


ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Open Access



Parenting by mothers in immigrant families from Poland, Russia and Turkey in Germany: Migration-related similarities or origin-related differences?

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Abstract

Even if families in migration contexts have been the subject of an increasing amount of attention in migration research in the recent years, there is a noticeable knowledge deficit with regard to current parenting practices and socialization goals of immigrant families living in Germany. This is particularly striking since child-rearing is of central importance for children's development and their educational pathways. This paper seeks to fill this gap, drawing on the survey "Growing up in Germany: Everyday Life" (AID:A) provided by the German Youth Institute (DJI). Similarities and differences in attitudes towards parenting among immigrant mothers compared to mothers without migration backgrounds were analyzed with regard to parenting practices (emotional warmth, punishment and child's active participation) and socialization goals (performance/self-control and positive social behavior). In a sample of 5870 mothers reporting on a child under the age of nine, mothers in families where both they and the father had Turkey, Russia or Poland as their country of origin were included and compared to autochthonic families. The results revealed significant differences in parenting practices and socialization goals between mothers with and without migration backgrounds. Concerning parenting practices, Turkish and Russian mothers differed significantly from German mothers with regard to emotional warmth and punishment. In terms of socialization goals, all immigrant mothers placed more emphasis on both performance/self-control, as well as positive social behavior for their children than mothers without migration backgrounds in Germany.

Keywords: Immigrant families, Parenting, Parenting practices, Socialization goals

Introduction

A fundamental aspiration of immigrants is to succeed in their new home country. This includes not only building a new life for themselves, but also offering more and better opportunities for their children. Thus, children, and more generally families, are affected by and involved in migration processes. With the exception of the work of the sociologist Bernhard Nauck, which, since the 1980s, has used quantitative findings to address the situation of families immigrating to Germany (Nauck, 1985), families have

generally been neglected in migration research. However, over the past years, the topic of migration and family is becoming the focus of research. This concerns, on the one hand, families in transnational settings (Cienfuegos et al., 2023; Crespi et al., 2018). With regard to children, transnational migration studies deal with topics such as transnational childhoods (Ducu et al., 2018; Reisenauer, 2022), transnational parenting (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Carling et al., 2012), as well as global care chains (Hochschild, 2000). On the other hand, with the focus on receiving countries, there is an ongoing discussion on the situation of children born to immigrant parents. While the educational paths and achievements of immigrant children in Germany continue to receive special attention from educational science and migration research, parenting practices and socialization goals in immigrant families are still a neglected topic. This is all the more striking since child-rearing is of central importance for children's development and their educational pathways (Baker & Hoerger, 2012; Majumder, 2015). Thus, in order to explain existing differences in educational and development outcomes between children in immigrant and non-immigrant families, in addition to the effects of parents' educational levels and socio-economic status, it is important also to consider whether parenting styles in families with and without migration backgrounds differ, and how this is likely to affect children's development and their educational attainments (Stepick & Stepick, 2010).

Despite a growing interest in the inner life of immigrant families in Germany (Geisen et al., 2013; Fischer & Springer, 2011), little attention has been devoted to child-rearing from the perspective of parents with a migration background. This paper seeks to fill this gap, drawing on the survey "Growing Up in Germany: Everyday Life" (AID:A thereafter) provided by the German Youth Institute (DJI). Our focus is on similarities and differences in mothers' attitudes towards practices of parenting, comparing mothers who immigrated to Germany from Turkey, Russia or Poland to mothers without migration backgrounds in Germany. Furthermore, we aim to shed light on possible differences based on parents' countries of origin. For this purpose, the present study considers only mothers whose partner migrated from the same country of origin.

Theoretical background

Parenting in the context of migration

In recent decades, awareness of variation in family life and parent–child relationships in Germany has grown (Nave-Herz, 2015; Peuckert, 2008). In particular, a marked change from authoritarian parenting to more child-centered parenting attitudes and practices has been observed (Hurrelmann & Bauer, 2020; Schneewind & Ruppert, 1995). Against this background, it is important to gain an understanding of the interrelation between migration and parenting, as well as how migration contributes to the increasing diversity and complexity of family structures and parenting in immigration countries. Previous research has pointed to variations in parenting styles associated with migration resulting from three possible (and not mutually exclusive) mechanisms. First, since parenting varies between countries (Doepke & Zilibotti, 2019; Dwairy & Achoui, 2010a, 2010b), parenting styles of immigrants are assumed to be rooted in the parenting models of the respective countries of origin. According to this approach, systematic differences in parenting are attributed to the countries of origin of immigrant parents. Second, parenting styles appear to vary according to immigrants' social and economic integration in

Germany. In particular, lower average educational attainment and socioeconomic status of immigrants in the immigration country are associated with (class-) specific patterns of parenting (Herwartz-Emden & Westphal, 2000; Yagmurlu et al., 2009). Third, migration processes themselves affect parenting styles. Most (first generation) immigrants share some common experiences such as the lack of family support network, or acculturation distress, and might hence adapt their parenting in the immigration countries to these circumstances (Emmen et al., 2013). Regardless of the approach(es) taken to describe the relationship between migration and parenting, it is important to note the diversity of immigrant families and their parenting styles (Reisenauer, 2021). There are not only specific parenting styles between immigrants and non-immigrants, as well as between different immigrant groups, but parenting differs also within immigrant groups. Thus, statistical differences in parental styles related to migration capture only a small part of the complex relationship between migration and parenting.

This being said, the present study examines whether differences in parenting practices and socialization goals can be currently observed between immigrant and non-immigrant parents in Germany, as well as between parents from different countries of origin. We consider the experiences and perceptions of families with migration backgrounds from three different emigration countries who raise their children in Germany. The next section refers to parenting style research to present a typology of parenting identified by Baumrind, and elaborated on by Maccoby and Martin. Afterwards, cross-country comparisons regarding parenting will be addressed. Subsequently, available studies and findings on parenting in migration contexts are considered with regard to parenting practices and socialization goals. Before presenting the research design and the results, relevant aspects explaining the differences between immigrants and non-immigrants in the domain of parenting will be discussed.

Parenting styles and their importance for child development

Parenting is a multi-faceted construct which has often been conceptualized as reflecting two salient dimensions which, once combined, define distinct styles of child-rearing (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). In her seminal analyses, Baumrind initially identified three child-rearing styles: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative parenting (Baumrind, 1971), which were later extended by differentiating permissive parenting as indulgent or neglectful (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). The identification of these parenting styles is based on two dimensions, demandingness and responsiveness. While demandingness refers to behavioral control over the child's actions and the use of authority and disciplinary practices, responsiveness is about warmth and positive reinforcement in response to children's emotional and psychological needs (Baumrind, 1971). High levels of both demandingness and responsiveness describe the authoritative parenting style, while low levels of both dimensions represent the neglectful parenting style. The authoritative parenting style is also defined by its emphasis on the child's participation in important decisions (Hurrelmann & Bauer, 2020), whereas the authoritarian style of parenting is characterized by a high degree of demandingness and low responsiveness. Finally, an indulgent parenting style results from the combination of high responsiveness and low demandingness (Pong et al., 2010).

The quality of parenting plays an important role in children's emotional, cognitive, and social development (Attili et al., 2010; Majumder, 2015). High parental warmth is associated with better self-regulation and a positive interpersonal and school attitudes, while parental rejection or high restrictive parental control is associated with deficits in self-regulation, a higher likelihood of emotional and cognitive dysregulation, physical pleasure seeking linked to eating and substance use, and delinquency (Baker & Hoerger, 2012; Hoeve et al., 2009). Furthermore, a study by Attili et al. (2010) showed how the parent–child interaction affects children's popularity among peers. With regard to the educational pathways of children, numerous international studies provide evidence for the influence of parenting on children's later school achievement (Kashahu et al., 2014; Majumder, 2015; Turner et al., 2009). A high level of both emotional warmth and parental control is associated with positive academic performance. In contrast, low levels of emotional warmth and parental control, indicative of parental neglect, are associated with poor academic performance (Kashahu et al., 2014; Majumder, 2015). The described importance of family involvement in children's academic success is also confirmed for migration contexts (Schnell et al., 2015).

Cross-country comparisons of parenting styles

In order to understand parenting styles among parents who immigrated from different countries of origin to Germany, it is particularly important to engage in cross-country comparison studies, which reveal both universal aspects of parenting at a given time point, as well as differences between various countries. Most of the studies presented here focus mainly on comparisons between western and eastern countries in terms of their parenting practices. A study by Bornstein et al. (2012) considered the emotional relationship between mothers from western countries (Italy, Argentina, and the U.S.) and their five-month-old infants. Among many factors considered (such as non-intrusiveness or non-hostility), the only differences revealed are in terms of sensitivity. Italian mothers are found to be more sensitive, and their infants more responsive, than mothers and infants from Argentina and the U.S. The authors pointed out that adaptive emotional relationships appear to be a culture-common characteristic of mother-infant dyads near the beginning of life. Another cross-country comparison study explored connectedness between parents and their children (Dwairy & Achoui, 2010a). Compared to the western countries (e.g. France, Argentina), a higher connectedness between parents and their children is shown in the eastern countries (e.g. Kuwait, Algeria, Jordanian). A comparison of eastern (e.g. Kuwait, Algeria, Jordanian) and western countries (e.g. France, Argentina) in terms of parental control showed that parents in eastern countries exert more control than parents in western countries (Dwairy & Achoui, 2010b). An exception among the western countries is Poland, where parents report a higher level of control.

In their cross-country comparisons of parenting styles and socialization goals, Doepke and Zilibotti (2019) included further contextual factors, such as economic inequalities in the respective countries. Accordingly, higher economic inequality (e.g. Turkey) is associated with fewer parents adopting permissive parenting styles and a higher share of parents adopting authoritative parenting styles. There is also a link between higher economic inequality and the larger share of authoritarian parents, although the relationship

is less strong than for the other two parenting styles. Based on economic inequalities, differences between countries also emerge in terms of socialization goals. In countries with low economic inequality (e.g. Germany), more emphasis is placed on the child's imagination and independence, while in countries with higher economic inequality (e.g. Turkey, Russia), parents praise hard work. These findings show that country-based differences with regard to parenting are of great importance when addressing the question of whether migration-related similarities or origin-related differences in parenting practices exist between immigrant groups and non-immigrants in Germany. In order to explore this question in more detail, the next chapter will take a closer look at the child-rearing practices of immigrant families in Germany.

Parenting styles and practices in immigrant families in Germany

Several studies which compared parenting practices in immigrant and non-immigrant families established differences (Nauck & Lotter, 2015; Otyakmaz, 2015). However, the findings are far from consistent and point to the significance of additional factors like parents' life circumstances and their personal resources. Nevertheless, these findings still suggest that factors linked to parents' countries of origin, as well as their migration experience may play a role. For example, an analysis of parenting styles in Germany which compared mothers without a migration background to immigrant mothers from different countries of origin (Nauck & Lotter, 2015) showed that the former preferred permissive parenting styles, while neglectful parenting styles predominate among mothers of Turkish origin. Vietnamese immigrant mothers, on the other hand, are more likely to report having an authoritarian parenting style. These differences also remain significant when differences in cultural and social capital, employment status and migration biography were controlled for. Regarding emotional warmth in parenting, the findings of this study suggest that both immigrant groups report similarly lower levels of warmth in parenting style than the non-immigrant group. However, other studies do not suggest differences regarding emotional warmth between immigrants from Turkey and non-immigrants (Otyakmaz, 2015).

Empirical findings are also inconsistent with regard to differences in control and punishment as used by immigrant and non-immigrant parents in Germany. Lotter and Nauck's (2015) findings suggest that both Turkish immigrant mothers' and non-immigrant mothers' parenting are characterized by similarly low levels of control (permissive and neglectful). However, according to other data, Turkish immigrant mothers who are first generation immigrants (i.e. born in Turkey) express higher expectations of obedience, and more frequent use of punishment than non-immigrant mothers (Otyakmaz, 2015). Similarly, a study by Herwartz-Emden and Westphal (2000) showed that mothers from Turkey and resettlers¹ exert more control than German mothers. These differences are partly explained by immigrants' lower levels of education and the higher number of children in a household. According to this study, more highly educated mothers exert less control than mothers with lower levels of education. However, this difference disappears when the number of children in the household was controlled for. A comparison

¹ Ethnic German resettlers are descendants of Germans from the successor states of the former Soviet Union and from other Eastern European states.

of punishment practices between immigrants from Turkey and Russia and non-immigrant parents in Germany reveals a higher rate of violence among parents with a Turkish migration background (Hellmann, 2014). At the same time, there are findings indicating that Turkish immigrant parents treat younger children between the ages of zero and three with indulgence, with misbehavior not leading to consequences (Leyendecker, 2003). These inconsistent results of the various studies regarding emotional warmth and parental control may be due to differences in measurement and children's age groups considered. Regarding parental control, given its many features, heterogeneous findings may be due to variations in indicators used. Another reason may be that parenting styles cannot be assumed to be homogeneous within a country.

Furthermore, a high degree of rigid discipline and inconsistent parenting behavior (Leyendecker et al., 2011), but also increased delegation of parental responsibility (Jäkel & Leyendecker, 2009) is observed among Turkish immigrant mothers in Germany. High inconsistency in parenting behavior is associated with high maternal psychosocial burden and deficits in German language skills, while the delegation of parental responsibilities to teachers is linked to lower levels of maternal education. In a similar vein, Herwartz-Emden and Westphal (2000) found that non-immigrant mothers, as well as resettlers in Germany, are more indulgent in their parenting styles than Turkish immigrant mothers. Since parenting style research attaches importance also to the child's participation, as well as to responsivity and demandingness (Hurrelmann & Bauer, 2020), the present study addresses all three aspects.

Socialization goals in immigrant families in Germany

Socialization goals are defined as the skills and competences that parents seek to promote in their children (Keller, 2011). They are likely to reflect cultural traditions, as well as parents' expectations regarding personal qualities which may facilitate their children's success in their future lives. Given the high educational aspirations held by many immigrant parents (Glick & White, 2004; Rosenbaum & Rochford, 2008), it would seem likely that they tend to foreground issues of diligence and self-control. Studies in Germany indicate that parents of Turkish origin have significantly higher educational aspirations for their children than non-immigrant parents (Kristen & Dollmann, 2010), and that they value the instrumental benefits of school education particularly highly (Nauck & Lotter, 2015). In contrast, Citlak et al. (2008) found that self-control is a more important socialization goal for German mothers without a migration background than for mothers who were born in Turkey, or whose parents were born in Turkey. Mothers of Turkish origin who are more integrated into the German culture evaluate individualistic goals (such as self-control) more positively than those who feel less connected to the German culture (Durgel et al., 2009). Integration in this context refers to the preference for culturally specific activities.

Furthermore, for mothers from Turkey and Russia it has been found that child obedience is a more important parenting goal than child autonomy (Durgel and van de Vijver, 2015; Döge, 2015). Parents without a migration background, in contrast, rate the obedience as the least important socialization goal for their children. With regard to obedience as a socialization goal, parental education also plays an important role (Yagmurcu et al., 2009). Mothers with low education levels put more emphasis on relatedness and

obedience, while mothers with higher levels of education value the autonomy and self-realization of their child more highly.

As a further goal, mothers from Turkey attach more importance to close family relationships and mutual support within the family than mothers without a migration background (Durgel et al., 2009). In Döge's (2015) study, however, there are no major differences between Turkish, Russian and German mothers and fathers with regard to the socialization goal of prosocial behavior.

The findings on socialization goals in the context of immigration to Germany have shown that both academic performance, as well as behavior in social situations are of great importance for parents. For this reason, the socialization goals in the present study refer to these two areas.

Explaining differences in parenting practices and socialization goals

To explain the differences between immigrants and non-immigrants, various factors, such as variation in family structure, social status and culture, have to be taken into account.

With regard to family structure, both the family constellation (single-parent families vs. two-parent families), as well as the number of children living in the household play a decisive role in the context of parenting (Alidosti et al., 2016; Nauck & Lotter, 2015). Single mothers are found to be more controlling in their parenting than their married or partnered counterparts (Nauck & Lotter, 2015). Moreover, it is found that an authoritarian parenting style prevails in single-parent families, while in two-parent families, an authoritative parenting style predominate (Chan & Koo, 2011). Furthermore, a significant association is found between the number of children in the household and the preferred parenting style, with permissive parenting being more prevalent in families with only one or two children, while parents with three and more children are more likely to report authoritative parenting (Alidosti et al., 2016).

The second aspect explaining differences in parenting practices and socialization goals refers to social status. The assumption is that class-specific work values have an influence on parental preferences (characteristics parents consider most desirable to inculcate in their children) and thus play a significant role in determining parenting behavior (Kohn, 1977). It is assumed that parents value personal qualities, which they have experienced as contributing to their own occupational achievements, and accordingly, view as important for their children's future. Based on systematic links between social class, job demands, and parenting values, Kohn (1977) connected social class to values, meaning that parenting values can be partially explained by social structure and personality. As middle-class occupations tend to be characterized by high work complexity, and thus require a higher degree of creativity and self-reliance, these values are reflected in parenting practices in the form of indirect control and high emotional involvement. Working-class parents, on the other hand, are more routinized and closely supervised by others in their working environment, resulting in a parenting behavior consisting of direct control and distance between generations. Middle-class mothers place more emphasis on values that reflect internal dynamics (empathy, self-control and curiosity) than working-class mothers. Working-class mothers, on the other hand, prioritize values that reflect behavioral conformity (obedience and neatness).

The final factor affecting parenting is the culture, which is traditionally classified using Hofstede's (1980) basic value dimensions. Culture helps to construct parenting, and culture is maintained and transmitted by influencing parental cognition, which in turn is assumed to shape parenting practices (Harkness et al., 2007). In the context of parenting, the cultural value of individualism and collectivism plays a decisive role. Individualism "describes the relationship between the individual and the collectivity which prevails in a given society. It is reflected in the way people live together—for example, in nuclear families, extended families, or tribes; and it has all kinds of value implications" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 213). There are numerous studies that have found a difference between parents from individualistic and collectivistic countries in terms of their parenting behavior and socialization goals (Pong et al., 2005; Rothbaum & Wang, 2010). Concerning parenting practices, it has been shown that parents from collectivistic countries display higher levels of supervision and strictness than parents from individualistic countries (Pong et al., 2005). Accordingly, Chinese adolescents living in the United States are more likely to report their parents as having an authoritarian parenting style than adolescents from European America (Chao, 2001). Regarding socialization goals, it has been shown that parents in societies where individualism is emphasized consider child independence an important socialization goal, and attach high value to individuality and self-expression. On the other hand, for parents living in cultures where interdependence is valued, children's dedication to their family and social groups is a crucial socialization goal. This is because group harmony is deemed paramount (Hofstede, 2011; Rothbaum & Trommsdorff, 2007; Rothbaum & Wang, 2010). With regard to the countries considered in the current study, Hofstede (2001) classified Germany (67 points) and Poland (60 points) predominantly as individualistic countries, and Russia (39 points) and Turkey (37 points) as predominantly collectivistic countries. This leads to the assumption that, based on their cultural dimensions, the pairings Russia and Turkey on the one hand, and Germany and Poland on the other hand should share similar parenting concepts.

Aims of the present study and hypotheses

The present study aims to analyze maternal parenting practices and socialization goals among families from different countries of origin, as compared to non-immigrants² in Germany. It employs data from the German Youth Institute's AID:A I (2009) and II (2013–2015) surveys. We ask whether and how maternal parenting differs between families with and without migration backgrounds. However, this study goes beyond previous findings in three respects. First, the extensive AID:A I and II surveys allow us to consider a broad variety of families. Of particular interest is that parents with children from a wide age range (between zero and eight years old) were able to be included in the analyses.

Second, various dimensions of parenting can be investigated. In line with other studies, *emotional warmth* and *strict control/punishment* are considered as central dimensions of parenting practices. Moreover, in order to include different facets of child-rearing, the *active participation* of the child was also taken into account. In terms

² Non-immigrants in the present study are persons who were born in Germany, and whose partners were also born there.

of socialization goals, the variables considered were *performance/self-control* and *positive social behavior*.

Third, our research compares mothers from families with no migration background to those from the three largest immigrant groups in Germany, namely those from Turkey, Russia and Poland (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018; Woellert & Klingholz, 2014; Woellert et al., 2009). So far, parenting research on immigrant groups in Germany has focused primarily on families of Turkish origin (Citlak et al., 2008; Durgel et al., 2009; Jäkel & Leyendecker, 2009) and resettlers (Herwartz-Emden et al., 2014). However, using the AID:A I and II data, we can extend the focus of our analysis to further groups. The larger scope of our research thus provides deeper insights into group-specific differences in parenting.

In comparing these different immigrant groups, we focus on two-parent families in which both partners share the same country of origin. Families with one-sided migration backgrounds are not included, because immigrants with a German partner are generally assumed to be better integrated into German society than those in intra-ethnic marriages (Rother, 2008). This refers to cultural (e.g. use of the German language), social (e.g. intensity of social contact with Germans), and emotional integration (e.g. person's attachment to Germany). Accordingly, it is likely that immigrants in binational marriages also adapt their child-rearing style to the models of parenting dominant in the immigration country.

Our hypotheses are primarily based on findings about parenting practices in the respective countries under study and Hofstede's basic value dimensions (1980). We aim to answer the question of whether in Germany there exist migration-related similarities or origin-related differences between non-immigrant mothers and mothers from the three countries of origin. Since cultural values have an impact on parenting practices (He et al., 2021), we assume that results that deviate from our hypotheses could be a first indication of the existence of migration-related influences that push parents to change their parenting practices.

Hypotheses on parenting practices

Since in Turkish families much emphasis is placed on close family relationships (Durgel et al., 2009), *Hypothesis 1a* posits that Turkish mothers show more emotional warmth to their child than non-immigrant mothers in Germany. As previous findings in Eastern countries have found higher connectedness between parents and children, we assume that Russian mothers also show higher emotional warmth than mothers without a migration background (*Hypothesis 1b*). Based on the cultural dimensions and previous findings, it is assumed that Turkish (*Hypothesis 2a*) and Russian mothers (*Hypothesis 2b*) exert more control over their children or punish them more. Since some findings suggest that Turkish and Russian mothers value obedience more than children's autonomy (Durgel and van de Vijver, 2015; Döge, 2015), and since autonomy is crucial to the concept of participation (Abeling et al., 2003), we assume that Turkish (*Hypothesis 3a*) and Russian (*Hypothesis 3b*) families attach less importance to their children's participation in decision-making than non-immigrant families. As country where individualism is strong, Polish mothers are not expected to differ significantly from non-immigrant mothers in terms of parenting practices (*Hypothesis 4*).

Hypotheses on socialization goals

Hypothesis 5 addresses the high educational aspirations of immigrant parents (Glick & White, 2004; Rosenbaum & Rochford, 2008). It is assumed that all mothers with a migration background place more emphasis on their children's performance/self-control than mothers from non-immigrant backgrounds. Another reason for this assumption is that in their home countries, Turkish and Russian parents have been found to value hard work more than German parents do (Doecke & Zilibotti, 2019). As respect and politeness towards others is considered an important socialization goal in Turkish families (Citlak, 2002), *Hypothesis 6a* assumes that Turkish mothers place more emphasis on their children's positive social behavior than German mothers. Furthermore, since in collectivistic cultures dedication to the social group is very important (Hofstede, 2011; Rothbaum & Trommsdorff, 2007), *Hypothesis 6b* assumes that Russian mothers also attach great importance to their children's positive social behavior. As they come from two countries characterized by individualism, no differences are expected between Polish and German mothers in terms of the socialization goal of positive social behavior (*Hypothesis 6c*).

Methods

Data base and sample

The following analyses were carried out as part of the "Diversity and Change of Parenting in Migrant Families" ("Diversität und Wandel der Erziehung in Migrantenfamilien", DIWAN) research project. They are based on the first and second waves of the nationwide "Growing Up in Germany: Everyday Life" ("Aufwachsen in Deutschland: Alltagswelten", AID:A) survey, conducted in 2009 (AID:A I; <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.11358>), and from 2013 to 2015 (AID:A II; <https://doi.org/10.17621/aida2009>) by the German Youth Institute (DJI). AID:A I includes data from 25,337 individuals aged zero to 55 years-old who live in private households (target persons) (Quellenberg, 2012). The sample was drawn at random from the population register at 342 sample points in about 299 municipalities. The sample of the AID:A II survey comprises a longitudinal subsample, as well as a refreshment sample for a smaller age range, with a total of 22,424 persons under 32 years of age (Bien et al., 2015). In both waves, parents provided information on target children below age 18. Target children were interviewed at age 9 or older. While most respondents were interviewed by telephone, a small number of interviews were conducted online or in person.

The present analyses are based on both surveys, which are suited to being combined due to identical variables regarding parenting practices and socialization goals. The analyses presented here are restricted to the target group of children aged zero to eight, as the data used here was collected only from parents with children in this age group. In the large majority of cases (95.6%), the mother participated as the informant. Since the partner's country of origin was also taken into account, the study refers only to two-parent families.

Our analyses focus on similarities and differences in parenting between non-immigrant mothers and mothers with a migration background as defined by the parents' countries of origin. Families in which both parents of the target child were born in

Table 1 Sample description by comparison groups

	Germany (n = 5,337)	Turkey (n = 107)	Russia (n = 324)	Poland (n = 102)
Child gender: female (%)	48,6	44,9	51,5	47,1
Child age: mean (SD)	3.53 (2.15) (Range 0–8)	3.46 (2.18) (Range 0–8)	3.08 (2.18)** (Range 0–8)	3.29 (2.16) (Range 0–8)
Maternal age: Mean (SD)	36.44 (4.94) (Range 19–54)	34.47 (5.47)** (Range 22–49)	32.36 (4.94)*** (Range 22–46)	34.57 (5.20)** (Range 25–52)
Region: West Germany (%)	87,5	96,7**	95,1**	96,8**
Mother's years of education	14.98 (2.98) (Range 8–19)	10.73 (2.57)*** (Range 8–19)	13.19 (2.83)*** (Range 8–19)	14.22 (3.19) (Range 8–19)
Number of children in household: Mean (SD)	2.01 (.80) (Range 1–9)	2.57 (1.03)*** (Range 1–6)	2.20 (1.21)** (Range 1–9)	1.82 (.76) (Range 1–5)

Source: AID:A I and II

Significant differences to non-immigrant families are indicated as: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Germany are considered autochthonous ($n = 5,337$) and serve as a reference group for our analyses. Families in which both parents of the target child were born in Turkey ($n = 107$), Russia ($n = 324$), or Poland ($n = 102$) represent the three largest immigrant groups in Germany and were each compared to the reference group of parents without a migration background. Unexpectedly, the Turkish immigrant group was largely under-represented in the data. Hence, these findings should be interpreted with caution. Parents of other countries of origin were not included in our analyses. The country of birth of the target child was also not taken into account, as the majority of children were born in Germany (99.2%). Table 1 provides an overview of the final sample.

Turkish and Russian mothers appear to differ significantly from those from Germany in the sense that they are younger, have lower levels of education, and higher numbers of children in their households. Furthermore, the Russian mothers in the study have significantly younger children than the German mothers. In contrast, Polish mothers only differ significantly from German mothers concerning their age, which is much younger. Regional differences could be identified as expected, with fewer immigrants living in East than in West Germany.

Dependent variables

The dependent variables of the present study are indicators of parenting practices (items rated from (1) “never” to (4) “always”) and the perceived importance of socialization goals. With regard to socialization goals, different response formats were used in AID:A I (from (1) “not important at all” to (4) “very important”) and AID:A II (from (1) “not important at all” to (6) “very important”). Hence, these ratings were z-transformed for each assessment wave. Separate Principal Component Analyses (PCA) were performed for parenting practices and socialization goals to extract homogeneous factors. The Bartlett’s test of sphericity (Parenting practices: $\chi^2(45) = 10,400.58$, $p < 0.001$; Socialization goals: $\chi^2(15) = 7951.48$, $p < 0.001$) and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (Parenting practices: $KMO = 0.702$; Socialization goals: $KMO = 0.801$) indicated that the variables were suitable for factor analysis. Accordingly, a PCA with Varimax rotation was carried out for each set of items. Examination of Kaiser’s criteria and the scree-plot yielded an empirical justification for the extraction of three factors in the case of parenting practices, and two

factors in the case of socialization goals. Overall, 48.01 percent (parenting practices) and 62.65 percent (socialization goals) of the total variance could be explained. The indicators are as follows:

Parenting practices

Emotional warmth. The scale consists of five items, e.g. “I show my child with words and gestures that I like him/her”. Reliability tests revealed an internal consistency of Cronbach’s Alpha=0.60 for the total sample. Two items were restricted to children older than 24 months.

Punishment. This scale includes three items, such as “I punish my child harshly, even for small things” (Cronbach’s Alpha=0.60).

Child participation. This scale includes two items, such as “I ask my child about his/her opinion before I decide about issues which affect him/her”. Both items were restricted to children older than 24 months (Cronbach’s Alpha=0.77).

Socialization goals

Performance/self-control. Four items constitute this scale on maternal child-rearing goals. A sample item was “How important is it to you that your child wants to achieve something?” (Cronbach’s Alpha=0.70).

Positive social behavior. This scale includes three items, such as “How important is it to you that your child is respectful and helpful to others?” (Cronbach’s Alpha=0.61).

Individual indicators were computed as the mean value of all items of each scale. Since the number of missing values was very small, no method was used here to replace them with plausible values. As two scales contain items that refer only to children older than 24 months, more missing values are found here.

Control variables

The multivariate models include only potential confounders as control variables: these are variables that correlate both with the independent and the dependent variables, which, if not included, could lead to biased estimates.

The region in Germany (West vs. East Germany), the educational level of the mother, the number of children in the household, and the target child’s age were used as control variables. In other studies, controlling for these variables in the context of parenting and migration research has been shown to account for relevant compositional differences between immigrant and non-immigrant families (Alidosti et al., 2016; Chan & Koo, 2011; Nauck & Lotter, 2015). We expect that the educational level of the mother (years of education) and number of children differ systematically across our four comparison groups.

A multiple regression analysis was used to identify possible differences between non-immigrants and the three immigrant groups with regard to their parenting practices and socialization goals.

Table 2 Results of multiple regression analyses for mother's parenting practices and socialization goals (unstandardized coefficient B, standard error in brackets)

	Parenting practices			Socialization goals	
	Emotional warmth	Punishment	Child participation	Performance/self-control	Positive social behavior
Turkey	-.446*** (.064)	-.198** (.071)	.092 (.083)	.384*** (.068)	.163* (.073)
Russia	-.124** (.038)	-.118** (.041)	.080 (.050)	.495*** (.040)	.271*** (.042)
Poland	-.076 (.066)	-.059 (.072)	.024 (.086)	.401*** (.070)	.177* (.073)
Region (Reference group: West Germany)	.020 (.025)	-.029 (.029)	.004 (.033)	.128*** (.028)	.052 (.030)
Years of education (mother)	-.002 (.003)	.003 (.003)	.004 (.004)	-.043*** (.003)	-.002 (.003)
Number of children	-.068*** (.010)	.018 (.011)	-.046*** (.013)	-.048*** (.011)	-.032** (.012)
Child's age	.014*** (.004)	.057*** (.004)	.207*** (.005)	.035*** (.004)	.024*** (.004)
Constant	.129** (.049)	-.249*** (.056)	-.751*** (.064)	.544*** (.053)	-.011 (.057)
R ²	.023	.033	.232	.095	.014
Adjusted R ²	.022	.032	.231	.094	.013
N	n _g = 4,969 n _t = 100 n _r = 271 n _p = 94	n _g = 5,317 n _t = 107 n _r = 323 n _p = 102	n _g = 4,960 n _t = 100 n _r = 274 n _p = 94	n _g = 5313 n _t = 105 n _r = 317 n _p = 100	n _g = 5,329 n _t = 107 n _r = 322 n _p = 101

Source: AID:A I and II

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; n_g = Germany, n_t = Turkey, n_r = Russia, n_p = Poland

Results

Table 2 shows the results of a multiple linear regression for maternal parenting practices and socialization goals controlling for region, the mother's years of education, the number of children in the household, and the child's age. German mothers constitute the reference group.

With regard to parenting practices, similarities and differences were found when comparing mothers from families with and without a migration background. In terms of emotional warmth, the Turkish and Russian subsample differed significantly from those without a migration background ($F(7, 5410) = 18.35, p < 0.001$). In our analyses Turkish and Russian mothers showed less emotional warmth than German mothers. Concerning punishment, Turkish and Russian mothers differed significantly from German mothers ($F(7, 5839) = 28.68, p < 0.001$). Contrary to our expectations, mothers born in Turkey and Russia reported that they punish their children less often than mothers without a migration background. No differences were found between mothers with and without a migration background with regard to child participation. Concerning parenting practices, no differences were found between mothers from Germany and Poland.

In terms of the socialization goal of performance/self-control, all mothers with a migration background differed significantly from German mothers ($F(7,$

5824) = 87.10, $p < 0.001$). As expected, all immigrant groups indicated that they place more emphasis on their child's performance/self-control. Concerning the goal of positive social behavior a similar result was obtained. Mothers with a migration background attached more importance to their child's positive social behavior than German mothers ($F(7, 5851) = 12.03$, $p < 0.001$).

Regarding control variables, the number of children in the household, and the child's age proved significant.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to provide insights into parenting practices and socialization goals among parents of the three largest immigrant groups represented in the AID:A 2009 and 2013–2015 surveys in Germany. As our findings for mothers of Turkish, Russian, and Polish origin show, there are differences as well as similarities in parenting styles between respondents with and without a migration background. Next, we will summarize and interpret our findings before turning to the limitations of this study.

Differences between non-immigrants and the immigrant groups

Contrary to our expectations (*Hypothesis 1a and 1b*), Turkish and Russian immigrants showed less emotional warmth in their parenting than German mothers. This is consistent with previous findings which pointed to lower warmth among Turkish immigrant parents (e.g., Nauck & Lotter, 2015).

Also unexpectedly, Turkish and Russian mothers differed significantly from German mothers in terms of punishment (*Hypothesis 2a and 2b*). The results suggest that Turkish and Russian mothers punish their children less often than those without a migration background. This could be explained by the present study asking mothers about their parenting practices towards rather young children, as there are indications that Turkish parents are more indulgent with younger children (Leyendecker, 2003). Moreover, Turkish parents equate strict treatment of younger children with unkindness (Leyendecker et al., 2002). This would suggest that the indicators used to determine parenting practices may be interpreted differently depending on the country of origin of respondents. In further research, this aspect should be investigated. A further unexpected finding was that Turkish and Russian mothers gave their children as many opportunities as German mothers to participate in important decisions (*Hypothesis 3a and 3b*). When it comes to the set of parenting practices studied here of German and Polish mothers, as expected, there was no difference between these groups (*Hypothesis 4*). Since most of our assumptions regarding parenting practices did not apply, it is important to question our hypotheses at this point. Our hypotheses were based primarily on findings about parenting practices in the respective countries, and whether these constitute more collectivistic or individualistic countries. The results presented here could be a first indication that the differences in parenting practices are due to migration-related circumstances, and therefore also differ from the results concerning parenting practices in mothers' countries of origin. At the same time, we found that Turkish and Russian mothers differ from German mothers in terms of emotional warmth and the punishment of their children in the same direction. This would suggest that some cultural aspects (such as collectivism) of the country of origin still play a role in parenting, but that these are accompanied by a

rapprochement with the values of the host country. This was shown in a study by Nauck (1990), in which Turkish parents living in Turkey, Turkish parents living in Germany, and German parents living in Germany were compared with regard to various aspects of parenting. It was found that, especially with regard to early childhood practices, Turkish parents from Turkey, and Turkish parents from Germany differ from each other. In this respect, Turkish parents from Germany display alignment with the practices of German parents. These differences between parents with and without a migration background concerning their parenting practices could be very important for explaining existing differences in educational and development outcomes between children in immigrant and non-immigrant families. The relevance of parenting for children's education and development is well established (Baker & Hoerger, 2012; Majumder, 2015), but there is little evidence on whether this relationship is also significant in the context of migration. Only a few studies have investigated the importance of family involvement for children's educational success (Schnell et al., 2015), or the association between high levels of parental warmth and positive child adjustment in immigrant families (Iqbal & Golombok, 2018). Since migration can be a risk factor for child behavior (Daglar et al., 2011), further research is needed on the relationship between parenting and child development in the context of migration.

All mothers with a migration background attached more importance to their children's performance/self-control (*Hypothesis 6c*) and their children's positive social behavior (*Hypothesis 6a and 6b*) than mothers without migration background. Contrary to our expectations, Polish mothers also placed more emphasis on their child's positive social behavior (*Hypothesis 6c*). This result is in accordance with the high educational aspirations that immigrants have (Glick & White, 2004; Rosenbaum & Rochford, 2008). While high educational aspirations have mostly been interpreted as reflecting particular orientations of immigrants who shoulder the challenges of migration in order to enable a better life for their children, an examination of parenting values across countries showed that in their home countries, Turkish and Russian parents value hard work more than German parents do (Doepke & Zilibotti, 2019). In this context, the question arises whether the high educational aspirations of immigrants also lead to the academic success of their children. However, educational disparities between children with and without a migration background continue to be evident (Weis et al., 2020). One reason may be immigrants' experiences of discrimination, which can cause a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy (Genkova, 2020). This would mean that a person who is thought to be not intelligent would behave accordingly. The low family, social, and financial resources of families with a migration background could also explain these differences (Westphal et al., 2020). Immigrant parents in particular are expected to be "good and functional parents" (Westphal et al., 2017), but these findings show that there are still barriers that prevent immigrants from accomplishing their high educational aspirations, which furthermore cannot be explained by parenting deficits in immigrant families. The fact that positive social behavior is particularly important to Turkish mothers is also consistent with other findings indicating that Turkish parents place a high value on their children exhibiting respectful and polite behavior toward others (Citlak, 2002).

Finally, however, it is important to mention that the observed differences are small and do not point to a higher prevalence of parenting problems among the immigrant families

studied here. Instead, there are also positive and supportive factors in immigrant families (Westphal & Kämpfe, 2013; Westphal et al., 2020). In this respect, the higher emphasis placed on the socialization goals of performance/self-control and positive social behavior is noteworthy as a positive factor in immigrant families. Furthermore, although a large number of findings provide support for the links between authoritative parenting and positive development for children, the context is likely to lead variations in parenting styles which are also associated with positive effects on child development (Bornstein, 2012).

Limitations of the study and future prospects

The findings of our study must be interpreted in the context of limitations, particularly of methodological nature. All scales used as dependent variables in our research show a skewed distribution. One reason for this may be that the interviewed mothers tended to give socially desirable answers, i.e. to provide a predominantly positive description of themselves (Paulhus, 2002). In this case, this would imply that both non-immigrant mothers and mothers from the three countries of origin showed a similar tendency concerning their response behavior.

The most important limitation of the study is the overrepresentation of parents with higher education levels as respondents in the sample (especially in the German and Polish subsample). Many studies have shown that parents' levels of education play a decisive role for their parenting behavior and socialization goals (Chan & Koo, 2011; Yagmurlu et al., 2009; Leyendecker et al., 2014; Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2016; Kashahu et al., 2014). Furthermore, the "segmented assimilation theory" emphasizes the importance of parental educational level and socioeconomic status in integration processes, as these factors are related to different integration paths (Zhou, 1997). According to this theory, the receiving society comprises different segments to which immigrants might assimilate. For this reason, a comparison between parents with high and low educational levels would be very important in order to find out whether the assumptions of the "segmented assimilation theory" can also be applied to parenting practices. First indications for this suggestion could be seen in the results of the Polish sample. Overall, the Polish mothers showed no differences in terms of parenting practices and did not differ from non-immigrants in terms of maternal education (Table 1). Also, immigrant parents with little mastery of the German language are underrepresented in this study. Although the questionnaire was available in Turkish and Russian, this option was very rarely used. Thus, we were unable to determine if variations in German language skills are linked to differences in parenting, as suggested by other findings (Jäkel & Leyendecker, 2009).

Finally, the present study was not able to take into account whether parents receive support in their parenting, for example, from relatives. Support from persons, either from the host country or the country of origin, could also influence the parenting behavior of mothers.

In order to overcome some of the limitations of AID:A II, the third wave of the AID:A survey (AID:A 2019), along with an additional sample of immigrant families, will be an important resource in studying parenting among immigrant families in Germany. The

newly embedded migration sample not only provides an oversampling of immigrants, but also includes more recent groups of immigrants.

Acknowledgements

The research project DIWAN is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Responsibility for the contents of this publication rests with the authors.

Author contributions

YÖ analyzed the data and drafted the manuscript. ER, LC, SW substantially revised the manuscript. All authors made a substantial contribution toward development of the final manuscript and approved publication.

Funding

Open Access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL. The research project DIWAN is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) under the funding code 01UM1814AY within the initiative "Migration and Social Change".

Availability of data and materials

Data are publically available for scientific use at <https://surveys.dji.de>.

Declarations

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Received: 11 November 2021 Accepted: 25 October 2023

Published online: 31 October 2023

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