

# How to combine survey data with administrative data successfully?

Lessons from the German study on "Life courses and pension provisions" (LeA)

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## Motivation

Combination of data sources (record linkage) is increasingly popular. It offers many benefits, but also introduces new sources of error.

German data protection regulations: record linkage only with written consent (signature).

How much additional selectivity is introduced by the record linkage?

## Data - Survey on Live Courses and Pension Provisions (LeA)



**Population**  
People who live in Germany, born 1957-1976 and their partners



**Sample size**  
N = 9.447 respondents



**Survey year**  
2016



**Interview mode**  
Computer - assisted personal interviews



**Sample source**  
Registration office



**Data**  
Survey data and administrative data from individual German pension insurance accounts

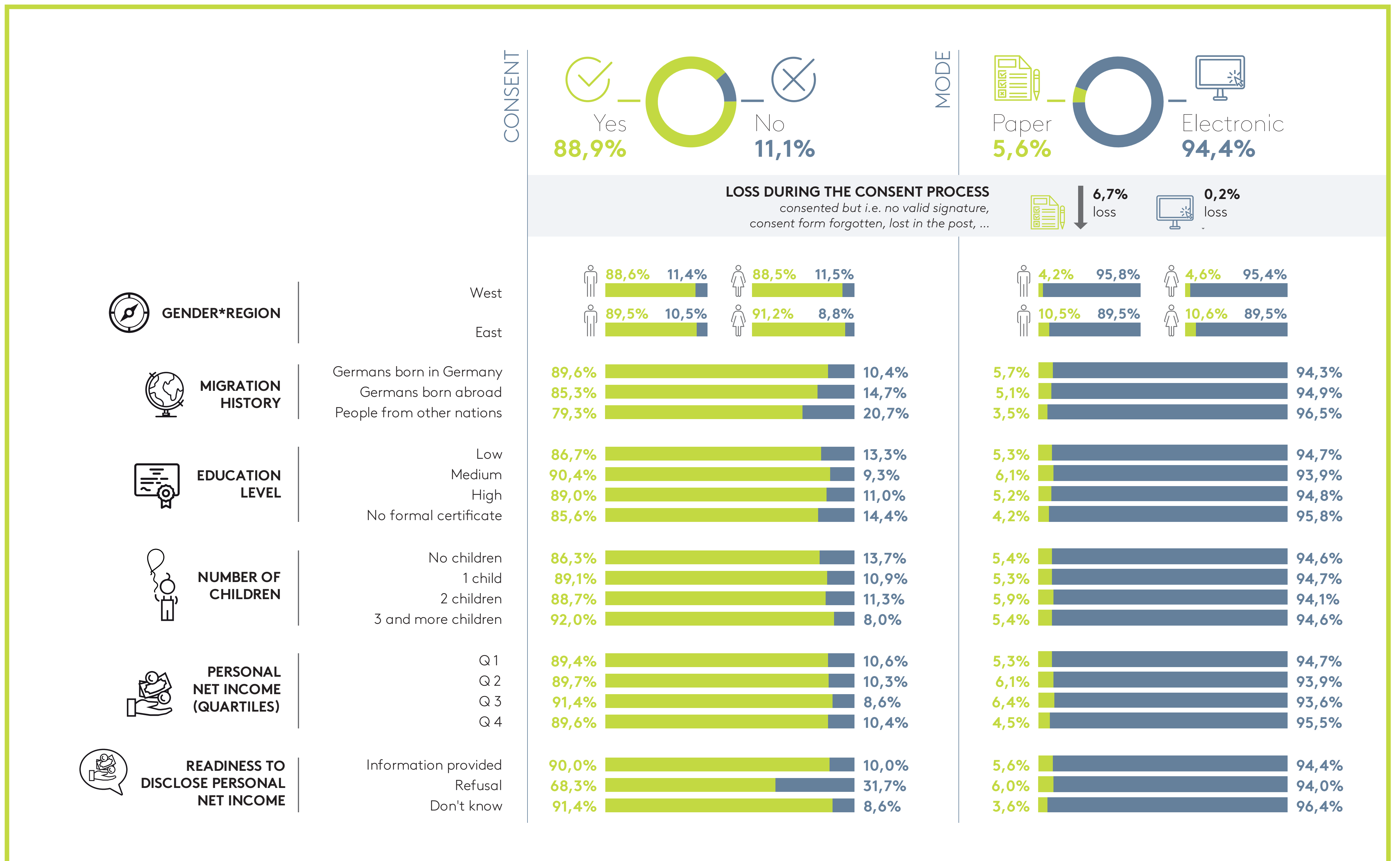


**Content**  
Detailed information on work histories and pension provision activities in Germany and abroad



**Household context**  
Information on partners (irrespective of their age)

## BIVARIATE ANALYSIS



## LOGIT ANALYSIS



## Conclusion

**Good news:**  
Overall, the precondition of written consent for the record linkage does not introduce much additional selectivity.

Groups who are less likely to consent are well known from previous survey methods research into sample selectivity and non-response error:  
- People who are generally wary of disclosing income information  
- Migrants

Electronic consent forms help by streamlining the process of consenting.

## Recommendations

Offer low burden digital solutions if legally possible.

Have an old-fashioned paper alternative, as some subgroups will be uneasy with the digital approach.

Mixed mode can assure a high consent rate with little selectivity.

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