

Employment Behaviour Among Women in Germany: Differences between East and West Persist

Despite the persistently difficult labour market situation, the employment orientation among women in east Germany remains high; in west Germany it has increased noticeably. In east Germany, however, women are more often employed part time against their wishes. As regards the extent of working hours, the trend in all of Germany is towards more part-time employment. The desire for full-time employment is on the rise. This development is linked to a plurality in lifestyles, which is making it increasingly important for individuals, especially women, to secure an independent existence for themselves.

In west Germany, the labour market participation of women has risen considerably since German unification. For the year 2000, the micro-census shows a labour force participation ratio (i.e., the share of the population's employed and unemployed) of 69.6% for the 16- to 59-year female age group (cf. table 1); this corresponds to an increase of more than 5 percentage points over 1991. In east Germany, the labour force participation ratio of women, despite a fall since 1991, remains noticeably higher, at 83.3%. This is particularly due to the fact that women there demonstrate a greater employment tendency, and therefore register as unemployed to a greater extent when not employed. In terms of employment, the approximation between east and west is more pronounced than in terms of labour market participation.

In west Germany, almost two-thirds of women able to work were employed. For men, the comparable share fell by 2.5 percentage points to 81.4%. This west German labour market development favoured women in particular: their employment rose over the whole period, although the number of employed people as a whole fell until 1997.

In east Germany, following the slump of the early 1990s, the share of employed women has risen once again and now stands at 67%. Although their numbers did drop, the fall at the base (women of working age) was still stronger.

West Germany: importance of female employment grows steadily

The trend: more part-time working

In 2000, according to the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP),¹ 42% of employed women in west Germany worked full-time subject to social insurance and 27% in part-time work (cf. table 2). Compared with 1991, a pronounced change has occurred in the employment structure: in 2000, the share of women in full-time employment was 7 percentage points lower while that of part-time working women had risen by about the same amount. Marginal employment plays a much greater role among women than men. Most recently, however, the significance of marginal employment has also fallen, which could be attributed to the introduction on 1 April 1999 of compulsory social insurance. In 2000, only 11% of employed women were in marginal employment – down from 15% three years earlier.² The share of women on maternity protection or maternity leave³ (without being in simultaneous employment) has risen steadily since 1991, standing at 7% in 2000.

In the last 30 years, the employment behaviour of women, especially mothers, has changed in west Germany. Ever increasing numbers of mothers work. In terms of their labour market participation, children's ages play a key role (cf. table 3). As is to be expected, mothers who have very young children at home work to a much lesser extent (43% in all) than mothers with older children (of those with children in the 12- to 16-year age group, for example, 72% are employed). Maternity protection/maternity leave is of great relevance only to mothers with very young children. Of the 71% of women who claim maternity protection or maternity leave, 28% still pursue some employment, although mostly at reduced hours, while 43% do not work at all. Of the almost 30% of mothers with small children who do not (or no longer) receive maternity protection/maternity leave, on the other hand, about half work.

¹ The analysis presented here refers to the population in western and eastern Germany between the ages of 16 and 59 years. The SOEP is a representative longitudinal survey of private households, which is conducted annually, since 1984 in western Germany, and since 1990 in eastern Germany. In 2000, the SOEP sample was doubled in size, to about 25,000 persons. Cf.: SOEP Group: The German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP) after more than 15 years – Overview. In: Elke Holst et al. (eds): Proceedings of the 2000 Fourth International Conference of German Socio-Economic Panel Study Users (GSOEP2000). In: *Vierteljahrshefte zur Wirtschaftsforschung*, Vol. 70, No. 1/2001, pp. 7-14; or see also: (<http://www.diw.du/soep/>).

² Here it must be considered that the fall in the number of employment relationships is lower (the share of all employment relationships also falls because the number of full-time employees has markedly increased).

Table 1

Population of Working Age¹ by Participation in Working Life

Results of the micro-census

	Population	Employed	Unemployed persons	Labour force participation ratio	Ratio of employed persons
	in 1 000			in %	
Females					
West Germany					
1991	19 122	11 506	788	64.3	60.2
1994	19 396	11 664	1 135	66.0	60.1
1997 ²	19 337	11 750	1 156	66.7	60.8
2000	19 003	12 305	913	69.6	64.8
% change 1991 to 2000 ³	-0.6	6.5	13.7	5.3	4.6
East Germany					
1991	4 729	3 556	563	87.1	75.2
1994	4 564	2 934	919	84.4	64.3
1997 ²	4 449	2 900	842	84.1	65.2
2000	4 310	2 895	697	83.3	67.2
% change 1991 to 2000 ³	-9.7	-22.8	19.2	-3.8	-8.0
Germany, total					
1991	23 851	15 062	1 351	68.8	63.2
1994	23 960	14 598	2 054	69.5	60.9
1997 ²	23 786	14 650	1 998	70.0	61.6
2000	23 313	15 200	1 610	72.1	65.2
% change 1991 to 2000 ³	-2.3	0.9	16.1	3.3	2.0
Males					
West Germany					
1991	19 940	16 730	783	87.8	83.9
1994	20 247	16 318	1 363	87.3	80.6
1997 ²	20 020	15 841	1 559	86.9	79.1
2000	19 445	15 836	1 157	87.4	81.4
% change 1991 to 2000 ³	-2.5	-5.6	32.3	-0.4	-2.5
East Germany					
1991	4 716	4 008	377	93.0	85.0
1994	4 705	3 633	518	88.2	77.2
1997 ²	4 694	3 529	640	88.8	75.2
2000	4 599	3 445	632	88.6	74.9
% change 1991 to 2000 ³	-2.5	-16.3	40.3	-4.3	-10.1
Germany, total					
1991	24 656	20 738	1 160	88.8	84.1
1994	24 952	19 951	1 881	87.5	80.0
1997 ²	24 714	19 370	2 199	87.3	78.4
2000	24 044	19 281	1 789	87.6	80.2
% change 1991 to 2000 ³	-2.5	-7.6	35.2	-1.2	-3.9
Total					
West Germany					
1991	39 062	28 236	1 571	76.3	72.3
1994	39 643	27 982	2 498	76.9	70.6
1997 ²	39 357	27 591	2 715	77.0	70.1
2000	38 448	28 141	2 070	78.6	73.2
% change 1991 to 2000 ³	-1.6	-0.3	24.1	2.3	0.9
East Germany					
1991	9 445	7 564	940	90.0	80.1
1994	9 269	6 567	1 437	86.4	70.8
1997 ²	9 143	6 429	1 482	86.5	70.3
2000	8 909	6 340	1 329	86.1	71.2
% change 1991 to 2000 ³	-6.0	-19.3	29.3	-4.0	-8.9
Germany, total					
1991	48 507	35 800	2 511	79.0	73.8
1994	48 912	34 549	3 935	78.7	70.6
1997 ²	48 500	34 020	4 197	78.8	70.1
2000	47 357	34 481	3 399	80.0	72.8
% change 1991 to 2000 ³	-2.4	-3.8	26.1	1.0	-1.0

1 Between 16 and 60 years old. — 2 In 1996, the lead question on employment was changed in the micro-census. — 3 Change of ratio in percentage points.

Sources: Federal Statistical Office, FS 1, Series 4.1.1, several years, DIW calculations.

Table 2

Employment Relationships, by Type of Main Employment

	West Germany								East Germany							
	Total				of which: female				Total				of which: female			
	1991	1994	1997	2000 ³	1991	1994	1997	2000 ³	1991	1994	1997	2000 ³	1991	1994	1997	2000 ³
	Number															
Sample	5 964	5 607	5 681	10 919	2 563	2 487	2 576	5 125	2 905	2 328	2 225	3 354	1 398	1 113	1 085	1 665
	Share in %															
Total ¹	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employees subject to social insurance	73.1	71.3	71.2	72.9	69.8	68.0	66.0	69.2	89.3	83.0	78.9	76.6	88.3	82.6	75.3	76.6
Full-time	63.3	61.5	59.5	58.4	49.4	46.8	44.8	42.3	81.5	75.2	70.0	65.4	73.0	67.4	58.2	56.5
Part-time	9.8	9.8	11.7	14.5	20.4	21.2	21.2	26.9	7.8	7.8	8.9	11.2	15.3	15.2	17.1	20.1
Civil servants	7.7	8.0	7.1	7.1	4.3	5.1	4.8	5.1	1.0	2.1	3.0	2.8	0.4	1.0	2.4	1.8
Self-employed	9.3	9.7	9.4	9.3	8.1	8.0	7.5	7.6	4.7	7.2	8.0	9.8	3.1	4.8	6.8	7.9
Marginally employed	8.0	8.9	9.4	7.5	13.5	14.0	15.2	11.3	2.1	5.4	7.3	8.2	2.1	6.6	9.7	8.5
Maternity protection/ maternity leave ²	1.9	2.2	2.9	3.2	4.3	4.9	6.5	6.8	2.9	2.3	2.8	2.5	6.1	5.0	5.8	5.2

1 Between 16 and 60 years old. — 2 Without currently undertaking any further employment. — 3 In this year the question on maternal/parental leave was no longer in the lead question on employment, but raised elsewhere in the questionnaire.
Source: Socio-economic Panel (SOEP), weighted results.

On the whole, in west Germany it is anticipated that the integration of mothers into the labour market will continue to make progress. Currently, efforts are under way to attempt to solve the problem of the reconciliation of family and work particularly through part-time work. However, this form of employment, although usually pursued voluntarily,⁴ does imply certain career-related risks and disadvantages.⁵

³ On 1 January 2001, the new reform law on maternity pay and parental leave came into force. The main reason for the new law was the legal entitlement to part-time work, which seeks to extend also to young fathers the opportunity to help care for their young children (according to figures from the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, 98.5% of those requesting maternity leave are women). The reform law applies to children born from 2001 onwards. Cf. Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (eds): *Erziehungsgeld. Elternzeit*. Bonn 2001. The law on maternity pay and maternity leave originally came into force in 1986, and entitled beneficiaries to income-dependent maternity payments for a period of 10 months; from 1990 onwards, this rose to 18 months; finally, from 1993 until 2000, it rose to two years. The new reform law enables parents who claim maternity pay for only one instead of two years to receive a maximum of DM 900 per month instead of DM 600. Also, for the first time, fathers and mothers can take this leave at the same time for the unchanged three-year duration of parental leave. The ceiling for permissible part-time work was raised from 19 to 30 hours/week.

⁴ Cf.: Jürgen Schupp: Promotion of part-time work through legal entitlement. In: *Economic Bulletin*, no. 2, February 2001, p. 73.

Increase in employment orientation of non-employed

In the labour market, the employment intentions of non-employed persons are also very important. Table 4 illustrates the population structure by employment status and labour market proximity. In this case, those regarded as employed⁶ are those who, at the time of the survey, stated that they carry out at least one hour of paid employment.⁷ All those who do not pursue any paid employment, are listed as non-employed, which, in addition to the unemployed and those in school education (including higher education) also includes hidden unemployment⁸ (cf. tables 3 and 4).

⁵ For an international comparison, see also: Jacqueline O'Reilly and Colette Fagan: *Part-Time Prospects. An international comparison of part-time work in Europe, North America and the Pacific Rim*. London and New York 1998.

⁶ Following the convention of the official statistics, the group of gainfully employed people also included those on maternity leave, since their employment was merely interrupted and, given their option to return, they are, legally, employed. Cf. also in detail: Hohe Fluktuation in der Stillen Reserve. Elke Holst and Jürgen Schupp. In: *Wochenbericht des DIW*, No. 47/1997, pp. 921-928.

⁷ Table 4 shows a higher share for employed people than the micro-census. This is linked to the more comprehensive definition of marginally employed and those covered by maternity protection in the GSOEP.

Table 3

Mothers with Children at Home by Labour Market Participation, in 2000

Share in %

	Age of youngest child at home					
	West Germany			East Germany		
	under 4 years	4 to 11 years	12 to 16 years	under 4 years	4 to 11 years	12 to 16 years
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employed (not on maternity/ protection maternity leave)	15.2	49.5	71.9	29.6	60.6	77.8
Taking maternity protection/ maternity leave	70.9	18.9	0.0	65.9	12.4	0.0
of which:						
Marginal employment	10.2	1.8	0.0	3.5	0.5	0.0
Other employment	17.4	2.0	0.0	10.7	1.2	0.0
No current employment	43.3	15.1	0.0	51.7	10.7	0.0
Registered unemployed ¹	2.4	1.7	3.8	2.1	22.9	17.9
Strong labour-market-oriented hidden unemployment ²	2.3	4.4	4.6	2.4	2.3	0.8
Moderate labour-market-oriented hidden unemployment ³	5.1	8.2	3.7	0.0	0.2	0.5
Non-employed with no labour market proximity ⁴	4.1	17.3	16.0	0.0	1.6	3.0

1 Non-employed who declare they are registered unemployed. — 2 Non-employed who wish to take up employment either immediately or during the next year. — 3 Non-employed who wish to take up employment in two to five years' time. — 4 Non-employed who have no desire to work or who wish to take up employment after five years at the earliest.

Source: Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), weighted results.

In 2000, only 14% of 16- to 59-year-old women demonstrated no desire to work in the near future (in 1991, this figure had stood at 18%). Among those in hidden unemployment, approximately 6% of women wanted to take up employment, either immediately or within the next year.

However, for the most part, the non-employed judged their chances of finding suitable employment as difficult (cf. table 5). Thus in 2000, in west Germany, only 15% of women and men, respectively, estimated that it would be easy to find suitable employment; almost half of the female non-employed judged it to be difficult or practically impossible.

Where the desired extent of employment is concerned, distinct differences between women and men become evident – which follow the traditional concept of

work-sharing at home (cf. table 6). Non-employed men almost exclusively wish to pursue full-time work, while non-employed women are primarily interested in part-time work. Viewed over time, there seems, however, to be a shift in the preferred working hours, although in opposite directions among women and men: Thus the share of men who would like to work full-time has fallen by 4% since 1991, while it has risen by roughly the same amount among women over the same period. The share of women who would like to work only part-time has continued to fall noticeably since 1991 (by 10 percentage points). This development could be linked to the steady increase in the share of single-person households – including among women in the 16- to 59-year age group⁹ – which implies an increase in the need for adequate independent financial security through employment.¹⁰

For men, part-time work is still no alternative. Here, however, the share of those who do not yet know how much work they actually wish to do has risen by 4 percentage points since 1991, to 9% in 2000.

⁸ On the existing definition of determining hidden unemployment, cf. Elke Holst: Die Stille Reserve am Arbeitsmarkt. Größe – Zusammensetzung – Verhalten. Berlin 2000. On the definition of hidden unemployment by the Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (IAB) cf. currently Johann Fuchs: Der Zusammenhang von Stiller Reserve und geringfügiger Beschäftigung, Vol. 34, Issue 2, 2001, pp. 152-164. In 1997, the DIW Berlin for the first time published an alternative measuring concept to directly calculate hidden unemployment in the Federal Republic of Germany. Cf. Hohe Fluktuation in der Stillen Reserve, see above. This was carried forward in 2000. Cf.: Stille Reserve wichtig für die Arbeitsmarktflexibilität in Deutschland. By: Elke Holst and Jürgen Schupp. In: *Wochenbericht des DIW*, No. 29, 2000, pp. 457-465.

⁹ Cf. also current results based on the micro-census in: Leben und Arbeiten in Deutschland. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2000, Wiesbaden 2001, p. 66.

¹⁰ In western Germany, according to the GSOEP, the share of 16- to 59-year-old women living in single person households rose from 12% in 1991 (the corresponding figure for men: 15%) to 14% in 2000 (men: 20%).

Table 4

Persons of Working Age¹ by Employment Status and Labour Market Proximity

	West Germany								East Germany							
	Total				of which: woman				Total				of which: woman			
	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000
	Number															
Sample survey	7 705	7 382	7 387	13 741	3 800	3 696	3 723	7 019	3 475	3 067	2 870	4 325	1 759	1 560	1 448	2 198
	Proportions in %															
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employed	78.2	74.8	75.9	79.2	68.9	66.2	68.1	73.0	82.1	72.7	73.6	75.2	77.7	68.0	71.4	72.2
Registered unemployed ²	2.7	6.2	6.9	4.3	2.3	5.0	6.3	3.6	8.8	16.3	15.2	14.6	10.7	19.5	15.7	15.5
In education / further education ³	3.5	3.7	3.2	3.7	3.1	3.8	3.6	3.7	2.4	3.3	4.7	4.4	2.7	3.7	5.2	5.0
Strong labour-market-oriented hidden unemployment ⁴	2.7	2.3	2.0	2.3	3.0	2.6	2.4	3.0	2.2	2.2	2.1	1.4	2.2	1.7	1.7	1.7
Moderate labour-market-oriented hidden unemployment ⁵	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.1	4.6	4.5	3.9	3.1	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.6	/	/	0.5
Not employed with no labour market proximity ⁶	10.3	10.3	9.4	8.3	18.1	17.9	15.7	13.6	4.1	4.9	4.0	4.0	6.1	6.5	5.6	5.1

(/) Due to low number of cases (i.e., fewer than 10) not illustrated.

1 Between 16 and below 60 years old. — 2 Non-employed who declare they are registered unemployed. — 3 Non-employed in school or further education, on the whole below 26 years of age. — 4 Non-employed who wish to take up employment immediately or in the next year. — 5 Non-employed who wish to take up employment only in two to five years' time. — 6 Non-employed who do not wish to take up employment, or desire to do so after five years at the earliest.

Source: Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), weighted results.

Married-couple households: predominantly with two incomes

The changes described are to be seen in context that, in the married-couple households included in the analysis, predominantly both partners are employed, implying that men no longer ensure domestic security as sole breadwinner (cf. table 7). Meanwhile, in 61% of married-couple households, both partners work: 22% of all wives are employed full time; 39% are employed either part time or marginally.¹¹ In 2000, the husband was the traditional sole breadwinner in only 30% of married-couple households (38% in 1991). The wife as sole earner is still a great exception, however (4%), as is the non-employment of both partners (5%).¹²

¹¹ The weighting of monthly net income of the female spouse, measured against net household income, constitutes a good 40% in households where both partners are in full-time employment; in households, where the female spouse is in part-time (and her partner in full-time) employment, it constitutes 20%.

¹² Furthermore, partners who are both in part-time employment (not illustrated here) are exceptions. It should be noted that the analysis refers to 16- to 59-year-olds. The possible effects that might occur based on the recourse to part-time work among older employed people are not considered here.

East Germany: despite persistently high unemployment, no retreat from labour market

High employment orientation among women

In east Germany, female employment orientation continues to be high: only 5% of 16- to 59-year-old women currently do not wish to work in the foreseeable future, almost the same share as in 1991 (cf. table 4) – despite the persistently dramatic labour market situation; 16% of women are registered unemployed, and do not pursue any employment. Nevertheless, there are no signs that women are retreating from the labour market. An increasing number are attempting to improve their chances on the labour market through better education.

The prospects of finding suitable employment in east Germany are generally judged to be markedly worse than in west Germany. Women in particular see this situation as problematic (cf. table 5): Only 3% agree that it is easy to find suitable employment; more than three-quarters consider this task difficult or impossible.

Table 5
(Re-)employment Prospects¹

Share in %

	West Germany								East Germany							
	Men				Females				Men				Females			
	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000
Total ²	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Easy	28.5	14.1	6.9	15.9	15.1	12.8	10.8	14.2	8.8	8.3	8.2	9.6	4.5	2.4	2.9	3.3
Difficult	31.7	49.8	50.3	41.7	27.1	35.0	38.4	35.2	52.0	55.1	52.9	57.6	48.2	50.5	53.7	49.0
Practically Impossible	13.4	12.0	17.3	14.8	7.4	10.4	13.4	12.0	19.9	15.3	21.4	14.8	16.5	24.1	23.9	28.0
Do not intend to take up employment in future	26.4	24.1	25.5	27.6	50.4	41.8	37.4	38.6	19.3	21.3	17.5	18.0	30.8	23.0	19.5	19.7

1 Question: 'If you were looking for work now, is it, or would it be, easy, difficult, or practically impossible for you to find a suitable position?' — 2 Non-employed between 16 and below 60 years old.

Source: Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), weighted results

East German mothers: frequently employed

Even 10 years after unification, mothers in east Germany, regardless of the age of their children, demonstrate a higher labour market participation than in west Germany (cf. table 3). Around 30% of women with children under 4 years old – twice the share in west Germany – were employed in 2000, without being on maternity protection or maternity leave. It is noticeable that there are virtually no mothers with no labour market proximity.

Maternity protection/maternity leave is not claimed as often as in west Germany. However, when it is

claimed, a larger share than in west Germany stay at home completely (52% in east Germany; 43% in west Germany). Evidently, parental leave frequently serves to bridge labour market problems. The re-integration following a break in employment is often difficult, however:¹³ the share of mothers with older children who are registered unemployed is particularly high in east Germany (e.g., 23% of mothers with 4- to 11-year-old children).

¹³ Cf. also: Gerhard Engelbrech and Maria Jungkunst: Erziehungsurlaub, Hifle zur Wiedereingliederung oder Karrierehemmnis? In: IAB-Kurzbericht, No. 11 of 20 June 2001.

Table 6
The Interest of Non-employed in Full-time or Part-time Employment¹
Share in %

	West Germany								East Germany							
	Men				Female				Men				Female			
	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000
Total ²	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Full-time employed	78.1	76.1	73.8	73.7	22.2	24.9	24.6	26.0	73.9	81.9	72.0	77.3	37.1	46.1	38.6	46.1
Part-time employed	5.0	3.5	6.9	4.3	61.6	51.8	54.6	51.1	7.7	2.3	2.7	2.0	31.6	21.7	24.2	18.6
Interested in both	12.1	13.9	12.8	13.3	8.0	9.2	13.1	12.8	16.5	12.1	20.5	14.3	25.3	25.8	31.7	26.4
Undecided	4.8	6.5	6.5	8.7	8.2	14.1	7.7	10.1	1.9	3.7	4.8	6.4	6.0	6.4	5.5	8.9

1 Question: 'Would you be interested in full-time or part-time employment, or would you be interested in both?' — 2 Non-employed between 16 and 60 years.

Source: Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), weighted results.

Table 7

Employment in Married-Couple Households¹

	West Germany				East Germany			
	1991	1994	1997	2000	1991	1994	1997	2000
	Number							
Survey	2 284	2 196	2 161	3 880	1 180	978	826	1 120
	Proportions in %							
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both employed	56.3	52.8	54.7	61.1	70.4	59.8	62.7	66.3
of which:								
Female partner employed full-time	21.5	20.2	21.9	21.8	55.5	43.4	44.2	43.4
Female partner employed part-time	23.8	21.3	20.3	30.1	13.5	12.9	15.0	18.9
Female partner marginally employed	11.0	11.3	12.5	9.2	1.4	3.5	3.5	4.0
Male partner solely employed	37.8	37.5	33.4	29.7	20.2	22.0	21.9	18.9
of which:								
Female partner registered unemployed	1.6	2.7	3.2	1.7	10.1	13.4	11.9	11.5
Only female partner employed	3.7	5.4	6.2	4.3	5.4	9.5	7.6	8.1
of which:								
Female partner employed full-time	2.6	3.6	2.9	2.2	4.2	7.9	5.6	6.2
Female partner employed part-time	0.7	1.2	2.4	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.9
Female partner marginally employed	/	/	0.9	0.6	/	/	0.6	0.5
Memo item of which:								
male partner registered unemployed	1.2	3.0	2.3	2.0	3.1	7.0	6.0	7.4
Both non-employed	2.4	4.4	5.6	4.7	4.1	8.6	7.9	6.7
of which:								
Only female partner registered unemployed	/	0.2	0.5	0.6	1.5	1.4	/	0.6
Both registered unemployed	/	0.6	0.5	/	1.3	4.3	3.2	3.7

(/) not shown because of small numbers (less than 10 cases).

¹ Married, living together in household; male partner aged between 16 and 60 years old.

Source: Socio-economic Panel (SOEP), weighted results.

More part-time work, despite great desire for full-time work

In east Germany – as in the old Länder – change is evident regarding the form of employment (cf. table 2). The fall in the share of women's employment subject to social insurance contributions seems to have come to a virtual standstill towards the late 1990s, although the transition from full-time to part-time work continues. In the meantime, every fifth woman in east Germany is employed part-time (15% in 1991) and 9% are in marginal employment (2% in 1991). However, these forms of employment in particular are often pursued involuntarily: about one-third of women working part-time would prefer full-time employment (only 6% in west Germany).¹⁴

Non-employed women once again prefer to enter full-time employment (cf. table 6). Fewer women than ever before would like to work part time (19%). Among men, this desire is even more pronounced: 77% want to work full-time, only 2% would like to pursue part-time employment.

Employment take-up more often a financial necessity than in west Germany

In east German married-couple households it is still commonplace for both partners to work, and also for most women to be in full-time employment. Further calculations¹⁵ on the significance of monthly net earned income of the female partner showed a share of 44% of monthly net income for full-time working women and of 31% for part-time working women, with the male partner pursuing full-time employment in both scenarios. In east Germany too, where, before unification, apartments were hard to come by, a growing number of people now live alone, or as single parents, and depend on one income. Among women, the share of single parents stood at 11% in 2000 (8% in 1991) and the share of single-person households at 9% (7% in 1991); among men, this latter share has doubled, to 19%, since 1991, thus reaching west German levels.

All this points to the fact that the exclusively financial motivation among non-employed women in east Germany for taking up employment is high, at a share

¹⁴ Cf. Förderung von Teilzeitarbeit, see above.

¹⁵ Information not tabulated here.

Table 8

Reasons for Taking up Employment among Non-employed¹

Share in %

	West Germany						East Germany					
	Males			Females			Males			Females		
	1994	1997	2000	1994	1997	2000	1994	1997	2000	1994	1997	2000
Total ²	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Earn money	34.2	31.4	31.6	20.9	20.4	20.8	41.4	46.3	36.0	33.2	34.7	31.8
Other reasons	4.0	3.7	2.5	7.1	4.3	6.3	2.2	2.4	3.6	1.9	1.6	3.0
Both equally	37.7	39.6	38.3	30.2	37.9	34.3	35.1	33.8	42.4	41.9	44.2	45.5
Do not intend to take up employment in the future	24.1	25.3	27.6	41.8	37.4	38.6	21.3	17.5	18.0	23.0	19.5	19.7

¹ Question: 'There are various reasons for being employed. What is most important to you: to earn money or other reasons?' — ² Non-employed between 16 and 60 years. Source: Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), weighted results.

of 32%; this is closely comparable to the corresponding male share in west Germany (cf. table 8). For 46% of women, earning money and other reasons are equally important (34% in the west). Only one-fifth of an already small group of non-employed intend not to take up employment in the future.

Economic and social policy conclusions

The employment of women is a matter of course not only in east Germany but – now also – in west Germany. The trend towards more single-person households, as well as high divorce rates¹⁶ require women to make adequate independent security provision that can also preempt poverty in old age. The published analyses using SOEP data also show that, in married-couple households, women's incomes contribute substantially to the family's financial security.

The situation of women on the labour market is difficult, however; indeed, in east Germany, it is persistently precarious for many. In the past, given the current conditions, the consequence would have been not so much a retreat into the family, but, rather, a fall in fertility rates:¹⁷ in 2000, only just under one-third of 16- to 59-year-old women in east Germany lived in households

with children under 16 years of age; in 1991, this figure still stood at 42%.

Family policy reforms should take increased account of these social changes. Thus, the improvement of material services within the scope of family allowances, as demanded by the Federal Constitutional Court, need to be complemented, expanded, and increased in terms of the quality of infrastructural childcare facilities.¹⁸ In general, greater attention should be paid to the tax and social incentives regarding the employment of women with a view to equality policy.

It is also up to employers to recognise that the consideration of family obligations is a necessary and unavoidable element in the organisation of business processes if the long-term safeguarding of qualified personnel is to be achieved.¹⁹ Women today are more highly qualified than ever before. Exploiting this potential while simultaneously providing the possibility of family life for men and women is the future responsibility of modern societies.

Elke Holst and Jürgen Schupp

¹⁶ Cf. Federal Statistical Office: Neuer Höchststand bei den Ehescheidungen im Jahr 2000. Mitteilung für die Presse vom 6. September 2001, Wiesbaden.

¹⁷ Cf. also Michaela Kreyenfeld: Changes in the Timing of First Birth in East Germany after Reunification. In: Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 120, Issue 2, 2000, pp.169-186. On similarities and differences in the European countries, cf. also Jürgen Debrits: Europäische Fertilitätsmuster. In: Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft, Vol. 25, Issue 2, 1000. Pp. 235-266.

¹⁸ Cf. Petra Beckmann and Beate Kurtz: Erwerbstätigkeit von Frauen. Die Betreuung der Kinder ist der Schlüssel. In: IAB Kurzbericht, No. 10, of 15. June 2001; Kindertageseinrichtungen in Deutschland – Ein neues Steuerungsmodell bei der Bereitstellung sozialer Dienstleistungen. By: Michaela Kreyenfeld, et al. In: Wochenbericht des DIW, No. 18/2000, pp.269-275, as well as Michaela Kreyenfeld et al.: Finanzierungs- und Organisationsmodelle institutioneller Kinderbetreuung, Neuwied und Berlin, 2001.

¹⁹ Cf. also the agreement between the Federal Government and the German industry associations on the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women in the private sector, 2 July 2001 (<http://www.bundesregierung.de>).