

# Does Granting Refugee Status to Family-Reunified Women Improve Their Integration?\*

Linea Hasager<sup>†</sup>

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## Abstract

In many refugee-receiving countries men are the principal asylum applicant, while women are admitted through family-reunification procedures. I document that granting asylum to family-reunified women has significant impacts on economic integration and decreases their risk of being victims of intimate partner violence. Using an event study approach, I find that annual employment and earnings increase by 1.6 percentage points and USD 500, respectively, immediately after asylum recognition relative to family-reunification status. These are large effects compared to the low baseline of virtually zero employment and earnings in the preceding years. At the same time the divorce rate increases by 3.8 percentage points and domestic violence decreases by 0.9 percentage points. The decrease in violence is observed regardless of whether the woman remains married or not, which suggests that the new, more favorable, residence permit improves her bargaining power within the marriage. This is consistent with the predictions from a Nash bargaining model where the risk of being returned to the home country affects the woman's threat point, and thus the allocation of resources within the marriage.

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<sup>†</sup>Department of Economics, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5 Building 26, DK 1353 Copenhagen, tlh@econ.ku.dk.