

IAB-Colloquium

zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung

Women and the labour market in East and West Germany: Socialist legacy and pre-socialist tradition

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This paper challenges the conventional wisdom that post-socialist East Germany has a higher share of working women than West Germany due to legacy effects of socialist labour market policies. Regional data show that the border between East and West Germany corresponds to pre-war differences in female labour supply. Furthermore, exposure to socialism plays no role for changes in the relative share of working women. These patterns are also of general interest for a growing literature exploiting the division and re-unification of Germany as a natural experiment for analysing the effects of political regimes on economic behaviour.

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