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## **15|2025en** Germany as a stopover? Insights into return and International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa)

Yuliya Kosyakova, Lukas Olbrich, Katia Gallegos Torres, Luisa Hammer, Theresa Koch, Simon Wagner



**IMPa**

International Mobility Panel  
of Migrants in Germany

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# Germany as a stopover? Insights into return and onward migration intentions of immigrants from the International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa)

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## In brief

- The new *International Mobility Panel of Migrants* in Germany (IMPa) is a longitudinal online survey that systematically investigates the causes, patterns and effects of the migration dynamics of migrants to Germany. In the first wave (December 2024 to April 2025), around 50,000 people were surveyed. Going forward, new baseline surveys are planned every two years, supplemented by annual follow-up surveys over a four-year period.
- Using statistical weighting procedures, the data allow for representative statements about individuals in Germany who immigrated by April 2, 2024, are recorded in the Federal Employment Agency's (BA) data (through employment, benefit receipt, or participation in labor market programs), and are of working age (18 to 65 years).
- This report presents initial findings on emigration dynamics among immigrants based on the first wave. At this stage, only information on intentions to emigrate or migrate onward is available. Data on actual emigration events will become available with the second wave, planned for the second half of 2025.

### Key findings:

- A slight majority of immigrants (57 percent, or approximately 5.7 million people) intend to stay in Germany permanently. Around 1.2 million (12 percent) plan only a temporary stay, while approximately 3 million (30 percent) remain undecided. Some 2.6 million (26 percent) reported having considered leaving Germany within the past year, and around 300,000 (3 percent) already have concrete plans to emigrate – roughly half to their country of origin and half to a third country.
- Returnees predominantly target European countries such as Poland, Romania, but also Turkey, whereas onward migrants favor destinations like Switzerland, the United States, and Spain. Family reasons are the primary driver of return intentions, while economic opportunities tend to motivate onward migration. Political dissatisfaction, personal preferences, high tax burdens, and bureaucracy are frequently cited reasons for considering emigration. These motives are shared across labor, education, and family migrants; refugees additionally point to experiences of discrimination.
- Men are more likely than women to express temporary intentions to stay, thoughts of emigration, and concrete emigration plans. Refugees and family migrants show lower emigration tendencies, whereas individuals from EU countries or those with permanent residence permits or German/EU citizenship are more mobile – likely due to greater freedom of movement.
- Higher-qualified individuals are significantly more likely to consider or plan emigration than those with lower educational attainment. This applies especially to those with degrees from Germany or third countries, and to individuals whose foreign qualifications are recognized in Germany – possibly due to greater international transferability. Proficiency in German and English is also associated with higher emigration tendencies, likely reflecting better access to global labor markets.

- Employed individuals are more likely to report temporary intentions to stay than those who are unemployed or in training. Higher income levels are associated with stronger emigration intentions, suggesting that particularly well-integrated migrants consider leaving. In contrast, higher job satisfaction is linked to lower emigration tendencies and thus acts as a stabilizing factor.
- Emigration risk is particularly high in knowledge-intensive sectors such as IT and technical services – industries that are also heavily affected by skilled labor shortages. Other shortage-prone sectors such as healthcare, construction, public administration, and retail show relevant, though not above-average, levels of emigration intention.
- Social integration and participation significantly shape emigration intentions. Family ties, social contact with Germans, emotional attachment to Germany, and a sense of being welcomed reduce the likelihood of emigration. In contrast, experiences of discrimination, especially in interactions with authorities or in the workplace, markedly increase emigration tendencies.
- To date, only about one-fifth of those with emigration plans have taken concrete steps. Simultaneously, around one-fifth express a long-term desire to return to Germany, one-third rule it out, and about half remain undecided. This indicates substantial return potential: nearly two-thirds of potential emigrants remain open to returning.
- Overall, the findings make clear that emigration intentions are not random but reflect a complex interplay of individual characteristics, social integration, economic stability, and perceived societal acceptance.
- A forward-looking migration policy must go beyond promoting immigration – it must also foster long-term prospects for staying. The IMPa findings underscore the need to eliminate structural barriers, accelerate and simplify migration and administrative processes, enhance social integration, and actively promote an open and inclusive society.

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## Summary

Temporary migration of people who have immigrated to Germany is a frequently observed phenomenon, and the trend is rising. Between 2014 and 2023, the average emigration rate among foreign nationals ranged from 6 to 11 percent, depending on the data source. At the same time, Germany requires a net annual immigration of around 400,000 people to stabilize its labor force potential. The high mobility propensity among immigrants can challenge this goal - with far-reaching consequences for securing skilled labor, integration, and the long-term viability of the welfare state.

To gain robust insights into the causes, patterns, and effects of mobility, the *International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany* (IMPa) has been established as a new longitudinal online survey. It includes first-time surveys every two years, complemented by annual follow-up surveys over a four-year period. In the first wave (December 2024 to April 2025), around 50,000 immigrants participated. The first follow-up survey is scheduled for the second half of 2025. Using statistical weighting procedures, the data allow for representative statements about individuals in Germany who immigrated by April 2, 2024, are registered in the data of the Federal Employment Agency (e.g. via employment, benefit receipt, or participation in labor market programs), and are in working age (18 to 65 years).

Key findings from the first wave indicate: A narrow majority of immigrants (57 percent, roughly 5.7 million people) plan to stay in Germany permanently. Around 1.2 million (12 percent) aim for a temporary stay, and roughly 3 million (30 percent) remain uncertain. About 2.6 million people (26 percent) reported having considered leaving Germany in the last 12 months; approximately 300,000 (3 percent) already have concrete emigration plans - split roughly equally between return migration and onward migration. Given Germany's structural need for skilled labor, the political priority in migration policy is shifting: not only immigration, but also the long-term retention of immigrants is becoming a key challenge.

The data reveal that emigration intentions vary widely. Those intending to return primarily target European countries such as Poland or Romania but also Turkey, while onward migrants tend to prefer Switzerland, the United States, or Spain. Motivations also differ: family reasons dominate returns to the country of origin, while economic opportunities play a key role in onward migration. Main reasons for emigration considerations include political dissatisfaction, personal preferences, tax burdens, and bureaucracy. These motives are present among labor migrants, education- and family-based migrants alike; refugees also frequently cite discrimination as a major reason. Overall, the findings suggest that state measures such as reducing bureaucracy, simplifying administrative procedures, and offering tax incentives could help lower emigration intentions.

Regarding sociodemographic and migration-specific factors, the IMPa results highlight their central role in shaping emigration intentions. Men report higher rates of temporary stay intentions, emigration considerations, and concrete migration plans than women. Region of origin and reason for migration significantly influence mobility patterns: refugees and individuals

with family reunification backgrounds express considerably lower emigration tendencies, while migrants from EU countries and those who came for work or education show higher mobility. Furthermore, immigrants with permanent residence status or EU/German citizenship are more likely to consider leaving - probably due to broader legal mobility options.

The IMPa results highlight that labor market factors and economic integration also play a critical but nuanced role in shaping emigration intentions. Education emerges as a key predictor: highly educated individuals more frequently express thoughts of leaving or make concrete plans than those with lower educational levels. Qualifications obtained in Germany or third countries - as well as foreign qualifications recognized in Germany - are more strongly associated with emigration considerations, likely due to their higher international transferability.

Employed individuals are more likely to report temporary stay intentions than those who are not employed or are in training. Sectors where the outmigration risk among immigrants is particularly high-such as IT and technical services-are also those facing significant skilled labor shortages. Furthermore, it is notable that in other sectors vulnerable to labor shortages-such as healthcare, construction, public administration, or retail-, emigration tendencies are not above average, but they are still relevant. Higher incomes are also associated with stronger emigration considerations and plans, which indicates that migrants who are particularly well integrated into the labor market want to leave Germany again. Another important factor is job satisfaction: the less satisfied individuals are with their work, the more frequently they express temporary intentions to stay, thoughts of emigration, and concrete emigration plans. Job satisfaction thus acts as a stabilizing factor.

Language skills show differentiated effects: while descriptive findings suggest that individuals with poor German skills have lower intentions to stay permanently and higher mobility plans, multivariate analyses indicate that good German skills are associated with increased mobility. Good English skills also tend to increase emigration intentions, likely due to better international labor market options.

Social integration and societal participation are also crucial: family ties in Germany and regular contact with German nationals have a stabilizing effect. A strong emotional attachment to Germany stabilizes the intention to stay, whereas a strong connection to the country of origin increases the likelihood of emigration. A strong subjective sense of welcome and low perceptions of discrimination significantly reduce the probability of emigration considerations and plans. Conversely, perceptions of discrimination - especially in interactions with authorities, police, and at the workplace - greatly increases emigration tendencies. Political dissatisfaction also significantly raises the likelihood of emigration-related thoughts and plans.

In summary, emigration intentions do not arise randomly but are the result of a complex interplay of individual characteristics, social integration, economic anchoring, and perceived societal acceptance.

One of the central findings of the IMPa survey is that those who came to Germany for work or education, better educated, more economically successful, and more linguistically integrated are the ones most likely to consider leaving or already have concrete plans to do so. In other words: those most urgently needed to secure Germany's future labor supply are also those most inclined to leave. This selective mobility endangers the country's long-term ability to retain skilled labor.



It is therefore essential to offer this group a meaningful perspective and to position Germany not only as a place of immigration but as a country in which people want to stay and build their future.

This includes faster and more transparent recognition of qualifications, a determined reduction of bureaucratic hurdles, family-friendly integration policies, and targeted measures against everyday and workplace discrimination. Only when immigrants feel like fully included members of society - with real opportunities for participation and professional advancement - are they likely to choose Germany as their long-term home and pursue both personal and professional goals here.

So far, only about one fifth of those with emigration plans have taken concrete steps towards leaving. At the same time, roughly one fifth express a long-term wish to return to Germany, one third rule it out, and about half remain undecided. This means that around two thirds of those considering emigration are potentially open to returning in the future. Activating and supporting this return potential could become a valuable component of Germany's strategic labor policy.

## Zusammenfassung

Die Temporäre Migration von Menschen, die nach Deutschland eingewandert sind, ist ein häufig wahrgenommenes Phänomen mit steigender Tendenz. Zwischen 2014 und 2023 lag die durchschnittliche jährliche Fortzugsrate ausländischer Personen je nach Datenquelle bei 6 bis 11 Prozent. Gleichzeitig ist Deutschland zur Stabilisierung seines Arbeitskräftepotenzials auf eine jährliche Nettozuwanderung von rund 400,000 Personen angewiesen. Eine hohe Mobilitätsneigung unter Eingewanderten kann das Erreichen dieses Ziels gefährden – mit weitreichenden negativen Konsequenzen für Fachkräftesicherung, Integration und die langfristige Tragfähigkeit des Sozialstaats.

Um belastbare Erkenntnisse zu Ursachen, Mustern und Auswirkungen von Mobilität zu gewinnen, wurde mit dem *International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany* (IMPa) eine neue längsschnittliche Online-Befragung etabliert. Dabei sollen alle zwei Jahre neue Erstbefragungen stattfinden, ergänzt durch eine jährliche Wiederholungsbefragung über einen Zeitraum von insgesamt vier Jahren. In der ersten Welle (Dezember 2024 bis April 2025) haben rund 50.000 Migranten und Migrantinnen teilgenommen, die erste Wiederholungsbefragung startet in der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2025. Mithilfe statistischer Hochrechnungsverfahren lassen sich repräsentative Aussagen über Personen in Deutschland treffen, die bis zum 2. April 2024 nach Deutschland eingewandert sind, in den Daten der BA erfasst wurden (durch Beschäftigung, Leistungsbezug oder Maßnahmenteilnahme) und im erwerbsfähigen Alter (18 bis 65 Jahre) sind.

Zentrale Ergebnisse der ersten Welle zeigen: Eine knappe Mehrheit der Eingewanderten (57 Prozent, rund 5.7 Millionen Personen) plant, dauerhaft in Deutschland zu bleiben. Rund 1.2 Millionen (12 Prozent) streben dagegen nur einen vorübergehenden Aufenthalt an („temporäre Bleibeabsichten“), etwa 3 Millionen (30 Prozent) sind unentschlossen. 2.6 Millionen Personen (26 Prozent) gaben an, im vergangenen Jahr über eine Ausreise nachgedacht zu haben; rund 300,000 (3 Prozent) hegen bereits konkrete Abwanderungspläne – jeweils etwa zur Hälfte in

Richtung Herkunftsland oder in ein Drittland. Angesichts des wachsenden strukturellen Fachkräftebedarfs wird also nicht nur der Zuzug, sondern auch die dauerhafte Bindung Zugewanderter wird zur zentralen Herausforderung.

Die Befunde zeigen, dass sich die konkreten Wanderungsabsichten stark von Gruppe zu Gruppe unterscheiden. Rückkehrwillige steuern vor allem europäische Länder wie Polen oder Rumänien aber auch die Türkei an, während Weiterwandernde insbesondere die Schweiz, die USA oder Spanien bevorzugen. Die Motive variieren ebenfalls: Bei der Rückkehr ins Herkunftsland spielen vor allem familiäre Gründe eine Rolle, während verbesserte ökonomische Chancen ein zentrales Motiv für die Weiterwanderung sind. Als Hauptgründe für Auswanderungsüberlegungen werden politische Unzufriedenheit, persönliche Vorlieben sowie hohe steuerliche Belastungen und Bürokratie in Deutschland genannt. Diese Motive zeigen sich sowohl bei Arbeitsmigrantinnen und -migranten als auch bei Bildungs- und Familieneinwandernden; Geflüchtete nennen zusätzlich Diskriminierungserfahrungen als wichtigen Grund. Insgesamt deutet vieles darauf hin, dass staatliche Maßnahmen wie Bürokratieabbau, Verfahrensvereinfachungen oder Steuererleichterungen die Abwanderungsneigung verringern könnten.

Hinsichtlich der soziodemografischen und migrationsspezifischen Faktoren zeigen die Umfrageergebnisse, dass diese eine zentrale Rolle für die Abwanderungsabsichten spielen. Männer äußern häufiger temporäre Bleibeabsichten, Auswanderungsüberlegungen und konkrete Auswanderungspläne als Frauen. Herkunftsregion und Zuzugsgrund beeinflussen die Abwanderungsneigung ebenfalls erheblich: Geflüchtete und Personen, die im Rahmen des Familiennachzugs kamen, zeigen deutlich geringere Abwanderungstendenzen, während Migrantinnen und Migranten aus EU-Staaten sowie aus arbeits- und bildungsbezogenen Migrationskontexten eine höhere Mobilität aufweisen. Zudem ist die Abwanderungsneigung unter Personen mit unbefristetem Aufenthaltsstatus oder EU-/deutscher Staatsangehörigkeit größer – vermutlich aufgrund erweiterter Mobilitätsoptionen.

Zudem haben Arbeitsmarktfaktoren und ökonomische Verankerung einen wichtigen, aber differenzierten Einfluss auf die Abwanderungsabsichten von Eingewanderten. Bildung ist ein zentraler Prädiktor: Höherqualifizierte äußern deutlich häufiger Auswanderungsüberlegungen und konkrete Auswanderungspläne als Personen mit niedrigerem Bildungsniveau. Auch Personen mit in Deutschland oder in Drittstaaten erworbenen Abschlüssen sowie in Deutschland anerkannten ausländischen Qualifikationen überlegen häufiger, ins Ausland zu gehen – vermutlich aufgrund der höheren internationalen Übertragbarkeit ihrer Qualifikationen.

Erwerbstätige wollen nach eigenen Angaben häufiger nur vorübergehend in Deutschland bleiben als Nichterwerbstätige oder Auszubildende. Jene Branchen, in denen das Abwanderungsrisiko unter Eingewanderten besonders hoch ist – wie IT und technische Dienstleistungen – zählen zugleich zu den Sektoren mit erheblichem Fachkräftemangel. Zudem fällt auf, dass in anderen besonders engpassgefährdeten Bereichen – etwa im Gesundheitswesen, der Bauwirtschaft, der öffentlichen Verwaltung oder im Einzelhandel – zwar keine überdurchschnittlich hohen, aber dennoch relevante Auswanderungstendenzen bestehen. Auch höhere Verdienste sind mit stärkeren Auswanderungsüberlegungen und -plänen verbunden, was darauf hinweist, dass besonders die gut in den Arbeitsmarkt Integrierten, Deutschland wieder verlassen wollen. Ein weiterer wichtiger Faktor ist die Arbeitszufriedenheit: Je unzufriedener die Beschäftigten mit

ihrer Tätigkeit sind, eher neigen sie dazu, Deutschland den Rücken zu kehren. Arbeitszufriedenheit erweist sich damit als wichtiger Stabilitätsfaktor.

Auch Sprachkenntnisse machen einen Unterschied: Während deskriptive Befunde darauf hindeuten, dass Personen mit schlechten Deutschkenntnissen eher seltener die Absicht haben, dauerhaft in Deutschland zu bleiben, zeigen multivariate Analysen, dass gerade gute Deutschkenntnisse mit einer erhöhten Mobilitätsneigung verbunden sind. Auch gute Englischkenntnisse erhöhen tendenziell die Abwanderungsneigung, was auf bessere internationale Arbeitsmarktoptionen hindeuten könnte.

Auch soziale Integration und gesellschaftliche Teilhabe haben einen entscheidenden Einfluss auf die Abwanderungsabsichten von Eingewanderten. Familiäre Bindungen in Deutschland sowie soziale Kontakte zu Deutschen wirken stabilisierend. Auch eine starke emotionale Verbundenheit mit Deutschland festigt den Wunsch, sich dauerhaft hierzulande niederzulassen, während eine enge Bindung an das Herkunftsland die Abwanderungsneigung erhöht. Auch ein starkes subjektives Willkommensgefühl und geringe Diskriminierungswahrnehmungen senken deutlich die Wahrscheinlichkeit von Auswanderungsüberlegungen und -plänen. Umgekehrt verstärkt die Wahrnehmung von Diskriminierung – insbesondere im Kontakt mit Behörden, Polizei und am Arbeitsplatz – die Abwanderungstendenzen erheblich. Politische Unzufriedenheit erhöht ebenfalls signifikant die Wahrscheinlichkeit von Abwanderungsgedanken und -plänen.

Insgesamt verdeutlichen die Ergebnisse, dass Abwanderungsabsichten nicht zufällig entstehen, sondern das Ergebnis eines komplexen Zusammenspiels individueller Merkmale, sozialer Integration, wirtschaftlicher Verankerung und wahrgenommener gesellschaftlicher Akzeptanz sind.

Ein zentrales Ergebnis der Befragung ist, dass gerade die für Erwerbs- oder Bildungszwecke zugezogenen, besser gebildeten, wirtschaftlich erfolgreicher sowie sprachlich besser integrierten Migrantinnen und Migranten – also genau jene, die Deutschland dringend für die Fachkräftesicherung benötigt – überdurchschnittlich häufig über eine Ausreise nachdenken oder konkrete Abwanderungspläne äußern. Diese selektive Mobilitätsneigung gefährdet die langfristige Fachkräftesicherung in Deutschland. Umso wichtiger ist es, diesen zentralen Gruppen eine echte Perspektive zu bieten und Deutschland nicht nur als Einwanderungs-, sondern als dauerhaft attraktives Lebens- und Arbeitsland zu positionieren.

Dazu gehören schnellere und transparentere Verfahren bei der Anerkennung von Qualifikationen, ein entschlossener Abbau bürokratischer Hürden, eine familienfreundliche Integrationspolitik sowie gezielte Maßnahmen gegen Diskriminierung im Alltag und am Arbeitsplatz. Nur wenn Zugewanderte sich als vollwertige Mitglieder der Gesellschaft erleben – mit realen Chancen auf Teilhabe und beruflichen Aufstieg –, steigt die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass sie Deutschland auch langfristig als Lebensmittelpunkt wählen und ihre beruflichen wie privaten Zukunftspläne hier verwirklichen möchten.

Bislang hat nur etwa ein Fünftel derjenigen, die Auswanderungspläne äußern, bereits konkrete Schritte zu deren Umsetzung unternommen. Gleichzeitig wünscht sich rund ein Fünftel dieser Gruppe eine langfristige Rückkehr nach Deutschland, während ein Drittel eine Rückkehr ausschließt und etwa die Hälfte unentschlossen ist. Daraus ergibt sich ein erhebliches Rückkehrpotenzial: Zwei Drittel der Auswanderungswilligen schließen eine spätere Rückkehr

nicht aus. Dieses Potenzial gezielt zu aktivieren und unterstützend zu begleiten, könnte ein wirkungsvoller Baustein in einer strategischen Fachkräftesicherungspolitik sein.

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# 1 Introduction

Germany is facing a significant shortage of skilled labor and requires annual net immigration of approximately 400,000 people to maintain its labor force potential (Fuchs et al. 2021). Given the high levels of emigration, achieving this net figure – i.e. immigration minus emigration – translates into a gross immigration target of around 1.5 million people per year. Since the early days of migration research, it has been widely recognized that large-scale immigration is typically accompanied by substantial emigration (Ravenstein, 1885), not least because a considerable share of migration is temporary in nature.

Despite the importance of emigration in shaping migration dynamics in Germany, available data sources often produce divergent estimates. According to the Federal Statistical Office, between 2014 and 2023 there were on average 1.8 million arrivals and 1.1 million departures annually, corresponding to an immigration rate of 16.6 percent and an emigration rate of 10.5 percent relative to the foreign population (own calculations based on DESTATIS 2025a, 2025b). These figures, however, are unadjusted and include multiple counts and very short-term stays. In contrast, the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) shows an adjusted average of 1.4 million arrivals and 621,000 departures for the same period, resulting in lower immigration and emigration rates of 12.4 and 5.7 percent, respectively (BAMF 2024). For 2023, the AZR recorded 383,000 documented departures (2.9 percent) and 313,000 deregistrations abroad or with unknown destinations (2.3 percent), totaling 5.2 percent of the foreign population (DESTATIS 2024). Accounting for further uncertainties, such as registry corrections, the actual emigration rate likely does not exceed 6 percent.

In international comparison, Germany is among the OECD countries with the highest emigration rates among immigrants. Based on estimates from the OECD International Migration Database and the Labor Force Survey (2010–2019), around 67 percent of immigrants to Germany left again within five years. Only the Netherlands recorded a higher share (75 percent). France, Sweden, and the United Kingdom reported significantly lower rates of 27 to 31 percent (OECD 2024).

Despite methodological limitations, there is broad consensus that return and onward migration significantly shape Germany's migration landscape and influence both the size and composition of the immigrant population. Simply curbing emigration is not a realistic policy strategy: the underlying causes are too diverse, and effective instruments for political control are limited. Moreover, declining transport and communication costs have increased global mobility. Migration is increasingly characterized by shorter and more frequent episodes, and temporary stays are gaining importance. This results in higher churn rates. While favorable living and working conditions can increase the likelihood of longer stays and thereby stabilize the workforce, they may also encourage temporary migration. Even as average durations of stay increase, high levels of mobility may persist. Duration of stay, in turn, determines the extent to which migrants invest in host country-specific human capital—such as language skills, educational credentials, work experience, and social networks. The scope and duration of migration episodes therefore have a direct impact on labor market outcomes, welfare systems, and integration trajectories. In order to design effective policies, decision-makers require reliable data on emigration patterns.

Currently, however, such data remain scarce. According to the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), in 2019, 19 percent of people with a direct migration background reported intentions to emigrate permanently or for an extended period, compared to 11 percent among those without a migration background. In 2021, 16 percent of immigrants indicated plans for temporary stay in Germany, versus 8 percent among non-migrants. Emigration intentions are particularly high among university graduates with a migration background (23 percent in 2019, compared to 14 percent for their non-migrant counterparts). Findings by Boockmann et al. (2022) further show that employees in low-skilled occupations are more likely to plan shorter stays. This aligns with the international literature, which points to a dual pattern: return and onward migrants are often positively selected in terms of skills, but emigration intentions are also linked to labor market challenges.

Return and onward migration thus have far-reaching consequences for Germany's labor supply, social participation, and the long-term viability of the welfare state. However, empirical knowledge about how these decisions are shaped by settlement intentions, integration pathways, and their interaction remains limited. Of particular interest is the role of host-country specific human and social capital in shaping the desire to stay. If such investments—for instance, in language acquisition or education – are not realized due to premature emigration, the social and fiscal returns are largely lost.

Against this background, the *International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany* (IMPa) was established – a systematic, long-term data infrastructure to analyze return and onward migration dynamics. IMPa is a longitudinal online survey following multi-year entry cohorts. It collects detailed information from immigrants in Germany about their biographies, migration intentions, and actual mobility behaviors. Approximately 50,000 respondents participated in the first wave (December 2024 to April 2025). New entry cohorts will be surveyed every two years, with annual follow-ups over a four-year period. Through statistical extrapolation, the data enable representative statements about immigrants who entered Germany by April 2, 2024, are registered in the Federal Employment Agency's administrative records (via employment, benefit receipt, or participation in labor market measures), and are aged between 18 and 65.

As Bekaert et al. (2024) emphasize, previous studies focused largely on theoretical models of return migration (see Cassarino 2004; Constant & Massey 2002; Dustmann & Görlach 2016; Dustmann & Weiss 2007). Empirical research remains limited and inconsistent, particularly with regard to onward migration, which is still understudied. A major barrier for empirical analysis is the lack of suitable longitudinal data that tracks migrants across borders (Constant 2020, 2021). Existing German studies, such as the German Emigration and Remigration Panel Study (GERPS) (Ette et al. 2019), are largely confined to German nationals or former migrants and rely on non-representative samples (Boockmann et al. 2022; Loschert et al. 2025). Longitudinal data on the emigration of refugees and other migrant groups remain virtually absent.

This is where IMPa makes a key contribution: the survey explicitly captures intentions regarding onward or return migration and allows for nuanced analyses of settlement perspectives. While the first wave focuses on migrants currently living in Germany and does not yet include realized emigration events, the collected intention data provide valuable insights into likely future behavior. Of course, intentions are not always realized—limited resources or unforeseen obstacles may intervene (Carling & Schewel 2018). Still, numerous studies have consistently

shown that migration intentions are a strong predictor of actual emigration behavior (Bekaert et al. 2024; De Haas & Fokkema 2011; Sallam 2024; Tjaden et al. 2019; Van Dalen & Henkens 2013; Wanner 2021).

In addition to general intentions to emigrate, IMPa gathers information on migration-related considerations, concrete plans, and preparations; intended destinations; reasons for migration; and return intentions. These data form an essential basis for understanding future migration decisions and help forecast migrant trajectories. From a policy perspective, intended duration of stay is equally important for planning educational infrastructure, housing, and integration services. Understanding migration aspirations also helps identify labor market risks early and supports targeted social policy interventions (Mjelva & Carling 2023).

For the first time, this report provides robust empirical insights into emigration dynamics in Germany based on IMPa data. It explores who is planning to emigrate, who is considering it, where they intend to go, and why. The report is structured into eight chapters, each focusing on different dimensions of migrants' living conditions and mobility aspirations – differentiated by region of origin, sociodemographic factors, and integration experiences. Given the labor market focus, the analyses are restricted to respondents aged 18 to 65. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology, sampling, weighting, and questionnaire design. Chapter 3 presents descriptive findings on intentions to stay, emigration considerations, concrete plans, preferred destinations, motivations, and return intentions. Chapters 4-6 explore how migration intentions relate to sociodemographic background, labor market status (e.g., employment, qualifications), and socio-cultural factors such as language skills, discrimination, and social ties. Chapter 7 provides regression analyses identifying key drivers of migration intentions. Chapter 8 summarizes the main findings and presents evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice.

## 2 The IMPa survey

This chapter provides an overview of the IMPa survey, in particular (1) the design of the survey, (2) the population and sample basis, (3) methods and fieldwork, (4) survey content, (5) data quality, (6) weighting and (7) an overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

### 2.1 Design of the survey

The central aim of the survey is to analyze the structure and selectivity of return and onward migrants as well as their effects on labor market integration and the potential workforce in Germany. To this end, we conduct a longitudinal online survey of immigrants. The design is based on a multi-cohort panel survey in which several cohorts are re-interviewed over a longer period of time (up to five years). In the first wave of the survey, information is collected on the migration biography, settlement and emigration intentions, concrete migration plans and preparations, intended destination countries, reasons for emigration or the choice of destination and intentions to return to Germany. The second wave focuses on actual migration movements



and future migration intentions. A total of up to four re-interviews are planned. Figure 2-1 shows the planned course of the survey across the cohorts.

**Figure 2-1 : Multi-cohort panel design of the IMPa survey**



Source: Own representation.

A special feature of the study is the possibility to link the survey data with administrative IEB data<sup>1</sup> In the survey, respondents are asked for their consent to do so. This link enables a dynamic and life course-related perspective (over time) on return and onward migration intentions.

## 2.2 Population and sampling basis

The population of the survey consists of all persons aged 18 to 65 who were ever registered with a foreign nationality in the data of the Integrated Employment Biographies (IEB) and for whom at least one notification was available on the sampling date (30.04.2024). Due to the restriction that the persons were "ever registered with a foreign nationality", the sample also includes persons who now have German citizenship, e.g. due to naturalization. As the IEB notifications are based on various data sources, e.g. employment information from companies and information from the BA in the case of unemployment or support measures, there are instances where the stated nationalities are incorrect. It is therefore possible that people without a migration background, whose nationality was incorrectly stated once, are included in the sample. These were later filtered out during the survey.

Due to the delay in processing, the current version of the IEB (December 31, 2023) was supplemented by a cross-section of current notifications as of April 30, 2024 with a limited number of variables (gender, date of birth, origin of notification, place of residence and nationality). As a large share of emigration takes place in the first months and years after entry, a

<sup>1</sup> The Integrated Labor Market Biographies (IEB) allow individual employment histories to be tracked on a daily basis. They include all persons who have one of the following employment statuses at least once during the observation period: Employment subject to social insurance contributions (recorded from 1975), marginal employment (recorded from 1999), receipt of benefits according to the SGB III legal system (recorded from 1975) or SGB II (recorded from 2005), registered with the Federal Employment Agency (BA) as a jobseeker (recorded from 2000) or (planned) participation in a labor market policy measure (recorded from 2000). This information comes from various administrative data sources and is merged in the IEB (cf. Graf et al., 2025).



large time gap between the reference date of the sample and the invitation of respondents could lead to many people having already left Germany again at the time of contacting. As this group is of particular interest, the more recent cross-sectional dataset was used.

When interpreting the results, it must be taken into account that, due to the sample basis, civil servants, the self-employed, students and the so-called hidden reserve - as long as there is no parallel notification in the BA for them - are not part of the population.

As described in the chapter 1, the maximum estimated emigration rate is six percent of the foreign population. The main aim of the survey is to recruit as many respondents who left Germany again as possible for the second survey wave. However, this group is generally difficult to reach due to their higher mobility (Schündeln 2014) and presumably more difficult to contact once they have left the country. For this reason, people with a higher probability of emigration were sampled with a higher probability.

For this purpose, the population was divided into 47 groups based on five duration of stay groups (less than 1 year, 1 to less than 2 years, 2 to less than 5 years, 5 to less than 10 years, more than 10 years) and ten country of origin groups (EU East, Turkey, countries of asylum<sup>2</sup>, EU/Schengen, Asia, Africa, English, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Ukraine<sup>3</sup>). The exact duration of stay of the respondents is not available in the IEB and was approximated using the duration since the first IEB notification. Emigration rates for these groups were approximated on the basis of the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). For the gross sample, a minimum group size (N = 6,250) was defined for each group in order to obtain sufficient case numbers for the net sample<sup>4</sup>. The remaining gross sample was distributed proportionally to the AZR-based emigration rates. In total, the gross sample consists of 700,000 people. The composition of the sample is discussed in detail in sections 2.5 and 2.6.

## 2.3 Methods and fieldwork

### 2.3.1 Invitation letter, mode and incentives

The 700,000 target persons were recruited for the survey by a postal invitation. The invitation letter contained a one-page German version of the cover letter, a one-page English version of the cover letter, a page with ten short paragraphs in other languages (Romanian, Polish, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Russian, Arabic, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Czech) and a data protection sheet (see Appendix A1). The cover letter contains a link to the survey homepage as well as a personalized password (consisting of 6 to 10 capital letters), which the participants must enter at the beginning. The cover letter also announced the incentive in the form of a voucher worth 5 euros. The survey homepage contains additional information on data protection and frequently asked questions and is available in various languages.

The mailing of the letters was initiated on December 2, 2024 and took place in daily packages of 100,000 letters each. An estimated 10 percent of the letters could not be delivered. Analyses

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<sup>2</sup> This group includes the following countries: Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran Islamic Republic, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria.

<sup>3</sup> For Ukraine, separate categories were only created for the duration of stay categories "less than 1 year" and "1 to less than 2 years". For the other categories, Ukrainian nationals were added to the "Eastern Europe" country group, as the group size of Ukrainian immigration cohorts before 2022 was too small.

<sup>4</sup> For the two Ukraine groups, the gross sample was set at 31,250 due to their current significance. At the same time, departure rates based on the AZR data before the war in Ukraine were used for these groups.

based on the pre-test data <sup>5</sup> showed that the group of people whose letters could not be delivered differed only marginally from other non-participants. As a consequence, respondents who could not be reached were not considered separately in the further course (e.g. for weighting).

Participation in the survey only took place online. Sending a paper questionnaire to the participants would have been a possible alternative, but as the main aim of the project is to survey people who leave Germany between the first and second wave who would no longer be reachable in the second wave if they moved away, this mode was not used.

Participants were given a voucher worth 5 euros as an incentive for their participation. For a subgroup of respondents, this amount was increased to 10 euros as part of an experiment on panel consent. After completing the survey, respondents were redirected to the voucher portal to redeem the voucher. There they had the option of choosing from various providers (including supermarkets, DIY stores and furniture manufacturers).

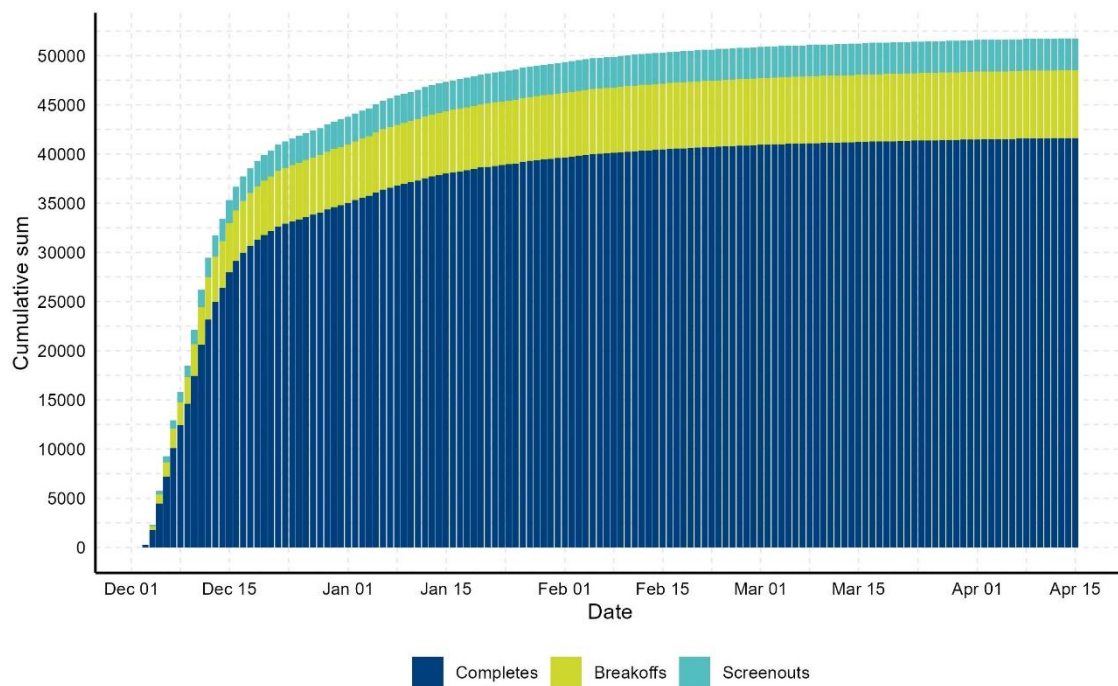
### 2.3.2 Utilization

Figure 2-2 shows the fieldwork progress of the survey. 70 percent of all completed interviews (29,103 observations) were collected in the first two weeks. By the end of 2024, 84 percent of all complete interviews (34,778 observations) had been collected. In total, the people invited were able to participate until April 15, 2024.

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<sup>5</sup> For the pretest, 10,000 people were contacted by post at the end of June 2024 and invited to take part. No incentives were awarded for participation. The aim of this procedure was to identify potential problems in the process and questionnaire in order to avoid them in the actual survey.

**Figure 2-2 : Cumulative survey participation over the field**



Note: Screenout refers to the excluded participants who are not part of the survey population because they were born in Germany.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1, unweighted.

The evaluation of the final response rate is shown in Table 2-1. A total of 51,770 people (7.4 percent of the gross sample) started the survey. However, 13.3 percent of them did not complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was classified as completed as soon as the respondents had answered the question about their willingness to participate in the panel at the end of the questionnaire. Furthermore, 6.2 percent of participants were excluded because they were born in Germany ("screenout" in Figure 2-3). For people who stated that they were born in Germany, the persons were either born before 2000, so that birth in Germany did not automatically lead to German citizenship, they have dual citizenship and are second or third generation migrants, or there may be an incorrect declaration of foreign citizenship in the IEB reports. They therefore received an alternative questionnaire. In addition, the willingness to link the survey data with the IEB was also asked for these persons, so that a detailed investigation of the source of error is possible for persons who gave their consent (2,681 observations; 83.1 percent). However, this group of respondents will not be discussed in the remainder of the report.

**Table 2-1: Participation**

	N	Percent
Gross sample	700,000	100.0
Interviews started	51,770	7.4
<b>including:</b>		
Completes	41,637	80.4
Breakoffs	6,908	13.3
Screenouts	3,225	6.2
Participation rate (share of complete interviews)	41,637	5.9

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1, unweighted values.

Overall, the participation rate is 5.9 percent and is comparable to similar IAB surveys (considering the difficult target population and the absence of a reminder letter) (e.g. Coban et al. 2024, Haas et al. 2021, Osiander et al. 2020).

The questionnaire could be answered in 19 different languages (German, English, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Ukrainian, Arabic, Polish, Italian, Romanian, French, Portuguese, Croatian, Hungarian, Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, Dari, Czech). The questionnaires were translated by professional service providers and checked by native speakers. The majority of participants answered the questionnaire in German (32.7 percent) or English (31.6 percent). A further 7.7 percent answered the questionnaire in Russian, while the share for Spanish was 5.3 percent. For the other languages, the share was less than 4 percent in each case.

In terms of the device used, 73.9 percent took part in the survey using a smartphone. 25.7 percent used a computer. Only 0.3 percent used a tablet.

### 2.3.3 Record linkage and panel consent

The focus of the project is on contacting respondents who left Germany between the first and second survey wave. Consequently, consent to be contacted again is central. At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide their consent to be contacted again. Respondents could indicate that they would only like to be contacted by email, only by text message, by email or text message or not. People who agreed to be contacted were then asked to enter their contact details. Respondents who initially declined to be contacted again were asked to reconsider their decision once.

A total of 89.4 percent gave their consent (see Table 2-2). This high consent rate implies that the majority of respondents can be contacted again. This in turn increases the potential number of interviews with people who will have emigrated. With regard to the mode of recontact, 81.1 percent stated that they would only like to be contacted by email. 3.5 percent would only like to be contacted by text message. 15.4 percent would like to be contacted by email or text message. This share is relatively high compared to similar surveys (see Coban et al. 2024, for OPAL; Dollmann et al., 2023, for dezim.panel), although the generally higher willingness to participate in these surveys must be taken into account.

**Table 2-2: Record linkage and panel consent**

	N	Percent
Panel consent	37,217	89.4
Record linkage consent	38,291	92.0
Panel consent, but no consent to linkage	2,329	5.6

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1, unweighted values.

Linking the survey data with the administrative data available at the IAB is also particularly informative for studies on emigration. As part of the study, respondents were asked at the beginning of the questionnaire for their consent to linking the collected data with the process data available at the IAB. Respondents who did not agree to this request were asked for their consent again at the end of the questionnaire. A total of 92.0 percent of respondents gave their consent to this, 8.0 percent refused (see Table 2-2). 5.6 percent of respondents did not give their consent, but agreed to participate in further surveys. In the subsequent waves, these respondents - if they participate - will be asked for their consent again.

## 2.4 Contents of the survey

When designing the questionnaire, the focus was placed on collecting key variables relating to the decision to move away. The modules were surveyed in the following order:

1. Nationality, origin and arrival in Germany
2. Migration biography
3. Housing situation
4. Intention to stay
5. Life experiences in Germany
6. Family and partnership
7. Self-assessment
8. Language skills
9. Education and qualification
10. Employment
11. Social contacts
12. Health
13. Life situation and preferences

The questions and questionnaire modules are largely based on existing and tested surveys, including the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees (Brücker et al., 2017), the IAB-SOEP Migration Sample (Brücker et al., 2014), OPAL (Coban et al., 2024), DEZIM.panel (Dollmann et al., 2023), GERPS (Ette et al., 2019), Make it in Germany (Liebig and Senner, 2024), HOPP (Haas et al. 2021) and the Labor Force Survey (Eurostat, 2022). Questions developed for other modes were adapted to the web mode and supplemented with project-specific questions. The questionnaire was first tested internally and then evaluated in a pre-test. As part of this, particular attention was paid to limiting the burden on respondents, with an average survey duration of 20 minutes.

The contents of the survey and the general procedure were reviewed and approved by the ethics committee at the IAB (review no.: 2024\_003).

## 2.5 Data quality

### 2.5.1 Quality assurance during the field period

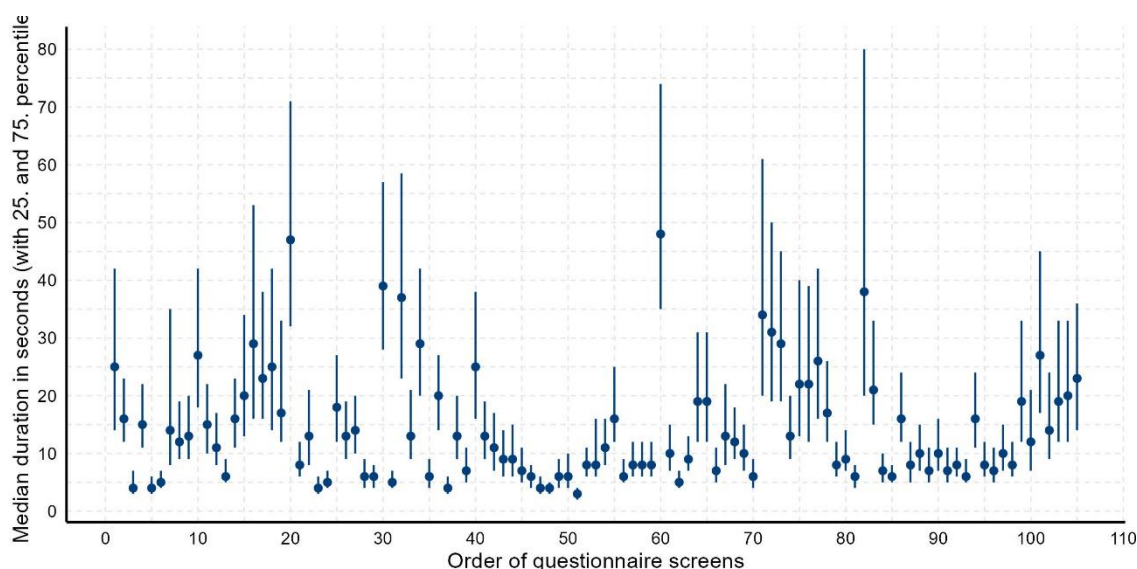
To ensure the quality of the data and to monitor the field progress, a dashboard was programmed that contains several quality indicators and enables, for example, a quick examination of the distribution of variables. This would have enabled programming errors to be identified and adjusted accordingly, for example. In the event of other quality problems (e.g. frequent terminations at certain points), the project team would also have been able to intervene by updating the dashboard on a daily basis.

### 2.5.2 Paradata

The median interview duration is just under 22 minutes. However, it varies greatly between respondents (5th percentile: 11.2 minutes, 95th percentile: 60.3 minutes). When considering the total duration for online surveys, however, it must be taken into account that interruptions during the questionnaire can lead to an overestimation of the total duration. In addition, the length of the questionnaire depends heavily on the individual filter guidance.

Figure 2-3 shows the median duration for each questionnaire screen over the course of the interview. As expected, the duration varies greatly between the individual screens. For example, more complex questions such as those on record linkage and panel consent have significantly longer durations than questions on demographic characteristics. Screens that contain several questions also have longer durations. In addition, some of the screens differ greatly in the variation of the measured durations. These differences can result, for example, from differences in the complexity of the questions or the composition of the respondents.

Figure 2-3 : Median duration by questionnaire screen



Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1, unweighted values.

### 2.5.3 Item non-response

The share of so-called item non-response per question, i.e. the lack of answers to individual questions, averages 1.4 percent. In contrast, the median - i.e. the middle value of the distribution - is significantly lower at 0.01 percent. This discrepancy arises from the relatively high item non-response for individual questions, which have a greater influence on the average value than the median. Four questions have significantly higher percentages compared to the other questions. These include the questions on earnings: gross earnings (40.3 percent) and net earnings (38.3 percent). Questions on earnings often have high item non-response rates, as many respondents consider such information to be sensitive, do not know their exact income or do not wish to provide any information for data protection reasons. Other questions with comparatively high item non-response rates are questions with open-ended information on professional activity at the time of the survey (30.4 percent) and before moving to Germany (26.1 percent). Compared to the other questions, these open questions are more cognitively demanding, require more effort and many respondents may be unsure how to accurately describe their occupation. Apart from these four questions, the item non-response rate for all other questions was less than 4 percent.

## 2.6 Weighting

Due to the unequal probability of being drawn and the presumably selective participation of the respondents contacted, the survey data is weighted to ensure representativeness. This is done in two steps, which are explained in more detail in the following sections.

### 2.6.1 Design weights

In order to contact as many people as possible who could leave Germany again after the first survey, certain groups were sampled with a higher or lower probability. To correct for these unequal sampling probabilities, the design weight is first calculated for each respondent

(1/sampling probability). As a result, people who were sampled with a lower probability are given a higher weight than people who were sampled with a higher probability.

### 2.6.2 Calibration

The design weights can correct for the sample design, but not for the selective participation of respondents. For this purpose, the net sample is adjusted for marginal distributions of various characteristics available in the sampling frame. The following characteristics from the administrative data of the IEB are used for this purpose:

- Gender
- Highest educational qualification
- Age
- Federal state
- Ever registered with German citizenship
- Employed × approximated length of stay
- Employed × nationality group

Note that some characteristics are not available for individuals who only appear in the cross-sectional dataset (see chapter 2.1 ) and who did not previously appear in the IEB. In addition, some of the calibration variables are variable over time, but are only available at the reference date. Changes over time can therefore marginally distort the marginal adjustments. The design weights form the basis for calculating the calibration weights.

### 2.6.3 Marginal distributions before and after weighting

Table A2-1 in Appendix A2 shows the marginal distributions of the calibration characteristics for the population, the gross sample, the unweighted net sample and the weighted net sample. Differences between the population and the gross sample result from the sampling design (primarily due to the disproportionate sampling probabilities). Differences between the gross sample and the unweighted net sample result from selective participation. The last column shows that the shares correspond to the shares in the population due to the weighting.

With regard to gender, it can be seen that men are less willing to participate than the population as a whole. The sampling design attracts younger people with a disproportionately high probability, but no clear pattern can be identified for the willingness to participate. The 18-28 and 49-58 age groups participated disproportionately less, whereas the 29-38 age group participated disproportionately more.

With regard to the level of education, people with vocational training were sampled with a lower probability, which can be explained by the disproportionate drawing of people with a shorter period of residence. The higher share of missing values for the level of education in the gross sample is due to the fact that no educational information is available for people who only appear in the cross-sectional dataset. In general, there is a highly selective participation with regard to education: people with a higher level of education show a significantly higher willingness to participate.



For the employment status, which is determined via the source of the last notification, there are only marginal differences between the calculated shares. This also applies to the federal state. German citizenship was ever reported for 45.2 percent of people in the population. In the gross sample, this value is halved. However, there are only marginal differences in terms of willingness to participate.

As mentioned above, the length of stay is approximated by the time since the first appearance in the BA data. The actual length of stay is on average likely longer. The sampling design (disproportionately large sample of persons with shorter approximated durations of stay) results in pronounced differences between the population and the gross sample. Persons with a shorter duration of stay were sampled with a higher probability, whereas persons with a duration of stay of more than 10 years were sampled with a lower probability. However, there are only marginal differences in terms of willingness to participate.

The sampling design also results in differences for the country groups based on the nationality reported in each case. For example, people from Turkey, Eastern Europe and countries of asylum origin were sampled with a lower probability, whereas people from Asia, Latin America and English-speaking countries, for example, were sampled with a higher probability. There are also major differences between the country groups in terms of willingness to participate. For example, people from Eastern Europe are significantly less likely to participate than people from English-speaking countries or Latin America. There are many different explanations for this (e.g. general accessibility, language skills, level of education, address quality, seasonal migration), but these cannot be conclusively investigated with the available data.

## 2.7 Socio-demographic characteristics based on the survey data

**Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.** in Appendix A2 shows the distribution of socio-demographic characteristics based on the survey data, both unweighted and weighted. It should be noted that differences between the weighted and unweighted results may arise due to the unequal sampling probabilities of certain groups and the selective participation of certain groups. Overall, the participants are significantly younger than the target population, with more than 65 percent of participants under the age of 40, while the weighted share is over 48 percent. There are similarly large differences in the length of stay of the respondents. Just under 47 percent of respondents last moved to Germany three or fewer years ago; on a weighted basis, this share is just over 22 percent. This difference is mainly due to the sampling design.

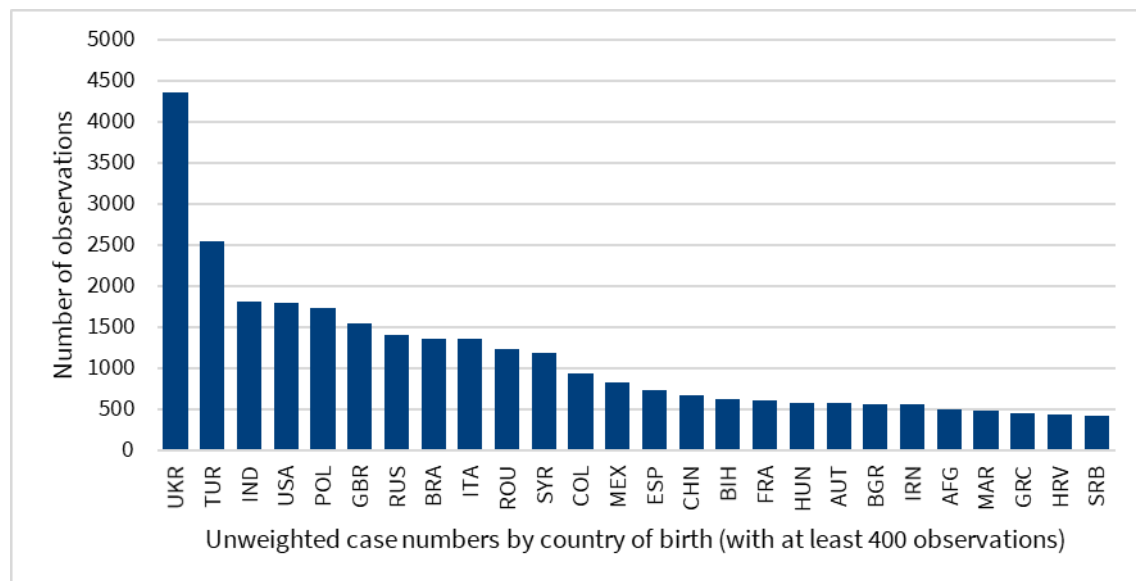
With regard to the respondents' highest level of education, almost two thirds of respondents have a university degree. The weighting corrects this share to 35 percent. When interpreting this data, it must be taken into account that international education systems are difficult to compare, which makes the standardized collection of the education level more difficult. 13 percent of respondents have German citizenship. Due to the sampling design, this share is corrected to 30 percent by weighting. With regard to the legal basis for immigration, there are also differences between the weighted and unweighted shares; for example, the weighted share of people whose basis was "work/job search" is significantly lower when weighted. In contrast, the weighted share for asylum seekers is significantly higher. The weighting also significantly increases the share of people who have at least one child. With regard to current residence status, the biggest

difference is for people with German citizenship, whose share more than doubles when weighted.

In total, immigrants from 188 countries participated in the survey. Around 70 percent of respondents come from 26 countries of birth. Figure 2-4 shows the absolute number of cases for these countries of origin. At least 400 complete interviews are available for each of these 26 countries, which enables well-founded country-specific analyses. Most observations are available for Ukraine (4,367 persons, 10.5 percent), followed by Turkey (2,554 persons, 6.1 percent), India (1,818 persons, 4.4 percent), the USA (1,803 persons, 4.3 percent) and Poland (1,737 persons, 4.2 percent). In addition, over 43 other countries of origin are represented with at least 100 cases each. The high diversity of origins underlines the broad analytical potential of the panel - particularly for comparative studies on migration intentions, integration experiences and motives for return by group of origin.

**Figure 2-4: Number of complete interviews by country of birth**

Countries with at least 400 observations each, absolute figures



Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1, unweighted values.

## 3 Migration intentions, destination countries and reasons for emigration

In the literature there exist various concepts to capture migration-related attitudes, wishes and decisions. A distinction is often made between migration wishes, intentions and concrete plans (Mjelva and Carling 2023). Researchers use such indicators increasingly to explain or predict migration flows (Sallam 2024; Tjaden et al. 2019; Van Dalen and Henkens 2013; Wanner 2021). These indicators also provide valuable insights into the underlying motives: poor economic integration or a lack of social participation, for example, can encourage the desire to return to the country of origin or move on to another country (cf. Constant 2020).

However, whether a desire to migrate actually results in a change of location depends on numerous other factors – such as the situation in the destination country or structural barriers (Bekaert et al. 2024; Bratsberg et al. 2007). Even if no emigration takes place, the intention to stay can have an impact on the behavior of migrants – especially on investment decisions with regard to language, education and social participation. Numerous studies show that migrants with a long-term intention to stay are more willing to invest in country-specific human capital. For example, they invest more frequently and earlier in language acquisition (see Dustmann and Görlach 2016), invest more in education and training (Damelang and Kosyakova 2021; van Tubergen 2022) and build up social networks more quickly (de Vroome and van Tubergen 2014).

With this in mind, this chapter first briefly introduces the survey items used on migration intentions and the underlying concepts, and defines the three main variables used to analyze emigration intentions and used throughout the report. These are: temporary intentions to stay, emigration considerations and emigration plans. Next, we analyze what migrants' intentions to stay were at the end of 2024 to the beginning of 2025 and whether their intentions to stay have changed since their arrival. Next, we examine how widespread emigration considerations and concrete migration plans are, and whether respondents intend to return to their countries of origin or move on to other countries. Finally, the reasons for the intention to emigrate, preparatory measures taken and the desire to return to Germany are discussed. These items were part of the fourth questionnaire module (see Chapter 2.4).

### 3.1 Survey items on migration efforts

As part of the IMPa survey, respondents were first asked two questions about their general intentions to stay in Germany - one looking back at the time they moved to Germany and the other relating to their current situation. The retrospective question was: "Please think back to when you moved here. Did you want to stay in Germany forever back then?" For people who had moved to Germany several times, reference was made to the time of their last move. The current intention to stay was surveyed with the following question: "And what about now, do you want to stay in Germany forever?" Both questions offered the response options "Yes", "No" and "I don't know". The aim was to record basic preferences and aspirations with regard to staying in Germany permanently. The questions were asked after the block of questions on the migration biography and the current housing situation. For the analysis of migration aspirations, the

answer option "No" is coded as an indicator of a *temporary intention to stay in Germany*, with "Yes" and "I don't know" forming the reference category.

We then asked participants whether they had thought about moving to another country in the past twelve months (answer categories: yes / no). This question serves to record short-term emigration considerations. It measures cognitive behavior in the past and distinguishes between people who have thought about emigrating and those who have not. The answer option "Yes" is coded as an indicator for *emigration considerations in the last 12 months*, while "No" forms the reference category.

We next asked the respondents whether they were planning to leave Germany within the next twelve months (answer categories: yes / no). This question is aimed at recording concrete plans to emigrate. In contrast to general thoughts or preferences, planning is the next step towards an actual action and is therefore seen as particularly behavioral. The answer option "Yes" is coded as an indicator for *emigration plans in the next 12 months*, while "No" forms the reference category.

The questionnaire includes all four questions for all respondents.

## 3.2 Development of general intentions to stay since immigration

Figure 3-1 uses a Sankey diagram to illustrate the change and stability of migrants' intentions to stay in Germany and compares the intentions at the time of immigration and at the time of the survey.

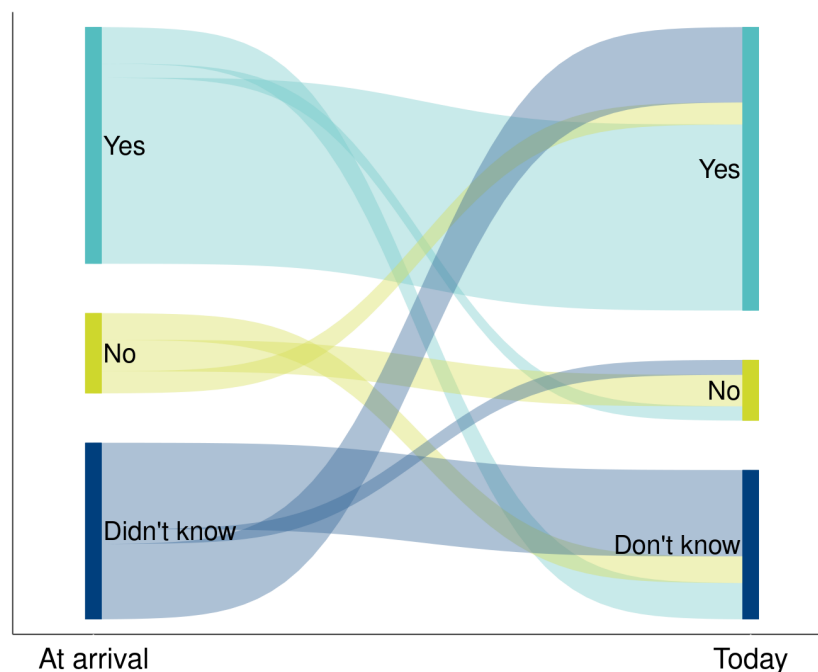
Nearly half of migrants (48 percent) stated that they wanted to stay in Germany permanently when they moved here, 16 percent wanted to stay temporarily and 36 percent were undecided. At the time of the survey, there was a clear shift: the share intending to stay permanently rose to 57 percent, while the shares of those with a temporary orientation and those undecided fell to 12 percent and 30 percent respectively. In absolute figures, this means that around 1.2 million immigrants are planning to stay temporarily, while a further 3 million are undecided about their settlement intentions.

The individual transitions illustrate both stability and dynamism in preferences: 79 percent of those who were planning to stay permanently when they moved here also held to this intention at the time of the survey. Around 28 percent of those who were originally temporarily oriented and 43 percent of those who were originally undecided have since decided to stay permanently. At the same time, 39 percent of those who initially did not want to stay permanently have consolidated their temporary orientation. Conversely, 6 percent of those who had originally decided to stay permanently and 8 percent of those who were undecided turned away from Germany.

Uncertainty among those who were originally undecided also decreased: Only 49 percent of those who were unsure when they moved here also stated that they were undecided at the time of the survey. In contrast, 33 percent of those who originally intended to stay temporarily were unsure at the time of the survey. Among those who originally planned to stay permanently, 15 percent expressed uncertainty at the time of the survey.

**Figure 3-1: Change in migrants' intentions to stay in Germany**

Percentage of people of working age (18-65) who have retained or changed their intention to stay since moving here



Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,568, weighted values

The dynamics of the intention to stay increase with the length of stay (results available upon request). Within the first year in Germany, 29 percent of migrants have already changed their mind about their original intention to stay. Among those who have lived in Germany for 10 years or longer, this share is 44 percent. This is particularly clear among people who originally intended to stay temporarily: after one year in Germany, 16 percent want to stay permanently, 53 percent are sticking to their temporary intention and 31 percent are now undecided. After 10 years, the shares are almost evenly split into thirds, but slightly higher for current permanent residence intentions (37 percent). This trend indicates that changes in the intention to stay develop over longer periods of time. At the same time, it could also indicate positive selection: People who originally planned to leave the country soon may have already left Germany.

### 3.3 Short-term emigration considerations and plans

At the end of 2024 to the beginning of 2025, 26 percent of immigrants in Germany stated that they had thought about leaving the country in the 12 months prior to the survey (see Table ).

Extrapolated, this corresponds to just under 2.6 million people. Around 3.1 percent - approximately 312,000 immigrants - expressed concrete plans to emigrate within the next 12 months. Around half of these people (1.5 percent) planned to return to their country of origin, while the other half (1.7 percent) planned to move on to another country.

**Table 3-1: Average values of migration intentions**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

	All	Only persons with...		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Uncertain intentions to stay	Permanent intention to stay
With emigration considerations in the last 12 months	25.8	68.0	41.2	8.6
With emigration plans in the next 12 months	3.1	17.2	2.2	0.6
<b>Including</b>				
Back to the country of origin	1.5	9.0	0.8	0.2
To another country	1.7	8.2	1.4	0.4
Observations	41,573	6,368	15,228	19,973

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,573, weighted.

A comparison of thoughts about emigrating and concrete plans to emigrate shows that the largest share (around 74 percent, calculated as the remainder) is accounted for by people who have neither thought about migration nor expressed concrete plans to emigrate (results available upon request). Around 24 percent of respondents stated that they had considered migration but had no concrete plans. A further 3 percent expressed both thoughts about migration and concrete plans to emigrate. A very small share of 0.7 percent stated that they had plans to emigrate without having thought about migration beforehand. While the group with both thoughts and plans presumably reflects firm intentions to emigrate, the small share with plans without prior consideration could indicate spontaneous decisions or unexpected events.

If only those people who expressed a temporary intention to stay at the time of the survey are considered (see Table ), the extent of migration considerations and plans is significantly higher. In this group, 68 percent were considering emigration and 17 percent stated that they had concrete plans to emigrate. Of these, 9 percent planned to return to their country of origin and 8 percent planned to move on to another country. It is striking that immigrants with an unknown length of stay also had high levels of emigration considerations (41 percent), but much lower levels of emigration plans (2.2 percent). However, most of them (1.4 percent) would like to move to another country and significantly fewer (0.8 percent) would like to return to their home country. Quite in line with the permanent intentions, the data shows that among those with permanent settlement intentions, only 9 percent have thought about emigrating and 0.6 percent are actually planning to emigrate.

### 3.4 Return and onward migration: destination countries and motives for migration

As already mentioned, previous research has focused primarily on the theoretical foundation and empirical investigation of return migration (see Bekaert et al. 2024; Cassarino 2004; Constant and Massey 2002; Dustmann and Görlach 2016; Dustmann and Weiss 2007). The area of onward migration, on the other hand, has been addressed much less frequently to date. The IMPa data now makes it possible to analyze this phenomenon in a more differentiated way - especially with

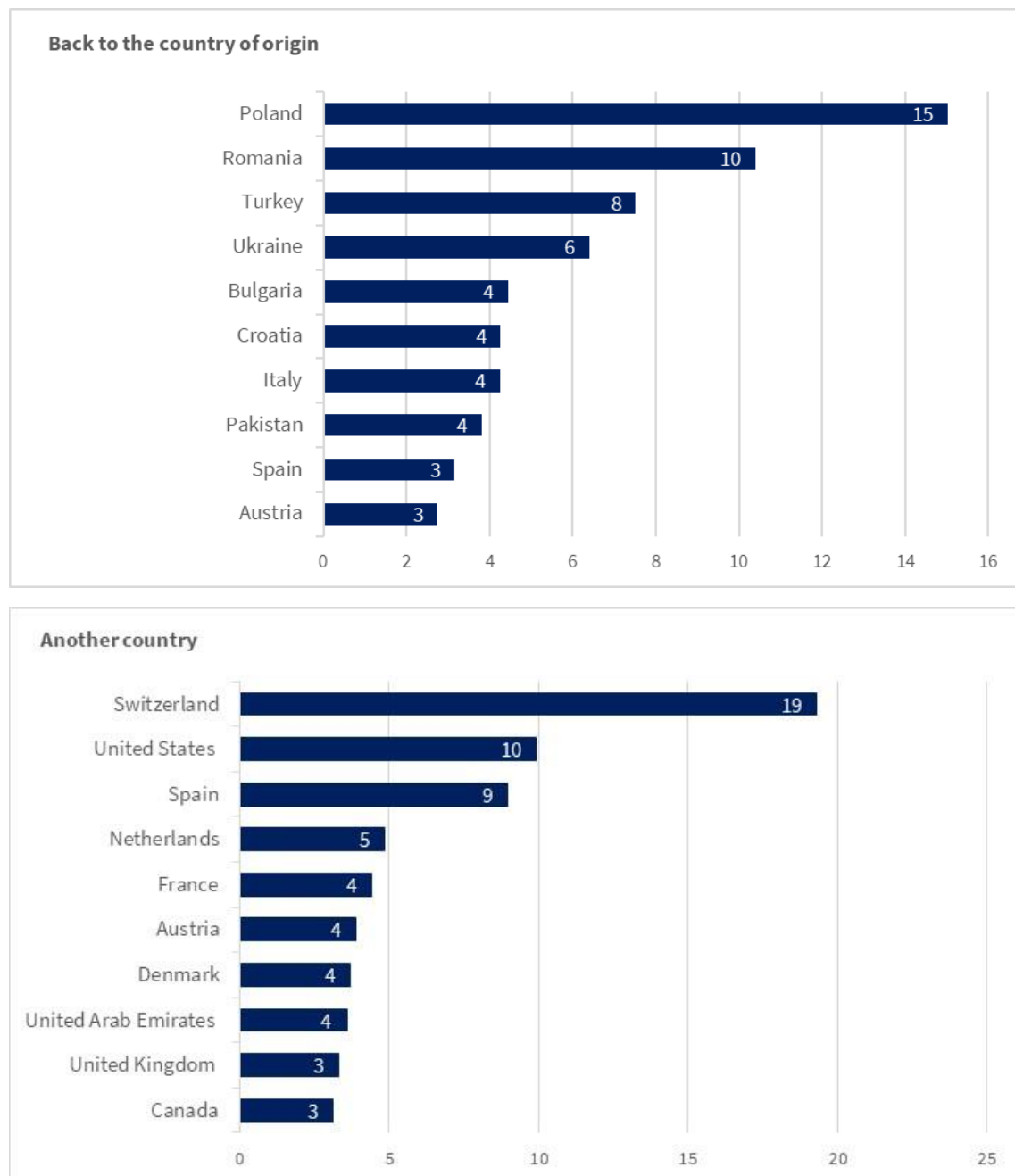
regard to destination countries and migration motives. To this end, people with plans to emigrate in the next twelve months were first asked about their intended destination country. Based on this information and information on the country of birth, a distinction was then made between returning to the country of origin and moving on to another country as different forms of emigration.

Figure 3-2 shows the ten most frequently mentioned destination countries of people with emigration plans, broken down by return to the country of origin and onward migration to another country. The destination countries of returnees are predominantly in Europe and mostly within the European Union. At 15 percent, Poland is the most common destination country, followed by Romania with 10 percent. This pattern indicates a pronounced mobility within the framework of existing legal possibilities - in particular the freedom of movement within the EU - and suggests patterns of circular migration. Some European non-EU countries such as Turkey (8 percent) and Ukraine (6 percent) are also among the most frequent destinations.

For onward migration, Switzerland is the most common destination country with 19 percent, followed by the United States and Spain with 9 percent each. With the exception of Spain and Austria, the ten most common destination countries for return and onward migration do not overlap - an indication of different migration patterns depending on the form of emigration.

**Figure 3-2: Destination countries of planned emigration (top 10)**

Share of people of working age (18-65) with plans to emigrate, in percent



Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1. only respondents with plans to emigrate (observations: 1,964), weighted.

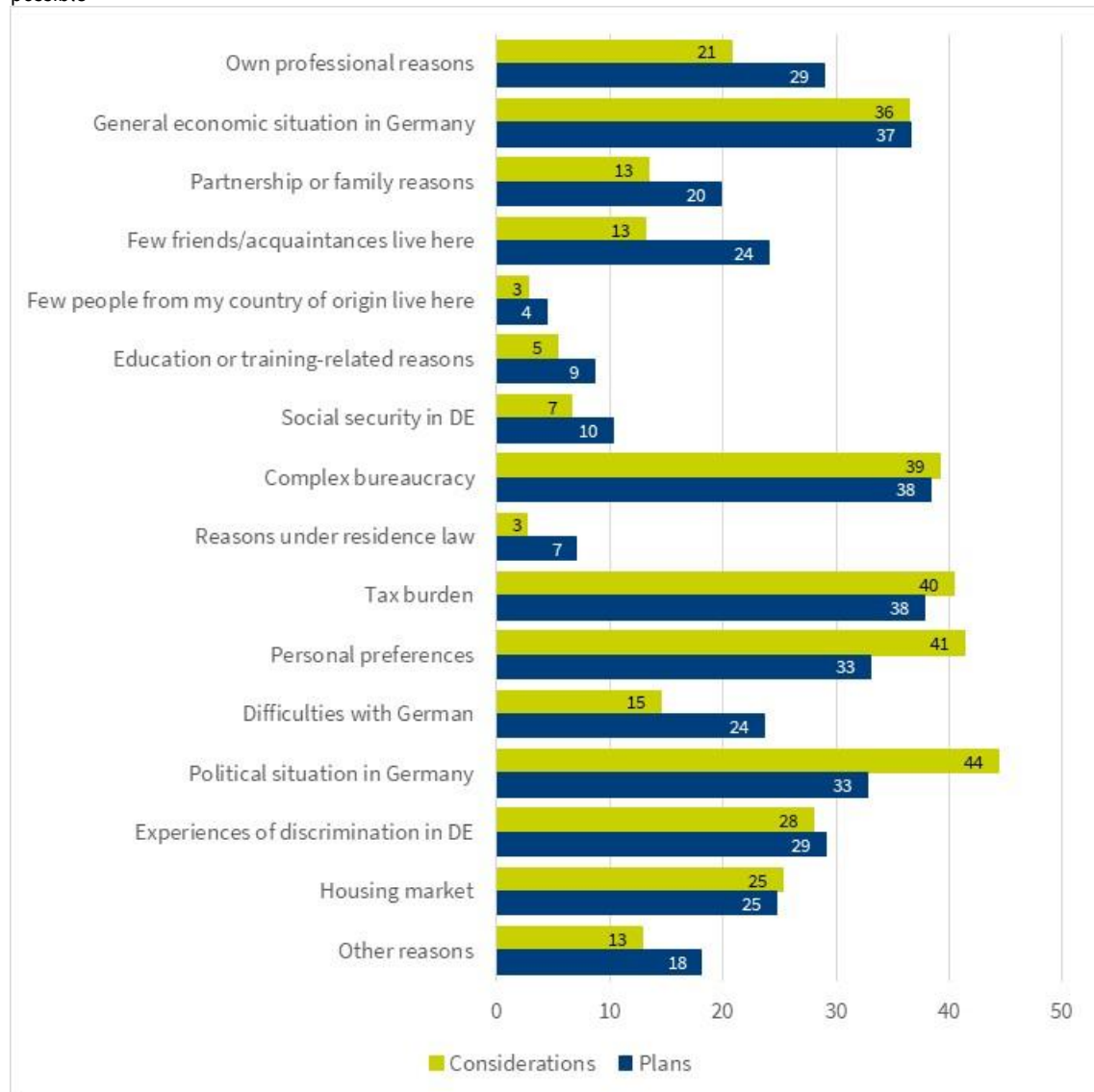
### 3.5 Differences in reasons for immigration and emigration intentions by form of emigration

The most important reasons for respondents who are considering or planning to return or move on from Germany are summarized in Figure .



**Figure 3-3: Reasons for wanting to leave Germany, according to emigration considerations and emigration plans**

Share of people of working age (18-65), only people considering and planning to emigrate, in percent, multiple answers possible



Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 12,832, weighted.

For migrants considering emigration, the most frequently cited reasons are the political situation in Germany (44 percent), followed by personal preferences (41 percent), the tax burden (40 percent), burdensome bureaucracy (39 percent) and the general economic situation in Germany (36 percent). It should be noted that the survey period coincided with the dissolution of the previous federal government and the 2025 Bundestag election campaign. As the election campaign revolved heavily around the topics of internal security and immigration (see ARD-aktuell 2025), the topic of migration and the political situation was very much on the minds of everyone living in Germany.

The reasons for emigration are distributed somewhat differently among migrants with plans to emigrate: The tax burden (38 percent), the high bureaucratic burden (38 percent) and the general economic situation in Germany (37 percent) are the main reasons. Less relevant for plans or

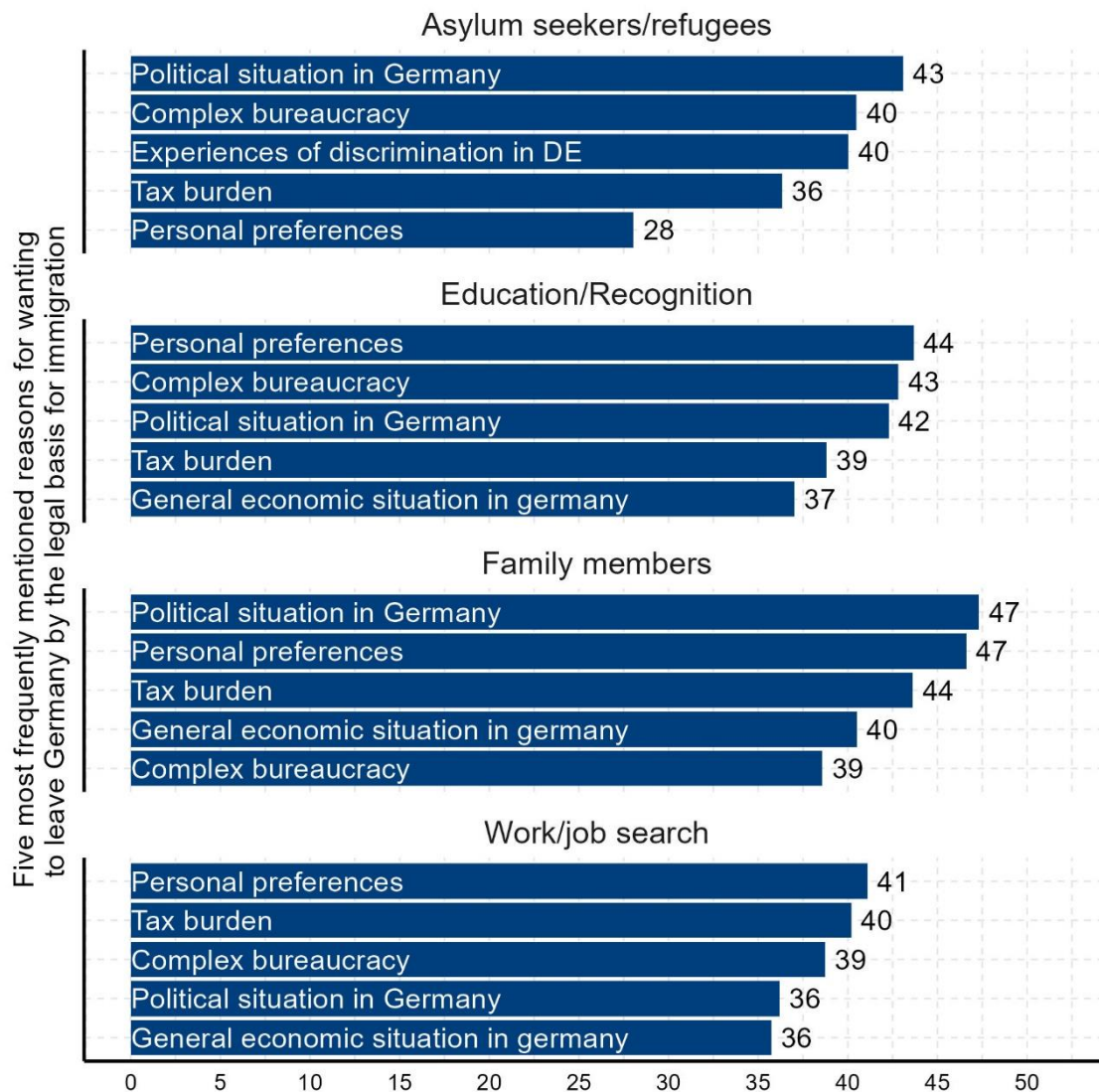
considerations to leave the country are reasons relating to residence law (7 and 3 percent respectively), education or training-related reasons (9 and 5 percent respectively) and the fact that only a few people from their own country of origin live in Germany (4 and 3 percent respectively).

An interesting difference could emerge if we analyze the different motives for emigration by place of residence. A distinction is made between residence in Berlin, East Germany and West Germany. Additional analyses (without figure) show that residents of Berlin tend to have a higher desire to emigrate for professional and housing reasons than immigrants in East/West Germany. Immigrants in Western Germany cite macroeconomic reasons, including tax burdens, more frequently than residents in Eastern Germany or Berlin. Another important reason for immigrants in Eastern Germany is the smaller number of friends and people from their countries of origin. Both immigrants in Berlin and those in Eastern Germany mention problems with the German language more frequently than those in Western Germany. Surprisingly, there are no statistically significant differences when it comes to citing the political situation as the main reason for residents in East and West Germany. On the other hand, immigrants in East Germany more frequently mention experiences of discrimination as a reason for emigrating than those in West Germany.

What are the reasons for emigration according to the original intention for immigration? Figure shows the five most frequently cited reasons for considering emigration, differentiated according to the four main legal bases for moving to Germany. It is striking that the same five reasons are mentioned most frequently for immigrants whose reason for moving to Germany is work/job search, education/recognition or family reasons - albeit in a different order in some cases. These include personal preferences, the tax burden, the complex bureaucracy and the general economic and political situation in Germany. A different pattern emerges for asylum seekers and refugees: in this group, the political situation in Germany, bureaucracy and experiences of discrimination are at the top of the list. The tax burden and - at a slightly greater distance - personal preferences are also frequently mentioned.

**Figure 3-4: The five most important reasons for wanting to leave Germany, according to the legal basis for immigration**

Share of people of working age (18-65), only people considering and planning to emigrate, in percent, multiple answers possible

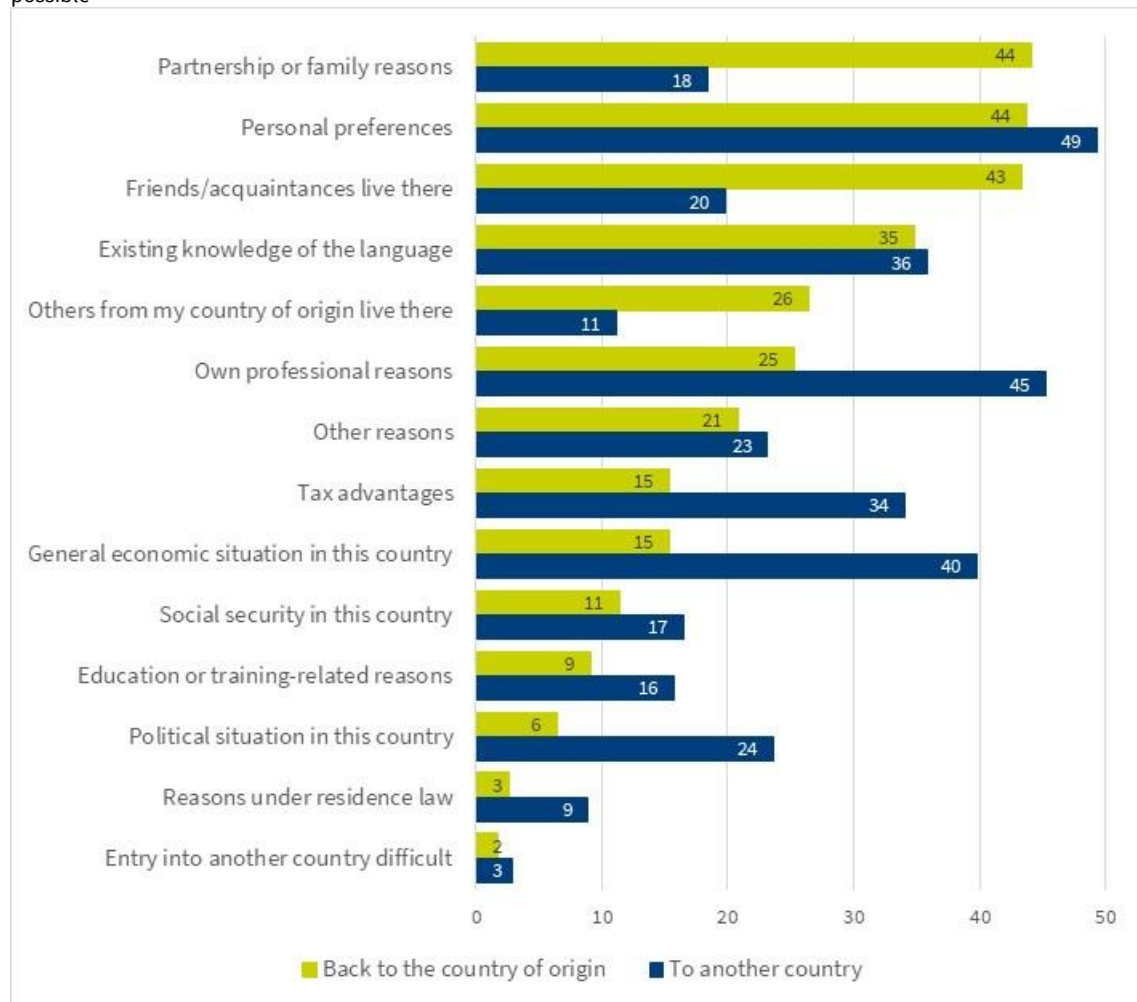


Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 11,409, weighted.

Respondents with emigration considerations and concrete emigration plans were also asked about their reasons for choosing a specific destination country. It is noticeable that the decisive motives differ significantly depending on whether a return to the country of origin or a move to another country is planned (see Figure

**Figure 3-5: Reasons for wanting to emigrate to a particular country, by destination country**

Share of people of working age (18-65), only people considering and planning to emigrate, in percent, multiple answers possible



Note: Only people with emigration plans who have indicated a destination country

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 1,974, weighted values.

Migrants who would like to return to their country of origin, cite the following three reasons most frequently: that friends/acquaintances live there (44 percent), personal preferences such as a better climate or a different way of life (44 percent), and partnership or family ties (43 percent). The least relevant reasons for this group are the political situation in the destination country (6 percent), residence law reasons (3 percent) and difficulties entering another country (2 percent).

For respondents planning to migrate to a country other than their country of origin, the priorities are clearly different: For just under half, personal preferences are the most important motivation (49 percent), followed by professional motives (45 percent) and the economic situation in the destination country (40 percent). In this group, too, residence law hurdles (9 percent) and difficulties entering the country (3 percent) are among the least frequently cited reasons. There is a significant difference in the third least important reason: only 11 percent of these people cite the presence of people from their own country of origin in the destination country as a motive - compared to significantly higher figures for those interested in returning.

In summary, it can be seen that while personal and social factors are the main focus for people wishing to return, economic considerations play a more central role for those wishing to emigrate to a third country.

### 3.6 Preparations for the migration

To determine the degree to which immigrants concretized emigration plans within the next 12 months, the survey asked whether concrete preparations had already been made. At the time of the survey, 20 percent of immigrants with emigration plans had taken the relevant steps (Table ). A further 21 percent stated that no preparations were necessary, while 59 percent had not yet taken any measures.

**Table 3-2: Preparation for relocation by form of emigration**

Share of people of working age (18-65), only people with emigration plans, in percent, multiple answers possible

Preparing for the move	In total	Form of migration	
		Back to the country of origin	Another country
Yes	20.0	23.6	17.0
No	59.5	51.6	66.1
No preparations necessary	20.5	24.8	16.9

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 1,973, weighted.

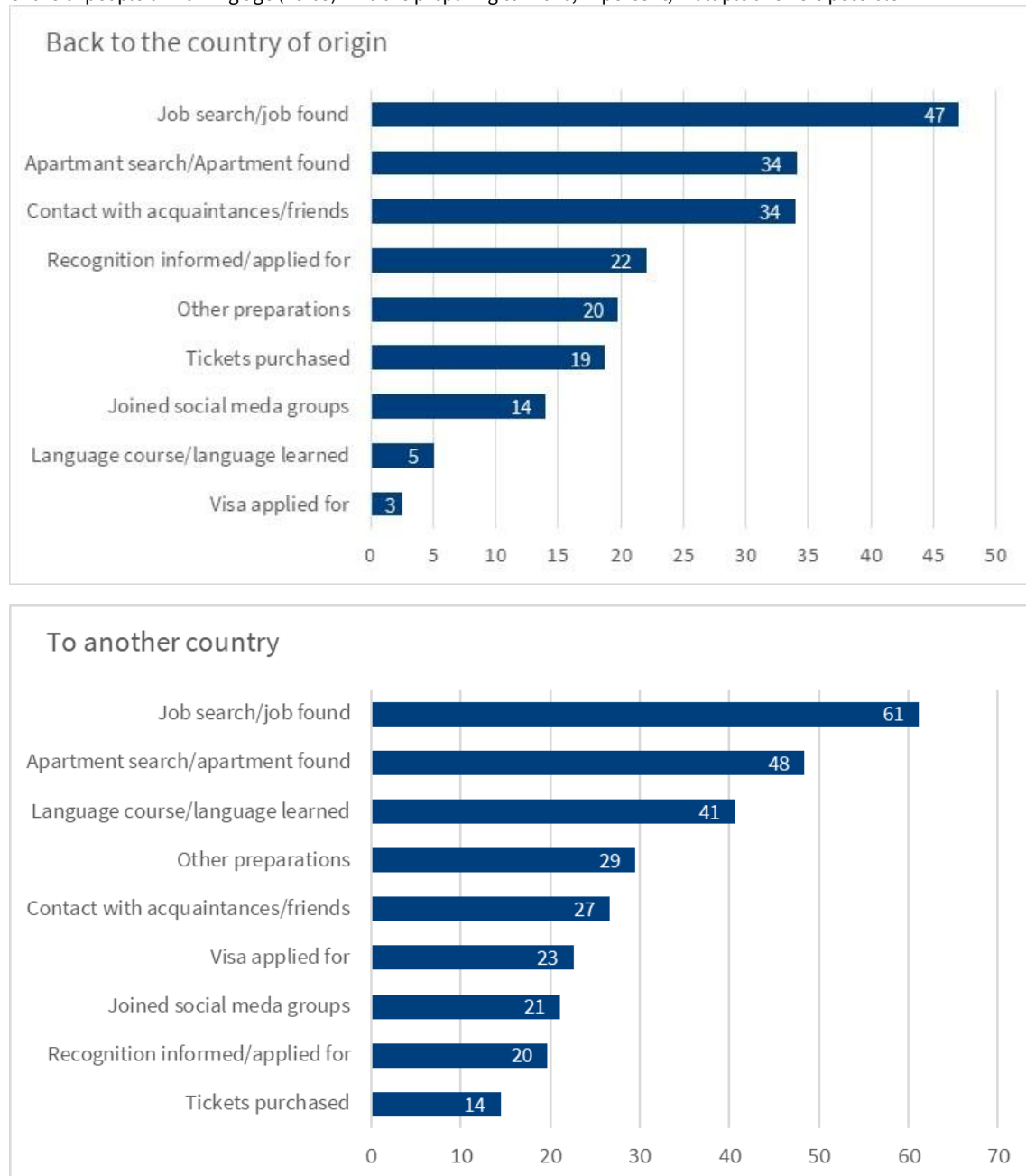
A differentiated look at the type of emigration shows that 24 percent of those wishing to return had already made preparations, compared to only 17 percent of those moving on (see Table ). Two thirds of those moving on had not yet made any preparations for a move to their destination country at the time of the survey (66 percent).

To shed further light on the concretization of emigration plans, we also asked which concrete steps had already been taken. This revealed that just over 40 percent of respondents who had made preparations, had completed one preparatory step, 21 percent had taken two steps, 19 percent three steps and 10 percent four steps (results available upon request). On average, those willing to return stated that they had taken two steps; for those who had moved on, the figure was three steps.

Figure 3-6 shows the specific preparatory steps according to the intended form of emigration. Returnees most frequently mentioned looking for a job or having already found employment (47 percent), followed by looking for accommodation (34 percent) and contacting acquaintances or friends in the country of origin (34 percent). The first two aspects in particular indicate a serious intention to settle back in the country of origin in the long term. However, it should be noted once again that 25 percent of those wishing to return stated that they did not consider any preparations necessary - which may be the case if they are planning to return to their parents' home or to relatives.

**Figure 3-6: Concrete preparatory steps for planned emigration**

Share of people of working age (18-65) who are preparing to move, in percent, multiple answers possible



Note: Only people who stated that they intend to emigrate in the next twelve months and have already made concrete preparations.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 452, weighted.

Among those moving on, looking for a job or having already found employment (61 percent) and looking for accommodation or already having a place to live (48 percent) were also mentioned most frequently - but with significantly higher percentages. These results underline the fact that work- and residence-related aspects are key structural prerequisites for the implementation of planned emigration - regardless of the destination country.

In third place is attending a language course or learning the target language (41 percent compared to only 5 percent of returnees), which indicates targeted preparation and investment

in human capital for the new start in the future destination country. Administrative steps such as applying for a visa (23 percent compared to 3 percent) and participating in social media groups (21 percent compared to 14 percent) also occur more frequently among returnees - possibly due to higher requirements or information needs in the destination context.

### 3.7 Plans to return to Germany

If the emigration plans of immigrants are realized, Germany will initially lose these people to another host country. However, many of these emigrations could be of a temporary nature. For this reason, the IMPa survey also asked whether the immigrants generally wish to return to Germany one day. Table shows the desire to return depending on the respective form of emigration.

**Table 3-3: Desire to return to Germany, by form of emigration**

Share of people of working age (18-65), only people with emigration plans, in percent, multiple answers possible

Return plans	In total	Form of migration	
		Back to the country of origin	Another country
Yes	21.0	22.6	19.4
No	33.7	36.8	31.0
Don't know	45.4	40.5	49.6

Notes: Only people with emigration plans who have indicated a destination country.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 1,973, weighted.

Around 21 percent of immigrants with concrete plans to emigrate expressed a desire to return to Germany in the long term. The share is almost the same among both returnees and those who have moved on. A further 34 percent rule out a return to Germany - slightly more frequently among those who would like to return to their country of origin (37 percent) than among those who have moved on (31 percent). This could indicate a "completed migration project".

By contrast, around half of immigrants with plans to emigrate were undecided about a possible return to Germany. The share is particularly high among those moving on, at 50 percent, while it is 41 percent among those returning. The high share of undecided migrants and the share with an explicit desire to return indicate a considerable potential for return - an estimated 199,000 people. Appropriate political measures - such as return programs, targeted information services or support structures for migrants interested in returning - could represent a conceivable strategy for attracting emigrated immigrants back to Germany in the long term.



## 4 Migration intentions according to socio-demographic characteristics

Previous studies show that individual characteristics such as gender, age and education are key influencing factors for migration intentions - although the findings are not uniform. For example, some analyses indicate a higher propensity to move on among men, possibly as a result of a greater willingness to be mobile or economic responsibility (Bekaert et al., 2024). With regard to age, a negative correlation with migration intentions is described in some cases and a U-shaped relationship in others: younger people are more likely to be mobile, while older people - such as those of retirement age - also think about returning disproportionately often (Constant and Massey 2003; Bekaert et al. 2024).

Education is also considered a key variable: Borjas and Bratsberg (1996) argue that return decisions depend heavily on the migrants' original selection: Accordingly, returnees can be both the "worst of the best" and the "best of the worst". Empirically, the findings are inconsistent: while some studies find no correlation between educational level and emigration (e.g. Constant and Massey 2003; Bekaert et al. 2024), others point to a positive correlation between education and (onward) migration (e.g. Dustmann and Weiss 2007). These differences could indicate that highly qualified people have higher expectations of the economic utilization of their skills and are therefore more likely to migrate further.

The country of origin also plays a key role. Empirical studies show that migrants are more likely to return to countries whose standard of living is similar to that of the host country (cf. Bekaert et al. 2024). Constant and Massey (2002, 2003), for example, show that people from traditional guest worker countries return less frequently than those from EU countries - a finding that points both to the economic and political conditions in the country of origin and to the importance of legal status and the motive for moving.

This chapter examines the extent to which socio-demographic characteristics - including gender, age, length of stay, education, country of origin, and legal residence status - are related to migrants' migration intentions in Germany. A distinction is made here between temporary intentions to stay, considerations to emigrate and plans to emigrate (see chapter 3).

### 4.1 Gender, age and education

Overall, the results in Table show that the intention to emigrate is more pronounced among immigrant men in Germany than among women. The share of those who only want to stay in Germany temporarily is around 1.84 percentage points higher among men than among women. Men are also slightly more likely to consider emigrating: While 26 percent of immigrant men stated that they wanted to leave Germany, the figure for women was 25 percent. Men also express concrete plans to emigrate more frequently than women (3.5 versus 2.6 percent). The gender differences for temporary intentions to stay and emigration plans are statistically significant.



**Table 4-1: Migration intentions by gender**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Gender	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Man	54.5	13.1	26.2	3.5
Woman	45.5	11.3	25.3	2.6

Note: The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,569, weighted.

These results are consistent with the findings of Bekaert et al. (2024). Furthermore, it could be related to different motives for migration - for example, a higher representation of women among family reunions (results available upon request).

The first two columns of Table show the age groups and their relative shares in the sample, while the last three columns show the average values for temporary intentions to stay, emigration considerations and concrete emigration plans by age group.

**Table 4-2: Age groups and migration intentions in percent.**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Age	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
<25	9.6	12.4	25.8	3.5
25-29	11.2	16.3	30.8	4.1
30-34	13.2	13.6	33.3	4.6
35-39	14.6	12.1	29.5	3.0
40-44	13.5	9.7	25.1	2.7
45-49	11.6	11.8	22.8	2.2
50-54	11.4	13.9	22.4	2.0
55-59	8.4	11.9	19.8	2.9
60 +	6.5	6.8	14.1	2.8

Note: The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,574, weighted.

A differentiated analysis of migration intentions by age reveals an inverse U-shaped relationship for all three indicators. The share of those considering emigrating is 26 percent for those under 25 years, 33 percent for those aged 30 to 34 and 14 percent for those over 60. With regard to specific emigration plans, comparable patterns emerge: 4 percent among the under 25s, 5 percent among the 30 to 34-year-olds and 3 percent among the over 60s. Just under half of those surveyed are under 40. On average, these age groups have higher migration intentions than people over 40.

The analysis by formal educational qualifications shows clear differences between the education groups (see Table ). Both temporary intentions to stay as well as emigration considerations and concrete emigration plans follow a similar pattern: the tendency to emigrate increases as the level of education rises. This is particularly pronounced among people with a high level of education: 15 percent of immigrants with a master's or doctoral degree express temporary intentions to stay, 35 percent have thought about leaving Germany in the last twelve months and 4 percent actually plan to emigrate within the next twelve months. By comparison, among immigrants with a secondary degree or lower, the corresponding percentages are only 10, 16 and 2 percent respectively.

**Table 4-3: Education and migration intentions in percent.**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Highest educational qualification achieved (ISCED)	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
(0-2) Lower secondary level or less	15.7	10.3	15.5	2.3
(3) Secondary level II	10.5	11.8	22.5	3.1
(4) Post-secondary non-tertiary education	36.4	12.5	25.1	2.9
(6) Bachelor/Diploma (FH)	19.5	11.4	28.7	3.1
(7-8) Master/ Diploma (Uni)/ PhD/ Doctor	17.9	15.0	35.0	4.4

Note: The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,544, weighted.

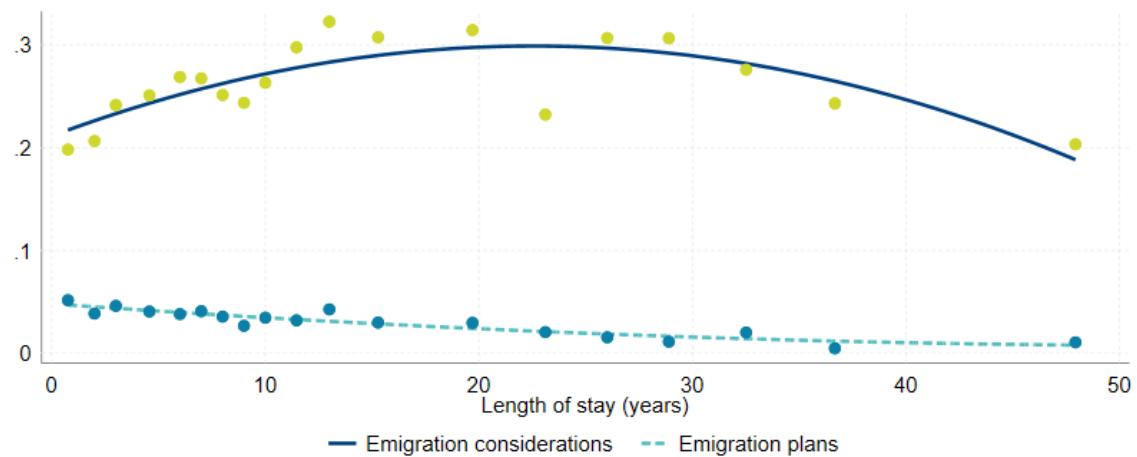
## 4.2 Duration of stay, country of origin and reason for immigration

Empirical research shows that emigration rates are highest in the first five years after arrival in the destination country; thereafter they stabilize or decline (see Bekaert et al. 2024; Constant and Massey 2003; Dustmann and Görlach 2016; Dustmann and Weiss 2007). The analysis of the IMPa data shows a similar pattern: emigration considerations initially increase with increasing length of stay, reach their peak at a length of stay of around 25 years and then decrease again (see Figure , solid line). In contrast, specific emigration plans show an overall negative correlation with the length of stay (see Figure , dashed line). Around 5.2 percent of respondents who had been in Germany for one year or less at the time of the survey stated that they were planning to emigrate within the next twelve months. After six years, the share drops to 4 percent, after 10 years to 3 percent and after more than 20 years to 1.5 percent.

It should be noted that in earlier immigration cohorts, only those people who are currently still in Germany can be surveyed. People with a high propensity to emigrate have presumably already emigrated, meaning that the current emigration intentions of earlier cohorts tend to be underestimated.

**Figure 4-1: Binned scatterplot of emigration considerations and emigration plans by length of stay (in years)**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent



Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,571, weighted.

The differences in the length of stay can also be influenced by different groups of countries of origin or reasons for immigration. Since 2015, many people from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq in particular have sought protection in Germany. As Brücker et al. (2020) show, over 90 percent of these people express a strong desire to stay permanently. Around half of the refugees who have come to Germany since the start of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, can also imagine staying in Germany permanently (Kosyakova et al. 2025). In contrast, the intention to emigrate is often much more pronounced among other groups - such as migrant workers or international students - partly because these groups often already plan to stay temporarily when they enter the country (see Bratsberg et al. 2007; Dustmann and Görlach 2016; Dustmann and Weiss 2007). The relationship between country of origin, length of stay and intentions to emigrate is examined further below.

The intentions to emigrate by country of origin are shown in Table 4-4. The lowest shares of concrete plans to emigrate are found among respondents from conflict countries such as Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan - particularly among people from Afghanistan, only 0.4 percent of whom stated that they were planning to leave Germany.

By contrast, the highest emigration plans are found among migrants from the European Union - for example from Poland, Romania, Italy or Bulgaria - with shares of between 4 and 5 percent. The figures are similarly high for people from India (5 percent), the USA (4 percent) and Colombia (4 percent) (not included in the Table 4-4). These countries are predominantly home to skilled workers who have migrated to Germany specifically to work. A bilateral migration agreement was already concluded with India in 2022 (BMI 2022) and a similar agreement is currently being prepared with Colombia (BMI 2024). Nevertheless, these groups are still relatively small compared to other migrant groups, such as those from Turkey or Poland.

**Table 4-4: Migration intentions by selected countries of origin (top 20 by share of the population)**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Country of birth	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Turkey	14.2	10.5	18.8	2.3
Poland	8.6	14.25	30.8	4.1
Ukraine	7.0	6.3	16.5	2.5
Syria	4.8	6.8	16.6	1.4
Romania	4.2	14.6	25.4	5.0
Russian Federation	4.0	10.3	31.1	1.4
Italy	3.2	14.1	31.5	3.5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.0	16.5	31.6	2.5
Afghanistan	2.7	2.9	16.6	0.4
Iraq	2.4	8.8	16.7	0.5
Iran	2.3	15.0	38.1	5.3
Bulgaria	2.1	23.1	32.3	4.6
Croatia	1.7	20.6	38.6	5.1
Hungary	1.6	12.5	31.3	4.5
Serbia	1.6	13.1	22.3	1.2
India	1.6	17.4	30.1	5.2
Kazakhstan	1.6	8.0	24.3	5.8
Kosovo	1.5	7.0	22.2	2.0
Spain	1.4	22.6	38.2	5.4
Austria	1.1	24.8	39.5	6.5

Note: The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 40,960, weighted.

Overall, it can be seen that the intention to emigrate depends significantly on the respective region of origin. For people from EU states or from countries with predominantly labour market-related immigration, the tendency to emigrate is significantly higher than for people from countries of origin with refugee or protection migration.

Further analyses of intentions to emigrate by group of origin and length of stay (see **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.** in Appendix A2) show that on the other hand migrants from EU countries have the highest share of concrete plans to emigrate in the first five years after their arrival in Germany. Respondents from countries of asylum origin and from Ukraine, on the other hand, show the lowest figures for emigration considerations and plans during this period. However, as the length of stay increases, the percentages in these groups rise. This indicates that people from conflict countries significantly distort the overall average of emigration intentions downwards, particularly in the first two years after arriving in Germany.

Another important aspect concerns the original motives for migrating to Germany. Table shows the migration intentions broken down by the legal basis for immigration.

**Table 4-5: Legal basis for immigration and emigration intentions**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Legal basis for immigration	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Germans born abroad	4.6	7.8	28.0	2.7
Work/job search	25.5	17.7	29.5	5.1
Education/Recognition	12.8	15.4	34.0	4.4
Family members	24.8	12.5	24.9	1.7
Asylum seekers/refugees	23.1	5.2	16.5	1.7
Tourists/Others	9.1	13.1	29.0	3.7

Note: In the case of multiple entries into Germany, the survey refers to the legal basis of the most recent entry. The column "Share of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,562, weighted.

We see the lowest shares of temporary intentions among asylum seekers and refugees (5 percent) and Germans born abroad (8 percent), followed by people with family reunification (13 percent) and those who came to Germany as tourists or via other unspecified routes (13 percent). We find significantly higher figures among people who immigrated for work-related reasons (18 percent) or for the purpose of education or recognition (15 percent). Considerations of emigration are particularly pronounced among people who came to Germany for education or recognition (34 percent). The figures are also high among respondents who moved to Germany for employment purposes (30 percent), as well as among Germans born abroad and the "Tourism/Other" group (29 percent each). We observe the lowest figures among refugees (17 percent). Concrete plans to emigrate are particularly evident among people moving to Germany for work or education (4-5 percent) and among tourists and other immigrant groups (4 percent). Refugees and people with family reunification have the lowest figures (2 percent each).

Overall, it is clear that people with a more temporary or strongly mobility-oriented migration profile - especially in the areas of work, education or tourism - have significantly higher intentions to emigrate than people with protection status or family ties.

In terms of current residence status, 31 percent of respondents now have German citizenship (see Table ). A further 24 percent are EU citizens and 17 percent have a settlement permit. This means that a total of 73 percent of those surveyed have a legal status that allows them to stay in Germany long-term.

**Table 4-6: Current residence status and migration intentions**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Residence status	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
German citizenship	30.6	10.1	29.7	2.3
EU citizens	24.4	20.1	31.3	5.4
Settlement permit	17.3	10.4	23.3	1.8
Temporary residence permit	11.2	12.0	22.8	3.0
Visa	1.9	16.2	27.4	4.3
Recognized protection status	2.9	4.3	11.0	2.3
Tolerated stay/permission to stay	3.4	3.9	11.7	1.8
Ukraine residence permit	4.5	4.9	11.7	2.6
Other	3.8	9.9	18.0	2.6

Note: In the case of multiple entries into Germany, the survey refers to the legal basis of the most recent entry. The column "Share of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,571, weighted.

It is striking that German nationals and EU citizens have the highest share of people considering emigration, at around 30-31 percent each. Temporary intentions to stay and concrete plans to emigrate are also above average in these groups - as well as among people with a settlement permit. This confirms the previous findings: People with a secure residence status show an increased tendency towards mobility. On the one hand, this finding contradicts earlier findings on the tendency of former guest workers to return (Constant and Massey 2002, 2003), but on the other hand it is consistent with the findings on circular migration (Constant and Zimmermann 2011). As these studies emphasize, German or EU citizenship in particular opens up extensive migration options - such as visa-free travel or permanent settlement rights - which encourages spontaneous return or onward migration.

In addition, people with a temporary residence status - such as a visa or temporary residence permit - also show increased tendencies to emigrate: around 23 percent have considered leaving the country and 3-4 percent plan to do so within the next twelve months. These figures are significantly higher than those of people with a recognized or temporary protection status as well as a tolerated stay or residence permit.

## 5 Role of labor market factors for migration intentions

The empirical findings in the literature on the effect of labor market integration on migration intentions are inconclusive. For guest workers, it has been shown that weak labor market integration – for example in the form of part-time work or unemployment – is associated with an

increased likelihood of return (Constant and Massey 2003). More recent studies, on the other hand, either find no clear connection between labor market integration and migration intentions (Bekaert et al. 2024), or only if a distinction is made between different employment status groups. For example, people who are not employed or in training have significantly higher intentions to migrate than those who are employed (cf. Wanner 2021).

Against this background, the following chapter describes intentions to stay as well as considerations and plans to emigrate in relation to variables of the labor market context. The focus here is particularly on: (1) the country of highest educational qualification and the recognition of foreign qualifications, (2) employment status, earnings and home ownership in Germany, (3) sector structure and (4) job satisfaction.

### 5.1 Recognition of foreign qualifications

Two thirds of immigrants in Germany obtained their highest educational qualification in their country of birth (61 percent) or in another country (6 percent) (seeTable ). Around one third obtained this qualification in Germany.

**Table5-1: Migration intentions by country of highest educational qualification**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Country of highest educational qualification	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
In Germany	32.4	12.0	32.6	2.3
In my country of birth	60.5	12.3	21.7	3.4
In another country	6.1	13.7	29.0	4.5

Note: The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,574, weighted.

It is notable that people with educational qualifications acquired abroad tend to show lower intentions to stay: Among immigrants with a degree in Germany, 12 percent stated that they did not want to stay in Germany permanently (seeTable ). This share was 12 percent for people with a degree from their country of birth and 14 percent for those with a degree from a third country. A similar pattern can be seen in the specific plans to emigrate: the group with a degree obtained in Germany has the lowest share (2.3 percent), compared to 3.4 percent with a degree in the country of birth and 4.5 percent with a degree in another country.

However, a different picture emerges when it comes to emigration considerations: 33 percent of people with an educational qualification obtained in Germany stated that they had considered emigrating in the last twelve months. This share is significantly higher than that of the other two groups – 22 percent of those with qualifications in their country of birth and 29 percent of those with qualifications in a third country.

The recognition of foreign qualifications not only gives migrants access to regulated professions, but also has a signaling function on the German labor market by reducing uncertainty about the

qualifications of immigrant employees. Brücker et al. (2021) show that the recognition of professional qualifications significantly increases the employment opportunities and earnings of migrants. This makes it easier for immigrant workers to catch up with natives. However, obstacles in the recognition procedure often mean that not all migrants apply for recognition of their qualifications.

Among immigrants who obtained their highest professional qualification abroad, 32 percent stated that they had received equivalent recognition of their qualification and 13 percent that they had received partial recognition (see Table ). For 17 percent, the qualification was not recognized and for 5 percent of respondents, the recognition procedure has not yet been completed. Around a third of respondents have not (yet) applied for recognition.

**Table 5-2: Recognition of the highest training/university degree and migration intentions**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Recognition of the highest training/university degree	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Yes, equivalent	31.9	14.6	29.6	4.5
Yes, partially	12.5	14.3	26.4	2.8
No, was not recognized	16.6	13.4	24.3	3.0
The proceedings are still ongoing	4.8	7.0	15.0	3.2
Not applied for	34.2	12.2	21.7	3.8

Note: Only people who obtained their highest level of training/university degree abroad. The column "Share of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 27,918, weighted.

Among respondents whose highest vocational training or university degree was recognized as equivalent in Germany, 30 percent stated that they had thought about leaving Germany in the last twelve months (see Table ). This share is slightly lower among respondents whose qualification was only partially recognized or not recognized, at 26 percent and 24 percent respectively. Among those who have not (yet) applied for recognition of their foreign qualification, the share is also lower at 22 percent.

The group whose recognition procedure had not yet been completed at the time of the survey had the lowest share of those considering emigration – 15 percent. However, this group also represents the smallest share of immigrants. A similar picture emerges with regard to concrete plans to emigrate: around 4 percent of immigrants with equivalent recognition are planning to leave Germany within the next twelve months.

Overall, it can be said that respondents with partially or non-recognized qualifications do not express emigration considerations or plans to emigrate more frequently than those with full recognition. On the contrary: those whose qualification was recognized as equivalent in Germany showed the highest likelihood of leaving.



## 5.2 Employment groups and earnings

Almost three quarters of working-age immigrants were in paid employment at the time of the survey (77 percent; see Table ), 47 percent of whom were in full-time employment. A further 10 percent are actively looking for work, while 14 percent are neither employed nor looking for work. It is striking that the intention to migrate is most pronounced among employed migrants: compared to non-employed groups, they are more likely to express temporary intentions to stay in Germany (13 percent) and have thought about emigrating more often in the last twelve months (27 percent). Concrete plans to emigrate, on the other hand, are only slightly more pronounced than in other groups.

**Table 5-3: Migration intentions according to employment status**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Employment status	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Employed	76.9	13.3	27.4	3.2
<b>Among them</b>				
Full-time employee	46.6	14.5	28.8	3.7
Part-time employee	15.7	11.3	24.5	2.6
Employed persons without hours	8.8	12.3	27.8	2.4
In paid training	4.1	8.8	21.0	2.1
Marginally employed	1.6	17.1	31.0	2.8
Actively looking for work	9.8	9.7	23.7	2.9
Not looking for work	13.5	8.3	18.0	2.8

Note: Gainful employment is defined as the exercise of paid employment or self-employment. The listed activity characteristics are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, a successive exclusion was made: Persons who are employed and looking for work at the same time are only counted as employed. Jobseekers - unless they are also employed - are only defined as jobseekers. Only people who do not fall into either of the other two categories (e.g. unemployed or currently at school/studying and not working) are included under "Other". The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 27,918, weighted.

A closer look at the migration intentions within the group of employed persons shows that full-time employees in particular, as well as persons with no indication of their working hours and marginally employed persons, express emigration considerations remarkably frequently at 29 percent and 31 percent respectively (cf.3). However, the latter two groups are relatively small. People in training, on the other hand, have by far the lowest share of emigration considerations among those in employment at 21 percent. Among the non-employed respondents, job-seekers appear to have considered emigrating more frequently than other non-employed groups (24 vs. 18 percent).

**Table 5-4: Migration intentions and earnings**

Share of people in employment, in percent

Gross earnings quintiles	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
In total				
Less than € 2100	10.2	12.1	24.3	2.7
2101-3000 €	11.4	16.0	24.5	3.3
3001-3700 €	8.5	13.8	25.3	3.2
3701-5250 €	10.0	14.8	32.6	3.1
More than 5250 €	10.0	16.5	38.9	4.2
No salary information	49.9	11.7	24.9	3.1
Full-time employees				
Less than € 2800	11.4	15.6	21.0	3.6
2801-3450 €	11.2	15.6	24.5	3.1
3451-4300 €	11.3	15.9	31.3	3.7
4301-6000 €	11.6	15.1	34.2	2.9
More than 6000 €	11.1	16.4	38.9	4.4
No salary information	43.5	12.9	27.4	3.8

Note: Gainful employment is defined as paid employment or self-employment. The column "Share of the population" adds up to 100 percent in each case. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 30,309 (full-time: 20,194), weighted.

A look at the specific plans to emigrate shows that full-time employees are most likely to express plans to leave the country (3.7 percent). The lowest percentages are found among people in training and part-time employees – in both groups, they amount to 2 and 3 percent each.

In addition, the IMPa survey also asked about earnings. Table shows the distribution of gross earnings in quintiles – for all respondents and separately for those in full-time employment – as well as the group sizes and the respective intentions to migrate. Just under half of the employed respondents did not provide any information on their earnings (50 percent). This group, together with respondents in the two lowest income quintiles, had the lowest shares of respondents considering emigration (24 to 25 percent) and planning to emigrate (3 percent each).

It is striking that considerations of emigration increase significantly with rising gross income. In the top quintile, 39 percent of respondents expressed such considerations – this correlation is also evident when taking employment intensity (as measured by full-time employment) into account. Concrete plans to emigrate are also most pronounced in the top income quintile (4 percent). Previous research has found hardly any clear correlations between income and intentions to emigrate. However, the present findings – particularly in conjunction with the results on education – point to a possible positive selection of immigrants who are considering emigration.

In contrast to income, home ownership in the host country has been shown to have a major influence on return migration (cf. Constant and Massey 2002, 2003). The IMPa data show that around 74 percent of immigrants do not own a home in Germany. Although emigration

considerations are almost the same between those with and those without residential property, emigration plans are significantly lower among those with residential property in Germany (1.6 vs. 3.6 percent).

### 5.3 Industries

Table 5-5 shows the migration intentions of employed immigrants in Germany by sector, based on the aggregated classification of economic sectors (SNA/ISIC-A10). The largest share of immigrants work in trade, transportation and storage (22 percent), followed by manufacturing, mining, energy, water, waste (18 percent) and health and social work (17 percent). The smallest group, at one percent, is in agriculture and forestry.

The knowledge-intensive and internationally oriented sectors – in particular information and communication, financial and insurance services and business-related services – have the highest shares of people considering emigration (30 to 39 percent) and concrete plans to emigrate (4 to 6 percent). The high share of emigration plans in the comparatively small group of those employed in agriculture (10 percent) is also particularly notable.

In contrast, the intention to emigrate in the major employment sectors – healthcare and social work, manufacturing and trade, transport and storage – is comparatively moderate: between 24 and 28 percent of respondents have thought about leaving the country in the last twelve months, while around 3 percent have concrete plans to do so. These percentages are even lower in government-related sectors such as education (1.6 percent concrete plans) and public administration (1.8 percent).

A comparison with the skills gap of the Competence Centre for Securing Skilled Labour (KOFA – Kompetenzzentrum Fachkräftesicherung) makes it clear that precisely those sectors in which the risk of emigration among immigrants is particularly high – such as IT and technical services – are also among the sectors with a considerable shortage of skilled workers (Tiedemann and Kunath 2024). At the same time, it is noticeable that in other sectors particularly at risk of shortages – such as healthcare, construction, public administration or retail (Herzer and Kunath 2024) – there are no above-average but still relevant emigration trends.

**Table 5-5: Industries and migration intentions**

Share of people in employment, in percent

Industries	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Agriculture and forestry	1.2	19.1	16.4	9.5
Manufacturing, mining, energy, water, waste	18.4	13.5	27.0	2.9
Building trade	7.2	11.7	22.6	3.0
Trade, transportation and warehousing	21.5	14.4	24.2	3.2
Information and communication	7.8	16.4	38.7	6.0
Financial and insurance services	3.0	12.8	34.6	3.7
Business-related services	15.1	14.4	29.8	3.8
Public administration, social security	2.8	9.1	30.2	1.8
Education and teaching	5.4	8.2	24.8	1.6
Health and social services	17.1	12.4	28.1	2.8

Note: Only persons who are employed and have an indication of their current sector. Business-related services include economic sectors such as the provision of professional, scientific and technical services as well as other economic services. The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 24,607, weighted.

Given that many of these system-relevant sectors are heavily reliant on the potential workforce of migrants (Khalil et al. 2020), even a moderate migration dynamic may be enough to further exacerbate existing bottlenecks. This applies in particular to the healthcare and social services sector, whose ability to function can in turn have repercussions for other occupational fields and areas of care (Herzer and Kunath 2024).

## 5.4 Job satisfaction

Table shows the migration intentions of employed respondents depending on their satisfaction with their current job. Job satisfaction was measured on a scale from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 7 (completely satisfied).

Almost three quarters of respondents in employment state that they are somewhat or completely satisfied with their current job (response categories 5 to 7). There is a clear correlation between dissatisfaction with work and the tendency to emigrate: 39 percent of those who rate their job as 1 or 2 have thought about leaving Germany in the last twelve months, and 11 percent even express concrete plans to emigrate. In comparison, these shares are only 17 percent and 2 percent respectively for those who are completely satisfied (response category 7). There is also a clear difference when it comes to temporary plans to stay: among dissatisfied employees, the share is up to 25 percent (answer 1 or 2), while it is only 9 percent among the very satisfied (answer 7).

**Table 5-6: Migration intentions according to job satisfaction**

Share of people in employment, in percent

Satisfied with the work	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
1 = not satisfied at all	4.0	24.7	36.2	10.6
2	3.6	25.0	42.0	12.0
3	6.3	20.3	34.8	6.1
4	12.3	18.2	36.0	4.0
5	21.2	12.8	30.9	2.5
6	24.2	12.0	25.9	2.1
7 = completely satisfied	28.4	8.5	17.3	1.6

Note: Only people who are employed. The column "Share of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 28,952, weighted.

Overall, it can be seen that job satisfaction correlates strongly with migration intentions – both in terms of temporary stay orientation and emigration considerations and plans. The differences between the satisfaction groups are among the clearest in the area of influencing factors in the area of well-being (Sallam 2024; Wanner 2021).

## 6 Socio-cultural anchoring and migration intentions

In addition to the labor market context, socio-cultural ties to the country of origin and the host country also play a central role in immigrants' desire to return (Bilgili and Siegel 2017; Constant and Massey 2002; de Haas and Fokkema 2011; de Vroome and van Tubergen 2014; Hannafi and Marouani 2022; Kaya and Orchard 2020). Studies show that establishing social contacts locally, acquiring language skills or developing a sense of belonging to the host country can significantly reduce the likelihood of return or onward migration (cf. Bekaert et al. 2024; Constant and Massey 2003; Steiner and Velling 1994; Wanner 2021). In particular, skills in the host country language are considered a key indicator of integration: they not only influence employment opportunities and the risk of discrimination in the labor market (Constant and Massey 2003), but also the intention to stay (Ette et al. 2016). Social contacts with host-country nationals have a twofold effect: they improve language skills and promote integration into the labor market (Barreto et al. 2022) – both of which have been shown to reduce the likelihood of emigration. Family ties also play an important role: while strong ties to the country of origin may increase the likelihood of return, family networks in the host country often strengthen the prospects of remaining (Bekaert et al. 2024; Constant 2020; Ette et al. 2016).

Against this background, the following chapter examines the correlations between social integration and the respondents' migration intentions. These are purely descriptive analyses.

Social integration is mapped across several dimensions: family ties, social contacts, language skills, attachment to the country of origin and Germany, subjective feeling of welcome and experiences of discrimination.

## 6.1 Family and social contacts

The family situation and the location of close relatives are among the key determinants of migration decisions (see Constant and Massey 2003; Constant 2020; Dustmann and Görlach 2016;). It is often not the individual migrant alone, but the family as a unit that takes the decision to stay or return. The family represents a central social bond – whether oriented toward the host country or the country of origin. In migration research, the transnational approach is important for understanding return and circular migration. These are often understood as strategic decisions motivated by family ties. Particularly in the case of repeated visits to the country of origin, maintaining social networks in both countries remains crucial to preserving both social and economic flexibility (Constant 2020).

Among adult immigrants in Germany, around 77 percent live together with their partners or children. This group reports the lowest rates of temporary intentions to stay (12 percent), emigration considerations (25 percent) and concrete migration plans (2 percent) – particularly in contrast to those whose entire nuclear family, or only the partner or at least one child live abroad. Although these latter groups represent only around 4 percent of immigrants, they have the highest rates of concrete plans to emigrate within the next twelve months, at 10 and 8 percent respectively. These findings are in line with the literature on the role of family ties in the country of origin on migration decisions (see Bekaert et al. 2024; Wanner 2021).

**Table 6-1: Family location, plans for family reunification and migration intentions**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Nuclear family				
No partner; no children	16.8	13.2	28.7	4.5
Partner and all children in Germany	77.2	11.5	25.2	2.3
Partner and all children abroad	3.4	20.8	26.4	10.4
Partner or at least one child abroad	2.5	19.6	22.8	7.9
Other family members abroad <sup>1</sup>				
No	13.9	12.8	21.9	4.6
Yes	86.1	12.2	26.4	2.9
Plans for family immigration to Germany <sup>2</sup>				
No	86.8	12.9	27.6	3.0
Yes	13.2	7.5	18.4	2.1

Notes: 1) Other family members include parents/parents-in-law, siblings and other family members (e.g. grandparents/uncles/aunts, nephews/nieces, cousins). 2) Only persons with family members (incl. partner or children) abroad (observations: 34,690). The column "Share of the population" adds up to 100 percent in each case. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,572, weighted.

It is not only the presence of the nuclear family in the host country that influences emigration considerations, but also the presence of other family members abroad or the prospect of family reunification in Germany. For example, 86 percent of immigrants state having relatives outside Germany. This group is slightly more likely to consider emigrating (26 percent) than those without family abroad (22 percent), but at the same time this group has lower rates of temporary intentions to stay and concrete migration plans.

The opposite trend can be seen when family members are planning to move to Germany (see Table 6-1): within this group, temporary intentions to stay in Germany, emigration considerations and concrete plans to emigrate are significantly less common (8, 18 and 2 percent respectively) than among people who do not intend to bring family members to Germany (13, 28 and 3 percent respectively). This suggests that internationally dispersed family systems can have ambivalent effects on migration decisions: On the one hand, they can contribute to stability in the country of residence through emotional ties or support networks; on the other, they may encourage mobility and remittances through transnational obligations (see Constant 2020).

Remittances reflect financial ties to the country of origin (see Constant and Massey 2002, 2003). In the IMPa data, 31 percent of immigrants send regular remittances abroad (results available upon request). For this group, all emigration indicators are higher: 14 percent have temporary intentions to stay, 29 percent have emigration considerations and 4 percent have emigration plans. The respective figures for immigrants who do not send remittances are 12, 25, and 3 percent.

Co-ethnic networks are a key factor that facilitates (labor market) integration. They enable the exchange of information and thus promote integration. These findings are in line with the

sociological theory of "weak ties" by Granovetter (1973), according to which not only close, but especially loose social relationships enable access to new information via more distant networks. Conversely, a lack of social contacts can mean an inadequate flow of information, which can have a negative impact on the prospect of staying and influence emigration considerations.

In the IMPa survey, the participants were therefore asked about the frequency of their contact with three groups: (1) people from the country of origin, (2) people from Germany and (3) people from neither Germany nor the country of origin. For the following analysis, the response options "never" and "rarely" were combined into one category and compared with the more frequent contacts ("weekly" and "daily").

Only around a third of immigrants have at least weekly contact with people from their country of origin. Around three quarters maintain regular contact with Germans and around half with people from other countries of origin (see Table 6-2:). The correlation between frequent contact with Germans and lower intentions to emigrate is striking. For example, the share of people with regular contact with Germans who intend to stay temporarily is 11 percent – compared to 16 percent of people who rarely or never have contact with Germans. Considerations and plans to emigrate are also less common when there is regular contact with Germans (25 and 2 percent respectively) than when there is less frequent contact (28 and 5 percent respectively).

According to Granovetter (1973), loose connections with people from the target society could be particularly valuable, as they improve access to information relevant to the labor market. Frequent contact with Germans could therefore contribute to better orientation and integration – and thus strengthen the prospects of staying. Conversely, regular exchanges with people outside Germany can make new migration options visible. For contacts with people from other countries, however, there are no significant differences in migration intentions.



**Table 6-2: Social contacts and migration intentions**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Social contacts	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Time spent with people from country of origin				
Never/Rarely	65.7	12.3	26.8	2.9
Weekly/Daily	34.3	12.4	23.9	3.6
Time spent with Germans				
Never/Rarely	28.2	16.3	28.1	4.9
Weekly/Daily	71.8	10.7	24.9	2.4
Time spent with people from other countries				
Never/Rarely	51.1	11.7	24.7	3.1
Weekly/Daily	48.9	12.9	26.9	3.1

Note: The column "Share of the population" adds up to 100 percent in each case. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,572, weighted.

## 6.2 Language skills

Language proficiency in the host country's language is considered a key prerequisite for both economic and social integration (Chiswick 1998; Kosyakova et al. 2022). Acquiring the host-country language is not only seen as a means of better adapting to the new environment, but also as an investment that increases the likelihood of permanent settlement (Chabé-Ferret et al. 2018; Stefanovic et al. 2014). English language skills also play an important role, particularly in overcoming language barriers when interacting with the local population. English is the most widely spoken language in EU countries alongside the native language (Rubio and Lirola 2010) and can therefore be important for social and professional mobility as well as for potential emigration opportunities. As part of the IMPa survey, participants were asked to rate their German and English language skills on a six-point scale: (1) mother tongue, (2) very good, (3) good, (4) fair, (5) rather poor and (6) not at all.

Overall, 44 percent of migrants reported very good or native German language skills. A further 25 percent put themselves in the "good" category, 20 percent rated their knowledge as "fair", while 11 percent stated that they had little or no knowledge of German (see Table ). Overall, English skills tend to be weaker: 36 percent of respondents have (very) little knowledge of English, 28 percent have (very) good knowledge.

A comparison of migration intentions by level of German proficiency shows that people with little knowledge of German are more likely to express temporary intentions to stay (18 percent) than those with very good or native-speaker knowledge (12 percent). Emigration considerations (25 percent) and concrete plans to emigrate (6 percent) are also above average for those with low German language skills.

**Table 6-3: Language skills and migration intentions**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Language skills	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
German				
Not at all/rather bad	11.4	16.6	24.6	6.4
It goes	19.9	11.5	17.8	3.2
Good	24.8	11.9	21.1	2.5
Mother tongue/Very good	43.9	11.8	32.3	2.6
English				
Not at all/rather bad	36.2	10.0	16.5	2.0
It goes	18.5	9.6	23.5	2.5
Good	17.8	11.9	27.8	3.2
Mother tongue/Very good	27.5	17.4	38.1	5.0

Notes: This is self-reported information from respondents on their level of German and English language skills. The column "Share of the population" adds up to 100 percent in each case. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,574, weighted.

However, there is one exception when it comes to emigration considerations: People with a very good or native-speaker knowledge of German also think about emigrating relatively frequently (32 percent). This apparent contradiction can be explained by differences in education: Highly qualified people are more likely to have very good language skills and also exhibit increased tendency towards mobility (see chapter 4). For example, half of the respondents with a Master's or doctoral degree have very good German language skills, compared to 28 percent of those with secondary education at most (results available upon request).

In contrast to German skills, intentions to emigrate increase significantly with English skills. People with very good English skills are less likely to express a desire to stay in Germany permanently and are more likely to have concrete plans to emigrate. This is probably due to the fact that a good command of English facilitates access to international labor markets. At the same time, highly qualified people are more likely to have very good English skills. In our sample, 58 percent of immigrants with a master's or doctoral degree report very good English skills, but only 12 percent of those with a lower level of education (results available upon request).

### 6.3 Feeling of being welcome and experiences of discrimination

Socio-cultural integration is not only influenced by individual characteristics, but also by the attitudes of the population in the host country. In addition to psychosocial factors, the social climate and the "warmth of reception" play a significant role in influencing integration processes and settlement decisions (Reitz 1998). Studies show that individuals who feel discriminated against or experience assaults are more likely to consider returning to their country of origin. In contrast, immigrants who experience the population as hospitable and feel welcome are more likely to plan to stay permanently. In order to investigate the connection between the subjective feeling of being welcome and migration intentions, respondents were asked in the IMPa survey

how welcome they currently feel in Germany. The assessment was made on a four-point scale from "not at all" to "completely".

Table illustrates the connection between the feeling of being welcome and the tendency to migrate. Two thirds of respondents report feeling mostly or completely welcome. In this group, both temporary intentions to stay as well as thoughts and plans to emigrate are comparatively rare. Among those who feel completely welcome, only 15 percent express such thoughts and only 1 percent have concrete plans to leave. In contrast, 54 percent of those who do not feel welcome at all report thoughts of emigrating and 18 percent of this group are planning to leave Germany. Temporary intentions to stay are also particularly pronounced in this group, at 38 percent. Overall, 9 percent of immigrants feel little/not at all welcome in Germany. The intention to emigrate is highest among these individuals.

**Table 6-4: Welcome feeling and migration intentions**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Welcome feeling	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Not at all	2.8	37.5	54.2	18.0
Little	6.6	28.4	48.4	8.0
Something	24.7	14.8	33.3	3.9
Predominantly	33.6	10.8	23.5	2.1
Perfect	32.3	6.4	15.3	1.3

Note: The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,574, weighted.

Another indicator of the social climate is the role of perceived discrimination in shaping migration intentions. The analysis is based on the respondents' subjective statements on the frequency of situations in which they felt they had been treated unfairly. These were recorded for six contexts: Work context, education context, contact with offices and authorities, contact with the police, situations in public spaces and the housing market. The response categories "never" and "rarely" as well as "sometimes", "often" and "very often" were grouped for the analysis.

Table compares the migration intentions of people with frequent and infrequent perceptions of discrimination. A clear pattern emerges across the board: in all examined contexts, people with more frequent perceptions of discrimination are significantly more likely to consider and plan to leave the country than those without such perceptions. Emigration considerations are particularly pronounced in the case of perceived discrimination in contact with the police (49 percent), followed by the public sphere (36 percent), the workplace (35 percent), the housing market (33 percent) and public offices and educational institutions (31 and 32 percent each). These findings illustrate the relevance of non-discriminatory social conditions: Perceived discrimination represents a significant risk factor for temporary intentions to stay and actual decisions to emigrate.

**Table 6-5: Migration intentions according to perceived discrimination**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Perceived discrimination	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
For contact with authorities1)				
Never/Rarely	59.6	10.7	21.7	2.3
(Very) often/sometimes	40.4	15.8	31.4	5.1
In the education sector 1)				
Never/Rarely	68.2	9.7	22.3	2.2
(Very) often/sometimes	31.8	15.9	31.7	5.0
In the work context <sup>1)</sup>				
Never/Rarely	59.5	10.3	22.0	2.0
(Very) often/sometimes	40.5	17.2	34.6	5.5
On the housing market <sup>1)</sup>				
Never/Rarely	50.7	10.5	20.9	2.5
(Very) often/sometimes	49.3	15.0	32.5	4.8
In public <sup>1)</sup>				
Never/Rarely	68.2	10.5	22.5	2.4
(Very) often/sometimes	31.8	17.5	35.5	4.9
In case of contact with the police <sup>1)</sup>				
Never/Rarely	82.1	10.5	23.0	2.8
(Very) often/sometimes	17.9	23.0	39.3	7.4
In at least one area <sup>2)</sup>				
Never/Rarely	35.4	8.6	17.7	1.6
(Very) often/sometimes	64.6	14.8	30.7	4.1

Note: The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent in each case. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent. 1) Respondents could indicate that they had no contact with the respective area. No perceived discrimination was then recorded for these areas. 2) Perceived discrimination (very) often to sometimes in at least one area.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,574, weighted.

Another important factor is life satisfaction (see Sallam 2024; Wanner 2021). Current life satisfaction is often used as an indicator of subjective well-being. However, life satisfaction correlates strongly with job satisfaction (Chapter 5) and the data shows a very similar trend: immigrants who are completely satisfied with their lives are significantly less likely to consider emigrating (14 vs. 43 percent) and to have concrete plans (2 vs. 10 percent) compared to those who are very dissatisfied. However, the group of the very dissatisfied is relatively small (only 3 percent; results available upon request).

## 6.4 Emotional attachment to country of origin and Germany

Another element of socio-cultural integration is the emotional sense of belonging to the country of origin or to Germany. From a migration sociology perspective, a stronger identification with the host country is considered a stabilizing factor for staying intentions, while a strong emotional

connection to the country of origin increases the likelihood of considering return or onward migration (de Haas and Fokkema 2011). To capture this cultural orientation, respondents were asked to rate their emotional attachment to both the host and their origin country on a scale from 1 (not at all attached) to 7 (very strongly attached). For the analysis, values from 5 to 7 were classified as high attachment.

The results show clear patterns: people with low attachment to Germany are significantly more likely to express temporary intentions to stay (22 percent), emigration considerations (37 percent) and concrete plans to emigrate (6 percent) than people with strong attachment to Germany (see Table ). Conversely, the likelihood for mobility increases with growing emotional attachment to the country of origin: In this group, temporary intentions to stay (17 percent), emigration considerations (30 percent) and emigration plans (4 percent) are above-average. These findings confirm that social and cultural roots in the host country can have a stabilizing effect, while a sustained orientation towards the country of origin is associated with an increased willingness to emigrate.

**Table 6-6: Attachment to country of origin, Germany and migration intentions**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent

Sense of attachment <sup>d</sup>	Share of the population	Share with migration intentions		
		Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Emotionally attached to Germany				
Not at all	39.2	21.9	36.6	5.6
Very connected	60.8	6.1	18.8	1.5
Emotionally attached to HKL				
Not at all	49.3	7.3	22.0	2.1
Very connected	50.7	17.2	29.5	4.1

Note: The column "Percentage of the population" adds up to 100 percent in each case. The remaining three columns show the average of the respective variables and do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,568, weighted.

## 7 Multivariate analyses of emigration intentions

Logistic regression models are used to systematically analyze the relationships between the influencing factors analyzed in the previous chapters and the intention to migrate. While the descriptive evaluations (chapters 4-66) presented initial correlations using bivariate analyses, the regression analysis allows a more in-depth analysis. It makes it possible to examine the isolated influence of individual independent variables – such as socio-demographic characteristics, labor market-related or socio-cultural factors – on the dependent variables (intentions to emigrate) simultaneously.

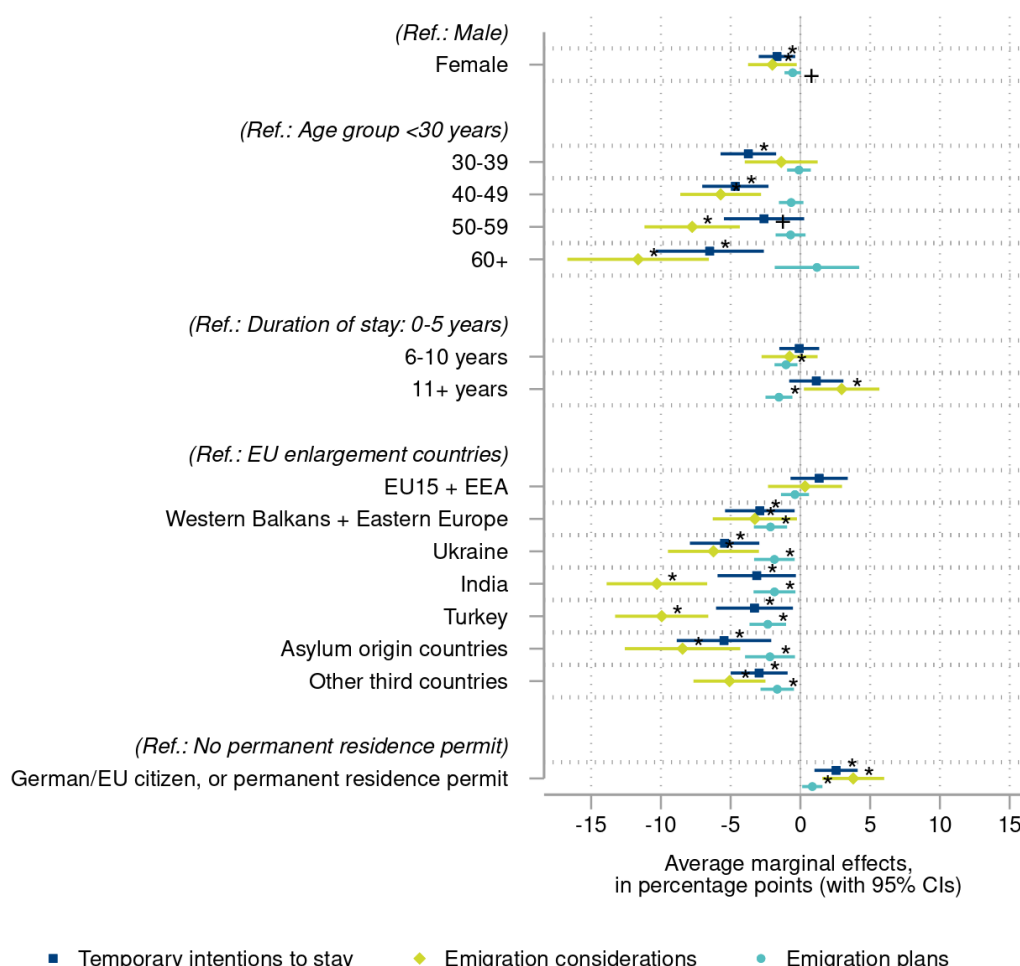
This is particularly relevant when certain characteristics correlate strongly with one another. For example, the descriptive findings show higher emigration tendencies among people with very good English skills as well as among highly qualified people. Since around 60 percent of respondents with a master's or doctorate degree also have very good English language skills, it is unclear which of these factors are actually linked to the tendency to emigrate. The regression analysis makes it possible to isolate the correlation between language skills while holding the level of education constant – and vice versa. A similar example concerns gender and employment status.: If men are more frequently in (full-time) employment and employment is associated with an increased tendency to emigrate, an observed gender difference could in fact be explained by differences in labor market status. Such overlaps can also be controlled for in the regression model.

In the following sections, the correlations between different groups of characteristics (socio-demographics, labor market integration and socio-cultural integration) are presented. Even if the results are explained thematically, they are each based on a common regression model for each dependent variable. The Figure 7-1 7-1, 7-2 and 7-3 show the marginal effects for three target variables: (1) the temporary intention to stay, (2) emigration considerations and (3) emigration plans. All dependent variables are coded as dummy variables. The results presented are to be interpreted as statistical correlations – they do not allow any causal statements to be made.

## 7.1 Socio-demographic characteristics

Figure 7-1 uses multivariate regression models to show the correlation between various socio-demographic variables and the intention to emigrate. In line with the descriptive evaluations, it can be seen that women intend to leave Germany less often than men. This applies both to temporary intentions to stay (-1.7 percentage points), to emigration considerations (-2 percentage points) and to concrete plans to emigrate (-0.6 percentage points).

**Figure 7-1 : Correlation between the intention to emigrate and socio-demographic factors.**  
**Dependent variables: temporary intentions to stay, emigration considerations and emigration plans**  
Average marginal effects with 95 percent confidence intervals, in percentage points



Notes: \*,+ significant at the 5 and 10 percent level. Robust standard errors. The figure shows the estimation results – presented as marginal effects – of a multivariate regression analysis (logistic regression). The dependent variables are coded binary: 1 for temporary intentions to stay / emigration considerations / emigration plans, 0 for permanent or uncertain intentions to stay or no considerations or plans to emigrate. The other explanatory variables are shown in Fig. 7-2 and Fig. 7-3; additional control variables are the number of previous stays in Germany, an indicator for other family members abroad and an indicator for place of residence in eastern/western Germany. Table A2-3 in the Appendix shows the complete regression results.

Legend: All other factors being equal, women are around 1.7 percentage points less likely than men to have a temporary intention to stay, 2 percentage points less likely to be considering emigrating and 0.6 percentage points less likely to have plans to emigrate.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1. observations: 41,170, weighted.

With increasing age, temporary intentions to stay initially decrease significantly, but increase again slightly from the age group 50-59 – a pattern that indicates an inverted U-shaped relationship. A similar pattern can be seen for specific plans to emigrate, although differences by age group are not statistically significant. By contrast, thoughts of leaving Germany decrease continuously with age: people aged 60 and over are 12 percentage points less likely to have thought about leaving Germany in the last 12 months than those under 30. Both patterns – the non-linear relationship for temporary intentions and the negative relationship for considerations

– confirm the findings from Chapter 3 and are consistent with previous studies (e.g. Bekaert et al. 2024).

There are also differentiated findings with regard to the length of stay. While previous studies emphasize an increased likelihood of return within the first five to ten years after arrival, the IMPa data show a differentiated picture. People who have lived in Germany for more than eleven years are more likely to express emigration considerations than recent immigrants. Concrete plans to emigrate, on the other hand, show a contrasting pattern – here the probability is around 1.6 percentage points lower for longer stays. This indicates that actual plans to leave the country are particularly substantiated in the first few years after immigration – a finding that is consistent with previous studies.

There are also clear differences by country of origin: Citizens from EU countries have the highest share of emigration considerations and plans. In contrast, refugees from traditional countries of asylum and from Ukraine are less likely to express such intentions. These results illustrate the formative influence of the contexts of origin on individual prospects of staying.

Irrespective of country of origin, there are also clear differences according to current residence status: immigrants with German or EU citizenship and with a permanent residence permit express intentions to emigrate more frequently than people with temporary residence status. Although this finding stands in contrast to earlier results for return migration – for example, for so-called guest workers (see Constant and Massey 2002) – it appears plausible and is in line with findings for circular migration of the same group: a secure legal status increases the mobility options and can therefore lower the threshold for further migration or return.

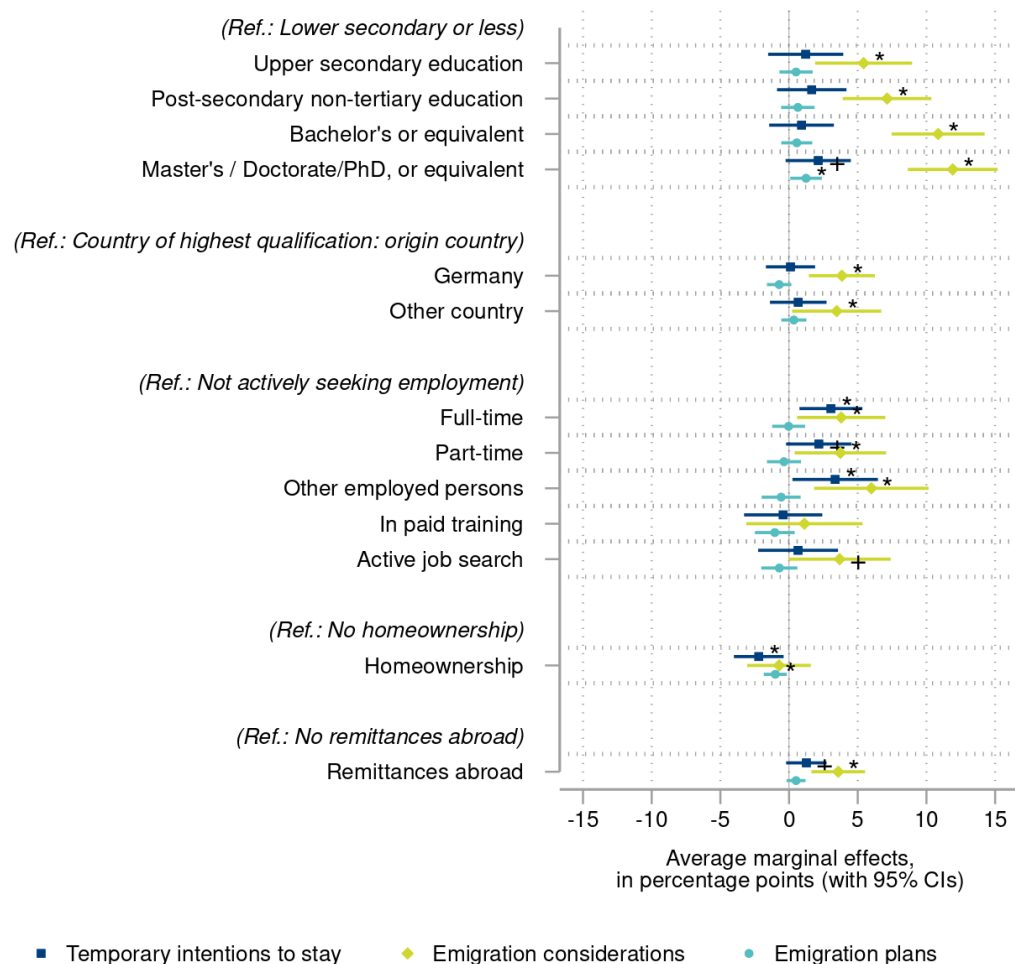
## 7.2 Labor market context and economic anchoring

Figure shows the marginal correlations between education level and labor market factors on migration intentions. Although education was treated as a socio-demographic characteristic in the previous sections, it is also a key prerequisite for labor market success – for example, through higher earnings prospects.

Research findings on the correlation between education and emigration are inconsistent: while some studies find no clear effect (e.g. Bekaert et al. 2024; Constant and Massey 2003), others point to a positive correlation, especially for onward migration (e.g. Bekaert et al. 2024; Dustmann and Weiss 2007). One possible explanation for this discrepancy lies in the expectations of highly qualified people who see their skills as being more useful in another country and are therefore more mobile. Our analyses support the latter: people with a master's or doctoral degree show statistically significantly higher intentions to emigrate than people with secondary education – with an increase of 2 percentage points for temporary intentions to stay, 12 percentage points for emigration considerations and 1 percentage point for concrete emigration plans. The multivariate results thus confirm the previously reported descriptive findings.



**Figure 7-2 : Relationship between the intention to emigrate and labor market-related factors.**  
**Dependent variables: temporary intentions to stay, emigration considerations and emigration plans**  
 Average marginal effects with 95 percent confidence intervals, in percentage points



Notes: \*,+ significant at the 5 and 10 percent level. Robust standard errors. The figure shows the estimation results – presented as marginal effects – of a multivariate regression analysis (logistic regression). The dependent variables are coded binary: 1 for temporary intentions to stay / emigration considerations / emigration plans, 0 for permanent or uncertain intentions to stay or no considerations or plans to emigrate. The other explanatory variables are shown in Fig. 7-1 and Fig. 7-3; additional control variables are the number of previous stays in Germany, an indicator for other family members abroad and an indicator for place of residence in eastern/western Germany. Table A2-3 in the Appendix shows the complete regression results.

Legend: Immigrants with a master's or doctoral degree are around 2 percentage points more likely to have temporary residence intentions, 12 percentage points more likely to have emigration considerations and 1 percentage point more likely to have emigration plans compared to those with secondary education or less – all other factors being equal.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1. observations: 41,170, weighted.

The country of highest educational qualification is also relevant. A degree obtained in Germany as well as in a third country is associated with a higher probability of considering emigration – in each case compared to the reference category "country of birth". At the same time, the differences with regard to basic intentions to stay and concrete plans to emigrate are not statistically significant. These discrepancies can possibly be explained by selective migration trajectories.

The positive selection with regard to education is also reflected in the correlations with labor market attachment. While it is often assumed in the literature that a weaker labor market attachment – for example in the form of part-time or marginal employment – increases the likelihood of emigration, our data shows a more differentiated picture: in terms of temporary intentions to stay, the tendency to leave is even higher among those in employment than among those not in employment or in paid training. The differences within those in employment are not statistically significant. A lower tendency of people in training to stay in Germany only temporarily indicates that investments in human capital specific to the host country – such as through training – can reduce the tendency to emigrate (see also chapter 6).

A very similar pattern is found for emigration considerations. On the other hand, employment status does not play a systematic role in emigration plans. Overall, this shows that the correlation between labor market status and emigration intentions is less clear than expected and contradicts common assumptions to some extent.

Finally, economic roots in the country of residence and continuing financial ties to the country of origin are examined using two indicators: Property ownership in Germany is associated with statistically significantly lower intentions to emigrate, while regular remittances increase the tendency to emigrate. These results are in line with theoretical considerations on the role of economic integration and transnational resources (cf. Constant and Massey 2003).

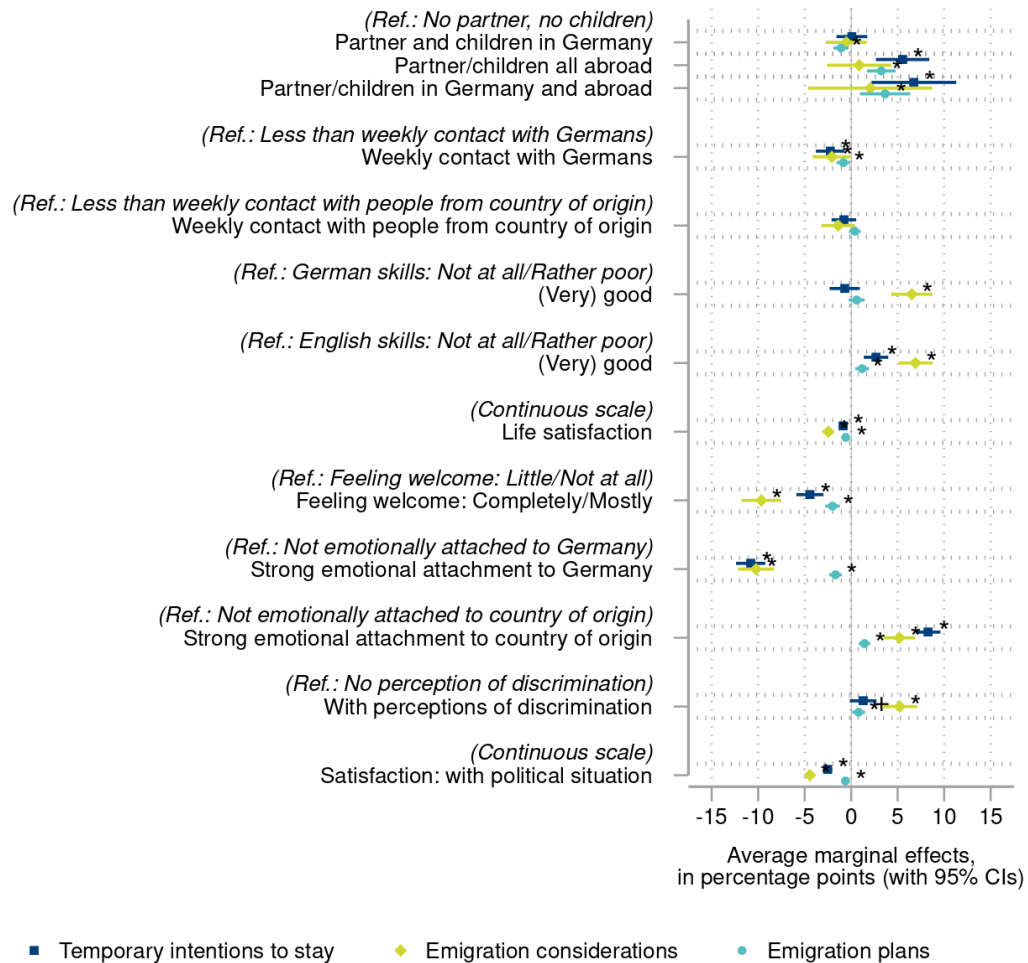
### 7.3 Socio-cultural anchoring

Figure 7–2 shows the marginal effects of various socio-cultural factors on the intention to emigrate. As expected, the location of the nuclear family plays a central role: if the partner or children live abroad, the probability of temporary intentions to stay and of considering emigration increases significantly. If, on the other hand, all family members are in Germany, emigration considerations and plans decrease compared to the reference group without a partner or children. A similar, but statistically insignificant trend can be seen for emigration plans. There is no significant correlation between the presence of other relatives abroad and the intention to emigrate (results available upon request in the figure).

Another relevant factor is social integration in the host country. Immigrants who have at least weekly contact with Germans show fewer intentions to emigrate – both temporary and concrete (see Figure 7–2). These results confirm existing research according to which exchanges with people from the majority society contribute both to social integration and to the consolidation of intentions to stay. Immigrants with more frequent contact with people from their home countries show no relevant difference in their intentions to emigrate compared to people with less contact.

**Figure 7-2 : Relationship between the intention to emigrate and socio-cultural factors. Dependent variables: temporary intentions to stay, emigration considerations and emigration plans**

Average marginal effects with 95 percent confidence intervals, in percentage points



Notes: \*,+ significant at the 5 and 10 percent level. Robust standard errors. The figure shows the estimation results – presented as marginal effects – of a multivariate regression analysis (logistic regression). The dependent variables are coded binary: 1 for temporary intentions to stay / emigration considerations / emigration plans, 0 for permanent or uncertain intentions to stay or no considerations or plans to emigrate. The other explanatory variables are shown in Fig. 7-1 and Fig. 7-2; additional control variables are the number of previous stays in Germany, an indicator for other family members abroad and an indicator for place of residence in eastern/western Germany. Table A2-3 in the Appendix shows the complete regression results.

Legend: Immigrants who feel very welcome in Germany are around 4 percentage points less likely to have temporary intentions to stay, 10 percentage points less likely to have emigration considerations and 2 percentage points less likely to have emigration plans compared to those who feel hardly welcome, all other factors being equal.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1. observations: 41,170, weighted.

(Very) good German language skills are associated with a higher probability of considering emigration – but not with temporary intentions to stay or concrete plans to emigrate. The correlation with English language skills, on the other hand, is clearly positive: with better English skills, both emigration considerations and concrete plans to leave Germany increase. This is likely to be primarily due to expanded career options in an international context.

General life satisfaction not only reflects the current life situation, but often also the assessment of various sub-areas such as work, social relationships or the social climate. The results show a consistently negative correlation between life satisfaction and the intention to emigrate: Each additional point on the seven-point scale significantly reduces the likelihood of temporary intentions to stay, thoughts of emigrating and concrete plans to emigrate. This underlines the importance of individual satisfaction as a stabilizing factor for prospects of staying – a finding that is in line with current studies (e.g. Sallam 2024).

The subjective feeling of welcome also has a significant effect: Those who feel mostly or completely welcome in Germany have a significantly lower tendency to think about emigrating or to pursue concrete plans. Like life satisfaction, this feeling also reflects the perceived social acceptance – a key element for long-term integration and residence decisions.

Experiences of discrimination in the last twelve months are another significant predictor: people who experience discrimination more frequently – whether in public spaces, at work or in contact with the authorities – show a consistently higher tendency to wish to emigrate. This correlation is particularly clear when considering emigration.

Emotional ties to Germany and the country of origin also play an important role: a strong emotional bond with Germany significantly reduces the intention to emigrate – especially with regard to temporary intentions to stay and considerations. Conversely, a strong bond with the country of origin increases the likelihood of wanting to leave Germany again – a result confirmed by earlier research (cf. Constant and Massey 2003).

Finally, the political situation was named as one of the most frequent reasons for emigrating from Germany (chapter 3 ). The estimation results in Figure 7–2 confirm this pattern and show a clear correlation between political satisfaction and the propensity to emigrate: Each additional point on the scale for satisfaction with the political situation in Germany (1 to 7) lowers the probability of temporary intentions to stay, thoughts of emigrating and concrete plans to emigrate. The results are thus consistent with the most frequently cited motives for emigration in the IMPa survey.

## 8 Conclusion and recommendations

Temporary migration, return migration and onward migration have reached high levels in Germany. Depending on the statistics, the rates of departure from 2014 to 2023 average just under 6 percent (Central Register of Foreigners) to 11 percent (migration statistics from the Federal Statistical Office) of the foreign population – although the migration statistics also include very short-term stays. At the same time, Germany requires a net annual immigration of approximately 400,000 people to compensate the demographic decline in its labor force potential (Fuchs et al. 2021). High mobility intentions among immigrants increasingly call this target into question, posing significant challenges for labor market stability, integration outcomes, and the long-term sustainability of the welfare state.

Return and onward migration have a significant impact on migration in Germany. They have a direct impact on integration prospects, economic participation and the sustainability of the welfare state. In-depth knowledge about the causes, motives and composition of return and onward migration as well as the effects of temporary migration on integration and participation opportunities is therefore important – both for securing the available labor force potential and for shaping labor market and social policy.

To close this knowledge gap, the new longitudinal online survey International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa) systematically examines mobility dynamics: who stays, who leaves – and why? New baseline surveys are planned every two years, supplemented by annual follow-up surveys over four years. The first wave (Dec. 2024–Apr. 2025) surveyed approximately 50,000 immigrants.; the first follow-up survey will start in the second half of 2025. With the help of statistical extrapolation methods, representative statements can be made about people in Germany who have immigrated to Germany by April 2, 2024, have been recorded in the BA data (through employment, receipt of benefits or participation in measures) and are between 18 and 65 years old. This report presents initial findings on the migration dynamics of immigrants in Germany based on the first wave.

The key findings can be summarized as follows: A slight majority of immigrants (57 percent) plan to stay in Germany permanently – this corresponds to around 5.7 million people. In contrast, around 1.3 million only intend to stay temporarily (13 percent) and around 3 million are undecided about their intention to stay (30 percent). 26 percent of immigrants – an estimated 2.6 million people – are thinking about leaving Germany, and 3 percent or 312,000 people have concrete plans to emigrate – roughly half to their country of origin and half to a third country. The second wave of the IMPa survey will show whether and to what extent these stated plans actually materialize. What is clear, however, is that this mobility dynamic may make it more difficult to achieve the demographic target of 400,000 net immigrants per year. Not only immigration, but also the long-term retention of immigrants is becoming a key challenge for securing skilled workers.

The most common emigration destinations vary by type of migration: individuals planning to return primarily aim for European countries such as Poland, Romania, but also Turkey, whereas those intending to move onward tend to favor Switzerland, the United States, or Spain. The underlying motives also differ: family-related reasons are the primary driver of return migration,

while economic opportunities are central to onward migration. Across all groups—labor migrants, students, and those who migrated for family reunification—key reasons for considering emigration include political dissatisfaction, personal preferences, high tax burdens, and administrative complexity. Refugees additionally cite experiences of discrimination as a major factor. Overall, the findings suggest that policy interventions such as reducing bureaucratic barriers, simplifying and streamlining procedures, and providing targeted tax incentives could help to curb emigration tendencies.

So far, only about one fifth of those with emigration plans have taken concrete preparatory steps. Activities such as job searches, housing searches, or participation in language courses are particularly common among those planning onward migration. Around 20 percent of prospective emigrants express a long-term intention to return to Germany, one third rule out a return, and roughly half remain undecided. This suggests that approximately two thirds of those considering emigration are potentially open to returning. This reveals substantial potential to re-engage former residents over the long term. Targeted policy measures – such as return programs or tailored support services for return-interested migrants – could play a key role in realizing this potential.

With regard to socio-demographic and migration-specific factors, the IMPa results show that these play a central role in the intention to emigrate. Men are more likely than women to express temporary settlement intentions, to consider emigrating and to have concrete plans to emigrate. Considerations of emigration decrease significantly with increasing age, while temporary intentions to stay show an inverse U-shaped relationship with age. A longer period of residence goes hand in hand with more considerations about emigrating, but fewer concrete plans. Region of origin and reason for immigration have a significant impact on the tendency to emigrate: refugees and people with family reunification show significantly lower tendencies to emigrate, while migrants from EU countries and from work- and education-related migration contexts show higher mobility intentions. In addition, the tendency to migrate is greater among people with permanent residence status or EU/German citizenship – presumably due to extended mobility options.

The IMPa results make it clear that labor market factors and economic anchoring have an important but differentiated influence on the emigration intentions of immigrants. Education is a key predictor: people with higher qualifications (with a Master's or doctorate) are significantly more likely to express emigration considerations and concrete emigration plans than people with a lower level of education. Degrees from Germany or third countries as well as foreign qualifications recognized in Germany are also more strongly associated with emigration considerations – presumably due to their greater international transferability.

The positive selection with regard to education is also reflected in the correlations with labor market attachment. While it is often assumed in the literature that weaker labor market integration – such as part-time or marginal employment – increases the likelihood of emigration, the IMPa data shows differentiated findings: those in employment even express temporary intentions to stay more frequently than those not in employment or in training. However, the differences within the working population are not statistically significant. A lower tendency to emigrate among people in training indicates that investments in human capital specific to the host country – such as training – can have a stabilizing effect.

Further results show that people in knowledge-intensive sectors such as IT and financial services in particular have higher intentions to emigrate. Higher earnings are also associated with stronger emigration considerations and plans, which again indicates positive selection. Employees in the healthcare and construction sectors do not express an above-average, but still relevant tendency to emigrate – a risk in view of existing skills shortages. Another important factor is job satisfaction: the more dissatisfied employees are with their job, the more frequently they express temporary intentions to stay, thoughts of emigrating and concrete plans. Job satisfaction therefore proves to be an important stability factor. After all, housing ownership in Germany has a stabilizing effect, while regular remittances to the country of origin increase the tendency to emigrate.

Social integration and social participation also have a decisive influence on immigrants' intentions to emigrate. Family ties have a stabilizing effect: immigrants who live with their nuclear family in Germany or who are planning to bring their family to Germany show significantly lower tendencies to emigrate. Regular social contact with Germans is also associated with a lower tendency to emigrate, while contact with people from other countries of origin has hardly any influence.

Language skills have a differentiated effect: While descriptive findings indicate that people with poor German language skills have lower permanent intentions to stay and higher mobility plans, multivariate analyses show that good German language skills are associated with an increased propensity to move. A good command of English also tends to increase the propensity to emigrate, which could indicate better international labor market options.

A strong emotional bond with Germany stabilizes the settlement intentions, while close ties to the country of origin increase the tendency to emigrate. A strong subjective feeling of welcome and few experiences of discrimination also significantly reduce the likelihood of considering and planning to emigrate. Conversely, perceptions of discrimination – especially in contact with the authorities, police and at work – considerably increase the tendency to emigrate. Political dissatisfaction also significantly increases the likelihood of thoughts and plans to emigrate. The findings underline the central importance of an inclusive social climate for the long-term integration and retention of migrants. Experiences of discrimination represent a significant risk factor for migration intentions.

Overall, the results make it clear that intentions to emigrate do not arise by chance, but are the result of a complex interplay of individual characteristics, social integration, economic anchoring and perceived social acceptance.

Based on the findings presented, what policy responses might be considered? One of the most frequently cited reasons for concrete emigration plans is the high bureaucratic burden in Germany. A comprehensive approach to reducing bureaucracy – through **centralization**, **simplification**, **digitalization**, and **acceleration** of migration- and administration-related procedures, from entry and employment to the recognition of qualifications – could substantially ease integration and strengthen migrants' long-term settlement intentions. In particular, procedures in the domain of labor migration require further streamlining. The recognition of foreign qualifications and visa issuance processes should be made more efficient, transparent, and digitally accessible to remove unnecessary obstacles and enhance Germany's competitiveness in the global race for talent (Liebig and Ewald 2023; Expert Council on



Integration and Migration [SVR] 2025). This is especially relevant for STEM professionals, a group for which international competition is particularly intense (Anger et al. 2025). Experiences from countries such as the United Kingdom demonstrate that simplified and digitalized visa systems can significantly improve the recruitment of highly qualified migrants. While Germany has made progress in digitizing visa procedures since early 2025, the SVR (2025) emphasizes that additional migration- and integration-related administrative processes must also be standardized and digitalized to systematically eliminate structural barriers.

The new federal government has acknowledged the pressing need for reform. As outlined in the coalition agreement, it plans to establish a digital *work-and-stay agency*. In collaboration with the Federal Employment Agency, this centralized IT platform is intended to streamline and expedite all processes related to labor migration and the recognition of professional qualifications, while aligning them with the administrative structures of the federal states (WirtschaftsWoche, 2025). The Expert Council on Integration and Migration (SVR) supports these initiatives but cautions in its 2025 Annual Report that legislative reforms must be grounded in implementation realities. Efficiency should not come at the expense of practicability; instead, all relevant stakeholders should be involved from the outset, and proposed reforms should undergo feasibility testing through real-world practice checks. Only through such measures can digitalization and simplification efforts achieve their intended impact.

The tax burden, which is often perceived as high, is also cited as a reason for emigration. While fundamental tax reforms are beyond the scope of this report, international experience, for example from Italy (Bassetto and Ippedico, 2023), shows that **tax incentives** can specifically contribute to the return of skilled workers who have emigrated and to general immigration (Brücker et al., 2024).

The political situation in Germany is also cited as an important factor when considering emigration. **An open-minded, safe and liberal social climate is** needed to promote long-term ties. An objective public debate on migration and integration and a clear stance against discrimination and exclusion are key prerequisites for this.

Almost two thirds of migrants report perceived discrimination in Germany in at least one area of their lives (e.g. looking for accommodation or in the context of the labor market), while one third feel either not at all or only somewhat welcome – factors that significantly increase the tendency to emigrate. The often lengthy and complicated bureaucratic procedures in particular act as a deterrent and hinder early integration. In many places, there is a lack of a welcoming culture and practical assistance, especially in the initial phase after arrival. Large companies can specifically deploy **integration guides** or **agents** to support migrants in dealing with authorities, finding accommodation and integrating. Small and medium-sized companies, on the other hand, are often unable to take on these tasks alone. Institutional support is needed here, for example through **funding programs**, in order to relieve them of the burden of integrating immigrant workers (SVR 2025). Skill partnerships are another promising instrument (Azahaf 2020; Ebbinghaus et al. 2017). These partnerships help migrants prepare for migration in their country of origin and at the same time create structures for sustainable integration in Germany. At the same time, such programs could improve the matching between companies of all sizes and potential employees and thus facilitate both individual and economic integration.



Immigrants with families and a high level of life satisfaction show significantly lower intentions to return and are more likely to remain in Germany in the long term. Social integration not only has a positive effect on individual decisions to stay, but also strengthens social acceptance of migrants. Measures that facilitate **family reunification** – for example through accelerated procedures for the entry of partners and children – make a decisive contribution to increasing the life satisfaction of immigrants and stabilizing their prospects of remaining in Germany. Family reunification is therefore not only relevant in terms of migration policy, but is also a key investment in social cohesion and sustainable integration. Actively promoting the social integration of immigrants – for example through better **care services, local integration programs** and **support structures** – could further strengthen this positive effect.

A key finding of the IMPa survey is that it is precisely the better educated, economically more successful and linguistically better integrated migrants who have moved to Germany for work or education purposes – i.e. precisely those that Germany urgently needs to secure skilled workers – who think about leaving the country or express concrete plans to emigrate with above-average frequency. This selective emigration poses considerable risks for Germany's future economic viability. In order to counteract this development, targeted efforts must be made to retain this key group in the long term. Germany must become more attractive not only as an entry-level country, but also as a genuine lead country. This includes accelerated recognition procedures, the removal of bureaucratic hurdles, greater support for family integration and a clear stance against discrimination in the working and living environment. Only if highly qualified immigrants are given clear career prospects and genuine social participation can it be prevented that the best-performing migrants leave Germany again.

Finally, the findings point to substantial potential for encouraging emigrants to return to Germany. Two thirds of those who express intentions to emigrate either explicitly aim to return or do not rule it out. This suggests a significant reservoir of potential returnees that could be mobilized. Targeted policy measures – such as structured **return programs, tailored support services, and information campaigns**—could play a key role in systematically activating this return potential.

The success of migration and integration as well as longer-term ties to Germany do not depend solely on the efforts of migrants. It requires a favorable institutional framework, a supportive reception policy, social openness and committed support for integration. Integration is a two-way process that can only succeed if both sides actively contribute to it.

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# Appendix A1

«Vorname» «Nachname»

«StrasseHausnr»

«PLZ» «Ort»

Nürnberg, im November 2024

## Wissenschaftliche Studie „Mein Weg in Deutschland“

Guten Tag «Vorname» «Nachname»,

gemeinsam mit unserem Team bitten wir Sie herzlich, an unserer wissenschaftlichen Studie „Mein Weg in Deutschland“ teilzunehmen. Diese wird vom Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (IAB) in Nürnberg durchgeführt. In unserer Studie wollen wir verstehen, wie es Migrantinnen und Migranten<sup>6</sup> hier in Deutschland geht. **Wir interessieren uns für Ihren Weg in Deutschland:** Von den alltäglichen Herausforderungen und Erfolgen bis hin zu Ihren Hoffnungen und Überlegungen – Ihre Perspektive ist für uns entscheidend.

**Warum ist Ihre Teilnahme wichtig?** – Die Erfahrungen von Migrantinnen und Migranten in Deutschland sind sehr divers. Wir betreiben wissenschaftliche Forschung und beraten politische Entscheidungsträger. Wir möchten der Politik wirklich gute Ratschläge geben und besser verstehen, was Migranten hier bewegt. Daher ist es wichtig, dass auch Sie mit Ihren ganz persönlichen Erfahrungen an dieser Befragung teilnehmen.

**Wie können Sie mitmachen?** – Einfach den QR-Code mit Ihrem Smartphone scannen oder folgenden Link in einen Internetbrowser eingeben: [www.iab-myway.de](http://www.iab-myway.de)

Ihr persönliches Passwort zur Teilnahme lautet: «Passwort»



**Was haben Sie von der Teilnahme?** – Sie erhalten als kleines Dankeschön für die Teilnahme einen Gutschein über mindestens 5 Euro. Sie können selbst entscheiden, wofür Sie es einlösen möchten (z. B. Media Markt, Zalando, IKEA, Otto, OBI, ...).

**Woher hat das IAB Ihre Adresse?** – Ihre Kontaktdaten wurden uns von der Bundesagentur für Arbeit zur Verfügung gestellt, und zwar *ausschließlich* für diese Studie. Wir versichern Ihnen, dass wir Ihre Daten streng vertraulich behandeln und Ihre Privatsphäre respektieren. Weitere Informationen zum Datenschutz finden Sie unter [www.iab-myway.de/privacy](http://www.iab-myway.de/privacy).

**Warum gerade Sie?** – Sie wurden nach dem Zufallsprinzip aus Personen mit Migrationshintergrund ausgewählt. Ihre Teilnahme ist freiwillig. Ihre Geschichte, aber, ist ein entscheidender Beitrag für unsere Studie.

**Wie lange wird es dauern?** – Wir schätzen, dass die Beantwortung der Fragen etwa 20 Minuten dauert.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen und der herzlichen Bitte um Ihre Unterstützung

Prof. Dr. Yuliya Kosyakova  
(Studienleiterin)

Prof. Dr. Herbert Brücker

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<sup>6</sup> Möglicherweise leben Sie schon sehr lange hier und identifizieren sich nicht als Migrant\*in. Wir bitten Sie trotzdem an unserer Studie teilzunehmen. Weitere Erläuterungen dazu, warum wir Sie angeschrieben haben, finden Sie unter [www.iab-myway.de/FAQ](http://www.iab-myway.de/FAQ).



## Online personal survey "My way in Germany"

Dear «Vorname» «Nachname»,

together with our team, we would like to invite you to take part in our scientific study "My way in Germany". It is conducted by the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) in Nuremberg. In our study, we want to understand how migrants<sup>7</sup> are doing here in Germany. **We are interested in your path in Germany:** from everyday challenges and successes, to your hopes and thoughts – your perspective is crucial to us.

**Why does your participation matter?** – The experiences of migrants in Germany are very diverse. We carry out scientific research and advise policy-makers. We want to give excellent advice to policy-makers and better understand what matters to migrants here. Therefore, your participation in this survey and sharing your personal experiences is so important.

**How can you take part?** – Simply scan the QR code with your smartphone or enter this link in your internet browser: [www.iab-myway.de](http://www.iab-myway.de)

Your personal password for participation is: «Passwort»



**What's in it for you?** – For your participation you will receive a voucher for at least 5 euros as a small thank you. You can decide for yourself what you want to redeem it for (e.g., Media Markt, Zalando, IKEA, Otto, OBI, ...).

**Who are we?** – We are researchers from the Institute for Employment Research.

**Where did the IAB get your address?** – Your contact details were shared with us by the Federal Employment Agency, strictly for this study. We assure you, your details are treated with the utmost confidentiality and respect for your privacy. For more information on data protection, visit [www.iab-myway.de/privacy](http://www.iab-myway.de/privacy).

**Why you?** – You were randomly selected from all people with migration background. Your participation is voluntary. Your story, however, is a crucial contribution to our study.

**How long does it take?** – We estimate that answering the questions will take about 20 minutes.

**Further information** can be found under [www.iab-myway.de](http://www.iab-myway.de).

Yours sincerely and with a heartfelt request for your support

Prof. Dr. Yuliya Kosyakova  
(Director of the study)

Prof. Dr. Herbert Brücker

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<sup>7</sup> You may have lived here already for a very long time and do not identify as a migrant. We would still like to ask you to take part in our study. You can find further explanations as of why we have written to you under [www.iab-myway.de/FAQ](http://www.iab-myway.de/FAQ).

Abychom lépe porozuměli tomu, jak se migrantům v Německu daří, zahajujeme letos vědeckou studii "Moje cesta v Německu". Zajímá nás zejména vaše cesta: vaše osobní zkušenosti od příjezdu, jak se vám zde daří a co si myslíte. Za účast v této studii vám budeme velmi vděční. Jako malé poděkování obdržíte poukázku v hodnotě 5 eur. Účast je snadná: použijte odkaz (nebo naskenujte QR kód) a zadejte heslo vytištěné na první straně. Velmi vám děkujeme za vaši ochotu podělit se o své zkušenosti!

W tym roku rozpoczynamy badanie naukowe "Moja droga w Niemczech" aby lepiej zrozumieć, jak migranci radzą sobie w tym kraju. Jesteśmy szczególnie zainteresowani Twoją drogą: Twoimi osobistymi doświadczeniami od momentu przyjazdu, tym, jak sobie tutaj radzisz i co myślisz. Będziemy bardzo wdzięczni za wsparcie w tym badaniu. Jako mały dowód naszej wdzięczności za Twój udział otrzymasz kupon o wartości 5 euro. Uczestnictwo jest proste: użyj linku (lub zeskanuj kod QR) i wprowadź hasło wydrukowane na pierwszej stronie. Bardzo dziękujemy za chęć podzielenia się swoimi doświadczeniami.

Annak érdekében, hogy jobban megértsük, hogyan boldogulnak a bevándorlók Németországban, idén elindítjuk az "Mein Weg in Deutschland" (Utam Németországban) című tudományos kutatást. Az Ön története különösen érdekel bennünket: a személyes tapasztalatai a megérkezése óta, hogyan érzi magát itt, és mit gondol Németországról. Nagyon hálásak lennénk, ha támogatná ezt a kutatást. Résztvételének elismeréseként egy 5 eurós utalványt tudunk felajánlani. A részvétel egyszerű: szkennelje be a QR-kódot, és használja az első oldalon kinyomtatott linket és jelszót. Köszönjük szépen, ha megosztja velünk a tapasztalatait

Anul acesta lansăm studiul științific "Drumul meu în Germania", pentru a înțelege mai bine cum se descurcă migrații în Germania. Suntem interesați în special de următoarele aspecte ale călătoriei dumneavoastră: experiențele dumneavoastră personale de la sosire, cum vă descurcați aici și ce părere aveți. Vă suntem foarte recunoscători dacă puteți prin participarea dumneavoastră să ne ajutați în acest studiu. Ca un mic semn de apreciere pentru participarea dumneavoastră, vă oferim un voucher de 5 euro. Participarea este simplă: utilizați link-ul (sau scanați codul QR) și introduceți parola tipărită pe prima pagină. Vă mulțumim foarte mult pentru disponibilitatea dumneavoastră de a vă împărtăși experiențele cu noi!

За да разберем по-добре как се чувстват мигрантите в Германия, тази година стартираме научното изследване "Моят път в Германия". Особено ни интересува Вашия опит: личните Ви преживявания след пристигането, как се справяте тук и какво мислите. Ще Ви бъдем много благодарни за Вашата подкрепа в това проучване. В знак на благодарност за Вашето участие ще получите ваучер за 5 евро. Участието е лесно: използвайте връзката (или сканирайте QR кода) и въведете паролата, отпечатана на първата страница. Благодарим Ви много за готовността да споделите своя опит!

Чтобы лучше понять, как живут мигранты в Германии, в этом году мы запускаем научное исследование "Мой путь в Германии". Нам особенно интересен ваш путь: ваш личный опыт с момента прибытия, как вы себя здесь чувствуете и что думаете. Мы будем очень благодарны за вашу поддержку в этом исследовании. В знак нашей признательности за участие вы получите ваучер на 5 евро. Принять участие в исследовании очень просто: воспользуйтесь ссылкой (или отсканируйте QR-код) и введите пароль, напечатанный на первой странице. Большое спасибо за готовность поделиться своим опытом!

Para conocer mejor cómo les va a los inmigrantes en Alemania, este año iniciamos el estudio científico "Mi camino en Alemania". Especialmente nos interesa como ha sido el camino de usted: sus experiencias personales desde su llegada, cómo le va aquí y qué piensa. Le estaríamos muy agradecidos por su apoyo en este estudio. Como pequeña muestra de nuestro agradecimiento por su participación, recibirá un vale descuento de 5 euros. Participar es fácil: utilice el enlace (o escanee el código QR) y la contraseña impresos en la primera página. ¡Muchas gracias por su apoyo en nuestro estudio!

Afin de mieux comprendre la situation des immigrés en Allemagne, nous lançons cette année l'étude scientifique "Mon chemin en Allemagne". Nous sommes particulièrement intéressés par votre parcours : votre expérience personnelle depuis votre arrivée ainsi que votre ressenti. Votre contribution à cette étude serait très précieuse pour nous. En guise de remerciement pour votre participation, vous recevrez un bon d'achat de 5 euros. Pour participer, rien de plus simple : utilisez le lien (ou scannez le code QR) et entrez le mot de passe imprimé sur la première page. Nous vous remercions pour votre réponse !"

Para compreender melhor a situação dos imigrantes na Alemanha, lançamos este ano o estudo científico "O meu caminho na Alemanha". Estamos particularmente interessados no seu percurso, nas suas experiências pessoais desde a chegada, como você se sente aqui e o que pensa. Ficariamos muito gratos pelo seu apoio a este estudo. Como pequena demonstração do nosso apreço pela sua participação, você receberá um vale-presente de 5 euros. Participar é fácil: Clique no link (ou use o código QR) e introduza o código impresso na primeira página. Muito obrigado pela disponibilidade de partilhar suas experiências!

من أجل فهم أفضل لكيفية عيش المهاجرين في ألمانيا، نطلق هذا العام دراسة علمية بعنوان "طريقي في ألمانيا". نحن مهتمون بشكل خاص بتجاربك الشخصية منذ وصولك، وما رأيك في هذا المكان، وكيف حالك هنا. سنكون ممتنين للغاية لدعمك في هذه الدراسة. وكتعبير بسيط عن تقديرنا ثم أدخل كلمة المرور المطبوعة في الصفحة (QR لمشاركتك، ستحصل على قسيمة بقيمة 5 يورو. المشاركة سهلة: استخدم الرابط) أو صور رمز ال الأولى. شكرًا جزيلًا لك على استعدادك لمشاركة تجاربك

## **Data protection information in accordance with Art. 13 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

The German Institute for Employment Research (IAB) is responsible for carrying out the online survey “My way in Germany”. The data collected will be used to investigate the experiences of people with a migration background in Germany and to see how this influences their life situation. Your data will be treated as strictly confidential. *Participation is voluntary! There are no disadvantages for you, regardless of whether you decide to participate or not.*

**What happens to my information?** – Your information will be processed in accordance with the strict data protection regulations and stored separately from your name and address. The researchers who analyse the data will only receive this data without your name and address and are therefore unable to find out who you are. The results of the survey that are published do not contain information on individual persons, but only about larger groups (e.g. percentage or average values). The publication is therefore anonymous. The data is analysed for research purposes only. Use for commercial purposes (advertising, marketing) is not permitted.

**How did the IAB obtain my contact details?** – The IAB received your contact details – in strict compliance with data protection regulations – from the Federal Employment Agency (BA). The IAB is part of the Federal Employment Agency (BA), but is separate from it in terms of space, personnel and organisation to ensure the freedom of its study and research work. The IAB may ask people to take part in surveys if the required information cannot be obtained from existing data. This is regulated by law in Section 282 (5) of Book Three of the German Social Code (SGB III). Among others, the BA stores notifications from organisations concerning periods of employment to the social security system. The survey itself and the merging of the data collected in the survey with data which is available at the IAB or is collected there will only take place if you have given your prior consent to this (point (a) of Art. 6 (1) GDPR).

**Why have I been asked for my email address and / or mobile telephone number?** – To be able to ask you again and to send you your voucher, we need your email address. Your personal data will not be passed on to third parties and is protected under the data protection laws by the Institute for Employment Research. Your consent to this will be requested in the survey and can be withdrawn at any time.

**Who is responsible for the data processing?** – The Federal Employment Agency, represented by its executive board, Regensburger Str. 104, 90478 Nuremberg, Germany, is responsible for the processing of personal data within the scope of this survey. You will receive your invitation to participate in the survey from the IAB. The technical completion of the survey is carried out by Ingress as the processor of the IAB. Ingress acts exclusively in accordance with the instructions of the IAB and is obliged to maintain strict confidentiality.

**Erasure** Your survey data will be erased by Ingress at the end of the following survey period, and by IAB at the end of the retention period, to ensure good scientific practice.

**Your rights** You can request information about your data held by the IAB and also request an assessment of whether the rectification, erasure or forwarding of your data or the restriction of its processing should take place and whether your objection to the processing should be granted. You can also withdraw your consent. You can withdraw your consent at any time by post or by email to the addresses provided in the letterhead. The legality of the previous processing remains unaffected by this. To assert your rights as a data subject, please also use the addresses provided in the letterhead.

**Data protection officer of the BA** You can contact the data protection officer of the BA, Marc Rompf, at the following address if you have any questions or concerns: Federal Employment Agency, Data Protection Unit, Regensburger Straße 104, 90478 Nuremberg. Contact form: <https://web.arbeitsagentur.de/portal/kontakt/de/weitere-themen/datenschutz>

**Supervisory authority for data protection** You have the right to lodge a complaint with the BfDI - Federal Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, Graurheindorfer Str. 153, 53117 Bonn.

**Thank you for your cooperation and your trust in our work!**

## Appendix A2

**Table A 2-1: Marginal distributions of the calibration characteristics in the population, the gross sample, the net sample and after weighting**

Variable	Category	Population, percentage	Gross sample, number	Net sample, percent	Net sample weighted, percent
Gender	Male	54.5	55.0	50.8	54.5
	Female	45.5	45.0	49.2	45.5
Age	18-28	18.3	30.0	24.6	18.3
	29-38	27.5	31.4	39.2	27.5
	39-48	25.7	21.2	22.6	25.7
	49-58	20.4	13.0	10.4	20.4
	59-65	8.0	4.4	3.2	8.0
Education	(University of) Applied Sciences	19.3	21.2	45.5	19.3
	A-levels	7.7	6.9	7.1	7.7
	A-levels and vocational training	8.0	5.0	5.3	8.0
	Vocational training	25.4	13.5	7.7	25.4
	No degree	25.4	22.2	12.3	25.4
	Missing	14.2	31.2	22.2	14.2
Employed	Employed	73.2	74.7	76.5	73.2
	Not employed	26.8	25.3	23.5	26.8
Federal state	Baden-Württemberg	16.2	15.3	15.1	16.2
	Bavaria	17.0	18.1	19.5	17.0
	Berlin	6.6	8.2	11.1	6.6
	Brandenburg	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.3
	Bremen	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.2
	Hamburg	3.3	3.3	3.7	3.3
	Hesse	9.6	9.1	8.7	9.6
	Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.7
	Lower Saxony	7.8	7.8	7.0	7.8
	North Rhine-Westphalia	23.7	20.5	17.6	23.7
	Rhineland-Palatinate	4.5	4.5	3.8	4.5
	Saarland	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.0
	Saxony	2.1	2.9	3.8	2.1
	Saxony-Anhalt	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.1
	Schleswig-Holstein	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.5
	Thuringia	1.2	1.5	1.3	1.2
	Missing	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.1

Variable	Category	Population, percentage	Gross sample, number	Net sample, percent	Net sample weighted, percent
German citizenship	Ever reported	45.2	22.2	19.6	45.2
	Never reported	54.8	77.8	80.4	54.8
Length of stay	0 to under 2	17.1	43.4	43.5	17.1
	2 to under 5	11.7	21.5	23.3	11.7
	5 to under 10	24.8	20.0	19.8	24.8
	More than 10	46.4	15.1	13.4	46.4
Country group	Africa	4.9	7.2	6.6	4.9
	Asia	7.0	9.0	10.5	7.0
	Asylum countries of origin	14.6	8.6	6.7	14.6
	EU East	22.8	26.4	14.3	22.8
	EU/Schengen	12.2	11.8	14.0	12.2
	English speaking	1.3	5.4	11.0	1.3
	Latin America	1.8	5.6	11.6	1.8
	Eastern Europe	14.1	10.2	8.6	14.1
	Turkey	14.3	6.2	6.0	14.3
	Ukraine	7.1	9.7	10.8	7.1
Observations		10,077,286	700,000	41,627	

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1.

**Table A 2-2: Socio-demographic characteristics, unweighted and weighted.**

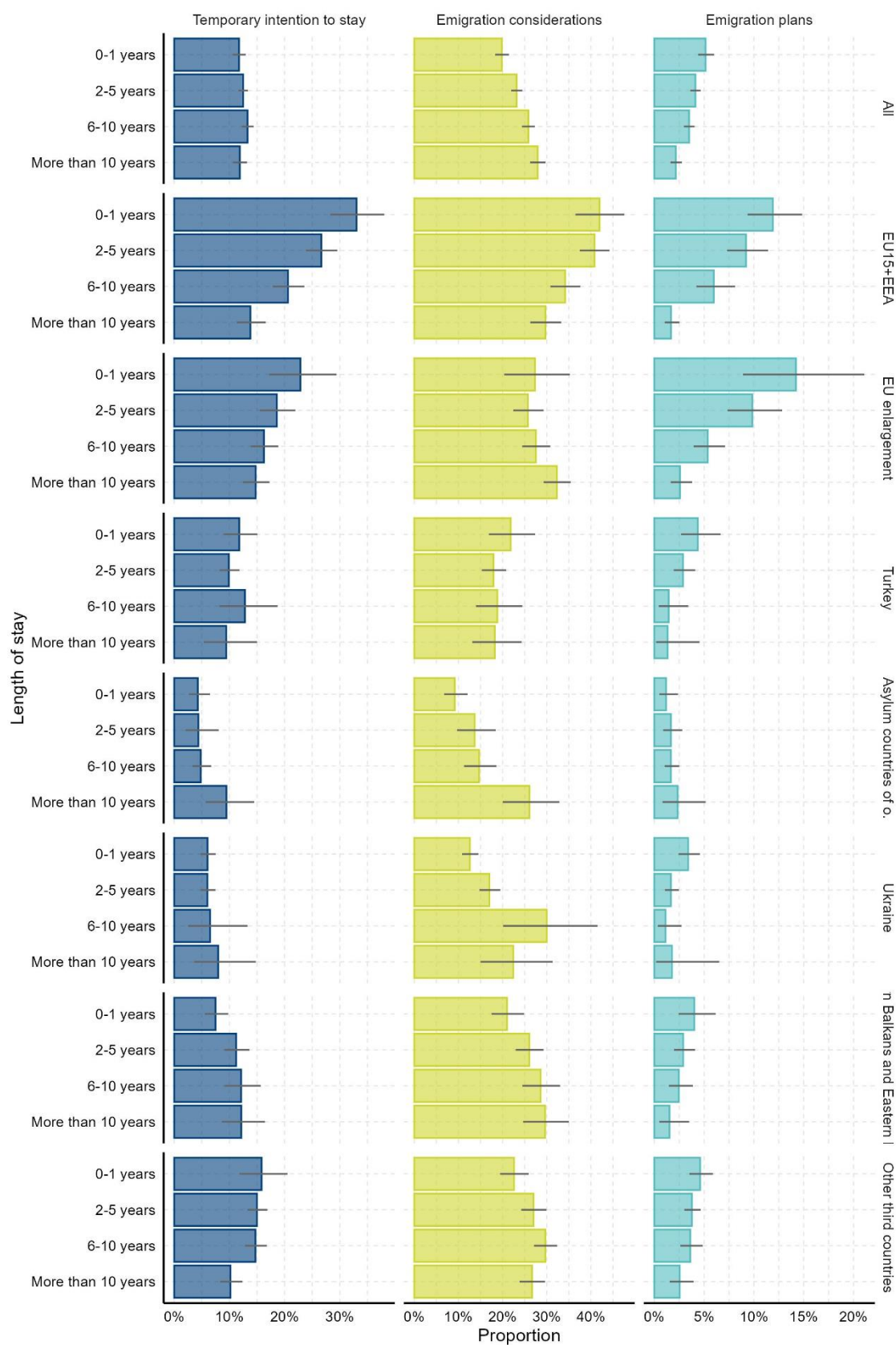
	Category	Observations, number	Net sample, percent	Net sample weighted, percent
Age	<25	4662	11.2	9.6
	25-29	7020	16.9	11.2
	30-34	8608	20.7	13.2
	35-39	7319	17.6	14.6
	40-44	5255	12.6	13.5
	45-49	3573	8.6	11.6
	50-54	2419	5.8	11.4
	55-59	1613	3.9	8.4
	60+	1105	2.7	6.5
Length of stay	0 years	1612	3.9	2.5
	1 year	6023	14.5	7.6
	2 years	7636	18.4	6.9
	3 years	4091	9.8	4.3
	4 years	2569	6.2	2.9
	5 years	2927	7.0	3.8
	6 years	2331	5.6	4.3
	7 years	1881	4.5	4.6
	8 years	1775	4.3	4.6
	9 years	1901	4.6	5.6
	10-19 years	5299	12.7	20.7
	20+ years	3529	8.5	32.1
Highest Educational qualification	Vocational training	8907	21.4	41.6
	Higher education	26471	63.7	35.0
	No degree	6166	14.8	23.4
German citizenship	Yes	5532	13.3	30.6
	No	36042	86.7	69.4
Legal basis Basis for immigration	Work/job search	14250	34.3	25.5
	Asylum seekers/refugees	7111	17.1	23.1
	Education/Recognition	8200	19.7	12.8
	Family members	7469	18.0	24.8
	Germans born abroad	700	1.7	4.6
	Tourists/Others	3832	9.2	9.1

	Category	Observations, number	Net sample, percent	Net sample weighted, percent
Residence status	Recognized protection status	1355	3.3	2.9
	Temporary residence permit	8117	19.5	11.2
	German citizenship	5532	13.3	30.6
	Tolerated stay/permission to stay	1410	3.4	3.4
	EU citizens	10346	24.9	24.4
	Settlement permit	6659	16.0	17.3
	Visa	2246	5.4	1.9
	Ukrainian residence permit	3481	8.4	4.5
	Other	2425	5.8	3.8

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1.

**Figure A 2-1 : Migration intentions by length of stay and country of origin groups**

Share of people of working age (18-65), in percent



Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1; observations: 41,574, weighted.



**Table A 2-3: Determinants of temporary residence intentions, emigration considerations and emigration plans**

Average marginal effects, in percentage points

Variables	Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
Woman	-1.8*	-2.1*	-.64*
<b>Age (Ref.: 18-30 years)</b>			
30-39	-3.6*	-1.4	-.09
40-49	-4.4*	-5.6*	-.61
50-59	-2.4	-7.7*	-.73
60+	-6.3*	-12.0*	1.2
<b>Length of stay (Ref.: 0-5 years)</b>			
6-10 years	-0.06	-0.76	-1.0*
11+ years	1.2	2.8*	-1.6*
German, EU citizen, or with a settlement permit	2.6*	3.8*	0.91*
<b>Partner/children (ref.: no partner; no children)</b>			
Partner and children in Germany	0.05	-0.6	-1.0*
Partner/children all abroad	5.1*	0.26	3.2*
Partner/children in Germany and abroad	6.8*	1.7	3.9*
<i>Family abroad</i>	-0.4	2.2+	-0.9+
<b>Frequency of stays in Germany (Ref.: once)</b>			
Twice	1.1	2.0	-0.3
3 to 5 times	1.0	0.4	0.4
More than 5 times	1.2	0.4	1.1*
<i>Life satisfaction (7-point scale)</i>	-0.9*	-2.5*	-0.6*
<b>Feeling of welcome in Germany (Ref.: Little/not at all)</b>			
Completely/predominantly	-4.3*	-9.7*	-2.1*
German language skills: (Ref.: Not at all/rather poor)			
(Very) good	-0.8	6.8*	0.6
English language skills: (Ref.: Not at all/rather poor)			
(Very) good	2.8*	6.7*	1.1*
Contact with Germans: At least weekly	-2.4*	-2.0+	-0.9*
Contact with people from the country of origin: At least weekly	-0.8	-1.3	0.4
Emotionally (very) connected to Germany	-11.0*	-10.0*	-1.7*
Emotionally (very) connected to the country of origin	8.4*	5.1*	1.4*
With perceptions of discrimination	1.4+	5.4*	0.9*
Satisfaction: With political situation (7-point scale)	-2.5*	-4.5*	-0.62*
<b>Highest level of education (Ref.: (0-2) lower secondary level or less)</b>			
(3) Secondary level II	1.1	5.6*	0.4
(4) Post-secondary non-tertiary education	1.8	7.4*	0.6
(6) Bachelor/Diploma (FH)	0.95	11*	0.6
(7-8) Master/ Diploma (Uni)/ PhD/ Doctor	2.2+	12.0*	1.3*

Variables	Temporary intentions to stay	Emigration considerations	Emigration plans
<b>Employment status (Ref.: Not seeking employment)</b>			
Full-time	3.0*	3.5*	-0.24
Part-time	2.1+	3.4*	-0.61
Employed without hours	3.5*	5.7*	-0.69
In paid training	-0.22	0.7	-1.2
Active job search	0.58	3.4+	-0.9
Not specified	7.3	-5.5	-0.01
<b>Country of highest educational qualification (ref.: country of origin)</b>			
In Germany	0.1	3.6*	-0.73
In another country	0.53	3.1+	0.21
<i>With house/flat ownership in Germany</i>	-2.2*	-0.64	-1.0*
<i>Remittances abroad</i>	1.2	3.6*	0.44
<b>Country group (Ref.: EU enlargement)</b>			
EU-15 and EEA	1.4	0.58	-0.4
Western Balkans and other Eastern European countries	-2.8*	-3.1*	-2.2*
Ukraine	-5.8*	-6.4*	-2.2*
India	-3.4*	-10.0*	-2.0*
Turkey	-3.4*	-10.0*	-2.5*
Asylum countries of origin	-5.5*	-8.5*	-2.3*
Other third countries	-3.0*	-5.0*	-1.7*
East Germany (excluding Berlin)	-0.12	-0.24	-0.29
Observations	41,170	41,170	41,170

Notes: \*,+ significant at the 5 and 10 percent level. Robust standard errors. The table shows the estimation results – presented as marginal effects – of a multivariate regression analysis (logistic regression). The dependent variables are coded binary: 1 for temporary intentions to stay / emigration considerations / emigration plans, 0 for permanent or uncertain intentions to stay or no considerations or plans to emigrate. Additional control variables are the number of previous stays in Germany, an indicator for other family members abroad and an indicator for place of residence in East/West Germany.

Legend: Immigrants with a master's or doctoral degree are around 2 percentage points more likely to have temporary residence intentions, 12 percentage points more likely to have emigration considerations and 1 percentage point more likely to have emigration plans compared to those with secondary education or less – all other factors being equal.

Source: International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), wave 1. observations: 41,170, weighted.

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