

## **Labour market sex segregation in a regional dimension: Human or symbolic capital? Some empirical findings from southwest Germany**

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Abstract:

Disparities in income are a main indicator for sex segregation in the labour market. The average income of women is, taking labour time into account, lower than the income of men. This pattern can be found in all industrial nations and economists trace this problem back to the choices of individuals. Thus disparities in income are a result from differences in qualification and productivity between the sexes or can be traced back to different occupational choices of men and women. Another explanation is seen in the direct discrimination of women by the employers. In this context sociologists emphasise the importance of gender as a social category, which implies a gender specific attribution of role patterns and produces – beyond individual qualification and job performance – unequal integration and asymmetric positioning in the occupational system.

The disparities in income between the sexes have been studied in extenso under the mentioned aspects, but what patterns of these disparities can be found if the data are disaggregated into regional types? So the starting point for our analysis is the question: Are there regional disparities in the gender pay gap? What are the influences of the practised occupation, age, qualification, nationality, enterprise size and the branch of economic activity on the variance of income of men and women in different regional types? The data base for the analysis is the BA Employment Panel – a 2% sample of all German employees - of the German Federal Employment Office. Using multiple linear regression the explanatory value of the selected influence factors was tested.

Not surprisingly the income of women is much lower than that of men in all regional types and also the incomes of both sexes are lower in the periphery than in the core. But taking the gender pay gap into account it can be seen that there are great differences between the regional types. Looking at the regression models the overall explained variance is much lower for the women's models and differs significantly for both sexes between the regional types. Also the explanatory value of the factors qualification and enterprise size vary greatly between the sexes and the regional types. As it is qualification in the men's case which explains the income best, it is in the women's case the size of the enterprise they are working in. This is quite astonishing as one could suggest that the explanatory value of qualification should be the same for both sexes.

In the paper to be presented we would like to discuss these findings in the light of human capital theory by Becker, the theory of symbolic capital by Bourdieu and the theory of spatial diffusion of innovations by Hägerstrand.