Subjective employment perspective among older workers with and without migrant background in Germany

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Background & Objectives

In the coming years, large groups of employees with migrant background (EMB) will reach pensionable age in Germany [1]. However, this group has been virtually ignored by worldwide retirement research so far. EMB are a highly heterogeneous group with substantial differentiation in working conditions, found by e.g. Eurofound [2]. Different types of migration status might thus have influence on EMBs' retirement decision and the employment perspective in higher working age.

Objective: *The aim of this study was to investigate the subjective employment perspective in higher working age for different employee groups with migrant background (EMB) and without (non-EMB), meaning "willing", "being able" and "planning" to work until the individual state pension age.*

Methods

Sample: Representative sample of socially insured employees (born in 1959 or 1965), surveyed with computer assisted personal interviews; cross-sectional analysis based on data from the 3rd wave of the lidA cohort study (2018), sample only included employees and complete cases (n=3286).

Outcomes: *"Until what age …would you like to work?"* (willing) *"…are you able to work?"* (able) *"…do you plan to work?"* (planning). The individual state pension age was set as the cut-off point for each outcome. These were found to be good indicators for future retirement behaviour [3-5].

Migrant background: EMB were differentiated via generation (first-generation [G1] vs. second-generation [G2]) or nationality (German vs. foreign). Within multivariate analysis non-EMB served as the reference group.

Control variables: Sex, age, educational level, net household income, health and work factors.

Analysis: Applying bivariate statistics with tests of independence and block-wise logistic regressions.

Results

	willing		able		planning		
	%	p-value*	%	p-value*	%	p-value*	
All EMB vs. Non-EMB							
Non-EMB	10%	0.497	32%	0.097	21%	0.889	2703
All EMB	11%		28%		22%		583
EMB by generation							
first generation (G1)	12%	0.128	27%	0.387	**25%**	**0.005**	346
second generation (G2)	8%		30%		**16%**		236
EMB by nationality							
German/Dual	**9%**	**0.004**	28%	0.564	**20%**	**0.008**	464
Foreign	**18%**		30%		**29%**		119

*tested with Chi²-test

Table 1: Willing, able and planning to work until the individual state pension age by migrant status (Prevalences, n=3286)

Bivariate analysis

• *Willing and planning*

When comparing subgroups of EMB, significant differences appeared in bivariate analyses for "willing" and "planning" to work.

• *Generation*

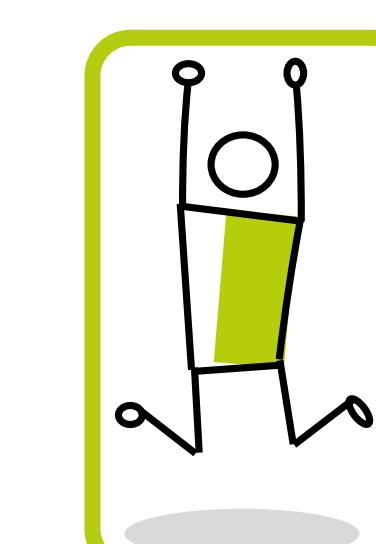Compared to G2, G1 were to a higher degree planning to work longer.

• *Nationality*

Those with foreign nationality were more willing and planning than those with German nationality.
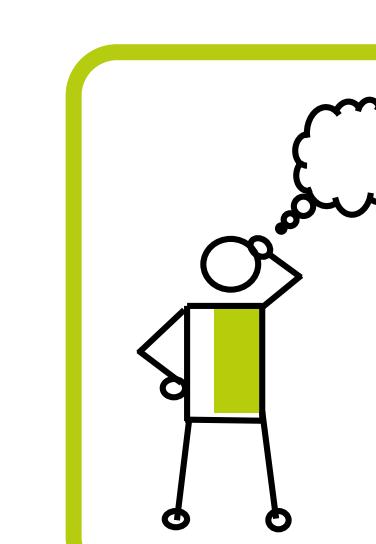
Logistic regression

• *Willing*

There were no significant differences for willing.

• *Planning*

The odds for planning to work (at least until the individual state pension age) were significantly higher in G1 EMB than non-EMB, even in the fully adjusted model.

	Crude Model	Full model$
Willing (n=3135)		
Non-EMB	Ref.	Ref.
G1 EMB	1.30 (0.91 – 1.85)	1.26 (0.87 - 1.82)
G2 EMB	0.82 (0.51 - 1.35)	0.88 (0.53 - 1.45)
Planning (n=3132)		
Non-EMB	Ref.	Ref.
G1 EMB	**1.34 (1.03 - 1.74) ***	**1.38 (1.04 - 1.82) ***
G2 EMB	0.76 (0.53 - 1.09)	0.78 (0.54 - 1.13)

* p < 0.05, $ see control variables in the methods

Table 2: Association of migrant status and willing and planning to work until the individual state pension age

Conclusions

• In general, percentages for "able" were higher than for "willing" and for "planning" to work longer, indicating an "early exit culture" still prevailing in Germany.

• In certain migrant groups approaching retirement age the "planning" might not reflect a choice, but a forced decision to work longer.

• When it comes to extended working lives, the first-generation migrant group, as well as foreigners may constitute risk groups locked in lower working positions, poor health and economics and require increased attention from work and social policy.

• Our findings underline the need for differentiation of migrant groups in social research and policy.

References

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