

# Women's subjectification in times of social change – work, care, and the techniques of the self

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## Introduction

Considerations of European gender regimes reveal fundamental transformations during the last six decades due to social changes at the levels of the political, the social, and the economical. In the field of social policy and its ideal family model, those transformations can be described as the decline of the male breadwinner model with an unemployed housewife<sup>1</sup> on the one hand and the rise of the adult worker model on the other. Even strong male breadwinner countries like Germany have finally adopted this model, but with fragmentations on the policy-level as well on at the cultural level.<sup>2</sup> However, political discourses in general consider the adult worker model – which is part of the European Employment Strategy and related to the activation paradigm (Betzelt and Bothfeld, 2011) – as a crucial impetus for national social policies. And public discourses foster the well-educated and working woman as a stereotype of modern femininity.

These discourses and political frameworks impact on women's subjectivity by offering specific role models and patterns of feelings, thinking, aspirations, claims, and action. Governmentality Studies stress the emergence of subjectivity which includes self-regulations related to and indirectly governed by discourses and political programmes. Social and political transformations during the last 30 to 40 years, which have finally led to activation and the adult worker model, are related to those discourses or, more precisely, are expressions of neoliberalism at the level of social policy. Thus, activation and the adult worker model foster the progressive economisation of the subject.

These analyses describe in detail and very well which indirect techniques of self-regulations are offered to subjects by those discourses. But they focus on how, on a normative programmatic level, subjects should learn via particular practices or programmes to perceive themselves and other, to experience and to interpret themselves and others (Bührmann, 2012: 146). Thus, Bührmann calls these kinds of studies analyses of "Subjektformierung". However, what is not considered is, how subjects refer to and internalise discourses and techniques of power. Studies of *Subjektformierung* do not consider, if subjects actually, on an empirical level, do, think and feel what they are supposed to do, think and feel (Bührmann 2012, 153). Therefore, Bührmann calls studies, which focus on those questions, analyses of "Subjektivierungsweisen". In my opinion, such analyses should include the question if discourses and technologies of power actually *do* and *should* impact on all individuals in the same way. This would for instance include the question, if – to give an example – unemployed worker, mothers or managers internalise the figure of the enterprising self in the same way.

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<sup>1</sup> This lasted longer in strong male breadwinner countries (e.g. Germany) than in weak male breadwinner countries (e.g. Sweden).

<sup>2</sup> For the fragmentation of German gender regime, see Bothfeld (2008) and Betzelt and Bothfeld (2011).

Therefore, this article highlights the transformation of women's subjectification under the impact of activation, economisation and the emergence of the adult worker model, by focusing on analysing *Subjektivierungsweisen* and by considering social inequalities. It considers the impact of the adult worker model on women's work/care-life from an historical and intersectional perspective, using the example of Germany. It discusses the interwovenness of altered political and gender regimes in the field of labourwork and the subjectification of women as worker *and* carer. As a new scientific perspective, referring to Bührmann's notion of *Subjektivierungsweisen* compared to *Subjektformierung*, this article asks how subjects refer to and internalise discourses and techniques of power. But instead of analysing social and political discourses (supposing that hegemonic discourses and social and political regulations – as those on activation or 'entrepreneur of the self' currently – are those techniques of power that impact on all subjects in the same way, which is, following Bührmann, an analysis of *Subjektformierung*), my analysis starts at the level of the individual, following the question, if "sie [the subjects, S.B.] es auch sind, also sein wollen, was sie sein sollen" (ibidem, 153) – a question that refers to *Subjektivierungsweisen*. In other words: this study examines at the level of the individual, by using qualitative interviews, how their narrations reveal techniques of the self, and through this the discourses and techniques of power that gear their subjectification. Techniques of the self are considered as expressions of *Subjektivierungsweisen*/subjectification. Thus, the subjects' narrations and descriptions of their daily life and daily practices reveal how discourses are internalised and transformed into social practices. This leads to insights about the relation between techniques of power and techniques of the self; thus, it connects the level of power and society with the level of subjects.

The analysis of women's subjectification shows that, besides gaining autonomy through labourwork, women are continually in contradictory conflicts between the carer- and worker role. This article argues that these conflicts are to be considered as a deeply rooted structure within capitalist and patriarchal systems of western industrial societies. The adult worker model still fosters a male worker ideal and care remains hidden in private. Women's subjectification is formed within these conflicting tensions between the (hidden and unrecognized) role of carer and the role of (male, autonomous) worker idea.

To meet the analytic requirements for elaborating these theses, the subject is taken as an analytic starting point and therefore, a secondary analysis of qualitative interviews with women was conducted. I suggest, following the Foucaultian tradition of genealogic research (Fraser, 1981), comprehending a topic, object, discourse or structure as historically evolved. To understand a current condition or state, reconstructing its development is necessary. In terms of the role of the adult worker model within neoliberalism and its impact on women's subjectification, it is therefore necessary to analyse the genealogic process of the adult worker model by looking back to its historical starting point. In Germany, the decade between 1990 and 2000 can be considered as the period of a shift towards the adult worker model (see chap. 3), and the interviews utilised in this study were conducted during this period.

The analysis takes the subjects' narration as its starting point. I assume that social structures and hegemonic discourses are observable through the individuals' narrations on their own values, on their experiences with social ideas, on their daily requirements and on their everyday life-structures. Subjective individual experiences reveal social structures. This assumption refers to Foucault's approach of governmentality which states that neoliberalism

develops a form of government which conducts through indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals. Thus, transformation to neoliberal subjectification is characterized by a subject whose self has geared his feelings, thinking, aspirations, claims, and action towards rational choices and economic cost-benefit calculations (Hamann, 2009). Elaborating women's subjectification and highlighting the techniques of the self allows conclusion on how neoliberal governmentality operates through the adult worker model.

This assumption requires an approach that links an analysis at the subject's level with reflection and analysis on social structures and political frameworks. To operationalize this requirement, I draw on the multi-level-analysis-approach for intersectional research of Winker and Degele (2011). Their intersectional multi-level analysis considers and links social structures, processes of identity construction, and cultural symbols.

Before introducing the multi-level approach of Winker and Degele (4) and discussing the results (5), I briefly outline some relevant aspects on the issue of modified gender relations under changed social contexts of the rising neoliberalism and describe the theoretical underpinning, Foucault's main thoughts on governmentality (2).

### **The Governmentality of Gender Relations**

Governmentality is a concept developed by Michel Foucault as a guideline to introduce new dimensions to his analytic concept of power that enable analysing power relations from the perspective of "conduct".

'Foucault uses the concept of government in a comprehensive sense geared strongly to the older meaning of the term and adumbrating the close link between power relations and processes of subjectification. [...] For this reason, Foucault defines government [...] as 'the conduct of conduct' and thus as a term which ranges from 'governing the self' to 'governing others'' (Lemke, 2001: 191).

The concept of governmentality links and analyses the relationship between power and subject. These processes are described as 'body of knowledge that provides the criteria of the ideal subject, and in terms of the precise ways in which the actual subject is led to practice itself in satisfying these criteria' (Kiersey, 2011: 31).

In pre-modern western societies, power was mainly incorporated by the sovereign monarch and social control was executed through religious and social orders (Nadesan, 2006). The shift to modernism included the rise of the autonomous, self-responsible, rational, and reasonable subject. Individual freedom and free, rational decisions became the core of the modern concept of citizen. Neoliberalism removed the limiting, external principle and put a regulatory and inner principle in its place, as Lemke (2001: 201) points out. This regulatory and inner principle allows a neoliberal form of government that develops indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals. The choice of options for action has necessarily to be the expression of free will on the basis of a self-determined decision, and therefore, the consequences of action are borne by the subject alone who is also solely responsible for them (Lemke, 2002). The modern or neoliberal subject therefore develops strategies of self-regulation which are necessary to govern subjects, or, as Foucault explains: 'Governing people, in the broad meaning of the word, governing people is not a way to force people to do

what the governor wants; it is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself' (Foucault, 1993: 203-204).

*Subjektformierung, Techniques of the Self and Subjektivierungsweisen*

This strategy of techniques of the self can be deployed in all sorts of areas and leads (Lemke, 2001: 201). Governmentality studies, which draw on Foucault's concept, describe techniques of the self, in which the neoliberal subject is situated and which are developed by itself, as 'the replacement every time of *homo oeconomicus* as a partner of exchange with *homo oeconomicus* as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings' (Foucault, 2008: 226). But this analysis focuses on Subjektformierung, thus on analyses of discourses and social and political regulation that suggest how, on a normative programmatic level, subjects should learn via particular practices or programmes to perceive themselves and other, to experience and to interpret themselves and others (Bührmann, 2012: 146). On a normative programmatic level, the transformation to neoliberal subjectification is characterized by a subject whose self has geared his feelings, thinking, aspirations, claims, and action towards rational choices and economic cost-benefit calculations (Hamann, 2009). This applies particularly to the activation paradigm and the feature of the adult worker model. This model is embedded in social policy frameworks that focus on activation, understood as enabling people to be active with regard to gainful employment and self-sufficiency, and to enable self-actualization through this activity. The hegemonic discourse on citizenship is that of the working subject and subjects identify themselves with these discursive settings. Discursive patterns and the underpinning governmentality are impacting on the work/care regimes and how women arrange their care requirements with their working aspiration.

But how women internalise these discourses, how technologies of power actually lead at an empirical level to specific techniques of the self, to specific self-regulations – this question refers to the notion of *Subjektivierungsweisen*. Thus, analysing *Subjektivierungsweisen* highlights practices, it elaborates self-concepts and subjectivity by analysing social practices. In Germany, according to my thesis, women's subjectification under the neoliberal adult worker model differs from women's subjectification in the period before – the time of Fordism and Taylorism when the male breadwinner- and housewife-model was hegemonic. Women were mainly not employed and considered as housewives. The rise of the adult worker model with the concomitant modifications for women includes that women have been considered as worker and not only as housewives. On the one hand, policies which are related to the adult worker model have been useful for women regarding the promotion of their labour market participation. Women have gained further autonomy and opportunities of social participation and representation. But on the other hand, care is still associated as female activity and its requirements are hardly acknowledged. Thus, those who provide care (mainly women) are still facing inequalities.

A brief insight in the structural socio-economic and political processes in Germany between 1990 and 2002 will explain the changes of discursive political patterns.

## **Political and economic framework of the adult worker model in Germany**

During the period between 1990 and 2002, women's labour market participation had increased significantly in Europe. In Germany, this applied particularly for women in Western Germany whereas women in the former East Germany already had been integrated in the labour market nearly equally. By contrast to West Germany and its hegemonic ideal (the male breadwinner- and housewife-model), East Germany had pursued an egalitarian labour market policy with fulltime employed women. A wide range of public childcare facilities were offered which supported the reconciliation of work and family. The political and social ideal was the fulltime employed woman and mother.

In West Germany before the reunion the situation was different. Political regulations, ideals and norms on women's gender role and normative concepts on motherhood facilitated the caring und not-employed mother. A lack of active labour market policies to support women's labour market participation, a welfare system with family policy and taxation based on the male breadwinner model, and a lack of public childcare facilities had forced mothers to interrupt employment and to stay at home. Women had to face constraints if they tried to reconcile gainful employment and carework.

In the course of economic changes and crisis with growing unemployment and decreasing family wages, employment of women became increasingly necessary for many families. In conjunction with changes such as the increasing education of women, EU-policy developments and normative modifications of female gender roles, influenced by women's movement, cultural and political orientations changed. Thus, the rise of the adult worker model in Western Germany appeared after the German reunion between 1990 and 2002. Political regulations in the field of labour market- and family-policies, such as reforms of parental leave act and expansion of public childcare facilities, were introduced. This change was attended by ambivalences: on the one hand, employment and career became more and more important aspects of female gender roles, but on the other hand, women have still been considered as responsible for care. Fragmentation occurred between gender culture and social policies as well as within the different fields of social policies. Specific fragmentation could (and still can) be observed between the Eastern German cultural norm of fulltime employed women and mothers on the one hand and policy frameworks that have facilitated the unemployment of mothers (e.g. taxation or aspects of parental leave arrangements) on the other hand. These ambivalences also occur in the narrations of the interviewed women. An intersectional multi-level analysis reveals the interwovenness between women's subjectification, norms and gender ideals, and social structures. This method and some information on the study will be described in the following.

## **The study**

### *Intersectionality as multi-level analysis*

Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele developed the approach of an intersectional multi-level analysis in order to 'realize socially relevant categories of inequality methodologically and comprehend them empirically' (Winker and Degele, 2011: 52). By using a multi-level approach that considers social structures (including organizations and institutions, thus, the macro and meso level), processes of identity construction (micro level), and cultural symbols (such as norms, values, and social assumption, thus the meta level of symbolic

representation), the interrelatedness of categories of inequality can be grasped and analysed as a part of the empirical research process, as the authors pointed out (Winker and Degele, 2011: 52).

The intersectional multi-level analysis links two strands: With regard to the requirement of a methodological grounded method to analyse qualitative data from an intersectional perspective it first enables to undertake such empirical research and second, it contributes to the theorization of the interferences of categories of inequality and differences.

Categories of inequality refer to vertical dimensions of inequality, defined as the main social structures that characterize the society regarding their hierarchies and regarding its access to resources and chances of participation. The function a society has to solve is the organization of production and the distribution of resources, and the organization of social reproduction. In capitalist societies, this organization and distribution is organized along a hierarchical order and via three dimensions of inequality: class, gender, and 'race'/ethnicity/nationality (Klinger, 2008). As a fourth dimension Winker and Degele suggest body.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, categories of differences are horizontal dimensions, less of inequality but rather of diversity. These dimensions are connected to inequality, as hegemonic norms and values which lead to discrimination of as marginalized perceived differences arise from vertical hierarchical categories of inequality.

Winker and Degele suggest eight steps to operationalize the multi-level analysis which include the identification and description of identity construction, symbolic representations and references to social structure. The other steps include clustering and comparison at all levels and the identification of interrelations on the three levels (Winker and Degele, 2011: 58).

My analysis which highlights the process of women's subjectification regarding care- and work-ideals, influenced by neoliberal governmentality of the adult worker model, benefits from the intersectional multi-level approach as it takes identity constructions as its starting point, according to Winker and Degele's reference to Bourdieu's praxeology approach (Winker and Degele, 2011: 52). I analysed (at the level of identity) how women implement the norms of being considered as an adult worker in connection with being considered as a carer. Identity constructions and agency related to identity constructions are expressions of the techniques of the self. Techniques of the self, understood as knowledge, strategies, and practices of governance that the individual seeks to engage actively in its own self-cultivation (Foucault, 1997), seemingly constitute the choice of options for action of the autonomous subject. The autonomous subject rationally assessed 'the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to other alternative acts' (Lemke, 2001: 201), but this process is the product of the 'conduct of conduct' (Lemke, 2001: 201); thus, 'indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals without at the same time being responsible for them' (Lemke, 2001: 201) might appear in the social practice of caregiving, as I assume. The arrangement of carework in private households is regulated by neoliberal governances, influenced by hegemonic discourses on the working and caring subject. In other words, analysing the

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<sup>3</sup> I refer only to the categories class, gender, and 'race'/ethnicity/nationality and agree with Cornelia Klinger (2008) to restrict on these three categories at a macro level. Body is a category which includes sexuality, age, health, and so on and is therefore to be considered as a category of difference.

subjects' narrations on care in their everyday life and how they describe their dedication towards care, leads us to an understanding of the governmentality of care as 'a space of 'micropower'' and enables us to 'examine how they can become an expression of micropower, reflecting the neo-liberal macro structure of governmentality' (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2007). The particular benefit in using a multi-level approach is therefore the possibility to link the levels of social structures and symbolic representation (thus, the levels at which governmental processes have their starting point) with the level of identities (thus, the level at which governmentality has an impact on agency) and to elaborate the interactions between the levels and the categories (Winker and Degele, 2011: 64).

### *Qualitative secondary analysis*

The qualitative interviews had been conducted in four research projects which had been carried out at different times between 1990 and 2002.<sup>4</sup> The qualitative secondary analysis of data which had been conducted during this period, offers the possibility to gain insights in processes of social change during the rise of the adult worker model.

The primary research projects had mainly focused on different questions such as on the organization, constraints and challenges of everyday life, on the blurring of boundaries of work and family life and on questions like the division of domestic work. I assume that processes of subjectification can very well be reconstructed through the narrations on everyday life conduct, on the daily coping to reconcile work and family life, and on experiences of contradictory norms and values.

About 500 qualitative interviews from four primary studies are the data basis of our secondary study. Out of these data, I chose a fitting sample for my sub-study of a qualitative secondary analysis on women's subjectification. The chosen data had to meet several criteria. The "caring"-criteria was met by choosing interviews with women and men who lived with at least one child.<sup>5</sup>

I referred to the structural category 'class' by choosing women with different social backgrounds in terms of their education and their current social status. Regarding 'cultural' and structural differences, I chose women who live in urban and women who live in rural environments, as well as women with East German and West German socialization. Most of the interviews were conducted with employed women, but I contrasted them with not employed women to compare their attitudes towards care.

I considered the category 'gender' mainly by analysing individual gender differences, individual and social assumptions on hegemonic femininity and masculinity at the level of symbolic representations and at the level of identity. I analysed, for instance, on which assumptions of normality the subjects drew on. I conducted the analysis by focusing on how elements of identity construction are related to the idea of being a worker or to the idea of being a housewife. Did women identify themselves with caring or did they distance

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<sup>4</sup> The primary studies which provided their qualitative data for our qualitative secondary analysis are: „Alltägliche Lebensführung“ (conduct of everyday life) from 1986-1996 (Kudera and Voß 2000), „Paarbeziehungen im Milieuvvergleich“ (couple relationships in different milieus) from 1995-1999 (Koppetsch and Burkard 1999), „Alleinerziehen – Vielfalt und Dynamiken einer Lebensform“ (lone parents) from 1996-1999 (Schneider et al. 2001) and „Liebe und Arbeit in Paarbeziehungen“ (love and work in couple relationships) from 2000-2002 (Huinink and Röhler 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Those who were caring for frail elderly and also met the other criteria, were also caring for children.

themselves from being a housewife? How did they consider masculinity in relation to care and how did they experience and describe women's and men's gender roles at the level of social symbolic representation? I also searched for narrations on experiences of inequality, difference, or discrimination related to gender. To contrast the caring of women along the line of gender, I analysed also interviews with single fathers.

All in all, the sample of the sub-study consists of 50 interviews. This article is based on 25 interviews which have been analysed exemplarily, 22 with women, three with men. 19 women were employed, three were not employed. Three women had a migrant background. About one third of the interviews were conducted with women of a lower social status regarding their education and their financial situation, one third with women of a medium social status, and one third of the women had a higher social status. The interviews had been conducted between 1990 and 2002, most of them in 1996 and 2000. At the time of the interview, the interviewees were between 28 and 43 years old. Our primary studies used the qualitative method of semi-structured, problem-centred biographic interviews. This interview method is open for intersectional multi-level analysis.

### **Women's subjectification under the neoliberal adult worker model**

The following chapters aim to present and discuss the study's results. I have elaborated the women's subjectification/Subjektivierungsweisen<sup>6</sup> in the tensions between their role as carer and worker which has gained a specific importance since the rise of the adult worker model. The analysis shows how the processes of subjectification are related to structural categories of inequalities and to categories of difference. Within this complex, symbolic representations (norms, values, cultural ideas) on gender roles, femininity and masculinity play a major role.

I differentiated two main types of subjectification in which the specific interrelation between the level of identity, the level of social structure, and the level of symbolic representation is recognizable.

#### *The Carer-Identification-Types*

A strong dedication towards care applied for those women of the sample who grew up in West Germany. It is a significant result that nearly all Western German women of my sample had a strong aspiration towards care and felt being satisfied with doing care. This applied for housewives as well as for fulltime employed women. For most of those women who decided to be a housewife, the decision to interrupt labourwork and to stay at home rooted in her and her husband's traditional ideas on gender and family. Thus, they felt a strong identification with the carer role and no strong dedication towards labourwork. With their role they corresponded to the still hegemonic symbolic representation of the housewife-model which had still been an ideal for mothers in Western Germany during this period, particularly in more rural areas.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, they experienced contradictory requirements on women which are related to the fragmentations within the gender regime, as during this period the norm of unemployed mothers coexisted with the norm of employed women (and more and more: mothers). They felt not being a real part of the society as recognition for women had

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<sup>6</sup> In the following, I will use the term subjectification as an English term for Subjektivierungsweisen.

<sup>7</sup> Something, which can be still observed in Germany.



increasingly been attached to labourwork, and at the level of public discourses housewives' carework decreasingly received recognition.

Employed mothers of a lower social status who were mainly from a worker class milieu had a weak worker-identity and a strong carer-identity. Their employment was often a result of structural conditions and of having no other option than to work due to the financial situation of their family. At the level of identity, they handled their carer-worker-role in a pragmatic manner. If it had been possible from a financial point of view, they could also imagine staying at home. In general, these women referred to traditional gender roles and a traditional division of work at the level of identity. Even fulltime employed women felt responsible for doing domestic- and care-work, with an essentialist assumption that caring belongs to the female gender role. They drew satisfaction from doing domestic work.

The well-educated women with a higher social background had a strong carer-identification connected with a strong worker-identification. Traditional, but hidden symbolic representations on women's carer role and their own commitment towards care were connected with progressive and emancipative assumptions on female autonomy and women's career aspiration. At the structural level, their higher education and their considerable advanced career had led to a strong worker identity. After the birth of their child/children they faced ambiguous feelings regarding their worker role that conflicts with their normative assumption on caring. This inner conflict comprised a feeling of a lack of time and women faced a great many issues to reconcile work and care. Furthermore, this inner conflict consisted of meeting the requirements of contradictory role models: the role model of worker versus the role model of carer. These contradictions or tensions between being a carer and a worker appear in ambivalent narrations. On the one hand they distanced themselves from solely housewives, but on the other hand they explained that housework is their responsibility, their field, and a satisfying activity.

Major differences along the line of culture exist between women who grew up in West Germany and women who grew up in East Germany. Significantly, all women of our sample who grew up in East Germany distanced themselves from being a carer or from housewives. This is the second main type and for the Eastern German women, this type applies through all classes. It comprises all Eastern German women and some well-educated women of a higher social status who grew up in West Germany.

### *The Carer-Dissociation-Types*

East Germany fostered a female ideal of fulltime employed women and mothers and the normative female gender role of women as worker had been established for four decades. This norm has still been hegemonic between 1990 and 2002 and until now in the eastern parts of Germany. The structural frameworks had had impact on women's subjectification which can be shown in my analysis insofar as the narrations of those women who grew up in Eastern Germany show a much stronger identification with the worker role connected with a clear distance from being a carer. They distanced themselves clearly from the housewife-model and described housework as an unsatisfying, boring and meaningless activity, whereas waged work was considered as meaningful and important for their self-fulfilment. And they explained the importance of waged work for their autonomy.

These first analyses illustrate the role of care on the level of identity linked with the level of social structure and symbolic representation. Women who grew up in West Germany showed a strong dedication towards care at the level of identity, while women who grew up in East Germany distanced themselves strongly from the carer- or housewife-role. These differences are related to social structures in the former West and East Germany. While in East Germany, the figure of fulltime employment for all citizens dominated the hegemonic discourse – an ideal which comprised also women's gender role – care was hardly discussed. It was still allotted to women but not connected with any positive connotation regarding their citizenship. By contrast to West Germany, where citizenship on the one hand was connotated with the male role of an autonomous and employed man, but with a clear gendered segregation between the public and private sphere. While the public was a mainly male sphere, the private was clearly female. Caregiving as a natural, essential and thus positive activity for women was a hegemonic ideal for decades and the interviews reveal that despite a shift of women's gender role towards labourwork, caring was still an important aspect of Western German women's subjectification.

But despite these differences at the level of identity, there are two further aspects at the intersection between the levels of identity, symbolic representation and social structure and which go through the category of class and the differences between Eastern and Western Germany: regardless of their dedication towards care, all women do more care than men. And all women explain this fact by referring to essentialist gender knowledge, thus, the discursive assumptions on gender roles and gendered norms.

Therefore, the next chapters highlight and discuss in detail the findings on the level of symbolic representation which includes the specific gender dimensions and finally the particular impact of the adult worker model on women's subjectification.

### *They just don't see it*

The women explained their higher commitment for housework and care and men's lower time allocation and engagement by referring to gender roles and gender stereotypes. They did not consider housework as a real men's issue and explained the genesis of familial division of labour and women's higher commitment to domestic work by men's higher tolerance for dirt and that men do not realize necessary housework chores. Even the single fathers felt no normative pressure in keeping a perfect household. They explained to do the most important things, trying to keep it clean but not perfectly clean and tidy all the time.

The interviewed women showed a strong dissatisfaction with men's housework activities. In general, the way men were doing housework had not fulfilled women's requirements. Therefore, women tended to prefer doing housework on their own and considered housework as something that necessarily needs their control. They considered housework as their sphere and were also unwilling to share this sphere or their responsibility with their partners. This applied particularly for the laundry.

These differences between the depths of the commitment of keeping a perfect household are based on the different gender roles and gender ideas. But beyond the "private" attitudes, the interviews reveal differences in gender which resulted in structural differences. The single fathers were fulltime employed while the single mothers were not or part-time employed, mostly involuntary. Both, single mothers and single fathers, reported the experience that

youth welfare services preferred single fathers in assigning a place in public nursery schools, because they expected mothers to stay at home.

These insights at the level of symbolic representation and social structure demonstrate how strongly female (gender) identity is still related to care, and it shows that inequalities in gender relations, thus, gender as a structural category which structures social order along the line of gender, are based on the relation between gender norms and care. For some interviewed women, mainly those from Western Germany, the relation between gender identity and care results in a strong identification with the carer role, while for other women – mainly those from Eastern Germany – the relation between gender identity and care was restricted on a commitment towards care. This commitment is one main aspect of female gender stereotype.

Under the increasing impact of the adult worker model which women experienced as liberating regarding participation, autonomy, and recognition, the still existing assignment of care responsibility to women and the connotation of caregiving as a main aspect of female gender role leads to contradictory tensions for women. The techniques of the self, which are regulated by social assumptions on employment on the one hand and on caregiving in the private on the other hand, occur in women's narrations as two conflicting dimensions. The interviewed women have been approached with both dimensions by social norms and by their own self-identification. Their techniques of the self reveal the ambivalent requirements they have to face.

*'These are two claims which diverge enormously and one is torn between'. Ambivalences in Women's Subjectification*

Even in adult worker model-regimes care is associated with women, a persistence which applies for all western industrial countries. My study elaborates that this persistence does not only restrict women's full citizenship status due to their still restricted opportunity of participation at the labour market. The double burden of labour- and care-work comprises more than the difficult reconciliation of work and family. It is a conflictual encounter of two opposed ideals within women's subjectification. The women's narrations reveal inner conflicts and the feeling of being torn between two diverging claims.

Under the governmentality of the neoliberal adult worker paradigm, women have developed techniques of the self to meet the normative requirements of this ideal. They promote their career and employment against the background of their caregiving responsibilities. Their coping for reconciling work and family life are techniques of the self and it appears as an expression of free will on the basis of self-determined decision. The strategies of self-regulation are based on women's commitment or dedication towards care.

Vice versa, these techniques indicate social power structures. Current "adult worker societies" do not consist of egalitarian work/care arrangements with men and women who equally represent the worker/carer role. Instead, women are torn between fulfilling two ideals. Instead of developing family models of egalitarian division of work, external carework gains more and more importance. Those families, who are able to afford it, employ a domestic careworker for the woman's relief. Thus, differences along the line of class consist of the claiming of external domestic work services. In my sample, middle class or upper class families rely on carework of au pairs, for instance; a development which has already been

referred to by feminist researchers. This indicates power structures of a still in the private hidden care, without public recognition and acknowledgement, which has not been subject to equality discourses and thus still remains an exclusively female responsibility.

This organization of care in the hidden private of the family and burdened on women's responsibility is an expression of individual techniques of the self related to social power structures. Our society and economy are based on a social reproduction that is conducted in the private. Discourses, norms, and structures entail that individuals and families conduct caregiving without being paid for, organized and solved in the private. This private arrangement of care which includes that due to women's employment families increasingly rely on (lower class or migrant) domestic careworkers, is another aspect of the interrelation between the gendered techniques of the self and the techniques of power, and comprises the intersection between gender, class and 'race'/ethnicity/nationality. The techniques of the self in the field of care, of women and men, reveal the aim of the neoliberal governmentality in the field of social reproduction: the maintenance of neoliberal gender regimes which guarantee the social reproduction of labour force and generations without interfering capitalist production and the hegemony of waged work over care.

## **Conclusion**

What is the benefit of drawing on the notions of techniques of the self and subjectification/Subjectivierungsweisen when considering women's reconciliation of work and care? I suggest understanding hegemonic practices and agency as expressions of and related with social power structures. The hegemonic paradigms of neoliberal power structures are activation and self-sufficiency and these paradigms occur in social practices of reconciling work and family by women. The function of capitalist societies relies on women's techniques of the self to gear their thinking, feeling, and aspiration towards reconciling the carer- and the worker-ideal. This permits neoliberal societies not to consider care as a public responsibility but to delegate care to the self-responsibility of (female) individuals.

Examining the relation between care, gender, and subjectification develops our understanding in the status quo of current gender relations. It contributes to explain the persistence of gendered division of work and enables to appraise developments in the field of care like those of the increasing delegation of carework to domestic careworkers on the one hand and the persistent low participation of men in domestic work on the other hand. The core of androcentrism is still labourwork, and care – in its unpaid and paid forms – is still devalued. During the last decades transformations have occurred and this has been attended by reshaped ideas of work and family. But the core of these transformations regarding gender was the transformation of femininity: femininity is now linked to career and aspiration towards waged work *and* to (unpaid) carework. By contrast, hegemonic masculinity in the context of work/care has hardly altered.

Thus, the neoliberal imperative has different implications for men and women and due to the misrecognition of care, women are still discriminated. Regarding the gendered division of work, women or those who care will not fully meet the demands of the androcentric adult worker. Politics or feminist strategies for action should therefore not be restricted to merely promote women's participation in the labour market and to the reconciliation of work and family. Nancy Fraser (2009), among others, stresses that the adult worker model with its

family-equivalent, the two-earner family, is not the emancipatory solution of feminist critique of the former family wage- and male breadwinner model:

‘Far from aiming simply to promote women’s full incorporation as wageearners in capitalist society, second-wave feminists sought to transform the system’s deep structures and animating values—in part by decentring wage work and valorizing unwaged activities, especially the socially necessary carework performed by women. [...] in rejecting the androcentrism of the family wage, second-wave feminists never sought simply to replace it with the two-earner family. For them, overcoming gender injustice meant ending the systematic devaluation of caregiving and the gender division of labour, both paid and unpaid’ (Fraser, 2009: 105f.).

Accordingly, the consequence of the former centrepiece of a radical analysis of capitalism’s androcentrism is the intensification of ‘capitalism’s valorization of waged labour’ (Fraser, 2009: 111) with ‘depressed wage levels, decreased job security, declining living standards, a steep rise in the number of hours worked for wages per household [...], and a rise in female-headed households’ (Fraser, 2009: 110).

Since the emergence of the adult worker model and neoliberal activation policies, the organization of care has not been altering towards an egalitarian and social organization of care as in concepts like inclusive citizenship (Knijn and Kremer, 1997) or an egalitarian work/care regime which centres a universal carer, includes a modified notion of labour, and recognizes carework. Instead, the adult worker model still fosters a male worker ideal and care is mainly hidden in private.

Since the formation of the modern autonomous subject, changes in gender have been connected to hegemonic norms, values, and discourses (which are related to the *mentalité* in *gouvernementalité*/governmentality) and beyond that to the techniques of power. This means that the adult worker model as a hegemonic ideal connected to the governmentality under the neoliberal activation paradigm is highly socially recognised and an auspicious model which reflects values like independence, self-responsibility, participation, and recognition. It corresponds to the idea of the autonomous subject and hence is attractive for emancipatory aims.

In contrast, however, the carer-role which is not recognized. The carer stands for dependence and restriction – restricted regarding autonomy as well as regarding participation. The carer-role contradicts the idea of the autonomous subject which is equivalent to the male gender role. Therefore, changes of female gender role towards the adult worker model are hardly accompanied by changes of male gender role towards caring. Caregiving is not profitable; according to the current hegemonic discourses, the carer-role does not promise any emancipatory profits. Changes in male gender roles towards caring – which we can observe in fathers taking parental leave as in Scandinavia or in Germany – are only gradual modifications of gender. They are mainly focused on childcare and do not include housework chores. These gradual modifications could be understood as aspects of the increasingly required soft skills of an increasingly service-based industrial society.

This might finally shift our focus towards recognition of care: As feminist theorists have already emphasized by developing the *ethics of care*-approach (Lister, 1997; Tronto 1995), gender equality requires going beyond the delicate connection between gender and care. It is therefore necessary to decentre wagedwork (Fraser, 2009), as politics that arrange care around

wagework will not dissolve the women's traditional responsibility for care. It is necessary to valorise care and to valorise other unwaged activities (Fraser, 2009), and to degender care. Therefore, caregiving or carereceiving should be included in the definition of citizenship (Knijn and Kremer, 1997). This will require a major cultural as well as structural shift and finally a radical transformation of the deep structures of the social totality (Fraser, 2009).

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