



JUGEND – BILDUNG – ARBEIT

Wie Raum und Herkunft die Integration in Bildung
und Beruf strukturieren
(JuBilA)



**ABSTRACT
BAND**

Session 4

S4-K: Spatial and Regional Mobility (Chair: Tabea Schlimbach)

Zeit: Freitag, 21.04.2023, 11.30 - 13.00 Uhr
Ort: Amerika-Zimmer

The role of spatial mobility in realizing status aspirations for VET occupations

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»Should I stay or should I go?« Prevalence and predictors of spatial mobility among youth in the transition to vocational education and training in Germany

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International master's students at German universities: What factors influence time to degree?

Theresa Thies (Bayerisches Staatsinstitut für Hochschulforschung und Hochschulplanung, IHF)

S4-K: 2 »Should I stay or should I go?« Prevalence and predictors of spatial mobility among youth in the transition to vocational education and training in Germany

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Motivation and research question

The situation in the German training and labor market is characterized by strong regional disparities that influence the chances of youths' successful transitions into VET (Hillmert et al., 2017). Youths' spatial mobility is an important means of solving regional disparities and matching problems in training and labor markets (Matthes & Ulrich, 2018). Moreover, it is the result and source of social inequality as it is associated with higher socio-economic resources and monetary returns (Lemistre & Moreau, 2009). While aggregate data analyses show considerable spatial mobility among VET students (Jost et al., 2019), research on its determinants is scarce. Therefore, this study investigates the joint role of individual, social and regional factors on the spatial mobility of youth in the transition from school to VET.

Theory and previous research

Prevailing theories explaining spatial mobility originate from the rational choice framework, which views spatial mobility as economic cost-benefit decisions (Cadwallader, 1989; Kalter, 1997). Extending this perspective, we integrate theoretical approaches that understand mobility as a resource or potential – called motility (Kaufmann et al., 2004) – that is dependent on agentic motivation and structural constraints and emphasize the importance of individual, social, and regional push and binding factors for spatial mobility (Haldimann et al., 2021; Windzio, 2008).

Underlining rational choice theoretical assumptions that spatial mobility is dependent on monetary costs and benefits, studies have shown a positive relationship between job qualifications and the job search duration with spatial mobility (Lemistre & Moreau, 2009; Windzio, 2004). Additionally, approaches originating from vocational psychology suggest that individual motivation and occupational aspirations are important driving factors for spatial mobility (Haldimann et al., 2021; Holland, 1997).

Furthermore, youths' possibility to realize their occupational aspirations and a successful transition into VET depends on the opportunity structure in their home region. Theoretically, it is assumed, that a low place utility will push people away (Windzio, 2008) and towards "escalator regions" (Fielding, 1992). The importance of different regional factors for spatial mobility has been proven in many studies (Lemistre & Magrini, 2011; Windzio, 2008).

Other approaches emphasize the importance of binding factors, most notably social ties, as barriers to spatial mobility (Kaufmann et al., 2018). The theoretical assumption that individuals with strong social ties are less motivated to become mobile, as leaving strong social networks entails opportunity costs, is underlined by studies showing that, especially among young people, the unwillingness to leave family and friends behind leads to lower mobility (Haldimann et al., 2021).

Hence, it is assumed that youths with higher occupational status aspirations, longer search durations, stronger social ties, and unfavorable regional opportunity structures are more likely to become spatially mobile in the transition to VET.

Data and methods

We used longitudinal survey data from the German NEPS (Starting Cohort 4, N=5,537) (Blossfeld & Roßbach, 2019; NEPS Network, 2021) to analyze the predictors of spatial mobility of students entering VET within two years of leaving the general school system. Drawing on the concept of functional labor market regions (Kosfeld & Werner, 2012), we distinguished between spatial mobility within and between regional labor markets using the information on youths' schools and VET locations. To map the regional opportunity structure, we merged administrative geospatial data at the level of the school location using NUTS-3 regional delineation (BA, 2022; BBSR, 2022).

We estimated multinomial logistic regression models to examine the role of youths' occupational orientations (status aspirations; search duration), social ties (satisfaction with friends, and family; participation in organizations), and regional opportunity structure (commuter balance; share of the aspired occupational segment) for spatial mobility.

Results

At the descriptive level, our results show that spatial mobility is widespread among youth entering VET: 16% are mobile within and 22% between regional labor markets. Multinomial logistic regression models show that youths' occupational orientations, strong social ties to friends, and regional opportunity structures are decisive for spatial mobility.

While higher status aspirations lead to a higher probability of mobility within regional labor markets, a longer search duration increases the probability of mobility between regional labor markets. Regarding social ties, a significant binding effect could only be observed among youths with particularly high satisfaction with friends. Most notably, both regional indicators (commuter balance, share of the aspired occupational segment) statistically significantly predict the probability to become mobile within and between regional labor markets.

Conclusion

Our study contributes to the literature on youths' spatial mobility in two ways: First, we highlight that factors at different levels are crucial for spatial mobility. Second, the regional opportunity structure is a key determinant of youth's spatial mobility, even across regional labor markets. This underscores the importance of spatial mobility in the context of regional disparities to promote youths' access to VET and reduce mismatches in the VET market.

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