



“So, where are you *originally* from?” Experiences of discrimination and phenotypic differences in Germany

Summary

The Policy Brief examines the subjectively perceived discrimination of migrants¹ and for the first time establishes that in Germany people with observable (physical) characteristics which mark them out as being of foreign origin, such as a dark skin tone or headscarf, feel they are discriminated against more frequently than migrants who cannot be told apart from the native population by their appearance. The same goes for speaking with a foreign accent. A manifestly foreign origin is thus experienced as a disadvantage in Germany.

Analysis of the data contained in the SVR's 2016 Integration Barometer reveals that around 17 per cent of migrants who regard themselves as having a “typically German” appearance feel they are being discriminated against. However, some 48 per cent of those who visibly have a migration background (phenotypic differences) report they have experienced discrimination. This figure rises to 59 per cent for those who also speak German with a foreign accent.

The analyses presented here are based on a special evaluation of data available in the 2016 SVR Integration Barometer. The Barometer includes data on *Aussiedler*, or repatriated ethnic Germans, people of Turkish descent, EU migrants and migrants from the rest of the world (ROW). The data thus allows detailed analyses of subjectively perceived discrimination among migrants in Germany.

The share of those who differ visibly or audibly from the native German population varies depending on their group of origin. This is reflected in the share of people who have experienced discrimination: 54 per cent of respondents of Turkish descent said they had experiences of discrimination, while 34 per cent of *Aussiedler*, 26 per cent of EU migrants and 40 per cent of migrants from ROW countries reported they had experienced discrimination.

Religious affiliation of those with a migration background also has a big effect: 55 per cent of Muslim migrants feel they are discriminated against, that is a much larger percentage than Christian migrants (29 per cent) or migrants with no religious affiliation (32 per cent).

¹ The terms “migrants” and “people with a migration background” are used interchangeably in the following.