AT A GLANCE

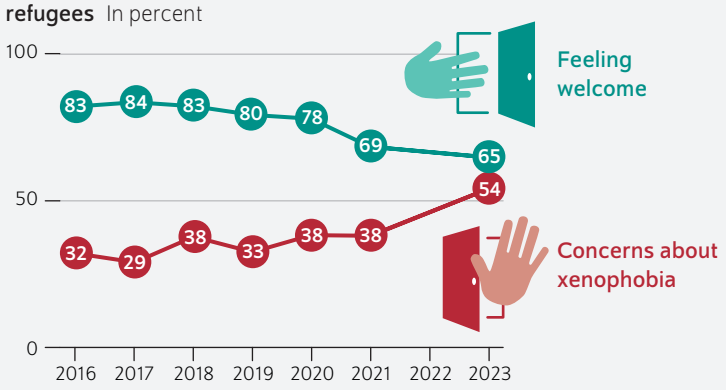
Refugees are feeling increasingly unwelcome and perceiving discrimination in the labor and housing markets

By Philippa Cumming and Ellen Heidinger

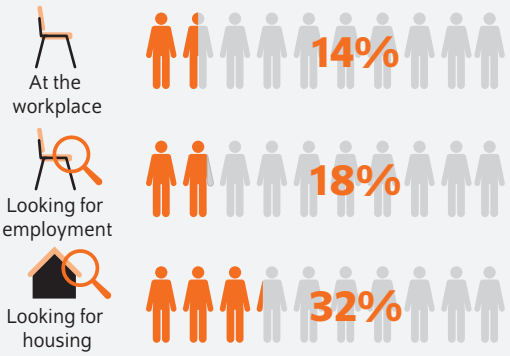
- General feeling of feeling welcome among refugees has been declining steadily since 2018, while their concerns about xenophobia have been rising since 2019
- Refugees feel discriminated against most often due to their ethnic origin, being from a foreign country, or racism
- 28 percent of refugees report perceived discrimination during the housing search
- Refugee men living in eastern Germany perceive discrimination at work and during the job and housing searchers more frequently than in the west
- Transparent application and contract-awarding processes in the labor and housing markets should be further developed

Refugees are feeling increasingly unwelcome and becoming more concerned about xenophobia

Feeling welcome and concerns about xenophobia among refugees In percent



Perceived discrimination among refugees and other immigrants, 2022 In percent



Sources: Authors' calculations using SOEP data (SOEP v40), weighted.

Notes: Questions about feeling welcome and concerns about xenophobia were not included in the 2022 survey. Questions about perceived discrimination were last asked in 2022.

FROM THE AUTHORS

"In addition to offers from the government, such as orientation courses or language classes, transparent application and contract-awarding processes are needed. Anonymous applications and clear selection criteria can help reduce discrimination and promote equal opportunity."

— Ellen Heidinger —

MEDIA

Audio Interview with Ellen Heidinger (in German)
www.diw.de/mediathek

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ABSTRACT

The sentiment among refugees in Germany has changed significantly: Using Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) data from 2016 to 2023, it can be seen that refugees have been feeling increasingly unwelcome since 2018, while their concerns about xenophobia have grown since 2019. In addition, cross-sectional data from 2022 refugees' subjective experiences of discrimination in the workplace and when searching for jobs or housing. Refugees cite their ethnic origin as the main reason for perceived discrimination, followed by religion and appearance. Almost one third of refugees perceive discrimination when looking for a place to live. The perception of discrimination varies depending on a number of factors, including sociodemographic characteristics. For instance, refugee men with an intermediate level of education perceive less discrimination at work than their counterparts without a degree. Refugee women with an intermediate level of education are more likely to report discrimination when searching for housing more frequently than refugee women without a degree. In addition, refugee men living in eastern Germany perceive more discrimination across all the life domains examined than refugee men living in western Germany. To counteract discrimination, transparent processes for applications and awarding contracts in the labor and housing markets should be enhanced.

The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (*Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes,* ADS) received a record-breaking 11,405 reports of discrimination in 2024. Of these, 43 percent pertained to racial discrimination. Since 2019, the amount of counseling provided by the ADS has more than tripled.[1]

This Weekly Report analyzes how welcome refugees feel and how their concerns about xenophobia developed between 2016 and 2023 using Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) data,[2] the integrated IAB-SOEP migration sample as well as the integrated IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees.[3] We also use data on perceived discrimination and its causes from 2022; this information was most recently collected in that year. This Weekly Report investigates how refugees perceive discrimination in three key areas of their lives: in the workplace, seeking employment, and searching for housing. For the first time, the data enables a differentiated examination of perceived discrimination based on multiple characteristics (see Box). This allows us to examine multiple forms of discrimination for a variety of reasons and in different contexts within a representative sample of refugees in Germany.

This Weekly Report uses multiple samples for the analysis. Data from all eight available survey waves (2016 to 2023) of the IAB-SOEP migration sample and the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees are used to investigate how welcome refugees feel subjectively as well as their concerns about xenophobia over time. A total of 29,338 observations were evaluated. Cross-sectional data from 2022 is used to examine how current perceptions of discrimination differ according

1 Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, *Jahresbericht 2024 der Unabhängigen Bundesbeauftragte für Antidiskriminierung* (2025) (in German; available online. Accessed on June 9, 2025. This applies to all other online sources in this report unless stated otherwise).

2 Jan Goebel et al., "The German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP)," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik 239, no. 2 (2019): 345–360 (in German); Miriam Gauer and Cornelia Kristen,* "A guide to using the Socio-Economic Panel for research on individuals of immigrant origin," *SOEP Survey Papers Series C* no. 1332 (2023) (available online).

3 This study was conducted by the Socio-Economic Panel at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin) in cooperation with the Institute for Employment Research (*Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung*, IAB) and the research center of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF-FZ). Herbert Brücker et al., "Integration and Migration Dynamics: The Research Potentials of a Large-Scale Longitudinal Household Study of Refugees in Germany," *European Sociological Review* (forthcoming); Martin Kroh et al., "Das Studiendesign der IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung von Geflüchteten," *SOEP Survey Papers*, no. 365 (2016) (in German; available online).

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Box

Data and methodology

These analyses are based on data from the SOEP as well as the integrated IAB-SOEP migration sample and the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey. The Refugee Survey includes data on people who came to Germany as asylum seekers between January 1, 2013, and August 31, 2022. Information on the living situation of the asylum seekers, such as German language skills, level of education, employment status, and social participation, is collected annually.

People from Turkey and Ukraine were excluded from the longitudinal analysis because they were overrepresented in the 2023 sample. The following two questions were examined from 2016 to 2021 and in 2023:

> *How welcome do you feel in Germany today? (Completely, mostly, in some respects, hardly, or not at all) And: Are you concerned about xenophobia and hostility toward foreigners in Germany? (Very concerned, somewhat concerned, not concerned)*

For the first time, the 2022 survey included a set of questions on perceived multiple forms of discrimination, highlighting experiences of discrimination based on all characteristics specified in the General Equal Treatment Act (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz*, AGG) as well as other characteristics.[1] The central question is:

> *In the past 12 months, have you personally felt discriminated against due to your ethnicity, for racist reasons, due to your gender, your religion or beliefs, a disability, your age, or your sexual orientation?*

Subsequently, the perception of discrimination in twelve different areas of life was assessed. The present analysis focuses on three areas: the workplace, the search for employment or training (hereafter abbreviated as the job search), or the search for an apartment or housing (hereafter abbreviated as the housing search).

Additionally, respondents could indicate the reasons for perceived discrimination. Eleven characteristics were available to choose from: six that are protected by law in accordance with the AGG in addition to five additional categories. Multiple answers were possible. The following three characteristics were mentioned most frequently and are included in the analysis:

1. Ethnic origin, such as language, name, or culture; racist reasons; or origin from another country
2. Religion or beliefs
3. Appearance (e.g., body weight, clothing style, and tattoos)

The refugees surveyed in 2022 about perceived discrimination are characterized by the following sociodemographic factors (weighted): Thirty-three percent of the respondents are women. The average age is 34 (standard deviation eleven years). The main countries of origin are Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. On average, refugees from these three countries have been in Germany for 6.6 years (standard deviation of one year). Around 58 percent are employed , and 89 percent have at least intermediate German language skills. Other immigrants who came to Germany from 2013 onward but did not apply for asylum were used as a comparison group. Fifty-three percent of these respondents are women. On average, they are 35 years old (standard deviation of ten years). They have been in Germany for an average of 5.4 years and the main countries of origin are Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria. 81 percent of these respondents are employed.

To analyze the probability of perceived discrimination based on German language skills, level of education, and place of residence, separate binary logistic regression models were estimated for each of the three life domains examined. The analyses were carried out separately for the two populations studied (refugees and other immigrants), and then within each group by gender. This resulted in twelve models being considered in total. Since no data on German language proficiency was collected for non-asylum-seeking immigrants in 2022, this characteristic is not examined for this group. The samples in the workplace and job-search domains are limited to people aged 18 to 65 (see Table). The analyses controlled for age, residence status, and length of stay, as well as for employment status for the housing search.

Table

Refugees and other immigrants surveyed about experiences of discrimination

In absolute numbers

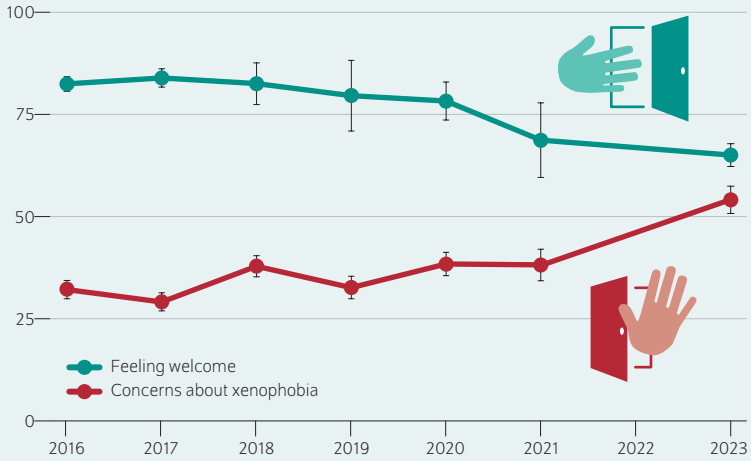
	Refugees		Other immigrants	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
At work	196	733	1115	1284
Job search	198	394	498	465
Housing search	246	359	596	716

Source: Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP v39).

1 David Richter et al., "Pretest eines Fragenmoduls zu subjektiven Diskriminierungserfahrungen in der SOEP-Innovationsstichprobe 2020," *SOEP Survey Papers no. 1332 Series B* (2021) (in German; available online).

Figure 1

Feeling welcome and concerns about xenophobia among refugees
In percent



Notes: Concerns about xenophobia are identified if respondents indicate they have "Some concerns" or "Major concerns." Feeling welcome is identified if the respondents answer "Completely," "Mostly ," or "In some respects". Neither question was included in the 2022 survey. The vertical lines indicate the 95 percent confidence interval. This means that in 95 percent of cases, the actual value lies within this interval. Adjusted for duration of stay in Germany. N(concerns) = 29,338, N(feeling welcome) = 12,031.

Sources: Authors' calculations using SOEP data (SOEP v40), weighted.

While the general sense of feeling welcome among refugees has steadily declined since 2018, concerns about xenophobia have increased since 2019.

to selected sociodemographic characteristics, specifically gender, German skills, level of education, and place of residence. The sample includes 2,424 refugees. To contextualize the results, the situation of refugees is compared with that of other immigrants who have also been in Germany since 2013 but did not apply for asylum. The main countries of origin are Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria.

Refugees are feeling more unwelcome and concerns about xenophobia are increasing

Refugees are becoming increasingly concerned about xenophobic attitudes in Germany (Figure 1). In 2019, nearly one third of respondents reported having some or major concerns about xenophobia. This figure increased slightly to 38 percent in 2020 and remained stable throughout 2021. By 2023, around 54 percent of respondents reported concerns about xenophobia, marking the highest figure recorded during the study. At the same time, refugees' subjective sense of feeling welcome in Germany has been declining since 2018. For instance, 83 percent of respondents said they felt "entirely," "mostly," or "in some respects" welcome in 2016. One year earlier, then-chancellor Angela Merkel famously declared "*Wir schaffen das*" (We can do this) in reference to the integration of refugees. The figure value declined to 80 percent by 2019, falling further still to 65 percent by 2023.

This decline was accompanied by a major public debate on the topic of migrants and refugees. In 2023, several migration policy measures were discussed and passed, including reforms to the legal grounds for forced repatriation[4] as well as an extension of the benefits period as laid out in the Benefits for Asylum Seekers Act (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*).[5] Moreover, as is the case today, 2023 saw a high level of group-specific enmity and increased visibility of anti-immigration positions in political discourse.[6] These developments could contribute to refugees feeling less welcome and exacerbate concerns about xenophobia. Furthermore, subjectively perceived discrimination can have a negative impact on feelings of belonging as well the integration process.[7]

Refugees perceive discrimination differently

Discrimination is one of the main barriers to integration.[8] Here, a distinction is made between objective and subjective discrimination. Objective discrimination is defined as proof of unequal treatment, whereas subjective discrimination describes a person's perception of discriminatory events.[9] Objective discrimination is difficult to measure because it is often hidden or occurs in subtle ways. Therefore, it is all the more important to consider subjective perceptions of discrimination in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the situation. Studies show that people who experience discrimination are less likely to use healthcare services,[10] avoid contact with the authorities,[11] and have less trust in institutions.[12] Thus, perceived discrimination can create real limitations in daily life and can negatively affect integration. However, the extent to which discrimination is perceived

4 Deutscher Bundestag, "Gesetzentwurf der Bundesregierung: Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Verbesserung der Rückführung (Rückführungsverbesserungsgesetz)," *Bundestags-Drucksache* 563/23 (2023) (in German; available online).

5 At the end of February 2024, the maximum exclusion period for refugees from health care services under the *Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz* (Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act, AsylbLG) was increased from 18 to 36 months. The AsylbLG determines the amount and type of social benefits that asylum seekers are entitled to before they can receive the citizen's benefit (*Bürgergeld*) and other social benefits. These changes were introduced in a bill in November 2023. Deutscher Bundestag, "Gesetzentwurf der Fraktion CDU/CSU. Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Weiterentwicklung des Asylbewerberleistungsgesetzes (Asylbewerberleistungsweiterentwicklungsgesetz – AsylbLWG)," *Bundestags-Drucksache* 20/9309 (2023) (in German; available online).

6 Andreas Zick und Nico Mokros, "Rechtsextreme Einstellungen in der Mitte," in *Die distanzierte Mitte. Rechtsextreme und Demokratiegefährdende Einstellungen in Deutschland 2022/23* (2023) (in German; available online); Merih Ateş et al., *Rassismus und seine Symptome. Bericht des Nationalen Diskriminierungs- und Rassismusmonitors* (2023) (in German; available online).

7 Lena Walther et al., "Mental Health and Integration: A Qualitative Study on the Struggles of Recently Arrived Refugees in Germany," *Frontiers in Public Health* 9 (2021): 576481.

8 Daniel Diekmann and Karim Fereidooni, "Diskriminierungs- und Rassismuserfahrungen geflüchteter Menschen in Deutschland: Ein Forschungsüberblick," *Zeitschrift für Flüchtlingsforschung* 3, no. 2 (2019: 343–360 (in German).

9 Steffen Beigang et al., *Diskriminierungserfahrungen in Deutschland: Ergebnisse einer Repräsentativ- und einer Betroffenenbefragung* (Nomos: 2017) (in German; available online).

10 Katja Kajikhina et al., "Rassismus und Diskriminirung im Kontext gesundheitlicher Ungleichheit – ein narratives Review," *Bundesgesundheitsblatt* 66 (2023): 1099–1108 (in German).

11 Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, *Diskriminierung in Deutschland: Erkenntnisse und Empfehlungen. Fünfter Gemeinsamer Bericht der Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes und der in ihrem Zuständigkeitsbereich betroffenen Beauftragten der Bundesregierung und des Deutschen Bundestages* (2024) (in German; available online).

12 Sebastian Lutterbach and Andreas Beelmann, "How refugees' stereotypes toward host society members predict acculturation orientations: The role of perceived discrimination," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021): 612427.

varies. A 2023 meta-analysis of 42 individual studies on the correlation between integration and perceived discrimination shows that certain groups of people report perceived discrimination more frequently.[13] For example, higher levels of education and better German language skills are more frequently associated with perceived discrimination.

This Weekly Report focuses on perceived discrimination in three areas: the workplace, during the job search, and during the housing search. These areas are particularly relevant for refugees as they are key to achieving economic stability, physical security, and societal participation.

Only respondents who indicated that they are employed or searching for a job or housing were asked about perceived discrimination in these areas. As the questions refer to the past twelve months, it is possible that respondents searched for work and gained workplace experience during this period. In the 12 months leading up to the 2022 survey, 65 percent of the refugees who came to Germany since 2013 were employed. By comparison, 86 percent other immigrants were employed. In this comparison group, 90 percent of the men and 83 percent of the women were employed. The situation was different for refugees: While 82 percent of the men were employed, only 33 percent of the women were. Although the share of employed refugee women doubled between 2013 and 2019, they still face obstacles when it comes to integrating into the labor market, including lower levels of education, less work experience, barriers to language acquisition, and traditional gender roles.[14]

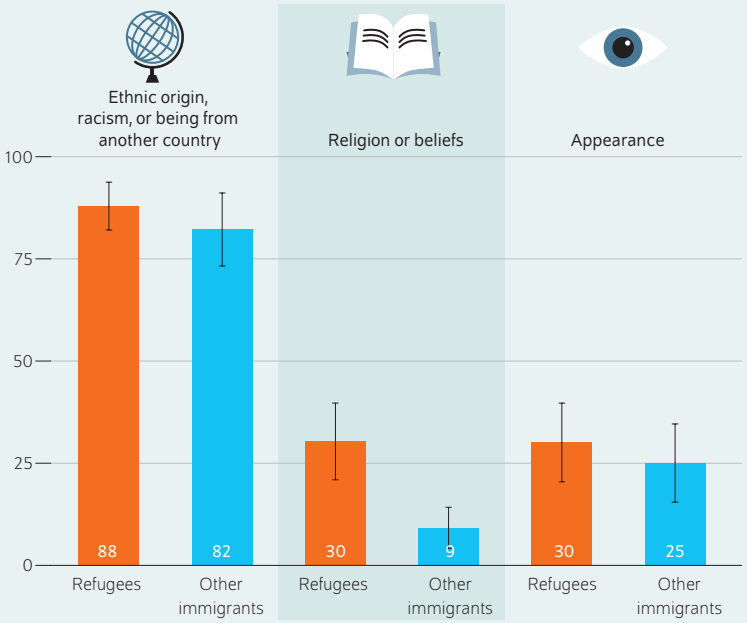
Compared to other immigrants (30 percent), a higher share of refugees were looking for housing (40 percent). In both groups, men were slightly more likely than women to be searching for housing. Forty-two percent of refugee men were searching for housing compared to 37 percent of refugee women, and among other immigrants, 33 percent of men and 27 percent of women were searching for housing.

Refugees feel particularly discriminated against because of their ethnic origin

Both refugees and other immigrants most frequently cite their ethnicity, racism, or being from another country as grounds for discrimination (Figure 2). Around 88 percent of refugees who perceive discrimination identify ethnicity (i.e., language, name, or culture) as the reason. Among other immigrants, this figure is 82 percent. Refugees cite their religion or beliefs as a reason for discrimination (30 percent) significantly more often than other immigrants (nine percent). This suggests that religious or ideological differences may play a particular role among refugees. Thirty percent of refugees and almost 25 percent of other immigrants report experiencing discrimination based on their appearance, including physical characteristics such as weight, clothing style, or tattoos.

Figure 2

Reasons for perceived discrimination among refugees and other immigrants, 2022
In percent



Notes: Multiple responses possible. Ethnic origin includes aspects such as language, name, and culture. Appearance refers to characteristics such as weight, clothing style, and tattoos. Only people who have perceived discrimination are included. The vertical lines indicate the 95-percent confidence interval. This means that in 95 percent of cases, the actual value lies within this interval. N(refugees) = 812, N(other refugees) = 2,072.

Sources: Authors' calculations using SOEP data (SOEP v39) from 2022, weighted.

Respondents often perceive discrimination due to their ethnic origin, being from another country, or racism.

People tend to categorize others into certain groups based on their ethnicity, religion, or appearance. When negative characteristics are attributed to these groups, this can manifest as attitudes, judgments, and discriminatory behavior.

Refugees perceive discrimination most frequently when searching for housing

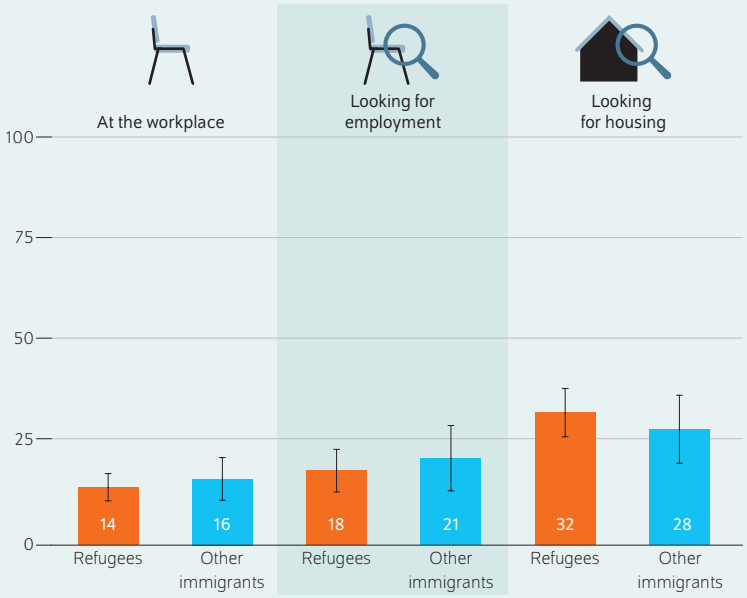
Examining perceived discrimination in the workplace and during job and housing searches reveals minimal differences between refugees and other immigrants (Figure 3). Fourteen percent of refugees and 16 percent of other immigrants report perceived discrimination in the workplace. When searching for work, 18 percent of refugees as well as 21 percent of other immigrants feel discriminated against. The highest levels of perceived discrimination occur when searching for housing: Almost one in three people in both groups report perceived discrimination in the housing market (32 percent of refugees and 28 percent of other immigrants).

13 Merlin Schaeffer and Judith Kas, "The Integration Paradox: A Review and Meta-Analysis of the Complex Relationship Between Integration and Reports of Discrimination," *International Migration Review* 58, no. 3 (2023): 1384–1409.

14 Adriana Cardozo, "Employment opportunities of refugee women in Germany are improving despite starting at a disadvantage," *DIW Weekly Report* no. 19/20 (2023): 134–140 (available online).

Figure 3

Perceived discrimination among refugees and other immigrants, 2022
In percent



Notes: Only includes people who are employed, looking for employment, and looking for housing. Looking for work includes looking for an apprentice position, and looking for housing includes looking for either an apartment or house. The vertical lines indicate the 95-percent confidence interval. This means that in 95 percent of cases, the actual value lies within this interval. N(refugees, workplace) = 1,247, N(other refugees, workplace) = 2,434, N(refugees, job search) = 836, N(other refugees, job search) = 993, N(refugees, housing search) = 822, N(other refugees, housing search) = 1,366.

Sources: Authors' calculations using SOEP data (SOEP v39) from 2022, weighted.

Both refugees and other immigrants often perceive discrimination in the housing market.

The higher rate of perceived discrimination during the housing search may be due to various structural and social factors. The housing market in Germany is characterized by a high share of rental properties, rising rent prices, and a generally tense situation, especially in metropolitan areas.[15] Private landlords have considerable leeway to make decisions based on their individual preferences. There may be various reasons for their decision to reject non-German applicants, whether refugees or other immigrants. These reasons may be based on clear selection criteria, such as ensuring rent is paid, but they may also be based on prejudice or discriminatory behavior.

Processes that lack transparency are difficult to classify accurately. It is often unclear to individuals whether objective criteria, such as their financial circumstances, were the main reason for rejection, or if discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, or appearance played a role.[16] Regardless of the reason, individuals who are rejected encounter a barrier to accessing housing. This perception of discrimination is supported by evidence of actual discrimination, as a meta study shows: In almost all 71 field experiences examined, ethnic discrimination in the housing market was proven, especially in Germany.[17]

The effect of different levels of education on perceived discrimination varies

We use regression models to investigate whether perceived discrimination varies according to specific characteristics. For this purpose, a total of 12 models were estimated (information box). Separate models were calculated for refugee men and women as well as for immigrant men and women, for each of the three life dimensions (Figure 4). The following characteristics are investigated: German language proficiency (on a scale from one (very good) to five (none at all)),[18] level of education (no degree, medium level of education/secondary school qualification, or high level of education), and residence in eastern or western Germany.

German skills are not related to perceived discrimination in any of the three life dimensions. However, differences emerge in terms of workplace and job search when it comes to educational attainment. Refugee men with a medium level of education (meaning at least a lower secondary qualification (*Sekundarabschluss I*)) perceive discrimination in the workplace less frequently than those with no qualifications, by 6.3 percentage points.[19]

In the housing search, it is evident that refugee women with a medium level of education are more likely to report perceived discrimination than those with no qualifications (a difference of 27 percentage points). This effect is not evident among refugee men or other immigrant men and women. Therefore, these results cannot solely be attributed to housing market discrimination being perceived differently by men and women. Nor can the integration paradox explain these results. Nevertheless, people with different levels of education have different daily routines and activities, which offer varying potential for experiencing and perceiving discrimination. Moreover, the higher the level of education, the more likely it is that experienced discrimination is perceived

15 Bundesministerium für Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung und Bauwesen, *Fakten zum Wohnungsmarkt – Aktuelle Entwicklungen auf dem Deutschen Wohnungsmarkt* (2025) (in German; available online).

16 Thomas Hinz, Katrin Ausgpurg, and Andreas Schneck, "Diskriminierung auf dem Wohnungsmarkt," in: *Handbuch Diskriminierung* (Wiesbaden: 2022): 1–21 (in German).

17 Nine of the 71 field experiments were conducted in Germany and showed that the extent of discrimination in the housing market is especially high here. Katrin Augspurg, Andreas Schneck, and Thomas Hinz, "Closed doors everywhere? A meta-analysis of field experiments on ethnic discrimination in rental housing markets," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45, no. 1 (2019): 95–114.

18 German language proficiency is only assessed for refugees, as other immigrants were not surveyed on this topic in 2022. German language ability is based on self-assessments. The average of respondents' self-assessed ability to speak, write, and read in German is calculated on a scale of one (very good) to five (no skills at all) and centered on the average of the four sub-populations.

19 A similar result was found for women. However, the confidence intervals (horizontal bars indicating uncertainty)for interpreting the results, are very large for refugee women in the workplace. This is presumably because there are fewer employed women in the sample (N=196).

Figure 4

Probability of perceived discrimination among refugee and other immigrant men and women according to selected characteristics

In percentage points compared to reference group

Notes: Average marginal effects of 12 binary logistic regression models. Limited to individuals who were employed or were looking for employment or housing. Control variables are age, length of stay, residence status, and employment status when looking for housing. The horizontal lines indicate the 95-percent confidence interval. This means that in 95 percent of cases, the actual value lies within this interval. The narrower the interval, the more accurate the estimated value. If the confidence interval does not touch or cross the zero line, the coefficients are statistically significant at the five-percent level at least. German language skills were only surveyed among refugees and are based on self-assessments. These are calculated as an average of the respondents' self-assessments of their speaking, writing, and reading skills on a scale from one (very good) to five (non-existent). The results are centered on the mean value for each of the four subpopulations. Positive values indicate above-average German language skills, while negative values indicate below-average German language skills. The place of residence was coded as follows: −1 = western Germany and +1 = eastern Germany. Negative values correspond to western Germany and positive values to eastern Germany. Looking for work also includes looking for an apprentice position. Looking for housing includes looking for either an apartment or a house. For the sample sizes per model, see the Box.

Legend: Refugee women with a medium level of education are 27 percentage points more likely to perceive discrimination during the housing search than women without a degree.

Source: Authors' calculations using Socio-Economic Panel data (SOEP v39), 2022.

Refugee men living in eastern Germany perceive discrimination at work and during the job and housing searches more frequently refugee men in the west.

as such.[20] However, further investigation is needed to establish why this pattern is observed among refugee women and not men.

Refugees in eastern Germany perceive discrimination more often

In the 12 months prior to the 2022 survey, refugees in western Germany were more likely to be employed than those in eastern Germany (66 compared to 61 percent). Conversely, they were searching for employment and housing less frequently

20 Jan-Philip Steinmann, "The paradox of integration. Why do higher educated new immigrants perceive more discrimination in Germany?" *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45, no. 9 (2019): 1377–1400.

(35 and 39 percent, respectively, compared to 43 and 45 percent in eastern Germany). Refugee men and women who are employed in the east are more likely to report perceived discrimination in the workplace than those in the west. The difference in likelihood is around 6.5 percentage points for both genders. Refugee men living in the east who are looking for a job report experiencing discrimination more frequently (six percentage points). Refugee men looking for housing in the east are also more likely to experience discrimination (6.7 percentage points). However, almost none of the characteristics analyzed can explain the differences in perceived discrimination among other immigrants in the three life dimensions despite the considerably larger samples sizes. For this group, level of education and place of residence are not generally associated with the likelihood of perceiving discrimination. Only immigrant men in eastern Germany report less perceived discrimination when searching for housing than their counterparts in the west. This suggests that other factors are relevant, such as selection processes that cause other immigrants to move to certain regions. Moreover, context-specific factors, such as the local housing and labor markets, also play a role.

Conclusion: More protection from discrimination on the labor and housing markets is needed

The analyses show that refugees have felt increasingly less welcome since 2018, while their concerns about xenophobia have grown considerably. Furthermore, it is evident that refugees perceive discrimination in the workplace, when seeking employment, and particularly when searching for housing. In this area, three out of ten refugees report perceived discrimination. They cite reasons mainly related to their ethnic origin, including differences in language, names, culture, religion, or outward characteristics, such as clothing and appearance.

The extent of perceived discrimination varies according to the life dimensions examined as well as socio-demographic characteristics. For example, refugee men with secondary education perceive less discrimination in the workplace than those without a degree. In contrast, refugee women with an intermediate level of education report discrimination during the housing search more frequently than their counterparts without a degree. In addition, the data shows that refugee men in eastern Germany perceive more discrimination across all areas of life than refugee men in western Germany.

This is especially pronounced in the workplace. Although the analyses do not allow for direct conclusions about the causes of the higher perceived discrimination against refugees in the eastern German labor market, several explanations are plausible. On the one hand, structural conditions could play a role, which are characterized by a generally more tense employment situation. This results in refugees facing stronger competition and higher levels of workplace tensions. Refugees may also experience higher levels of objective discrimination in eastern Germany. To analyze these dynamics more precisely, future studies should take into account the ethnic composition of residential areas and the social contacts of refugees.

This Weekly Report clearly shows that perceived discrimination must be examined separately for different life dimensions. Characteristics such as gender, German language skills, level of education, and place of residence must be considered. Perceived discrimination can provide valuable information about existing problems and potential discrimination in important areas of life. Among the groups evaluated here, it is unclear to what extent the differences in perceived discrimination are due to varying degrees of actual discrimination or to differences in how people interpret and perceive situations.[21] However, field experiments have shown that the extent of discrimination in the German housing market is high compared to other European countries.[22] A meta-study of field experiments in Europe also shows that job applicants with a migrant background experience discrimination in the labor market during the initial stages of the application process.[23] Moreover, a recently published study found objective discrimination in the search for apprenticeships in Germany.[24] Therefore, measures against discrimination in the labor and housing markets should be consistently implemented and strengthened. This includes transparent processes for allocating applications and contracts as well as enabling fair and understandable decisions. Anonymous applications and clear selection criteria can help prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunity. Furthermore, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency recommends including citizenship as an additional protected characteristic in the AGG.[25] Finally, the expansion of independent legal advice centers for people who have experienced discrimination in the areas of employment and housing should be further promoted. This will provide people who have experienced discrimination access to low-threshold support and effective opportunities to enforce their rights.

21 Claudia Diehl, Elisabeth Liebau, and Peter Mühlau, "How Often Have You Felt Disadvantaged? Explained Perceived Discrimination," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 71 (2021): 1–24 (in German).

22 Augspurg et al., "Closed doors everywhere?"

23 Eva Zschirnt and Didier Ruedin, "Ethnic discrimination in hiring decisions: a meta-analysis of correspondence tests 1990–2015," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 7 (2016): 1115–1134.

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