

Assessing the Family-friendliness in a rural Region in East Germany to explain the Migration of the Population

Introduction and Objectives

- Many areas in East Germany are facing the problem of vast internal migration of population to western federal states, resulting in one of the lowest birth rates in the EU. One explanation represents the weak economic situation: the unemployment rate is nearly twice as high in comparison to Germany's western federal states.
- On the basis of objective data, most areas in East Germany have above-average family-related structures (e.g. child care, living) in comparison to other German regions. Since the economical situation cannot be changed within a short period of time, these regions try to use family-friendliness to oppose internal migration and to attract companies and qualified employees.
- The **study objectives** were to assess and evaluate the family-related structures in a rural area and to determine if differences in perceptions of the family-related 'offers' exist regarding addressees (represented by entrepreneurs and graduates of one of the region's universities) and political players (represented by the region's majors).

Method and Sample

- Data used was obtained through a self-administered survey questionnaire

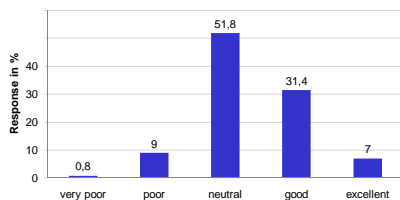
Distributed Questionnaires			
Total	Majors	Graduates	Entrepreneurs
1.607	104	396	1.107
Response (%)			
398 (25%)	51 (49%)	124 (31%)	223 (20%)

Results (I)

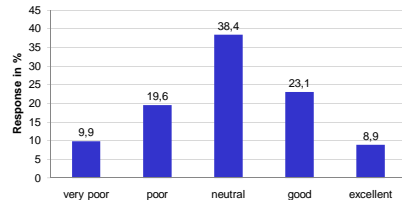
Study participants' answers regarding capable actors to improve family-friendliness:

- 1. Federal State
- 2. Local Authorities
- 3. Companies
- 4. Initiative of one's own
- 5. Churches
- 6. Associations and charitable institutions

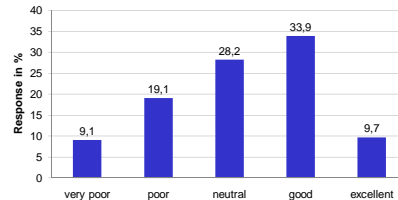
Assessment of family-friendliness in general



Assessment of costs of child care



Assessment of provision of medical care



Results (II)

Table 1: Extract of results of the study participants' assessment of the region's family-related structures. Participants were asked to rate each item on a 5-point scale: 5= excellent, 4= good, 3= neutral, 2=poor, 1=very poor

Item	N	Rating (grouped Median)			
		Total	Major	Graduates	Entrepreneurs
Own capabilities of influencing family-friendliness	386	2.95***	3.89	2.84	2.76
Family-friendliness in general	388	3.34***	4.03	3.18	3.30
Capacities of child care facilities	377	3.64***	4.75	3.25	3.61
Capacities of caring for older people in need of care	374	3.53 ^{n.s.}	3.47	3.47	3.57
Living	379	3.33***	3.91	3.20	3.28
Provision of medical care	383	3.25*	3.28	3.48	3.08
Accessibility for families	382	2.67 ^{n.s.}	2.75	2.73	2.61

Kruskal-Wallis-Test: ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, n.s. =non-significant

Discussion and Implications

- Study participants prefer political actors to improve family-friendliness, less important actors were 'initiative of one's' own, 'churches', and 'associations'; majors assess their abilities to act significantly higher than the remaining participating groups.
- Study participants tended to be satisfied with family-friendliness in general, capacities of caring for older people in need of care, capacities of child care facilities, and provision of medical care.
- Results also indicate a huge discrepancy regarding perceptions of family-related structures between the addressees and political players: graduates and entrepreneurs assess most aspects significantly more critical than majors, whereas majors' assessment correspond to objective data indicating the region's family-related structures are positive in comparison to many other regions
- Possible explanations: graduates and entrepreneurs assess their own situation most critical; majors carry out a self-assessment and therefore tend to rate their own performance favorable, possibly in fear of negative consequences if they give negative feedback for their own work
- The present study cannot determine the reason for the different perceptions; however, these discrepancies should receive attention when evaluating the family-related structures, subjective assessments of the addressees can differ from objective data.