

## **Foreign but at home:**

Migration and integration of Turkish and Bosnian women in Vienna

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### **Abstract**

This study of the Institute of Demography, Austrian Academy of Sciences, on migration and integration of Turkish women in comparison to Bosnian women is part of the EU funded project FEMAGE which aims to compare the integration process of migrants within nine EU member states. The study at hand focuses on representatives of the two largest migrant groups in Austria and tries to explain parallels and differences in migration and integration with respect to language, work and identity. Although there have been studies on the integration process of each of these groups, there are hardly any comparative studies which consider, among others, the influence of the different motives of migration and the cultural and socio-economic background of the migrants on the development of their integration. There is a main focus on work in relation to gender in order to go beyond existing androcentric studies on this topic which have led to a rather one-sided and passive image of female migrants.

### **Introduction**

Migrants and their integration into the European Union has been and is now even more a dominant topic on the political and social scientific agenda within the EU. However, this topic gets abused by national politics in a populist way more and more. It is therefore a principal task of the scientific community to guarantee a counter balance in this respect. The FEMAGE-project – funded by the EU in the 6th framework – aims to provide enhanced knowledge about the integration process of migrants by comparing the situation within the EU member states. In each of the 9 participating EU-countries female immigrants from two different countries of origin are in the focus of the research. The reason for the gender focus lies in the fact that the migration situation of female migrants has often been discussed from an androcentric point of view leading to a rather one-sided and passive image of female migrants. By using biographic interviews, however, the migrants are given the opportunity to speak about their migration situation in their own words, to present their level of activity with respect to that and to stress those experiences and parts of their lives which they see as most important.

Our study addresses the following questions: What are the chances, expectations and needs of women who migrate from a third country to the European Union? In how far does the migration have an effect on the perceived gender roles? What obstacles do migrants encounter? What different trajectories of integration can we detect? How are they linked to the cultural and socio-economic background of the migrants? How can the participation in the labour market be described?

Here, first and more expected results of the Austrian project partner, the Institute of Demography, Austrian Academy of Sciences, shall be presented with a special focus on work, education and social status.

The next section describes the historical development of migration to Austria and is followed by theoretical considerations. Then the sample and methods which have been used are highlighted. The following chapter illustrates our results and a discussion concludes the findings.

### **The historical background**

In Austria it was decided to analyze and compare the migration experiences of the two major migrant groups in Austria, consisting of Turkish and Bosnian migrants. A short historical outline shall demonstrate the high significance these two groups have for Austria.

1964 Austria acceded to an agreement with Turkey to employ so-called Turkish guestworkers. Two years later the same agreement was concluded with Ex-Yugoslavia. In the course of the following years, over 250 000 workers from both countries came to Austria (Münz/Zuser/Kytir 2003: 22). The idea was to occupy these additional workers just as long as they were needed, for a restricted period of time, in order to then send them back to their home countries. However, in fact many of these workers stayed and settled in Austria. At the end of the 80ies there was another wave of migration which can be explained by the fall of the Iron Curtain, the war in Ex-Yugoslavia and a better economic situation in Austria. Between 1989 and 1993 the number of people with a foreign citizenship doubled from 387 000 to 690 000. As a consequence of the unexpected rapid increase of migrants and refugees, Austria saw the need to imply restrictions on the existing asylum and alien law. It therefore introduced a quota system in 1990 with the purpose of getting a better control of immigration. Today, Turkish and Bosnian migrants are the two largest groups in Austria. The census in 2001 showed that nearly 18% of all migrants with a citizenship other than Austrian are Turks and around 15% are from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Furthermore, over 400 000 naturalizations have taken place in Austria since 1980, with the Turkish migrants forming again the largest group followed by migrants from Ex-Yugoslavia (Statistic Austria 2001).

The differences between these two groups with respect to their reason for migration, education, level of integration etc. shall be discussed below.

### **Theory**

Within the scientific, socio-political and public discourse, gainful employment is, apart from social benefits, family and education, one of the main societal instances for the assurance of participatory rights. In this context, theoretical discussions about the integration of migrants into modern and functionally divided societies call the filling of positions within the various functional systems, like the educational system or the labour market, *structural assimilation* or *placement* (Esser 2001). Placement is one of four dimensions of social integration Hartmut Esser identifies, with the other three being cultururation, interaction and identification. According to Esser, the placement of migrants into a social system requires a certain degree of cultururation, which is the knowledge and acquisition of cultural characteristics of the host country like the knowledge of the language as well as of norms and traditions, and a certain degree of interaction. The processes of cultururation and placement cannot be seen as isolated from each other in Esser's theory. For Hoffmann-Nowotny (1973), however, institutional integration meaning the participation of migrants in society relevant status dimensions like profession, income, education, quality of living conditions,

voting rights etc. is the driving force for integration. According to his theory, cultural integration is not a precondition of structural integration, but rather the consequence of it. If institutional integration of migrants shall be a starting point for further forms of integration an equal participatory share of the societal goods would be necessary. However, migrants tend to be deployed in the lower labour segments in industrialised countries in which they are occupied as unqualified and unskilled workers. Even if they have gained certain qualifications in their country of origin, these are in many cases not acknowledged by the receiving country. The lower labour segments are characterised by comparatively low income rates, high instability, bad working conditions, low prestige and hardly any upward mobility. Michael J. Piore (1979), the main representative of the dual labour market theory, therefore divides labour markets in industrialised societies into the centre and the periphery, i.e. the primary and the secondary segment, which is a reflection of the polarised order in a globalised world. According to the centre-periphery model, migratory movements of qualified workers on the one hand and unqualified workers on the other hand can be seen as an expression of a world wide division of labour and a world order which normally tends to polarisation. Esser calls this phenomenon *ethnic stratification*: “The differentiation of the labour market means the systematic distribution of certain groups over certain sectors and the classification into different wage groups (while having the same occupation). Such differentiations occur according to sex, age, but also, attendant migration, according to ethnic criteria” (Esser 2001: 37). That migrants accept these “dead-end-jobs” in the secondary segment of the labour market is, according to Piore, mainly due to social psychological reasons. Since the migration is in many cases only planned for a restricted period of time, it is easier to accept comparatively bad working conditions. Especially in the beginning work is often seen simply as a means to an end – the relation to work is often just an instrumental one. However, the longer the migrants stay in the host country, the more their restriction to the secondary labour market segment might pose an identity problem with respect to their social status.

Ethnic stratification is a barrier to upward social mobility for wide parts of ethnic minorities and is bound to dequalification according to Esser: “Since migrants are usually deployed in unprivileged sections first, this alone already leads to a high probability of a continuation of the therefore given systematic disadvantages on the group level (Esser 2001: 38).

In the Austrian migration research the finding prevails that upward social mobility of migrants in Austria takes place very seldom (Wolf 2001; Gächter 2005). A rise to the middle class is an important feature of integration. However, this rise in Austria only if at all can be identified in the subsequent generations, and rarely in the life-course of the migrant him/herself. This is due to the rigid Austrian legal framework and labour market which aim to maintain the low wages domain by the systematic occupation of migrants. Due to the non-acknowledgement of educational attainments or already existing professional qualifications, migrants are often forced into these low-skilled labour segments. However, in some cases individual ambitions plus the necessary social network on the migrant’s side can lead to a better placement on the labour market.

According to Elisabeth Aufhauser (2000), the dequalification for female migrants is especially high because gender can be seen as an additional factor with respect to social and power relations apart from their migratory and ethnic background which can lead to an even greater unprivileged social status in the receiving country. Migrant women are often occupied in the worst paid sectors within the female segment of the service sector – there is an evident differentiation between

autochthonous and allochthonous women. Especially in this segment of the labour market a traditional gender distribution is still maintained which is why migrant women often have no other opportunity than to work in the service sectors such as household work, shop assistant, cleaning professions, child care, elderly care, nursing etc. Even intellectual female migrants often do not manage to break out of the fields of activity which are foreseen by the receiving country in the long run.

Does migration have emancipatory consequences for the female migrants, though? The gender specific migration research has still no consistent answer. On the one hand, women are involved in the production process and the public sphere, are financially more independent due to their own income and often see their work as a means for their self-determination. On the other hand there is the danger of a double burden with respect to wage work and housework. It can also happen that female migrants achieve a financial independence from their husbands, but get dependent on their wage labour instead without an increase of the social prestige. Another question which needs to be addressed is if the migration is based on their own decision or if the decision was made by their husbands or parents. The individual existing results of gender-related migration research are manifold which only leads to the following conclusion: "migration is not an open door to emancipation" (Morokvasic 1983: 28) although it can be for some migrant women.

Bernhard Nauck (2001), on the other hand, puts a strong focus on the role of family and relatives for the process of migration and integration. With respect to the social disadvantages of migrants he stresses that it is of great importance to analyse which differences exist in the transmission of cultural, social and economic capital from one generation of migrants to the next. Also Portes and Rumbaut (2001) identify the following factors for the result of the integration process for the second generation:

- The history of the first generation
- The rate of cultururation between parents and children and its influence on their normative integration
- The cultural and economic barriers the second generation has to face
- The resources the families and communities can oppose these barriers

The question of an upward social mobility for the second generation can therefore also be seen as being dependent on several variables which leads to heterogenic forms of integration within this group of interest.

Within the FEMAGE project we focused on the first generation of migrants to Austria. However, because many of your interviewees came as children they faced similar challenges as the second generation. We want to show in this paper what the situation is like in the case of the interviewed women in the study at hand.

### **Sampling**

In the sampling 15 Turkish and 15 Bosnian women who are living in Vienna have been interviewed. Ten interviews of each group were made in German and five in the respective mother tongue. We used theoretical sampling to get a wide variation within the interviewed groups with respect to age, education, social class, work etc. The contact with these women was created via various kinds of organisations. . All women are migrants of the first generation and Muslims.

The search for interviewees was started by contacting various organisations that are dealing with migrants, like Health centres, Youth centres or Mosques. These organisations were asked for help to establish contacts with potential interviewees.

Another important source were the interviewees themselves. Some of them were willing to ask women within their own network to participate in the project.

It was easier to establish contact with Turkish women than with Bosnian women. However, it turned out to be difficult to get a diverse sample which should allow for a large variety of individual cases. One of the major problems was to find Turkish women without a veil although there is a number of unveiled Turkish women living in Vienna. On the other hand, it was only managed to find one Bosnian woman with a headscarf. It has to be said, though, that in comparison to Turkish women living in Austria the number of Bosnian veiled women is much lower.

It also appeared that work is more present in the Bosnian interviewees' lives so that it was easier to find economically active Bosnian women than non-working ones. On the other hand, in the Turkish sample there are more women who are not occupied now, some of which have a longer working history, though. However, guided by our theoretical sampling we managed to get a diverse group of female migrants in both groups.

Furthermore, the sample shows differences with respect to the reasons for migration which shall be dealt with below in more detail.

The Turkish interviewees are between 22 and 55 years old, with five of them being between the age of 20 and 30, four between 31 and 40, and the age of seven Turkish interviewees ranges from 41 to 55. Three of them came as children under the age of ten, six were between eleven and twenty and seven were older than 21 when they came to Austria.

The respective sample of the Bosnian women consists of women aged from 25 to 57. No woman was under ten when she migrated to Austria. There were six women who were between twelve and 26 years, only two between 21 and 30 and seven older than 31 years.

## **Methodology**

In this study we want to look at the perspective of migrants. The increasing diversity of lifestyles and identities gives the need for qualitative research, which has become a well-established sociological discipline since the 1980s. Within the realm of qualitative research there are different forms of interview techniques and analysis methods (Rosenthal 2005, Flick 2006).

With regard to the present perspective of the migrants-in-a-life-course-framework we decided to use the biographic narrative method, following the Rosenthal approach (Rosenthal 2005). This method has gained a very good reputation in qualitative sociology and has also gained some momentum in migration research (Flick 2006). A key achievement is that we have the possibility to look at individual experiences, which might be crucial in the case of migrants. However, not only single elements of somebody's life can be looked at, but the whole structure of the life-course. Not arguments are the basis of our analysis but the experiences and structure of a social system (Rosenthal 2005).

We started each interview with a biographical question on the migration of the interviewees. Immanent questions about the migration process and other important elements followed. In this part, the focus was on the subjective view of the past and the future. After the main narration and immanent questions, topics that were not mentioned but were also necessary for the research have been asked (Lamnek 1995, Mayring 1990, Flick 1995).

The main aim of the method is to find out the present perspective of migrant women especially in connection to their integration. At the end of each interview also a quantitative questionnaire was annexed. It contained open and closed questions focusing on the main goals of the project. It has the function of collecting additional systematic information.

In the end this additional information was used to fill in gaps or obscurities. However, in general the biographical interviews already provided so much information that very seldom the quantitative questionnaire provided new information which was rich in content.

### **Analysis**

In this study, the objective hermeneutic biographical analysis was linked with content analysis. Froschauer and Lueger (1992) suggest that objective hermeneutic analysis shall be used in the beginning if different methods are applied. It supports (apart from textual advantages) the sensibility for following? rough interpretation methods. Combining different methods increases the utility because strengths can be made use of and weaknesses can be reduced.

Therefore, at the outset, a biographical analysis was made. Looking at the biography with all the migrants' experiences and difficulties made it possible to already develop hypotheses about their well-being and integration. The individual perspective and opinions already develop here (Rosenthal 2005). Starting with this method had the advantage that a certain number of hypotheses were developed before the next step, the content analysis. Using the content analysis it was possible to work with such a huge amount of data in a relatively short time (Flick 2006).

The main task in the analysing process is to develop hypotheses and compare and check them on the following data, which should give an idea on how phenomena might be related to each other (Strauss and Corbin 1996). The hypotheses do not emerge immediately; it takes a long process of searching, comparing, and finding. There is a constant interplay between developing hypotheses and checking them to make sure that the findings are stable; otherwise the hypotheses must be changed. (Strauss and Corbin 1996). With the content analysis it was possible to look at special problems and their appearance (Mayring 1990).

### **Comparative analysis of social status**

#### **Reasons for Migration**

Work and education have been focused on in most of the biographies in both groups. This can partly be explained by the fact that many interviewed women came to Austria as labour migrants. There are a number of variations and other **grounds for migration**, which have a strong effect on the perception of work and social status, though.

Within the group of the Turkish women almost no forced migration can be found according to the usual definition, which implies for example war, political or religious persecution. However, there are still many cases of “involuntary” migration insofar as the migration was not intended and decided by the women themselves. The Turkish women of our group mainly followed either their husbands or their parents. It was mainly them who decided to leave the home country with the aim to improve

their financial situation as well as their social status. The original reasons for migration have therefore been mainly economic ones: better chances and a better life had been expected in Austria. In many cases the husbands had already been living in Austria before and let their wives follow them from Turkey.

However, also a small number of Turkish women of our sample migrated on their own will because of the same economic reasons, but also because of gender-related reasons. They see more opportunities for women in Austria and stress their independence here as one of the most important factors.

Most of the Bosnian women interviewed came to Austria because of the war so that their migration can be described as a forced one. Many of them come from a good social position, with their flight from their home country they lost everything, though, and had to start from zero again.

There are also three Bosnian women who migrated to Austria voluntarily: one because of a difficult family situation and because of a strong emotional affiliation to Austria; the other one fled more because of her violent husband than because of the war; and the third interviewee came here because of work-related reasons.

### **Working and educational history in the country of origin**

Less than the half of the Turkish women interviewed already worked in Turkey, most of them were occupied in lower skilled jobs. However, we have to have in mind that many of the Turkish women migrated already at a very young age being still in education at the time of their migration. Only two Turkish women did not work or were not in education in their country of origin.

In contrast to this, the majority of the Bosnian women come from a higher educational background with a good social position and (partly) very good jobs. As women who were socialised in a socialist regime they grew up in a more egalitarian working system from a gender perspective. In comparison they were less exposed to traditional bonds and got an easier access to higher education as well as better job opportunities. Approximately half of the Bosnian women worked in their country of origin, several interviewees still went to school or university and only one woman was a housewife.

In both groups, two third of the interviewed women had already finished their education in their country of origin. Within this group, the majority of Bosnian women received a higher secondary education or a university degree whereas it was one third of the Turkish women who finished some higher secondary education in Turkey. Those women who migrated at a rather young age and who continued their education in Austria aimed at lower and higher secondary education mostly in both groups. Some of these women are still in education and still aiming at a university degree.

### **First expectations and problems**

The expectations of the Turkish group were very much focused on achieving a higher social status and having a better life in the future. Already the stories about Austria which were told by other migrant workers when they were visiting Turkey during their holidays formed a blurred picture of Austria in favour of its positive sides. There are Turkish labour migrants who invest a lot of money in Turkey and build houses there, but have a very poor life in Austria with very small flats. However, people who are living in Turkey only see their luxurious lives and assume that they must lead a

life on the same level in Austria. This creates the wrong feeling that Austria and Europe in general are paradise-like. However, when the Turkish women finally came to Austria they had to face a totally different situation than they had expected. They expected better life and job opportunities, but instead they had to live under bad living and working conditions. To a large extent their expectations were disappointed, especially in the first phase of their lives in Austria.

The Bosnian women, on the other hand, came with no expectations. After partly very traumatic experiences in the war and on the flight, just their and their family's survival counted. They suffered a very difficult first time in Austria with only one thought in mind: to return home as soon as possible, as soon as the situation in their home country was stable again. For most of them it took several months before they had to acknowledge that they could not go back.

The issue of language was also a very much - discussed one - the gain of German skills was mentioned several times. All women who are integrated to some extent into the Austrian society pointed out that knowing the language is a very important factor. They said that German is important for independence, communication and for defending oneself. Women who were considered as not very well integrated did not see the necessity to speak German well. However, it should be stressed that this was only a very small group of women and that for most of them German was a very important point during the interview. Also some women who gave the interview in their mother tongue are able to speak German, but still wanted to talk in their language to make all the important issues as clear as possible. Several women of both ethnic groups reported that they came as children to Austria. In the course of their school life they learned German relatively quickly. This was the reason why many parents took their children with them to the authorities to help with translation. Most of the women stressed how difficult it was to handle all this pressure. School in general was considered a place with much support especially by the Bosnians. Many of those women who migrated at a later stage in their lives had to learn German via self-studies because of the lack of time and money to attend German courses. Many reported that learning German was only possible because of their strong will. Some also got a lot of help from other people like their teachers or working colleagues.

### **Job search in the first phase**

Mostly those Turkish women who did not migrate on their own decision but came with or because of their husbands had more problems in the beginning and needed longer to start working than the rest. In their biographies it turned out that the first phase of their lives in Austria was very much characterised by a certain fear of leaving the house. Following the assumption of Esser (2001) cultururation and placement are coming together. If people do not know the rules of the receiving country, orientation and integration are difficult tasks. The fact that everything was strange and that they did not know the language hindered them to actively look for a job although working was important financially and/or personally speaking. As a consequence, some of the Turkish interviewees stayed at home for two to five years before they found a job. Their behaviour can be described as rather passive which reflects the passiveness of their migration. Some of them still tend to present themselves as more active and successful, though, as they are from the authors' perspective.

However, there are also some truly active Turkish women who successfully looked for a job right from the beginning. In contrast to some of the women



mentioned before they did not wait until jobs were offered to them, but actively took care of that themselves. Again this is not only because of financial reasons but also because work is of a great value to most of them. Against Esser's theory they managed to enter the labour market without having had the chance, money and/or time to get used to the new system and language to a certain degree. Some of the Turkish women migrated at such a young age, though, that they did not look for a job right away, but continued their education in Austria.

In the case of the Bosnian women working was first seen as most important in order to be able to survive and to support the family in Austria as well as family members who stayed in the war zone. Especially in the beginning it was therefore easier to accept any kind of work, mostly very low-skilled work. Speaking with Piore, they had a rather instrumental relation to work which made the acceptance of these "dead end jobs" easier. Furthermore, some of the interviewees saw their work as a kind of occupational therapy: they needed something to do, no matter what, just to be distracted so that they would not have to constantly worry about the situation at home. The very large majority is therefore and because of other reasons (more support from the Austrian state, longer tradition of women's work in their country of origin etc.) very active and able to find a job fast. However, there are also some cases of rather passive behaviour which can either be explained by governmental restrictions like problems with getting the working permission and with the nostrification, with posttraumatic depressions but also simply with less ambition towards work. Some of the interviewees continue going to school when they come to Austria.

### **Actual job situation under the aspect of education**

Most of the Turkish interviewees started with *low-skilled jobs* in Austria and stayed at this level during their working career. As already discussed in our theoretical considerations this is a phenomenon which is true for most of the migrants (s. Gächter, Piore, Wolf). Which makes the situation even more complex is the fact that we also have to consider the influence of gender within the labour market. As Aufhauser (2000) has argued not only dequalification because of ethnicity but also because of gender complicates the life of the women. As a consequence they often have no other choice than to accept typical female jobs at the periphery of the labour market.

Currently six Turkish women are working. However, the majority of the interviewed women have been working at certain points in their lives. In contrast to many of the Bosnian women, most of the Turkish women do not have a higher level of education, but come from a lower to lower middle class which is why doing or having done lower skilled work poses less problems for their identity. They stressed that they are glad to have work, however, the majority was financially speaking not content, but partly facing serious financial problems. Some of the Turkish interviewees, on the other hand, always wished for higher education, but never got the chance to attend a higher school.

Also the majority of the Bosnian women still works in rather lower-skilled jobs which can be seen far beyond their qualification (currently nine women). Although most of them finished a higher secondary education they are still working in such professions as factory workers, cleaning ladies, shop assistants, but also in caring professions (child care, elderly care, nurse). The longer these women have stayed in these jobs the more differentiated their justifications and reactions have become to this fact. Since they could not go back to their home country and their old life, most of

them had the aim to at least create a new and similar life in Austria with a similar status. Even more than the Turkish women, the Bosnian refugees were continuously fighting to get back their old social position. As Wolf (2001) argues, increasing the social status poses a large problem for 1<sup>st</sup> generation migrants. However, we also had very few but still some women who managed to get back to a similar life with a good social position as they had had in Bosnia or who had also in Bosnia been occupied in lower skilled jobs. In comparison to the Turkish women, their satisfaction with their income appears to be more balanced: half of the interviewed women is rather unsatisfied with it, the other half is rather satisfied.

What are the different reactions now to the being caught in a lower-skilled job? In many cases of the Turkish women we could detect the presentation of a certain pride. Some of the interviewees stressed that they managed to increase their social position since they migrated to Austria in comparison to people who stayed in Turkey. However, in comparison with the majority population in Austria, the social status of many of them is at the very low end. This does not cause problems for their identity, though, because the majority population is not their reference point or their *Significant Other*.

Also some of the Bosnian women who are still doing lower skilled work but have a higher level of education put more focus on their good and hard work which makes them proud than on the unfair Austrian system which did not make it possible for them to work according to their qualification. In their case a shift of emphasis seems to have taken place in which the success to have managed to start from zero, to have found work and to have supported the family are put in the foreground instead of the barriers they had to meet. During the interviews some of them stressed that their success and their good work is also valued by their colleagues who recognise their true talents. This holds also true for people who found jobs according to their education. Another example of a certain kind of success can be identified on the personal level: success at work not only shows via hard work but for some it is equally important to be liked by everyone - a phenomenon which can be seen in both groups of women. Even if there are evident individual failures within the working history, they are not presented as having been caused by the interviewees themselves. These failures are then justified either as a matter of having been mobbed or the fault of the labour system itself. As an excuse it was stated that it was difficult to get information about duties and rights as an employee and it was partly difficult to understand the given information.

Other reactions on the side of the Bosnian women are to develop a more pragmatic thinking: they stress that the kind of work they are doing is not important, but that it is most important for them to have survived the war and to live in peace now. Whereas in the beginning to have work and to work hard are prioritised, their attitude changes once the financial situation gets more stable. Then the family ranks first which is one of the guidelines taught by the war: the family is more important than riches.

An even other reaction identified within the interviews with the Bosnian women is that they make a difference between themselves and other people working in the same lower skilled jobs. Some of the interviewees stated that due to their higher education they put themselves on a higher level than their colleagues. The state might take away their social status, but they still know where they come from and who they are and want to protect this status. As a consequence they stress their origin from a higher class and that the work they are doing is inferior to their capabilities, in order to not be placed on the same level as their colleagues.

Another way of handling the social degradation some of the interviewees had to experience is to directly criticise the Austrian political system. It is stressed that they feel treated differently in comparison to the majority population and that they do not get the chances they deserve. What they demand is not to judge people just because of their ethnic or national origin, but to open the labour market according to their qualification. To recognise, appreciate and deploy these qualifications is not only to the migrant's but also to the state's end. Such arguments have been stressed in both groups.

There are only very few Turkish women who managed to improve their situation and their social status remarkably out of their own powers or who managed to hold an already good position. Also in the case of the Bosnian women it is an exception to be able to find a job according to one's higher education. There are also cases where either the education or the occupation got restricted by either the parents or the husband which is why climbing the social ladder was not possible. These cases of restrictions shall be dealt with later in more detail, though.

However, within our sample it seems as if a faster and in a very few cases more dramatic improvement of the social status can be detected in the Bosnian group. This can partly be explained by the better educational preconditions many of them bring with them to Austria. On the other hand, several Bosnian women are still not content with their financial situation, they still have not reached their aims.

### **Role of work and education**

In the case of the Turkish women who did not actively decide for migration two main forms of dealing with the given situation occur. Some women see their work as a necessity: together with their husbands they came to Austria in order to work. Financial reasons are for them the main reason and imply a strong force. Having to work is stressed more than wanting to work. Also for the Bosnian women work is a necessity in order to survive and start a new life. Within both groups supporting the family members in the new country of residence and sending parts of the money to Turkey or to Bosnia to support the rest of the family there form the main reasons for why work plays such a big role.

However, for several women in both groups having to work still also includes an opportunity to participate and an opportunity to gain independence. For them, work is seen as important for their self-determination and their self-esteem. It seems as if these women have accepted the given situation that they had to leave their home country in order to be together with their husbands and the given situation that Austria offers them more chances in economic terms than Turkey. And since work forms such a strong and important role in their lives, it also forms a strong part of their identity and their self-determination.

In the case of the Turkish women who actively decided for their migration, this fact has a strong effect on their way of presenting their lives in Austria: they stress that they feel very content and present their working life very much as a success story. In their and also in other cases of the Turkish women a stronger sense of independence as well as an increased social position in terms of emancipation was highlighted. They said that their role as women had changed, that they enjoyed more rights and more freedom.

Currently one third of the Turkish women are housewives, the reasons for which are manifold. Three women told us that they lost their jobs because of restrictions and unjust treatment by the authorities and did not look for or find another

job. One woman tells us that she was dismissed because she had to care for her sick father in her home country for five weeks; and another woman did not get the working permit. Other reasons for staying at home are to care for the children and/or restrictions by the husband. There is also a case of a woman who shows a very passive behaviour, also has had no working history in Turkey and has no strong ambitions to start a working career.

In our sample of the Bosnian women the great majority is working, which shows that in this group it is even more exceptional to find weak ambitions to work. Two thirds of the Bosnian interviewees are currently working, two are in education, and there are only three women who are at home. Some of the women who work still show a certain passiveness, though. Apart from a general passive attitude towards work this can be explained by a posttraumatic stress disorder caused by the war. Some of the women interviewed suffer from depressions or psychosomatic illnesses, which constrain a regular working life. Instead of work family comes first then.

All in all the interviewees put a strong emphasis not simply on work but on working hard. This quality was in a few cases even presented as a characteristic of the respective ethnicity. Some of the interviewees had/have more than two jobs and very few phases of inactivity, if any at all. To work is not only seen as a necessity but as a basic right, as a value in itself. Several traditional virtues are attached to work for most of the interviewees: diligence, discipline and austerity. This is why it is equally important not to be financially dependent on individuals or the state. Whenever an interviewee had a loan, for example, she always made sure that the loan was fully paid back in time. To abuse the state which accepted them as labour migrants or as refugees is in most of the cases not acceptable.

Even if most of the women wanted to make clear that they earn their own money and that they are “good” foreigners many of them mentioned that they are very pleased with the Austrian welfare state. Since they mainly find themselves in a lower social position they very often get financial support from the state, mostly in the form of family allowance. This is honoured very much by many and seen as one of the very big advantages of their stay in Austria.

### **The case of young migrants (children, adolescents)**

In both ethnic groups there are several cases of women who migrated at a very young age, mostly together with their parents. Two groups can be detected within the cases of young migrants. The first group manages a successful improvement of its social status and completes some sort of higher education. There are some Turkish women, for example, who spent parts of their childhood in Turkey, but most of their lives in Austria. In comparison to their parents their expectations of their lives in Austria are already higher, to receive a good education is the highest aim for them as well as for their parents. This is a phenomenon which can be seen in several cases of first generation migrants: for both groups it is equally important to make possible a better life for their children. As a consequence of this attitude and aim a rapid increase of the social position is achieved for the following generation. These young women share a strong support for emancipation, are very active and proud of what they have achieved.

On the other hand, the second group partly shares an unfulfilled wish for a higher education because of financial problems of the family or a very traditional and restrictive background. There are a few cases in the Turkish and the Bosnian group where the young migrants had plans for a higher education, but did not get the support

from their parents because of financial reasons. Since the economic situation was a very difficult one especially during the first time in Austria the young migrants had to find a job as soon as possible in order to support their family. The aim to study, for example, might have stayed in some cases, but it is harder to follow the more time passes which makes them feel unsatisfied with their situation. Others within this group are not as ambitious and not that career-oriented comparatively speaking, but satisfied with what they have achieved.

Speaking with Portes and Rumbaut we can see the influence of the cultural and economic options and barriers within the family network on the development of the educational and professional career of the young migrants.

### **Gender and family**

With respect to the labour market most of the interviewees who work can be found in the same or similar position as their husbands. In comparison, their contribution to the household income can therefore be regarded as equally important. In both, the Turkish and the Bosnian group, there are women who are or have been the sole earners of the family for a longer period of time. This was more often the case for the Bosnian women. An explanation for this might be the fact that in some cases they flee together with their children but without their husbands who either stay in the home country or follow them later. However, there are cases where the husbands are unable to work or constricted because of the consequences of the war.

In both groups there are some women who think that work and finances are more related to men. These are women with either a lower education and/or a bad paid job, or a difficult first time in Austria due to certain restrictions by the state. Especially Turkish women characterise good men as hard working and supporting. Since for many men are mainly responsible for the financial well being of the family they often point out how hard their husbands and also their sons are working and define men always via their professions.

For a few women in both groups their working life changes after marriage insofar as their husbands restrict them from working as much as they used to and want to. They then tend to orientate themselves more via their husbands and disregard their own needs. However, all in all many of the interviewed women can be thought of as emancipated related to work. It was mentioned several times, especially by many of the Turkish women, that they feel free in Austria and have more possibilities here. Some stated that they experienced more social control and restrictions in their home country. They see better opportunities in Austria and think that the Austrian attitudes fit more to their way of thinking. As a consequence, some women seem to have gained more freedom and self-determination after their migration. Now they help others with handling their migration too, care for more people and make their own decisions. Almost all of the jobs they get access to are typical female ones, though, like cleaning ladies or elderly care nurses.

With respect to the compatibility of family and work we found out that there is a lack of time for the children in both groups since most of the women are or have been working very hard when their children were still small. Most of them have no other choice than to concentrate on the financial needs of their family and have to neglect the non-material support. Some of the women state that this poses a great problem for them, which they seek to reduce once their financial situation gets more stable. However, considering the childcare traditional family patterns have been reported. The women of both groups state that they took care of their children

themselves. Some of them went back to work very quickly, however, the support for the care was mainly not given by the husband but by the larger family. In none of the cases the husband was responsible for the children. Even if the husband was at home because he was unemployed, it was the women who looked for other possibilities for care. Some Turkish women also sent their children back to Turkey for a few years to stay with relatives there. However, the intention behind this was probably rather to make them more familiar with Turkish values and norms than to solve the childcare problem. It is interesting, though, that, especially in the case of the Bosnian women, the problem of the compatibility of work and family is hardly mentioned. This is probably because the Bosnian women have been grown up in a system where women both worked and cared for their children. They consider this behaviour as “normal” whereas in Turkey women are mainly responsible for the family and men for the financial support.

Another very interesting phenomenon, which appeared in the interviews, was that some Turkish women considered themselves as old already very early. If they have a rather low education and/or started to work or have a family at a very young age and have been working for several years, they described themselves as old at the age of 40 or lower. They then stressed that they were too old to start anything new or to make plans for the future. On the other hand only very few Turkish women considered themselves as young. These women are then very active and want to reach high aims.

### **Options and barriers by the Austrian state**

Due to the special situation of the Bosnian women as refugees of the war in Ex-Yugoslavia there was comparatively more support from the Austrian state and also from individual Austrians in the course of a broad relief project called “neighbour in need”. The access to residence and working permissions was easier for most of them so that we could still find a strong gratitude towards Austria in the interviews that it opened its doors in this time of need. After the loss of their homes and the trust in other people, it seemed like a miracle that friends became enemies in the own country but that strangers became friends in a foreign country. However, it was also criticised that the Austrian society behaved in a rather ethnocentric way, which got evident when their education was not nostrified, for example. One of the women also said that she did not get enough support and information when she had to decide her future educational career in Austria. She accused the teachers of having prejudices and of having denied her intelligence just because she was a refugee and because of her lack of German. She is now working in the social field with the aim to help other migrants finding their way in Austria more easily. This is a professional orientation many of the interviewed women have chosen now: they want to give other migrants information on the educational system or alien and residence law they could hardly get themselves when they needed it.

The Turkish women, as we have mentioned, mainly migrated because they or other members of their family wanted to increase their social status. Some of them had problems to get the residence permission and/or the working permission. In general Turkish women tell us about more difficulties with the authorities than the Bosnian women. However, not all women complain about problems.

Both, some of the Turkish and some of the Bosnian women, stated that being visible as a foreigner, that is looking different because of a darker colour of skin or a

veil, can restrict the access to certain, better paid jobs and, as a consequence, a social upward mobility.

### **Identity**

Work and social status can be seen as one element of the social identity of a person. As a consequence, the working life is one of many factors which influence the identity and the feeling of integration of migrants. Another very important factor is the reason for migration, especially the question whether the migration was a voluntary or an involuntary one. Also the age at migration, the length of the stay and the intention to stay or the possibility for return migration are, amongst others, relevant factors for identity and integration.

In the narratives of the women, the understanding of integration and the influence of the mentioned factors on integration showed many parallels. Even if the working career was a difficult one for several interviewed women, this did not necessarily have a negative effect on their feeling of integration. In some cases bad experiences with the system of the labour market and experiences with dequalification impaired the picture of Austria to a certain extent. However, criticism was, if openly expressed, mostly directed against the institutions and the system itself and not against individuals. As a consequence, integration into and identification with Austria could still be achieved on a rather personal and/or cultural level despite of structural difficulties. Especially a social network which included Austrians was identified as a necessary precondition for integration by many of the interviewees. Another driving factor for most of the interviewees was the own family, especially the children and their integration into Austria. Integration and the final settling down found more acceptance and was easier to achieve by many interviewed women when it turned out that their children felt at home in Austria and wanted to stay. Also the command of the German language was an important factor according to the majority of the interviewees.

Experiences of degradation, for example in the realm of the labour market, can lead to problems for the migrants' self-esteem and further integration especially in the beginning of their migration. On the other hand, this very participation in the labour market and their success to have built up a new life in Austria was also stressed as a proof of integration: several times the women emphasized that they are fulfilling their duties and are not a financial burden for the state. However, some shared the opinion, that they could be as much integrated as they wanted, but they would still stay alien for the majority population.

Differences between the Turkish and the Bosnian women with respect to integration can partly be identified analysing the different reasons of migration. The majority of the Bosnian women saw no other alternative than fleeing the war in order to find a place where they could stay in peace. Even after several years, however, they had no other choice than to stay in Austria because the situation in Bosnia was still considered as too dangerous. This lacking of alternatives and the feeling of security in Austria made integration comparatively easier after all. Several Turkish women also did not migrate voluntarily in the sense that they decided the migration themselves, but followed the decision of their husbands or parents. Therefore, there are women whose migration did not base on their own decision in both groups, but the different reasons of migration, flight versus labour migration, are weighed on different scales. As a consequence, there are some Turkish women who even after years in Austria can still not fully accept and justify their migration. On the other hand, as has been

mentioned before, the freedom some of the Turkish women emphasize as a quality in Austria, is an important point to identify with.

Which forms of identity were found within the narratives shall be shown in more detail in the following:

Some women identify themselves as Austrians, but the reason why they do not feel completely at home in Austria is often the fact that other people remind them that they are different. The Austrian population gives them the feeling that there are alien. In some examples conflict-laden incidents and attacks were being told. Bosnian women very often talked about difficulties connected with their name, which is a constant reminder of their flight from the war: also in Bosnia it was their names which identified them as Muslims and which were therefore the reason for violence.

Several women stated that they have adopted elements from both cultures which is seen as an advantage by them. They are emotionally bound to their home country as well as to Austria. Being multicultural and having several elements of different cultures within your identity is seen in a very positive way. On the other hand, some women report that they stand between the cultures and that it is not possible to say where they completely belong to. To some extent they are foreign in both cultures, which forms a difficult situation for them.

Many women said that it was a problem to find their identity. Who they are and where they exactly belong to appeared in several interviews as a difficult question at one point in their lives. Some tried to find their roots and migrated back, others found their identity in their religion or in helping other migrants.

The main difference between these two groups is that many Bosnian women feel connected with a country which does not exist anymore. Bosnia as it is today is different than the country they loved and lived in. Serbs, Croats and Muslims have lived peacefully in one country which is not given anymore. Many of these women narrated that the war started unexpectedly. Some of the women see the problem and guilt on all sides, but other women pointed out that Muslims have been the victims in this war. These women have a rather strong ethnic identity. Most of the women still feel Bosnian and they teach their children their language. For many of them the loss of their wonderful country was very hard: they have not only lost their belongings but also their wishes and dreams.

Most of these women but also Turkish women stressed the fact that a strong identification via ethnicity and/or nationality can be very dangerous and that they want to focus on humanity and tolerance instead. People should not be judged because of their nationality and ethnicity but because of their actions. All human beings should be treated as equal. For many women other elements of one's identity would describe a person much better than the place where they were born. Both groups wanted to be considered rather as humans than as Turks/Bosnians and to have more tolerance and understanding especially from the Austrians.

On the other hand there have also been a few women who reported that they wanted to live their Turkish life in Austria. These women had xenophobic tendencies when talking about Austria. They pointed out that their culture was more valuable than the Austrian one and described the Austrian values as too lazy and even dangerous. They want no exchange, but live their culture and require understanding from the Austrian society. They stressed that they might be living in this culture but that they belong to another. The Austrian mentality was described as too different to make integration possible. Some even wanted their children to be socialised in Turkey.



Some women were very afraid of xenophobia in Austria. They reported attacks or racist taunts. Mainly the Bosnian women were afraid of the tendency that worldwide the climate for xenophobia against Muslims is getting bigger. Since they have already experienced such conflicts in their own country they observe the worldwide development very cautiously. Some women said that they do not want to provoke any conflicts. One strategy to handle such experiences was to neglect xenophobic attacks and not to take them seriously. Another mentioned strategy was to contribute to the reduction of prejudices, for example by working in intercultural organisations. To avoid people who judge others because of their nationality is even another strategy. Examples of discriminatory experiences with authorities or organisations were being told and also the media and the politics have been criticised because of their lack of sensitivity.

However, Austria has not only been criticised - also many positive aspects were connected with this country, like the well-organised state and the welfare state in general. Also the prevailing freedom and peace were stressed several times, as has been mentioned before. In many interviews especially Vienna was connected with very positive emotional attitudes, some of which have already been adapted by some of the interviewees. Austria was not only described as xenophobic: some women considered Austria as open and tolerant – a country where they can live an unproblematic life in peace. A few women pointed out that they could even live their religion more freely. Multicultural aspects of the Austrian society were identified and pointed out in a positive way by others. Austria was also praised because it accepts a high number of foreigners. It is modern and a better place to live especially for women because they have more liberty and can be active. Austria was connected with progress and modern thinking compared to especially Turkey which was considered as static and traditional.

Many of the Turkish women said that religion plays an important role in their lives. Most of them have experienced their life as being more difficult in Austria because of their religion. Only one woman said that she likes it to be allowed to wear her headscarf wherever she wants in Austria, whereas in Turkey this is much more complicated. Most of them saw their headscarf as the reason for most of the xenophobic attacks they have experienced. More understanding for their faith from the Austrian society was demanded. Some women started to wear a headscarf relatively late in their lives. This was mainly connected with the death of a close person and/or they started to put on a veil because of social pressure. Some Turkish women reported that they found their identity in their religion. Because living with two cultures is so difficult religion can work as an “identity anchor”. Only very few Turkish women had their own idea about their faith. However, these women do not want to be restricted and do not want to be told how to behave. Bosnian women reported very carefully about their religion and seemed to avoid to stress this issue a lot. They considered their religiosity as their private matter.

## **Conclusion**

As has been shown above, the biography of a migrant is a very complex issue - much more could be said. What Esser (2001) assumed, that integration is more than knowing the language and having an employment, was also visible in our research. There were cases of women who have been living and working in Austria for longer periods of time, but who could still not be described as integrated.

To sum up now the most important differences and similarities of both migrant groups shall be pointed out again.

Differences between the two groups were mainly connected with their reason to migrate. Whereas Turkish women mainly came to improve their social position, even if it was rather their partners who initiated the migration with this reason, the main reason for the Bosnian women was to flee the war. The educational levels were rather different with the Bosnian women being more educated in average. As discussed in the theoretical part they had understandably more problems to accept their low skilled jobs in Austria. Since their stay in Austria was meant to be only temporary the problems with accepting their social decline got worse they longer they stayed. The Turkish women had more problems to settle in Austria in comparison. Several women reported a very difficult start. Bosnian refugees, on the other hand, got relatively more support in the beginning because of their special situation. In general Turkish women are more visible and therefore more discriminated against. Some reported that they value especially their freedom in Austria, however, some felt rather exhausted and old compared to the Bosnian women who are mainly very active.

It shall also be pointed out that the two groups have many similarities. As we have discussed in our theoretical consideration the upward social mobility was rather difficult for both groups. Work was seen both as necessity and also as means of self-determination and independence. In the Turkish and in the Bosnian group, a difference between women who got the possibility to receive a good education and women who had no chance to get well trained was detected. As discussed in our theoretical part of the paper this depended mainly on their social network.

Considering gender it has to be said that most of the interviewees work in typical female low skilled jobs. They can mostly be found on a very similar occupational level as their husbands. It appeared, as assumed in the theory part, that most of the women were both, working and responsible for the household and children. Many women reported that they want to make possible a better life for their children especially with respect to their education. It was reported that they see more possibilities in Austria compared to their country of origin. Summing up, their migration had to some respect positive consequences for their emancipation but also led to the creation or persistence of a double burden for the women.

When talking about identity we could see that Turkish and Bosnian women very often talked about their working career by using success stories. They presented themselves as hard working and popular in their social network. Several women reported that they already feel at home in Austria but that the natives remind them regularly that they are different. However, some women pointed out that combining the two cultures is an advantage. One possible reaction of some women was to stress the issue that humanity not nationality and ethnicity should be focused on. Several women reported their fears about xenophobic attacks. However, not only negative elements connected with Austria - most of the interviewees also mentioned several positive elements about this country.

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