

Structure and Eigensinn : Transformation Processes and Continuities of East German Women

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After the Wall

Eastern Germany Since 1989

EDITED BY

Patricia J. Smith

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Structure and *Eigensinn*:¹ Transformation Processes and Continuities of East German Women

Irene Dölling²

At the beginning of the 1990s, during the time of the political unification of the two German states, various sociological scenarios were being developed in relation to women. Two assumptions were made in connection with this. First, it was assumed that the restructuring of the job market and occupational fields would transpire in a relatively gender-neutral manner. This assumption was based on the fact that women in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had worked in full-time jobs over the course of numerous generations and had attained a high degree of professional education. More generally formulated, there was only one broadly accepted model of work and career. The existence of a pronounced gender-specific segregation in the occupational system and the limiting of gender competition in the job market which accompanied it were also seen as favorable prerequisites for keeping women from being driven out of the occupational sphere. Second, based on the "double burden" of GDR women, it was assumed that they viewed professional work (*Erwerbsarbeit*)³ above all as compulsory and that therefore a large group of women would leave the occupational world relatively quickly and voluntarily. It was presumed that the three-phase model of the female career which was

propagated in the Federal Republic Germany (FRG) (gainful employment, a long interruption of this after the birth of children, and later re-entry into gainful employment) would establish itself in the new *Länder* as well.⁴

Neither of these assumptions was born out in the following eight years. East German women, as numerous empirical studies attested to in the meantime, adhered to their previous outlook on life to an astounding degree. These facts have led to a change of perspective in sociological research, especially in the field of so-called transformation research (and there not solely or even mainly in relation to women). The idea that the new *Länder* would adapt themselves to the West German model--in a crash course on "catch-up modernization" via the adoption of institutions and structures--dominated in the early years. Subjective potentials for action (*Handlungspotentiale*), mentalities, etc. of East German women and men appeared from this perspective generally as deficient, although at best in some individual points they were viewed as "modern."⁵

In recent years the sociological viewpoint has changed insofar as the assumption is now, after the largely completed transfer of institutions and structures from west to east, that the "more deeply established everyday-life orientations of action, cultural schema and norms"⁶ of East Germans continue to remain effective. These present themselves as resources or restrictions which shape individual possibilities for action along with institutions and structures.⁷ The observable "own ideas" (*Eigensinn*) of East German women as well as their adherence to full-time work and to the compatibility of career and family are not the least of the phenomena which have sharpened the focus of the sociological view concerning the influence of subjective potentials for action on transformation processes. Meanwhile, it is becoming ever clearer that the crisis-like economic and social developments in eastern Germany are not the expression of a short-term phase of transition and adaptation to the (prosperous) West German model. Instead, they are signs of a crisis of the capitalist system, a pending radical reorganization of the economy and in the social welfare state, and in connection with this, a reordering of gender relations.

With this as a background, in this contribution I would like to present some aspects which presently characterize the life-context (*Lebenszusammenhang*) of East German women. This happens in the form of "snapshots" of a process which has begun and is today in no way predictable in its consequences and results. As "snapshots," these aspects also have differing sociological reach and strength of assertions. I will limit myself to the areas of professional occupation,

the compatibility of career and family, and demographics. My central focus is on how (changed) structures and the "own-ideas" (*Eigensinn*) of women encounter one another and what outlooks concerning women's possibilities for action or for gender relations can be cautiously concluded from this encounter.

Professional Occupation (*Erwerbsarbeit*)

East German women are characterized in a common slogan as the "losers of German unification." On the one hand, this correctly grasps the fact that East German women are experiencing forms of discrimination in many ways previously unknown to them, and that important conditions of life and social services have changed drastically and to their disadvantage. On the other hand, this slogan conceals the fact that enormous and growing social differentiation exists among East German women, and the slogan pushes women as actors into the background of public perception. In this slogan they are simultaneously made into victims in the forefront.

A view to the developments of the job market in eastern German since unification shows both gender-neutral and gender-specific tendencies. The experience of unemployment is mostly gender neutral. As the *Social Report 1996* establishes, since 1990 "unemployment has already become a personal experience for over half of all citizens between 18 and 60."⁸ Also gender neutral, the risk of job loss is no greater for women than it is for men, i.e., no more women's jobs were lost in recent years than men's.

The chance of finding a new job, on the contrary, is gender-specific. The statistics show clear gender-specific differences with regard to unemployment and re-employment since 1990. In 1995, 19.4 percent of women and 11.1 percent of men were jobless in eastern Germany (and the percentage points have risen somewhat in the meantime); the proportion of unemployed women to total unemployed amounted to 62.4 percent. In comparison to their share of unemployment, however, women have fewer chances than men of receiving aid in the form of "political job market measures" (ABM) (52 percent) or of entering into a regular occupational situation (38 percent).⁹ A similar picture is produced when the length of unemployment is observed. In 1996, 43 percent of those unemployed in eastern Germany had already been unemployed for longer than 24 months; this affected 57 percent of unemployed women, but only 24 percent of men.¹⁰

Up to the present time, the proportion of women among the total employed has not significantly changed in comparison to 1989;¹¹

however, some developments stand out which (could) lead to a redistribution of employment along gender lines. Hildegard Nickel and Sabine Schenk characterize this in three scenarios. 1. Industries which were typical for women in the GDR, i.e., generally also less attractive and lucrative (e.g., commerce, banking, insurance), will become mixed industries. 2. Mixed industries (e.g., agriculture, transportation, postal services) will tend to become male-dominated industries. 3. Traditionally male-oriented industries (mining, energy, construction, metal and electrical industries) will continue to exclude women.¹² Nickel and Schenk conclude:

Against this background, the assumption arises that a renewed cementing of gender specific inequalities of opportunity is taking place on at least two levels. First, on the level of the redistribution of scarce good jobs to the detriment of women. Second, on the level of a successive "gender reversal" of occupational fields which leads to women again remaining relegated to the less future-oriented, less secure, and less lucrative developmental paths.¹³

It can be generally ascertained that gender has less influence on employment for the youngest age group (18-25 years) than for the group of those over 50 and that women in the 35-50 age group have relatively good employment opportunities while women between 25 and 35 years of age have fewer chances on the job market.¹⁴ Corresponding to the last point is the fact that men between 20 and 40 years of age have the greatest chances for employment if they live in stable partnerships (marriage/family). Here the preferred model in the old *Länder*--the provider marriage--becomes apparent, structurally. Men, if they are married and have children, are consequently viewed as "providers," and this factor--even more than their qualifications!--influences their percentage of jobs (*Erwerbsquote*).¹⁵

Unemployment in the new *Länder* has up to now meant unemployment in relation to the achieved qualification structure of the GDR--"above all, unemployment of citizens with completed professional or technical training (*abgeschlossener beruflicher Ausbildung*)."¹⁶ In other words, the majority of the unemployed are skilled workers and master craftsmen and women (*FacharbeiterInnen/MeisterInnen*), while technical/trade school and university graduates, independent of gender, have so far experienced relatively little unemployment. The unskilled and those without vocational training who represented a quite small group in the GDR have relatively low chances of obtaining employment on the newly-formed job market; their share of the unemployed, measured against their share of total employment, is high.

Along with structural influences such as employment sectors and regional location and individual factors such as age, for women who are skilled workers the *level* of professional education plays a decisive role in the chance of finding new employment. Especially for women from 35 to 50, "the level of qualifications is able to compensate for the negative gender effect in this context."¹⁷ Nevertheless, re-employment on the basis of a high qualification level as a rule does not lead to competition with (equally or less qualified) men, but instead works against less qualified women. In other words, there is now, in comparison to in the GDR, a growing social differentiation among women which is, besides structural factors, influenced by individual characteristics such as professional education/level of qualification, age, marital status, and number of children and/or age of children.

The trends outlined here confirm in the first place that the restructuring of the job market in eastern Germany tends to lead to a worsening of the employment and career chances of women. The characterization of women as "the losers of unification" is thus not entirely unwarranted. This impression is also strengthened by the fact that women rarely offer organized resistance to the loss of jobs, in contrast to the many actions which have been and are being undertaken with varying success by men in prestigious job sectors. Instead, women use a "quiet" and individualized form of resistance; that is, they retain with their "own ideas" (*Eigensinn*) certain orientations of action and values against the constraints or pressures of the adopted West German structures which affect their everyday life. This can be seen especially in their "unbroken propensity for gainful employment" (*ungebrochene Erwerbsneigung*).

In contrast to the presumptions of the *Wende* period, that women in the GDR were employed largely compulsorily and were only waiting for the end of their double-burden, the statistics show an unchanged (and even growing) desire of East German women to be or remain employed. About two-thirds of the women want to be employed full-time and approximately 30 percent would like to work part-time, while only a very small percentage of women want to be housewives.¹⁸ In 1996, 83 percent of East German women considered work to be "very important" and 14 percent "important."¹⁹ The positive valuation of women's work remains undiminished among East German men. (In 1996, 16 percent were of the opinion that women should definitely be working and 71 percent would leave the decision to the woman.²⁰) In other words, even women currently unemployed are not voluntarily going back to the "private sphere" ("the kitchen sink") and, above all, they do not want to stay there permanently. Instead, they want to return to the job

market, sooner or later. (In reality, however, this will not be possible for all of them, especially not for the older ones.)

For the overwhelming majority of East German women, (full-time) employment is one of the givens in their life plans to which they cling, even under the changed conditions.²¹ The reasons why women continue to adhere to life-long careers, despite decreasing chances, are obviously quite complex. Among them, material factors are not to be underestimated. Wages and salaries remain lower in eastern Germany than in western Germany (the differences, depending on the industry, lie between 10 percent and 35 percent), so that a family can seldom live or maintain its standard of living on a single income. The general insecurity of the job market leads to a situation in which no one voluntarily leaves her job. In addition, many women fear becoming economically dependent on a husband/man, not only currently but also in a more long-term perspective, i.e., after reaching retirement age. Material necessities are tied to the adherence to a professional occupation by an internalized norm of the compatibility of career and family which defines the self-conception of most women in eastern Germany. This self-conception,²² moreover, rests in the practical experiences of a relatively strong position in the household and in the family, a position bolstered by the contribution of women to household income as well as by their hitherto independent position outside the home.²³

Still, in 1996 over 30 percent of the then employed women expressed the desire to work part-time; (they were mainly women who were married or who had small children²⁴). When considering the number of hours they desire to work, however, it becomes apparent that East German women are referring to GDR norms. The majority of them want to reduce their weekly work hours to 25-35 hours (57 percent) or to 35-40 hours, as in GDR times.²⁵ This desired number of hours is well over the average part-time arrangements in the old *Länder*. It is more of a work reduction than part-time work (which, in addition, usually is tied to cuts in benefits and social services as a result of the reduced work week). Thus, one could also say: East German women certainly want to reduce their work hours, but they think little of part-time jobs with minimal or no insurance or other social coverage. (However, it must be taken into account that, for now, the supply of such part-time jobs in eastern Germany is still very low).

In general, the following can be said of the situation of East German women on the job market. Although tendencies toward a reorganization of the job market along gender differences and to the disadvantage of women exist and cannot be ignored, and women disproportionately belong to the unemployed, the share of women among total employed

has not decreased. Women with relatively high levels of professional qualification and with technical school and university degrees generally have, at least in certain age groups, good chances on the job market. The majority of women believe in lifelong full-time work and they develop a multitude of activities in order to find a new job after becoming unemployed.²⁶ East German women on the whole produce an enormous amount of pressure on the job market through their adherence to full-time employment. What the long-range effects of this will be--whether East German women will indeed (have to) adapt themselves to the West German structures, whether their adherence to professional occupations will facilitate their remaining in or returning to the job market, whether part-time work will become, as Kreckel predicts, "a potential gateway for the west German job market regime into east Germany"²⁷--all this is difficult to foresee today.²⁸

Compatibility of Career and Family

One characteristic of the "female life-context" (*weiblicher Lebenszusammenhang*) in modern societies is "double socialization": women must reconcile professional occupation, which has become increasingly a (short- or long-term) part of women's biographies with their--unchanged--duties to household and family. One of the special characteristics of their socialization is thus "society-ization" (*Vergesellschaftung*),²⁹ the development of full authority, skills, and motivation for both areas of life. The GDR belonged to those modern societies which allowed women to reconcile lifelong professional employment with their familial duties through a broad network of child-care institutions and social policy measures. As we know, there is no immediate connection between the employment rate of women and the possibilities of child care outside the home (as is shown, no less, by the GDR where women already in the 1960s and 1970s exhibited a comparatively high share of employment while the availability of nurseries and kindergartens was well under the need at the time, and many women had to find familial or private solutions). On the other hand, however, it can be said that a large and affordable network of child-care institutions promotes not only continuing professional work with only a short-term interruption after the birth of children, but also achieves a continuity in gender relations which are determined among other things by the model of the dual-earner marriage (or partnership). This model became accepted as the general norm in the GDR, and under current conditions also serves as a resource for East German women to oppose the changed structures and institutions with their "own ideas" (*Eigensinn*).

East German women remain committed not only to (full-time) professional work, but also to the compatibility of career and family--as well as have a high acceptance of child care outside the home. In a 1992 survey only 12 percent of East German women and 16 percent of East German men favored a longer career pause for women after the birth of children, while in the old *Länder* 41 percent of women and 38 percent of men voted for this option. In the east, one percent of women and three percent of men could envisage women giving up their careers entirely while this was considered an appropriate solution for six percent of West German women and twelve percent of West German men. East and West German women and men voted similarly concerning maternity and parental leave.³⁰ This survey data makes clear the fact that in eastern Germany the dual-earner model and in western Germany the modernized provider model³¹ are accepted and practiced by the majority of both genders. For East German women this consensus proves to be a favorable factor for their adherence to professional work. The majority of men accept women's claim of equal access to skilled, professional work,³² and they share with them a lifestyle in which both partners pursue a career and the woman interrupts her employment only for a short time after the birth of children. Men also assume responsibilities in the family in order to allow their partners the ability to acquire further qualifications or education outside of working hours, if that will secure their jobs.³³

It cannot be overlooked, however, that--independent of the subjective outlooks of East German women and men--the conditions for women to practice the model of the compatibility of career and family are becoming increasingly unfavorable. Along with the already outlined setbacks in the job market, the closings of child-care institutions and the rising costs of those that remain are having an increasingly negative effect. Company kindergartens and nurseries were already closed shortly after currency union and the introduction of the market (in July 1990) because they were, from the perspective of the market economy, ineffective. State kindergartens were transferred to local government authorities, and they are being supplemented by private and religious institutions. The total amount of available kindergarten space today is still larger in eastern than in western Germany (where kindergartens are often only open mornings). With the increasing financial difficulties of east German locales and the extreme decline in the birth-rate (see the following section), closings on a larger scale are planned.

In addition, since unification the costs of kindergarten spots, school meals, etc. have continually risen³⁴ (although from *Land* to *Land* in differing degrees). Child care outside the home thus becomes a cost

issue for many women and families who are searching for private solutions, and single mothers are hit especially hard. In addition, financial shortages and the high unemployment level of women lead to fewer children attending the institutions. Already by the end of 1991

two-thirds of employed women but only every fifth unemployed woman with children under four years of age made use of a nursery school. Of the four to six year-old children, three of four with working mothers but only one out of every two children with unemployed mothers were cared for in kindergartens, a lower figure than in west Germany.³⁵

With the closing of child-care institutions because of decreasing demand, a vicious circle develops for unemployed women who want to re-enter the work force: employers demand proof that the children will be taken care of before hiring women, but many kindergartens, due to limited capacity, give spots solely to women who are employed.

On the whole it can be stated that, until now, for East German women the compatibility of career and children is still possible, even though under more difficult conditions, if one takes the level of available child-care facilities as a basis. It remains to be seen whether the 1996 entitlement to a kindergarten spot for all children over three years old, will become a right in 1999 as planned. For East German women, this would at least amount to the preservation of the status quo.³⁶

Demographic Development

A discrepancy similar to that which exists for East German women, between their wish for a career and the possibilities of employment can also be established under demographic viewpoints. Although the appreciation of family and the desire for children has not changed for East German women and men in comparison with GDR times, a massive decline in the birth rate since unification can be observed. As Kreckel correctly notes, for women in the GDR it was not the "double burden" which led them to limit the number of children, but it was rather "exactly the opposite: their threatened 'housewifeization' (*Hausfrauisierung*)"³⁷ led to a decline in the birth rate after 1990.

While 198,922 children were born in 1989 in the GDR, there were only 80,500 born in 1993. With that, eastern Germany has one of the lowest fertility rates in the world.³⁸ Although the number of live births in eastern Germany rose slightly in 1996, the "demographic decline" (*demographischer Einbruch*) of recent years is far from overcome. In a 1995 report on the demographic situation in Germany the

authors find that "the birth rate in the new *Länder*, with an average of 0.77 children, remains significantly lower than in the earlier Federal Republic . . ."³⁹ While in the GDR it belonged to the "normal biography" of a woman to have children,⁴⁰ presently two trends in the reproductive behavior of East German women can be seen. First, young women are delaying the birth of their first child longer. They are thus approaching the reproductive behavior of West German women who are on average 28 to 29 at the birth of their first child. Whether or not East German women will also conform to West German women in regards to the growing childlessness currently cannot be predicted.⁴¹

Second, the number of East German women who opt for sterilization and are thus actively, on the basis of their own decisions, prematurely ending their fertility phase has sharply risen since 1989. In the state of Brandenburg, for example, the only *Land* in Germany which includes complete sterilization records in its statistics, the number of sterilization procedures performed rose from 827 in 1991 to 6,224 in 1993.⁴² The numbers in all the new *Länder* are likely to be similarly high. In order to evaluate these statistics it must be borne in mind, for one, that in the GDR sterilization was a seldom-practiced method of birth control (in contrast to in West Germany). In addition, sterilization was coupled with a complicated medical and bureaucratic procedure.⁴³ A certain "catch-up effect" and "newness effect" must also be considered. In addition, and this is more important, as the empirical studies of Daphne Hornig (now Hahn) show for the *Land* of Brandenburg, only women who are on average over 30 years old and who have completed their family planning with the birth of the desired number of children (one to two, for the majority) have themselves sterilized. In other words, the thesis of the "birth strike" of East German women,⁴⁴ continually launched in the press, especially in 1992 and 1993, is doubly wrong. First, the number of very young women who are having themselves sterilized is near zero,⁴⁵ that is, these women are not permanently refusing to have children at all. Second, the women who are having themselves sterilized as a rule have already borne children.

Both very young women who are delaying the birth of children, and women who are having themselves sterilized are making their decisions in the context of their desire to remain (fully) employed and/or to continue to combine family and career. Their reproductive behavior can surely be interpreted as a silent, individual form of resistance to the new structures, conditions, and unreasonable demands. Even if one considers that times of high unemployment and widespread social insecurity always negatively affect birth rates, the fact that the decline in births in eastern Germany today is higher than in Germany

during the world economic crisis preceding World War II points to complex motivations of women in their current reproductive behavior. Young women know very well that career and family are more difficult to reconcile today than they were in the GDR, and they want to first acquire a relatively secure position in the working world before they begin a family. With their decision to wait before having children they are also resisting the broad danger of being prematurely forced out of the job market as mothers. Furthermore, this corresponds to the fact that only very few East German women interrupted their employment due to the birth of children, at least in the first few years after the political unification. "Hardly any women (0.7 percent) took parental leave from their employment from 1991 to 1992."⁴⁶

Of the women who underwent sterilization, two large groups with different motivations can be ascertained, according to our studies.⁴⁷ The first is the group of socially disadvantaged women (unemployed and/or with only a low family income or both partners unemployed) who, above all, do not want to worsen their social situation (their children's chances) through further births. For these women--in contrast to in the GDR--the now costly contraceptives present an unacceptable stress on the family budget. Second is the group of professionally established women who want to make use of their current opportunities on the job market and have concluded their family planning. In contrast to GDR times, when they may have borne an additional, unplanned child and not viewed this as a hindrance to their professional ambitions, under the changed conditions they want to avoid endangering their career through an unwanted pregnancy. It is also interesting that 57 percent of the women surveyed in 1993-94 by Daphne Hahn pointed to the changed abortion law (which limited the possibilities for abortions after unification in eastern Germany) as a central motive for their decision to undergo sterilization. They did not want, as many of them formulated in a similar manner, (old) men in Bonn to dictate to them whether they carried out a pregnancy or not.⁴⁸

Outlook

In this contribution I have tried to show, on the basis of a few examples and trends, that between the adopted West German structures and institutions on the one hand, and the subjective potentials for action and habitual patterns and norms of behavior of East German women on the other, friction and points of conflict are ascertainable. Over the short-term as well as long-term these could influence the professional and social opportunities for East German women and/or gender

relations. In concluding I would like to formulate some speculations about the effects the encounter of new structures and the "own-ideas" (*Eigensinn*) of East German women may have for gender relations. In doing this, however, I reduce to a few correlations the complexity of economic, social, and cultural figurations which influence gender relations respectively and give it concrete shape and form.

1. All the facts show that the transformation processes in eastern Germany up to now have not transpired in a gender-neutral manner and that this will also not be the case in the future. Even if certain consequences of the implantation of new economic, legal, and social systems become effective for East German men and women equally, "gender" as an usher in the newly forming society is effective in all respects. Social differentiation presents itself here along gender lines, as it was practiced in "real socialism" (e.g., in the forms of segmentation and segregation in the professional sphere), as "favorable" starting point conditions. That the capitalist, as the "real socialist," systems are two variants of modern society⁴⁹ is witnessed, not insignificantly, by the fact that they share the symbolic gender order as characteristic of both their cultures. In this respect, for a limited time gender relations in eastern Germany will exhibit a few differing characteristics from those in western Germany. However, they will not differ from each other qualitatively.

2. The "real socialist" GDR provided for women—in terms of modernization theory—a "modernized" model of the female career. This included access to (qualified) professional work, a broad network of institutions, measures for the compatibility of career and family, and the possibility of self-determined pregnancy, etc.. This "modernized" model was coupled with a "gender contract" (*Geschlechtervertrag*)⁵⁰ which, on the one hand, established the responsibility of woman for the "private sphere" and for reproductive work in the family and, on the other hand, replaced the "provider of the family" model with the "dual-earner" model. This gender contract functioned in the GDR in part because social differences were generally not as strongly defined, so "gender" as a factor of social differentiation thus played a subordinate role.

When East German women currently cling to their "modernized female life" (*modernisierter weiblicher Lebenslauf*), this is possible because, among other reasons, the gender contract remains largely intact. That is, men also accept and practice the norms of this contract. However, this does not exclude the fact that men profit from the "invisible hand" through which "gender" is becoming effective in the reformation of industries in the professional sphere. This means concretely, for example, that men are advancing in careers previously

occupied by women, and generally the poorer jobs are open to women. Whether this tendency will destroy the current gender contract, however, is doubtful. The generally observable erosion of the "normal work situation" presently in the developed industrial countries, which was mainly oriented to the male worker and the "provider-nourisher" model, should rather facilitate the continued existence of the "gender contract" taken from the GDR.

3. East German women increase immensely the pressure on the job market by adhering to full-time work (with the remaining forms and institutions for child care outside the home facilitating this). It is conceivable that, in order to reduce this pressure, the supply of part-time jobs will also be increased in eastern Germany. These jobs, in their worst form, will not amount to more than nineteen hours per week, placing them below the minimum hours for benefits and social services coverage. With the ruling passed in March 1997 stating that, after only six months of unemployment, workers must accept even a job below their professional qualifications, the door could be opened for part-time positions in eastern Germany (usually these are the unskilled "everyman jobs")--and that means first and foremost for women. The fewer the opportunities for women on the job market, and the longer, for example, the period of their unemployment, the more inclined East German women will be to take on part-time jobs in order to remain in the work force at all. On the other hand, East German women's adherence to full-time work could also foster tendencies toward a more gender-neutral distribution of the "scarce work" (*knappe Arbeit*). The fact that in eastern Germany--in contrast to in the former Federal Republic--there has been as yet no gender-specific divisions of the occupational sphere into (male, skilled) full-time work and (female, unskilled) part-time work, which could be carried over into the development of new forms of work, could prove to be favorable for the re-structuring of the job market.

One should also bear in mind that in the current reorganization of the occupational sphere in eastern Germany, drastic rationalization processes are taking place, not the least of which are occurring in the service sector where many women continue to be employed. Here, forms of work organization are being adopted from the industrial sector (e.g., group work) which are characterized by a general breakdown of hierarchies in the work processes. With this, however, the hitherto common "genderization" of work duties or decision-making powers and the previously quasi self-evident hierarchies between men and women are becoming obsolete. It remains to be seen whether the demand of East German women for equal access to qualified work together with the consensus inherent in the (GDR) "gender contract" will produce

strong enough pressure to eliminate the hierarchization of gender relations which arise out of the modern organization of work.

It is also conceivable that, with continued structural unemployment, new lines of social differentiation will develop, i.e., between those with and those without jobs--which will run diagonally to differentiation by gender. This could lead--similar to the situation in the GDR, but this time for different reasons--to the weakening of "gender" as a factor of social differentiation as many combinations and other factors of social stratification (age, qualification, familial status, nationality) come to the fore. This could also mean that the forms in which women and men construct their relations will differentiate themselves.

4. Currently the scenario is rather bleak. The crisis symptoms which are observable in all western industrial countries through "globalization" apply completely to the Federal Republic of Germany. These are presently felt even more strongly in the new *Länder* than in the old. This is rather counter-productive for East German women's continued adherence to their "own ideas" (*Eigensinn*). Even if East German women prove themselves on the job market and continue to adhere to the model of the compatibility of career and family, the losses already sustained in the level of their professional qualifications cannot be overlooked. These occurred through the disappearance of entire industries and professions, as well as through lengthy unemployment and holes in institutional networks and social policy measures for the compatibility of career and family. The result of this configuration, short- and long-term, for the manner of integration of women into society remains to be seen and can only be determined through empirical studies.

Notes

1. This chapter was translated by Michael Kelly. Thanks to the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Seattle, for providing financial assistance for this translation.

Translator's note: *Eigensinn* is, in the context of this essay, somewhat of a play on words, or a re-interpretation of a common word. In regular usage, the word means simply "stubbornness," yet in this essay it has been separated into the two words which are used to create it: *eigen* and *Sinn*. Literally, these two words mean "own" and "sense" or "meaning." In this essay, the term is used to describe a particular quality of East German women which affords them a view of life and a form of quiet resistance to the changes their lives are undergoing. Thus, I struggled to find a suitable English translation and have left it in its original in

the title. Other occurrences of the term in the text have been translated as "own ideas" and put in quotation marks.

All translations of quotations from other sources quoted by the author originate exclusively from the translator of this essay and not from other published translations in the cases where such do exist.

2. I thank Sylka Scholz for her literature search in preparation of this article.

3. The terms "professional work" and "professional occupations" are used here in the broad sense to denote career or vocation, including those in technical fields.

4. Sabine Schenk and Uta Schlegel, "Frauen in den neuen Bundesländern - Zurück in andere Moderne?" in *Berliner Journal für Soziologie*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1993), p. 374.

5. In an update of theories of modernization, deficits and advantages of modernization in the GDR as opposed to in the FRG were highlighted, whereby the GDR, especially, was acknowledged as having a modernization advantage as compared to the FRG with regard to the social situation of women. See Stefan Hradil, "Die 'objektive' und die 'subjektive' Modernisierung. Der Wandel der westdeutschen Sozialstruktur und die Wiedervereinigung," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 29 (1992), pp. 15-28; Rainer Geißler, "Die ostdeutsche Sozialstruktur unter Modernisierungsdruck," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 29 (1992), pp. 15-28; and Irene Dölling, "Zum Verhältnis von traditionellen und modernen Aspekten im Lebenszusammenhang von Frauen," in *Berliner Debatte. Initial. Zeitschrift für sozialwissenschaftlichen Diskurs*, No. 4 (1994), pp. 29-35, from the perspective of East German women.

6. Peter A. Berger, "Was früher starr war, ist nun in Bewegung oder: von der eindeutigen zur unbestimmten Gesellschaft" in Michael Thomas (ed.), *Abbruch und Aufbruch* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992), p. 143.

7. See Stefan Hradil, "Die Modernisierung des Denkens: Zukunftspotentiale und 'Altlasten' in Ostdeutschland," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 20 (1995), pp. 3-15; Martin Diewald and Karl Ulrich Mayer (eds.), *Zwischenbilanz der Wiedervereinigung. Strukturwandel und Mobilität im Transformationsprozeß* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1996).

8. Gunnar Winkler, *Sozialreport 1996. Sonderheft 1 + 2: Zur sozialen Situation und deren subjektive Reflexion in den neuen Bundesländern* (Brandenburg: Sozialwissenschaftliches Forschungszentrum e. V., 1996), p. 24.

9. See Sabine Schenk, "Neu- oder Restrukturierung des Geschlechterverhältnisses in Ostdeutschland?", in *Berliner Journal für Soziologie*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1995), pp. 475-76.

10. Winkler, *Sozialreport 1996*, p. 25.

11. The downward tendency cannot be overlooked; however, in 1989, the share of women among the employed amounted to 47 percent, while in 1993 it had sunk to 44 percent, Sabine Schenk, "Erwerbsverläufe im Transformationsprozeß," in Hans Bertam (ed.), *Ostdeutschland im Wandel: Lebensverhältnisse - politische Einstellungen* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1995), pp. 75-76.

12. See Hildegard-Maria Nickel and Sabine Schenk, "Prozesse geschlechtsspezifischer Differenzierung im Erwerbssystem," in Hildegard-Maria Nickel,

Jürgen Kuhl, and Sabine Schenk (eds.), *Erwerbsarbeit im Umbruch* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), pp. 265-66.

13. Nickel and Schenk, "Prozesse geschlechtsspezifischer Differenzierung," pp. 266-67.

14. Schenk, "Erwerbsverläufe," p. 77.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

16. Winkler, *Sozialreport* 1996, p. 25. Translator's note: Qualification structure refers to the system of education and practical training which existed in the GDR (and the FRG to some extent) by which one becomes officially qualified for various positions and trades.

17. Schenk, "Erwerbsverläufe," p. 91.

18. Winkler, *Sozialreport* 1996, p. 23.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

21. See Ina Dietzsch and Irene Dölling, "Selbstverständlichkeiten im biografischen Konzept ostdeutscher Frauen: Ein Vergleich 1990-1994," in *Berliner Debatte. Initial. Zeitschrift für sozialwissenschaftlichen Diskurs*, No. 2 (1996), pp. 11-20.

22. There are studies which view East German women's adherence to the models of full-time work and the compatibility of career and family critically. In these, according to the views of some authors, the wide-ranging harmony of ideal and self-image in East German women, who have internalized and experienced in practice the norm of motherhood and career, functions rather as a hindrance to a critical reflective view of their lives and socialization in the GDR until now. See Heike Ellermann and Katrin Klatt, *Bundesdeutsche Hausfrau? Nie im Leben! Eine Studie zum Selbstverständnis von Frauen in Ost und West* (Berlin: Hoho Verlag Christine Hoffman, 1995), p. 204ff.

23. Women's contribution to household incomes remains at 43 percent, approximately the same as in GDR times. In comparison, the contribution of women in the old *Länder* to household incomes is 18 percent (1988). See Schenk, "Neu- oder Restrukturierung," pp. 484 and 479.

24. Winkler, *Sozialreport* 1996, p. 23.

25. In 1995, 64 percent of all employees in the new *Länder* still had a standard work week of 40 hours, while this applied to only three percent of employees in the old *Länder*, Winkler, *Sozialreport* 1996, p. 22.

26. A method for avoiding unemployment which women have discovered for themselves is that of founding independent companies. These are usually small companies in the service sector. Women in eastern Germany currently profit from state assistance to independent companies equally as much as men, although they usually have relatively little start-up capital available. To what degree these small companies have a chance of survival is currently difficult to say. See Frigga Dickwach and Monika Jungbauer-Gans, "Betriebsgründerinnen in Ostdeutschland," in *Soziale Welt*, No. 1 (1995), pp. 70-91.

27. Reinhard Kreckel, "Makrosoziologische Überlegungen zum Kampf um Normal- und Teilzeitarbeit im Geschlechterverhältnis," in *Berliner Journal für Soziologie*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1995), p. 492.

28. In 1995, economists at the Institute of Economic Research in Halle put forth the thesis that "the east German job market crisis is not," as the sociologist Reinhard Kreckel summarizes, "due foremost to the loss of over 3.5 million jobs since 1989, but rather to the much higher 'inclination to work' of east Germans (in comparison with the old *Länder*)." (See Kreckel, "Makrosoziologische Überlegungen," p. 490.) This "higher inclination to work" in eastern Germany is accounted for, above all, by East German women.

29. Translator's note: The German word here is *Vergesellschaftung* which is otherwise best translated as "socialization." However, as the author is distinguishing between two different types of socialization, it would be misleading and redundant to translate this second form as such. I have thus used the term "society-ization" to impart the author's meaning of socialization *into* a specific society and societal role.

30. Pregnant women in the Federal Republic receive a 14-week paid maternity leave (6 weeks before and 8 weeks after childbirth) with job-dismissal protection of four months. Since 1994 a three year parental leave for mothers or fathers is allowed. For this period there is a guarantee of employment; child-rearing money is received for the first six months (320 ECU per month) and after that the following eighteen months can be financed depending on income.

31. This model is modernized insofar as women, in the old *Länder* too, increasingly are employed. There is still a wide-ranging consensus, however--and this is confirmed by corresponding tax breaks--that employment should be interrupted for a longer period prior to (possible) re-entry after childbirth. The provider model is thus only modified.

32. Dietzsch and Dölling, "Selbstverständlichkeiten," pp. 11-20.

33. Frank Thielecke, *Der Habitus im Veränderungsprozeß eines Versicherungsunternehmens*, Dissertation (Berlin: Humboldt University, 1993), has shown this for the banking and insurance sectors. In these typical occupations for women in the GDR, women had to obtain additional qualifications soon after unification in courses in the old *Länder* which sometimes lasted a period of weeks. Although the majority had children, the women often and seemingly without serious conflicts made arrangements with their husbands for child care and domestic duties during the time of their absence. Even if one considers that this represented an extraordinary situation (by taking the courses the women retained relatively secure jobs and their salaries were quickly brought to the level of those of the west), these findings still speak for the experiences of a practiced everyday division of labor between the sexes which could be fallen back upon. This is not intended to deny results of studies from the GDR, according to which women did three-fourths of all housework. Under such unequal distributions, however, East German men appear to have experience with domestic duties. Unfortunately there are no sufficient empirical studies on this topic.

34. Child-care institutions were practically cost-free for parents in the GDR. Only approximately 30 Marks for food had to be paid. Today for a kindergarten spot in Berlin, for example, costs range from DM 75 to DM 490 per month. As of 1998, a kindergarten spot will cost at least DM 95, if the parents earn less than DM 44,000 yearly. The price rises to DM 140 if yearly income lies between DM

44,000 and DM 55,000 and to DM 240 for yearly incomes between DM 55,000 and DM 66,000. Top earners (over DM 150,000 yearly income) will no longer pay DM 490, but rather DM 560. For this money, however, it is also possible to find private child care, which promotes a further reduction in public child care.

35. Gerhard Engelbrech (1993), quoted in Schenk and Schlegel, "Frauen," p. 378.

36. One must bear in mind, however, that day care in eastern Germany for children in the lower classes and school-based recreational possibilities have largely disappeared. Hence, the entitlement or the right to a kindergarten spot can only partially compensate for the lost network of public child care in the GDR.

37. Kreckel, "Macrosoziologische Überlegungen," p. 494.

38. *Die Zeit*, 10 October 1994, p. 37.

39. Jürgen Dorbritz and Karla Gärtner, "Bericht 1995 über die demographische Lage in Deutschland," in *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (1995), p. 339.

40. "Desired childlessness" (*Gewollte Kinderlosigkeit*) in the GDR was negligible. In the corresponding studies of the Institute for Sociology and Social Policy of the GDR Academy of Sciences from the years 1982 and 1987, the amount of those who desired no children was merely 1.5 percent and 0.9 percent, respectively. See Sonja Menning, "Geburten- und Heiratsverzicht in den neuen Ländern - Abschied von der Familie?", in Hubert Sydow, Uta Schlegel, and Andreas Heimke (eds.), *Chancen und Risiken im Lebenslauf. Beiträge zum gesellschaftlichen Wandel in Ostdeutschland* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), p. 138. While the fertility level tended to fall in the GDR as in all industrialized countries, the rate of motherhood (*Mütterrate*), i.e., the percentage of women who had borne at least one child during her lifetime, rose. In 1989-90 it stood at 90 percent, according to Winkler, *Frauenreport 1990* (Berlin: Verlag Die Wirtschaft, 1990), p. 27.

41. Dorbritz and Gärtner, "Bericht 1995," p. 339, highlight "the relatively high childlessness in the former Federal Republic" as a characteristic of the demographic situation in Germany. They claim the proportion of childless women born in 1960 is 25 percent. According to their evaluation, this high rate is an "international exception."

42. Daphne Hornig, *Auswirkungen gesellschaftlicher Transformationsprozesse auf das reproduktive Verhalten Brandenburger Frauen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung irreversibler Schwangerschaftsverhütung* (Potsdam: Ministerium für Arbeit, Soziales, Gesundheit und Frauen, 1994), p. 67.

43. Hornig, *Auswirkungen*, p. 62ff.

44. In a research project we have analyzed this press campaign using discourse theory and related it to the motives of East German women for undergoing sterilization. The results of this research will be published in English as Irene Dölling, Daphne Hahn (formerly Hornig), and Sylka Scholz, "Birth Strike in the New Federal States an Act of Resistance?", in Susan Gal and Gail Kligman (ed.), *Gender Transformations: Reproduction as Politics in East Central Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming). The German version is titled "Gebärstreik im Osten? Wie Sterilisation in einer Pressekampagne

diskursiviert wurde und welche Motive ostdeutsche Frauen haben, sich sterilisieren zu lassen," by Irene Dölling, Daphne Hahn (formerly Hornig), and Sylka Scholz (1996), *Potsdamer Studien für Frauen- und Geschlechtsforschung*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1998).

45. See Hornig, *Auswirkungen*.

46. Elke Holst and Jürgen Schupp, "Perspektiven der Erwerbsbeteiligung von Frauen im vereinten Deutschland," *DIW Diskussionspapier No. 68* (Berlin: Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, 1993), p. 6.

47. See Hornig, *Auswirkungen*, and Dölling, Hahn, and Scholz, *Sterilization*.

48. Hornig, *Auswirkungen*, p. 58.

49. See Zygmunt Baumann, *Moderne und Ambivalenz. Das Ende der Eindeutigkeit*, trans. from English by Martin Suhr (Hamburg: Junius, 1992).

50. In German social science discussion in recent times, the concept of "gender contract" has played a role. See Birgit Pfau-Effinger, "Macht des Patriarchats oder Geschlechterkontrakt? Arbeitsmarkintegration von Frauen im internationalen Vergleich," in *PROKLA*, No. 4 (1993), pp. 633-663. The basic assumption of this approach is that, in all modern societies, a historically developed socio-cultural consensus exists on the respective forms of communication and exchange between the sexes. This involves a model and life-pattern for the "correct" form of gender-specific distribution of work, commonly accepted by both men and women, and on the form of the family and the manner of integration of both genders into society, the job market and/or the family." See Schenk, "Neu- oder Restrukturierung," p. 478. In ideal form, two separate models can be differentiated here. One is the model of the male provider marriage, in which women are primarily integrated into society through the family and their roles as housewife and mother. On the other hand, there is the model in which participation in the employment system presents the dominant form of integration into society for both men and women equally and which proceeds from the participation of all employable people in the job market. Without going into concrete formations at this point, one can say that for the former Federal Republic a gender contract according to the model of the male provider marriage is characteristic, and for the GDR, or for the new *Länder*, the model of the dual-earner marriage.