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Female employment and migration in European countries: Introduction to the Special Issue

Michaela Kreyenfeld¹, Claudia Diehl², Martin Kroh³, & Johannes Giesecke⁴

¹ Hertie School. ² University of Konstanz. ³ Bielefeld University. ⁴ Humboldt University

Address correspondence to: Hertie School, Friedrichstraße 180, 10117 Berlin (Germany).
Email: kreyenfeld@hertie-school.org

Abstract

Objective: This chapter introduces the reader to the Special Issue “Female Employment and Migration in European Countries”.

Background: While there is a large body of research on the labour market performance of male migrants, women’s employment behaviour after migration has only recently moved into the focus of attention.

Method: This Special Issue draws on various research methods and data sources, including register, census, and survey data. Some of the studies focus on specific national contexts, such as the German, Spanish, Dutch, and Belgian situations. Other studies compare female migrants across European countries and between origin and destination countries.

Results: The contributions in this Special Issue help to disentangle the complex interplay of socio-economic factors, family and fertility behaviour, gender role attitudes, and institutional constraints and policies that shape the employment behaviour of migrant women after they migrate.

Conclusion: In many European countries, the employment rates of first-generation female migrants, and particularly those of women from non-EU countries of origin, lag behind the employment rates of native women. While prior research has often reported that socio-economic and cultural factors play a role in shaping the employment behaviour of female migrants, the contributions in this volume also emphasise the strong relevance of institutional factors in the receiving country, including migration, family, and labour market policies.

Key words: Europe, female employment, gender roles, labour market integration, migration



1. Introduction

1.1 *Cultural and economic determinants of female migration*

In 1885, Ernst George Ravenstein published his seminal work on the “Law of Migration”. Based on rich census data from the United Kingdom, he explored various facets of geographical mobility, described the migrants’ characteristics, and drew maps to illustrate the regional differences and similarities in migratory behaviour. His aim was to search for distinct regularities that could be crystallised into overarching principles. Altogether, he identified seven principles, including one stating that: “*Woman is a greater migrant than man*” (Ravenstein, 1885: 196). It seemed self-evident to Ravenstein that migration was gendered, and that these patterns were so regular that they could be characterised as a “Law of Migration” according to which women were more mobile than men (1885: 199).

When Ravenstein published his work, there was not yet a sharp dividing line between regional mobility and international migration. He may be criticised for his hasty conclusions, which were often based on simple aggregate-level associations. In hindsight, however, Ravenstein’s research appears surprisingly open-minded and fresh with regard to the role of women in society. Ravenstein (1885: 196) acknowledged that women may be intuitively associated with “domestic life”. However, he argued that the role of women had been changing in the late 19th century, and that women were also very much attracted to the employment opportunities in the emerging centres of industry and commerce. In Ravenstein’s framework, women were their own agents in the decision to move, and they did so primarily for employment reasons.

Ravenstein’s open-minded perspective towards the role of migrant women in society is largely absent from the theoretical frameworks and empirical investigations that followed. With the emergence of the household economics in the 1970s, migration has been theorised as a household or family decision (Mincer, 1978). The upsurge of this theory marked the beginning of a phase in which residential mobility and migration of women were primarily discussed in conjunction with the ambitions and plans of the male spouse. While the theory of “tied migration” assumes that the partners in a couple have joint interests, and is gender-neutral by construction, Mincer (1978: 753) concluded that women were empirically more likely to be the “tied persons” whose behaviour was “dominated” by the economic gains of the spouse’s migration. Women were thus characterised as “tied migrants” (Bielby & Bielby 1992) and “trailing wives” (Cooke 2008), and migration by women was viewed as “secondary” (Morrison & Lichter, 1988) and “subservient” (Boyle et al. 2001: 201).

The economic models of migration were primarily concerned with the pecuniary factors that guided the decision to migrate and shaped subsequent employment decisions (Lee 1966; Radu & Straubhaar 2012). Individual resources, such as education and qualifications, language skills, the availability of migrant networks (see *Bilecen & Seibel* in this Special Issue), and in some cases discrimination were identified as key factors that determine the later labour market success of both female and male migrants (Kalter & Kogan, 2014; Kogan, 2004a, 2004b, 2007). Cultural factors – in particular traditional gender role attitudes, as well as religious affiliation and orientation – were cited as

additional layers for understanding women's migration and employment behaviour (Khatab & Hussein 2018; Kofman 2004; Smith 2004, see also *Guveli & Spierings* in this Special Issue). The low female employment rates and the prevailing and often traditional norms in the migrant women's countries of origin have been discussed as important determinants of their low levels of labour market attachment in the host societies (Blau 2015; Boyle et al. 2001; Guveli et al. 2016).

The new focus on the migrants' countries of origin also opened up new avenues for migration and integration research, as it emphasised the importance of taking transnational ties and relations to the country of origin into account when seeking to understand the behaviour of migrants in the destination country (Aybek & Milewski 2020; Baldassar et al. 2018; Merla et al. 2020a, b). There is evidence as well that transnational family ties play a critical role in determining the family wellbeing and family behaviour of humanitarian migrants. While the value of these ties is most obvious for unaccompanied minors, these relationships are also highly relevant for adult migrants who have minor children or a spouse in the home country (e.g., Gambaro et al. 2018). The focus on country of origin ties and influences has also stimulated research on the inter-generational transmission of attitudes and values, and has raised the question of how gender roles have evolved, how they are transmitted across generations, and how they interact with economic and social conditions after migration (Nauck 2001, see *Tsolak et al.* in this Special Issue).

1.2 *The demographic perspective*

A very different strand of literature has addressed the factors that determine migrants' demographic behaviour (Kraus & Castro-Martín 2018; Kulu 2005; Milewski 2010; Mussino et al. 2020; Ortensi 2015; Tønnessen & Mussino 2020). This type of research has been particularly concerned with women's fertility and marriage timing. It is intriguing that while labour market research has mainly addressed the behaviour of male migrants, demographic research has almost completely neglected the male perspective. Only a few existing studies have examined the fertility and marriage transitions of international male migrants (see, however, Kraus 2019; Wolf 2016).

Three competing hypotheses are commonly discussed in this area of demographic research: namely, the socialisation, adaptation, and interrelation-of-events hypotheses. While the socialisation hypothesis states that the behaviour of migrant women is primarily determined by the cultural patterns they learned in their country of origin, the adaptation hypothesis assumes that migrant women's demographic behaviour will – with increasing duration of stay – converge to the behaviour of the “majority population” in the destination country (Andersson 2004; Wolf 2016). Adaptation may occur through “cultural convergence”, as migrants acquire norms and values of the ideal number of children or of the optimal age at first birth that are similar to those of the native population. It can also occur as migrants are exposed to new economic and institutional constraints in the destination country. The interrelation-of-events hypothesis – which is arguably more of an empirical observation than a hypothesis that is carefully buttressed by any theorising – states that migration, childbirth, and marriage are closely interrelated events in a woman's life course (Impicciatore et al. 2020; Milewski 2007).

In a review of prior research in this area, Andersson (2021) concluded that demographic scholars have probably overemphasised “socialisation”, and paid too little attention to the structural factors in the receiving country that shape migrant women’s family, fertility, and employment behaviour. The focus on “cultural differences” between natives and migrant populations may also have ramifications for the public discourse on migrant women’s integration into the host society. Instead of removing barriers to women’s labour market participation, policy-makers may brush aside concerns about migrant women’s lack of success in integrating into the labour market by referring to “cultural particularities”. Likewise, the focus on “culture” diverts attention from the ways in which family, labour market, and migration policies shape migrant women’s life courses.

1.3 Institutional constraints and migrant women’s employment

Family and labour market policies shape the conditions for participating in the labour market in the receiving country (Costello et al. 2004). Migrant women may be disadvantaged in several respects. Many EU countries are moving towards becoming dual-earner societies, and are increasingly implementing earnings-related parental leave schemes. These developments may put migrant women at a disadvantage because they tend to be less attached to the labour market before they start a family than native women, but also because any work experience and earnings they had in their home country are generally not factored into the calculation of these benefits if they are not from an EU country. Moreover, migrant women may be less likely than native women to secure a slot in public day care for their child. Women who have recently migrated to a new country may find it hard to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles involved in registering a child with a public day care institution (see *Biegel et al.* and *Sánchez-Domínguez & Abenza* in this Special Issue).

Beyond family and labour market policies, migration policies must be taken into account when seeking to understand migrant women’s behaviour in the receiving country. Ultimately, migration policies define the conditions for entering the country, and these conditions can be very limited for migrants from non-EU countries. Many third-country nationals (TCNs) enter Europe on the basis of family reunification (OECD 2020). What constitutes a “family” is regulated by migration law, and jurisdictions in European countries commonly rely on a “western image” of the nuclear family that is composed of a married couple with minor children (Kofman 2004). Kofman (2004; 2007; 2018) further argued that family reunification migration is usually treated as “a secondary form” of migration. Inherent in this form of migration is the presumption that there is a main male earner and a female migrant who will be economically dependent on her spouse after migration. This view is also omnipresent in national regulations, which tie family reunification to pre-conditions. Thus, if a migrant wants to bring a spouse into the country, he (or in theory also she) is required to have sufficient earnings and housing to support another person. The legal and economic dependence of the “tied migrant” can, in turn, result in family conflict, partner violence, and paternalistic behaviour by the male partner (Kofman et al. 2012; Kraler et al. 2012).

Migration policies chiefly define the selectivity of the migrant population (Borjas & Bronars 1991; Pessar & Mahler 2003; Rapoport et al. 2020; White & Johnson 2016). While selective migration is relevant for both women and men, the degree and the patterns of selection into migration differ by gender. For female third-country nationals, “marriage migration” constitutes one of the few pathways to migrate to Europe. Thus, the female migrant populations from third countries are often highly selected in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics, family behaviour, and family orientations (see *Samper & Kreyenfeld* in this Special Issue).

2. Migration flows, policies, family behaviour, and migrant women’s employment

2.1 Migrant flows by gender

The major immigration receiving countries in Europe are Germany, the UK, France, Spain, and Italy, which together “absorb” more than 60 per cent of all immigrants to the EU. As Figure 1 indicates, the gender ratio of recent migration has been fairly balanced in Spain and the UK, but has been dominated by men in Germany, Italy, and the UK (see Figure A1 in the Appendix on the influx by gender). This pattern was particularly pronounced in 2016 and 2017, when large numbers of humanitarian migrants moved to European countries. In Germany, the male-to-female gender ratio at migration increased to more than 1.5 in 2015/16. Hence, for every 100 female migrants, there were more than 150 male migrants. Since then, the share of female migrants among the humanitarian migrants has increased gradually (Bujard et al. 2020).

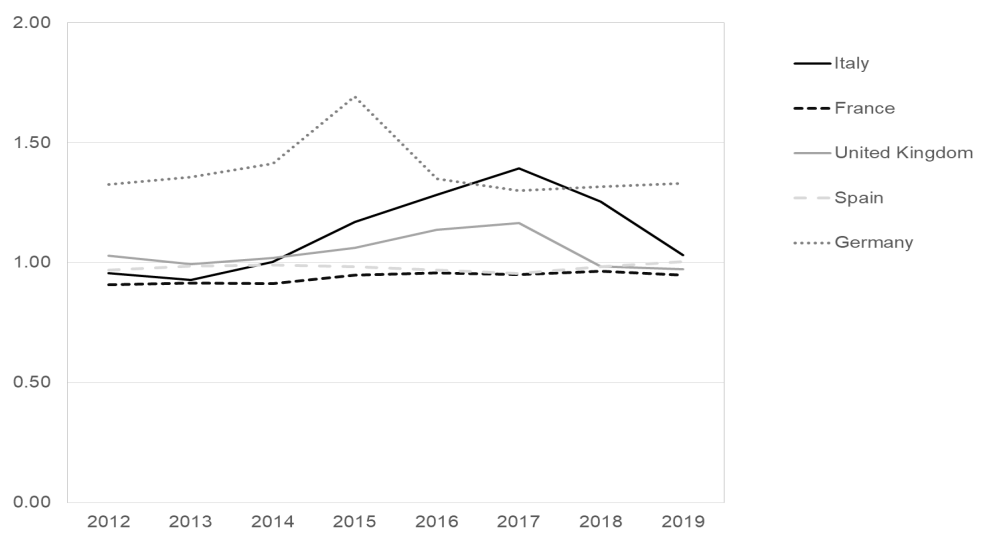
With the influx of humanitarian migrants in 2016 and 2017, the composition of the immigrant population has also changed with respect to country of origin. In Germany, for example, Syrians have been among the three main countries of origin for immigrants in 2016 (DESTATIS 2018). However, previously and in the years thereafter, large shares of the immigrant population were from Central and Eastern European countries, such as Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria (see Figure A2 in the Appendix; see also *Sprengholz et al.* in the volume).

2.2 Migrant women’s employment rates in European countries

European migration policies distinguish between EU citizens and third-country nationals (TCNs). As can be seen in Figure 2, the employment rates of female migrants from third countries are generally lower than those of the native population. In Germany, for example, the female employment rate of the total population reached 78 per cent in 2019, while the employment rate of migrants from third countries was just 33 per cent. Similar discrepancies can be observed in France, Sweden, Netherlands, Austria, the UK, and Denmark (see also Brinbaum 2018; Kogan 2016). While the employment rate of non-EU migrants in Italy and Greece is only around 25 per cent, it is important to note that the

employment rate of the total female population in these countries is also only about 50 per cent. In Spain, the differences are less pronounced, most likely because a significant share of the migrants from Latin American countries who work in domestic services (Leon 2010; see also *Sánchez-Domínguez & Guirola Abenza* in this Special Issue). Another exception to this pattern is Hungary, where most third-country nationals have immigrated on employment visas from neighbouring Ukraine (OECD 2020: 201). While there are large differences between the total employment rates and the employment rates of third-country nationals, the employment rates of women from EU countries hardly differ from the national average (with the exception of Greece).

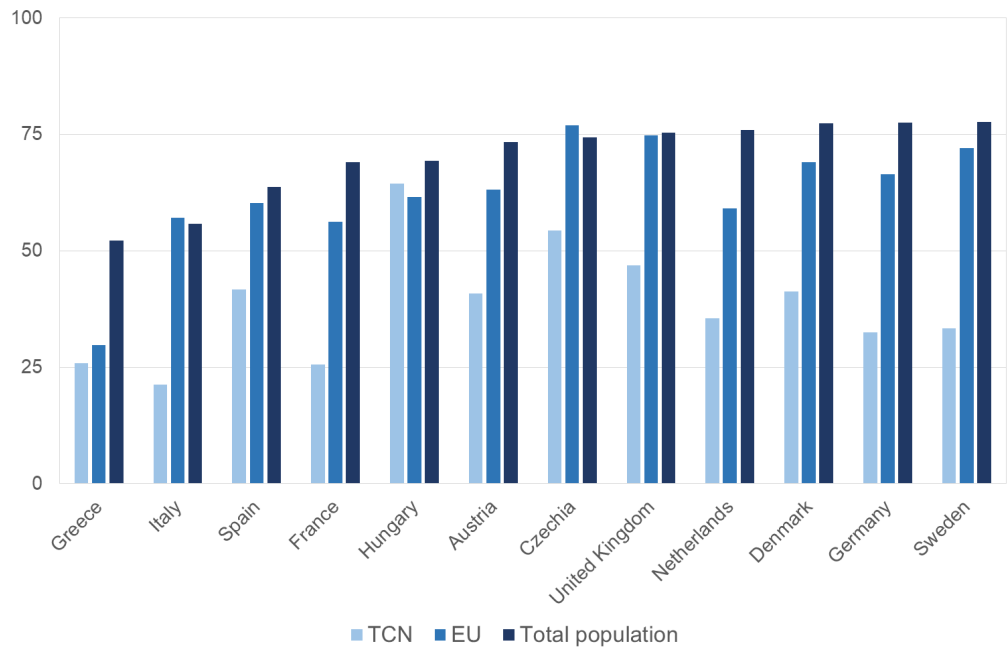
Figure 1: Inflows of immigrants by gender. Male-to-female ratio in the major receiving countries of immigrants in the EU



Note: A value above 1 means that more men than women migrated. For example, a value of 1.50 means that there are 150 men for 100 women. *Source:* Eurostat (2021c)

The low employment rates of female TCNs in European countries are closely related to the migration channels available to women from outside the EU. The main grounds for TCNs to migrate to Europe are humanitarian reasons and family reunification. In addition, there is a growing group of individuals who have migrated to Europe on a student visa or as a highly skilled professional (Cerna & Czaika, 2016; Czaika & Parsons 2017). While migration on the grounds of being a highly skilled worker or a student is increasingly possible, women from non-EU countries still have limited access to these channels. In addition, high-skilled migration by women has not attracted much attention in the scientific discourse, as women “are still largely treated as dependents or providers of unskilled labour” (Kofman 2000: 46).

Figure 2: Female employment rate by country, total female population and first-generation migrants, distinguished by third-country nationals (TCNs) and EU migrants, 2019

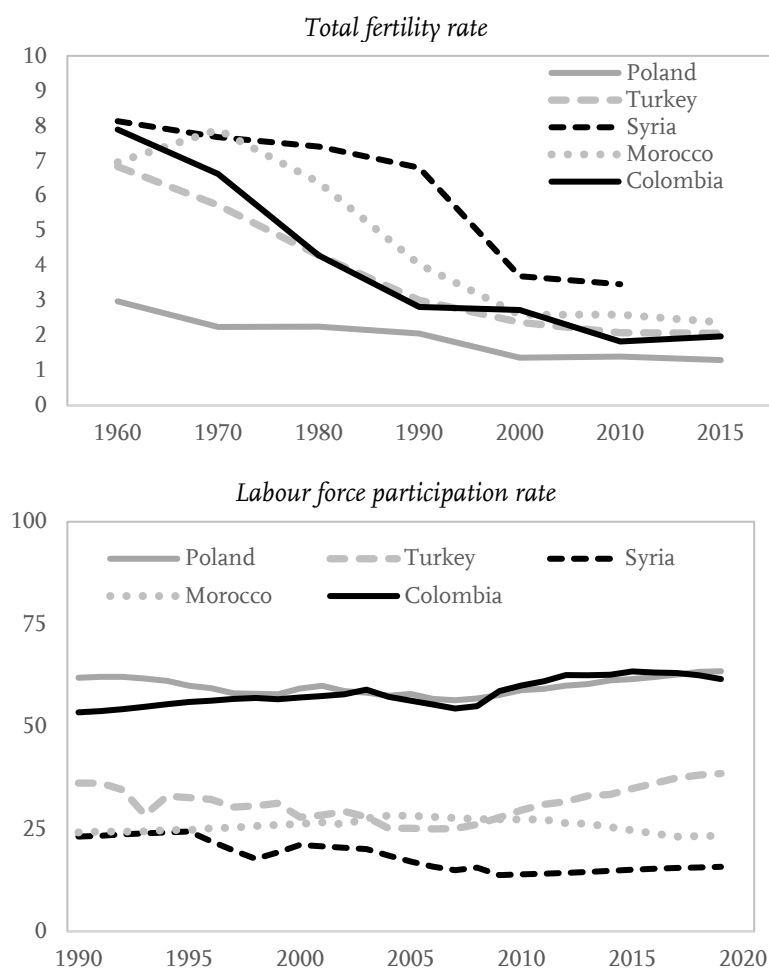


Note: The UK is treated as an EU country as the data are from 2019. *Source:* Eurostat (2021a, 2021b)

2.3 Demographic behaviour and migration

Much of the prior demographic research on female migration started with the assumption that third-country nationals come from countries with high fertility. As a result, it was generally expected that the fertility of the migrant population would be higher than that of the native population (see, however, Mussino *et al.* 2020; Tønnessen & Mussino 2020). Such an assumption disregards the reality that many of the typical countries of origin of migrants to Europe have undergone profound demographic transitions in recent years. Figure 3 (upper panel) plots the fertility rates of some common origin countries. In all of these countries, the total fertility rate has decreased sharply in recent years. Poland, which is one of the main origin countries of migrants to the UK and Germany, has experienced low fertility for many decades. While fertility has fallen to or close to replacement level in many of the leading origin countries, large differences in the female employment rates in these countries have persisted (see Figure 3, lower panel as well as *Tsolak et al.* in this Special Issue).

Figure 3: Total fertility rate and labour force participation rate in selected origin countries by calendar year¹



Source: HFD (2021); ILO (2021); UN (2019)

Although the fertility rates in many of these countries of origin are below or around replacement level, the birth rates of female international migrants tend to accelerate around the time of migration (Milewski 2010; Kraus & Castro-Martín 2018; Ortensi 2015; Toulemon 2004). This pattern is usually characterised as the “arrival effect” in the literature, and it is closely related to the channels through which international migrants

1 Fertility estimates are based on UN data. In some cases, these data provide more than one estimate for a given year. When there was conflicting information, we gave priority to estimates from vital statistics or DHS data. Not all years are covered in the data. For example, for Colombia, there was no information for the year 2010; but as there was information for 2009.5, that information was then used as an estimate for the year 2010.

from non-European countries are legally permitted to move to Europe. Migration on the basis of family reunification means that the migrant must have marital ties to a spouse in the destination country at the time of migration. As a consequence, marriage and migration are often strongly interrelated events in the life courses of women (and men) who migrate on the legal grounds of family reunification (Mulder & Wagner 1993).

A large body of empirical research has confirmed that women's birth intensities tend to peak in the year of migration (Milewski 2010; Kraus & Castro-Martín 2018; Ortensi 2015; Toulemon 2004). While the demographic literature has provided a detailed account of the birth patterns around migration, the question of how the partnership and fertility decisions women make around the time of migration affect their subsequent life courses has rarely been investigated. It is, however, obvious that a woman's family behaviour at the time of migration will influence her future employment, earning, and poverty trajectories.

3. Content of this special issue

This Special Issue brings together original work by scholars who have examined the labour market experiences of female migrants. By presenting this research, we seek to integrate the demographic literature that has mainly been concerned with the family behaviour of female migrants, and the economic literature that has primarily focused on the employment behaviour of male migrants. The contributions in this volume show how employment is affected by processes of intergenerational transmission, and how employment intersects with other life course domains, particularly partnership and fertility behaviour. Many of the papers are focused on the German experience, but evidence from other European countries is presented as well.

3.1 Integration into the German labour market

The first paper in this volume, which is by *Maximilian Sprengholz, Claudia Diehl, Johannes Giesecke and Michaela Kreyenfeld*, provides a "long view" on female migration to West Germany that spans the period from 1976 to 2014. The paper describes different indicators that map employment and economic integration, including women's employment rates, working hours, and socio-economic positions (measured as ISEI-88). As well as showing that female migrants' levels of education have increased across arrival cohorts, and have become more similar to those of men, the paper presents evidence that the labour market performance of immigrants varies greatly by arrival cohort, and thus reflects the conditions and the policy contexts that were prevalent when the migrants entered Germany. A much overlooked finding in the literature is that the employment rates of the female migrants who arrived in the late 1960s and the early 1970s were actually higher than those of the native population. The working hours of the women in these arrival cohorts were almost equal to those of the men. However, with increasing duration of stay, the working hours of these migrant woman declined, and nearly reached the lower levels observed among (West) German women. By contrast, the employment

rates of the women of the later migration cohorts were not only far below those of the women of the “recruitment cohort”, they were also below the employment rates of average (West) German women.

While the first paper provides a long-term overview of the German situation up to 2014, the contribution by *Zerrin Salikutluk and Katrin Menke* focuses on a more recent period: i.e., on the labour market integration of recently arrived humanitarian migrants. Major legal restrictions that made it difficult for refugees to enter the German labour market, such as the prohibition on working and the requirement that refugees undergo a priority review (“*Vorrangprüfung*”), have been softened in recent years. Furthermore, German language programmes have been expanded, and are increasingly able to respond to the needs of women with children. Although these paradigmatic and legislative changes have facilitated the integration of migrant women into paid work, the paper by *Salikutluk and Menke* shows that only about 30 per cent of refugee women are active in the labour market (compared to roughly 60 per cent of refugee men). The paper also highlights that many of the refugee women have young children below the age of three. As expected, the authors find that the presence of children in the household has a very strong inhibiting effect on the labour market participation of these refugee women. Prior studies have theorised that migrant women who wear a hijab are likely to experience discrimination in the labour market. While the process of discrimination is notoriously difficult to detect using survey data, the findings of this study support the hypothesis that for migrant women, there is a strong negative correlation between their chances of integrating into the labour market and wearing a hijab.

The contribution by *Bentley Schieckoff and Claudia Diehl* examines the labour market integration of recently arrived migrant women from Poland and Turkey. The study finds large differences by country of origin. While almost 70 per cent of the women from Poland were already employed, only 30 per cent of the women from Turkey had entered the labour market. The study also provides data on the women’s subjective motivations for migration. Only a small fraction (around five per cent) of the Turkish women reported that they migrated for work, compared to 20 per cent of the Polish migrants. Apart from their motivations for migration, individual characteristics, such as the women’s language skills, education, work experience, and ties to the majority population, are shown to explain the differences between the two groups. The authors also find that for both groups, religiosity was associated with lower chances of participating in the labour market.

3.2 Cultural determinants of women’s labour market participation

The paper by *Dorian Tsolak, Marvin Bürmann, and Martin Kroh* investigates the intergenerational stability of female employment among migrant populations. While past research on intergenerational employment mobility among migrant mothers and their daughters has been for single countries only, this study adopts a cross-national perspective by using data from the European Social Survey (ESS). The individual-level data, which include information on each respondent’s current employment status as well as on her mother’s employment status at age 14, are complemented by macro-level data on the labour force participation rates in the origin countries of the respondents. The study finds that the influence of the country of origin was less powerful than would be expected. The

results also indicate that women from countries that are characterised by low employment rates show higher levels of inter-generational stability than other migrant women; i.e., they are more likely to mimic their mothers' employment behaviour. The patterns are shown to be very similar regardless of whether the migrants' receiving country had a mediocre or a high female employment rate.

Prior research on female migrants' employment behaviour has often adopted a simplified view on how "culture" determines individual behaviour. Religious affiliation and high frequency of attendance at religious services have been regularly used as operational definitions of "traditionality". The contribution by *Ayse Guveli and Niels Spierings* challenge this view. In their study, which is also based on European Social Survey (ESS) data, they tease apart the roles of traditional gender role attitudes and religiosity in the employment behaviour of women. Their findings confirm the assumption that Muslim women are less likely to be working than other women. However, the "degree of religiosity" (measured in terms of frequency of praying) is found to explain some of the differences between Muslim and other women. In addition, gender role attitudes (operationalised with the statement: "Men should have more rights to a job than women when jobs are scarce") are shown to be less strongly correlated with religiosity than expected. The authors conclude that both traditional gender role attitudes and religiosity have independent effects on women's labour force participation.

3.3 Family policies, labour market structure, and social networks

While the previous two contributions have highlighted the role of cultural influences in migrant women's employment behaviour, the paper by *Cristina Samper and Michaela Kreyenfeld* focuses on the migration policies that determine the "selectivity" of the female migrant population. Migration research has differentiated between "leaders", "stayers", and "followers". In this paper, the authors argue that the demarcation line is instead between "marriage migrants" and other migrants. Marriage migrants are individuals who married after the partner had moved to the destination country and had lived there for several years. "Marriage migration" is particularly common among third-country nationals who have few channels to migrate to Germany other than by having a marital bond to a person who lives in the destination country. The results of a competing risk analysis show that the large majority of the marriage migrants had a child before entering the labour market, and a significant fraction had a child in the year immediately after migration. The marriage migrants' childbearing patterns combined with their relatively low levels of education and labour market experience had large effects on their subsequent employment careers. After five years in Germany, only about 30 per cent of these marriage migrants had ever been employed.

The contribution by *Naomi Biegel, Jonas Wood, and Karel Neels* emphasises the pivotal role of family policies in migrant women's labour market integration. It draws on register data for Belgium to examine migrant women's employment in conjunction with their usage of informal and formal day care arrangements. Belgium has been characterised as a dual-earner society in which female full-time employment is highly prevalent. Thus, migrant women in Belgium who are unable to enter the labour market can be seen as deviating from the "norm" of full-time employment. The study shows that about 30 per

cent of first-generation migrant mothers from non-EU countries were employed full-time, compared to roughly 65 per cent among the native population and 50 per cent of first-generation European migrants. The paper also finds considerable differences in child care usage among migrant populations: i.e., that mothers of Turkish, Moroccan, and Eastern European backgrounds were less likely than natives to use formal child care, and were more likely to rely on informal arrangements. Controlling for socio-demographic characteristics reduced the differences, but some differences persisted between Turkish migrants and others.

María Sánchez-Domínguez and Luis Guirola examine the role of labour market structures in the labour market integration of migrant women. Data for this investigation came from the Spanish Labour Force. Spain has emerged as one of the “new” European immigration countries, and a large fraction of the migrants in Spain come from Latin America. The analysis shows that female and native employment rates rapidly converge with increasing duration of stay, but that the segmented Spanish labour market provides few options for migrant women to enter “regular employment”. A large fraction of migrants work on term-limited contracts, and are often employed in the care or the cleaning industry. Like the paper by Biegel et al., this study highlights the large gap between migrants and natives in the usage of child care services. Migrant women are significantly more likely than native women to depend on informal child care or to leave their children unattended. The paper concludes that migrant women face a “double penalty”: i.e., they are often stuck in low-paid jobs in the secondary labour market, and the Spanish care regime does not help them to reconcile work and family.

In addition to labour market structures, social networks are important channels through which migrants enter the labour market and achieve upward labour market mobility. While there is a large body of literature on the role of social networks in the labour market success of migrants, little is known about how these patterns differ by gender. As the relevance of social media grows, new forms of online networks have emerged. There is no previous research on how these developments are affecting migrants, and on whether these patterns are gendered. The study by *Başak Bilecen and Verena Seibel* fills this void by drawing on survey data from the Netherlands that include rich information on the composition of the respondents’ offline and online networks. While offline networks are the “classical” networks composed of family, friends, neighbours, and colleagues, online networks are social networks that exist through social media platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. The results of this study show that compared to male migrants, female migrants had more ties to employed Dutch individuals, and that women’s social networks were more “tightly knit” than men’s. However, the study also finds that migrant women made significantly less use of social media platforms than their male counterparts. Nonetheless, the authors conclude that while there were gender differences in social networks, they were not consequential for the migrants’ employment chances. Thus, the results do not indicate that there was a strong and significant correlation between migrant women’s online networks and their employment rates. The most important determinant of whether a woman was participating in the labour market was the share of employed individuals in her network. However, the authors raised concerns that this variable may not be an exogenous predictor of women’s employment.

3.4 *Concluding remarks*

The main objective of this Special Issue was to provide novel evidence on the employment behaviour of recent female immigrants to Europe. Another aim was to create a bridge between demographic and labour market research. Thus, the contributions in this volume highlighted the pivotal roles that marriage, childbearing, and raising children play in the employment behaviour of immigrants to European societies. Although the studies in this volume acknowledged the importance of considering cultural factors when seeking to understand migrant women's behaviour, the key role of the institutional context ran like a red thread through all of the contributions. Migrant women may be subject to the same institutional constraints as natives, but they are less likely to benefit from these policies. This gap is most obvious in the lower usage of formal child care among migrant families, but it is also apparent in differences in the uptake of other family policies, such as parental leave. Migrant women are further disadvantaged because labour market segmentation – which is common in many European countries – confines them to the lower segments of the labour market, without offering them many opportunities for upward mobility.

This Special Issue also emphasised that migration policies are key to understanding the family behaviour and socio-economic characteristics of female migrants from third countries. Women from outside of Europe have few options for entering European countries, other than through “marriage migration”. As a result, the migration to European countries of highly skilled women from third countries is still rare. The programmes that seek to attract highly skilled migrants have largely focused on male-dominated occupations, such as IT and engineering (Boucher 2018). To the extent that the issue of female labour migration from third countries has been put on the political agenda, it is mainly in the context of filling the gaps in the care sector (Lutz 2018; Yeates 2004).

To overcome these gendered migration patterns, policy-makers must provide alternative legal pathways to enter European countries for women from third countries who are highly skilled or are work-oriented. In other words: national and EU policies aimed at attracting highly skilled migrants should adopt a gendered perspective on skilled migration. In addition, policy-makers should change their views on female migrants who have entered Europe on the basis of “family reunification”. Instead of being regarded as “tied movers”, they should be seen as future workers whose skills should be put to use and developed further. As many European countries are moving towards becoming dual-earner societies, the failure to integrate migrant women into the labour markets of European countries will widen the existing gap between native and immigrant women. It will also have severe repercussions for the economic circumstances of migrant household, which will increasingly hinge on the labour market participation of both partners.

Acknowledgments

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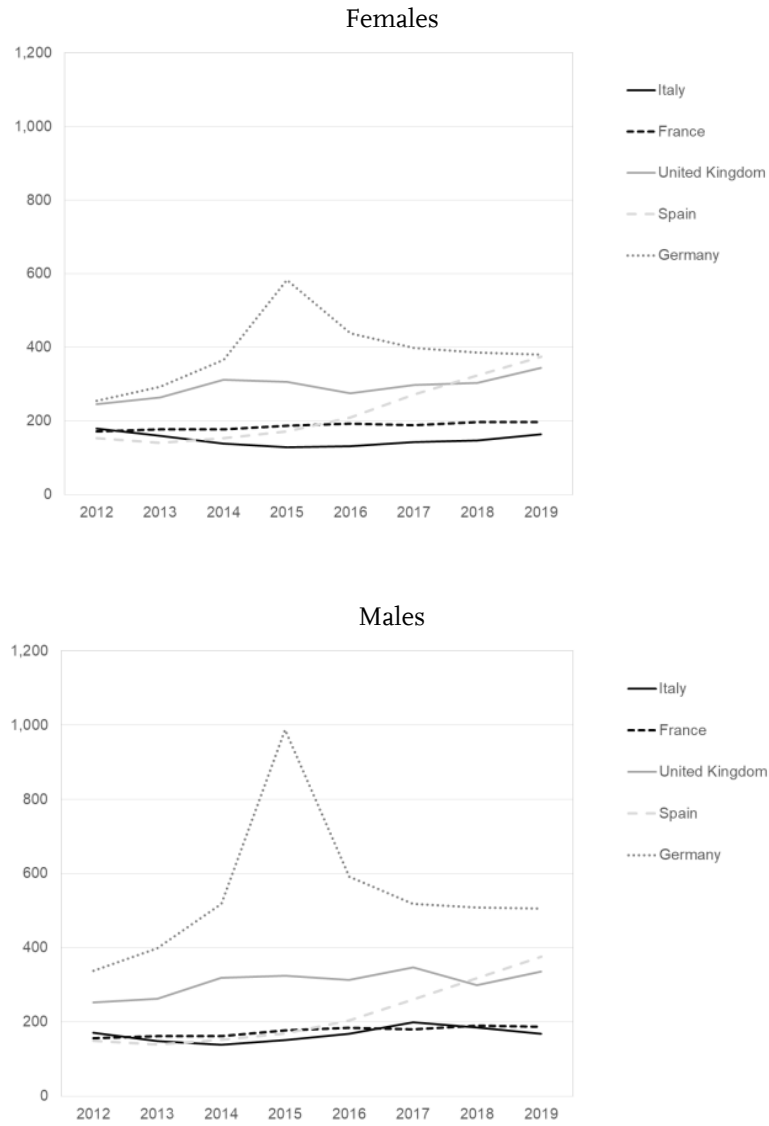
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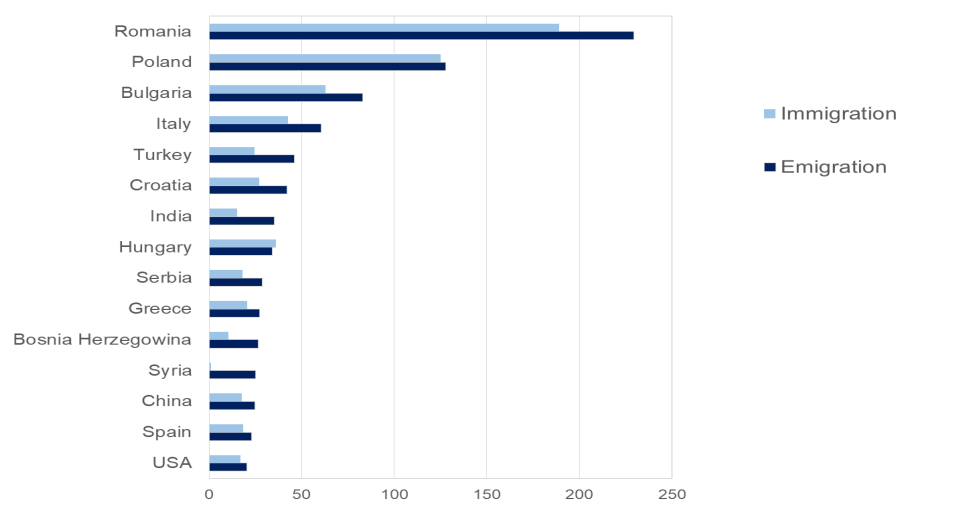
Appendix

Table A.1: Annual immigrants to major EU countries, in thousands



Source: Eurostat (2021c)

Table A.2: Annual emigration and immigration of foreign country nationals to Germany, in thousands, 2019



Source: DESTATIS (2021)

Information in German

Deutscher Titel

Frauenerwerbstätigkeit und Migration in Europa: Einleitung zum Special Issue

Zusammenfassung

Fragestellung: In diesem Beitrag führen wir in das „Special Issue“ mit dem Titel „Frauenerwerbstätigkeit und Migration in Europa“ ein.

Hintergrund: Eine Vielzahl von Studien hat sich dem Erwerbsverhalten von Männern nach Migration gewidmet, während die Erwerbsverläufe von Migrantinnen vor allem in jüngerer Zeit in den Fokus des wissenschaftlichen Interesse gerückt sind.

Methode: In diesem „Special Issue“ werden unterschiedliche Datensätze wie Registerdaten, Zensusdaten und Befragungen verwendet. Einige Studien fokussieren auf bestimmte Länderkontexte, wie beispielsweise auf die Situation in Deutschland, Belgien, den Niederlanden oder Spanien. Andere Studien sind vergleichend angelegt und stellen das Verhalten von Migrantinnen in verschiedenen Ländern Europas oder in Ziel- und Herkunftsländern gegenüber.

Ergebnisse: Die Beiträge in diesem „Special Issue“ zeichnen die komplexen Wechselwirkungen nach, die zwischen den sozio-ökonomischen und kulturellen Faktoren, dem Fertilitäts- und Familienverhalten, den Geschlechterrollenvorstellungen wie auch den institutionellen Rahmenbedingungen bestehen, die das Erwerbsverhalten von Frauen nach Migration bestimmen.

Schlussfolgerung: In vielen Ländern Europas liegen die Erwerbstätigenquoten von Migrantinnen, insbesondere jenen aus „Drittstaaten“, deutlich unter denen der einheimischen Frauen. Während bisherige Studien häufig die Rolle individueller sozio-ökonomischer und kultureller Faktoren betonen, verweisen die Beiträge in diesem Band bei der Erklärung des Arbeitsmarktverhaltens internationaler Migrantinnen auch auf die Bedeutung institutioneller Faktoren in den Zielländern, insbesondere auf die arbeitsmarkt-, familien- und migrationspolitischen Rahmenbedingungen.

Schlagwörter: Arbeitsmarktintegration, Europa, Frauenerwerbstätigkeit, Geschlechterrollen, Migration

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Michaela Kreyenfeld: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9420-3818>

Claudia Diehl: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5309-2960>

Martin Kroh: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4889-8425>

Johannes Giesecke: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6678-5811>



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