

Women and Care: Subjectification in times of the rising adult worker model – An intersectional perspective

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Abstract

Drawing on Foucault's approach of Governmentality, the article highlights the impact of the activation paradigm linked with the rise of the adult worker model on women's subjectivization from an historical and intersectional perspective, using the example of Germany. Focusing on the aspect of care and women's tensions between worker- and carer-role, the article presents and discusses results from a qualitative secondary analysis using an intersectional multi-level analysis. The analysis links the levels of gender norms, (gender) identity and social structure which enables to further understand the status quo of current gender relations.

Keywords: male breadwinner model, adult worker model, subjectification, governmentality.

1. Introduction

Considerations of European gender regimes reveal fundamental transformations during the last six decades. Whereas during the earlier decades the hegemonic family model was that of the male breadwinner with an unemployed housewife¹, the transformations during the later decades generated the decline of the male breadwinner model 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 model². 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 albeit caring woman as a stereotype of modern femininity.

These developments have been useful regarding promotion of women's labour market participation. Women have gained further autonomy and possibilities of social participation and representation. However, this article stresses the assumption that the adult worker model is *not* the emancipatory solution of feminist critiques because it maintains gender inequality and social hierarchies.

Thus, critical social theory needs to analyse and express why, and by what exactly, the current situation of the adult worker model does not meet the feminist project of an egalitarian and emancipatory gender order. The aspects to be observed are manifold; however, this paper theorises that one aspect is crucial within the complex: care and the organisation of social reproduction.

Therefore, this article highlights the impact of the activation paradigm linked with the rise of the adult worker model on women's work/care-life from an intersectional perspective, using the example of Germany. It discusses the interwovenness of altered political and gender regimes in the field of work and the subjectification of women as

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

² But with fragmentations at the policy-level as well as at the cultural level (see Bothfeld 2008, Betzelt and Bothfeld 2011).

worker *and* carer. The analysis shows that besides gaining autonomy through employment, women are continually in conflicts between the carer role and the worker role. This article argues that these conflicts are to be considered as deeply rooted structures within capitalist and patriarchal systems of western industrial societies. The adult worker model still publicly fosters a male worker ideal, but care is hidden and private. Women's subjectification is formed within the tensions between the (hidden and unrecognised) role of carer and the role of worker (conceptualised as male and autonomous).

Following the Foucaultian tradition of genealogic research (Fraser 1981), I suggest 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 2002 can be considered as a gradual shift towards the adult worker model (see par. 2). Therefore, I used the method of a qualitative secondary analysis and analysed interviews with women in Germany that were conducted between 1990 and 2002³.

This article elaborates the thesis that women's subjectification allows for certain conclusions about how neoliberal governmentality operates through the adult worker model. This assumption requires an approach that links analysis at the subject level with reflection and analysis on social structures, political frameworks and cultural norms. To operationalise this requirement, I draw on the multi-level analysis approach for intersectional research of Winker and Degele (2011).

Before introducing the method (4) and discussing the results (5), I briefly outline some theoretical considerations (2) and relevant aspects on the socio-economic and political frameworks in Germany before and after the reunion (3).

³ The article presents results from a subproject of the DFG-funded research project IDconstruct under the direction of Thomas Kühn at Bremen University. Thanks to my colleagues Patrick Ehnis and Marina Mohr.

2. Techniques of power and subjectification

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 the approach of Foucault (2008) to governmentality – that neoliberalism develops a form of government that conducts through indirect techniques of leading and controlling individuals. The concept of governmentality links and analyses the relationship between power and subject. This process is 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). The modern or neoliberal subject therefore develops strategies of self-regulation which are necessary to govern subjects. Thus understood, subjectification comprises the entirety of processes that comprehend that technologies of domination determine the individual's construction of becoming a subject and that the individual transforms this conduct into processes through which «the self is constructed or modified by himself» (Foucault 1993, 203-204).

Thus, transformation to neoliberal subjectification is characterised by a subject whose self has geared feelings, thinking, aspirations, claims, and action towards rational choices and economic cost-benefit calculations (Hamann 2009). This applies particularly to features 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-actualisation through such activity. In the field of work and family, the adult worker model is the expression of the activation paradigm – the shift from welfare states to workfare states that activate or compel people to self-sufficiency (Daly 2011, Lessenich 2009). The hegemonic discourse on citizenship is that of the working subject, and subjects identify themselves with this discourse. The discursive patterns and the underlying governmentality impact on work/care regimes and women's arrangements for care requirements as intertwined

with their working aspiration. Obviously the question of how to reconcile paid and unpaid work relates to gender dimensions – in the main, women are the one who have to reconcile this question. Thus, the rise of the adult worker model that altered women's subjectification in the sense that women have been considered not only housewives, but also workers, leads to ambivalences and contradictions.

3. Political and economic framework of the adult worker model in Germany

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

In West Germany before the reunion the situation was different. Political regulations, ideals and norms of women's gender role and normative concept of motherhood facilitated the caring, 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 forced mothers to interrupt employment and stay at home. Women had to face constraints if they tried to reconcile gainful employment and carework.

During 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 the 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 the 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, women were still considered 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 full-time employed women and mothers, and policy frameworks that facilitated the unemployment of mothers (e.g. taxation or aspects of parental leave arrangements).

Thus, the rise of the adult worker model with all its paradox implications and fragmentations has led women to experience ambivalences and contradictions. These ambivalences occur also in the narrations of the interviewed women. The narrations offer insights in norms and symbolic representations the women and men drew on and were confronted with. They show how the women and men integrated these discursive patterns into forms of self-regulation, how they reflected their own attitudes in relation to political paradigms such as activation, and how political structures occurred in the individuals' self-regulation – thus the subjectification. An intersectional multi-level analysis reveals the interwovenness between women's subjectification, social norms and gender ideals, and social structures. This method of analysis and some information on the study are described in the following.

4. The study

The particular benefit of using a multi-level approach is the possibility of linking 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 impacts agency) and elaborating the interactions between the levels and the categories (Winker and Degele 2011, 64).

4.1. Intersectionality as multi-level analysis

Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele developed an intersectional multi-level analysis in order to «realize socially relevant categories of inequality methodologically and comprehend them empirically» (2011, 52). By using a multi-level approach that considers social structures (including organisations and institutions, i.e. the macro and meso level), processes of identity construction (micro level), and cultural symbols (such as norms, values, and social assumption, i.e. 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 Winker and Degele pointed out (*ibidem*).

Therefore, intersectional multi-level analysis links two strands: With regard to the requirement of a methodologically grounded approach for analysing qualitative data from an intersectional perspective, it first enables the undertaking of such empirical research, and second, it contributes to the theorisation 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 characterise society regarding its hierarchies and its potential access to resources and chances of participation. In capitalist societies, class, gender, and ‘race’/ethnicity/nationality must be considered the main categories of inequality, since these three dimensions relate to the dilemmas a society has to resolve: the organisation of production and the distribution of resources, and the organisation of social reproduction. In capitalist societies, this organisation and distribution is arranged along a hierarchical order and via the three dimensions of inequality: class, gender, and ‘race’/ethnicity/nationality (Klinger 2008). As a fourth dimension Winker and Degele suggest body⁴. These categories of inequality occur at the macro level of society. In

⁴ I refer only to the categories class, gender, and ‘race’/ethnicity/nationality. I agree with Cornelia Klinger (2008) in restricting these three categories at a macro level. Body is defined by Winker and Degele as a category that includes age and health. The category body leads to inequality, but in my opinion, argu-

contrast, categories of difference occur at the micro level of the individual. Individuals experience inequalities and differences in manifold ways. Therefore, Winker and Degele suggest for research at the micro level to keep open the number of socially defined categories available and necessary for the analysis. Categories of difference connect to categories of inequality since from categories of inequality arise hegemonic norms and values that lead to discrimination of as marginalised perceived differences.

Winker and Degele suggest eight steps to operationalise 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 among the three levels (ivi, 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 because it takes identity constructions as its starting point. I analysed (at the level of identity) how women implement the norms of being considered an adult worker in connection with being considered 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» (*ibidem*); thus, «indirect techniques for lead-

ments such as «age, bodily condition, health and attractiveness in the last decades have exerted an ever-increasing influence in relation to labour and have great impact on the sharing of resources» (ivi, 56) do not explain convincingly the relation of the category body to the macro level of society. Bodily conditions and health have not only had great impact on the sharing of resources and on maintaining labour force during the last decades but also during the decades before. But mainly, body is not an essential structural pattern of inequality. Dimensions such as age vary regarding inclusion and exclusion. While youth is a normative ideal, power and domination are mainly related to higher age (see politicians or managers). Also at the labour market, age reveals ambivalent forms of discrimination. On the one hand, in most European countries, mainly younger and elder unemployed persons face particular problems to enter the labour market again, while on the other hand, some labour areas offer particular securities which are based on age and seniority – and thus discriminate younger people. Therefore, in my opinion, body is a category of difference. At the level of the individual, a variety of differences related to body can be experienced.

ing and controlling individuals without at the same time being responsible for them» (*ibidem*) might appear in the social practice of caring, as I assume. The arrangement of care work in private households is regulated by neoliberal governances, influenced by hegemonic discourses on the working and caring subject. In other words, analysing the subjects' narrations on care in their everyday lives and their descriptions of 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).

4.2. Qualitative secondary analysis

The database of our qualitative secondary study are about 500 qualitative interviews from four research projects carried out at different times between 1990 and 2002⁵. The qualitative secondary analysis⁶ of data conducted during this period, offers the possibility of gaining insights into the processes of social change during the rise of the adult worker model.

The primary research projects focused mainly on the organisation, 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 of everyday life conduct, of the daily coping to reconcile work and family life and of experiences of contradictory norms and values.

From the interviews, I chose a fitting sample for my sub-study, a qualitative secondary analysis on women's subjectification. The sample consists of 50 interviews. This article is based on 25 interviews that have been analysed exemplarily, 22 with women, three

⁵ 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).

⁶ For information on qualitative secondary analysis see Witzel *et al.* (2008).

with single fathers. Most of the interviews were conducted with women and men who lived with at least one child. 19 women had been employed, three were not employed. Three women had a migrant background. About one third of the interviews were conducted with women who had a relatively low social status regarding their education and their financial situation, one third had a medium social status, and one third of the women had a relatively high social status. At the time of the interviews, the interviewees were between 28 and 43 years old. The women (and three men) lived in urban as well as in rural environments, in Eastern and Western Germany.

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, 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 being a housewife. Did women identify themselves with caring or did they distance 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 also analysed interviews with single fathers.

The primary studies used the qualitative method of semi-structured, problem-centred biographic interviews. The interview method is open to an intersectional multi-level analysis.

5. Women's subjectification under the neoliberal adult worker model

The following sections present and discuss the study's results. I elaborated the women's subjectification in the tensions between the carer-role and worker-role 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) of gender roles, femininity and masculinity play a major role.

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

5.1. The Carer-Identification-Types

In the sample, a strong dedication towards care applied to the women who grew up in West Germany. Significantly, nearly all the Western German women of my sample had strong aspirations towards care and felt satisfied performing care.

Dorothy: «I am more a domestic soul. And to be honest, I never mind doing household work. I like doing it and I enjoy it» (BK I8.2, 8, 1-5)⁷.

This type applies to housewives as well as to employed women. For most of those women who decided to be a housewife, the decision to interrupt work and to stay at home was rooted in her and her husband's traditional ideas on gender and family. Thus, these women felt a strong identification with the carer role. 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 areas⁸. At the same time, they experienced contradictory requirements 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, employed mothers):

Interviewer: «What are the problems if you stay at home?»

Lydia: «Well, sometimes you have the feeling that you're not a real part of the society. You try to get some recognition, but you can only get it in the

⁷ All interviews were translated from German into English by the author.

⁸ The housewife model as an ideal can still be observed in Germany.

private sphere and [...], so there is something I miss. [...] And childrearing is only a fraction worth of employment» (HR V_03_01_West, 224-226).

Recognition of women had increasingly become attached to paid work, and within public discourse housewives' care work decreasingly received recognition. Normative assumptions related to this development are perceivable as an important dimension within the process of women's subjectification. This indicates an interrelation between the level of social norms and symbolic representation and the level of identity. The housewives referred to social norms by relating their carer identification to hegemonic discourse. Parts of the hegemonic discourse still fostered the not employed housewife which was part of their identity. But those parts of the hegemonic discourse, which referred to employment and self-sufficiency, devalue them. Thus, at the level of identity, fragmentation of gender orders regarding women's gender role affected women's identity and subjectification.

Employed mothers with a relatively low social status who were mainly from a working 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 families. At the level of identity, they handle their carer-worker-role in a pragmatic manner. If it were possible from a financial point of view, they would likely have stayed at home. In general, these women referred to traditional gender roles and a traditional division of work at the level of identity. Even full-time 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.

Lilli: «It's in my bones, the idea that housework is for women and men don't need [...]» (BK I7.2, 91-94).

This reveals the importance of care within women's subjectification. Western German women, as our study shows, were highly committed to care and felt responsible for care

regardless of their employment or of their partners' housework commitment. This applied also to well educated women with a relatively high social background. They had strong carer identification connected with strong worker identification. Traditional, but hidden symbolic representations of women's carer role and their own commitment towards care were connected with progressive and emancipative assumptions on women's autonomy and career aspirations. At the structural level, their higher education and their considerably advanced careers had led to a strong worker identity. After the birth of a child they faced ambiguous feelings regarding the worker role which conflicted with their normative assumptions on caring. This inner conflict comprised a feeling of a lack of time, and women faced a great many issues in attempting to reconcile work and care. Furthermore, this inner conflict consisted of meeting the requirements of contradictory role models: the worker versus the carer. The tensions between being a carer and a worker appeared in ambivalent narrations. On the one hand they distanced themselves from being solely housewives:

Catherine: «[...] I don't want to stay at home and only do the cleaning, so, then, I think, I would really get nervous. [...] I think you have to get out, one anyhow needs to have a counterbalance» (HR West_21_1, 45, 2-10).

But on the other hand, they explained that housework is their responsibility, their field, and a satisfying activity.

Sarah: «Well, I mean, I like cleaning, because, I think it is rewarding. Well, somehow, you can see what you have done and everything is tidy and nice, and I like it. [...]. And so, I don't want anything taken away from me». (HR West_21_1, 16-21 and 41, 14-18)

Most women did more housework than men. Even in those families where both partners were employed full time, women were mainly responsible for care. Many women explained that they were satisfied with doing housework, either because they considered it

as something satisfying or at least as something ‘that simply has to be done without thinking about it’. The care arrangements on the household level were connected to women’s aspirations towards care, and thus, to their identification as a carer and their dedication towards care. Care is still a main aspect of female gender roles and one of the most important differences between female and male gender roles and between hegemonic femininity and hegemonic masculinity.

From an intersectional perspective, gender dimensions of care, which are manifested in the connotation of care as a female task (and which are reflected in women’s dedication towards care), are interwoven with class regarding the importance of paid work. In my sample, paid work played a major role within the process of identification only for well educated women. Career and good education was a fundamental element of their self-concept; thus those women faced particular contradictions regarding their worker–carer role.

Within the carer-identification types, the interrelation between the level of social structures, the level of symbolic representation (social norms and values) and the level of identity are particularly recognisable. For several decades, West Germany had facilitated the ideal of not employed mothers and housewives, and hegemonic discourses and gender roles ascribed women to care and to the private sphere. The study shows that most Western German women in the sample refer to this pattern. From a governmentality-perspective, the technologies of power regarding the dominant gender role and the organisation of care appear within women’s subjectification at the level of identity as well as they seem to influence the individuals’ action – processes which are understandable as techniques of the self. Western German women geared their aspirations and actions towards the interpellation of being a carer – and under the impression of social changes (of emancipation, equality, but also self-sufficiency) also towards being a worker. The interwovenness between social structures and norms on the one hand and identity on the other hand becomes even more apparent by comparing differences between Western and Eastern German women.

Major differences along the line of culture existed between those women who grew up in West Germany and those who grew up in East Germany. Significantly, all the women

in this sample who grew up in East Germany distanced themselves from being a carer or a housewife. This is the second type, and for those women from Eastern Germany, this type applies through all classes. It comprises all the Eastern German women, but only some women who grew up in West Germany.

5.2. The Carer-Dissociation-Types

East Germany fostered a female ideal of full-time employed women and mothers and the normative 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 impacted on women's subjectification; this can be shown in my analysis insofar as the narrations of women, who grew up in East Germany, show a much stronger identification with the worker role, connected with a clear distance from the carer role. They distanced themselves clearly from the housewife-model.

Anna: «I am just not the housewife type, this would drive me crazy if I had to sit around at home in the household [...]» (A1 DDR7, 81-86).

Denise: «I wouldn't stop working, I simply need my job, doesn't work without. I am not suitable as a housewife» (HR Ost_06_1, 19, 11-15).

Distancing themselves from being a housewife connects with hierarchical judgments about paid over unpaid work:

Denise: «Well, I didn't really like it, only to watch my child growing. [...] I missed a meaningful work. To me, housework is no meaningful work» (*ibidem*, 38, 1-3).

Nora: «I'm not someone who can stay at home for donkey's years and who doesn't need these activities outside» (HR Ost_30_1, 17, 23-25).

The major difference between the carer-identification and the carer-dissociation types lies in the dedication towards care. While the carer-identification type describes satis-

faction in doing housework, the carer-dissociation type perceives housework as a necessary, but unsatisfying activity.

These analyses illustrate the role of care on the level of identity linked with the levels of social structure and symbolic representation. Women who grew up in West Germany showed a strong dedication towards care at the level of identity, but 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. Whereas in West Germany citizenship was connected with the role of autonomous and employed male, in East Germany, the ideal of full-time employment for all citizens dominated the hegemonic discourse—an ideal that comprised also women's gender role. Due to the fact that paid work was a central aspect of citizenship for all individuals in East Germany, care was hardly discussed. Care was still allotted to women, but not connected with any positive connotation regarding citizenship. Women in East Germany were responsible for care, but the dissociation from the carer role can be explained by their labour market participation and the low recognition of care. The narration of Eastern German women reveal that discourses on employment impacted highly on their subjectification. By contrast, in West Germany care was recognised as a natural, essential and thus positive activity for women and a hegemonic ideal for decades. This discursive setting has played a major role even during the increasing importance of paid work for Western German women – something that, at the level of identity, appears through contradictions and ambivalences with regard to the carer and worker role. Our interviews therefore show that despite a shift of women's gender role towards work, care 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, which permeate the category of class and the differences between Eastern and Western Germany: The aspect that despite their dedication towards care, all women do perform more care than men. And all the women explained this fact by referring to essentialist gender knowledge, thus, the discursive assumptions on gender roles and gendered norms.

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

5.3 They just don't see it

In the sample, women explained their higher commitment for unpaid work and men's lesser time allocation and commitment by referring to gender roles and gender stereotypes.

Nora: «I don't know, I think, men work differently than women. Or maybe I only know men who work differently than women» (HR Ost_30_1, 49, 10-13).

Sophie: «Maybe, as a woman, you are more specialised [...]. I think, this goes back to our history, that he is a man and has a completely different socialisation than I have [...]» (BK I9, 6, 45-47 and 8, 33-39).

The women did not actually consider housework a men's issue and explained the genesis of the familial division of labour and women's higher commitment to domestic work by men's higher tolerance for dirtiness. Men simply do not seem to perceive as necessary the housework chores that women perceive.

Bill: «Well, let's say, usually I define the windows as clean. (laughs) [...]»

Interviewer: «And what about the bathroom?»

Bill: «[...] mostly I overlook those things which I do not consider as necessary [...]. So my wife is doing them».

Interviewer: «And what do you think about it?»

Molly: «Well, they are men; that's how men are. [...] Well, anyhow, no offence meant, but he does not see it, they just don't realise it» (HR Ost_03_2_a, 6:24).

Even single fathers did not feel any normative pressure to keep a perfect household. They explained that they did the most important things, trying to keep the house clean, but not perfectly clean and tidy all the time.

Max: «Let's say, we have a comfortable mess. Never mind. [...] I am a single father and I will manage it» [...].

Interviewer: So, that is, if it is all too much for you then you leave it and drop everything?»

Max: «Right, then I say "Sod you". Sometimes that's really necessary. Enough!» (SL 292, 28, 34-30, 9).

The interviewed women showed strong dissatisfaction with men's housework activities. In general, the way men did the housework did not fulfil the 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 their sphere and were unwilling to share this sphere or their responsibility with their partners. This applied particularly to the laundry.

Denise: «Doing the laundry is definitely my duty, because – otherwise it might go wrong» (HR Ost_06_1_a, 021).

Apparently, the gendered division of unpaid care is based on individual preferences and negotiations – with regard to commitment towards unpaid care and (individual) tolerances of dirtiness. But from an intersectional multi-level perspective, the narrations reveal how strong seemingly individual aspirations are related to social norms and values. Femininity internalises higher value for cleanliness whereas masculinity internalises lower value for cleanliness and higher tolerance for dirtiness. From a social theoretical perspective it can be concluded that seemingly individual processes and action are, in fact, results of gendered conduct.

These insights at the level of symbolic representation and social structure demonstrate how strongly female (gender) identity is still related to care. This also shows that inequalities in gender relations, thus, gender as a category which structures social order along the line of gender, are based on the relation between gender norms, gender identi-

ty and care. For some women of the sample, mainly those from Western Germany, this relation between gender identity and care resulted in a strong identification with the career role, while for other women, mainly those from Eastern Germany, the relation between gender identity and care was restricted to a commitment towards care. This commitment is one main aspect of the 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 the female gender role led to contradictions for women. The techniques of the self, that are regulated by social assumptions on employment and on (private) caring, occurred in women's narrations as two conflicting dimensions. The women had been approached with both dimensions by social norms and by their own self-identifications. The emerging techniques of the self revealed the ambivalent requirements the women had to meet.

5.4 «These are two claims which diverge enormously and one is torn between». Ambivalences in women's subjectification

Even in adult worker model regimes like Germany, care is associated with women, a persistence which also applies to other western industrial countries. The analysis elucidates that this persistence does not only restrict women's full citizenship status due to their still restricted opportunity for participation in the labour market. The double burden of paid and unpaid work is more than a difficult temporal reconciliation of work and family. It is a conflictual encounter between two opposing ideals within women's subjectification. The women's narrations reveal inner conflicts and the feeling of being torn between two diverging claims.

Nora: «My contribution is that I bear a child, something I should recognise – as my friends have been trying to tell me for weeks, that I should recognise this. In my mind I think it's ok, but one is really enormously affected by this “efficiency orientation” and this “you have to be efficient, you have to perform” and especially per-

form outside the family. Particularly as a woman, this inner conflict I just have become aware of, also emotionally. On the one hand to be at home and to think it's fine [...] but on the other hand this claim "you have to go out and stand your ground and earn money". So, these are two claims which diverge enormously and I am really realizing how one is torn between them and how one can have a tough time!» (HR Ost_30_1, 31, 11-31).

Under the governmentality of the neoliberal adult worker paradigm, women's subjectification is characterised by being torn between two ideals to meet the normative requirements of female gender roles. This applies to all the women, but women faced ambivalences, that are related to subjectification, in different ways according to their social status and background and along the line of class. Within this context, women developed techniques of the self to meet the normative requirements of this ideal. They promoted their career and employment against the background of their caregiving responsibilities. Their coping for a reconciliation of work and family is an expression of the techniques of the self and appears as an expression of free will on the basis of self-determined decision.

Vice versa, these processes of subjectification 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 of developing family models of egalitarian division of work, external carework gains more and more importance. Those families, who were able to afford it, hired a domestic careworker for the woman's relief. Thus, differences along the line of class consisted of the claiming of external domestic work services. In this sample, middle-class or upper-class families relied, for instance; on the care work of au pairs, a development which has already been referred to by feminist researchers. Relying on other women for care work indicates power structures of still 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 organisation of care occurs as techniques of the self related to power structures of social reproduction. Our society and capitalist economy is based on a social reproduction that is conducted in the private. Discourses, norms, and structures entail that individuals and families conduct unpaid care, organised and solved in the private. This private arrangement of care which includes that due to women's employment families increasingly rely on domestic careworker, is the expression of the interrelation between the gendered techniques of the self and the techniques of power: 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 the neoliberal gender regime which guarantees the social reproduction of labour force and generations without interfering capitalist production and the hegemony of paid over unpaid work.

6. Conclusion

Examining the relation between care, gender, and subjectification develops our understanding of the status quo of current gender relations. It contributes to explain the persistence of gendered division of work and enables appraisals of developments in the field of care like those of the increasing delegation of care work to domestic careworkers on the one hand and the persistent low participation of men in domestic work on the other. The core of androcentrism is still paid work, and care – in its unpaid and paid forms – is still devalued. During the last decades transformations have occurred, and they have 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 paid *and* unpaid work. By contrast, hegemonic masculinity in the context of work/care has hardly altered. Therefore, Mary Daly emphasised that measures to encourage greater symmetries in women's and men's gender roles did not amount to an adult worker model, and that it seems that a dual earner, gender specialised, family model was an appropriate characterisation of the trends in policy reforms during the period of activation (Daly 2001, 19).

Thus, the neoliberal imperative has different implications for men and women. Due to the misrecognition of care, women are still discriminated against. 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 merely to promoting 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 male breadwinner model:

Far from aiming simply to promote women's full incorporation as wage-earners 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 (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» (ivi, 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» (ivi, 110).

Since the emergence of the adult worker model and neoliberal activation policies, the organisation of care has not altered 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 work, and recognises care work. Instead, the adult worker model still fosters a male worker ideal and care is, for the most part, hidden and private.

In contrast, the carer stands for dependence and restriction – restricted regarding autonomy as well as participation. The carer role contradicts the idea of the autonomous subject, the equivalent of 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. Caring 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 emphasised 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 waged work (Fraser 2009), since politics that arrange care around waged work will not dissolve women's traditional responsibility for care. It is necessary to valorise care and to valorise other unwaged activities (*ibidem*), and to degender care. Therefore, caregiving or care-receiving 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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