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Trends in East-West German Migration from 1989 to 2002

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to show recent trends in regional migration from East to West Germany by combining data from the Statistisches Bundesamt from 1991 to 2002 with data from the Zentrales Einwohnerregister der DDR from 1989 to 1990. We document that annual gross outmigration rates peaked at the time of the Reunification, fell sharply thereafter, but rose steadily from the 1997 until 2001 to reach levels obtained prior to the Reunification. While Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Brandenburg experienced less outmigration before the Reunification compared to Thuringen, Sachsen, and Sachsen-Anhalt, they are the regions that have experienced the highest pace of outmigration since then. With the exception of the increasing popularity of the Berlin region, the distribution of East to West migrants across West Germany is fairly stable over time: migrants continue to favor the large industrial provinces of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bayern, Nordrhein-Westfalen, and Niedersachsen.

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