

Do second-generation Turkish migrants in Germany assimilate into the middle class?

Ethnicities

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Abstract

The understanding of career paths of migrants is crucial for gaining deeper insights into assimilation processes. However, previous studies in Germany have paid little attention to middle-class assimilation and the career sequences of the second generation of migrants. This paper focuses on early employment career patterns of the children of guest workers, both men and women and especially those of Turkish origin, in comparison to native Germans. Using the German Socioeconomic Panel data set, I apply sequence analysis and regression analysis techniques to describe and assess differences in their success of middle-class assimilation in early employment careers. The findings are robust for two unique definitions of holding a middle-class position, and suggest that large differences exist between native-born Germans and second-generation Turks, and especially between second-generation Turkish women and native German women. The results for second-generation Turkish men indicate that their differences can be explained entirely by education. In the case of second-generation Turkish women, the causes for their disadvantage are more complex and include their lower education, language skills, and host-country-specific social capital as well as group-specific penalties for marriage and childbirth.

Keywords

Second generation, migrant, assimilation, labour market, career, middle class, Germany, sequence analysis, life course, minorities

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Introduction

In the last decade, the question of whether the second generation assimilates into different segments of the host society or into the mainstream middle class has received much attention in the academic field. Proponents of new assimilation theory argue that the second generation will slowly experience upward mobility and social integration into mainstream middle-class society, with downward mobility being an exception (Alba and Nee, 2003). On the other hand, proponents of segmented assimilation theory argue that outcomes differ strongly for the second generation, with downward assimilation into the lower ranks of society being one possibility for those with fewer parental resources (Portes et al., 2005; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Portes and Zhou, 1993).

Empirical evidence on labour-market assimilation outcomes of the second generation in Europe suggests that most ethnic groups do assimilate into the middle class. Compared to their parents' generation they have made considerable progress, even though they still experience a wide range of labour market disadvantages (Heath et al., 2008). One group with particularly strong labour market disadvantages are second-generation Turks. As Heath et al. (2008) report for Austria, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands, second-generation Turkish migrants have less access to salariat positions and are at greater risk of unemployment. In Germany, the country with the biggest population of second-generation Turks in Europe, their labour market disadvantages have been found to be particularly severe. For the 1.5 million second-generation Turks in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2012), Algan et al. (2010) find that they have the greatest difficulties finding employment and earn less, and Kalter (2005, 2006) and Granato (2003) find that they have the lowest access to employment and salariat positions and the greatest risk of unemployment. While most of these studies ascribe their labour market disadvantages to their lower educational qualifications, their lower labour market success has also been attributed to lower language skills and lower host-country-specific social capital (Kalter, 2006). However, there is evidence of intergenerational upward mobility and a weakening link between educational and occupational outcomes that work in favour of the second generation (Herweg and Konietzka, 2012; Kalter et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, middle-class assimilation of the second Turkish generation has not been thoroughly tested so far. As most studies use static indicators of labour market success such as employment status, social class, or income, they fail to account for the changing and time-dependent nature of labour market outcomes. For instance, initial advantages may accumulate over the course of the career (DiPrete and Eirich, 2006; Hillmert, 2011), and previous unemployment histories may increase the risk of later unemployment (Bender et al., 2000). By ignoring the various consecutive states of individual employment careers, static measures only partially describe the complexity of ethnic labour market inequalities. What is more, the duration and frequency of unemployment episodes are important dimensions of labour market inequality that have not been assessed so far. Assimilation,

then, must be understood as an ongoing and path-dependent process and a thorough test of new and segmented assimilation theory should therefore consider assimilation outcomes as the result of an ongoing, time-dependent process.

Additionally, previous research on ethnic labour market disadvantages has neglected the effects of family formation and focused primarily on individual resource deficits of migrants. Nonetheless, there is a general consensus that having children or being married affects employment careers (Fouarge et al., 2010; Grunow et al., 2006; Kenjoh, 2005). As people marry or have children, they adjust their career plans to their new situation. The resulting employment patterns differ, depending on the timing of family formation, and social, economic, or cultural circumstances. Considering that social, economic, and cultural differences exist between the second-generation Turks and native-born Germans, it is not surprising that their timing of family formation and the resulting employment patterns differ from the majority of the population. For example, women of Turkish origin have been found to spend more time doing household work than their German peers and to give birth sooner (Huschek et al., 2011; Milewski, 2007; Phalet and Schönplflug, 2001; Steinbach, 2009). Furthermore, there is evidence of ethnic differences regarding the age of marriage and the number of children (De Valk, 2006; Milewski, 2010). Accordingly, as family formation greatly affects employment careers in the long run, the long-term effects of these ethnic differences on labour market assimilation need to be taken into account.

This article aims to thoroughly test the hypothesis of mainstream, middle-class assimilation for second-generation Turkish men and women in Germany by asking whether they permanently hold middle-class positions over the course of their early employment career. Thus, this study overcomes the limitations of previous studies that neglected the temporal dimension of assimilation and fail to account for the complexity of labour-market assimilation outcomes. Also, this study contributes to the existing literature of labour-market assimilation by assessing the effects of family formation on labour-market outcomes. Focusing on the children of Turkish migrants and other classic labour migrant groups in Germany, the following questions are addressed: firstly, what are the main differences between the early labour market careers of second-generation Turkish men and women in terms of employment and wage status when compared to native-born Germans? Secondly, do second-generation Turkish migrants assimilate into middle-class society by pursuing a stable middle-class career to the same extent as do native-born Germans? And thirdly, can any ethnic differences be fully explained by individual resources or do events of family formation explain their employment disadvantages?

In the next section, I outline the major arguments for the labour-market disadvantages of second-generation migrants. In order to address the first research question, I then provide descriptive career characteristics such as the number and duration of episodes in different employment statuses. The question of middle-class assimilation is then addressed by constructing a reference career sequence composed of continuous employment in middle- and higher-wage categories

which is then used to compare it to the labour-market careers of all ethnic group members. As it turns out, second-generation Turkish migrants have rather large impediments to a stable middle-class career, which is mainly due to more frequent and longer unemployment spells as well as, in the case of women, household activities and childcare. In the last step, I test the reasons for these disadvantages using regression analysis. Lower education levels and language skills turn out to be the main causes of their failure to pursue stable middle-class careers.

Accounting for difficulties of middle-class assimilation over the life course

Failure to reach middle-class positions is largely a consequence of low employment and income chances. Two of the most prominent explanations for ethnic employment and income disadvantages in the literature have been educational attainment and language proficiency (Alba and Nee, 1997; Nee and Sanders, 2001; Portes et al., 2009). As proponents of human capital theory have argued, investing in education and language skills increases productivity and competitiveness and, thus, the likelihood of finding employment (Chiswick, 1978). It is further argued that employers cannot profoundly assess the productivity of job candidates for cost reasons and, therefore, rely on educational certificates as a proxy (Arrow, 1973; Spence, 1974). Thus, education increases productivity, with educational certificates serving as important signals to employers about the candidate's productivity. Therefore, it is assumed that higher educational attainment leads to better employment and income chances in the labour market. Indeed, there is ample evidence that little educational success is a risk factor for unemployment (Brauns et al., 1999; Manzoni, 2012; Portes, 1995; Wilke, 2005) and that lower language proficiency has negative effects on access to salariat positions (Kalter, 2006). Moreover, since the German education system is highly standardised and stratified, educational certificates are especially important for a future career (Allmendinger, 1989; Müller et al., 1998). Individuals are channelled into specific occupational tracks with little mobility between occupations and those with little education and no vocational training are at risk of finding themselves in unskilled, manual positions with little security and fewer rewards (Allmendinger and Dietrich, 2003; Gangl, 2002; Gießelmann, 2009). As studies have repeatedly demonstrated, second-generation migrants have lower chances of receiving vocational training (Diehl et al., 2009), lower speaking and reading skills (Dustmann et al., 2011), lower transition rates to the Gymnasium, and lower chances of completing the Abitur (Kristen and Granato, 2007). Therefore, a number of studies have attributed their lower labour market success to their lower human capital and language skills (Buchholz and Kurz, 2008; Granato, 2003; Heath et al., 2008; Kalter, 2006; Kalter et al., 2007; Konietzka and Seibert, 2003). Due to their lower qualifications, I expected to find that second-generation migrants do not reach middle-class positions to the same extent as native-born Germans.

Related to missing skills is another form of minority-specific deficit that has consequences for employment and income chances: lower host-country-specific social capital and strong ties to ethnic networks. Social capital is generally understood as resources that are accessible through social relations. By providing valuable information, social capital is generally considered helpful in finding employment or achieving higher income (Granovetter, 1974). The quality or income of jobs found through social relations depends on the quality of the resources that a person is connected to: persons connected to others with greater income, status, or power are expected to fare better than those who are only poorly connected (Lin, 1999; Montgomery, 1991). For second-generation migrants, this yields two implications: firstly, strong ties to the ethnic community can provide secure jobs and income. However, as these links give access only to the generally limited resources of their own ethnic community, these might hamper assimilation (Wiley, 1967). Secondly, as the value of resources provided by members of the host society is generally greater, the chances for upward mobility are better if one's social network contains bridges to the host society. The available empirical evidence is generally supportive of both arguments. Bridging social capital has a positive effect on employment, status, and income, while the effects of one's own ethnic social contacts are found to be limited, if not negative (Hagan, 1998; Kanas et al., 2012; Lancee, 2010, 2012). In Germany, the composition of the second-generation's social networks is biased towards their ethnic peers (Haug, 2003), and accordingly I expected to find that second-generation migrants are less successful in pursuing a stable middle-class career.

Apart from individual resources, events of family formation greatly influence employment and income chances over the course of the career. The most prominent theory dealing with the effects of marriage and childbirth is commonly referred to as new home economics (Becker, 1981). Based on the principle that spouses specialise in those activities in which they yield comparative advantages over their partner, it is assumed that men usually specialise in market labour activities due to their greater income, while women specialise in household work. Thus, to the benefit of both partners, labour is divided according to human capital and labour-market returns. Empirically, a number of studies have confirmed this hypothesis. For example, after marriage, men increase their labour-market participation due to their new family responsibilities (Manzoni, 2012), while women are more likely to drop out of the labour market (Drobnic et al., 1999). However, this effect has decreased since the 1940s (Buchholz and Grunow, 2007; Grunow et al., 2006) and dropout rather takes place at childbirth. Also in line are findings that higher education increases women's labour-market attachment (Buchholz and Grunow, 2007), that re-entry rates of married mothers after childbirth are lower than those of single mothers (Drasch, 2013), and that fathers have a better labour-market position with higher income than men without children (Pollmann-Schult and Diewald, 2007; Trappe and Rosenfeld, 1998, 2000), while a large share of mothers do not return to the labour market after childbirth (Engelbrech, 1997; Engelbrech and Jungkunst, 2001; Kenjoh, 2005). These findings have implications for

second-generation migrants, as they enter marriage and parenthood at a younger age and are likely to have more children (Milewski, 2007, 2010; Soehl and Yahirun, 2011). Second-generation mothers might therefore leave the labour market sooner and for a longer period of time. On the other hand, second-generation fathers can be expected to increase their labour-market participation and income and, thus, attain middle-class positions more easily than single, second-generation men.

There is an additional reason as to why events of family formation contribute to ethnic, labour-market inequalities. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) model that links individual attitudes with subsequent behaviour, cultural differences that foster traditional role models increase the effects of childbirth and marriage and put pressure on mothers to not join or re-enter the labour market (Steiber and Haas, 2010). In Germany, research suggests that second-generation migrants, especially those of Turkish origin, have lesser egalitarian gender attitudes than native-borns who favour traditional female domain of childcare and routine household tasks (Bernhardt and Goldscheider, 2007; Huschek et al., 2011; Phalet and Schönplflug, 2001). Accordingly, marriage and childbirth should increase the success in reaching a middle-class position for second-generation men and increase ethnic penalties for second-generation women.

Finally, both segmented and new assimilation theory stress the importance of discrimination for assimilation failure (Alba and Nee, 2003; Portes et al., 2005; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). In their view, a hostile and discriminating environment blocks occupational mobility and makes it difficult to translate human capital into appropriate labour-market success. For the labour market, various mechanisms of discrimination have been suggested. In his theory on 'tastes of discrimination', Becker (1957) assumes that employers prefer workers of their own ethnic origin and that foreign workers induce mental costs on employers. According to Becker, these costs cause employers to hire workers of their own ethnicity. However, as firms act in competitive markets, this form of discrimination should decrease in the long run, because such acts decrease the firms' productivity and competitive advantage. Another form of discrimination, statistical discrimination, takes place when the assessment of the job candidate's productivity is associated with high costs. In trying to avoid these costs, employers assess a candidate's productivity according to less expensive ascriptive characteristics like ethnic group membership. Given that the employer considers the minority group's average productivity to be lower than the majority's average productivity, migrant workers whose productivity is above the average are disadvantaged (Aigner and Cain, 1977; England, 1992; Phelps, 1972). However, statistical discrimination explains only individual discrimination. If the minority's average productivity is indeed lower and correctly assumed by employers, then there is no discrepancy between the ethnic group's labour market outcomes and their actual level of productivity. Related to this form of discrimination are stereotypes. Stereotypes cause decision makers to filter information in a way that preserves their expectations and they come into effect in situations where individual characteristics are not easily observable and several demands compete for attention (Darley and Gross, 1983;

Dovidio and Gaertner, 2000; Gilbert and Hixon, 1991). Labour market discrimination has also been conceptualised as a form of class struggle and social closure. Here, existing ethnic inequalities are deliberately reproduced by the majority population by excluding minority members from valuable social resources like well-paid jobs (Roscigno et al., 2007).

Even though discrimination has been an extensively debated issue in migration research and is a possible explanation of middle-class assimilation failure, statistical proof is hard to obtain. This is due mostly to its treatment as a 'residual' within the popular frameworks of status attainment and human capital discrimination. Consequently, this article cannot directly test the discrimination hypothesis and treats discrimination as one of the possible explanations for middle-class assimilation failure if all other considered explanations fail. In the German case, however, studies show that labour-market disadvantages for second-generation migrants can almost completely be explained by their lack of individual resources such as education, language skills, and social capital (Kalter, 2006).

Data and methods

For the purpose of studying middle-class assimilation, I used the German Socioeconomic Panel data set (GSOEP, cp. Wagner et al., 2007). It is particularly suited to the study of career processes of migrants, as it is the only data source in Germany containing monthly employment data since 1984 and over-sampling the German immigrant population. Using the data from 1984 to 2010, I constructed a sample containing individuals with at least 24 months of valid monthly employment data. I excluded those individuals whose labour-market entry month could not be identified due to data limitations. Likewise, I excluded respondents from eastern Germany, since almost no second-generation migrants in the sample live there and the economic conditions are different from the western part. Overall, the sample contained 4618 individuals, including 255 of Turkish origin and 691 children of labour migrants from other countries (see Table 1). In the GSOEP data set, panel attrition is higher among second-generation migrants than among native-

Table 1. Case numbers.

Ethnic group	Gender		Sum
	Male	Female	
German	1751	1921	3672
Second-generation Turks	143	112	255
Second-generation other	363	328	691
Total	2257	2361	4618

Source: GSOEP 1984–2010.

born Germans. However, my own calculations show that panel attrition is not higher among those second-generation migrants with marginal careers and panel attrition should, therefore, not bias second-generation men's disadvantages.¹ The month of entry into the labour market is operationalised as the month respondents leave the education system or military/community service for the first time for more than 3 months. This limitation was set in order to rule out employment spells during vacations and other short-term interruptions of educational sequences. Furthermore, I analyse only the first 6 years after labour market entry because the data does not contain sufficient numbers of second-generation migrants for further years.

In order to assess early career differences, I differentiate between five labour market statuses: employment in the middle- and higher-wage categories, employment in the low-wage category, unemployment, education, and other, while the latter comprises household activities and maternity leave. Dividing employment into two subcategories has the advantage of introducing an additional dimension that distinguishes between the middle and lower ranks of society and, thus, is able to test whether second-generation migrants assimilate into the mainstream middle class. As there is no authoritative income threshold for dividing lower-class positions from higher-class positions, I apply two definitions and assign people to lower-class positions when their gross hourly earnings are: (a) below the median gross hourly earnings; and (b) below two-thirds of the gross hourly median earnings. These definitions emphasise not so much the generated income for consumption but rather the potentially obtainable income and the individual's value in the labour market, which closely corresponds to education and social and cultural capital. Thus, this approach helps to study the labour-market success of men and women independent of their partner and avoids the biases generated by varying working hours, household labour division, and joint taxation of married couples. It has to be noted, however, that women can benefit from their partner's income to some extent in their class attainment and that other measures, like equivalent household incomes, might produce results more in favour of second-generation assimilation.

As a first step, and related to the first question of the main differences in the early employment career between native-born Germans and second-generation migrants, I compare employment sequences of second-generation migrants and native-born Germans with respect to the number and duration of episodes in a particular labour-market status using sequence analysis. This technique also allows for comparing employment sequences with a reference sequence and provides a clear picture of the degree of dissimilarity between the groups and the reference sequence. In the second step and related to the second research question of a stable middle-class career, I compare the labour-market careers of second-generation migrants and native-born Germans to a labour-market career that resembles continuous employment with earnings above: (a) the median; and (b) two-thirds of the median gross hourly earnings. The comparison to the reference sequence is accomplished by generating a distance measure using Elzinga's longest common

subsequence (LCS) metric for categorical time series data (Elzinga, 2006).² This technique assumes that sequences are similar if they have long subsequences in common and captures how well subsequences of one person are matched with sub-sequences of the reference sequence. In more practical terms, the LCS dissimilarity metric answers the question of what the minimum number of states is that have to be removed from both sequences in order to make them completely equal. Thus, the distance measure is 0 for a career that perfectly resembles 6 years of middle-class employment. It must be noted that dissimilarity metrics only serve comparative purposes between groups and have no sociological interpretation. Each month a person is not holding a middle-class position, e.g. is unemployed or has a low-income job, increments the distance measure by two points, whereas missing months increment the distance score by one point. Thus, a worker permanently holding low-income positions or who is unemployed will reach the maximum distance score. By using the LCS metric, I avoided the shortcomings of the standard Optimal Matching or Dijkstra and Taris metric, such as arbitrary operation costs or discarding of states (Aisenbrey and Fasang, 2010). Because a greater degree of dissimilarity can result not only from unemployment or low-wage employment but also from education and household work, and since these statuses increment the distance score to the same extent, a greater distance to the reference sequence cannot be interpreted as downward assimilation. Instead, it must strictly be interpreted as a greater distance to a stable middle-class career. The hypothesis of ethnic difficulties to assimilate into the mainstream middle class is confirmed when the average distance score of the second generation is greater than those of native-born Germans.

The third step, related to the third research question of the causes of middle-class assimilation failure, comprises regression analysis in order to account for the causes of ethnic employment inequalities. Using the distance to continuous employment in middle- and upper-income categories as the dependent variable, I applied Poisson pseudo-maximum-likelihood regression techniques. This model is designed to deal with zero-inflated dependent variables, as is the case with the distance measure used here, and does not have to specify the full distribution of the dependent variable (Burger et al., 2009; Martinez-Zarzoso, 2013; Silva and Tenreiro, 2006). Missing data were dealt with by the bootstrap expectation-maximization (EM) multiple imputation algorithm (Honaker et al., 2011). All analyses were conducted on the basis of monthly employment data.

Ethnic group membership was assessed on the basis of the nationality and place of birth of the respondents as well as their parents. I included individuals in the second generation if they migrated to Germany themselves before the age of 6 from one of the major guest-worker-sending countries (i.e. Turkey, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and ex-Yugoslavia), or if the respondent was born in Germany and at least one parent migrated to Germany and was born in one of the guest-worker-sending countries or claims to hold their nationality. Unfortunately, the data contained only sufficient case numbers for Turks. Therefore, second-generation migrants of Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Greek, and ex-Yugoslavian origin

were put into one category. Even though a more detailed categorisation would be desirable, I am able to separate the Turkish group that fares worst in the labour market from those of European origin that have better labour-market outcomes and are more similar to native-born Germans (Kalter et al., 2007). The resulting categories, then, are 'native-born Germans', 'second-generation Turks', and 'second-generation Others'. The combination of such diverse groups as second-generation Iberians, Greeks, and Italians does not permit general conclusions about their labour-market outcomes and assimilation progress. In this study, this group is used exclusively to compare the second-Turkish-generation's labour-market success to the average labour-market success of non-Turkish, second-generation migrants in order to gain an additional perspective on their relative assimilation success. First-generation migrants were not included in the analysis, since their career trajectories are too different from those of the second generation. Human capital was measured as educational attainment and language proficiency. For educational attainment, I used the CASMIN scheme (Brauns et al., 2003) and took the respondent's highest educational degree before labour-market entry. Furthermore, I use inadequate education as the reference category and include a category for missing data. Vocational training is contained in several of the original CASMIN categories. Therefore, and due to its distinguished importance in the German labour market, I constructed a dummy variable for vocational training. This helps to attain a clearer hierarchical order of the other educational categories and separate the effect of vocational training. After recoding the CASMIN scheme, I attained five categories: inadequate education (no school certificate), lower secondary school degree, middle school degree, maturity degree allowing for tertiary education, and tertiary degree. Regarding language skills, I merged the self-reported proficiency in written and spoken German into one variable for parsimony reasons. For native-born Germans, no data for language skills were given and I assumed that native speakers were perfectly fluent in spoken and written German. To measure the amount of host-country-specific social capital, I used the percentage of German friends among the three closest friends. The percentage was measured before labour-market entry in order to avoid causality problems. In case data before labour-market entry were not available, I used data closest to this point of time. One shortcoming of this approach is that changes in the ethnic composition of social networks over time could not be considered. However, data limitations did not allow for a more precise approach. Furthermore, historical macroeconomic conditions vary considerably and affect the employment and income chances of each labour-market entry cohort. Because the share of labour-market entrants varies between the ethnic groups for a given time period and is likely to bias estimation results, I created labour-market entry cohorts to account for these differences. At last, I constructed variables for time married and the number of children. Marriage was measured in terms of the percentage of time respondents were married during the observation period. As with marriage, the percentage of time in which the respondents had at least one or two children was measured.

To rule out cases where respondents still lived at home, only children in the household up to age 15 were considered.

The struggle to attain stable middle-class positions

Table 2 presents the main descriptive differences in the early labour-market careers of second-generation migrants and native-born Germans. The results reveal that the careers of second-generation Turkish men and women differ greatly from those of native-born Germans, while there are almost no differences for other second-generation migrants. Second-generation Turkish men are more frequently, and for a longer period of time unemployed, while their frequency and time spent in

Table 2. Description of the employment careers of second-generation migrants and native-born Germans.

Ethnic Group	Second Else		Second Turkish		Germans	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Sex						
Nr. of diff states	0.83	0.87	0.87	0.97	0.85	0.86
Duration in Employment						
Median	16.37	7.73**	14.39	5.42**	17.62	10.62
Median two-thirds	32.08	22.21	30.04	19.07*	32.09	25.15
Employment low						
Median	25.37	29.00	25.25	30.03	24.02	28.91
Median two-thirds	9.67	14.51	9.60	16.38	9.55	14.38
Unemployment	4.78	4.02	8.91**	5.49*	3.87	3.35
Education	6.96	5.78	5.34	2.79*	6.86	4.72
Other	2.58	7.63	1.97*	14.88**	3.42	9.08
Nr. of episodes in Employment						
Median	0.63	0.48	0.55*	0.39*	0.69	0.52
Median two-thirds	1.03	0.83	0.97	0.71*	1.08	0.89
Employment low						
Median	0.71	0.75	0.71	0.90	0.68	0.8
Median two-thirds	0.30	0.40	0.29	0.56*	0.30	0.43
Unemployment	0.57	0.40	0.68*	0.66*	0.50	0.43
Education	0.36	0.36	0.27**	0.18*	0.40	0.31
Other	0.25	0.52	0.21	0.68*	0.30	0.48

Notes: *Significance <.05; **Significance <.01.

Source: GSOEP 1984–2010.

employment and low-wage employment are lower than for native-born Germans. However, only their lower number of middle-class employment spells at the median income threshold are significantly lower than those of native-born German men. Second-generation Turkish women are less frequently, and for a shorter period of time, in middle-class employment positions and education, but have longer and more frequent episodes of unemployment and other activities, e.g. household labour and maternity leave. Also, at the lower two-thirds median income threshold, they are more often employed in the low-wage sector during their early career. For non-Turkish, second-generation migrants, no significant differences were found, indicating that the average, second-generation migrants of non-Turkish origin have similar employment patterns to native-born Germans.

In the next step, I calculated the distances to a stable middle-class career based on the LCS metric. The distances themselves have no immediate sociological interpretation. Rather, they represent an abstract degree of dissimilarity to a stable middle-class career which can be used to compare between-group differences. The cumulative distance distributions are represented in Figures 1 and 2. Depending on the income threshold for middle-class positions, roughly 10% (median income threshold) or 18% (two-thirds median income threshold) of all considered groups (including native-born Germans) have a distance of zero to a stable middle-class career, indicating that among all these groups the same share of men is pursuing a stable middle-class career. Naturally, as the median income threshold excludes more individuals from middle-class positions than the lower

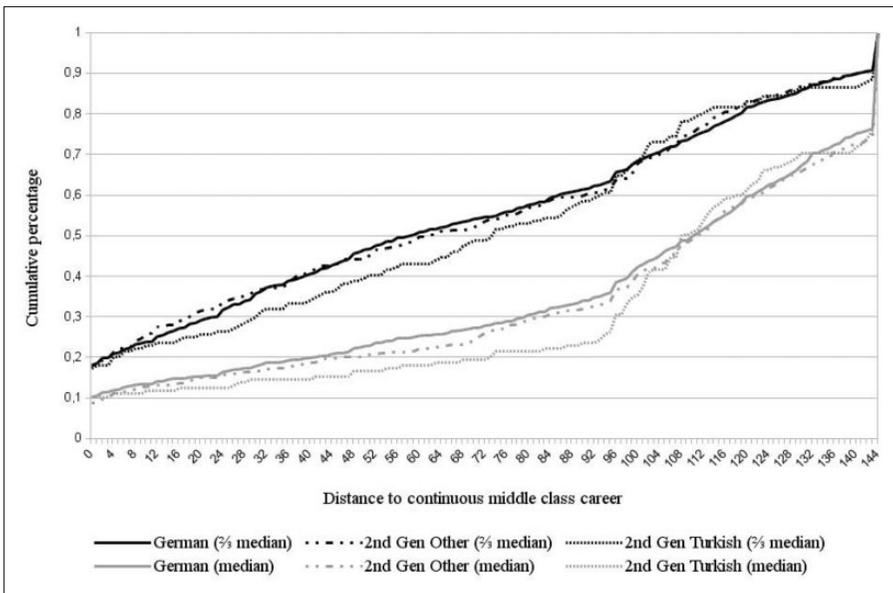


Figure 1. Distances to a continuous middle-class career for men.

threshold, this threshold produces greater distances. Regardless of the income threshold, the distances for the average, second-generation non-Turkish men are similar to native-born German men, while the distances for second-generation Turkish men are greater: their share of those with only small distances to a stable middle-class career is lower and their share of men with greater distances to a stable middle-class career is greater than in other groups. Thus, perfect middle-class assimilation occurs for the same proportion of second-generation Turkish and non-Turkish men as for native-born German men. For the most part, however, second-generation Turkish men have greater difficulties in pursuing a stable middle-class career than any other group.

For women, Figure 2 shows disadvantages for all ethnic groups regardless of the chosen middle-class criteria. The proportion of second-generation women having a stable middle-class career is lower compared to native-born German women. Likewise, the proportion of those with careers that closely resemble a stable middle-class career is lower for second-generation women, and this finding holds true especially for second-generation Turkish women. Accordingly, the second-generation Turkish women's share of those with careers rather distant from a stable middle-class career is the highest. Most strikingly, a large proportion of second-generation Turkish women pursue a career that has no similarities to a stable middle-class career at all, as can be seen at the maximum distance in Figure 2. Thus, second-generation Turkish women especially, have greater

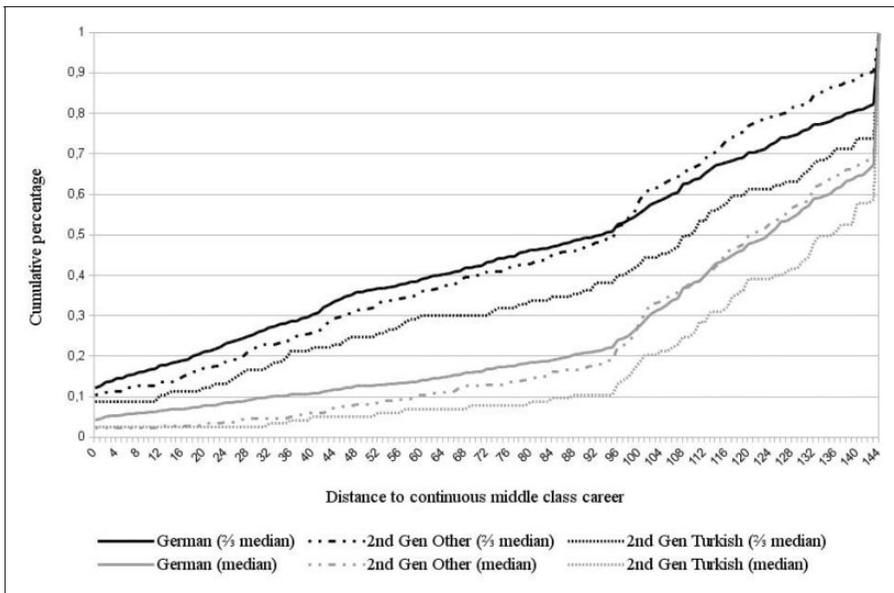


Figure 2. Distances to a continuous middle-class career for women.

difficulties in assimilating into the middle class, and their success in middle-class assimilation is lower than the average success of second-generation non-Turkish women.

So far, analysis has shown that the second Turkish generation has difficulties in pursuing a stable middle-class career. In the next step, I look into the causes of these difficulties. Regression analysis for both middle-class definitions is carried out in nine different models to test the arguments derived earlier in the theory section. Table 3 presents the results for men and the median income threshold middle-class definition. The first model simply displays the group differences with no further variables controlled for. According to the results obtained so far, second-generation Turkish men have a greater average distance to a stable middle-class career than native-born German men, while average, second-generation non-Turkish men have only small disadvantages. The second model takes macro-economic conditions into account by controlling for the labour-market entry cohort. Compared to the first model, ethnic disadvantages grow, caused by the larger proportion of second-generation migrants in the sample entering the labour market in the economically more thriving period between 1990 and 2000, while there is a greater share of native-born Germans entering the labour market in a period of little economic growth in the years after 2000. Models 3 and 4 account for human capital differences between the ethnic groups. Better education in general enhances the chances, although maturity certificates without vocational training have a negative effect on career chances. Most importantly, controlling for education accounts for all second-generation men's disadvantages in middle-class assimilation. Likewise, controlling for language skills significantly lowers second-generation Turkish men's disadvantages, while there is a minor increase in ethnic disadvantages when the proportion of native German friends among the best three friends is considered in model 5. Models 6–9 take events of family formation into account. The proportion of time having children or being married during the observation period have a decreasing effect on the distance to a stable middle-class career, but hardly affect second-generation men's disadvantages. In order to test whether children or marriage has different effects on labour-market outcomes for second-generation migrants and native-born Germans, models 7 and 9 include interaction terms for ethnicity, marriage, and children. Interestingly, having children has a slightly greater decreasing effect on the distance score for second-generation Turkish men than for native-born German men and being married decreases second-generation men's distance to a continuous middle-class career more than it does for native-born German men. The results are largely confirmed by the results based on the two-thirds median income threshold for middle-class positions (summarised in Table 5). Nevertheless, there are two notable differences: firstly, applying the two-thirds median income threshold increases second-generation men's disadvantages in pursuing a stable middle-class career compared to native-born German men because the share of second-generation men with lower income is greater than the share of native-born German men. And secondly, the second-generation men's ability to pursue a stable middle-class career is less affected by their lower

Table 3. Men, regression of distance to continuous middle-class employment, median income threshold.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Intercept	4.55**	4.54**	4.63**	5.13**	5.15**	5.25**	5.30**	5.16**	5.14**
<i>Ethnic group (German)</i>									
Second Turkish	0.06**	0.08**	0.01	-0.07**	-0.05**	-0.04	0.08	-0.05**	-0.04*
Second Else	0.02**	0.03**	-0.02**	-0.06**	-0.06**	-0.06**	-0.07**	-0.07**	-0.06**
<i>Cohorts (1985)</i>									
Cohort 1990s		-0.11**	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.10**	-0.09**
Cohort 1995s		0.00	0.04**	0.04**	0.04**	0.05**	0.05**	0.05**	0.06**
Cohort 2000s		0.06**	0.09**	0.09**	0.09**	0.09**	0.09**	0.08**	0.08**
Cohort 2005s		0.02**	0.04**	0.04**	0.04**	0.03**	0.03**	0.02**	0.02**
<i>Education (Inadequate)</i>									
Missing			-0.18**	-0.17**	-0.17**	-0.17**	-0.17**	-0.16**	-0.15**
Lower secondary			0.04**	0.05**	0.05**	0.05**	0.05**	0.04**	-0.05**
Middle school			0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02
Maturity			0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01
Tertiary			-0.47**	-0.46**	-0.46**	-0.46**	-0.46**	-0.41**	-0.42
Vocational training			-0.02**	-0.02**	-0.02**	-0.02**	-0.02**	0.00	0.00
Language skills				-0.10**	-0.11**	-0.13**	-0.14**	-0.11**	-0.11**
German friends					0.01*	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Children						-0.08*	-0.07		
Children × Turkish							-0.19		
Children × Else							0.01		
Marriage								-0.19	-0.17**
Marriage × Turkish									-0.11**
Marriage × Else									-0.18**
N	2257	2257	2257	2257	2257	2257	2257	2257	2257

Notes: *Significance <.05; **Significance <.01.

Source: GSOEP 1984–2010.

language proficiency, most likely because then attaining a middle-class position depends less on employment in better paid jobs which require better language skills.

Table 4 presents the regression results based on the median income middle-class definition for women. The results show significantly greater distances to a stable middle-class career for all second-generation women when no further variables are controlled for. In contrast to men, and even though more second-generation women were entering the labour market in the more favourable period between 1990 and 2000, ethnic disadvantages remain constant when the labour-market entry cohort is added to the model. When controlling for educational differences between the ethnic groups, model 3 indicates that better education has a decreasing effect on the distance score. However, the educational level explains the greater distances only for the combined groups of second-generation non-Turkish women. The disadvantages of second-generation Turkish women remain significant even when, in addition to education, language proficiency, the share of native-born German friends, and their time being married or having children are taken into account. In fact, second-generation Turkish women's disadvantages only become insignificant when an interaction term is added to the model that assumes that marriage or having children puts additional disadvantages on second Turkish generation women compared to native-born German women (models 7, 9). Indeed, model 9 shows that marriage increases second-generation Turkish women's distance to a stable middle-class career more than for native-born German women. Lowering the income threshold of having a middle-class position to two-thirds median income increases the disadvantages for second-generation women because their share at the bottom of the income hierarchy is larger than that of native-born German women (Table 5). Furthermore, language proficiency has a much stronger effect on second-generation Turkish women's disadvantages and, in combination with education, reduces them to an insignificant level (model 4).

In sum, second-generation migrants have greater difficulties in pursuing stable middle-class careers than native-born Germans, and the difficulties for second-generation Turkish men and women exceed those of their average, non-Turkish second-generation counterparts. The greater difficulties of second-generation Turkish men can be completely attributed to their lower educational qualifications. Accordingly, the hypothesis about the effects of education can be confirmed for men, while the hypotheses about the role of host-country-specific social capital and the effects of family formation on ethnic disadvantages must be rejected. For second-generation Turkish men, the importance of language proficiency for their disadvantages depends on the chosen income threshold. At the median income threshold, language proficiency significantly reduces ethnic disadvantages, while the effect is less pronounced at the lower income threshold. In the case of women, their lower education, language proficiency, and host-country-specific social capital reduce their disadvantages for pursuing a stable middle-class career, but only explain them at the lower-income threshold level. At the higher median-income threshold, the specific effects of marriage and childbirth on

Table 4. Women, regression of distance to continuous middle-class employment, median income threshold.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Intercept	4.70**	4.80**	4.78**	4.89**	4.90**	4.86**	4.86**	4.90**	4.90**
<i>Ethnic group (German)</i>									
Second Turkish	0.10**	0.09**	0.06**	0.05**	0.03*	0.03*	-0.03	0.03*	0.01
Second Else	0.03**	0.03**	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.00
<i>Cohorts (1985)</i>									
Cohort 1990s	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.08**	-0.08**	-0.08**	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.08**	-0.08**
Cohort 1995s	-0.08**	-0.08**	-0.07**	-0.07**	-0.07**	-0.07**	-0.07**	-0.07**	-0.07**
Cohort 2000s	-0.14**	-0.14**	-0.11**	-0.11**	-0.11**	-0.11**	-0.11**	-0.11**	-0.11**
Cohort 2005s	-0.22**	-0.22**	-0.19**	-0.19**	-0.19**	-0.19**	-0.19**	-0.19**	-0.20**
<i>Education (Inadequate)</i>									
Missing			-0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
Lower secondary			0.05**	0.06**	0.06**	0.06**	0.06**	0.06**	0.06**
Middle school			0.02	0.03*	0.03*	0.04**	0.04**	0.03*	0.03*
Maturity			0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.11**	0.11**	0.10**	0.10**
Tertiary			-0.20**	-0.19**	-0.19**	-0.19**	-0.19**	-0.19**	-0.19**
Vocational training			-0.03**	-0.03**	-0.03**	-0.03**	-0.03**	-0.03**	-0.03**
Language skills			-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02
German friends					-0.01	-0.01	-0.01*	-0.01	-0.01
Children						0.03**	0.04**		
Children × Turkish							0.09		
Children × Else							-0.05*		
Marriage								-0.01	0.00
Marriage × Turkish									0.11**
Marriage × Else									-0.05**
N	2361		2361	2361	2361	2361	2361	2361	2361

Notes: *Significance <.05; **Significance <.01.

Source: GSOEP 1984–2010.

Table 5. Coefficients of ethnic differences in distance to continuous middle-class employment using two-thirds median income middle-class definitions.

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Men	Second Turkish	0.06**	0.14**	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.07*	0.18*	0.05*	0.03
	Second Else	0.00	0.04**	-0.04**	-0.03*	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.03*	0.00
Women	Second Turkish	0.17**	0.18**	0.07**	-0.01	-0.04	-0.05	-0.13*	-0.02	-0.06**
	Second Else	0.05**	0.06**	0.00	-0.03**	-0.05**	-0.04*	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03

Notes: *Significance <.05; **Significance <.01.

Source: GSOEP 1984–2010.

second-generation Turkish women have to be taken into account to explain their disadvantages. While prior research suggested that these differences can be caused by their more traditional gender role values, the data are not sufficient to look into the actual causes in more detail. Furthermore, even though discrimination can lower second-generation migrants' middle-class assimilation, the results demonstrate that discrimination is not a major factor. However, the methodological approach of this study does not permit a straightforward test of discrimination and, therefore, does not allow any conclusions about negative effects of discrimination on middle-class assimilation. Furthermore, discrimination may be important at earlier stages of the life course, e.g. in school, and affect second-generation migrants' assimilation outcomes indirectly.

Discussion and conclusion

In Europe, second-generation Turks experience strong labour-market disadvantages and Germany hosts their largest community of 1.5 million. Starting from the assumptions of new assimilation theory that ethnic minorities assimilate into the mainstream middle-class society in the long run, I asked whether second-generation Turkish men and women in Germany pursue stable middle-class careers. To answer this question, I used a life-course approach and attained a measure of dissimilarity to a stable middle-class career, which I then used to compare the second Turkish generation to native-born Germans.

Overall, the findings show that the second generation in Germany has greater difficulties in pursuing a stable middle-class career than native-born Germans, and this holds true in particular for second-generation Turkish men and women. Most notably, second-generation Turkish men experience longer and more frequent unemployment episodes than native-born Germans, while second-generation Turkish women also have less frequent and shorter middle-class employment spells and a much higher propensity to spend time in the household or on maternal leave. Evidence that the second Turkish generation assimilates into the low-wage sector can only be found for second-generation Turkish women who enter the low-wage sector more often than native-born German women. Accordingly, the

employment careers of second-generation Turkish men and women resemble a stable middle-class career much less than those of native-born Germans.

The main reasons for the second-generation Turkish men's struggle to pursue a stable middle-class career are their lower educational qualifications and lower rates of vocational training. Together these explain all second-generation Turkish men's disadvantages in pursuing a stable middle-class career. This result underscores the role of human capital and confirms the results of previous studies (Buchholz and Kurz, 2008; Granato, 2003; Heath et al., 2008; Kalter, 2006; Kalter et al., 2007; Konietzka and Seibert, 2003). In addition, the results indicate that their lower host-country-specific social capital contributes to their disadvantages. The results for second-generation women are mixed. Their lower education, language proficiency, and host-country-specific social capital contribute to their labour-market disadvantages, but only explain them at a rather narrow definition of low income. With a less narrow definition of low income, marriage and childbirth have a greater negative effect on second-generation Turkish women than on native-born German women. Together with their lower education, lower language proficiency, and lower share of native-born German friends, these additional disadvantages account for second-generation Turkish women's greater difficulties in pursuing a stable middle-class career. Although the underlying causes remain unclear, recent findings suggest that less egalitarian gender role models might be at work (Huschek et al., 2011). Discrimination is not directly tested in this study, and even though it is likely to impair second generation's chances of middle-class assimilation, the results show that discrimination is not a major factor and that arguments are not necessary to account for second-generation Turks' difficulties in assimilating into the middle class.

This study adds to existing knowledge in two notable ways: firstly, the second Turkish generation's lower degree of assimilation into the middle class holds true for their entire early employment career and is not just a temporary phenomenon that occurs at some stage of their employment career. Thus, this study generalises and consolidates previous findings on second-generation Turks' assimilation progress. Secondly, second-generation Turkish women have much greater difficulty than men in assimilating into the middle class and the causal mechanisms differ between men and women. In particular, this study adds evidence that married, second-generation Turkish women have greater difficulty in assimilating into the middle class than married, native-born German women. Thereby, this study highlights the need for future research to address minority women's assimilation progress separately and with special attention to family-related events.

While this study raises concerns about permanent downward assimilation, it does not compare ethnic inequalities over generations and covers only the first 6 years after labour-market entry. Whether the second Turkish generation's lower degree of assimilation into the middle class is indeed permanent, or whether their situation improves as they grow older and new cohorts enter the labour market, remains to be answered by future research. A further limitation of this study concerns the choice of middle-class assimilation as a reference for assimilation success.

While this choice is perfectly in line with new assimilation theory, a critical test of segmented assimilation theory also requires a test for downward assimilation. However, the applied method does not permit straight conclusions about downward assimilation because the distance to a stable middle-class career also grows when respondents enter employment statuses such as education where no income is generated, but that do not necessarily point to downward assimilation. Even so, sequence analysis is perfectly suited to address downward assimilation by choosing a reference career that includes only unemployment episodes or employment episodes with little income. Finally, it was not possible to obtain a more origin-country-specific picture of second-generation migrants. Although I was able to analyse the most disadvantaged ethnic group in Germany, those of Turkish origin, separately, no distinction could be made between other second-generation groups such as Italians, Greeks, or ex-Yugoslavs. Other second-generation groups might perform quite differently from what was displayed in the broad 'other second generation' category, and empirical evidence suggests that those of Spanish origin are, indeed, more successful (Kalter et al., 2007).

Even though this study provides insights into labour-market careers and assesses ethnic labour market inequalities from a life-course perspective, a number of questions regarding intra-generational assimilation remain open. Most notably, downward assimilation of the second generation in Germany remains a matter little researched. Similarly, little is known about the downward and upward mobility risks of the second generation over the course of their career; therefore, we know little about whether ethnic labour-market inequalities grow or decline over the course of the second-generation's employment career. As intergenerational assimilation and career progress are intertwined topics, the study of these questions would contribute greatly to our knowledge on the mechanisms of assimilation.

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Notes

1. Kroh (2013) shows that panel attrition for GSOEP sample B, the sample that contains most second-generation migrants, is indeed greater than attrition in other samples that contain native-born Germans. Own calculations for the subsample used in this study confirm his findings. They also show that respondents with marginal careers do not have a greater risk of leaving the panel, and the effect of having a marginal career on the risk of leaving the panel does not vary between ethnic groups.
2. Gaps were excluded from all sequences. The inclusion of gaps adds a new state to the sequence, which automatically results in an overestimation of distances, whereas the

exclusion of gaps reduces the sequence length. The previous and resulting average sequence lengths are distributed equally across all ethnic categories, so that between-group differences in distance scores are not affected.

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