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Mit der Reihe „IAB-Discussion Paper“ will das Forschungsinstitut der Bundesagentur für Arbeit den Dialog mit der externen Wissenschaft intensivieren. Durch die rasche Verbreitung von Forschungsergebnissen über das Internet soll noch vor Drucklegung Kritik angeregt und Qualität gesichert werden.

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Contents

Abstract

On 5 September 2015, the German government suspended the EU's Dublin III regulations, allowing all asylum seekers to apply for asylum in Germany. This policy change motivated more than one million people, especially Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis, to enter the country. This study examines the impact of this policy change on migration aspirations and actions in 11 Arab countries, assessing whether it increased migration pressure toward Germany. We find that while the policy raised migration aspirations, it did not significantly affect concrete migration plans and therefore immigration pressures. Instead, age and personal networks abroad play more decisive roles in shaping such plans. Additionally, territorial control by IS in certain regions served as a distinct push factor. We also analyze migration preparations and find that age and networks abroad remain key determinants. Our results also suggest that the policy may have altered the composition of those planning to migrate.

Zusammenfassung

Am 5. September 2015 entschied sich die Bundesregierung, die Dublin-III-Regeln der EU vorübergehend nicht mehr anzuwenden, was den Zugang zum Asylverfahren in Deutschland erleichterte. In der Folge wanderten über eine Million Menschen zu, insbesondere aus Syrien, Afghanistan und dem Irak. Diese Studie untersucht die Auswirkungen dieses Politikwechsels auf Migrationsneigungen und -handlungen in elf arabischen Ländern. Während sich ein Anstieg der allgemeinen Migrationsneigung nach Deutschland zeigt, lässt sich kein signifikanter Einfluss auf konkrete Planungen, und damit den Migrationsdruck, feststellen. Stattdessen spielen Alter und persönliche Netzwerke im Ausland eine größere Rolle. Zudem zeigt sich, dass die Wahrscheinlichkeit, eine Migration nach Deutschland zu planen, in vom Islamischen Staat kontrollierten Regionen anstieg, was die Relevanz konfliktbezogener Push-Faktoren verdeutlicht. Auch für Migrationsvorbereitungen sind Alter und Netzwerke zentrale Einflussgrößen; darüber hinaus könnte die Maßnahme die Zusammensetzung der Personengruppe mit Migrationsplänen verändert haben.

JEL

C25, F22, J61

Keywords

Immigration policies, Migration aspirations, Migration plans, Refugees

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1 Introduction

The Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, marked the onset of one of the largest humanitarian crises in modern history, displacing millions of people. By summer 2015, the number of border crossings into Europe had surged, challenging European Union norms such as the Dublin III regulations, which require asylum applications to be processed in the first EU country of arrival. Amid mounting pressure, Germany and Austria temporarily suspended border checks on 5 September 2015, effectively bypassing the Dublin III system. The initial move was met with mixed reactions, lauded by some as a historic gesture of humanity and criticized by others as irresponsible. Border controls were reinstated on 13 September and gradually tightened. Contrary to the German chancellor Merkel's stance, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Hungary, and the then-Republic of Macedonia decided to shut down the so-called Balkan route on 9 March 2016, a process intensified by an EU-Türkiye agreement shortly thereafter (Alexander, 2017).

Images of Germans welcoming refugees with open arms and expressions of solidarity dominated global media, reshaping perceptions of Germany as a country and a people. Germany became a focal point for asylum seekers, with over 1.4 million claims submitted between 2015 and 2017. In December 2015 alone, three quarters of asylum claims were registered by people from Syria (162,000 applications), Afghanistan (50,000), and Iraq (36,000). The temporary suspension, however, left profound marks, influencing migration patterns and the political landscape. The surge in arrivals intensified debates over immigration, contributing to a rise in xenophobia, the growth of right-wing populist movements, and the adoption of stricter immigration measures, including the 2016 EU-Türkiye refugee return agreement and the proposed *New Pact on Migration and Asylum*.

This paper examines whether Germany's 2015 asylum policy contributed to increased immigration pressures from certain Arab countries. To assess this, we analyze its impact on various types of migration intentions. First, we test whether the policy raised migration aspirations, potentially leading to an increase in the number of potential migrants from specific Arab countries. Migration aspirations represent unconstrained stated preferences for future locations. While they offer insights into the general structure of future migration flows (World Bank, 2018; Docquier/Peri/Ruyssen, 2014), aspirations only partially translate into actual migration decisions. This has led many scholars to prefer other forms of migration intentions that are more predictive of future movements (Clemens/Montenegro/Pritchett, 2019; Clemens/Mendola, 2024). Therefore, we also investigate the policy's impact on migration plans, which represent aspirations that are supported by concrete actions, signaling respondents' commitment to their initial mobility

desires. Additionally, we consider commitment, defined as the extent to which respondents remain dedicated to their initially intended destination as they prepare to move. It is possible that the policy heightened aspirations but reduced the proportion of aspirational migrants who actually planned to migrate, resulting in an ambiguous effect on actual migration flows. Alternatively, the policy might not have altered the share of aspirational migrants but could have increased the likelihood of making plans among those who had expressed migration intentions, thereby boosting immigration flows. Our analysis integrates these different levels of intentions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the 2015 policy's impact.

To assess the policy impact on these different types of migration intentions, we use data from the Gallup World Poll, a globally harmonized and annually repeated cross-country survey. Importantly, the Gallup World Poll captures multiple stages of migration decision-making, including aspired destinations. We focus on 11 Arab countries and territories (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen), for which data are available from 2010 to 2015, which allows us to evaluate the short-run policy impact. We apply a nested logit model to account for complex substitution patterns among alternative destinations in response to the policy, and augment it with data on established determinants of migration decisions such as GDP per capita, geographical distance, and diaspora size.

Our findings reveal a significant surge in migration aspirations among Arabs toward Germany in late 2015. The observations show an almost triplication of the raw numbers in the pre-period (see Table 2 below). The policy change did not alter the likelihood of planning migration for those already expressing an aspiration to move to Germany. Instead, we find that long-term conditions and individual characteristics play a crucial role in shaping migration plans and preparations. Specifically, age and networks are key factors influencing both aspirations and actual migration decisions. Additionally, the presence of IS in a respondent's region emerges as a strong push factor, significantly increasing the likelihood of migration planning. For highly skilled individuals, the policy also led to greater alignment between Germany as a stated ideal destination and their actual migration plans. Overall, our analysis suggests that the policy contributed to a future rise in immigration flows from Arab countries, a trend that was evident in the subsequent years through increased observed migration movements. For the countries included in our sample, the total increase per year almost doubled from 108,677 in 2014 to 202,785 in 2023, the most recent figure, even though immigration was severely restricted over time.[1]

We contribute to different strands of the migration literature. Germany's intake of mostly Syrian refugees in 2015 has generated extensive research on this quasi-natural experiment (Müller/Schwarz, 2020; Berbée et al., 2022; Jaschke/Sardoschau/Tabellini, 2022; Giavazzi et

[1] These numbers, taken from the Federal Statistical Office, lack data on Palestine and Sudan in both years.

al., 2023; Barreto et al., 2022; Gallegos Torres, 2023; Aksoy/Poutvaara, 2021). For a review of the German government's responses and internal political debates, see Alexander (2017). Similar to Tjaden/Heidland (2024), we examine migration aspirations around the 2015 policy. We diverge from them by focusing on a set of specific origin countries for which the effect might be more substantial. In contrast with their results, we find a clear and positive effect of the policy on migration aspirations.

Our work also builds on research linking migration aspirations, plans, and actual flows (Dustmann/Okatenko, 2014; Docquier/Peri/Ruyssen, 2014; Bertoli/Ruyssen, 2018). These studies highlight the role of policy and geographic context in shaping migration intentions. By examining individual responses to restrictive policies, we provide new evidence on how different types of migration intentions evolve under constrained conditions. In a related study, Docquier/Tansel/Turati (2020) find that less religious respondents in the MENA region self-select into migration aspiration and plans. However, their focus differs from ours, as their study does not center on Germany or forced migration, and their definition of *MENA* and the time span are differnet. Other contributions in this area include Görlach/Motz (2020); Beverelli/Orefice (2019); Manchin/Orazbayev (2018); Migali/Scipioni (2019); Creighton (2013); Epstein/Gang (2006). Kulka et al. (2024) discuss migration plans among university students across a broad set of origin countries, while Frigo/Lodigiani (2025) investigate migration aspirations and self-assessed probabilities of internal and international migration in the wake of child abuse scandals. For a broader discussion on migration aspirations, see also Aslany et al. (2021); Gorinas/Pytliková (2017); Huber et al. (2022).

Additionally, we engage with literature on policy-induced migration behaviors, complementing studies that examine how restrictions shape aspirations and actions (Beber/Ebert/Sievert, 2024; Bah et al., 2021; Bratu et al., 2020; Clemens/Mendola, 2024; Guichard/Machado, 2024) Research has shown that migration decisions are often not only reactive but also forward-looking, influenced by expectations of future restrictions (van Dalen/Henkens, 2008; Epstein/Gang, 2006). Connected to that, studies such as Laczko/Tjaden/Auer (2017) explore the gap between stated migration intentions and actual movements, while Docquier/Peri/Ruyssen (2014) emphasize that migration aspirations are often highest among less-educated people, who simultaneously face the greatest legal and financial barriers. Our findings contribute to this debate by linking aspirations and concrete planning decisions to a restrictive policy shift, providing empirical insights into how sudden changes in migration governance impact behavioral responses.

Finally, we contribute to the broader discourse on migration governance, particularly in the context of forced displacement (Beine et al., 2024; Bratu et al., 2020; Bazzi et al., 2021; Di Iasio/Wahba, 2024; Buggle et al., 2023). The evolving policy landscape motivates a deeper understanding of how migration aspirations are formed at both the individual and

community levels as well as under violence and conflicts (Hagen-Zanker/Rubio/Erdal, 2024; Hagen-Zanker et al., 2025). Additionally, our study is able to address a sudden policy change in a setting of involuntary immobility (Carling, 2002) and the subsequent intertemporal substitution effects to seize an unexpected and likely short-term opportunity (Czaika/de Haas, 2017). Our study provides valuable lessons for policymakers on how restrictive measures influence migration intentions and long-term integration prospects, particularly for displaced populations facing limited legal pathways.

2 Methodology

Our analysis on migration aspirations below follows Beine/Bierlaire/Docquier (2025); Beine et al. (2024) in the modeling of location preferences based on a random utility model of location. In short, respondent n considers all potential locations j (including the domestic one) to maximize utility U_{jn}. Thereby, U_{jn} adds a deterministic part V_{jn} and a stochastic part ϵ_{jn}:

$$U_{jn} = V_{jn} + \epsilon_{jn} \tag{1}$$

We include main determinants of migration in V_{jn} and distinguish between the home option and foreign destinations.

2.1 Deterministic Component of Utility V_{jn}

The utility for staying in the current location $j = 0$, V_{0n}, is given by

$$V_{0n} = D'_n \beta, \tag{2}$$

with D'_n being a vector of individual characteristics as age, gender, marital status, and personal income. We further include three levels of education as binary variables, which we interact with a binary for a personal network abroad (Beine, 2020; Beine/Docquier/Özden, 2011; Munshi, 2003). Appendix A.1.1 presents more details on these characteristics. Their β coefficients describe the effect of each characteristic on the probability to stay.

The utility for moving to foreign destinations (except Germany) is described by

$$V_{jn} = Z'_{jn}\gamma + \delta_{m(j)}, \qquad j = 1, \ldots, J-1 \tag{3}$$

where Z'_{jn} includes determinants of a foreign destination's attractiveness such as distance, GDP per capita, and diaspora. We also interact these determinants with education levels, since they might have a heterogeneous effect. The $\delta_{m(j)}$ terms express the attractiveness of a destination j by nest m, which allows to account for unobserved factors in the distribution of ϵ_{jn}.

Finally, in the utility of the German destination, we include $z_{DEU,n}$, which describes the policy effect for someone who aspires to move to Germany:

$$V_{jn} = Z'_{jn}\gamma + \delta_{m(j)} + \zeta z_{DEU,n} \times post, \quad j = DEU. \tag{4}$$

In our analysis, the policy impact enters via the interaction with an indicator for the post-period.

We assume that the policy affects migration aspirations directly and indirectly in our estimate of ζ. Directly, the policy change makes Germany more attractive, and indirectly, other destinations become relatively less attractive. The direct effect will be estimated and refers to the elasticity of the probability choosing Germany upon a change in the probability of moving there from pre- to post-period. The indirect effect refers to the cross elasticity of each location to such a change in aspirations. The elasticities and cross elasticities rely on the distribution of the stochastic component ϵ_{jn}.

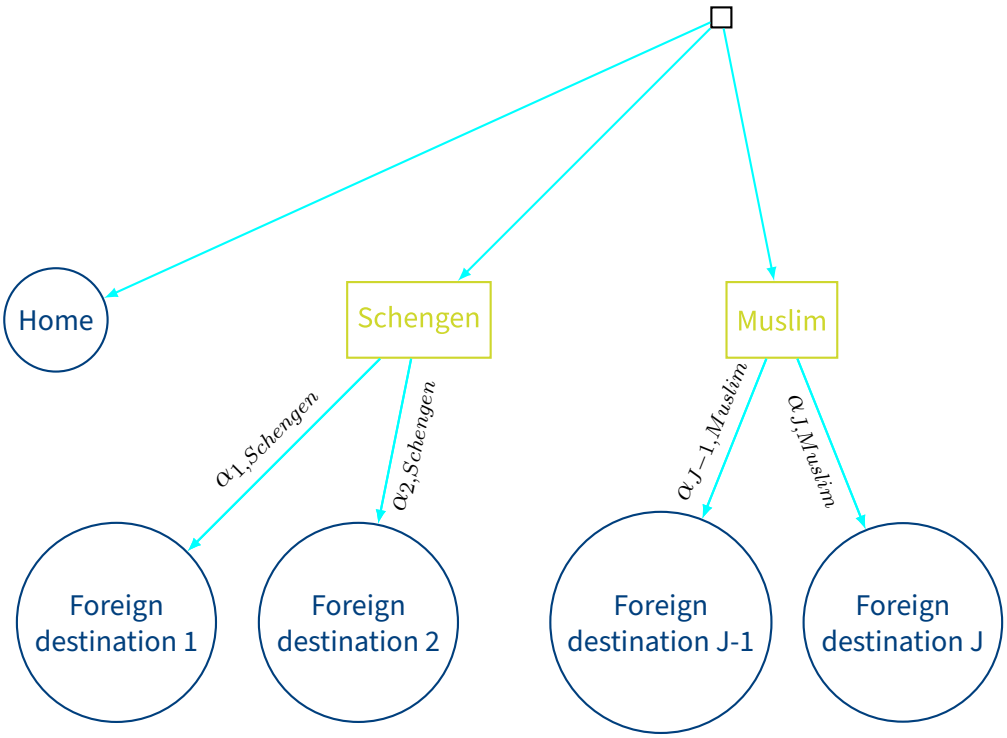
2.2 Stochastic Component of Utility ϵ_{jn}

As argued in Beine/Bierlaire/Docquier (2025), the location choice model should take into account that some destinations are close substitutes on specific characteristics. This means that their stochastic terms are correlated thanks to unobserved shared characteristics. In consequence, the underlying assumption of independence of irrelevant alternatives (IIA) for the traditional logit model will likely be violated (Train, 2009). To that end, we follow Beine/Bierlaire/Docquier (2025); Beine et al. (2024) and propose a partition of the choice set into a domestic option ($j = 0$) and foreign destinations ($j = 1, \ldots, J$) as can be seen in Fig. 1.

For foreign destinations, we categorize two nests to capture the similarity across foreign destinations in a nested logit: Schengen and Muslim majority. For each foreign destination $j = 1, \ldots, J$, we compute the number of nests K. Then we set $\alpha_{jm} = 0$ if destination j does

not belong to nest m, and $\alpha_{jm} = \frac{1}{K}$ if it does.[2] Appendix Table A.2 lists the choice set and the values of the α_{jm}s for all foreign destinations.

Figure 1: Structure of the nested logit model for migration.



3 Data

3.1 Samples

Our analysis focuses on 11 Arab countries. As stated above and listed in Table 2, these are Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen. We exclude wealthy Gulf countries Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE. Missing data prevent the inclusion of Mauritania, Oman, and Syria.

Table 1 emphasizes that before and after the policy change, Arab countries are not among the largest diasporas in Germany. However, Table 1 also shows that the Syrian and Iraqi diasporas in particular multiplied by factors of 13.7 and 2 between 2010 and 2019,

[2] For computational reasons, we create a third nest to collect all destinations without a nest but do not estimate its coefficient.

emphasizing the policy relevance of our analysis below. This development is further amplified as for 2023, the German *Ausländerzentralregister* reported 974,000 Syrians living in Germany, while another 160,000 have attained German citizenship since 2016.

Table 1: Major Diasporas in Germany, 2010-2019.

	2019		2015		2010	
Poland	1,784,839	(1.)	1,592,694	(1.)	1,535,428	(1.)
Türkiye	1,531,333	(2.)	1,370,193	(2.)	1,320,171	(2.)
Russia	999,162	(3.)	893,657	(3.)	861,106	(3.)
Kazakhstan	940,296	(4.)	848,587	(4.)	816,137	(4.)
Syria	**589,628**	**(5.)**	**44,761**	**(36.)**	**42,959**	**(36.)**
Italy	578,841	(6.)	349,395	(7.)	335,329	(7.)
Romania	545,759	(7.)	497,518	(5.)	477,488	(5.)
Czechia	502,609	(8.)	458,182	(6.)	439,737	(6.)
Greece	326,297	(9.)	181,290	(10.)	173,992	(10.)
Croatia	321,527	(10.)	176,585	(11.)	169,476	(11.)
Bulgaria	262,462	(11.)	88,792	(22.)	85,217	(22.)
Ukraine	241,486	(12.)	220,141	(8.)	211,279	(8.)
Austria	238,191	(13.)	217,137	(9.)	208,395	(9.)
Afghanistan	208,732	(14.)	83,992	(26.)	80,611	(26.)
Iraq	**188,759**	**(15.)**	**96,977**	**(18.)**	**93,073**	**(18.)**
Bosnia and Herzegovina	184,792	(16.)	168,458	(12.)	161,676	(12.)
Hungary	184,004	(17.)	145,629	(13.)	139,766	(13.)
Serbia	166,432	(18.)	89,923	(21.)	86,303	(21.)
Spain	155,083	(19.)	84,770	(25.)	81,357	(25.)
Netherlands	137,846	(20.)	117,420	(15.)	112,693	(15.)

Bold-typed countries belong to our focus sample (with missing data for Syria). The numbers in parentheses indicate the total rank in that year.

Data source: United Nations Population Division (2020).

3.2 Gallup World Poll

The key data concerning location preferences come from the Gallup World Poll conducted in origin countries. The Gallup World Poll represents about 95 percent of the world population over the age of 15. The data include more than 160 countries and are representative on the national level.

In light of our research focus, we restrict our sample to 2010–2015, because migration plans are only observed for these years (see 3.2.1). This data constraint reduces the post-period to just 118 days, which include cases where interviews were conducted after 4 September 2015. Thus, the treatment is observed in four countries: Iraq, Libya, Morocco, and Yemen (see Table 2).

Tunisians, Iraqis, and Lebanese form the largest groups of respondents with aspirations to migrate to Germany. Our findings on migration plans and preparations are largely driven by Iraq, which accounts for more than half of the post-period observations. Migration plans and preparations also vary across origin countries. Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Palestine exhibit a high level of planning, which translates into high preparation shares for the first three.

Table 2: Respondents with Migration Aspirations to Germany.

	Pre	Post	Total
Algeria	56	–	56
Plans to move	8	–	8
Preparations	4	–	4
No preparations	4	–	4
No plans to move	44	–	44
Egypt	53	–	53
Plans to move	6	–	6
Preparations	1	–	1
No preparations	4	–	4
No plans to move	47	–	47
Iraq	87	57	144
Plans to move	39	33	72
Preparations	13	12	25
No preparations	26	21	47
No plans to move	46	24	70
Jordan	51	–	51
Plans to move	8	–	8
Preparations	2	–	2
No preparations	6	–	6
No plans to move	42	–	42
Lebanon	108	–	108
Plans to move	23	–	23
Preparations	13	–	13
No preparations	10	–	10
No plans to move	81	–	81
Libya	6	4	10
Plans to move	0	3	3
Preparations	0	0	0
No preparations	0	3	3
No plans to move	6	1	7

	Pre	Post	Total
Morocco	56	17	73
Plans to move	7	1	8
Preparations	4	0	4
No preparations	3	1	4
No plans to move	48	16	64
Palestine	56	–	56
Plans to move	20	–	20
Preparations	5	–	5
No preparations	15	–	15
No plans to move	33	–	33
Sudan	17	–	17
Plans to move	3	–	3
Preparations	2	–	2
No preparations	1	–	1
No plans to move	11	–	11
Tunisia	174	–	174
Plans to move	22	–	22
Preparations	13	–	13
No preparations	8	–	8
No plans to move	142	–	142
Yemen	9	8	17
Plans to move	1	2	3
Preparations	1	0	1
No preparations	0	2	2
No plans to move	8	5	13
Total	743	111	854
Plans to move	154	50	204
Preparations	64	17	81
No preparations	87	33	120
No plans to move	558	60	618

The pre-period spans the years 2010 to 2015 for most countries. For Iraq, Libya, Morocco, and Yemen, the post-period is defined as interviews conducted after 4 September 2015 in 2015. Note that inconclusive answers are missing and omitted from the table.

Conveniently, restricting our sample to 2010–2015 avoids confounding effects from the closing of the Balkan route and the implementation of the EU-Türkiye refugee return agreement on 18 March 2016. That being said, the policy change itself may not be clear-cut because the situation evolved daily and can be perceived as volatile, in particular in light of the Paris attacks and subsequent policies and debates in November 2015. We thus interpret the variable to describe a first impulse to recent events with the largest impact being a facilitated way to migrate into a major destination country.

Computational power limits the number of countries that we can consider in our analysis. Appendix Table A.2 lists the 88 countries in our choice set. Note that not all countries in the table were chosen by respondents, so we can also consider presumably irrelevant choices.

3.2.1. Location Preferences

The Gallup World Poll assesses migration intentions by five path-dependent questions. First, respondents are asked: *"Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?"* Respondents who answered affirmatively receive two follow-up questions about their preferred location: *"To which country would you like to move?"* and *"Are you planning to move permanently to another country in the next 12 months, or not?"*[3] Additionally, respondents planning such a move answer a follow-up question: *"Have you done any preparation for this move?"* If respondents also affirm this, they are asked *"To which country are you planning to move in the next 12 months?"* Those with preparations to migrate can be considered as the most committed, representing 0.4 percent of adults globally (Laczko/Tjaden/Auer, 2017).

For our sample, we can only consider respondents who state a preference to move *and* for a distinct country, i.e. we exclude those with missing or unspecific information in either of these two questions.[4] Table 3 lists the preferences for the 11 Arab countries in our sample by pre- and post-period. Given the data limitations, these data are selective and only suggestive. While volatility is high, our sample data imply that Germany became a more popular destination choice in the post-period with its share of mentions increasing from 3.87 to 8.47 percent.

Likewise, Fig. 2 visualizes the mentions of Germany as the preferred destination among potential migrants between 2008 and 2023. Panel (a) shows an upward trend in the full sample for the years 2015/6, which aligns with our expectations. While we neglect subsequent trends in our analysis, the shift in 2015/6 elevated migration aspirations to Germany. Panel (b) shows that Iraq is a major driver of the development for all Arab countries and in our analysis below.

[3] As migration preferences are only surveyed conditional on an aspiration to emigrate, the data overlook individuals who migrate on others' preferences (e.g. spouses, children with better prospects) or refugees moving against their previously stated intent. Finally, the large share of temporary migrants is not considered separately, although this distinction would be relevant for more accurate predictions for policymakers (Huber et al., 2022).

[4] For example, Gallup recorded answers such as *African Country*, *Arab Country*, or *Island Nations*, which represent more general responses without a specific country in mind. Furthermore, we drop observations with a preference for non-sovereign states such as Nagorno-Karabakh, Northern Cyprus, and Somaliland.

Table 3: Stated Aspirations for Most Popular Destinations in Arab Countries (2010–2015).

(a) Pre (2010–4 September 2015)

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Saudi Arabia	1166	24.80	24.80
France	574	12.21	37.01
United Arab Emirates	458	9.74	46.76
United States	386	8.21	54.97
Italy	234	4.98	59.94
Canada	202	4.30	64.24
Germany	**182**	**3.87**	**68.11**
Turkey	160	3.40	71.52
Sweden	155	3.30	74.81
Spain	154	3.28	78.09
United Kingdom	143	3.04	81.13
Qatar	114	2.43	83.56
Egypt	102	2.17	85.73
Belgium	82	1.74	87.47
Netherlands	63	1.34	88.81
Australia	58	1.23	90.04
Lebanon	49	1.04	91.09
Syria	49	1.04	92.13
Kuwait	43	0.91	93.04
Jordan	41	0.87	93.92
	⋮	⋮	⋮
Total	4701	100.00	

(b) Post (after 4 September 2015)

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Egypt	164	12.52	12.52
Germany	**111**	**8.47**	**20.99**
United States	105	8.02	29.01
United Arab Emirates	91	6.95	35.95
Saudi Arabia	83	6.34	42.29
Turkey	79	6.03	48.32
Canada	75	5.73	54.05
United Kingdom	71	5.42	59.47
France	60	4.58	64.05
Sweden	55	4.20	68.24
Qatar	36	2.75	70.99
Italy	32	2.44	73.44
India	32	2.44	75.88
Australia	31	2.37	78.24
Syria	28	2.14	80.38
Jordan	20	1.53	81.91
Lebanon	18	1.37	83.28
Morocco	17	1.30	84.58
Indonesia	17	1.30	85.88
Netherlands	16	1.22	87.10
	⋮	⋮	⋮
Total	1310	100.00	

The upper panel lists stated aspirations in the pre-period between 2010 and 4 September 2015, while the lower panel covers the days between 5 September and 31 December 2015. The sample includes the list of 11 countries listed in Table 2.

3.2.2. Individual Characteristics

The Gallup World Poll provides a broader set of individual characteristics, which we control for in our discrete choice models to assess their impact on the propensity to emigrate and destination choice. Our data include key determinants of migration as age (Beine, 2020), education level, gender, network abroad (Beine/Docquier/Özden, 2011; Munshi, 2003; Esipova/Ray/Srinivasan, 2011), marital status, and log income per household member.[5] Table A.1.1 lists more information on the individual characteristics used in our analysis.

As in Beine/Bierlaire/Docquier (2025); Beine et al. (2024), we segment our results on educational attainment to capture heterogeneity in the propensity to emigrate. We follow the Gallup World Poll classification and distinguish between low-skilled (LS, primary education and below), medium-skilled (MS, secondary education and up to three years of tertiary education), and highly-skilled (HS, at least four years of tertiary education).

[5] Appendix A.1.2 describes our approach to calculate individual income.

Notably, we interact these educational groups with destination-specific variables described in 3.2.3.

3.2.3. Destination-specific Covariates and Interactions

We use supplemental destination-specific data, following closely Beine/Bierlaire/Docquier (2025) and adjust where necessary. We include measures for an origin country's diaspora in a country (Beine/Docquier/Özden, 2011), distance, log income per capita (Grogger/Hanson, 2011), and population size. All these variables potentially attract migrants as they resemble one's home along integrative and social dimensions. Importantly, diaspora, GDP per capita, and population size are time-variant, and thus, reflect changes in attractiveness of a country. We acknowledge that in comparison to realized migration, aspiration is shaped by cultural proximity, media coverage, colonial past, and trade links, which is also applied in our analysis.

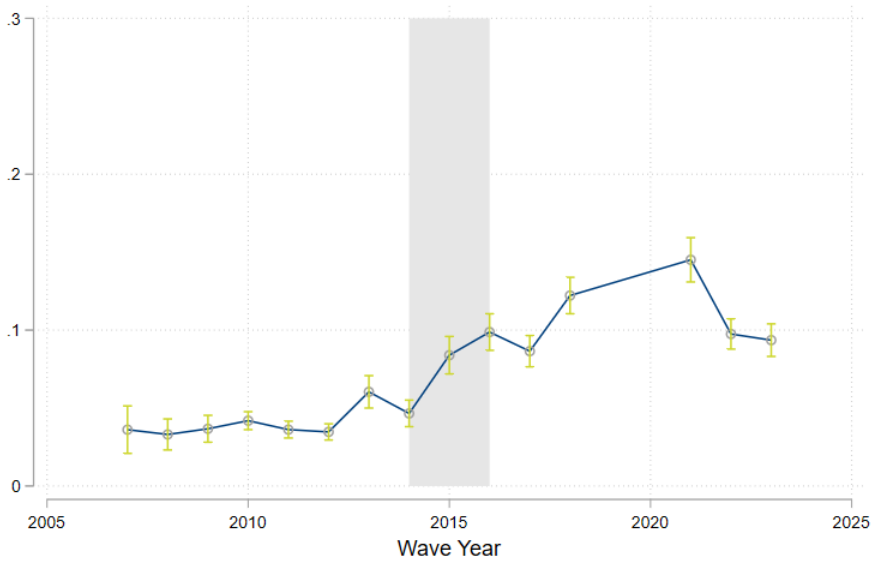
We obtain macroeconomic data from international organizations and institutes. For GDP (International Monetary Fund, 2022), all years are covered, whereas we use the closest year available for diaspora (United Nations Population Division, 2020) and population (United Nations, 2022). Naturally, distance as such is time-invariant and measured in distance between two countries' capitals (Mayer/Zignago, 2011). Table A.1.3 presents more information on the destination-specific variables and necessary adjustments.

As mentioned in 3.2.2, we interact the destination-specific variables for diaspora and income with education levels. Relevant literature points out that education level affects the propensity to migrate and also the destination choice (Grogger/Hanson, 2011; Özden/Packard/Wagner, 2018; Beine/Docquier/Özden, 2011; McKenzie/Rapoport, 2010).

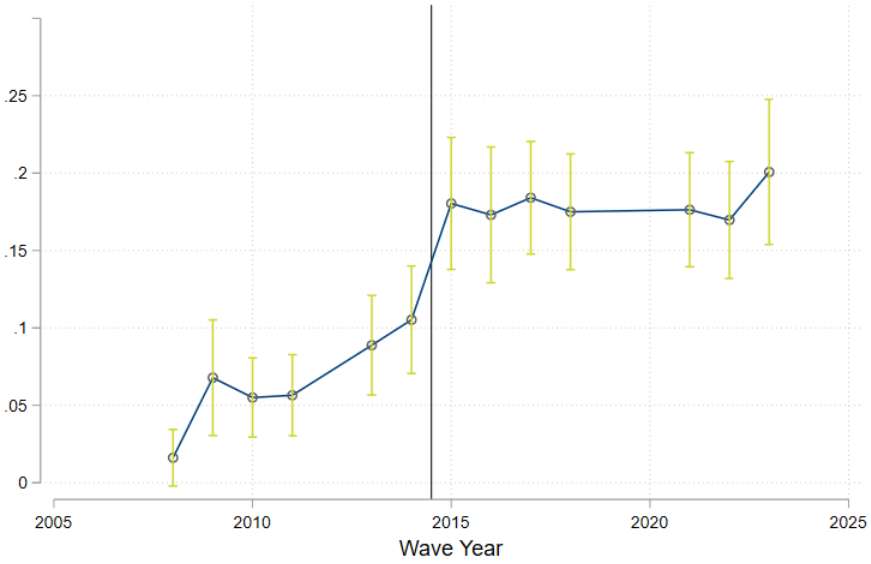
Recall from Eq. (4) that our main channel for the policy analysis and subsequent simulations is the interaction between binary variables for post-policy and the expressed aspiration to go to Germany.

Figure 2: Moving to Germany.

(a) 11 Arab countries



(b) Iraq



The graph pictures positive responses to moving to Germany among respondents from 11 Arab countries (upper panel) and Iraq (lower panel). The shaded area and vertical lines represents the initial policy change in 2015, depending on the day of interviews conducted in the country and full sample.

Data source: Gallup World Poll (2023).

4 Estimations

4.1 Migration Aspirations

Table 4 provides the estimated effect of the determinants of aspirations to migrate to Germany. Our sample includes 57,536 observations across 11 countries. The estimates in Table 4 align with findings established in the literature: higher education, male gender, and personal networks abroad increase the likelihood of emigration. Destination-specific covariates exhibit the expected effect: GDP, diaspora, and population have strong positive effects. Their impact sensitivity varies across education levels. Muslim and Schengen countries are particularly attractive to Arab respondents, as expressed by the δ coefficients. For the nested logit model in the even-numbered columns, the estimates of the nesting parameters suggest that all nests are validated (the null hypothesis $H_0 : \mu_m = 1$ of an irrelevant nest is rejected for both nests).

Turning to the main variable of interest, we find that the 2015 shift in the policy has a positive and statistically significant effect. This shows that Germany was mentioned more often as the preferred destination following the policy change in late 2015. The post-policy shift is pronounced. Our estimated effects are in line with the raw evidence of Table 3. Overall, our findings suggest that the policy shift that occurred in Germany in 2015 acts as a self-selection factor of emigration for Arab respondents. Next, we investigate the factors driving self-selection into migration planning and assess in particular whether the policy affected the conversion of aspirations into migration plans.

4.2 Migration Plans

Among those expressing an aspiration to move to Germany in our sample, we estimate a *binary* logit model to gain insights on the formation of migration plans within the next 12 months and the role of the policy in converting aspirations into more concrete actions. Table 5 provides descriptive statistics of the sample of individuals making migration plans and those actively preparing to migrate (with aspired *and* planned destination being Germany). The patterns largely reflect the global profile for migration intentions (Laczko/Tjaden/Auer, 2017): men, individuals in their twenties, singles, and urban residents are overrepresented. For our sample of Arab countries, the share of urban residents is particularly high, while the share of singles is lower.

Table 4: Determinants of Migration Aspirations.

	(1) Logit	(2) Nested Logit	(3) Logit	(4) Nested Logit
	Utility of staying in the domestic location (V_{0n})			
Low skilled (LS)	20.364***	18.476***	20.323***	18.466***
	(0.2339)	(0.2301)	(0.2348)	(0.2301)
Medium skilled (MS)	19.673***	17.845***	19.629***	17.826***
	(0.2214)	(0.2190)	(0.2230)	(0.2193)
High skilled (HS)	20.189***	18.312***	20.146***	18.293***
	(0.2890)	(0.2756)	(0.2906)	(0.2760)
Male	-0.470***	-0.470***	-0.470***	-0.470***
	(0.0222)	(0.0221)	(0.0222)	(0.0221)
Single	0.658***	0.645***	0.658***	0.645***
	(0.0224)	(0.0222)	(0.0224)	(0.0222)
Network abroad	-0.685***	-0.676***	-0.685***	-0.676***
	(0.0236)	(0.0235)	(0.0236)	(0.0235)
Log income at origin	0.036***	0.038***	0.036***	0.038***
	(0.0082)	(0.0082)	(0.0082)	(0.0082)
	Utility of moving to a foreign location (V_{jn})			
Log distance × LS	0.067***	0.072***	0.067***	0.072***
	(0.0115)	(0.0076)	(0.0115)	(0.0076)
Log distance × MS	0.048***	0.055***	0.049***	0.054***
	(0.0096)	(0.0059)	(0.0096)	(0.0060)
Log distance × HS	0.081***	0.077***	0.081***	0.077***
	(0.0164)	(0.0109)	(0.0165)	(0.0110)
Log GDP × LS	1.150***	1.089***	1.139***	1.085***
	(0.0399)	(0.0369)	(0.0406)	(0.0373)
Log GDP × MS	1.322***	1.218***	1.313***	1.212***
	(0.0319)	(0.0298)	(0.0325)	(0.0301)
Log GDP × HS	1.499***	1.379***	1.491***	1.374***
	(0.0514)	(0.0476)	(0.0521)	(0.0480)
Log diaspora × LS	0.356***	0.301***	0.357***	0.303***
	(0.0109)	(0.0088)	(0.0109)	(0.0089)
Log diaspora × MS	0.272***	0.238***	0.273***	0.239***
	(0.0070)	(0.0062)	(0.0070)	(0.0063)
Log diaspora × HS	0.244***	0.219***	0.245***	0.220***
	(0.0113)	(0.0102)	(0.0113)	(0.0102)
Log population	0.624***	0.527***	0.622***	0.526***
	(0.0099)	(0.0096)	(0.0099)	(0.0096)
Post × DEU	0.404***	0.236***	0.408***	0.238***
	(0.0905)	(0.0567)	(0.0906)	(0.0569)
δ_{Muslim}	1.843***	1.886***	1.838***	1.881***
	(0.0392)	(0.0448)	(0.0392)	(0.0451)
$\delta_{Schengen}$	0.721***	1.538***	0.719***	1.534***
	(0.0404)	(0.0366)	(0.0404)	(0.0366)
	Parameters of the nest structure (μ_m)			
μ_{Muslim}		1.129***		1.128***
		(0.0205)		(0.0206)
$\mu_{Schengen}$		1.807***		1.803***
		(0.0372)		(0.0372)
Origin-specific effects	No	No	Yes	Yes
Log-likelihood	-60,353.78	-60,001.61	-60,324.22	-59,974.33
Observations	57,536	57,536	57,536	57,536
Parameters	20	22	30	32

$p < 0.1$, $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$

Table 5: Migration Plans and Preparations: Descriptive Statistics.

	Plans			Preparations		
Variable	Count	Mean	Std	Count	Mean	Std
Male	423	0.71	0.45	92	0.72	0.45
Elementary	423	0.27	0.45	92	0.21	0.41
Secondary	423	0.60	0.49	92	0.59	0.50
College	423	0.13	0.34	92	0.21	0.41
Single	423	0.47	0.50	92	0.58	0.50
Income	423	5,523.34	7,222.55	92	5,986.89	9,671.50
More than 2 children	423	0.38	0.49	92	0.48	0.50
Urban residence	423	0.70	0.46	92	0.77	0.42
Age 15-20	423	0.26	0.44	92	0.14	0.35
Age 20-30	423	0.32	0.47	92	0.37	0.49
Age 30-40	423	0.23	0.42	92	0.26	0.44
Age 40-60	423	0.17	0.38	92	0.22	0.41
Age 60+	423	0.02	0.13	92	0.01	0.10

Notes: Descriptive statistics of the samples of individuals making some migration plans to Germany (left panel) and preparation plans to Germany (right panel).
Source: Gallup World Poll, 2010-2015. Origin countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Table 6 provides the determinants of migration plans conditional on expressing a desire to move to Germany. Our preferred estimation is reported in column (4), with a specification including origin-specific constants. We find little evidence of an impact of the policy on the likelihood to formulate concrete migration plans among those with the aspiration to move. The policy interaction term with the post-period is insignificant at conventional levels for all education levels. We find no evidence that, due to the policy, aspirational migrants expected to be more able to migrate and started more migration plans. Conversely, we find no evidence in favor of the opposite result. Such a result could correspond for instance to the fact that the rise of stated aspirations concerned mainly individuals with no real intention to migrate, which would be reflected by a negative coefficient of the interaction term. Overall, this implies that the rise in the share of people willing to migrate to Germany was not offset by a decrease in the proportion of those conducting action plans to materialize these aspirations. This is predictive of future movements, which is reflected by the rise in the stocks of immigrants from these countries.

Although the policy does not appear to influence the likelihood of making migration plans, several other factors emerge as significant determinants. Notably, having a network abroad acts as a strong pull factor, particularly for high-skilled individuals. This finding aligns with existing literature that highlights the pivotal role of migrant networks in facilitating international mobility (see, e.g., McKenzie/Rapoport, 2010; Beine/Docquier/Özden, 2011). Age also plays an important role: individuals over 65 exhibit a strong and statistically significant reluctance to plan for migration, while the youngest cohort (ages 15–20) is more

likely to take concrete steps toward migrating. Furthermore, place of residence at origin appears to matter as urban residents are more likely to engage in migration planning. This supports prior research suggesting that international mobility is more commonly driven by emigration from urban areas (Marchiori/Maystadt/Schumacher, 2012). These findings suggest that migration plans are predominantly driven by long-term structural conditions and selective personal characteristics. We also find that territorial claims by the *Islamic State (IS)* in certain regions in Egypt, Iraq, and Libya emerge as a significant factor in migration plan formation, which emphasizes that specific security concerns influence migration aspirations beyond economic considerations and abstract fears (Hagen-Zanker/Rubio/Erdal, 2024). These findings indicate that heightened insecurity may have reinforced the urgency of planning, while this was not associated to Germany-related factors.

These findings suggest that migration plans are predominantly driven by long-term structural conditions and selective personal characteristics.

4.2.1. Commitment to Ideal Destination

As mentioned before, the Gallup World Poll allows respondents to reconsider their ideal migration destination when reporting their actual migration plans. In most cases, the ideal and planned destinations align. This alignment is another sign that individuals are committed to migrate when expressing their aspiration. We define as *commitment to ideal destinations* the fact that the stated ideal destination corresponds to the destination of the migration plans and look at whether the German 2015 policy shift influenced that commitment. Out of 110 observations, 92 named Germany as both their ideal and planned destination.[6] The large overlap between ideal and planned destinations supports the validity of self-reported aspirations, alleviating common concerns in the literature.

We estimate the impact of the policy on this commitment with a binary logit model. The results reported in Table 7 suggests that Germany's policy change raised aspirations and strengthened commitment among those planning.

[6] Four respondents chose Türkiye as their planned destination, while two each selected France and Sweden. One respondent each named Algeria, Brunei, Canada, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Russia, the UK, and the US. Two responses were missing.

Table 6: Determinants of Migration Plans to Germany.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Low skilled (LS)	-8.472***	-9.869***	-9.786***	-11.371***
	(2.7027)	(3.1432)	(2.5305)	(2.9677)
Medium skilled (MS)	-8.288***	-9.564***	-9.502***	-10.960***
	(2.6832)	(3.1041)	(2.5655)	(2.9642)
High skilled (HS)	-7.824***	-9.661***	-9.605***	-11.595***
	(2.7368)	(3.1634)	(2.6526)	(3.1047)
Post × LS	0.970*	0.617	0.095	-0.160
	(0.5272)	(0.5836)	(0.6013)	(0.6556)
Post × MS	1.564***	0.947*	0.683	0.237
	(0.4460)	(0.5439)	(0.4865)	(0.5755)
Post × HS	0.547	-0.172	-0.607	-0.792
	(0.7495)	(0.8750)	(1.0360)	(1.0801)
IS			2.118***	1.816***
			(0.5001)	(0.5601)
Male	0.406	0.406	0.325	0.341
	(0.2808)	(0.2987)	(0.2873)	(0.2977)
Single	0.468	0.160	0.308	0.070
	(0.3665)	(0.3933)	(0.3660)	(0.3835)
Network abroad × LS	0.352	0.347	0.483	0.582
	(0.4858)	(0.4982)	(0.4952)	(0.5116)
Network abroad × MS	0.522	0.569	0.612*	0.651*
	(0.3191)	(0.3508)	(0.3220)	(0.3427)
Network abroad × HS	0.802	1.744***	1.326*	2.211***
	(0.5599)	(0.6550)	(0.6781)	(0.7668)
Age 15–20	0.282**	0.313**	0.340***	0.386***
	(0.1316)	(0.1460)	(0.1254)	(0.1380)
Age 20–30	0.009	-0.007	0.008	-0.010
	(0.0461)	(0.0501)	(0.0470)	(0.0503)
Age 30–40	-0.073	-0.050	-0.070	-0.050
	(0.0492)	(0.0525)	(0.0529)	(0.0567)
Age 40–65	0.053	0.035	0.059	0.040
	(0.0356)	(0.0396)	(0.0380)	(0.0429)
Age 65 and older	-9.200***	-9.207***	-9.741***	-9.747***
	(1.0246)	(1.1724)	(1.0552)	(1.2086)
More than two children	0.410	-0.151	0.125	-0.345
	(0.2577)	(0.3011)	(0.2790)	(0.3095)
Log income at origin	0.001	0.053	0.029	0.090
	(0.0810)	(0.0920)	(0.0763)	(0.0890)
Urban residence	0.873***	0.693**	0.882***	0.798**
	(0.3119)	(0.3420)	(0.3217)	(0.3537)
Origin-specific constants	No	Yes	No	Yes
Log-likelihood	-212.38	-187.19	-201.36	-180.75
Observations	423	423	423	423
Parameters	19	28	20	29

$p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01$

Notes: Logit estimates of determinants of probability of conducting migration plans among aspirational migrants. Origin countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. IS dummy captures controlled territories in Iraqi and Libyan regions by Islamic State between 2014–2017.

Table 7: Probability of Commitment to Germany as Ideal and Planned Location.

	(1)
Low skilled (LS)	7.65 (8.43)
Medium skilled (MS)	9.70 (8.71)
High skilled (HS)	7.36 (8.78)
Post × LS	0.85 (1.6)
Post × MS	-1.59 (1.02)
Post × HS	10.50*** (0.92)
Male	-1.13* (0.64)
Single	0.67 (0.91)
Network abroad × LS	-0.48 (1.35)
Network abroad × MS	-1.47 (1.30)
Network abroad × HS	0.24 (1.31)
Age 15–20	-0.28 (0.46)
Age 20–30	-0.02 (0.12)
Age 30–40	-0.04 (0.11)
Age 40–65	0.00 (0.07)
Origin-specific constants	No
Log-likelihood	-42.37
Observations	110
Parameters	15

$p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01$

Commitment is defined as an equivalence between the stated ideal and planned destination. We use a binary logit to estimate commitment to ideal destination among potential migrants with migration plans and ideal destination Germany. Respondents come from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen.

4.3 Migration Preparations

As a final step, we investigate the propensity of potential migrants who plan to move to Germany within the next 12 months to actively prepare for their migration. This stage represents a critical transition from aspiration to action and serves as the last observable step in the migration process within the Gallup World Poll. Our sample is derived from the analysis in section 4.2 and initially identical with the one used in section 4.2.1. We exclude all observations for which respondents deviated from their ideal destination and named another country than Germany upon their migration plans. The sample consists of 92 observations, including 26 in the post-period (35 in total for 2015), and 49 from Iraq, while we lose all observations for Libya. Given the selective nature of this sample, we refrain from making causal claims. However, the inclusion of origin-specific constants in column (2) improves the model fit without altering the findings from column (1).

Table 8 shows that migration preparations are uncommon across all skill levels. While medium-skilled respondents appear to be the least likely to advance their migration plans, their behavior is statistically indistinguishable from other education groups. We find no robust evidence of a policy impact on the likelihood to prepare migration increases in the

post-period. This result is in line with those obtained for plans. Unlike migration plans however, we find no evidence that IS territorial control itself affected migration preparations. This finding suggests that while external factors such as political instability may initiate migration plans, they appear less influential in their execution.In line with the findings for migration plans, networks abroad significantly influence migration preparations. The positive and significant interaction terms reinforce that connections abroad facilitate migration, with strong effects for higher-educated groups. Beyond this, we find a moderate role for age and income at origin on the probability of conducting preparations.

Our results on migration preparations naturally depend on sample selection, as they focus on respondents who both aspired to migrate to Germany and initially planned to do so. Nevertheless, the results are consistent with previous insights in 4.2, namely that networks and age matter most for realizing migration aspirations. We also find an impact that can be attributed to Germany's suspension of the Dublin III regulations in late 2015. While Germany's 2015 policy change affected the external margin to aspire migration thereto, this decision had no impact on the subsequent step of formulating more concrete migration plans for the next 12 months. These results reiterate the disconnect between mere aspirations and concrete actions since only about one third of aspirational movers ultimately migrate (Laczko/Tjaden/Auer, 2017).

Finally, we emphasize two caveats. First, the concrete time frame of 12 months might be seen as too restrictive, in particular for students years ahead of graduation and forced migrants. Second, we acknowledge the context-specific analysis but are certain to offer new insights into the formation of migration plans in a dramatic turn of global events.

5 Conclusion

This study investigates the impact of a remarkable shift in European foreign policy, Germany's suspension of the Dublin III regulations in 2015. In the following months, more than 1 million asylum seekers immigrated to Germany, reshaping the country's and continent's social fabric and triggering political backlash. Our analysis indicates that Germany's policy decision led to an increase in migration aspirations to Germany among individuals in Arab countries, thereby heightening potential immigration pressure from the region in the immediate aftermath. This finding is particularly notable given the absence of data on Syria—the primary country of origin for asylum seekers following the policy change. As such, our estimates likely represent a lower bound of the policy's overall impact.

Table 8: Determinants of Migration Preparations to Germany.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Low skilled (LS)	-10.287	-12.527	-11.891*	-13.800
	(7.3117)	(9.4364)	(6.9928)	(9.1227)
Medium skilled (MS)	-13.075*	-15.095	-14.567**	-16.319*
	(7.4298)	(9.4382)	(7.1351)	(9.1045)
High skilled (HS)	-12.668*	-14.647	-14.391*	-16.108*
	(7.5785)	(9.5484)	(7.4706)	(9.3197)
Post × LS	-1.766	-1.757	-2.316*	-2.247
	(1.2882)	(1.3756)	(1.3941)	(1.5033)
Post × MS	2.159**	1.820**	1.722	1.456
	(0.9055)	(0.9009)	(1.0874)	(1.0581)
Post × HS	0.300	-0.296	-0.122	-0.644
	(1.3430)	(1.1855)	(1.2678)	(1.1880)
IS			0.725	0.828
			(0.8870)	(0.9644)
Male	-0.438	-0.649	-0.405	-0.561
	(0.5999)	(0.6122)	(0.5909)	(0.6217)
Single	-0.081	-0.125	-0.117	-0.150
	(0.8203)	(0.8178)	(0.8150)	(0.8162)
Network abroad × LS	1.233	1.187	1.459	1.383
	(1.2693)	(1.4362)	(1.3013)	(1.4757)
Network abroad × MS	2.079**	2.379***	2.221**	2.587***
	(0.9658)	(0.9125)	(1.0228)	(0.9652)
Network abroad × HS	3.227*	3.892**	3.513*	4.218**
	(1.6667)	(1.6105)	(1.8342)	(1.7878)
Age 15–20	0.520	0.630	0.578*	0.679
	(0.3638)	(0.4442)	(0.3440)	(0.4249)
Age 20–30	-0.262**	-0.314**	-0.262**	-0.300**
	(0.1204)	(0.1268)	(0.1189)	(0.1241)
Age 30–40	0.116	0.173	0.125	0.180
	(0.1233)	(0.1274)	(0.1249)	(0.1268)
Age 40 and older	0.071	0.050	0.068	0.048
	(0.0978)	(0.0988)	(0.1004)	(0.1002)
Log income at origin	0.210	0.244*	0.235*	0.270*
	(0.1362)	(0.1378)	(0.1424)	(0.1479)
Origin-specific constants	No	Yes	No	Yes
Log-likelihood	-46.84	-44.01	-46.52	-43.68
Observations	92	92	92	92
Parameters	16	24	17	25

$p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01$

We use a binary logit to estimate migration preparations among potential migrants with plans to move to Germany in the next 12 months. Here, the sample is restricted to those potential migrants, who also plan a move to Germany. The pool of countries includes Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. Out of these, IS controlled territories in Iraqi regions between 2014–2017.

While the number of potential migrants increased, the policy did not significantly influence the proportion of aspirational migrants who actively planned to migrate. This suggests that other factors, especially age and the existence of personal networks abroad, play a more decisive role in shaping concrete migration plans. Furthermore, we find evidence that territorial control by IS in parts of Egypt, Iraq, and Libya acted as a distinct push factor in

migration planning within those regions. This result is also confirmed by investigating the impact of the policy on the likelihood of conducting preparations in the next 12 months after the interview. We do not find a role for the policy shift

A possible scenario could have been that the increase in the proportion of aspirational movers induced by the policy would include mostly individuals with little intentions and ability to migrate. Overall, the joint evidence we bring discards such a scenario since there is no negative effect of the policy on plans and preparations. Therefore, such evidence is predictive of future movements of individuals to Germany from Arab countries and suggests that the 2015 policy shift played an important role in that matter. This was confirmed in the subsequent years during which Germany experienced a surge in the number of immigrants originating from Arab countries.

Our results align with the broader migration literature, which emphasizes the interplay of individual characteristics and external political conditions in shaping migration decisions. Future research should explore the persistence of these findings in different geopolitical contexts and investigate whether similar policy shifts in other destinations produce comparable effects.

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Appendix

A Data

A.1. Variables

A.1.1. Individual-specific Variables

Table A.1.1: Sources and Descriptions of Individual-specific Variables in the Gallup World Poll (2007–2019).

Variable	Description	Gallup question code	Time Horizon
Age	Age of the respondent	WP1220	2010–2015
Education level	Education level of the respondent	WP3117	2010–2015
Gender	Dummy$= 1$ if a respondent is male	WP1219	2010–2015
Income	Computed income of individual	Authors' calculation based on equivalence scale[7]	2010–2015
Income per capita	Average income in the household	INCOME_4	2010–2015
Marital status	Dummy$= 1$ if a respondent is single	WP1223	2010–2015
Network abroad	Dummy$= 1$ if a respondent has a network abroad	WP3333	2010–2015

A.1.2. Individual Income

We use an equivalence scale, following Beine/Bierlaire/Docquier (2025), to derive individual income from household income per capita (variable INCOME_4). First, we compute total household income (h_n) by multiplying household income per capita by the household size (variable HHSIZE). We then consider the number of adults (WP12) and children (WP1230) in the household, where an age of 15 is the threshold for adults. Lastly, we obtain individual income I_n from the following formula:

$$I_n = \frac{h_n}{1 + 0.5\,(adults_n - 1) + 0.3\,children_n}. \tag{A1}$$

[7] See Appendix A.1.2 for further details.

A.1.3. Destination-specific Variables

Table A.1.3: Sources and Descriptions of Destination-specific Variables.

Variable	Description	Source	Time Horizon	Time Frequency
Diaspora	Total stock of origin-born	United Nations: International Migrant Stock in 2019	2010–15	5 years
Distance	Distance between origin country and destination	CEPII: Mayer/Zignago (2011)[8]	time-invariant	
Income	GDP per capita	IMF: World Economic Outlook Database (current prices, 2017 US dollar)	2010–2015	annual
Population	Total population at destination	United Nations: Population prospects in 2019	2010–2015	5 years

[8] We recode *Belgium and Luxembourg* for Belgium. We also corrected the capital for Israel and assigned the coordinates for countries with multiple capitals to represent Pretoria (South Africa), Mbabane (Eswatini), and Amsterdam (Netherlands).

A.2. Choice set

Table A.2: Choice Set and Participation Parameters for Nests.

Country	Schengen	Muslim
Algeria	0	1
Angola	0	0
Argentina	0	0
Armenia	0	0
Australia	0	0
Austria	1	0
Bahrain	0	1
Bangladesh	0	1
Belgium	1	0
Brazil	0	0
Brunei Darussalam	0	1
Bulgaria	0	0
Canada	0	0
China	0	0
Côte d'Ivoire	0	0
Cyprus	0	0
Denmark	1	0
Egypt	0	1
Eswatini	0	0
Finland	1	0
France	1	0
Germany	1	0
Ghana	0	0
Greece	1	0
India	0	0
Indonesia	0	1
Iran	0	1
Iraq	0	1
Israel	0	0
Italy	1	0
Japan	0	0
Jordan	0	1
Kenya	0	0
Kuwait	0	1
Lebanon	0	1
Libya	0	1
Malaysia	0	0
Mauritania	0	1
Mongolia	0	0
Morocco	0	1
Netherlands	1	0
New Zealand	0	0
Norway	1	0
Oman	0	1
Pakistan	0	1
Philippines	0	0
Portugal	1	0
Qatar	0	1
Romania	0	0
Russian Federation	0	0
Saudi Arabia	0	1
Senegal	0	1
Singapore	0	0
South Africa	0	0
South Korea	0	0
Spain	1	0
Sudan	0	1
Sweden	1	0
Switzerland	1	0
Syria	0	1
Thailand	0	0
Tunisia	0	1
Türkiye	0	1
Ukraine	0	0
United Arab Emirates	0	1
United Kingdom	0	0
United States	0	0
Venezuela	0	0
Yemen	0	1

This list includes the countries in the choice set and the nests they belong to with the respective values for $\alpha_{j,m}$.

List of Figures

List of Tables

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