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## **Assimilation Over the Life Course? Early Labour Market Careers of Second-Generation Turks in Germany.**

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## **Summary**

In recent years, migration and migrant assimilation have returned to the center of public debate in Germany, and as the number of immigrants has risen steadily, the insights of migration scholars into migrant assimilation have become increasingly valuable. However, the insights of migration scholars into the temporal processes of assimilation are limited. As theories of migrant assimilation largely address intergenerational assimilation processes, they lack a concise understanding of the temporal dimensions and mechanisms of the assimilation process.

In this dissertation, I put forward that the life course presents an additional and critical temporal dimension of migrant assimilation. Associated with this argument is the critique of assimilation theories' emphasis on intergenerational assimilation for its lack of a systematic assessment and understanding of migrants' life courses. As this dissertation aims to demonstrate, the disregard of migrants' life courses presents a conceptual weakness that obstructs important temporal processes and mechanisms of migrant assimilation.

The dissertation substantiates these claims both theoretically and empirically. The first part of this dissertation discusses assimilation theories and shows how a life course perspective on migrant assimilation provides a more detailed and adequate understanding of the temporal processes and mechanisms of assimilation. This part concludes that assimilation or segmentation may occur over the life courses of migrants; that life course principles - such as linked lives or the endogenous causality of the life course - present adequate means to conceptualise these developments; and that the life courses of the parent generation have profound effects on the assimilation outcomes of their children.

The main and second part of this dissertation seeks to empirically demonstrate the prolificacy of adopting a life course perspective for studies of migrant assimilation. For this purpose, I present three empirical studies that assess second-generation Turkish migrants' labour market assimilation over the course of their early careers in Germany. The first study seeks to answer whether second-generation Turkish migrants in Germany pursue stable middle-class careers to the same extent as native-born Germans, thereby offering a more solid answer to the question than traditional cross-sectional studies that examine migrants' labour market outcomes only at one point throughout their career. As the study demonstrates, second-generation Turkish migrants have greater difficulties in pursuing middle-class careers, and this holds true especially for second-generation Turkish women. Lower host country-specific capital, such as education or language skills, are major contributors to their disadvantages.

The second study examines employment and income transitions for second-generation Turkish men in Germany, also taking into account their development over the course of their early careers. It concludes that second-generation Turkish men have higher unemployment and income mobility risks than native-born German men. Over the course of their early labour market careers, their lower chances of re-employment and higher risks of upward income mobility become more similar to those of native-born German men, while their higher unemployment risks remain at the same level. Again,

missing host country-specific capital plays a major role for second-generation Turkish men's lower labour market outcomes. Further, this study shows how the resulting cumulative effects impact the success of their second-generation Turkish men over the course of their early career.

The third study focuses on whether second-generation Turkish women's chances of securing employment, being unemployed, and being a homemaker converge to those of native-born German women over the course of their early careers. The study finds that second-generation Turkish women are more likely to be a homemaker and less likely to be employed than native-born German women; however, over the course of their early careers, their probability of finding employment and being a homemaker become similar to that of native-born German women. This development seems largely driven by the different timing of family related events, such as childbirth, which causes native-born German women to become a homemaker at a later stage in their career.

In sum, the studies contribute to the body of empirical research on migrant assimilation by adopting a longitudinal perspective on second-generation Turkish migrants' labour market assimilation and by finding evidence for the role of life course mechanisms in migrant assimilation. Theoretically, the studies question the emphasis that assimilation theories place on intergenerational assimilation processes, and make a strong argument for adopting a life course approach for studies of migrant assimilation.