



Co-funded by
the European Union

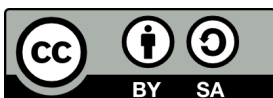
MYCo - Meet Your Colleague.

Overcoming generational stereotypes through knowledge.



**DESK RESEARCH ON GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES
IN GERMANY**
AUTHOR:
ASSIST

DECEMBER 2024

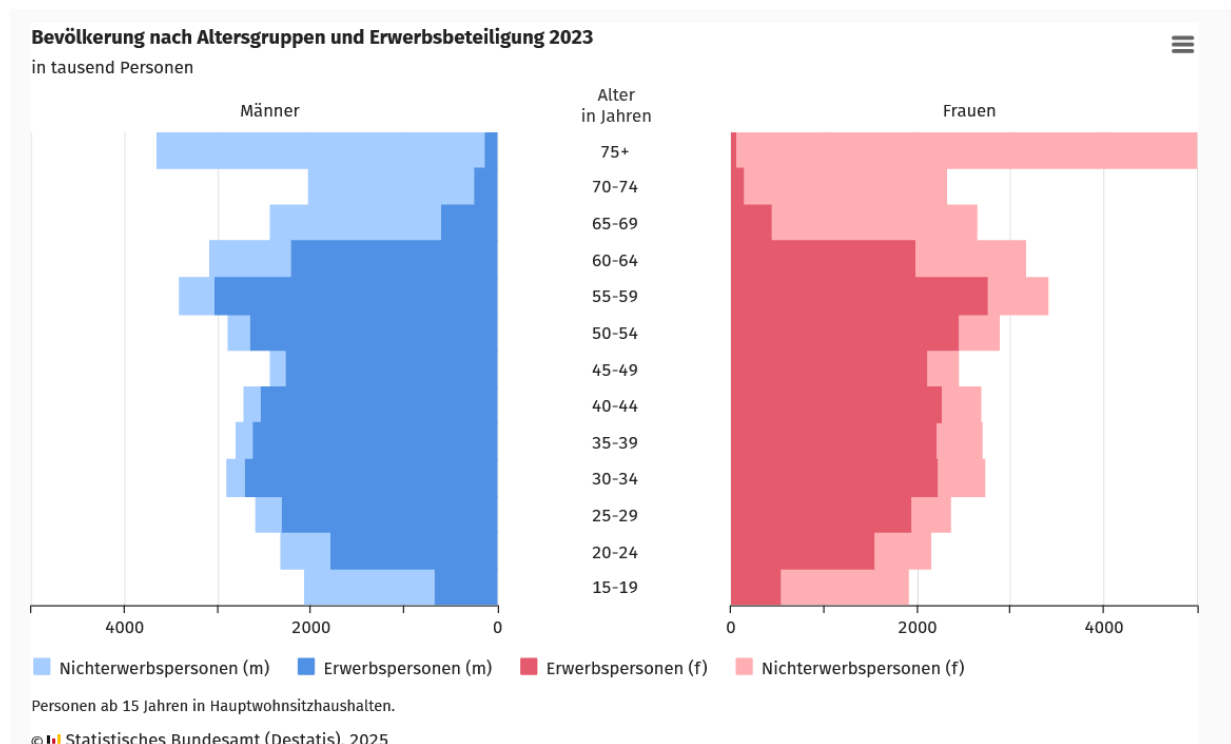


This work is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

The number of people in employment in Germany has risen almost continuously since 2006, with the exception of the years marked by the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. At the end of 2022, there were around 46 million people in employment. Today there are 47.1 million. There are major concerns in Germany about a shortage of labour and skilled workers, especially as the retirement of the baby boomer generation from working life is viewed critically.

The site Statista 2025 provides the following data about the percentage of people per generation in Germany in general: Generation X: 19,7% (aged 43-57); Generation Y: 19,43% (aged 28-42); Baby Boomer 14,62% (aged 58-67); Generation Z: 14,58% (aged 14-27); Generation Alpha 13,1% (aged 0-13); Post-war 9,8% (aged 68-77); Generation '45: 8,6% (aged 78+).

Employment rates over generations: A statistic about working people in Germany shows the following situation:



The statistics say, that currently, the Baby Boomers are the generation contributing with the highest percentage of workers. In 2023, about 26 per cent of the working population was aged 55 or over (https://www.destatis.de/DE/Im-Fokus/Fachkraefte/Erwerbstaetigkeit/_inhalt.html). They will retire over the next 15 years. The younger generations will not be able to supply for the shortage of workers. In the western regions of Germany a stable number of 20- to 66-year-olds is only possible with high net immigration and a rising birth rate (https://www.destatis.de/DE/Im-Fokus/Fachkraefte/Demografie/_inhalt.html).

In some sectors of the labour market the proportion of older workers was significantly higher than in others. These included agriculture, forestry and fishing (39 %), real estate and housing (37 %), other services (33 %), which also includes arts and entertainment. The labour force in the information and communication sector was relatively young, with only 19 % of people in employment aged 55 and over.

COUNTRY SITUATION:

Despite recent political tendencies, Germany is a multicultural society and a 'country with a migration background' (Speech by Frank Walter Steinmeier 2021). The statement reflects and highlights the social

heterogeneity of the country. Since the 1950ies Germany has actively recruited labour force from other countries. Many of these workers remained in Germany also after retirement. The families are now in the second and third generation in Germany.

According to the Federal Statistical Office, in 2023 labour force in Germany consisted of around 12.7 million individuals with a migrant background in (de.statista.com). This corresponds to about 30 percent of the working-age population. However, **no specific data appears to be available on the distribution of the labour force with a migration background across the individual generations**. Indeed, **recent studies mention the need for longitudinal research** that relates the different phases and realities of life to each other in order to analyse the complex factors conditioning the situation (dezim-institut.de 2022).

Despite the scarcity of data, it appears that there are differences in how national cultures value age and aging in general. Different countries seem to have varying approaches to the integration and appreciation of older people. For example, social and family expectations towards older people differ between collectivist and individualistic cultures ("Neue Kultur des Alterns" 2015). Studies like the document „Altersbilder in anderen Kulturen“ by the Robert Bosch Stiftung (2009) give rise to the thesis that there are differences in Western Cultures like America and Germany when compared to Asian ones like Japan. Other studies (for example „Rekonstruktion der Vorstellungen vom Altern und von Einstellungen zur (stationären) Pflege bei Personen mit Migrationshintergrund“, 2011) show that even in Germany there are various cultural approaches to generation and age, depending on the analysed section of society. Even among the population with migrant background, views on aging may alter according to the level of integration in the hosting society. Without adding any more specific information on the topic, also a newer studies conclude that migrant groups bring their own images of aging with them, which often do not correspond to those of the hosting society (for example, „Eine neue Kultur des Alterns“, 2024).

Interestingly, it seems that our understanding of generations is influenced by cultural and historical contexts. The definition of age groups (or generations) is set culturally, namely by what people of a particular age have experienced in common as significant events and share as common values, attitudes and practices (Hofstede 1993). More precisely, while Western societies often seem to focus on historical events and individual values, other cultures emphasise family ties and collective responsibility.

CONCLUSION AND REFERENCES

National cultures and their approach to generation, age and ageing have thus to be understood associated with group/generational culture, with which national culture intersects and overlaps resulting in a complex relationship. Information and studies on the topic of generational differences and understanding of age / aging are a desideratum in general and especially when it comes to working cultures. Although there are some studies which analyse the differences in generations (Baby boomers, X, Y, Z, Millennials), there seem to be a lack of information when generations are related to cultural differences and work. The more it will be interesting to understand what participants in the project will answer to the questionnaire questions.

References:

Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (eds.) (2024), „Eine neue Kultur des Alterns“, Berlin.

Foroutan, Naika (20.04.2015). Die postmigrantische Gesellschaft. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Abrufbar unter <https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/kurzdossiers/205190/die-postmigrantische-gesellschaft/> (last accessed 01.03.2024)

Hofstede, Geert (1993), Interkulturelle Zusammenarbeit, Wiesbaden.

Kolland, Franz (2015), „Neue Kultur des Alterns“, Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz (Hg.), Wien.

Robert Bosch Stiftung (2009), „Altersbilder in anderen Kulturen“, Stuttgart.

Schenk, Liane (2011), „Rekonstruktion der Vorstellungen vom Altern und von Einstellungen zur (stationären) Pflege bei Personen mit Migrationshintergrund“, Institut für Medizinische Soziologie, Berlin.

Links:

de.statista.com

https://www.destatis.de/DE/Im-Fokus/Fachkraefte/Demografie/_inhalt.html