

## Female Refugees in Germany - Recreational Habits and Social Contacts

Paiva Lareiro, Patricia de; Schwarzmüller, Julia

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Kurzbericht / abridged report

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Paiva Lareiro, P. d., & Schwarzmüller, J. (2021). *Female Refugees in Germany - Recreational Habits and Social Contacts*. (BAMF-Brief Analysis, 2-2021). Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) Forschungszentrum Migration, Integration und Asyl (FZ). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-77934-9>

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# BAMF-Brief Analysis

Edition 02|2021 of the Brief Analyses of the Migration, Integration and Asylum  
Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

2 | 2021

## Female Refugees in Germany – Recreational Habits and Social Contacts

by Cristina de Paiva Lareiro

in collaboration with Julia Schwarzmüller

### AT A GLANCE

- Female refugees appear to differ from men with a refugee background in various participatory dimensions. They demonstrate a lower level of formal education on average, are much less likely to be employed and have weaker German language skills.
- Analysis of data from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey has shown that the majority of women who have experienced forced migration arrived in a family setting and also primarily live in this setting in Germany. They spend a large portion of their day caring for children and performing other household activities.
- Accordingly, they participate less regularly than refugee men in public life. They are far less likely to attend sporting/cultural events and restaurants and hardly ever actively take part in sporting activities.
- When compared with women of a different background or without a migration background, the differences are less pronounced. This is especially the case with restaurant visits and excursions/short journeys.
- On average, there was an overall increase in the recreational activities of female refugees between 2017 and 2018.
- Female refugees also maintain less contact with Germans than male refugees. Multivariate analyses show that determining influencing factors here include their differing socio-structural living conditions, such as less frequent employment, weaker German language skills and more infrequent recreational activities. However, there is potential in concentrating on the family environment to enable contact between female refugees and the native population.

## Introduction

Social participation in Germany usually poses more difficulties for female refugees than for male refugees. They are, on average, less educated than male refugees (Brücker et al. 2020b), less likely to attend language courses and improve their German language skills comparatively more slowly (Tissot et al. 2019; Fendel 2019). They are also less likely to pursue employment (Fendel 2019) and have less contact to Germans (Siegert 2019). In this respect, the question arises as to whether and to what extent these factors can lead to refugee women also participating less in social life than refugee men.

How the everyday life of refugee women in Germany is shaped and to what extent they actually participate in public life has hardly been studied so far. With this in mind, the brief analysis focuses on precisely these issues. In the following, a brief overview of the current state of research on the structural and cultural integration of refugee women will be given as an introduction to the framework conditions for participation in social life. Subsequently, the everyday life and the various dimensions of social participation of refugee women in comparison to male refugees will be examined in more detail, in order to conclude with the question of the extent to which refugee women have contact with the host society.

The research findings described here are based on data from the representative IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey from the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 (see Box 1). It relates to individuals from the age of 17 who travelled to Germany between 2013 and 2016 and applied for asylum, and to members of their households (Brücker et al. 2017). As in the population, about one-third of the 2018 refugee respondents are women. Twelve per cent of study participants were still going through asylum proceedings at the time of the 2018 survey. Seventy seven per cent were granted protection status and 5% were in possession of a temporary suspension of deportation. In addition, Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) data (Göbel et al. 2019) from the years 2018 and 2013 was consulted for the individual analyses, and comparisons made with individuals with and without a migration background.<sup>1</sup>

1 As per the definition of the SOEP, the term “individuals with a migration background” covers individuals born in another country who travelled to Germany themselves (individuals with their own migration background), individuals born in Germany whose parents (or at least one parent) were not born in Germany and travelled to Germany and/or individuals who did not hold German citizenship from birth (individuals without their own migration background). Refugees who arrived from 2013 onwards are not included in the category “Individuals with a migration

## Conditions of participation for female and male refugees

The different conditions of participation for male and female refugees upon their arrival in the Federal Republic of Germany and the status of their structural integration in 2018 will be presented and compared in the following. Our own calculations and a review of the available literature will form the basis of this.

### Arrival and family situation

Male and female refugees already differ with regard to the circumstances of their arrival in Germany. On average, the women interviewed for the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey had been living in Germany for a shorter period of time (34 months) than the male refugees (37 months). Furthermore, most female refugees arrived in Germany with their family (women 79%; men 37%), while most male refugees arrived on their own (women 15%; men 51%).

There are significant differences in the reasons for choosing Germany as a destination country. The most important reason for men and women was the safeguarding of human rights and the feeling of being welcome in Germany. Male refugees were slightly more likely to have chosen Germany for the respect for human rights associated with Germany (women 62%; men 72%) as well as the feeling of being welcome (women 39%; men 45%) than female refugees. There were clear differences between the sexes regarding the motives in fleeing to Germany with regard to family members in Germany: female refugees were more than twice as likely than male refugees to state that they had come to Germany because of family members (women 31%; men 16%).

On average, female refugees are approximately three years older than male refugees (women 33 years old; men 30 years old). There are also differences between the sexes with regard to family situation: female refugees are predominantly married (women 71%; men 39%) and more likely to live in a household with children (women 70%; men 30%). In particular, they are more than twice as likely to live with small children under the age of four in a shared household (women 34%; men 15%). Accordingly, the overarching impression from the literature is that they are more likely to assume childcare duties and take care of other house-

background”, but rather in the category “Refugees”. Despite this, individual refugees who had already arrived before 2013 may be found in the category of individuals with a migration background.

## INFOBOX: BASIS OF DATA: THE IAB-BAMF-SOEP REFUGEE SURVEY AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PANEL

The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey is an annual, federal longitudinal survey of individuals who arrived in Germany from 1 January 2013 up until and including 31 December 2016 and applied for asylum, regardless of the progress and result of the asylum proceedings. It therefore covers both individuals in the middle of the asylum proceedings (asylum applicants) and those who have already been granted protected status. Individuals whose asylum applications have been refused but whose departure or deportation has been suspended for various reasons and who have therefore been granted a temporary suspension of deportation were also surveyed, as well as members of these individuals' households. When statistical weighting methods are used, the results gathered based on the data are representative for the households in the above defined population (for a detailed description of the sampling procedure, see Kroh et al. 2016; Jacobsen et al. 2019).

The comprehensive survey programme (Kroh et al. 2016) allows comprehensive analysis of refugees'

living conditions. It is therefore possible to take into account a range of relevant characteristics in the analyses, such as date of arrival, sex, age, country of origin, level of education and residence status. All data is based on self-reporting by the refugees. The questionnaire was translated into seven languages (English, Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Urdu, Kurmanji, Tigrinya).

To contextualise the results of female refugees' socio-cultural participation, **Socio-Economical Panel (SOEP)** data was also consulted. The SOEP is a survey conducted annually since 1984, the organisation of which is handled by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) (Göbel et al. 2019). The SOEP covers approximately 30,000 respondents from almost 11,000 households in Germany and represents a statistical population of German households. The data contains information on a range of topics such as income, gainful employment, health and education.

hold tasks than male refugees (Brücker et al. 2019; Tissot et al. 2019; Brücker et al. 2020a).

### Education, German skills and participation in the employment market

The structural integration of new immigrants (Esser 2001), therefore their participation and positioning in the education sector and employment market of the host country, is of particular relevance for the progress of the overall integration process. Structural integration is accompanied both by economic independence, such as when individuals can live on the salary from their employment, and by securing future prospects, such as acquiring school-leaving certificates which qualify individuals for vocational training or academic studies. It also provides access to social spaces in which contact to mainstream society is enabled, along with the opportunity to apply newly-acquired language skills.

Although almost all female and male refugees had no knowledge of German when they arrived, nearly half of male refugees (49%) stated in 2018 that they had good or very good knowledge of German in the areas

reading, writing and speaking.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, this figure was only 33% for female refugees.

This is also related to female refugees being less likely to participate in language courses than male refugees (de Paiva Lareiro et al. 2020). It is also revealed that women are less likely to be in gainful employment, on average (Brücker et al. 2020a). They also have a lower level of formal education than male refugees. In particular, they are less likely to have had schooling beyond an elementary level (Brücker et al. 2020a; Brücker et al. 2017; Brücker et al. 2016; Worbs et al. 2016; Worbs/ Bund 2016; Kalkum et al. 2019; Kosyakova/Brenzel 2018).

Family circumstances play a major role, both in the development of German skills and in gainful employment. As described above, female refugees are more likely to live in a family setting and be heavily involved in the care of (small) children than male refugees. This means that female refugees are less likely to be

<sup>2</sup> The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey records German language skills in the form of a self-assessment of reading, writing and speaking levels. The respondents can answer using a scale of 1 ("Very good") to 5 ("Not at all"). The self-assessment of German skills strongly correlates with the assessment of the interviewer (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.708).

in a favourable position with regard to opportunity structures for language acquisition and their own employment (Tissot et al. 2019; Brücker et al. 2019). Although there is a negative correlation between gainful employment and the presence of children in their households for male refugees, their employment market participation is much higher regardless of whether or not they are parents (Fendel 2019; Kalkum et al. 2019; Worbs/Baraulina 2017; Worbs et al. 2016; Brücker et al. 2020a).

### Everyday life for female refugees

The conditions of participation for female refugees are therefore less favourable than those of male refugees, although participation in society comprises a wide spectrum of spheres. Along with structural aspects, there is day-to-day life, recreational habits, participation in public life and social contact.

Figure 1 first of all illuminates the average time spent on various selected daily activities on a working day, each a comparison between male and female refugees and the control groups - individuals with and without a migration background. Female refugees spend a large portion of their day completing household tasks. They spend approximately 4.2 hours on average caring for children, three hours on errands and another 2.9 hours on housework. Employment (0.5 hours per day), but also hobbies and other recreational activities (0.8 hours per day), play a secondary role in the women's daily lives. This corresponds to the findings on the employment market participation and family situation of refugee women discussed above, whereby the majority of women who live in a household with (small) children do not (yet) pursue employment.

Generally speaking, it can be said that women with a background of forced migration manage their time on working days differently from the control groups observed. In a descending order, after employment, women with and without a migration background spend approximately two hours per day on housework, hobbies and recreational activities; 1.2 or 1.7 hours are spent by women without a migration background and women with a migration background on childcare, respectively, and approximately one hour per day is spent on running errands. At approximately three hours per day, childcare dominates the time of refugee women, followed by errands and housework.

Male refugees also spend a smaller amount of their time pursuing employment than men with and without a migration background, as well as on recreational activities and hobbies, but a larger amount of their

time on running errands, childcare and housework. They spend much less time on the latter activities than female refugees, however. These differences between men and women, i.e. a considerably stronger time emphasis on childcare and household activities and less of a focus on employment for women, can be seen in all control groups and therefore align with the existing literature on gender-specific division of labour and time management (Haberkern 2007). However, employment takes up a significantly higher proportion of time in the daily lives of women with and without an immigrant background than it does for refugee women.

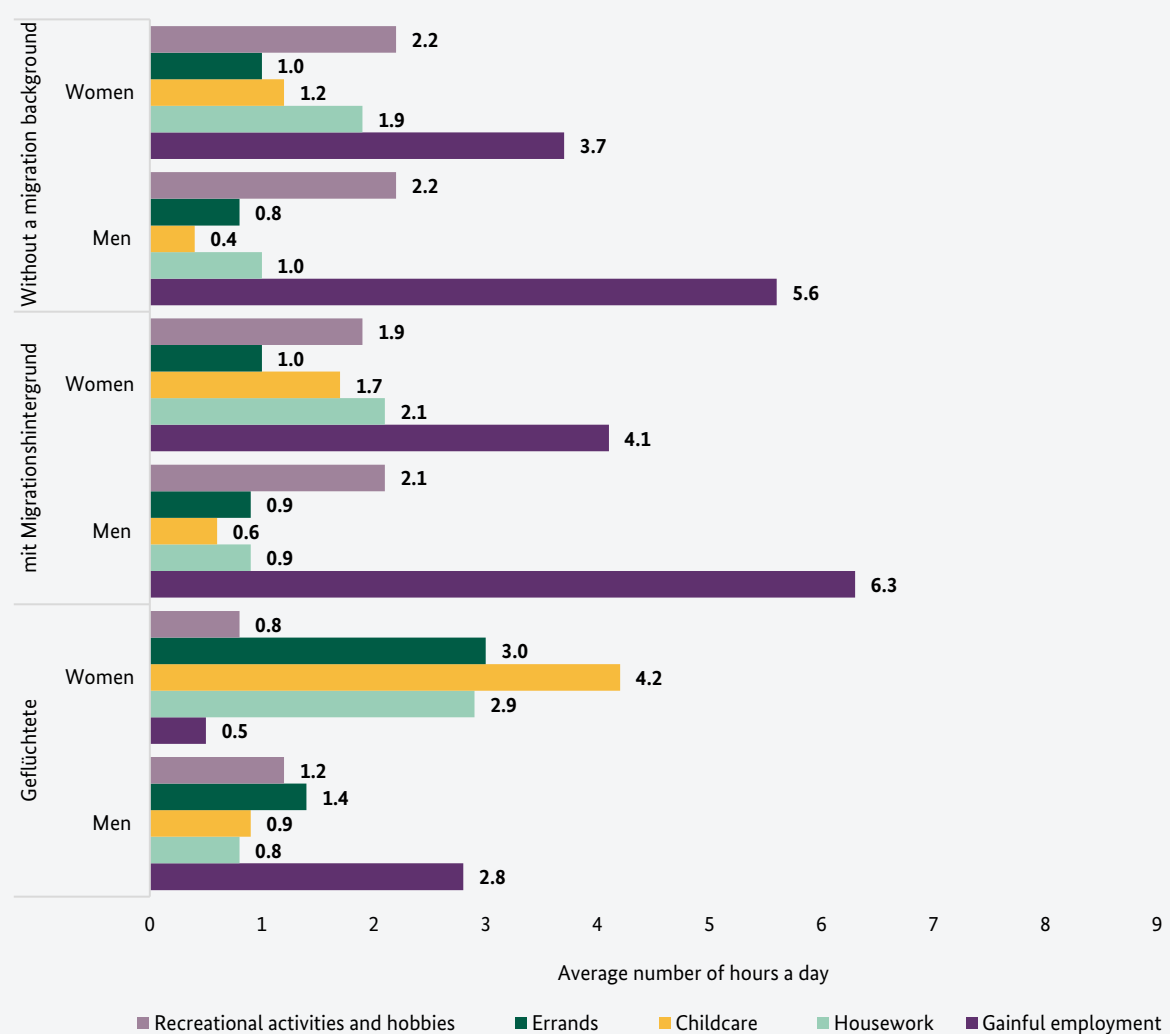
### The recreational activities of female refugees

Especially in the context of leisure time, social contacts with other people can arise, even without a refugee background. There is also the option of putting to the test and consolidating acquired German language skills in language courses. Various recreational possibilities<sup>3</sup> will therefore be considered in the following in order to analyse these issues.

How and how frequently do female refugees participate in public life? Are there differences between the recreational habits of male and female refugees? Are there differences to be found between them and the other societal groups with and without a migration background? What role do children play in recreational activities?

The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey as at 2018 forms the basis of the following analyses. Data from the year 2017 for all respondents who took part in the first survey round was also consulted so as to illuminate the intra-individual, personal changes in comparison with the previous year, thereby enabling an illustration of the dynamics of the integration process. The information on both control groups from the SOEP (individuals without and with a migration background) comes from the year 2013, as this was the last year in which the corresponding information was recorded in the SOEP.

<sup>3</sup> The study participants were asked how often they engaged in the respective recreational activity on a scale of 1 "Daily", 2 "A minimum of once a week", 3 "A minimum of once a month", 4 "Less frequently" and 5 "Never". For improved visualisation, the first two categories and the two middle categories have been summarised.

**Figure 1: Average time spent on selected activities, hours per working day**

Source: SOEP including IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2018. Basis: Errands 17,796; childcare 18,202; housework 14,354; gainful employment 17,873. Weighted data.

Note: These are average values across all of the respondents in the respective category. For example, if female refugees work an average of half an hour per working day, this value can be explained by the fact that relatively few female refugees pursue gainful employment. The result is this relatively small average amount of time across all female refugees.

## Participation in public life - excursions and gastronomy visits



Indicators of participation in public life taken into account are, on the one hand, how often refugees undertake short trips or excursions and how often they visit gastronomic establishments.<sup>4</sup>

In the survey year 2018, 13% of the women stated that they went on at least one excursion or short journey per week, whereas a huge majority (60%) did so less frequently (Figure 2). Just over a quarter (27%) stated that they never did. On average, refugee mothers went on excursions or short journeys more frequently than female refugees without children. This correlation was also reproduced for mothers from other countries of origin (no graphic).

Compared with the two other origin groups, it is immediately visible that refugees are far more likely to go on regular excursions. Amongst the individuals with and without a migration background, 4% of respond-

<sup>4</sup> Study participants were asked how often they go out to a café, restaurant or pub for a meal or drink. The question did not dis-

tinguish between visits to classic restaurants, takeaways, fast food restaurants or pubs without food.

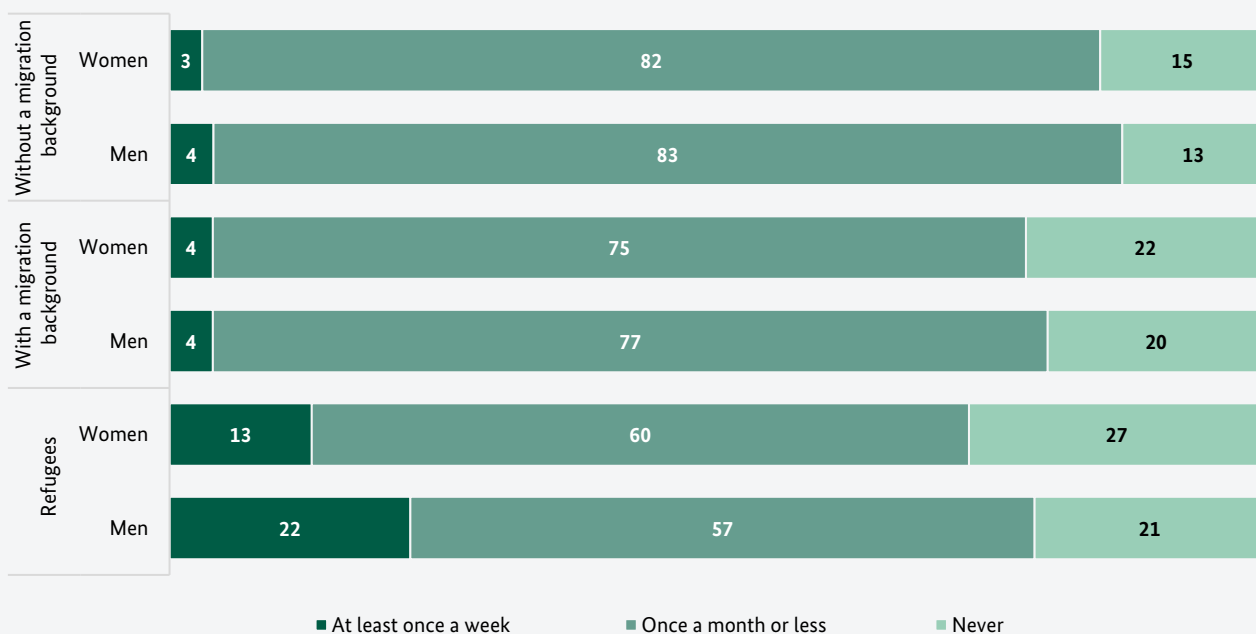
ents stated that they did so at least once a week. As the observation of daily time management suggests above, this may be because individuals with and without a migration background spent more time in gainful employment and on other hobbies and activities in 2018. There are also indications suggesting that refugees live in relatively cramped conditions (Tanis 2020), which may lead to them striving to spend as much time as possible outside of their living space.

There are differences between 2017 and 2018 for approximately half of the respondents compared with

the previous year (Table 1) when considering developments in the frequency of female refugees' activities. A total of 37% went on more frequent excursions or short journeys in 2018 than in the previous year (sum of green boxes).

Women in particular who stated that they never did so in 2017 increased their levels of activity (30%). Only 13% of the women stated that they went on excursions in 2018 less frequently than in 2017 (sum of yellow boxes) There are comparable tendencies shown among male refugees (no graphic); 37% did so more than in

**Figure 2: Frequency of excursions or short journeys (in per cent)**



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2018, basis: 3,859 respondents SOEP v.35, 2013. Basis: 16,568 individuals without a migration background and 2,437 respondents with a migration background. Differences between men and women with a migration background insignificant. Weighted data.

**Table 1: Frequency of excursions or short journeys in 2017 and 2018, female refugees (in per cent)**

		2018			Total
		Never	Once a month or less	At least once a week	
2017	Never	17 %	25 %	5 %	48 %
	Once a month or less	8 %	31 %	7 %	46 %
	At least once a week	2 %	3 %	1 %	7 %
Total		27 %	60 %	13 %	100 %

■ Lower levels of activity compared with the previous year  
■ Increased levels of activity compared with the previous year

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2017 and 2018. Basis: 1,257 female respondents. Data weighted and rounded.

the previous year, however frequency decreased for 17% of them compared with 2017.

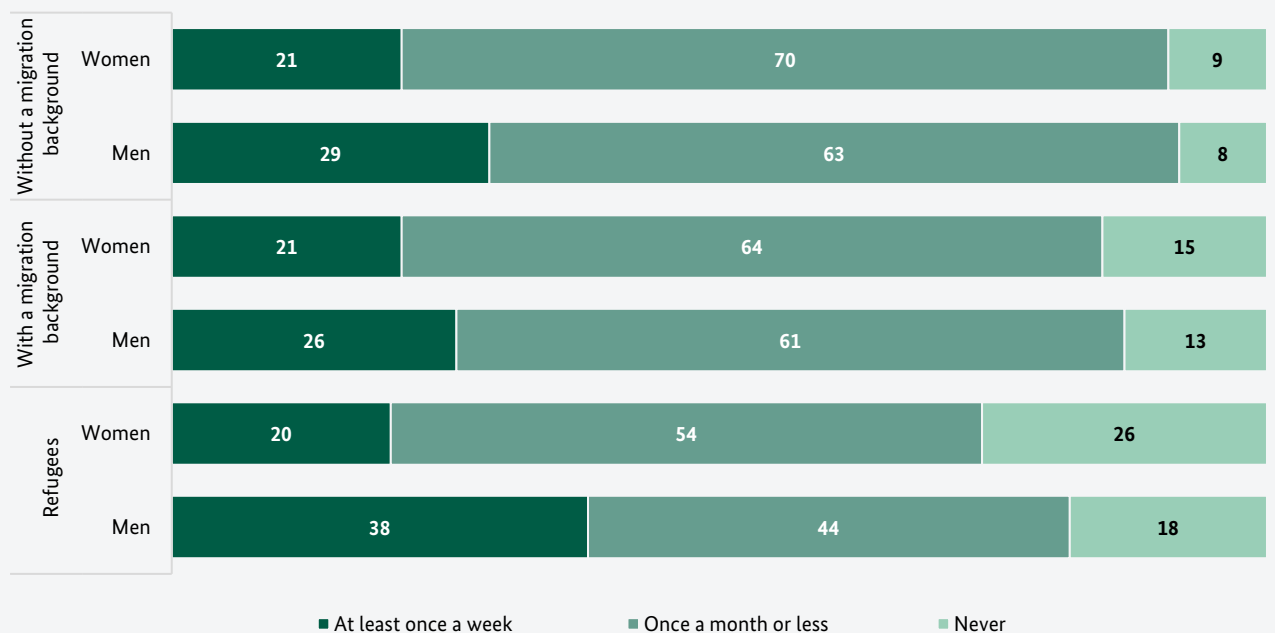
Visits to restaurants, cafés or pubs are at least once-weekly occurrences for 20% of the female refugees (Figure 3).

Approximately half (54%) visit restaurants once a month at the most; approximately one quarter (26%) never do so. Once again, this differs among male refugees. Approximately 44% of male refugees stated that they visited gastronomic establishments once a month at the most, whereas 38% did so at least once a week.

Quite a similar picture arises when the control groups are contrasted. Men are more likely to visit gastronomic establishments at least once a week than women, but this sex discrepancy is far smaller amongst individuals without a migration background and individuals with a migration background than amongst refugees.

In line with the observation on the frequency of excursions, female refugees are also the group with the highest share never to report visiting gastronomic establishments.

**Figure 3: Frequency of gastronomy visits (in per cent)**



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2018. Basis: 3,860 respondents SOEP v.35, 2013. Basis: 16,588 individuals without a migration background and 2,436 with a migration background. Weighted data.

**Table 2: Frequency of gastronomy visits in 2017 and 2018, female refugees (in per cent)**

		2018			Total
		Never	Once a month or less	At least once a week	
2017	Never	19 %	21 %	5 %	46 %
	Once a month or less	6 %	26 %	9 %	41 %
	At least once a week	1 %	7 %	5 %	13 %
Total		27 %	54 %	19 %	100 %

- Lower levels of activity compared with the previous year
- Increased levels of activity compared with the previous year

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2017 and 2018. Basis: 1,259 female respondents. Data weighted and rounded.

When the differences between female refugees and childless women (no graphic) are considered, it appears that women with children visit gastronomic establishments slightly more frequently.

It also appears that, over time, more than a third (35%) of female refugees more frequently visited gastronomic establishments compared with the previous year (Table 2, sum of green boxes). Twenty one per cent of the women who stated in 2017 that they never visited gastronomic establishments did so in 2018 once a month or less frequently; 5% even did so on a weekly basis. For a total of 14%, frequency of restaurant visits decreased in comparison with 2017 (sum of yellow boxes). Similar developments are also evident amongst male refugees (no graphic): Thirty six per cent visited gastronomic establishments more frequently in 2018 and 18% did so less frequently than in 2017.

### Cultural participation - attendance at events



An index of three different questions on event attendance was formed as an indicator for participation in cultural life: 1. Participation in popular culture (“How often do you go to the cinema, attend concerts with modern, contemporary music or dance and listen to music, for example at clubs, discos or dance cafés?”), 2. Participation in high culture (“How often do you attend events such as the opera, classical concerts, the theatre, exhibitions?”) and 3. Attendance at sporting events (“How often do you attend sporting events?”) Unlike the other activities considered here, frequency in this case is illustrated over the three categories frequently, occasionally and never, as summarising the activities does not allow for a clear assignment to the categories used previously.

It should also be considered that participation in cultural events, and in particular high culture, involves a relatively high number of pre-requisites. Adequate knowledge of the common language and potentially further foreign languages and an educational background are required to familiarise oneself with cultural offerings and to be able to take them up.

In addition, a certain amount of financial resources is usually necessary to pay for a visit to the theatre, cin-

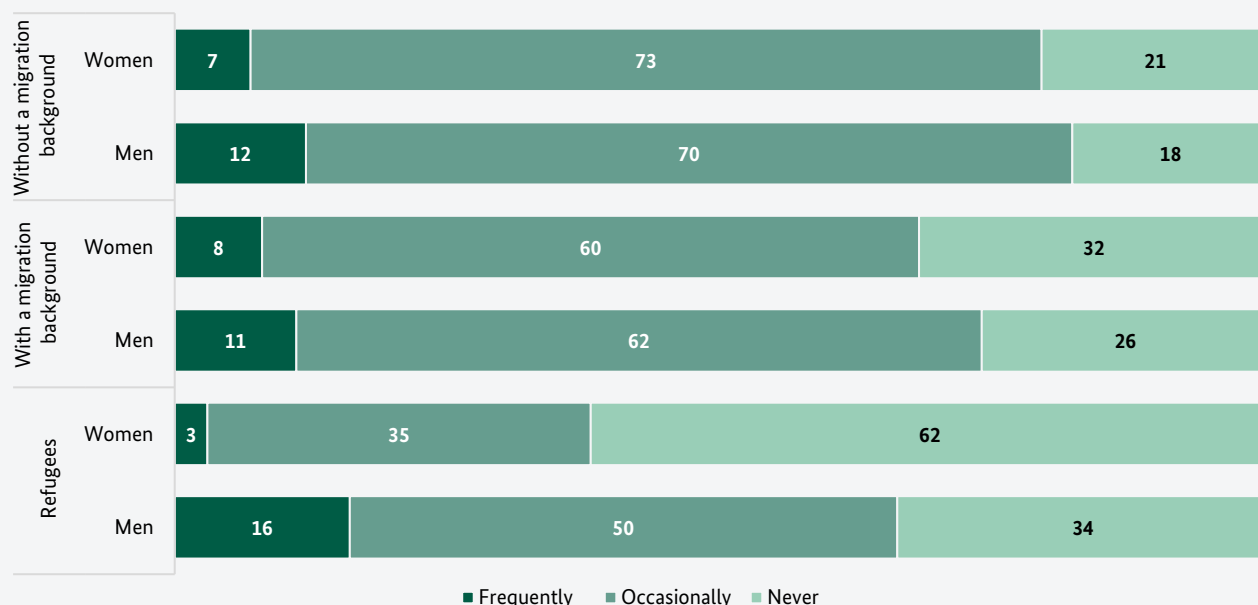
ema or football stadium (Isengard 2005; Federal Statistical Office 2017). The differences between refugees and individuals with and without a migration background are therefore clearest in this area (Figure 4).

Attendance at sporting and cultural events is also more of an exceptional recreational activity for the large majority of individuals with and without a migration background. Only between 7% and 8% of women and 11% and 12% of men frequently attended recreational events in 2018.

When compared, however, the percentage of individuals who stated in 2018 that they never attended such events was by far the highest for female refugees, at 62%. In contrast, men who have experienced forced migration were most likely to state that they frequently attended sporting or cultural events, with a figure of 16%. There is hardly any difference between female refugees with and without children when it comes to take-up of cultural offerings and attendance at sporting events (no graphic).

The responses from the previous year show that there was an increase in the level of activity for female refugees, although also at a lower level than with previously observed indicators (Table 3).

Just under a quarter of women (24%) attended sporting and/or cultural events more frequently than in the previous year. Increases were recorded in particular amongst respondents who never attended such events in 2017. Just 15% of women attended events less frequently than in 2017. Male refugees exhibit a greater dynamic in a year-on-year comparison, both with increases (30%) and decreases (30%) (no graphic).

**Figure 4: Frequency of event attendance (in per cent)**

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2018. Basis: 3,832 respondents SOEP v.35, 2013. Basis: 16,570 individuals without a migration background and 2,430 with a migration background. Weighted data.

**Table 3: Frequency of event attendance in 2017 and 2018, female refugees (in per cent)**

		2018			Total
		Never	Once a month or less	At least once a week	
2017	Never	51 %	21 %	2 %	73 %
	Once a month or less	12 %	11 %	1 %	23 %
	At least once a week	2 %	1 %	1 %	3 %
Total		64 %	33 %	3 %	100 %

- Lower levels of activity compared with the previous year
- Increased levels of activity compared with the previous year

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey, v.35, 2017 and 2018. Basis: 1,249 female respondents. Data weighted and rounded.

## Sporting activities

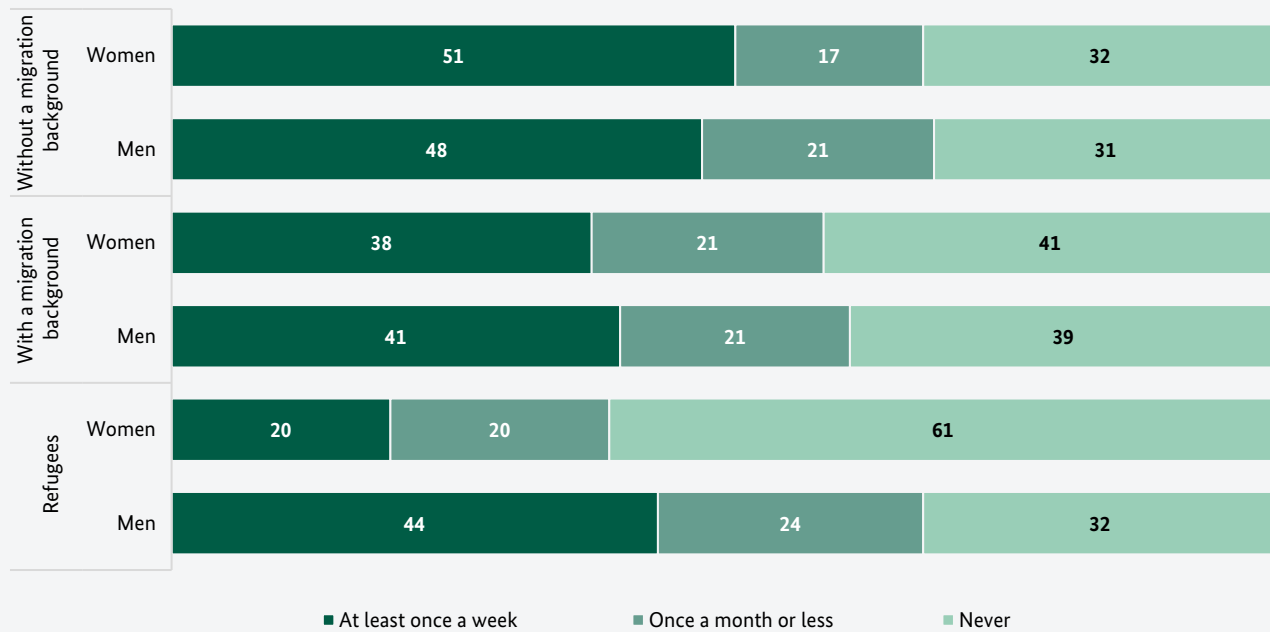


When it comes to sporting activities, the differences in the recreational habits found between female and male refugees are more marked (Figure 5). Just 20% of women who have experienced forced migration stated in 2018 that they work out at least once a week. This percentage is less than half of that of all other men and also women in the control groups considered. At

61%, the majority of female refugees stated that they never actively exercised.

The share of individuals who do not include sporting activities in their recreational habits is therefore twice as high as that of men and women without a migration background and male refugees. Female refugees with children are the group who are least likely to actively exercise (no graphic).

In contrast, male refugees barely differ from men and women without a migration background or men with a migration background with regard to their level of sporting activity.

**Figure 5: Frequency of sporting activities (in per cent)**

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2018. Basis: 3,855 respondents SOEP v.35, 2013. Basis: 16,524 individuals without a migration background and 2,428 respondents with a migration background. Differences between men and women with a migration background insignificant. Weighted data.

**Table 4: Frequency of sporting activities in 2017 and 2018, female refugees (in per cent)**

		2018			Total
		Never	Once a month or less	At least once a week	
2017	Never	49 %	11 %	10 %	70 %
	Once a month or less	7 %	3 %	3 %	14 %
	At least once a week	7 %	4 %	5 %	17 %
Total		63 %	18 %	19 %	100 %

■ Lower levels of activity compared with the previous year  
 ■ Increased levels of activity compared with the previous year

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2017 and 2018. Basis: 1,262 female respondents. Data weighted and rounded.

## Social inclusion - contact with Germans

Previous analysis has shown that female refugees invest a lot of time into completing household tasks and into childcare, but also take part in public life, although to a lesser degree than male refugees. Social contacts - with other persons with a refugee or migration background as well as with persons without a migration background - are directly related to participation in public life. These social contacts are an important element of successful integration. They facilitate the

settling-in process for new immigrants in their new living environment, for example via practical assistance in the search for a job or during official appointments. They also provide the opportunity to practice German as part of daily life (Siegert 2019; Bilecen et al. 2018). In the past, social inclusion in particular proved to be predominantly difficult for refugee women and girls (Worbs et al. 2016). Previous analysis has shown that refugee girls are less likely to spend their free time with Germans (de Paiva Lareiro 2019) and also that social integration is much less pronounced amongst adult female refugees than it is amongst male refugees (Siegert 2019).

Siebert fears, on the basis of the 2017 data, that the differences between men and women may continue to grow due to less frequent use of language support measures and lower employment market participation (2019: 10).

With this in mind, there follows an analysis of how much time was spent with Germans in 2018.<sup>5</sup> Analysis of current survey data confirms this discrepancy between the sexes (Figure 6). While approximately half of male refugees stated in 2018 that they had contact with Germans several times a week<sup>6</sup>, this was only the case for just under a third of the women (31%). Female refugees were the group who were most likely to state that they had weekly contact with Germans at the most (45%). Just under a quarter of the women reported in 2018 that they never had any contact with Germans, whereas this figure was only 17% for the men.

Female refugees are therefore less likely to participate in public life in Germany and their contact with Germans is less frequent. Multi-variate analysis can show whether these differences may be attributed to other socio-structural factors or recreational habits. Figure 7 demonstrates how certain aspects depend on the likelihood of any contact with Germans, specifying the average marginal effects (AME). These show by what

percentage an aspect increases the chance of contact with Germans.

As before, only statistically significant results are discussed, i.e. results that are not the result of random fluctuations in the sample and can be transferred to the population.

A crucial result of the multi-variate observation is that the significant correlation found descriptively between sex and frequency of spending time with Germans is no longer shown when further aspects are considered.

This means that female refugees spend less time with Germans than male refugees as a result of their socio-structural living conditions.

It is further shown that refugees with children in their households are approximately 8% more likely to have contact with Germans than individuals with no children. Gainful employment is also positively correlated with the likelihood of contact with Germans (+10%). These two correlations are obvious, as points of contact to other individuals with and without a migration background arise easily due to the family environment, for example children's friends and contact with other parents, and working environment.

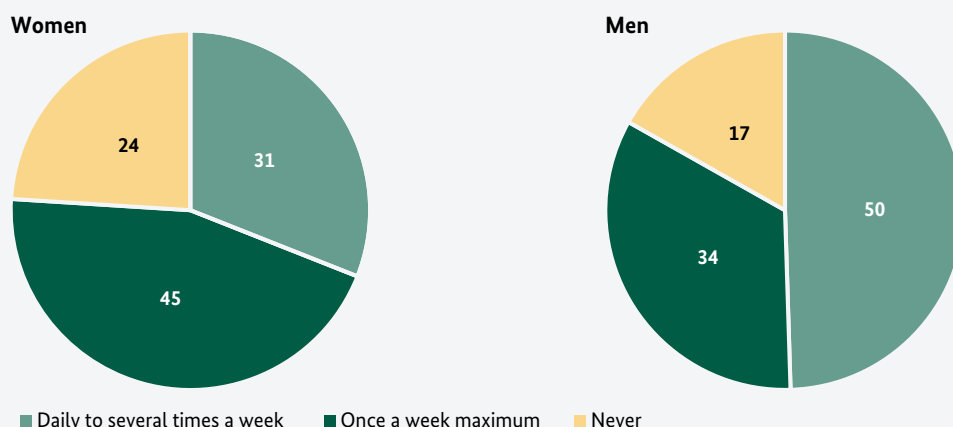
A positive correlation is also recorded with regard to private accommodation. If refugees live in private housing, the likelihood that they will have contact with Germans increases (e.g. by interacting with neighbours) by 7% compared with shared accommodation.

Contact with individuals from one's own country of origin has no significant influence, whereas contact to individuals of a different origin is very positively linked with the likelihood of also having contact with

5 The study asked the refugees how much time they spend with a) Germans, b) Individuals from their own country of origin and c) Individuals of a different origin. The term "German" was not defined further in this case.

6 Frequency of contact to Germans was recorded in the data set using a six-level scale. To better illustrate the results, the first two categories (1 "Daily", 2 "Several times a week") were summarised under the category "Daily to several times a week" and the following three categories (3 "Every week", 4 "Every month", 5 "Less frequently") were summarised under the category "Once a week maximum"; category 6 ("Never") was used.

**Figure 6: Frequency of time spent with Germans 2018 (in per cent)**

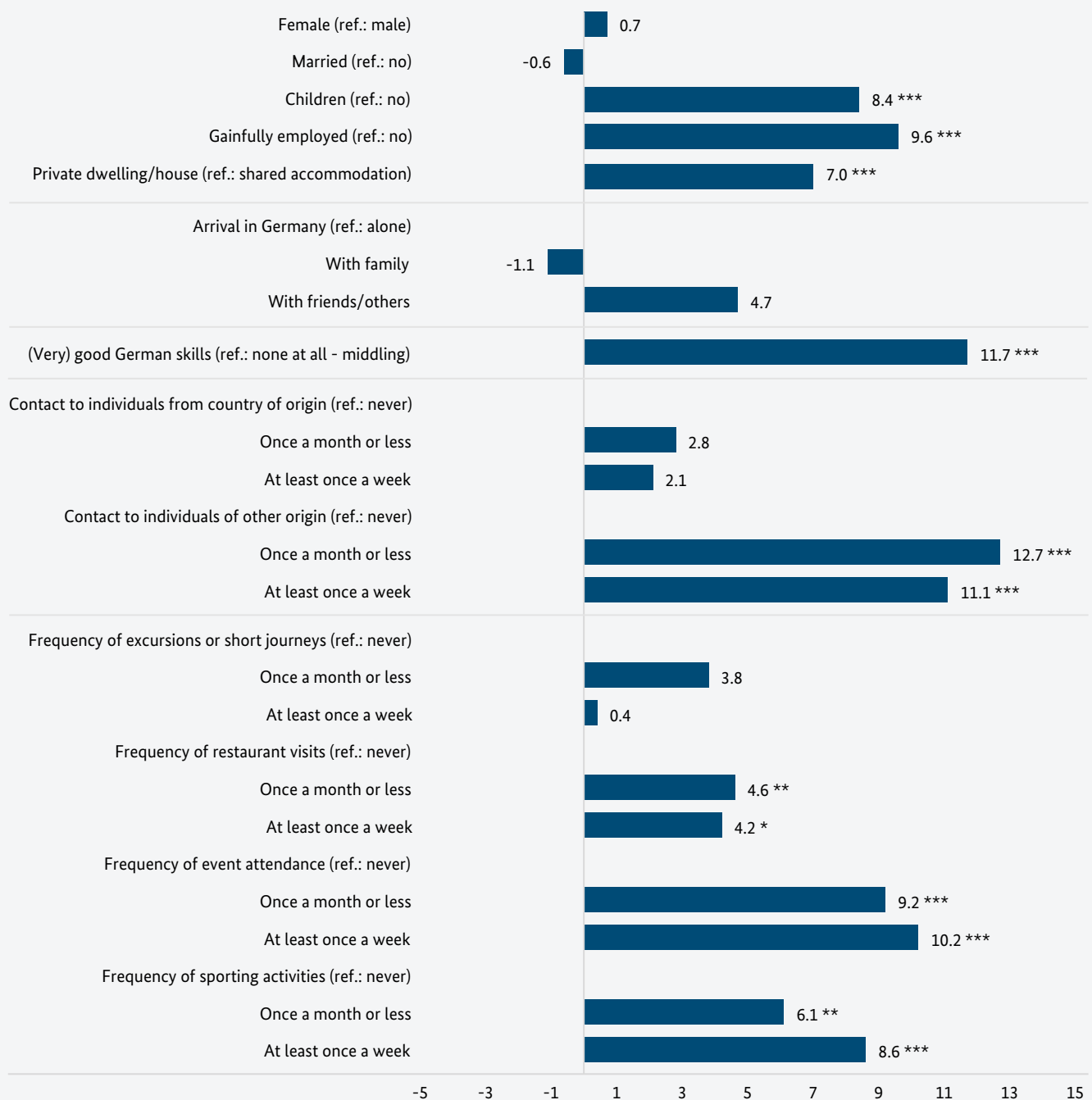


Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2018. Basis: 4,302 respondents Weighted data.

Germans. As maintaining contact with individuals from varied groups of origin evidently does not mutually cancel the other out, but is more likely to promote the tendency, this could indicate that there are underlying personality structures influencing frequency of contact, such as whether or not an individual is generally sociable.

Knowledge of the German language also correlates positively with contact with Germans. Refugees with (very) good German skills are just under 12% more likely to have contact with Germans than refugees with worse or no German language skills.

**Figure 7: Likelihood of contact with Germans (in contrast with no contact with Germans) (AME)**



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey v.35, 2018, 2017, 2016. Basis: 3,382 respondents

Note: AIC = 2817.198; BIC = - 3049.995; reference category in brackets; significances: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Controlled for age, education, nationality, years in Germany, health satisfaction, residence status. Full results can be obtained from the author.

Legend: The value presented for gainful employment (Yes) states that the likelihood of having contact with Germans is 9.6% higher when compared with the control group (unemployed individuals)

The recreational activities which were investigated ultimately find their way into the multi-variate analysis. All four of the recreational opportunities observed correlate very positively with contact with Germans, but gradual differences are apparent. Activities which are usually done in a family setting, such as excursions or restaurant visits, demonstrate a weaker correlation with the likelihood of maintaining contact with Germans. When refugees go on excursions or short journeys once a month or less frequently, they are approximately 4% more likely to have contact with Germans than refugees who stated that they never go on excursions or short journeys. Visits of gastronomic establishments also increase the likelihood of contact with Germans by only 5% (once a month or less frequently), or 4% (at least once a week). Accordingly, activities involving a high level of contact with other people correlate more strongly with the likelihood of contact with Germans. If the refugees actively exercise, the likelihood of contact with Germans increases by 6% (once a month or less frequently) or 9% (at least once a week).

If they attend sporting or cultural events, it even increases by 9% (once a month or less frequently) or 10% (at least once a week).

## Conclusion and discussion

A comparison between refugee men and women reveals some differences. Women mainly arrive as part of a family and also live in Germany in this setting. They have a lower level of formal education, are much less likely to be gainfully employed and demonstrate weaker German language skills. Accordingly, their structural, cultural and social integration has not progressed as far as that of male refugees.

The data from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey from the year 2018 shows that there are also differences in the ways they spend their days and their leisure time, between male refugees and women and also women from different groups of origin. Refugee women spend a large portion of their day caring for children and performing other household activities. Accordingly, they participate in social life to a lesser extent on average. They are much less likely to attend sporting and/or cultural events than male refugees and hardly do any active exercise. They demonstrate similar sex-specific differences to individuals with and without a migration background with regard to activity patterns (Federal Statistical Office 2017), as documented in the literature. Despite initial increas-

es, female refugees nevertheless lag behind women with and without a migration background with regard to activity levels on average, and especially when it comes to sporting activities.

Even if refugee women participate less in public life in their free time, the survey results also show that they are not completely isolated in a domestic setting. Female refugees do, in fact, take part in public life, although often in different ways from male refugees. They demonstrate a positive trend in the frequency of participation in comparison with the previous year, sometimes even more so than male refugees. The results over the next few years will show to which extent the activity levels of female refugees converge with those of male refugees and women with and without a migration background.

There is a negative trend in the area of social participation for now. Female refugees also had less contact with Germans than male refugees in 2018.

Refugee women are, as discussed above, less likely to be gainfully employed, have less knowledge of German than male refugees on average and take part in recreational activities involving numerous contact opportunities to other individuals, such as attending events and exercising, less frequently.

Concentrating on a family setting can also benefit women, however. Siegert (2019) shows that female refugees are less likely to feel socially isolated than male refugees. The presence of children in the household has also proved to be an important positive factor for contact to individuals with no migration background. Refugees seem to come into contact with Germans via their children more frequently by meeting Germans in their children's environments, for example the playground or school. That the female refugees are more likely to live in private accommodation and not shared accommodation than men, perhaps as a result of there being a higher percentage of unmarried males, can also have a positive impact.

The comparatively difficult parameters and conditions by which the socio-cultural integration of women who have experienced forced migration is shaped in contrast with male refugees, such as frequent concentration on the household, fewer language skills and lower participation in the employment market, may go further in explaining the differences found between the sexes. It is therefore important to continue addressing women who have experienced forced migration and concentrate on providing special integration services

such as low-threshold courses (e.g. MiA courses<sup>7</sup>) and language courses tailored to the needs of mothers/women who have just arrived in the country (such as parents'/women's integration courses) in order to reduce the existing discrepancies between men and women regarding participation and support the process of arrival in German society for female refugees (Tissot 2021).

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7 The "Migrantinnen einfach stark im Alltag" programme ("Every-day strength for female migrants"; MiA course) is aimed at foreign women in Germany with a long-term residence status. The courses are also open to asylum applicants from countries with a good prospect of remaining in Germany and, under certain circumstances, other asylum applicants. For more information, visit: [www.bamf.de/mia-traeger](http://www.bamf.de/mia-traeger).

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## AUTHORS:

### Cristina de Paiva Lareiro

is a Researcher at the Migration, Integration and Asylum Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nürnberg.  
Cristina.Paiva@bamf.bund.de

### Julia Schwarzmüller

is a student at Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg and completed an internship at the Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees between 14/09/2020 and 23/10/2020.

## IMPRINT

### Published by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge  
Forschungszentrum Migration, Integration und Asyl  
90461 Nürnberg

### Version

01/2021

### Layout

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

### Picture credits:

Icons page 3: GettyImages and iStock, page 8/9: GettyImages

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### Full title

de Paiva Lareiro, Cristina (2021): Female Refugees in Germany – Recreational Habits and Social Contact. Edition 02|2021 of the Brief Analyses of the Migration, Integration and Asylum Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nürnberg.

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