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Title: Transitioning towards more equality? Wealth gender differences and the changing role of explanatory factors over time



We investigate the changing role of explanatory factors that have contributed to wealth levels and the gender wealth gap in Germany over the period 2002-2012. In particular, we analyze the role of changes in labor supply, permanent income, portfolio composition, and marital status on wealth accumulation.

Using individual level micro data from the German Socio-Economic Panel results show that real mean wealth levels for the working age population have been decreasing for both women and men since 2002 and that the wealth gap has decreased by 13.5% to 30.700€. We show that the increased participation of women in the labor market and their occupational structure had an increasing positive role on women's wealth accumulation. Making use of the panel dimension in the data and of Oaxaca-Blinder and Firpo, Fortin, Lemieux decompositions, in comparison to previous analyses, a diminishing role of permanent income is observed, due both to a reduction in the gender difference in permanent income and in gender differences in its returns. Overall, the evidence points to more equal wealth accumulation both in terms of characteristics and in terms of returns.

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Keywords Wealth differences, Gender, SOEP, decomposition, labor supply, occupations