

The Social Integration of International Migrants: Evidence from the Networks of Syrians in Germany



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Main Questions

- Where do Syrian refugees integrate best into German society?
- Are differences due to the places, or due to the natives?
- What policies facilitate refugee integration?

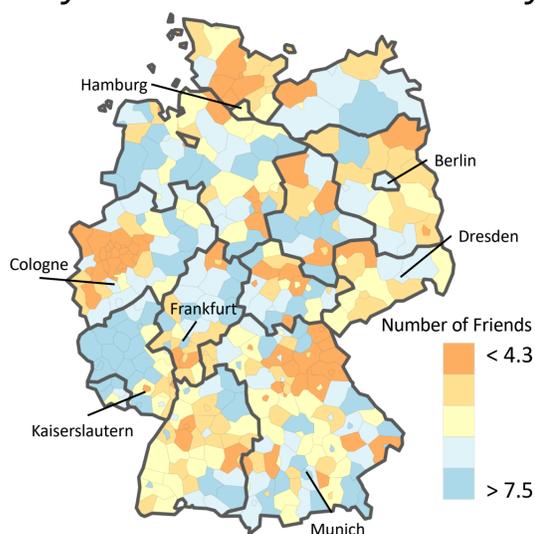
1. Facebook data

We use Facebook data to measure:

- Refugee flows from Syria to Germany
- Refugees' social integration
- Refugees' language acquisition
- Integration in community groups

2. Where do migrants integrate?

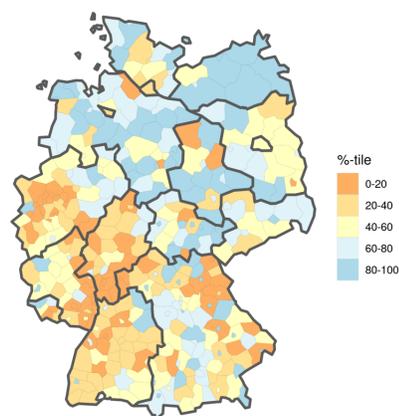
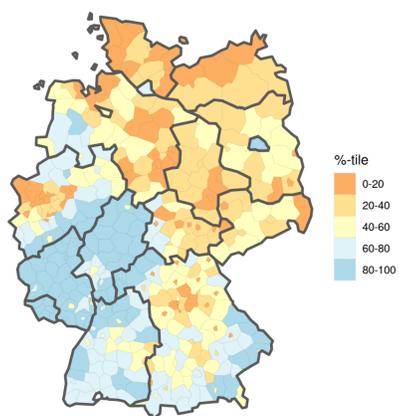
German-Syrian Social Connectedness by NUTS3



These differences can be decomposed into:

General Friendliness

Relative Friendliness



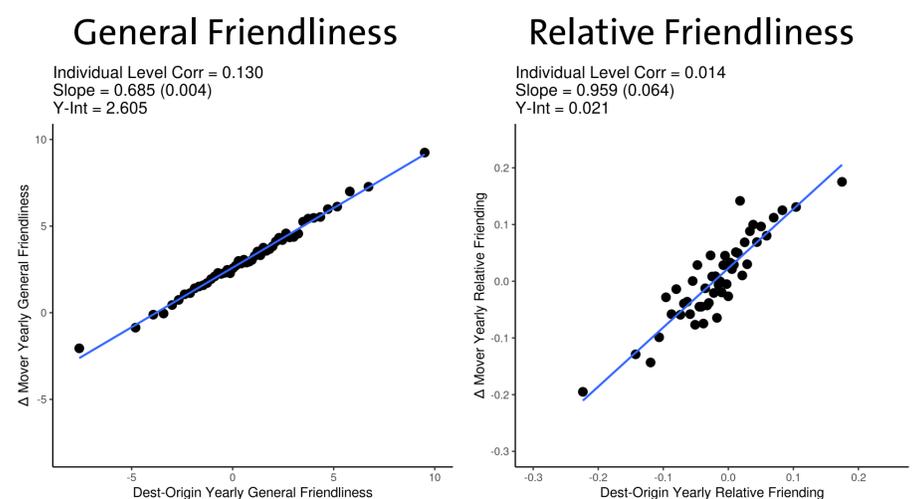
3. What makes places different?

Could be:

- Place-based factors (policy, built environment, etc)
- Characteristics of natives living there

We find that Germans who move between areas adapt their friending to the norm in their destination, hinting at importance of place-based characteristics:

△ Native Mover Behaviors vs. Matched Non-Movers



4. Assessing integration policy

IV Estimates - Effects of Integration Courses

	Integration	General Friendliness	Relative Friending	Language	Employ. / Training
Log Integration Courses per Syrian	1.698*** (0.33)	0.204 (0.21)	1.389*** (0.25)	0.193*** (0.07)	0.891*** (0.15)
Control Covariates	x	x	x	x	x
Control Log General Unemployment Rate	x	x	x	x	x
N	390	390	390	390	384

The German government heavily promoted German language and culture classes among migrants, but availability was limited by a teacher shortage.

We instrument for course completion with local German-language teacher unemployment, and find that courses tend to improve Syrian social and economic integration.