

Migrant Women's Employment: International Turkish Migrants in Europe, Their Descendants, and Their Non-Migrant Counterparts in Turkey

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Abstract

When compared with native-born women, migrant women have lower employment likelihoods. However, to reveal the relationship between migration and employment, migrant women need to be compared to those remaining in the origin regions and across generations. This study is the first to fill this gap by employing a *dissimilation-from-origins and across-generations* perspective. We test the hypothesis that migration to more welfare-state based and liberal contexts increase women's employment likelihood among migrants and the second generation. The 2000 Families data enable a unique comparison of Turkish international migrants, including Turkish-origin women born in Europe, and their non-migrant counterparts from the same regions in Turkey. Furthermore, we theorize and test whether differences in employment are explained by differences in family composition, education, and culture (religiosity and gender attitudes). We find migration leads to a higher likelihood of paid employment for the second generation and international migrant women, in that order. Education and religiosity are the main explanatory factors for differences between non-migrants and the international migrants, including the second generation. Parenthood, while explaining differences between migrant and destination 'native' women, hardly explains differences between migrant women and their non-migrant counterparts. Overall, we find strong support for the hypothesis that migration increases women's employment.

Introduction

Women's employment is often considered an indicator of the integration of migrant communities, partly serving as a cultural demarcation between origin and destination contexts. Accordingly, the dominant approach in migration research focuses on differences between migrant and native-born women, with many studies noting

lower employment rates for Muslim migrant and second-generation women (Read and Cohen, 2007; Khoudja and Fleischmann, 2015; Khattab and Hussein, 2018; Blommaert and Spierings, 2019).

In this study, we complement these studies on 'assimilation' by introducing a 'dissimilation perspective' to the study of women's employment (see Guveli *et al.*,

2016a, 2017; Bayrakdar and Guveli, 2020). By doing so, we draw attention to the theoretical and empirical question of how migrant women's likelihood of employment differs from that of women from the same *origin* context who did not migrate. By introducing the dissimilation perspective to women's employment, we make two important contributions to the literature.

First, we acknowledge that people tend to move to improve not only their own lives, but also the lives of their offspring, even at the cost of their own wellbeing. Therefore, we uniquely include the daughters and granddaughters of guest workers who moved to Europe between 1960 and 1974 from Turkey and compare them to their counterparts in Turkey. We argue that doing so will help us assess the interlinkage of migration and women's employment *across migration generations*.

Second, any assessment of how migration from one context to another influences socio-economic outcomes is necessarily affected by issues of selectivity, as migration decisions are not and cannot be attributed randomly. It is thus up to social scientists to assess as best they can how migration shapes the lives of migrants, compared to their lives had they not migrated. This study's data make some major progress in this respect (Feliciano, 2020). The 2000 Families data (Guveli *et al.*, 2016b) employed a unique design to collect data on comparable Turkish migrant women and non-migrant women, all of whom were daughters or granddaughters of the original guest workers who migrated between 1960 and 1974 or their non-migrant counterparts who stayed in five high-sending origin regions. Thus, we can compare non-migrant and migrant women and those born in Europe, as they come from the same families and the same origin region. Moreover, we can control for, among other things, destination country, citizenship, and where education was obtained. The data allow us to discover whether the migrant women were, for instance, higher educated to start with than their non-migrant counterparts. Counterfactuals of migration are impossible to establish, but these data are better able to reveal the potential impact of migration from one context to another on women's employment than any other existing large-scale data.

To sum up, by taking a dissimilation perspective and using the 2000 Families data, we stand to gain a better understanding of the potential impact of migration from a more traditional and industrial country to a destination context with more liberal institutions, wealthier societies, and advanced labour markets. Our first research question reads (RQ1): *To what extent does the likelihood of employment among Turkish migrant and*

second-generation women differ from that of their non-migrant counterparts in Turkey?

In addition to extending the dissimilation perspective to include women's employment, we integrate insights from the literature on women's employment to broaden the understanding of how migration influences women's employment chances (cf. Read and Cohen, 2007). We theorize and then test whether potential employment differences between non-migrant women in Turkey and international migrant women (in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) stem from family composition, educational differences, religiosity, and gender attitudes (cf. Khoudja and Fleischmann, 2015; Spierings, 2015a; Blommaert and Spierings, 2019). This leads to our second research question (RQ2): *To what extent do differences in family composition, education, religiosity, and gender attitudes explain variations in the likelihood of employment for women in groups with a different migration background?*

Background: Turkish Migration to Europe

Our study is the first large-scale application of an origin-country and multi-generation perspective to women's employment. Our empirical focus is on women of Turkish descent. People of Turkish descent comprise the largest Muslim migrant group in Europe, with well over 5 million Turkish-origin people living in Western Europe (Guveli *et al.*, 2016a). Insights into their migrant dynamics also have significance for understanding migration processes of, for instance, North Africans to Europe or Mexicans to the United States, all cases of migration from a more traditional and relatively poorer context to a more liberal and welfare rich societies (cf. Castles, De Haas and Miller, 2014).

In 1961, Western European countries started labour migration programmes to solve major labour shortages, leading to almost 1 million Turkish people migrating to Western Europe. As the programmes aimed for a male labour force, only about 15 per cent were women (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Akgündüz, 2008). After guest worker programmes ended in 1974, migration from Turkey to Western Europe continued mainly in the form of family migration (tied migration, family formation, and family unification), asylum, and education.¹ In this study, we use data tracing the descendants of the original and legal migrant flows between 1960 and 1974. The women we study mainly migrated on family-related motives, not because of their own employment motives.

The 2000 Families data (Guveli *et al.*, 2016b, 2017) give information on migrant and non-migrant families from five regions; these regions were among the highest migrant-sending areas: Acıpayam, Akçaabat, Emirdağ, Kulu, and Şarkışla. Recruitment offices—which arranged around 80 per cent of all labour migration—were particularly active in these regions (Penninx, 1982; Akgündüz, 2008). Still, the five regions are diverse: Akçaabat is mountainous with little fertile land; Kulu and Şarkışla have plenty of fertile land; Emirdağ and Acıpayam are in the most developed part of Turkey. These regions give valuable insights into the different but core strands of the Turkish migrant and non-migrant stayer communities.

Theory and Hypotheses

Dissimilation from Origins and across Generations

From the international *migration literature*, we derive the *dissimilation from origins* perspective. This perspective allows us to theorize how leaving the origin context reshapes people's behaviour, resources, opportunities, and perceptions (FitzGerald, 2012; Guveli *et al.*, 2016a). Crucially, this highlights the other side of the assimilation coin and refocuses our theoretical attention. Accordingly, in what follows, we move from asking what explains differences between migrants and 'destination natives' and we begin to ask how migration and living in more liberal and relatively developed welfare-state contexts might impact the lives of migrants compared to their lives had they not migrated. Moreover, we go beyond the mere difference between migrants and non-migrants as we also focus on the consequences for the descendants of migrants and their non-migrant counterparts. We call this perspective *dissimilation across generations* and use it to shed valuable light on the enduring consequences of the contextual changes due to migration, which will demonstrate the impact that migration from Turkey to Western Europe has had in this study.

We connect the dissimilation perspective to the literature discussing several core factors shaping women's employment (see Van der Lippe and Van Dijk, 2002; Pettit and Hook, 2005; Spierings, 2015a; Guveli and Spierings, 2021). The most relevant of these factors are also central to our theoretical discussion below. On the one hand, these are (macro-level) demand factors that shape the opportunities for women, including labour market structures and cultural norms. On the other hand, core micro-level factors create or diminish

women's opportunities to find employment. The macro-level differences are at the core of our argument about the mechanism and dynamics driving the impact of migration on women's employment: changing contexts. The micro-level factors partly demonstrate which aspects of the contextual change matters most in shaping women's employment.

We account for micro-level factors in the mechanism behind women's labour market supply, which are prominent in the literature, particularly the employment of migrant women and their descendants (Guveli, 2011; Zuccotti, Ganzeboom and Guveli, 2017; Blommaert and Spierings, 2019; Guveli and Spierings, 2021). These are: *family structures*, which pull women in the household due to gendered roles (motherhood) and decrease economic needs (being partnered) (see Pettit and Hook, 2005: pp. 796–797; Spierings, 2015a: pp. 63–64); *education*, which creates human capital and increases employment opportunities, but might also lead to a stronger preference for paid employment (Blommaert and Spierings, 2019: p. 47); and (internalized) *cultural attitudes*, shaping the gender roles (Van der Lippe and Van Dijk, 2002: pp. 230–231; Spierings, 2015a: pp. 67–68). Below we discuss these mechanisms in more detail and how these explanatory factors are linked to migration.

Theorizing Migration-Related Differences in Women's Employment

Any comparison of the labour market and family contexts in Western European countries and in Turkey must acknowledge the existence of considerable *dissimilarities* likely to shape women's employment likelihoods. At least three of these dissimilarities suggest migrant women in Western Europe are likely to have higher likelihood of employment than their non-migrants counterparts in Turkey (Figure 1).

First, the labour markets of European destination countries offer better opportunities for women than the Turkish labour market: more jobs, more childcare facilities, and better social policies (e.g. childcare) supporting women's employment. Women's labour market participation is markedly higher in the European destination countries than in Turkey (Figure 1). The labour market opportunities are particularly dismal in the Turkish regions from which (male) labour migrants were recruited (Akgündüz, 2008; Gündüz-Hoşgör and Smits, 2008; Guveli, 2011; Spierings, 2015a; Guveli *et al.*, 2016a). Second, in Western European destination countries, women face *fewer* patriarchal restrictions, and weaker traditional gender norms might lead to a higher

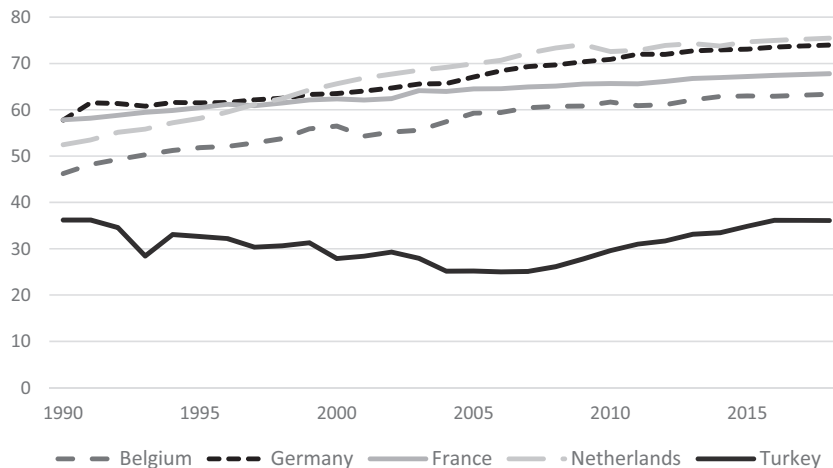


Figure 1. Female (15–64) labour force participation rate

Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database (September 2018).

likelihood of paid employment than in Turkey (Pessar, 2003; Guveli, 2011; Koenig, Maliepaard and Güveli, 2016). Third, international migration to Western Europe creates more educational opportunities, particularly for those born in Western Europe (Guveli *et al.*, 2016b; Bayrakdar and Guveli, 2020), and education increases human capital and socializes employment-conducive values, both of which are likely to stimulate paid employment (see Spierings, 2015a; Bussemakers *et al.*, 2017).

The above considerations culminate in two core empirical expectations:

H1: Turkish migrant women will have a higher employment likelihood than non-migrant women from the same origin context.

H2: Turkish women born in Western Europe (second generation) will have a higher employment likelihood than Turkish migrant women and non-migrant women from the same origin context.

Explaining Differences: Family Structures, Education, and Culture

The discussion above touches on several individual-level changes that are expected to be grounded in the dissimilation processes and will link migration to women's employment. In what follows, we formulate hypotheses on the following core mediating factors: marital situation, number of (dependent) children, education, religiosity, and gender attitudes.

Family structures

Having a partner is generally linked to lower employment rates among women (Van der Lippe and Van Dijk, 2002). The household breadwinner role is generally considered male. In households with adult men present (e.g. a male partner), the pressure on women to enter the labour market and the likelihood they will do so decreases (Spierings, 2015a). The presence of dependent (e.g. young) children increases care needs in the household. Because providing care is considered more women's than men's role, the presence of young children decreases women's available time and is thus theorized to lead to lower employment (Van der Lippe and Van Dijk, 2002; Pettit and Hook, 2005; Spierings, 2015a).

Assimilation theories would suggest a drop in fertility rates after migration from Turkey to a Western European context, but the specific literature on this issue demonstrates a moderate influence of migration on family formation across generations.² In this study, we should take into account that many of the migrant women are the wives of labour migrants who followed their spouses (Guveli *et al.*, 2016a). Still, from other studies we know that women entering an unfamiliar Western European societal context at an adult age increased their desire for a relatively larger family as a form of security (Singley and Landale, 1998; Andersson, 2004; Guveli *et al.*, 2016a). Crucially, family formation might decrease women's employment, but it is thus less likely that migration decreases adult migrant women's fertility very strongly, therefore not strongly increasing their employment likelihood via that route either. First-generation migrants, however, also include female

children. For them the mechanism is different. Young women who have mainly had their socialization in Europe might acculturate in less patriarchal norms and are less likely to see partnership and motherhood as part of their life's fulfilment (see [Khoudja and Fleischmann, 2015](#); [Guveli et al., 2016a](#)). Following this argumentation, we expect women who are born in Europe to be more likely in paid employment *because of* their lower fertility rates and them being less likely in a partnership. A weaker but similar effect will occur among women who migrated to Europe because this group includes women who migrated at different ages.

H3: The higher employment likelihood among women with a migration background, particularly those born in Europe, compared to non-migrant women is partly explained by the former's greater likelihood of being single.

H4: The higher employment likelihood among women with a migration background, particularly those born in Europe, compared to non-migrant women is partly explained by the former having fewer young children.

Education

The education–employment relationship has been widely demonstrated across contexts, whereby education is linked to more human capital (i.e. employability) and stronger employment preferences (e.g. [Van der Lippe and Van Dijk, 2002](#); [Guveli, 2011](#); [Bussemakers et al., 2017](#)). Our dissimilation perspective draws particular attention as to how migration generally increases the average education opportunities for migrant women.

Two aspects are crucial in theorizing how migration from the Turkish to the Western European context impacts on women's educational attainment. First, at the structural level, the European educational infrastructures are more accessible, particularly compared to those for Turkish women in (semi-)rural origin regions. Such educational opportunities are essential for children to enter education, discourage dropouts, and make the transition from primary to secondary education ([Huisman and Smits, 2015](#)) and from education to labour market. This supply-side argument applies to all women, but evidently, it is mainly the school going (descendants of) migrants who are influenced most, particularly compulsory age of schooling is higher in most European destination countries, generally until the age of 16. Compulsory age of education was 8 when our data were collected and increased to 12 in 2012 in

Turkey, but this is still considerably lower than the Western European average.

Second, at the cultural and economic level, the demand for education might increase as a consequent of migration for migrant women and the second generation. Education might be compulsory to a certain age but it is not up until the age of higher tertiary education, which is the educational level that increases women's employment chances considerably ([Spierings, 2015a](#); [Bussemakers et al., 2017](#)). In Turkey, the gender gap in education predominantly occurs after compulsory education and widens in tertiary education and beyond. The context of the Western European destination countries is thus also likely to increase the preferences for longer education, with increased employment returns. Again, this mainly fuels the difference between women of Turkish descent born in Western Europe and their non-migrant counterpart. The group of migrant women includes young women who also benefit from educational opportunities in Western Europe and some adult women might also seek additional education (see [Zuccotti, Ganzeboom and Guveli, 2017](#); [Bayrakdar and Guveli, 2020](#)).

H5: The higher employment likelihood among women with a migration background, particularly second-generation women born in Europe, compared to non-migrants is partly explained by the migrants' higher educational attainment.

Culture—religiosity and gender equalitarian attitudes

Cultural attitudes can provide a third link between migration and women's employment likelihood. A classic claim in the gender and migration literature is that women's migration to more liberal and gender equalitarian societies will benefit them and increase their labour market participation ([Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992](#); [Pessar, 2003](#)). Following this line of thinking, we consider the role of gender attitudes and religiosity linking migration and employment by comparing women with a migration background to non-migrants in the origin region.

Both traditional gender role attitudes and religiosity are often linked to women's employment decisions in terms of cultural factors shaping preferences, and both are argued to *explain* differences between Muslim women and majority women in Western Europe. The mechanism is straightforward: Western Europe is a less religious context in which patriarchal gender roles are weaker. Consequently, migrating from Turkey to Western Europe changes cultural norms in which women are acculturated and thus they consider being

economically active. Being in paid employment as mother with dependent children is relatively more acceptable in Western European destination societies, which leads to higher employment likelihoods for migrant and second-generation women (Khoudja and Fleischmann, 2015; Blommaert and Spierings, 2019). Again, it is important to note that this effect is likely to be stronger for second-generation women who are socialized in the destination country during their formative years (Röder and Mühlau, 2014; Spierings, 2015b).

Religiosity is often considered to be *the source* of more patriarchal gender attitudes, particularly in terms of prescribing household responsibilities, instead of public and economic, to women. However, gender equality attitudes also have other (cultural and structural) roots than religion (Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Röder and Mühlau, 2014), and it has also been argued that migration-related processes might keep women relatively religious whereas encouraging them to embrace the gender progressive attitudes over time (Guveli and Platt, 2011; Röder, 2014; Van Klingeren and Spierings, 2020; Guveli and Spierings, 2021). That is, the impact of religiosity shaping gender traditionalism might fade and therefore these two determinants might be decoupling in shaping women's employment.

Regardless, the focus in this article is on whether cultural factors understood in terms of preferences can help explain employment differences between (the descendants of) international migrant women and their non-migrant counterparts, than on the complex relationship between religiosity and gender role attitudes (see Glas *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, we formulate two straightforward separate hypotheses:

H6: The higher employment likelihood among women with a migration background compared to non-migrant women is partly explained by the former's decreased religiosity.

H7: The higher employment likelihood among women with a migration background compared to non-migrant women is partly explained by the former's more liberal gender equality attitudes.

Data and Methods

Research Design and Sampling

The 2000 Families dataset (Guveli *et al.*, 2016b) includes information on migrant and non-migrant families from five high migrant-sending regions in Turkey (Acıpayam, Akçaabat, Emirdağ, Kulu, and Şarkışla)

between 2010 and 2011. Because non-migrant and migrant women in these data are from the same region and same families, the data bring us closer to being able to assess how migration (from Turkey to Western Europe) influences women's employment via a counterfactual design than any other dataset or study (more below).

The families were randomly sampled by screening the five high-sending regions. The initial study drew a clustered probability sample, using the Turkish Statistical Institute's (TUIK) address register to identify 100 primary sampling units. From the primary sampling points onwards, randomisation was achieved by random walk to identify four migrant families (i.e. a family of which the ancestor was a labour migrant) first and then to locate one non-migrant family (i.e. a family of which the ancestor was *not* a labour migrant). The random walk stopped when 60 households were screened or when the cooperation of eight families was obtained (Ganzeboom *et al.*, 2016; Guveli *et al.*, 2016a). The screening focussed on the ancestors, but the relevant information might come from another family member (for instance, the person opening the door).

The survey traced and interviewed the ancestors (if they were alive) and their children and grandchildren in the Western European destination countries and in Turkey. The selection of the guest workers and their non-migrant counterparts was based on three criteria: the ancestor (i) was or would have been between 65 and 90, (ii) grew up in the region, and (iii) moved to Western Europe between 1960 and 1974 and stayed in Western Europe for at least 5 years. The 'counterfactual' non-migrant ancestor was identified by the same criteria except the last criterion, which was 'who stayed in Turkey'. A quota was used to ensure that about 80 per cent of the ancestors, from about 400 families for each of the five regions (hence the term 2000 Families), were migrants and 20 per cent non-migrants. More details on the data collection are provided in Ganzeboom *et al.* (2016) and Guveli *et al.* (2016a, 2017).

The complete genealogies of the ancestors were drawn on the doorstep during the screening of the high-sending regions in Turkey, including migration status, gender, name, and age of the (grand)children. Next, two adult children of the ancestor were randomly selected, and survey data were collected between 2010 and 2012 through face-to-face interviews with those present in the regions and phone interviews with those who were anywhere else in Turkey or in the destination country (see Ganzeboom *et al.*, 2016). The same procedure was followed for up to two adult children of the selected adults—the grandchildren following the same lineage. The descendants were not selected for interview on the

basis of their migration status. They could be non-migrants, migrants to Western Europe (either as child with their parents, via marriage), or persons born in Western Europe.

The registered response rate of these personal interviews was 90 per cent (Ganzeboom *et al.*, 2016: p. A16). Given our present focus on women's employment, we only include the daughters and granddaughters of the ancestors. The dataset contains 2,281 randomly selected adult women. Cases with missing data are listwise deleted.³

Assessing Selectivity

It is impossible to determine what would have happened if a migrant had not migrated, and we cannot assign migration randomly as in an experiment. As such, all systematic studies on the consequences of migration are challenged by the issue of selectivity: migrants are claimed to be a selective group with respect to their characteristics leading to the decision to migrate, such as socioeconomic resources and risk-taking behaviour (Borjas, 1987; Polavieja, Fernández-Reino and Ramos, 2018; Ichou and Wallace, 2019; Feliciano, 2020). These characteristics might also partly or fully drive the outcomes, for example, women's employment (Van de Werfhorst and Heath, 2019; Bayrakdar and Guveli, 2020). The 2000 Families dataset comes closer to allowing us to assess how women's employment is shaped by changing context because of their own or of their parents' migration, which we demonstrate as the impact of migration.

The 2000 Families dataset design enables us to hold constant the ancestors' birth cohort (all ancestors were between 65 and 90 years old), their semi-rural sending regions, their family, and their migration histories, as all grew up in the region or in the European destination

country (see above). Moreover, all women included in the data were randomly sampled from the (female) children of the migrant and non-migrant ancestors, regardless of their own migration status. As such, these data allow us to compare migrant women who mostly migrated with their parents or via marriage and women who stayed put in Turkey. In addition, many daughters and granddaughter of the guestworkers were born in Western Europe, enabling an across-generations assessment.

Besides the design features discussed above, the data include information that help us assess and reduce any remaining impact of selectivity. First, the data reveal the reasons for migration. Interestingly, employment or education opportunities are seldom mentioned (<5 per cent). Over 90 per cent of the women mention a form of family migration: migrating with parents or a partner or migrating to (re)unite with family or a future partner. In other words, we find no direct motivational link between the migration decision and employment among the women. Second, the data tell us whether women completed their education in Turkey or in a destination country. When we compare the non-migrant women to the migrant women who completed their education in Turkey, we find the latter are, on average, not better educated, again suggesting migrant women are not more likely to be employed due to selection. Third, following the second point, when we rerun our models only including women educated in Turkey, the additional analyses confirm the patterns for the whole sample. Fourth, we nest women in their families, thus controlling for many unobserved factors at the family level. In the mediation models, the net effects of migration are also controlled for family networks and structures, education levels, and cultural attitudes, leaving little room for selectivity effects.

Table 1. Women's employment per country

	Per cent employed 2000 Families women	N	Per cent employment country wide
Turkey	25.4	1,019	26.6
Austria	43.5	46	51.6
France	51.6	62	49.3
Germany	51.9	206	51.3
Belgium	56.7	134	46.6
Netherlands	56.9	72	53.7
Sweden	63.0	46	57.5
Denmark	66.7	45	54.1
Other	42.6	47	
Total	36.6	1,677	

Source: 2000 Families (own calculations); ILO Stat, ILO data explorer (employment-to-population ratio, female, 25+, 2011).

Core Variables

Our dependent variable is current *employment status*, whereby we distinguish between women who indicate having a paid job (1) and all other categories (0).⁴ We drop the 295 women still in education (12.9 per cent) from the analysis, as well as the 36 (1.6 per cent) with missing values.⁵ In our remaining sample, 36.6 per cent of the women are employed, which means they indicate working for payment (Table 1). This might include informal or illicit employment, such as housekeeping, but the detailed job listings suggest most reported jobs are not in the informal sector; for instance, only nine of the women mention having a job as a domestic cleaner. [Supplementary Appendix A](#) provides the descriptive statistics of all variables, split by migration status.

The *migration status* information allows us to create a variable that includes our three core categories: non-migrant women who stayed in the region of origin in Turkey; female migrants to Western Europe from Turkey; and women born in one of the Western European destination countries ([Supplementary Appendix A](#)). In addition, we can distinguish women who migrated from the five selected regions to elsewhere in Turkey (internal migrants), demonstrated in [Supplementary Appendix B](#).

The data also indicate whether women hold citizenship of the country they are residing in. Not holding citizenship is most prevalent among international migrant women (~39 per cent) and those born in Western Europe (14 per cent). A lack thereof does not indicate illegal residence *per se*; women might be citizens of one EU country but legally reside or work in another. Still, this might impact access to work (despite EU regulations stating otherwise). Therefore, we include a variable to indicate citizenship of the country of living.

In line with H3 through H7, we include five mediating variables. For *marital situation*, we distinguish between being (0) married, (1) divorced, separated, or widowed, and (2) never married. We include the *number of young children*, indicating a woman's number of children aged 11 or younger. Alternative measures, for instance, children aged 5 or younger, lead to similar conclusions. For the highest level of *education*, the data include a standard common metric running from 0 to 10. The models including education also have a dummy to indicate whether the highest education was obtained in Turkey (or not).

Cultural attitudes or preferences were tapped by two concepts. We measure *religiosity* combining two items: 'How important is religion to the way you live your life?' (1 = very important–5 = totally unimportant), and

'Apart from religious services, how often do you pray (*namaz*)?' (1 = five times a day; 2 = every day; 3 = once a week; 4 = at least once a month; 5 = only on special holidays; 6 = less often; 7 = never). Both items tap individual religiosity, and they correlate significantly and positively.⁶ We rescale both to run from 0 to 4 and use the inversed mean of the two items.

For *gender equality attitudes*, we use the inversed mean of two items: 'A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl', and 'On the whole, men make better business executives than women do' (1 = agree–3 = disagree).⁷ These items focus on higher socioeconomic status equality, not *per se* on women's labour market and household roles, which might constitute better measures for gender-role attitudes. However, our items are commonly used to assess gender attitudes (e.g. [Inglehart and Norris, 2003](#); [Glas et al., 2019](#)) and have been shown to correlate with employment at the macro-level (e.g. [Bussemakers et al., 2017](#)). Nevertheless, we should be careful in drawing too strong conclusions on H7 if no effect is found.

Control Variables and Context Indicators

All models are controlled for respondents' age and citizenship status (see above). The random part of the model includes a unique family identifier to filter out family-level differences (see below). We also add fixed effect dummies to filter out origin-region differences.

The main destination countries are Germany, France, Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden. Countries with lower numbers include the United Kingdom, Norway, and Italy. Controlling for destination-country effects would filter out the full migration effects we capture with the migration dummies, and thus it would defy this study's goal. However, when we rerun the analyses comparing the non-migrants to the Western European migrants and women born in Western Europe for countries with more than 50 women in the dataset (Belgium, Germany, France, and the Netherlands; [Supplementary Appendix E](#)), the overall patterns remain robust across destinations.

Modelling Strategy

As our dependent variable is dichotomous, logistic regression models comprise the core of our empirical assessment. To control for between-family (interfamily variance) and origin differences, we estimate two-level multilevel models, with the family as the higher-level unit, adding fixed effects for the origin regions. Additional analyses, distinguishing part-time work, are estimated using multinomial models ([Supplementary](#)

Table 2. Multilevel linear probability models for paid employment by migrant status (cf. [Supplementary Appendix C](#))

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Migration status differences				
<i>(ref: non-Migrants in Turkey)</i>				
<i>Migrants to EU</i>	0.248*** (0.034)	0.256*** (0.034)	0.157*** (0.037)	0.150*** (0.038)
<i>Born in EU</i>	0.395*** (0.037)	0.397*** (0.037)	0.229*** (0.049)	0.211*** (0.048)
Explanatory factors				
<i>Marital status (ref: Married)</i>				
<i>Divorced/separated/widow</i>		0.002 (0.050)	-0.006 (0.049)	-0.019 (0.049)
<i>Never Married</i>		0.121* (0.043)	0.071 (0.042)	0.062 (0.042)
Number of children aged ≤ 11 (0–5)		-0.045* (0.016)	-0.044* (0.015)	-0.044* (0.015)
Education (0–10)			0.056*** (0.006)	0.053*** (0.006)
Religiosity (0–4)				-0.048* (0.015)
Gender attitudes (0–2)				0.005 (0.021)
Control variables				
Age	-0.004** (0.001)	-0.003 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)
Education obtained in Turkey			-0.049 (0.040)	-0.041 (0.040)
Citizenship of country of living	0.048 (0.038)	0.038 (0.037)	-0.007 (0.037)	-0.005 (0.036)
<i>Region of origin (ref: Actıpayam)</i>				
<i>Şarkışla</i>	-0.013 (0.049)	-0.016 (0.049)	0.009 (0.047)	-0.006 (0.047)
<i>Akçaabat</i>	-0.082* (0.036)	-0.080* (0.036)	-0.054 (0.035)	-0.041 (0.035)
<i>Emirdağ</i>	-0.092* (0.041)	-0.085* (0.040)	-0.064 (0.039)	-0.069# (0.039)
<i>Kulu</i>	-0.103* (0.037)	-0.093* (0.037)	-0.047 (0.035)	-0.040 (0.035)
Intercept	0.370*** (0.013)	0.364*** (0.011)	0.370*** (0.012)	0.370*** (0.012)
Model statistics				
Family-level variance	0.018#	0.019*	0.015#	0.016#
Individual-level variance	0.187***	0.182***	0.172***	0.169***
BIC	1,771.938	1,757.156	1,668.643	1,670.789
Observations	1,372	1,372	1,372	1,372

Note: s.e. given in parentheses; all variables are centred. *** $P < 0.001$, ** $P < 0.01$, * $P < 0.05$, # $P < 0.1$.

Source: 2000 Families, personal data.

Appendix F). With logistic and multinomial models, a simple direct comparison of coefficient might lead to invalid conclusions (Mood, 2010). To assess our mediation effects, we therefore use mean-centred variables in the regression models to prevent the intercept being at

an extreme end of the underlying S-curve. We also rerun the models as linear probability models (LPMs); if these show patterns similar to those of the logistic models, we will know the differences are not technical artefacts. They lead to exactly the same conclusions. LPM allows

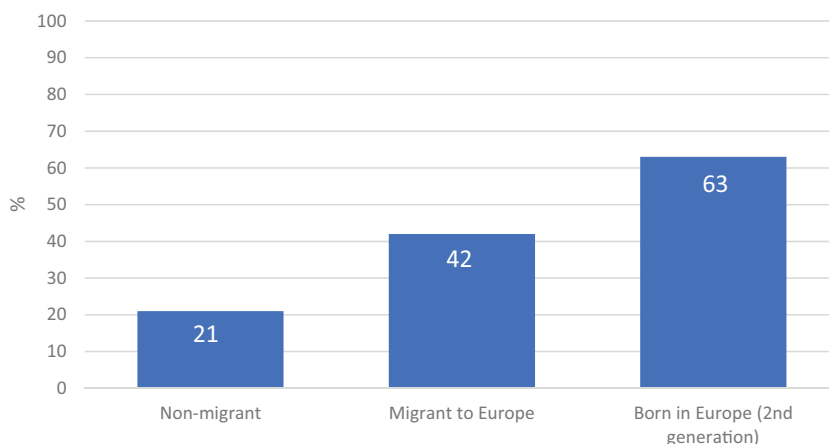


Figure 2. Women's employment by migration status

Source: 2000 Families dataset.

more a straightforward interpretation of the mediation and effect sizes; these are presented in [Table 2](#). If relevant, the additional models are discussed below, including the order in which mediation variables are added.

Results

Descriptive Results

Of the women in Turkey, 21 per cent of those who stayed in the sending regions have a paid job, compared to 42 per cent of international migrant women and this figure jumps to 63 per cent for those born in the European destination countries ([Figure 2](#)).⁸ Moreover, [Table 1](#) showed that the employment likelihood overall is lowest in Turkey; among the European destination countries, the conservative-corporatist countries (e.g. Austria, Belgium, France, Germany) show the lowest employment figures, and the social-democratic regimes (e.g. Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden) show the highest.

Multivariate Results: Group Differences

[Table 2](#) contains the LPMs, controlling for age, origin region, citizenship status, and interfamily variance; robustness tests are presented in [Supplementary Appendices B–F](#). The coefficients can be interpreted as changes in employment probabilities.

Model 1 shows migrants and their descendants have higher employment probabilities than non-migrants. Women who moved to Western Europe are 25 percentage points more likely to be employed, and women born in Western Europe 40 percentage points. These differences are statistically significant, as is the difference between first- and second-generation migrant women.

The difference between the groups is very robust: the logistic models ([Supplementary Appendix C](#)), the ‘labour force instead of employment’—model ([Supplementary Appendix D](#)), and the ‘per destination country’—model ([Supplementary Appendix E](#)) show the same results. Also, the models with parttime and full-time employment split show higher employment likelihoods among women in Western Europe, compared to non-migrant women in Turkey ([Supplementary Appendix F](#)). Lastly, as shown in the [Supplementary Appendices B–F](#), women who migrated within Turkey consistently fall in between the Turkish-origin women in Western Europe and the Turkish non-migrants, which indicates that the impact of migration is not a pure effect of the act of migration, but very much related to the opportunities that the destination context provides, as discussed in our theory section.

In sum, indeed migrant women have higher employment likelihoods than non-migrant women, and second-generation women in Western Europe have even higher employment likelihoods than migrant and non-migrant women, which strongly supports H1 and H2.

Explaining Group Differences

Adding family composition factors (Model 2) shows single women are more likely to be employed than (ever-)married women, and the number of young children is inversely related to women's employment. However, family composition does not account for the migration-related employment differences.⁹ These results resonate with the limited variation in family structures between migrant groups ([Supplementary Appendix A](#)), which we

would expect for (adult) first-generation migrant women, but not for the second-generation women.

While migration might not be linked to changing family structures, additional analyses¹⁰ show that the linkage between family formation and employment is different across migrant groups: the employment gap is smaller among women with more children, indicating that in the Western European destination countries, particularly women without children benefit more from liberal norms regarding employment, which is in line with previous research on other contexts (Spierings, 2015a: pp. 163–164). However, migration does not link to a lower number of children and in turn does not lead to higher employment likelihoods via this route: H3 and H4 are refuted.

Model 3 adds education attainment, which is higher among Turkish women in Western Europe than among their counterparts in Turkey (Supplementary Appendix A; also: Bayraktar and Guveli, 2020). We find a clear effect: women's employment probability on average rises by 5.6 percentage points per level of education. Moreover, adding education to the models explains a considerable part of the employment differences. In Model 2, the women born in Western Europe were 40 percentage points more likely to be employed than non-migrant women in Turkey; after including education, the remaining difference was only 23 percentage points; educational differences explain 42 per cent of that employment gap. Moreover, it also explains 47 per cent of the employment gap between women who migrated to Western Europe and those born there, and the remaining gap between them (0.229 vs 0.157) is only marginally significant. Model 3 further demonstrates the importance of educational opportunities for women in the destination context and contributes to our understanding about the mechanism as to how migration benefits women's employment: through increasing level of education.

The patterns discussed above are robust across models (Supplementary Appendices B–F). Moreover, models that only include women who obtained their highest education in Turkey show that including education only slightly reduces the difference between non-migrant women and international migrant women. Again, this underscores that the educational opportunities provided by the Western European countries after migration are pivotal in understanding the employment consequences of migration.

In sum, women born in Western Europe are higher educated than those migrating to Western Europe, and those migrating to Western Europe have higher education compared to non-migrant women, and these

educational differences account for a substantial part of the variation in employment likelihood; H5 is corroborated.

Finally, Model 4 adds religiosity and gender attitudes. Across models, no independent or mediating effect is found for gender attitudes.¹¹ That is, we do not find significant relationship between gender role attitudes and women's employment likelihood even if we exclude religiosity, education, or family structures from the model.¹² As discussed in the methods section, other measures of gender role attitudes than those included in the 2000 Families data might play a role in shaping women's employment. Therefore, we reject H7 on the mediating role of gender equality attitudes in explaining the migration-employment linkage among women cautiously, emphasising that attitudes on women's role in the labour market and household might provide significant explanation.

More generally, the cultural attitudes matter, as higher individual religiosity significantly reduces women's employment probability, and including it somewhat reduces the coefficients comparing non-migrant women to those migrated to and born in Western Europe.¹³ Varying the order of inclusion of the mediating factors furthermore suggests that part of the religiosity effect works via family formation decisions, but not via gender equality attitudes.¹⁴ Overall, the results support H6, which states that differences in religiosity partly explains the higher employment likelihood of women born in Western Europe compared to migrant women and migrant women compared to non-migrant women in Turkey.

Conclusions

We asked to what extent the likelihood of employment of migrant and second-generation women in Western Europe differs from that of their non-migrant counterparts in Turkey (RQ1) and to what extent these differences can be explained by differences in family composition, education, and cultural (religiosity and gender equalitarian) attitudes (RQ2).

With the unique 2000 Families data, we could come closer to assessing the consequences of migration on women's paid employment while countering the issue of selectivity. Our results support the dissimilation-from-origins argument, as they consistently show migrant and second-generation women have a considerably higher employment likelihood than their counterparts in Turkey (RQ1). As illicit employment is not explicitly surveyed in the data, and small part-time jobs might not be reported, the difference may even be more

pronounced, particularly for first-generation women. Moreover, we do not consider unpaid work in family farm or business as employment, which women in the sending regions and especially in the villages might be doing more often. Our data do not include detailed information about unpaid work and we only considered paid employment because receiving income gives women a certain level of independence and is more likely to benefit women's empowerment (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). All in all, the higher paid employment likelihood remains among Turkish-origin women in Western Europe even after including the micro-level mediation factors, thus suggesting macro-level or institutional differences between Western Europe and Turkey matter for women's employment.

As for the mediating factors (RQ2), the differences we report are largely explained by higher educational attainment and lower levels of religiosity among the migrant groups; clearly, the education opportunities of those who migrated to Western Europe at a young age or who were born there matter. Contrary to expectations, family structures and gender equality attitudes do not explain differences. This is noteworthy, as migrant women's attitudes are understood to become more progressive through migration, and this is considered a driver of employment in the assimilation literature (Khoudja and Fleischmann, 2015; Spierings, 2015b; Van Klingereren and Spierings, 2020). It should be acknowledged that our gender equality attitudes measure is of a general nature (i.e. not specifically attitudes to work or household roles). However, from a dissimulation perspective, our result indicate that not only the more liberal migrant women enter the labour market but also the more traditional migrant women are more likely to work than their Turkish counterparts, which might be because of economic household need or to send remittances (see Spierings, 2015a).

Gender attitudes are not significantly related to paid employment in the 2000 Families dataset, and this is at odds with multiple other studies, mostly including attitudes directly related to the labour market and work-family balance. We have tried to find an explanation for this and we analysed interactions between gender attitudes and migration groups. These additional analyses seem to support the explanation that women work regardless of their gender attitudes because of their economic household needs. That is, the general gender egalitarian attitudes as measured here do not play a significant role in paid employment of migrant women in Western Europe and their non-migrant counterparts in Turkey. However, results for Turkish-origin women who were born in Western Europe seem to concur with

findings in the numerous studies on gender attitudes and paid employment among majority populations. Gender egalitarian attitudes are associated with considerably higher rates of employment for those who were born in Western European destination countries ($P < 0.01$). Nevertheless, delving further into these additional analyses are outside the scope of our research. Using a similar survey design and including more specific scales on gender role attitudes to replicate our results, future research could provide more thorough understanding about the gender traditionalism or egalitarianism and women's paid employment among migrant and non-migrant women in destination and origin countries.

Our results show how dissimulation processes work and what they add to migration studies, which often focus on assimilation—how migrant women differ from native-born women in destination countries (Alba and Nee, 1997; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). That tells us little about the processes migrant women go through due to changing context of living and how this affects them (Guveli *et al.*, 2016a,b; Bayrakdar and Guveli, 2020). For instance, the assimilation literature finds having young children explains differences between migrant and second-generation women on the one hand and majority women on the other (Khoudja and Fleischmann, 2015; Blommaert and Spierings, 2019). Our study shows that the number of children does not explain why migrant women are more likely to be employed than their counterparts in Turkey. How to explain this? Similar processes related to fertility and household dynamics might be taking place among Turkish-descent women in Western Europe and in Turkey, but they may easily be misunderstood as assimilation if women in Turkey are left out of the discussion.

Similarly, the employment-gap between women in Western Europe and in Turkey remains roughly 17 percentage points. 'Assimilation studies' might point to labour market discrimination of Turkish women in Western Europe (Brynin and Guveli, 2012; Khattab and Hussein, 2018; Blommaert and Spierings, 2019), which is rather convincing; however, our dissimulation perspective and results add that the Western European labour market contexts still create more work opportunities for Turkish-origin women in Western Europe than the Turkish labour markets provide for their counterparts in Turkey. That said, other research shows that with the same level of education, women in Turkey obtain higher status jobs than their comparators in Western Europe (Guveli *et al.*, 2016a; Zuccotti, Ganzeboom and Guveli, 2017). Women in Western Europe seem to work more often but more often in lower status jobs.

As mentioned above, our study has some limitations that future research may address. We compare women from the same families and (high-sending) origin regions who did not make the migration decision themselves or who migrated with employment in mind, and we correct for crucial observable variables. As such, we come closer to isolating how migrating from a more traditional society to a more liberal and welfare context shapes peoples' lives, but the issue of selectivity remains salient. An important, albeit expensive, future design could be to collect data similar to the 2000 Families data using a (long-term) panel design, including multiple pre- and post-migration waves.

Next, despite the robustness of the patterns, several results suggest more detailed effects of context. The 2000 Families data do not allow us to include country-level explanatory variables; important differences remain between Turkey and Western European countries and between destination countries. Part of the latter are difference in welfare-state regimes and that the size of migration communities might differ; larger communities might, for instance, help women find their way or provide informal childcare options. Future research, if data allow, should theorize and test these contextual effects further.

In short, we can propose a number of future endeavours. For now, however, our application of a *dissimilation from origins and across-generations* perspective yields important insights into understanding the enduring impact of migration on women's employment.

Notes

- 1 Migration fuelled by political and cultural changes (but not formal asylum), often linked to the rise of Erdogan's AK-party, became more prominent only after the 2000 Families data were collected.
- 2 One might expect that non-migrant women in Turkey have more children because of limited availability of contraception and abortion. In fact, family planning has a long history in Turkey: contraception is commonly used and available without prescription and abortion is legal until 10th week (Akin, 2007).
- 3 Only education has >3.5 per cent missing values: 8.7 per cent. Overall, 86 per cent of the women who completed their education are included in the analysis.
- 4 Other categories: looking after family or home; in education/training; long-term sick/disabled; retired; doing unpaid work for family firm or other organization; doing something else. Unemployed women

- (3.9 per cent) are coded 0; [Supplementary Appendix D](#) shows the models coding them 1 [i.e. measuring Labour Force Participation (LFP)].
- 5 The survey includes an open answer question on expected weekly working hours. We considered this item's validity lower (extreme numbers; numbers while having said not to work). Nevertheless, as robustness check, we run a multinomial model on a three-category variable: no work, 1–31 h a week (13 per cent), 32 or more hours a week ([Supplementary Appendix F](#)). Our conclusions remain the same. Most notably, particular part-time work is higher among (first/second generation) migrant women: parttime work is uncommon in Turkey but relatively common in countries like the Netherlands.
 - 6 Pearson correlation 0.45 ($P < 0.001$); including them separately shows similar effects.
 - 7 Using the five-point items (available for four origin regions) or only using the education item leads to the same conclusion.
 - 8 The LFP pattern is even more pronounced ([Supplementary Appendix A](#)).
 - 9 Including children up to the age of five leads to similar conclusions.
 - 10 Findings are available from the authors.
 - 11 The exception: there is a marginal positive impact of gender egalitarian attitudes on *full time* employment with all mediators included ([Supplementary Appendix F](#)), but this does still not mediate migration background.
 - 12 The interaction analysis between gender attitudes and migration status shows that women born in Europe with relatively more equalitarian gender attitudes are more likely in paid employment than Western European-born women with less egalitarian gender attitudes ($P < 0.10$). However, the role of gender attitudes in the employment likelihood is not different for women who migrated to Europe and those who stayed in the regions in Turkey. These results are available upon request from the authors. Nevertheless, this impact of gender egalitarian attitudes among European born women does not translate to such attitudes to explain the gaps we focus on in this study, even though they do seem relevant for women's employment among (second generation) migrant women in Western Europe.
 - 13 Separately, each of the two religiosity indicators show significant negative effects.
 - 14 Our religiosity and gender equality attitudes do correlate significantly ($P < 0.001$) and negatively; there is no indirect religiosity effect because our gender equality attitudes have no impact on employment.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary data are available at ESR online.

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