
Service literacy among refugees in Germany: The role of provider availability

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Support for refugees in Germany

- Refugees are dependent on assistance upon arrival in Germany (Böhm, 2017; Metzing et al., 2020)
- Responsibilities are shared between:



Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (AsylbLG)

- Mandatory tasks: accommodation, financial benefits, and health care
- Obligatory self-administrative tasks (education) and voluntary tasks (language training, qualifications)

NPOs and NGOs

- Voluntary initiatives, religious or cultural institutions, foundations or individuals
- Expand state services by
 - informing on AsylbLG
 - social and asylum counselling
 - daily life in the community

The relationship between service literacy and availability of support service providers

Service literacy = *The ability to find, understand and utilize information related to support services* (Loyd et al., 2013)

- Language, cultural, geographical or health barriers, stigma and discrimination prevent service literacy (Nakhaie, 2017)
- Cultural and language sensitive services, community-based approaches, and targeted outreach can lower barriers (Barbaresos et al., 2023; Krieger et al., 2020; Slobodin et al., 2018)

Hypotheses: Higher availability of non-governmental support providers is positively associated with service literacy

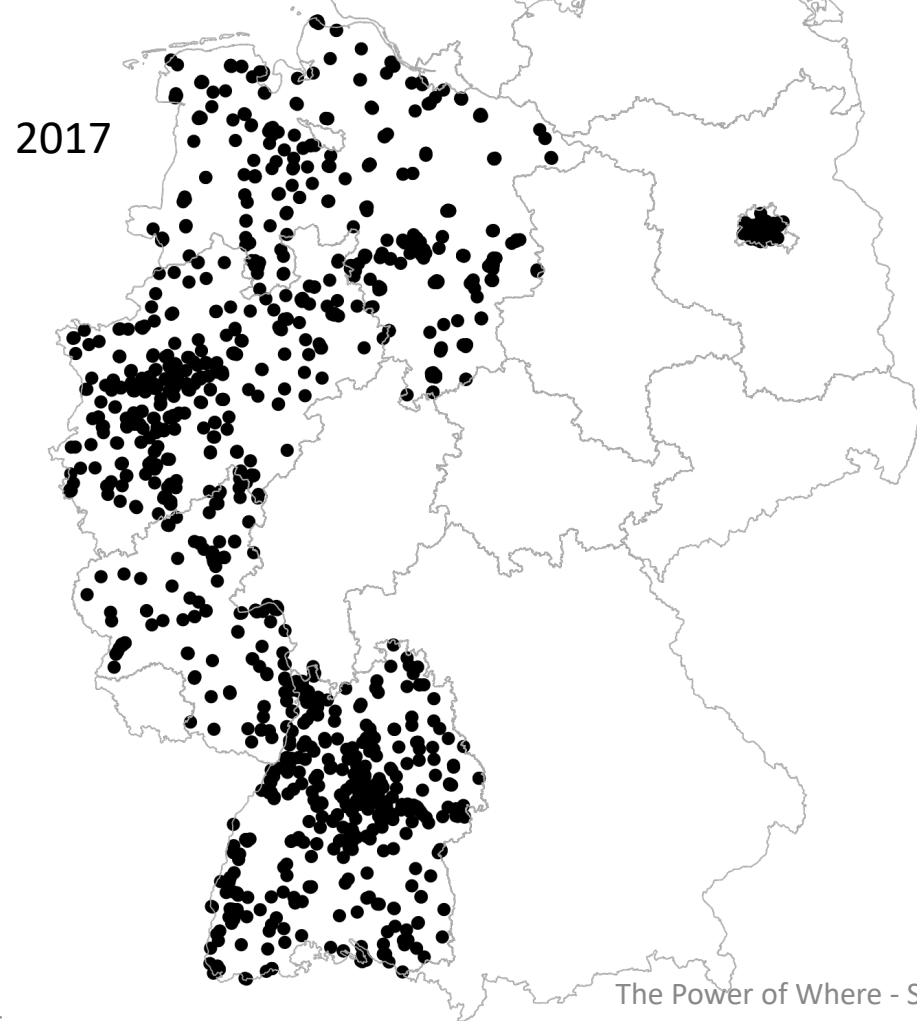
- a) *knowledge* about 5 different services
- b) *utilization* of support in 8 life domains
- c) *utilization* of 2 language courses

Repository of non-governmental support providers

- Compilation local services, initiatives, organizations, foundations, individuals that aim to help refugees
- Basis are address directories created and maintained by the **refugee council** of each federal state
 - Updated and distributed annually
- Inclusion criteria
 - Fixed organizational structure
 - Fixed available rooms and a permanent address
 - Regular office and counselling hours
 - Permanent staff (and additional volunteers)
 - Cover spectrum of services



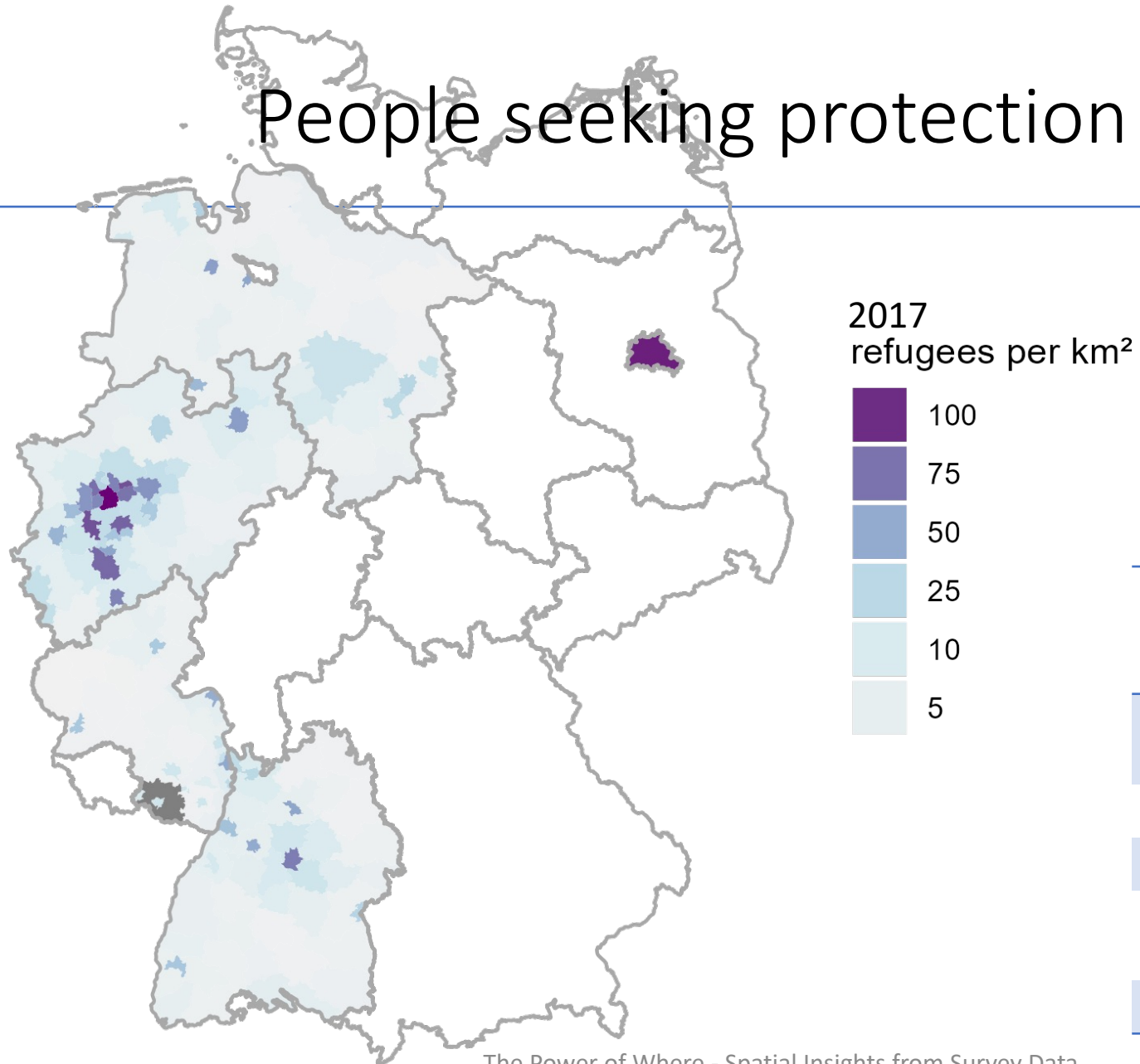
Point location of non-governmental support providers 2017



Repository comprises

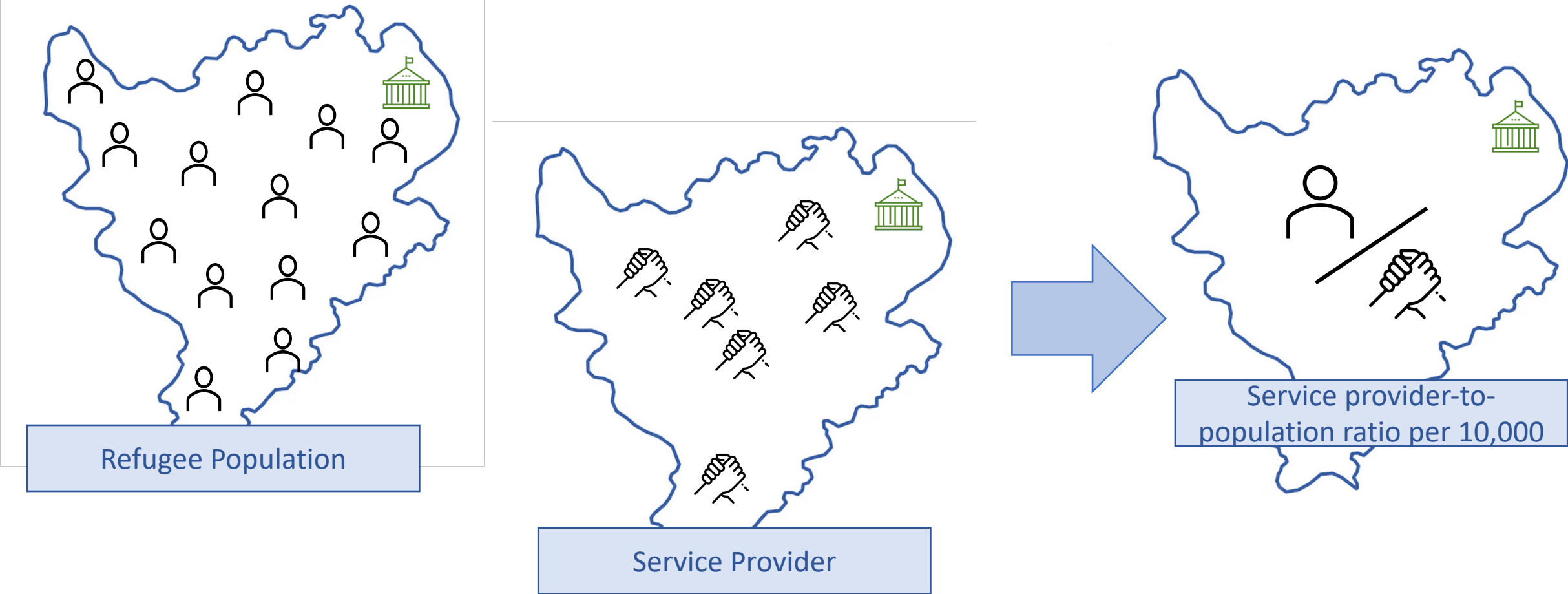
- 5 federal states in Germany
- Span of up to 5 years
- 3.391 geo-coded locations of service providers
- Average 10.4 services per district

People seeking protection 2017

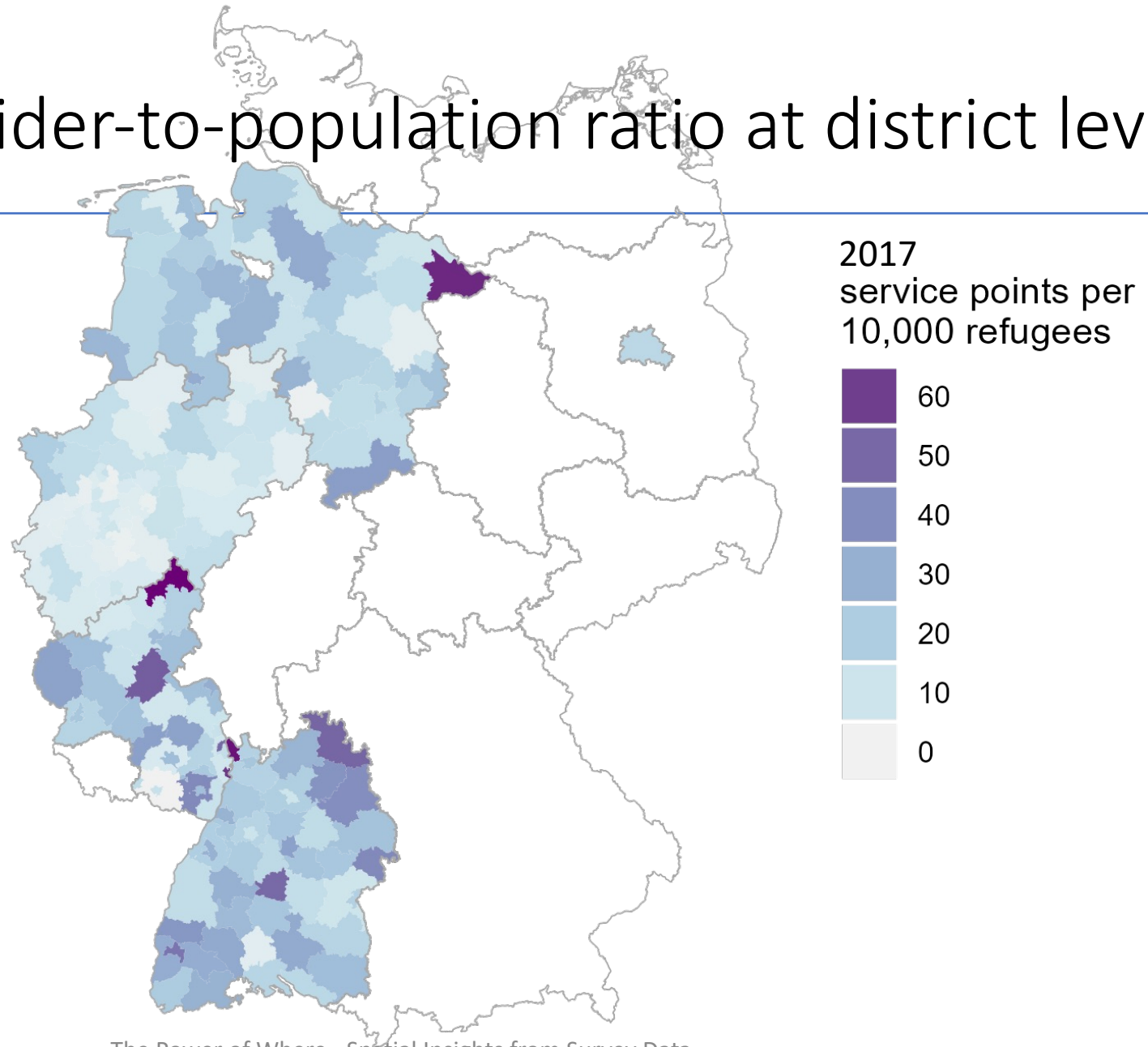


Bundesland	Schutzsuchende 2017	Anteil an der Bevölkerung (%)
Baden-Württemberg	194.120	1.8
Berlin	91.950	2.5
Niedersachsen	178.905	2.2
Nordrhein-Westfalen	439.660	2.5
Rheinland-Pfalz	77.195	1.9

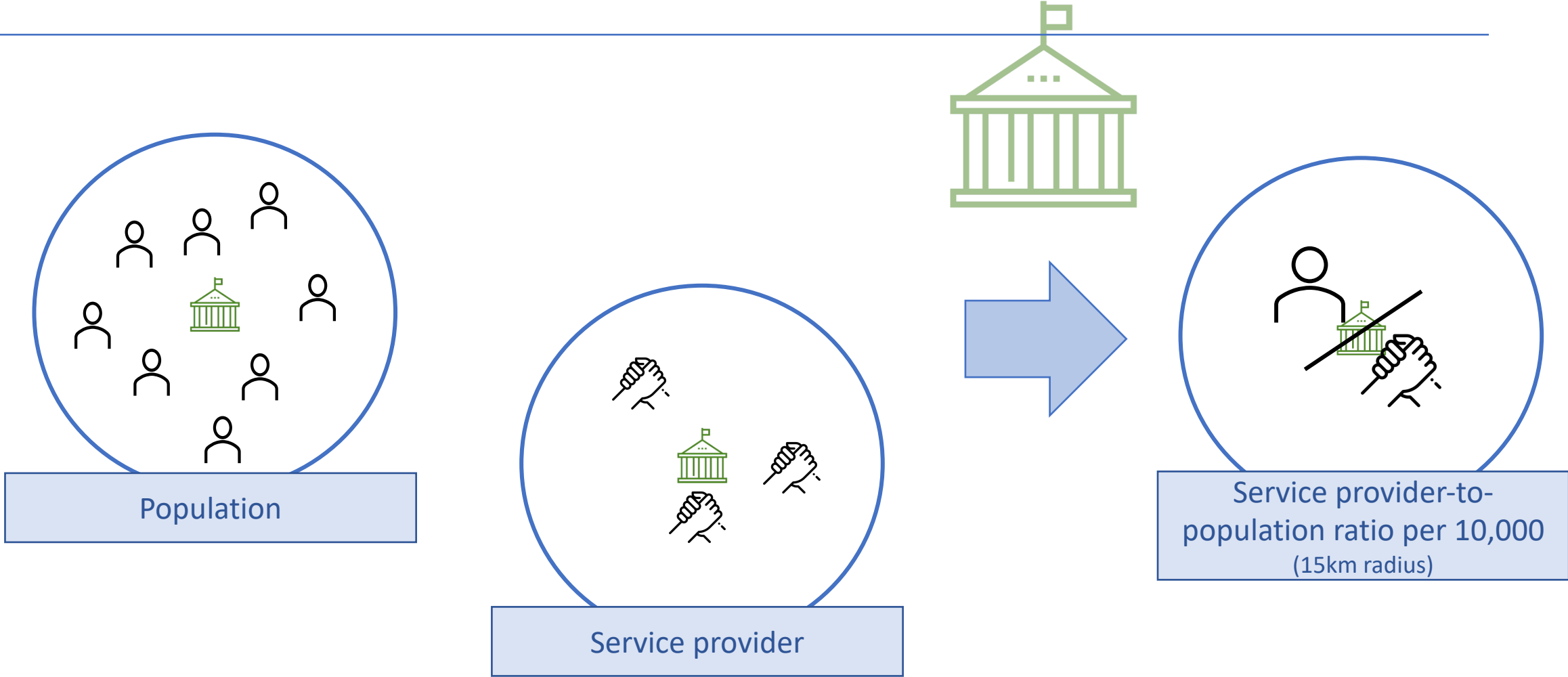
Service provider-to-population ratio at district level



Service provider-to-population ratio at district level



Service provider-to-population ratio at municipality level



IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees

- Monitors people seeking protection since 2016 (Brücker et al. ,2016)
- Sampling population: Refugees that arrived in Germany between 2013 and 2016

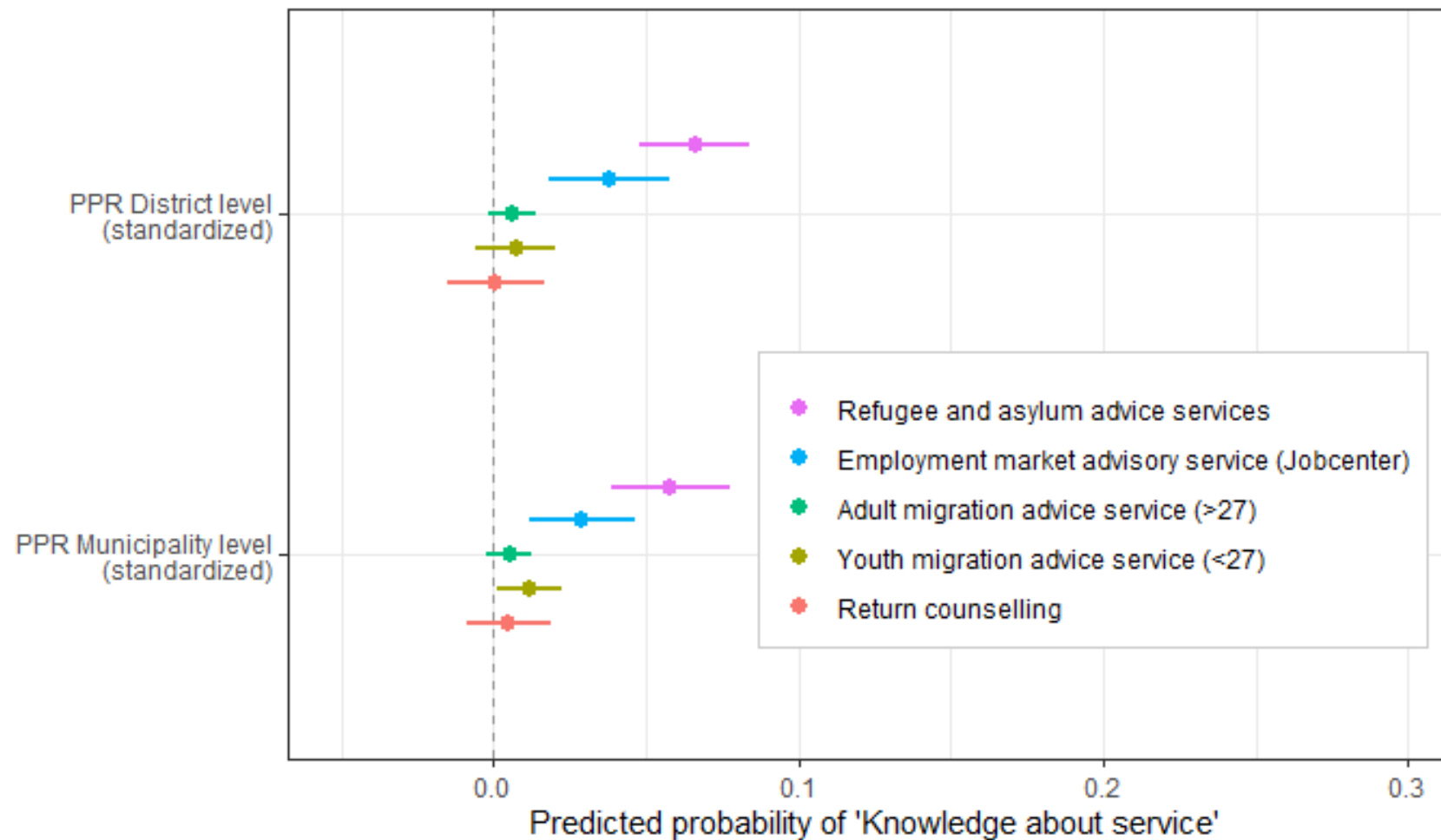
Working sample (N=4.884)

- Mean age 33.68 ($sd=10.82$); 40.81% female; Mean time since migration to Germany 2.24 years ($sd=0.89$); Main countries of origin Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq & Iran

Do you know...	Have you attended...	Have you received help...
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Refugee and asylum advice services2. Employment market advisory service (Jobcenter)3. Adult migration advice service (>27)4. Youth migration advice service (<27)5. Return counselling	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. BAMF language course2. Other language course	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Financial situation2. Health care3. Accommodation4. Recognition qualifications5. Education6. Employment7. Learning German8. Legal advice

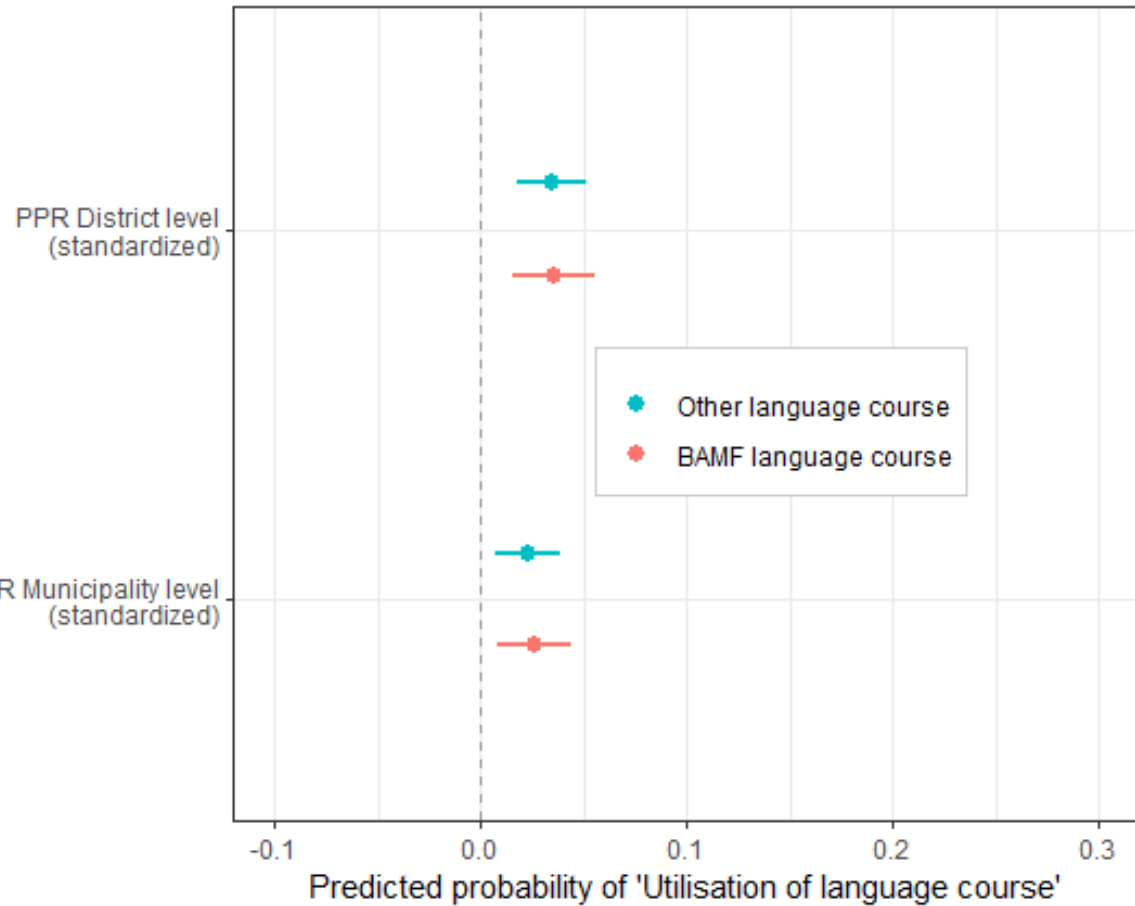
Average Marginal Effect (95% CI)

Estimates of separate logistic regression per service.
Control variables not shown.



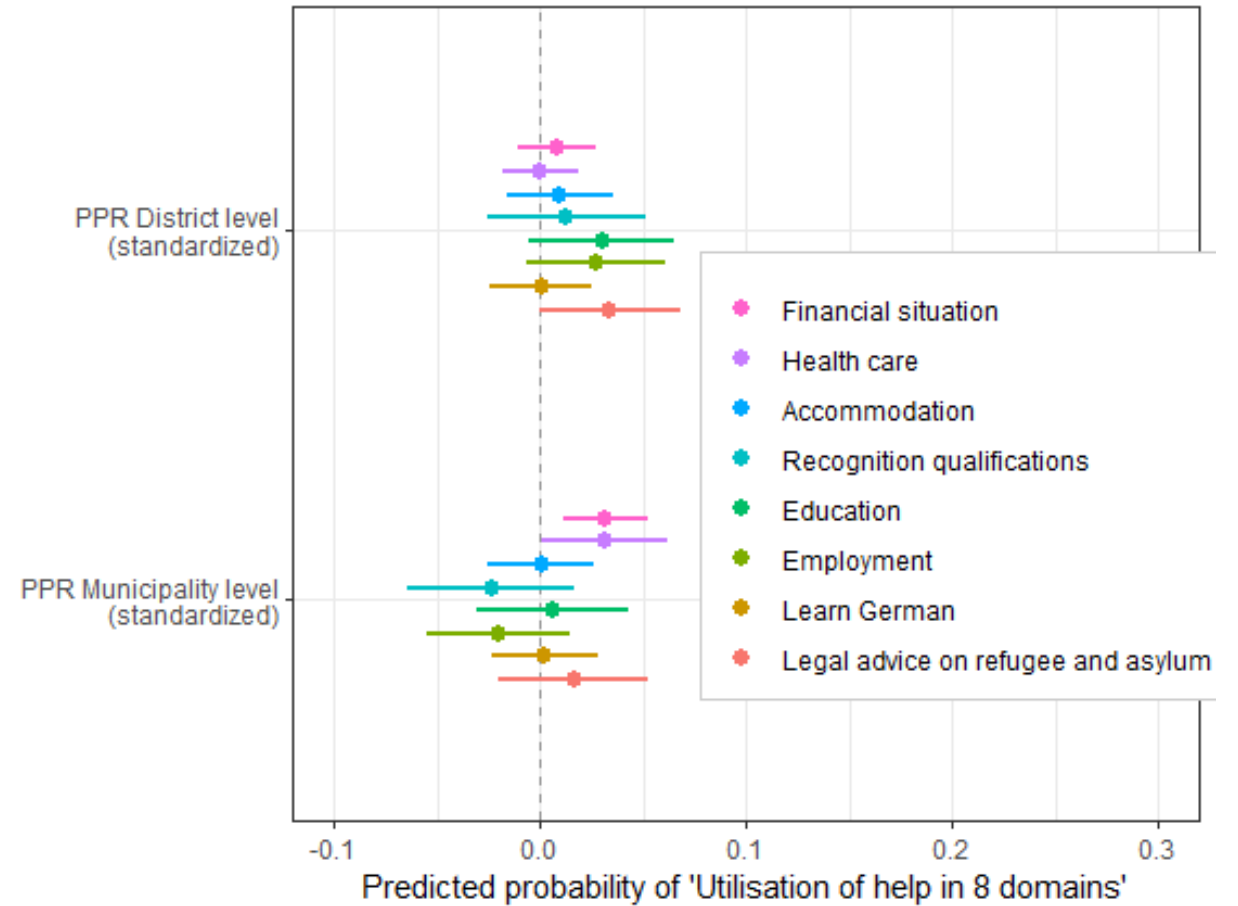
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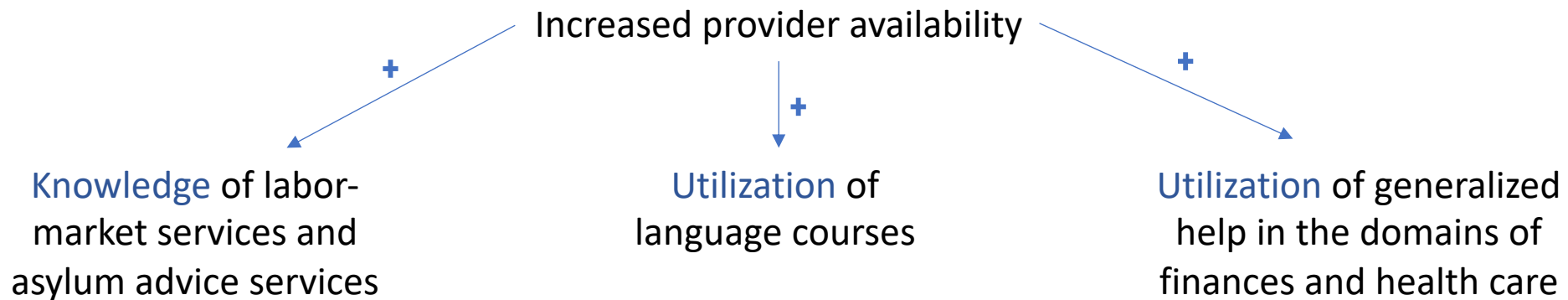


Average Marginal Effect (95% CI)

Estimates of separate logistic regression per service.
Control variables not shown.



Higher provider availability positively associated with service literacy



- Municipality and district level effects similar
- Non-governmental support organizations provide important **counselling**, **distribute information** and **link** refugees to state support
- Repository can be applied to analyze other integration related outcomes, such as labor market participation, perceived discrimination or loneliness

Literature

Axel Böhm (2017): Was bewegt geflüchtete Menschen in Deutschland? Migrationsmotive, Sorgen und Zukunftsorientierungen. *Migration und Soziale Arbeit* (4), 357-364.

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Barbaresos, F., Georgiou, N., Vasilopoulos, F. and Papathanasiou, C. (2023) 'Peer support groups and peer mentoring in refugee adolescents and young adults: A literature review', *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 14(2).

Slobodin, O., Ghane, S. and De Jong, J.T.V.M. (2018) 'Developing a culturally sensitive mental health intervention for asylum seekers in the Netherlands: A pilot study', *Intervention Journal of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Conflict Affected Areas*, 16(2), pp. 86–94.

Repository of non-governmental support providers

Data quality

1. No claim to completeness

- No obligation for service providers to register
- Uncertain funding, personnel change
- Undetected variance between states

2. Inactive provider

- No information about how provider remain in the address register (opt-in or opt-out)
- Monitor change possible but no conclusions can be drawn

3. Size of provider

- No claim on supply side

Sample sizes non-imputed, unweighted

Subsample	Sample size
Refugee and asylum advice services	4780
Employment market advisory service (Jobcenter)	4801
Adult migration advice service (>27)	4783
Youth migration advice service (<27)	3316
Return counselling	3316
BAMF language course	4884
Other language course	4837
Financial situation	1930
Health care	1810
Accommodation	1832
Recognition qualifications	756
Education	1017
Employment	1053
Learning German	1988
Legal advice	1263

Repository of non-governmental support providers

Federal state	Year	Number of providers
Berlin	2016	144
Berlin	2017	145
Berlin	2018	194
Baden-Württemberg	2016	486
Baden-Württemberg	2017	496
Niedersachsen	2018	534
Nordrhein-Westfalen	2016	382
Nordrhein-Westfalen	2017	376
Nordrhein-Westfalen	2018	475
Nordrhein-Westfalen	2019	514
Nordrhein-Westfalen	2020	517
Rheinland-Pfalz	2016	159

Controls in glm models

- Sex (dummy)
- Age in years
- Time since migration to Germany in years
- Accommodation type (dummy)
- Partner (dummy)
- Kids (dummy)
- Asylum status (3)
- Educational attainment (3)
- Region of origin (5)
- Federal state (4)
- Survey year (3)