Abstract

Mobility strategies of women in ICT careers. Moving for what?

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The international labour market is a new arena for highly skilled women. Firstly, international mobility concerns to the training phase and the development of competitive careers. Secondly, globalization performs the international labour market providing new challenges to highly skilled personnel women included. It could benefit the entrance of women into one of the most competitive sectors. In fact, the general dynamism of the ICT sector is developed within an international context, and the labour workforce is characterised by a strong internationalization.

In this paper I explore the trends of the women’s international mobility in the ICT sector with a special reference to Spain because all of the women interviewed are Spaniards or have spent long periods of time in this country. I use a lifecycle point of view to deal with this study because it is related to the long-term situation derived from these women’s mobility strategy and the diverse circumstances they experience along their professional careers. This lifecycle approach displays information to categorise their motivations and strategies. Moreover, similar situations could result in very different consequences taking into account multiple factors involved in a process that affect differently to every woman.

I deal with this issue from two main theoretical frameworks. Feminist literature has explored the gender dimension of mobility for professional purposes. According to the results, mobility could be a serious obstacle for the promotion of women into higher positions, above all if they do not have collaborative partners or have children but no support to look after them. On the other hand, migration theories point out that the role of women in mobility strategies is more active now and sometimes they lead the make-decision process even when the whole family is involved. These cases evidence that personal reasons and familiar well-being are as important as professional goals.

This study focuses on women working in ICT with mobility experiences in order to address the main research questions proposed by literature. The lifecycle approach sets out some evidence on specific features of these women regarding the causes to move abroad, their positions as leaders in the make-decision process, and the consequences after their decisions. Furthermore, a diversity of profiles and necessities suggests a gear shifting to policy agenda related to mobility support and children care resources.