

## **Gendering Work and Social Commitment**

**Christina Stecker, University of Muenster, Germany**

Introduction	2
1. The gender division of work: the lack of income and independent social security	2
1.1. Labour-market participation	3
1.2. The value of unpaid work and social commitment	5
1.3. The welfare state and the gender bias in de-commodification	8
2. The gender division of commitment: the lack of recognition and leading position	10
2.1. Historical development of honorary posts	11
2.2. Gender blind explanations on motivations for social commitment	12
3. Two strategies for work and social commitment	14
3.1. Labour-market strategy	14
3.2. Transition strategy	15
4. Conclusions	16
Bibliography	20

### *Summary*

The socio-economic relevance of the third sector in the interface of the labour-market at the one hand and civil society at the other has been shown in recent studies. The relationship between labour-market participation, providing social services and gender roles was less an issue to look at. Focusing on gender roles in this context is inevitable for two interdependent reasons. First, increasing needs for personal social services in the service society, which may offer individual opportunities for female labour-market participation. Second, limited governmental budgets and rising costs of social service provision bring the specific “surplus” of volunteering and unpaid work into the centre of interest for the welfare state. This put a new complexion on concepts like the “activating“ or “activity state“, which intend to increase social commitment, and processes of deliberation by the citizen. Both, increasing female labour-market participation and activation strategies by the state, may lead to a structural trap for the still gender-related family work and caring done by women.

## ***Introduction***

In most of the Western countries, decreasing employment rates in the industrial sector seem to be indicators of “The End of Work” and “The Dawn of the Post-market-era” quoting Jeremy Rifkin (1995). His prediction of a growing importance of the informal sector and personal services may be confirmed by viewing the growing needs of service provision. Knowledge-based industries with high-qualified high-paid jobs on the one hand and often low-qualified low-paid personal social services in the health sector on the other hand mark the range of the labour-market and for employment of today. High and increasing labour costs and structural adjustment rigidities are seen as the main cause of the current employment gap. Because of the wage structure and the mismatch at the labour–market in Germany, experts and politicians are searching for instruments and policies to solve the structural problems of employment. Implementing a general low wage sector, combined wages, and wage subsidies for individuals reducing the burden of payments for social insurance are suggestions only regarding the unskilled at the lower end of the income bracket. Indeed, according to this opinion, much of the employment gap could be bridged in the service sector as well as in the third sector, if the sketched modifications were undertaken.

Limited public budgets and the demands for reducing socio-political aids bring the social commitment into the focus of interest, too. On the background of unemployment, labour crisis, and the financial problems of the welfare state deriving from those, concepts like the “activating state” are focusing on this kind of unpaid work. Since the social type of commitment is highly gendered, the development towards a service society may offer chances for transitions into the labour force, especially for women. From the perspective of women, who either serve in the labour-market or in the Third sector, it is to question, what kind of impact the development of the labour society will have on gender roles and equal participation.

The inquiry starts showing the gender division of work in the labour-market as well as in households and the volunteer sector (Chapter 1). The importance of political and social commitment and processes of deliberation by the citizen is not treated exhaustively by only regarding employment potentials in the Third sector. For the civil society and the state, the most important and visible values are solidarity and participation. Regarding the historical development of the “honorary post” phenomenon, which exists only in Germany, the shift from political participation for men to a form of unpaid social work for women is coming to light (Chapter 2). Being the main resource for the state doing unpaid social work for the “common good” an ambiguous situation for women occurs. Although this kind of work serves as an individual way to be a visible part of society, it does not pay for any monetary independency or social security. On the contrary, social commitment may be a strategy for women for future labour-market participation. Since needs for personal and social services rise, there are individual chances but collective risks for an equal division of work and changing gender structures in the society (Chapter 3). The overall thesis of this inquiry is that both – activation strategies by the state, which intend to increase social commitment, and an increasing female labour-market participation – will lead to a structural trap in gender roles because of the still gender-related social work and caring done by women (Chapter 4).

### ***1. The gender division of work: the lack of income and independent social security***

Today, labour is basically referred to as gainful employment, but the meaning of laborious doing remains virulent. Hannah Arendt’s *Vita Activa* (1997) gives a brilliant analysis of these two sides of the same medal. This ambiguity can be seen in housework, family work, reproduction, and other activities. These terms still serve as a means of separation in a double sense: as a term for gainful employment and as a term for other forms of activity, mostly done by women (sections 1.1. and 1.2.). In the current Western society,

these two labour conceptions can be found, with gainful employment being the one of relevance for the welfare state (section 1.3.). Within this framework, new society concepts, which indicate the economic use of gainful employment and try to abolish the term limitations, intend no consequences for the social insurance system. All relevant theories calculating with non-profit labour and refuse the system of individual insurance, would, of course, change the German social insurance system utterly.

### ***1.1. Labour-market participation***

Over the past 30 years, women's employment has experienced sustained growth in all Western countries, and women make up an increasing proportion of the workforce. The proportion of women in the labour force of post-unification Germany was nearly 43 percent in 1998 starting from 36 percent in 1970. This proportion is marginally lower in Germany than in the United States (see Salverda/Bazen/Gregory et al. 2001). The sustained rise of female participation in pre-unification Germany in the same time period by 14 points up to 61 per cent in 1998 reflects this growing proportion of women in the labour force but is still lower than in the US with a participation rate of 72 per cent. Employment of men has also been rising, although at a slower rate than for women and at a slightly falling employment-to-population ratio by 8 points from 1970 to 80 per cent in 1998 (see Klammer/Klenner/Ochs et al 2000). The main source of employment growth is a higher proportion of part time work, a particularly similar development in Germany and the Netherlands. On the contrary, part time work in Germany is more gender-biased than in the Netherlands as illustrated in figure 1.

***Figure 1: The role of gender and working hours in the economy, 1996***

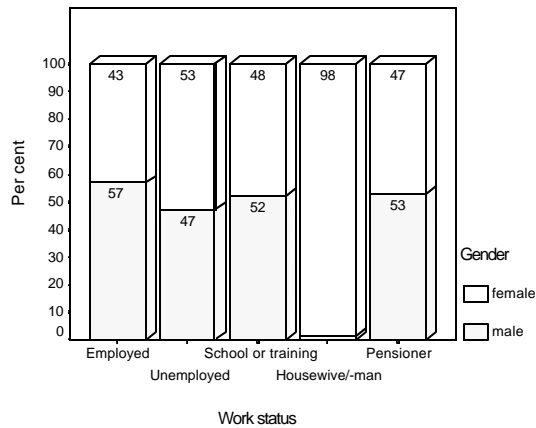
	United States	France	Germany	Netherlands	United Kingdom
<b>Employment-to-Population ratio (15-64)</b>					
Total (head)	73.9	58.7	65.0	66.3	68.9
Total (FTE) <sup>1)</sup>	82.0	63.9	65.6	59.3	71.9
% full-time men	53	57	59	61	56
% full-time women	38	32	30	18	29
% part-time men	3	2	1	6	2
% part-time women	7	8	10	15	13
<b>Average FTE<sup>1)</sup> person</b>					
Total	1.11	1.09	1.01	0.89	1.04
full-time men	1.28	1.19	1.10	1.10	1.25
full-time women	1.15	1.14	1.10	1.09	1.13
part-time men	0.61	0.66	0.68	0.52	0.63
part-time women	0.59	0.68	0.60	0.52	0.57

1) Full-time equivalent = 35 hours a week.

Source: Salverda/Bazen/Gregory et al. 2001: 7, Database: National Microdatasets, usual weekly hours worked.

Female part-time work – in measures of the employment-to-population-ratios – ranges from 7 per cent in the US to 15 per cent in the Netherlands. In Germany, only one per cent of men is working less than full time but 10 per cent being women. The fact that 87 per cent of all part-time workers in Germany are women (see Klammer/Klenner/Ochs et al. 2000) illustrates that, in Germany, part-time work is a predominantly female activity. Part-time work as a highly gendered issue counts even in the case of the Netherlands, where one-third of part-time work is done by (mainly young) men. The predominance of women in part-time work corresponds with gender roles and the division of work, obvious in 98 per cent being housewives as figure 2 illustrates.

**Figure 2: Work status by gender**



Source: Own calculations, Database: Freiwilligensurvey 1999 (n = 7500).

Despite the growing labour force, a significant gender gap persists in terms of payment. Women still earn less money than men. This “gender-specific” difference in earnings shows clear deviations between East and Western Germany, economic sectors and employee groups. In the producing sector, for example, with an average monthly gross income of 1,990 EUR in 1999 the East German workers and employees earned only 70.8 per cent of the monthly gross income of their West German colleagues (2,810 EUR) (see Statistisches Bundesamt 2000). The earnings differed less in the trading sector, where East German employees in credit and insurance industries earned 2,041 EUR or 76.2 per cent of the salary of West Germans (2,680 EUR). However, on average, women still have lower incomes than men. The average weekly wages of female workers in the producing sector make up only 73.7 per cent of the corresponding man earnings in the former federal territory and 77.6 per cent in the newly-formed German states. The salaries of the female employees constitute 72.9 per cent of the man salaries in West Germany and 70.8 per cent in the New Laender. The salaries of the female employees reached 76.5 per cent of the man incomes in the West and 86.5 per cent in the East in the trade, credit and insurance industry. The reason for these income differences is the high quantity of women in lower pay and salary groups as well as in economic sectors. Furthermore, interruptions of their professional career for child-rearing or taking up a temporary or part time employment are more likely. Time rows only available for the earlier federal territory show a slow reduction of the gender-specific wage difference. In 1960 the weekly wages of female workers made up to 59.4 per cent and salaries of female employees 60.0 per cent of the corresponding man earnings in the producing sector.

Although female labour-market participation rates in high-paid high qualified jobs incline, in times of economical and employment crisis women worldwide view new employment forms becoming “typical” employment forms for women. Gainful employment for any price seems to become a synonym for female employment: unsecured employment, temporary work, part-time work, homework and telework. Involving more and more men, this phenomenon has been described as the “feminisation of work”. Nevertheless, female employment is marked by other structures as male employment. Women are still the main victims of low pay. These wage disparities occur between male and female full-time work and between full-time and part-time work. In the last decades, growing job offers for part-time work have lead to greater options to combine gainful employment with duties of domestic work, child-rearing and welfare. Other contributory factors deriving from individualisation and the pluralism of lifestyles have lead to a greater female labour

force which influences family structures, fertilisation rates, and forms of community and partnership. But they come along with bad working conditions, lower qualifications, lower wages, less industrial safety, lower social security and a higher risk of getting unemployed.

Since there are still gender-related responsibilities for domestic work, child-rearing and welfare, there is no need to question “who is doing the job”. The following section provides data on time spent on this duties as well as for social commitment in the Third sector.

### 1.2. *The value of unpaid work and social commitment*

If one looks at the division of working hours spent on childcare, housework and other welfare services, the gender gap in doing unpaid work is obvious. Domestic work and child-rearing are still main duties for women. In households with dependent children, men spend an average of 2 ½ hours on unpaid work, nearly half an hour of that time for child-rearing. Women do an average of 5 ¾ hours of unpaid work, that is 4 ¼ hours on domestic work and 1 ¼ hour on childcare as main activity, excluding the time they spend on watching children and doing other activities on the side. In couples with one dependent child under the age of 6, mothers spend an average of about 2 ½ hours per day on childcare as main activity, the total amount of unpaid activities takes 7 hours a day, and with more children 8 hours. Even if mothers are gainful employed, this does not mean a greater time engagement by husbands or partners. Employed women are not taken off some of the strain assisted in the duties in domestic work and child-rearing by men (see Bundesministerium für Familie 1998: 125).

**Figure 3: Average time daily spent on unpaid work by mothers and fathers with children under the age of 18, ordered by family type and labour-market participation, 1991/92**

Family type <sup>1)</sup>	Average daily time spent on unpaid work by adults <sup>2)</sup>					
	Total		of it for...			
	Women	Men	Domestic work <sup>3)</sup>		Child-rearing <sup>4)</sup>	
			Women	Men	Women	Men
			by hours : minutes			
Couples with one child, of it	6:11	2:35	4:20	1:26	1:23	0:30
? child under the age of 6	7:00	3:02	4:04	1:19	2:35	0:58
? both parents gainful employed	5:06	2:36	3:41	1:24	1:03	0:27
Couples with two or more children, of it	6:51	3:02	4:42	1:29	1:32	0:32
? youngest child under the age of 6	8:12	3:24	4:50	1:30	2:37	0:54
? youngest child between the age of 6 and 17	5:44	2:45	4:35	1:29	0:40	0:16
? both parents gainful employed	5:31	3:00	3:59	1:32	1:04	0:31
Single parent	5:12	3:05	3:25	2:16	1:17	0:34
Other households with children <sup>5)</sup>	5:38	2:33	4:10	1:26	1:02	0:15
Total of households with children	5:50	2:45	4:14	1:27	1:18	0:28

1) Families with a German partner and children under the age of 18 or, if still in training, with children under the age of 27 living at home.

2) These are domestic and craft work, child-rearing, caring and welfare for adults as well as unpaid social commitment (relevant main actual activity).

3) Preparing meals, cleaning dishes, laundry and other, shopping, dealing with administrative bodies, caring for plants and animals, organization of the household.

4) Looking after children under the age of 16 which are not permanently in need of care, excluded are times in which child-rearing is not the main activity and other duties are to be finished.

5) Households with apart from Parent-Child-Communities other people are living; included unmarried partnerships with children.

Source: Bundesministerium für Familie 1998: 127, Database: Zeitbudgeterhebung 1991/92, Statistisches Bundesamt Tabellenband II (1995).



Modelling the performance of caring, child-rearing and welfare in pre-unified Germany the economic value of unpaid work done by private households depending on variations in hourly wages ranges from 100 to 240 Billion German Marks in 1992. Adding domestic services, craft work and social commitment the economic value of unpaid work exceeds the value of gainful employment (see Bundesministerium für Familie 1998: 125) as figure 4 illustrates.

**Figure 4: Economic value of unpaid work, pre-unified Germany 1992**

Type of Work	Yearly volume of time spend	Economic value by assessment with...				
		Total sum of wages and salaries	Average wages for...		All employed	
			Qualified domestic servant	Net Wages <sup>1)</sup>	Labour costs <sup>2)</sup>	Net Wages
	Billion hours	Billion German Marks				
Gainful employment	48	1238				
Getting to workplace	8					
Unpaid work, of it	77		897	1912	1288	2805
? Domestic work	59		682	1458	982	2139
? Caring and welfare	7		73	162	109	238
? Craft work	8		101	211	142	309
? Social commitment	3		41	81	55	119

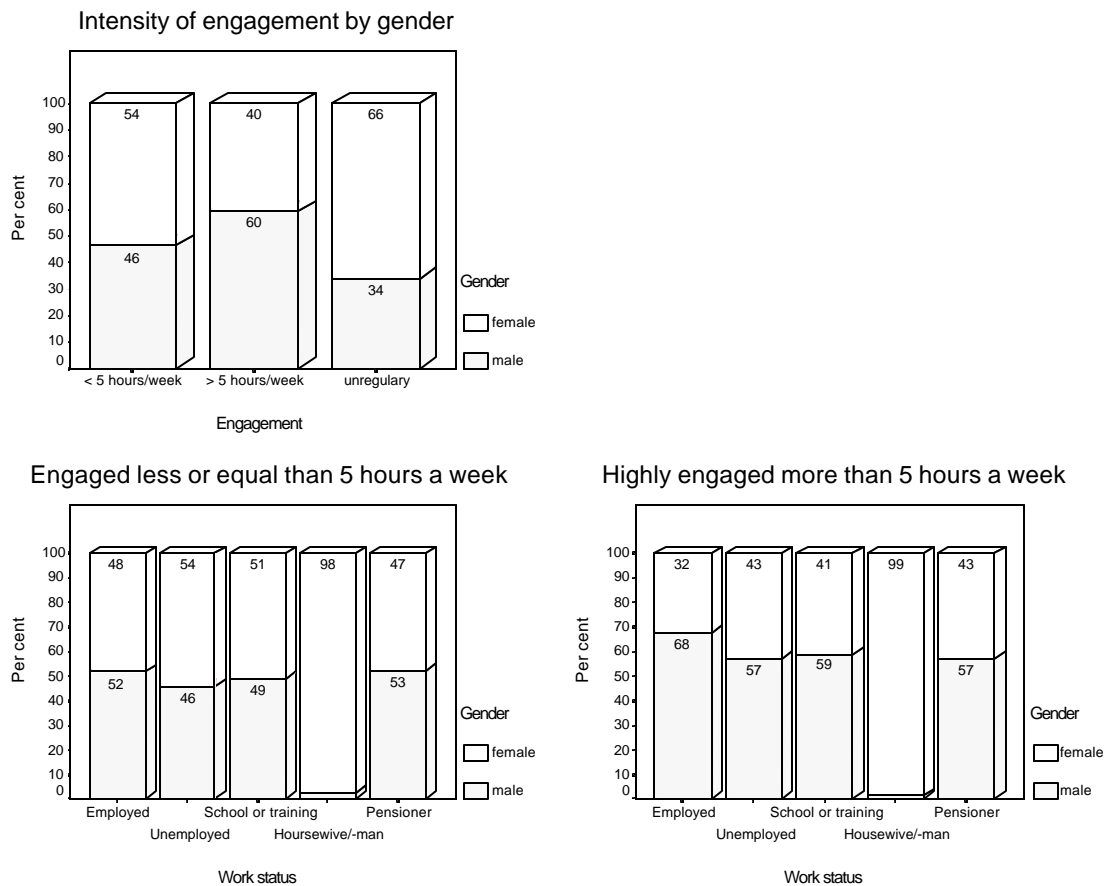
1) 11,70 German Marks per hour.

2) 25,- German Marks per hour (including non-wage labour costs)

Source: Bundesministerium für Familie 1998: 128, Database: Zeitbudgeterhebung 1991/92, Statistisches Bundesamt Tabellenband I 1995.

Even if social commitment often occurs as hard work or “laborious doing” viewing on the value of social commitment the topic is not fully exhausted by counting hours or calculate subsidiary wages. The individual meaning of social commitment lies in the range of possibilities for the individual to realize personal goals, creating a life purpose and social group integration. The economic relevance of social commitment however, lies in the kinds of nursing work within Charity organizations. In a time of limited state budgets, the social honorary post and social commitment is more than ever in the focus of interest. Using current data on volunteering and social commitment in Germany (see Rosenblatt 2000a) the following figures give an impression on the relation of engagement by gender and by work status.

**Figure 5: Engagement by gender and by work status**



Source: Own calculations, Database: Freiwilligensurvey 1999 (n = 7498).

Surveying the motives and meaning of social commitment in a historic perspective Christian charity was the basis for the traditional honorary post and for its social acceptance. The political honorary post was based on civil duty. But these values seem to decline these days. There is no longer a widespread readiness to take-up an unpaid honorary post in charity organizations and clubs according to civil duties. Whereas new forms of civil participation and organization emerged, which – at first – did not fit in these categories. Current commitment research tries to find and explain the new motives. The contradiction between altruism and egoism is tried to be solved, by proving that care for other people may stem from selfish intentions (see Chapter 2).

### **1.3. The welfare state and the gender bias in de-commodification**

In Germany as well as in most labour societies social security is arranged around marriage and benefits based on employment and contributions. In this kind of welfare arrangement other forms of work don't serve for personal security or offers claims on pensions or retirement payments. Women as housewives are traditionally covered by their gainfully-employed husbands and their contributions to the social insurance system. Only if these instruments of security fail and people are in need, the welfare state provides means-tested social assistance. Welfare state arrangements and security systems can be differentiated by their weighting and combination of the structural components of insurance and relief, and non-governmental

forms of security and welfare. The German welfare state is still entirely restricted to the gainful employment of men and husbands. The only modernisation and exception within the pension scheme is raising up children and non-professional nursing care as can be seen in figure 6.

**Figure 6: Relation of “work“ and social security in Germany**

	Public Sphere		Private Sphere	
	Gainful employment	Social commitment	Reproduction, self-provision	
Social Security of	Gainful employment	./.	Poverty and families	
Social Insurance by	Dependent work (wage earners)	./.	Marriage and families	
			Child-rearing, nursing care	Marriage
Institutionalised security		Traditional security		
Welfare-mix				
System of social distribution	State market	Non-profit organizations, groups	Family neighbours	
	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sector	Third sector	4 <sup>th</sup> Sector	
	Formal Sector		Informal sector	
	Public sphere		Private sphere	

Source: Stecker 2002b: 22.

Yet, the combination of gainful employment and social insurance leads to individual and political problems, mainly of financial character. The inherent construction of this system did not encourage female labour-market participation to rise and led to a highly personal dependence of women either on their husbands or on the patriarchal welfare state. The system provoked a high poverty-rate among female pensioners because of their lack of individual claims out of the pension system. The general social development toward individualism, in which traditional forms of community and family assistance decline, increased the importance of individual social insurance via gainful employment. Gainful employment still serves monetary as well as immaterial functions of the individual: it provides income and social security, contributes to one's self-realization, status and inclusion in the civil society.

Political and social commitment are the visible expressions of practical and active solidarity and democratic participation. They have an individual, as well as collective function. Honorary posts and social commitment are considered the head cornerstone of society and crucial democratic element. As they are practiced in public, they rather resemble gainful employment than housework, or any kind of work performed for family purposes or for oneself. Those activities are not included in the social insurance system of the individual.

The criteria of unpaid work are necessary for distinguishing, yet neither sufficient for the survey of social political activity nor helpful for suggestions to change rights, properties and laws of social policy insurance. There are several current proposals for social commitment assistance. There is a demand for a greater recognition in connection with further concepts to make these types of activity more interesting for a larger amount of people, even though without pay. Considerations of how to include this concept of non-paid work into the social insurance system are being uttered, but there are no detailed qualitative and quantitative studies on this – with exception of Stecker (2002b, 2001b). If social policy tends to include

social commitment into the German social security insurance, the fields of health and social services (“caring”), “education” and professional “management” are suggested. For many reasons (see Chapter 2.2.) only these forms of volunteering – their close potential for transitions towards the labour-market, and because they are already regular forms of gainful employment – are taken into account. In analogy to pension claims which are newly accepted for phases of child-rearing and unprofessional domestic care for the elderly and disabled, these “solidarity times” could work as a *functional equivalent of gainful employment for the pension scheme*. As equivalent to gainful employment these exceptions provide – similar to the contributions paid out of earnings from gainful employment over one’s lifecycle – legal claims to the pension system. As a passive form they are granted by the welfare state, and are therefore a political issue too. Varying with times of economic growth, welfare state expansion or retrenchment, and limited budgets those secondary or derived claims may be more or less on the agenda of social policy adjustments for the next generation of claimants or pensioners.

Various social alternatives and models, dealing with changed labour attitudes and other forms of social activity, can be found, described as “Activity society“ trying to see further options in self-providing or an institutionalised system of basic income. Granting an individual basic income to all citizens would change the German welfare system utterly (see Stecker 2003). In this context, society theories are discussed, that – as welfare society and welfare pluralism – show the synergetic supplement and the mix of various social, family, and socio-political contributions to augment collective and individual welfare. Other reform plans are to establish new institutional arrangements of labour beyond the marketplace in a non-profit or volunteer sector. Despite these concepts scientists and politicians are trying to avoid these alternatives and preserve the current system. New concepts and policies are in demand which solve the employment gap, lower costs in health care and for social services, and serve growing needs for social service provision using system adequate instruments for the German welfare state.

Actual critics of feminists are directed to the gendered labour-market separation and question the just division and time management of gainful employment, domestic work, child-rearing and other welfare activities like caring for the elderly and disabled. Criticism here is viewing on the precarious situation of social security and insurance for women because of the German “male-breadwinner” model. Because of the high gender bias of social commitment, considerations of how to raise the female employment rate are made by using the Third sector as a “job machine” (Betzelt 2001) and pioneer (Chapter 3). In this context it is feared that women would be regarded only as “hidden resource of social policy” (Beck-Gernsheim 1991, also Daly 2000).

## **2. *The gender division of commitment: the lack of recognition and leading position***

As a kind of social activity social commitment, political engagement, and networking belong to the “social capital“ of any society. Practicing it conveys, alters, and preserves social norms, values, and traditions. Traditions, regulations, and moral creed create a social framework, as well as the law and organisations (e.g. state and commercial enterprises). The social and political consensus regarding these conditions – “solidarity” – is the third coordination and integration mechanism of the society, beside state and marketplace (via law and money). The term “informal sector“ has become in use to describe the sphere between market and state. In this, the Third sector plays an important role as social capital and for civil society besides family relations. Political and social commitment within the community therefore becomes important for processes of democratisation and welfare. In the historical development of Germany these activities got a functional part of the welfare state, along gender roles however (section 2.1.). Today, it seems that the integral values of commitment decline. Viewing the explanations for changes in motivations

these activities seem to get closer to logics of utility and pay. Critiquing this explanation is not only because of the inability to explain the inherent “moral surplus” but much more their gender blindness (section 2.2.).

### **2.1. *Historical development of honorary posts***

It can be seen in the historic development of commitment, that civil rights and duties were established in the progress of democratisation in Germany missing a revolution similar to France or the United States of America. This led to the only in Germany existing term and phenomenon of “honorary posts”. 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany laid back in institutionalising political modernisation at a governmental level with democratic parliaments and participated citizens, which still would not have included the working class, in comparison to other nations (see Anheier/Seibel 1999: 20). The main aim of the Prussian reforms and City Acts since 1806 by granting rights for self-regulation on a local; administrative level was the integration of the revolting and ascending German bourgeoisie. These granted rights necessarily included self-regulation duties. Paragraph 191 of the Prussian City Act of 1808 placed an obligation on unpaid public posts on the municipal level (see Sachße/Tennstedt 1998: 199-205). Well respected citizens were forced to duties in service for the community. These “political” posts were, to put it directly, a new form of unpaid work. Since it was institutionalised by the Prussian state as an administrative duty, refusing this post – still mainly a symbolic form of political participation – led to the loss of political voting rights for several years and could also include monetary contributions to the state.

The State of Prussia implemented a second form of bourgeois honorary post out of poor relief reforms and focusing the new social problems of the urban, industrialized proletariat. The control of the poor and concerns on hygiene led to the implementation of municipal poor relief posts; the so called “social honorary post”. It was not offered to the German bourgeoisie but to the middle-class citizen. Men were responsible for specific municipal poor sections in their cities. As a post this was a form of bureaucratic “Amt” too and of course as unpaid labour “honorary”. Later on the bourgeois wives got involved to this social service and this changed its honorary, administrative character and duty dramatically: Trying to help their husbands but also focusing the first choice of public activity they were allowed to, the women themselves along with contemporary theories on “social motherhood”, and in addition with the insight of the state, that these social problems could not be solved alone by the public poor relief but with the assistance of the civil and private initiatives, the social honorary post and the charitable associations became their important role – and hold them in Germany till today. The emergence of self-help associations at the beginning of the 1980’s shows how the regulations, established organisations are submitted to, lead to discussions of their legitimacy. Traditionally most of the charity workers in the Bismarck Reich following the State of Prussia were women, nurses engaged in the health sector. That is the reason for seeing social honorary posts and social commitment first as some kind of care service, mainly after the introduction of the German care insurance in 1995. Established charity organisations criticize this, fearing both competition and decline of the honorary post reputation. Women organisations criticise the unpaid work for care services. But it is not only the lack of pay and social insurance which separates honorary posts and social commitment from gainful employment. This criterion also refers to other forms of activity, for instance leisure time activities.

All in all, it can be said that honorary posts and commitment – out of various and different contexts – are regarded as important and inevitable for the preservation of society and the welfare state. Because of the male domination in governing boards of charity organisations and clubs mainly the social forms of commitment on the background of this inquiry are here to consider a resource and functional equivalent of the welfare state (see Stecker 2002b). Regarding modern explanations of the motivations for social

commitment the reproduction of gender blind thought becomes obvious.

## ***2.2. Gender blind explanations on motivations for social commitment***

For quite a while it seems that grants, expense allowances, or education offers become important for honorary activities and volunteering. This development improves the approach of professional behaviour and professional organisation. In connection with this, the social honorary post sees itself for nearly the first time definitely in an unclear and ambivalent position and situation. The new conflict lines put it between the value obtained social activities and services in the context of charity organisations and the fluent limits to state or economic organisation, the self-help movement as well as private and domestic care. These activities are more and more perceived by charity organisations as competition. In opposition to economic or state suppliers the welfare associations emphasise the unusual feature of the value obtained motives underlying their activities which should motivate also for the take-over of a social honorary post. With the loss of this “profession” social commitment and the social honorary post as a fundamental alternative to the caring profession loses therefore plausibility on the one hand. On the other hand the free enterprise organisation of care services and other offers in the social nursing area just leads to “professionalism” and the “economisation” of social work. In this controversy about “professionalism”, in which the double vocation of “profession” and “calling” is often neglected, the ambivalent situation of social commitment and social honorary posts between self-help and gainful employment gets clear.

Individual interest seems to be the opposite of solidarity forms and social responsibility. From this point of view critiquing a lack of solidarity was and is still plausible. Using modern economic argumentation the interpretation of self interest plays a constitutional role in the version of “enlightened egoism“: the individual economic advantage can be found in an extended exchange concept. In the sense of the Rational-Choice Theory solidarity and commitment are just a smart, or rather soft form of egoism. Additionally, commitment is worth trying because of the satisfaction and the achievement of a life goal it promises. Welfare Economics consider altruistic behaviour a subjective tendency, in which individual advantages and social welfare functions are included. Within this explanation, cooperation is only a matter of organisation. As with the social security system, it is only the question to find an adequate organisation form. A conflict of egoistic and altruistic motivations does not arise here. Motivations for commitment derive from easy access, interesting offers, qualifications useable in profession and pay. In opposition to the traditional honorary post, here the range of creative potential and possibilities is stressed, because projects can be handled due to individual skills and talents. A membership in an organisation is not necessary, if not desired. Similar to leisure time activities, fun and happiness with what you are doing, are to create satisfaction and self-realisation.

Criticism of those concepts, should start with pointing out their lack of rational, normative values for taking on duties. That is because those concepts only know personal tendencies instead of morally based values. Explanations are incomplete, where advantages cannot be calculated or are hard to achieve, and the types of commitment rarely show a direct dependency. After all, commitment to a self-help association or any other charity work to those is just a mean serving the purpose of self interest satisfaction. Assistance of commitment, along with an augmented social recognition, does not find a stable basis in stressing self interest and satisfaction as charity motivations. Regarding charity work as a mere kind of leisure time activity, is of course, not suitable for getting more reputation – the main aim in current political statements to improve social participation for the common good in “activation strategies” by the state. As a theoretical explanation, however, commitment and cooperation as profitable solution for the individual will find a wide

agreement in an individualistic society – from a male perspective.

It is not only questionable, if chairmen and representatives, which are mostly male, rather seek the satisfaction of private ambitions as New Institutional Economics and the Principal-Agent Theory explain. Regarding theoretical and political statements to “activate” self-help resources and responsibility by the citizen, it becomes obvious that these are implicitly and sometimes explicitly directed towards social commitment – and therefore addressed to women being the main contributors. Explanations on the basis of individualistic behaviour are not able to explain why women are responsible for caring, nursing and welfare for the “common good” and – more striking – are taking over these duties and responsibilities. These activities still remain much more hard work in the sense of “laborious” doing and therefore missing the reputation and acknowledgement by the public they deserve. The approach of Communitarianism, who seeks to oppose individualistic motivations in order to strengthen social commitment as such on the contrary, is addressed to family values and includes some sort of moral suasion. Criticism here has two sides: one being a market-liberal motivation, and the other one a social collaboration on the basis of civil and moral responsibility. This makes women responsible for moral development in the core of civil society: the family. If women don’t fully serve the role as housewives and representative of charity and welfare they are regarded disparagingly, according to communitarian thought.

In connection with this, it doesn't require any particular woman research perspective to expose the appeals of the political control over the engagement potentials, which are addressed to the two sexes, as an activation strategy for women. On the basis of the empirical experiences and the gender-specific engagement areas one cannot assume that men are to win for the unpaid work connected to welfare and care in the social and health area in a larger number than today. The greater share of men in honorary posts and commitment in opposition to women, as the time budget elevation of the (old) Federal Government and empirical studies on volunteering show, don't stay in contrary to this (Statistisches Bundesamt 1995, Rosenblatt 2000b). Male engagement forms like boy scouts, firemen, in district councils or as exercise leader in the sports,<sup>1</sup> which are usually done besides and because of having a professional work and being married, and are often paid too, cannot be equated with the social honorary post and social commitment. The popular example of “citizen work” (Bürgerarbeit) mentioning the possible use areas demonstrate that these are mainly social fields of activity like nursing care for the elderly and handicapped and so on. It is still the women who are supposed and asked by activation campaigns for traditional honorary posts and (social) commitment (see Notz 1999: 26, Effinger/Pfau-Effinger 1999, Zierau 2000.)

At least an option stands contrary to this development for the done work in the traditionally rather female, social honorary post and social commitment. Both this practically as also theoretical contains the potential to emerge out from the informal sector into the public by professional practice, and that is, into the state or market organised realm, and become paid work.

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<sup>1</sup> As an inevitable part of the human rights political citizenship rights for women are still limited worldwide. In particular the participation of woman in management-boards and committees, governments and parliaments is distributed unequally. Only in few countries a rate of just 30 per cent, which is considered to be necessary for a relevant power to influence policies and decisions, of feminine representatives is listed. Since the Platform for Action in Peking 1995 at least the gender-particular perspective is supposed to be considered with the aid of the concept of gender mainstreaming in every government action; for details on political citizenship and fairness see Stecker 2002a.

### **3. *Two strategies for work and social commitment***

Social commitment of citizens for their own purposes and the state has a unique position between gainful employment and private forms of work. This unique position lead to two strategies concerning the Third sector and social commitment. The first strategy is related to the potential of gainful employment in the Third sector for women on the background of growing needs of social service provision (section 3.1). The second strategy focuses social commitment as a transition strategy for women into the labour force (section 3.2.). Within this strategy policy concepts for “activation” only viewing on the potentials of social commitment as a traditional form of unpaid work done by women bear the risk of substitution of gainful employment by social commitment, and may raise the employment gap in the service sector.

#### **3.1. *Labour-market strategy***

From an economic perspective the cost of wages are considered the main reason hindering new employment. The absence of labour demand is viewed in the short run by excessive prices for work (wage scale and non-wage labour costs) and no market clearing will follow. In the long run the growth of labour productivity is the dominant source of overall well-being as classical economist demonstrated (Ricardo, Smith). But the encompassing effect of this development includes a declining of employment in relation to national produced goods and services and a reduction of places to work.<sup>2</sup>

Structural effects caused by the development towards a service society, for example mobility of manpower into the service sector and the public sector, lead in total to a lower labour productivity. The labour productivity of a service society therefore is lower than in an “industrial society”. On the contrary the estimated national labour capacity (the number of employed) will be higher – not taking into account the likelihood of rising strategies of illicit work and illegal activities. For this and many other reasons actions are necessary to bring work into legacy: First, opportunities of governmental leading and control diminish, financial and socio-political problematic fields become more critical or may emerge out of this situation, second, concerning the economy, real chances of the market and competition become distorted. This may lead to a closing-up of plants and losses of workplaces. Third and finally, it becomes more and more difficult for the life world to resist this way out and preserve the faith in social order, fairness of chances and solidarity.

From the welfare state perspective and with respect to gainful employment in a service economy the first strategy includes policies, which are helpful for the creation and acquisition of jobs within the Third sector and the official market. Because of the character of these personal and social services this strategy will especially create “female” work and therefore allow women entering into the labour force and gain an independent income from waged labour. Further more, it would contribute for original claims – not derived from a husband or the patriarchal welfare state – out of social insurance and the system of pensions. This strategy would increase the number of employed persons, raise the female employment rate, and the welfare for the whole society as well as the quality of services also possibly raises due to professionalism. In contrary stands the experiences and fears of welfare associations and self-help groups noticing the economic (or state) organisation of social nursing services loosing essential quality (“profession”). But it has to be said that work within Third sector organisations only poorly matches the requirements of paid labour

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<sup>2</sup> Visible by a declining labour coefficient, which is the reciprocal measure of labour productivity.

as a commodity traded on the labour-market. It is more regarded as synonymous with social commitment that is missing payment regulations or contracts of duties and rights. To a large extent working in the Third sector includes intrinsic motivations seeing the possibilities of individual development and self-realization.

The increased interest of women for gainful employment seems to promise a double success within the first strategy. Not only new fields for gainful employment on the official market would be developed but also services necessary, which would not be provided any more in the private area due to the raising of female gainful employment.

### **3.2. *Transition strategy***

If women do two third of social commitment, and do not earn an income from gainful employment there may be strategies for transition into the labour force. But whether and how work and employment in non-profit- or charity organizations offer specific transitions for women has less been on the research agenda. The nexus between labour-market policies, Third sector research and social integration is an important issue to look at.

In the context of the second strategy just the intermediate status of activities in the non-profit sector provides a high degree of transitions into the labour-market. In analogy to the world of employment, which causes flexible transitions and discontinuous working-careers, a fluent transition of social commitment and professional work in charity organisations is visible. Especially the fields of health and social services (“caring”), “education” and professional “management”, where gainful employment is quite common, offer transitions towards the labour-market (see Stecker 2001a). The importance of creating transitory markets has been pointed out in Germany by Schmid (see Schmid 1994, Schmid 2001, also O’Reilly/Cebrián/Lallement 2000). As an instrument of labour-market and welfare policies the concept of transitory markets will serve to compensate “internal risks” for women emerging out of discontinuous employment-careers due to the temporary absence or reduced working loads for child-rearing or personal care for relatives or close neighbours. Learning and training labour-market relevant skills as well as improving social competence are coming along with social commitment. Meanwhile practical periods are often suggested for those who want to learn a social profession in the social and health area. Since these professions are still mostly chosen by women, this is another awkward development for women. As surveys on volunteering show too, using social commitment as a bridging strategy to get into the labour-force is mainly used by high-school graduated girls or academics in general and are less used by unemployed, less educated, and persons on social assistance or subsidies.

Requirements to reform and restructuring institutional arrangements of the welfare state on the background of the financial crisis and the employment gap bring the informal and Third sector into the centre of interest. Within the framework of possible strategies of reduction, privatisation and de-regulation the “forgotten” social resource becomes a suggested solution, especially on account of the structural boundaries of the market and the state in the production of welfare. Because distribution margins of the public budget become narrow considering unemployment, phases of economic stagnation and demographic change policies of increased utilisation and “activation” of the economic and welfare relevant informal capacities are more than likely. From a welfare state and economic perspective the further shift of social and personal services, which show a low productivity, in the informal sector is suggested, while activities with high productivity remain in the official economy. The complete economic growth (and social welfare) would be higher from this point of view in comparison with the Gross National Product measured officially.

Furthermore increases in productivity remain possible (Economics of scale). For the welfare state the advantage of an successful re-privatisation of social services is the possible reduction of the state quota (public budget) by the mining of transfers. With such a shift it would be possible at the same time to let rise the giving load of the employed generation less strong or even to lower it. The growth potential for the formal sector could be fortifying by it – theoretically – again.

Concerning the two strategies it has to be taken into consideration that these are not necessarily in conformity with each other. Therefore, an analysis of work and employment in the Third sector has to look at both sides of the medal. Regular employment has to be taken into consideration as well as volunteering. From a welfare state perspective it has to be decided whether rising employment by forcing labour-market oriented policies to strengthen the social and personal service sector. Or trying to lower the social budget by forcing incentives for taking-over unpaid forms of social commitment in the Third sector and within the family. From this viewpoint the state cannot be interested in the shift of social commitment towards the labour-market. On the other hand raising gainful employment would help financing the social security system and make people independent of social grants and transfers. Yet, this second strategy would amount to the further commodification of family and domestic activities. To the structural and financial limits of the welfare state in the area of social security and welfare the objection of the instrumentalisation and economisation of informal activities the phenomena of reglementation, bureaucratisation and professionalism come along. From the individual perspective the strategy may help women to open opportunities for future inclusion in the labour force.

In the end increase is carried out by both of the two strategies for gainful employment and prosperity due to the moving of informal activities into the public sphere of the welfare state or the market economy. For social activities the analogy of tertiary (service-) sector and Third sector is no longer to be regarded only as conceptual (see Stecker 1998). The aspect of the public sphere is of great importance, and how the gender research also covers, for women particularly relevant.<sup>3</sup>

#### **4. Conclusions**

Since for the modern high-ranking of “work” productivity has become the deciding factor, questions arise concerning the change of the industrial society into a service society. But the argument is still persistent that personal services are “unproductive”, and therefore lower wages have to follow.<sup>4</sup> The unlinking of production and consumption as central condition for rationalisation first seized the fields of profitable commodities. Reproduction and self-provision was left as residual for households, instantly including the unpaid work of women. Within the process of industrialisation the formal, professional and company organized paid labour outside private households became the standard scope of work for men, domestic work fell out of the applicability of the new common expression of “work”. With the asserting industrial production and a decreasing agricultural sector the displacement of women out of social accepted work and statistical registration was coming along. Rising female participation in the labour-force after World War II slowly abolishes this situation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See for example Sichtermann 1987; Schubert 1993; Pfau-Effinger 2000 and the literature there indicated in each case.

<sup>4</sup> This point of view is taken by the Kommission für Zukunftsfragen der Freistaaten Bayern und Sachsen 1997: 116-136, and the Zukunftskommission der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 1998: 240-245 for which these activities are predestined for a general low-wage sector.

<sup>5</sup> For further details see Häußermann/Siebel 1997: 175-186, especially Chapter 9 on work, domestic work, paid work and  
Christina Stecker Christina Stecker 2/19/2003

Work in the service sector and the social type of commitment are both highly gender-biased. For this reason “activation” policies for commitment and volunteering as well as labour-market concepts suggesting a general low-wage sector or wage subsidies have a greater impact on women than on men. The importance of unpaid social services for the welfare state may lead to a loss of opportunities for women to participate in the labour-market. On the contrary, social commitment may be an individual strategy for women to future labour-market participation. Viewing the background of the general development towards a service society the paradox situation occurs that both, an increasing female labour-market participation and activation strategies by the state will lead to a structural trap in gender roles because of the still gender-related family work and caring done by women.

Personal services – the field of health, education, advisory service, personal hygiene, accommodation, catering, cleaning or other traditional domestic services – go back to the initially private, family sphere. That’s why employment possibilities often overlap with those of the tertiary sector (service sector) and the Third sector or may emerge out of it as surveys from the European Commission suggest (Europäische Kommission 1995). Estimations from the European Commission designate the number of employed in the Third sector or “third system” about 8 million persons. It is supposed that there are still enormous potentials for employment growth in the service sector and the Third sector. On account of gender roles and historical developments personal services are considered “typical female” and closely domestic. This does neither qualify for automatically being named as “low qualification jobs” as the various types of professions in the social and health sector demonstrate nor being “typical female”. But it has to be mentioned that regular jobs in these fields are often poorly paid and remarkably instable. Notably, for the antique world the difference of the public sphere and the private sphere was significant. Social commitment as well as gainful employment offer the chance for women to leave the private sphere and emerge before the public.

The development and demand for social services offers an important chance for women as the first strategy shows. The opportunity to move between full-time and part-time work or other flexible part-time arrangements as domestic circumstances evolve, raises the labour-market mobility for women. But these forms of work typically carry a pay penalty: as current status and, more significantly, over the future career path, through the lower or missing earnings. So the mobility between types of employment and unpaid work comes at a serious price for women. As more women spend more time in precarious forms of work and activity over the life-span this adverse status threatens increasing polarisation of income and gender roles. So even if women participate in the labour-force they take a greater risk of material security, which is grounded in three facts:

1. the low presence in high paid full-time work or high qualified work,
2. the still unequal pay for the same kind of work,
3. the concentration of women in part-time work.

These three reasons effect the amount of contributions into the social insurance system, especially the pension system, which is following the logic of equivalence of income and gains out of pensions and retirement payments. This risk of poor pay outcomes and poor gains from social security for women in the labour force is conspicuously high in Germany, In the last two decades some modernisation processes in welfare state arrangements took place. Until now those new instruments were integrated into the existing system without substantially changing it. But the examination of gender arrangements in the field of social

policy demonstrates that the German hierarchical gender order is still stable. Within obvious and hidden insufficiencies there is above all the strong labour-market segregation and the resulting wage differentials. Although the female participation in high qualified jobs has risen in recent years it seems improbable if there are equal chances in terms of pay and female labour-market participation in knowledge-based industries. Findings from the first chapter disillusion these hopes.

Regarding the second strategy the potential for women for a transition into the labour force is likely in the fields of management, education, and especially in the field of caring and health. Volunteering and social commitment as a strategy for future labour-market participation as a specific chance for women is because of:

1. women are doing most of domestic and family work, caring and welfare,
2. women are still the main source for social commitment and the welfare state.

But even if social commitment may offer individual transitions towards the labour-market, the overall situation of women is concerned. It isn't identical whether women are active in the civil society and charity organisations or at the labour-market. The impact on gender roles by arguing only on the dichotomy of paid and unpaid work is not sufficient, because:

- Privileging gainful employment in comparison with other forms of work (caring, child-rearing, reproduction, self-provision, and social commitment) on the one hand.
- Participation in the public sphere provides a qualitative better social status as participation in the private sphere on the other hand.

But participation in the labour-market includes both social integration and status in the society. From this perspective the wish of many women to participate in the labour force by taking-up an employment is understandable. It is uncertain if the current situation towards a service economy and demographic changes increases the demand of caring and personal services, and would provoke a snowball effect deriving from this. Even if the logic of more women getting into the labour force would create more demand for services (housework, care, child-rearing), it is not definitely said, that they are not forced for social honorary posts or social engagement. However, both don't make any difference for their effect on gender roles.

Against the background outlined, it seems both an increased labour-market participation and strategies for "activation" for commitment by the state, lead to the structural stabilisation of gender roles and the division of work, even if the material situation or the transition into the labour force for the individual woman has a positive effect. Since there are still unequal chances in terms of profession and pay, and dissimilar opportunities for qualified work and training, but more significant in the division of work and duties, the structural disadvantages for women remain unchanged. For the state there is a lot to do, and indeed both with regard to the consideration of the individual requirement of citizens than also with regard to the modernisation of policy instruments rather applying on a macro level. The difficulty of the adequate reaction exists for the welfare state. Governmental deficits show themselves both concerning the interface between gainful employment and commitment as well as in particular during the consideration of woman-relevant aspects. On the level of the individual as also within the framework of social infrastructures there are not any contents-related programmes of the state which take into account the necessity of the integration of child care, welfare and commitment into personal time structures. At least a special requirement should be considered for the multiple loads of the majority of the population due to the gender roles.

The state should consider distributive politics, taxes, and social regulations but should prefer the use of the

law in particular. The promotion of a gender-friendly enterprise culture is to be supported, however one should not over-estimate the potentials to influence enterprises and hierarchies within organisations. From a far greater effect the modernisation of the general conditions and infrastructure would be certainly effective as they play an essential role for the gender division of work. Nevertheless, here the acting state retains itself up to now very reservedly, and indeed because the state only hesitantly yields competences and hardly tolerates an active and self-reliant society as a surveillance entity of governmental policies.

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