



# Pretty unequal?

## Ethnicity, Gender and Returns to Physical Attractiveness in Germany

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# Pretty Integrated? The Causes and Consequences of Immigrants' Physical Attractiveness on Integration Outcomes

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(a) Determinants of physical attractiveness perceptions



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(b) Consequences of physical attractiveness for socio-economic outcomes



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*Lots of experimental data collections ongoing...*

# Motivation

- Physical attractiveness confers many advantages in a variety of life domains

(Frevert & Walker, 2014; Gordon et al., 2013; Jæger, 2011; Langlois et al., 2000; Scholz & Sicinski, 2015)

- Notably, highly attractive people earn more than their peers, receiving a “**beauty premium**”

(Doorley & Sierminska, 2015; Gordon et al., 2013; Hamermesh & Biddle, 1994; Mobius & Rosenblat, 2006)

- The size of this premium may vary according to primary axes of social division: **gender and race, ethnicity, migration background**

(Doorley & Sierminska, 2015; Monk et al., 2021)



SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION

May 14, 2017

**Why attractive people earn more money**

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# Research question

**Does the size of the **beauty premium** vary by migration background and gender?**

- contribution to literatures on social stratification and labor market inequalities

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# Theoretical expectations: Two Perspectives

## Resource substitution

- The effect of any given resource is larger for someone with fewer alternative resources (Ross & Mirowsky, 2006)

-> Beauty should give the **greatest benefit to the most disadvantaged** (Bauldry et al., 2016; Monk et al., 2021)

## Human capital

- Capital is not perfectly transferable between countries (Chiswick & Miller, 2009; Friedberg, 2000)
- Due to localized beauty standards, “bodily capital” may not transfer well

-> Beauty should give the **greatest benefit those with least cultural distance**

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# Hypotheses

## Larger beauty premium for:

### Resource substitution

1. People *with* migration background
2. *First*-generation immigrants
3. Women vs. men
4. People from backgrounds with *low* cultural similarity

### Human capital

1. People *without* migration background
2. *Second*-generation immigrants
3. ?
4. People from backgrounds with *high* cultural similarity

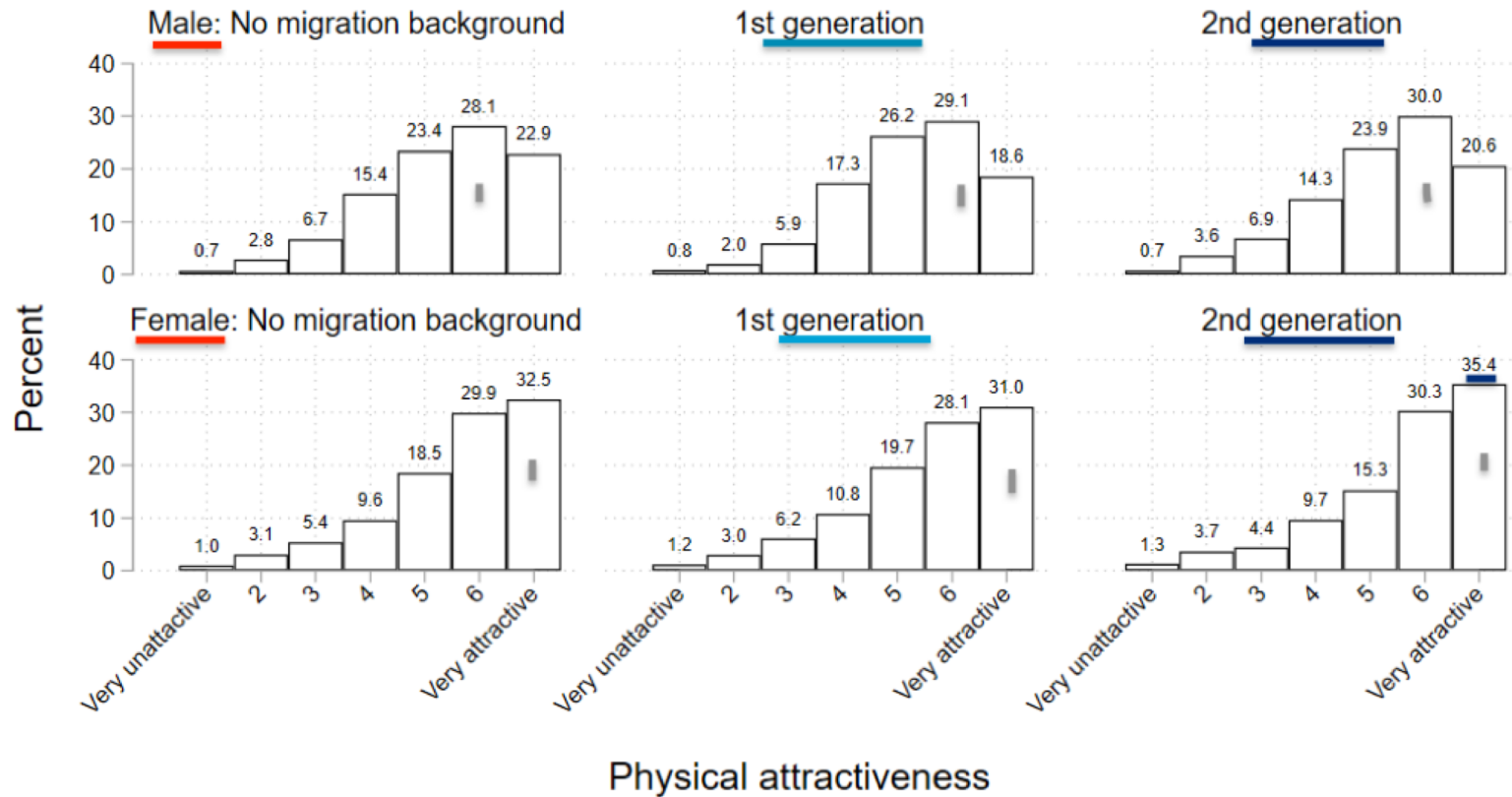
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## Data & methods

- **Data:** German Family Panel pairfam, waves 1-12 (~ 12,000 respondents) (Brüderl et al., 2021)
- **Independent variables: physical attractiveness** rated 1-7: “*How attractive do you find the respondent?*” by **interviewer in wave 1**, migration background (own & parental place of birth)
- **Dependent variables: log-transformed net & gross hourly earnings**
- **Methods:** two-way fixed effects models (interviewer and wave fixed effects)  
*In progress: multiverse analysis*
- **Controls:** relating to respondents’ socio-economic status (SES), health, personality, and social distance

# Attractiveness ratings & migration background

Distribution of physical attractiveness first wave: Migration background

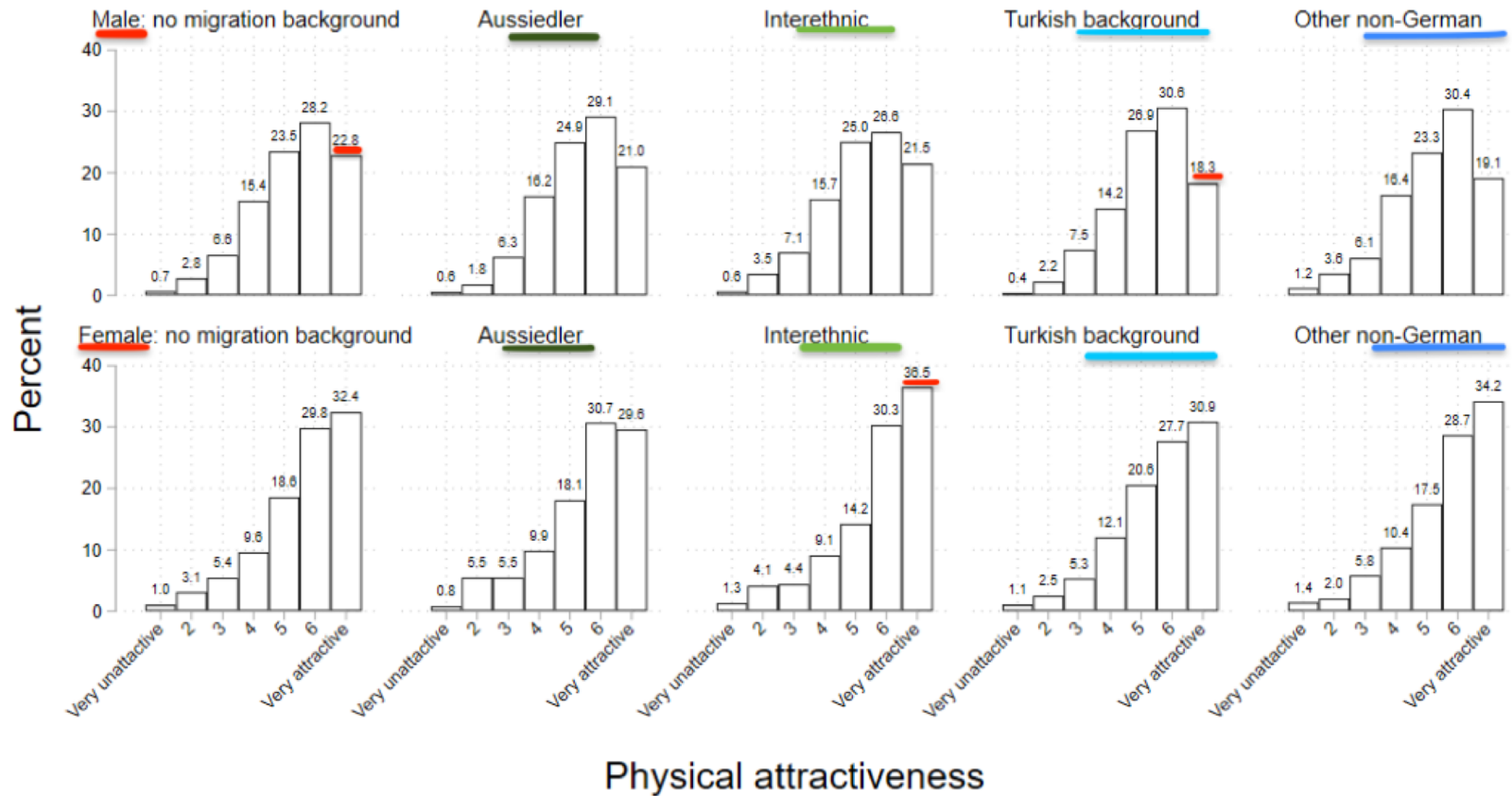


**Male:** No migration background N = 4523, 1st generation N = 709, 2nd generation N = 670  
**Female:** No migration background N = 4605, 1st generation N = 860, 2nd generation N = 766



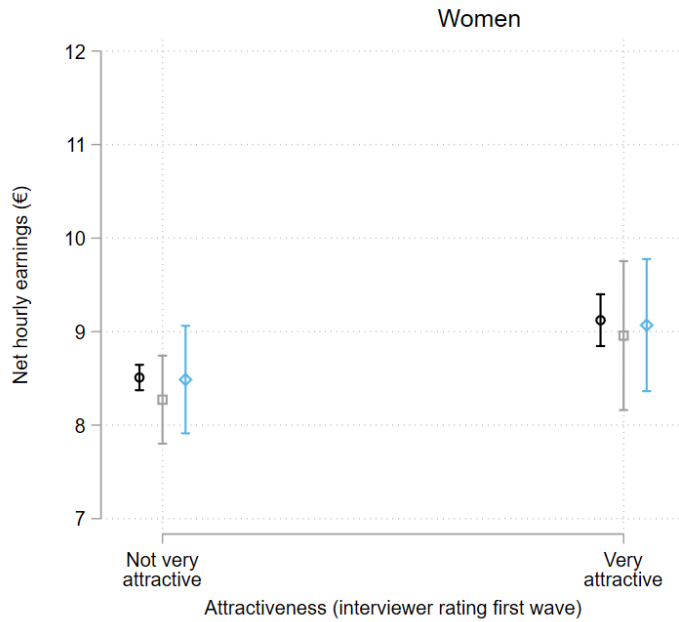
# Attractiveness ratings & ethnicity

Distribution of physical attractiveness first wave: Ethnicity

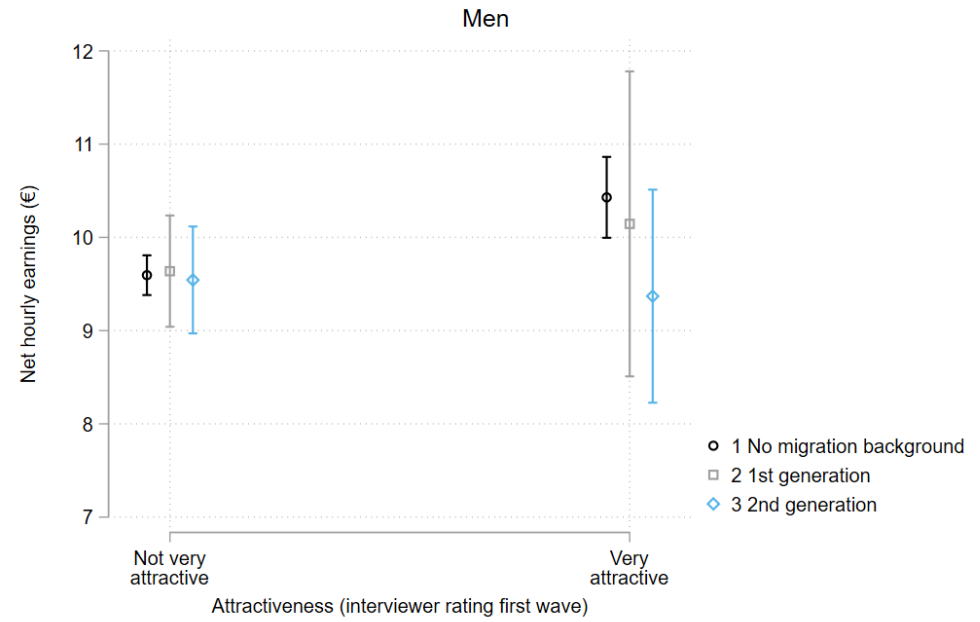


**Male:** No migration background N = 4492, Aussiedler N = 333, Interethnic N = 312, Turkish background N = 268, Other non-German N = 507  
**Female:** No migration background N = 4573, Aussiedler N = 365, Interethnic N = 386, Turkish background N = 282, Other non-German N = 635

# Beauty premium & migration background

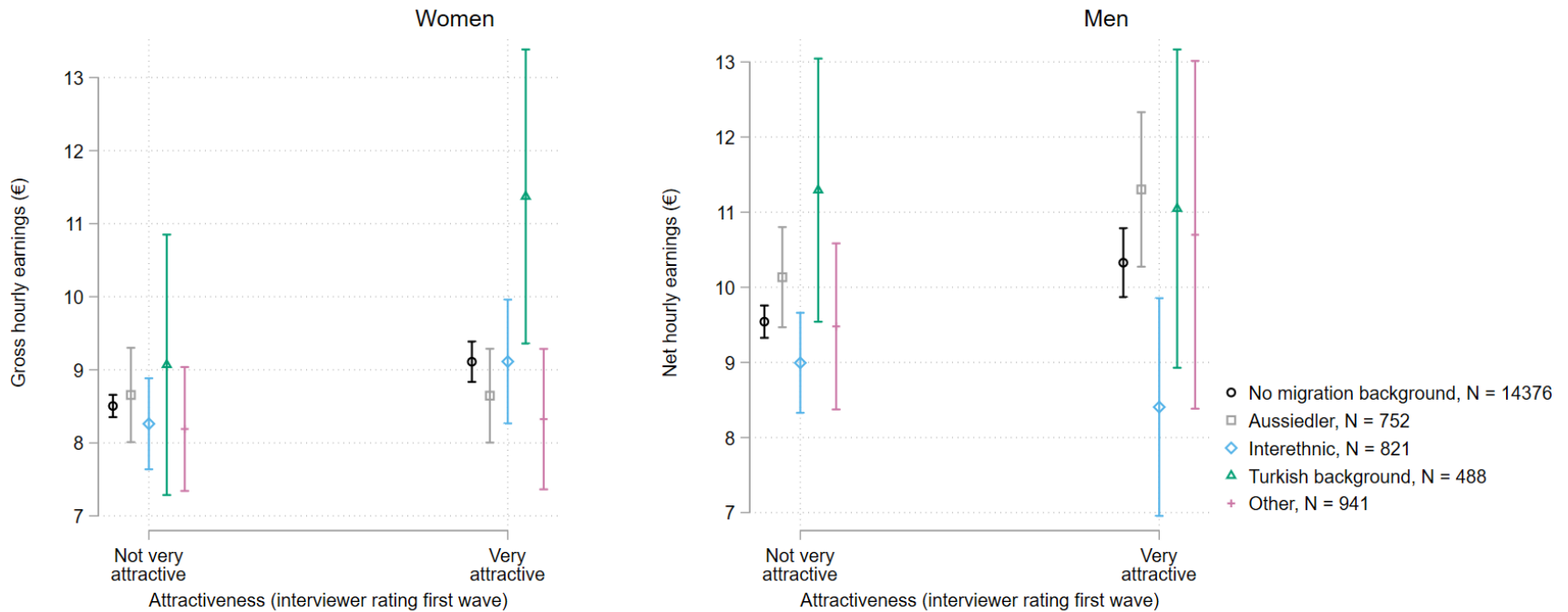


No migration background N = 13524, 1st generation N = 1677, 2nd generation N = 1662



No migration background N = 14499, 1st generation N = 1369, 2nd generation N = 1479

# Beauty premium & ethnicity



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# Multiverse analysis

- Planned analysis with multiverse methods to estimate all feasible model specifications (Steege et al. 2016; Simonsohn et al. 2020)
  - Tests robustness of findings: address the lack of transparency and model uncertainty
  - (Partially) addresses problem of selective reporting

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## Discussion

- Only Germans **without migration background receive a significant beauty premium**
- Qualified support for **“human capital” perspective**: effect of Eurocentric beauty standards?
  - But: **no differences between ethnic groups**
- Attractiveness as a driver of immigrant-native wage gap?
- **Why are Germans with migration background less able to transfer “bodily capital” into earnings?**

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