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# Empowerment of female migrants through self-organized network structures in Bavaria

**A best-practice model for South Tyrol?**

## Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Beitrag untersucht das Potenzial der Selbstorganisation als mögliche Form des Empowerments von Migrantinnen. Zunächst werden die Voraussetzungen für eine erfolgreiche Selbstorganisation von Migrantinnen analyisiert; die Daten wurden im Rahmen von qualitativen strukturierten Interviews mit drei Migrantinnenorganisationen in Bayern gesammelt, welche alle von Frauen mit einer eigenen Migrationsgeschichte geleitet werden. Die Interviewdaten geben einen Einblick, welche Voraussetzungen für erfolgreiche Selbstorganisation erfüllt sein müssen und welche möglichen Herausforderungen damit einhergehen. Im zweiten Teil des Artikels werden zwei Organisationen und deren Projekte zur Arbeitsmarktintegration im Sinne von Best Practices hinsichtlich einer möglichen Übertragbarkeit auf Südtirol analysiert. Viele der Maßnahmen wären grundsätzlich auch in Südtirol anwendbar, es fehlt dort aber eine solide Datenlage zu Migrantinnen als Basis, um gut adaptierte und geeignete Modelle zu entwerfen. Zudem könnte sich die sprachlich Vielfalt Südtirols (Deutsch – Italienisch – Ladinisch) als Herausforderung bei der Umsetzung erweisen.

**Schlagworte:** Migrantinnen, Empowerment, sozio-ökonomische Integration, Best Practices, Selbstorganisation

## Abstract

The present paper investigates the potential of self-organization for the empowerment of female migrants. First, the prerequisites for successful female migrant self-organization are analyzed through qualitative structured interviews with three migrant women organizations from Bavaria, all three are led and organized by women with an own migration history. The interview data provides an insight into which conditions need to be fulfilled for successful self-organization as well as which challenges may arise. Second, two projects for labor market integration established by two of the organizations are analyzed regarding the transferability of best practices to South Tyrol. While many measures are likely to be transferable, more data on migrant women in South Tyrol is needed to design better-fitting models, and South Tyrol's linguistic diversity (German – Italian – Ladin) could prove to be a challenge in implementation.

**Keywords:** female migrants, empowerment, socio-economic integration, best practices, self-organization

# 1.    Introduction

Women with a migratory background and female migrants, in general,[1] constitute a significant part of the immigrant population; in South Tyrol, Italy's northernmost province, there are now more female than male migrants. While integration processes and possible pathways to long-lasting labor market integration have been at the center of scholarly debate for a while, there are still considerable research gaps in looking at migrant women as a target group for integration measures. Both Italy in general and South Tyrol more specifically, are only slowly coming to terms with their role as destination countries for migrants; in South Tyrol, migration began in the 1990s and has been increasing continuously ever since. However, systematic data collection on migrants and larger-scale studies have only begun to be implemented over the last decade, and there are no studies on female migrants specifically so far.

The present paper, therefore, aims to shed light on labor market integration possibilities for female migrants in South Tyrol, by analyzing the prerequisites for successful migrant self-organization and labor market integration measures from Bavaria that might be used as best practices. Bavaria has a much longer history with migration (since the 1960s and 1970s) than South Tyrol, and there is more data available on the integration of women with a migratory background. Both regions are situated in the Alpine Space, both are economically strong and affluent, and should thus be able to support integration measures out of their social policy expenses. We chose to focus on self-organization structures, associations, and projects run by migrant women themselves; such initiatives can help to overcome the usually passive and victimized role given to migrant women. Instead, as self-organizers, they set the agenda of what is important to them, which can lead to stronger empowerment processes.

This paper's aim is twofold: first, to analyze the necessary framework conditions and prerequisites for successful female migrant self-organization. To do so, qualitative structured interviews with three migrant women self-organizations based in Bavaria were conducted. They differ in size, scope, and framework of activities, but all three are led and organized by women with an own migration history. The interview data gave us an insight into which conditions need to be fulfilled for successful self-organization as well as which problems or challenges may arise. Second, we chose two projects for labor market integration established by two of the organizations and analyzed them regarding the transferability of best practices to South Tyrol. While many measures are likely to be directly transferable, more data on migrant women in South Tyrol is needed to design better-fitting models.

Our analysis begins with the facts and figures on migration to Bavaria and South Tyrol, before moving to the description of the organizations and their aims. Through thematic analysis (cf. Braun/Clarke 2006), we then identify common topics across the interview data and provide an evaluation of the necessary framework conditions for

self-organization structures. Finally, we analyze the MonaLea model and "*Migrantinnen in Bayern – Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt*" and look at their potential transferability to the South Tyrolean case.

## 2. Immigration in Bavaria and South Tyrol: Facts and Figures

### 2.1 Bavaria

As of 2017, Bavaria has 3.05 million inhabitants with a migratory background[2]; compared to the general population of Bavaria (13 million), 23.8% have a migratory background. Out of those with a migratory background, 47.3% are German citizens[3], and 29.5% were born in Germany, making them second-generation migrants (SVR 2018: 6). The largest groups are *Spätaussiedler_innen*[4] with 415,000 people; other frequent countries of origin include Turkey (336,000), Romania (248,000), ex-Yugoslavia (210,000), Poland (202,000), Austria (133,000) and Italy (96,600) (Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung 2017: 7).

Looking at labor market integration, employment rates have been increasing steadily since 2005 for both migrant and non-migrant workers due to the strong German economy. While 79% of the German population were in employment, the percentage of working persons with a migratory background is at 70%; this difference can mainly be attributed to the lower employment rate among migrant women (74% of women without a migratory background were in employment, compared to only 63% of migrant women). The overall employment rate increased by 7% for persons without and by 9% for persons with a migratory background in the same timeframe, moving towards a decreasing difference in employment rates between the German population and migrants (Europäisches Forum für Migrationsstudien 2017: 54–55).

What public discourse often neglects is that there were many women among the *Gastarbeiter* coming to Germany from Southern Europe and Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1970, female migrants had an employment rate of 70%, while only 40% of German women worked (BMFSFJ 2016: 35). A study published by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth in 2016 looked specifically at the labor market integration of mothers with a migratory background in Germany. Academic qualifications are nearly as frequent as in German mothers (14% compared to 17%). However, there is a substantial percentage of female migrants who do not hold any educational diploma (46% compared to 18% of non-migrant mothers) (BMFSFJ 2016: 36–37).

*Spätaussiedlerinnen* have the highest employment rate at 67%, followed by Polish and Southern European female migrants at 65% and 63% (BMFSFJ 2016: 39). There are almost no differences between migrant and non-migrant mothers in full-time

employment (more than 32 hours per week) (BMFSFJ 2016: 42). A family model featuring one (mostly male) breadwinner is much more common in migrant (42%) than in German (27%) families. There are significant differences among migrant groups: in 61% of Southern-European, 60% of Polish, 57% of *Spätaussiedler*, 46% of Ex-Yugoslavian, but only 35% of Turkish families both parents are in employment (BMFSFJ 2016: 55). Persons with a migratory background cannot be regarded as a homogeneous entity, and labor market participation rates differ considerably between groups (Höhne/Schulze Buschoff 2015: 352).

While the above-mentioned report draws on data for all of Germany, we can expect the situation in Bavaria to be quite similar, as most of the main migrant groups are the same as on the federal level. However, Bavaria's better economic position and the general lower unemployment rate is likely to also provide a better outset for the labor market integration of women with a migratory background. The next part of this paper will comparatively look at the situation in South Tyrol, where migration is a more recent phenomenon, happening on a smaller scale than in Bavaria with its much larger general population.

## 2.2   South Tyrol

One of South Tyrol's distinguishing features is its multilingualism; migrants thus do not enter a (relatively) homogeneous host society but are faced with three linguistic groups (German 69.4%, Italian 26%, Ladin 4%; (Autonome Provinz Bozen 2019)). Along with a strong autonomy providing many competencies to the provincial level and distribution of public-service jobs according to the numeric strength of linguistic groups (the so-called *Proporz*), the province's multilingual character makes arriving in South Tyrol a different experience than coming to the rest of Italy. As there are German and Italian education systems, migrants have to choose which school their kids should go to, a decision that then also impacts their social environment.

Migration history in Italy and specifically in South Tyrol is a relatively recent development. Italy used to be a country of origin rather than one of destination. Internal migration processes (from the poor regions in the South to the richer and more industrialized North of the country) were the predominant form of migration in Italy. From the 1950s to the late 1980s, South Tyrol was a country of emigration: most South Tyroleans left for the German-speaking neighboring countries like Germany (26.3%), Switzerland (20.9%), and Austria (11.3%) (Girardi 2011: 79). In the 1990s, during the first phase of migration, mostly men came to South Tyrol, while more recent migratory movements primarily consist of women (e.g. those working as so-called *Badanti*, in-house care-givers, in elderly care) (Girardi 2011: 81). The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union considerably facilitated Eastern-European migration (Girardi 2011: 85). As South Tyrol's history with migration is relatively recent and due to Italy's strict

naturalization laws especially for third-country nationals, the literature on South Tyrol mostly speaks of foreigners (*Ausländer*), and not of persons with a migratory background as a term that also includes the second generation of migrants. The plans made by the former Partito Democratico government to introduce a *ius soli* system were not followed through; thus, many second-generation migrants born and raised in Italy do not have Italian citizenship and still fall under or belong to the category of foreigners.

In 2018, South Tyrol had a migrant population of 9.5%, higher than both the Italian (8.5%) and the EU (7.8%) average (ASTAT 2019: 4). Albania (11.4%), Germany (8.8%), Pakistan (7.2%), Morocco (7%), Romania (6.6%), Kosovo (5.1%), Slovakia (4.4%), Macedonia (4.2%), Ukraine (3.5%) and Austria (3.2%) are the main countries of origin. Since 2007, there is a majority of female migrants (52.4% of the migrant population are female) (ASTAT 2019: 9). EU-citizens' unemployment rates were slightly lower than those of the general South Tyrolean population (2.7% for men and 3.2% for women for EU citizens, compared to 3.4% and 4.1% for the general population). However, third-country nationals have significantly higher unemployment rates (14.2% of men and 18.7% of women are not in employment). Like Bavaria, South Tyrol benefits from economic prosperity and has a very low general unemployment rate at 3.1% (EURAC Research 2018: 37).

While there is data on the labor market integration of persons with a migratory background in South Tyrol as well as on the fields that migrants mostly work in, studies specifically looking at female migrants on the labor market and specifically also looking at countries of origin are still lacking. Though an affluent region like South Tyrol, Bavaria has been dealing with the accommodation of diversity and also with specific services addressing female migrant workers for a much longer period of time. Analyzing best practice models of self-organization and evaluating their possible applicability to the South Tyrolean case will thus be at the center of our analysis.

## 3.     Bavarian female migrant self-organization structures as best practice models for South Tyrol?

In order to identify the framework conditions for establishing female migrant workers self-organization structures, qualitative structured interviews with self-organization representatives were conducted in April and May 2019, face-to-face and via telephone. The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis (cf. Braun/Clarke 2006), which allows for the identification of shared topics and sub-topics across the collected interview data. The interviewed organizations will now briefly be introduced, followed by an analysis of the prerequisites for female self-organization and labor market integration projects to thrive.

## 3.1 The Organizations

### 3.1.1 MonaLea

MonaLea stands for *Münchner Orientierungs- und Qualifizierungs-Netz für Arbeitssuchende – Leben und Arbeiten in München* (Munich Orientation and Qualification Network for Employment Seekers – Living and Working in Munich). It was designed to facilitate education, qualification, and labor market integration and has been active since 2008. More than 850 female migrants attended MonaLea courses since 2008, 90% obtained a vocational certificate, and 70% a Goethe-certificate at B1, B2, or C1 level. Each year about 50% of course attendees move directly into employment or education and 25% into further vocational or educational training measures. One year after completing MonaLea, over 45% of women with a migratory background are in a job with social security measures, and 30% are in education or getting school diplomas (Terrasi-Haufe/Bilotta-Gutheil 2019: 8–9).

### 3.1.2 Hilfe von Mensch zu Mensch e.V.

*Hilfe von Mensch zu Mensch e.V.* (help from human to human) is a migrant self-organization founded in 1992 by Sadija Klepo, who fled from Bosnia and Hercegovina to Germany because of the Balkan wars. At first, the association provided local help for Bosnian refugees through donations and the transport of aid to Bosnia. In 1998, the association took over the *Beratungsstelle für Flüchtlinge und Asylbewerber* (counseling office for refugees and asylum seekers) in Munich. Since 2013, its aims and structures have broadened further, and it is now offering long-term services to refugees and migrants in different parts of Bavaria (HVMZM 2019).

### 3.1.3 Migrantinnen Netzwerk Bayern

The *Migrantinnen Netzwerk Bayern* (female migrant network Bavaria) was founded in Munich in 2013. Its aims are "the legal, political and social equality of female migrants; self-representation of female migrants; and the participation and representation of female migrants in the nation-state, the economy, and society" (Migrantinnen Netzwerk Bayern 2013; author's translation). In 2015, the female migrant network launched the project *Migrantinnen in Bayern – Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt* (female migrants in Bavaria – competency for the labor market), which aimed to prepare female migrants for the German labor market through a series of modules.

## 3.2 Framework Conditions and Prerequisites for Successful Self-Organization

Through qualitative structured interviews with representatives from each organization, we aimed to identify the framework conditions for successful self-organization, the necessary prerequisites without which such structures cannot work as well as potential pitfalls or problems encountered along the way. The points raised in the interviews were then analyzed using thematic analysis (cf. Braun/Clarke 2006), and clustered into common issue areas or topics that were mentioned in all the interviews.

The first of the topics addressed across the interview data is the necessity of also providing *child care* when planning offers for female migrants, as they most often still are the main caretakers for their children.

> "It is a fact that women are still seen as those who support families, as those who take care of children. […] So this concept of child care and so on is difficult as well. And for our women it is always very important to see that I also have children […] And I believe that when they realize that others feel the same way as they do, then they open up too." (Interview with MonaLea 2019; authors' translation)

This quote underlines that many migrant women might not be familiar with leaving their children in daycare facilities, so even that act alone might be stressful, but the pressure can be minimized by having in-house provisions for such care. Establishing relatability is also important; the course participants see that the team is also composed of mothers who encounter similar problems, which helps to build common ground and creates trust.

In order to provide such childcare facilities, self-organization structures also need to have the necessary *resources*, including both financial and time resources.

> "You actually need a personal approach. If you want to build that up properly, you would actually have to do it all over Bavaria. Someone from the association, or the board members, would have to be willing to travel, also to the smaller cities of Bavaria and lead face-to-face group discussions. And that is unfortunately difficult at the moment with the resources we have on hand; we are a volunteer board." (Interview with Migrantinnen Netzwerk Bayern 2019; authors' translation)

Self-organizations thus have to find a balance between their goals and aims and the limited resources at hand.

Another topic common to all interviews is *internal diversity*. As outlined in the facts and figures section at the beginning of this paper, persons with a migratory background differ significantly from each other in their experiences, their personal resources, their qualifications, and their needs regarding counseling or work qualifications.

> "There are always between 45 and 50 different nations represented here. […] The target group is heterogeneous. Some of us have women with an above-average level of education; we usually have 40% who already have a university degree from their country of origin. And then we also have 10% without a school

leaving certificate, or who are rather unaccustomed to learning and we learn to-gether here. […] So, empowerment definitely means learning to cope in such constellations and it's important not to pigeonhole, because then you isolate your-self in the end." (Interview with MonaLea 2019; author's translation)

Empowerment thus also encompasses acquiring the competence to deal with living and working in an environment characterized by diversity and managing to establish a setting in which everyone's needs and pace can be respected without endangering common standards or learning progresses necessary to complete the program.

Empowerment is also connected to moving away from a situation in which mi-grants, and especially female migrants, are only seen as victims or recipients of aid, without any own agenda-setting powers. In order to actively shape their own lives, women with a migratory background need to get out of this passive role; the transition from *passivity to activity* is, therefore, also among the shared topics mentioned in the interviews.

"And the first thing I noticed here in Germany was that they don't see refugees as a factor for society. We should sit in shelters, with our children, without taking part in life anywhere, without the children going to school. […] And then I imme-diately understood that I have to do something in Germany." (Interview with Hilfe von Mensch zu Mensch e.V. 2019; authors' translation)

Moving from a passive back towards an active role is central for both own personal development and integration processes.

Along with becoming active, getting in contact with the host society was men-tioned as one of the prerequisites for establishing a new livelihood in the new country.

"I knew people had to come into contact with the Germans and then they would no longer need help, because integration would happen naturally through social interaction. [...] And if we don't take these women along with us, meaning that they learn German, that they love and accept this country, then their children won't do that either." (Interview with Hilfe von Mensch zu Mensch e.V. 2019; au-thors' translation)

Labor market integration is also needed, as it provides the necessary framework for both increasing exchange as well as for stepping out of a passive and into a more active role by making women able to provide for themselves. However, it does not only take the migrant women's will to get into contact with the local population, but the host society must also be open and responsive to such engagement.

This leads over to the final shared topic, namely *viewing diversity as an asset*. While migration is often seen as a danger to societal cohesion, or even worse, as a security threat, there are also increasing awareness-raising processes that show how diverse societies can be a good place to live for all inhabitants.

"But we already have a network […] Of course, there are also contacts to these big chains, to DM, to Rossmann, or to Denns Biomarkt. […] Or we also have more and more medical practices, which like to have a bit of a focus on multilingualism

> for the reception […] the orthodontist who has many children with Arabic back-
> ground and who is happy if he has someone at the reception who can explain in
> Arabic to the parents, or the children, what is going on and what they have to pay
> attention to." (Interview with MonaLea 2019; authors' translation)

A more diverse workforce can, therefore, represent an asset or even a unique selling point for certain products or services.

The points raised here – child care facilities, questions of resources, of internal diversity, the transition from passivity to activity, getting in contact with the host society, and viewing diversity as an asset instead of a threat – are shared by all migrant self-organizations interviewed, and it is highly likely that they can also be translated to other countries and contexts. The common topics identified also apply to the South Tyrolean case and could be used as an outlining framework when fostering migrant self-organization on the provincial framework.

## 3.3    Examples of Labor Market Integration Programs

After having looked at the bigger picture through establishing the prerequisites and framework conditions for successful migrant self-organization, this chapter focuses on two projects fostering the labor market integration of female workers with a migratory background and their transferability.

### 3.3.1  MonaLea

The MonaLea program targets female migrants from 20 to 55 years of age who wish to pursue a labor market qualification and at least possess an A2 level of German, but whose language skills are not yet developed enough to position themselves on the labor market. Women can choose from different courses (office management, retail, logistics and customer services, sales, health care, child care), and counseling is provided as to whether this is the appropriate choice; the aim of this process is to get the participants to take responsibility for their own educational course (Terrasi-Haufe/Bilotta-Gutheil 2019: 9). This is fundamental to an empowerment-approach, as migrant women get to determine their own path in life, and thus their future through further education.

Once the program has started, classes take place two days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Parallel to the vocational classes, participants attend language classes three times a week, and can reach the Goethe certificate B1, B2 or C1. MonaLea offers free childcare facilities for 30 children from 18 months of age onwards. This allows mothers to pursue their training without having to worry about where to leave their children (Terrasi-Haufe/Bilotta-Gutheil 2019: 10).

### 3.3.2 Migrantinnen in Bayern – Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt

The project *Migrantinnen in Bayern – Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt* (female migrants in Bavaria – competency for the labor market) was a now completed project launched by the Migrantinnen Netzwerk Bayern as a measure to foster the labor market integration of women with a migratory background, focusing specifically on women who already have a university diploma or a vocational qualification. *Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt* was offered as a seminar series in different Bavarian towns (e.g. Ingolstadt, Bayreuth, Landshut, Lauf a.d.P., Nürnberg, Schweinfurt, Würzburg), following a more decentralized approach by also moving into more rural areas. Unlike *MonaLea*, *Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt* did not prepare participants for specific future jobs or fields, but provided general competencies necessary for labor market integration and soft skills, through a structure of five modules (Migranet 2019).

Module 1 constituted an assessment of participants' needs and competencies, awareness of future job perspectives, and career planning. Module 2 provided information on how to get degrees or vocational qualifications recognized in Germany, while module 3 was on job applications and working culture in Germany. Module 4 aimed at strengthening and fostering competencies related to labor market integration: goal-oriented working and time management, team building, how to deal with conflicts, communication training, self-confidence, and presentation skills. Module 5 then dealt with how to align the job application to the local labor market, by providing information on which jobs are needed in the respective region, as well as advice on compiling CVs and training for job interviews. Women with a migratory background were encouraged to support each other, and the *Migrantinnen Netzwerk Bayern* also provided networking possibilities through its many contacts to other migrant organizations, associations, and policymakers (Migranet 2019).

### 3.4 Analysis of Transferability to the South Tyrolean Situation

MonaLea and *Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt* are similar in structure and aims, but there are also some differences in the target group and project approaches. First, MonaLea is open to all women, provided that their German is at an A2 level (basic language competence). As 46% of all migrant women in Germany do not hold any educational diploma, MonaLea has a more inclusive approach than *Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt*, which targets women who already have a university degree or a job qualification. In South Tyrol, there is no specific data on migrant women's educational status yet, but it is likely that out of the 18.7% third-country-national females who are currently unemployed, many do not hold a vocational or other qualification. A best practice to be exported here would thus be a more open approach, allowing for all women with a migratory background to participate. As always, the linguistic situation could be more

difficult to handle in South Tyrol, as women would need to have both German and Italian skills on level A2 to participate; another solution could be to split the groups into a German and an Italian-based one.

The second difference between both programs is indeed a centralized (Munich-based) or decentralized (all over Bavaria) approach. Both have advantages and disadvantages: through their offices in Munich, MonaLea is able to provide a stable point of reference and offer child care services. The structure with fixed course days and German classes is almost a full-time educational service and provides structure for women to plan their daily activities. *Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt* offered modules in a more loosely arranged way, possibly making them easier to attend, but also offering less counseling and guidance. Ideally, classes should be offered in a decentralized way, but in fixed structures that also offer childcare provisions. In South Tyrol with its smaller number of migrants, it would need to be seen if the demand is high enough to offer courses not only in Bolzano/Bozen but also in other larger towns.

The third difference relates to the content of the course. MonaLea offers courses designed to lead to employment in specific sectors of the labor market. This means that better-tailored training and language courses can be offered. However, this also requires that the women already know which field they would like to work in, which could be challenging to figure out for participating migrant women new to the country, without knowledge of the local labor market. *Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt* took on a different approach, and offered more generic competencies that are important for different fields of the labor market.

For South Tyrol, both models could be combined, as the groups would likely be smaller than in Bavaria: First, an orientation phase could be offered, in which generic competencies are taught, and an overview of the labor market and job opportunities in South Tyrol are given. Second, the participants could then move on to more specific courses according to their own personal interests. Like in MonaLea, socio-pedagogical support and counseling should be provided throughout the whole process.

While many of the above-mentioned measures and best practices could be almost directly transferred to South Tyrol, linguistic competence is a field that would have to be re-modeled for a multilingual regional context. Ideally, intensive training in both German and Italian would be provided at the beginning of each course, and both languages would then also be taught in job-specific courses. However, this could be difficult not only for the migrant women or participants, but also for potential teachers, who would have to be fluent in both languages as well as experts in the vocational education they are offering to be able to teach such courses – personnel could be very hard to find. A more pragmatic approach could be to offer course structures in both German and Italian and to let women choose based on which language they are already more familiar with, or which they think will be more useful in their own personal setting. More

data about the target group is needed before designing measures – beyond employment rates and countries of origin – as there is not much information available regarding women with a migratory background in South Tyrol. A more extensive study collecting data on educational status, possibly by country of origin, views on labor market integration and childcare, and potential job interests could provide a starting point. The best practices identified here could then be discussed in more detail and adapted to the specific needs of the target groups in South Tyrol.

## 4.     Conclusion

As a region with a relatively recent history of migration, South Tyrol could benefit from a shared learning process on labor market integration measures for female migrants. Bavaria and South Tyrol are in a comparable position; while Bavaria is much larger population-wise, and has been dealing with migration processes since the 1960s and 1970s, both regions are economically stable and have low unemployment rates, thus providing good preconditions for female migrants to be able to enter the labor market. Bavaria's longer history with migration has also allowed female migrant self-organization structures to flourish there, a concept which so far has only found very few small-scale users (e.g. community gardening through the association of *Donne-Nissà*). However, self-organizations in South Tyrol have not yet become an important player in offering labor market integration projects. As organizations run by migrant women themselves, they can offer insights into the needs and claims of female migrants and could help to design better-fitting integration projects. Social cooperatives could be an excellent organizational form for such associations in Italy.

Out of the framework conditions for successful self-organization identified in the interview data, all are likely to be applicable to South Tyrol as well: the need for childcare facilities, for resources, for the recognition of internal diversity, for a transition from passivity to activity, for getting into contact with the host society as well as for viewing diversity as an asset. These preconditions could be helpful in setting out a framework of support structures and in designing provisions to help self-organization associations come to life in South Tyrol.

A similar conclusion can be drawn for the transferability of best practices. Both a more open module structure allowing for the acquisition of general competencies (such as *Kompetent auf dem Arbeitsmarkt*) as well as a more strictly-structured program, combined with training for specific fields of work and the necessary linguistic qualification (like MonaLea) could be transferred to South Tyrol, maybe even in a combined course design, and potentially in a bilingual German/Italian framework. As always in South Tyrol, language is also a political issue – which language migrants learn first is likely to impact their social circles, their belonging to a certain group, and choosing a school system for their children. Depending on which language they choose, they

might feel more drawn to one linguistic group than the other, which could then, in the long run, also strengthen or weaken the groups' political positions.

However, before designs for implementation and ponderings about political consequences can be made, the lack of data on female migrants in South Tyrol needs to be addressed. We do not have data on migrant women's educational status, on the specific challenges they face when moving to the country, on what they feel could be improved, and on the (most likely very significant) differences between different migrant groups. In order to allow for designing better integration programs and also keeping the framework conditions for self-organization and best practice models discussed in our paper in mind, a more thorough analysis of the situation of female migrants in South Tyrol is the first and foremost precondition.

## Endnotes

[1] The term "migratory background" is more frequent in Germany, as it encompasses migrants without German citizenship as well as those who have already become citizens or are second-generation migrants – the term will be explained in more detail below. In South Tyrol, only persons without citizenship are counted, which could also be due to the so-far lower naturalization rates for third-country-nationals; the data here thus only speaks about "migrants" or "foreigners". This paper, therefore, uses "women with a migratory background" as well as "migrant women" interchangeably in most parts, and specifies which group is meant in the cases where they cannot be used interchangeably.

[2] The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees defines a migratory background as follows: "A person has a migratory background if they or at least one of their parents were not born with German citizenship" (BAMF 2019; author's translation).

[3] This relatively high rate of naturalized migrants can be accounted for by the Spätaussiedler_innen, who immediately receive German citizenship after having provided proof of their German ancestry.

[4] Spätaussiedler_innen are persons of German descent coming from the territory of the former Soviet Union, who need to prove their German heritage in order to get German citizenship immediately.

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## Interviews

Interview with MonaLea, Munich, 2019.

Interview with Hilfe von Mensch zu Mensch e.V., Munich, 2019.

Interview with Migrantinnen Netzwerk Bayern, Munich, 2019.

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