

**Female Employment after Migration:**

**Evidence from the Recent Immigrant Sample of the German Socio-Economic Panel**

Michaela Kreyenfeld (Hertie School of Governance, Berlin)<sup>1</sup>

Cristina Samper (Hertie School of Governance, Berlin)

**Short Abstract**

A large body of literature has amassed that investigates the conditions and processes of the labor market integration of male migrants (Fertig & Schurer, 2007; Kogan, 2004, 2007; Velling, 1995) Female migrants have often been viewed as “tied movers” (Adsera & Chiswick, 2007; Mincer, 1978) whose migration decision is contingent on the behavior of the male breadwinner. This view has been challenged by a growing numbers of female migrants seeking for employment in the German labor market. At the same time, migration laws have improved the possibilities for certain groups of “family migrants” to enter employment. Further, German family policies have been reformed in recent years allowing for a better compatibility of work and family life. This paper explores whether these factors have facilitated the integration process of female migrants into the German labor market. By means of event history modeling, we examine the duration it takes until different migrant groups enter employment after migration. We furthermore investigate how employment decisions intersect with decisions in the family domain of the life course. Data for this analysis comes from the migrant sample of the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP). Our analytical sample includes migrants who have come to Germany in the years 1990-2013.

---

<sup>1</sup> Email: kreyenfeld@hertie-school.org

## **1 Introduction**

While a large body of literature has amassed that has investigated the employment behavior of male migrants (see e.g. Fertig & Schurer, 2007; Kogan, 2004, 2007; Velling, 1995) far less attention has been devoted to the labor market behavior of women after migration. Official labor market statistics suggest that female migrants have a low tendency to be working. In 2012, the labor market participation rate of immigrant women amounted to 66%, while it was around 79% for the native German population (Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, 2014, p. 99). The low labor market participation of female migrants may have manifold consequences. It suggests that female migrants will face lower possibilities to integrate into the German society over a gainful employment. Moreover, low female employment rates may have repercussion on the economic foundation of migrant families. Germany has reformed their family policies in recent years and, with the expansion of public day care and the introduction of the “Elterngeld”, significantly improved the conditions for working parents. With the move towards a dual earner society, the economic foundation of the family is increasingly dependent on the employment of both parents. The failure to integrate migrant women into the labor market may have, thus, serious implications for the economic standing of migrant families, leading to higher poverty rates and greater chances that migrant families will be subject to welfare dependency. Last but not least, the low employment rates of female migrants may translate into low chances of migrant children to attend public day care. Despite a “right to public day care” that was enacted in 2013 on the national level, there is consistent empirical evidence that children of not-working mothers are less likely to start day care at an early age (Krapf, 2014; Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, 2014). Thus the integration of female migrants into the labor market is not only an important leverage to the social inclusion of migrants into the German society (Henkel, Steidle, Braukmann, & Sommer, 2015; Milewski, 2013). It should also be a general social policy concern, because a failure to integrate female migrants into the labor market may defer the integration of migrant children into the German society.

Against this background, this paper explores female migrants' labor market dynamics in Germany. In particular, we examine the duration it takes that migrant women enter the labor market after migration, how patterns vary by migration subgroups and how differences can be explained by the conditions and family behaviors surrounding migration.

## **2 Data, Method and Variables**

Data for this analysis comes from the immigrant sample of the German Socio Economic Panel (GSOEP) from the year 2013. The immigrants sample was drawn based on the "Integrated Employment Biographies Sample of the Institute for Labor Research," (IEBS) which comprises persons who have been employed, registered as unemployed, seeking employment, received benefits such as unemployment benefit or similar forms of government assistance (Brücker et al., 2014). The sample may fail to fully capture those female migrants who never inserted into the labor market. Albeit that a sample drawn on the IEBS is not representative for the total migration population in Germany, non-working females are still captured in the sample, if the family members who co-reside with the anchor respondent has been working and/or any of the other household members or the household has been employed or receiving any of the abovementioned benefits. Same as the other subsamples of the GSOEP, the immigrant sample is organized as an annually repeated panel study. For our analysis, we have selected data from the year 2013. The total sample size of the immigrant sample for that year includes 4,964 respondents. There are some respondents in the immigrant sample who were born in Germany or who migrated as young adults. These cases were omitted from our analytical sample. The sample has been further reduced to female respondents who migrated at ages 18-64 and who provided valid birth and employment histories. The final sample includes 1,468 female respondents, which is further reduced to 1,380 when we take out those who came initially for studying purposes, as their process for finding employment is mediated by other factors we cannot consider for other groups.

As a method, we employ event history modeling. The (main) process time is the duration between migration and first labor market entry. In the descriptive statistics we break down the employment status by full-time and part-time employment. In the multivariate analysis, we only contrast employed and the rest. Please note that we include all respondents into the analysis, irrespective of their employment status at migration, but people who migrated to Germany for studying purposes are excluded from the event history analysis. In order to generate our dependent variable, we combined information on the year of migration and the year of first employment. The latter was taken from the annual employment biographies.

One of our major independent variable is the migration group (see Table A1 in the Appendix for details). We distinguish three major groups EU-migrants, ethnic Germans and third country migrants. The latter is furthermore broken down by a) humanitarian migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers b) family migrants, which for descriptive purposes we additionally break down into Turkish origin and non-turkish c) others, including blue card holders and other migrants who moved for education or work. We also control for level of education, years since migration, year of migration, support for migration, language proficiency, age, and age of youngest child. The latter is included as a time-varying covariate into the analysis.

### **3 Results**

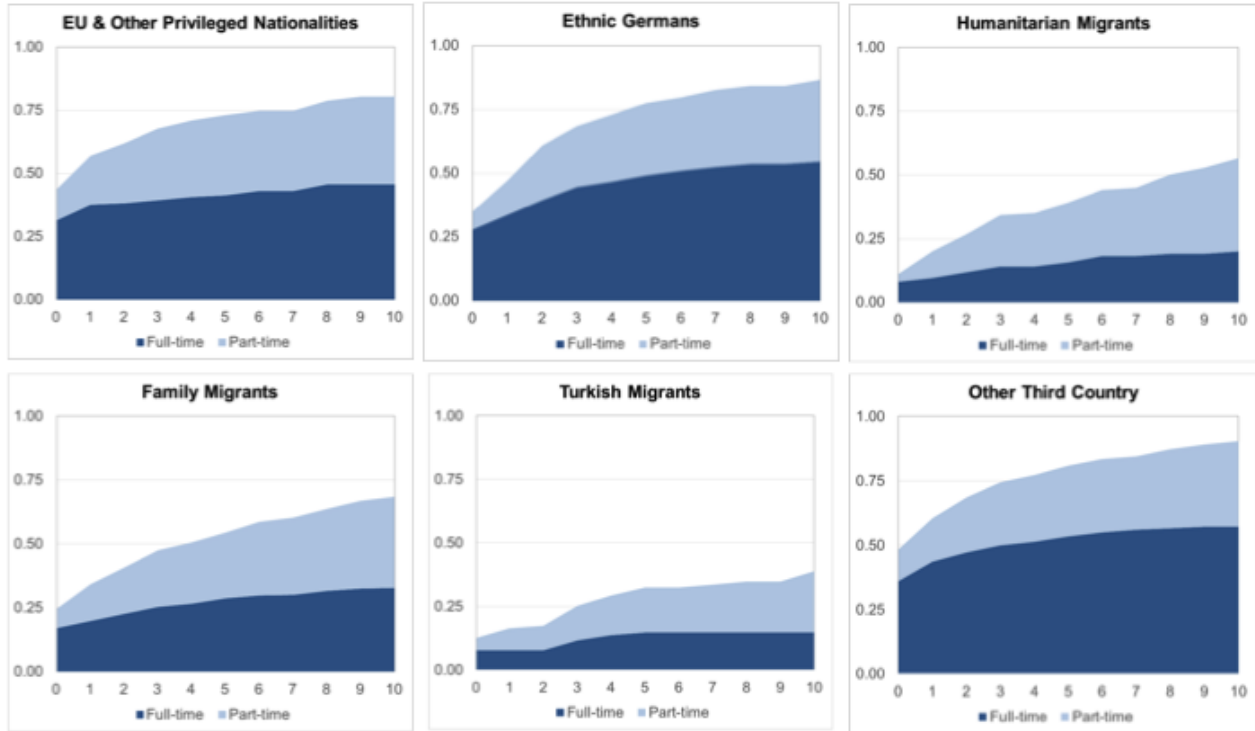
#### **3.1 Descriptive Results**

Figure 1 gives first descriptive results of female migrants' employment dynamics after migration. The graph displays cumulative incidence curves (Gooley, Leisenring, Crowley, & Storer, 1999) of the two competing events of entering full- versus part-time employment. If we turn to the EU migrants in a first step, we see that more than 45% are already employed when they enter the country and after the first year almost 60 percent (about 20% part-time and 40% full-time) have already entered employment. After ten

years, almost 80 % have entered the labor market at least once. We also find a rapid integration of ethnic German migrants into work. In the case of ‘other third country’ we can also see a rapid integration into employment, in fact after 10 years more than 90% of this group has entered employment at some point, this makes sense given that work in shortage occupations – apart from family and refugee status- is one of the few reasons why a third country migrant has a right to migrate and stay in Germany.

Striking is the behavior of Turkish migrants, who display an extremely low attachment to the labor market. Even after 10 years of stay in Germany less than 50% has entered the labor market. If they had entered, they mostly worked in part-time employment. Turkish migrants have mainly migrated for family reunion in recent years. As these migrations have been shown to quickly have a child after migration (Wolf, 2016), the low labor market attachment of this group may be intertwined with their birth behavior. Note, however, that for other family migrants (who are from other countries than Turkey), we see a higher attachment to the labor market.

Figure 1: Results from cumulative incidence curves. Transition to employment by duration since migration to Germany



Note: For this representation family migrants are split into “Turkish family migrants” and ”other family migrants”

### 3.2 Multivariate Results

Table 1 reports the results from the event history model. We have followed a stepwise procedure and included socio-economic covariates step by step. The first model contains the migration status only. It supports the prior descriptive findings showing family migrants and refugees have significantly lower employment risks than other migration groups. In the second model, once we control for having children some of the differences are explained. It is also evident that young children ages 0-5 are a significant factor for which migrant women do not enter employment. Having a small child between the ages 0-2 reduces the risk of entering employment by 75% compared to a childless woman. In the third model, we

control for the human capital endowment, language skills and labor market experience before migration, After inclusion of these covariate, differences between the family migration group and ethnic Germans are reduced further, but large differences remain. In the final model, we have controlled for Turkish origin, we see that Turkish women have a 50% reduced risk of entering employment in comparison to other migrant women. This corroborate previous studies that have found Turkish women tend to show low employment rates (Wagner, 2012).

Table 1: Results from Piece-wise model. Transition to employment after migration

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>
<b>Migration Group</b>				
Ethnic Germans	1	1	1	1
EU + priv. nationalities	1.15	1.26*	1.27*	1.21
TC: Refugees	0.37***	0.49***	0.53***	0.50***
TC: Family reunion	0.62***	0.71***	0.75***	0.78***
TC: Other	1.48***	1.49***	1.55***	1.5***
<b>Children</b>				
Childless		1	1	1
1 <sup>st</sup> child [Age: 0-2]		0.34***	0.35***	0.36***
1 <sup>st</sup> child [Age: 3-5]		0.60***	0.61***	0.61***
1 <sup>st</sup> child [Age: 6-8]		0.89	0.89	0.89
1 <sup>st</sup> child [Age: 9+]		0.98	1.02	0.99
2 <sup>nd</sup> child		0.71***	0.73***	0.73***
3 <sup>rd</sup> child		0.76**	0.76**	0.77**
<b>Employed before migration</b>			1.88***	1.82***
<b>Education</b>				
Low			1	1
medium: vocational			1.23***	1.16*
high: university			1.34***	1.25***
<b>German level at migration</b>				
None			0.77**	0.80**
Low			0.81**	0.83*
Good			1	1
<b>Turkish</b>				0.50***

Notes: \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*) continuous covariates

Also controlling for: years since migration, year of migration, age and support for migration



#### 4 References

- Adsera, A., & Chiswick, B. R. (2007). Are there gender and country of origin differences in immigrant labor market outcomes across European destinations? *Journal of Population Economics*, 20(3), 495–526.  
<http://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-006-0082-y>
- Brücker, H., Kroh, M., Bartsch, S., Goebel, J., Kühne, S., Liebau, E., ... Schupp, J. (2014). The new IAB-SOEP Migration Sample: an introduction into the methodology and the contents. *SOEP Survey Papers Series C - Data Documentations*, 216. Retrieved from [http://doku.iab.de/fdz/iab\\_soep/surveypaper\\_en.pdf](http://doku.iab.de/fdz/iab_soep/surveypaper_en.pdf)
- Cholewinski, R. (2004). *The Legal Status of Migrants Admitted for Employment*.
- Fertig, M., & Schurer, S. (2007). Labour Market Outcomes of Immigrants in Germany: The Importance of Heterogeneity and Attrition Bias. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 2915*, (2915), 0–52. Retrieved from [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1001203](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1001203)
- Federal Foreign Office. (2012). Immigration Act. Retrieved July 30, 2015, from [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/Zuwanderungsrecht\\_node.html](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/Zuwanderungsrecht_node.html).
- Gooley, T. A., Leisenring, W., Crowley, J., & Storer, B. E. (1999). Estimation of failure probabilities in the presence of competing risks: New representations of old estimators. *Statistics in Medicine*, 18(6), 695–706.  
[http://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-0258\(19990330\)18:6<695::AID-SIM60>3.0.CO;2-O](http://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-0258(19990330)18:6<695::AID-SIM60>3.0.CO;2-O)
- Henkel, M., Steidle, H., Braukmann, J., & Sommer, I. (2015). *Familien mit Migrationshintergrund. Analysen zur Lebenssituation, Erwerbsbeteiligung und Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf*. 3. Auflage. Bundesministerium für Familie Frauen und Jugend- BMFSFJ, Senioren.
- Kogan, I. (2004). Last hired, first fired? The unemployment dynamics of male immigrants in Germany. *European Sociological Review*, 20(5), 445–461. <http://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jch037>
- Krapf, S. (2014). Who uses public childcare for 2-year-old children? Coherent family policies and usage patterns in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 23(1), 25–40.  
<http://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.12031>
- Kreienbrink, A., & Rühl, S. (2007). *Family Reunification in Germany: Small Scale Study IV in the Framework of the European Migration Network*.
- Liebig, T. (2007). The Labour Market Integration of Immigrants in Germany. *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, 1. <http://doi.org/10.1787/238411133860>
- Milewski, N. (2013). Erwerbsbeteiligung und Einstellungen zur Familie von türkischen Migrantinnen im Generationenvergleich. *Zeitschrift Für Familienforschung*, 25(1), 53–74.
- Mincer, J. (1978). Family Migration Decisions. *Journal of Political Economy*, 86(5), 749–773.  
<http://doi.org/10.1086/260710>
- Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration. (2014). *Deutschlands Wandel zum modernen Einwanderungsland: Jahresgutachten 2014 mit Integrationsbarometer*. Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration. Retrieved from [http://www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SVR\\_JG\\_2014\\_WEB.pdf#](http://www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SVR_JG_2014_WEB.pdf#)
- Velling, J. (1995). Wage Discrimination and Occupational Segregation of Foreign Male Workers in Germany, (95). Retrieved from <ftp://ftp.zew.de/pub/zew-docs/dp/dp9504.pdf>
- Wagner, M. (2012). The Impact of Social Support Networks on Maternal Employment: A Comparison of West German, East German and Migrant Mothers of Pre-School Children.
- Wolf, K. (2016). Marriage migration vs. family reunification: How does the marriage and migration history determine the timing of first and second childbirth among Turkish immigrants in Germany? *European Journal of Population (Forthcoming)*.

**Table A1: Classification of Migrant Groups**

<b>EU and other Advantaged Nationalities</b>	<b>EU Citizens</b>	European Citizens have the right the move freely around Europe and pursue employment under the same right and obligations as any country national. Apart from EU citizens who can work without restrictions in Germany, there are also other 'western' country nationals that also have a 'privileged position' to enter Germany for working purposes to. They can enter without a visa, find work, and then obtaining a residence permit and working permit without having to satisfy labor market testing already being in Germany (Cholewinski, 2004, p. 23).
	<b>Ethnic Germans</b>	Individuals with an Ethnic German background, most from Eastern Europe and Central Asia who have a special resettlement permit and have entered Germany since 1950. They have received substantial integration help since the beginning and have immediate access to German citizenship (Liebig, 2007, p. 201).
<b>Third Country Nationals</b>	<b>Humanitarian Migrants</b>	Third country nationals who have entered Germany as refugees or asylum seekers. In relation to the working permissions, for those individuals that are granted asylum under the Geneva Convention Labor market testing does not apply (Liebig, 2007, p. 28). But for those looking for asylum, between 1997-2000, Asylum seekers and quasi refugees could not work in Germany. This provision was later abolished in 2001 in favor of a one-year waiting period and subsequent labor market testing (Liebig, 2007, p. 24).
	<b>Work or Study Migrants</b>	All those migrants who are non-EU, non-privileged nationals, who come to Germany for working or studying purposes. The working permission laws for this group have undergone the biggest changes between 1990 and 2013. In 2000, the labor shortage in the ICT sector was seen as an obstacle to economic growth, so the possibility of obtaining unrestricted working permits was opened (11 July 2000 BGB1 I p. 1146) (Cholewinsky 2004, 23). Most recently, in 2012 the EU Blue Card Directive or highly skilled immigrants was implemented. In 2005 the Immigration Act entered into force (January 1, 2005). The new system made the visa to enter Germany a kind of residence permit (Federal Foreign Office, 2012) . An important aspect of the 2005 residency act was the focus on the importance of migrant integration to the German culture, and to accomplish this by offering for example special language courses (Liebig, 2007, p. 27).
	<b>Family Reunion</b>	German law allows migrant workers to be joined by their spouse, or a partner of the same sex with a formalized union, as long as the migrant worker possess a residence permit or establishment permit, an adequate accommodation and sufficient means of subsistence. This group is then separate from other third country nationals, as they are mainly tight movers and get a special residence permit. With respect to working permission, in 1990 for a spouse (who migrated with the title of family reunification) of a principal holding a temporary residence permit or that was granted asylum, a one-year waiting period and labor market testing generally applied (Liebig, 2007, p. 25). Then since January 1, 2005 Resident Act improved the working possibilities for family members of third country migrants. Spouses are entitled to attend integration courses and are allowed to work to the same extent that the principle works (Kreienbrink & Rühl, 2007, p. 22).