

Dr. Emily Frank

SOCIOLOGIST

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Summary

I am a sociologist interested in how the reception context in Germany shapes refugees' well-being, including experiences of discrimination, health, and access to services and the labor market. I combine causal analysis of longitudinal survey data (multilevel models, staggered difference-in-differences; R, Stata) with qualitative interviews, and have years of professional experience communicating findings to both academic and policy audiences.

Education

Hertie School

Berlin, Germany

PHD, GOVERNANCE - MAGNA CUM LAUDE

9.2021-9.2024

- Title: "Bureaucracy as Borders: Refugees' Experiences of Citizenship at Government Offices"
- Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Anke Hassel, Hertie School; Prof. Dr. Markus Promberger, Institute for Employment Research (IAB) & FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

University of Amsterdam

Amsterdam, Netherlands

VISITING RESEARCHER

10-11.2023

- Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Floris Vermeulen

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Madison, WI, USA

MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY & ADMINISTRATION - GPA 3.83 (TOP GRADE IN THE US: 4.0)

2017-2019

- Thesis on the administration of social welfare programmes in Wisconsin

New York University

New York, NY, USA

BA, SOCIOLOGY - GPA 3.93

2011-2015

- Minors: Politics; Hebrew & Judaic Studies
- Summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa

Professional Experience

DIW Berlin / Hochschule Hannover

Berlin, Germany

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER

9.2026-

- Contribute to the Longitudinal Study of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany (SUARE), focusing on adolescents' experiences of discrimination at school and their effects on mental health
- Estimate causal effects in longitudinal survey data using multilevel models and staggered difference-in-differences designs in R and Stata
- Visualize results in R and translate findings into academic and policy-oriented publications

WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Berlin, Germany

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW

7.2024-

- Member of the research group "Health and Social Inequality" and the Einstein Center Population Diversity
- Research health inequalities among immigrants and their descendants
- Apply causal inference methods, including multilevel modeling and staggered difference-in-differences, to longitudinal survey data in R and Stata
- Produce data visualizations in R and communicate policy-relevant findings to academic and policy audiences

Hertie School

Berlin, Germany

DOCTORAL RESEARCHER

9.2021-6.2024

- Dissertation on refugees' sense of belonging and participation in accessing government services and the labor market
- Interviewed refugees, policymakers, local officials, and NGO representatives
- Published research papers based on the dissertation

Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research (BIM)

Berlin, Germany

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

6.2021-6.2024

- Researched migration and the welfare state, with a focus on social policy
- Analyzed longitudinal multilevel data using multivariate methods
- Authored articles for peer-reviewed journals
- Presented findings at conferences and webinars

Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research / Population Europe

Berlin, Germany

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE (DISSEMINATION)

7.2019-8.2021

- Disseminated findings from the Horizon 2020 project VULNER on asylum law in eight EU and non-EU countries
- Organized international expert meetings on migration and asylum, bringing together researchers, policymakers, and civil society at the national and European levels
- Wrote policy briefs and short reports for stakeholders
- Produced research updates, webinars, a podcast series, and social media content

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Madison, WI, USA

RESEARCH ASSISTANT, LAW SCHOOL

7.2017-5.2019

- Coded interview transcripts for an interdisciplinary legal and social science project
- Designed and implemented a data management system
- Cleaned and coded quantitative data and ran regression analyses

Bard College Berlin

Berlin, Germany

INTERN, REFUGEE PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT

6.2018-8.2018

- Wrote and edited grant applications
- Evaluated the program through qualitative interviews with refugee students
- Produced a higher education guide for refugee students

Urban Justice Center

New York, NY, USA

LEGAL ADVOCATE, SAFETY NET PROJECT

6.2015-6.2017

- Represented English- and Spanish-speaking public assistance recipients at administrative hearings
- Worked with policymakers and the New York City Human Resources Administration on reforms to ensure immigrants' equal access to public benefits
- Won retroactive benefits totaling US\$440,000 and ongoing benefits totaling US\$67,000

New York University

New York, NY, USA

RESEARCH ASSISTANT, SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

1.2012-5.2015

- Organized and anonymized research data
- Coded interview data in Dedoose

Publications

ARTICLES IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

Hertner, L., Abdel-Fatah, D., Frank, E., & Kluge, U. (2026). Beyond depressive symptoms: conceptualizing social suffering among displaced Syrians in Lebanon. *Frontiers in Public Health, Sec. Public Mental Health, Special Issue: "Navigating the Refugee Experience: Understanding the Dynamics of Mental Health Challenges and Resilience"*, edited by Jutta Lindert. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2026.1844218>

Frank, E. (2025). "Why it's different?": Hierarchies of (non-) belonging in German refugee categorizations. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2025.2529497>

Frank, E., & Nivorozhkin, A. (2025). Legal status and refugees' perceptions of institutional justice: The role of communication quality. *Public Administration Review* 85(4), 1004-1018. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13898>

Frank, E. (2022). Determinants of welfare benefit use of immigrant groups - longitudinal evidence from Germany. *Frontiers in Sociology, Sec. Migration and Society, Special Issue: "The Integration Context of Refugees and Immigrants: Challenges and Opportunities in the Receiving Countries"*, edited by Jasper Tjaden & Zerrin Salikutluk. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2022.839352>

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Frank, E. (2024). *Bureaucracy as Borders: Refugees' Experiences of Citizenship at Government Offices* (Dissertation, Hertie School). <https://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-hsog/frontdoor/index/index/docId/5610>

Frank, E. (2023). Beyond their years: Unaccompanied minors and the social construction of categories. *Culture, Practice & Europeanization*, 8(2), 264-266. <https://doi.org/10.5771/2566-7742-2023-2-264>

Vulnerabilities Beyond Age - Filling the gaps in asylum hearing procedures for unaccompanied minors (2020), policy brief fürs EU Horizon 2020 project VULNER (Ghostwriter).
<https://population-europe.eu/research/policy-briefs/vulnerabilities-beyond-age>

UNDER REVIEW

Frank, E. (revise & resubmit). Paper walls: Administrative burdens as bordering tools. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.

Ferrara, A., Bister, L., & Frank, E. (revise & resubmit). Family Complexity and Multimorbidity Across Migrant Generations: A Life Course Study in the United Kingdom. *Migration Studies*.

Frank, E., & Müller, T. (under review). Penny for your thoughts: The income divide in media effects on immigration attitudes. *Social Forces*.

WORKING PAPERS

Cardozo Silva, A. R., Prömel, C., & Frank, E. Feeling Equal before the Law? The Impact of Access to Citizenship and Legal Status on Perceived Discrimination.

Frank, E., & Heisig, J. P. A longitudinal analysis of the effects of legal status on refugees' mental health.

Frank, E., Hertner, L., & Abdel-Fatah, D. Beyond Symptom Checklists: Differential sensitivity of mental health scales to social and political stressors among Syrian refugees and receiving communities in Lebanon.

Awards, Fellowships and Grants

2025	Transfer project "WZB wirkt", from the Friends of the WZB	€10.000
2023	Funding for research visit at the University of Amsterdam	€3.500
2018-2019	Foreign Language & Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS) for German, UW-Madison	\$15.000
2018	Funding for internship, UW-Madison	\$5.000
2017-2018	La Follette School Fellowship, University of Wisconsin-Madison	\$15.714

Teaching

Spring 2026, Fall 2026 Migration, Borders and Race in Europe and Berlin, Freie Universität Berlin FU-BEST Program

Academic Year 2025-26 Master Thesis Workshop Series, Hertie School

Summer 2025 Mixed Methods Approaches to Migration & Health Inequalities, Freie Universität Berlin

GUEST LECTURES:

Winter 2025-26 Qualitative Research, PhD Global Health, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin

Winter 2023-24 Social Policy Research, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

Winter 2023-24 Migration & the Welfare State, Universität Kassel

Summer 2023, Winter 2023-24, Winter 2024-25 Conducting Research with Interviews, Hertie School

Summer 2023 Queer & Feminist Issues in Methodologies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Winter 2021-22 Work & Immigration from a Welfare State Perspective, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Supervision

- PhDs: "The Right to Health in Times of Mass Movement: Examining Healthcare Coverage and Access for People on the Move under the Temporary Protection Directive versus the Common European Asylum System," Iman Abdikarim, Global Health, Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, 2025-
- Three master theses, Freie Universität Berlin, 2025-

Presentations

INVITED KEYNOTES

2024 IAB-Colloquium (Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2026 European Political Science Society (EPSS), Belfast, Northern Ireland
2026 European Consortium for Sociological Research (ECSR), Dublin, Ireland
2025 Workshop on labor migration, Salzburg, Austria
2025 5th ISA Forum of Sociology, Rabat, Morocco
2025 IMISCOE Spring Conference, Paris, France & online
2025 MIMAP Closing Conference, Bundesagentur für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF), Nürnberg
2023 FIS-Forum, Deutsches Institut für Interdisziplinäre Sozialpolitikforschung, Berlin, Germany
2023 American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, USA
2023 Administrative Burden Workshop mit Donald Moynihan & Martin Baekgaard, Galway, Ireland
2023 IMISCOE Annual Conference, Warsaw, Poland
2023 European Political Science Association (EPSA), Glasgow, Scotland
2023 International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM) Conference, Budapest, Hungary
2023 European Network for Social Policy Analysis (ESPAnet) Doctoral Workshop, Berlin, Germany
2023 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (DGS), Migration Section, Bamberg, Germany
2022 PopFest: 28th Annual Postgraduate Population Studies Conference, Florence, Italy
2022 DeZIM-Tagung, Berlin, Germany
2022 14th International German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) User Conference, Berlin, Germany
2021 FIS-Forum, Deutsches Institut für Interdisziplinäre Sozialpolitikforschung, Duisburg, Germany
2021 IAB-ECSR Conference "Refugee Migration and Integration Revisited", Online

Event Organization

2026 "WZB in Your Kiez" science transfer event series
2025 ECPD Ethics Taskforce speaker series, Einstein Center Population Diversity
2025 Distinguished Lecture: Prof. Dr. Raj Bhopal, Einstein Center Population Diversity
2024 Ethics Workshop, Einstein Center Population Diversity
2024 Podium discussion: "Xenophobic rhetoric in German political discourse," Hertie School

Skills

Quantitative Stata, R, advanced causal regression techniques, data visualization, survey methodology

Qualitative Interviews, Ethnography, MAXQDA, Dedoose, NVivo

Communication Academic writing, research dissemination, policy briefs, presentations

Languages English (native), German (C1), Spanish (B2), Hebrew (B1)

Service

PEER REVIEW

Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Migraciones, BMC Public Health, Bundesgesundheitsblatt, Journal of Health Psychology

ACADEMIC SERVICE

- 2025-present WZB Ethics Committee
- 2025 WZB Retreat Organizing Committee
- 2024-present Steering Committee, PhD Global Health, Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin
- 2024-present Ethics Taskforce, Einstein Center Population Diversity
- 2023 DYNAMICS RTG, Student Representative
- 2022 DYNAMICS RTG, Retreat Organizing Committee
- 2021 Member of Selection Committee for MA Thesis Poster Prize, Hertie School
- 2018-2019 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Officer, La Follette School of Public Affairs, UW Madison

SELECTED VOLUNTEER WORK

- **Refugee-Led Research Hub, University of Oxford, 2025**, Mentored refugee student applying for master's programs
- **Spore Initiative, 2024**, Organized monthly fundraising events for children in Gaza
- **BASE Berlin, 2022**, Housed refugees from Ukraine
- **Seebrücke NGO, 2021**, Reviewed emails to support information gathering on individuals requiring emergency transport from Afghanistan
- **New York Cares, 2015**, led ESL (English as a Second Language) course for Spanish speakers

References

- **Prof. Dr. Jan Paul Heisig**, Professor of Sociology, Freie Universität Berlin; Research Group Lead Health and Social Inequality, WZB; jan.heisig@wzb.eu
- **Prof. Dr. Markus Promberger**, Head - Area Joblessness and Social Inclusion (ET), Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (IAB); Professor of Sociology, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg; Markus.Promberger@iab.de
- **Prof. Dr. Anke Hassel**, Professor of Public Policy, Hertie School; hassel@hertie-school.org

Berlin, 12.10.2026