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# The process of family reunification among original guest-workers in Germany

Der Prozess der Familienzusammenführung bei den ursprünglichen „Gastarbeitern“ in Deutschland

## Abstract

This article examines the process of family reunification among original guest-workers in Germany. Contrary to conventional accounts, the findings indicate that the bulk of family reunification occurred for the most part before the halt on recruitment was imposed in the mid-seventies. Using data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP), I find that approximately half of wives who joined their husbands in Germany migrated in the same year as their husbands. In fact, it does not seem that the ban on labor recruitment had an accelerating effect on the reunification process, as it is generally assumed. According to the obtained results, the reform of the children's allowances in 1975 had a clearer and stronger impact in explaining the family migration decisions of original guest-workers in Germany. On the other hand, variables related to the macroeconomic conditions at the origin and destination countries, the size of the household, the age of the children, and the labor market characteristics of the mother are important to account for differences in the time that elapsed until male immigrants had their families reunified abroad.

## Zusammenfassung

In diesem Beitrag wird der Prozess der Familienzusammenführung bei den ursprünglichen Gastarbeitern in Deutschland untersucht. Im Gegensatz zur gängigen Darstellung legen meine Erkenntnisse nahe, dass die Mehrzahl der Familienzusammenführungen schon vor dem Anwerbestopp Mitte der 1970er Jahre stattfand. Unter Verwendung von Daten des Sozio-oekonomischen Panels (SOEP) stellte ich fest, dass ungefähr die Hälfte der Ehefrauen, die ihren Männern nach Deutschland folgten, im gleichen Jahr wie ihre Männer auswanderten. Tatsächlich scheint es nicht so zu sein, dass – wie gemeinhin angenommen – der Anwerbestopp einen beschleunigenden Effekt auf die Familienzusammenführung hatte. Nach den vorliegenden Ergebnissen hatte die Kindergeldreform im Jahre 1975 einen eindeutigeren und stärkeren Einfluss auf die Erklärung der Entscheidungen der ursprünglichen Gastarbeiter in Deutschland hinsichtlich der Familienzusammenführungen. Andererseits sind aber auch andere Variablen, die sich auf die makroökonomischen Bedingungen in den Herkunftsländern und im Aufnahmeland, die Haushaltsgröße, das Alter der Kinder sowie die Arbeitsmarktcharakteristika der Mütter beziehen, für die Erklärung der unterschiedlichen Zeiträume, die vergingen, ehe die männlichen Einwanderer ihre Familien im Ausland wieder zusammenführten, bedeutsam.



*Key words:* family reunification, joint couple migration, staggered family migration, immigration policy, context of reception

*Schlagworte:* Familienzusammenführung, gemeinsame Migration als Paar, zeitlich versetzte Familienmigration, Einwanderungspolitik, Aufnahmekontext.

## I. Introduction

The settlement of immigrant families and the development of permanent immigrant communities are usually presented by politicians as an unforeseen and unwanted outcome of their original decisions to admit foreign workers for solving temporary labor shortages. Accordingly, family reunification is commonly viewed as a major threat for the success of immigration policies in most European countries.

On the one hand, family-based chain migration is believed to exponentially enlarge the number of foreign residents and, therefore, to reduce the states' capacity to control immigration. On the other, family reunification is also viewed as a double-edged sword with regard to the integration process. First of all, migrants arriving through kinship links are thought not to be economically motivated in their decision to migrate and, therefore, are likely to constitute an increasing burden on the taxpayer. The report elaborated by the Kirkhope Commission to guide the future immigration policy of the British Conservative Party in 2004, clearly illustrated this position: *"Family reunion immigration is the biggest source of the low skilled workers that depress GDP per capita [...]. Immigrants from all over the world who come in on work permits do pay their way. Immigrants who come in through family reunion are usually subsidised by the UK taxpayer."*

Secondly, it has become a commonplace to blame family reunification as being responsible for increasing closure trends within immigrant communities and their failed integration into the host societies. In this line of reasoning, the French Minister of Employment fingered polygamy as one of the reasons behind the rioting in Paris' suburbs in November of 2005. Gérard Larcher said that multiple marriages among immigrants was one reason for the racial discrimination which ethnic minorities faced in the job market. Overly large polygamous families sometimes led to anti-social behaviour among youths who lacked a father figure, making employers wary of hiring ethnic minorities, he explained (Financial Times, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2005).

In this context of increasing politicization of the issue of family reunification among third countries' nationals within the European Union, it is surprising how little is still known about how the process of family reunification actually works, and who are the relatives most likely to reunify. Our knowledge about how family linkages affect the volume and composition of international flows at different stages of the migration process, or how family ties affect the integration of immigrants in their host societies is still very limited. One of the most extended ideas about family reunification is that wives tend to join their husbands only once they have a stable job in the host country; in other words, that reunited wives are more likely to be economically dependent on their husbands than other female migrants. However, we

lack of empirical studies that have tested whether this is true or not. Moreover, we do not even know the average time that it takes for the wife to join her husband abroad, and what are the factors that tend to delay or accelerate this process.

These are all relevant issues because of their clear policy implications. Policy makers would be able to design more effective programs dealing with the newcomers' reception if they had better information about the size of the flows, their approximate time of arrival, their characteristics and their available networks at the host country. Moreover, they could also utilize this information in order to design more realistic admission policies, without precluding family migration in general but favoring those types of family-linked migration that are known to be more beneficial for the integration process.

The central aim of this article is precisely to shed some light on these issues by examining the process of spouses' and children's reunification among original male guest-workers in Germany.<sup>1</sup>

## II. Postwar migration to Germany. Causes and timing of the family reunification process

German authorities signed a bilateral recruitment agreement with Italy in 1955 for solving labor shortages in the agriculture sector of the region of Baden-Württemberg. Initially, this agreement was presented as a temporary solution for a sector-specific problem. However, as the German economy recovered from the war's damages, labor shortages extended also to the industrial sector and additional recruitment agreements were signed with Spain and Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968). Recruitment was systematically justified on an economic rationale according to which foreign labor was the safest and cheapest way of avoiding the negative effects of labor shortages, without putting at risk the employment of native workers in the future. In fact, temporariness and rotation were proclaimed the core principles of the recruitment system in order to assure that foreign workers will fulfil their buffer function. They were issued a one-year work permit, generally renewable for one more year as long as no damage for the German economy was appreciated. After this two-year period, foreign workers were expected to leave and being replaced by new recruits if the employer still needed a worker to fill the vacant position.

In accordance with the principles of temporariness and rotation, family reunification and settlement were officially discouraged, especially for Turkish workers. In fact, the bilateral treaties that regulated the recruitment of foreign labor from Italy, Spain and Greece included the possibility of authorizing family reunion if "adequate

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1 By focusing on adult first generation immigrants who had married prior to migration, I exclude from the analysis the process of family formation and, in particular, the practice of importing spouses by single immigrants living in Germany, which I have already analyzed in González-Ferrer, 2006.

housing” was provided.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, the German-Turkish agreement omitted even this conditional possibility. Moreover, it established a rotation stipulation that explicitly limited their period of residence to a maximum of two years. And these discriminations were not eliminated until the agreement was revised in 1964.

Immigration steadily increased since the early sixties. After the interruption derived from the short economic recession of 1966, the annual number of foreign entries rocketed to almost one million in 1970. The total foreign population residing in Germany that year approached three million; and a substantial proportion were women despite of the fact that labor migration to Germany has been traditionally characterized as a male-dominated phenomenon. In fact, the increasing demand for female labor in sectors such as cleaning and restaurant services, textile industry and food processing factories, favored policies aimed at recruiting higher numbers of women in the sending areas as soon as the early sixties. In addition, German employers had often utilized the traditional visa system to hire their male guest-workers’ spouses because nominal recruitment (comparing to the anonymous system) entailed noticeable advantages for both employers and migrant workers (Werner, 2001). First of all, on the employer’s side, nominal recruitment permitted to fulfill job vacancies faster than the standard procedure of anonymous recruitment. In addition, by hiring the wives of their guest-workers, employers usually assured that their trained migrant workers stayed, avoided the payment of the new recruitment fee, and sometimes they also avoided the price of health care insurance for the wife. On the migrant worker’s side, nominal recruitment allowed migrant families to circumvent most legal obstacles for family reunification; in addition, it also represented the possibility of accumulating more savings in a shorter time.

In the early seventies, the average length of stay of migrant workers in Germany had clearly prolonged more than it was expected. This was a clear indication that foreign labor was becoming less mobile and flexible and, therefore, increasingly unable to perform the buffer function for which it was thought. In this context, the German authorities tried to reduce the number of annual entries and raised the recruitment fee from DM 300 to DM 1.000 in July of 1973. But this measure revealed absolutely insufficient and a few months later, when the Arab oil-producing countries announced the oil embargo, the government decided to impose a total halt on recruitment (23<sup>rd</sup> of November).

Labor entries immediately dropped. However, most accounts of post-war migration to Germany commonly portray the halt on recruitment as a failure because it did not manage to stop completely further immigration. Even more, the halt is usually argued to have transformed original guest-workers into permanent immigrants who, instead of returning home, decided to bring their families, which had been left behind up to that moment (Mark and Miller, 1980; Martin, 1998; Bade, 2003). For in-

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2 According to Bendix (1990), the housing requirement was an effective manner of limiting family reunification without banning it overtly. Trade-unions exerted a strict surveillance on employers to secure that wage conditions were respected. However, housing conditions were usually overlooked, as it was a foreigners’ specific issue. This lack of control favored employers, who often paid very cheap housing in dormitories and barracks for their foreign workers that, in turn, had to delay family reunification.

stance, D. Massey and A. Constant in their study of return migration among immigrants in Germany stated:

“The first guestworkers were generally young men unaccompanied by wives or children. [...] Although some of the migrants may indeed have ‘rotated’, they usually returned home only for short visits before coming back to jobs in Germany. The situation changed dramatically in late 1973. [...] Germany suspended guestworkers’ recruitment. Authorities expected the migrant population to dwindle slowly as visas expired and the guests rotated out. They were surprised, however, that neither employers nor guestworkers behaved according to plan. Employers wanted to avoid the costs of recruitment and retraining, and thus sought to extend the visas of the foreign workers they already had. The migrants, meanwhile, did not want to give up their good jobs and steady income, so they stayed put. Rather than leaving, they sought to sponsor the entry of their wives and their children. After dipping slightly in 1974, the foreign population of Germany rose and its composition shifted increasingly from workers to dependents” (2002: 6).

In order to reduce the number of family-linked entries, the German government initiated a harsh campaign against family reunification. In November of 1974, a decree prohibited the issuing of initial work permits for foreigners who had entered Germany after the halt on recruitment (“Stichtagsregelung”), most of which were adult relatives of original guest-workers. In addition, the monthly rates paid to families as children’s allowances (“Kindergeld”), as well as their eligibility criteria, were reformed in 1975. According to the new legislation, foreigners who were working in Germany would receive the new higher rates only for those of their children who resided in Germany. This legal change implied a potential economic loss of 200 DM each month for a Turkish worker with four children, all residing in Turkey in 1974. It is evident that this measure created a strong incentive for foreign workers to bring their children (and spouse) to Germany, if they still lived in their homeland by the time the reform was approved. Moreover, the impact of these measures is expected to have been stronger for Turkish and Yugoslavian migrations, which were in the midst of a phase of massive expansion when the restrictions were imposed.

### III. Previous evidence and hypotheses

Most of the empirical studies concerned with the issue of family reunification have focused on either the impact it has on the growth of annual entries and the total foreign population residing in the host countries (Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1986, 1989), or on its effects over the labor quality and economic performance of immigrants as a whole (Duleep and Regets, 1992; Duleep and Regets, 1996; Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1997). Yet, other related issues such as which immigrants do bring their relatives to the host country, when do they so and why, remain largely unexplored.

The decision to reunify the family abroad has been commonly viewed as the reverse of the return decision, as we have seen in the foregoing description of the German experience. It is often assumed that immigrants who bring their families are those immigrants who decide to stay permanently at destination. However, if repeat

migration is a common practice of immigrants in many countries (see Constant, 2003, for Germany), family reunification and return migration do not need to be mutually exclusive but events occurring at different stages of the migration process, which should be analyzed separately.<sup>3</sup>

As Khoo (2003) stated in a recent piece of research "... the relation between family sponsorship and permanent settlement (or return migration) is not a simple one for empirical analysis. While it can be hypothesized that immigrants who want to sponsor or have sponsored their close relatives are more likely to want settle permanently, it is also possible that those who decide to settle permanently are also more likely to want to sponsor their relatives to join them" (180). She concluded, with data for a recent cohort of immigrants in Australia, that there exists a strong association between immigrants' permanent settlement and family sponsorship decisions. Her findings suggested that immigrants who have sponsored their close relatives, particularly parents and siblings, are much more likely to settle permanently than migrants who have not. Besides, this relationship appeared to be stronger for skilled and business immigrants than for all migrants.

However, there are no empirical studies that allow us to establish whether this strong connection between permanent settlement and family reunification holds also for relatives other than siblings and parents, in particular for spouses and children, which actually constitute the bulk of total family reunification. In most countries, this lack of evidence has not prevented the extended belief that immigrant men do not bring their family until they decide to settle permanently in the host country. Although this idea appears fairly reasonable with regard to the reunification of young children, the reunification of spouses and children of working age might follow a different pattern.

Constant and Massey (2002) have stated that the relationship between the presence of a spouse in the origin country and the immigrants' decision to return to their homeland is expected to depend basically on the individuals' initial reasons for migration. If migrants, as the Neo-Classical Economics of Migration assumes (Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro, 1976), are income-maximizing individuals who move in response to the higher wages in the receiving nation, and will stay abroad as long as there is no reduction in the bi-national wage difference, they are expected to be more willing to endure relatively long separations until the proper arrangements can be made for family reunification. On the contrary, if migrants are target-earners who return home as soon as they manage to remit or save the amount of money they need, as the New Economics of Labor Migration argued (Stark, 1991), to have a spouse and children at origin would encourage migrants to work longer hours abroad. However, bringing the spouse and children of working age to the immigration country might help to meet faster the savings' target of the household (if they work) and, thus, would shorten their stay abroad. Therefore, in advance, it remains

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3 It is possible to think, for instance, of a male immigrant who arrives alone to the country of migration, goes back to his home country after a year abroad, stays there for several months and then migrates again with his oldest son; later on, he brings his wife and their youngest child, stays for several more years in the immigration country until they all definitely return to their country of origin.

unclear which of these two types of migrants (target-earners or income-maximizers) would tend to sponsor their spouse's migration more rapidly. Moreover, original reasons for migration are not directly observable, and they can also vary both across individuals and over time, which makes particularly difficult to test the type of hypotheses formulated above.

The few empirical works that have examined migration-related separation of spouses have usually found that more educated wives are more likely to migrate jointly with their husbands (versus remaining behind). At least, partners who participate in joint couple migration are usually more educated than those who followed a staggered migration pattern. Gupta (2002) conjectured that education improves women's status overall and results in more equalitarian partners' relationship, which in turn might make wives more likely to insist in migrating with their husbands or, alternatively, to succeed in persuading them of not migrating at all (61). Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994), on the other hand, also found that access to social networks composed of the wife's kin works as a key factor in the process of the joint couple's migration (182).

Children have usually appeared in migration research just as an important factor influencing the likelihood and timing of their parents' own migration. While young children and a larger number of them seem to increase men's odds of migrating (Massey et al., 1987; Espinosa and Massey, 1997), the rate of movement among women remains quite low, especially if they have young children (Brettell 1986; Kanaiaupuni 1995, 1998; Hoodar 1992). On the contrary, older children and large family size increase females' mobility (Escobar et al., 1987; Stier and Tienda, 1992; Kanaiaupuni, 1995). The evidence concerning the relationship between the presence and number of children and return migration have also confirmed, also in the case of immigrants in Germany, that having children at the home country increases the odds of return for male immigrants, whereas having children in the host country reduces those odds (Dustman, 1993; Steiner and Velling, 1994; Schmidt, 1994; Constant and Massey, 2002). Moreover, Dustman (2003) has recently concluded that the size of such a negative effect of children on return varies by the gender of children, at least for immigrants of Turkish origin; having only daughters in Germany still reduces the odds of their parents' return to their homeland but less than when they have only sons in Germany.

However, none of the studies I have reviewed so far pay attention directly to the determinants and timing of children's migration. The existing literature seems to assume that children either do not migrate at all because their parents are temporary migrants; or if they do, they migrate with their mothers whenever the family decides to move and settle abroad permanently. This view largely reflects the idea that family and economic motives are mutually exclusive in migration decisions, which contradict recent studies that demonstrate that family reunification flows are not irresponsive to the changing economic conditions in the host country (Jennissen, 2004).

## Joint couple migration

In the German case, family reunification has been usually conceived as a consequence of the halt on recruitment and the transformation of the original guest-workers into permanent immigrants. However, as I suggested in section 2, the intense demand for labor created strong incentives for both joint couple migration and wives' reunification in Germany a long time prior to the halt was imposed in 1973. Although we cannot ascertain the overall magnitude of joint couple migration in the post-war migration experience due to data limitations, we can at least hypothesize that wives are expected to be more likely to migrate jointly with their husbands to Germany the more educated they are and the less children they have at the time their husband migrates. On the contrary, more children, especially if they are young, are expected to reduce the odds of couple's joint migration versus delayed wife's reunification.

On the other hand, if joint couple migration is a family strategy aimed at saving more money in the shortest time, wives with pre-migration work experience would be more likely to participate in joint couple's migration than wives who had never worked. However, there is also a possibility that the more strongly attached the wife is to the labor force in the home country, the more likely it is for her to delay migration in order to assure that her potential job at the country of destination or, at least, her husband's wage will be enough to maintain the family's standard of living. In line with this reasoning, which highlights the importance of economic incentives in explaining couples' migration decisions, joint couple migration will be more likely in periods of high female labor demand in the immigration country. Moreover, joint couple migration is likely to increase as the migration flow matures and the information about opportunities for female employment in the host country expands throughout the sending communities.

## Wife's reunification

If the husband migrates first, the spouses' separation is expected to lengthen with wife's years of work experience, number of children, unemployment in the host country and economic growth at origin, because all these factors increase the opportunity cost of migrating for the wife. On the contrary, the time that elapses until the wife's reunification will be shorter if the husband migrates during a period of massive recruitment, which increases the opportunities of the wife's employability in the country of destination. Not only macro-economic conditions in the host country but, in general, changes in the context of reception as a whole are likely to affect the intensity and timing of spouses' migration. In the German experience, both the halt on recruitment and the reform of the children's allowances are expected to have accelerated the process of family reunification among those original guest-workers who still had their families at their homeland at the time these measures were adopted.



## Children's reunification

On the other hand, the pace of children's reunification is expected to be dependent on four major groups of factors: the child's characteristics, the structure of the household and its socio-economic characteristics, the migration of other members of the household, and the context of reception.

Older children are likely to be taken to the immigration country earlier than younger ones, since they are less demanding in terms of time and care. If Dustman is right about the lower cost that daughters entail for their parents' return migration, compared to sons, there is a possibility that daughters are also likely to be brought to the immigration country earlier than their brothers. Regardless of gender, the time that elapses until the reunification takes place is expected to increase with the number of siblings, since each sibling entails a potential competitor for a trip ticket. However, the result of this competition is likely to vary depending on the children's ages. In principle, I would expect for children whose siblings are all of school age to be taken abroad quicker than those who still have siblings of pre-school age.

The mother's migration is expected to be one of the most powerful predictors of children's migration. First of all, young children are not expected to migrate unless the mother is residing in the immigration country because of strong gender ideologies concerning childbearing tasks. On the other hand, and partially because of the same reasons, mothers are expected to be more strongly attached to their children's daily presence and more afraid of their possible estrangement if separation prolongs; therefore, the mother's migration is expected to accelerate children's reunification abroad. The effect of other sibling's migration is not clear in advance; it probably depends on the children's ages and on the stage in the settlement process.

Differences across nationalities are also predicted. The legal privileges enjoyed by Italians, as a result of their EEC membership, are likely to increase the likelihood of joint couple migration and to accelerate the pace of both the wife's and children's reunification. In contrast, geographical and social distance between Turkey and Germany is likely to hamper joint couple migration among Turkish immigrants and delay their process of family reunification.

## IV. Data, samples and methods

The empirical analyses carried out in the next section are based on the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP), a representative longitudinal study of private households in the entire Federal Republic of Germany, which was launched in 1984. Since its inception, it over-sampled households whose head was of Turkish, Spanish, Italian, Greek or (former) Yugoslavian nationality, in order to obtain a representative sub-sample of the immigrant population living in Germany at that time. Each adult member within the selected households is asked a set of retrospective questions about their family and job biographies since the age of 16. Combining the survey and biographical retrospective information, I constructed two

samples to investigate the process of wives' and children's reunification separately. The first sample is made of 407 immigrant couples where the wife migrated the same year as her husband or later.<sup>4</sup> The second sample is made of 431 father-child dyads in which the child is younger than 17 at migration.<sup>5</sup>

*Table 1.* Characteristics of reunited wives at the time of their husband's migration

Variable	All	Joint couple migration (both partners migrate the same year)	Wife's delayed reunification (wife migrates at least one year later)
<b>Wife's age</b>	28.6 (7.0)	28.8 (7.6)	28.4 (6.1)
<b>Husband's age</b>	31.5 (6.4)	31.6 (5.4)	31.3 (7.1)
<b>Wife's age at marriage</b>	20.6 (4.1)	21.2 (3.9)	19.9 (4.3)
<b>Years of marriage</b>	11.0 (7.8)	7.9 (6.6)	14.9 (7.4)
<b>Wife's education</b>	8.1 (1.6)	8.4 (1.8)	7.7 (1.1)
<b>Husband's education</b>	9.2 (2.0)	9.5 (2.1)	8.7 (1.7)
<b>Ever worked</b>	56%	65.5%	44.2%
<b>Years of work experience (if ever worked)</b>	4.7 (5.4)	4.5 (4.9)	5.1 (6.1)
<b>% childless</b>	26.5%	32.3%	19.3%
<b>Number of minor kids (if any)</b>	2.4 (1.2)	2.1 (1.0)	2.7 (1.3)
<b>% Turks</b>	38%	29%	50%
<b>Date of husband's migration</b>	1970	1967	1971
<b>Years until reunification</b>		0	7.4 (5.1)
<b>N=407</b>		226 (55.5%)	181 (44.5%)

Source: GSOEP, 1984-2000. Unweighted data

4 At the time GSOEP was launched, approximately 95% of married foreign men had been already joined by their spouses in Germany. Of the remaining 5% (56 men), half of them ended up bringing their spouses at some point during the observation period (1984-2000). Thus, the sub-sample of men who never brought their partner to Germany before returning home are too few and hardly representative of the whole population of those who returned before bringing their spouses in Germany. Furthermore, GSOEP does not provide information on the spouses who never came to Germany. Due to all these reasons, I decided to restrict the analysis to the sub-sample of couples that actually reunified in Germany, and examine how long it took them to join each other in Germany, instead of examining the determinants of the decision to reunify.

5 I have excluded from the sample children who joined their parents in Germany after the age of 16 because the German immigration law only permits family reunification of children younger than 17. Obviously, the migration decision of adult children is likely to be a more independent one compared to children, and governed by different factors. I have also excluded children whose fathers migrated after the halt on recruitment (1973), in order not to mix children of original guest-workers with children of other type of migrants such as asylum seekers.

Table 1 summarizes the main characteristics of the couples included in my sample, measured at the time of the husband's migration. More than half of the wives in these couples migrated to Germany the same year as their husbands, which is quite unexpected according to the conventional portrayals of postwar migration to Germany<sup>6</sup>.

Table 2 summarizes the main characteristics of children reunified in Germany by fathers who had migrated prior to the halt; children are classified depending on whether they migrated jointly with, later, or earlier than their mother.

*Table 2.* Type of child's migration (earlier, joint, later than mother)

Type	Total	Turk	Yugoslav	Greek	Italian	Spanish
<b>Joint</b>	62.0	55.8	75.6	49.1	75.4	89.5
<b>Later</b>	32.7	38.1	20.7	45.2	19.3	10.5
<b>Earlier</b>	5.3	6.1	3.7	5.7	5.3	0.00
<b>Age</b>	8.4 (4.3)					
<b>Female</b>	41%	42%	41%	35%	42%	37%
<b>Number of siblings</b>	2.7 (1.9)	3.1 (1.7)	2.9(2.8)	1.5 (0.8)	2.1 (1.1)	2.1 (2.2)
<b>Year of immigration</b>	1974 (5.1)	1976 (3.8)	1975 (5.9)	1969 (3.6)	1972 (5.5)	1970 (5.3)
<b>Total</b>	431	260	61	43	48	19

*Source:* GSOEP data. Own elaboration

I decided to examine first which are the factors that increase the likelihood of joint couple migration versus delayed wife's reunification; secondly, the factors that lengthen (shorten) the period of time that elapses until the wife's joins her husband in Germany and, finally, the factors that lengthen (shorten) the number of years that elapses until each child in my sample joins their parents in Germany<sup>7</sup>.

For the analysis of joint couple migration, I utilize a standard binary logistic regression model, which follows the general form:

$$P(Y = 1) = 1 / \{ 1 + \exp[-(b_0 + b_1X_1 + \dots + b_nX_n)] \}$$

Where  $Y$  is the dependent binary variable that takes value 1 if the couple migrates together (i.e. the same year), and 0 if the wife takes more than one year to join her husband abroad.

6 Although it is true that the immigrant sample in GSOEP tends to over-represent long-stayers – since it only surveyed immigrants who had stayed in Germany at least until 1984, this selection bias is not the main reason for the large number of sampled couples that participated in joint couple migration. Note, that there is no reason to believe that wives who do not migrate jointly with their husbands would return earlier to their homeland. In fact, the opposite would be expected if the reason why immigrants delay their wives' reunification is effectively because they wait until the proper economic and housing arrangements for family reunification can be made.

7 Most of the times, children joined not only their father but also their mothers in Germany because in most cases children did not migrate to Germany until the mother had migrated as well (see Table 2).

For the analysis of the children's and the wife's reunification (in cases where the couple did not migrate together), I utilize a parametric accelerated failure time model that permits to examine the effect of time-varying covariates on the duration of the process<sup>8</sup>, and which can be written as:

$$\ln(T) = X_t \beta^* + Z_t$$

Where  $\ln(T)$  is the logarithm of the episode duration<sup>9</sup>,  $\beta^*$  are the estimated coefficients for covariates  $X$ , which are allowed to be time-varying (see subscript  $t$ ), and  $Z$  is an error term. Note that a positive  $\beta$  in accelerated failure time models indicates the corresponding covariate prolongs the duration of the episode (i.e. a positive coefficient must be taken as an indication that the corresponding covariate increases the number of years that elapse until the wife joins her husband in Germany). I have assumed that  $T$  follows a Weibull distribution.

## VI. Results and discussion

### Joint couple migration

Estimates in Table 3 indicate that Italian and Greek couples are much more likely to migrate together than Turkish ones (reference category). Although migrants from the former Yugoslavia also show a higher likelihood of joint migration comparing to Turks, this result vanishes when differences in the partners' level of education are controlled for (compare Model 1 and 2). The higher propensity of Italian couples to migrate together is in line with my expectations, because of their legal privileges as EU members. However, the strong inclination for joint couple migration among Greek immigrants appears a little odd.

The younger the wife is at the time the husband makes the decision to migrate, the more likely she is to migrate with him. Similarly, newly married couples are also more likely to migrate together than couples that have been married for a relatively long time at the moment the husband migrates. These results are consistent with the view of migration as a household decision, which is strongly influenced by the family life cycle.

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8 Time duration models are generally chosen not only because they permit to analyze the effect of time-varying covariates but also because they can deal with the problem of censoring. In my samples, however, there are no censored data since GSOEP only includes information for those wives and children that effectively reunified their husbands and fathers in Germany.

9 As for the log transformation of  $T$ , its main purpose is to ensure that predicted values of  $T$  are positive.

Table 3. Logistic estimates of the likelihood of joint couple migration versus delayed spouses' reunification

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Only if M's mig. before 1974
(ref. Turkey)						
Former Yugoslavia	0.78** 0.27	0.45 0.28	0.35 0.29	0.07 0.30	-0.02 0.33	-0.02 0.34
Greece	1.26** 0.34	1.34** 0.35	1.18** 0.38	1.01** 0.40	1.26** 0.44	1.31** 0.45
Italy	0.70** 0.34	0.84** 0.35	0.74** 0.35	0.85** 0.37	0.90** 0.41	1.02** 0.42
Spain	0.02 0.40	-0.02 0.42	-0.20 0.43	-0.26 0.45	0.21 0.49	0.24 0.49
W's age	0.06* 0.03	0.05* 0.03	0.05 0.03	0.05 0.03	0.07** 0.04	0.08** 0.04
H's age	0.01 0.03	0.00 0.03	0.00 0.03	-0.01 0.03	-0.00 0.03	0.00 0.04
Years since marriage	-0.08** 0.03	-0.07* 0.03	-0.05 0.03	-0.03 0.04	-0.07* 0.04	-0.08* 0.04
W's years of education		0.22** 0.09	0.21** 0.09	0.21** 0.09	0.14 0.10	0.15 0.11
H's years of education		0.17** 0.07	0.16** 0.07	0.18** 0.07	0.14* 0.07	0.15** 0.08
W ever worked (ref. never worked)			0.63** 0.27	0.62** 0.28	0.74** 0.30	0.75** 0.30
W's years of work experience			-0.04 0.03	-0.06* 0.03	-0.05 0.03	-0.05 0.03
Number of kids < 17				-0.33** 0.14	-0.36** 0.15	-0.38** 0.15
(ref. no kids < 17)						
Youngest kid < 6				-0.17 0.39	-0.00 0.42	0.02 0.43
(ref. no kids < 17)						
Youngest kid 6-16				1.20** 0.49	1.23** 0.52	1.26** 0.53
(ref. H's migration 1960-1967)						
H's migration 1968-1970					0.89** 0.32	0.93** 0.33
H's migration 1971-1973					0.88** 0.37	0.92** 0.37
H's migration 1974-1997					3.65** 0.79	
Constant	-1.53** 0.73	-4.56** 1.05	-4.63** 1.05	-3.94** 1.12	-4.68** 1.24	-4.96** 1.27
Log likelihood	-263	-252	-249	-233	-213	-202
N	407	407	407	407	407	353

Source: GSOEP, 1984-2002. Unweighted data. \* Significant at 10%. \*\* Significant at 5%.

In line with the findings obtained for migrants to other destinations, the likelihood of joint couple migration increases with both partners' education. In addition,

spouses also appear more likely to migrate jointly if the wife has some work experience. Although a stronger attachment of the wife's to the local labor market seems to reduce the probability of migrating together (see negative sign of the coefficient of the variable "W's years of work experience"), this effect is only marginally significant.

As expected, the likelihood of joint couple migration is negatively related to the number of non-adult children in the household. However, having only school-age children strongly increases the partners' odds of the migrating together comparing to childless couples (reference category). These two results can be read as a clear indication that economic needs play a crucial role in shaping family migration decisions. The reason underlying the changing effect of children depending on their age is not clear in advance. It might be that school-age children are cheaper to take abroad than young children since they can be easily put at (public) school and, therefore, do not prevent mothers' work and the saving capacity of the household. However, it might be also that parents are more willing to leave their children behind with other relatives if they are of older age. The analysis of the children's reunification in the next section should offer some hints on this (see below).

Finally, in Model 5 I have added a set of dummy variables indicating the time at which the husband migrated to Germany. The likelihood of joint couple migration was substantially higher during the peak years of recruitment (1968-1973), compared to the previous period (1960-1967). However, the most noticeable result in this regard is the extremely high probability of joint migration among couples that migrated after the halt on recruitment (see  $B = 3.65$  in Model 5). In fact, in only two of these couples the wife took two or more years to join her husband abroad. This result is probably related to the fact that most male adult foreigners that entered Germany after 1974 were admitted on the basis of asylum and, thus, enjoyed special conditions with regard to their family reunification. In order to eliminate the potential distortion that migrant couples of this kind (i.e. "refugee") might introduce in the overall analysis, in Model 6 I restricted the sample to couples where the husband first migration to Germany occurred prior to 1974 (i.e. "original male guest-workers"). As can be seen in the last column of Table 3, results remain largely unchanged.

#### Duration of the spouses' separation

Table 4 summarizes the effect of various set of factors on the pace of the wife's reunification process. In order to understand these effects correctly is necessary to remind that, in *accelerated failure time models*, a negative coefficient implies a shorter duration of the episode until the event occurs (i.e. a faster process of reunification).

In line with the findings previously described for the case of joint couple migration, more educated women are likely to join their husbands earlier than less educated ones; however, having a husband with more years of education, which was found to substantially increase the odds of joint couple migration, does not significantly affect the pace of the spouses' reunification. In other words, the level of education of the husband appears to be important in deciding whether the couple migrates jointly or not (more educated husbands are more likely to migrate jointly with

their partners); but if the wife stays at the time the husband leaves, it is her own level of education, instead of her husband's, what will influence the time at which she joins him abroad.

On the other hand, wives with more years of work experience in the country of origin tend to take longer in joining their husbands abroad (in line with the results obtained for the case of joint couple migration). This result can be interpreted as confirming the previous idea that women with a stronger attachment to the labor market at the country of origin tend to delay their own migration to join their husband abroad. However, results in Model 2 also show that being employed at the country of origin substantially accelerates the pace of the wife's reunification with her husband, regardless of her years of work experience at the time he left. Although the size of the coefficient reduces as additional controls are added to the model, its effect remains largely significant. This effect might be largely endogenous: women who wish to join their husband abroad as soon as possible decide to work in the meantime, in order to save money for the trip and to cope with unforeseen expenses that may derive from migration. This is especially likely if the couple also wished to take their children to the country of immigration. Alternatively, it may also happen that reunification appears as a better strategy for the family if the wife is working anyway, because of the wage differential between the origin and the destination.

Model 3 shows that having a first child, and having only children of preschool age accelerates the wife's migration, although it is not possible to ascertain whether these women leave their children behind with other relatives or take them to Germany as well. On the contrary, the number of children in the household does not significantly affect the pace of the spouses' reunification.

Model 4 confirms, once again, the importance of period effects: wives whose husband migrated in the period 1968-70 and 1971-73 joined their husbands abroad quicker than wives whose husband had migrated during the period 1960-67 (reference category).

In order to investigate whether these period effects reflect the higher demand for female labor in the late sixties and early seventies, or not, I added a control variable that measures "the annual rate of female unemployment in Germany" in Model 5. First of all, the positive coefficient of the variable "rate of female unemployment in Germany" indicates that worse economic conditions in the host labor market tend to delay the wife's migration, which suggests that family and economic reasons for migration are not mutually exclusive but they rather reinforce each other. Secondly, the importance of the period at which the husband migrated far, from disappearing, becomes larger and stronger after controlling for the level of female unemployment in Germany. Moreover, the time that elapsed until the wives joined their husbands abroad increasingly reduced over time: husbands who migrated after 1967 reunified with their wives in Germany faster than those who had migrated earlier; and husbands who migrated between 1970 and 1973 also brought their wives sooner than husbands who had migrated between 1968 and 1970. This reduction of the "waiting period" over time may reflect the development of wider and stronger support (female) networks at destination as the flows consolidated, which probably lowered the costs of the wife's migration.

Table 4. Estimates of wife's reunification (Weibull accelerated failure time model)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
(ref. Turkey)							
Former Yugoslavia	0.25 0.22	0.24 0.18	0.14 0.15	0.18 0.15	0.06 0.06	0.08 0.06	0.07 0.06
Greece	-0.83**	-0.69**	-0.49**	-0.69**	-0.29**	-0.85**	-0.84**
	0.22	0.18	0.17	0.18	0.08	0.14	0.15
Italy	-0.01	0.06	-0.01	-0.08	0.05	-0.93**	-0.91**
	0.27	0.25	0.19	0.19	0.1	0.22	0.23
Spain	-0.27	-0.1	-0.05	-0.24	-0.08	-0.91**	-0.89**
	0.27	0.22	0.18	0.19	0.11	0.2	0.2
Years since marriage at H's migration	-0.01 0.02	0 0.02	0 0.02	0 0.02	-0.01 0.01	-0.01 0.01	0 0.01
W's age at H's migration	0.0001	-0.01	-0.02*	-0.02	0	0	0
	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
H's age at H's migration	0 0.02	-0.01 0.02	-0.01 0.01	-0.01 0.01	0 0.01	-0.01 0.01	-0.01 0.01
W's years of education		-0.09*	-0.09**	-0.06	0	0.01	0.01
		0.05	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.02
H's years of education		-0.03 0.05	-0.06 0.04	-0.07* 0.04	-0.02 0.02	-0.01 0.02	-0.01 0.02
(ref. never worked)							
W has worked at least once at the moment of H's migration		-0.05 0.17	-0.04 0.14	0 0.15	0 0.06	0.01 0.05	0.01 0.05
W's years of work experience at the moment of H's migration		0.08** 0.02	0.07** 0.01	0.06** 0.01	0.02** 0.01	0.02** 0.01	0.02** 0.01
(ref. wife did not work)							
Wife worked last year		-1.12** 0.2	-1.08** 0.18	-1.08** 0.18	-0.43** 0.09	-0.38** 0.08	-0.37** 0.08
Number of kids < 17			0.02 0.03	0.02 0.03	0.03 0.02	0.02 0.02	0.02 0.02
(ref. no children)							
Having a first child			-0.50** 0.22	-0.59** 0.2	-0.47** 0.1	-0.39** 0.09	-0.37** 0.09
(ref. no kids < 17)							
Youngest kid < 6			-0.66** 0.21	-0.55** 0.21	-0.08 0.12	-0.05 0.11	-0.04 0.11
(ref. no kids < 17)							
Youngest kid 6-16			-0.21 0.16	-0.1 0.17	0.09 0.1	0.11 0.09	0.11 0.09
(ref. H's date of migration 1960-1967)							
H's date of migration 1968-1970				-0.36** 0.12	-0.65** 0.05	-0.73** 0.05	-0.73** 0.05
H's date of migration 1971-1973				-0.31** 0.15	-0.93** 0.08	-1.03** 0.08	-1.04** 0.08
Rate of female unemployment					0.18** 0.01	0.14** 0.01	0.14** 0.01
GDP country of origin (ln)						0.94** 0.20	0.91** 0.20
Change in GDP of origin (previous year)						-0.00018** 0.00	-0.00017** 0.00
(ref. year=1974)							
Halt on recruitment							-0.01 0.06



Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
(ref. year#1975)							
Kindergeldreform							-0.19** 0.09
Constant	3.45**	4.49**	5.48**	5.34**	2.52**	-5.27**	-5.11**
	0.54	0.66	0.6	0.64	0.36	1.75	1.75
ln_p	0.62**	0.75**	0.89**	0.91**	1.50**	1.61**	1.63**
	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05
Log likelihood	-467	-432	-410	-400	-270	-250	-248
N	179	179	179	179	179	179	179

Source: GSOEP, 1984-2002. Unweighted data. \* Significant at 10%. \*\* Significant at 5%.

On the other hand, the results obtained in Model 6 confirm that the macro-economic conditions at the country of origin also influence the pace of the wife's reunification but in the opposite direction to the predicted one: the coefficient of the "change in GDP" variable (GDP change between year  $t$  and  $t-1$ ) has a negative sign, which means that economic growth in the country of origin tends to accelerate the process of reunification among separated couples. The explanation for this result is probably related to the larger economic constraints that family migration entails comparing to individual migration. It is very likely that the wife's migration is more costly than the husband's one, especially if the couple has children and decides to take them to the immigration country as well. Bad economic conditions at the country of origin are likely to increase the cost of the wife's migration because it reduces the household's saving capacity and makes more difficult to raise the money for the trip; in addition, it may also make more difficult to persuade other relatives to take care of the children in the meantime their parents are abroad. In fact, this idea of higher economic constraints in the case of family-related migration is consistent with the previous result that having worked last year accelerates the migration of the wife.

Although the higher the  $\ln(\text{GDP})$  is in the country of origin, the longer the time that elapses until the wife joins her husband in Germany, this result is reflecting differences across countries rather than the effect of changes in the economic conditions in the immigrants' homeland. In this regard, note that the differences across countries of origin initially observed in Model 1 to Model 5 substantially modify once this control variable is added. At the first glance, Greek couples appeared to be the only ones that reunified in Germany faster than the Turkish ones (reference category, see Model 1). However, once differences in GDP across countries are controlled for, wives from the former Yugoslavia are the only ones who do not join their husbands in Germany faster than Turkish ones.

Finally, in Model 7, I added two time-varying dummy variables – "halt" and "Kindergeldreform" – to analyze the potential impact of the halt on recruitment imposed in November of 1973, and of the children's allowances' reform on the pace of family reunification. The coefficient for the "halt" variable ("halt" takes value 1 in year 1974, and 0 in the rest of the years) is negative but close to zero and non-significant; therefore, the idea of the so-called accelerating effect of the halt on recruitment on the process of family reunification is not empirically supported. On the contrary, the effect of "Kindergeldreform" appears to have been much stronger

since the coefficient is large, strongly significant and also negative. Therefore, it seems that the reduction in the amount of money that immigrant families would receive if they kept their children in the country of origin, rather than the halt on recruitment, was the policy decision that most clearly speeded up the reunification of families who had remained separated up to that moment. However, this interpretation must be confirmed by analyzing whether the “Kindergeldreform” displayed also an accelerating effect on the pace of children’s reunification or not (see below).

### The reunification of children

Table 5 summarizes the estimated effects of the aforementioned factors on the pace of children’s reunification with their immigrant parents in Germany. In these models, a negative coefficient also implies a longer period of separation.

With regard to the effect of the children’s characteristics, the obtained results show that differences by gender are only marginal and tend to disappear after controlling for differences in the timing of other relatives’ migration (compare Models 1 and 4).

The parents’ human capital displays distinct effects depending on whether we pay attention to the mother or the father. While the father’s education does not reveal a significant effect on the pace of his children’s reunification, the results confirm that children in families with more educated mothers tend to join their parents quicker (see the negative sign of the variable “M’s years of education” in Model 2). However, the idea that work-oriented mothers (i.e. mothers more strongly attached to the labor force at the time the father left) may prefer to leave their children behind in order to maximize their earnings’ capacity during their stay abroad, is not supported by the data (the coefficient for “M’s years of work experience” is not significant although it has the expected sign, see Model 2).

In Model 3, I added a set of covariates related to the composition of the household: the number of siblings, their ages and whether the child is the eldest or the youngest sibling in the family. Quite surprisingly, none of these variables has a significant effect on the timing of the children’s migration. Moreover, some coefficients even have the opposite sign to the predicted one. However, the picture becomes much clearer after taking into account the influence of other relatives’ migration. Model 4 examines whether children of immigrants are likely to be taken to Germany jointly with their mother or other siblings; the variable “M’s migration” takes value 1 the year the mother migrated to Germany, and 0 otherwise. Similarly, the variable “S’s migration” takes value 1 the year when other sibling migrates to Germany, and 0 otherwise. The large negative coefficients of these two covariates in Model 4 indicate that both the migration of the mother and other siblings in the household tend to accelerate the process of children’s reunification. However, if the mother took one child with her, the waiting period until the remaining siblings in the households are brought to Germany extends (see the positive coefficient of the interaction term “M’s migration\* S’s migration” in Model 5). In other words, siblings within the same household can be conceived as competing for a trip ticket.



Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Change in GDP country of origin (previous year)								-0.0002** 0.00008
Constant	2.60** 0.10	1.23* 0.64	1.23* 0.67	1.99** 0.66	2.07** 0.66	2.21** 0.54	1.85** 0.43	-2.02** 1.58
P	1.90 0.07	2.06 0.07	2.06 0.08	2.10 0.08	2.11 0.08	2.61 0.09	3.21 0.11	3.27 0.12
log likelihood	-1066	-1030	-1029	-778	-758	-656	-568	-559
N	426	426	426	426	426	426	426	426

Source: GSOEP, 1984-2002. Unweighted data. \* Significant at 10%. \*\* Significant at 5%.

Model 6 indicates that if the parents migrated jointly to Germany, their children also tend to be taken to Germany much sooner than children in couples where the mother stayed behind. Moreover, the negative sign of the interaction term “M’s migration\* H’s migration” suggests these children were more likely to migrate to Germany at the same as their parents. This result is quite unexpected since it implies that a relatively large number of the immigrant couples that migrated together to Germany took at least one of their children with them. In fact, migration of the two parents with at least one child represents about 18% of the total sample utilized in these estimations.

On the other hand, after including all these variables that account for the sequence of migration of different members of the household, the effect of the total number of siblings and their ages turned significant in the expected direction. Firstly, a higher number of siblings delays the reunification of children, as expected (see positive sign of variable “number of siblings” in Models 4 and 5). Secondly, the presence of at least one sibling of pre-school age in the household delays their siblings’ migration (see the positive significant coefficient of the variable “youngest sibling <6” in Models 4 to 7). And thirdly, the youngest child tends to be brought to Germany later than other siblings (see the positive coefficient of “youngest” variable in Model 6).

Finally, the variables that capture the halt on recruitment and the reform of the children’s allowances display the same effects as in the case of the wife’s reunification: while the halt does not significantly accelerate the process of children’s reunification (although the sign is negative, it remains far from being statistically significant), the reform of the children’s allowances clearly accelerated the reunification of those children still at their homeland by that time (see the negative sign of the variable “Kindergeldreform” in Model 7)<sup>10</sup>. Besides, these results remain unchanged even after controlling for differences in the rate of unemployment in the immigra-

10 Taking into account the importance of the result concerning the no-effect of the halt on recruitment on the pattern and timing of family reunification, I replicated the estimations with three other measures of the variable “halt on recruitment”: 1) “halt2”, which takes value 1 in 1973, instead of 1974; 2) “halt3”, which takes value 1 in all the years following the halt on recruitment (1974-2000), and 0 in all the previous years (1960-1973); 3) “halt4”, which takes value 1 in the four years next to the halt, and 0 in the rest of the years. The results for all these alternative estimations are available on request.

tion country, and the economic growth in the country of origin. Therefore, the overall results reinforce the idea that immigrant families were actually strongly responsive to their economic situation and their economic prospects in the host country at the time they planned the timing and the sequence of their families' reunification.

## Conclusions

Immigration policies ultimately result in the selection of households rather than individuals. However, receiving countries rarely explicitly adopt a household approach when designing and implementing their immigration policies.

In this article, I have examined the process of family reunification among male guest-workers who arrived to Germany between 1960 and 1973. Despite of some data limitations, the obtained results challenge one of the most extended ideas concerning postwar migration to Germany: that temporal labor migration was mostly made of single men, and that they only decided to bring their relatives and settle permanently in Germany as a result of the halt on labor recruitment in November of 1973. The analyses carried out in the previous pages suggest that: 1) a large fraction of married guest-workers migrated jointly with their wives (at least a large fraction of those who stayed in Germany until 1983); 2) both the likelihood of joint couple migration, and of rapid family reunification steadily increased over time, as the support networks developed in the country of destination; 3) the characteristics and behavior of immigrant women were crucial in explaining the likelihood and the pace of family reunification (and therefore, they are also crucial in explaining the post-migration behavior of immigrant households).

The policy implications of these findings are clear and important. Economic and family reasons are not mutually exclusive in explaining migration decisions, but they rather reinforce each other. Family-related migration begins from the very moment labor migration starts; and variations in the macro-economic conditions at the country of destination, and immigration policy measures with financial consequences for migrants clearly affect their family migration decisions, not always in the expected direction. Both admission and integration policies should take this into account. The recent debate about the convenience of adopting a pro-active selection of immigrants via a skill-based point system has conceived immigration as an individual affair, even if we know it is not. According to the past experiences, it seems that the composition of the migrant household and the labor market characteristics of other household's members apart from the principal applicant should be considered in the migrant's evaluation as well.

On the other hand, further empirical research is needed in order to correctly understand the connection between the family dimensions of migration and return behavior, and the impact that different types and paces of family migration have on the labor behavior of immigrant women and on the integration of the middle and second generation into their host societies.

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