

Social Support in Partnerships and Labor Market Outcomes of Immigrants in Germany

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Abstract

This study looks at the effects of social support provided by the partner on immigrant labor market outcomes. I thereby study two labor market outcomes, risk of unemployment and occupational status, and differentiate between three forms of support: informational support, instrumental support and emotional support. I can show that informational, instrumental and emotional support vary in their effects on labor market outcomes and that certain differences can also be found between immigrant groups. The results suggest that third country nationals, compared to EU migrants and ethnic Germans, benefit particularly from their partners' informational and emotional support, however, only with regard to finding employment. EU migrants and ethnic Germans do not benefit from their partner's support with regard to finding employment; however, they benefit significantly from personal job references, with regard to occupational status. Moreover, informational and instrumental support is only effective if the partnership is characterized by emotional closeness, hence, if the partner provides emotional support. This suggests that emotional support works as a transmission belt of other resources and should therefore be included in future research.

5.1 Introduction

Romantic relationships are one of the most important social ties accompanying every individual's life. What the partner thinks about certain issues and how he or she is embedded in society influences our decisions as well as opportunities. Romantic relationship, or partnership, is one of the strongest ties people can have and many researchers have shown much interest in how partnership influences individual's behavior. Studies suggest that particularly for immigrants, family based networks are important for gaining access to the labor market (Waldinger 1974). The help of others seems to be crucial for immigrant job seekers. Immigrants face many institutional barriers such as the lack of credential recognition or discrimination (Kogan 2006) which makes them particularly dependable on their social

network when looking for a job. Visits to the authorities are easier with the help of friends or family members who are familiar with the host-country's labor market. Also, for the job search social networks can help finding employment by providing information about job openings, help with the application writing or references for potential jobs. Moreover, as labor market integration is difficult and burdensome, patience and emotional support provided by the partner can ease the process and be beneficial for the job search.

Studies focusing on immigrant partnerships are mainly interested in *who* provides resources and not *what sorts of resources* are provided. Duvander (2001) and Mutarak (2011), for example, show that immigrants with native partners show more positive labor market outcomes in terms of employment and wages than those who are in co-ethnic relationships. The focus lies on the ethnicity of the partner with the underlying assumption that native partners provide specific resources, such as information about the labor market, which enables their partner to find work. However, we hardly know which form of support provided by the partner specifically leads to positive labor market outcomes. Rather, researchers rely on very general assumptions, naming various resources simultaneously which may be provided by the partner and which then lead to higher labor market returns. "For example, they may have better job search skills or greater knowledge of the labor market" (Furtado 2010, p.2) or "access to information, contacts, and knowledge" (Duvander 2001, p. 215).

However, it may matter what forms of support are provided. Could it be that certain forms of support are more helpful than others? This question has not been answered so far. Rather, it is assumed that social resources provided by the partner are all helpful in some way. However, a clear theoretical distinction between different forms of support and their effects for different migrant groups is missing. Certain migrant groups might profit particularly from help with the application process, for example immigrants from countries which are culturally and institutionally different than the host society. Others might benefit more from job

references, for example privileged groups with influential friends, such as EU migrants. Hence, I am looking at different forms of support and how they affect specific immigrant groups such as EU migrants, ethnic Germans and third country nationals, in order to understand the underlying mechanism.

In the following, I will differentiate between several forms of social support: Partners who provide information about job openings are delivering *informational support*. *Instrumental support* is provided if the partner actively helps the individual to find a job by, for example, bringing him or her into contact with people who could employ the job seeking individual or by helping with writing a job application. Informational and instrumental support, although not named so specifically, are most prevalent in the immigrant and social capital literature (e.g. Duvander 2001; Furtado 2010; Lancee 2013).

However, another very important form of support is neglected in most of the research which study the relation between social capital and labor market outcomes: *Emotional support*. Emotional support, or what Hochschild calls emotion work (1983), refers to the expression and exchange of feelings to enhance others' affect or behavior (Erickson 1993), reduces workplace stress and (Noor 2002) and positively affects life and job satisfaction (King et al. 1995). Therefore, it is very likely that migrants who receive emotional support from their partner perform better on the labor market.

Moreover, so I argue, informational and instrumental support might only take its full effect if emotional support is provided. Spouses who hardly exchange opinions and talk to each other about problems and other issues might not fully benefit from the resources provided by their partner. Emotional support is thereby not only expected to directly influence labor market performance but also to work as a "transmission belt" (Schönplflug 2001) for informational and instrumental support.

In this study I am interested how informational, instrumental and emotional support effects labor market outcomes of immigrants. I thereby look at two outcomes: risk of unemployment and occupational status for those who are employed. I am interested how these forms of support vary in their effect for different migrants groups. I am thereby looking at ethnic Germans and EU migrants on the one hand and third country nationals on the other hand. I chose those two groups since they differ tremendously in their legal rights (e.g. Konietzka, and Kreyenfeld 2001; Kogan 2006) and problems they face such as discrimination (Kaas and Manger 2012). Hence, access and use of support is expected to have different effects for different groups.

In a second step I am contributing to the existing literature by introducing emotional support as a relevant resource provided by partners. I am providing theoretical indications for emotional support not only having a direct effect on labor market outcomes but also moderating the effect of informational and instrumental support. Although my focus lies on immigrants I also present results for the native population so I can get an estimation of how ‘mainstream’ certain mechanisms work.

In order to test my hypothesis I am using the second and third wave of the start cohort 6 of the National Educational Panel Study (NEPS) (Blossfeld et al. 2011). This data suits my research question perfectly since detailed information about informational, instrumental and emotional support is provided. I am starting with a short description of the German labor market, followed by theoretical explanation why it is important to distinguish between EU migrants, ethnic Germans, non-EU migrants and refugees. I will then continue with theory, hypotheses, results and discussion.

The German labor market

The German labor market is characterized by specific institutional constraints and opportunity structures which restrict immigrants' access. In comparison to liberal welfare regimes in Europe such as the UK or Ireland Germany counts among the conservative and social democratic welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1999), characterized by low labor market flexibility due to its segregated and rigid labor market. Low labor market flexibility leads employers to be more careful when hiring staff due to potential high firing costs (Kogan 2006, p.699) which in turn increases expectations towards productivity of potential employers (Giesecke and Groß 2003). This may disadvantage immigrants because employers rather rely on the known productivity of natives than taking the risk of employing an immigrant whose productivity is difficult to assess. Indeed, in a comparative study Kogan (2006) finds that immigrants in more conservative welfare regimes are more likely to be unemployed than immigrants in liberal welfare regimes. Hence, immigrants in Germany face certain obstacles which are manifested in the specific structure of the German labor market.

Moreover, Germany's labor market is strongly certificate-based meaning employment is mainly acquired by possessing occupation specific vocational certificates (Müller and Shavit 1998; Konietzka and Kreyenfeld 2001; Kalter and Granato 2007). This can be particularly challenging for immigrants, who often have to deal with the non-recognition of their credentials acquired abroad (Konietzka and Kreyenfeld 2001). Such intransferability of foreign human capital has been largely acknowledged (Friedberg 2000; Chiswick and Miller 2009). However, most of the studies have been conducted in migration-experienced countries such as the US, Canada or UK which all provide nationally wide-ranging migration and integration policies and regulations. In Germany, on the other hand, "no comprehensive policy was initiated to facilitate the social and cultural integration of immigrants" (Kanas et al. 2011: 115). Regulations for foreign credential recognition differ strongly not only by

occupation but also by federal state. Also, information is often not accessible in multiple languages.

In addition, German politicians only recently formally acknowledged Germany as an immigration country. Consequences are diffuse migration policies and the lack of national regulations concerning the recognition of foreign credentials, particularly of third country nationals. A law stipulating the rules and norms regarding the educational and occupational recognition procedure for third country nationals was only released in Spring 2012.

Hence, many institutional barriers induced by low labor market flexibility, certificate-based job matching and the lack of clear rules regarding the recognition of foreign credentials, restrict immigrants' access to the labor market. Therefore, they are particularly dependent on their social networks in order to circumvent discrimination as emphasized by Mouw (2002) and to gain host-country specific knowledge for an efficient job search.

Migrant groups defined by international agreements and legal status

In the following I am going to introduce several migrant groups which are affected by those institutional barriers to more or lesser extent and therefore, so I hypothesize, vary in their dependence on their partners' social support.

Since the Second World War, Germany has engaged in several international agreements with origin countries which have an impact on the legal status of immigrants in Germany and thereby also on their chances acquiring a residence permit, work permit and recognition of foreign credentials. In the following I am introducing two main immigrant groups: ethnic Germans (Aussiedler) and EU immigrants on the one hand and non-EU immigrants and refugees, also summarized under the term "third country nationals", on the other hand.

Ethnic Germans, so called *Aussiedler*, enjoy specific rights in Germany with regards to citizenship, work permit, residence permit and credential recognition (Konietzka and Kreyenfeld 2001; Kogan 2006). Coming from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union ethnic Germans are fully entitled to settlement, German citizenship and recognition of their educational and vocational credentials. For such reasons ethnic Germans are expected to have specific advantages on the German labor market compared to other ethnic groups, although research shows that they not fully catching up with the native population (Konietzka and Kreyenfeld 2001; Kogan 2006).

Next to ethnic Germans, EU immigrants possess specific privileges on the German labor market. Within the European Union, an economic community of shared values, several international agreements exist which facilitate the labor market integration of EU immigrants. Particularly after the implementation of the Bologna reform (1999) mutual recognition of credentials has been simplified. Such agreements lead to an increased “compatibility of human capital received abroad with the skill requirements of the host country labor market” (Friedberg 2000, p. 225). EU migrants and ethnic Germans therefore have access to institution-based support which helps them getting their credentials recognized and to find a job. Hence, they may be less dependent on the resources which are provided by their partner.

Third country nationals, on the other hand, are more disadvantaged on the German labor market. Accessing information about labor market opportunities and credential recognition is particularly difficult for them since no clear agreements and regulations exist as they do for EU immigrants and ethnic Germans. Regulations, if present, differ between federal states (*Bundesländer*), occupation and country of origin. Until March 2012, any statutory basis for formal recognition was missing for third-country nationals. Fleischmann and Dronkers (2010) find for Europe that immigrants coming from non-EU countries have a higher probability of unemployment than EU immigrants. The situation becomes even more complicated if

immigrants had to leave their country suddenly to present conflict. For refugees, it is probably most difficult to tap valuable social capital and/or to gather information about which destination country might provide the best labor market opportunities. In addition, important documents might be missing which further increases their difficulty to integrate into destination country's labor market. Empirically, Mattoo et al. (2008) could show that military conflict during the decade the immigrant arrived decreases chances of having a skilled job. Previous research could show that the more unprivileged immigrants are the more they depend on their social network when looking for a job (Seibel and van Tubergen 2013). Hence, third country nationals may benefit especially from their partner's support since access other institution-based channels is restricted. Moreover, since it is a rocky road to employment, a strong partnership characterized by emotional support may ease the process. In the following, I am going to introduce three forms of social support provided by the partner, informational, instrumental, and emotional support, and discuss which immigrant groups benefit the most with regard to labor market outcomes.

Social Capital and Relationships

Social support, also referred to social capital, mainly refers to the resources embedded within social networks (Bourdieu 1985; Coleman 1988). The amount of social capital depends on the size of the network, on the resources provided by the social contacts within the social network and their willingness to help (de Graaf and Flap 1988). Especially in the job-seeking literature social capital has gained major prominence. Social capital reduces job-search costs since information is transmitted more quickly within networks than through non-network job seeking methods (Granovetter 1973; Marsden and Hurlbert 1988; Elliot 2001; Marsden and Gorman 2001; Montgomery 1992; Mouw 2003).

Social capital also enhances the benefits of the job search since the information transmitted is considered trustful and detailed (Granovetter 1995[1974]; Franzen and Hangartner 2006). This increases the chance that social networks lead to a job which matches the skills and expectations of both, the job seeker and the future employer (Franz and Hangartner 2006). However, research shows also that particularly disadvantaged people rely on their social network which often consists of other disadvantaged people who possess little resources themselves (Seibel and van Tubergen 2013). Hence, differences in the “quality” of social support can be expected, depending on who accesses those resources.

Partnership is an important form of social capital. Being in a romantic relationship can enable access to networks of the partner. It also signals commitment, stability, and trustworthiness. Moreover, partnership is a strong tie, implying emotional intensity, reciprocal behavior, and intimacy (Lancee 2010). Or as Lin (2001, p.66) puts it: the stronger the relationship, the more likely the sharing and exchange of resources.

Partnership can be helpful since integrating into the host labor market is difficult and exhausting. Migrants who wish to work first need to know where and how to get their qualifications recognized. In Germany, this can be a difficult procedure since until recently no clear regulations and information systems regarding foreign qualification recognition were available. Therefore, help with gathering such kind of information is needed in terms of translation, hints where to search and how to conduct the research in the most efficient way. The partner can be very helpful by providing social support. Which form of support are thereby provided has not been researched so far. In this study I am looking at three forms of social support provided by network members: informational, instrumental and emotional support. I am discussing how each form of support is expected to influence the chance of finding employment high status jobs, how those forms of support are related to each other, and how they differ in their relation to labor market outcomes.

Social Support

Social relations rather than institutions create social support which has been linked to theories about social networks and social integration (House et al. 1988). Social support can be broken down into three main domains: instrumental support, informational support, and emotional support (House et al. 1988; Henly et al. 2005)¹. Many studies address the question how social networks support their network members (e.g. Granovetter 1974; Lin 1999; Lancee 2013) focusing thereby on the structure of the network and how it relates to outcomes such as educational mobility, employment, and the job search. Social support is thereby a result of certain network properties such as density, size, diversity and strength of ties (Lin 1999; Granovetter 1974). One of the most famous examples is the study “The strength of weak ties” by Granovetter (1974), which emphasizes the advantage of weak ties, relations to acquaintances, over strong ties, relationships with family members, in the job seeking process. Weak ties are perceived as particularly useful as they refer to social ties interconnecting otherwise unconnected groups. They increase the chance of attaining useful information which is not already possessed by the job seeker (Burt 2004).

Granovetter’s assumption about the 'strength of weak ties' is challenged by Grieco (1987) who rather stresses the importance of strong ties in the job seeking process. She argues that it is faster if information about job opportunities is transmitted between close friends and family members than if the same information would be acquired through general channels such as employment centers. This way, the use of social relations can imply a time advantage. Additionally, the information given can be trusted; often it is more detailed which helps the

¹ The literature also mentions financial support as a subgroup of social support. However, financial support can be acquired via multiple channels and therefore requires a study by its own. I am focusing on romantic relationships and most partnerships possess common commodities, therefore I will not further discuss this aspect. Moreover, financial support is distinct from the other three forms of support in that sense as it is a rather broad concept that no personal face-to-face interaction is required.

person looking for a job to assess whether the specific job fits his or her interests and abilities. Strong ties imply emotional intensity reciprocal behavior and intimacy (Lancee 2003). Or as Lin (2001, p.66) puts it: the stronger the relationship, the more likely the sharing and exchange of resources.

Despite the extensive research on the relationship between social capital and labor market outcomes two main gaps can be identified. First, most studies focus on informational and instrumental support (e.g. Seibel and van Tubergen 2013) and neglect emotional support. Bridging ties, for example, are interpreted as particularly useful for job-seeking migrants because they are assumed to provide host-country specific information about the labor market and the application process. In this context, emotional support has received little to no attention. However, there are several indications, particularly from the social-psychology literature, of the importance of the causal relationship between emotional support and labor market outcomes (e.g. Erickson 1993; King et al. 1995; Wayne et al. 2006). Therefore, the study of emotional support as a specific form of social support fills an important research gap. Second, to my knowledge, the literature has theoretically discussed informational and instrumental support (e.g. Duvander 2001; Muttarak 2011; Lancee 2013), but has not empirically investigated them. Which form of support is most beneficial and how this might differ for different groups of migrants remains unknown. In the following I theoretically distinguish between instrumental, informational and emotional support and discuss how they are related to each other. I also assume that they benefit EU migrants, ethnic Germans, and third country nationals differently.

Informational and instrumental support

The migrant literature refers mainly to informational and instrumental support (Lin 2001; Lancee 2010; Seibel and van Tubergen 2013). *Informational support* refers to the first steps in

the job seeking process: Acquisition of knowledge about job openings and the labor market. *Instrumental support* is a more concrete form of support and refers to actively helping the other with the job search. Two common examples include help with the application process and providing a reference to potential employers. Writing an application can be difficult, particularly if migrants are not familiar with the language and host-country culture; Job applications have different styles and requirements from country to country. Knowing someone who can help to write a CV and a convincing motivation letter can be very helpful. Such support may not only increase chances of employment but even chances of high status employment. In addition to providing help with the application network members can also serve as a reference to potential employers. They might either be able to employ the immigrant job seeker themselves or know someone who would. This can be particularly powerful, especially if it results in the migrant getting a high status job.

It is very likely, however, that some individuals will benefit more from informational and instrumental support than others. Informational support and help to write a job application may be specifically helpful for those who are less familiar with the German labor market. Third country nationals, for example, are usually less familiar with the German labor market than EU migrants and ethnic Germans. In general, immigrants particularly turn towards their networks if external circumstances are unfavorable (Seibel and van Tubergen 2013). As mentioned before, immigrants enjoy very different rights and privileges depending on where they come from. Whereas specific administrations exist for EU migrants and ethnic Germans which are responsible for their social and economic integration into the German society third country nationals do not enjoy equivalent institutional support. Third country nationals may also be more vulnerable to discrimination. Third country nationals, particularly those from less developed countries, are more likely to come from more religious societies than EU migrants which increases the risk of taste discrimination (Becker 1971). German employers

are also less informed about foreign training routes outside the EU. In such cases employers use general information about the ethnic group the applicant belongs to in order to judge the applicant's ability. This 'average-based'-approach can lead to lower occupational outcomes because the employer believes that, for example, the language skills of the immigrant job seeker will not be very good since, on average, this ethnic group possesses low language skills (even though this particular applicant might be perfectly fluent in the host-country's language). Such discrimination is called statistical discrimination (Arrow, 1972). Because of those obstacles third country nationals may be more likely to benefit from social support since access to other forms of support is restricted.

***H1:** Informational and instrumental support is more beneficial for third country nationals than for EU migrants and ethnic Germans with regard to labor market outcomes.*

Emotional Support

Individuals also benefit from emotional support provided by their network members. Emotional support refers to the expression of feelings to enhance others' affect or behavior (Erickson 1993) and is mainly studied in the social-psychology literature, which places a strong focus on family emotional support. Previous research suggests that family emotional support reduces workplace stress (Noor 2002) and positively affects life and job satisfaction (King et al. 1995). Hence, emotional support in the family can positively influence life at work (Wayne et al. 2006, p.450).

The work-family enrichment hypothesis provides a link between emotional support and labor market outcomes. Work-family enrichment is defined as "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role" (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). Hence, emotional support generated within the family may promote performance in the work place (Wayne et al. 2006, p.447) by reducing workplace stress (Noor 2002) and increasing job

satisfaction (King et al. 1995). Although this theory focuses on emotional support provided by the family, the same arguments can be made with regard to other network members. Theoretically, this argument is compatible with social capital theory, which also predicts that resources derived from social relations will positively affect outcomes in other life domains such as employment.

Migrants perceive migration as a stressful event and face emotional hardship when integrating into the host society. Discrimination, language difficulties, or problems with the recognition of foreign credentials are just a few examples of problems migrants report. In such situations, having someone to talk to who provides emotional support may be crucial. If emotional support reduces stress it strengthens the ability of migrants to deal with host-country authorities, discrimination etc. Hence, migrants who receive emotional support from their network members may be better able to follow the steps necessary for successful labor market integration. Lacking the partner's emotional support, on the other hand, indicates a burdened relationship which adds to the stress the job seeking immigrant already experiences.

***H2:** Migrants who receive emotional support achieve higher labor market outcomes than migrants who do not receive emotional support.*

Although it is very likely that most individuals would welcome emotional support, the question arises whether certain groups are more dependent on it than others. For example, cultural differences exist in the way networks are built and utilized (Lancee and Seibel 2013). The feeling of being lost and alone might be stronger for migrants who come from societies characterized by close-knit networks. In this case, emotional support is expected to play a crucial role. Migrants from more developed, individualistic societies might be more used to adopting an individual approach when solving problems. For members of collective societies it might be even more important that the source of emotional support is a strong tie such as a

partner. Turning to other network members such as colleagues or neighbors (weak ties) might be perceived as ‘losing face’ and therefore avoided. EU member states are characterized by a certain level of economic advancement and individualistic approach. Corruption is low and turning to authorities and institutions for help is acknowledged. Moreover, labor market integration is more burdensome for third country nationals which makes emotional support provided by the partner particularly valuable.

***H3:** The effect of emotional support on labor market outcomes is stronger for third country nationals than for EU migrants and ethnic Germans.*

In addition, emotional support might not only have a direct effect on labor market outcomes. It might also increase the intensity of investing in helping the partner by providing informational and instrumental support. In this regard, whether informational and instrumental support is provided does not depend on individuals’ objective characteristics but rather on the quality of the relationship the job seeking individual has with his or her partner. Just because people can provide instrumental support, does not necessarily mean that they will do so. The job seeking process can be tedious, particularly for migrants, and so is the provision of support. Offering support often means translating, visiting public administrations, and, if alter is a native, dealing with cultural differences. All those activities take time and energy. Therefore, it stands to reason that informational and instrumental support differs depending on who provides it. In that regard, it is less important what sorts of objective characteristics network members have. Rather, it is the quality of their relationship, its emotional intensity, which is of importance. Emotional support works thereby as a transmission belt as it enhances the transmission of informational and instrumental support (Schönplflug 2001, p. 175).

Hence, it is not only important to know someone who is able to help with the job seeking process. The information provided might be even more detailed, more adjusted to the individual's needs if it emerges from a relationship that is characterized by trust and reciprocal behavior. Therefore, in interpersonal relations trust and emotional exchange might be a prerequisite to accessing and using instrumental support in the first place. One might have a partner who is experienced in the labor market and therefore suitable for providing help with the job seeking process. However, only emotional support within a trust-based relationship might be the prerequisite of a fruitful exchange of information and support. I might skim a colleague's application but I will carefully proof-read a close friend's application of. Hence, informational and instrumental support can be even more beneficial for the job seeker if emotional support is provided.

H4: Emotional support moderates the effect of informational and instrumental support.

Data and Measures

My analyses are based on data from the German National Educational Panel Study (NEPS) which provides detailed biographical monthly information over the life course about education, occupation, family formation etc. (Blossfeld et al. 2011). Within the NEPS data structure I make use of the second and third wave of start cohort 6 which possesses a representative sample of the working population in German². Wave two, which was collected in 2009/2010, contains all social capital variables. The dependent variables, unemployment and occupational status, are acquired from wave three which was collected in 2010/2011. Therefore, a gap of one year exists between the report of social support and labor market outcomes. Missings in the second wave were imputed by information from the first wave, if available.

² I excluded wave 1 as it does not contain most variables needed.

The total sample size is over 11 000 individuals, ranging from the age 23-65. Immigrants are either of foreign origin themselves (first generation immigrants) or have been born in Germany but have at least one foreign-born parent (second generation immigrants). I focus on individuals who report to be in a serious partnership, hence either married or cohabiting. Although my focus lies on immigrants I also estimate all models for home born individuals. This leads me with a total sample of 5453 natives and second generation immigrants and 594 first generation immigrants. Because of its detailed structure the NEPS data is particularly valuable for my research questions. However, one has to bear in mind that due to the retrospective nature of the survey only immigrants are included who have not (yet) re-immigrated to their home country.

Measures

Dependent variable: I am studying two dependent variables. First, whether individuals who seek employment are employed (1) or not (0). Second, I am interested in the occupational status of those who are employed. I am thereby looking at the Standard International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status (ISEI) which ranges from zero to 100.

Informational and instrumental support: Respondents were asked whether their partner would provide a) information about job openings (informational support), b) help with the application process (instrumental support) and c) try to get the job seeker a job (instrumental support). I created three dummy variables indicating whether the partner is likely to provide information, help, and job reference (1) or not (0).

Emotional support: Respondents were asked whether, looking back at the last six months, they discussed important matters with their partner. This measure indicates dialog, trust and

exchange of emotions and suits a valid item for emotional support (Henly et al. 2005). Respondents either answered with yes (1) or no (0).

Legal status at time of migration: I am differentiating between ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*) and EU immigrants (0) and third country nationals (1). Ethnic Germans are clearly identified in the data. Whether an immigrant is considered an EU migrant or third country national depends on whether the origin country is a member of the European Union and whether he or she migrated to Germany *after* the origin country became a member of the European Union.

Partner characteristics: I am controlling for two characteristics of the partner: education and origin. Education of the partner is measured by the CASMIN classification (Comparative Analysis of Social Mobility in Industrial Nations, see König, Lüttinger, and Müller 1988) and ranges from 9-18 years. Additionally, for each partner the country of birth is known. Partners born outside of Germany are considered foreign (0), those born in Germany native (1).

Controls

Development Status at time of migration: In order to measure the development status of each origin country in comparison to Germany, the GDP per capita of each year from 1950-2009 was put into relation of the GDP per capita of Germany in the respective years (The Conference Board Total Economy Database™, January 2013, <http://www.conference-board.org/data/economydatabase/>).

Language skills: Immigrants reported how well they could read, write, speak and understand German (very good to very bad). I constructed a scale of 6 items (Cronbach's Alpha .70, Loevinger's H.52).

Education: Respondents' education was measured in years of school attendance (CASMIN classification, see above) and ranges from 9 years to 18 years.

Education in Germany: Immigrants reported whether they spend at least part of their schooling in Germany (1) or not (0).

Length of stay in country: NEPS provides exact data about year and month of migration and time point of the interview. The migration dates were subtracted from the interview dates and then regrouped into four categories: 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years and more than 20 years.

Gender: Respondents are either female (1) or male (0).

Age: in years. Ranges from 20 to 65.

Unemployment rate at time of migration: Using data from the Agentur für Arbeit (2012), the unemployment rate of Germany at time of migration was added, ranging from 7% to 13.

Results

The following analyses serve the purpose to answer three main questions: Which forms of support provided by the partner are helpful for labor market integration? Are there group differences? And to what extent does emotional support moderate informational and instrumental? Overall, I can show that a distinction between different forms of social support is important as they have different effects on labor market outcomes. Moreover, third country nationals benefit the most from their partner's support, mainly from job references and emotional support. Moreover, I can show that emotional support enforces the effects of informational and instrumental support.

In total, I estimate my models for four different samples. First, I study two different labor market outcomes: The risk of unemployment and for those, who are employed: occupational status. I further distinguish between two main groups, namely natives and second generation

immigrants on the one hand and first generation immigrants on the other hand. For reasons of simplification I will refer in the following to home born sample when speaking of natives and second generation immigrants and foreign born sample when speaking of first generation immigrants.

All models are estimated using linear probability models. I also estimated the models with unemployment as the dependent variable with logistic regressions, but results are substantially the same. Because in logit models one cannot compare coefficients across models with different independent variables (Mood, 2010) and because the results do not differ, I present the estimates obtained with the linear probability model with estimated robust standard errors.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for the two dependent variables, unemployment and occupational status, main independent variables and control variables for both samples, home born and foreign born separately. Unemployment occurs more frequently among first generation immigrants than among natives and second generation immigrants. First generation immigrants also report lower occupational status.

With regard to the different forms of support it becomes apparent that perceived informational support and job references are equally distributed among home born and foreign born individuals. First generation immigrants report twice as much as home born individuals that their partner would help them with writing a job application. Also, whereas almost 50% of first generation immigrants reported that they talk with their partner about important matters only 34% of home born individuals did. This already shows that resources within partnerships are not equally distributed among natives and second generation immigrants on the one hand and first generation immigrants on the other hand.

***** Table 1 about here *****

Main effects of social support

In table 2 I proceed with estimating multivariate models that predict the risk of unemployment. Models 1a-3a refer to the home born sample, model 4a-6a to the foreign born sample. Models 1a and 4a report estimates for informational and instrumental support. First results suggest that home born individuals benefit from having a partner who can help with the application process whereas informational support and job references do not significantly affect the risk of unemployment. For immigrants, however, none of the two forms of social support influence the risk of unemployment.

In a second step, I include only emotional support (M2a and M5a) and find that whereas no effect is found for home born, first generation immigrants indeed significantly benefit from emotional support provided by the partner ($b=-.049$, $p<.01$). The effect even remains if controlling for the other forms of social support (M6a).

Same estimations were obtained for the employed sample studying the effects of social support on occupational status (table 3). For all groups we can see that if the partner provides help with the application process occupational status decreases significantly. Hence, at least for natives and second generation immigrants we can conclude that partner's help with job applications leads to employment, however, of lower occupational status. I also hypothesized that emotional support positively affects labor market outcomes; however, it seems like this is only true for home born individuals and not for first generation immigrants.

***** Table 2 and 3 about here *****

Group differences in social support

In a second step I was looking at group differences more detailed. I hypothesized that among first generation immigrants third country nationals are the main beneficiaries. Whereas first results suggested that first generation immigrants are not affected by their partners' informational or instrumental support in terms of finding a job, we now see that this is only true for EU migrants and ethnic Germans. Third country nationals, on the other hand, benefit significantly from a partner who is able to provide information about the job search. The risk of unemployment decreases by .240 points. It also becomes visible that they are the main beneficiaries from their partner's emotional support. However, not all resources, which are provided by the partner, work in favor of third country nationals. If the partner provides job references the risk of unemployment increases by .127 points.

A quite different pattern is shown with regard to occupational status. No effect of partner's resources is found for third country nationals. EU migrants and ethnic Germans, on the other hand, experience higher occupational status if their partner provides job references. However, they are also negatively affected if the partner is able to help with job applications.

Those results suggest that EU migrants and ethnic Germans find a job no matter whether their partner provides social support or not. Rather, it seems like social support matters with regard of the type of the job they find. For third country nationals, the opposite is the case. Partners' social and emotional support does not matter for occupational status but strongly affects their likelihood of finding a job in the first place. The effect of emotional support on the risk of unemployment is especially interesting in this regard. It shows that emotional closeness in partnership matters and that those who are particularly vulnerable due to institutional barriers and discrimination benefit the most.

***** Table 4 and 5 about here *****

Emotional support as moderator

In a last step, I estimated marginal effects of informational and instrumental support by emotional support. I hypothesized, that emotional support moderates the effects of those two forms of social support because a strong relationship may be a prerequisite for exchanging particularly valuable information and instrumental support.

I therefore included interaction terms between informational and instrumental support and emotional support. This allows testing whether the gain from partner's social support with respect to finding employment and acquiring higher occupational status depends on whether the partner also provides emotional support.

I can clearly support this hypothesis for first generation immigrants. Informational support only decreases the risk of unemployment if the partner provides emotional support as well. With regard to previous results we can assume that this effect is mainly relevant for third country nationals. I also showed previously that EU migrants and ethnic Germans possess higher occupational status if their partner is able to provide job references (table 5). We now see that this effect becomes only significant if emotional support is provided. Also, the negative effect of partner's help with writing an application is enforced through emotional support. This suggests that good intentions do not always lead to good results.

For natives and second generation immigrants we see that job references provided by the partner only decrease the risk of unemployment if emotional support is present (table 6). the results are a bit mixed. Also, occupational status is negatively affected by partner's help with the application; however, the effect is double as strong if emotional support is present. This shows that the mechanism of partner's help with the application is similar for home born and foreign born individuals.

***** Table 6 and 7 about here *****

Conclusion

In this paper I studied the partner's role in immigrants' labor market integration by examining the effects of instrumental, informational, and emotional support provided by the partner on the risk of unemployment and occupational status. The exact empirical measurement of social support was not done yet in previous studies, mainly due to lack of proper data. Moreover, I introduce emotional support as a theoretical concept and discuss why emotional support positively affects labor market outcomes. I argue that emotional support provided by the partner not only affects unemployment and occupational status directly, it also affects labor market outcomes indirectly by increasing the willingness of the partner to share particular valuable informational and instrumental support.

I first looked at group differences hypothesizing that all three forms of social support work differently for EU migrants, ethnic Germans and third country nationals. I argue that individuals who face obstacles due to their origin are more likely to benefit from their partner's social support because they are restricted in their use of other forms of support. Particularly third country nationals are more likely to face discrimination and mainly come from countries which are characterized by knit-tight networks. Therefore, they might be more dependent on instrumental, informational, and emotional support whereas natives, EU migrants and ethnic Germans also have better opportunities to receive support from German institutions and authorities.

I find that this is partly true. Third country nationals, compared to EU migrants and ethnic Germans, indeed benefit most from their partner's social support. They are much more likely to find employment if their partner is able to provide information about the labor market

(informational support). For EU migrants and ethnic Germans, however, none of the resources provided by the partner have any influence on their chances of finding employment. For them, it seems, the partner becomes important not for finding a job but for finding the right job. If the partner is able to provide job references, i.e. is either able to employ the partner him/herself or knows someone who could, EU migrants and ethnic Germans acquire a much higher occupational status than if the partner is missing this resource. This suggests that third country nationals and EU migrants and ethnic Germans benefit differently from their partner's resources. For third country nationals the partner is important for finding employment, whereas the partner becomes important for EU migrants and ethnic Germans when looking not just for any job but a good job.

I also find that emotional support matters for third country nationals, at least for finding employment. Whether immigrants are able to talk to their partner about problems or not helps avoiding unemployment. One explanation could be that family emotional support reduces work place stress (Noor 2002) and therefore increases work productivity which leads to promotion, as suggested by the work-family enrichment hypothesis (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). This finding shows that previous emphasis on instrumental support is not as justified as assumed. On the contrary, for immigrants it seems more important to feel that they are in good hands and have someone with whom they can share their problems. Moreover, emotional support serves as a transmission belt for the other resources. Informational support is only effective if the partner also provides emotional support. Emotional support may lead to more detailed and considered information about potential job openings and the labor market. Partners may consider together the best strategy to apply to well-paid jobs with high occupational status.

I also looked at natives and second generation immigrants, the so called home born, for comparative reasons. Employment is easier to find if the partner provides help with writing a

job application. However, the job they find is of low occupational status. This is particularly true if a strong emotional relationship exists between the two partners.

Lastly, I could show that informational, instrumental and emotional support work differently for EU migrants, ethnic Germans, and third country nationals. Whereas third country nationals benefit from their partner when they are looking for a(ny) job, EU migrants and ethnic Germans benefit from their partner with regard to high status jobs. One explanation for this finding could be that third country nationals still face discrimination and institutional barriers, such as non-recognition of foreign credentials, which hinders them to find employment. Therefore, they may be more dependent on their social networks than EU migrants and ethnic Germans. Previous studies find that disadvantaged immigrant groups indeed rely more on their social network when looking for employment (Seibel and van Tubergen 2013) and that social networks may help circumvent discrimination (Mouw 2002). Also, those aspects make labor market integration for third country nationals particularly stressful and emotional support by the partner might be needed to go through the process of finding a job. In addition, since third country nationals are often coming from countries which institutionally differ from Germany they might lack information about how the German labor market functions. Since acquiring information about the German labor market is one of the main first steps, help from the partner is very valuable.

EU migrants and ethnic Germans have much fewer problems when it comes to recognition of their credentials. Hence, they do find employment, independently of whether their partner helped them or not. However, those who found employment are better off in terms of occupational status if their partner is connected to other employers. This suggests that EU migrants and ethnic Germans often have partners who are themselves already well integrated into the German labor market and therefore able to influence their partners labor market outcomes.

Of course, this study bears several limitations: First, due to the retrospective nature of the study the sample consists of immigrants who have not (yet) re-immigrated to their home country. Hence, my results might look differently for immigrants who stayed in Germany for e.g. only five years and then returned to their home country. I assume that those immigrants benefit even more from a strong social support system. As they might have little intentions to stay in the host country, thereby investing less into host-country specific human capital and knowledge, support by peers might be particularly helpful. However, I also assume that the effect of informational, instrumental and emotional support is mainly beneficial with regard to finding employment and to a lesser extent to chances of finding a job of higher occupational status. Immigrants with barely any intentions to stay might be more interested in finding employment quickly in order to earn some money and are less willing to go through the tiring procedure of credential recognition.

Another problem might be unobserved heterogeneity; people with certain characteristics, such as a friendly appearance, may be more likely to receive emotional support and be successful on the labor market. Unfortunately, I do not have access to data about specific personality traits. Also, because there is only one year gap between the measurements of social support and the measurements of labor market outcomes reverse causality may occur. One could argue that those individuals who find employment and who find a job of higher occupational status also have a partner who is able to provide job references or help with the application writing. However, this would not explain why natives, for example, benefit from their partner's help with writing a job application when looking for a job but are harmed by the same resource with regard to occupational status. Still, further waves are needed which allow a more thorough longitudinal analysis of the problem.

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Table 1: Descriptives

	Natives and 2nd Gen. Immigrants		First Generation Immigrants		range
	mean	sd	mean	sd	
Unemployed	.045		.12		
Occupational Status	.51.80	(20.72)	40.66	(21.68)	11.74- 88.96
Informational support	.08		.09		
<i>Instrumental support:</i>					
Job Reference	.09		.09		
Help with application	.25		.42		
Emotional support	.34		.47		
<i>Partner's characteristics:</i>					
Education	13.56	(2.71)	13.23	(2.98)	9-18
Foreign origin	.06		.71		
Female	.49		.47		
Age	46.79	(9.95)	44.69		23-65
<i>Migration Background:</i>					
2nd Generation immigrants	.09				
Third country nationals			.50		
GDP ratio home country			.41		
Language skills			2.77	(.39)	1-3
Education			13.38	(2.93)	9-18
Education in Germany?			.80		
Length of stay			22.46		
Age at migration			23.11	(11.87)	1-56
Unemployment rate (%)			7.91	(3.68)	.7-13
N	5453		594		

Table 2: The effect of social support on the risk of unemployment, by home born and foreign born

	Natives and 2nd Generation Immigrants						First Generation Immigrants					
	M1a		M2a		M3a		M4a		M5a		M6a	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
Informational support	.010	(.011)			.009	(.011)	-.062	(.050)			-.060	(.052)
<i>Instrumental support:</i>												
Job Reference	.000	(.007)			-.001	(.007)	-.009	(.031)			-.002	(.031)
Help with application	-.016+	(.009)			-.017+	(.009)	.046	(.048)			.046	(.048)
Emotional support			.008	(.006)	.010	(.006)			-.049*	(.023)	-.047+	(.026)
<i>Partner's characteristics:</i>												
Education	-.003**	(.001)	-.004***	(.001)	-.003**	(.001)	-.007	(.004)	-.007+	(.004)	-.006+	(.004)
Foreign origin	.023	(.014)	.023+	(.014)	.023	(.014)	-.032	(.033)	-.027	(.032)	-.027	(.035)
Female	.026***	(.006)	.025***	(.006)	.026***	(.006)	.061**	(.021)	.062**	(.020)	.058**	(.021)
Age	.002***	(.000)	.002***	(.000)	.002***	(.000)	-.006	(.020)	-.003	(.021)	-.005	(.021)
<i>Migration Background:</i>												
2nd Generation immigrants	.006	(.010)	.007	(.010)	.006	(.010)						
EU migrants & ethnic Germans							<i>ref.</i>		<i>ref.</i>		<i>ref.</i>	
Third country nationals							-.033	(.068)	-.041+	(.026)	-.035	(.025)
GDP ratio home country							-.099*	(.038)	-.095*	(.038)	-.108**	(.039)
Language skills							-.110**	(.034)	-.108**	(.034)	-.104**	(.034)
Education	-.004***	(.001)	-.005***	(.001)	-.004***	(.001)	-.002	(.004)	-.002	(.004)	-.003	(.004)
Education in Germany?							.014	(.016)	.013	(.015)	.014	(.016)
Length of stay							.005	(.022)	.001	(.022)	.004	(.023)
Age at migration							-.010	(.020)	-.013	(.021)	-.011	(.021)
Age at migration ²							.000***	(.000)	.000***	(.000)	.000***	(.000)
Unemployment rate (%)							.002	(.007)	.003	(.007)	.004	(.007)
Constant	.097***	(.028)	.054*	(.026)	.098***	(.028)	.762***	(.219)	.716***	(.195)	.743***	(.213)
<i>R-Squared</i>	.028		.019		.029		.120		.125		.125	
<i>Observations</i>	5453		5453		5453		594		594		594	

Table 3: The effect of social support on occupational status, by home born and foreign borns

	Natives and 2nd Generation Immigrants						First Generation Immigrants					
	M1a		M2a		M3a		M4a		M5a		M6a	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
Informational support	-.243	(.889)			-.524	(.892)	-.974	(3.601)			-1.356	(3.648)
<i>Instrumental support:</i>												
Job Reference	-.245	(.840)			-.417	(.842)	2.155	(2.347)			2.081	(2.374)
Help with application	-.2094***	(.551)			-2.338***	(.554)	-3.835*	(1.771)			-4.036*	(1.764)
Emotional support			1.953***	(.489)	2.168***	(.494)			1.051	(1.373)	1.492	(1.292)
<i>Partner's characteristics:</i>												
Education	1.187***	(.103)	1.102***	(.101)	1.162***	(.103)	1.905***	(.251)	1.828***	(.250)	1.895***	(.244)
Foreign origin	.343	(1.027)	.556	(1.024)	.320	(1.027)	-.506	(1.6619)	.375	(1.466)	-.598	(1.661)
Female	-.440	(.469)	-.575	(.467)	-.424	(.469)	3.112*	(1.350)	3.245*	(1.318)	3.207*	(1.387)
Age	.063*	(.029)	.069*	(.029)	.069*	(.029)	-.062	(.995)	-.183	(.975)	-.089	(.985)
<i>Migration Background:</i>												
2nd Generation immigrants	.877	(.803)	1.018	(.803)	.979	(.802)						
EU migrantsðnic Germans							<i>ref.</i>		<i>ref.</i>		<i>ref.</i>	
Third country nationals							-3.808*	(1.707)	-3.821*	(1.545)	-3.643*	(1.746)
GDP ratio home country							2.006	(4.375)	1.801	(4.090)	1.820	(4.314)
Language skills							9.265***	(1.606)	9.553***	(1.592)	9.228***	(1.592)
Education	4.477***	(.114)	4.503***	(.144)	4.416***	(.115)	2.544**	(.750)	2.438**	(.742)	2.552***	(.721)
Education in Germany?							2.544**	(.750)	2.438**	(.742)	2.552***	(.729)
Length of stay							.266	(.994)	.406	(.969)	.297	(.978)
Age at migration							-.059	(.954)	.069	(.944)	-.023	(.940)
Age at migration ²							-.001	(.005)	-.001	(.005)	-.001	(.005)
Unemployment rate (%)							.232	(.417)	.246	(.430)	.233	(.422)
Constant	-32.882**	(2.108)	-30.494***	(2.053)	-32.524***	(2.107)	-49.298***	(13.895)	-51.834***	(13.052)	-49.331***	(14.086)
<i>R-Squared</i>	.384		.382		.386		.463		.462		.463	
<i>Observations</i>	5112		5112		5112		522		522		522	

Table 4: Marginal effects of social support on risk of unemployment by migration background of first generation immigrants

	EU migrants& ethnic		Third country nationals	
	Germans me	se	me	se
Information	.005	(.037)	-.240+	(.078)
Reference	-.028	(.047)	.127+	(.073)
Help	.003	(-.026)	-.025	(.050)
Emotional	-.011	(.048)	-.080**	(.025)

Table 5: Marginal effects of social support on occupational status by migration background of first generation immigrants

	EU migrantsðnic		Third country nationals	
	Germans me	se	me	se
Information	-4.227	(4.463)	3.863	(2.916)
Reference	8.960***	(2.562)	-5.193	(3.710)
Help	-5.960**	(2.211)	-1.109	(2.615)
Emotional	-1.286	(1.756)	3.728	(2.592)

Table 6: Marginal effects of informational, instrumental and financial support on risk of unemployment by emotional support

	Natives and 2nd Gen. Immigrants				First Generation Immigrants			
	No emotional Support		Emotional Support		No emotional Support		Emotional Support	
	me	se	me	se	me	se	me	se
Information	.005	(.015)	.013	(.015)	.017	(.085)	-.134***	(.037)
Reference	-.011	(.014)	-.024*	(.012)	-.011	(.095)	.104	(.088)
Help	.003	(.008)	-.006	(.009)	.004	(.033)	-.007	(.065)

Table 7: Marginal effects of informational, instrumental and financial support on occupational status, by emotional support

	Natives and 2nd Gen. Immigrants				First Generation Immigrants			
	No emotional Support		Emotional Support		No emotional Support		Emotional Support	
	me	se	me	se	me	se	me	se
Information	-.497	(1.281)	-.568	(1.254)	-.840	(3.499)	-1.357	(5.011)
Reference	-.295	(1.157)	-.497	(1.220)	-2.189	(4.932)	6.673*	(2.744)
Help	-1.881*	(.735)	-3.021***	(.820)	-2.712	(2.748)	-5.869**	(2.171)

