

Seeking asylum in Germany

how social stratification affects the length and outcomes of asylum recognition processes

저자 (Authors)	Yuliya Kosyakova, Herbert Brücker
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Seeking asylum in Germany: how social stratification affects the length and outcomes of asylum recognition processes

Yuliya Kosyakova¹ Herbert Brücker²

¹Institute for Employment Research (IAB)

²Institute for Employment Research

In this paper we investigate whether and how the social stratification of refugees and their access to social and economic resources such as ethnic networks determine the length and the outcome of asylum recognition processes. We employ the IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Survey of Refugees in Germany for this purpose. The IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Survey enables us to draw representative inference on the refugees which arrived January of 2013 until the end of January 2016 in Germany, i.e. it covers the recent surge in refugee migration there. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first paper which analyzes systematically how the social stratification of refugees and other economic and social aspects affect the outcome of asylum recognition processes. Our findings indicate that the length and the outcomes of asylum recognition processes are determined by human capital of refugees, their economic and social status in home countries and their access to personal networks in Germany after controlling for origin country fixed effects and individual concerns about persecution in home countries. We thus conclude that the social and economic selectivity of refugees affects the outcome asylum recognition processes.

How does the legal status and the length of asylum procedure affect the labor market integration of refugees in Germany?

Hanna Brenzel¹ Yuliya Kosyakova²

¹Institute for Employment Research²

This study examines the role of the legal status and the lengths of asylum procedure in transition to the first employment among recently arrived refugees in Germany. Particularly due to the unsecure legal status during (lengthy) asylum procedures, successful economic and social integration of refugees

is challenging. Once the asylum request is recognized and granted protection, no legal barriers for the labor market access exist anymore. Although under certain conditions German authorities have granted labor market access to refugees with pending asylum request or to those whose asylum request has been rejected but their stay in Germany is tolerated (*Duldung*), it is questionable how their labor market integration process differ from recognized refugees due to the following reasons: First, potential employers are likely to be less willing to offer jobs or investing in vocational training to refugees with pending or rejected asylum requests due to their uncertain perspectives as well as duration of stay in Germany. Second, refugees by their own, might also be less motivated to gather host country specific human capital such as language proficiency or vocational qualification as long as their asylum request has not been recognized. Third, bureaucratic barriers such as an approval of the Immigration Offices and a comparability test (*Vergleichbarkeitsprüfung*) by the Federal Employment Agency is mandatory for refugees with pending or rejected asylum requests which slows down the recruitment process and might discourage employers to employ not yet recognized refugees. Taking this into account, we expect that asylum recognition should enhance labor market integration but also investment in human capital. However, not only the legal status per se but also the length of asylum procedure may be detrimental for the refugees' labor market integration due to devaluation of human capital and potential depress in working aspirations during the waiting process.

To examine our research question empirically, we draw on the newest data from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Refugee Sample in which the detailed information on the timing of the last request for asylum in Germany and the results of these request as well as the date of the first job were surveyed. Applying duration models, we find that the recognition of the refugees' status increases the transition rate into first employment in Germany. In turn, the effect of the asylum length procedure is non-linear: For a certain length, the transition rate into first employment increases with increasing length of asylum procedure. However, this positive effect diminishes with each additional month within the asylum procedure and after roughly 18 months becomes negative, i.e., the transition rate into first