Title:

Labor market integration of immigrant mothers in Germany

Abstract:

Immigrant labor market integration in Germany requires close examination following a surge in refugee population in the recent years. This study focuses on the timing and level of labor force participation of female immigrants with young children in Germany by entry type and parity. Using retrospective work and birth history, we identify the level of labor force participation and the timing by which one enters the German labor market post-migration by the number of young children (5 years old or younger) born to the individual controlling for human capital. We focus on four immigrant groups: ethnic Germans, European immigrants, non-European immigrants, and those with refugee status. Using event history techniques, we model the probability of entrance into the labor market upon entering Germany controlling for education, previous work experience, and other social background indicators. Furthermore, we consider the competing risk of working part-time or full-time by migrant type and parity. This work serves to illuminate the relationship between family and work for those of immigrant background and inform policymakers of possible family-related obstacles to labor market integration, particularly for women.

Background:

Germany is home to a sizable foreign-born population, comprised of individuals with diverse immigration circumstances. Past work has emphasized the importance of focusing on migrant origins in examining individuals' pathway toward labor market integration in their destination country. In this view, the culture surrounding gender division of labor directly influences women's propensity to engage in market work at their new country (Khoudja & Fleischmann, 2017). Moreover, the type of entry, such as female labor migration compared to family reunification, heavily influences whether or not one participates in the labor market in the destination (Samper & Kreyenfeld, 2021). Circumstances surrounding origin might hinder the labor force participation of some groups (e.g. refugees who require recognition for foreign qualifications versus Europeans who do not). Previous studies have highlighted the disadvantage of non-European migrants compared to their European counterparts in the labor market (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2017). Guest workers, or those who entered Germany through bilateral agreements among governments, have shown to experience more limited mobility compared to natives (Constant & Massey, 2005). With the inclusion of refugee migrants in the recent years, additional examination of individuals with refugee status, alongside ethnic German migrants, European migrants, and former guest workers, is essential in understanding the mechanisms behind labor market integration in Germany.

We aim to examine the timing and level of labor market entrance by considering the number of young children one has at the time of migration. Childcare, mostly led by women, competes for labor market time. Thus, we further examine the competing risk of part-time versus full-time work by parity. Other than family situation, we consider an individual's education, years of prior work experience, and occupational status by examining the International Socio-economic Index of Occupational Prestige (ISEI). We will additionally include whether individuals have family living nearby, which can in theory facilitate childcare, as a covariate.

Data and methods:

This study uses the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), a longitudinal survey that began in 1984. GSOEP boasts a large, representative data of 15,000 households in Germany with periodic over-sampling of immigrant families. Its panel design is ideal for life-course research. GSOEP contains various survey

instruments, one of which is biographic interview. These interviews capture retrospective history of individuals from birth, which holds an advantage over register data for migration research because they capture life events that took place prior to migration, such as prior work history.

Given the panel design of the German Socioeconomic Panel of which individuals can enter and exit at different points in their lives, we use an event history design to fully take advantage of all available information on individuals' propensity of experiencing the event of interest. We first use the Kaplan-Meier method to investigate entrance of labor market for both men and women. We then analyze the likelihood of entering part-time or full-time work upon entering Germany by using the cumulative incidence function (Austin et al., 2016). Finally, we use competing risks event-history analysis to also adjust transition rates for covariates (Putter et al., 2007).

Expected findings:

We expect that overall, women's labor force participation will be strongly affected by the number of young children under their care (Cooke, 2001), but previous labor market experience will have a positive effect on their, if not full-time at least part-time, labor market participation in the destination country. Women of higher education or higher status occupations will likely be more engaged in market work. We further hypothesize that individuals with refugee status in Germany, mostly from Syria and Iraq, would show more gender division of work through lower female labor force participation, possibly as a function of higher religious adherence (Besamusca et al., 2015) or more traditional gender attitudes (Khoudja & Fleischmann, 2017).

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