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Causes and consequences of the gender-specific migration from East to West Germany

Silvia Maja Melzer

Dissertationen

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Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.ddb.de abrufbar.

Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades an
der Fakultät für Soziologie der Universität Bielefeld
23. April 2013
vorgelegt von Silvia Maja Melzer
geboren am 21. Juni 1979, in Danzig (Polen)

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Zweitgutachter: Prof. Dr. Herbert Brücker, Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg und Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung

Herausgeber der Reihe IAB-Bibliothek: Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (IAB), Regensburger Straße 104, 90478 Nürnberg, Telefon (09 11) 179-0 ■ **Redaktion:** Martina Dorsch, Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 90327 Nürnberg, Telefon (09 11) 179-32 06, E-Mail: martina.dorsch@iab.de ■ **Gesamtherstellung:** W. Bertelsmann Verlag, Bielefeld (wbv.de) ■ **Rechte:** Kein Teil dieses Werkes darf ohne vorherige Genehmigung des IAB in irgendeiner Form (unter Verwendung elektronischer Systeme oder als Ausdruck, Fotokopie oder Nutzung eines anderen Vervielfältigungsverfahrens) über den persönlichen Gebrauch hinaus verarbeitet oder verbreitet werden.

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ISBN 978-3-7639-4103-2 (Print)
ISBN 978-3-7639-4104-9 (E-Book)
Best.-Nr. 300902 www.iabshop.de www.iab.de

Contents

Acknowledgement

Unquestioningly, I am tremendously indebted to my supervisors Martin Diewald and Herbert Brücker for their advice and tuition. They enabled the pursuit of my research interest, were always ready if a piece of advice was needed, and opened up the (financial) means to participate in the research community. I am also thankful to Hans-Peter Blossfeld for the possibility to attend his research colloquium and for his advice. During the time of my dissertation I was a member of the Graduate Program of the Institute of Employment Research and was partly also employed there. Later I was employed at the Collaborative Research Center 882. Both institutions provided the right environment to work on my thesis.

Some of the work was conducted during my stay at the Swedish Institute for Social Research at Stockholm University. I want to thank Michael Tåhlin for being a wonderful host and for advice he gave regarding my work. More work was carried out at the Tilburg University. I want to thank Ruud Muffels for his encouragement and for our pleasant cooperation. I really enjoyed working with you! I also want to thank other members of the SOFI and Tilburg University for the great time. There are two articles written in cooperation included in my dissertation. I want to thank Natascha Nisic and Thomas Hinz for their cooperation. I am happy to work with you!

Writing a dissertation is not possible without the help of others, who's advice and help point (more likely push or pull) you in the right direction. Many persons supported me and my work in small or large ways and I am able to mention only a few of them by name. Without their support this work could not exist and I am grateful to all of them. Sometimes the support was the right guidance at the right time, as the advice from Timo Baas on how to write an article. Sometimes it was a shared cigarette or a coffee break to calm down my nerves after an important meeting. Other help occupied more time and resources as the help from Kathi Ruppe, who not only revised a lot of my writing, but also brought me through the first year at the IAB, providing not only advice on my work, but also on life.

I am also thankful to many of the GradAB members who worked at their dissertation around the same time as I did. I learned a lot from you guys! I am thankful for your academic support. I enjoyed especially our preparation meetings before conferences. However, most grateful I am for the great time I had with you guys! After my relocation to Bielefeld I found a highly supportive environment and great new colleagues. I would especially like to thank the B3 team and Anja Abendroth, Björn Andernach, Mareike Reimann, Stephanie Pausch, and Reinhard Schunck for the possibility to work in the project, while finishing my thesis.

A lot of this thesis was in circulation in several papers, was presented at different conferences, and was discussed by several people face-to-face. There are

lot of people who read my articles. Dominik Morbitzer you read every article twice, thank you! I am also grateful to Alexia Mayermann for her extensive help with the German summary. Katja Freistein helped me in various ways with my thesis and gave me a lot of academic advice. I especially enjoyed our Sunday dinners with Tatort.

Most importantly I would like to thank my parents for their love, constant encouragement, and support. Michael, it is great to have a brother like you. Marcus, thank you for your support, I profited immensely from your relaxed way and the programs for the weekends you put together.

Chapter I

Introduction

1 Motivation

Increased migration of women has been among the major trends in international migration in the last two centuries (Castles and Miller 1993). Women comprise half of the migration flow worldwide (Dumount et al. 2007) and occasionally even outnumber migrating men (United Nations 2006), a trend that also occurs in East-West migration[1] in Germany. These trends are not necessarily new, as evidenced by the feminization of transatlantic migration in the 19th and 20th centuries (Castles and Miller 1993; Diner 1983).[2] At the same time, the migration of women is under-researched; women are perceived as following their partners and exerting limited influence on the household decision to migrate (Lutz 2010, p. 1648). Such assumptions render it unnecessary to account for women's characteristics or the systematic differences in the migration behavior of men and women. Factors that may cause differences in the migration decisions of men and women are ignored. Women's migration remains overlooked. Ignoring the differences in men's and women's migration behavior is problematic not only because half of all migrants are women and their reasons behind migration remain uninvestigated but also because the recent increase in migration flows is mainly caused by women's greater participation in migration (cf Castles and Miller 1993). Therefore, to investigate recent developments, the focus must shift to women's migration. There are several reasons why women's and especially highly qualified women's migration behavior is under-researched.

First, assumptions prevail that women migrate mostly to join their families, although researchers have long recognized that women also behave as independent economic actors (Donato 1993; Donato 1999; Hugo 1993; Pessar 1986; Pessar 1988; Zlotnik 1993). The migration of women as independent actors is understudied (Cohen 1995; see also: Kofman 1999; Zlotnik 1995). Women are rarely understood as workers who participate in the labor market because their work in the domestic services (cf Ehrenreich and Russell Hochschild 2002; Lutz 2009; Lutz 2010; Pedraza 1991; Raijman et al. 2003) is often overlooked. By ignoring women's economic participation and economic motives for migration, we fail to reflect the real-life situation that migrating women face and may reach biased and oversimplified interpretations of migration patterns.

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1 I use the term *migration* because it is commonly used in the English-speaking world in which migration is understood as relocation across and within countries. However, I also use this term to refer to the unique situation in East and West Germany and to stress that relocation between East and West Germany refers to a relocation between two regions that are now parts of the same country but that once represented two separate countries. Historical differences and similarities, economic situations, and normative aspects create a unique situation in which East-West migration cannot be understood as a simple relocation from one region of a country to another; it is also not international migration.

2 The abundant participation of women in migration was already common in the 19th century (Gabaccia 1996; Harzig 2003), when women accounted for a large share of the migration from Ireland to the US (Diner 1983).

Second, focusing on the migration of women as part of a family implicitly results in a lack of research on the migration of highly skilled women (Kofman 1998; Kofman and Raghuram 2009; Pedraza 1991), which is key because the availability of highly qualified workers is important for countries' long-term economic growth (cf Lucas 1988) and because increasingly more countries are attempting to attract highly skilled migrants. In general, migration research pays scant attention to the fact that migrant women also hold professional and managerial positions (Kofman 1999).[3] This is true even though the migration of highly skilled women combines the two most current trends in migration research: the feminization of migration and the migration of highly skilled workers (Dumont et al. 2007). Bringing women's mobility into focus should therefore widen our understanding of migration, including the "brain gain, brain drain" dimension.

Third, the main body of research seeks to explain the migration of women using qualitative studies. As Curran et al. (2006) note, by the mid-1990s the focus of migration studies shifted from research on the migration of women to research on gender and migration. Moreover, the methodological framework shifted from quantitative to qualitative research. The qualitative studies concentrate on the gender issues of migration, whereas the quantitative research generally fails to address gender differences. Quantitative research on women's migration can help to deepen our understanding of migration by accounting for factors that influence men's and women's migration decisions at the micro, macro and meso levels differently.

Finally, as Calavita (2006, p. 125) indicated, *"If there is one bias that penetrates much of [migration] literature, it is an almost singular focus on immigrants who are poor".* The migration flows that receive the most attention originate in (poor) developing countries, where the migrants aim to relocate to (wealthy) industrialized and post-industrialized countries (e.g., Durand et al. 2001; Massey and Espinosa 1997; Taylor 1987). Migration within industrialized countries receives less attention; however, the reasons for migration may differ for people who relocate from or within developing and industrialized countries. Factors such as income levels and access to jobs, which generate migration in industrialized countries, may also lead to migration in developing countries. Nevertheless, it can be expected that the manner in which these factors influence the migration decisions varies according to the degree of industrialization, the culture and the political context of the country.

3 For research on the mobility of highly qualified women, see Hugo (1993); Kofman (1998); Kofman and Raghuram (2009); Pedraza (1991).

2 Contribution

This work aims to fill at least some of the gaps in the literature focusing on the East-West migration in Germany, which represents one of the recent migration flows in which women outnumber men. This study examines the reasons behind women's higher migration rates from East to West Germany. The fact that women are more likely than men to leave East for West Germany (cf Dienel and Gerloff 2003; Gerloff 2004; for the higher migration rates among women, see also Hunt 2006; Windzio 2007) is particularly curious because their higher migration rates are not consistent with the predictions of most theoretical frameworks. Moreover, a comparison of the wage differences between East and West Germany shows that the wage gap between East and West Germany is smaller for women than for men, which suggests that men should be more likely to migrate.

This topic deserves attention because it reinforces problematic demographic developments as aging of the population. Moreover, together with other trends as lower return migration to East Germany by women or higher migration of women abroad it leads to severe demographic consequences. For example, in 2007, in nearly all regions of East Germany, there were fewer than 90 women in the age group between 21 and 25 for every 100 men. This ratio was even worse for slightly older women (see Figure 1 and cf Grünheid 2009; Kröhnert and Klingholz 2007). In the age group between 26 and 30, fewer than 86 women lived in East Germany for every 100 men.

Gender and migration

I investigate which factors at the micro, macro and meso levels may influence migration decisions and outcomes in a gender-specific manner. The main challenge of analyzing the causes and consequences of women's migration is not only that migration can be influenced in a gender-specific manner at the micro and macro levels but also that women's social networks may determine different migration decisions and outcomes for single women compared with women in partnerships. I expect that gender alone does not account for the differences between migrant men and women but that gender and partnerships interact and play a mediating role in migration. The interrelation of these two dimensions results in not only different migration patterns between men and women but also entirely different migration outcomes for single women and women in partnerships. I focus on individual migration in the first two articles and on family migration in the three last articles.

The manner in which gender influences migration creates a highly complex research scenario, placing high demands on the data and empirical methods used.

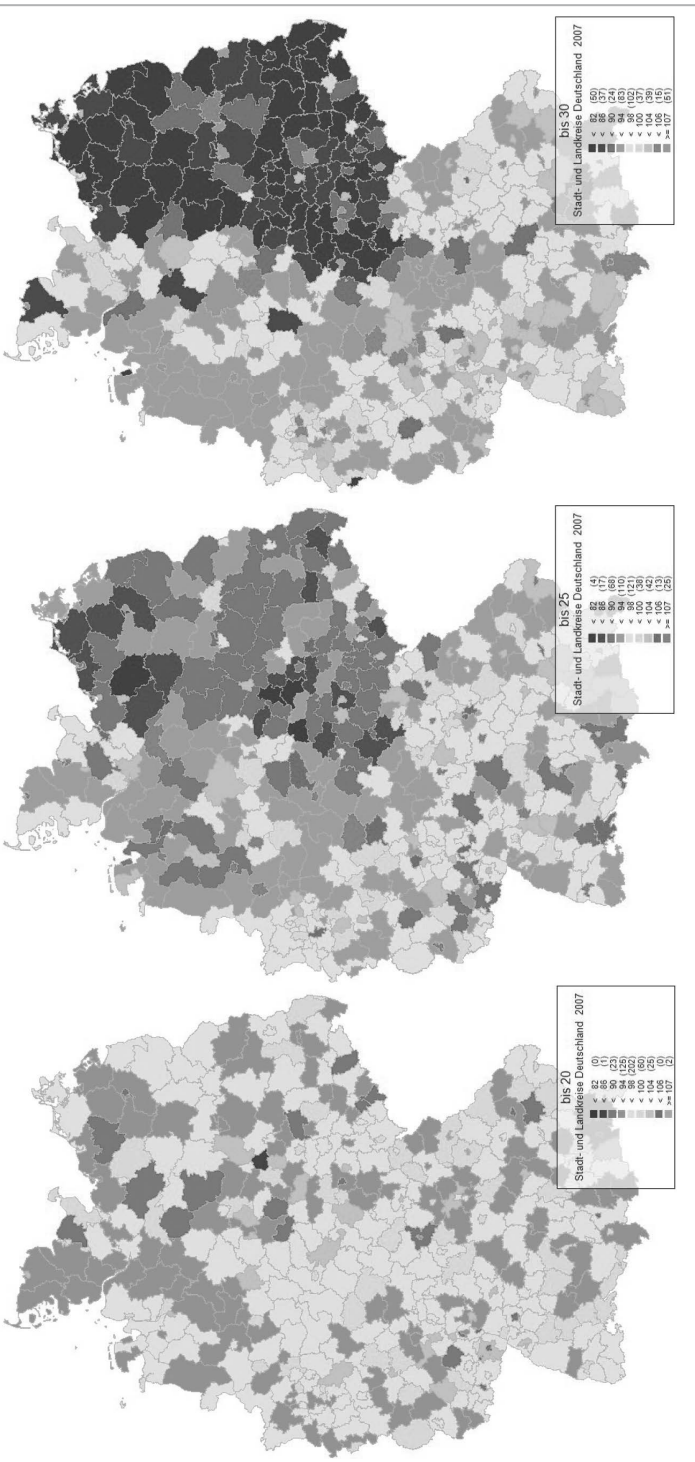


Figure 1: Ratio of women living in Germany per 100 men; the first age group is 16 to 20 years; the second 21 to 25 and the third age group is 26 to 30

Source: Statistical Federal Office Germany; data 2007; own calculations.

To account for the topic's complexity, I investigate migration from different angles (causes and consequences of migration) and examine different groups (singles and couples) while maintaining a focus on the influence of central factors such as education and qualifications. Finally, I also compare the mobility patterns of persons who relocate under different economic conditions, more precisely, people relocating from East to West Germany and within West Germany.

Gender and migration theories

This study adds to the limited theoretical discussion of women's migration by providing an overview of theoretical frameworks. The fact that women's migration can only be understood when investigated from different angles is reflected in the choices of the migration theories reviewed. First, I present an overview of the classical migration theories that are used to investigate individual migration and can also be used as a theoretical framework for the special case of East-West migration in Germany. I also provide a summary of the migration theories used to investigate family relocation. Although the role that gender plays in the decision to migrate is central to family relocation, that role is mostly neglected in migration theories that focus on individuals. Finally, I discuss briefly two theoretical ideas that are specially designed to describe the differences in migration patterns of men and women who relocate individually.

Data and methods

For the empirical investigation of the causes and consequences of migration, I use the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) data that were collected by the German Institute of Economic Research (DIW) beginning in 1990. The existing research on the specific context of East-West migration in Germany was primarily conducted shortly after reunification, with the longest period investigated at the individual level spanning into the year 2001. Meanwhile, the available data since reunification cover more than 20 years and allow for more complex research questions, such as analyses of gender-specific influence of education on the decision to migrate and the application of more sophisticated research methods such as multilevel models with random (see Rabe-Hesketh and Skrodal 2012a; Rabe-Hesketh and Skrodal 2012b) or fixed effects (see Engel 1998; Snijders and Bosker 1999) or Heckman selections (see Heckman 1979; Heckman and Smith 1996).

3 Historical context East-West migration in Germany

3.1 Differences and similarities

Over 20 years ago, East and West Germany were combined to form a single country with the same institutional framework. Reunification equalized the political system in East and West Germany and other aspects of people's lives such as pensions, education, and systems of taxation.

However, East and West Germany remain divided by their historical past, their economic situation and certain cultural aspects. The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) have experienced significantly different historical pasts: the FRG was a western liberal democracy, and the GDR was a socialist Warsaw Pact country. Moreover, the economic systems in the FRG and the GDR also differed significantly, and East Germany's economy continues to lag far behind that of West Germany in terms of development.

In 1991, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the new federal states (excluding Berlin) accounted for only seven percent of the GDP of the united Germany (with East and West Berlin, eleven percent), even though the new federal states held approximately one-third of the territory and approximately one-fourth of the population. Until 2009, this GDP percentage rose by only five percentage points to a level of twelve percent (with East and West Berlin included, fifteen percent) (calculations on data of the Statistical Agency of the Federal Union and the Länder). In addition, income levels vary between East and West Germany. In 2009, the hourly wage for West German men was 20.1 Euros, whereas the hourly wages for East German men was 30.3 percent lower at 14 Euros per hour. The difference between East and West German women's incomes was only 12.9 percent; the East German women's incomes were 13.2 Euros per hour, and the incomes of West German women were 15.2 Euros per hour (Statistisches Bundesamt 2010, p. 49). Notably, the gender wage gap is higher in West Germany than in East Germany (in the East, the incomes of women are only 80 cents, or 5.7 percent, lower). In West Germany, the difference is 24.7 percent or 5 Euros (Statistisches Bundesamt 2010, p. 49). Moreover, the unemployment rates remain nearly twice as high in the East as in the West (Bundesagentur für Arbeit Statistik 2013).

The political ideology in the GDR emphasized gender equality and the labor market participation of women. In the FRG, the main breadwinner family model was common (Pfau-Effinger 1996). In the GDR, the employment of both partners was most common (Lauterbach 1994) and men and women led more similar lives in the GDR (Blossfeld et al. 1995). Currently, women in East Germany participate in the labor market more often than their West German counterparts and contribute

a greater amount to the household income. The percentage of household income contributed by women, according to various sources, is between 40 (Lemke 2002) and 43 percent (Dölling 2002). The incomes of West German women account for only 18 percent of the entire household income (Dölling 2002; Lemke 2002). Until today, East German men and women express more egalitarian gender views than West Germans (Kreyenfeld and Geisler 2006; Lück and Hofäcker 2003; Matysiak and Steinmetz 2008).

Finally, the structure of families in East and West Germany remains significantly different. In 2009, in East Germany, 40.2 percent of adults were married compared with 46.3 percent of the West German population. Moreover, in East Germany, 8 percent of couples cohabited compared with 6.2 percent in West Germany during the same year. Thus a higher share of the East Germany population lived alone. Although the current breadwinner model, encompassing traditional gender roles, is supported by the German tax system (Dingeldey 2000, p. 125), alternative living arrangements are more common in East than in West Germany. It is also notable that the differences in East and West Germany were greater in 2009 than they were in 1996, which indicates that at least in this domain, there is little harmonization.

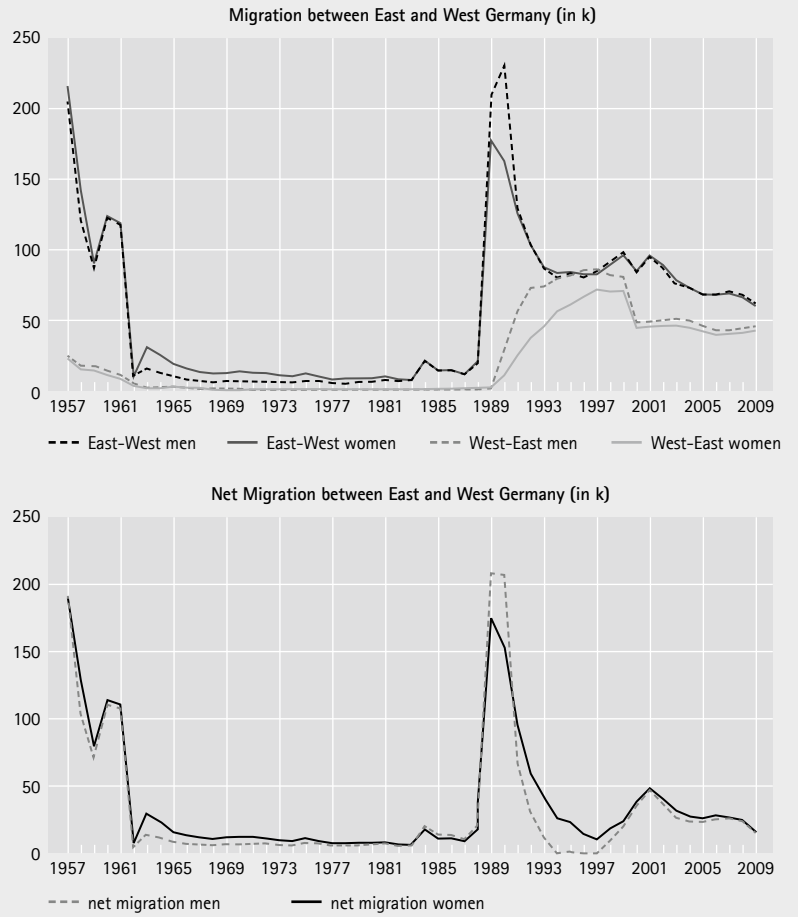
3.2 East–West migration in Germany

The East-West migration in Germany is indivisible from German reunification and the historical changes that occurred in 1989. The most prominent event was the fall of the Berlin Wall, which was visible evidence of the breakdown of the GDR and the entire Eastern Bloc as well as the end of the Cold War (Zelikow and Rice 1996). The fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 enabled the East German population to freely and legally relocate to the FRG for the first time in 28 years. For the GDR, the fall of the Berlin Wall was only one step in the direction of reunification; that event was followed by the first free election in March 1990 and then the Unification Treaty, which accomplished the consolidation of the monetary, economic and social union of Germany in July 1990 (Bahrmann and Links 1999; Pond 1993). The final step occurred in October 1990, when the GDR and the FRG became politically unified.

For the people of East Germany, this process opened the possibility of migrating to the West and removed the restrictions on where they could live. Unsurprisingly, East Germany experienced high outmigration, with 400 thousand people migrating to West Germany in 1990 alone (Figure 2). However, the connection between migration and German reunification goes deeper. Apart from the poor economic situation in the GDR, which went hand-in-hand with the economic crisis in the

Soviet Union, the mass protests and outmigration that occurred shortly before the fall also contributed to the breakdown of the GDR. Migration to West Germany became feasible. The Hungarian government opened its borders to Austria in May 1989, disregarding the conventions of the Warschauer Pakt (Bahrmann and Links 1999; Pond 1993). By 1989, 390 thousand people had migrated to the West (Figure 2).

Figure 2 and 3: East-West migration in Germany



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2011) Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt, p. 53 ff.

The high migration rates in 1989 and 1990 matched the migration outflow of 1957, the highest figures of outmigration before the Berlin Wall was built. In the first two years after the fall, more men migrated to West Germany than women

(Figure 3). This picture changed after 1991, when more women migrated than men (cf also Grünheid 2009; Mai 2006; Schlömer 2004). However, beginning in 1991, the migration flows for both men and women declined steadily. In 1993, the flow of those leaving East Germany stabilized at approximately 80 thousand men and women per year. Beginning in 2003, the level dropped again by ten thousand to approximately 70 thousand. This indicates that even if the migration flows declined shortly after reunification, the eastern portion of Germany has continued to lose approximately 25 thousand men and slightly more women every year since reunification. Overall, by 1995, the East German population had declined by 7.9 percent compared with its pre-reunification levels, and by 2000, it had declined by 10.7 percent.[4] By 2008, the East German population had declined by 11.7 percent, or 1.7 million people. However, other factors also contributed to this decrease in the population, including declines in fertility and migration abroad (Statistisches Bundesamt 2010, p. 10).

The German reunification allows for the investigation of unique research questions possible and should also enable this study to improve our understanding of the East-West migration in Germany and international migration. For example, the identical political and institutional framework in combination with extensive economic differences renders comparisons of the migration patterns between East and West Germany particularly useful, primarily because reasons for migration that are connected to political or educational systems common in international migration can automatically be eliminated.

4 The structure of this work

This study begins with an overview of the theoretical frameworks that exist in the migration literature. In addition to the discussion of the most common individual-level migration theories, this overview reviews theories that describe family migration and outlines the few theoretical ideas that focus on the differences in migration behavior between single men and women. The theories are presented as theoretical concepts that can be utilized simultaneously rather than as competing frameworks (cf Massey et al. 1993).

The second section comprises the empirical contribution of this work, which is structured into five chapters, each containing one article. All of the articles focus on the causes or the consequences of East-West migration for men and women, although the articles have various emphases.

4 For the population of the GDR in 1989, please refer to the Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik (1989, p. 335). The figures presented do not include Berlin because the statistics office does not differentiate between East and West Berlin after 2000.

The first article focuses on the causes of individual migration from East to West Germany for both men and women. The purpose is to investigate the gender-specific differences in the migration process. This article focuses on the influence of education on migration and the self-selection processes involved in migration. This article is motivated by findings in recent international research that indicate that level of education influences the migration decisions of men and women differently (Dienel and Gerloff 2003; Dumount et al. 2007; Feliciano 2008; Gerloff 2004; Stecklov et al. 2010).

This article accounts for the gender-specific interplay of factors at the micro and macro levels. For example, it can be shown that education determines women's migration decisions to a greater degree than it determines men's migration decisions. Women are self-selected with regard to their education. Only women with at least an upper secondary education are able to profit from migration and are thus willing to relocate. Because the economic conditions are more favorable for men, men are able to profit from migration even if they have less education. Thus, self-selection based on education is lower for men who migrate from East to West Germany.

The second article shifts the research perspective and focuses on the consequences of migration for men and women from East to West Germany. This section focuses on the effects of migration on non-monetary factors such as subjective well-being (SWB). This article adds to the understanding the development of SWB through the process of migration. This topic has not yet been investigated using longitudinal data and information from before and after relocation. The results indicate that migrants are indeed able to improve their SWB relocating. For men, this improvement can be associated with better economic conditions in West Germany.

The third article goes beyond the investigation of the determinants of East-West migration in Germany and investigates a broader spectrum of mobility decisions of men and women. This article accounts for the complexity of mobility decisions and that commuting between East and West Germany and migration may be interrelated. Commuting may serve as an alternative or stepping stone to migration. The aim of this article is to show how the mobility choices of men and women differ, which factors have gender-specific influence on the decision to commute and to migrate and, finally, how these processes are interrelated. A question motivating this article is whether the different choices in mobility forms men and women prefer may help explain the higher migration rates found in East-West migration for women than for men.

To seriously consider the effect of marital status on the migration of men and women, researchers must not only control for the family context but also investigate the forces that drive family migration decisions as both partners' characteristics. The fourth article presented here investigates the migration patterns of men and

women who relocate with their partners, with the migration of persons who relocate alone and, thus, do not need to consider the location preferences of partners. This article adds to the literature on East-West migration in Germany by investigating the meso level and analyzing how a partner's characteristics influence men's and women's migration decisions. This article's contribution to international research is an analysis of the migration of people who have been socialized in a post-socialist country. Information on the interplay of marital status, family groupings and gender norms in determining the migration behavior of men and women and comparing individual and family migration is provided. The importance of being in a partnership for migration decisions is emphasized. Women are much more restricted in their mobility decisions due to partnership than are men. Moreover, whereas men abstain from migration because their partner's characteristics, such as high income, restrict migration, women in partnerships retreat from migration simply because of the presence of a partner, regardless of that partner's characteristics.

The last article presented here contributes to the topic of family migration by investigating both the determinants and consequences of family migration. Although family migration is a joint decision, migration may have different effects on the income and employment of men and women in partnerships. This article focuses on these differences. In addition, this article takes advantage of the fact that the situation in the labor market differs significantly in East and West Germany even though the institutional settings are identical. Merging the analyses on the causes and consequences of migration, this article combines the inconsistent results obtained at individual and family levels. Moreover, this article examines why East German women in partnerships, who appear to be more egalitarian and make greater contributions to household income, are unable to benefit from their higher education when relocating.

The work concludes by combining the results of the different articles and providing a more general overview and description of the East-West migration of women in Germany.

The results of this study may prove interesting for future research and policy makers. Politicians may be interested in the mechanisms that drive migration from East to West Germany. Moreover, information gained from research on East-West migration may enhance our understanding of other migration flows such as the relocation of people to Germany following the enlargement of the EU because data on such recent developments remain limited.

Most importantly, the investigation of women's migration should add to our understanding of the general phenomenon of migration, not only because gender is often neglected but also because gender may be a dimension that causes inequality (cf Portes 1997, p. 816).

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