

# women's lives – family planning and migration in women's lives

## *Summary of the central results of the BZgA study on women with Turkish and eastern European migrant backgrounds*

Women with a migrant background make up 18%, i.e. a significant proportion, of the female population of the Federal Republic of Germany (micro-census 2007). Around two fifths of these women are between the ages of 20 and 44, thus at an age at which family planning and the processes of starting a family are relevant. The Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BZgA) has focused increasingly on the living conditions of this heterogeneous group, which is why it commissioned the study “women's lives: family planning and migration in women's lives”. The goal was to obtain knowledge about the different needs for information and support regarding matters of family planning among different migrant groups. The hope is that social and cultural backgrounds will be taken adequately into account in order to facilitate access to the migrant groups.

One problem in migration research is the great heterogeneity of the target group, which can be differentiated by ethnicity, by the way in which the women came to Germany, by their legal status, by their education and their social standing. Since the migrant population largely live in cities and large towns in western Germany, it is more true here than in general family research that average figures do not represent the reality. To date there has been little research in the area of family (planning) that has differentiated by migration group and gender; the only data that exist have come from small-scale special surveys addressing specific family planning questions. The present study seeks to contribute to closing this gap.

This present study looks at the two largest migrant groups – women with a Turkish or eastern European migrant background (including members of old-established ethnic German communities re-

CONTENT	
Migration Profiles	3
Social Situation	5
Current family situation	6
The dynamics of family formation in women's lives	9
Contraception in the women's lives	11
Pregnancy Terminations in the Women's Lives	13
Need for Information, Sources of Information, and Advice Requirements	15
Conclusion	16
Bibliography	17
At a Glance	18

garded as German nationals) – and systematically obtains information about family planning and family formation processes, about contraception and pregnancy terminations in women's lives. Using retrospective data about relationships, marriage, number of children and gaps between births as well as living arrangements and the desire to have children, it compiles patterns of biographical dynamics and discusses factors of influence such as growing up in Germany, education, cultural aspects and the migration event itself. At the heart of the investigation is the relationship between the migration story and the family story, which produces phase-specific desires to have children or delay / prevent births. Contraception and pregnancy terminations are viewed with respect to this relationship, and needs for information and advice are examined. Women

## DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

- A Turkish or eastern European migrant background exists when the survey participant or at least one of her parents was born in Turkey or an eastern European country\*. This takes the origins of naturalized women and former members of ethnic German communities in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union into account.
- The “second generation” was not just defined by birth in Germany. Others included in this group were those women who came to Germany below the age of twelve. The “first generation” therefore includes all women who were at least twelve when they migrated to Germany.
- For reasons of linguistic simplification the terms “women with a Turkish migrant background”, “Turkish women” and “women from the Turkish group” and “Turkish group of origin” are used synonymously, even though it is quite possible that survey participants with a Turkish migrant background possess German citizenship. The same procedure is applied for the women with an eastern European migrant background. Finally, the term “west German woman” is meant to apply to the control group of women that do not have a migrant background.

\* see footnote 1

with a Turkish or eastern European<sup>1</sup> migrant background aged between 20 and 44 were interviewed over the telephone about their migrant history, their reproductive biography and their current living situation. The control group consisted of west German women without a migrant background.

#### The study's key points are:

- *Socio-geographical approach*: The survey was conducted in co-operation with the four cities of Oberhausen, Stuttgart, Nuremberg and Berlin. This approach suggested itself for the survey because it provided the municipalities with locally specific data and takes into consideration the fact that around 50% of the foreign population live in towns and cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>
- *Focusing on two migrant groups*: In light of the heterogeneity of the migrant population two migrant groups (classified by place of origin) were chosen for the survey, namely those most strongly represented in the population as a whole and also in the municipalities in question.<sup>3</sup>
- *A comprehensive understanding of family planning as a private life-choice*: Family planning is more than just the use of contraception. It is neither about rational planning alone, nor exclusively about family and children. Defined broadly, family planning includes aspects of relationships, sexuality and childlessness as well as pregnancy terminations and births.
- *Combining a quantitative sub-study with qualitative sub-studies*: The standardized telephone survey was supplemented by qualitative interviews with individuals and group discussions with the target groups, as well as “by interviews” with experts from the field of family planning in order to place the results on a sounder footing. The results of the qualitative sub-studies are set out in a more in-depth publication<sup>4</sup>.

1 The sample group called “eastern European” in this survey largely consists of women who personally or whose parents came from the European as well as the Asian successor states of the Soviet Union. The countries of origin in this category include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Belarus. In Oberhausen an additional n = 73 women from southeast Europe were included in the survey because the total number of eastern European women was too small here for the sampling procedure. The family origin here refers to the successor states of Yugoslavia and to Romania and Bulgaria.

2 Schönwälder, K., Söhn, J. (2007): Siedlungsstrukturen von Migrantengruppen in Deutschland. Schwerpunkte der Ansiedlung und innerstädtische Konzentrationen. WZB-Discussion Paper No. SP IV 2007-601. Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung gGmbH

3 In reference to the eastern European group it should be emphasized that more than half of the women were in the category of “members of ethnic German communities in eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union”. Since this was the only group surveyed in Stuttgart and Nuremberg because of the municipalities’ express wishes, this is not a representative picture of the survey group as a whole.

4 The more detailed publication on the study will be published in the series *Forschung und Praxis der Sexualaufklärung und Familienplanung* (BZgA). For further information on the study, see [www.forschung.sexualaufklaerung.de](http://www.forschung.sexualaufklaerung.de)

**KEY DATA ABOUT THE POPULATION WITH A MIGRANT BACKGROUND (MICRO-CENSUS 2007)\***

- Population: 82.3 million, of which 15.4 million (= 18.7%) have a migrant background
- High percentages in west German cities and larger towns: Stuttgart: 37%, Nuremberg: 38%, Berlin 24% (largely as a result of the different regional recruitment efforts in the sixties)
- Even higher percentages among the 18–25-year-olds in these cities: Stuttgart: 47%, Nuremberg: 42%, Berlin 29% (it generally holds that the younger the group looked at, the higher the percentage of the population that has a migrant background)
- The most important countries of origin: Turkey (16.4% of the population with a migrant background), Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Ukraine (together 11.6%), Poland (7.5%)
- Special conditions: 9.2% of the people with a migrant background have not passed a school-leaving examination of any kind, and 33.2% have no vocational training (without migrant background 1.4% and 17.9% respectively)

\* Presented here are data from the 2007 microcensus, the year of the survey. Statistisches Bundesamt (2009): Bevölkerung nach Migrationsstatus regional. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2007, Wiesbaden: StBA und Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder (2009). On the definition of “migrant background” see Statistisches Bundesamt (2009); for a simplified definition, see box “Definitions and Terminology” on p. 2 above.

\*\* Subjects were assigned to countries of origin on the basis of their current nationality, or, in the case of naturalized Germans, their former nationality; in the case of ethnic German immigrants, the country where they formerly lived.

## Migration Profiles

With regard to the migrant history there are differences between and within the migrant groups. This is primarily due to the fact that under the migration policy for eastern European women, in addition to coming as family members (wife or child) to join those already in Germany, they also have the option of migrating to Germany as members of ethnic German communities under certain conditions

and this method was very much taken advantage of during the major immigration waves of the early 1990s after the raising of the “Iron Curtain”.<sup>5</sup> This results not just in direct differences related to the main migration reason, legal status and language knowledge but also in a specific selection based on who migrates with what qualification and in what family configuration (table 1).

**TABLE 1: Migration history of the Turkish and eastern European women (FIGURES IN %)**

Migration history max. sample number	Turkish women n=842	Eastern European women n=832
born in Germany	21,5	4,6
immigrated as a child under 12	18,5	13,3
members of the second generation	39,9	17,9
age on immigration	peak between 18 and 22 years	varies widely
important migration reasons* under the terms of provisions for members of ethnic German communities	1,8 (1,6)	44,2 (45,7)
joining husband already in Germany	57,9 (75,2)	16,8 (19,4)
joining parent already in Germany	34,1 (16,1)	21,2 (15,4)
German citizenship**	12,8	76,1

\* Survey participants who immigrated themselves; the figures in the brackets are those for the members of the first generation, i.e. those who were at least twelve when they came to Germany.

\*\* whether or not dual nationals

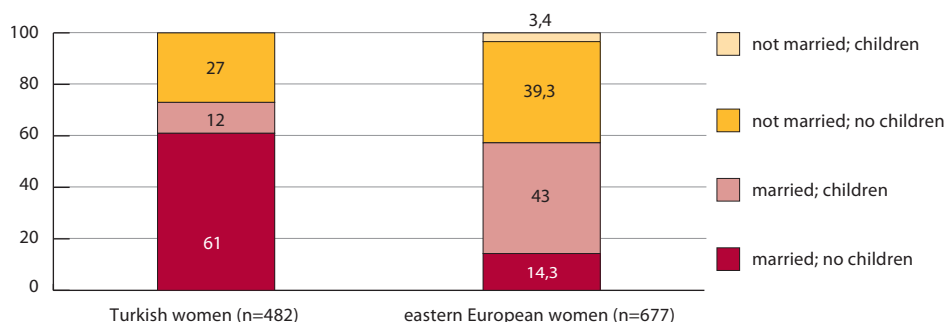
Source: BZgA, data set “frauen leben II” 2009, 20–44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

5 Labour migrants have played no significant role since the halt to guest-worker recruitment in 1973.

In the Turkish group the women of the first generation (percentage of the group as a whole: 60%) came largely already married but (still) childless. Among the eastern European women migration in connexion with a marriage plays a lesser role and there is also no peak in immigration at around the

age the women get married. The largest percentage of the first generation came with a husband and child(ren); the second-largest group was made up of women who were not married and did not have children when they immigrated (fig. 1).

FIGURE 1: FAMILY STATUS OF THE FIRST GENERATION AT THE TIME OF IMMIGRATION BY GROUP OF ORIGIN (IN %)



Source: BZgA, data set "frauen leben II" 2009, 20-44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

If marriage-related migration is defined by a marriage occurring within a year prior to or after the migration, then 18% of the eastern European women and 56% of the Turkish women of the first generation were marriage migrants. Among the 20-34-year-old women the percentages are 22% and 73% respec-

tively. For these women the biographical events of marriage, migration and possibly a promptly occurring pregnancy largely coincide. The challenges of this situation demand special assimilation efforts and support.

**BEWARE: "SECOND GENERATION" MUST NOT BE EQUATED WITH "YOUNG"**

In the **Turkish group** around a third of the older women above the age of 34 belong to the second generation (because of the history of Turkish immigration since the 1960s) and one in two of the younger women under the age of 35 are members of the first generation (because of continuing marriage-related migration; table 2). The consequence of this is that the average ages of the first and second generations are not very different at 35.9 and 31.9 years respectively.

In the **eastern European group** the first generation predominates among both the younger and the older women. Here too "young" cannot be equated with "second generation". Since, however, few of the older women are members of the second generation, the women of the second generation are on average considerably younger (26.5 years) than the women of the first generation (34.8 years).

TABLE 2: GENERATION MEMBERSHIP BY GROUP OF ORIGIN AND AGE (IN %)

group of origin age	Turkish women		Eastern European women	
	20-34 n=358	35-44 n=462	20-34 n=418	35-44 n=411
first generation	48,6	69,1	70,3	94,2
second generation	51,4	30,9	29,7	5,8
total	100	100	100	100

Source: BZgA, data set "frauen leben II" 2009, 20-44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

## Social Situation

Family planning among migrants, just like among west German women, is dependent on their social situation (education, job, income). There are clear differences here between and within the migrant groups.

The education situation of the Turkish women is characterized by very low formal school and vocational qualifications. This is particularly true for the first generation: here two thirds of the women have low school qualifications, 61% do not have any vocational qualifications (fig. 2). The marriage migrants were particularly likely to come to Germany without qualifications; it was also rarely possible for them to obtain job qualifications after having had their family. In the second generation the picture is generally more positive, but here too 27% do not have vocational qualifications and are not in a vocational training programme either.

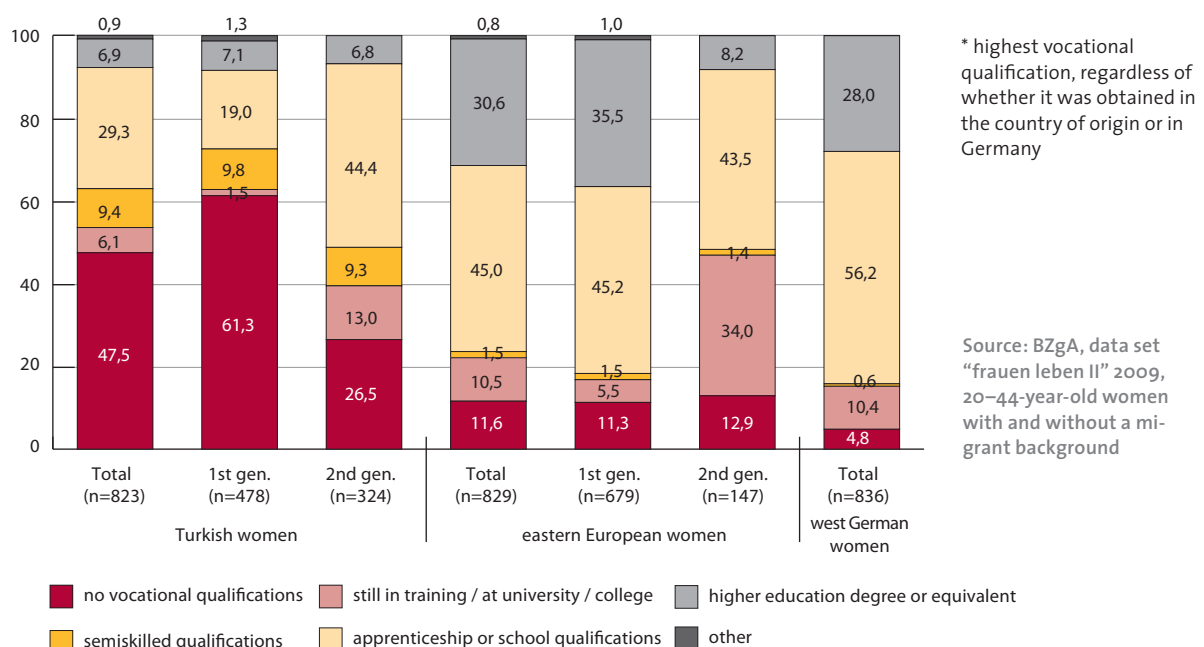
Characteristics of the occupational and income situation of the Turkish women are:

- Only a small contribution to the family income, particularly in the first generation, linked to the fact that these women have low school qualifications. Three quarters of the first-generation

women are not in gainful employment or only to a small extent (less than 15 hours a week). In the second generation the same is true for “only” not quite half the women.

- Low-level jobs<sup>6</sup>: in the first generation almost half of the women work in unskilled or semiskilled jobs, in the second generation this is still true for one third of the survey participants. Their partners are also comparatively likely to work in low-level jobs (unskilled or semiskilled job: 45%).
- Low household incomes: more than half of all Turkish households have to make do with net household incomes of 1,000–2,000 euros a month, 18% even have to make do with less than 1,000 euros a month. Almost a third of the Turkish households (31%) receive state benefits.
- A high percentage of these women have no personal income at all (41%).

FIGURE 2: HIGHEST VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS\* BY GROUP OF ORIGIN AND GENERATION MEMBERSHIP (IN %)



<sup>6</sup> referring to women who work more than 14 hours a week

The **eastern European group** generally displays comparatively high vocational / school qualifications with a high percentage of graduates and a small number of women without vocational qualifications (fig. 2). The (usually younger) members of the second generation are often still in training or at university. It must be taken into account for the first generation that 43% of the vocational qualifications obtained in the country of origin were not recognized in Germany. As a result the percentage of women without vocational qualifications recognized in Germany goes up to 34% in the first generation. This is relevant to the issue of starting a family because after the migration the women are faced with deciding whether to obtain qualifications in Germany or whether to have a child. 37% of the eastern European migrants with qualifications from their country of origin, particularly highly qualified ones, were able to get new qualifications or take the necessary additional courses and exams to get their qualifications recognized.

The job and income situation of the eastern European women is more positive than that of the Turkish women, but less favourable compared with the west German group:

- Both in the first and second generations, 56% of the women are employed for more than 15 hours a week (west German women: 69%). One third of the women are not in gainful employment.
- In the first generation 35% of the women work in unskilled or semiskilled jobs; the same is true of 13% of the women of the second generation (west German women: 12%). Despite the frequently high vocational / educational qualifications only 12% of the women in the first generation work in highly qualified jobs or in managerial positions (west German women: 22%), which is doubtless the result of the lack of recognition of their foreign qualifications.
- As a result of the women's greater contribution to the family income and the overall more favourable situation regarding their occupational position and that of their partner, eastern European households have a somewhat higher monthly net income than the Turkish households. Nevertheless here too almost a third of the households depend on state support.

#### KNOWLEDGE OF THE LANGUAGE

Knowledge of the German language is an important indicator for education and participation opportunities. The results show differences between the groups and generations: in the first generation of the **Turkish group** just one fifth of the women stated that they had a good or very good knowledge of the German language; 86% of the members of the second generation say this. Among the **eastern European women** of the first generation more than two thirds of the survey participants said their knowledge of the German language was very good or good. In the second generation this figure went up to no less than 96%.

### *Current family situation*

When looking at the cross-section of the current living arrangements of the two migrant groups (with regard to relationships and children), there are some very clear differences compared with the west German women.

Among **Turkish women** marriage dominates (83%; for 97% of these, their first marriage). Other types of living arrangements, at just over 3%, are almost negligible. This means "relationship" and "mar-

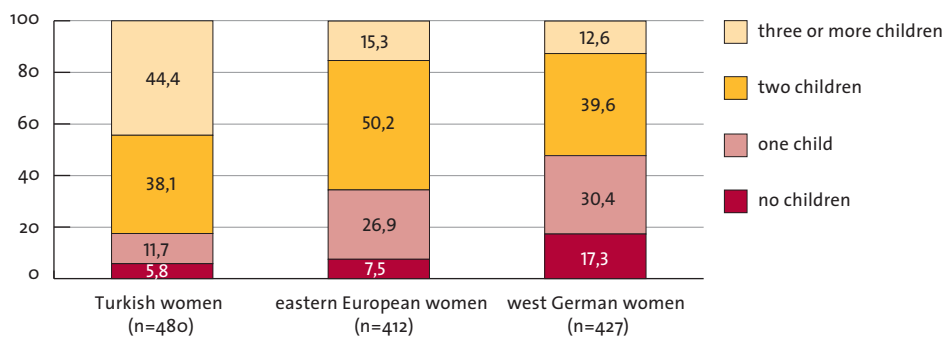
riage" are almost synonymous. Four fifths of the Turkish women have children. The average number of children among the women over the age of 34 is 2.4. "Marriage" and "motherhood" go hand-in-hand. Few of the married women (7%) do not have children and only a few single women (28%) have children (since the single mothers, with one exception, had all once been married, their children presumably date from a previous marriage). Larger families with three or more children are more com-

mon among the women above the age of 34 than among the other groups of origin (fig. 3).

Among the **eastern European women** marriage also dominates, but not to the same extent (69% married and living with their husband, 88% of these in their first marriage). Other types of relationships are however more common. The normative-binding conditions by which sexual relationships / a shared household are coupled with marriage are less strong here than in the Turkish group. Furthermore, in contrast to most of the Turkish women, the first-generation women in this group were able to come

to Germany whether married or not, so the selection effect does not hold. Three quarters of the women have children. Among the women over the age of 34 the average number of children is 1.8. Married women are rarely childless (9%). In contrast to the Turkish group, children occur more often in non-marital relationships: 29% of the women living in non-marital relationships and 50% of single women have children. At 77%, smaller families with one or two children dominate among the women above the age of 34 (fig. 3).

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF CHILDREN AMONG THE WOMEN ABOVE THE AGE OF 34 BY GROUP OF ORIGIN (IN %)

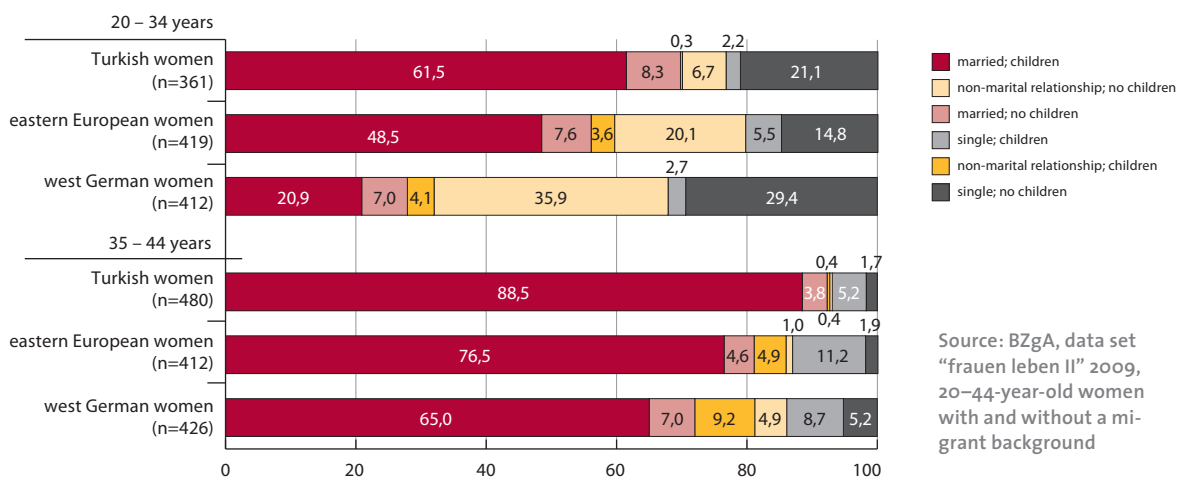


Source: BZgA, data set "frauen leben II" 2009, 20-44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

The differences in living arrangements are more strongly pronounced in the 20-34 age group than in the 35-44 age group. The younger migrants are more likely than west German women to be living in "traditional family-oriented" arrangements, to be married and to have children. This is particularly true of the 20-34-year-old Turkish women, of whom 62% are already married and have children. The same is also true of almost half of the younger

eastern European women, but of only one fifth of the west German survey participants of the same age (fig. 4). The family situation of the younger migrants at the time of the survey can largely be explained by the fact that the family phase is an aspect of the women's lives that is taken for granted and one that is realized at a younger age than among west German women.<sup>7</sup>

FIGURE 4: LIVING ARRANGEMENTS WITH AND WITHOUT CHILDREN BY GROUP OF ORIGIN AND AGE (IN %)



Source: BZgA, data set "frauen leben II" 2009, 20-44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

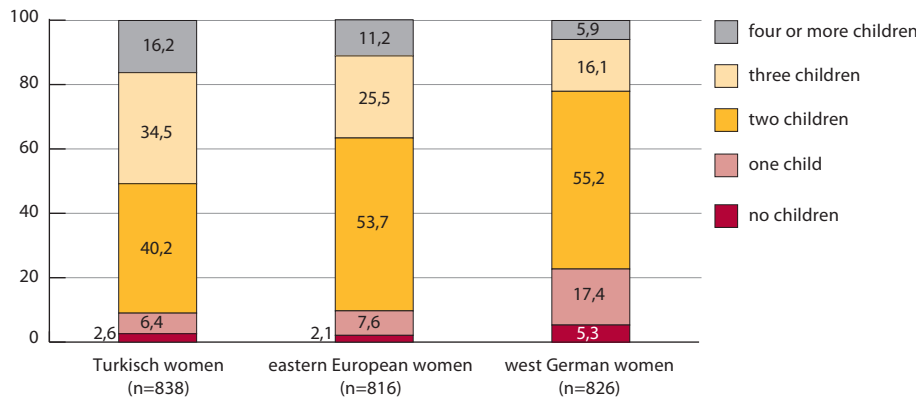
<sup>7</sup> Cf. the next section on the dynamics of family formation in women's lives

With regard to *choice of partner* it becomes clear that **Turkish women** have largely chosen their current partner from their own ethnic group (93%; in the second generation: 87%). While among the **eastern European women** intra-ethnic relationships also predominate (78%), they are less important in the second generation (57%).

A total of 25% of the Turkish women said they were related to their partner / spouse (Nuremberg: 19%, Berlin: 31%; no specification regarding the degree of kinship). In the first generation spouses are more likely to be related (33%) than in the second generation (10%). Such marriages are more common among women with low qualifications and among women who grew up in rural areas.

The women's *desire to have children* was investigated through the question of whether children were present and if so, how many as well as how many (more) were wanted. In all three groups of origin childlessness is not an option. Turkish women are more likely to be able to imagine a larger family with three or more children, while the desire for a two-child family dominates among eastern European women, followed by the idea of three or more children (fig. 5). West German women tended to favour smaller families with one or two children (together 73%). Questions relating to the women's attitudes showed that the migrant women take children for granted more than west German women do.

FIGURE 5: TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN IMAGINABLE\* BY GROUP OF ORIGIN (IN %)



\* The total number of children imaginable (number of children already present plus the number of further children desired) includes, in addition to those already present and the further children desired, a current pregnancy if present.

Source: BZgA, data set "frauen leben II" 2009, 20-44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

In the second generation the desire for big families goes down somewhat, but still more than two fifths of the **Turkish women** and almost a third of the **eastern European women** of the second generation can still imagine having three or more children (west German women: 22%). In both migrant groups the average number of children imaginable drops with increasing levels of education, regardless of whether the women are members of the first or second generation. Among **west German women** on the other hand it is those with the highest levels of education who are more likely to be able to imagine having three or more children and the least likely to be able to imagine having just one child.

*Family networks* are just as important for migrant women as they are for German women to help them cope with everyday life and especially to help them look after their children. Almost 90% of both migrant groups have parents or parents-in-law or other reliable relatives living in the vicinity, which is just

as often as among the west German women. It fits in with marriage migration as a route to immigration that only 15% of the first generation **Turkish women** had their own parents living in the vicinity (76% in the second generation). By comparison first-generation **eastern European women** were also more likely to immigrate with their own parents. As a result more than half of them said their own parents lived nearby (83% in the second generation). When it comes to child care the **Turkish women** get support significantly less often from parents, parents-in-law or other relatives living nearby than the **eastern European women** and **west German women** (55% "regularly" or "sometimes" compared to 77% among the eastern European women and 84% among the west German survey participants).



## The dynamics of family formation in women's lives

The current distribution of the family living arrangements can be traced back to a fundamental dynamics of family formation in the women's lives. They are very different in all three groups of origin.

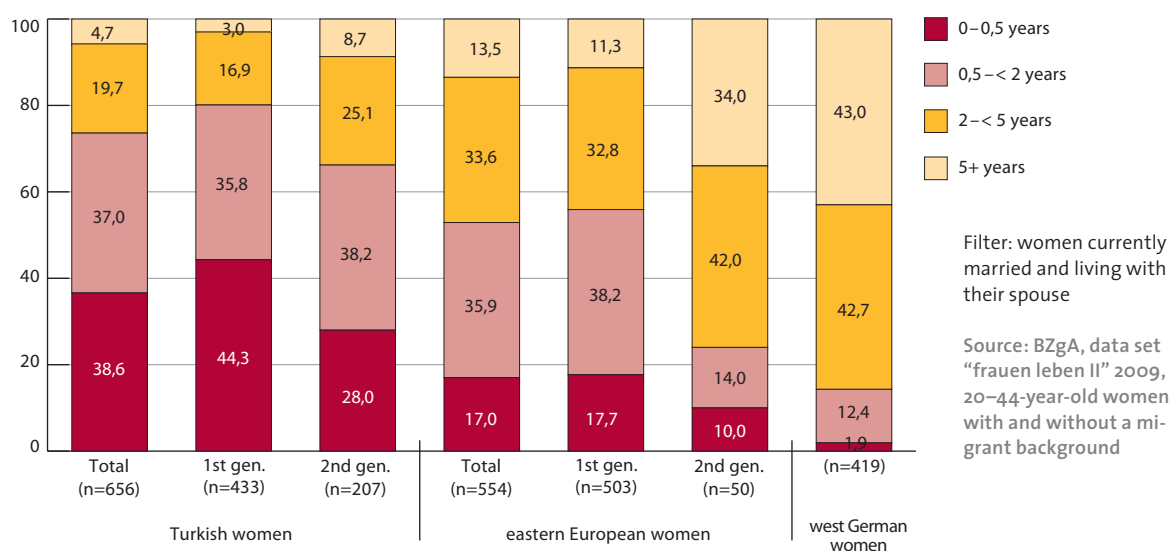
- The **Turkish women** started the family phase early, after just a short pre-marital relationship phase. The birth of the first child did not follow the marriage directly, but the contraceptive phase was quite short and ended early.
- The **eastern European women** got married young, after a somewhat longer pre-marital relationship phase. The first child was born shortly after the wedding. However, the overall longer intervals between the births mean that the family phase continued into a higher age than among the Turkish women.
- Among the **west German women** families were started late, after a longer phase of non-marital cohabitation with a partner and the completion of a (longer) period of vocational training or higher education. The family phase was then somewhat more compressed, but because of the late start it also ended later.

Early motherhood was desired by the **Turkish women** and could also be found among the women of the second generation, albeit in a less pronounced

manner. With regard to the process of relationship and family formation, it can be seen that the women settled for the current relationship early on and lastingly compared with the eastern European and west German survey participants. The pre-marital relationship phase lasted less than half a year (fig. 6) for almost two thirds of the women. They married for the first time at the age of 21. The mothers had their first child aged 23.3 (west German women: 26.3 years and 27.8 years). The Turkish women's early commitment can be explained not just by cultural traditions, but also by their comparatively lower levels of education. It is generally true of all three groups of origin that the lower the levels of school education, the earlier the current partnership had begun and the younger the women married.

Vocational-training took second place behind the prioritization of early family formation: just 43% and 47% respectively of the Turkish women had completed vocational training before their first child and/or were earning money before this event. While the age at the marriage and at the birth of the first child goes up only slightly in the second generation (21.6 years and 24 years respectively), the number of those who have completed vocational training prior to their first child goes up significantly (fig. 7).

FIGURE 6: TIME BETWEEN START OF THE RELATIONSHIP AND MARRIAGE BY GROUP OF ORIGIN AND GENERATION (IN %)



As a result of the comparatively early start to having a family, 62% of the Turkish women had already completed their families at the time of the survey.

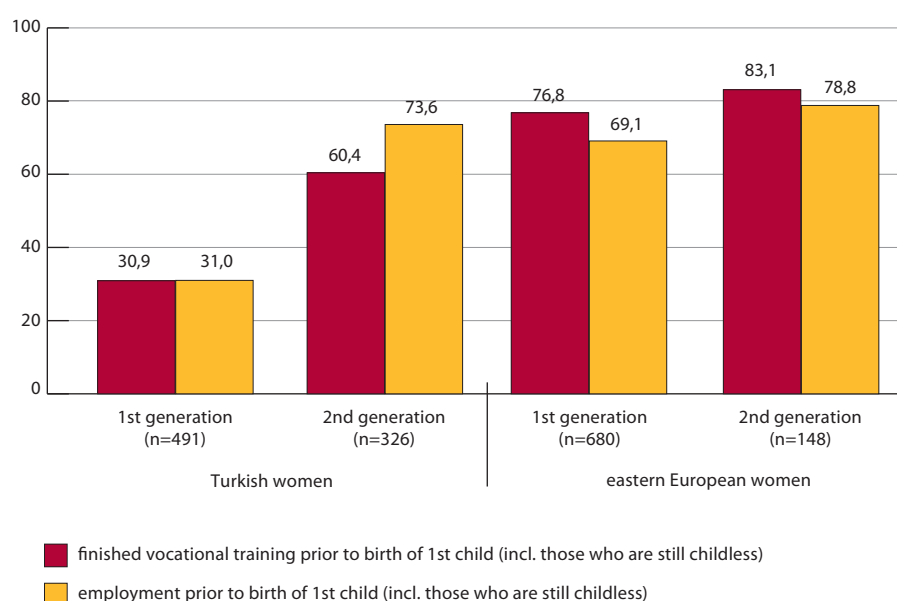
The **eastern European women** were 22.3 years old when they got married for the first time and the mothers were 23.7 when their first child was born. Two fifths of the mothers currently in their first marriage had their first child within a year of getting married.<sup>8</sup> The early start to having a family did not replace obtaining a qualification: 78% had vocational training and 71% were in employment before they had their first child. As a result of the shorter school and training times in the (successor states of the) Soviet Union such a biographical pattern was possible for the women who had their first child in their country of origin. Here too the age of marriage and giving birth to the first child went up slightly (23.5 years and 24.4 years) in the second

generation and the already high percentage of first-generation women who followed the pattern “first qualifications, then job, then child” also increased (see fig. 7).

The eastern European women were less likely than the Turkish women to have completed their families. The proportion (40%) of them that spoke out unambiguously against (further) children was similar to that of the west German women (43%).

Education “puts back” the family phase: in all the groups of origin, if the survey participants had higher levels of education, the first child was born later and, correspondingly, vocational qualifications were more frequently obtained prior to the birth of the first child (fig. 8). The increased age at the first birth in the second generation of Turkish

FIGURE 7: **QUALIFICATION AND JOB STATUS BEFORE STARTING A FAMILY BY GROUP OF ORIGIN AND GENERATION**  
(PERCENTAGES OF “YES” RESPONSES)



The group of women who had completed their vocational training prior to having their first child also includes women who have qualifications and are (still) childless. Equally the group of women who were employed prior to having their first child also includes childless survey participants who are currently working.

Source: BZgA, data set “frauen leben II” 2009, 20–44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

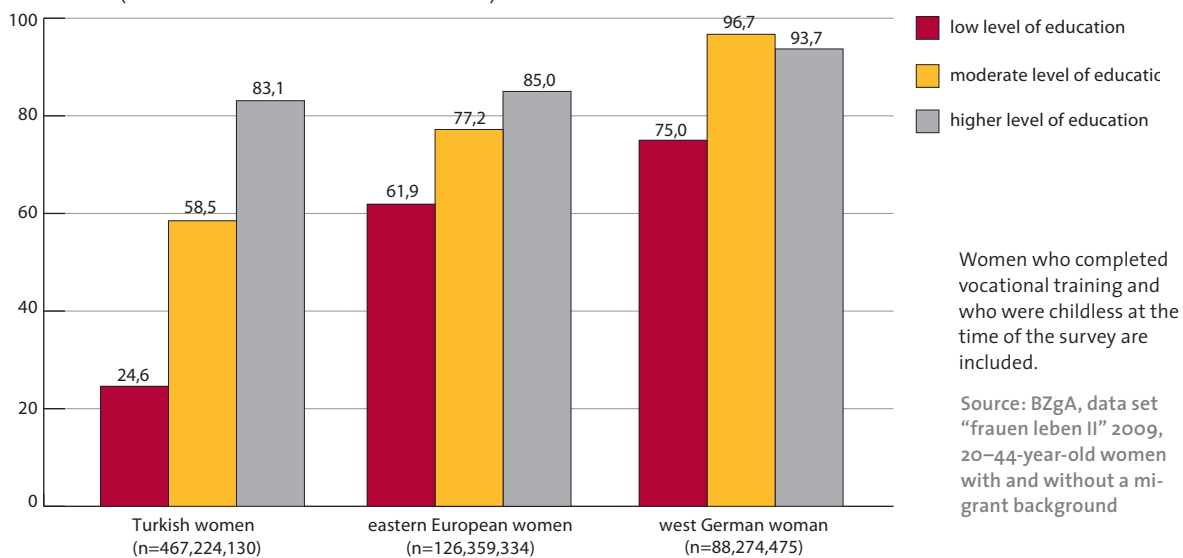
women can therefore be explained by the fact that more women had better educational qualifications, had finished vocational training and were in employment before starting a family.

The migration event itself also delays the onset of motherhood or further children: it was not just

growing up in Germany that had an influence on shifting the family phase to a somewhat higher age compared with the country of origin. The personal experience of migration also led to the first child being born later, and if the first child was born prior to the migration the interval between the first and second children was increased. The latter was par-

<sup>8</sup> When calculating the percentages the pre-marital firstborns (10%) were excluded.

FIGURE 8: FINISHED VOCATIONAL TRAINING PRIOR TO STARTING A FAMILY BY GROUP OF ORIGIN AND EDUCATION (PERCENTAGES OF “YES” RESPONSES)



ticularly true of **eastern European women** who postponed the birth of a second child because of the difficult child-compatibility in Germany of obtaining new and additional qualifications as well as compatibility of employment and family.

The desire for (more) children depended in all groups of origin on the age of the survey participants as well as on how many children they already had. In the case of the **eastern Europeans** and **west Germans** more than a third of the childless women under the age of 34 who did not speak out clearly in favour of children explained their attitude with reference to the uncertain financial situation, while

the same was only true of 13% of the childless **Turkish women** of the same age. The argument of “personal professional interests, compatibility of work and family” was also cited more often by the childless eastern European women (32%) and west German women (37%) than by the Turkish survey participants (20%).

## *Contraception in the women’s lives*

The dynamic of the family phase in the lives of the **Turkish women** meant that they only started using contraception at a late age. At a young age the majority of the unmarried women had no reason to use contraception because they were not sexually active<sup>9</sup> and after getting married young the desire to have children stood in the foreground. Almost half of the Turkish women of the first generation were 23 and older when they used contraception for the first time and a total of two thirds of them only started using contraception after they had started their families (fig. 9). Contraception only became

a biographical option when the women wanted to limit the number of children or delay the birth of a further child.

Turkish women who have higher educational qualifications and/or largely grew up in Germany also started using contraception comparatively late in life but were more likely to postpone the birth of a first child: in the second generation 31% still only started using contraception from the age of 23. The big change between the generations as well as an effect of higher levels of education was that almost

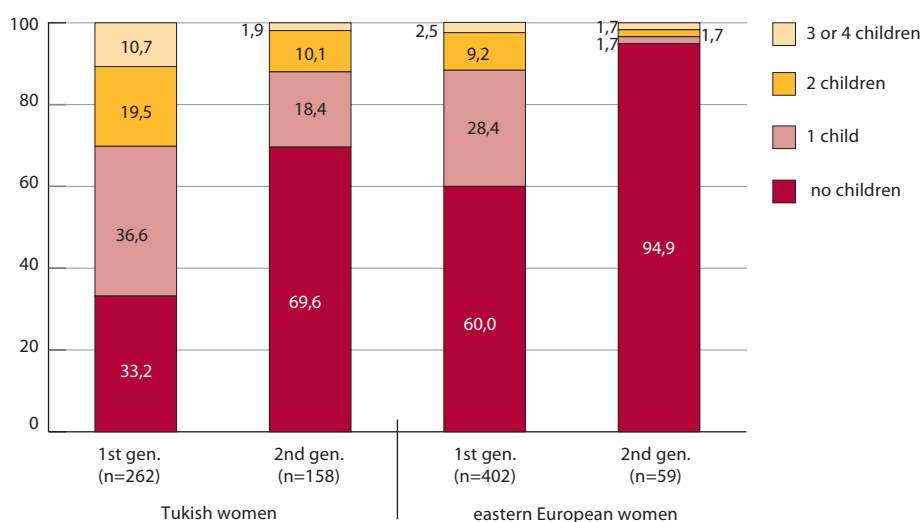
<sup>9</sup> Unmarried women were most likely to give this reason. It should be kept in mind that the taboo nature of premarital sexuality makes contraception difficult to access for unmarried women. This is true in the country of origin, but sometimes also in Germany. Other access barriers in Germany include the comparatively high cost of contraception.

70% of the women started using contraception before they had their first child. A further reason for using contraception besides limiting family size was putting off the birth of the first child, a desire that fitted in with the desire to postpone having a family.

44% of the first generation eastern European women started using contraception before they were 20 and 40% only started using contraception after the first

or subsequent child(ren). The latter is true of 80% of women who had their first child in their country of origin. According to the qualitative interviews this is to be explained by the poor availability of contraceptives in the formerly communist countries. This late start to using contraception disappears almost completely in the second generation.

FIGURE 9: NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHEN CONTRACEPTION WAS FIRST USED BY GROUP OF ORIGIN AND GENERATION (IN %)



Filter: only women in Nuremberg and Berlin

Source: BZgA, data set "frauen leben II" 2009, 20–44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

Regarding current measures, among all those who do use contraception, the Pill is the most widespread contraceptive, followed by condoms and the IUD/IUS. Vasectomies are comparatively uncommon (1–2%) in both migrant groups. Coitus interruptus is only cited to any significant extent by the Turkish group.

The IUD/IUS becomes increasingly significant in all three groups of origin with an increasing number of children, and in this connexion, when the family formation stage is over. Since migrant women are more likely than west German women to have completed their families before reaching the age of 35, younger Turkish and eastern European women are also more likely to use the IUD/IUS. The lower the number of children, the more common the use of the contraceptive pill, although the percentages vary in the different groups of origin. Among the eastern European women the low use of the Pill can also be explained by reservations towards hormonal contraception in general, as was determined in the qualitative survey.

If the migrant women had a clear current desire to have a baby they were more likely to abstain from contraception than the west German women. For west German women a desire to have children is not linked to a direct and immediate prospect of turning that desire into reality; it is something they plan to do some time in the future. One of the experts interviewed summed it up thus: for Turkish women children are taken for granted and they make conscious decisions about contraception, while for west German women contraception is taken for granted and they have to make conscious decisions about having children.

Only 37% of the **Turkish women** were familiar with the "morning after pill" (eastern European women: 61%, west German women: 94%). In the second generation this knowledge, as well as experience of the contraceptive pill and condoms in general, is more widespread than among the first generation. Regardless of the migrants' group of origin and generation the women with a high level of education are better informed than the women with lower educational qualifications.

## Pregnancy Terminations in the Women's Lives

All of the indicators with which pregnancy terminations are captured demographically, such as lifetime prevalence, the termination rate and the percentage of multiple terminations reveal that there are significantly more terminations among the two migrant groups than among west German women.

Experiences with pregnancy terminations are particularly widespread among the women of the first generation. The frequency drops significantly among the second generation (table 3). Connected to the different immigration histories is the fact that the first-generation **eastern European women's** terminations often took place in the country of origin, i.e. in the Soviet Union's successor states, which

were known for their high rates of terminations and poor access to contraception. In the **Turkish group** on the other hand the terminations of the first generation were largely performed in Germany.

In all three groups of origin women with a lower level of education were more likely to have terminated a pregnancy than women with a higher level of education. Among the migrant women neither religiosity nor marriage to a relative (this was only asked of the Turkish women) had an influence on the decision to terminate a pregnancy.

The first pregnancy termination, like the use of contraception, can be placed in the specific biographical dynamics of the family development. The question referred to the year of the first termina-

TABLE 3: PREGNANCY TERMINATIONS BY GROUP OF ORIGIN AND GENERATION (IN % AND RATES)

experiences with pregnancy terminations (lifetime prevalence)	group of origin	Turkish women n=838	eastern European women n=820	west German women n=833
total		19 %	31 %	8 %
first generation		22 %	35 %	
second generation		12 %	12 %	
average number of terminations for 100 women		27	48	9
number of live births per termination		7,2 : 1	2,9 : 1	11,5 : 1
percentages of multiple terminations, on the basis of all women with termination experience		30 %	42 %	13 %

Source: BZgA, data set "frauen leben II" 2009, 20–44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

tion. Among Turkish women the first terminations were less likely to involve single women (7%) than among eastern European women (35%; among west German women: 75%).

A distinction is to be made between the following biographically relevant effects of contraception and a first termination.

- Putting off the first birth to postpone starting a family (contraception / termination before having had a child)
- Increasing the gap between the first and second child (contraception / termination after the first child and before the second)

- An at least temporary limitation to family size after the birth of at least two children (contraception / termination after second or further children)

In the Turkish group the dominant motive is limitation of family size, in the eastern European group it is putting off starting a family and increasing the gap between the first and second child, while among the west German women the main category is putting off starting a family (table 4).

In some cases the first termination is equivalent to putting off starting a family after marriage. In the **Turkish group** 13% of all terminations took place after getting married for the first time and before the birth of the first child. Among the **eastern European women** this was true in 7% of cases (west German women: 5%).

The **Turkish women's** four most important reasons for having a termination were health reasons, too small an interval since the previous birth, an already completed family and reasons to do with their partner. Reasons relating to work and training or to being too young were not very relevant. This fits in with the prioritizing of family over work and

TABLE 4: TIMING OF THE FIRST TERMINATION IN RELATION TO SEQUENCE OF BIRTHS, BY GROUP OF ORIGIN (RANKED BY BIOGRAPHICAL FUNCTION, IN %)

Turkish women n=137	Eastern European women n=227	West German women n=60
1. limitation: 43,1	1. delaying 1st child*: 41,9	1. delaying 1st child*: 65,0
2. delaying 1st child*: 24,8	2. increasing gap between 1st and 2nd children*: 37,4	2. increasing gap between 1st and 2nd children*: 23,3
3. increasing gap between 1st and 2nd children*: 19,7	3. limitation: 15,0	3. limitation: 8,3

\* Women who did not have children at the time of the survey and women who only had one child at the time of the survey were also included in these statistics

Where percentages do not add up to 100% the missing cases relate to women who had their first termination in the same year as the birth of their first or second child, thereby preventing a classification

Source: BZgA, data set "frauen leben II" 2009, 20-44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

the concept of early motherhood that are taken for granted in this group. Even Turkish women who were under the age of 25 when they had their first termination do not say they had this termination for "age-related reasons". The **eastern European women** had a wide spectrum of reasons for their terminations, the most common relating to work and vocational training (23%). In addition they also cited the Turkish women's four main reasons. 14% of the women who were under the age of 25 when they had their first termination said it was for "age-related reasons".

Among **west German women** work and vocational training reasons dominate, followed by reasons to do with their partner. Arguments against early motherhood (too young, still in training) have a bigger significance in this group. A fifth of the women who were under the age of 25 when they had their first termination cite age-related reasons.

## Need for Information, Sources of Information, and Advice Requirements

The results reveal a great need for information and advice with regard to family planning competence as well as to better access to contraception, particularly for the women of the first generation.

**Turkish women** expressed a comparatively high need for information about various aspects of family and family planning, particularly with regard to medical questions (gynaecological issues as well as sexually transmitted infections such as AIDS) and subject matters referring to their relationship with their partner/spouse (e.g. “rights and duties of the

man and woman in the family”). We should not jump to the conclusion that the particularly high interest in the subject of “domestic violence” means that the surveyed Turkish women are affected more often by violence in the family. This response behaviour could also be the result of an increased presence of this subject in the media or of friends and acquaintances in a wider network being affected (table 5).

Among the **eastern European women** the subject arousing most interest was “diseases of the female

TABLE 5: INTEREST IN INFORMATION ABOUT SUBJECTS TO DO WITH FAMILY PLANNING BY GROUP OF ORIGIN (“YES” PERCENTAGES)

group of origin max. number of cases	Turkish women n=842	Eastern European women n=832	West German women n=839
contraception and the Pill	51,9	24,4	31,1
pregnancy and birth	41,0	26,0	22,2
what to do when attempts to get pregnant fail	43,0	23,4	18,5
what to do when an unwanted pregnancy occurs*	54,7	28,7	26,3
satisfying sexuality in the relationship	61,7	41,2	39,1
sexually transmitted infections, e.g. AIDS	73,4	37,5	41,5
diseases of the female sexual organs	90,4	73,7	74,1
child benefit	53,2	51,6	35,4
rights and duties of men and women in the family	78,8	42,9	38,3
what to do when violence occurs in the family	72,1	31,5	34,5

\* The interest in information about this subject was only asked about in the second project phase (telephone survey in Nuremberg and Berlin)

Source: BZgA, data set “frauen leben II” 2009, 20–44-year-old women with and without a migrant background

sexual organs”, albeit at a much lower level, followed by a desire for information about child benefit and subjects to do with their partner. In all three groups of origin, women with low educational qualifications have a greater interest in information about subjects to do with their partner and about “sexually transmitted infections”.

When it comes to questions to do with family planning the **Turkish women** preferred gynaecologists and other doctors as their source of information

<sup>10</sup> The percentage of Turkish women citing gynaecologists was 26%, other doctors were cited by 19%.

(44%).<sup>10</sup> Almost as many women would also prefer family and women’s advice centres. Print media and the internet (both 20%) as well as television and radio (14%) play a comparatively small role and this is particularly true of women with a low level of education.

The **eastern European women**, like the west German group, prefer to obtain their information from the internet and via print media (both almost 54%).

In third place are gynaecologists and other doctors (30%).<sup>11</sup> Internet use as a way to access information is dependent on level of education in all three groups of origin.

That advice is also offered in the language of origin and that the advising person is familiar with the women's culture of origin and religion is "very important" or "important" to more than 70% of the **Turkish women**. For the **eastern European women** this is less the case (42% "very important" and 39% "important"); this could be explained by the fact that the eastern European group largely consists of ethnic Germans. The great significance of the mother tongue in the Turkish group is mainly

found among members of the first generation and can also be seen in the fact that 94% of them wanted to conduct the interview in Turkish. However, in the second generation too, i.e. among those who were born here or who came to Germany as children, almost half of the women still requested the interview to be conducted in Turkish.

With regard to the gender of the advisers, two thirds of all the **Turkish women** wanted to be informed by women. Among the **eastern European women** this was only a "(very) important" factor for 55% of them (west German women: 45%).

## Conclusion

This current study was able to reveal different needs regarding family planning among the migrant women. The results can be used for shaping concrete advice services and local family policies, when specifying local framework conditions and target-group profiles. In addition the following aspects should be emphasized:

- First generation migrant women, and particularly those who came to Germany in the context of a marriage from countries in which contraception is not very widespread, need special services regarding information and access to contraception. Effective strategies with regard to accessing this group are needed.
- There is a need to show women ways in which they can combine work and family, particularly tailored to early motherhood. It is necessary to develop training services for women who have not completed training programmes prior to starting a family. Women who want further or new qualifications after immigrating and who want to integrate also need ways to make family and training or integration compatible.
- Special access and services must be developed for migrant women with low qualifications.

In order to do justice to local concentrations of second-generation women intercultural approaches in sexual education should be further developed and widely anchored. Girls without a migrant background can also benefit from this.

<sup>11</sup> Among the eastern European and west German groups gynaecologists were also cited more often than other doctors (eastern European women: 20% compared to 11%, west German women: 17% compared with 8%).



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## At a Glance

Women with a migrant background make up 18% of the female population in the Federal Republic of Germany. More than two fifths of these women are between the ages of 20 and 44, thus at an age at which family planning and the processes of starting a family are relevant. Since there is to date little fundamental information, differentiated by background, about this heterogeneous group on the subjects of starting a family, contraception and pregnancy terminations, the BZgA commissioned the study “frauen leben: family planning and migration in women’s lives”. The study concentrates on the two largest migrant groups: women with a Turkish, and women with an eastern European background (in the latter case, in particular women from the European and Asian successor states of the former Soviet Union, including those of ethnic German background). The control group is made up of western German women with no migrant background.

The **eastern European women** of the first generation largely came to Germany either with their families or single and without children (each approx. 40%). The **Turkish women** usually came to Germany married but (still) without children (61%). For many of them the move to Germany took place close in time to their wedding, soon after which, in turn, many had their first child. The special situation these marriage-migrants find themselves in after moving to Germany means they need extra support and help with assimilating.

The **Turkish women** generally possess very **low levels of education/training**. The marriage-migrants in particular often came to Germany without vocational qualifications and little knowledge of the German language. In the second generation the educational situation is more favourable, but here too 27% of the women still do not have any vocational training. The **eastern European group** has overall a high level of education/training; however the foreign qualifications obtained in the country of origin are often not recognized in Germany.

The **income and earning potential** resulting from the migrants’ educational background is often difficult. In the **Turkish group** the women generally only make a small contribution to the family income; they have menial jobs and low incomes. In the **eastern European group** the women contribute

more to the family income and they work less often as unskilled or semi-skilled labour. Nevertheless in this group, just as in the Turkish group, almost a third of the women are dependent on support measures from the state.

Younger migrant women are more likely to live in “**traditional family-oriented**” arrangements than younger west German women. While almost two thirds of the 20 to 34-year-old **Turkish women** and almost half of the **eastern European women** of the same age are already married and have children, this is only true for one fifth of the younger **west German women**. Relationship configurations other than marriage are almost non-existent among the younger Turkish women (7%), whereas 24% of the eastern European women live in such arrangements. Marriage and motherhood are closely linked in the Turkish group.

The (**marital**) **partner** is usually from the same group of origin. Almost all of the **Turkish women** have chosen their current partner from their own ethnic group. A quarter of them are related to their partner/spouse. Among the **eastern European women** intra-ethnic relationships also dominate. They do, however, become a lot less significant for the second generation.

Female migrants are not just **more likely** than west German women to have children, they also have **more** children. The **Turkish migrant women** over the age of 34 have an average of 2.4 children, the **eastern European women** of the same age an average of 1.8 children (west German women: 1.5). Merely 6% and 8% respectively do not have children (west German women: 17%). While the total number of children both migrant groups can imagine having goes down with increasing levels of education, west German women with high educational qualifications are more likely to be able to imagine having three and more children than those with lower levels of education.

The three groups of origin are very different regarding the **time in their lives when they have children and the speed at which they complete their families**. The **Turkish women** married early and soon had their first child. Vocational training was less of a priority than starting a family early. After further births in quick succession the family is com-

plete at a young age. The **eastern European women** also got married and had their first child at a comparatively young age, although most women in this group had already had job training under their belt by the time they started a family. In this group the women took longer to complete their families because they left bigger gaps between children, so they were older than the Turkish women when their families were complete. The **west German women** started families comparatively late. This phase was somewhat more compressed but nevertheless the family-forming phase was completed later than among the migrant women.

**Education and migration** “delay” the **family** phase. For all three groups it is true that the higher the level of education, the later the women started having children and the more likely they were to finish their education/vocational training before starting a family. The delay in starting a family among the second generation of **Turkish women** goes hand in hand with a higher level of education. Their own experience of the migration event also has a delaying effect.

**Turkish women of the first generation** started using **contraception** comparatively late, often only after they had started their families (66%). The background here is that in this group sexuality is closely linked to marriage and starting a family very soon after marriage is usually taken for granted. Contraception is frequently only necessary when the couple want to limit the number of children or delay the time at which they have more children. In comparison members of the second generation were significantly more likely to start using contraception before they had their first child.

The **Pill** is the **most widespread form of contraceptive** in all three groups. However, it is used to a somewhat lesser extent by the **eastern European women**, not least because they have fundamental reservations about hormonal forms of contraception. Migrants use the IUD/IUS (the “coil”) relatively often and it becomes more significant when the number of children is higher, or when the women have completed their families. As a result of the early age at which these women started their families this is truer for the migrant woman than for the west German women.

**Pregnancies are terminated** more often in both of the migrant groups than in the west German group.

This is particularly true for members of the first generation. The most important reasons cited by **Turkish women** for terminating a pregnancy were health reasons, whereas **eastern European women** and **west German women** were more likely to cite their job or their education. In all three groups women with a lower level of education were more likely to have terminated a pregnancy than women with higher educational qualifications.

There are clear differences between the groups regarding the **time at which the women terminate a pregnancy for the first time**. In the **Turkish group** the first termination predominantly took place during or at the end of their family-forming phase (63%). The **eastern European women** and the **west German women** in particular were more likely to have terminated a pregnancy for the first time prior to the birth of their first child (42% and 65% respectively).

The migrants’ **need for information and advice** on the subject of family (planning) is high. This is particularly true for the **Turkish group** and generally for the women with a low level of education.

Gynaecologists and other doctors are amongst the **preferred sources of information**. When it comes to questions of family planning they are clearly preferred by half of the **Turkish women**. Almost as many women would also turn to family advice centres and women’s advice centres. The **eastern European women**, like the west German group, prefer to get information via the internet and the print media. However, gynaecologists and other doctors are still in third place here. For all three groups it is true that the higher the women’s level of education, the more they use the internet as a source of information.

Language problems and an insufficient cultural sensitivity can be significant **barriers to taking advantage of information and advice services**. It is particularly important to the **Turkish women** that services regarding family planning matters are also offered in their mother tongue and that the counsellor is familiar with their culture and religion of origin.

## THE RESEARCH PROJECT

### DURATION

December 2006 – February 2010

### SPONSORSHIP

Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BZgA)

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### METHOD

a) Quantitative survey:  
2513 women aged 20–44,

N=842 with a Turkish migrant background  
N=832 with an eastern European migrant back-  
ground

N=839 women without a migrant background  
Random sampling from the local inhabitant reg-  
isters, telephone surveys, standardized question-  
naire, use of Turkish-speaking interviewers and,  
in Nuremberg and Berlin, Russian-speaking inter-  
viewers

b) Qualitative survey:

45 interviews with individuals, 18 group discus-  
sions with women, mainly with a Turkish or east-  
ern European migrant background, 10 interviews  
with experts

### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the connexion between family planning and migrant experiences among women aged 20–44 with a Turkish (n = 842) or an eastern European migrant background (particularly from the Soviet Union successor states, n = 832). The standardized survey was conducted on the basis of random sampling in four west German cities. The survey of west German women in the same cities serves as a control. The study picks up the key points of the research approach of the study “frauen leben. Familienplanung im Lebenslauf von Frauen” [women's lives. Family planning in women's lives] (1998–2001): a comprehensive understanding of family planning as a private life choice, the inclusion of life prospects as well as the combination of a standardized telephone survey with a qualitative sub-survey to take the women's subjective opinions into account. The analysis within the migrant groups makes further distinctions (particularly by education and generation membership). The study therefore does not (only) focus on cultural differences, it also takes account of the social situation of migrant women.

Among the central results are the clear differences between the groups regarding the dynamics of the reproductive biography which are in part the result of different migrant profiles (significance of marriage-related migration, emigration of ethnic Germans from former homelands, immigration “filters”). Women with a Turkish migrant background in Germany tend to start their family phase early and also end it early after having had several children. The family phase of the eastern European women also began early, either in their country of origin or in Germany, but then stretched out for a longer period. The migration event itself and, within the migrant groups, growing up in Germany as well as a higher level of education all “postpone” the family phase. The women's contraceptive behaviour and their pregnancy terminations can be explained within this dynamic. Conclusions are drawn regarding the need for information and advice about family planning issues.



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Aufklärung**

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