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Women in Management in Germany

East, West, and Reunited

Several significant changes have occurred in the political and economic landscape surrounding women in management in Germany since we wrote the first review of their situation in the mid-1980s (Berthoin Antal and Krebsbach-Gnath, 1986). First of all, they have become established as a target group of attention in the media, politics, and the business community. Individual women are frequently profiled in business journals, for example; topics such as "dual-career couples" are making an appearance; and a growing number of conferences and seminars are focused on women in management.

Second, a variety of measures designed to implement equal opportunities have been introduced at various levels of government and business during the past few years. Equal opportunity officers and action plans, both voluntary and mandatory, have been put into place.

Third, the task of describing and explaining the situation of women managers and future outlook for them in Germany has taken on several new dimensions since 3 October 1990, the date of unification of East and West Germany.¹ Most simply, the size of the work force expanded significantly when the approximately 17 million citizens of East Germany were united with the 61 million people living in West Germany. The change in the size of the pool of human resources is bound to have an impact on the opportunities for women in manage-

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ment in Germany. If we want to shape the future and improve the opportunities for women in management, it is essential to gain a better understanding of the past. What can be learned by comparing the effects of the policies pursued in the two systems? The opening of East Germany allows a closer analysis of the living and working conditions of women in that system, and of the factors promoting or hindering their entrance and promotion in management. A preliminary assessment of the facts and myths relating to women in management in both systems lays the groundwork for gauging what they might be facing together in the upcoming years and what policies are needed to improve their prospects.

Facts and figures

Participation of women in the labor force and their representation in management

The situation in West Germany 1980–1989

In 1987 women made up 38.7 percent of the work force in West Germany, in other words 10.1 million women, or 47 percent of the women aged between 15 and 65 (Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie, Frauen und Gesundheit [BMJFFG], 1989, p. 32). However, their representation in management nowhere nearly corresponds to their participation in the labor force. The absence of women in management went largely unnoticed until the mid-1980s, before which time no articles specifically on “women in management” had been published. During the last five years, public interest in West German media and politics have definitely increased, and several popular business books have focused on the topic (e.g., Demmer, 1988; Bischoff, 1990). Not surprisingly, the facts are not changing as quickly as interest is growing: female managers are still few and far between in West Germany, compared with the United States.

The data remain scant, but the message is well illustrated in figure 1. According to a study conducted in 1988 of 45,000 companies with more than 20 employees or at least 2 million deutsch marks turnover, 5.9 percent of top managers were women, and 7.8 percent of managers at the next level were women (Hochstätter, 1989, p. 47).² Another study that focused on women at the board levels³ noted that women accounted for only 0.7 percent of managing board members in public companies (*Aktiengesellschaften*) in West Germany in 1988, and 0.3 percent of supervisory board members (Hochstätter, 1989, p. 47). Companies owned by women appear to be more likely to have women in management positions: according to a study conducted by the Association of (West German) Women Business Owners in 1989, 10 percent of the upper management positions in these companies were held by women (Hübner, 1989, p. 19).

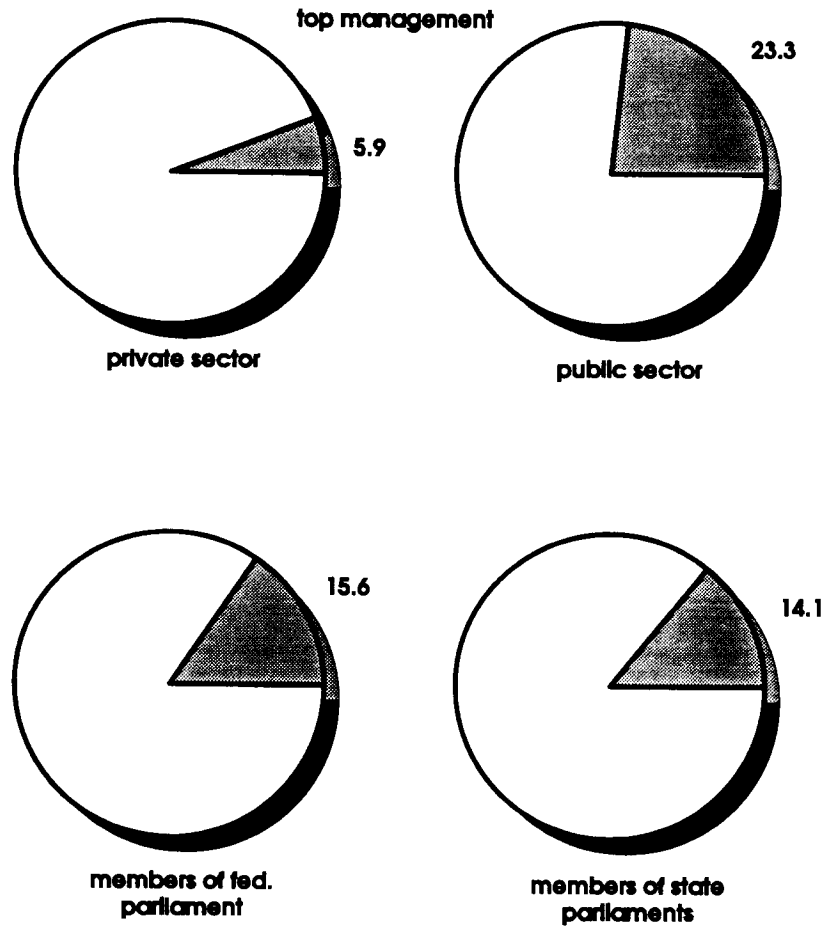


Figure 1. Women in Management and Politics in West Germany: The Gap
 Source: Adapted from Demmer (1988)

The situation in East Germany until 1989

The representation of women in positions of responsibility in economic, academic, and political organizations was certainly greater in East than in West Germany. See figure 2 for an overview of the distribution of women in leadership positions in different East German areas. In East Germany, women held about one-third of all management posts in the 1980s (Nickel, 1990, p. 5). As impressive as this statistic is, however, it needs to be examined more closely. First, as leading East German sociologists now point out, "the fact that most of these were positions

**WOMEN'S SHARE OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS (%)
IN EAST GERMANY (GDR), 1989**

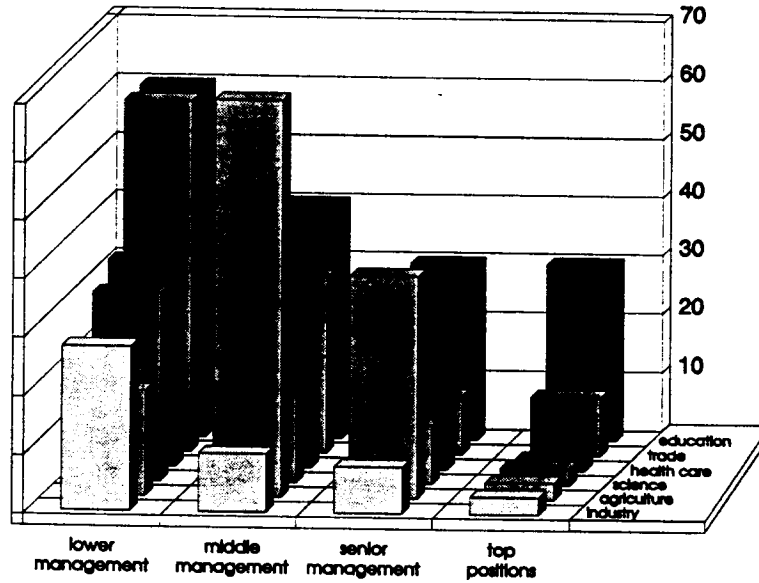


Figure 2. The Representation of Women in Management in Germany, 1989
Source: Adapted from Winkler (1990), p. 94

with low status and little money in lower management was not mentioned” by the former regime, which preferred to publicize this statistic as one of its “success stories” (Meier, 1990b, p. 5). Second, 30 percent of management positions is less impressive when one considers that 91 percent of women of working age were in the labor market (Nickel, 1991, p. 5). “The percentage of women in management positions does not at all reflect the broad potential of qualified women in the labor force” observed the first major critical study of the situation of women published by the East German Minister for Women’s Affairs after the “peaceful revolution of 1989” (Winkler, 1990, p. 94, our translation).

The distribution of women in management according to sector in West and East Germany

Common to both Germanies is a high degree of gender-specific segmentation of the labor market. Almost 70 percent of working women in West Germany are concentrated in ten (out of 400) occupational categories (BMJFFG, 1989, p. 33).

Women account for 85.7 percent of people employed in the health services (excluding medical doctors and pharmacists), 79 percent of people in the social services, 62.2 percent of people employed in retail, and 48.2 percent of teachers. In East Germany women represented 91.8 percent of people employed in the social services, 83.1 percent of those in health-related occupations, 77 percent in education, 72 percent in retailing, and 68.9 percent in postal and telephone services. They remained a minority in industry, the trades, construction, agriculture and forestry, and the transportation sector (Nickel, 1990, p. 5).

Women in both systems have tended to have better chances at obtaining management positions in those sectors of the economy where they are strongly represented. In East Germany, for example, almost two-thirds of management functions in education, health care, and trade were held by women; in light industry and in services, 40 to 50 percent of all managers were women. In transportation and local government, they held 25 percent of management positions, while in heavy industry, construction, and science women remained a rarity in the management ranks. As noted above, however, "women are mostly employed in lower and middle management positions; in top positions they are still the exception" (Winkler, 1990, p. 95, our translation). In education, for example, where women accounted for 80 percent of the employees, only a quarter of the East German schools were headed by a woman. In academia, only one lecturer in seven and one professor in nineteen was a woman (Meier, 1990b, p. 5).

Education and training

West Germany

The levels of education and vocational training achieved by women has risen significantly in West Germany over the past two decades. The system of vocational training is much more extensive in this country than in Anglo-Saxon countries, accounting for 60 percent of school leavers. Between 1970 and 1985, the percentage of working women who completed vocational training rose from 38 to 65 (compared with 65 percent to 77 percent for men during the same period). Similarly, women accounted for 40.9 percent of university students in 1987 (32.6 percent in 1970).

The low representation of women in management is still often attributed to the occupations or courses of study that young women choose. Some 54 percent of young girls are concentrated in only 10 of the 380 potential training occupations—for example, hairdresser, office clerk, and sales clerk (BMJFFG, 1989, p. 19). At the university level, young women account for more than half of the students in the arts, languages, and sports, a figure that is usually contrasted with their low representation in engineering, where they constitute 11 percent

(BMJFFG, 1989, p. 24). It is significant, however, that the most popular degree for both women and men is in economics, and that women now account for almost 40 percent of law students (BMJFFG, 1989, p. 25). Both of these courses of study lead into management in Germany, where there had been until very recently no MBA degree (Handy, 1987).

The increase in numbers of women university graduates, and their expansion into areas more suited to management careers in the public and private sectors give reason to hope that the younger generations of women will achieve higher ranks than their mothers. However, two notes of caution are in order here. First, higher education is no guarantee of employment, let alone access to management positions. In fact, female university graduates in West Germany have higher unemployment rates than do male graduates: whereas women represent 25 percent of the working population with a university degree, they account for 45 percent of the unemployed with a degree (BMJFFG, 1989, p. 38).

Second, it is important to recognize that education and training, particularly when obtained outside the company, play a limited role in promotion decisions, especially for upper management. As research has shown (e.g., Hegelheimer, 1982), German companies rely predominantly on in-firm training, which implies that if selection procedures filter women out from the early stages, they will not participate in the training programs designed as a basis for promotion. At the same time, however, it has been shown that the weight placed on professional qualification is inversely related to the position in the hierarchy: the higher the position, the less significance is attached to such "objective" criteria. The factors that receive more weight in promotion decisions for higher management functions are less objective and are often based on traditional male career patterns so that, in effect, they discriminate against women. Among those listed in the Hegelheimer study are professional competence, effectiveness, professional experience, length of experience, time with the company, commitment to the job, and professional and regional mobility (Hegelheimer, 1982, p. 62). To the extent that "objective" factors and qualifications, such as education and training, that women can consciously acquire play a lesser role in decision making, other sociopsychological and systemic factors assume increasing importance and create less easily surmountable barriers to career development for women (for a discussion of barriers to women in management in Germany, see Berthoin Antal and Krebsbach-Gnath, 1986-87).

East Germany

In East Germany, too, the levels of education and vocational training achieved by women increased steadily in the past decades. The official statistics of the former German Democratic Republic showed that by the 1980s there was no difference between the education and vocational training levels achieved by men and women. Some 86 percent of working women had completed vocational

training and women accounted for 54 percent of university and college graduates (Radtko, 1989, p. 1). However, a closer look indicates that the problem of sex-specific segmentation occurred in the education and training courses in East Germany, albeit in different areas. Although women made up 51 percent of students in mathematics and natural sciences, they concentrated in chemistry, biology, psychology, and pharmacy, rather than in engineering and physics (Radtko, 1989, p. 12). Nevertheless, women accounted for 25 percent of students in technical courses and 66 percent of those in economics (Winkler, 1990, p. 47), so that their underrepresentation in management positions cannot easily be attributed to educational and training levels in this economy either. Significantly more women than men worked in jobs below their level of qualification (Winkler, 1990, p. 9).

Women entrepreneurs

A major difference between the management options open to women in East and West Germany has been the opportunity to run one's own business. In 1987, 5.7 percent of working women in West Germany were entrepreneurs, as compared to 10.3 percent of men (BMJFFG, 1989, p. 34), and it is estimated that in the 1980s one-third of all new companies were created by women (Assig, 1989, p. 5). The East German planned economy did include a very small private sector, which was nevertheless very tightly controlled by the state, so the concept of "entrepreneurship" is difficult to apply. Some 5.4 percent of the East German labor force were employed in the private sector, with 1.8 percent of working women in 1989 either self-employed or working in family-owned companies, not including agriculture (Statistisches Amt der DDR, 1990, pp. 123–129). In other words, whereas in West Germany women could choose to set up their own business, either early in their careers or later when they might feel limited by the restrictions to career development in large organizations, entrepreneurship was not a serious option for women in management in East Germany.

The income issue

A further characteristic common to both systems is the lower average income of women: in both East and West Germany, they earn about one-third less than men do (Schmidt, 1991, p. 2; Nickel, 1991, p. 8). This gap is generally attributed to "structural" reasons (women are in lower-paying jobs and sectors, and they work fewer hours⁴). The existence of other reasons, specifically the unequal value attached to the work done by women and by men, is only gradually coming to the fore. Largely as a result of pressure from the European Community, the issue of "comparable worth" is now being raised in West Germany (BMJFFG, 1989, p. 37).

Studies in West Germany now show that even the small number of women

who are in the elite class of "management" do not receive the same pay as their male counterparts: their salaries are roughly 20 percent lower than those of comparable male managers (*Wirtschaftswoche*, 1985, p. 70). A review conducted by a major German personnel consultancy, Kienbaum, revealed that in 1988 the pay differential between a male and a female top manager was an average of DM 84,500 per year, at the next level DM 27,500, and at the third level DM 18,000 (Hochstätter, 1989, pp. 56–58). The income gap persists, and increases with the level in the hierarchy and the size of the firm. Unfortunately, research has only just begun to document the differentials, and has not yet progressed to an examination of how the gap is maintained.

Women in management—and their children

A significant difference between women in management in Eastern and Western Germany is their family situation. The birth of children still has a major impact on work patterns of women in West Germany, where almost 60 percent of 25–35-year-olds with children leave the labor market at least temporarily (BMJFFG, 1989, p. 43). A primary reason, as the official federal government report points out, is that "working life is still organized today as though workers had no family responsibilities or household to take care of" (BMJFFG, 1989, p. 43). Only four out of ten women in middle management in West Germany are mothers—and they usually have only one child; almost all their male colleagues, by contrast, are married and have an average of two children (Ridder-Melchers, 1989, p. 14).

In East Germany, 94 percent of women with children remained in the labor force (Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, 1990, p. 580), and no statistical evidence is available to indicate that the women in management positions were less likely to have children than other women. As will be discussed in a later section, the much broader availability of childcare in East Germany was a significant factor in enabling women to combine work and family responsibilities. However, studies now indicate that in East Germany, too, career decisions for women were made "according to their family situation, not according to their professional achievements" (Winkler, 1990, p. 96). In this system, too, the fact that women maintained the primary responsibility for children—particularly when they were ill and needed a parent at home—represented a barrier to women's advancement in organizations (e.g., Merkel, 1990, p. 61).

Policies and legislation affecting women in management

The constitutional guarantee of equal rights

The constitutions of both the Federal Republic of Germany and of the former German Democratic Republic include articles specifically recognizing the equal

rights of men and women. However, as the review of available data provided above shows, in neither state has equality been achieved in practice.

There are two particularly significant differences between the two societies in this respect that are relevant for the career development of women. First, the constitutional "right to work" in East Germany was essentially not left to the realm of choice, in practice it was actually a "requirement to work": the labor needs of the economy were so high that the state could not afford *not* to have the women work. A second significant difference between the two states is that the regime in East Germany did not anchor and practice the "right of free speech" in its constitution. Critical voices could not be raised. A women's movement that was vocal and effective in placing the issue of inequality on the table and getting it integrated into political party agendas did not emerge in East Germany. Only now, after the opening of the Wall, can East German sociologists publish the observation: "The equality of women was treated as achieved in the official GDR propaganda, the women's question was seen as resolved" (Meier, 1990a, p. 10, our translation).

The subject of inequality between the sexes was a taboo (see, for example, Jaekel, 1990, p. 12) and no women's movement developed to break this taboo. As a leading East German sociologist noted, "the placement of taboos on problems on the one hand and the dissemination of success stories on the other blocked the development of critical consciousness, of a women's consciousness in the GDR" (Nickel, 1990, p. 8, our translation). In other words, the masking of the inequality that existed, in spite of the political proclamation of equality in the constitution, was so effective that even women were not aware of it and were therefore unable to generate change.

New equal opportunities legislation and offices in West Germany⁵

Probably the most important changes for the career opportunities of women in West Germany in the past decade have been the introduction of laws mandating equal opportunities and introducing equal opportunities offices throughout public administration. The European Court found that the articles in the "*Grundgesetz*" (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany) were not specific enough for women to be able to obtain their rights. The first step was taken in 1980, having been prompted by the European Community, which required all the member states to ensure that their legislation provided for the equal treatment of men and women at work. Since then, cases have been taken to the courts in Germany and to the European Community to give the law more bite by ensuring that the compensation given in cases of discrimination will become too expensive for employers to take lightly.

The discussion about the need for and constitutionality of stronger legislation that would apply not only to the public sector but also to the private sector is

very controversial in Germany. The Christian Democratic party, which dominates the coalition at the federal level and controls the government of several states shares the view of the employers' organizations that mandatory measures, specifically those including quotas,⁶ are unacceptable. For this reason, the federal government has restricted itself to programs to be implemented in its own ranks and to elaborating a variety of recommendations and voluntary guidelines. The effectiveness of such voluntary programs is limited, as is particularly evident in international comparisons (see, for example, Berthoin Antal and Izraeli, 1993).

The need for strong measures in the public administration is obvious, since women are no better represented in the management ranks there than in the private sector in Germany (von Friesen, 1989, p. 6). In 1986, the federal government passed the mandatory "Guidelines on the Occupational Promotion of Women in the Federal Administration." Since then, public authorities at various levels have introduced similar policy measures. They cover measures to increase the recruitment, promotion, and further training of women, and measures designed to balance work and family responsibilities (e.g., part-time work). It is significant, however, that although these guidelines are mandatory, they do not include sanctions so that the effect remains limited.

One of the key elements in the policy provisions at this time is the requirement that all government agencies identify a person or group as "equal opportunities officer" to monitor developments in the organization that affect women and to stimulate change. Unfortunately, these officers have not always been given the necessary support and authority. However, although the actual changes have been limited and slow, the attention paid to the issue has revealed the manifold hurdles to women in management and has provided a solid basis for working out concrete solutions (see, for example, Bulmahn et al., 1990). The improvements are still meager, however. Not much more can be claimed, even by the official report of the federal government than that "the proportion of women recruited increasingly corresponds to the proportion of women applicants" (BMJFFG, 1989, p. 41, our translation).

The hurdles that remain in the absence of strong legislation are well illustrated by an analysis of advertisements for management positions. Despite the existence of a law requiring nonsexist job advertising, firms in Germany reveal their preference for male managers in advertisements directed to men. In the public sector, 94 percent of management openings are neutrally formulated, but in the private sector 95 percent of advertisements for top management positions use the masculine noun form⁷ (*Management Wissen*, 1990, p. 8). In other words, since no effective sanctions exist, current equal opportunity legislation is not even strong enough to mandate nonsexist advertising for openings, which might ensure a higher number of women applicants.

Parental leave and childcare provisions

The issue that has received the most attention as a hurdle for women in management is the difficulty of combining family and career responsibilities. For this reason, it is useful to look at the support provided by the state as a framework within which companies, women, and men make career decisions.

East Germany

Over the course of the past decades, the extensive provisions for childcare in East Germany have served as a reference point for women in West Germany. Several new measures were introduced in East Germany in 1976 specifically to help women combine family and work responsibilities: one year's paid leave—and a guaranteed job on return—after the birth of the second child (extended to the first child in 1986); one “household day” per month for women with children; the right to four weeks of paid leave to care for sick children (extended by two weeks for each additional child).

The provision of childcare for working mothers was more extensive in East Germany than in any other country in the world. In large cities, almost 100 percent of parents needing childcare for infants and preschool children could obtain it at no cost, and 82 percent needing afterschool care for school children could find it (Jaeckel, 1990, pp. 18–19). Children, in other words, were not permitted to stand in the way of women's ability to work in East Germany. These provisions were especially important in light of the fact that almost 20 percent of mothers were single parents. A further factor to keep in mind when assessing the benefits provided to working mothers is that running a household under the conditions of the socialist economy was an extremely time-consuming and difficult task, since goods and services were hard to come by. The case of East Germany shows that the provision of childcare is but one—albeit a key one—of the factors needed to enable people to balance home and work responsibilities.

West Germany

The difficulties involved in combining a career with a family have received a great deal of public attention in West Germany. Although the provision of childcare by the state and by some employers is more extensive in West Germany than in the United States, it is still by no means sufficient. Only 2 percent of infants born in West Germany can find a place in a crèche, so women have to make informal arrangements, often with relatives. Some 78 percent of three- to six-year-olds can be placed in nursery schools, although there are significant regional variations hidden in this figure. Probably the most problematic factor for women at work in Germany are the school hours: unlike schools in the United States and most other European countries, most primary schools in West Germany are open only four to five hours in the morning, and hours can vary

from day to day, making it very difficult for women to work full-time. Only 4 percent of six- to ten-year-old children needing afterschool care are provided for in Germany (Jaeckel, 1990, p. 18; Commission of the European Communities, 1990, p. 15).

Since the negative birth rate gave rise to demographic concerns in West Germany (as indeed in East Germany as well), the past few years have seen the introduction of increasingly generous provisions to encourage women to have children. Beyond the fourteen-week paid maternity leave (six weeks before and eight weeks after the birth of a child), parental leave was introduced in 1986, and it currently allows either parent to take an eighteen-month leave. During this period, the parent is entitled to a state-paid allowance that is calculated according to income. Some 97 percent of those eligible have taken the parental leave—but in 98.5 percent of the cases it was the mother, not the father, who took the leave; and of the fathers who did take it, 70 percent had been unemployed prior to doing so (Commission of the European Communities, 1990, p. 14). There are plans to extend the leave to two years and eventually three years, “reflecting a widespread view that children should be in full-time parental care up to age 3” (Commission of the European Communities, 1990, p. 14).

It is this attitude to the role of the other in raising children that represents one of the most significant barriers to equal opportunity in management careers in West Germany. As long as mothers, fathers, and employers continue to share this assumption about the conditions for the healthy growth of small children, it will be extremely difficult for women of childbearing age to have equal access to career opportunities. West Germany is still a long way off from realizing the hope expressed by the President of the German Employers' Association, Klaus Murmann, that “when [men] take their father role to be as important as their work, the world of work will change” (quoted in *Capital*, 1989, p. 262, our translation). Such a change in attitude to fatherhood would mean a change in the distribution of the family responsibilities between men and women, and would most probably lead to a change in the way paid work is organized and scheduled. Both kinds of changes would make it easier for women to pursue management careers.

Corporate policies and programs in West Germany

With this framework of labor legislation and social policies in mind, what are companies doing about the issue of women in management? Companies in West Germany are in a quandary. On the one hand, business leaders such as the late Heinz Nixdorf are concerned that “the increased participation of women in the labor force has meant that tens of thousands of children are not born each year” (quoted in *Capital*, 1989, p. 262, our translation). As the business magazine pointed out, this implies a deficit of future consumers, employees, and supporters

of pension plans (*Capital*, 1989, p. 262). On the other hand, companies are experiencing an immediate deficit of skilled workers, and recognize that they cannot afford to waste the potential that women represent today. A top manager at Esso in Germany admitted that “we can no longer afford to have competent women leave the company only because they cannot combine their careers and their family” (Alexander Geck, quoted in Weimer, 1991, p. 73, our translation). These combined concerns—together with a substantial amount of pressure through the media and political channels—has led companies to introduce policies to identify, develop, and keep qualified women, particularly those with management potential.

One of the approaches taken in German companies has been the introduction of voluntary equal opportunities programs. In 1984, the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family and Health requested one of the authors of this chapter to develop guidelines for companies interested in recruiting, developing, and promoting more women (Krebsbach-Gnath and Schmid-Jörg, 1985), and the resulting booklet has been widely distributed in the German business community. Other bodies, such as employers’ associations have since developed similar tools (e.g., Busch et al., 1990). Although they are still but a minority, a growing number of companies have been nominating a person or group responsible for equal opportunities. However, in many cases, these offices still do not have the necessary staff support and political backing in the organization to make significant changes. Studies that seriously assess the extent and impact of these policy instruments and agents remain to be conducted.

A second but more recent development is the conclusion of company-level agreements between employers with the workers’ representatives on parental leave and returner schemes. The purpose of these schemes is to allow employees to take a longer leave than that granted by law, and to attract the employee back by guaranteeing an equivalent job on her or his return. Most of the major West German corporations have not only extended the parental leave (e.g., to seven years for the first child, with the possibility of an additional three years after the birth of more children), but they have added provisions for the parent to keep in touch with colleagues and changes at the workplace through seminars and holiday work.

These agreements appear very progressive at first glance, but they are already being looked at sceptically since it is unclear whether women—who are the overwhelming majority of applicants to date—will really be able to return to comparable jobs (e.g., Biallo, 1990). More significantly, such schemes will prove to be a mixed blessing if men do not take the leave, thereby making recruiting women appear to be an even greater “risk” for a department, because the parental leave is so much longer than the maternity leave. The existence of these agreements may hinder experiments with other programs and organizational changes that would do more to facilitate combining work and childrearing, if management then feels that it has done enough to help women balance work and children by “giving them leave not to work.”

Outlook

Drawing on a comparison of the experiences and achievements in the two Germanies, what might the future of women in management look like in the united Germany by the end of the decade?

Can we count on economic demand?

The greatest promoter of women throughout the economy is very simple: economic need. When organizations are desperate for labor, they definitely hire women, and it appears that when the deficit is in the management ranks, they hire women for those jobs too. But economic need is not a stable thing, and the history in the market economy of West Germany shows that the unemployment of women rises disproportionately during economic downturns.

In terms of need for labor, the situation in reunited Germany is very unbalanced at this point: the "East German" labor force is suffering from exceptionally high unemployment levels, estimated to have reached almost 50 percent of the labor force by the end of 1991. East German women represent over 60 percent of the unemployed, and anecdotal evidence indicates that women who held management positions in East Germany were laid off faster than their male colleagues. On the other hand, unemployment is dropping in West Germany and there is a great concern about the estimated deficit of 50,000 people with management potential that is predicted to grow to 550,000 by the end of the century (Prognos AG, 1985, 1989).

What are the implications of the labor market situation for East and West German women managers? For slightly different reasons, the outlook does not appear to be good for either, if policy is based only on a perception of "urgent need for labor." The concern about the projected deficit of managers in West Germany that was identified in the second half of the 1980s was one of the most important factors that led companies to reassess their recruitment and personnel development policies in order to try to attract and keep qualified women. But will this momentum be maintained in reunited Germany? The high level of unemployment among men in East Germany is certain to have an impact on the perception on the part of companies of the need for women managers. It is not unlikely that the "demographic shift" afforded by the opening of the Wall in the form of the expansion of the pool of men to draw on make the specter of unfilled management positions fade and drain away the sense of urgency that had stimulated the search for women by West German companies.

There are various projections for how long it will take to revive the economy in the former East Germany, but most expect that by the end of the century a

significant turnaround will have been achieved. Does this mean that East German women will automatically regain their positions on the labor market? It is very unlikely, because reentering the labor market after a period of unemployment will be difficult, in light of the extensive reskilling needed to adapt to the needs and standards of western industrialized companies. The East Germans who do not move into training and employment now risk not being able to catch up later. Since the socialist planned economy made reentry so automatic, it is difficult for workers in that system to realize how high the cost of not fighting for a job in this system now might well be. Considering how central a part of their identity paid work has been for East German women, it is not likely that many are choosing to leave the labor market willingly. Rather, the well-established mechanisms whereby men tend to hire, keep, and promote other men appear to be functioning effectively in this period of transition.

The need for legislation

In both Germanies, the existence of a constitutional right to equal opportunity has not sufficed for that right to be achieved, particularly when it is applied to access to power and resources in the form of management responsibilities. As the president of the German *Bundestag*, Rita Süßmuth pointed out: "A glance at history documents that women have never received their rights voluntarily, they have always had to fight to claim them." She added: "This is still true, and for this reason women should and must continue to fight for the necessary changes in our societal structures, because when we stop fighting, we cannot move anything any more" (Süßmuth, 1989, our translation). This is especially true about getting men to share power.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the transition to a reunited Germany has been the rapidity with which the legislated achievements of East Germany have been dissolved⁸ and the ease with which equal opportunity practices that have become established in West German organizations have been overlooked by managers sent to operate in East Germany. In the turbulence of transforming East German companies to the market economy and of adapting the public administration to the West German system, personnel decisions have been made without applying the advertising or consultation procedures that have become standard operating procedure in West Germany. The mandatory government guidelines for equal opportunities in the public administrations discussed above have not been enforced in the process of reorganizing East German administrations. As a result, there has been a significant gender bias in the decisions to keep, fire, or recruit staff in both the public and private sectors, and that bias will have long-ranging consequences.

Clearly, stronger legislation must be fought for if change is to be achieved and a significantly higher number of women are to be found in management in

Germany by the end of the century. Organizations and individual managers must be required to set reasonable targets in this area just as they do for other management tasks, and then be held accountable for achieving these goals. Serious consequences need to follow if women are not adequately represented in management functions and in the training programs and seminars considered essential for career development.

Infrastructure and underlying values

The review of the experiences of women in management in East and West Germany in the past decades and the past months shows that neither great economic need nor legislation alone can guarantee that women will gain access to significant numbers of positions of authority in the economic, political, and societal systems. International comparative studies of the situation of women in management also lead to the same conclusion (see, for example, Berthoin Antal and Izraeli, 1993). What more needs to be taken into consideration?

The provision of childcare is an essential but not sufficient precondition for managing the dual responsibilities of children and a career. Although the East German state introduced far-ranging childcare provisions to enable its women to work, it did not do anything to change the structure of work. Nor was there an opportunity for other actors in society to question the basic assumptions about the roles of women and men in the home and in childrearing. In both Germanies, jobs, particularly those leading to and in management, are tailored to the person (generally a man) who can devote almost unlimited time to the work, leaving other responsibilities for life in the hands of another (usually a woman). In both Germanies, women have traditionally carried—and continue to carry—the major responsibility for housekeeping and childcare. Time-budget studies indicate that in both systems women spend significantly more hours at these tasks than did their partners (e.g., Winkler, 1990, p. 127–129).

Parallel to seeking legislation and ensuring its implementation, much more attention will have to be paid in the upcoming years to developing numerous flanking measures designed to change organizations from the inside: new forms of structuring and distributing work are needed in organizations providing paid employment as well as in the organizational type called “household/family.”

A glimmer of hope: A new constellation of forces for change

There is reason to hope that change can be achieved through the combined energy of a constellation of forces in Germany at the outset of the decade. First, a source of energy for the struggles to come will probably be found in the women of former East Germany. The things that they had come to see as their birth-

right—such as the right to work and the right to childcare—are being swept away during the transition to a united Germany. If they can link forces with women in West Germany who have already learned the hard way to fight for their rights, the combined energy could achieve the changes needed in society. Active networking of women in management in East and West is already underway in such organizations as EWMD, the European Women's Management Development Network.

A second factor that might well add fuel to this process is the rapprochement currently occurring between women seeking change from within the "establishment" and those from the fringes. The issue of women in management received no attention at the outset from feminist scholars, and women in management were simply rejected out of hand by most members of the critical women's movement in West Germany during the 1970s. Similarly, few women in management had any interest in the women's movement. Since the mid-1980s, however, there is increasing recognition on the part of all concerned that they have more in common than meets the eye, and attempts to learn from one another are being launched in seminars and through the literature.

A third source of pressure on organizations to change may well be men. Although, unfortunately, international comparative surveys indicate that men's attitudes to the childrearing role of women is particularly conservative in Germany (e.g., Commission of the European Communities, 1987), other attitudinal surveys show that a small but growing number of men are looking more critically at the traditional German work ethic and seeking more meaningful activities, both at work and in their leisure time (e.g., von Klipstein and Strümpel, 1985). It is to be hoped that more male managers will follow in the footsteps of the few pioneers who are choosing to work part-time, or take parental leave and thereby break the stereotypical molds of successful managerial careers.

A final factor promoting change in management decisions on personnel and organization policies may be found in the increasing debate about the need for "new management styles and structures." Project management as a flexible and nonhierarchical structure, and cooperative and holistic management styles are receiving increasing attention in the popular management literature and corporate seminars.⁹ In an experimental atmosphere where companies are open to a variety of new ideas, recruiting and promoting women in management in Germany may not appear to be such a crazy idea after all.

Notes

1. We will use the terms "East" and "West" Germany in this text, although the political terms applicable until 1990 were "German Democratic Republic" and "Federal Republic of Germany" respectively, and since unification the former territory of East Germany is referred to as "the new federal states."

2. It is important to note that all such statistical data are of questionable value since

there is no explicit definition of "manager" on which to base surveys in Germany. Respondents and analysts apply their own definitions, thereby essentially precluding verification, comparisons between companies, and longitudinal analysis.

3. German corporations have a two-tiered board structure: the management board and the supervisory board above it.

4. Although in West Germany this refers to part-time work, this was not an option for women in East Germany. They did, however, tend to work significantly less overtime than their male colleagues, and therefore did not receive bonuses (Winkler, 1990, p. 92).

5. As critics point out, the "women's policy" of the former East German regime was essentially limited to "family policy" (Merkel, 1990, p. 60). For this reason, this section does not provide a comparison between policies in East and West as in the other sections of this paper.

6. The resistance to applying quotas to the recruitment and promotion of women until the current imbalance is corrected is interesting to observe in a system that allows for both explicit quotas for other groupings (e.g., party affiliation, labor representation) and for "hidden" quotas that tend to favor men in a range of occupations and hierarchical levels.

7. There is no gender-neutral term for "manager" or "supervisor" in German: the commonly used form (reflecting reality) is masculine, and adding the feminine ending must be a conscious decision (e.g., *Leiter/Leiterin; Meister/Meisterin*).

8. The one legislative achievement of East Germany that received special attention was the abortion law, which is much more flexible in East Germany than in West Germany. For a transition period, this is the only law that was permitted to remain different between the two parts of reunited Germany.

9. One of the elements that is raised in this discussion in Germany as well as in other countries is the potential match between "feminine leadership" qualities and the features needed for management in the future. As attractive as this argument may appear at first, it contains the seeds of further stereotyping. Significantly more research would need to be done before solid arguments can be presented on this matter. Existing research is of limited use since it has been conducted almost exclusively in the United States, either in laboratory-like settings or in large male-dominated organizations. Insights from experiences in other countries and in women-only or women-dominated organizations are needed for this discussion.

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