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## Regional gender structures among young adults

Theme  
Population and Living Conditions

Project  
SEMIGRA: Rural Migration

Programme  
ESPON 2013 Programme

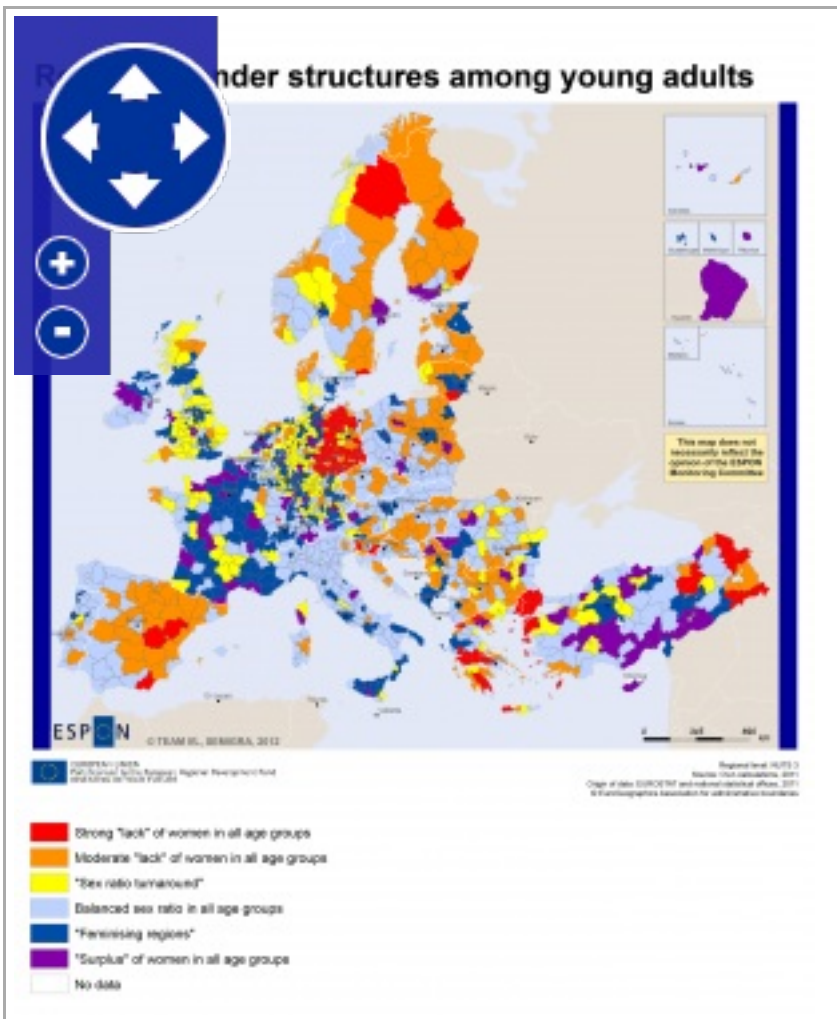
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- **A ‘male-oriented’ economic structure is an important explanation for sex ratio imbalances**
- **Regions with a surplus of males in early adulthood tend to be peripheral rural areas while females outnumber men in the urban centres and their hinterland**
- **Regional sex ratios are highly dependent on the national context**
- **In Europe, the core area is composed mainly by the UK, Switzerland, France, the Benelux countries, Western Germany, and to some degree Italy due to the surplus**

## Observations for policy

Considerable imbalances in the sex ratio are to some extent connected to deficits in economic development. In general, a ‘male-oriented’ economic structure is an important explanation for sex ratio imbalances.

Regions with a surplus of males in early adulthood tend to be peripheral rural areas, while females outnumber men in the urban centres and their hinterland. However, regional sex ratios are highly dependent on the national context. There are some pan-European trends in the regional pattern of sex ratio imbalances, but there are even more differences and national peculiarities.

## Policy context

Sex ratio imbalances are not only an issue for gender politics. They are both an effect of territorial developments and structures and condition future territorial developments. The mobility of young women is an important feature for local economic development. Imbalanced sex ratio are (in most cases) a local phenomenon caused by sex-selective migration. To achieve the employment targets of Europe 2020 it is necessary to better understand these patterns and see which regions are attracting or loosing their young female population.

## Map interpretation

The map shows the balances between male and female population aged 20 to 34 differentiated by six types:

- ‘Strong lack of women in all age groups’ comprises regions with massive deficit of women in all age groups. These are predominantly rural regions, and 60% are located in Eastern Germany;
- ‘Moderate lack of women in all age groups’ is mainly to be found in rural and agrarian regions. This type is rather common on the Iberian Peninsula, in the Nordic countries and in Eastern Europe;
- ‘Sex ratio turnaround’ is characterised by a sex ratio that increases with age. In the age group 20-24 there is a pronounced ‘surplus’ of men, which turns into a ‘deficit’ in the age group 30-34. Such regions are common in western Germany and in the UK. Accessible regions in the countryside are over-represented;
- ‘Balanced sex ratio in all age groups’ is the largest group and more or less evenly distributed across countries as well as territorial, accessibility and economic categories;
- ‘Feminising regions’ feature a slightly below-average sex ratio in the youngest age group and a strong ‘surplus’ of women in the older age groups. This type is predominantly urban, but it is also well represented among the intermediate regions with a diversified economic structure;
- ‘Surplus of women in all age groups’ is predominantly an urban feature in the capital regions of Finland, Hungary, Sweden and most major German cities.

At European level, the core area is mainly composed by France, the Benelux countries, Western Germany, and to some degree Italy due to the surplus, particularly in the age group 30-34. The rest of Europe is characterised by balanced sex ratios and regions with male surplus. Turkey stands out with a mix of regions facing male and female surplus.

## Concepts and methods

The variables used to determine the number of clusters were the number of women per 100 men in the age groups 20-24, 25-29, and 30-34. The resulting clusters were cross-analysed with typologies dealing with accessibility respective urban-rural relations and the economic structures of rural regions.

## Keywords

*Female Migration, Gender Balance, Population Structure*

