



INSTITUT FÜR ARBEITSMARKT- UND
BERUFSFORSCHUNG
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POLICY CONTEXT OF MIGRANT'S LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION IN GERMANY: CHALLENGES AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

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THE CHALLENGES OF REFUGEES INTEGRATION

Challenges:

- Refugees are forced migrants who escape their countries of origin due to necessity.
 - Less positively selected
 - Large psychological scar
- They often face perilous journeys and wait a long time before receiving the refugee status.

→ Because of these conditions, they report low labor market participation even decades after arrival in the host country (Brell et al., 2020; Fasani et al., 2022; Kosyakova and Kogan, 2022).

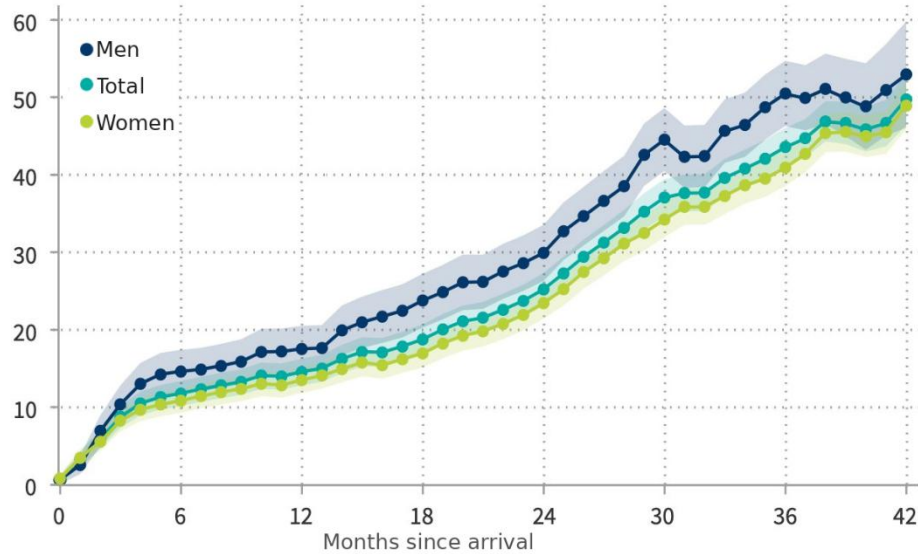
The case of Ukrainians:

Ukrainian refugees' journey was shorter and safer. Moreover, they were granted the refugee status upon arrival under the **Temporary Protection Directive**.

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES' EMPLOYMENT

Monthly employment rates¹⁾ of refugees from Ukraine by length of stay and gender

Shares in percent



¹⁾ Employment rates are defined as the share of persons in paid dependent employment among all 18- to 64-year-olds.

Notes: The shaded areas indicate the width of the confidence interval at the 95 percent level. Observation period 25.2.2022–30.9.2025. Person-observations: 2,746. Person-month-observations: 112,300.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees (v40.1) linked with IEB (V17.02.00) and DWH of the BA (2025/12), preliminary weights. Graph: IAB

Source: Kosyakova, Y., Jaschke, P. & Wagner, S. (2026)

For comparison:

- Asylum seekers who arrived in 2015 only reached an employment rate of 50 percent around six years after their arrival (Brücker, Jaschke, and Kosyakova 2025)
- The employment rate of the working-age population was around 68 percent in June 2025.

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES' EMPLOYMENT CONT.

- **Still far from a complete catch-up with natives:**

- Lower earnings while working
- Significantly higher share of part-time, especially for women
- High rates of employment in low-skill, low wage occupations (skill downgrading)

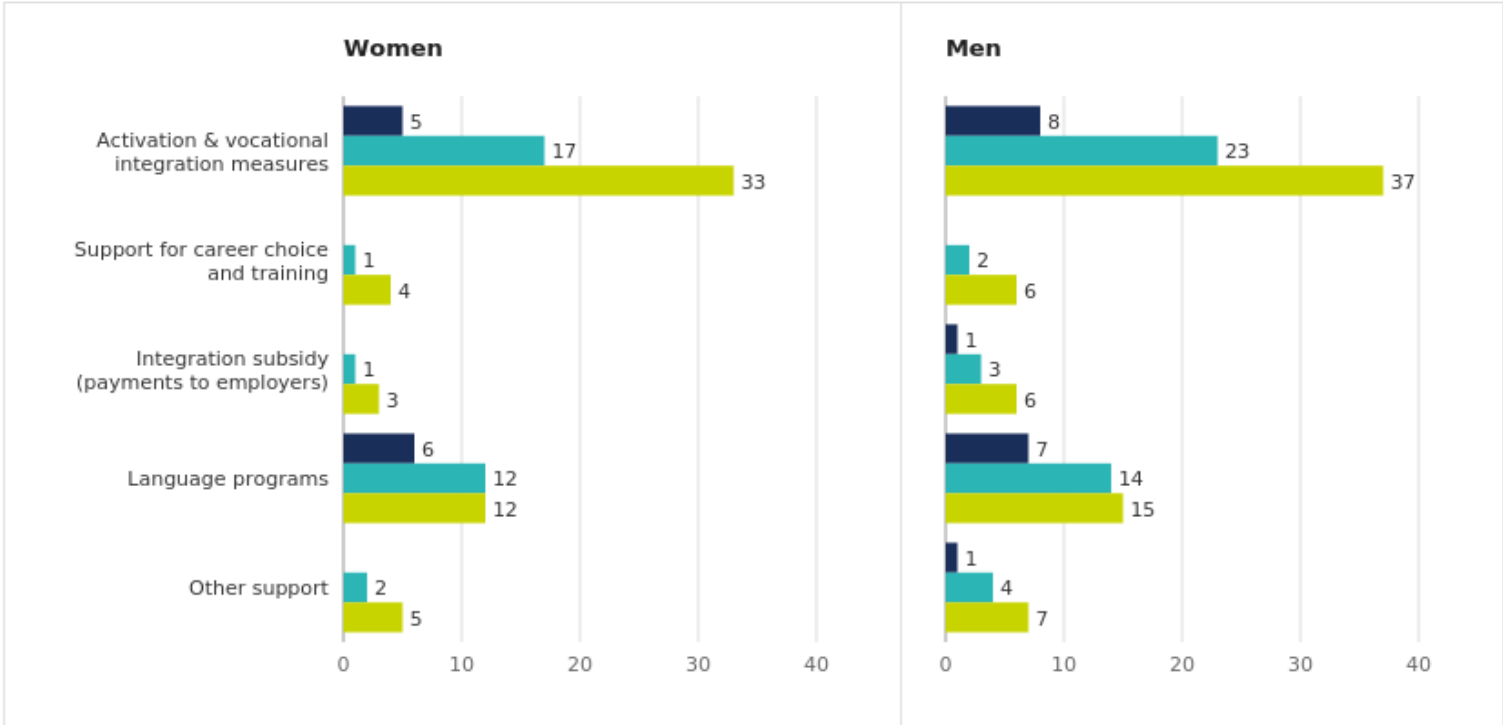
→ Large share of households still perceive complementary social security benefits even if household members work.

THE ACTIVE ROLE OF THE STATE IN REFUGEES INTEGRATION

Figure: Program participation of refugees by gender and length of stay

Shares in percent

■ ≤ 12 months ■ 13-24 months ■ 25-34 months



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees (v40.1) linked with IEB (V17.02.00), preliminary weights. Observation period 25.2.2022-31.12.2024. Person-observations: 2,746. Person-month-observations: 88,538.

Source: Kosyakova, Y., Jaschke, P. & Wagner, S. (2026)

ACTIVE LABOR MARKET POLICIES: JOB TURBO

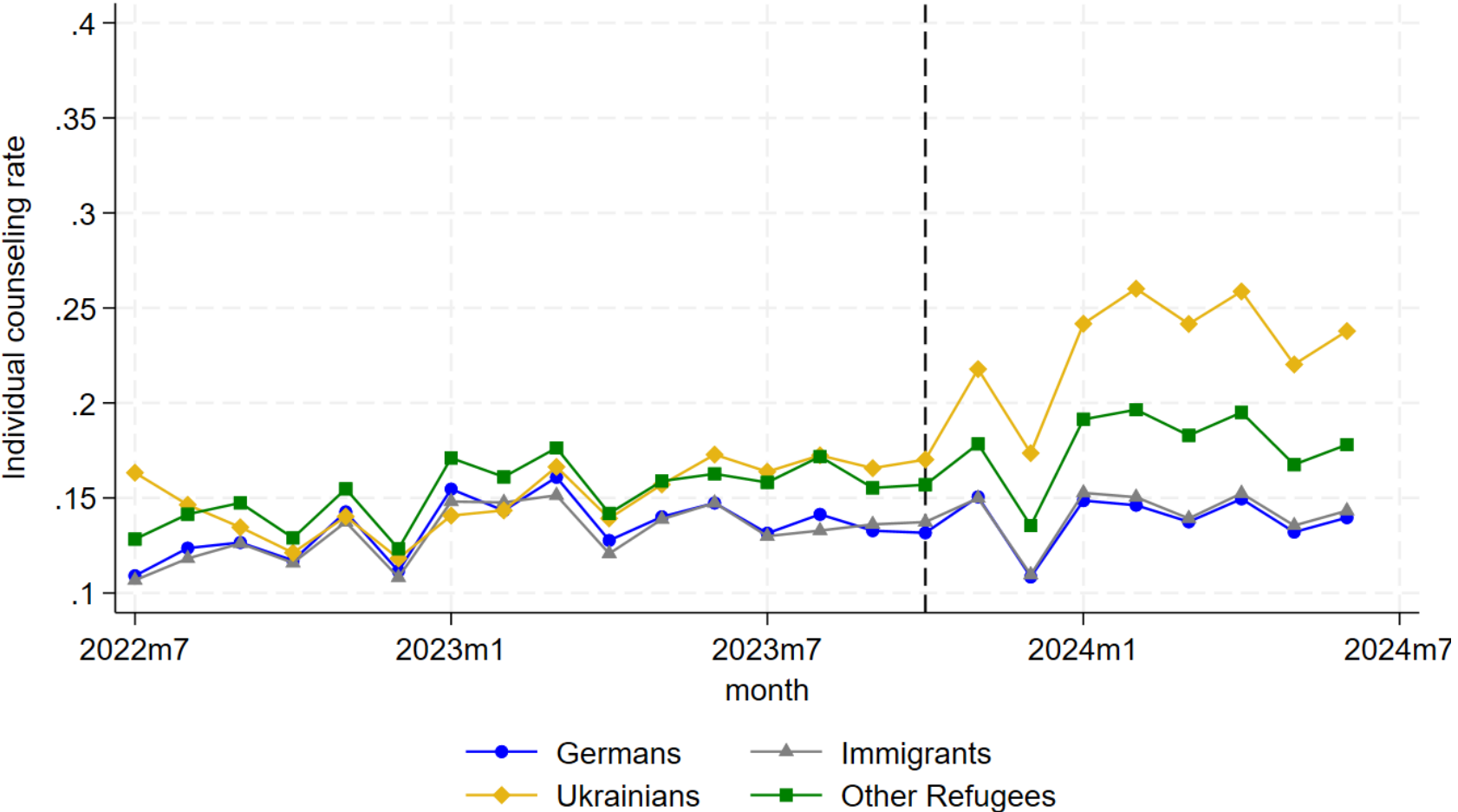
JOB TURBO

- Job Turbo officially started on the **23rd of October 2023**, and was followed by an internal directive in January 2024.
- It comprises a series of recommendations for job centers to fast-track refugees, particularly from Ukraine, into the German labor market.

Main tools

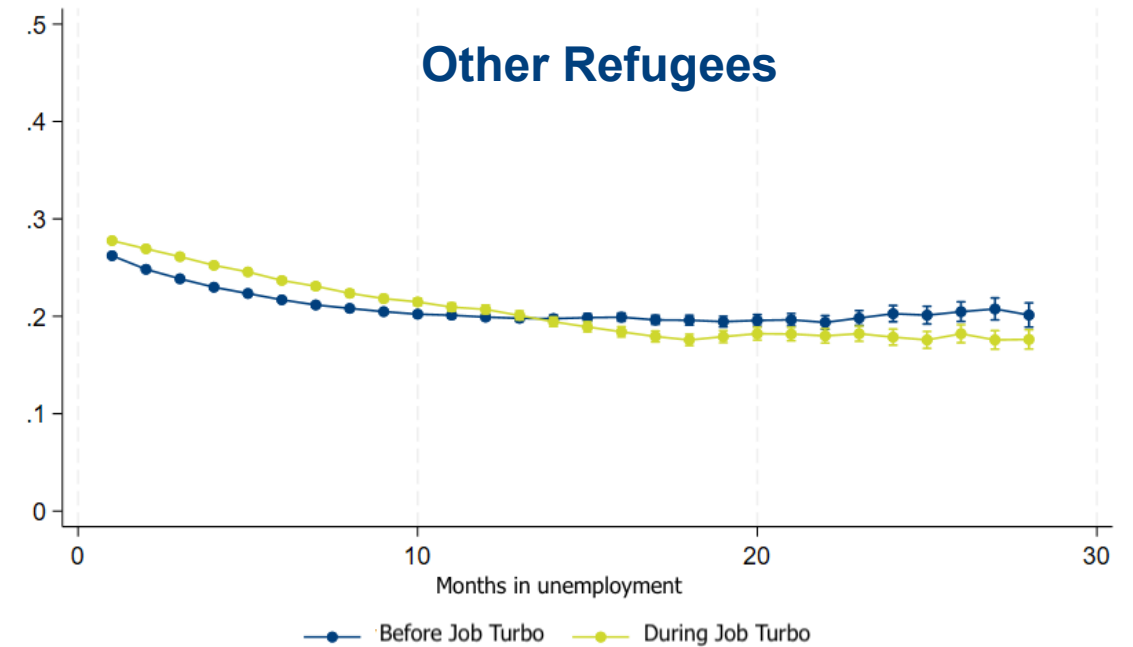
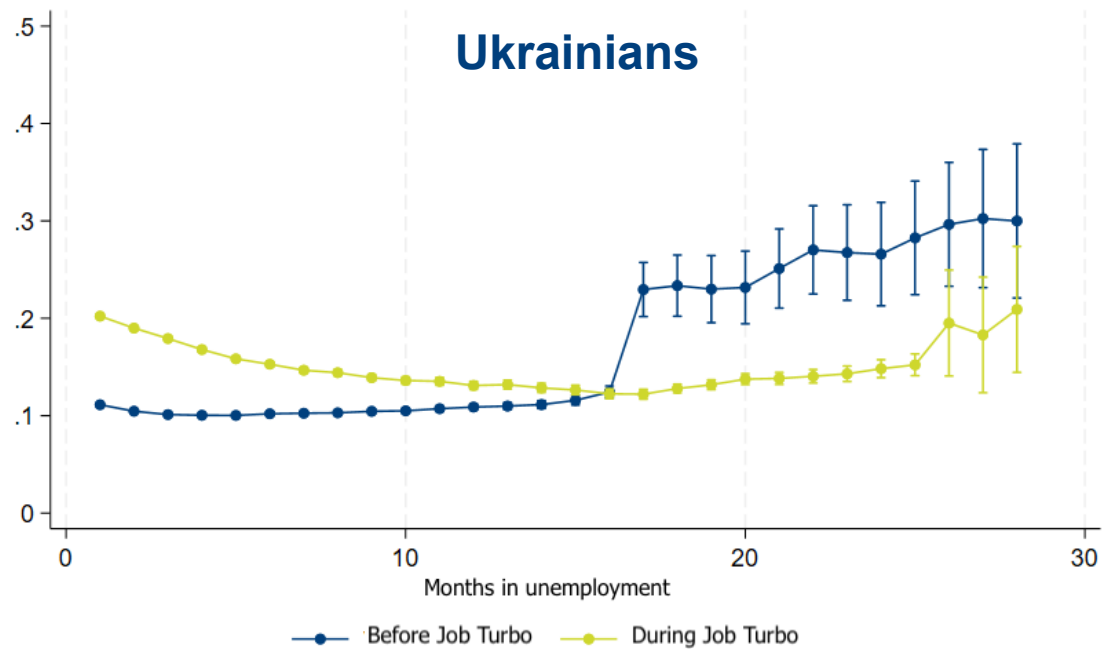
- Increase **1-to-1 counseling**.
- Make employers aware of refugees employability.
- Organize events for refugees and employers to meet.

EVOLUTION OF COUNSELING BY NATIONALITY GROUPS



EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYMENT RATES BY NATIONALITY GROUPS

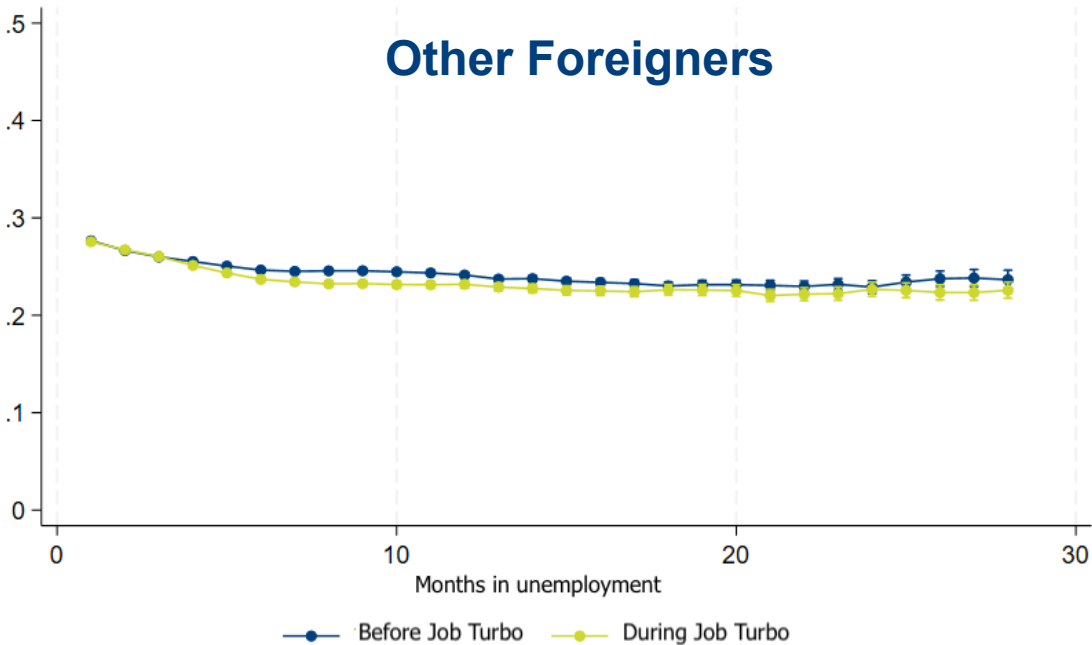
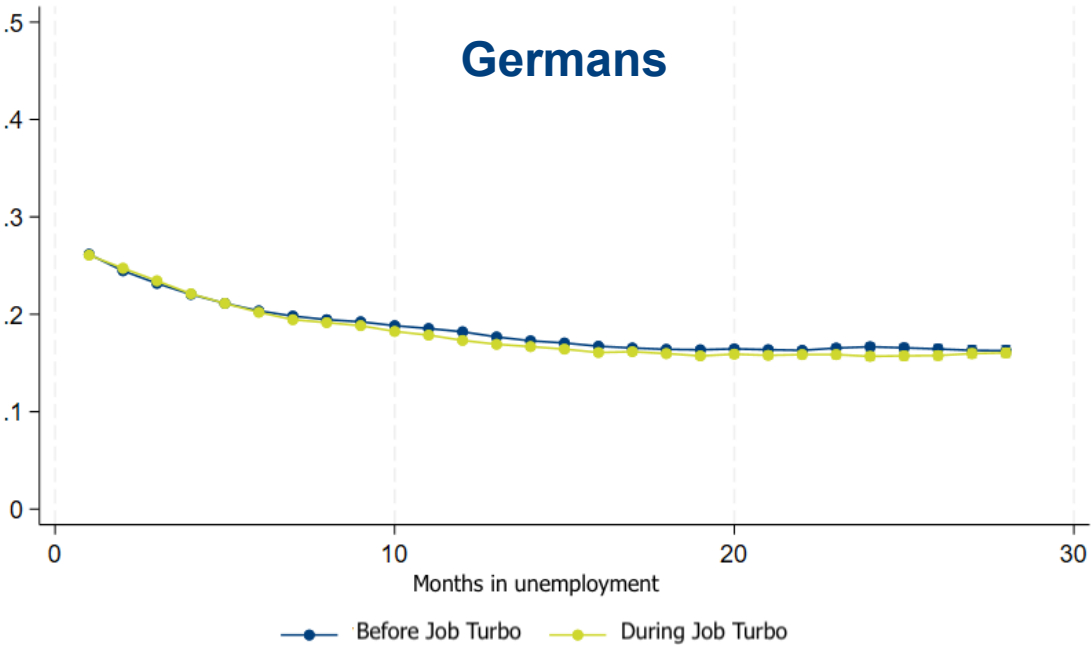
Employment rates 6 months later,
by nationality and unemployment length, in percentage points



- **Ukrainians:** Employment transitions greatly increases with Job Turbo, but less so with longer unemployment spells.
- **Other refugees:** Similar tendency as for Ukrainians, but at a lower level.
- **Conclusion:** The Job Turbo measures seem very effective for the target group, less so for other refugees.

EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYMENT RATES BY NATIONALITY GROUPS

Employment rates 6 months later,
by nationality and unemployment length, in percentage points

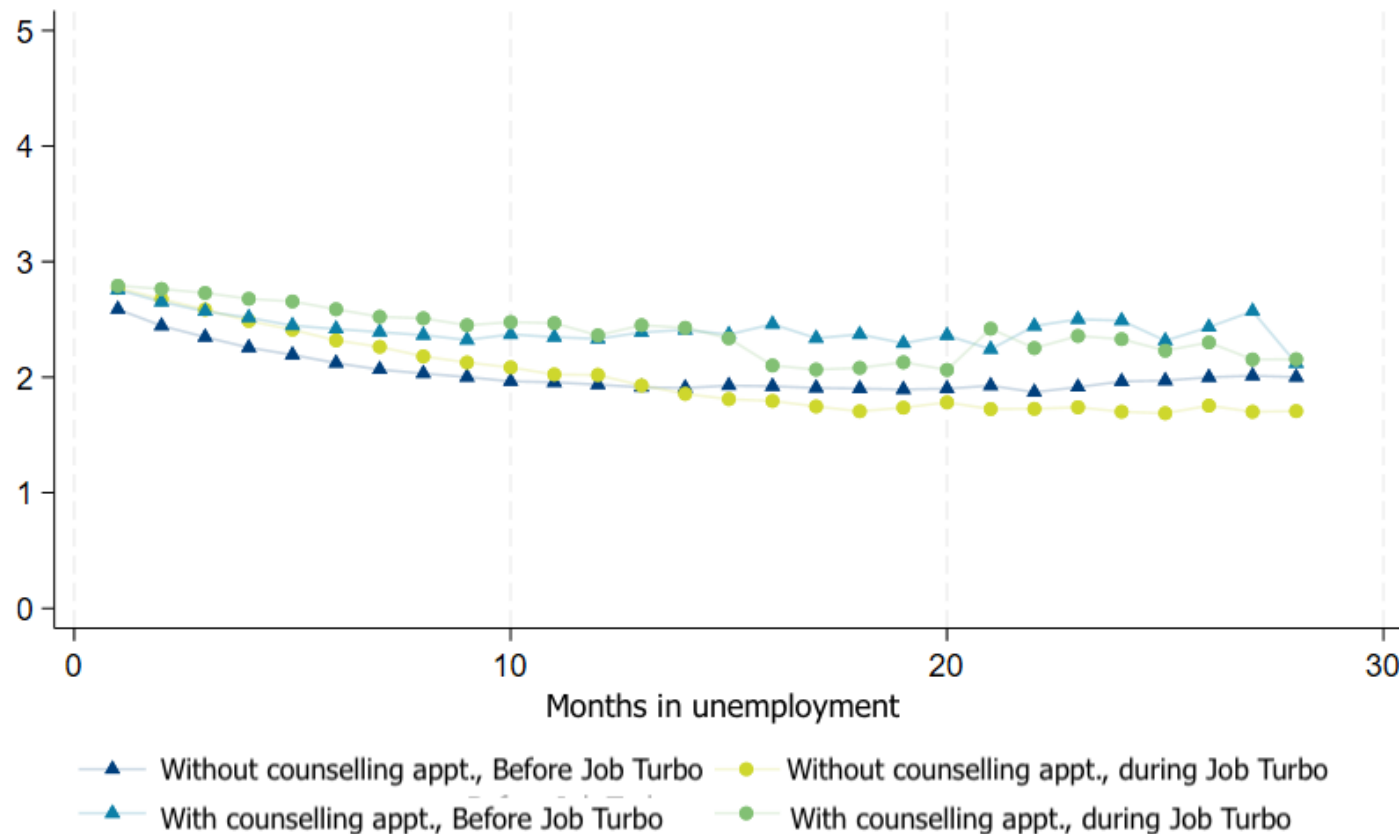


- **Germans and other foreigners:** Transitions to employment are stable or slightly lower

EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYMENT RATES WITH AND WITHOUT COUNSELING

Employment rates 6 months later, refugees

by counseling status and unemployment length, in percentage points



Before Job-turbo

- Counseling is effective, especially for those with longer unemployment spells.

After Job-turbo

- Counseling has a stronger effect, especially in the first months of unemployment.
- However, especially at the beginning of unemployment, we also observe an increase in employment rates for individuals that **have not** received counseling.

EVALUATIONS OF SIMILAR INTERVENTIONS

There exist few recent papers that have evaluated similar policies as Job Turbo (Joonas and Nekby, 2012; Abbiati et al., 2025; Hainmueller et al., 2025).

Broad consensus

- Counseling helps treated refugees finding employment

Limitations

- Little evidence on displacement effects
- Little evidence of mechanisms

BEYOND STATE INTERVENTION: THE ROLE OF INTERMEDIATE BODIES

THE ROLE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society can work in parallel to the state to sustain the integration process (Barreto and Gallegos-Torres, 2022).

However, civic organizations can also constitute a barrier if migrants/refugees are excluded from their network (Rocha and Santini, 2023).

- **Trade Unions** are a case in point:
 - Trade unions help protect workers and enforce their rights.
 - However, participation among migrants, and even more refugees, is low (Bedaso and Jirjahn, 2023)
 - As such, the divide between unionized and non-unionized workers is conflated in the native-migrant gaps (Dodini et al., 2025)

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Refugee integration progress, but slower than what would be optimal for refugees families and the hosting country.
- Public policy can play a decisive role in helping refugees find a job, either supporting the acquisition of local skills (e.g., language), or by helping navigating the German labor market (jobcenters).
- The state, however, is not the only actor who can intervene: civil society, non-profit organizations, and trade unions can all participate in the integration effort, but this requires careful consideration of the special needs and situation of migrants/refugees.

THANK YOU!

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE WELCOME

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