

## **Symposium „Spatial Mobility, Families and Gender Inequality in the Labour Market“, 28th-29th March 2017 at Gästehaus Teerhof (Bremen)**

**Organizing Committee: Prof. Dr. Johannes Huinink, Dr. Sergi Vidal & Tim Schröder**

Despite considerable declines in labour market gender inequality, differences against women in terms of pay, work hours, over-qualification and promotion opportunities still remain. Gender inequalities permeate household relocation and mobility decisions and outcomes. Compared to men, women cover shorter commuting distances, are less likely to lead long-distance household relocations for a job, and their careers benefit little when this happens. Instead, women who follow men (i.e. the *trailing wives*) often experience lasting negative impacts on their employment and earnings. Research has drawn attention to the *domestic* and *secondary-earner* roles of women in families to explain observed within-couple gender differences in spatial mobility among dual earners. However, the processes underlying the emergence and perpetuation of gender asymmetries in the causes and consequences of contemporary family relocations and partner's mobility are not yet well understood. The symposium will cast light on relevant underresearched dimensions of the association between the spatial mobility of families and gender-based labour market inequality.

The one-and-half day symposium will be held at the Teerhof Guesthouse – University of Bremen (Germany) on the 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The event is open to the public and there are no fees associated with the participation, however seats are limited. Advance registration is requested.

Please contact: Daniela Hög - [hoeg@uni-bremen.de](mailto:hoeg@uni-bremen.de)

The organization of the symposium has been possible through financial support from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), the University of Bremen, and the Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course.

## Programme

### Day 1

12:30 – 12:50	Registration, coffee and finger food
12:50 – 13:00	Welcome and Introduction
13:00 – 13:45	<b>Clara H. Mulder</b> – Family ties and gendered patterns of residential relocations
13:45 – 14:00	Coffee break
14:00 – 14:45	<b>Darren Smith</b> – Geographies of family migration, (non)traditionality and forming formations
14:45 – 15:30	<b>Phillip Lersch and Sergi Vidal</b> - Residential Mobility and Changes in Gender Attitudes
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee break
15:45 – 16:30	<b>Heiko Rüger, Gil Viry and Detlev Lück</b> – How partnership, fertility and work-related spatial mobility histories intersect?: A French-German comparison
16:30 – 17:15	<b>Gil Viry and Heiko Rüger</b> – The contrasting perceptions of mothers being highly mobile for their job: the importance of the family context
18:30	Dinner at “Bremer Ratskeller” *

### Day 2

09:15 – 10:00	<b>Silvia Melzer and Thomas Hinz</b> - Decisions on commuting and migration between eastern and western Germany and the influence of education and overqualification
10:00 – 10:45	<b>Martin Abraham and Sebastian Bähr</b> – Migration of couples: Should we expect gender effects?
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 11:45	<b>Natascha Nisic</b> – Mobility decisions of dual-career couples- new evidence on the “co-location” problem
11:45 – 12:30	<b>Stefanie Kley and Sonja Drobnič</b> - Moving for Family Nest-Building. A Stumbling Stone for Mothers' Labour Force Participation?
12:30 – 13:30	Free lunch
13:30 – 14:15	<b>Sebastian Bähr</b> – Regional mobility of unemployed workers in the wake of the German Hartz reforms
14:15 – 15:00	<b>Tim Schröder</b> – Tied to the labour market? How occupational characteristics explain differential wage returns to family migration within couples
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee break
15:15 – 16:00	<b>Michael Thomas, Clara H. Mulder and Thomas J. Cooke</b> – Geographical distances between separated parents: A longitudinal analysis
16:00 – 16:30	Roundtable & Farewell

\* Please note that dinner expenses are not covered by the symposium fund.

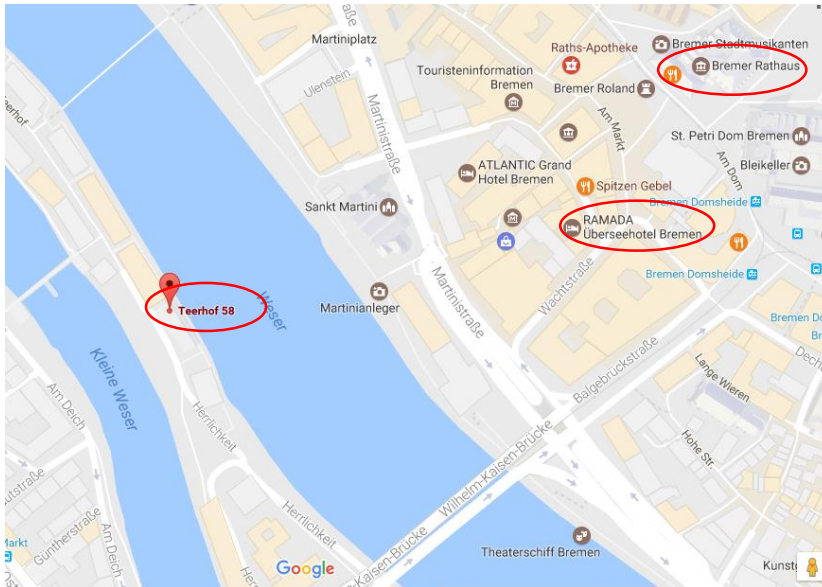
Location: Bremer Ratskeller, Am Markt, 28195 Bremen

## Directions

### *Gästehaus Teerhof*

Auf dem Teerhof 58

28199 Bremen



**From the airport:** Coming from the airport you can take the tram 6 in direction to “Universität” and get off at “Wilhelm-Kaisen-Brücke” (approx. 8 minutes). Then follow the street on the opposite side of the street called "Herrlichkeit" and go straight forward until you reach the street called “Auf dem Teerhof”. The first big building on the right side (number 58) is the guesthouse.

**From central station:** Coming from central station you can either take tram 6 (direction “Flughafen”) or tram 4 (direction “Arsten”) and get off at “Wilhelm-Kaisen-Brücke” (approx. 8 minutes). See description from the airport.

**From the Ramada Hotel:** Leave the hotel onto “Wachtstraße”, turn to the right and follow the street until you hit “Martinistraße”. Turn left and walk straight till “Wilhelm-Kaisen-Brücke”. Turn right and follow this street. After crossing the bridge turn right onto the street called “Herrlichkeit”. See description from the airport.

### *Ramada Hotel*

Wachtstraße 27-29, 28195 Bremen

**From the airport:** Coming from the airport you can take the tram 6 in direction to “Universität” and get off at “Domsheide” (approx. 9 minutes). Cross the street and follow the street called “Marktstraße”. Turn left into the following street called “Wachtstrasse”. After a few meters you will find the hotel on your right.

**From central station:** Coming from central station you can take either tram 6 (direction “Flughafen”) or tram 4 (direction “Arsten”) and get off at “Domsheide” (approx. 7 minutes). See description from the airport.

## Abstracts

### Day 1

*'Family ties and gendered patterns of residential relocations'* – **Clara H. Mulder**

(University of Groningen)

Ties to family – spouses, children, parents, siblings – play an important part in gendered life-course patterns of residential mobility and migration. This is true in all stages of the adult life course: from leaving the parental home via relocations for union formation and dissolution, family migration and care-related relocations to moves to institutions. This presentation provides an overview of such gendered patterns and highlights the importance of 'linked lives' in these patterns.

*'Geographies of family migration, (non)traditionality and forming formations'* – **Darren Smith**

(University of Loughborough)

Analyses of 2001 and 2011 UK Census show changing family geographies across the UK, in part underpinned by various, cross-cutting, migration and demographic processes. The overall effect is an increasing diversification of family formations tied to distinct regional patterns and life course differentials in particular locations. This changing landscape of family formations and family life is further linked to both enduring and transformative normative ideas of partnering, parenting, working, work-life balances, (de)prioritisation of domesticity, and social relations. It is argued that family life in the UK is increasingly being shaped by the formation of seemingly regional-clubs of traditionality and non-traditionally, and in/exclusionary social practices which are viewed as being the 'right thing to do' in the 'right place and time'.

*'Residential Mobility and Changes in Gender Attitudes'* – **Philipp Lersch & Sergi Vidal**

(University of Cologne & University of Queensland)

Long-distance residential mobility has been previously shown to be associated with increases in objective gender inequality within families in paid and unpaid work. At the same time, a rich literature finds evidence for changes in the subjective attitudes towards gender inequality at critical life events such as childbirth. We combine these literatures by examining whether a subjective measure of gender attitudes -- the degree to which individuals support an unequal, gendered division of labor --, changes when families move residentially. We draw on the life course framework and intra-cohort aging theory to derive expectations about changes in gender attitudes. We test these expectations using longitudinal data from the British Household Panel Survey (1991–2007) with panel regression models. Our results contribute to a better understanding of life course dynamics in gender attitudes.

*'How partnership, fertility and work-related spatial mobility histories intersect?: A French-German comparison'* – **Heiko Rüger, Gil Viry & Detlev Lück**

(Federal Institute for Population Research, Wiesbaden & University of Edinburgh)

In a time of low fertility and high divorce rates in Western countries, there is a concern that migrating and travelling over long distances for work affect relationship stability and family development. Over their career, many workers resort to various forms of spatial mobility, such as daily and weekly long-distance commuting, overnight business travel and migration. In a life course approach, the association between mobility and family behaviours is construed as a process that unfolds over time. The national contexts are likely to influence this process through cultural and structural institutions, that shape

what is seen as appropriate and what is possible for men and women in their ways of balancing work-related mobility and family development. France and Germany are interesting countries to compare in this regard, since both feature high rates of mobility but differ considerably in terms of family policy regimes and fertility rates. Using retrospective data from a European survey, this paper examines cross-national differences in how partnership, fertility and work-related spatial mobility histories intersect. The data derive from the second wave of the 'Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe' survey (2010/12). The sample (N=847) comprises two subsamples: a random sample of the residential population in France and Germany aged 40 to 57 and an oversample of people who were highly mobile at the time of the interview. We apply innovative techniques of sequence analysis to grasp mobility experiences holistically as individual histories. Based on whole trajectories we develop indicators that summarise key features of partnership and fertility histories (e.g. number of children and partnerships, (in)stability of partnerships). Preliminary results show that long experiences of long-distance commuting are associated with having fewer children among women in Germany but not among women in France. While we find a higher number of partners among highly mobile women in Germany, the overall relationship between spatial mobility and partnership histories is rather weak. The findings suggest that partnership histories are not a major predictor of the differences in fertility between highly mobile women in France and Germany. In the other groups (men and French women), results show that long experiences of mobility are linked to a distinctive number of partners. The paper discusses the role of social norms, family policies and labour market structure in shaping individual life courses by either reinforcing or mitigating the conflict between family development and work-related mobility.

*'The contrasting perceptions of mothers being highly mobile for their job: the importance of the family context'* – **Gil Viry & Heiko Rüger**

(University of Edinburgh & Institute for Population Research, Wiesbaden)

Gender role theory predicts that mothers who spend a great deal of time commuting or travelling for their job are less satisfied with their mobility than mobile fathers. Highly mobile mothers would feel guilty and stressed out by long hours travelling due to their involvement in childcare and household responsibilities. They would also perceive their work-related mobility negatively, because it does not conform to the traditional gender norms assigned to good mothers. In this view, mobile mothers would be trapped in family and employment situations that force them to commute. On the other hand, we can expect that the highly-selected group of mobile mothers may perceive their mobility positively. Having a job requiring long commutes – and in some cases pursuing a professional career – may be seen as a source of security, autonomy, and pride, in a labour market where women remain disadvantaged. Travel time can be experienced by mothers as a rare opportunity in an otherwise busy work-family schedule to undertake activities for themselves, such as reading books or listening to music, and to prepare the transition between work and home roles. This contribution tests these hypotheses using data from the 'Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe' survey. It examines whether mothers' mobility perception varies with mobility circumstances (e.g. duration and form of mobility), financial and household situation, and gender-role beliefs. 7,200 participants aged 25-54 living in Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, Spain and Switzerland were interviewed in 2007 using the same questionnaire. 1,735 participants from four countries were re-interviewed in 2010-12. People who were highly mobile at the time of the interview (and who were oversampled in both waves) were asked to rate their overall perception of their mobility experience. We used a pooled sample of 440 highly mobile mothers of children aged 0-17 years. Overall, mothers are more likely to perceive their mobility negatively and as a burden than men and women without children. However, mobility perception strongly varies among highly mobile mothers, with a majority of mothers seeing their mobility behaviours in a neutral or positive way. Based on cluster analysis and multiple correspondence

analysis, results show that mobile lone mothers perceive their mobility behaviours more positively than those living with a partner. Among mothers with co-resident partner and children, a negative mobility perception is associated with traditional gender roles attitudes and unequal division of housework, family-oriented values and older children. Conversely, a positive mobility perception is associated with flexible working hours, an egalitarian division of housework, career-oriented values and cohabitation (instead of marriage). Interestingly, the level of educational and financial resources available to mothers poorly explains mothers' mobility perception. Overall, this contribution will emphasise the importance of making everyday mobility practices more central to our understanding of gender inequalities, work-family balance and family life.

## **Day 2**

*'Decisions on commuting and migration between eastern and western Germany and the influence of education and overqualification'* – **Silvia Maja Melzer & Thomas Hinz**

(University of Bielefeld & University of Konstanz)

As previous research underlines the necessity to investigate migration and commuting simultaneously, we investigate both mobility forms and the interrelation between them relying on the unique situation in eastern and western Germany and asking how education and overqualification influence mobility decisions. Until today the East-West divide determinants the mobility patterns within Germany and directs migration and commuting from the economically weak eastern to the economically strong western part. Using Socio-economic Panel data from 1992 to 2013 and two-level multinomial models with random effects we investigate in the first step mobility choices simultaneously. Second, we estimate random effects cross-classified multilevel logit regressions to investigate the interrelation between migration and commuting. Our results show that people with higher education are more likely to migrate, while people who spent less time in education commute. Overqualification, in turn, reduces the likelihood of becoming mobile, but has a stronger negative impact on migration than on commuting. Commuting usually serves as a stepping stone to migration rather than an alternative to it especially for the highly qualified and women. Finally, higher distance shows negative impact on commuting, but no influence on migration. However, it reduces the likelihood to commute less for highly educated. Our results also support previous findings on gender-specific differences and indicate that women in partnerships are less likely to commute and migrate. However, women who start commuting are more likely to migrate soon after. Finally, the differences in the mobility patterns are less pronounced for single men and women than those in partnerships.

*'Migration of couples: Should we expect gender effects?'* – **Martin Abraham & Sebastian Bähr**

(Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nürnberg)

For sociologist, gender is a crucial dimension of social inequality which is examined in a multitude of areas. This is also the case in migration research which deals with different migration probabilities and different returns of migration for men and women. However, when we look at migration decision of couples, the effect of gender is difficult to assess theoretically as well as empirically. We will first review the theoretical basis of gender effects for migration of couples. In a second step we sum up empirical results of various studies, especially several vignette studies which are especially well suited to reveal gender differences in migration intentions. The results show that evidence for gender effects is sparse. We will propose a theoretical explanation of this effect by stressing the long-termed character of private partnerships and the role of mutual commitments between spouses.

*'Mobility decisions of dual-career couples- new evidence on the "co-location" problem'* – **Natascha Nisic**  
(University of Hamburg)

In the past decade the relevance of geographic determinants for explaining career opportunities and the labor market success of workers has received renewed attention. However the relationship between local labor markets, individual career mobility and private life appears to be far more complex. In particular the increasing number of dual-career couples face a so-called "co-location problem". Since it is unlikely that both partners will find their individually best job offers in the same geographic location, working couples are challenged by the question how to coordinate their regional and occupational preferences and opportunities. By combining economic and sociological approaches to labor markets and the family, this study investigates how educational and occupational constellations within couples affect region-specific spatial mobility patterns. The empirical analysis is based on a panel data analysis of the German Socio Economic Panel (waves 1992-2012). The paper also gives insight into recent developments in urban settlement and the changing social structure of large metropolitan areas.

*'Moving for Family Nest Building. A Stumbling Stone for Mothers' Labour Force Participation?'* – **Stefanie Kley & Sonja Drobnič**

(University of Hamburg & University of Bremen)

Housing relocation around first childbirth is common and often directed to suburban or rural neighbourhoods. Such moves are likely to increase housing costs and the family might depend on both partners' contribution to household income. But they might also induce long commutes and thereby inhibit mothers' labour force participation. (Prospective) mothers who put primacy on the family sphere might accept a remote location because they value family-friendly environment but also because they plan to delay their labour force participation anyway. We employ event history methods to analyse the influence of family relocations around first childbirth on the timing of mothers' transitions into employment after childbirth, using longitudinal data from the German Socio-Economic Panel 1999–2014 (N = 1334 first-time mothers). Results show that moving delays mothers' labour market participation after first childbirth regardless of human capital and labour commitment in the majority of women. Re-entry accelerating effects of moving are largely explained by self-selection of women with high earnings potential in expensive homes. The findings suggest that moving for family nest-building often places women in a situation that promote their life orientation toward the family sphere.

*'Regional mobility of unemployed workers in the wake of the German Hartz reforms'* – **Sebastian Bähr**  
(Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nürnberg)

Interregional job search can greatly enhance the re-employment chances of unemployed. In the early 2000s German unemployed are perceived to display an unwillingness to engage in job-related mobility (Brix and Christensen 2002). This leads to the introduction of tougher mobility requirements for unemployment benefits (UB) recipients in Germany in the course of the Hartz reforms of 2003. Unemployed without family ties have to accept job offers, that require regional mobility if local perspectives are poor. This paper analyses the impact this particular aspect of the wider labour market reform has on the regional mobility of unemployed. We employ a difference-in-differences (DID) approach using large German administrative data and a detailed set of potential treatment groups and relevant reform outcomes. Our results indicate that the reform indeed activates UB recipients, although not by enhancing mobility. Instead, exiting the labour market or re-evaluating local job opportunities are prevalent patterns. These results vary considerably by treatment subgroup, region,

and gender. Thus we shed light on the complex interactions between intended activation aims, the logic of action of subgroups, and the regional opportunity structure.

*‘Tied to the labour market? How occupational characteristics explain differential wage returns to family migration within couples’ – Tim Schröder*

(University of Hamburg)

The international literature has been repeatedly stated that women are ‘tied movers’ suffering wage losses after family migration. New home economics and bargaining approaches assume that this finding is determined by an uneven distribution of economic resources within couples. Surprisingly, the structure of opportunities for cumulating these resources, the labor market, has only recently been taken into account. The aim of the contribution is to assess the mediating and moderating effects of occupational characteristics on wage mobility following family migration using fixed-effects panel models. The occupational traits are derived from the BIBB-BAuA Employment Survey and matched with dyadic data on families from the German Socioeconomic Panel (GSOEP, 2000-2012). It is tested, if women compensate occupational conditions facilitating family relocation for higher wages or if the interrelation of spatial and social mobility is affected by gendered class boundaries and social closure.

*‘Geographical distances between separated parents: A longitudinal analysis’ – Michael J. Thomas, Clara H. Mulder & Thomas J. Cooke*

(University of Groningen & University of Connecticut)

Using detailed geocoded microdata from the British Household Panel Survey and longitudinal random effects models, we investigate how geographical distances between separated ex-partners with children develop in a context of spatial constraints and gender asymmetries. The findings demonstrate how: 1) through links to children, separated parents maintain geographical proximity in the years following partnership dissolution; 2) the spatial constraints associated with maintained proximity are linked to educational attainment, repartnering and the location of social networks, and vary in strength by gender; and 3) the initial distance after separation is a strong predictor of the subsequent distances between separated parents. The findings are valuable in demonstrating how the lives of separated parents remain linked after separation and highlight how gendered spatial constraints may prevent separated parents, and particularly separated mothers, from migrating for work or other reasons.