"Gender-Related Decision-Making on the Migration from East to West Germany: An Analysis with the SOEP-data."

Silvia Maja Melzer

Next to the migration of the young and the highly qualified, a new trend can be observed in the mobility patterns in Germany lately. Young women leave Eastern Germany at disproportionately high rates. In fact, most eastern regions experience an imbalance between the sexes. Thus, at the age-span of women aged 18 to 29, there are only 80 women per 100 men. Comparable to the rural areas of Greece and northern Scandinavia, the ratio of men and women is similarly uneven. This imbalance reinforces demographic problems, which can already be found in Eastern Germany, as for example a low fertility rate.

This process has for a long time been ignored in the scientific field. Any migration behaviour of women was treated as a residual factor. These movements were excluded from scientific research following the argument that women's migration behaviour was not caused by economic considerations. As a consequence, they were treated as 'tied movers' or ‚at best, gender was used as a controlling variable. The situation in Eastern Germany shows that this view is not longer appropriate. In addition, more and more international studies stress out the fact that women participate increasingly at migrational movements. Therefore, this paper aims to examine empirically the migration from Eastern to Western Germany. Its main focus lies on gender-related differences in migration behaviours. Furthermore, one aspect of this work studies the impact of regional factors on migration, such as unemployment or spatial income level.

This analysis is based on a hierarchic linear model. This method gives, on the one hand, the possibility to include regional factors (such as the unemployment rate) into the analysis. On the other hand, it allows for differentiation between the labour market for men and for women. This is necessary as women not only work in different industry sectors, at different hierarchical positions and employment models, but also do these markets themselves show different qualities. To give an example: throughout the decade of the 90s, the unemployment levels for women were significantly higher than those for men in Eastern Germany. The hierarchical statistical models used for this study are structured over tree levels. At the fist level we would find the regions, sorted according to the aggregation of population. The spatial qualities like unemployment rates are set at the next level. Finally, time periods of one year's duration at the individual stage are located at the third level. In this way, the hazard rate of migration can be calculated with a logistic regression. For the analysis SOEP-data are used. These data are enhanced with the spatial information of the IABS-data.

First descriptive results show that between men and women, there are in fact significant differences in migration behaviours. Young women tend to be much more mobile than men in this group, even if we must state the fact that mobility is especially high in this group. However, the willingness to move decreases much faster over the life-course of women then those of men, who stay longer mobile then women. Also, the impact of regional factors differs between the sexes.

Silvia Maja Melzer

Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung

Graduiertenprogram

Weddigenstraße 20-22

90478 Nürnberg

Tel:0911/179-5363

Mail: Silvia-Maja.Melzer@iab.de