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Germany

EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCE – GENDER RELATIONS IN UPHEAVAL?

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Gender as a dimension of social structure – gender as social superstructure

Gender is a dimension of social structure in every known society. It is important for the ascription of social status as well as of social cooperation. Gender relations have a formative influence on the society as a whole and become a „social superstructure” (Schelsky).

Gender stereotypes become embedded in the minds of individuals. Having been produced originally by the social organization of gender roles, gender stereotypes tend to be perpetuated. Thus gender becomes a permanent dimension of social structure and is crucial not only to social status and to cooperation, but also to forming the normative patterns of relationships between women and men. Men and women are defined by gender relations. That is why, when analyzing gender relations, one cannot neglect the mutual interconnections and contradictions of the individual dimension as well as

those of the structural dimension. Gender relations are not reducible to gender difference; and gender difference, per se, does not legitimate any form of economic or social disadvantage. That comes about rather by gender politics which regulate gender relations. Decisions in educational politics, social politics, family politics, and labor market politics are made appropriate to structures which are differentiated and differentiating according to gender.

Social inequality of the sexes is due to gender-specific differentiations, regulating the allocation of resources such as labor, money, time, knowledge, social relations, power, prestige, and others. For example, in a society which tends to be „fatherless” (Mitscherlich), having children and wanting to take care of them is a source of many conflicts between the sexes as well as a source of social inequality. Apart from this, there are some others which are identified again and again in relevant research: money, time and time use, employment and the gender-specific division of labor.

Along these lines, I would like to trace the social change in gender relations and its implications for contemporary gender relations. It is indispensable for any process of emancipation that the recognition of both „facts of equality” as well as „points of difference” become common points of reference on politically emancipatory activities for both sexes.

Styles of household management and areas of conflict

The ideas and concepts for the recent German empirical study of household management styles (Piorkowsky & Warnecke 1994) were put forward by Williams & Paixao (1992). Styles of household management are at the center of their international and intercultural comparative research project on „Effects of the Household Resource Management System”. Williams & Paixao’s first findings were presented during the XVII-th World Congress on Home Economics in Hannover in 1992 within the report on the research project „Family Resource Management – Family Transactions with the Economy”.

The Bonn survey aims primarily at collecting data for an intercultural comparative analysis of practiced and preferred styles of household management. Furthermore, it aims at highlighting how various styles of household management relate to specific features such as the distribution of power and roles, patterns of interaction and resource management as well as highlighting how different styles of household management affect the members of a household in their satisfaction with the way the household is managed and with family life. The research focusses on the relation between styles of household management and areas of conflict within families.

Williams and Paixao distinguish between eight management systems which are to be seen as transitional forms between the extreme systemic forms of organization, i.e. hierarchy and chaos:

- a) autocratic, traditional, authoritarian, patriarchal or matriarchal – „productive”
 - b) socialistic, rational bureaucratic – „cooperative”
 - c) communal or familistic – „sharing”
 - d) democratic, rational autonomous – „family council”
 - e) egalitarian – „calculating”
 - f) exchange, laissez-faire, market exchange (quid pro quo), specialists – „competitive”
 - g) permissive, change-prone, free-form – „expressive”
 - h) fatalistic – no system or structure – „nonproductive, noncooperative”.
- (Piorkowski & Warnecke 1994, 161)

The Bonn study distinguishes between the following styles of household management:

- a) patriarchal-authoritarian
- b) patriarchal-cooperative
- c) familistic-communal
- d) democratic-discursive
- e) egalitarian-calculating
- f) individualistic-exchange-oriented
- g) individualistic-emotion-oriented
- h) confused-fatalistic. (cf. 162)

The most common household management styles are the patriarchal-cooperative (21%) and the familistic-communal (20%) style. Least widespread is the democratic-discursive style (8%). There is no data available on the patriarchal-authoritarian style (see Tab. 1).

Table 1
Practiced styles of household management
(cf. 163)

Styles of management	
patriarchal-cooperative	21%
familistic-communal	20%
democratic-discursive	8%
egalitarian-calculating	16%
individualistic-exchange-oriented	14%
individualistic-emotion-oriented	13%
confused-fatalistic	11%

The data available from the Bonn study show that it is impossible to mark a particular management style as being practiced by the majority of households. They seem to indicate that particular styles of household management or management systems respectively are more adequate than others for certain types of households or certain phases within the family life cycle. The available data also reflect the tendencies in Germany towards individualization and pluralization. The individualization of structuring one's life in the sense of differentiated household management systems becomes obvious. Furthermore, the households do not adhere to a style of household management once adopted but adapt it or change it whenever it becomes necessary due to changes in the life situation. Thus 61% of those interviewed said they had changed their style of household management in the course of their partnership. Again, 40% of those said that the birth of a child led in particular to a change in their style of household management.

Being dissatisfied with the style of household management implies certain potential for conflicts within households, as we shall see in the following. „Domestic work and division of labor” was the area of conflict most frequently mentioned. Other frequent problems concerned „money and finances” as well as „free time for the family”. Moreover, in many households „economic activity” and „clothing or rather appearance” are subjects of discussion (see Tab. 2).

Table 2

Areas of conflict in households

Area of conflict	mentioned by	interviewees
Domestic work and division of labor	85	83
Money and finances	80	78
Free time for the family	80	78
Economic activity	78	76
Clothing/appearance	78	76
Hours/time for sleep	70	68
Friends	69	67
Intimacy/sex	62	60
Faith/religion	62	60
Problems of children at school	56	54
Drugs	49	48

Table 3

Areas of conflict and styles of household management

Style of household management	Areas of conflict mentioned (%)										
	Domestic work	Money	Family	Work	Cloths	Hours/time for sleep	Friends	Sex	Religion	School	Drugs
patriarchal-cooperative	90	71	81	71	81	57	76	62	57	71	48
familistic-communal	75	65	70	60	50	50	45	35	50	40	30
democratic-discursive	75	75	63	63	88	63	75	50	50	38	38
egalitarian-calculating	88	88	88	94	75	88	75	75	69	56	56
individ.-exch.-orient.	93	79	71	79	71	64	57	57	57	57	43
individ.-emot.-orient.	85	85	85	77	85	77	69	69	62	46	62
confused-fatalistic	100	91	82	91	100	91	82	82	82	64	64

Table 3 shows how the various areas of conflict are related to different styles of household management. Households managed in the familistic-communal style show the least conflict and thus this style seems to be not only the most favored but also the most harmonic style in private households. The confused-fatalistic style of household management, however, seems to imply a high potential for conflict, judging from the relatively high percentages. For example, 100% of the persons surveyed with a confused-fatalistic style of household management mentioned „domestic work and division of labor” as well as „clothing” as areas of conflict in the household group. Being dissatisfied with the confused-fatalistic style of household management also manifests itself in the high percentage of conflicts arising in nearly all areas.

On the background of further research results the main areas of conflict within gender relations (Germany)

- domestic work and division of labor
- free time for the family
- economic activity, and
- money and finances

will be highlighted in the following, both at the level of the couple/household and at the structural level.

Division of labor and time conflicts

The most important resource of the couple for reducing time pressure resulting out of economic activity is to share domestic work and the care of children communally. If the household is managed in a „familistic-communal” style or in a „democratic-discursive” style economic activity is more seldom an „area of conflict” within the household than if it is managed in the more frequent „patriarchal-cooperative” style.

Time studies show the following:

Minimal changes in the hours men spend on domestic work and a crucial reduction of the time working women spend on domestic work lead to a shift within the relative distribution of domestic work between the partners. Even in cases where the woman is employed full time (and her paid weekly working hours are only insignificantly less than those of the man) the man takes over on average only a third of the domestic work. The fact that men participate relatively more in domestic work when the economic activity of their female partner increases led Krüsselberg et al. to the conclusion that the behavioral patterns of men are changing. „This confirms (...) the thesis of the New Domestic Economy which stipulates that regarding behavioral patterns the husbands of working women more easily break away from traditional role

stereotypes" (Krüsselberg, Auge, & Hilzenbecher 1986, 203). This is a flagrant misinterpretation which cannot be confirmed, not even with their own data. Changes in the relative distribution of domestic work are almost entirely due to changes in the behavioral pattern of women, i.e. a reduced expenditure of time and energy for domestic work (cf. Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1996).

The partners themselves will probably not make a direct comparison of their individual shares in domestic work but will relate them to the amount of paid working time in such a way that low shares in domestic work on the part of men are offset against a „higher engagement" regarding economic activity and their role as breadwinners. Stage in the family life cycle and the age of children prove to be decisive factors when judging the total demands. The proportion men and woman take over from the total demands changes during specific phases over the course of the family life cycle. Especially in their childrens early years, women take on a much bigger share of the demands than men.

These data also prove to some extent the existence of the life-cycle-squeeze of men postulated by Oppenheimer (1974): Oppenheimer showed that the income of men and the financial needs of families do not develop parallel over the course the of family life cycle. The peak of income needs (loss of income due to the break in economic activity on the part of women, additional expenses for children) lies in the middle phases of the family life cycle. It is only in higher positions that men earn the highest incomes at the same level as before. After a child is born, there is a significant increase in the total demands on women compared to that on men. It remains higher than that on men for as long as children live in the household. Maximal differences at the expense of women are always to be found during the early childhood and pre-school years of their children. The general easing of the situation and the reduced demands on the time budget as a result of children growing older are also immediately used by men to reduce their total demands.

The share of men in domestic work has increased during past decades not only on a European level but also in the individual member states – **with the exception of Germany!** Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France are the pioneer countries in which an accelerated de-traditionalization of the division of labor within the family can be observed: In those countries, among families that had their first child between 1980 and 1990, there was a relatively high percentage of men who participated in domestic work above average and a low percentage of men whose participation was below average compared to the rest of European countries. At the same time, positive changes have taken place in these countries: Compared to the traditional starting position of those families who had their first child before 1970, a clear trend towards more egalitarian forms of familistic division of labor can be observed in all four countries.

Denmark is within the group of pioneer countries clearly ahead. Italy and Greece belong to a second group of countries in which the process of de-traditionalization was not yet so advanced.

In Germany, however, nothing has changed concerning household work within the past decades. Although the situation in families who had had their first child before 1970 was at the time rather less traditional – together with the G.D.R. the Federal Republic of Germany had the highest percentage of men strongly involved in the household. The fact that no further developments have since taken place led to the fact that more traditional situations persist only in Portugal and Spain. Should this line of development continue, it will not be long before Germany is bottom club in the discipline of spreading egalitarian and partnership-based forms of a familistic division of labor. This, according to Kaufmann (1990, 121, 155), is a necessary (not sufficient) prerequisite for a new cultural stabilization of the family. „The future of the family will depend upon whether we succeed in establishing a sufficient number of long-lasting partnerships, based not only on idealistic but practical equality. (...) Only if we succeed to get the men to take a larger share in the familistic welfare production and to stabilize this expectation also within the gender relations is there hope that the present uncertainty of the women and the associated questioning of crucial elements of family culture can be replaced by a new cultural stabilization of the family”.

The resistance of a gender-specific division of labor to change (as has been repeatedly shown in Germany) is, however, precarious for gender relations: It happens that women take recourse to „rationalization” by separation from their husbands who mainly want to be pampered. „With men one has to be permanently in the role of a therapist ... a totally strenuous business”. „There comes a time when you start to consider the problem with your husband over and when you start to think about solving the rest of your problems by yourself”. At present one in three marriages ends in divorce.

Husbands continue to participate minimally in child care and domestic work. Even the discussion on „the new fatherhood” does not change the matter very much since the „new fathers/house husbands” are few in number. Solutions whereby children are cared for by other people are often opposed by men. The child is regarded as „guarantor of the gender-specific division of labor”. Time is an important factor within the relationship of a couple – especially when it comes to conflicts over dividing household work.

It is up to women to contrive ways to meet contradictory time demands in daily life. After all, they want „both”: family and career as reported in empirical research studies of the 80s and 90s (Müller & Schmidt-Waldherr 1993). This socially produced conflict – „one is not enough, both are too much” – cannot be resolved solely on the basis of individual strategies of mothers as is shown by the „burn-out-syndrome”.

The various individual strategies brought about by the attempts of individuals are insufficient to solve the basic problems grouped around time needs and time conflicts within families. Carole Pateman describes the reason for it as the „sexual contract“. According to Ilona Ostner (1990, 3) „women are free to work, free to move around in the male world provided they care for the children (and others that are physically and emotionally in need) – unpaid or more or less badly paid and maintained by the market, the state or the husband ... And even the woman who can escape this caring role because of her biography is compelled to behave according to the behavioral norm of the sexual contract“. Since the problems we face in this context are of a structural and social nature that make family and career incompatible without additional individual and social costs, only the solution of these structural problems can remedy the situation. Krsselberg describes the socially produced conflict between career and parenthood as a violation of social rationality“. In this sense, it is precisely „social rationality“ within family policy, social and labor market policy that is needed in order to solve this conflict.

Money and financial conflicts

„Money – power – love“ seems to be an unlucky trio, ever since. On the one hand, there has always been a strong link among them; on the other hand, one has often been a hindrance to the other. What influence does economic independence (which women had to fight very hard for and which is more and more taken for granted) have on personal needs and emotions? The new independence of women: Is it a hindrance or an enrichment to happiness with men?“ (Dormagen 1992, jacket text)

Money is the source of many conflicts in couple relationships. This becomes clear not only by our secondary analysis of qualitative interviews with couples concerning the division of labor in the private household. „Money plays a very crucial role in our lives. This explains why there is a stunning similarity between the way we deal with money and the way we deal with friendship and love. Those who find it difficult to let loose of their money also find it difficult to be generous with their affections“ (Yablonsky in „Brigitte“ 13/93). We'll encounter this topic. Lately, more and more often in journals and magazines – often associated with the topics Women, Career, and Money indicating that some change is taking place in society with attendant symptoms of precarious relationships based on eroding patterns. Statements, interviews, and interpretations of these articles show that the way people relate to money and thus to the relationship between genders (Becker-Schmidt & Knapp 1987) is extremely problematic.

Features of women in marital and similar relationships
(cf. Frerichs & Steinrücke 1995)

feature couple	educational level/vacational training	social background	profession	personal net income	net household income	capital, durable goods	household
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>worker she</i>	6th grade/no vocational training	working class/without traditional working class culture	warehouse worker	DM 1,500.–	DM 4,100.– (incl. son's DM 600.– apprenticeship income)	small car	married, includes her adult son from previous marriage
<i>he</i>	10th grade (O-level)/commercial vocations training	traditional skilled worker milieu	warehouse administrator (worker status)	DM 2,000.–			
<i>white collar she</i>	6th grade/home economics vocations training	middle class/traditional petty bourgeoisie (urban)	office manager	DM 2,700.–	DM 6,000.–	multiple life insurance policies	nonmarital shared household, 2 children each from previous marriages, not present
<i>he</i>	12th grade (A-levels)/university (no degree)	middle class/traditional petty bourgeoisie (urban)	computer programmer currently on leave as worker council member	DM 3,300.–			

Table 4 (cont.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
public service <i>she</i>	12th grade (A-levels)/ university degree	professional upper class	middle school teacher (on leave)	DM 750.– (interest income)	DM 5,350.–	house and property securities, van, family car	married, common household 3 children (3, 6, 10)
<i>he</i>	12th grade (A-levels)/ university degree	middle class/ traditional petty bourgeoisie/ farm milieu	gymnasium teacher	DM 4,600.–			
managerial <i>she</i>	12th grade (A-levels)/ university degree	middle class/ mining milieu	office manager	DM 7,500	DM 22,000.–	house and property, investments, luxury car, family car	married, common household (on weekend), no children
<i>he</i>	12th grade (A-levels), high school university degree	middle class/ traditional petty bourgeoisie crafts trades milieu	business manager	DM 15,000.–			

„Money makes the world and relationships go round“. There is enough dynamite: No matter whether it is complaints about costly telephone calls or a quarrel about home furnishings. The decisive point of the question is „Who has the final say when it comes to expenditures? How are costs distributed? In short: what do couples quarrel about in detail?“

66% of all couples quarrel about money. Finances are topic number one followed by jealousy, children, or sexual dissatisfaction.

38% of all couples experience a permanent crisis about money. Of all couples that separate, 21% state (i.e. 1993) that quarrel about money led to the separation. Interesting to see: In 1988 this was the case for only 13% of the couples.

65% of the men strongly dislike extravagance. Reproach: She spends too much money on silly things. 46% of the women, too, complain about the extravagance on part of their husband/friend.

35% of the women complain about stingy partners, but only 12% of the men criticize their partner for being stingy.

46% of all couples aim at compromise solutions. Common household cash, besides each partner has his/her own personal budget. There is a clear tendency towards this kind of arrangement among married as well as unmarried couples. 38% of couples pay everything out of one common budget. Only 12% have two separate checking accounts. Most couples pay for rent (63%), furniture (60%), holidays (79), and food (84%) together.

Against that background it is striking to see that **57% of all men decide on bigger expenses all by themselves,** as, for example, investments, housing, or car (the latter is solely financed by the man in 44% of all relationships) and that **69% of the women manage the household money by themselves.** Nobody interferes with activities such as daily shopping or paying workmens bills. (freundin 1993, 96)

On behalf of „freundin“ the Munich „Gesellschaft für Rationelle Psychologie „interviewed 4693 men and women between 16 and 55 years of age who live in a permanent relationship with a partner).

The income of women in relationships

A short characterization of the life situation of women in relationships can be drawn from the data in table 4 regarding educational level, social background, profession, income, capital, and household.

A comparison of income groups of men and women in various job categories shows that a gender-hierarchical structure in the distribution of income still exists. The existing data give proof of that. Table 5 shows an income structure based on calculations from data provided by the Socio-economic Panel (SOEP).

Table 5

Net income of women and men in selected job categories (in percent)
(cf. Frerichs & Steinbrücke 1995, 17)

Job category according to SOEP*	Income groups (DM) according to SOEP								
	to 999.-	1000.- to 14999.-	1500.- to 1999.-	2000.- to 2499.-	2500.- to 2999.-	3000.- to 3999.-	4000.- to 4999.-	5000.- to 7499.-	7500.- to 20000.-
unskilled labor									
female	62	18	17 ¹	2	–	–	–	–	–
male	23	5	31	28	8	5	–	–	–
skilled labor									
female	19	37	30	14	–	–	–	–	–
male	1	1	27	41 ²	20	9	1	–	–
skilled whitecollor									
female	16	18	25	27	10 ³	3	–	–	–
male	3	–	12	29	22	27 ⁴	6	1	–
managerial									
female	–	8	35	–	19	–	21	16 ⁵	–
male	–	25	4	3	16	9	4	14	11 ⁶
public service higher level									
female	–	2	13	17	–	21	31	16	–
male	–	8	–	–	–	9	50 ⁷	32	1

* only the SOEP job categories relevant for couples queried

1-7 income groups of couples queried:

1 = warehouse worker, 2 = warehouse administrator (employed in worker status), 3 = group supervisor, 4 = computer programmer, 5 = office supervisor,
6 = business manager, 7 = gymnasium teacher

Source: calculated from data provided by the Socioeconomic Panel (SOEP)

In assigning the incomes of interviewed women and their partners to the income groups of the SOEP, the following pattern emerges: In each category women are one income group lower than their men. More precisely: They earn between 500.– DM (worker), 600.– DM (white-collar) and 7,500.– DM (managerial) less than their partners. Couples of different social background have been assigned (with their individual net incomes) to the respective job categories and income groups of the SOEP. The table shows a descending line from left above downwards to the right. The income gap of women remains almost unchanged. The explanation for this kind of gender-based wage gap – the considerable differences in income between men and women that have remained unchanged during the course of time even within the same productivity groups – does not lie within the field of collective bargaining policy.

In 1992 full-time female employees earned an average gross monthly salary of 3,666 DM while their male colleagues received an average gross income of 5,578 DM, i.e. almost 2,000 DM more a month. Thus female employees earned only 66% of male incomes. In the worker category, differences were less distinct: female workers earned an hourly wage of 17.27 DM, which is 73% of the average hourly earnings of their male colleagues (23.67 DM).

The wage gap between men and women has remained relatively unchanged since the middle of the 60s. Female full-time employees in those days, for example, earned 60.1% of the gross income of their male colleagues. In 1992 their share amounted to 65.7%. In the case of female industrial workers this proportion has increased from 68.3% to 73.0%.

The social re-construction of gender and social inequality due to the gender-specific and the gender-hierarchical division of labor

In accordance with Game & Pringle (1984) we start from the fact that the division of labor and work organization are fundamentally determined by gender and that work on the other hand plays a crucial role in the social construction of gender. Concepts of what is defined „male” or „female” are co-produced and reproduced by and in work. Social changes (as we experience them at present) give us the chance to study this process of the social construction of „gender”. Game and Pringle understand gender as a form of power relationship, like any other, as something that must be continuously negotiated and reconstructed. This process becomes evident especially when work and the division of labor are being reorganized and when male against female identities and following from that work areas and life chances are newly divided up and allocated.

During past decades the activity rate of women has continuously increased. Nevertheless, a gender-specific division of the labor market still exists. Despite

formal equality of opportunities in education, enforced efforts especially on the part of women to acquire credentials, despite high flexibility among women and the readiness for change and reorientation, women still encounter many disadvantages in the work place. Even if they do not feel that way when working – at retirement age (at the latest) it becomes clear that female work is classified as second class. Few women (compared to men) manage to work continuously in „their” areas:

- Despite positive developments in the fields of education and economic opportunities the facts and data available indicate clear discrimination against women. „Discrimination” is not a cliché; it is a reality.
- Differences in positions held by men and women at work have remained almost unchanged since the middle of the 60s. In the case of women, qualification has hardly proved to be helpful for moving up the hierarchical ladder.
- The wages and salaries of women still fall behind. On average, women earn a third less than men.
- In the past 20 years the unemployment rate of women has always been (at times significantly) higher than that of men.
- Women, especially, are „punished” for taking a break in their professional career in order to have and care for their children. They still experience a typically gender-specific break in their career biography. After leaving a job, they often fail to get back into that job – at least not at the same level.
- Discrimination in the job market and the fact of being solely responsible for their children makes women much more often dependent on social welfare than are men. This is especially so in the case of elderly women and single mothers: poverty is female. 54% of welfare recipients are women, and almost 5% of all women depend on welfare support. More than 40% of single and elderly women live on or below the poverty line of 1,400 DM. The average pension women can claim for themselves in the federal state of North-Rhine-Westfalia amounts to only 700 DM. The pension of men is three times as much.

The present debate on the future of female work highlights the fact that the trend toward a stronger integration of women into the labor market noted during the 60s and 70s cannot be projected as a trend for the 90s and the years to come (Gottschall 1993).

Against the background of changed economic and labor market conditions the limits of the integration of women into the system of economic activity which could be seen in the 80s now appear to lead to persistent polarizations of work chances and risks. Women lose out to a much higher degree than men when it comes to rationalizations at work and a redistribution of paid and unpaid work within society.

In taking recourse to a gender-specific division of labor and in classifying people into fully, partly, or not-at-all employable categories, our modern achievement-oriented society resolves the dilemma by saying that in an industrial society not everybody can be employable and employed at all times. This means that until now one has consciously or insidiously fallen back on or revived the gender-specific division of labor.

In all countries with a high quota of female labor, what has changed is not so much the way work is divided between men and women but rather between women and women: An ever increasing proportion of relatively badly-paid women help other women to become or to stay employed, but again within the service sector.

Regulating gender relations by gender politics – equity and/or difference

In analyses Germany often comes last compared to other OECD countries – and all the more after reunification – when it comes to the modernization of gender relations measured in terms of (a) continuity in professional career or (b) the amount of personal income.

It is necessary to comment on the tradition of social policy as gender politics in Germany in order to get a clear picture of the options and risks women encounter in Germany. This tradition is being perpetuated in the new Germany. Social policy in the Federal Republic of Germany can be described as conservative and corporative due to (among other things) the constitutive importance of the „subsidiary principle” for the interaction of market, public, and domestic services.

According to the „subsidiary principle” each individual is her/himself responsible for securing her/his own existence. If she/he does not possess property she/he can live off she/he has to secure her/his existence by individual achievement, i.e. by working (Offe 1970; Schmidt-Waldherr 1988) and has to arm her/himself against the risks of the „risk society” – either through insurance or economic support by the family. Only if none of the above-mentioned forms of maintenance mentioned exists or is possible can a person turn to public welfare. In this sense, the subsidiary principle concedes priority to self-help on the part of individuals or smaller social units over outside help.

Recent research on the relationship between „Christianity and the social state” as well as on the influence of Christian social ethics and religious movements has highlighted how a secularized Prussian bureaucratic Protestantism and Catholic social ethics intermingled in the social policy of the Federal Republic of Germany. Since the time of the Weimar Republic, this relationship has resulted in a social market economy which does not protect the individual

but preserves the existing status and respective lifestyle of the according class („from above downwards”, i.e. from the civil servant down to the worker). Capital and work (but also husband and wife) are each understood to belong to a different class. Thus social policy intervenes primarily in order to safeguard status and not so much to replace the contributions of the various status groups, i.e. in order to dismantle status by means of modernization. Consequently, social policy in Germany is characterized by a complex and complicated politics of difference. It therefore represents the exact opposite of the Scandinavian model of a universalized work-citizen-society with its strategy of equity in which difference is taken into consideration. Gender difference does not necessarily constitute gender inequality.

In Germany, socio-political measures move, therefore, within a structure, differentiated and differentiating between the sexes. Therefore, the effects on gender differentiation created by each apparently gender-neutral measure, should be investigated. In this respect, the history of socio-political regulations could be seen as regulating the relation of the sexes, precisely in an area where such regulations were not (expressively) intended. Admittedly, social policy tried from the beginning to regulate and did regulate the relation of the sexes, purposefully, consciously, and in a well-planned manner (Ostner & Schmidt-Waldherr 1987). However, the problem with this is not the fact that family, social and job-market policies are gender politics, but whether and if so what disadvantages will result for women (Gerhard, Schwarzer, & Slupik 1988; Müller & Schmidt-Waldherr 1993).

Presently, the apparent crisis of the welfare state is used to make the fact that the state works against the interests of women appear as a necessary balance of interests. In fact, the different social and job-market policies for the reprivatization of social services amount to the state assigning the latter to private households. As a result of the „double socialization of women” (Becker-Schmidt), the State treats them as employers under social and family policies, not only in state-financed women’s professions, but also in the heart of the family. Social policy as gender politics can, therefore, be understood as an answer to the problem concerning those living in society who are unable to work and who need to be provided for. Consequently, the German state has managed to weave its own social web in the family and above all in the shaping of housewives’ work, a web to which the State can hand over all manner of problems for which a market solution appears too costly and a social rationalization impossible because of the need for a „special quality” adequate for solving problems. The consequences of turning unpaid housework and honorary posts into paid employment is not a problem for the representatives of the „New Subsidiary Policy”.

The „New Subsidiary Policy” mainly affects social care workers in the state-financed service sector, which women were able to penetrate over the last few

years as social workers, play-group leaders, nurses, teachers and doctors (Gottschall 1993). One in 7 women found a job in this career sector. Because they are regulated and financed by the State, these women's professions are particularly dependent on the economic situation and changing political strategies such as the „New Subsidiary Policy“.

This analysis of gender relations in Germany is, of course, only a partial one – („partial“ because a more complete analysis would have to include the asymmetric distribution of cultural and psychical life chances such as

- social acknowledgment
- cultural educational opportunities
- identity-creating work
- sexual self-determination).

But to summarize, even without including this we can say: Yes, gender relations are in upheaval. The most important areas of conflict between the sexes in everyday life

- job, domestic work, gender-specific division of labor
- problems of time use in families
- money and finance management

are reflecting social structures. And so, as Germany is cutting back social achievements of the welfare state, problems of women are increasing.

Again, social policy as gender policy is intensifying the social inequality of the sexes. That's why, what, in this regard, presently happens in Germany by no means could be a model for the European Union. The aim of an appropriate social model rather should be „equality to everybody in spite of difference“.

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