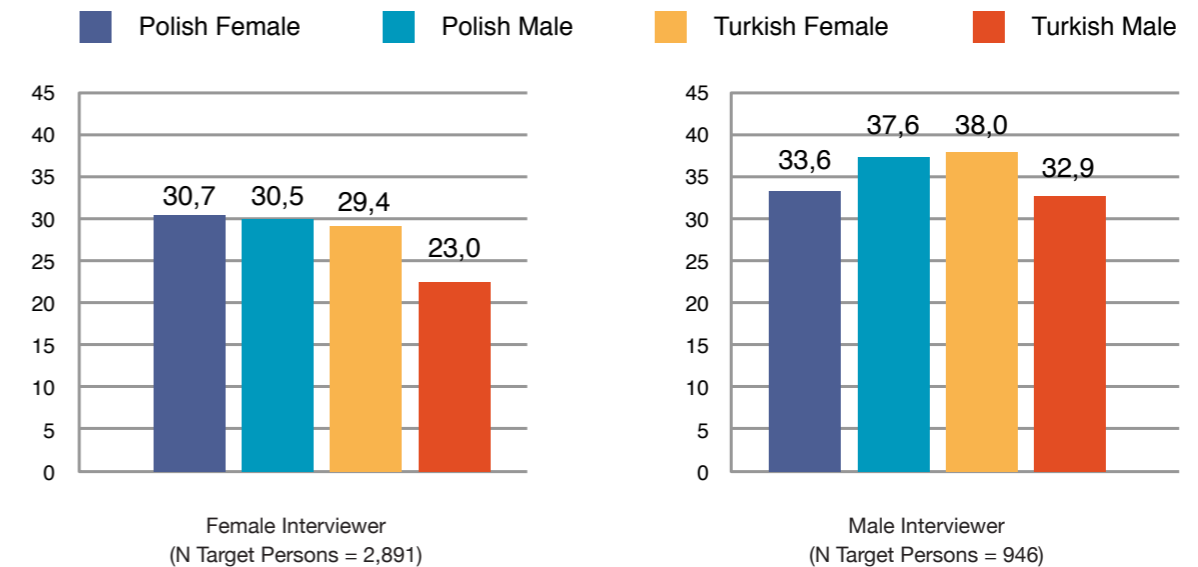


**Figure 6:** Share of refusals by interviewer sex for Polish versus Turkish males and females

UK, and Ireland who were re-interviewed about 18 months later. Although the national research teams faced several challenges – including identifying and finding new migrants and then motivating the targeted individuals to participate in the survey – the data collected have provided valuable information on a very early period of immigrant integration.

To circumvent language problems in the contact stage and during the interviews, the survey instrument was translated into the migrants' languages, and interviewers had the same ethnic roots as the targeted individuals. Notwithstanding these and similar efforts to increase response rates, contacts 'on the doorstep' were not always successful, not simply because interviews consume the interviewees' time but also because the interviewers necessarily enter their private living space. In this regard, several studies have demonstrated that female interviewers are more successful than males because they are more likely to be perceived as 'friendly' and respondents often report being more wary of 'doorstepping' male strangers.

Hence, a 'matching' of interviewers and potential interviewees by sex may be effective in decreasing refusal rates. This technique may be especially important in surveys among migrants from cultures that restrict contact between unrelated males and females. In this latter case, targeted persons may be particularly hesitant to participate in the survey if they are contacted by an interviewer from the opposite sex. Such 'gender-matching', however, may raise additional strategic challenges. For example, in the Netherlands, the social research institute that conducted the SCIP survey was able to employ gender-matching for Turkish and Moroccan respondents. In Germany, however, limited interviewer availability made such matching impossible. The German data, therefore, can provide valuable insights on whether or not refusal rates are lower when targeted individuals are contacted by same-sex interviewers and whether Turks and Poles differ in this respect. These questions are not only interesting for practical reasons but also from a sociological viewpoint.

### Does Gender-matching in Personal Interviews with Migrants Decrease Refusal Rates?

By Claudia Diehl, Anne Gresser, and Diana Schacht

Surveying immigrants is a challenging task because in many countries, sampling frames are non-existent, and even when they are available, they often contain outdated information because migrants tend to be more mobile than the general population. This latter is especially true for recently arrived migrants, who are the focus of the NORFACE funded survey project 'Socio-Cultural Integration Processes of New Immigrants in Europe' (SCIP). The primary data collection method in the SCIP project is personal interviews with about 7,000 recent arrivals in Germany, the Netherlands, the

### Can male interviewers approach targeted Turkish females?

In Germany, random samples of newly arrived migrants from Poland and Turkey were drawn from the population registers in five large cities. About 280 Polish and Turkish interviewers with an average age of 31 were hired and trained, two thirds of them female. In general, the interviewers were rather successful in motivating migrants to participate in the survey: refusal rates were about 30% for Poles and 28% for Turks. However, the rates were lower for female than for male interviewers. This finding confirms the results of several earlier studies showing that females are more successful interviewers than males. It is noteworthy, however, that this difference is more pronounced for Turkish than for Polish targets. A further analysis by sex of targeted interviewees (see Figure 6) indicates that the interviewer's sex makes a difference not only for female but also for male targets.

Those Turkish males who had been approached by female interviewers had a considerably lower refusal rate (23%) than those approached by a male interviewer (33%). Moreover, Turkish women were substantially less willing to participate in an interview than Turkish men, especially when contacted by a male rather than a female interviewer (refusal rate of 38% versus 29%, respectively). Obviously, the interviewer's sex was important for both Turkish women and Turkish men's decision to participate in the survey, and female interviewers were indeed more successful in securing cooperation than male interviewers. Among Poles also, male targets were particularly sensitive to the sex of the interviewer: Polish men refused to participate in the survey substantially more often when a man contacted them at the door than when a woman did so (38% versus 30%, respectively). For Polish females, however, the interviewer's sex was rather unimportant (34% versus 31%, respectively).

About 18 months after the first interview, respondents were asked to participate in a follow-up interview, which provided further insights into the effectiveness of the gender-matching strategy. Specifically, the SCIP data reveal that Turkish males in particular were much more likely to refuse participation in a follow-up interview when the first interview had been conducted by a male rather than a female (32% versus 22%). These differences were less pronounced for Turkish females (37% versus 31%), although in general Turkish women were

more reluctant to participate in another interview than Turkish men. Again, the results differ for Polish respondents: Polish men refused to participate in a wave 2 interview more often than Polish females (about 25% versus 15%, respectively), but for both sexes, this share was unrelated to the sex of the interviewer.

**Is using a female-only interview team the best way to reduce non-response for male and female targets?**

Overall, the SCIP data indicate that Turkish females are less likely than Turkish males to participate in an interview and be re-interviewed later. These data therefore imply that having female interviewers approach female targets might accomplish the important task of reducing refusals by female Turkish targets. Moreover, even though refusal was less common for Turkish males, even for this group, it may be advisable to send female interviewers given that the increase in response rates realisable using female interviewers is similarly high for both sexes. For Polish women, on the other hand, it may not make a difference whether they are approached by a male or a female interviewer, but for Polish men it does matter: they are more likely to participate in the survey when contacted by a female interviewer. In general, even though these findings need to be confirmed by other studies, the SCIP data strongly suggest that in immigrant surveys, a female-only team of interviewers is an even better strategy for reducing non-response than that of gender matching interviewers and target interviewees.

*More information about the SCIP project is available at [www.norface-migration.org/currentprojectdetail.php?proj=8](http://www.norface-migration.org/currentprojectdetail.php?proj=8)*