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Magazine for a sustainable economy

Topic

S / H E

It's All About Equality
Toothpaste for Princesses and Soup for Pirates
Resource-lighter Shopping
Widows and Orphans Stay Behind
Men Have Not Stopped Giving the Advantage to Women – Yet!
Change of Perspective: New Models of Prosperity, Livelihood and the Good Life
Women's Economy
How Does One Bring About an Unselfish Social Movement?
More Life with Less Work



The Small Difference

When dealing with gender relations, one finds that the plethora of institutions and projects that focus on this topic is astonishing. Even divorced from stereotypic images, their research and findings point in the same direction. The gender diversity of people working together, which has found its way into the German language in the form of the English word ‚diversity‘, raises the level of acceptance of difference, increases people’s creativity and performance and consequently that of their organisations and companies. One could assume that, in an economy built for efficiency and optimisation, these effects would be taken advantage of with pleasure. Certain major companies have already started to do so.

In particular, transformation projects towards more equality, climate protection and sustainability could profit from this. In practice, however, we notice only a few exceptions despite all of the insights achieved so far. Gender relations are chiselled in stone in many places; inequality and unfairness are hardly developing in a positive direction; and structures and stereo- ►



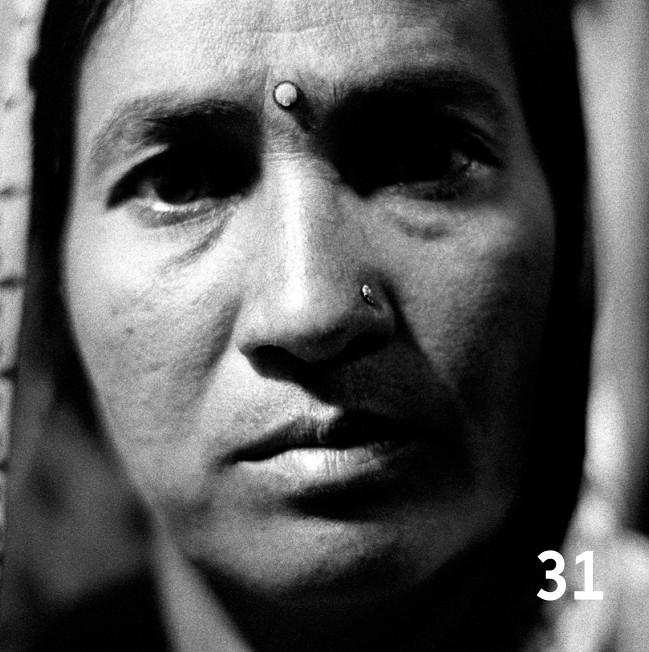
types persist. The key topic of ensuring the fair division of care of children, the sick or the elderly between the genders continues to be unsolved politically and practically, even though sustainable development would require a major leap forward in this domain.

To steer attention towards the possibilities for achieving greater sustainability through greater gender justice, we have collected a number of findings, phenomena and positions in this magazine: from an introductory interview on gender and sustainability to articles on toothpaste for princesses and resource-light consumption, down to a photo report on cotton producers in India; and from standpoints regarding careerists and changes of perspective to reports on women's economies and female pioneers down to demanding more life through less work. In order to prevent this volume from getting lost amongst the countless publications on this topic, we have chosen a special title for this issue: S/he. We wish you pleasant reading.

Ralf Bindel and the factory team

Translated from the German by Christoph Ulbert, Chantal Grube and Ina Besler





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»Gender mainstreaming means considering the different life situations and interests of women and men persistently from the outset and in all social endeavours as there is no gender-neutral reality.

With the Treaty of Amsterdam that went into effect on 1 May 1999, gender mainstreaming was defined as a binding mission throughout the EU for the first time. Articles 2 and 3 of the treaty oblige every member state to implement an active gender-equality policy in accordance with the gender mainstreaming approach (the anti-discrimination act of Germany called the Antidiskriminierungsgesetz).“

Federal Agency for Civic Education,
<http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/lexika/recht-a-z/22249/gendermainstreaming>

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The at-risk-of-poverty rate in Germany has been rising since 2008, increasing faster amongst women than men. In 2012, the rate was at around 17.2 percent for women (for men: 14.9 percent). In 2011, 38.8 percent of all individuals living in single-parent households were at risk of poverty. The poverty risk is also noticeably high for individuals who live alone. Out of the population of single people below the age of 65, a considerably high proportion of more than one third of them (36.1 percent) were at risk of poverty during the income reference year of 2010; in 2011, the income of nearly one in four people within the age group of 65 and over living in single-person households was below the threshold value (24.7 percent / in 2010: 24.1 percent). By contrast, only 7.7 percent of all people living in households consisting of two parents and two children were at risk of poverty. The Federal Agency for Civic Education, Ausgewählte Armutsgefährdungsquoten (selected at-risk-of-poverty rates), 29 January 2014

22.2

There is hardly any other European country with such a high gender pay gap as Germany. Here, women earn on average 22.2 percent less than their male colleagues. The OECD average is at 15 percent. For the exact same work, a female dental technician earns 31 percent less and a female cook earns 20 percent less while a female lawyer earns 9 percent less and a female software engineer earns 2 percent less than a man in the same position. OECD 2014, IG Metall (trade union) Forsa study.

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Compared to overall employment, women are noticeably over-represented in the health care professions. While the number of women within the overall workforce amounts to 46 percent and is therefore below the share of the population of women (51 percent), in the health care professions there are almost five female employees for each male employee. Less than one percent of all medical assistants are men, while the number is 14 percent amongst male nurses, and just over 50 percent amongst physicians. The number of female physicians has risen by 52 percent within the past ten years. The Federal Employment Agency, Arbeitsmarktbericht Gesundheits- und Pflegeberufe 2011/12 (the labour market report on health care professions 2011/12).

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Young adult men are still living in their parents' household much more often than women of the same age. In 2012, 37 per cent of the male population at the age of 25 still lived at 'Hotel Mum'. 13 per cent of 30-year-old men and 4 per cent of 40-year-old men were still part of the parental household. Only 21 per cent of young women at the age of 25 still lived with their parents as unmarried children in 2012. At the age of 30 it was only 6 per cent and at the age of 40 only 2 per cent of women were still at home. German Federal Statistical Office, 2013

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During the implementation of the pilot project entitled 'depersonalised application procedures' which was initiated by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, 41 percent of those questioned assumed that their chances of receiving an invitation for an interview would be higher if the application were depersonalised, while 33 percent did not see a difference and 26 percent expected better chances with regular application procedures. Compared to the standard procedure, women as well as applicants with an immigrant background tended to have better chances. Another project of the city of Gothenburg led to similar results. A complete absence of personal information is only common within the English-speaking areas. The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, results of the pilot project Anonymisierte Bewerbungsverfahren, (depersonalised application procedures), 2012

2,5

Among the ten most frequent professions of men between the ages of 27 and 59, teachers came in last (2.5 percent) in 2008, followed by commercial clerks in third place (5.4 percent) and leaders in corporate management or management consultancy (6 percent). Typical male professions do not exist, contrary to female professions. In 2008, 19.3 percent of women were employed in offices as commercial clerks, 9.5 percent in public health service, 7.6 percent in social professions, 7.4 percent as sales staff, 6.4 percent in cleaning and 4.8 percent as teachers. [The Federal Statistical Office, Frauen und Männer in verschiedenen Lebensphasen (women and men at different life stages), 2010]

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77 per cent of the people in Germany are in favour of a law that would oblige companies to pay equal salaries to men and women. Especially women (87 per cent) would welcome such a legal framework; 67 per cent of men are in favour of it. 30 percent of women believe that by no later than 2030 they will receive equal pay for equal work. Innofact survey, finanzen.net, 20 March 2014

94.4

The proportion of full-time working men with underage children amounted to 94.4 percent in 2012, and only 5.6 percent of men worked part-time. In comparison, only 32.8 percent of women with underage children worked full-time whereas two thirds (67.2 percent) worked part-time. Statista, 2014

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Approximately five to ten percent of all men and women in Germany are homosexual. According to current studies, 80 percent of those people have experienced discrimination in their workplace due to their homosexuality. As a result, only 12 percent openly are identifiable as homosexuals in their professional lives. This circumstance has an effect on the working atmosphere: One third of those 'affected' are unhappy with the working atmosphere, which results in psychosomatic illnesses for up to 60 percent of people. Nearly 90 percent of interviewees believe that their work performance would noticeably increase if there were a homosexual-friendly working climate. Researchers at Harvard University found out that the discrimination and disadvantage of homosexual employees adds up to a production loss of 10 percent. Völklinger Kreis, Unternehmenssicht (business report), 2014

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In 2011, private households in Germany spent on average EUR 143 on women's shoes, which is twice as much as on men's shoes (EUR 70). An average of EUR 28 was spent on children's shoes. In 2011, private households bought shoes and shoe accessories with an average value of around EUR 250. People living alone spent on average EUR 144 on shoes; the spending in the amount of EUR 156 on the part of women living alone exceeded the expenditure of EUR 108 by men living alone. Households comprising a couple and one child or more invested EUR 468 in shoe shopping. On average, households with a monthly income of less than EUR 1,300 bought shoes costing EUR 84 in 2011 while households with a monthly net income from EUR 5,000 to EUR 18,000 spent an average of EUR 528 on shoes. (Federal Statistical Office press release, 5 September 2013)

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The number of women in Germany working part-time is significantly higher than the EU average of 32 percent. In 2011, 45 percent of gainfully employed women in Germany between the ages of 15 and 64 were working part-time. Only one country showed higher rates, namely the Netherlands, where 76 percent of women were working part-time. The number of women with reduced working hours due to family reasons was at 55 percent. One fifth of all part-time employees wish to work more, considering that this work serves as the main source of income for two thirds of women. The Federal Statistical Office, 7 March 2013, The Federal Agency for Civic Education, Gleichstellung auf dem Arbeitsmarkt (equality in the labour market).

women's movement, image of women, women-led, proportion of women, young lady, welfare, gender, Gender Empowerment Measure, gender mainstreaming, gender pay gap, gender studies, gender marketing, Gender-related Development Index

feminist economics, feminist philosophy of science, women, female profession,

genital, **gender equality**, construction of gender, gender system, **gender role**, separation of sexes, **gender relations**, sex ratio, equal rights, equality, equalization, self-construction, **intersexuals**, purchasing power of the youth, children, clothing, consumption, **cosmetics**, lesbians, **S/he** power, **girls**, management, diversity, men, male profession, **male**, mother, sustainability, ecofeminism, pink, post-feminism, queer, role behaviour, daughter-in-law, **gays**, sex, sexism, sexuality, sexual, violence, care, **stereotypes**, sufficiency, transformation, transsexuals, **unisex**, father, reconciliation of work and family life, **women's economy**, female, widow, work-life balance

» The effective enforcement of equal rights for men and women is an explicit obligation of the Federal Government

according to the second sentence of Article 3, Subsection 2 of the German Basic Law. It is an essential component of the political action of the Federal Government in all policy areas.“

Federal Ministry of Equality
www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/gleichstellung,did=192702.html

It is about equality

Real sustainability is always connected to gender equality. The energy transition and the transformation to a sustainable society would be more advanced if the gender perspective were taken into more consideration, says Ulrike Röhr, a gender and sustainability expert, in an interview with Ralf Bindel.

Translated from the German
by Dorothea Schwarz



Is gender equality a key element of sustainable economic activity or rather of a sustainable social strategy? Is it a condition of sustainable development?

Both are required. The problem, though, is that only a small percentage of people dealing with sustainability hold the same view. There is no common understanding of sustainability. Therefore, it is important to point out again and again that sustainability is about the different aspects of justice and gender equality plays an essential role in this respect. After the UN conference in Rio, when the term was booming, the understanding of sustainability was much broader than it is today. It seems to me that ever since then, it has become ever narrower. What also arises from this very limited understanding is the fact that the Green Economy is nowadays seen as the main strategy of sustainability.

Obviously, this broad and therefore also gender-equitable understanding hasn't established itself. Does gender play a role in the sustainability

strategy of the German government. For example, does the Sustainability Council focus on gender?

The council completely ignores this issue. The first sustainability strategy was developed by the first socialist/ environmentalist coalition government. Together with the working group 'Women in the German NGO Forum on Environment and Development' as well as with genanet (Focal Point Gender Environment Sustainability of LIFE e.V.) we had already worked out some key points in advance, for example: what does the strategy mean from the gender perspective, how is it integrated, and who should be involved? We also had some suggestions for the composition of the Sustainability Council, but we couldn't get them adopted. None of those points appear in the strategy. Nevertheless, we weren't disheartened and for the first progress report we worked out proposals and positions on each issue – but again not a trace of that could be found in the published report.

What had happened?

One reason for this was surely that the strategy wasn't based in the Ministry of Economy – where the gender perspective found great support back then – but in the Federal Chancellor's Office. As so often happens, gender as a basis for negotiation got lost in the coordination process with all ministries.

So gender equality doesn't play a role in the German sustainability strategy?

It does, but only to a limited extent as an equal opportunity measure, for which the gender pay gap is the only indicator used. The actual mainstreaming of gender aspects into the terms of the strategy didn't take place. It is surprising for this reason alone because just at that time, gender mainstreaming was implemented in all German government ministries. The discrepancy now becomes evident in the strategy through a technical-technocratic view, through the fixation on growth, technologies, and through a strong focus on and dominance of quantified data. What is quantifiable takes place, what is qualifi- ►



able and isn't easily measurable doesn't appear in the sustainability strategy. Since there is no other indicator for gender than the gender pay gap, gender is practically no longer represented in the strategy, even though there would be enough opportunities to collect even qualitative data and incorporate them.

It is often said that the female perspective could sustainably change conditions.

The female perspective ... I would rather not use this expression at all. There is always a risk of arguing with stereotypes, even when it comes to gender concepts: women are like this, men are like that. And it gets really precarious when one talks about the female perspective, because one quickly ends up mentioning that "women are kind and provide for the future, men are willing to take risks and are technologically oriented". Those stereotypes are nothing but traditional role attributions which run the risk of being carved in stone.

Where does this become apparent?

We can see this, for example, in the climate negotiations. It took years to draw attention to the gender perspective. These days it is considered absolutely necessary to be included. Upon closer inspection, however, it is hardly ever about gender or rather gender relations but almost exclusively about women; either the poor women who are suffering particularly from climate change or the women as agents of change. If we support women because they are caring people as well as because they provide for the future, and we then bring them into negotiations and delegations so that they fulfil precisely this attributed role, there is a great danger that existing gender relations will be consolidated. Instead, the objective must be that all genders care as well as provide for the future and do not only rely on markets and technology. Often there are still major misunderstandings.

What kind of advantages does a gender perspective have within a sustainability strategy?

Ultimately, a broad view always has advantages. When gender mainstreaming (giving consideration to the different life situations and interests of women and men in any decision-making processes) was strategically implemented, even in politics, it has always been an argument that with gender we quickly achieve diversity.

We therefore cannot only look at women and men as entire groups, but we must have a look at the poor women and men, at young or elder women and men, the more and the less educated, women and men with an immigrant background and so on. This always provides us with a broader view of sustainable development. Besides, it has the advantage of working on a development or a strategy that aims to take care of everyone involved.

How does an entrepreneur benefit from including the gender perspective in his company's sustainability strategy?

Many companies do so already. They just do not call it a gender perspective. However, many enterprises work on topics such as ecological sustainability on the one hand and on work-life balance, family-friendliness or women in executive positions on the other hand. Many enterprises are well advanced in this field, including of course the global players because for them, gender and diversity are a must. Unfortunately, Germany is also lagging behind here. Smaller companies still have considerably more problems with gender since they simply have less capacity – nevertheless, there are some good examples.

Are work-life balance workshops, family-friendliness and women executives enough to achieve gender equality?

Transformation can only be achieved by integrating care work into sustainability and Green Economy debates. Family-friendliness is not enough

as long as its target group only consists of women. It is about a redistribution of socially necessary work. We all have to assume childcare, geriatric care and nursing, so that there will be a fundamental change. We cannot achieve gender equality if we claim that women are responsible for everything that has to do with care.

Why is it so important that men also take over care work?

Here, perspectives have changed. Ten years ago already, a survey conducted by the Federal Environmental Agency on environmental consciousness showed that fathers of young children are as environmentally aware as women are. This indicates that a greater awareness of care and the environment does not depend on one's gender but on who cares for future generations. Once the feeling of responsibility arises, it is reflected in other areas as well. In my opinion, this is also one of our problems: our politics and economics are determined by men or even women who

are far away from personal care for others and thus, who are missing this perspective.

Among the entrepreneurial personalities who comment on sustainable management, the care economy does not play a role. It is not even an issue in the academic domain.

This is something we despair of, but that we also continue to take a stand on. In this case, it does not matter whether we are talking about women or men because it is about people with a rigid system of values and standards that has been developed for centuries and that is still being used. Values and standards are always defined from the same perspective, which is not one that focuses on care for humans and the environment but on efficiency and on faster, bigger, higher, further – thus, on growth.

Could a larger number of women change anything in institutions?

The problem is that women adapt to this mainstream before they come into power: everything that differs from the prevalent standards is watered down – with some exceptions that withstand this process. This is why women in executive positions act the same as men.



Does this mean that we do not need a quota for women but for care work?

A possible requirement would be that in order to achieve an executive position, all women and men should be able to demonstrate that they have completed two years of childcare. As already mentioned, this opens up the perspective. Moreover, absence from the workplace due to care work would also be natural for men and hence, women would no longer be considered an element of uncertainty in the company. In addition, there is a lack of new ideas about how companies can be supported to that end.

What needs to be changed?

At present, the regulation is the following: the employer does not pay when the employee misses work because his or her child is ill; that is the responsibility of the health insurance company. However, women have to be deregistered from the social insurance system, they get sick benefits during the period in question and afterwards, and they have to register again. This is an enormous administrative burden. Nor-

mally, children are not ill for four weeks at a time but rather for two or three days or maybe a week. This is not worth the trouble. It is absurd that there is an instrument that is so technocratic and laborious that it is not used. Real welfare policy is something else.

How would this kind of energy transition look if more women actually had an effect on it? Currently, it is primarily shaped by men.

This is actually rather complicated and I won't be able to explain it in just a few sentences. I find the recurring demand for more women quite problematic. In my opinion, men are just as able to change and can therefore learn to deal differently with the energy transition. Assuming that women were in such a majority that they would be able to make demands, I would hope that this change of energy would become less technical. It disregards lifestyle changes, which include the reduction of energy consumption. Whether women would then take a different path is mainly conjecture. I would always hope

that the dominance of the industrial lobby would then be less prevalent. The energy transition is clearly characterised by enforcing the demands of the major energy suppliers and the industry, as you can see from the exceptions of the EEG reallocation charge at the expense of private households and small enterprises. I would have hoped that women would focus more on justice and would also devise new concepts. Or that they would focus less on large-scale plants such as Offshore-Windkraft (offshore wind park) with its associated problems, including new north-south power lines. This technocratic megalomania is also reflected in the energy transition. My hope would be that a gender-sensitive approach and an increase of women in higher positions would change these circumstances. ►

Do you think a quota for these kinds of transformation processes and its institutions would create greater gender sensitivity analogous to the proportion of women at the top?

Those are two very different things. The quota is a matter of justice and is therefore justified. However, I do not automatically expect gender sensitivity to result from this quota. This will take more. It would be important to demand that each entrepreneurial or academic project take the gender perspective into account. This would be the right step into a gender-neutral transformation.

So, do you support a quota of women, for example, on the supervisory boards of the German companies listed in the DAX index?

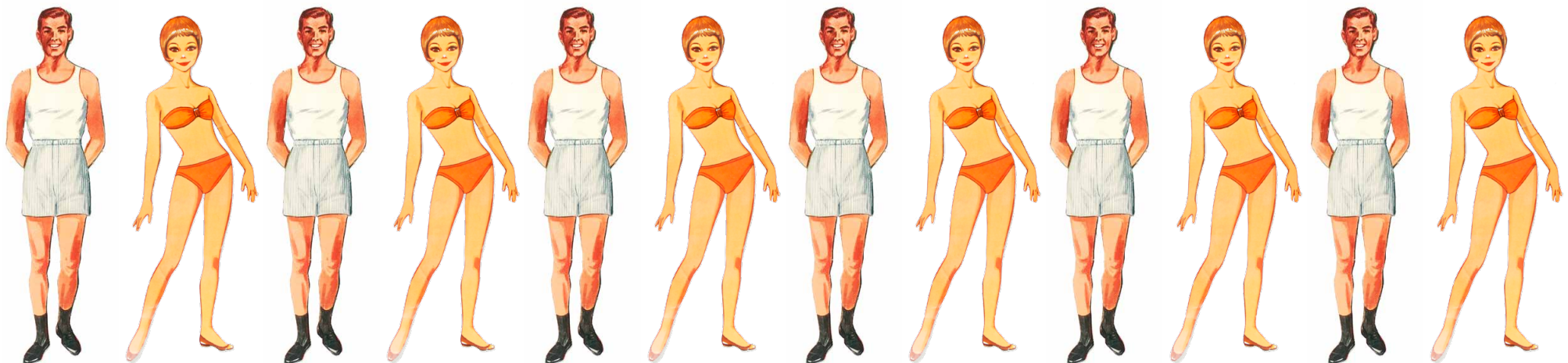
Like I said, this quota is important in terms of justice but not in terms of gender sensitivity. When the time comes, we can still wait and observe whether things change when there are more women represented in these enterprises. However, even if things do not change, it is only fair that 50 percent of employees are women.

It is quite possible that somebody will address the supply aspect.

This is certainly a long-term process. We have seen how people react if 30 percent of women are established in a company and the results do not improve. People immediately start complaining and arguing that it does not make any difference. They do not allow time for changes, which are sometimes not noticeable until two generations later. It is indeed difficult to find the patience.

Ulrike Röhr, civil engineer and graduate sociologist, is the cofounder of LIFE registered association – education, environment, equal opportunities. She manages the central office of the gender, environment and sustainability department.

Images © Jörg Bohn, www.wirtschaftswundermuseum.de



»The working man's
circumstances are impeded
by a so-called collective
schizophrenia.

Due to their enormous workload, men are unable to maintain a balance between professional and domestic life. We need part-time employment schemes, which men are legally entitled to and which will be advocated by all employers.“

Martin Rosowski, chairman of the Bundesforum Männer (German national forum for men) on the occasion of Equal Pay Day 2014
<http://www.bundesforum-maenner.de/2014/03/maenner-heute-wir-sind-mehr-als-unsere-arbeit/>

Toothpaste for Princesses and Soup for Pirates

Toy industries and food and clothing sectors specifically address children with gender-specific colours and contents. So-called gender-marketing strongly boosts consumption and often forces parents to involuntarily buy products which they themselves do not really like.

By Astrid Herbold

Translated from the German by Marina Nikic, Katharina Lopes Duarte



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If it were up to my five-year-old son, everything we buy would be covered in logos. We would have a Capt'n Sharky lunch box, a Star Wars drinking bottle and Spider Man bed sheets. His yoghurt is already decorated with Vicky the Viking, his sandals have dinosaur teeth and he has Cars-themed slippers. His friends in kindergarten are the same: merchandising products have a huge impact on children. Everyone wants them and everyone has the same. Shopping with your children always ends in an argument. Children consistently choose the 'branded' products and specifically those which appeal to their gender. As you may know, our sons and daughters live in two different worlds. Three-year-olds are already aware of which products are intended for them. Red stripes on shoes mean: ugh, girls stuff! A blue backpack: yuck, that's for boys! Where does this early manifestation of such strict gender stereotypes come from?

The man who has the answer to this question is Axel Dammler, the managing director of the research institute iconkids & youth in Munich. He helps

companies with advertising campaigns that are specifically tailored for children. He has worked with big companies such as Lego, Ferrero and Nestlé. It is therefore no surprise for Dammler that a child who cannot yet read can nevertheless recognise the Star Wars typeface on a chocolate surprise egg at the supermarket: "Just like adults, children react to key signals such as, for example, certain colour codes, but also typography, pictures and symbols."

Children recognise fonts and colour codes

But how does a boy know that he is only supposed to react to 'male' products? Dammler thinks that children acquire this kind of knowledge incidentally, through the things they experience. In the first years of their lives, everything that surrounds children merges into a big picture: the colours and logos on their clothes, the layout of food packaging, the toys in their rooms, the things they see on posters, on television, in catalogues or magazines. The industry uses this process in order to direct atten-

tion to their products. This mechanism works because young children feel a strong need to identify themselves in regard to gender and social position. Dammler sees no reason to worry. In his opinion, this behaviour has biological roots and finding one's own identity starts with a rudimentary differentiation of gender roles.

Stevie Schmiedel gets upset when she hears expressions like 'biological roots'. In 2012, the PhD gender researcher from Hamburg founded the organisation 'Pinkstinks Germany', which fights vehemently against 'limiting' gender roles, as she calls it.



“Children are born and quickly learn that in our society it is of major importance what sex you are and how well you embody that role.” This is why even the youngest of them try to find clues on how they can belong. From a capitalist point of view, Schmiedel can understand why the industry ‘genders’ products in order to raise profits but from an emancipatory standpoint, she finds it very worrisome: “There are two versions of everything. There are crisps for him and her; there is instant soup for racing drivers or princesses as well as toothpaste for girls and toothpaste for boys.”

Then it's better to buy something new

This pressures families into consumerism. Schmiedel says that everything has to be bought twice, which is very nerve wracking. She explains that this trend has made it to the children's rooms. “Monopoly, Scrabble, Memory, there is no game or toy that doesn't exist in duplicate.” Although many parents are critical towards gender marketing,

children still manage to get their way. “Parents don't want their kids to be bullied,” Schmiedel says. Little sisters rarely inherit the things their big brothers have used before. Parents prefer to buy new things that are gender appropriate. Schmiedel knows that marketing managers are aware of that and work according to the motto: Children need it and they want it – although most of the time, they simply try not to be excluded from their peer group.

Pinkstinks rigorously fights against this subliminal group pressure. Schmiedel and her team are part of a global initiative. Pinkstinks has been active in England for six years. Founders Abi and Emma Moore fight against toymakers whose offers for girls only include makeup sets, toy vacuums and glittery knick-knack. In Australia, the initiative TowardTheStars works towards the deconstruction of female stereotypes in children's rooms.

In the USA, there is a princess-free zone (princessfreezone.com). The heroine of the website is called Super Tool Lula and is the female equivalent to Bob the Builder.

The German organisation mainly focuses on publicity. It has repeatedly put several companies in the hot seat and its famous Facebook shitstorms are widely feared today. Recently, Pinkstinks was outraged by push-up bras – for seven-year-olds. In addition, Pinkstinks started a petition against pink chocolate surprise eggs.

Stevie Schmiedel and her team also participated in protests against the opening of the ‘Barbie Dream House’ in Berlin. For them, everything that the Barbie doll and her skinny and goggle-eyed relatives stand for is exactly the opposite of female emancipation. Schmiedel provocatively states that identifying with Princess Lillifee and



Barbie is the first step to accepting a salary that is 22% lower than that of one's future male colleagues.

Protests against bras for children and sexist advertising

Schmiedel is not only worried about gender marketing but also about the general depiction of women in commercials. She thinks that the image of women in our society humiliates and degrades them. She partly blames poster campaigns that have become increasingly obscene. "Twenty years ago, the lingerie pictures that H&M spread all over Germany in 2012 would have been considered pornography. Nowadays it's called eroticism."

Although one can find androgynous beauty ideals on international catwalks, even if loose boyfriend jeans sell extremely well among women at the moment and single designer labels hit the headlines with their stylish unisex collections, Schmiedel thinks that the trend is still mainly going in the other direction. What had started as a sales

pitch for children is slowly affecting more and more adults, too. Schmiedel explains that there are already pink power drills for women as well as pink toolboxes. There is pink beer, pink champagne as well as pink sausage for women because it contains less fat and has a milder taste. Although many clients make fun of all those things, companies still make large profits with those products. It seems in fact that adults also like to buy things with packaging that serves the gender cliché.

Astrid Herbold obtained a doctorate working on the topic of gender metaphors. Today, she is a freelance writer and journalist in Berlin. Herbold, a mother of three, published *M. o. M. – Mütter ohne Mann* (mothers without a partner) in 2006. It was republished as *Wir sind Heldinnen* (we are heroines) in 2012. Astrid Herbold writes regularly for the German newspapers *Tagesspiegel*, *Zeit Online*, *Das Magazin* etc.



»Women under stress could better distinguish between self and other-related mental representations, and therefore, they were able to be more empathic towards other people.

Men, however, showed a behavioural pattern that could rather be explained by a classic fight-or-flight response. Consequently, they behaved more egocentrically and less empathically in stressful situations.“

Psychologists at the University of Vienna examined the effects of stress on the ability to distinguish between self- and other-related mental representations which is a crucial ability for successful social interaction. The press release on the publication can be found in the journal Psychoneuroendocrinology “Is stress affecting our ability to tune into others? Evidence for gender differences in the effects of stress on self-other distinction”. Livia Tomova, Bernadette von Dawans, Markus Heinrichs, Giorgia Silani, Claus Lamm. Psychoneuroendocrinology, 43, 95-104, 2014. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psyneuen.2014.02.006>

Resource-light shopping

Women are an influential target group. Supposedly, they influence 80 per cent of overall consumption. If they chose less resource-intensive products and services, entire markets would perform more sustainably. Is it possible to focus more on the ethical and ecological issues in terms of female consumer choices? Moreover, is eco-friendliness a reason to buy at all?

By Jasmin Andresh

Translated from the German by Margarita Müller



The article *Die Kaufkraft der Frauen* (the purchasing power of women) published in 2011 by the German *Handelsblatt* newspaper, dealt with a recently finished study carried out by Nielsen, the American global information and measurement company, according to which 80 per cent of all consumer choices are made by women. 6,500 female consumers from the Asia-Pacific area, Europe, Latin America, Africa and Northern America participated in the survey on how they buy and who decides on what to buy. “Women have their own money. In addition, they spend the money of others, for example their partners”, says Diana Jaffé, head of an agency for consumer research and business consultancy. Jaffé is an expert for gender marketing, which means advertising that addresses a specific gender as a target group. She even coined this term. After having examined different studies on this topic, she is convinced that the female market is more than twice as large as the Chinese and the Indian markets together. It is hence a more than lucrative target group, also or especially for sustainable products.

Women show their willingness to act sustainably

Surveys conducted across Germany show that women are interested in sustainability and ecology. More than half of the 5000 women surveyed already said in 2007 that sustainable consumption should play a more important role¹. They do not just care about ethical and sustainable issues, but they want to act accordingly. For example in 2011, 48 per cent of women – and only 35 per cent of men – answered in a survey that they often buy ethically acceptable products².

However, do women really consume more sustainably than men do? The statistics indicate the opposite. The exploitation of non-renewable resources is increasing. The so-called Earth Overshoot Day³ is the day on which existing natural resources are already exhausted

1 <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/6451/umfrage/meinungen-von-frauen-zur-rolle-von-nachhaltigemkonsum/>
 2 <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/232215/umfrage/kaufhaeufigkeit-ethisch-korrekt-hergestellterprodukte-nach-geschlecht/>
 3 http://www.footprintnetwork.org/de/index.php/GFN/%20page/earth_overshoot_day/

for the current year and the reproduction capacity of the planet is exceeded. In the past year it was 22 August, ten years before it was 22 September and in 1993 the day on which we slipped into an ecological deficit was on 21 October.

Here is one question: if women are aware of the necessity of a sustainable development, why do they as a consumer majority not “boycott” companies that are harmful to the environment or exploitative?

Professor Ines Weller of the artec Sustainability Research Centre and the Gender Studies Centre of the University of Bremen says. “According to surveys. ►



more women than men are willing to contribute to sustainability. The difference, however, is not that great. What they do in practice then can be something completely different.” The reason for this is that certain answers to survey questions are often expected by society. Women are implicitly expected to be more connected to nature and to take necessary precautions. “When it comes to specific questions, which do not ask about everyday sustainability in general, the outcome changes. The answers turn out to be more differentiated. For example in case of mobility or nutrition”, says Ines Weller. “Compared to men, women are more often intensive buyers of organic products. They use public transport more frequently. On the other hand, more men are familiar with car sharing and are interested in electric cars.”

Are women really powerful consumers?

If you ask people about who in their relationship makes what kind of decisions, you will not necessarily get realistic an-

swers. The scientists Miriam Beblo and Denis Beninger also agree on that fact. Both economists do research on the decision-making behaviour of women and on the specific factors involved in allocating time and financial resources within families. In a recent study for the Hans Böckler Foundation, they evaluated the distribution of money and the proportional spending of couples. For this purpose, they interviewed each partner with indirect methods and finally came to the following conclusion: the one who earns the money makes the decisions. Given that men are the primary breadwinners and working women earn less than men, as a result of the Gender Pay Gap, it is surprising that women supposedly make 80 percent of buying decisions.

If you take a closer look at Nielsen’s Women of Tomorrow⁴ study, you will in fact notice that women have a greater influence on purchasing decisions than men when it comes to groceries, clothing, healthcare and cosmetics as well

⁴ Women of Tomorrow: A Study of Women Around the World by the Nielsen Company <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2011-Reports/Womenof-Tomorrow.pdf>

as –what a surprise– childcare. However, most purchasing decisions are regarded as shared responsibility, without mentioning the internal negotiation processes. In most cases, men decide when it comes to major decisions on cars, electronics or finances. One third of men and women stated that men are better suited to be politicians, to take leadership roles in their professional life (29 percent) and to make big purchasing decisions (22 percent). These results are based on surveys from 21 countries⁵, including those countries where the role of women is not considered to be very emancipated.

Keeping the female target group loyal

The Nielsen study shows especially that women today are generally under considerable stress and that they do not have enough time to relax or to reserve for themselves. The majority of women

⁵ The Nielsen study was conducted in developed countries like the USA, Canada, Great Britain, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Japan, Australia and South Korea; as well as in growth markets like Turkey, Russia, South Africa, Nigeria, China, Thailand, India, Malaysia, Mexico and Brazil. ►

from developed countries indicated that they use their extra money for vacations, clothing and cosmetics, followed by savings and the repayment of debts. On the other hand, the majority of women from developing countries invest any surplus they might manage to save in the education, and thus, in the future of their children. Let's say you want to have an influence on the consumer choices of women, where do you start?



Note: If you want to do business with women, you need to reduce their stress.

Nielsen Vice-President Susan D. Whiting commented on the study results in an interview with the German Handelsblatt newspaper. In her opinion, companies that intend to appeal strongly to the female target group should focus on how their products reduce stress and make life easier.

IKEA is a great example. Author Christiane Frohmann is the marketing manager of a publishing house and wrote a 'Pink Paper'⁶ on how to sell a product to women without treating them like complete fools. Her analysis of the IKEA principles shows that IKEA is a well-known example for excellent service that helps to reduce stress, especially for female customers with children. It was based on the idea that mothers often go shopping with their children without actually enjoying it. Children easily get impatient and whiny, which causes emotional stress for their moth-

ers. The company reduces the mother's stress by offering a variety of activities for their children, for example the free supervised play areas with a ball-pit, more play areas in the restaurant and even some throughout the store. Moreover, they have the possibility to enjoy a quick meal or to eat peacefully. The IKEA stores offer every kind of comfort such as clean public toilets for adults and children, hooks for jackets and handbags, baby changing rooms, free coffee for IKEA FAMILY members, cheap organic meals for kids and much more. Frohmann knows that, thanks to its services, the IKEA stores turn into a social hotspot for mothers with small children where they can meet with their female friends. She stresses that the good feeling for the brand persists beyond this phase. Many companies do not have the same financial and human resources as IKEA does; but every little store with even a tiny budget should at least be equipped with a water dispenser, a good coffee machine, a small and safe play area and clean toilets with baby-changing facilities. These are the ►

⁶ http://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/52585203/Pink%20Paper_iStockphoto.pdf

main requirements for female clients, summarizes Frohmann.

Note: If you want to appeal to female clients, you need to tell a story.

Diana Jaffé, an expert on advertising for women, explains different gender-specific differences in perceptions as women look at products differently. She says that it is necessary to present the goods in context and in an inspiring way. In addition, it is important to show what a product does for a person. Some questions arise: Does it fit into my house or in my handbag, does it go with my style? How can this product be useful to me or to my loved ones (children, family, female friends)? Home improvement stores with interior design sections or IKEA have considered these aspects really well.

Note: Women do not only want beautifully designed products but also useful ones

Research undertaken by the Bosch company has shown that women prefer to buy functional products rather than the supposedly typical feminine ones, at least for everyday shopping. Women do not buy tech products as status symbols but for their practical benefit. Men, on the other hand, desire innovative products and the most modern devices and technology, even when the benefit is not worth on the basis of a cost comparison.

Note: Women need an emotional bond when they buy something

Frohmann is certain that a salesperson who responds insightfully to a female customer, telling her perhaps that he already had a similar problem once, will win a buying friend. Frohmann says that this phenomenon especially concerns the former male consumption domains like the purchase of a home or a car, or

perhaps insurance and investments. As the saying goes, the customer 'is always right'; in reference to women this means that 'female customers always ask good questions.'

Reaching the female audience

According to the Nielsen study, television is the primary source of information about new products for women, with the exception of Spain and Germany, where female customers prefer to be kept informed about novelties by friends. In other countries, 73 percent of the respondents in developed markets



and 82 percent in emerging markets also trust the 'recommendations of friends.'

But be careful: it is not that simple. "Mum is dead", Frohmann states in her brochure. The typical addressee of gender-specific advertising such as 'the mere housewife' and 'mummy' is only one among many lifestyle patterns. According to the authors Michael Silverstein and Kate Sayre from the Boston Consulting Group, various life situations along with different needs have to be taken into consideration.

Silverstein and Sayre distinguish between women of the following types: fast-tracker, family-focused (aptly called the pressure cooker), relationship-focused, with adult children (fulfilled empty nester), managing on her own and making ends meet. Frohmann presents her advice: "In order to sell a mother a mobile phone, the salesperson has to explain to her that with the help of the device she can stay in touch with her children during the day; with the help of a car she can drive stress-free with her children and with the help of a game console her children can learn a foreign language. In order to sell a

phone or a car to a woman without children, advertise it as a stylish accessory."

With all these requirements, is there still enough room for sustainability?

Jaffé thinks that sustainability is not the first thing that women pay attention to when they buy something. It is the same with them as it is with men: old habits die hard. Stress does not make it easier to change such habits. Conscious shopping means being up to date. And this takes time that women do not have. But they love products that promise them many things at once, Frohmann believes. They want to optimise the living environment for others and for themselves by keeping it stress-free and healthy as much as possible. And ideally, they want to achieve this without exploiting people and harming the environment. Then, at last comes the price. This also emerges from the Nielsen study.

Here is Jaffé's advice for manufacturers: "Sustainably manufactured prod-

ucts need to come out of their niche; the ecological aspect can be mentioned, but not in the first place. This should be communicated in a natural manner. Instead, it is better to advertise: this product is cool or sexy. People are ready to spend a lot of money on cool brands. The environmental aspect itself is not a reason to buy. It is possible that an 'eco image' can even scare away some customers." [see the box for best practice examples]

Weller, however, regards the whole debate about the influence of female customers critically. "One needs to consider whether the influence of female and male customers is not being exaggerated and as a result, other influential and mighty players are perhaps being overlooked." In addition, Weller believes that there is the view that the environmental impact of products is decided at the beginning of their development and production. In this respect, consumers do not have any influence on this process at all.

Jasmin Andresh is a biologist and works as a medical and scientific journalist for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, (a Frankfurt daily newspaper) among others. ►

Sustainable women whisperers – best practice

The **Bosch** company is a good example of the advertising and products women wish for. The German electronics company was struggling with being pushed aside by Chinese rivals and so it focused intensively on market research in the 1990s. In doing so, they discovered the group of sporadic do-it-yourselfers that consists to a great extent of women. Especially for them, Bosch developed a small, functional cordless screwdriver without any special features. 12 million IXO screwdrivers were sold during the first year, says Diana Jaffé, the owner of a marketing consultancy company. She adds that roughly half of the buyers were women. Usually, an item sells only 1.5 million times during its life cycle. Today, the IXO is the best-selling electric tool in the world.

Moreover, Bosch is doing something for its image as a sustainable producer. Thus, for example, the Robert Bosch Foundation annually funds a professorship that emphasises the sustainable use of natural resources¹. The award is endowed with EUR 1m over a period of five years for the creation of an independent research group at a German university or a research center.

¹ <http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/content/language1/html/1593.asp>

The company annually publishes a sustainability report², funds studies³ in this field and operates a sustainability blog⁴.

Gender marketing is also an important part of **Unilever's** marketing strategy. The Campaign for Real Beauty launched by Dove, the company's personal care brand, targeted female customers and earned very positive reviews. The campaign focused on regular women of average weight and age who did not correspond to the beauty stereotype commonly promoted in the advertising industry. In a previous survey, the company had discovered that 87 per cent of the female respondents think that the media and the advertising industry are responsible for the unrealistic beauty ideal many women believe in. According to the survey, only five per cent of the women surveyed could identify with common beauty ideals. Many of them, on the contrary, were frustrated by the perfect role models and were asking for more natural women in advertising. By picking up this atti-

² http://www.bosch.com/media/com/sustainability/sustainability_new/downloads/NH_Bericht_2012_DE_10130605.pdf

³ http://www.innovative-nachhaltigkeit.de/htdocs_de/pdf/Robert_Bosch_GmbH.pdf

⁴ <http://sustainabilityblog.bosch.com/>

tude, promoting a healthier self-image and supporting partners in the battle against eating disorders, Unilever succeeded in improving its image. The company also benefitted from the campaign in a different way: Dove's annual turnover increased significantly and the brand took a big step closer to Nivea, the market leader.

Unilever also focuses on sustainability. According to its own statements, the company saves energy during the production process⁵ and tries to reduce its CO₂ emissions. On its website, Unilever promotes a Sustainable Living Plan⁶. With this plan, the company hopes to help more than a billion people to improve their health and physical comfort, halve the ecological footprint of its products and obtain 100 per cent of its agricultural raw materials sustainably by 2020.



⁵ <http://www.unilever.ch/medien/medienmitteilungen/2013/23042013.aspx>

⁶ <http://www.unilever.de/sustainable-living/unseransatz/>

»What the body has learned
is not possessed as a kind of
retrievable knowledge, rather
one is that embodied knowledge.

... What is learned in such a way lies beyond the awareness process and is thus protected from intentional and deliberate transformations; it is even protected from being explicitly mentioned: Nothing seems to be as unpronounceable, inexpressible, indispensable, inimitable and thus as precious as the incorporated, embodied values ...“

Pierre Bourdieu, (* 1 August 1930 in Denguin; † 23 January 2002 in Paris), French sociologist

Quoted from Hegemoniale Männlichkeit und männlicher Habitus (hegemonic masculinity and masculine habitus), discussion paper on Connell and Bourdieu for the third AIM Gender Conference 2004 by Holger Brandes.

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Widows and Orphans Stay Behind

Over the past ten years, 140,000 cotton farmers in the region of Vidarbha in the Indian federal state of Maharashtra have committed suicide. They were no longer able to afford genetically modified seeds. Other types of crops that are adapted to the local conditions were no longer available.

By Isabell Zipfel

Translated from the German by Olympia Klassen



The region of Vidarbha in the federal state of Maharashtra in central India, formerly known for its rich cotton yield, has recently been making negative headlines. The suicide rate among farmers in Vidarbha is higher than anywhere else in India. More than 200,000 cotton farmers in Maharashtra have committed suicide in the past decade, 70 per cent of them in Vidarbha. Falling prices and declining crop yields have been driving the farmers to despair. The suicide rate illustrates the dramatic struggle for survival that the Indian cotton farmers face.

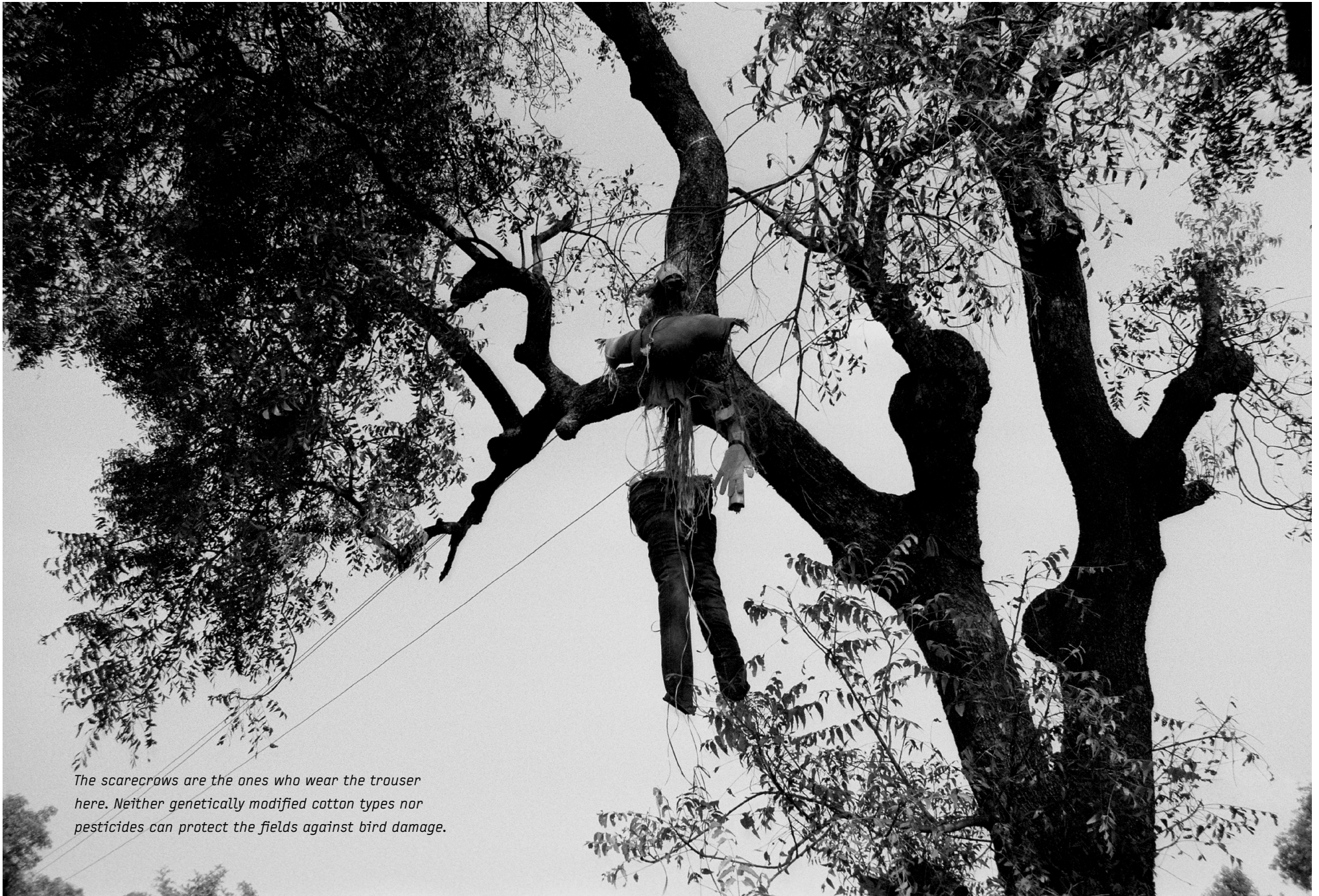
Cotton, formerly called white gold, has become a synonym for dumping and declining prices. Under pressure exerted by the World Trade Organization (WTO), India has permitted the import of cotton since 1998. Since then, the cotton price has declined steadily. Furthermore, the country has withdrawn from the government's procurement system for cotton. Starting in 1970, the Indian state had guaranteed a fixed cotton price independent of the world market. Since 1998, there has been no more regulation, and since 2002, the use of genetically modified bacillus thuringiensis cotton (Bt cotton) has been allowed. Bt cotton seeds, however, are expensive: they cost 1,900 rupees per kilogram, whereas the price for traditional seeds is only 200 rupees per kilogram. ►



In Vidarbha, cotton is a handmade product. The traditional seeds have been used for centuries, are adapted to the local conditions and do not require any irrigation.

Page 31: Soybeans as an alternative. A widow has taken over the cotton farm of her husband. As the cotton yield is too low for her to live on, she also grows soybeans.

Page 32: Lonely widows. The wives of the farmers who have committed suicide out of despair and shame are cast out by their families and often work alone.



The scarecrows are the ones who wear the trouser here. Neither genetically modified cotton types nor pesticides can protect the fields against bird damage.

While the farmers were able to reuse the traditional seed, they have to buy the Bt cottonseed every year anew. Besides, Bt cotton requires greater use of pesticides and fertilisers, which adds to the rise in production costs. They have increased ten-fold while the crop yield is decreasing. There are many reasons for this, but the most important one is the non-existent irrigation system. 90 percent of the fields depend on rain. However, Bt cotton is not suitable for regions that have no artificial irrigation system at all. Moreover, the genetically modified Bt cotton brought new pests that were unknown in India until then, like the mealybug, which destroys entire fields.

Since 2002, the acreage of Bt cotton has been increasing steadily in India. Counting 50,000 hectares at the time, the acreage had already become larger than 12.1 million hectares in 2011. This ranks India among the countries with the largest acreage of Bt cotton – even before China. By now, only Bt cottonseed is available to buy since all of the Indian seed producers were bought up by the US company Monsanto.



This farmer committed suicide in 2005. He drank pesticides in his field.

Page 36: the cotton yield of a widow. Although the region Vidarbha is rich in natural resources such as coal and ores, it is considered to be poor and underdeveloped, but also politically and culturally independent.





*Genetically modified Bt cotton in use. Its DNA contains the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*, causing the plant to produce toxins in its tissues that are harmful to specific insects. The cotton variety, Mallika by Monsanto, has been allowed since 2005.*

It is almost impossible for the farmers to switch to traditional cottonseed. They have to buy Bt cottonseed and pesticides every year. Prices are set by the corporations and the farmers are therefore entirely dependent on seed producers and chemical corporations.

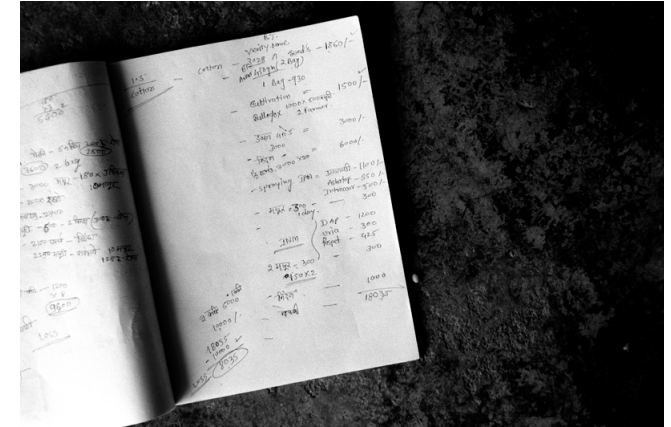
The region of Vidarbha is particularly well suited to the traditional cultivation of cotton with natural irrigation. Without the cultivation of cotton, the entire region would be lost. Meanwhile, many farmers have started cultivating soya beans, but this constitutes only an additional business activity. Many of



The ancient cultivated cotton plant belongs to the mallow family. The cotton fibre is extracted from its bolls. The plant is not a tree but a shrub that grows up to six metres tall.

them seek refuge in India's metropolises to enter service as day labourers or they work for a pittance on the fields that formerly belonged to them. If the cotton farmers continue to make losses, India will not only lose its regionally adapted cotton cultivation but the human tragedy will also continue unchecked.

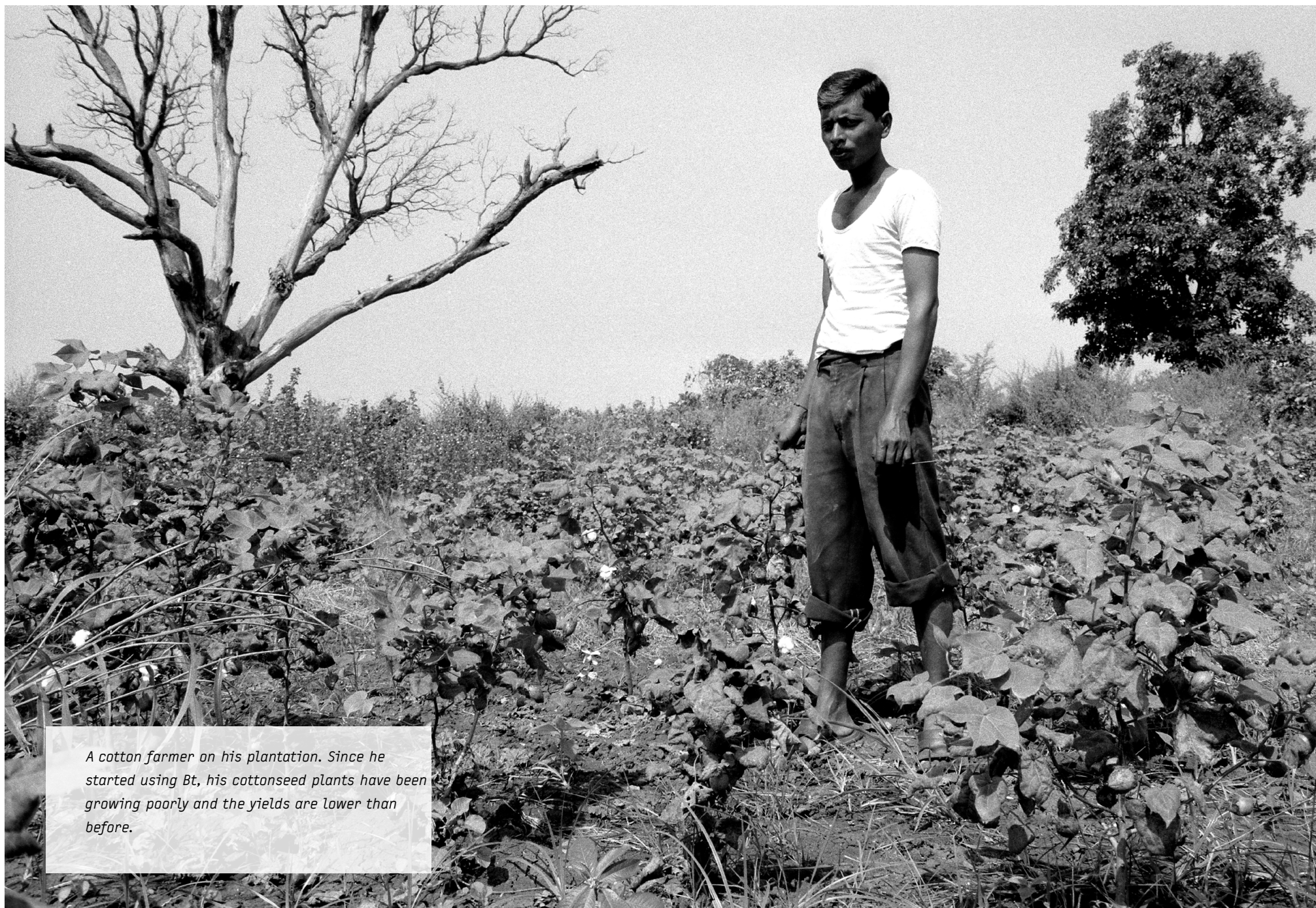
In India, the image of women is very much influenced by patriarchal values. Women are subjugated to men and they have to assume a pre-determined, traditional role as wife, mother and daughter-in-law. They are worthless without a man. In the Indian society



Accounting of a cotton farmer. The cultivation of Bt cotton is considerably more expensive than using traditional seed.

of 1.2 billion people, women are discriminated against both de jure and de facto. The birth of a girl is regarded as a misfortune. Female foetuses are aborted regularly as the birth of a girl is generally seen as little more than a financial burden. Parents have to raise vast sums of money for the girl's dowry since what is most important for a woman is to get married and have children.

The cotton farmers do not tell their wives about their financial difficulties. They simply commit suicide although they are well aware that this will mean the ruin of their wife and children. ►

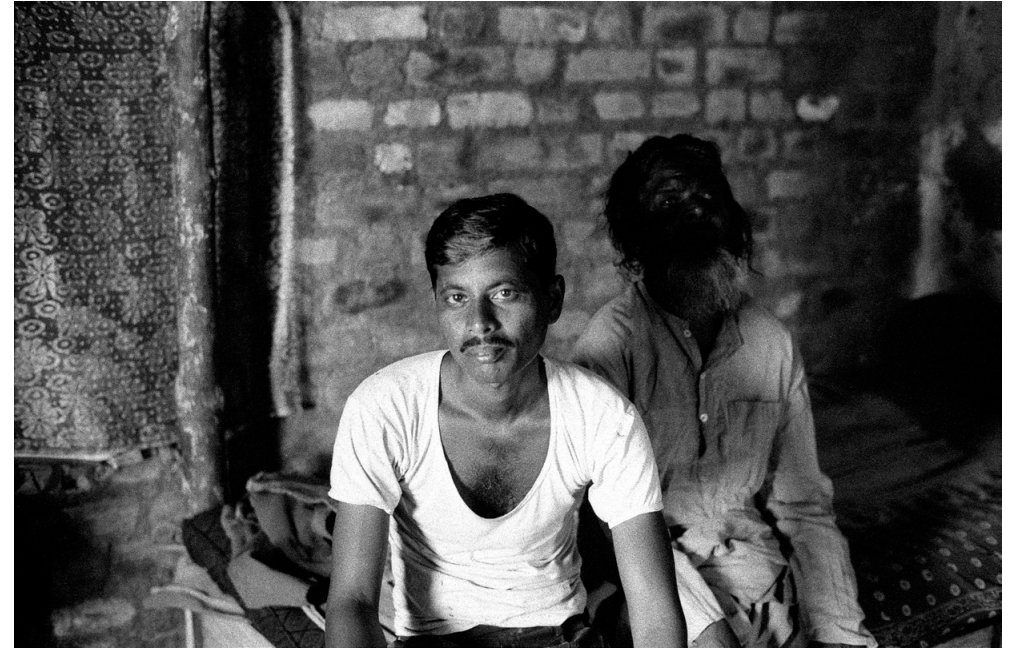


A cotton farmer on his plantation. Since he started using Bt, his cottonseed plants have been growing poorly and the yields are lower than before.



The home of a widow. Kiran and Vanshali are her two children. Kiran works as a cotton farmer and supports his mother.

They also do it out of shame, because they cannot provide for their family, which is traditionally solely the role of men. The role imposed on women makes the tragedy even worse. In the understanding of Hinduism, a woman lives a life of loyal devotion to her husband and she has to protect him. If her husband dies, it will generally be construed as a failure to fulfil her duty. Many women explain that they were therefore abandoned by the family of their husband or also by their own family. The prospects for the bereaved widows and orphans are very poor.



A cotton farmer with his disabled brother. Since they had to stop growing anything except Bt cotton, their situation has become worse.

If they are lucky, their husband's or their own family will support them financially since they do not have their own income. Therefore, local NGOs help them on their way to entering working life.

Isabell Zipfel works as a photographer and lives in Berlin. She has visited cotton farmers as well as the widows and bereaved of deceased cotton farmers and documented their life in the region around Wardha.



»Women are responsible for the care of their family and in countries of the Global South, 80 percent of the women's work in agriculture is done for their own personal needs.

Nevertheless, they are the group that is mostly affected by starvation. Women are underrepresented in political processes and decision-making. As a result, they have few opportunities to demand and enforce their rights.“

Gertrud Falk, representative for gender equality of FIAN Germany, press release on the International Women's Day 2014

Men Have Not Stopped Giving the Advantage to Women – So Far

The rather technically oriented field of environmental management was predominantly a men's business. In contrast, the complex issue of sustainability requires skills that are more commonly associated with women. Therefore more and more female managers are becoming responsible for CSR and sustainability. However, as long as men do not take these issues seriously, women will continue to have few career prospects. If sustainability becomes part of the core business, this could change and women could again be ousted from their positions.

Editorial by Heike Leitschuh

Translated from the German by Chantal Gruber and Bianca Gerards



Looking around at conferences related to CSR and sustainable management, it is obvious that in companies initiating a sustainability strategy, the responsible employees are mostly young and female. The previous, usually male, generation of sustainability managers was responsible for the rather technical field of environmentalism before their tasks were extended to include sustainability. Now this seems to be changing. Consultancies specialised in sustainability and CSR employ conspicuous numbers of women, as do sustainability research groups in companies such as Oekom Research AG. Of the 30 analysts working here, two thirds are female and all new employees in April 2014 were also women.

Women evidently show a high affinity for the issues of sustainable business. The reason for this phenomenon is not yet clear due to the fact that there are no reliable figures or related research. Here are some thoughts on the matter:

The competence profile of sustainability managers ...

Sustainability managers need a number of very different competences to be successful. They move 'between worlds' in almost every department of the company, since these usually present distinct cultures and ways of thinking and acting. The aim is to establish and implement common sustainability strategies. However, sustainability managers have an impact externally and need to foster contacts to stakeholders. This 'sandwich position' between high external expectations and the realistic opportunities within the company is not always convenient. Sustainability managers are most successful when they have or can develop the following abilities:

- To manage complexity, in other words pull many strings and develop a consistent strategy;
- To have empathy for the different constellations of labour conditions, performance requirements and interests of a company thus compile the respective links for the aims of sustainability;

- To have good internal and external communication and cooperation for which empathy, that is the ability to put oneself in somebody's position, is an important although insufficient requirement.

However, the details of sustainability targets can arouse opposition due to conflicting interests in the company. Hence, sustainability managers should be persistent, willing to take risks and certainly not avoid conflict. ►

... especially suits female strengths

Besides the required professional competences concerning how the company does in its core business and besides a certain capacity for enthusiasm and persuasiveness, these are the key properties that apply to sustainability managers. It seems as if quite a few of these, with the exception of the ability to handle conflicts, correspond well to female strengths.

However, this may not be the main reason why an increased number of women are working in the field of CSR and sustainability. If you ask female managers, they come up with another explanation, as does the female manager responsible for CSR in a larger mid-sized enterprise in Bavaria: it is – still – not possible to have a distinguished career in a company in CSR or sustainability, and this is why men have not stopped giving the advantage to women in these fields. This is the unflattering statement. “Men still do not take this issue particularly seriously”, she says. This is particularly true for companies where the management floor does not authentically back this issue but rather work on sustainability, whether they like it or not, because it is demanded by politics, the public, clients or the financial market. ►



However, in companies whose sustainability strategy is actually geared to their core business or who have recognised that sustainability is a question of survival, men dominate the field as in several automobile enterprises and power companies.

The other view

Can women actually make a specific contribution to sustainable management? I believe they can, namely in at least two respects. First of all, women usually have a more holistic view of things. This is extremely helpful as sustainability strategies are very complex and rich in dilemmas. Secondly, women are often less interested in technology than men are. Consequently, they will not primarily seek technical solutions to every problem because the basic

questions of sustainability cannot be solved with technology. Rebound effects will consume any efficiency gains if we do not respond to the challenge of sufficiency. The question 'How much is enough?' is one that requires a social and cultural dialogue. This dialogue does not spare companies.

Hence, companies that are serious about sustainability should also look for good female executives.

Heike Leitschuh is a publicist, book author, presenter and advisor for sustainable development in Frankfurt am Main. Her topics are sustainable development, stakeholder dialogues, lifestyle and the post-growth society. She is also a co-publisher of the Jahrbuch Ökologie (ecology yearbook).



»There is no need for a quota for women but for a gender quota.

As all earlier attempts to raise the proportion of women in governing bodies have failed, the gender quota should make sure that important and pioneering decisions in the economy or in other areas can no longer be made nearly exclusively by men but also by women.“

Andrea Bührmann, Director of the Diversity Research Institute at the University of Göttingen, and a number of students have analysed the biographical portraits of successful men and women in top management positions that appeared in national newspapers and magazines in Germany between 2007 and 2012. The interview Wann die Bezeichnung Businessfrau zum Stigma wird (when does the term business woman become a stigma) was published in Human Resources Manager on 7 March 2014.

<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/document/download/64a0eab0448a953058abe63bccce1ce3.pdf/Wann%20die%20Bezeichnung%20Businessfrau%20zum%20Stigma%20wird.pdf>

Change of Perspective: New Models of Prosperity, Livelihood and the Good Life

A change of perspective involves more than traditional material prosperity. However, material prosperity has to be considered, too, because this prosperity is intricately connected with growth, expansion, destruction of nature, and the destruction of still existing subsistence-oriented economic methods.

By Adelheid Biesecker, Christa Wichterich
and Uta von Winterfeld

Translated from the German by Bianca Gerards, Ina Besler, Margherita Müller,
Charlotte Otremba and Franziska Friedrich



In the context of the post-growth debate, sufficiency has gained increasing recognition. Nonetheless, sufficiency has a hard time in comparison with the other two approaches, namely efficiency and consistency, because it criticises the prevailing assumptions regarding growth and prosperity. Thereby, sufficiency makes it clear that the pressure to have more at times of rampant growth also develops because basic questions of social equality are left aside. If everything increases all the time, then at some point everyone will have enough – nothing needs to be redistributed. In the international feminist debate, sufficiency plays a significant role, especially with regard to social, global and gender equality.

A Different View of Sufficiency

A change of perspective with respect to sufficiency is the proposal to present it negatively. That is to say, not charging it normatively with a positive ‘you shall’ but concentrating on those unreasonable demands that always require ‘too

much’ and define them as a property right: no one shall ever have to want to have more¹. According to this definition, sufficiency does not ask ‘how much is enough’ (compulsory sufficiency) but it asks ‘what is too much’ (right to sufficiency). This brings into focus both the efficiency-driven pressure to work more and the commerce-driven pressure to consume more. Sufficiency does not mean, however, to accept social losses because of the qualified pursuit of growth. In fact, it is quite the opposite; it means that questions of justice and leading a good life come into focus if they are no longer determined by the growth imperative.

When feminists direct their attention to the economy, they also take into account social and biological processes in life, and seek prosperity within the meaning of the good life. From this point of view, three concepts are of particular interest when it comes to finding guidelines for redefining prosperity:

1 Winterfeld, Uta von (2011): Vom Recht auf Suffizienz. (about the right to sufficiency) In: Rätz, Werner/Egan-Krieger, Tanja et al. (Hg.): Ausgewachsen! Ökologische Gerechtigkeit. Soziale Rechte. Gutes Leben. (Fully grown! Ecological equality. Social rights. Good life.) Hamburg: VSA, S. 57-65

the livelihood approach, the capability approach, which is the concept of determining a good life with the help of human capabilities, as well as the concept of buen vivir (living the good life).

The livelihood approach was developed in order to be able to define life and surviving securities, prosperity and poverty differently than by money income. Based on analyses of unsuccessful programmes to fight poverty within the bounds of development aid in the 1980s, Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway defined sustainable foundations of life: “a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living... while not undermining the natural resource base.”

Cultural Diversity instead of Monocultures

Contrary to development as a macro strategy, the livelihood concept focuses on local connections of reproduction and the microcosm of ensuring everyday survival in the immediate natural and social environment. It is oriented towards security and preservation of ►

livelihood, not towards growth. The decentralisation of this approach involves taking up different local and regional conditions and preserving biological and cultural diversity instead of establishing monocultures in the fields and in people's thinking. Furthermore, it is based on local and indigenous knowledge, generated through experience. This approach also tolerates local rights of self-determination on development paths².

Within demand-based circular economies, producing prosperity depends on moral, extra-market principles of economy such as reciprocity, neighbourly help and solidarity. Common goods as well as commons with collective rights of access to resources and of use are also constitutive elements of livelihoods and a counter model to the

2 Wichterich, Christa (2002): Sichere Lebensgrundlagen statt effizienterer Naturbeherrschung – Das Konzept nachhaltiger Entwicklung aus feministischer Sicht (safe basis for life instead of domination of nature – the concept of sustainable development from a feminine point of view). In: Görg, Christoph/ Brand, Ulrich (Eds.): Mythen globalen Umweltmanagements. Rio + 10 und die Sackgassen „nachhaltiger Entwicklung“ (myths of global environmental management. rio+10 and the dead ends of sustainable development). Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, pp.72-92

hegemonic development strategy that is mediating global market along with competition.

A Life to Design

The capability approach was developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum as an approach to evaluating the quality of life. This approach underlies the Human Development Index of the UN. It was elaborated by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum whose central theme is the good life³. In her understanding, a good life implies that people are able to develop their abilities in order to design their own lives. At the same time, these abilities are the people's claims for opportunities to be active. It is imperative to create realisation opportunities and diverse spaces of opportunity on a political level.

This good life is characterised by recognition, independence, security and freedom. Its concrete design is culturally influenced and therefore extremely

3 Nussbaum, Martha (2003): Frauen und Arbeit – Der Fähigkeitsansatz (women and work – the capability approach). In: Zeitschrift für Wirtschafts- und Unternehmensethik (journal of economic and business ethics) (zfwu), Volume 4 (2003), issue 1, pp. 8-31

diverse and has to be re-defined and enabled repeatedly through social regulations in a joined exchange of ideas. Furthermore, these discourses deal with the verification of needs and the way they are satisfied. They also and mainly focus on the common determination of sufficiency. Social welfare in this case is not just determined monetarily. It is not calculable uni-dimensionally but can only be developed in a multidimensional and diverse way.

In contrast to the capability approach originating from individual human rights, the paradigm of *buen vivir* with the indigenous people in Latin America is based on social community and a different relationship with nature. In Bolivia and Ecuador, the concept of *buen vivir* was included in the constitution to enshrine the claim for autochthonous paths of development criticising capitalism and colonialism but also for their own indigenous legal systems. Thereby, a plurality of cultures along with social systems and paths of development is recognised. Explicitly,

all productive and reproductive forms of work are valued⁴.

It is about more...

All three concepts focus on the term good life, rather than on the term welfare. They make it clear that it is not a matter of the development of one single indicator by which the improvement of the quality of life is – monetarily – measured. It is rather about diversity. It is imperative to determine a majority of criteria within social processes of discourse from which a good life in harmony with nature can be developed for everyone without new exclusions and externalisations.

It is not just simply about internalisation, inclusion and enhancement within and into a product economy driven by growth and profit. For example, if ecological costs were included in prices, the latter would drastically increase: many things would be unaffordable for

poor people; rich people would not feel any difference. Although the internalisation of costs would lead to ecologically more just pricing, without the simultaneous transformation of social structures of inequality, it would lead to a new dilemma of justice.

As long as care work is paid, the gender hierarchy dividing labour will continue to exist. Accordingly, the structures of poverty will not change merely through the inclusion of poor women in the financial market through the allocation of personal loans. Thus, every one-point method will necessarily fall short, just like a single indicator cannot make a definite statement about an entire problem. On the contrary, each step needs to be seen as a strategic part of a social-ecological transformation.

Thinking about 'growth, wealth and quality of life' from a feminist perspective, the main goal is not the development of ideal indicators. Instead it is about taking and strengthening the development path, which leads one away from a growth compulsion through the market and money, to a society which orientates its ideas and economic pro-

cesses sustainably and gives everyone the chance to participate. Social disintegration can be avoided through participation since it is the only way to resolve the emptying of the term 'democracy' and the general disorientation among the populace.

Dr. Adelheid Biesecker is Professor Emeritus for Economics at the University of Bremen. Dr. Christa Wichterich is a sociologist and concerns herself with globalization and gender, women's movements and international women's policies. In the Factory issue entitled Taking Part, she had a contrarian position on Microkredite helfen. Oder nicht? (Microcredits help. Don't they?). Dr. Uta von Winterfeld has a second book in political science and is the project leader of a group of scientists working on a project for future energy and mobility structures at the Institute of Wuppertal. The text mentioned above is a slightly changed excerpt from the recent paper Feministische Perspektiven zum Themenbereich Wachstum, Wohlstand, Lebensqualität (female perspectives on growth, wealth and quality of life) 2012⁵.

4 Acosta, Alberto (2011): Buen Vivir auf dem Weg in die Post-Entwicklung. Ein globales Konzept? (buen vivir and its way into post-development. a global concept?) In: Rätz, Werner/Egan-Krieger, Tanja von et al. (Eds.) (2011): Ausgewachsen! (full-grown!) Hamburg: VSA, pp. 173-184

5 http://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/sonst_publicationen/Biesecker_Wichterich_Winterfeld_2012_FeministischePerspe.pdf

»Dualistic ideas about men and women, and thus about male and female images, are deeply anchored in organisational structures and orientation systems;

they are constructed through communication and interaction between the members of the organisation on a daily basis. Measures like gender mainstreaming and managing diversity can make a contribution. However, without any criticism and reflection on gender and differences, they easily adapt to daily routines and organisational structures. The discussion on organisational learning shows us the following: gender mainstreaming and managing diversity remain ineffective if there are no long-term continuing organisational development strategies. Accordingly, if inequality remains untouched, it will have an impact straight away.“

Brigit Riegraf, Geschlecht und Differenz in Organisationen: Von Gleichstellungspolitik und erfolgreichem Organisationslernen, WSI-Mitteilungen 7/2008 (gender and differences in organisations: about gender equality policy and successful organisational learning)



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A Women's Economy

Women do business differently – and in some respects more sustainably than men. Surveys showed that they pay more attention to environment-friendly and social business management – but that they also have to fight specific difficulties.

By Ute Scheub

Translated from the German by Hilde Fazakas, Cornelia Enger

The worries about her five children and her fellow citizens even led Ursula Sladek to the White House. In April 2011, US President Barack Obama awarded the former secretary and elementary school teacher with the renowned Goldman Environmental Prize and she tried to convince him of her vision of a nuclear-free world.

Is the ability to care for people and the environment a typical characteristic of female bosses? This is surely not always the case but quite often it is. Sladek, however, a cheerful woman from the Black Forest, had never planned to run the business she now heads called Elektrizitätswerke Schönaue (power station in Schönaue, Germany). It is the first civic power plant which offers only renewable energies – both in Germany and probably worldwide. Today, there are 100 workers employed, 3,300 cooperative members and 150,000 energy customers. Nevertheless, in 1986, after the explosion of the nuclear power plant in Tschernobyl, its founder only wanted to support the saving of energy as part of the initiative Eltern für eine atom-

freie Zukunft (parents for a nuclear-free future).

She was strongly criticised by the former local energy monopolist KWR. First, the investor reacted angrily and asked her if she lost her mind and said that they subsist from the sale of electricity, so why should they save energy? Today, 30 years later, the KWR has been closed down. After long-lasting discussions, two referendums and a nationwide campaign, the green electricity provider was created in 1994. In 1997 it took over the local energy grid and now provides energy nationwide since 1999. In 2009, the green electricity provider started cooperation with the Genossenschaft Netzeck EWS (a cooperative power plant in Schönaue, Germany).

Rebels as Role Models

Finally, the German environmental foundation Umwelt (environment) called Ursula Sladek (AKA, the 'electricity rebel') a social role model and awarded her with the highest European environmental prize in 2013. The second award winner was 'hemp rebel'

Carmen Hock-Heyl, the manager of the Hock company situated in the town of Nördlingen in Bavaria.

In 1996, the former receptionist started to experiment with hemp as an organic insulating material because traditional material caused allergic reactions. "I was a woman. I was blonde." She remembers being judged by all the authorities and banks. Today, there are about 45 employees working in her company. According to Stiftung Warentest, the German product-testing organisation, thermal hemp is currently the best organic building material because it absorbs carbon dioxide emissions, stores moisture and creates a pleasant indoor climate. What about the social climate within the company, though? Director Kurt Hock admits that in terms of the promotion of women and family-friendliness they would actually like to do more, however, this is very difficult due to tough competition.

Companies run by women are perhaps even more affected by market competition than those run by men. According to a study by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs which was ►

published in 2013, women are said to be less aggressive and also more cautious about the growth of their companies; and some have credit problems. The study also showed that in Germany, every fifth small business is headed by a woman, whereas only every twelfth company with more than 500 employees is run by a woman. It further concluded that the main reason for men to set up a company is to make a profit and to be in a leading position. Women, in comparison, instead set up companies in order to bring about change and to make a contribution to society or because they wish to become self-employed as 'mompreneurs' with more flexible working hours after a maternity leave.

"Girl, you're crazy"

Sina Trinkwalder, 36-year-old director of the Augsburg-based textile company 'Manomama' is deliberately breaking current market rules. After the birth of her son, the former management consultant asked the essential question of how the next generation is supposed to be a good one if mothers are being put

under such pressure. Over and over she witnessed the way bosses increased the 'efficiency' of their companies, namely, by laying off female employees. For this reason, she preferred to hire single mothers and long-term unemployed women over the age of 50 at an hourly wage rate of at least EUR 10 while other textile companies were emigrating to Bangladesh due to "excessively high wage costs". Furthermore, she obtained all her raw materials from organic producers. Again and again, she heard people say "girl, you're crazy". The company, however, with around 140 employees, is booming. 'Manomama' doesn't need any advertising, customers almost automatically feel drawn to the socio-economic principles of the company.

According to the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs, 90 percent of the companies run by women can be found in the sectors of health care and social services, textiles, retail industry and consumption and only 10 percent in the industrial and construction sectors. Windfang (catching the wind), a women's energy cooperative in Oldenburg, is one of these unusual companies. The

company runs ten wind turbines in the north of Germany and a solar system located on top of the Women's Museum in Bonn. Another example is the Berlin-based association Baufachfrau (female construction experts) which offers training for female carpenters, craftsmen and earthen builders and which considers sustainability to be one of its major themes. One of its many projects is the processing of wood waste to create new furniture under the name vermöbelt (re-furnished). According to ►



an online survey of around 250 female company managers, the interest in environmentally friendly and socially balanced ways of doing business is relatively strong. In 2013, almost all of them (87 percent) stated that they use resources carefully. According to their own reports, around half of them pay attention to ecological and social test seals, take their bike or use public transportation to get to work; nearly half of the respondents prefer taking the train for business trips, buying regional products and using green electricity. However, one should not rely completely on these numbers, as people tend to give a better image of themselves in surveys that doesn't necessarily correspond to their actual behaviour. Nevertheless, many female managers also talked about specific difficulties: As their companies are usually quite small, they have to work even when they are sick or do the job of those employees who are unable to work for some reason, often at the expense of their own children. Onsite day-care centres or the release of caring relatives are out of question. For this reason, many of the respondents would like to

have nearby grandparents and babysitter services in case of an emergency.

The online survey was conducted by the LIFE Association in cooperation with Europe's largest, Berlin-based start-up centre for female entrepreneurs WeiberWirtschaft (Women's Economy); a model business in terms of environmental care and welfare. The businesses of around 70 female entrepreneurs, operating in various sectors, are located in an ecologically renovated industrial complex of 6,000 square metres in Central Berlin, owned by approximately 1,700 partners. The complex has been unsealed, gardens were cultivated and the energy derives from regenerative resources such as the sun or a block heating power plant. Moreover, the use of rainwater for flushing toilets was difficult only in the early years; it works perfect now.

On these premises, the cooperative runs a day-care facility for around 70 children, so the female employees are able to schedule their working hours flexibly with regards to their yearly working-time accounts. The cooperative is practically flooded with awards for



environmental and family matters as well as with visits of politicians. Gregor Gysi who was Senator for Economics and Women in Berlin in 2002 for a short term, made a better impression though than Philipp Rösler. "He's doing a great job", a hard-core lesbian whispered during his visit on the International Women's Day in 2002. "Who?" "Well, Gysin".

Study Wachstumspotenziale inhaberinnengeführter Unternehmen (Growth potential of companies led by women) can be downloaded from www.existenzgruender.de/mediathek/publikationen/studien/09160/index.php

Online survey FrauenUnternehmen Green Economy (WomenBusiness Green Economy) can be downloaded from www.genanet.de/fuge.html

Ute Scheub, doctor of political science and journalist in Berlin, has published many books and articles on the environment, sustainability, gender and peace.

»Gender is not something that one is, it is something one does, an act ... a 'doing' rather than a 'being'.

Judith Butler, 'Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity' (1990)

What is the best way to initiate a selfless social movement?

Rachel Carson just couldn't help but start the environmental movement in the USA. To mark the 50th anniversary of her death, Rachel Carson's first German-language biography, written by Dieter Steiner, will be released.

By Hans-Jochen Luhmann

Translated from the German by Miriam Eckers, Judith Stenzel and Franziska Friedrich

On 14 April 1964, author Rachel Carson died. She has remained in our collective memory due to a non-fiction book she wrote entitled *Silent Spring*. This book caused an 'altruistic' social movement to protect humans' fellow creatures – at first in the U.S., and then in other western industrialised countries. How was it possible for her in a society that considers itself as deriving from asserted self-interest? What was her formula?

Steiner first points out that her books show that the relationship between human beings and nature is linked to the gender issue. Secondly, one could say that Carson succeeded in triggering the environmental movement because it was not her intention – she merely did what she had to: she felt obligated to comply with the request of a friend involved in nature conservation; and then it just came about.

It is the biographer's objective to show the person behind the author of these non-fiction books – which is another key to success. Steiner writes that Carson, who actually was a marine biologist and had previously written three books about the sea, *Under the Sea-*

Wind (1941), *The Sea Around Us* (1951) and *The Edge of the Sea* (1955), has shown in these works how no creature lives only for itself. According to Steiner, Carson's approach to the phenomenon of life and her ability of not separating heart and mind are also expressed in her works that combine science and poetry. She also helped to put an end to the use of euphemistic terms: nowadays, pesticides are called biocides.

The biography of Rachel Carson presents an idea of this epistemological classification that is sympathetic towards gender. The exceptional productivity of this approach has already led to four books all written by authors from the U.S. Now, Steiner, former professor at the ETH Zurich, provides us with the first German-language biography. The creative power that this fragile woman, who completed *Silent Spring* while suffering from cancer, evidently had worldwide, is astonishing. It was a power that was not defined by an 'against' and was therefore able to circumvent the common resistance to the perception of the obvious absurdity of our collective behaviour; nevertheless or exactly for that



Rachel Carson in the 1940s

reason it brought about an aggression of enormous extent. This is how love works.

Rachel Carson. Pionierin der Ökologiebewegung (pioneer of the environmental movement). Dieter Steiner, kom publishing company, 2014, 360 p., EUR 19.95

Dr. Hans-Jochen Luhmann is a senior expert at the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy.

»While women were engaged in upbringing, men created domains in which they can dominate

– and developed a nasty patriarchal society. For young men it is still easier to get opportunities. The old bosses are making sure that the proper successors are in the wings.“

Gerald Hüther, neurobiologist and researcher of learning, in Mädchen lernen besser, Jungen steigen auf (girls are better at learning, boys move up the ladder) Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 3 May 2012, faz.net

More life with less work

The reduction of working hours has to be on the agenda again. When Manuela Schwesig (SPD), Federal Minister for Family Affairs, presented her vision: a 32-hour week for parents with young children financed by taxes, to the public at the beginning of the year 2014, the response from the highest authority came immediately. According to the message by German Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU), this was the Minister's personal contribution to the debate.

By Ulrike Helwerth

Translated from the German by Miriam Eckers





This 'contribution to the debate' is certainly interesting – especially from a gender perspective – for without a redistribution of not only 'productive' gainful employment but also reproductive and often unpaid work between women and men, the goal of a sustainable society cannot be achieved. If this should mean more than the 'greening' of capitalism, it is necessary, apart from other resources, to focus especially on the human being as a resource.

Redistribution of income-generating work

Roughly three million people are currently recorded in Germany's unemployment statistics. In addition, there are 'one euro jobbers', that is, juvenile and elderly long-term unemployed, unemployed people who are involved in further training or who are sick and those who have not registered with the unemployment office. They are not included in these statistics – in other words, the number of those who cannot make a living from their work is significantly higher than three million.

Then there are more and more people, employees but most of all self-employed persons, for whom fifty or more working hours per week and working on week-ends have become the norm. An excessive workload, however, makes one permanently ill.

The state of exhaustion is a new widespread disease that affects more and more young people, and even the young. How can they be expected to sit at their desks until they reach the statutory retirement age or be covered by the public pension system if they suffer from burnout before they reach the age of forty? There is something completely wrong with this calculation. But this is a debate to be held elsewhere. However, unemployment can make people ill, depressed or stressed, and it can also cause other types of harm.

It is a fact that the costs for 'repairing' resource manpower are 'externalized' – similar to carbon dioxide emissions or other environmental degradation – and so are passed on to the public. Hospitals, therapies and possible early retirements have to be paid for



by health insurance, pension fund and people's contributions.

Today this means to express this in an economic way: both over-exploitation and under-exploitation of the human resource is simply not profitable.

Furthermore, economic productivity is increasing, but the volume of work related to society as a whole has hardly changed in Germany in years. At the same time, the number of employed people is growing – and especially the number of employed women. This means that an increasing number of people share this constant volume of work on a still strongly 'gendered' labour market. But part-time work can hardly support a woman, not to mention a family; since a part-time work has been essentially conceived as additional income for a family income. In practice, the idea of a main wage earner and his wife whose salary is a supplement to her husband's income works out less and less well. And this happens not just for financial reasons. This idea does not meet the interests of young and well-educated couples in particular. When young adults are starting a family, many

of them assume that they will share their gainful employment and family duties based on partnership and fairness: after their child's birth, mothers want to return to their profession as soon as possible, fathers want to participate in their children's education and share the related duties with their partner. But often enough, shortly after child's birth, things turn out differently than expected: the mother continues to stay at home for a longer period of time or works short part-time – that means 50 per cent or more below full-time. She loses touch with her profession, is often employed and paid below the level of her qualification. It is an unprecedented waste of skilled manpower potential and of investments in the educational system. In the meantime, the father tries to compensate for the reduced income by increasing his working hours, which usually comes at the expense of his family duties. And suddenly, the traditional division of labour is also being reestablished inside this modern partner relationship.

Redistribution of unpaid work

Not only is the traditional division of labour in the medium and long-term totally absurd from an economic perspective, it is also unfair: for women and men. Women are cheated out of their own guarantee of a continued existence. This is because long breaks and part-time work are the most serious obstacles for their career advancement and therefore it is one of the main reasons for the gender pay gap, which in Germany is almost unchanged at 22 per cent. This gender pay gap will spread later to a pension gap of almost 60 per cent in the future and is the reason why poverty, especially in old age, is a female problem. In the meantime, women are responsible for unpaid 'private' care, first of their children, and maybe later of their partner, parents or in-laws.

Federal Health Minister Hermann Gröhe, interviewed by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*¹ (the Sunday edition of the Frankfurt General Newspaper) on 6 April 2014, said

¹ <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/%20Interview/2014/04/2014-04-07-groehe-fasz.html>



the most important care service was the family. It is a mostly unpaid nursing service that is most often done by women. But the number of men taking care of family members is also growing.

Not least because of this, a new type of distribution and redistribution of gainful and care employment is in their interest – and necessary. This is because, in our post-industrial society, men are increasingly unable to fulfill the traditional role of a main wage earner for their families. Many men even do not want this role. Working cultures that are resistant to changes and accordingly inflexible working time schemes often make it difficult for the individual to live an active fatherhood and/ or to perform other nursing work and thereby to reduce professional commitments.

Therefore a sustainable and equitable redistribution and new distribution of work is required². To achieve this goal, flexible working time schemes alone are not sufficient. In the medium-term this will only be made possible by reducing working hours for

men and women. Trade unions, social and women's organizations have been demanding a 30-hour workweek as a new standard for full-time work for a long time. The Schwesig-scheme of a 32-hours workweek for parents of young children, which is to be financed by tax money and not by employers, is still a fair way off. And the most recent proposal by Eric Schweitzer, the president of the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to introduce a reduction in the workweek to 35 hours for mothers and fathers, does not even mention salary compensation.

Nevertheless, it was important to break the long-standing taboo of a general reduction in working hours and to initiate a political debate.

Ulrike Helwerth is the press and public affairs officer of the National Council of German Women's Organization, the representation of political interests in more than 50 nation-wide women's associations and women's groups.

<http://www.frauenrat.de/>

² http://www.frauenrat.de/fileadmin/user_upload/aktionen/epd/Statement_BuLs.pdf



factory^y – the Magazine for Sustainable Economy

Although the word 'factory' is mostly associated with the manufacturing industry and industrial production, it can also refer to 'factor Y', the factor by which energy consumption needs to change so that future generations will find themselves living in similar conditions. Such an understanding of sustainability implies that all aspects of economic activity need to be addressed with sustainability in mind, including consumer practices as well as the manufacturing and services sectors.

factory^y highlights the role of businesses in sustainable development and aims to draw the drivers of the economy into the public debate. Such development entails resource efficient economic practices for both producers and consumers as well as educating and informing them about sustainability issues.

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Ralf Bindel

Am Varenholt 123

44797 Bochum

phone: 0234-9799513

rb@factory-magazin.de

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phone: 0241-40929-0, fax: -20

info@aachener-stiftung.de

www.aachener-stiftung.de

Effizienz-Agentur NRW

Dr.-Hammacher-Straße 49

47119 Duisburg

phone: 0203-37879-30

efa@efanrw.de

www.efanrw.de

Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, Energie GmbH
Döppersberg 19

42103 Wuppertal

phone: 0202-2492-0, fax: -108

info@wupperinst.org

www.wupperinst.org

Design Concept:

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