

Changes in the Female Labour Market in German New Länder

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Abstract: Before the unification of Germany, the female labour force participation rate in the DDR was very high due to the fact that there was an institutional system that facilitated women's working. However, this system was not meant to resolve gender issues, and the organization of work for women differed from that of men. After the unification, major institutions were changed in various areas and the economic system too was transformed. These changes considerably affected the female labour market in new Länder. As a result, the female labour participation rate was gradually reduced, while the unemployment rate among women remained quite high. This situation was different from that of men in new Länder and the women in the former territory of the Federal Republic. This paper takes into account the characteristics of the female labour market in the DDR to analyse the reasons for the transformation of the female labour market; some suggestions for structural changes of the economy are presented.

Keywords: German unification, female labour market, region, institutional change

JEL Classification Numbers: D21, J21

1. Introduction

Generally speaking, the labour market for women is more easily affected by the business environment than that for men (Osawa, 1993). Further, the female labour participation rate is strongly influenced by family conditions and family policies, as well as by the institutional framework of a social security system.

In Japan, on the one hand, there are female graduates working in managerial positions (so-called *sougousyoku*), but on the other hand, there are many married females doing part-time work. It is especially this second group that is subject to economic fluctuations (Yoshida, 2007). When compared with other developed countries, the female labour market in Japan has several characteristics. First of all, the graph of labour force participation rate by age still shows an 'M-shape' (Komine, 2008). Second, the working hours of part-time workers are quite long, but the wage gap between part-timers and full-timers is large (Yashiro, 2009). Finally, some job categories are divided by gender and different employment status, which lead to disparity between women's and men's earnings (Komine, 2008).

Most Japanese think that in western Europe such gaps between men and women are almost

eliminated and that the female labour force participation rate is quite high. In fact, in the former western Germany, the female labour force participation rate was extremely low and there were larger gaps than in other countries of the region. By contrast, in the former DDR (Deutsche Demokratische Republik) the female labour force participation rate was quite high.

German unification in 1990 was, in a way, an absorption of the DDR by the BRD (Bundesrepublik Deutschland); therefore, institutions of the BRD were introduced to the area of the former DDR (German new Länder). In other words, institutions that supported female workers in the DDR disappeared, and the female labour market of new Länder was reformed within the framework of the BRD.

In order to analyse the dynamics of the regional economy, I focus on the labour market, which reflects the industrial structure and economic environment. Particularly, the focal point is the female labour market that is affected by various social factors. I can therefore describe the present situation in that area more precisely.

There have been several studies in Japan on the female labour market in the DDR and new Länder, but many studies are from the viewpoint of sociology (Himeoka, 1992; Ueno, Tanaka, and Mae, 1993). In the field of economics, there are some studies on the problem such as economic dependence on male workers and wage disparities (Franz and Steiner, 2000). Although a great number of researches have been conducted on the labour market in Germany, few studies reveal the complicated relationships between the female labour market and institutional changes.

In this paper, section 2 sketches the female labour market and institutions related to female workers in the DDR, and section 3 describes the ones in the BRD before unification. Section 4 shows the changes of institutions and circumstances connected with the female labour market since unification. Section 5 discusses changes in the female labour market and analyses the reasons for them. Finally, I show the connection between institutional changes and behavioural patterns, as well as the background effects which clarify the differences between new Länder and former territory of BRD.

2. Female workers in DDR

According to the DDR Constitution, those who were able to work had a right and a duty to do so. The principle of equality of payment and jobs was established in 1946. Since the foundation of the nation, both men and women had regular jobs. From the 1970s many problems began to emerge, such as an outflow of population, decrease of childbirth, increase in divorce rates and cohabitation without marriage; as a result, female full-time workers started temporarily being reassigned to part-time work. In order to cope with these problems, the DDR government supplied the institutions that facilitated women's working more than before. Just

before the unification, the major institutions related to female workers included the following:

- a) protection of pregnant women and nursing mothers: claim for redeployment without a wage cut, prohibition against overtime work and layoff.
- b) subsidy for childbirth: 1000 DM per child.
- c) maternity leave: 6 weeks before and 20 weeks after childbirth with maternity pay as social insurance benefit.
- d) feeding duration: 45 minutes each time, twice a day.
- e) childcare leave: one year (a year and a half for the third and later child), three years if nursery centre could not be found.
- f) childcare allowance during childcare leave: 250DM a month for the first born child, 300DM for the second child, 70–90% mother's earnings (at least 350DM) for the third and later children.
- g) child-raising allowance: 95DM a month for the first born (115DM for child 12 years and older), 145DM for the second child (165DM for child 12 years and older), 195DM for the third and later children (215DM for child 12 years and older).
- h) redemption for pregnant women and nursing mothers: preventing such women from doing jobs that endangered mother or baby.
- i) prohibition against night work and overtime work: to prevent pregnant women and nursing mothers from such work; mothers with pre-school children had a right to refuse such work.
- j) prohibition of dismissal on grounds of marriage, pregnancy or childbirth: in principle, it was not possible to dismiss a female worker who was under one of the following conditions: a) pregnancy, b) nursing or breast-feeding period, c) who had children under 1 year old, d) on maternity leave, e) single mothers (until the child reached 3 years of age).
- k) reduction of working hours: mothers with children 16 years and younger could have a cut in working hours from 43 hours and 45 minutes to 40 hours per week without a pay cut.
- l) day-care centre: for children 0–3 years old, organized by the company or government authorities, available 7 days per week from 7 a.m. to 19 p.m., 1.40 DM per day (or for daily centres Monday–Friday, 2 DM per day); 80.2% of all children who needed day-care centre services received them.
- m) kindergarten: for children 3 years old until the first year of school, Monday–Friday (Sat.), 6 a.m.–19p.m., the costs of children attending—0.5 DM per day, 95.1% of all children of the specified age.
- n) after-school care for children: grades 1–4, facilities were constructed as annexes to schools, 6(7) a.m.–19 p.m.; 81.2% of all children who needed these services received them.
- o) nursing-care leave for child: mothers who had two or more children under 14 years of age were eligible. 2 children—6 weeks, 3 children—8 weeks, 4 children—10 weeks, 5 and more children—up to 13 weeks; depending on the insurance, for the first two days 90% of

salary is paid, from the third day, 70–90% depending on the amount of children.

- p) extension of annual holiday: female workers working full-time and as substitutes who had more than two children under the age of 16 were eligible to apply. The usual 20 days holiday was extended to 22–25 days (depending on the type of employment and number of children).
- q) holiday for housework: female workers working full-time could apply for 1 day off per month under one of the following conditions: a) married female worker, b) having children under 18 years old, c) single mother more than 40 years old, d) having family member that needs special care. Male workers having children under 18 years old, or having a spouse in need of special care, were eligible for this benefit.

Table 1 Female working population and ratio of female workers by industries

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1987
Female working population _(thousand people) ^a	288.0	345.6	375.0	410.6	420.0
Female labour force participation rate(%) ^b			81.9	87.6	91.3 ^d
Percentages of female workers(%)	40.0	45.0	48.3	49.9	49.0
Whole productive sector	37.8 ^c	41.4	43.6	44.1	42.6
Industry	28.6	40.5	42.4	43.3	41.2
Construction	9.7	8.7	13.2	16.3	16.9
Manufacturing	34.5	33.6	40.1	37.8	36.7
Agriculture	53.7	45.7	45.8	41.6	38.1
Transformation and telecommunications	17.6	32.3	35.5	36.9	35.2
Retailing	54.9	64.6	69.2	72.8	72.2
Other productive sectors		42.7	53.6	55.3	55.7
Whole non-productive sector	55.8	64.2	70.3	72.9	72.7
Education			71.3	76.3	
Health and welfare			80.9	83.6	

Notes : a. including students, b. calculated on working-age population, c. excluding other non-productive sectors, d. Data for 1985

Source : Ishida (1989) p.183

The table 1 shows that various institutions for the support of women existed in the DDR. As a result, the female labour force participation rate¹ was quite high (91.2% including students and job trainees). Women made up 43.6% of the labour force in 1956, 48.3% in 1970, and 49.1% in 1987. In the DDR, women participated in the labour market from early and the share grew overtime.

The age-specific labour force participation rate was high for every age group. The

employment rate of married women was 91.0% in 1988. Of these people, 75.8% worked full-time. The female employment rate by number of children was 89.4% with no child, 94.2% with a child, 91.4% with 2 children, and 83.2% with 3 children. As the number of children leaped upward, the employment rate gradually fell, but still remained at a considerably high level.

In the context of such conditions, the DDR government announced that women's issues had been settled. However, as many researchers have noted, the traditional values of gender roles still predominated. Married women did the bulk of the housework. In fact, women in the DDR had to cope with the double burden of work and home.

The family policies as mentioned above suggested the following. The targets of the mother's physical protection law were, of course, women. Moreover, the targets of the established institutional frameworks such as 'holiday for housework', 'nursing-care leave', and 'childcare leave' were also women. Thus, the DDR government recognized housework as women's work.

From the mid-1960s to 1970s, the DDR government promoted women's entering key industries where most workers had been men. After 1980, with the change in government policy to an intensive use of labour force, female workers were concentrated in women-specific jobs such as nurses, teachers, and administrators. Especially, in the industrial branch of civil engineering and construction, and in most of the manufacturing sectors, the share of women workers fell below 40%. However, in the sales and non-productive sectors the share was quite high. This suggests that gender roles shaped the labour market.

The number of women who had vocational training or higher education was rising annually, with the share of female university students being about 50% and that of female vocational trainees about 70% in 1987. However, professional training available to women was limited to traditional women-specific jobs and the share of women in senior positions was relatively small, that is, 31.5% in 1988.

Moreover, despite the existence of the principle of equality in payment and jobs, gender segregation of employment maintained the earnings gap between men and women.

For example, wages in the postal service, telecoms industry, and retailing were lower than in other industries and many women worked in these sectors. Both the job types and categories of industry in which women worked in relatively large numbers effectively ensured their earnings were lower than men's.

From a socialistic ideological stance, the liberation of women was regarded as having been achieved by women's labour force participation and economic independence. Because women provided for themselves, the number of divorces kept rising. The divorce rate was 37.3%, and 70% of these were initiated by women. Furthermore, most single parents were women. Besides women becoming more independent economically, married women did about 75% of the housework. DDR law treated illegitimate children the same as legitimate children and single mothers could receive priority such as for day-care leave. All this created an environment

favourable to a high divorce rate.

**Table 2 Single, married, widowed and divorced people
(men and women aged 18 and older)**

	Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced
1964	1,633,249	8,655,911	1,660,569	422,661
1970	1,713,446	8,496,197	1,607,834	478,931
1981	2,102,367	8,279,769	1,482,066	780,644
1982	2,173,815	8,237,028	1,463,802	816,069

Source: Ishida (1989) p. 180

In the 1970s, the DDR government became deeply concerned about the declining fertility rates and hammered out countermeasures. As a result, in the late 1970s the fertility rates recovered, but did not reach reproduction level, and in the 1980s the fertility rates declined again.

This section showed the institutional framework and circumstances related to female workers in the DDR. In the DDR, most women worked with the generous assistance of government and achieved unprecedentedly high rates of labour force participation. On the surface, the DDR seemed a gender-equal society. However, women bore double burdens, namely, housework and jobs, and there were differences between men and women in terms of employment conditions. Even so, due to the fact that women could achieve economic independence by working, they had more options to marry, divorce, give birth, or become single mothers. In the DDR, working was considered a national obligation. Women worked after childbirth and most of those who had more than one child also worked. This suggests that the environment to support working mothers was well developed.

It must be noted that these institutional frameworks were established by government. Women neither appealed for reducing their burdens nor achieved gender equality.

The next section shows the institutional frameworks and conditions of female workers in the BRD before the unification.

3. Female workers in BRD before the unification

The BRD government started promoting gender equality from the 1970s. Before then, married women could not work without their husband's permission, husbands and wives did not have equal rights, and family-law differentiated legitimate children from illegitimate ones.

In the BRD, fertility rates were also declining and the family structure began to change from about the 1970s. In the 1960s, the women's liberation movement was at its peak and this

affected gender equality policies. Following pressure from the EU, the BRD introduced the principle of equality in payment and jobs type in 1980.

Hence, the BRD was not always proactive enough in realizing gender equality. Still, female labour force participation rates were high. But in 1988, the percentage of female employees of childbearing age was 55% and the ratio of employed female workers decreased to 38.8%. Ratio levels were lower in comparison to the DDR for the same period.

One specific feature of female workers in the BRD worth mentioning was their choice to engage in part-time work. This was also different from the DDR. In a 1982s survey, the percentage of women who answered that women should continue working after childbirth was only 22.8%; those thinking that women should give up their jobs when they give birth to a child and start working again after the period of child-rearing amounted to 52.7%. This way of thinking led women to opt for part-time jobs.

The income tax system also had a bearing on this situation. In the BRD, the municipality where the employee resided sent tax cards (Lohnsteuerkarte) to employees. The tax cards included the following information: address, date of birth, local tax, income tax brackets, the number of children eligible for allowances, religion, possible amount of allowances, so-called add-back amount, AGS (official municipality key), and ID number. Employees had to fill out these forms and return them. The employer determined the taxable gross income and made deductions of income tax. But workers could work without submission of this tax card under the following conditions:

- a) Continually working in part-time or short-term jobs.
- b) Total weekly working hours should be less than 20 hours (86 hours/a month) per one employer.
- c) A ceiling on wages of 120DM per week and 520DM per month.
- d) Average hourly earnings not more than 18DM.

If they met these conditions, the employee paid only 15% income tax. Additionally, the employer did not need to pay various insurance premiums. In April 1990, the number of women who worked less than 20 hours per week was 847,000, which was 8.7% of female workers; of this number, 76.1% were married women. Terasaki (1993) said this way of working was widespread among married women whose husbands worked full-time.

If this was not the case, employees had to pay income tax in accordance with their tax bracket. The tax bracket depended mainly on earnings and marital status. Under this tax system, double-income households bore heavier tax burdens than households with full-time homemakers or part-timers.

The BRD had a law relating to child support deductions. In addition to that, a law for child allowance was established in 1954. Since then, these laws have undergone several changes. The target and the amount of benefits were gradually expanded.

Because the number of working women was increasing, the BRD set up the maternity leave law. As a result, working women were encouraged to take maternity leave (paid vacation) for 8 weeks and receive childcare leave allowance for 6 months after childbirth. The income losses during maternity leave were covered by maternity allowances provided from health insurance and supplemental benefits from each company.

From 1985, the child-raising allowance law was introduced in addition to the child allowance law. This was a comprehensive systematic reform. This law also stipulated a childcare leave provision and came with the mother's physical protection law that ensured financial support and prohibition of dismissal during childcare for a worker who abandoned her full-time job because of childcare. At first, the qualification period was 10 months but was gradually expanded to 18 months. The amount of money was 600DM per month for 6 months without income limits. People who were workers, full-time homemakers, students, or men were eligible to claim this allowance. But those having a spouse who was a full-time homemaker could not have childcare leave. An applicant for childcare leave provision was not to be in full-time work but be fully engaged in childcare. In addition to this system, some companies introduced more excellent systems and extended the duration of childcare leave.

Introduction of the child-raising law had an impact on non-working people. It was also based on the model of the family 'breadwinner and housewife' in its modernized form. Though applied in all cases of maternity, the child-raising law could not compensate fully for the earnings of working women during childcare leave. Yet, on average, only 46.8% of women returned to work after childcare leave in 1986 and 1987. Of the women who returned to work, 31% changed from full-time jobs to part-time ones. This suggests that women experienced many difficulties when continuing to work after childbirth.

One of the reasons many women resigned from their jobs was the shortage of childcare facilities. Only 1% of children under age 3 attended nursery schools. The percentages of children who attended kindergartens were 30% of 3 year olds, 70% of 4 year olds, and 85% of 5 year olds. Most kindergartens opened only during the morning. Only 11.9% of children stayed in kindergartens all day. Elementary schools also opened only during the morning. Some 4.4% of elementary school students were enrolled in after-school care (Behning and Pascual, 2003, p. 113).

The institutions in the BRD differed from the ones in the DDR. The DDR government demanded that citizens should work to secure the labour force. Women also had a duty to work. Therefore, the government provided the systems that supported working women. The BRD government improved the situation that had prevented women from working, under demands from women and the EU. As a result, the number of women who had jobs was increasing. But still many women believed in a family-model such as a breadwinner and a housewife.

4. System changes and their effect on female workers

With the unification, female workers in the DDR experienced various changes. Those changes could be divided into two groups: those related to transformation of the labour market and those changes related to institutional frameworks. After the unification, the DDR legal system was abolished and that of the BRD was introduced. Former DDR regions changed to 'new Länder' of the 'new BRD'. These changes greatly affected the position of women. In particular, such measures as expansion of annual holidays, holidays for housework, decrease of working hours, etc. (so called mitigating policies) widely implemented in Eastern Germany were subject to abolishment or were reduced. Moreover, lack of childcare facilities became a serious problem.

As mentioned above, most children attended day-care programmes and this made it possible for their parents to work full-time in the DDR. In 1989, there were 7,707 childcare facilities, 6,846 of which were public and 851 of which were run by enterprises. At the same time, there were 13,452 kindergartens, 11,592 of which were public and 1,477 run by enterprises, among which 383 were church facilities. Many childcare facilities and kindergartens were private. But after the unification, the owners experienced financial difficulties and closed their facilities. The government offered the owners to transfer the facilities to the jurisdiction of the local government. However, many facilities were closed. The percentages of children under 3 who could attend nursery schools were about 50% in 1991, about 40% in 1994, and about 35% in 1998 (Uozumi, 2007). The situation with working mothers was getting worse.

Another problem was the labour market. The DDR had achieved almost full employment and had had low unemployment rates. After the unification, the unemployment rates went up due to privatization and transition processes.

When enterprises were privatized, they needed radical restructuring. This affected the labour market immediately. The number of unemployed drastically increased. In particular, the level of female unemployment was quite high (Figure 1).

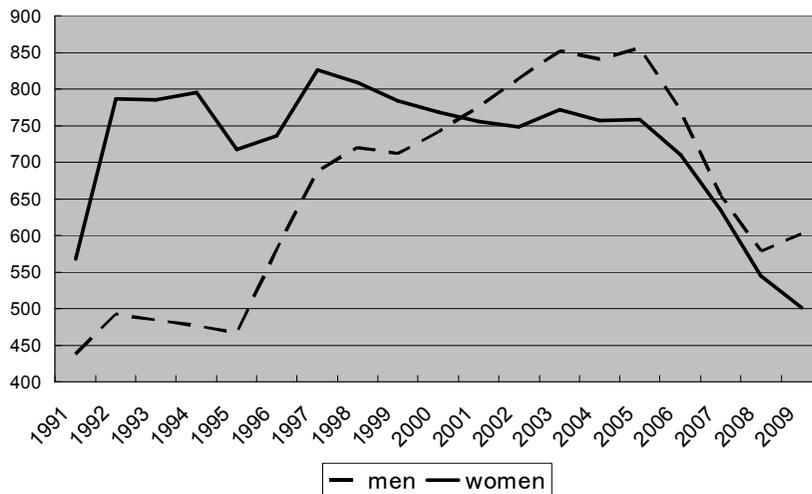
The government pursued active labour market policies. These policies were based on a law for employment promotion and included promotion of job training, recompense for reduced operations, incentive programmes for early retirement, and job creation schemes.

Below, we analyse the effect of those policies on the female labour market. First of all, let us refer to job training programmes. Sixty percent of job trainees in these programmes were women as of November 1992. Still, many women attended short-term programmes in training institutions. Maier mentioned that 'the short-term training programs were of low quality, and gave no public certificate of skills acquired. In-firm training, in contrast to the training in training institutions financed from the budget, was longer (2-3 years), but offered more employment opportunities in firms and allowed women to acquire more extensive professional

skills' (Maier, 1993).

Though the qualifications and the vocational training were quite important for the female workers in new Länder, female participants of such in-firm training were fewer than male ones. I think there were difficulties that prevented women from attending long-term training and pursuing qualifications, for example, lack of childcare facilities.

Figure 1 Number of unemployed in new Länder



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, GENESIS-Online(<https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online>)

Second, many workers applied for the early retirement programme. As mentioned above, under the process of transition, workers had to adapt themselves to new technologies. But for the middle-aged and the elderly workers it was difficult to learn new skills. Therefore, many workers gave up working.

Third, the recompense for reduced operations was criticized as hidden unemployment. The number of recipients in new Länder was 1.6 million. The share of female recipients was 36.1% in 1991 and 66.1% in 1995 (Kondou, 1998). The reason for this increase will be explained below.

Fourth, the extent of the job creation scheme was expanded in new Länder. The number of recipients was about 180 thousands in 1991 and about 400 thousands in 1992. The share of female recipients was 35.6% in 1991 and 65.3% in 1993.

The share of female recipients in the recompense for reduced operations and job creation scheme was increasing year after year. Female unemployment increased between 1991 and

1992. Male unemployment increased from 1996 to 2005. From 1991 to 1995, there was 'a special boom' of the unification. But female unemployment kept increasing in this period. As many researchers said, the civil engineering and construction industries employed many male workers. The share of investments in infrastructure for new Länder was about 60% in this period. Therefore, more female workers faced unemployment in comparison to male workers. Because many workers were employed in these industries, the share of female recipients in those programmes increased.

Female workers faced disadvantages in obtaining jobs. In addition, female workers in the DDR lost many support systems. Though the number of female unemployed was much larger than that of the male, the government introduced few special policies to assist the female labour market. Women who wanted to work had to search for their jobs on the same terms as men in very strained labour market conditions.

5. Changes in the female labour market

At first, many researchers expected the female labour force participation rate in new Länder to fall to the BRD level and the female working style of DDR was supposed to change to that of the BRD one, because the DDR introduced BRD institutions and the number of female unemployed was increasing. But these expectations were not realized. The female labour force participation rate hardly went down.

I highlight the features of the female workers in new Länder by comparing them with the female workers in the former BRD region.

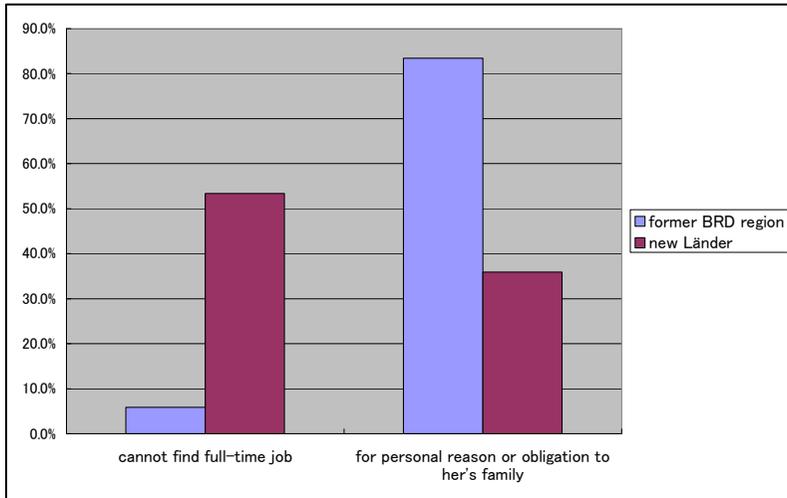
The female labour force participation rate was gradually decreasing year by year. In particular, the rate of women workers aged 45 to 54 dropped considerably. But the rate of women workers aged under 45 was nearly 90% (Bonin and Euwals, 2002). In 2002, the female labour force participation rate was 72.6% in new Länder and 63.2% in the former BRD region.

In new Länder, the number of women who became part-timers was increasing. The percentage of part-timers among female workers in 2005 was 31.4% in new Länder and 47.4% in the former BRD region. The reasons they took part-time jobs in new Länder were quite different from those of women in the former BRD region. In new Länder, they chose part-time jobs because of the difficulty in obtaining full-time work (Figure 2). Even women who had children aged less than 18 years preferred full-time jobs (Figure 3).

The average income in new Länder is still lower than in the former BRD region. A comparison of the average income of male full-time workers and of female full-time workers in new Länder with those in the former BRD region shows that the average female worker income is gradually approaching the level of that of the male in both regions. However, the income gap between men and women in new Länder is still smaller than that in the former BRD region

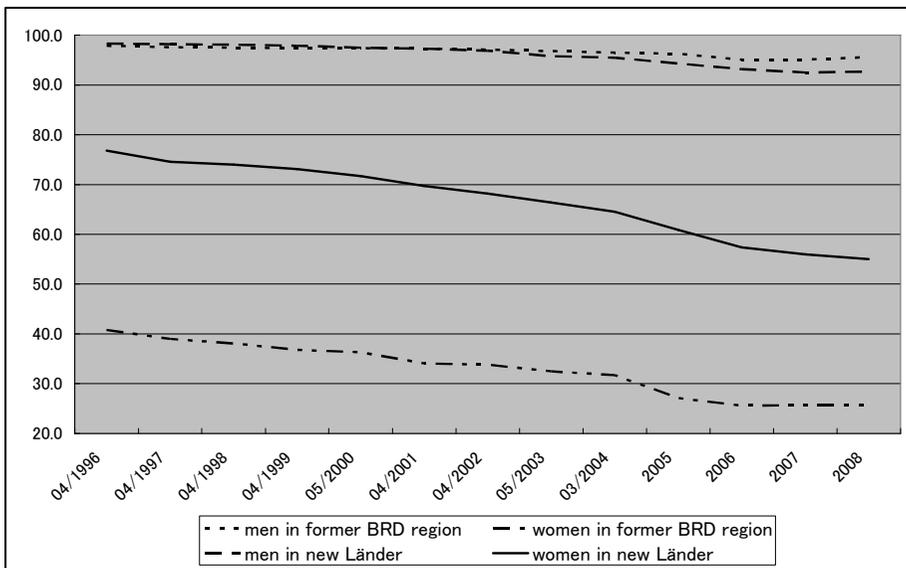
(Figure 4).

Figure 2 For personal reasons or due to family obligations



Source: Uozumi (2007) p. 24

Figure 3 Economic crisis and trend of consumption



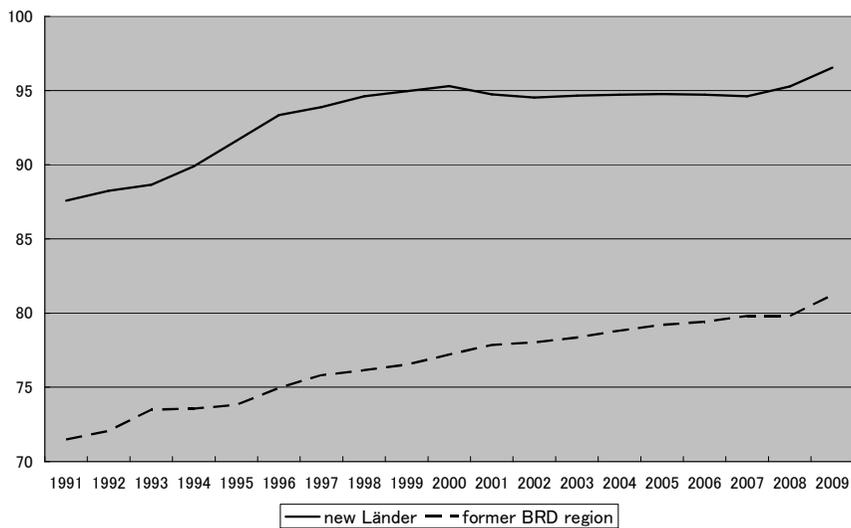
* calculated on working-age population

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, GENESIS-Online(<https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online>)

There was a 20% wage disparity between female full-timers in new Länder and those in the former BRD region (see Figure 4). As for male workers, there was a 35% wage disparity between male full-timers in new Länder and those in the former BRD region. This suggests that the differences in positions and jobs that related to gender roles were smaller in new Länder than in the former BRD region.

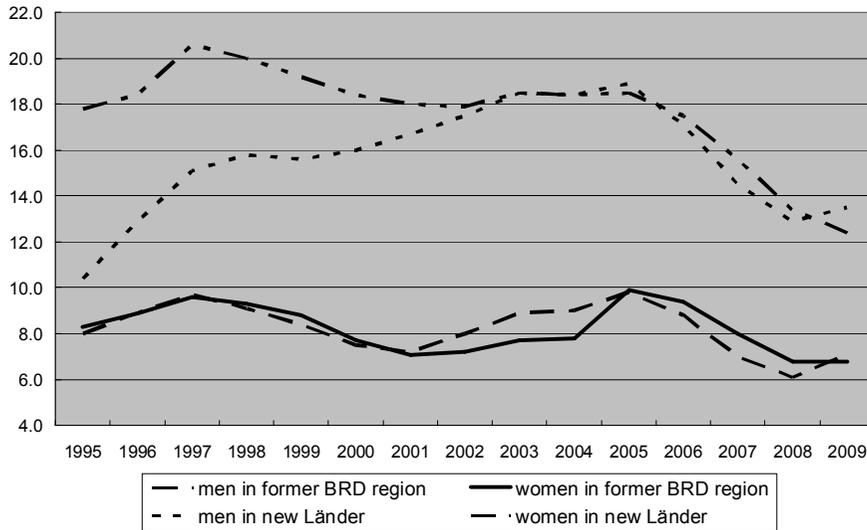
Working hours of male and female full-timers in new Länder were 2% longer than in the former BRD region. Working hours of female part-timers in new Länder, in general, were 22% longer and those of male part-timers in new Länder were 16% longer than in the former BRD region. Average wages in new Länder were 20% lower, and due to the fact that many female part-timers in new Länder were interested in having full-time jobs, work-time in new Länder was much longer than in the former BRD region.

Figure 4 Average income of female full-timers compared to the male one (%)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, GENESIS-Online(<https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online>)

Female unemployment rates have been similar to those of males in the former BRD region since 1995. However, they were much higher than those of males in new Länder from 1995 to 2002. Since 2003, male unemployment rates have been as high as those of females. The duration of female unemployment in new Länder has been remarkably long. In the former BRD region, the length of female unemployment was also longer than that of males, due to the fact that unemployed women did not exit the labour market.

Figure 5 Unemployment rates

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, GENESIS-Online(<https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online>)

Table 3 Duration of unemployment

Year	Former BRD region		New Länder	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
	Weeks			
1999	31.8	35.2	26.4	43.2
2002	30.2	34.5	31.1	48.0
2004	34.9	36.3	38.4	51.9

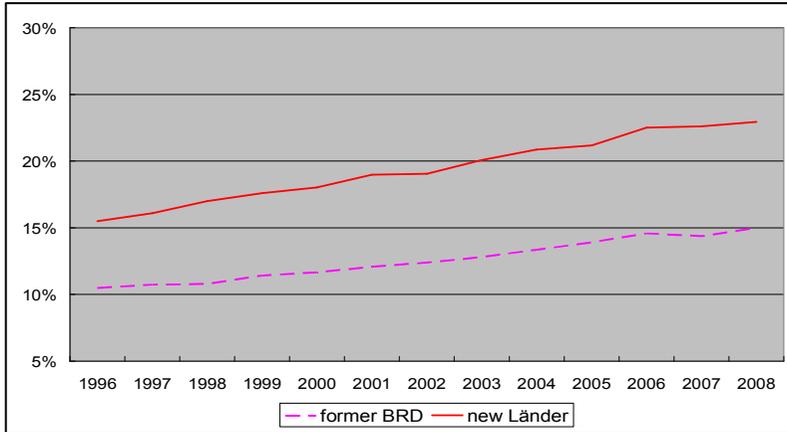
Source: Federal Statistical Office (2009) p. 33

There are two open questions concerning female workers in new Länder. The first is why they are eager to have full-time jobs. The second is why the female labour force participation rate has not fallen. There are several reasons to explain this phenomenon.

First, the number of single-mother households is larger than that in the former BRD region (Figure 5). Therefore, the employment rate of mothers with children aged 18 and under is high. Since the DDR period, the divorce rate has remained high and the percentage of illegitimate children is also at a high level. The ratio of illegitimate children amounted to about 60% in new Länder and about 20% in the former BRD region. A single mother is the sole earner in her family. Thus, she needs enough income to feed her family and is interested in finding full-time

work. Also, these women are likely to stay on the labour market even if they have been unemployed for a long time. Furthermore, women can enjoy a certain degree of freedom by supporting themselves financially. For example, working married women can divorce anytime they please.

Figure 5 Percentage of single-mother households in all households



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, GENESIS-Online(<https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online>)

Here is an interesting survey. This survey was conducted of women aged 20 to 44 who were asked about their ideal lifestyle (Table 4).

Table 4 Ideal way of life: women aged from 20 to 44

	Former BRD region	New Länder
Full-time job, no child	8.5	6.1
Full-time job, one child	5.5	19.1
Full-time job, two or more children	7	23.8
Part-time job, no child	2.1	0.6
Part-time job, one child	13.1	9.7
Part-time job, two or more children	32.3	30.5
Do not work until child gets older	25.6	8.6
Do not work, having a child	5.8	1.7

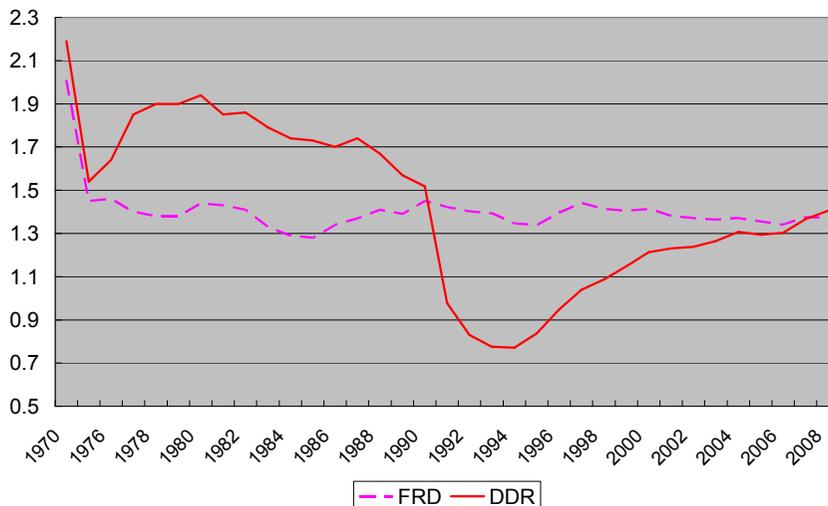
Source: Uozumi (2007) p. 24

Second, the male unemployment rate is also high and the average wage of male workers is much lower than in the former BRD region. In these circumstances, women do not regard their partner as the sole breadwinner. His income may not be enough to support the family adequately. In order to counteract the risks (namely, job loss), women need to become additional earners and supporters to the family budget.

These findings suggest the following: women in new Länder want to maintain their way of life that goes back to the DDR period by maintaining control of their own lives through having their own earnings. Moreover, to cope with the new situation of high unemployment, there is a strong tendency for married women also to work. Their behaviour is quite reasonable.

However, this type of behaviour has also caused various changes. The most drastic change was a decrease in the birth rate (Figure 6). New Länder experienced an unprecedented drop in its total fertility rate. The reasons for this are that people felt uneasy about the future and it was more difficult for working mothers to raise their children than before.

Figure 6 Total fertility rates



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, GENESIS-Online(<https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online>)

Thus, there is still a large gap between the lifestyle in new Länder and that in the former BRD region. Under the same systems some differences remain. When institutional frameworks based on different social models are introduced, it is important to find a way to reconcile them. It is possible to imagine that after the unification the lifestyle of women from Eastern Germany would change and thus a new model would be created. However, recently in Europe and in

Germany itself there have been decisive initiatives toward the so-called gender mainstreaming. This was not analysed in detail in the present paper, but as was mentioned, the policy on labour and family issues implemented in the 1990s and 2000s are of very great importance to the changed situation. In that sense it is possible to conclude that women will more actively participate in the labour market and expand their possibilities to become more independent. If this process continues, it might be concluded that the working style of women in Germany and the types of employment will eventually converge, with the model of new Länder being closer to this convergence point than that of the former BRD region.

6. Concluding remarks

The present paper analysed the background to changes in female employment in new Länder after the unification to show how that region adapted to the institutional frameworks of the German republic.

The unification of Germany that involved the implantation of Western Germany institutions to the Eastern part is considered one of the most drastic system transformation processes; the transition reforms in some other developing economies are comparable. However, the major finding of this paper is that when transplanting one region's system into the environment of another (in the case of Germany, by integrating mechanisms from West into the East) the desired changes in social structure are not immediately achievable. As was mentioned in the introduction, many factors influence the condition of the female labour force. Moreover, these factors might have a different impact depending on countries or regions; as well, some changes may be possible over time.

The BRD institutions that new Länder introduced were not adapted to the way of life that existed there. It will take time for the social model in new Länder to become fully integrated with the institutions introduced. In future, children who did not experience the DDR period will grow up and their behaviour patterns will be subject to change. On the other hand, people in the former BRD region may also change their behavioural patterns due to the global trend of gender mainstreaming. As a result, the behavioural patterns might correspond with each other.

This paper shows the changes in the female labour market in new Länder. Twenty years have passed since unification. Yet, there remains a large economic disparity between the two regions. The transition of the DDR was a radical one, with the introduction of BRD institutions being a major example. Despite this, the way of life in this region did not undergo drastic changes and the transformation has been somewhat limited.

In the DDR, most women took jobs, but still did not enjoy real equality with men. Needless to say that since the unification, the situation has been gradually changing, but there are still steps to be taken in this direction.

Notes

¹ There are two terms, ‘participation rate’ and ‘employment rate’ in this page. These two concepts are almost equal here. In the DDR there was ‘virtual’ full employment.

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