

# The effect of housework on migrants' and native-born individuals' wages

Tanja Fendel\*

2018

## Abstract

While the low earning potential of female migrants—relative to the earnings of their spouses—may often lead to an uneven division of housework tasks, housework may also have negative effects on earnings, thereby worsening the labour market performance of female migrants. This study examines the effects of housework on the wages of migrants and native-born individuals based on data obtained from the German Socio-Economic Panel from 2000-2015 and conducts instrument variable estimations to account for simultaneity between wages and housework. Significant negative and comparable high effects of housework on wages are found for native-born and migrant women. For migrants, effects are higher for those living with a partner than for those not living with a partner. In contrast to the effects on native-born men which are comparable to those on native-born women, the effects on migrant men are lower than those on migrant women or are not significant also when controlling for threshold effects. An Oaxaca-Blinder wage decomposition further displays that gender differences in housework for those in coupled households explain almost three times as much of the explained share of the gender wage gap for migrants as for native-born individuals. Hence, an assumed main reason for the higher wage gap among migrants than among native-born individuals is the highly uneven division of time spent on housework tasks among migrants. Ensuring that female migrants with inferior labour market prospects have access to education is important to prevent this uneven division within a household.

**JEL-Klassifikation:** D13, J16, F22

**Keywords:** household production, wages, female migrant's labor market integration, instrument variables estimation

\*) Institute for Employment Research (IAB)  
Regensburgerstr. 104, 90478 Nürnberg, Germany  
Tanja.Fendel@iab.de