and the Australian-born population are found among men aged 15-24 years who have been resident in Australia for less than 10 years. It should be noted, however, that the overseas-born in this age range contain an over-representation of full-time students compared to the Australian-born or total Australian population. For the other age groups, the labour force participation rate of the overseas-born is at least equivalent to that of the Australian-born or total Australian population after 5-10 years of residence.

After 10 years of residence in Australia, the participation rates of overseas-born women are also very close to those of Australian-born women. As is the case for overseas-born men, overseas-born women aged 25-64 years attain parity with Australian-born women in their labour force participation rates after 5-10 years of residence. The same pattern as for men is also evident for the age group 15-24, again reflecting the high rates of participation in full-time education of the overseas-born of these ages.

Figure 3.4 shows labour force participation rates for men and women aged 25-44 years according to their level of qualification. The general picture is that after 10 years of residence, labour force participation rates of overseas-born men and women are very similar to those of Australian-born men and women and the total Australian population for each level of qualification. For men, parity in labour force participation between the

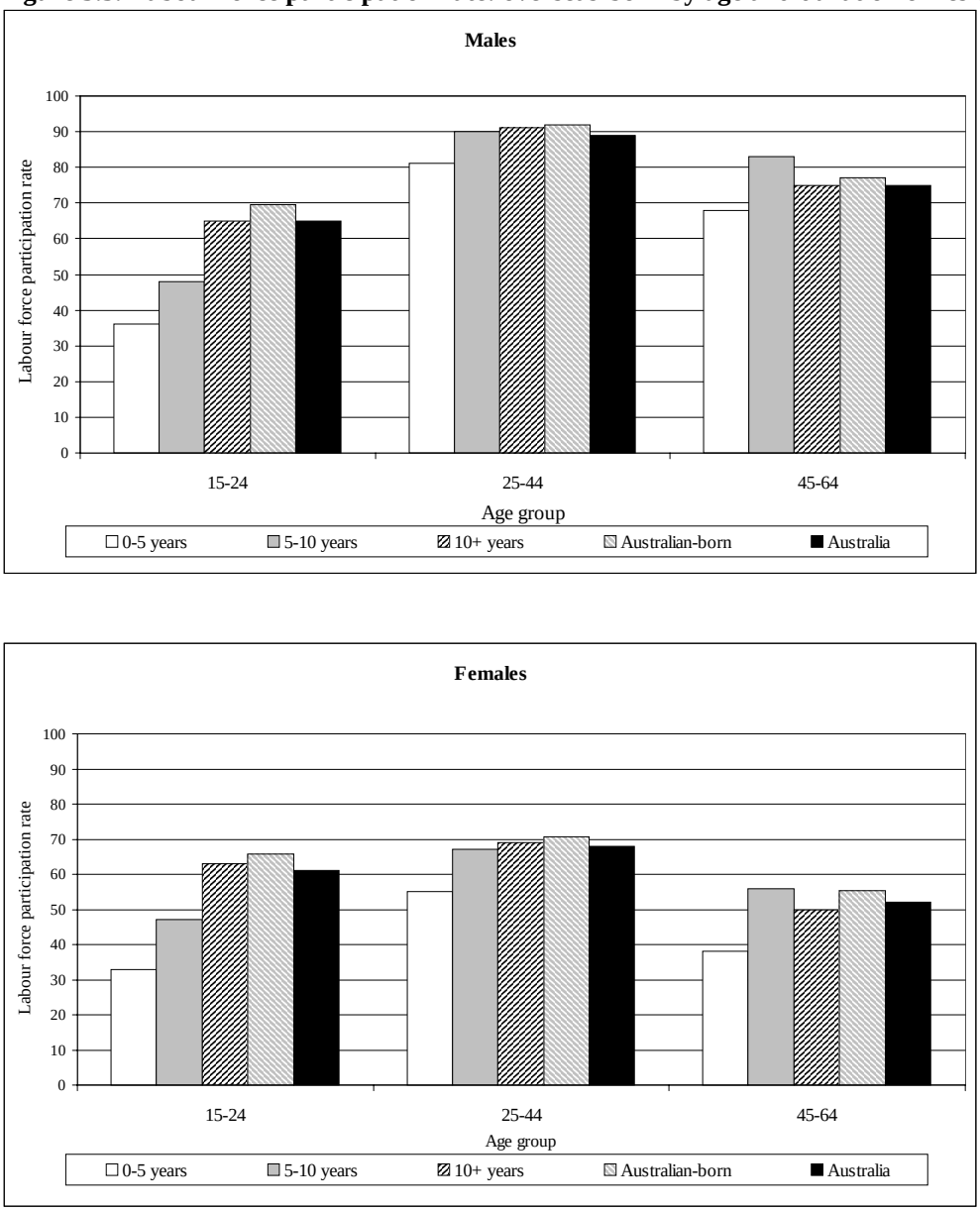
[8] The indicator is based on people who were employed in the census week and people who were unemployed. The employed were those who had worked at least one hour in the week prior to the census including those who were on leave and those who worked unpaid in a family business. The unemployed were those who were not working but had actively been seeking work in the four weeks prior to the census.

overseas-born and the Australian-born is reached after a period of residence of ten years for those with diploma or degree qualifications and about 5 years for those with vocational or no qualifications. For women, it takes about ten years for every level of qualification.

The labour force participation indicator from the 1999 Migrant Survey is shown in Figure 3.5 by educational attainment on arrival. The increase in participation rate with length of residence is similar to the pattern observed in the census rates.

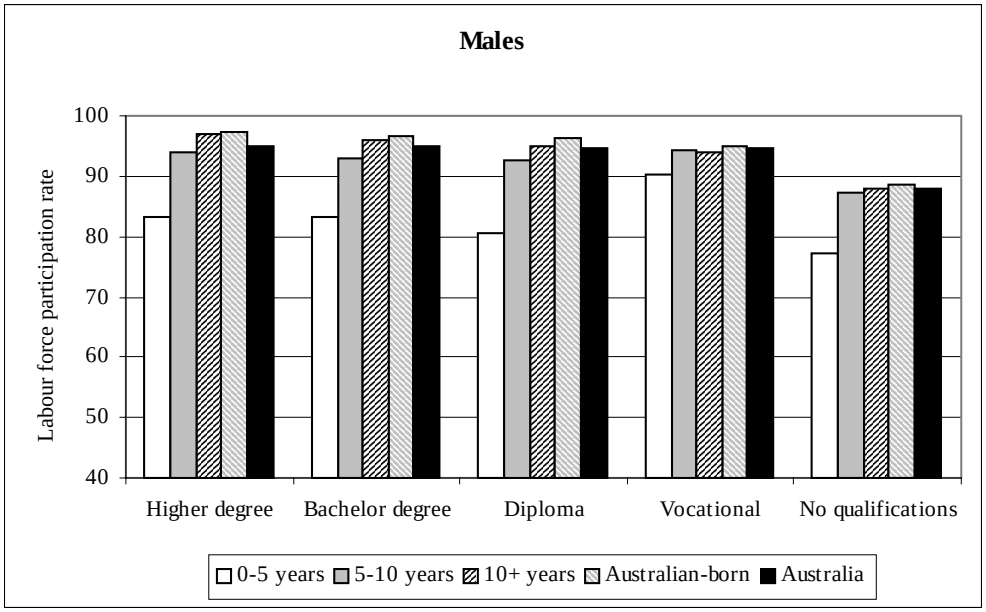
Labour force participation rates by migration category are shown in Figure 3.6. They indicate that former refugees have lower participation rates than other migrants even after more than 10 years residence.

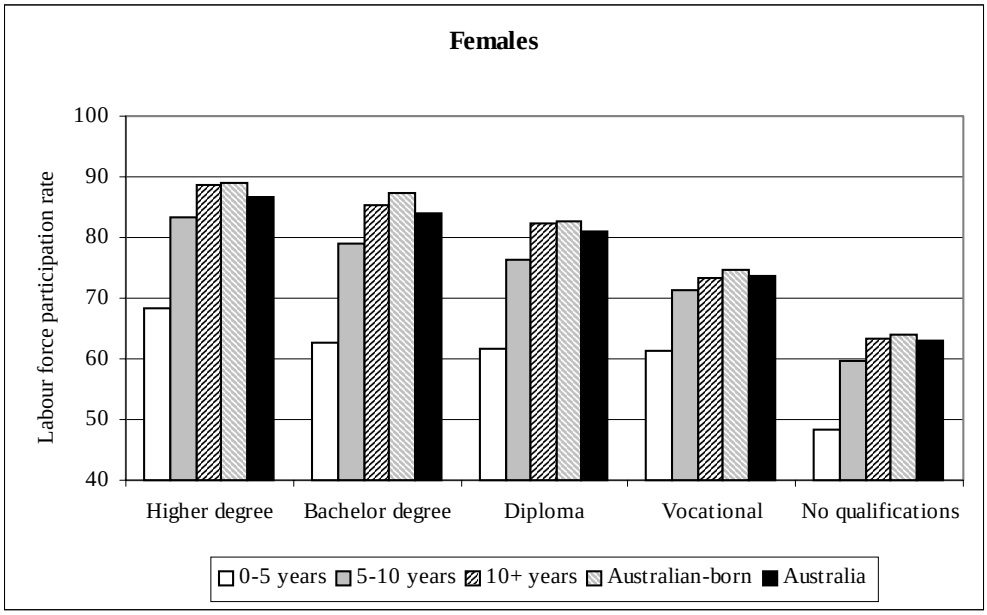
Figure 3.3. Labour force participation rate: overseas-born by age and duration of residence.



Source: Appendix Table B3.3a and Appendix Table B3.3b

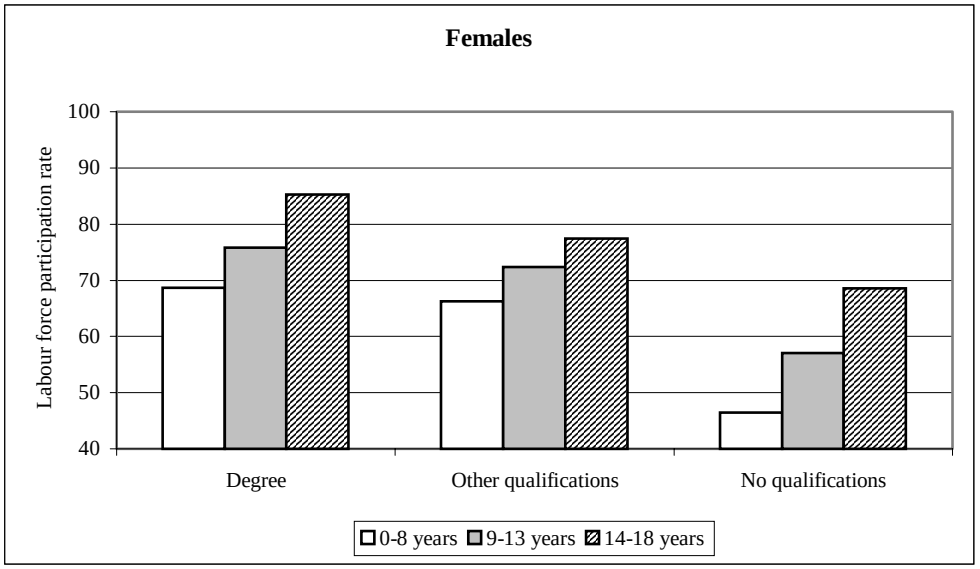
Figure 3.4. Labour force participation rate: overseas-born by qualification and duration of residence.





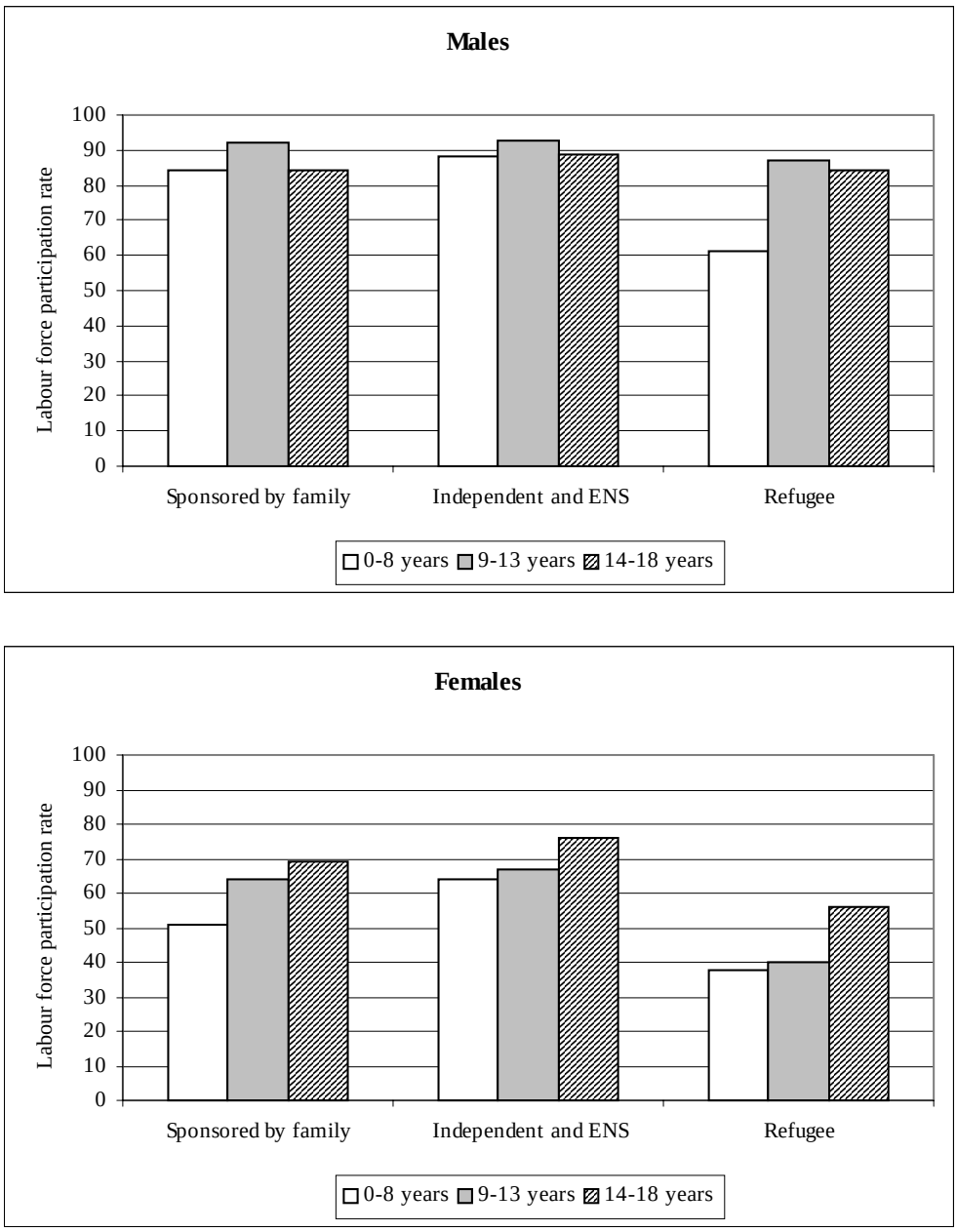
Source: Appendix Table B3.3a and Appendix Table B3.3b

Figure 3.5. Labour force participation rate: migrants aged 18-44 on arrival by educational qualifications on arrival and duration of residence, 1999.



Source: Appendix Table B3.4

Figure 3.6. Labour force participation rate: migrants aged 18-44 on arrival by migration category and duration of residence, 1999.



Source: Appendix Table B3.5

Unemployment rate

At the time of the 1996 Census, the unemployment rate of the total overseas-born population aged 15+ was 11 per cent compared with 9 per cent for the Australian-born and the total Australian population of equivalent age. As shown in Figure 3.7[9] the unemployment rate of the overseas-born varies considerably by duration of residence and declines with length of residence. Overseas-born men aged 25-44 years with more than 5 years residence had unemployment rates that were only slightly higher than that of Australian-born men.

Figures 3.8-3.10 show the rates of unemployment of overseas-born men and women according to their age and level of qualification. It is evident that the level of unemployment falls as qualification levels rise. In particular, unemployment rates are significantly higher for those with no qualifications at all duration of residence. As suggested earlier, this means that it is important to consider the potential impact on the results observed in Figure 3.7 of differing levels of qualifications among the overseas-born.

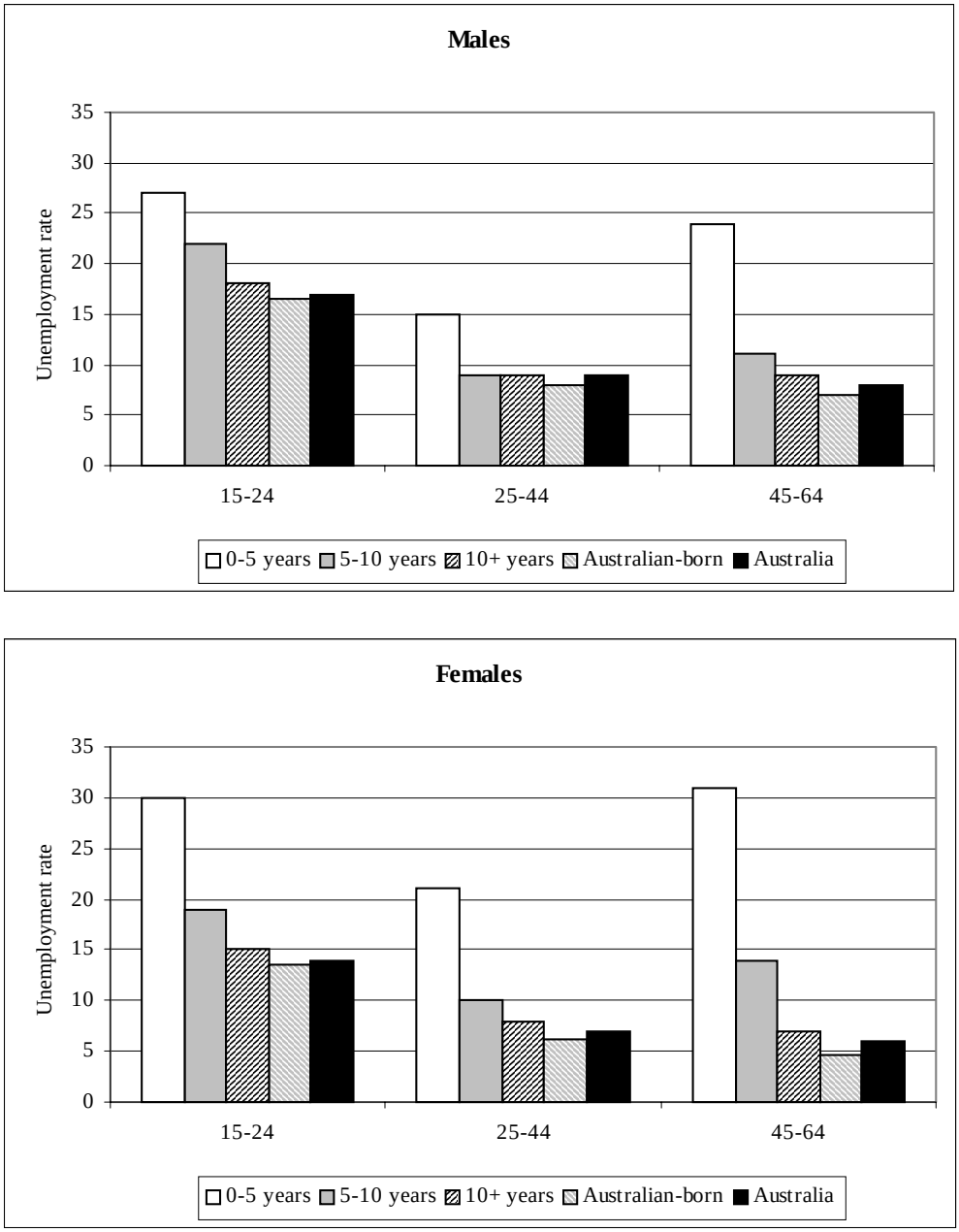
The difference in unemployment rates between overseas-born persons resident for more than 10 years and Australian-born persons is largest for both men and women aged 15-24 years at all levels of qualification. This is interesting because most of the overseas-born in this age category would have arrived in Australia as children and would have been educated, at least in part, in Australia. For example, the unemployment rate among women aged 15-24 for those with a university degree (obviously people at the higher end of this age range) was 7.6 per cent for the overseas born who had been resident for 10 years or more but less than 5 per cent for the Australian-born. For both groups, the degree would have been obtained in Australia. Thus, there remains an unemployment disadvantage among immigrants who arrived as children, a disadvantage that applies irrespective of level of qualification.

Unemployment rates by educational attainment on arrival from the 1999 Migrant Survey are shown in Figure 3.11. These show similar patterns to those from the Census. Migrants who arrived during 1981-85 seemed to have higher unemployment rates than those who arrived during 1986-90 except for women with other than degree qualifications on arrival.

Unemployment rates by migration category are presented in Figure 3.12 and show that migrants in the Refugee category have relatively high unemployment rates even after more than 10 years residence. Family sponsored migrants may have high unemployment rates during the first 8 years of settlement, but their unemployment rates appear to decline with longer duration of residence to be comparable with those of migrants in the Skill Migration categories.

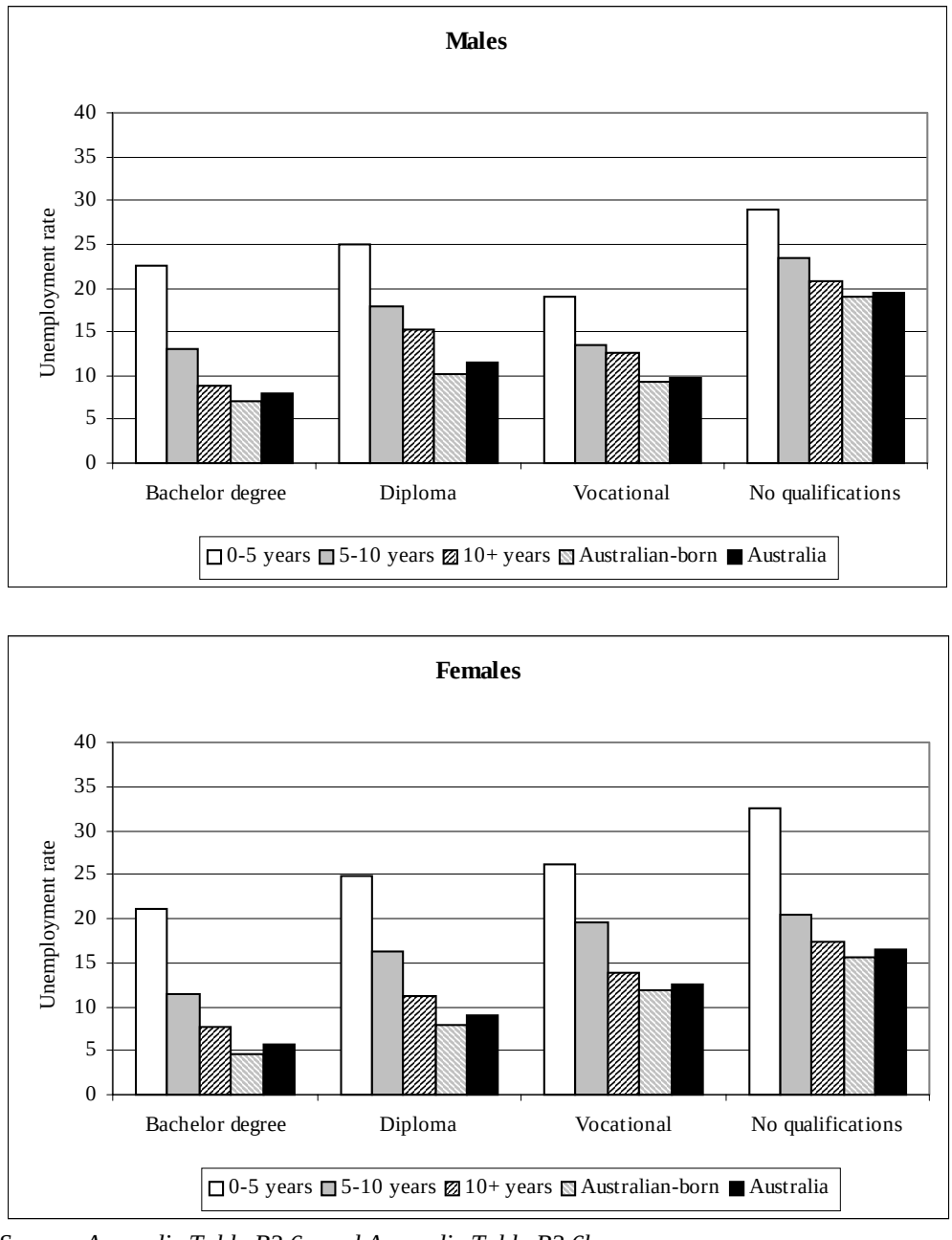
[9] These figures also provide an indication of employment rates as both rates sum to 100 per cent.

Figure 3.7. Unemployment rate: overseas-born by age and duration of residence, 1996.



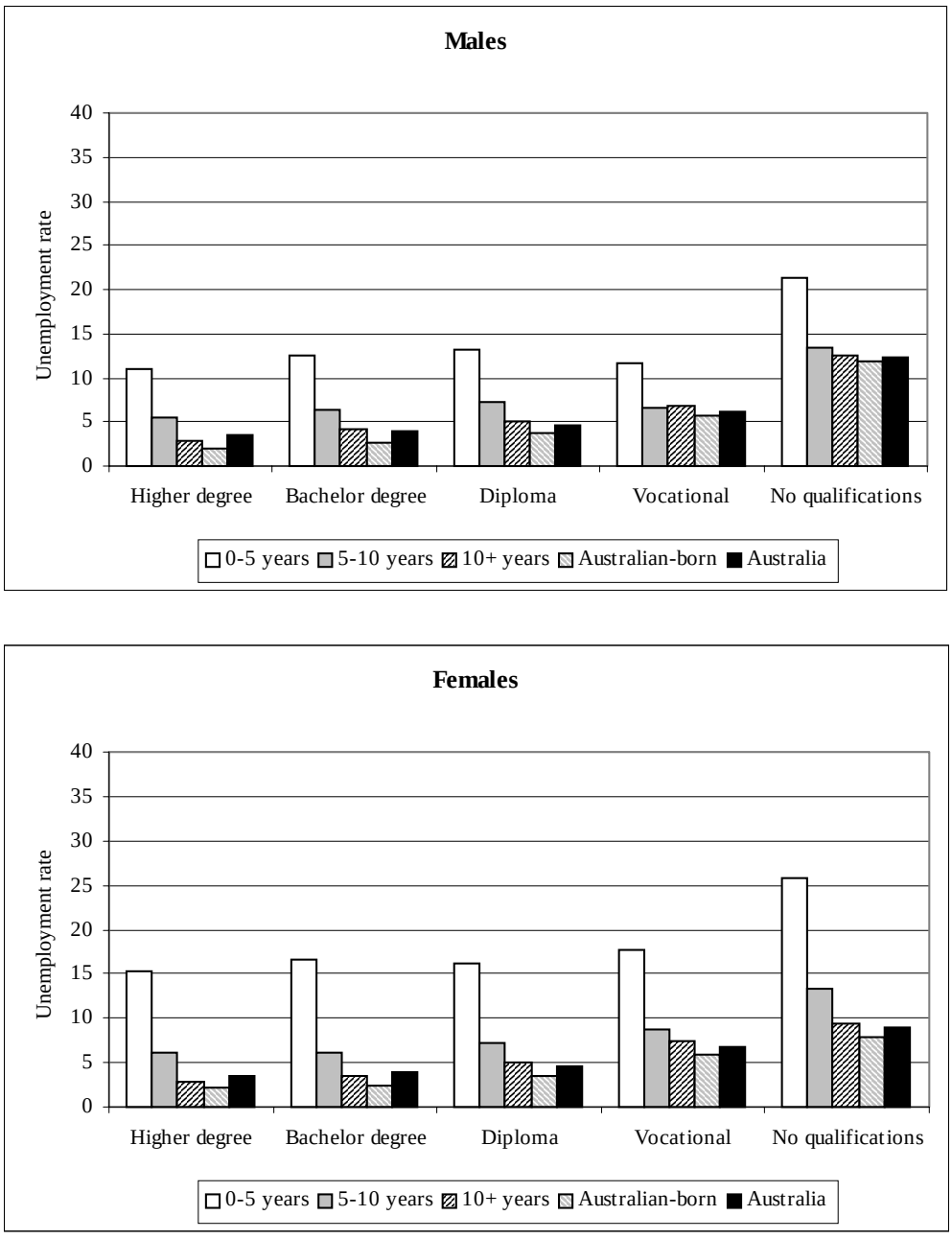
Source: Appendix Table B3.6a and Appendix Table B3.6b

Figure 3.8. Unemployment rate: overseas-born by qualification and duration of residence, migrants aged 15-24 years, 1996.



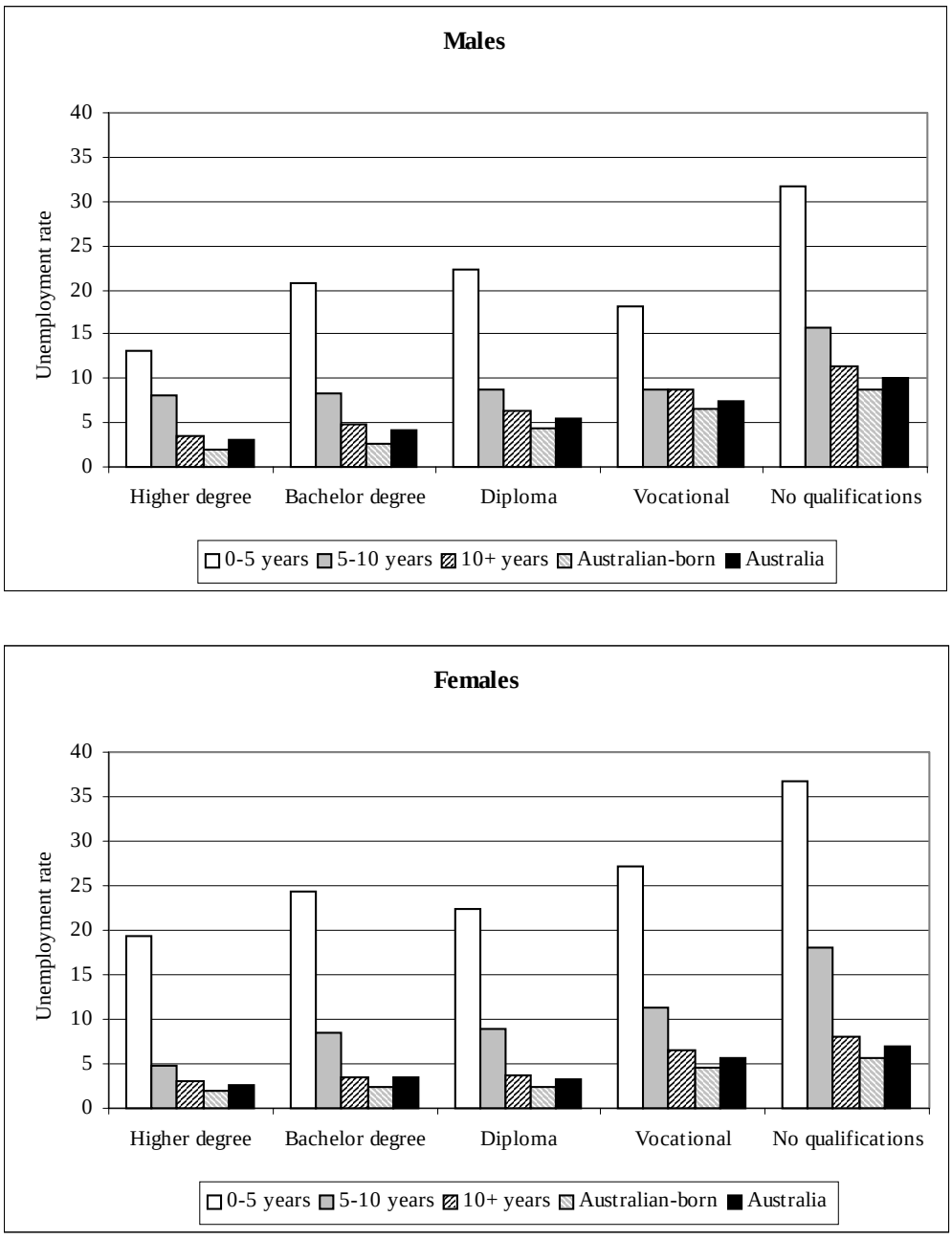
Source: Appendix Table B3.6a and Appendix Table B3.6b

Figure 3.9. Unemployment rate: overseas-born by qualification and duration of residence, migrants aged 25-44 years, 1996.



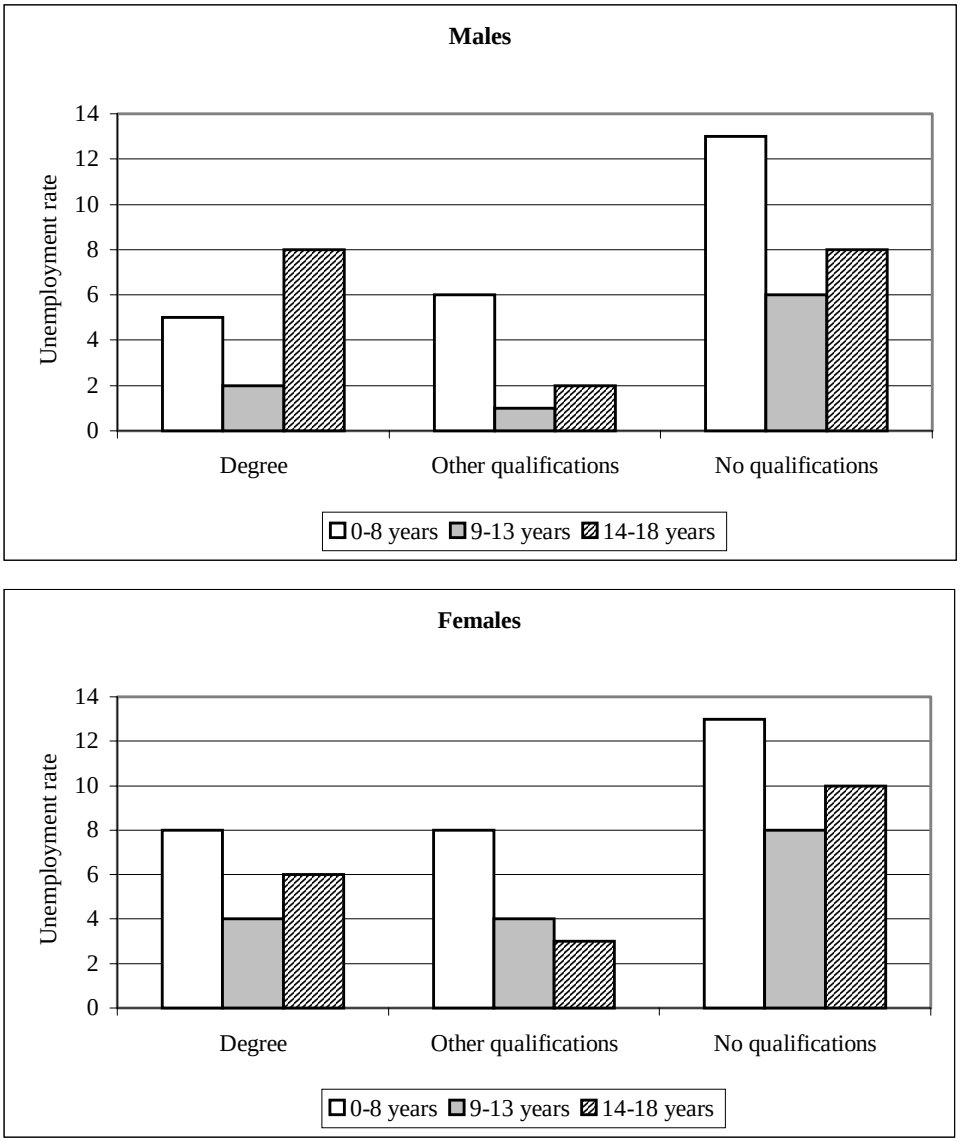
Source: Appendix Table B3.6a and Appendix Table B3.6b

Figure 3.10. Unemployment rate: overseas-born by qualification and duration of residence, migrants aged 45-64 years, 1996.



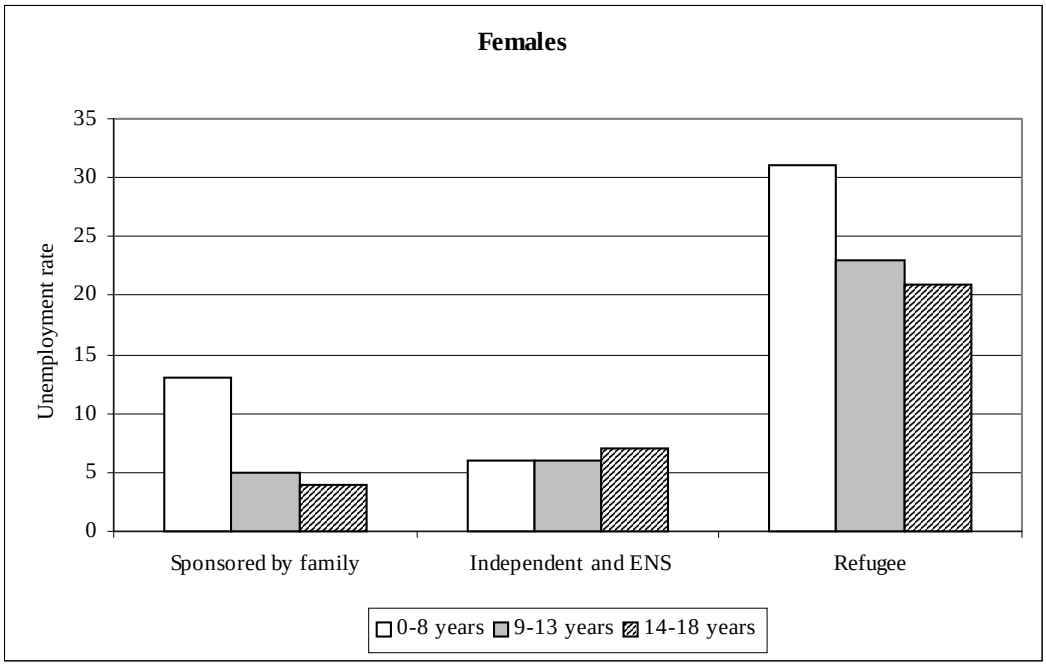
Source: Appendix Table B3.6a and Appendix Table B3.6b

Figure 3.11. Unemployment rate: migrants aged 18-44 on arrival by qualification on arrival and duration of residence, 1999.



Source: Appendix Table B3.6a and Appendix Table B3.6b

Figure 3.12. Unemployment rate: migrants aged 18-44 on arrival by migration category and duration of residence, 1999.



Source: Appendix Table B3.7

Occupational distribution

While the previous two indicators of economic participation show that the overseas-born are close to parity with the Australian-born population after 5-10 years residence in Australia, this result would not be so positive if the overseas-born had taken jobs below their capacity. Thus, it is important also to examine the occupational distributions of employed persons.

As shown in Table 3.3, the occupational distribution for employed overseas-born men and women becomes more similar to that of all employed Australian-born men and women as length of residence in Australia increases. This is illustrated in summary form by means of the index of dissimilarity[10]. As shown in Figure 3.13, the index of dissimilarity falls for both men and women as the duration of residence in Australia increases, indicating that their occupational distribution becomes closer to that of the Australian-born population as time passes.

Interestingly, however, the distributions of overseas-born men and women become similar to the Australian-born occupational distributions because the overseas-born become less likely to be in the higher level occupations the longer they are in Australia. For example, the percentage of overseas-born men in a professional occupation falls from 22 per cent for those resident in Australia for less than five years to 16.5 per cent for those resident for more than 10 years. This latter percentage is much closer to the Australian-born figure 14.4 per cent. This result would occur in the unlikely circumstance that immigrants moved down the occupational ladder the longer they were in Australia. The result would also be obtained if there was a shift over time in the migration intake to persons with higher occupational skills, that is, those who entered before 1986 may be less likely to be professionals than those who entered between 1991 and 1996. This is a possibility. However, the result is probably due mainly to the increases in participation rates and the fall in unemployment rates over time as described in the earlier sections. That is, the people who obtained jobs over time were more likely to be people who entered the lower level occupations.

For those who came to Australia before 1986, the occupational distribution for men is closer to the Australian-born occupational distribution than is the case for women (see also Figure 3.13). The main difference for women is that Australian-born women are more likely to be employed in clerical, sales and services occupations while the overseas-born women are more likely to be employed as labourers.

The 1999 Migrant Survey collected information on migrant's occupation before migration for comparison with their occupation at the time of the survey. This allows for an indicator of occupational outcome that measures the extent that migrants are able to find employment in the same occupational group after migration as before migration.

[10] The index of dissimilarity indicates the (minimum) percentage of people who would need to change their occupations in order that two occupational distributions would be precisely the same. As an example, the index for overseas-born men who arrived in Australia before 1986 is 3.8. This means that only 3.8 per cent of overseas-born men in this category would need to change their occupational group in order that their occupational distribution would be the same as that of Australian-born men.

Figure 3.14 shows the percentage of male and female migrants whose occupational group in 1999 was the same as before migration, according to migration category and duration of residence. Among the men, the more recently arrived migrants were more likely to be employed in the same occupational group as before migration, except for men in the refugee category, of whom those who arrived during the period 1986-90 (9-13 years after arrival) appeared to do better than those who arrived before or after that period. However, the numbers in the refugee category are relatively small and the sampling error associated with the results for refugees may be rather large.

It is possible that not all changes in occupation group after migration are associated with a decline in occupational status; some may be associated with an improvement in occupational status. Some of the change may also be related to a change in labour force status such as becoming unemployed or not participating in the labour force after migration. Migrants in the refugee category were the least likely to be employed in the same occupation group as before migration. As shown before, a large proportion of them were unemployed compared with other migrants.

Figure 3.15 shows the same indicator for men and women in managerial and professional occupations only[11]. The proportion in the same occupation group was higher for this occupation group than for all migrants as shown in the previous figure, indicating as expected that migrants with managerial or professional skills are better at finding employment at the same skill level after migration.

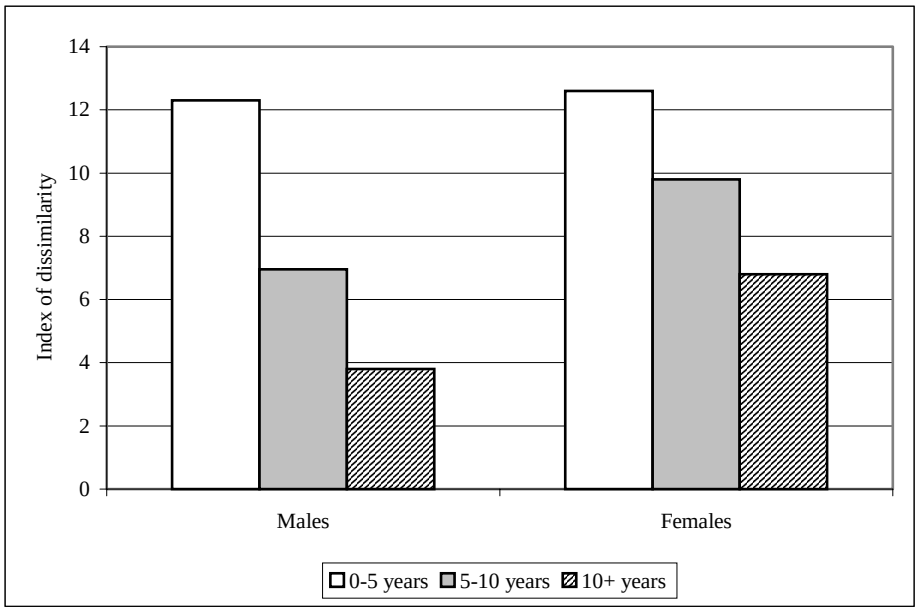
[11] It is not possible to obtain similar indicators for migrants in the other occupation groups because of large sampling error associated with small sample sizes in the other occupation groups. Because of small numbers, it is also not possible to obtain this indicator for migrants in the refugee category.

Table 3.3. Overseas-born employed persons by occupation, sex and duration of residence, compared with Australian-born persons, 1996.

Sex and occupation	Duration of residence			Overseas-born population	Australian-born population
	0-5 years	5-10 years	10+ years		
Males					
Managerial	8.9	8.3	11.4	10.7	12.6
Professionals	22.0	17.4	16.5	17.1	14.4
Paraprofessionals	9.8	11.3	12.8	12.2	11.9
Trades	17.3	20.4	20.7	20.3	21.0
Clerical/Sales/Services	13.7	13.9	13.6	13.6	15.4
Plant operators/drivers	11.7	14.6	13.4	13.4	12.9
Labourers	13.8	11.2	8.7	9.7	9.3
Not stated/inadequately coded	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.0	2.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Females					
Managerial	4.1	4.1	5.7	5.2	6.0
Professionals	21.4	20.0	19.8	20.0	19.9
Paraprofessionals	8.0	9.3	11.2	10.5	10.4
Trades	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.2
Clerical/Sales/Services	40.2	42.0	42.6	42.2	49.0
Plant operators/drivers	6.3	6.6	4.6	5.1	2.5
Labourers	13.6	11.8	10.3	10.9	6.9
Not stated/inadequately coded	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
All					
Managerial	6.8	6.5	9.1	8.4	9.6
Professionals	21.8	18.5	17.9	18.3	16.9
Paraprofessionals	9.1	10.4	12.2	11.5	11.2
Trades	11.5	13.0	13.5	13.2	13.0
Clerical/Sales/Services	24.9	26.2	25.7	25.6	30.4
Plant operators/drivers	9.4	11.1	9.8	9.9	8.2
Labourers	13.7	11.5	9.4	10.2	8.2
Not stated/inadequately coded	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

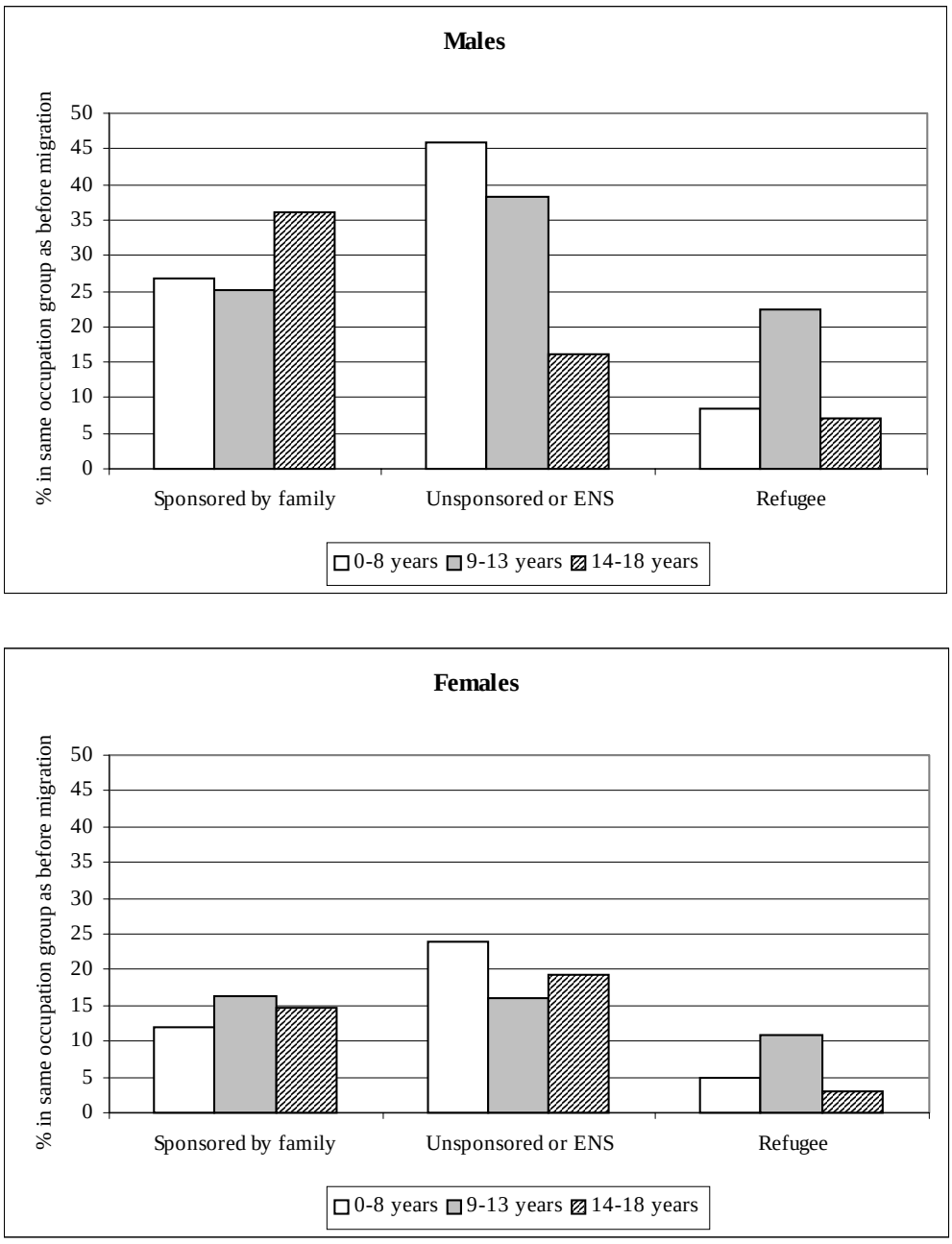
Source: 1996 Census Matrix Table CS085.
Table excludes those whose birthplace was not stated.

Figure 3.13. Index of occupational dissimilarity: overseas-born by sex and duration of residence, compared with Australian-born, 1996.



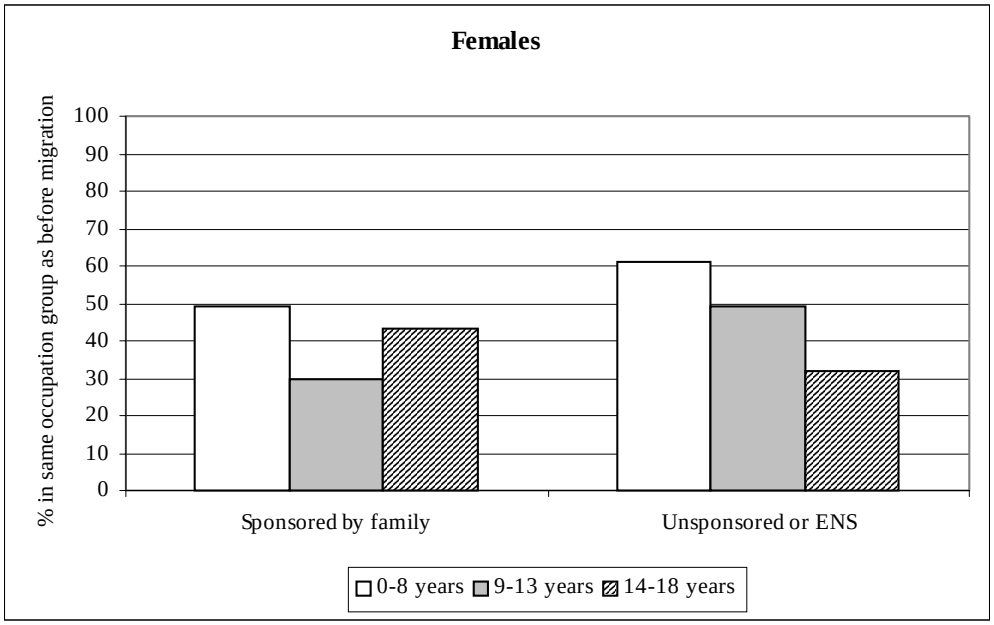
Source: Appendix Table B3.8

Figure 3.14. Per cent of men and women whose current occupation group is the same as before migration, by migration category and duration of residence, 1999.



Source: Appendix Table B3.9

Figure 3.15. Per cent of men and women who were in managerial and professional occupations before migration and in 1999, by migration category and duration of residence, 1999.



Source: Appendix Table B3.10

Indicators of economic wellbeing

Income

The income indicator from the census[12] shows that the percentage with above average weekly earnings increases with length of residence for men and women in all age groups (Figures 3.16). Parity with the Australian-born population is reached after 10 years residence by the overseas-born under age 45.

Income from government payments

This indicator obtained from the Migrant Survey is the percentage of people whose main source of income is a government pension or allowance. It indicates dependency on government payments and individuals in this situation can be considered to be in a less favourable economic position than others who are not.

Differences in this indicator by migration category are clear from Figure 3.17. After more than 10 years residence, a relatively high proportion of former refugees continue to be dependent on government pensions or allowances, although there is a declining trend with length of residence.

Housing

The home ownership indicator from the Census[13] shows that the disadvantage that is clearly obvious for immigrants in the early years after arrival no longer applies once the immigrant has been in Australia for at least 10 years (Figure 3.18). Indeed, for those aged 25-44, overseas-born persons with at least 10 years residence are more likely to be living in an owned house than are the Australian-born or all Australians. In all age groups shown in Figure 3.18, the overseas-born with at least 15 years residence are also more likely to live in an owned house than the Australian-born or the total population of the same age.

Among all overseas-born aged 25+, 71 per cent lived in their own homes in 1996. This proportion was slightly lower than the 74 per cent for the Australian-born population and 72 per cent for the total Australian population of equivalent age.

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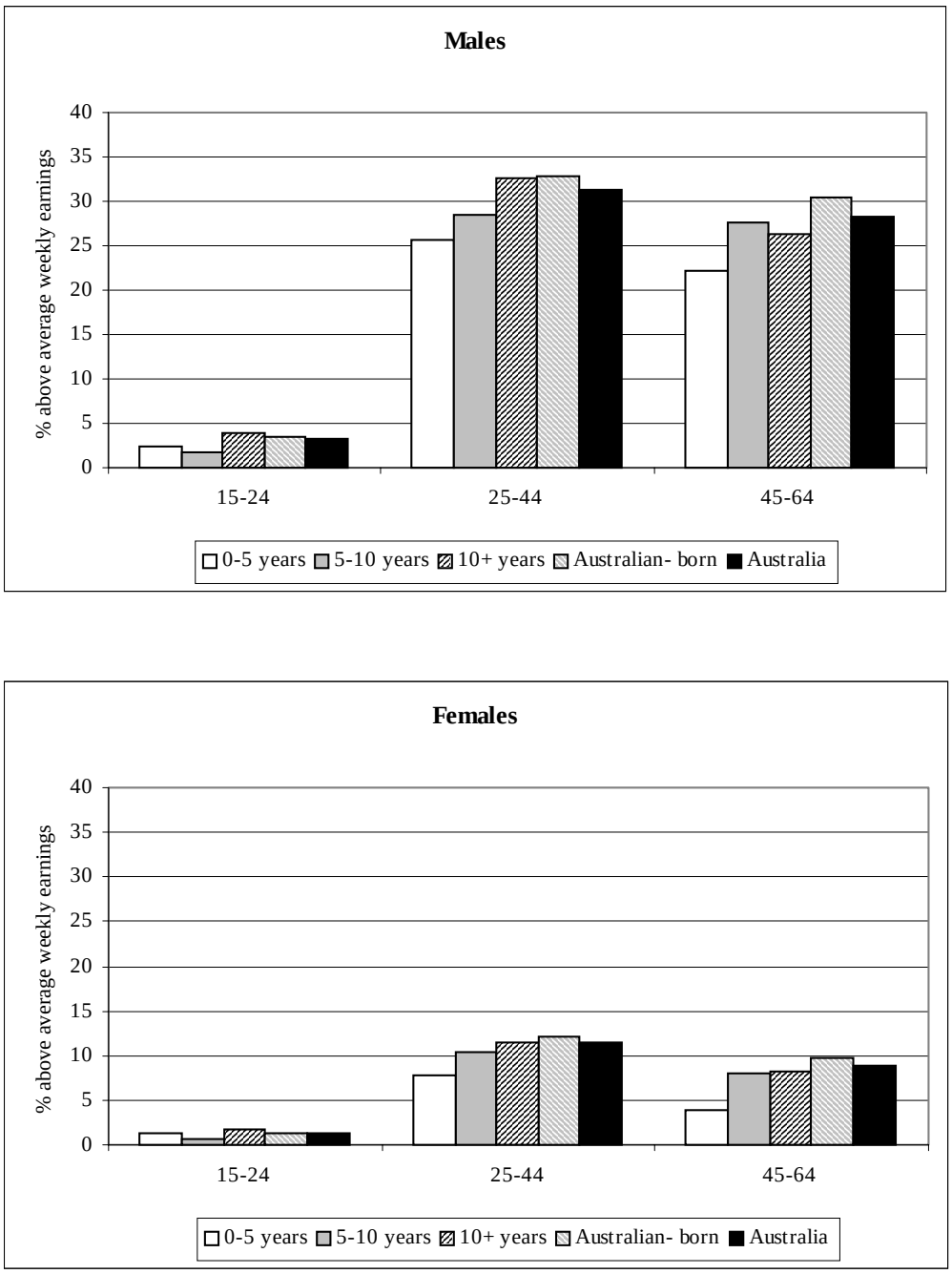
[12] The income indicator examined here is the percentage of people with a weekly income of $700 or more. This income category in the 1996 Census is the closest to $678.80, the average weekly earnings of adults in full time employment at that time.

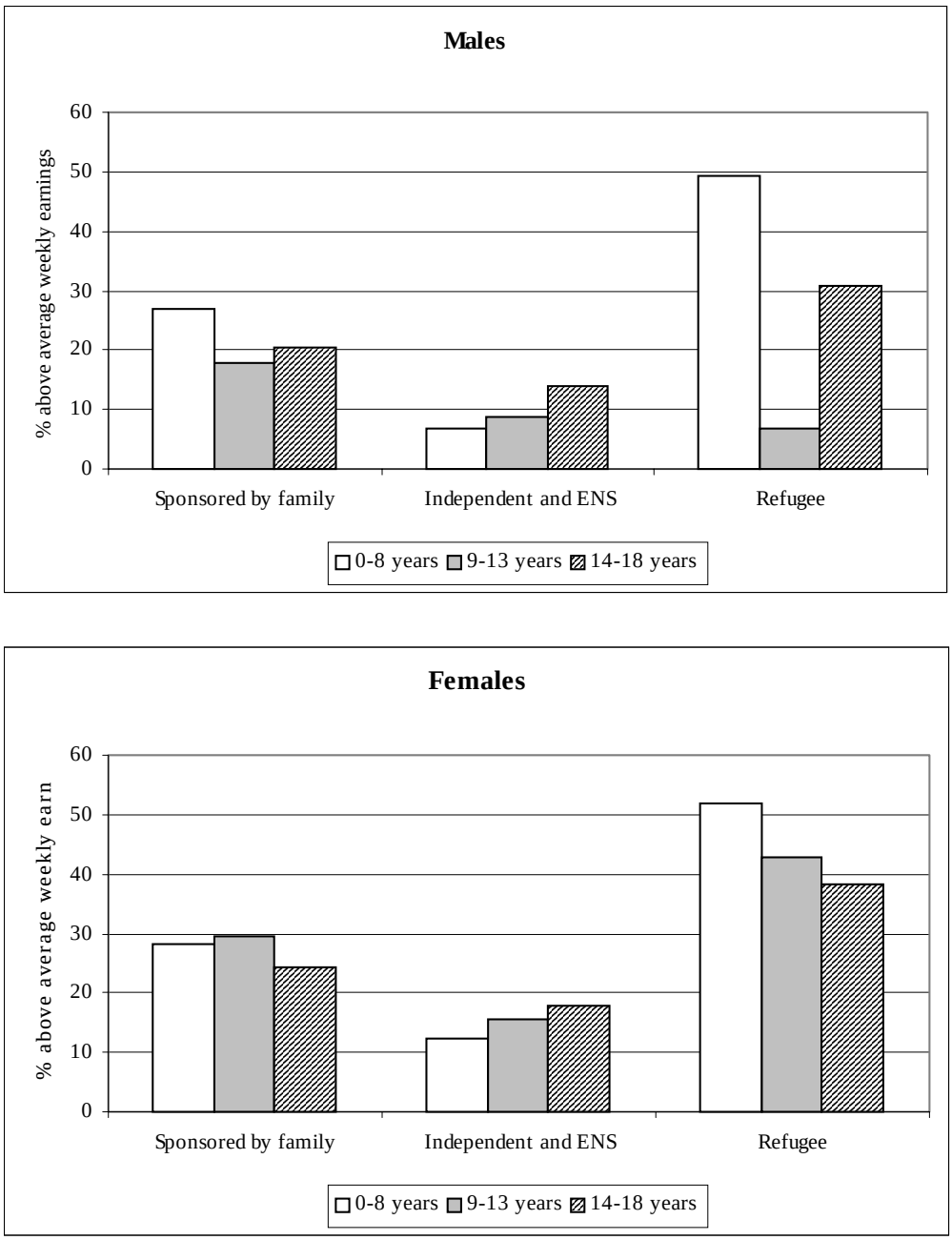
[13] Home ownership includes both those who fully own their house and those who are currently purchasing their house. The Census does not identify which member of a household owns the house in which a Census respondent is living. Instead, it identifies whether the house is owned or rented by the household. Thus, the statistic that is available from the Census is whether or not a person is living in a house that is owned by a member of the household in which they live. For example, where an elderly parent is co-resident with an adult child, the Census does not tell us which person owns the house, only that the house is owned by one or more members of the household.

Figure 3.16. Percentage with income above average weekly earnings of full-time employed adults by age and duration of residence, 1996.



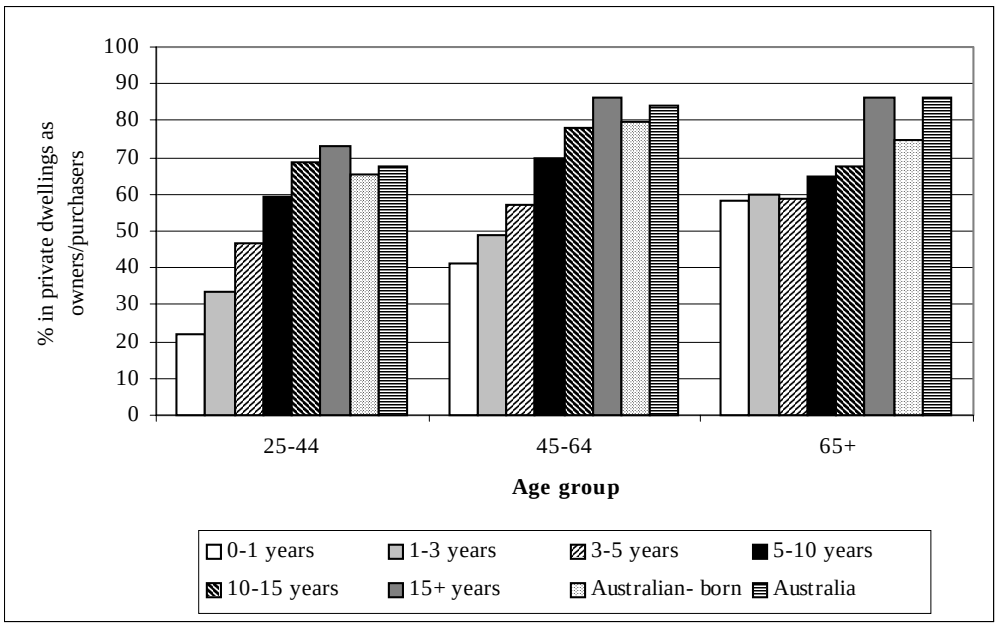
Source: Appendix Table B3.11

Figure 3.17. Percentage of migrants aged 18 and over on arrival whose main source of income was government pension or allowance, by migration category and duration of residence 1999.



Source: Appendix Table B3.12

Figure 3.18. Percentage in private dwellings who are owner/purchasers: overseas-born by age and duration of residence, 1996.



Source: Appendix Table B3.13

Indicators of physical wellbeing

Physical health

The indicator of physical health status derived from the 1997 Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing is similar to the indicator obtained from the LSIA, based on the presence of a long-term health condition[14].

Figure 3.19 shows the proportion of overseas-born men and women with at least one physical condition by age group compared with Australian-born and the total population of men and women. The indicator shows a rising trend with age and is generally higher for women than men. Overseas-born men and women are generally less likely to have a physical condition than Australian-born or the total population of men and women of the same age, with the difference being largest among those aged less than 35.

Mental health status

The indicator of mental health obtained from the 1997 Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing[15] is also comparable to that from LSIA1 in the previous chapter. The score for all Australians aged 18 years and over was 9.1 according to the survey.

The mental health indicator does not vary greatly between the different birthplace groups compared in Figure 3.20. Few scores stand out from the rest, the most notable being the scores for 18-24 and 45-54 year-old women from countries other than Australia and the main English-speaking countries. These women have a somewhat lower level of mental health and wellbeing (their scores are higher).

Summary

The indicators of longer-term settlement discussed in this chapter show that migrants' social and economic participation and economic wellbeing generally improve with length of residence. Compared against benchmarks based on the Australian-born, the settlement indicators suggest that immigrants are likely to reach parity with native-born Australians in terms of social and economic participation and economic wellbeing after about 10 years residence.

After 15 years residence, more than 90 per cent of former immigrants can speak good English and therefore are able to participate in the daily interchange in Australian society. The participation rate in secondary and tertiary education is also higher than average among overseas-born youth with more than 5 years of residence.

The citizenship rate does not increase much after 10 years residence, levelling off at about 75 per cent. This is mainly the result of the low rate of citizenship among former

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[14] Information is not collected in the 1997 Mental Health Survey on the year of arrival of the overseas-born respondents. Therefore it is not possible to examine this indicator and that on mental health for the overseas-born population by duration of residence.

[15] It is also based on the GHQ-12 in the 1997 Survey.

migrants from the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries. Many of these people had similar rights as citizens until 1984 and they retain the right to vote if already on the electoral rolls in 1984 (DIMA 1999). Hence they see no reason to become Australian citizens.

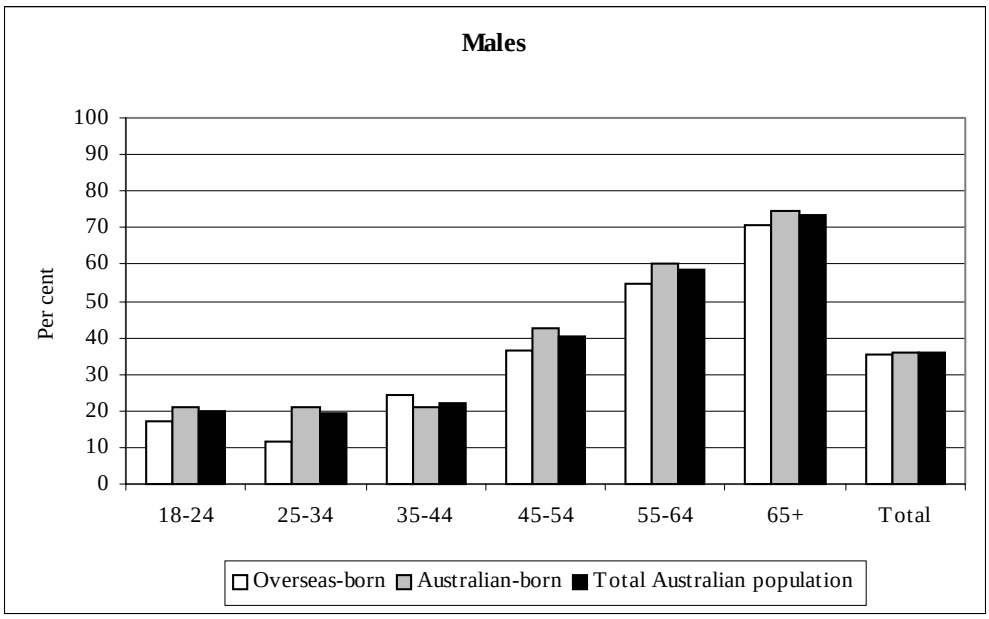
At more than 10 years of residence, migrants show similar levels of labour force participation to native-born Australian residents of similar age. Overseas-born men aged 25-44 with 5-10 years residence have employment and unemployment rates that are close to those of Australian-born men of the same age. The occupational distribution of migrants also becomes more similar with increasing length of residence to that of native-born and all Australian residents.

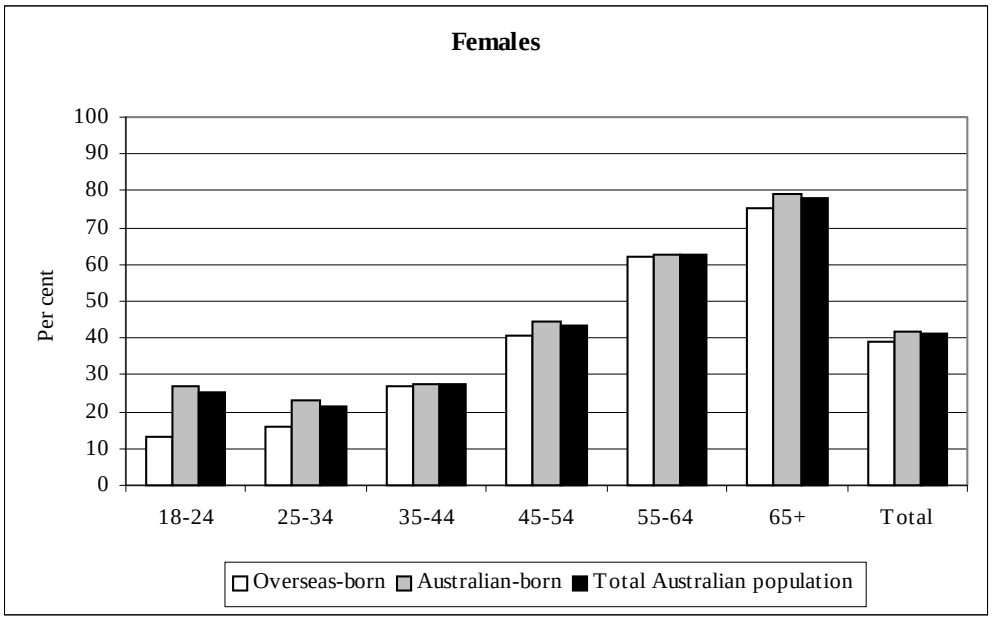
The indicators by migration category show little difference between family-sponsored migrants and independent skill migrants in terms of their labour force and employment rates after more than 10 years of residence. However, migrants in the refugee category continue to have relatively high unemployment rates even after more than 10 years residence. They also remain the most dependent on government payments after more than 10 years residence.

Home ownership among the overseas-born also increases with length of residence. The proportion living in owned housing was higher among the overseas-born with 15 years residence than the Australian-born population.

As measured by the indicators of physical wellbeing, the overseas-born also appear to have similar if not slightly better health status than the Australian-born population.

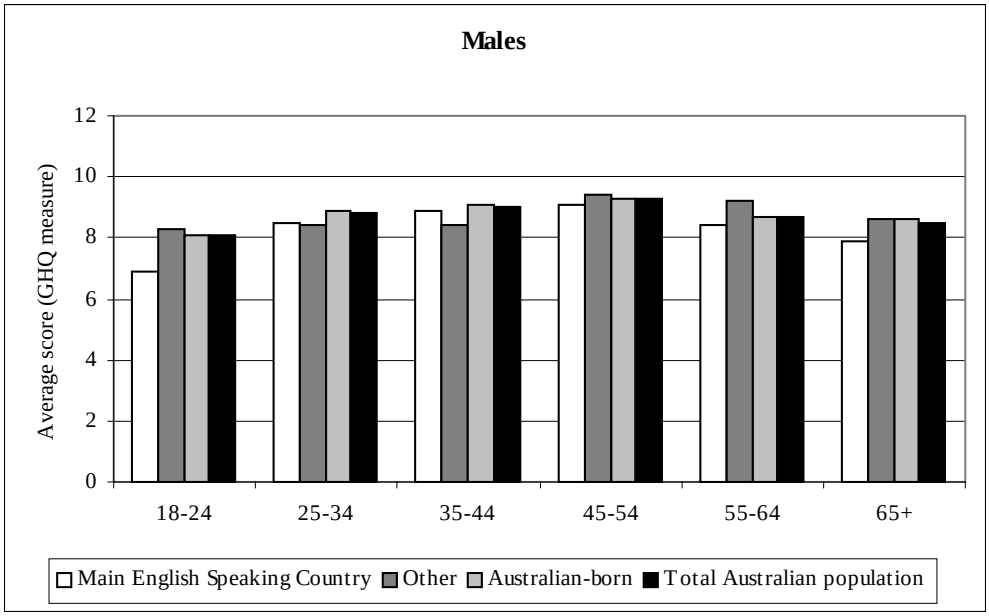
Figure 3.19. Per cent with at least one physical condition, overseas, Australian-born and total Australian population by age, 1997.

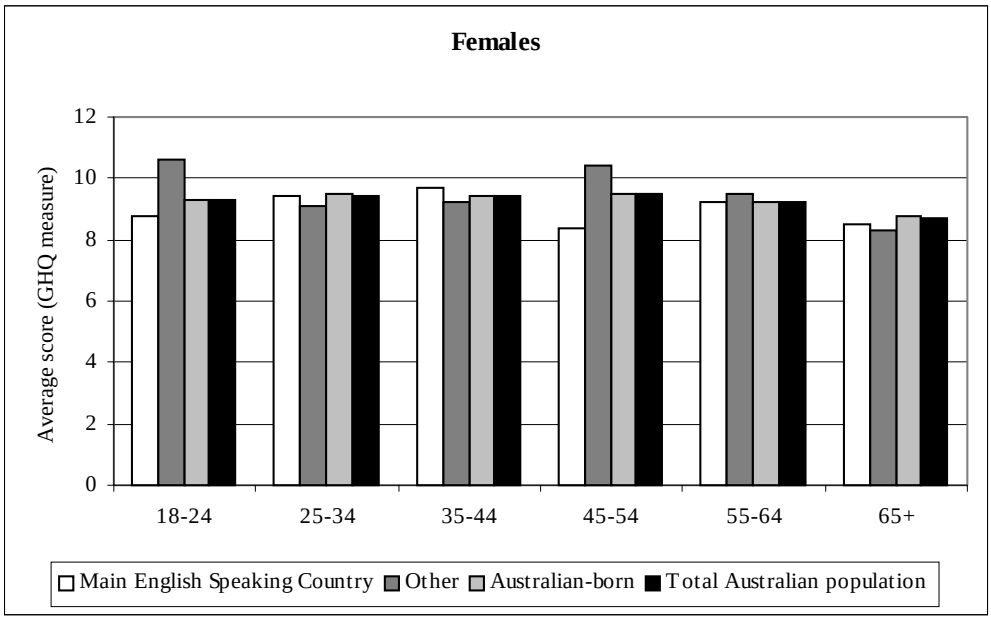




Source: Appendix Table B3.14

Figure 3.20. Average score based on the GHQ by age and country of birth, 1997.





Source: Appendix Table B3.15