‘Nachdenken, ihr nach’: Investigating Female Gender Identity and Subjectivity in the German Democratic Republic

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Abstract

Previous research on women in socialist East Germany has neglected to adequately or critically investigate the way in which female gender identity and gendered subjectivity was constructed in discourse. Furthermore, there has been a short-sighted neglect of socialist public discourse as source material for investigations not just of every day life in socialism but in the construction of individual subjectivities as well. The paper adopts a post-structuralist theoretical framework that draws on the traditions of second-wave gender history and operationalizes a modified version of Laclau and Mouffe’s model of discourse in order to investigate how gender identity and subjectivity was constructed in female-oriented public discourse in the German Democratic Republic. The analysis reveals nuances about the ways in which the various discourses that were in play modified and contested the definition of woman which heretofore had been glossed over by the heavy hand of preconception. In turn, the resultant, more nuanced picture of female gender identity uncovers important new avenues of investigation into the discursive construction of female identity and subjectivity in the GDR.
Acknowledgements

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
<td>CDA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Women's League of Germany</td>
<td>DFD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany</td>
<td>FRG</td>
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<tr>
<td>German Democratic Republic</td>
<td>GDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Socialist German Worker’s Party</td>
<td>NSDAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialist Unity Party of Germany</td>
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1. Introduction


Scholarship on the condition of women in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) has been prolific, the socialist woman a topic of heated interest even while the Wall still stood. Since the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the reunification of Germany, East German women have continued to be the objects of much discussion, especially as it became clearer that women and their reproductive rights posed one of the largest obstacles for peaceful integration of the two German states (Fisher, 2005).

Still, for all that has been written on the topic, there remains a remarkable bias in the literature. Historians, anthropologists, and sociologists alike have been keen to explain the anomalies of East German womanhood without a true attempt to critically analyse what that in fact meant for the subjects of their analysis themselves. The scholarship is marked by its reliance on an arrogant assumption that the meaning of woman in the GDR remained the same as it did everywhere else. It is the same arrogance that echoes through so much current discussion by Western analysts of women whose cultural and historical identities are unknown, misunderstood, and taken for granted. The identities of these women are then measured against the analyst's own yardstick and found to be wanting.

In undertaking this thesis project, my aim has been to address the imbalance of treatment in this subject. I am motivated by the conviction that an analysis which

1. 'The quest for her: in the thought of her. And of the attempt to be oneself. She speaks of this in her diaries, which we have, on the loose manuscript pages that have been found, and between the lines of those letters of hers that are known to me. [...] Memory puts a deceptive colour on things.’ (English translation from Wolf, 1982: 3; Wolf, 2007: 9)
refuses simplistic generalisations and tries, to the best of its abilities, to avoid presumptions and preconceptions, can uncover heretofore undiscovered nuances in a topic that has, in large part, been treated with a heavy hand. The project is an unconventional one, in that I enter into it with the expectation that I will be unable to answer my guiding question. Truly, though, any historian who claimed to be able to summarily answer the question, *How was female gender identity constructed in the GDR?*, should be regarded with suspicion, especially if she proposes to do so in the space of a Master’s thesis. This is not to say that the project will not return informative, innovative results. Rather, it is to set the understanding that any result that can be considered at least a partial answer to this question is of value. In the case of this project, a partial answer, the shedding of light on previously obscured nuances, is considered a positive result.

The structure of the paper follows the progress of my research question from a broad unanswerable to a set of smaller, more tangible questions. Thus, I begin with an assessment of the previous research on the subject, identifying broad trends in historiography before discussing in detail the existing scholarship on East German women. A consideration of the tradition of Gender History further delineates the gap in the literature and gives a springboard for the theoretical framework in Section 3. Considerable weight is given to the three pillars of my theoretical framework, as this framework is key both in the definition of the research problem and in the subsequent approach to analysis. In Section 4 I present my source material and a discussion of its relevance and applicability to the research question as it has been developed. I argue that historians’ neglect of socialist print media as source material for the study of citizens in socialist countries has stemmed from unsound prejudices and insist that print media represents a wealth of source material not only for the study of every day life in socialist countries but in the private lives and identities of socialist citizens. I then turn to a discussion of methods, presenting a highly detailed model of discourse predicated on a modified version of Laclau and Mouffe’s own model.

The model of discourse helps, in turn, to structure the steps of my analysis, which begins in Section 6 with an overview of the sources before continuing to present
the results of a very broad, very loose content analysis. Using the results of the content analysis, I further narrow my source material and decide which topics bear deeper analysis. The discourse analysis that follows is necessarily combined with the discussion, as it is in the discussion of discourse that the analysis occurs. By the end of Section 6, I am in a position to outline a more nuanced picture of how female gender identity and subjectivity was constructed in socialist public discourse, and vice versa. I argue that multiple discourses were in fact at work, and that female gender identity and subjectivity in East Germany was, in its own way, particularly East German. The unique interaction of these various discourses warrants the treatment of female identity in East Germany on its own terms and in its own contexts. Finally, the analysis leads directly to a call for further investigation into the interactions of discourses in East Germany with gender which have, until now, been entirely neglected.
2. Previous Research

This first section will discuss the corpus of previous research that has been conducted in the field with a view to outlining the gaps in the literature that my own research attempts to fill. The section starts with a necessarily brief overview of the broad trends of historiography of the former German Democratic Republic, before focusing more specifically on those works that deal with questions of identity – in particular, the identities of East German women. While recent scholarship has begun to move away from polarised interpretations of the nature of life in the GDR, a review of the literature shows that while the lives of East German women have been given much scholarly attention, this same attention has been characterised by a lack of critical consideration of the meaning of ‘woman’ and what, precisely, female gendered identity had come to entail in East Germany.

2.1. History's Struggle to Lexicalise the GDR

The writing of history is a cumulative process; it is not accomplished in a bubble, but instead is a complex, recursive process, and every new history is in some way built on the foundations of what came before it. The context of my own research is a new kind of social and cultural history, one that seeks to address its forebears and hopes to expand their insights through the consideration of historical contexts and discursive arrangements. Although just twenty-five years have passed since the Berlin Wall fell, much has been written about life in the GDR. Within these works it is possible to identify three distinct historiographical periods, each with its own particular guiding theories, research interests, and resultant claims. Motivated by the conviction that the GDR represents a special case in history (German history, Eastern European history, Cold War history, or just history in
general), historians within each period have impulsively tried to define exactly what kind of state existed in East Germany – as if in calling it by the correct name the analyst might somehow manage simultaneously to reduce and reveal its mysteries.

Before the Wall fell in 1989 and indeed for some years following its demise, until the mid-to-late 1990s, scholarship on East Germany was heavily influenced by Cold War sentiments and totalitarian theory. From this point of view, the GDR was an illegitimate state and the East German people were victims of forty years of repression from a party whose control was ubiquitous, inescapable, and complete. The theory of the durchherrschte gesellschaft\(^2\) (Kocka, 1994), in which the Party determined all social and political practices, supposes a de facto fusion of politics with all other social institutions such that society actually ‘withered away’ (Meuschel, 1992: 10) or lost all possibilities for autonomy (Schroeder, 1994). Studies that adhere to this theory seek to reveal the machinations of the state’s power and its relationship with resistance, complicity and consent (Pence and Betts, 2008a: 4). Arguably the most prominent work of this period was Günter Gaus’ *Wo Deutschland Liegt* (1986) in which he argued that the totalitarian government’s utter control over public institutions and spaces had turned the GDR into a nischengesellschaft\(^3\), wherein the pursuit of individual interests and agency could only occur in the apolitical sphere of the individuals’ *niche* – usually coterminous with their family and select close friends. However, the totalitarian thesis of a durchherrschte state has been heavily criticised for producing a one-dimensional picture of society which removes all possibilities of agency from the citizens. For instance, the model of the *niche* society was problematised by

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2. The term *durchherrschte gesellschaft* loosely translates to a ‘society ruled through and through’; coined by Alf Lüdtke (1994), it was originally intended to mean that politics were an everyday concern in the GDR but, as Corey Ross (2002: 49) explains, the meaning of it has been corrupted and the term is now more frequently used to imply the complete political determination of social life.

3. ‘Niche society’, a ‘society of niches’; this is a hugely influential concept in GDR historiography, but now tends to be applied with little critical consideration of its appropriateness as an analytical device.
Lüdtke's (1993) concept of *Eigen-Sinn*, which has become an equally ubiquitous concept in the literature as the *niche*. *Eigen-Sinn* allows the individual enough agency to assert their own subjectivity over the course of their daily lives, at work as well as at home.

In the late 1990s, another trend of analysis emerged which sought to offer more nuanced insights into the interaction between the socialist state and society. The guiding impulse of this period of historiography is best summed up in this statement by the prolific GDR historian Mary Fulbrook: ‘Of course [the GDR] was a dictatorship. But it was not *only* a dictatorship’ (Fulbrook, 2005: 11, emphasis mine.). To this end, social historians such as Thomas Lindenberger countered the thesis of total state control with the suggestion that dictatorship should be analysed as a *social process* and that the distinction between ‘rulers and ruled’ cannot be so clearly demarcated (1999; 2008). Konrad Jarausch, also an extraordinarily prolific historian of the GDR, contends that the complex nature of the state and its relationship with its people is best described in terms of a ‘participatory dictatorship’, or a ‘welfare dictatorship’ (Jarausch, 1999). Corey Ross extends this notion, positing a symbiotic process of ‘give and take’ – so that the state is not seen to have ruled over society but rather *through* it (2002: 63). Studies of the every day – including social and economic structures – began to flourish in this period as a means of showing the ‘other side of the medallion’ of dictatorship (Wolle, 1998). Such studies showed the ways in which the GDR was not just a totalitarian state but also, in its own way a modern, industrial society (see e.g. Fulbrook, 2005; Pence and Betts, 2008b).

The third and most recent period of GDR historiography takes its cues from the so-called ‘new cultural history’, which has developed in dialogue with insights from anthropology and linguistic theory (Port, 2013: 2). During this third period, focus has moved beyond questions of structure and assessments of modernity, seeking

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4. Loosely translatable as ‘a sense of one's own interests’ or ‘self-constructed meaning’; literally, ‘self-will’, or ‘stubbornness’.

5. This new social and cultural history has developed especially in Anglo-American institutions as a result of the ‘cultural’ or ‘linguistic turn’ in the social sciences.
access to the more subjective experiences of individual East Germans with a view to uncovering the ways they themselves made sense of their situation. For instance, Gabrielle Mueller (2013) examined visual representations of the *alltag* and the *niche* in order to trace shifts in the interpretation of individual agency and social interactions and Paul Betts explored the role of interior design in the creation of a specifically East German culture (2008; 2010). Milena Veenis’s engaging ethnography (2012) is just one of many works that highlight the key role played by consumption, which had become a common theme of second-period social and economic studies, in the formation of an explicitly East German identity. A standard thread running through all the studies of this period is their focus on the banalities of life; they emphasise the fact that for the most part, East Germans led normal lives, comparable to any other country in which people’s key concerns were family, jobs and material welfare (see e.g. Allinson, 2000). Indeed, historian and political scientist Martin Sabrow goes so far as to claim that most East Germans didn’t actually experience the state as a dictatorship, per se – most citizens of the GDR simply got on with their lives much as people anywhere else in the world might (1999: 196). Section 2.3 returns to a discussion of this third period of historiography, focusing especially on its contributions to the consideration of identity; first, however, Section 2.2 will trace the patterns of historiography specifically of East German women, with a view to placing these studies within the context of the three periods of GDR historiography as outlined here.

### 2.2. Restoring Women’s Stories

Perhaps because of the intrinsic links between the Western and European feminist and socialist movements, the subject of women under state socialist regimes has received significant attention. The case of women in East Germany is no exception, and academic treatments of women in the GDR have changed over time and in dialogue with the shifting trends of historiography.

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6. ‘The every day’.
2.2.1. Peeking Over the Wall

Writing on East German women published before the Wall fell originated almost exclusively in the academies of West Germany, Great Britain and the United States, and within a Cold War framework that cast the socialist Eastern Bloc as the West’s incompatible Other, a dangerous enemy to the sanctity of democracy. Scholarly writing on women in the GDR during this period can largely be categorised in two trends: ‘oddity’ reporting and yard-stick evaluations. In the first category are such studies as Sudau and Martin’s (1978) or Edwards’ (1985), which present laundry lists of facts and figures intended to sketch a picture of ‘what things are like over there’. Similarly, in Gretchen's Rote Schwestern (1974), scholars Jutta Menschick and Evelyn Leopold – West German and American, respectively – synthesised the results of door-to-door interviews with what few statistics were made available by the East German state with a view to constructing a portrait of their alienated ‘East German sisters’ that might fill the gaps between socialist rhetoric and the actual realities on the ground. These early reports set the agenda for much of the scholarly discussion of East German women that followed, providing a basis for future lines of argument resting on women’s proportional representation in the workforce, the resilience of patriarchal structures, and the exploitation of female domestic and reproductive labour. Since the fall of the Wall and the opening of the East German archives, such knowledge-gathering impulses have continued apace, but more recent researchers present their extended findings in the context of critical analysis rather than in the form of factual reportage.

Works in the second category follow influential feminist and sociologist Maxine Molyneux's (1981) critical evaluation of socialism as a catalyst for the emancipation of women and must be contextualised within a tradition not just of polarised Cold War attitudes but that of late second-wave feminist thought. At the core of such analyses lay two assumptions: 1) that the policy of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) was entirely

7. Second-wave feminism revolved around the cry of ‘the personal is political’. The goal of the movement was to effect social change and help women to attain equal access to the public liberties men enjoyed. For second-wave feminists, emancipation would be achieved through the establishment of legal, economic and social equality for women. See Downes (2010: 20ff).
driven by ideology, and that the party used high Marxist theory as a blueprint for their own policies; and 2) that the emancipation of women is encapsulated in the freedom of women from the domestic shackles of patriarchal gender roles. Marx dedicated little more space to the plight of women than to outline the assumption that women’s liberation would come hand-in-hand with the liberation of the proletariat: or, rather, that the two were coterminous (Marx cited in Buckley, 1985: 21). 8 August Bebel built on Marx’s framework, arguing that as women’s oppression stemmed directly from their social and economic dependence, their subordination had been conditioned by capitalism, and would continue only as long as capitalism did. Thus, only through economic liberation and self-determination could women be truly emancipated (Bebel, cited in Buckley, 1985: 21f). Engels, too, affirmed that the oppression of women within the paternalist family was the direct result of capitalist concentration of wealth in the hands of individual men (Engels, cited in Buckley, 1985: 23). 9

Anglo-American feminists10 in particular were preoccupied with the notion of equality between the sexes and the emancipation of women: Women under state socialist regimes were thus subject to close scrutiny, especially as leaders began to claim that the ‘Woman Question’ had been solved.11 Second-wave feminist scholars of the GDR set out to debunk leadership claims that state socialism offered women equality by evaluating the extent to which patriarchal gender roles had changed or

8. Regarding women, Marx famously wrote that the nature of the relationship between man and woman was the most natural relation of human being to human being, and therefore an excellent gauge of the level of humanity a society has attained (Marx cited in Buckley, 1985: 21).

9. This line of thought was crystallised in Lenin’s ‘The Woman Question’, although Lenin did realise that emancipation would not happen over night, and in fact advocated for divorce and abortion reform as well as public solutions to traditionally private, household tasks, alongside the full participation of women in politics. It was Lenin who wrote, rather sagely that ‘it is a far cry from equality in law to equality in life’ (cited in Buckley, 1985: 27).

10. The distinction is key, as European and particularly French feminism developed different trajectories during this period, being to a much greater extent entwined with Marxism, Socialism and the Left.

11. As in the USSR, the ‘woman question’ was declared by party leaders to have been ‘solved’ by the successful introduction of socialism into the GDR and in particular by the 1950 Law for the Protection of Mothers and Children and for the Equality of Women (see Harsch, 2008 #256 @62f).
dissolved in the East German state. By and large, these analysts argued that in fact, by their measure, emancipation remained a far cry from the reality of East German women. For example, analysts offered as counterpoints to socialist claims to have emancipated women by encouraging them to join the workforce statistics which showed the persistence of a very real ‘glass ceiling’ for women in the GDR (Lemke, 1982), or charted the limitations and redundancies of the Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands12 (DFD) as proof of the neglect of women in political representation (Einhorn, 1981). While acknowledging that women were entering the workforce in droves and that participation in the workplace seemed to be granting women a new, unique self-confidence, second-wave analysts continued to question whether this constituted an expansion of women’s ‘horizons’ when they were also expected to provide the brunt of domestic labour and child care (Dölling, 1986).13 This is the so-called ‘double-’ or even ‘triple-burden’ that the ‘emancipated’ women of state socialism experienced, and as a term it has become ubiquitous in literature written on women in the socialist states.14 Early studies, however, did not seek to analyse any potential social roots of the ‘double-burden’, preferring instead to attribute its creation entirely to a repressive, exploitative state, in keeping with the general trend of early GDR histories.

These first studies of women in the GDR sought to evaluate the truth of their emancipation against the yard-stick of their own ideal of emancipation, and this trend continued for some time after the Wall fell and the two Germanys were forcibly reunited. The underlying tone is one of condescension, conscious or otherwise: Feminism as a movement was largely considered irrelevant by East German women (Einhorn, 1993: 185), and this was taken by Western feminists as a sign of their under-developed female consciousnesses and a naiveté regarding the truth of their subjugation to patriarchal power structures (Ferree, 1994; see Bleiker, 2000). East German women were accused of political passivity stemming from an inability to think beyond the dictates of the party (Dölling, 1991), and the

12. ‘Democratic Women’s League of Germany’, the official women’s organisation of the GDR.
13. More on this discussion in section 2.3, as questions of emancipation and gender roles have been key in research on women’s identities in the GDR.
14. See e.g. {Buckley, 1989 #302}, (Corrin, 1992).
state accused of introducing measures for the alleviation of women solely in order to better exploit their reproductive capacities\(^1\) (Gerhard, 1991-1992; von Ankum, 1993).

### 2.2.2. Critical Distance, Second Waves

Over time, and as the influence of the totalitarian thesis over the writing of history began to decline, analysts began to call for a greater degree of critical distance than had been shown in previous studies. In Leonore Ansorg and Renate Hürtgen’s thoughtful article The Myth of Female Emancipation – Contradictions in Women’s Lives, the authors condemned early work on the problem of emancipation for its ‘uncritical attitude’ (1999: 164). They present evidence from personal interviews to show that East German women understood ‘emancipation’ to mean something entirely other than their Western counterparts (including scholars) did (Ansorg and Hürtgen, 1999: 172). Additionally, they assert, emancipation cannot be achieved from above, and any perceived lack of emancipation in East Germany must result from the contradictory nature the term itself (1999: 167).\(^{16}\) While ‘emancipation’ for women, as Ansorg and Hürtgen explain, is frequently understood to be a synonym for the equality between the sexes, in fact the term erases any possibility of heterogeneity within the category of women or variance in the structures that might need to be broken in order for ‘emancipation’ (whatever that might mean to a particular group of women) to be achieved.

In the context of the second period of historiography of the GDR, which began to favour bottom-up analyses, the consideration of every-day interactions between state and society rose to the fore. Arguments over whether or not women in the GDR had truly been emancipated began to fall by the wayside in favour of more nuanced histories of an East German woman’s daily life.\(^{17}\) Such analyses differ

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\(^{15}\) For instance, see the later brief discussion of Honecker’s so-called Muttipolitik.

\(^{16}\) Here, Ansorg and Hürtgen follow Cynthia Cockburn (1993) who declines to give a single definition of or measure for emancipation, instead positing a notion of ‘practices of freedom’ (cited in Ansorg and Hürtgen, 1999: 166).

\(^{17}\) Note that although discussions of the emancipation question have recently been in decline, they have not at all died out, and questions of emancipation continue to be addressed through a variety of analytical lenses. See, e.g. Finzel (2003), Fulbrook (2005: 142ff), and further discussion below.
from the early ‘oddity reporting’ impulse by highlighting the pockets of agency that were available to women in their daily lives – and, importantly, the effects that such pockets of agency had on the state. Regarding the patterns of women’s work, for instance, Heineman argued that although the SED sought to shape women’s lives with ideological rhetoric and structural measures that encouraged them to both to become mothers and join the workforce, in fact women’s decisions regarding parenting and work were conditioned above all by their own economic considerations (2000: 153). Assertions of women’s agency within the structure combined also with late second-wave feminist standpoint theory18, leading historians such as Langenhan and Roß to assert that the lives and daily experiences of men and women were so different from each other as to warrant the consideration of gender as a structural characteristic in its own right, influencing the vertical and horizontal segregation of the workforce and the persistent, traditional family roles (1999: 188).

Economic considerations gained new importance in second wave, turn-of-the-century histories of East Germany. With the assertion that the continuity of the East German state relied on its obtaining a degree of legitimacy especially contingent on its ability to provide for its citizens’ needs (Stitziel, 2008: 254), the ‘citizen as consumer’ served as a prototype, a useful prism through which to examine not only individual East German political and social behaviour but also the interactions of the state with its citizens (Hogwood, 2002; Crew, 2003). As women were overwhelmingly in charge of shopping and negotiating the distance between state provision and family needs, and as problems of the consumer economy were one of the leading troubles for the regime, women’s roles as consumers became a key focus point for their involvement in socialist life (Pence, 2001: 6; Pence and Betts, 2008b: 288).

18. Feminist standpoint theorists begin analyses with the assumption that women exist in specific ‘material historical circumstances’ in which power is overwhelmingly held by men and distributed according to a sex/gender hierarchy. The goal of standpoint theorists is to raise awareness in women of the oppressive artifice of the gender system as opposed to any perceived naturalness of its structure (Code, 2006: 156)
Building on these arguments, Donna Harsch’s influential book *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (2008) represents the dramatic shift not only in the investigation of East German women but also in the writing of a social history of the GDR that uncovers the ways in which society and state did not just interact but in fact depended on each other intrinsically. In the book, a good encapsulation both of the second period of GDR historiography and some impulses of second wave feminism, Harsch argues that while SED rhetoric and policies set the terms of the interaction between the state and its female citizens, women reacted within the structures the state created (2008: 2). Women complained, resisted, and negotiated such that the party was ultimately unable to avoid dealing directly with their grievances: things such as reproductive rights, child care, and the double burden, which had been previously largely ignored in favour of ideological rhetoric. This is what Harsch calls the ‘revenge of the domestic’ and it is the domestic’s revenge, its categorical refusal to be ignored, rather than any ideological watershed so frequently assumed to have occurred during the transition between Ulbricht and Honecker\(^\text{19}\), that Harsch proclaims the harbinger of the new welfare packages of the 1970s and 80s.

More recently, the emergence of new approaches to social history has resulted in an influx of studies on identities and subjectivities as they were experienced within the GDR. This is not to say that such questions had not been dealt with previously: as early as 1982, some analysts were using literature and writing from the GDR in an attempt to trace shifting subjectivities and identities (Shelbitzki Pickle, 1982; Zehl Romero, 1986). The following section delves into this discussion on identities, particularly gendered identities, in the GDR in more depth.

\(^{19}\) Histories of the GDR often incorporate an analytical assumption of two discrete periods demarcated by the terms of the two leaders of the SED, Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker. Ulbricht’s term is generally assumed to have been a time of strict adherence to Marxist rhetoric and deliberate social and political engineering, while Honecker is more readily associated with generous welfare packages (especially geared towards women, his so called *Muttipolitik* or ‘Mother-politics’) and a relative ‘normalisation’ or ‘stabilisation’ of social life. See e.g. Harsch (2008).
2.3. Socialist Identities, Socialist Roles

From early on in the Cold War, Western analysts were keen to evaluate (and condemn) the effects of state socialism on the individual and her psyche. Analysts who subscribed totalitarian theories, following e.g. Havel, assumed that the totalitarian state exerts pressure on the individual to conform to its dictates through threat of physical consequences; the individual, helpless and terrified, has no choice but to capitulate. The state, therefore, is responsible for shaping the complete structure of society, from institution to individual. According to Hanz Joachim Maaz, for instance, the citizens of the GDR were infected with a virus (state socialism) which ‘caused a pathological destruction of society’ and lead to a Gefühlsstau (cited in Veenis, 2012). Maaz represents an extreme example, and his thesis has been heavily criticised for erasing any kind of agency from the citizens of the state (Veenis, 2012). Still, it was not uncommon in early, first- and even second-period analyses of East Germans and their subjectivities to characterise them as somehow lacking in authenticity, especially when compared with their West German counterparts (Eghigian, 2008: 41).

By and large, these analysts argued that, by their measure, emancipation remained a far cry from reality for East German women – and they placed the blame for this on a lack of change in gender roles. So, for instance, with her analysis of gender roles in photographs in magazines, Dölling (1989: 135) argued that while women were depicted as successful members of the workforce, the bulk of these photographs showed women in ‘typical female occupations … [which] confirm and preserve the stereotypical concept of women as serving, supportive, helping, and caring’. Such photos, Dölling argues, had an ‘emotionally ambivalent meaning’ for women who could only hope to partially fill the shoes of an ‘ideal worker’, doomed as they were to take time out and split their energies in order to provide childcare (Dölling, 1989: 135). Still, by the 1970s women were joining the workforce in essentially equal proportions to men, and Dölling saw enough evidence of change

20. Literally, a ‘feeling blockage’, implying a caesura of genuine emotion.
to assert that women’s identities were, finally, beginning to change, to ‘broaden’ beyond the horizon of the family (Dölling, 1986: 86).21

In this way, much of the literature about female identity and gendered subjectivity in the GDR has been dominated by a discussion of (patriarchal) gender roles, questions of emancipation/equality, and the family. A reported ‘hardening’ of ‘traditional’ attitudes has been attributed to elements of official policy which, as they were addressed directly to women with the intention of alleviating the double (or triple) burden, in fact solidified traditional gender-roles and ‘women’s disadvantaged position in the public sphere’ (Einhorn, 1993: 47).22 According to Katharina von Ankum (1993), the paternalistic, patriarchal SED refused to tolerate any interference with its monopoly over women’s bodies and actively used the state media to shape the definition of womanhood with rhetoric that would reinforce motherhood and women’s central role in child rearing, thereby establishing reproduction as a ‘patriotic duty’ for the East German woman.23

The image of the patriarchal state reproducing traditional gender-roles and identities for its own good has persisted. Finzel (2003) observes that laws in the GDR were developed mostly by men; it is likely, therefore, that they depicted a (by default restricted) ‘male worldview’ and, as a result of this restricted view, policies were designed to aid women’s participation in the (male) world of work but failed to reallocate (female) work within the family to include men. Recently, though,

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21. Here, Dölling references the interviews gathered by Maxie Wander in Guten Morgen, Du Schöne, a ground-breaking collection of taped protocols in which women from various areas and situations of life spoke candidly about their experiences of life in the GDR.

22. A 1988 survey returned results reporting that 37% of women and 43% of men believed that women should be the one to make career compromises when children were young while only 3% of women and 1% of men thought that men should put their career on hold to look after children. According to Einhorn, this represented a significant hardening of traditional attitudes. See Einhorn (1993: 29ff).

23. Von Ankum’s use of ‘patriotic duty’ here is problematic: She attributes it to a Socialist policy maker, Grotewohl, but the SED maintained a difficult and complex relationship to the concept of nation and nationalism. I would rather use the phrase ‘socialist duty’; the difference is subtle, but important.
analyses have sought to restore some form of agency to individuals in the area of identity formation. For instance, Astrid Ihle shows how photographs could undermine socialist ‘consensus’ and disrupt expected codes, thereby ‘popularising new models of female identification’ (2000: 48-50). Veenis writes that ‘it was impossible to draw a line between the East German state and its citizens. Everyone helped to enhance the printed version of reality’ (Veenis, 2012: 104). According to Ansorg and Hürtgen (1999) women believed that they, rather than the state, determined their gender roles. It was typical for East German women to claim ‘I was emancipated because I never lost a day of work, despite my three kids, illness, and my divorce’ (Ansorg and Hürtgen, 1999: 172). Such studies have lead to claims such as that by Herzog that the GDR developed its own ‘distinctive standards of masculinity and femininity’ (2008: 86). Such claims, however, have remained largely unsubstantiated by thorough research. Much discussion has occurred about gender roles but, as Ross laments, this has largely been done without a consideration of the ‘role of ordinary East Germans, the weight of older social structures, milieux and mentalities’ (Ross, 2002: 54). This failure to historicise gender roles and identities is a significant gap – but, as we shall see, it is not an uncommon one.

2.4. Gender History and the Gap

The previous consideration of the historiography of women in East Germany reveals some significant shortcomings in the literature. In large part, East German women have been treated as pawns either within their own society or in a broader conflict between the academies of East and West. Generally speaking, academic treatment of the subject of East German women has adhered to the broader traditions of social and economic history. These are academic traditions that emerged in the Anglo-American and Western European academies in the late 1880s, as counter-currents to a previous conception of history as that which should chart the journey of Universal Man, the white, westernised and specifically male subject of the Enlightenment, towards his inevitable and ultimate goal of democracy. Social and economic history, on the other hand, call for a focus on the ‘common people’, and scholars adhering to these currents increasingly began to
tell the stories of minority groups that had previously been elided from the history books, subsumed and silenced by the archetype of the Universal Man (Scott, 1999: 180-183; Downs, 2010: 9-10).

In this new academy, women were given a voice in the history books for the first time. Two broad trends of the new historical academy emerged that focused specifically on women as their subjects. The first, operating as a general social history, challenged the narrative of political history with analyses of large-scale social processes told through the lives of particular groups of people (for instance, studies made of women in order to assess the impact of capitalism). The second, which historian Joan W. Scott calls ‘Her-story’, sought to demonstrate women’s ‘essential likeness’ to men as historical subjects by highlighting the active roles women played in their own history; for instance, by proving their participation in key historical events, or charting the courses of their daily lives (Scott, 1999: 20-22). Both of these academic impulses are clearly evident in the existing histories of women in the GDR.

In the 1980s, Joan W. Scott’s essay entitled ‘Gender – A Useful category of Historical Analysis’ shook the foundations not just of women’s history but of the broader historical academy. The essay functioned both as a trigger and a symptom of the so-called ‘cultural’ and ‘linguistic shift’ in the social sciences. Women’s history had become separated and polarised from the mainstream academy, set outside of ‘History’ in many institutions, particularly in America and Britain where, during the 1960s and 1970s, a late Cold War mind set caused historians to become preoccupied with ‘the tendency of stable structures to break down’ (Scott, 1999: 194) The association of women’s history with feminist politics further radicalised the tradition and caused it to suffer relative neglect by the mainstream academy (Scott, 1999: 196). It was during this time that the term ‘gender’ was popularised in the literature, meaning something like ‘social roles’ in contrast with the term ‘sex’, which in turn connoted biological ‘fact’. ‘Sex’ and ‘gender’, however, were so loosely defined and the two terms so widely used they became muddied down, corrupted, and stripped of their analytical edge (Scott, 1999: 200). Scott – frustrated by the fact that ‘gender’ had been reduced to a descriptive term used
more or less as a synonym for ‘woman’, and apathetic towards the tendency of feminist academics to focus on either the sameness or differences between women and men – argued vehemently that it is the job of historians to scrutinise popular historical methods, challenge history’s operative assumptions, and explain not only how particular meaning comes about but also how meanings can change (Scott, 1999: 32, 42). In terms of gender and women’s history, Scott wrote that the academy needed:

> ... a refusal of the fixed and permanent quality of the binary opposition, a genuine historicisation and deconstruction of the terms of sexual difference. We must become self-conscious about distinguishing between our analytic vocabulary and the material we want to analyse (Scott, 1999: 41).

Over the course of the essay, Scott advanced a concept of gender not as an entity in and of itself but rather as a category for historical analysis. This move was ‘as much about the practice of history as it [was] about gender’ (Weed, 2011: 292). According to Scott, historical investigation of gender should disrupt the notion of fixity and appearance of objectivity in order to lay bare the mechanisms the gender binary appear natural and timeless. Historians should examine the ways in which gendered identities are constructed in relation to activities, social organisations and historically specific cultural representations (Scott, 1999: 43-44). Additionally, histories of gender ought to include investigation of the ways gender and power construct each other in contingent, historical contexts, calling into question the very existence and persistence of naturalised gendered divisions. While historians have thoroughly investigated many aspects of women’s lives in East Germany, vigorous investigation of the mechanisms of gender identity in the context of the German socialist state have been omitted. Instead, the shape of gender identity within the GDR has largely been treated as an unproblematic given. Those studies that have considered gender identity and subjectivity have largely done so without examining how these identities were negotiated or maintained, beyond insisting on the persistence of patriarchal attitudes as manifested through the allocation of gender roles (for instance von Ankum, 1993; Finzel, 2003). What historians have not done is to question the accepted, naturalised manifestation of gender relations or adequately historicise the shape of female identity in East Germany.
This is a significant gap in the literature, and I do not believe that a single Master’s thesis can fill it summarily. The aim of my thesis, then, is to make a start, to begin to show how this research gap can be filled. My guiding question is broad: *How was female gender identity constructed in the GDR?* A definitive answer to such a broad question is inevitably elusive. The subsequent sections of the thesis, which outline my theoretical framework, source choices and methodology, work to narrow this question into a more feasible set of research questions. By investigating this set of narrower questions, the project sheds light on the broader enquiry, and provides a valuable addition to the corpus of research on East German women.
3. Theoretical Framework

Scott’s approach was heavily influenced by post-structural theory and thus, it is this approach that I build on for my theoretical framework. A post-structuralist approach to the question of gender and history can help to open up analyses of women in the GDR by dismantling leading assumptions, going deeper by questioning the mechanisms by which gendered meanings emerged, changed, or disappeared. This is the sort of approach to the history of women in the GDR that has been neglected by historians eager to, for example, uncover the place of women in a broader, masculinised history; to use women’s perceived condition comparative to that of Western women as a vehicle for criticism of alternative state and social configurations; or condescendingly to posit a false-consciousness among women in the GDR.

The following sections in this chapter will develop my theoretical framework for this analysis, which ultimately draws on several disciplines but rests on the pillars common to most post-structural approaches. My theoretical framework is this:

- Nothing exists outside of discourse; anything that exists in the concrete world is experienced through the prism of discourse. At any given time and place there are multiple discourses competing to establish meaning, and these discourses are mutually constitutive of social relations, including power and subject positions. Meaning is thus contingent, fractured, and vulnerable to change.
- The individual is decentred and can only ever partially occupy multiple subject positions; identity (including gender identity) is best described as a fractured process of identification with various subject positions that are constituted by discourse.
• The analysis of language is a ‘point of entry’ (Scott, 1988: 34) into the understanding of social relations, and it is possible to expose the mechanisms of meaning creation and identities through the deconstruction and analysis of the text.

3.1. Post-Structuralism

Post-structural theory evolved as both an extension and critique of structuralism and retains a complicated relationship with it; indeed, the nature of the relationship between the two bodies of theory is still in dispute (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 6). Because of the complexities of this relationship, and the relevance of structuralist concepts to the investigation at hand, my consideration of post-structuralist theory here begins with its structuralist forebears before moving on to highlight those concepts most relevant to my research.

3.1.1. From Structuralism to Post-Structuralism

The structuralist ontology stems largely from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, whose ground-breaking linguistic analysis rejected any essential, natural relationship between words (signs/signifiers) and their meanings (signifieds). A language (langue) is the set of linguistic rules that are presupposed for meaningful communication, and meaning and signification are entirely immanent to language itself. Within language, the meaning of a sign (also referred to as its identity) is derived from the differences and oppositions it has with other signs, which are established by the underlying linguistic structures (Howarth, 2013: 25-27). The Saussurean model takes a synchronic view of language, and views it as a closed, complete system – a finished product of human convention rather than an on-going process (Downs, 2010: 90; !!! INVALID CITATION !!! ). This presumes the kind of transcendent reason common in Western post-Enlightenment rationalism, a view of history as linear and evolutionary, and places the human subject as the ‘ultimate source of meaning and truth’ (Nicholson, 1990: 3; DiPalma and Ferguson, 2006: 128; Howarth, 2013: 10).

While post-structuralism accepts the importance of structuralism’s contributions, it insists on a problematisation of the essentialist assumptions on which the
structuralist ontology rests. Post-structuralist theory argues that the Saussurean postulation of a permanent fixity of meaning in an arbitrary sign through a set of concrete oppositions with other arbitrary signs fails to account for the plurality and variation in meaning over time or to attribute any degree of agency to the individual’s relation to language (Weedon, 2006: 175). Additionally, by viewing language as a closed system, Saussurean theory is accused by post-structuralist theorists of failing to account for the historicity of structures and the meaning of signs, or the possibility that these structures and meanings might be ambiguous or contradictory (Howarth, 2013: 39-40).

Instead of this fixed system, post-structuralism speaks of signs whose meaning is never permanently fixed but is constantly deferred (Weedon, 2006: 176). Two important theorists in the development of post-structuralist thought are Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault; while the two do not always agree, their work is complementary, and I draw much of my ontological framework from it. The benefit of a post-structuralist approach for my study is precisely its impulse to question that which is taken for granted and attempt to historicise meaning and identity. Adopting post-structuralist theory in the investigation of women’s history allows for a deeper consideration of the mechanisms by which gender itself is constructed. The following brief discussion of Foucault and Derrida’s theoretical contributions to post-structuralism serves to illustrate the pillars of my theoretical framework. This in turn drives my methodological considerations and the transformation of my broad research interest into more specific, tangible research questions.

3.1.2. **Derrida, Différance, and Discourse**

Saussurean structuralism grants signs unambiguous identities by positioning them in a negative relation to other signs within a linguistic system. Critical of this conception, Jacques Derrida argued instead for a positive, productive process, which he called *différance*, whereby meaning is produced *both* through differences between terms and the deferment of other, possible differences not captured by those terms (Howarth, 2013: 158; Direk and Lawlor, 2014: 3). The meaning of signifiers can never be centred or pure, as they exist in an ‘endless play’ of
hierarchical binaries (e.g. ‘unity’/‘diversity’, ‘good’/‘bad’, ‘man’/‘woman’). At first glance, these binaries appear to be stable and fixed, but their opposition conceals an important interdependence whereby the ‘leading’ term assumes and derives its meaning from the other, ‘weaker’ term. The leading term is contaminated by its Other to the extent that the secondary term must be seen as the thing that generates the definition of the primary (Scott, 1988: 37; Sonya Rose, 2010: 104). This formulation creates an undecidability that enables any system of meaning to emerge, thus eschewing naturalistic, deterministic links between signifier and signified, and destabilising meaning (Sonya Rose, 2010: 104; Howarth, 2013: 52).

Extending this logic, there can be nothing that exists entirely outside a text that can confirm its claim to truth; the exteriority is always in some way assumed by the interiority of the text. Anything that seems to be outside of a text is only made to appear that way as an ‘effect of writing’ and is, in fact, concealed within it (Direk and Lawlor, 2014: 2; !!! INVALID CITATION !!! ). Derrida’s famous, controversial claim that ‘There is nothing outside the text’ (Il n’y a pas de hors-texte) does not mean that the only thing that exists is literal, written text, but rather that all human experience is mediated through language and the operations of its binaries and their simultaneous ‘referral and deferral of meaning’(Derrida, 1997: 158; Grbich, 2004: 35; Howarth, 2013: 53). The text Derrida refers to is otherwise known as discourse. Discourse is thus a structuration of meaning that is always only temporarily fixed, which is perpetually haunted by and vulnerable to the meanings it negates. It follows in turn that an analysis – what Derrida called deconstruction – of the text can lay bare the operations of these contaminated binaries to reveal their indeterminate nature. In an investigation of gender and gender identity, so dominated by the ‘male/female’ dichotomy that is take entirely for granted by so many people, this theoretical basis is of great importance. My research question, How was female gender identity constructed in the GDR, implies questions not only of the making of meaning but its fixation in a given point in time – in consideration of this aspect, Michel Foucault’s theories are of great relevance.
3.1.3. Foucault

In his later, so-called ‘genealogical’ work, Foucault focused not on the nuts and bolts of meaning creation, as Derrida does, but rather on the means by which one meaning may become fixed in discourse rather than another at a given point in time and place. He also gave thought to the ways these meanings might change, and the consequences those processes have for knowledge, truth, and the human being as a subject. His overarching question becomes not what we know, but how and why we think we know it at any given time. Genealogy represents an attempt to ‘create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subject’ (Foucault, 1982: 777). A genealogy of subjectification places the ‘individualised, interiorised, totalised and psychologised understanding of what it is to be human as delineating the site of a historical problem’; it asks ‘under what conditions and through what forms can an entity like the subject appear’? (Kathy E. Ferguson, 1991: 15; Nikolas Rose, 1996: 149) To investigate these questions, Foucault’s genealogy uses discourse as its source material.

Foucault’s theory of discourse revolves around the nature of power and its exercise: power, in Foucault’s later conception, is ‘a question of government’ and the exercise of power ‘consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome’ (Foucault, 1982: 789). In this sense, government is the structuration of the possible field of action (Foucault, 1982: 790). Discourse is the means by which this government occurs; the silences that discourse imposes – the things that are not accepted as valid statements or behaviours – exist not outside but within discourse, as the counterparts to power's interlocking, hierarchised articulations (Foucault, 1990: 27-28). Thus, power becomes not a

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24. Foucault’s earlier works are described as an ‘archaeology of knowledge’; investigations of the rules that determined which statements might be accepted as meaningful and true at a given point in time. These writings are compelling and important but are more easily consonant with a structuralist ontology and neglect the key element of problematisation from investigation.

25. Foucault has been accused of being fickle over his theory of power – certainly, his conception of it changed over time. Again, I draw largely from power as he conceived of it in his later work, beginning with The History of Sexuality and onward.
thing to be possessed by individuals and exercised from the top down, but rather is best conceived as a relationship (Gauntlet, 2002: 117).

Power therefore does not just have one operation but multiple machinations rooted 'deep in the social nexus'. The human subject is suspended by the strands of power, simultaneously produced by and reproducing those strands. There can be no society without power relations, and outside of these relations, power cannot be said to exist. (Foucault, 1980: 98; 1982: 790; Gauntlet, 2002: 118). Power relations constrain and constitute the ‘very possibilities of volition’, which means that power cannot be withdrawn or refused, only redeployed (Butler, 2011: 168). It is key to remember, though, that Foucault’s conception of power is not a negative conception. Power does limit the realms of possibility of the social, but it is also the thing that provides the conditions of possibility for the social – it is productive (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 14). Discourses are the products of power, and discourses in turn constitute knowledge, truth effects, and subjectivities. Truth itself is unattainable, as it is ‘impossible to talk from a position outside discourse’. Everything must be represented in discourse, which means that analytic focus should fall not on the question of whether something is ‘true’ or ‘false’ but on how the effect of truth is created by discourse. The important question for analysts to be asking is how the social world, its subjects and its objects are constituted in discourse (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 13-14).

The degree to which discourse is constitutive of human subjectivity is a topic of debate among scholars and across disciplines. The postulate that ‘nothing exists outside the text’ implies that humans cannot understand or experience anything in a pure, unfiltered state; language and consequently discourse give structure to all human experience, and even concrete objects cannot be understood except as they are represented through discourse. It follows that human identities (that is, the nexus of our self-perceptions and behaviours) must also be to some or the other extent constructed through discourse. This in turn means that we can (and should) investigate subjectivity through discourse; that an analysis of discourse can reveal the strands of power that constitute and constrain subjectivity and identity. Of necessity born of time and space constraints, I am largely avoiding the nuts and
bolts of the arguments over the extent of subjectivity’s discursive roots. I adopt here several key theories from Jacques Lacan, modified to fit the rest of my theoretical framework in order to bridge the gap between discourse, subjectivity, and identity in a fruitful way that creates a theory of discursive identity that is workable in a historical study.

3.2. Identities and Subjectivities

Lacan’s critique of Freud and object relation theory has been critical in the evolution of post-structural and psychoanalytical thought – in fact, the two can be said to have evolved in dialogue with each other. The influence of Lacanian thought on post-structural theorists has caused a rejection of any natural, one-to-one relationship between the subject and the individual (Alsop, Fitzimons et al., 2002: 55). According to Lacan, the subject depends entirely on language for its production, and is therefore necessarily split. Language is a socially determined system, and thus the social must be responsible (to some extent) for the production of the unconscious (Alsop, Fitzimons et al., 2002: 54). Proceeding from a Saussurean conception of language, where language relies on a system of signifiers and signifieds, and any identity must be defined against an Other, the subject – perpetually haunted by its own negative – is decentred and unstable. The Lacanian subject is thus perennially incomplete, constantly striving to achieve a complete identity – a one-to-one mapping of signifier with signified. The ability of the subject to actually and fully achieve any single identity, however, is an unattainable myth. Identity is therefore more aptly described as process of identification, wherein the subject constantly attempts to achieve unity with some signifier, but is doomed never to realise it (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 42).

Lacanian theory has been heavily criticised, especially by feminist theorists, for its phallocentrism, essentialism, and failure to historicise the processes through which subjectivities are stabilised (Henriques, Hollway et al., 1984: 217; Butler, 1990: 329). In response to this, post-structural theories of the subject largely accept the deconstruction of the subject heretofore assumed to be unitary and transcendent, replacing Lacan’s universal timeless symbolic order with a notion of
‘positioning’ that occurs within discourses (Henriques, Hollway et al., 1984: 217). This not only enables an analysis of linguistically mediated subjectivity in terms of historical variation and in relation to power, but also allows for an explanation of how an individual comes to inhabit a multiplicity of interlocking, sometimes contradictory subject positions.

The framework of the subject is thus: humans enter a world of discourses and practices and cannot think or conceive of objects outside of these discourses (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 5). Discourses create subject positions, master signifiers which are invested with meaning through the shifting relationships they have with other signifiers, but the meaning of these signifiers is always unstable (their identity is always split). The site of the signifier is always a site of conflict, as different discourses offer different content with which to fill it (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 41-43). Establishing subjectivity always involves power, because – as we have seen – a claim to identity must always involve a repression of an outside Other (Hall, 1996: 3). In this way, discourse mediates the rules about who or what can or cannot occupy a subject position (Braidotti, 2011: 18). Furthermore, if the creation of a subject is the result of power (establishing a negative relation between an identity and its outside), power must be said to both create and result from the subject (Butler, 2004: 41); thus, discourse simultaneously creates and is created by the subject.

Identities are best understood and analysed as processes that can never be fully accomplished; the results of temporary attachments to the subject positions that discourse constructs (Hall, 1996: 5). They are, ‘to a large extent, imaginary tales, which project a reassuring but nonetheless illusory sense of unity over the disjointed, fragmented, and often incoherent range of internal and external fractures that compose them’ (Braidotti, 2011: 78). The multiplicity and variability of discourses that operate at any given time and in any given place adds another layer of ambiguity to identity. The human individual is caught between these discourses, drawn into their constant struggle as they seek to attain identities through which their own subjectivity can become culturally intelligible (Buffington, 2007: 1648). Subjectivity constrains and creates human agency,
and as a result becomes an important consideration in historical analyses. *Gender* is an identity, constantly in the process of being constructed by discourse and in turn shaping the subjectivity of individuals. History has created gender as a particularly salient identity, and as such it deserves particular attention.

### 3.2.1. Gender Identity, Gendered Subjectivity

Joan W. Scott defined 'gender' with two interconnecting propositions: 1) that ‘gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes’ and 2) that ‘gender is a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated’. Furthermore, gender involves four elements: culturally available symbols, normative concepts, political institutions and organisations, and subjective identity (Scott, 1999: 45ff). These four elements are intertwined in such a way that makes it possible to use them in order to investigate gender and its operations in a historical context. The most important, and the most controversial, of the implications of this framework is that gender cannot be said to have any more of an essential ‘core’ than any other identity or meaning. The difference between ‘man’ and ‘woman’, ‘female’ and ‘male’, must be seen as a social construct that is created by and regulated through discourse. Still, gender remains a ‘dominant lived category’, an identity the meanings and consequences of which seem natural and immutable to many (Pratt, 1993: 58). A study of historical gendered subjectivity suffers unless it can somehow bridge the gap between the theoretical concept and concrete experience. In order to link an abstract, intangible theory of the discursive constitution of subjectivity to a discussion of lived experience, I draw on Judith Butler’s influential theory of gender as a socially conditioned, historically sedimented *performance*.

Butler operationalises a Foucauldian conception of discourse as a nexus of power relations that creates and is created by society in her claim that the body only ‘gains meaning within discourse’ (Butler, 2011: 124). Specifically, she (along with Foucault) argues that the discourse of heterosexuality produces the category of biological sex, which is thus revealed to be an artificial, regulatory, *political* construct (Butler, 2011: 125-172). This is an extreme theoretical conception in which even the notion of a biological sex dichotomy is understood to be the result
of discursively established categorical limits (Butler, 2011: 178). The idea of binary sex is the product of a discourse that suppresses internal variation within each category and contrasts it with its external other to create a binary that appears to be absolute, concealing the heterogeneity of each category in the process (Butler, 2011: 178). Sex, then, is a discursively delineated binary imposed on the physical body. On the other hand, gender describes the way a culture expects biological sex to moderate and dictate behaviour: ‘...One is a woman, according to this framework, to the extent that one functions as one within the dominant heterosexual framework...’ (Butler, 2011: xi).

The popular assumption is that biological sex conditions gender identity, and these gender identities are assumed to be mutually exclusive, natural totalities (Butler, 1990: 336). This, however, assumes a coherence of identity between sign (the body) and signifier (gender) that is illusive and mythical, because the meanings of both of these are historically constructed through discourse. The acts and gestures that seem to speak to the existence of an internal, essential gender-specific core are nothing but a socially dictated performance that sediments itself on the discursively sexed body. In fact, the acts and gestures and ‘styles of various kinds’ that create the effect of gender are compelled by social norms, sanctions and taboos (Butler, 2011: 191). Over the course of history, these norms become sedimented on and through the body and create apparently ‘naturalised’ corporeal forms (Butler, 2011: 191). However, the core that gendered performance seeks to express is not essential or timeless but is radically decentred and contingent (Butler, 2011: 185). This means that we cannot hope to discover a truth or falsehood about what gender actually is. Like anything else, gender cannot be said to really exist except as a truth effect of a psychological discourse that supposes a ‘primary and stable identity’, for example, or an essentialist discourse assumes natural and discrete roles for each gender (Butler, 1990: 339).

This does not, however, mean that gender and gender identity cannot be investigated. On the contrary – adopting a theory of gender performativity has significant benefits to such a historical study as my own. Performativity offers a suitable theoretical bridge between the discursive creation of meaning and
identity and individual sexed and gendered bodies. It also allows for change to occur not just in each gender separately but in the shape of the gender binary (or, perhaps more accurately, the gender spectrum), because it rejects a natural link between biological sex and gender. The problematisation and historicisation of the naturalised gender binary is implicit in Butler's theory. Additionally, the theory of gender performativity means that gendered subjectivity can be studied through discourse in a productive manner.

Because gender is created as an effect of discourse, power relations are implicit in its creation and maintenance. Man and Woman are subject positions in discourse which individuals may claim to inhabit only if they fit the criteria invested into those subject positions by the discourse. Individuals who do not conform to the subject positions delineated by discourse risk becoming culturally unintelligible – the limits of these subject positions are heavily policed and transgression of those limits can warrant severe punishment (Butler, 1988: 528; Buffington, 2007: 1649). The discursive regulation of these subject positions not only shapes the subject, but creates it as well (Butler, 2004). However, the discursive construction of gender means that it retains an element of contingency. If the categories of men/women “are” anything, they are historical’ (Butler and Weed, 2011: 3). Subject positions, we have seen, are the site of constant conflict, as competing discourses attempt to invest them with different meanings according to the specific way in which they are articulated against other signifiers within that discourse. This implies and incorporates an element of changeability. Gender, as a master signifier caught up in a web of discursive meaning creation, can never be said to operate alone. The meaning of gender – what it signifies to say one is woman, for instance – is thus socially produced, variable, and contested between discourses (Weedon, 2006). Vitally, we must understand gender as a subject position that intersects with other subject positions, and this intersection modifies the meaning of both signifiers. This theory of gender allows us to deconstruct its apparent coherence and examine it not as a universal, homogenous entity but as a site of discursive conflict and an identity in a constant process of change.
This conception of the historicity and variability of gender, and the relationship between genders and other aspects of discourse, has been significantly absent from considerations of gender in socialist East Germany. Historians have focused, in large part, on the change (or lack thereof) in gender roles without considering the underlying mechanisms of discursive identity and subjectivity. Gender roles – for instance the archetypal housewife and breadwinner dichotomy – are better understood as gender performances. Without an understanding or even contextualisation of the discourses that create and sustain the norms and taboos that structure those gender performances, analysis of gender roles inevitably fall flat. At any given time and place, there are multiple discourses in effect which vie against each other in order to establish the limits of identities and subjectivity; individuals enter into this matrix and crucially are dependent on it to ‘initiate and sustain’ their agency, or ability to think, act, and behave (Butler, 1997 cited in Buffington, 2007: 1648) (Butler, 1997). This framework of gender, gender identity and gendered subjectivity as the products of discourse has significant impact on my research question. The guiding question, How was female gender identity constructed in the GDR?, is consequently transformed to: How was female gender identity constructed in discourse in the GDR? This is still a broad inquiry; the following section turns to questions of sources for investigation and subsequently methodological considerations in order to narrow the precise research questions for analysis further.
4. The Sources

The question of sources for historical investigation of East German society has been a fairly difficult one, given the relative scarcity of material available. Still, historians are nothing if not resourceful: studies have made use of everything from literature (e.g. Shelbitzki Pickle, 1982) to the vast amount of letters of complaint (e.g. Harsch, 2008). There has been a noticeable tendency among historians of the GDR, however, especially of the first and second periods, to dismiss the East German press as a source of reference material regarding the shape of every day life. Historians have largely assumed the products of the East German media to be irrelevant, bald propaganda, or – at best – composed of thinly veiled socialist rhetoric. Those studies that do use evidence garnered from the East German media have, by and large, focused on television and radio, and used it to support accusations of social engineering or to illustrate socialist rhetoric. Below, I argue for a distinction to be drawn between audio-visual and print media, and – in line with a few, more recent analysts – make a case for the usefulness of evidence drawn from East German print media in the study not just of every day life, but for the study of discursive interaction and the negotiation of identities and subjectivities in East German society.

4.1. Socialist Media, Censorship and the Writing of History

The East German press was remarkable for its diversity and prolificness under a paradoxically all-powerful yet relatively lax system of censorship and control. The available figures on the size and shape of the GDR press are sketchy at best, but are sufficient to paint a general picture. In 1988, there were 1,812 periodicals in circulation in a population of approximately 17 million. These included 39 daily
newspapers, 30 weekly and monthly newspapers, and 508 magazines (Urbschacht, 1997: 346). Circulation remained relatively small (Urbschacht, 1997: 345), but surveys conducted by the Institute for Market Research lead to estimates in 1975 that 89 percent of men and 84 percent of women read newspapers or magazines on a daily or near-daily basis. By 1979, these figures rose to 93 and 90 percent, respectively (cited in Löffler, 1999: 48). In 1973, the average number of newspapers and magazines subscribed to per household was 1.17 copies and it was estimated that 80 percent of households had a newspaper or magazine subscription; by 1979, there were an average of 1.37 subscriptions per household, and 92 percent of households held subscriptions (Löffler, 1999: 48). While West German media remained the biggest rival for the East German media complex, most of this competition came in the form of West German television and radio stations. Some West German print media did make it to the East, even after the Wall went up, but never in any great volume. Meanwhile, the print runs of the various East German newspapers and magazines were far from negligible. To dismiss East German print media as irrelevant, unseen, or entirely disregarded by the population is to wilfully ignore its relative significance and thus pass over a valuable source of data.

Marxist theory clearly outlines the role of the press in a socialist state: it should act as an agitator, propagandist, and organiser in the name process of constructing an advanced socialist society (Sandford, 1984: 28). Thus, the regulation of the press in the GDR fell to the Department of Agitation (Bytwerk, 2004: 67). However, in 1987, the Department of Agitation had just sixty-nine members. No wonder, then, that the department’s actual efficacy and influence over the 543 magazines it was charged with overseeing (among the other publications it was also responsible for) has been questioned (Holzweißig, 2002: 26). Control over publications was exerted in other ways, such that post-censorship was often left as a punitive last resort. In order to be legally published and circulated, periodicals had to have a license. These licenses could be obtained by state organs, institutes, academies, states governments also had a Press Office, but it had a very limited role (Bytwerk, 2004: 68).

26. The state government also had a Press Office, but it had a very limited role (Bytwerk, 2004: 68).
27. ‘Post-censorship’ is censorship as it is generally understood, a sanitisation or redaction of content that occurs after material has been written, but before it goes into publication.
parties, mass organisations, associations, publishers, and individuals. The terms and conditions of the license clearly stated that the character of the publication had to adhere to GDR laws, and that circulation was subject to the availability of printing capabilities and paper – no small veiled threat (Holzweißig, 2002: 27).

Most censorship in the GDR, however, was not punitive: rather, it was pre-emptive. A diffuse and secretive but bureaucratically and ideologically weighty system of press instructions, similar to that which had been present under the National Socialist German Worker’s Party (the NSDAP, or Nazi Party), ensured that journalists and editors were always aware of which party line they were expected to toe (Wilke, 2011). In a system where every individual writer carried responsibility for their own work (Holzweißig, 2002: 4), ‘the sanctions for violating norms have power’ (Bytwerk, 2004: 159). Stefan Wolle, a historian who once worked in the Institute for General History at the Academy Sciences of the German Democratic Republic, has since famously described this phenomenon as the ‘Schere im Kopf’ (scissors in the head) of every writer. However, Wolle also points out that people in the GDR were experienced at reading ‘in between the lines’, catching material and meanings that inspectors ignored or simply missed, as they were likely often overwhelmed (Wolle, cited in Holzweißig, 2002: 32).

Some historians of the GDR have read the SED’s control of the media as a given which, combined with the high rate at which East Germans accessed Western television and radio, justifies the dismissal of in-depth analyses of the content of said media beyond its role as a propaganda device. Dölling’s (1989) study of photographs and gender role stereotypes in Neue Berliner Illustrierte28 and Für Dich29 was one of a very few studies that briefly investigated the discursive negotiation of gender roles in the GDR press. Otherwise, historians of women in the GDR have often turned to Für Dich to mine anecdotal data from its editorials and reader discussions (see e.g. Harsch, 2008), and the fashion magazine Sibylle has been the object of quite a bit of nostalgic writing, including a documentary film made in 2001 (see Schrader, 2001; Poschardt, 2010). An exhaustive search of the

29. Literally ‘For You’, a weekly illustrated magazine specifically for women.
literature available to me, in both English and German, however, has failed to turn up any other examples of close investigations into the contents or discourse of East German women's magazines. The presumption seems to have been that the heavy hand of the state rendered these contents and discourses irrelevant to a true and authentic history of East Germany.

In line with Dietrich Mülhberg (1999: 33), though, I contend that the illustrated magazines produced in the GDR are, in fact, useful sources for consideration in cultural and historical research. It is important to bear in mind that although such publications were heavily subsidised by the state (Urbachacht, 345), magazines and their contents still needed to appeal enough to readers in order that they might consider buying them. In contrast with the daily newspapers, and despite the necessity of generally toeing party lines, the main aim of the illustrated magazines was not political information and education – rather, their principal intention was to attempt to bridge the gap to the 'real world' and serve readers' actual needs for information, explanation, and entertainment (Mühlberg, 1999: 33-34). Those intentions are what make the contents of the magazines 'culturally-historically revealing', as Mühlberg puts it, as they represent what the publishers believed to be entertaining offerings that would satisfy the expectations and desires of their readers (1999: 38). Crucially, neither Mühlberg nor I seek to deny the presence of socialist politics or censorship in the press offerings of the GDR. Such an argument would of course be hard-pressed to maintain any sort of authority. Consider, however, the similarities between Wolle's Schere im Kopf and the theory of discourse outlined above, in which power works through discourse to dictate the limits of what can and cannot be said in society. This theory of discourse implies that everyone, regardless of the kind of society they live in, carries a pair of scissors in their head. My study looks beyond the oft-presumed 'dichotomy of information/propaganda versus entertainment', as Löffler (1999: 49) put it, in approaches to socialist print media, and instead seeks to investigate the discourses represented therein to discover what the limits of these discourses can tell us about East German social realities.
Furthermore, there is an established historical tradition of using mass media to investigate gender identity (Burke Odland, 2010: 65). This is not such a developed impulse in studies of Socialist Europe, but I believe that the impulses that drive that tradition are legitimately applicable to such studies. The socialist media was, of course, under more strict hegemonic control by a leading government, but as argued above, the actual, forcible control exerted by the SED over the East German press was variable. Additionally, it is imprudent to dismiss socialist discourses out of hand; although citizens of East Germany may have been aware of socialist direction in public discourse, that does not mean to say that they remained entirely unaffected by it. Of necessity, most if not all East Germans must have been aware of the limits that socialist discourse placed on their behaviour. To dismiss the effects of this awareness as artificial, and perpetuate the myth that the East German subject remained untouched in her niche, is unsustainable. What is more fruitful is to insist that the socialist discourse did have an effect on East German citizens, but that it was not the only discourse that existed. Socialist mass media, like other mass media, read as ‘media cultural texts … are complex artefacts that embody social and political discourses’ (Kellner, 1995: 4).

In an investigation of the discursive limits and manoeuvres involved in identity construction, socialist print media – produced as it was by contemporaries who carried their own discursive scissors in their heads – is therefore a valuable resource. It must inevitably represent at least some of the discursive limits placed on valid subjectivity as the writers were themselves defined and motivated by these limits. To this end, I selected for analysis two magazines published in the GDR explicitly for women (and, not incidentally, by women): Für Dich and Sibylle.

4.2. Selecting The Sources

Many feminist scholars have dealt specifically with women’s magazines, usually in a rather disparaging way. A key example of this is Marjorie Ferguson, who wrote that women’s magazines were tantamount to the publications of a cult, socialising women into oppressive doctrines (1983: 35). In her book, Ferguson expounds on the power of women’s magazines to present women with discrete gender roles and
solicit them into performing those roles. This is not to say that women’s magazines are the sole influential factor in determining female gender identity, nor must said magazines always present fully formed, discrete gender identities devoid of conflict. Indeed, these magazines and their creators are, as pointed out above, imbrued in the society’s discursive entanglement. It may however be said that magazines, in particular women’s magazines, have an agenda – however conscious – which directly effects the way they depict gender and gender roles (Burke Odland, 2010: 65). The post-structural theoretical framework of my study, however, means that even though these depictions of gender may be to some extent engineered, they are of interest in a consideration of the construction of female gender identity.

There are some other inherent weaknesses introduced by selecting material for analysis that was created specifically for women. It lacks, for instance, the ability to unproblematically represent general social discourse, as the material tends to be self-consciously particularised. This is especially relevant to the evaluation of Für Dich, and is the reason I have included material from Sibylle in my analysis. While Für Dich is an illustrated magazine featuring general interest topics tailored specifically for women, Sibylle is a fashion magazine. Sibylle was also intended for a female audience, but this was in large part based on the assumption that readers most interested in women’s fashions would be female. The difference is subtle, but no less important for all that. Bearing these weaknesses in mind, the selection of female-oriented magazines still makes sense when investigating the discursive negotiation of female gender identity in discourse. Both magazines were run by predominantly female editorial boards and carried predominantly female-authored content.31 The specificity of the content means that it was specifically produced in order to resonate to some degree with its (female) readers. Both of these factors lend credibility to the magazines’ relevance in a discussion of women’s discursive navigation of gender identity.

31. This assertion is based on my own, informal observation.
My research approach seeks to historicise and uncover the shape of subjectivity as it occurred at a certain point in time, and thus I have limited the scope of this investigation to span one calendar year. While a broader investigation covering more time would be illuminating and might offer interesting insights, for instance into discursive change, it would also require much more space than is available in this Master's thesis. For the purposes of this investigation, I have focused on the year 1975, which – aside from being a few years into the apparent period of 'stabilisation' under Honecker and the introduction of his Muttipolitik\(^{32}\) – has the benefit of having been declared the International Year of Women. The International Year of Women garnered much introspective focus in print media on the state of women both in the GDR and abroad. Although it could be argued that such introspective and self-analytical material is unnatural and might not represent the general state of every day discourse, such discussions are likely to contain good examples of social antagonisms, places where competing discourses can be seen to clash over attempts to establish meanings and identities.

Full-text archives of *Für Dich* are not common, but can be found in several libraries in Germany. I was able to conduct my research in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin\(^{33}\) (SbB), which holds the entire *Für Dich* catalogue, minus a few missing issues, from 1962 until 1990. The SbB was missing just two issues from *Für Dich*’s 53-issue 1975 run. The SbB also holds one of only two existing full-text archives of *Sibylle* – the other is held in the Deutschen Bücherei\(^{34}\) in Leipzig (Kuhn, 1999).\(^{35}\)

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32. Literally, ‘Mother politics’, the slang term that has been adopted to describe Honecker’s social reforms which largely focused on mothers and children. While the interpretation of Honecker’s policies as Muttipolitik has been called into question, for instance by Harsch (2008), nevertheless this period saw a raft of legislation directed particularly towards easing the burdens of women and in particular mothers in the East German state.

33. The Berlin State Library.

34. The German National Library.

35. The publishers of *Sibylle* did not keep running archives, and those that they had were destroyed when the magazine closed its doors.
4.3. A Brief History of the Magazines

One of the key tenants of my theoretical framework is the importance of considering discourse within its own historical context – especially the immediate context within which the source material was produced (in this case, of the writers and editors) and consumed (the readership). Unfortunately, gathering sufficient historical data about the magazines themselves proves difficult. The information gathered below has largely been drawn from the comprehensive study of East German magazines, *Zwischen "Mosaik" und "Einheit": Zeitschriften in der DDR* (Barck, Langermann et al., 1999). *Zwischen “Mosaik” und “Einheit“* is a history volume, but it slots in with other, similar epistolary East German histories that read more like the nostalgic retrospectives of insiders than critical histories.³⁶ Such nostalgic epistolary histories are common, and representative of the popular, public trend of *Ostalgie*, but this does not mean that their insights should be in any way discounted – indeed, in some ways, they offer a more accurate narrative than histories written by outsiders might.

*Sibylle* was founded in 1956, published at first by the Institute of Clothing Culture and then by the *Verlag für die Frau*³⁸ in Leipzig. The editorial board of the magazine, however, maintained its offices in Berlin until the magazine shut down in the mid-1990s. The magazine was produced as a fashion magazine, setting out to represent East German fashion (and other artistic and cultural efforts) at a high level. The editors of *Sibylle* intended for their magazine to be measured against the metre-stick of international fashion, to contribute to taste-building and to help turn (East) Berlin into an internationally meaningful metropolis. Their key words were internationality, attractiveness, and *Weltgewandheit*³⁹ (Kuhn, 1999: 138). According to Nina Kuhn, ‘the magazine radiated *Zeitgeist*;’ the editors were actively trying to capture the spirit and feeling of East German reality in its pages (1999: 141). Formally, political control of the magazine fell under the Department

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³⁶ For instance, Boehlke (2007) and especially Galenza (1999).
³⁷ A popular portmanteau, meaning a sense of nostalgia for the GDR.
³⁸ The Publishing House for Women.
³⁹ Literally, ‘world fluency’.
of Women in the Central Committee, and thus, under the watchful eye of the department head, Inge Lange. Close details of the ins-and-outs of the editorial relationship with political control fall outside the spectrum of this discussion; it is enough to say that although Lange kept Sibylle’s editorial board under close supervision, and although the Editors-in-Chief were for the large part dedicated and party-loyal socialists, the members of the editorial board were also able, to a certain extent, to resist Lange’s ‘suggestions’ and pave their own path.40

Für Dich was the successor of Die Frau von Heute, a magazine spearheaded by the DFD that began in 1953, and which attempted to balance politics and entertainment in order to stimulate growth in its readers (Budde, 1999: 130). Die Frau von Heute was heavily criticised for being too far from its readers, capitulating to western ideology, and failing to engage in adequate social- or self-critique (Budde, 1999: 132). In 1962, Inge Lange decreed that the publications available for women no longer corresponded with requirements, and that even Die Frau von Heute was limited as the organ of a mass organisation. Lange and the DFD recognised the need to compete with the West German women’s illustrated, Constanze; even after the Wall went up, Constanze still managed to find ways into the GDR (Budde, 1999: 134). Für Dich was the answer to both the ideological and market-related problems incurred by Die Frau von Heute. From the date of its first publication in 1962, Für Dich broke with its one-dimensional, non-critical propagandistic predecessor and set out to be an illustrated magazine with a much broader thematic reach (Budde, 1999: 134).

4.4. Meet the Readers

Information about the audience (interlocutors) of a discourse is important when completing a discourse analysis; it provides important context for the consideration of intent, effect, and, indeed, cause within discourse. In 1974, Für Dich had an average print run of 927,347 copies, making it the third-largest weekly magazine in the country. Für Dich did experience a slight stagnation in its later

40. For a more detailed description of the political relationship between the editorial board and Inge Lange’s department, see Kuhn (1999).
years: by 1988, the average print run had risen by a modest 1.1 percent to 937,600\textsuperscript{41}, and dropped one place to come in at fourth in the rankings (Löffler, 1999: 49).\textsuperscript{42} Still, we can infer that in 1975 Für Dich was one of the most widely read weekly magazines in the GDR – an impressive feat when considered in conjunction with the fact that its readership was nearly entirely female. In fact, Einhorn suggests that Für Dich would have even been able to increase its circulation greatly were it not for problems with paper allocation (1993: 244).\textsuperscript{43} Sibylle, on the other hand, ran one issue every two months and had an average run of just 200,000 copies. Additionally, both magazines were successfully sold in other Eastern Bloc countries as well as in West Germany (Kuhn, 1999: 138).

Difficulties abound in reconstructing the shape of East German magazine readership. Much of the internal documentation produced by the magazines was destroyed either along the way or after unification (Kuhn, 1999: 148). Such was the structure of the state-run media that despite a late-1960s upsurge in market research within the GDR (Betts, 2010: 135), very few comprehensive studies were ever made relating to the nature of the readership of individual magazines. Löffler (1999) compiled the results of some readership surveys that were conducted between December 1989 and July 1990. These surveys, although not conducted by a centralised body or according to standardised specifications, and despite the fact that they were not a) completed during the magazines’ heydays of popularity and cultural currency but during a period of relative stagnation nor b) completed at the time of my study’s focus, can still shed important light on the audience dynamics of

\textsuperscript{41} Nearly one half of these copies were subscriptions (Einhorn, 1981: 447).

\textsuperscript{42} The stagnation in readership during this time has been linked to a considerable political tightening that saw the offerings of magazines, including Für Dich and Sibylle become more formulaic and socialist in content compared to the relative artistic freedom enjoyed during the 1970s (Kuhn, 1999: 138).

\textsuperscript{43} The GDR press perpetually found itself in printing crises due to chronic paper shortages, especially in the 1970s and onwards, which meant that daily and weekly magazines could not always fill their orders (Barck, Classen et al., 1999: 218).
the two magazines in question.\textsuperscript{44} By all accounts, the formulas and contents of both magazines remained fairly constant – it is not too far to suggest that the audience composition will have done similar.\textsuperscript{45} A short summary of the results of the surveys will suffice here in order to sketch a broad picture of the magazines’ readers.

Approximately 96 percent of the readerships of both \textit{Für Dich} and \textit{Sibylle} were female (Löffler, 1999: 52). Their similarities, however, seem to stop there. In terms of age, the readership of \textit{Für Dich} was more heterogeneous (see Figure 1), but tended to be older than the readers of Sibylle, 75 percent of whom were under forty (see Figure 2). In terms of occupation, however, the readerships differed significantly. While \textit{Sibylle} was overwhelmingly read by members of the so-called ‘intelligentsia’ (see Figure 3), the readers of \textit{Für Dich} were most likely to be staff (\textit{Angestellte/-r}) or workers (see figure 4).\textsuperscript{46}

The combined readership of \textit{Für Dich} and \textit{Sibylle} spanned a broad and fairly varied section of GDR society. Clearly both magazines catered to slightly different demographics and the interests of those demographics varied accordingly. The 1989 surveys also shed light on these differing interests of the magazines’ respective readerships, although the lack of standardisation hinders comparative analysis significantly (see Figures 5 and 6). Note that the different phrasing of the two questions means that where the \textit{Sibylle} questionnaire asks readers to report

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{44} The lack of market research information on East German media during the 1970s is a real shame, especially considering that it was during the 1970s that mass media is said to have had its greatest period of popularity.

\textsuperscript{45} Here I should note that before I decided to narrow my focus to just one year, I also undertook a similar initial content analysis of complete contents of both \textit{Für Dich} and \textit{Sibylle} in 1985 as that which I present below for 1975; I can thus attest to the fact that neither magazine had changed dramatically in terms of formula or content over the space of the decade.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Sibylle}'s readership survey also included categories for artisans and self-employed workers; \textit{Für Dich} had categories for Farm Workers and Pensioners. I've collated these smaller categories under ‘Other’ for the purposes of comparison. Interestingly, \textit{Sibylle} used the term ‘\textit{studenten}’ (student), which has more high intellectual connotations, while \textit{Für Dich} used the broader, more general phrase ‘\textit{in Ausbildung}’ (in education/training).

\end{footnotesize}
their general interests, Für Dich is asking readers to report which topics they want to be informed about, which comes much closer to asking what readers’ desires and expectations from the magazine are. However, the Für Dich readers had more limited choices in terms of answers than those of Sibylle. Still, some loose generalisations are possible, and interesting observations can be made. For instance, as Löffler highlights, we see a surprisingly low interest in Democracy/Local Politics among readers of Für Dich (just under 40%) in 1989, a time when political interest might be expected to be in a dramatic upswing. Löffler carefully follows this observation, however, with the important caveat that the survey does not necessarily imply that these readers would not be interested in politics at all, simply that it was not what they wanted from this magazine (Löffler, 1999: 54). Für Dich readers, Löffler summarises, were more interested in an ‘allgemeines Weltwissen’, where Sibylle readers favoured culture: their top four interests were reading, fashion, nature, and wohnkultur (Löffler, 1999: 53).

Additionally, approximately 63% of the Sibylle readership were interested in spousal relationships and politics – more so than art and painting.

In this section, I have argued the case of legitimacy for a rigorous investigation of every day life, and in particular historical female identity, using socialist print media, particularly women’s magazines, as source material. Such an investigation, driven by an innovative post-structuralist theoretical framework, addresses several concatenated gaps in the existing literature. Accordingly, my research question transforms to the more specific, source-related How was female gender identity constructed in East German female-oriented public discourse? Research inquiry thus narrowed and particularised, the next section turns to outline the relevant methodological considerations, in particular, to illuminate the model of

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47. Note, too, that the framing of the question combined with the limited availability of choices implies that the offered choices are the only social questions worth offering as choices, thus encouraging a notion that they are, in fact, the only things most people are interested in.

48. A general knowledge of the world.

49. Literally ‘living culture’, loosely translatable to home decor, interior design.

50. Note that most of the options available to the Sibylle readers were, in fact, cultural. Only nine of the twenty-two available choices were arguably non-cultural: Nature, Spousal Relationships, Politics, Children, Hiking, Science, Travel reports, General Technology, and Cars.
discourse that my research assumes and delineate the objects and procedures of my analysis.
In Section 3, I outlined my theoretical foundations, highlighting the influence that Derrida and Foucault and their conceptions of discourse in particular have had on my own ontology and thus my approach to the historical investigation of female gender identity and gendered subjectivity. In this section, I will outline the moves that take me from my ontological framework to my analytical approach. When it comes to analysing discourse, ‘method’ cannot be understood as a set of ‘free-standing, neutral set of rules and techniques’; rather, method and theory are inevitably intertwined in a set of ontological and epistemological assertions (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 4; Howarth, 2005: 318). For instance, both Derrida and Foucault developed their theories in tandem with their own ‘methodologies’, intended not just for analysis but to enable criticism and to drive social change. Derrida’s *deconstruction* aims to break open the operations of *différance* in texts in order to expose how meaning is made to work. By reversing and displacing binary oppositions that appear to be dichotomous, deconstruction reveals their interdependence and relativises their meanings to a particular point in history (Scott, 1988: 37). As Laclau writes, ‘To deconstruct the structure is the same as to show its undecidability, the distance between the plurality of arrangements that are possible out of it and the actual arrangement that has finally prevailed’ (Laclau, 1996a: 57). The aim of deconstruction is not to prove certain meanings wrong, but to expose how ‘truths’ and identities are produced (Pratt, 1993: 259). Foucault, in turn, proposed two methods of discourse analysis – *archaeology* and *genealogy*, already mentioned above– which represent different ways of problematising the nexus of relations between knowledge, power, and subjectivity. The aims and intentions of these methods lend themselves extremely well to an investigation of gender identity and subjectivity that seeks to move beyond essentialised
definitions of femininity and instead to lay bare the mechanisms through which these meanings are constructed. On the subject of how to actually *do* deconstruction and discourse analysis, however, Derrida and Foucault are fairly vague. To fill this gap, I have adopted methods proposed by several other theorists, which this chapter will now outline.

### 5.1. Methodology in Discourse Analysis

Since the ‘linguistic turn’ of the social sciences and the recognition of discourse as a valid object study, a subsequent ‘discursive turn’ has occurred, during which different schools of discourse analysis proliferated. These schools differ largely in their conception of the *scope* of discourse: at one end of the spectrum, ‘discourse’ refers to a unit of spoken or written text larger than a sentence; at the other end, it is said to encompass the entirety of the social world. As a methodological toolkit for analysis is always shaped in relationship to the questions posed by the researcher and the nature of the data being analysed (Howarth, 2005: 337), the different ways these schools analyse discourse vary according to their conception of discourse itself. Each school posits an analytical model of the internal structures and functions of discourse. These analytical models are the driving force of the methodology for analysis, as they dictate what the relevant objects of study are, how these objects may be identified, and what kinds of discussions can occur around them.

The theoretical framework I have laid out above is largely consonant with that of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, whose work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratisation* (2001; first published 1985) set the groundwork for an analytical approach referred to as Discourse Theory. For the purposes of my research, I have followed Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) in adding some key modifications to Laclau and Mouffe’s analytical model that enable a simultaneous analysis of multiple discourses and their contexts, a consideration which Laclau and Mouffe neglect. I should note here that while I adopt large swathes of the model of discourse and its component parts from Laclau and Mouffe, the manner in which I utilise this model is slightly different. The Discourse
Theory model as Laclau and Mouffe formulated it at first was highly critical and radical, a politicised harnessing of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony that sought to brutally deconstruct elements of the status quo in order to effect social or political change. My own aims are much less radical. I believe that my research does have important political implications, but my main focus here is not solely on the hegemonic operations of power. Power is, of course, implicit in discourse, and is an aspect that I am careful to consider, but my main focus will be on the products rather the structure of power itself.

Additionally, in order to facilitate concrete analysis and to make up for the lack of concrete methodological tools proposed by Discourse Theory, and in line with Jørgensen and Phillips’ reformulation of Discourse Theory I have borrowed some aspects of Norman Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as laid out in his influential text *Discourse and Social Change* (1992). Fairclough’s analytical toolkit draws heavily on linguistics; his method interrogates the data by focusing on certain linguistic features at varying levels. It is a flexible method and compatible with my theoretical framework, as it assumes a very similar model of discourse. However, the artificial and ill-supported theoretical distinctions Fairclough draws in his three-dimensional model of discourse between objects and practices constituted in discourse, and those that occur outside of discourse are unworkable within my theoretical framework, which starts with the assumption that all things are understood through discourse. This methodology chapter begins with an outline of the analytical model before discussing its application to the particular research questions and data sets in this study.

### 5.2. Discourse Theory: Units of Analysis

The aim of Discourse Theory is to discover and map the processes through which the meanings of signs become (temporarily) fixed, and how it is that these meanings come to be thought of as natural and objective (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 26). It seeks to explain how signs gain their meaning in a discourse and how these meanings are maintained or altered, but also considers the emergence of new discourses and the ways in which multiple discourses interact with each
other. Laclau and Mouffe’s model of discourse posits as units of analysis not only the individual building blocks of discourses but also the relationships between those building blocks. Jørgensen and Phillips’ additions to this model helpfully facilitate the analysis of the interactions between the discourses as well.

5.2.1. Building Blocks: Elements, Moments and Nodal Points

The basic unit of analysis for Discourse Theory is the sign, loosely equivalent to a written or spoken word. In Discourse Theoretical terminology, signs are called elements. Discourses articulate these elements by establishing relationships between them. The articulation of elements causes their identity or meaning to be modified by the relational position with other signs in which they are fixed. These discursively articulated elements are constitute positions within the discourse, which are called moments (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 105). Because elements are free-floating and polysemic (with undetermined and multiple potential meanings), the fixation of the sign as a moment entails a reduction in possible meanings (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 7; Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 105). A discourse is a ‘reduction of possibilities’, an exclusion of other ways that signs might relate to each other (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 26). However, excluding the unused possibilities for meaning does not obliterate them; instead, these eliminated meanings make up the field of discursivity of the discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 111). The field of discursivity is a reservoir of the ‘surplus of meaning’: all the meanings that each sign has, or once had, or could possibly have in other discourses but which the current discourse has excluded in its attempt to create a ‘unity of meaning’ (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 26). A discourse articulates elements in an attempt to establish closures, complete and total fixtures of meaning in its elements, otherwise known as an identity. However, because (for reasons explained below) no identity can be complete, no articulation can create a final closure in an element. The transition from element to moment – the fixation of meaning in discourse – can therefore never be complete. As we will see, the impossibility of closure and the incomplete, decentred element is what allows discourses to grow and change, and which enables identity itself.

51. I say loosely equivalent as this position may also include compound words and phrases, such as ‘White House’, ‘blood pressure’, etc.
Within a discourse, privileged signs, called nodal points, are responsible for the creation of a temporarily structured system of moments. These nodal points are master signifiers, the signs around which a discourse articulates elements in order to create moments, altering the identity of those elements in significant ways. Nodal points are said to be ‘empty signifiers’ (Laclau, 1996b: 53) because they are ‘pure signifiers’: they have no signified of their own and are thus particularly open to ascriptions of meaning (Žižek, 1989: 97). The open emptiness of the nodal point becomes a battleground in the on-going struggle between different discourses to establish their own fixed totalities of meaning. In the scope of these inter-discursive conflicts, nodal points (which, despite their supposed crystallisation, are particularly fragile) become floating signifiers; that is, signifiers that are especially vulnerable to change. When analysing a single discourse, we talk of nodal points; when analysing the struggles between discourses, we talk of floating signifiers.

5.2.2. Intra-discursive Relationships: The Logics of Equivalence and Difference

Elements are articulated around nodal points by applying logics of equivalence and difference, also referred to as chains of equivalence and systems of difference. The logic of equivalence suppresses and splits any systems of differences that may exist between the signifieds of the articulated signs, usually in opposition to a ‘series of Others’, and imposes equality between them. The logic of difference, on the other hand, dissolves chains of equivalence, expanding systems of differences by emphasising distinctions and de-articulating previously equated signs, and ‘incorporates those disarticulated elements into an expanding order’ (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 11). The logics of equivalence and difference are necessarily intertwined, working together in complex ways; they are never mutually exclusive. The application of the logics of equivalence and difference during articulation always involves the construction of some meanings and the exclusion of others; the discourses and identities produced in this manner are therefore political, as they are the results of the application of power through an ‘endless series of de facto decisions’ (Torfing, 2005: 15). The ‘decisions’ Torfing references here are generally (though not exclusively) unconscious: they occur every time language is used, with effects of varying degrees on the system of
meanings. This model of endless decisions allows for an understanding of how discourses are altered and changed even through mundane, daily usage. In order for it to be workable, however, it also requires a theory of hegemony, a theory that explains how one discourse establishes dominance over another and how meaning is accordingly fixed.

5.2.3. Inter-discursive Relationships: Orders of Discourse, Social Antagonism and Hegemony

Discourses never exist in a vacuum; there is always some previous, sedimented discursive form extant against which a discourse must struggle. As this is not so easily accounted for in Laclau and Mouffe’s Discourse Theoretical model, Jørgensen and Phillips introduce a Faircloughian concept of the ‘Order of Discourse’. This is an analytical level at which two or more discourses are trying to establish themselves in the same domain (2002: 55). When these competing discourses articulate the same element in different, antithetical ways, a social antagonism arises, the site of which is the identity of the moment (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 9; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 47). As mentioned above, the elements that are the sites of these conflicts are called floating signifiers. A discourse articulates and re-articulates floating signifiers from the Order of Discourse in its attempts to dissolve social antagonisms, and thereby to unify the discursive space around its particular set of nodal points, establishing a hegemonic totality of meaning excluding all other discursive possibilities in a given social space (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 48; Torfing, 2005: 15). In its attempt to exclude the threatening Otherness, however, a discourse must first construct that Otherness – thus preventing itself from ever achieving the complete and total closure it aspires to achieve (Laclau, 1996b: 53; Torfing, 2005: 15). The limits of the discourse – its political frontiers – are thus always undecided and unstable, as the discourse’s attempt to fix the identity of its elements introduces into those identities the conditions for their own subversion.

In Discourse Theory, a hegemonic practice is a political activity that articulates different identities into a common project or discourse; a hegemonic formation is the result of this project (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 14). Hegemonic
practices attempt to stabilise the meanings of as many elements as possible around crystallised nodal points. While a complete social closure is impossible, some discourses are more successful than others in their attempts to achieve hegemony (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000). Successfully hegemonic discourses are perceived as ‘common sense’ or accepted as the ‘natural order’ such that their contingency and the traces of power that created them are concealed or forgotten by social actors. These discourses are assumed to be objective (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 36; Mouffe, 2008). For Laclau and Mouffe, ideology and objective discourses are coterminous, as the effect of both is to hide the political processes through which they are established and to create a social order that appears to be inevitable (Laclau, 1990: 89ff). Ideology is ‘the “will” to totality of any totalizing discourse’ (Laclau, 1990: 92). Hegemony occurs when the hegemonic practice establishes its desired totality.

The sex binary can be read as a particularly successful discursive hegemony. Consider that ‘in western contexts morphological variations apparent in human bodies become meaningful through the imposition of a binary construct which sorts these variations into only two socially and legally recognised gender statuses – “man” and “woman”’ (Budgeon, 2014: 318). In turn, behaviour performed by individuals assigned a ‘gender’ (I would rather say sex) status according to their morphological variation is perceived to be fundamentally altered, coloured, by their sex status (Budgeon, 2014: 319). The sex binary is such a hegemonic discursive construct that it still seems to many foolish to call it into question. In turn, different discourses invest the two sex statuses with meaning by articulating them – for instance, according to the behaviours they entail. It is not a stretch to argue, then, that individual discourses invest genders with different meanings according to the interactions between themselves and other discourses present in their discursive field. ‘Man’ and ‘woman’, ‘male’ and ‘female’ are thus both nodal points and floating signifiers.

52. I use the term ‘sex binary’ in order to maintain a careful separation between morphological sex and gender so as not to presume a one-to-one relationship between the two.
Different discourses seek to establish their own regime and affix floating signifiers with their own meanings. A hegemonic discourse becomes dislocated and the objective political once more when the discourse encounters events it cannot integrate into its existing system. Many discourses are flexible and the resultant antagonism can be solved by rearticulation around existing nodal points. This is not always the case, however; in some cases, the consequent rift in the social order creates floating signifiers, and the opportunity arises for a hegemonic struggle, or hegemonic intervention, to re-fix these floating signifiers (Torfing, 2005: 16). Myths, for instance, are empty universals that attempt to ‘suture’ the dislocation and thereby form ‘a new objectivity by means of the rearticulation of the dislocated elements’ (Laclau, 1990: 61). When a myth is successful in neutralising social dislocations and incorporating social demands, it can be said to have transformed into a social imaginary (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 15). Laclau calls a social imaginary a ‘horizon’, an ‘absolute limit which structures a field of intelligibility’ (Laclau, 1990: 64)53.

5.3. Identity and The Subject in Discourse Theory

Regarding the matter of the subject, Laclau and Mouffe distinguish between subject positions, more or less equivalent to moments within a discursive structure, and political subjectivity, which concerns the behaviour of social actors (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 12). Discourse Theory draws on the work of Althusser, for whom individuals gain identity through their interpellation – a sort of hailing – into subject positions made available to them by ideology, thereby transforming the individual into subjects (Althusser, 1971: 174). Althusser’s theory of ideology as an entity that exists in parallel with other types of social practice runs counter to the central tenet of Discourse Theory, wherein everything is social practice and, therefore, discourse. Laclau and Mouffe reject the Althusser’s deterministic assumption that the individual always accepts the subject position allocated to her by ideology, which elides the agency of the individual and leaves no chance for resistance or discursive change (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 13; Jørgensen

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53 I mention myths and social imaginaries here for the sake of completeness; however, these concepts have garnered a huge amount of theoretical debate and, due to a lack of space and applicability, they do not feature in my analysis.
and Phillips, 2002: 16). However, they retain the notion of interpellation of individuals into subject positions within discursive structures (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 115; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 41). These positions correspond to certain behavioural expectations within society – imbuing the subject with social norms and guiding aspects of their performativity. Of necessity, an individual is always interpellated into multiple subject positions (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 41). An individual’s identity (their subjectivity) is best spoken of as a process of identification with these various subject positions.

Because the discursive structure is decentred and inevitably dislocated, the subject always emerges as a *split subject* which is ‘traumatised by its lack of fullness’. The subject ‘wants’ to achieve a closure in its identity, but the dislocations within the system prevent the subject from establishing any complete identity. The subject may therefore disintegrate or try to regain the illusion of a completed identity by identifying itself with the promise of fullness offered in other political projects (Torfing, 2005: 17). This is the *political subject*, conditioned by the discursive structure and in turn constitutes that structure, but also forced to make decisions in the case of social antagonisms when identities are in crisis (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 13). In this way, the *lack* which is inherent in the structure – its permanent undecidability and the impossibility of the system’s total closure – drives the identification of the political subject with constructions that seem capable of suturing the structure’s rift. Once these political subjects are formulated and stabilised in the discourse, they become the subject positions into which individual actors are interpellated (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 13).

**5.4. Methodological Considerations**

Discourse Theory, although it provides a useful analytical framework by outlining and defining the components of analysis, does not come equipped with a full toolbox of methods for the researcher to use in the process of said analysis. This is a boon as much as it is a hindrance: it gives the researcher the flexibility to suit the methods they choose to employ to the scope of their project, the research questions, and the data they have available. In large part, I treat the methods here
as an approach, a guide that structures and informs my analysis. I have found Jørgensen and Phillips’ (2002) guidelines for discourse theoretical research useful in formulating this approach. In light of the model of discourse laid out above, my guiding research question changes from *How was female gender identity constructed in East German female-oriented public discourse?* to include further specifications: What subject positions were made available by discourse? How were these subject positions filled with meaning? Are there clear points of antagonism between discourses? Which discourses were in competition and what effect did this have on the negotiation of subjectivity?

With this methodological approach, discussion is the powerhouse of analysis; research results are thus elicited gradually and cyclically in combination with discussion against context and previous knowledge and in answer to the research questions. The steps I follow in this approach are:

1. To outline what constitutes the text (and how it was itself constituted), and to place it as much as possible within its broad historical context. In this paper, this first step was begun in Section 4, with a contemplation of the magazines, their producers, and their audience, and continues in Section 6 with a loose content analysis that describes the contents of the text in terms of structure and topic.

2. To determine which subject positions the discourse indicates as relevant and important by looking for nodal points around which identity is organised. This step aims to create a very broad picture of the discourse in its entirety; here, again, I turn to the results of this basic content analysis.

3. To investigate the means by which these nodal points are filled with meaning in relation to other signifiers, to highlight any points of antagonism, and consider the construction of the Other in order to map how the different discourses at work struggle to define identity and divide the social in kind. This involves a closer consideration of a representative sample of texts – the content analysis is also useful here in determining which texts are selected for analysis. The closer discourse analysis is largely achieved by asking questions of the text: For instance, what wording is
used? What themes are reoccurring? Which metaphors are used and what is their effect?

4. To consider the implications of findings from both of these steps in the light of broader inquiries. For instance, what would the consequences be of one discourse achieving hegemony over the other? Which hegemonic interventions were attempting to override these conflicts and how? This fourth ‘stage’ of investigation is inevitably intertwined with the second and third, though, and indeed they drive each other.

A caveat: Unless stated otherwise, I treat both Sibylle and Für Dich as representative of the same discursive impulses. This is certainly not always the case, but the aim has not been to complete a comparative analysis of the contents of the two magazines – instead, the reason I’ve chosen to include both magazines in the analysis is in order to be as representative as possible. In large part, given the vast disparity in quantity of material, findings from Sibylle are used as supplementary to those from Für Dich. The next step is to identify which subject positions the discourse indicates as relevant and important by looking for nodal points around which identity is organised. Subsequently, the investigation moves into the means by which these nodal points are filled with meaning in relation with other signifiers, and thus to map how the different discourses at work struggle to divide the social into groups along different lines. At this point, consideration of how the Other is constructed is also key to exploring what the identity of the nodal point really entails. This kind of investigation is key in Discourse Theory, drawing heavily on Derrida’s conception of deconstruction and Foucault’s genealogy.
6. Analysis and Discussion

Thus far, I have argued in favour of a new approach to the study of women in East Germany, informed by post-structuralist discourse theory and gender history. I have further placed the sources, the magazines *Für Dich* and *Sibylle*, in as much historical context as possible, including a description of their audiences and the expectations their audiences had of them. Throughout, I have worked to narrow a broad research aim into a more specific research question: *How was female gender identity constructed in East German female-oriented public discourse?* The previous section outlined a working model of discourse that delineated the nuts and bolts of discourse which form the objects for analysis, further solidified the theory that links discourse to the negotiation of gender identity and gendered subjectivity, and explained how my analysis will proceed to address the broader question by answering these, more specific questions: What subject positions were made available by discourse? How were these subject positions filled with meaning? Are there clear points of antagonism between discourses? Which discourses were in competition and what effect did this have on the negotiation of subjectivity?

The structure of my thesis has been fairly unconventional, and the following analysis section is no exception. Discourse analysis is less a strict methodology than an analytical approach, and one which, as I have already argued, is fuelled by discussion. Thus the ‘results’ of my analysis, such as they are, are presented in conjunction with the discussion that relates them to the concrete of previous knowledge. The analysis will show that in fact, several discourses were at work in these East German female oriented media texts, and that gender – in this case, femininity – was the site of antagonism between these discourses. Furthermore, I will argue that gender was also a key factor in the articulation of other discourses.
As such, gender identity, what it meant to say one was woman in East Germany was particular to East Germany. First, though, we turn to the results of a broad content analysis in order to outline in some detail what constitutes the text and to determine the relevant and important nodal points that will drive the subsequent discursive analysis.

6.1. At First Glance: Content and Structure

The initial content analysis returned a large volume of raw data, which allows a very detailed ‘at a glance’ image of the contents of the magazines. I will briefly discuss each magazine in turn before analysing them in conjunction with each other.

6.1.1. Für Dich

As a weekly magazine, Für Dich ran fifty-three issues in 1975. Each issue had forty-seven pages, including front and back covers, and a remarkably predictable structure. The front cover was usually a photograph of a single woman, though occasionally they included children and, more rarely, men. The back cover varied, but was usually one of a series of photographs accompanied by interesting titbits of information – series included, among others, cats, different kinds of fabric, and plants. As an illustrated magazine, much of the page space was occupied with photographs, especially in the case of so-called ‘photo reports’ of which there were at least two in every issue. The magazine also had several repeating features: in 1975, the first one or two pages were generally occupied with reports related to the International Year of Women. Each issue also included a section—called Informativ which included bite-sized articles on topics ranging from science to socialism to the status of women abroad, a five-page fashion spread, and a six-page section called Guter Rat, which included advice on topics ranging from pedagogy to DIY to knitting, among other things. The final page of the Guter Rat section was dedicated either to an agony aunt-style column (Ganz unter uns gesagt) or

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54. ‘Informative’
55. ‘Good Advice’
56. ‘Just between us’
medical advice from a (usually male) doctor on a range of issues, called *Sprechstunde*\(^{57}\). The final page, overleaf from the back cover, was dedicated to rare advertisements, publisher’s info, and brief letters from readers accompanied by occasional editor’s comments. The contents of the magazine varied week to week, though repeating features were common. Usually, several pages were devoted to a serial novel and some also to on-going themed reader discussions. In 1975, for example, serial features ran on, *inter alia*, the question of where best to shop (and why), a hunt for the best man in East Germany, and a comparison of motherhood between 1973 and 1943.

### 6.1.2. Sibylle

Just six issues of *Sibylle* were published every year, each one comprising eighty-four pages, including front and back covers. The contents of *Sibylle* were less formulaic than those of *Für Dich*, but also less varied. A dedicated fashion magazine, it devoted most of its page space to fashion plates. Additionally, an unnamed but standard section brought reviews of books, music, theatre, and films, as well as the occasional feuilleton. Every issue of *Sibylle* included extensive pull-out clothes patterns, mostly for fashions showcased throughout the issue. Art pieces, short stories and poems were also common features. Additionally, the magazine featured some articles on a selection of topics, largely editorial and opinionated in tone and style. Given the relative paucity of material between the two magazine (53 issues of *Für Dich* versus 6 of *Sibylle*) my analysis focuses largely on data from *Für Dich*. However, the observations gleaned from the analysis of *Sibylle* are valuable in order to flesh out and corroborate those made from the analysis of *Für Dich*.

### 6.2. Content Analysis: Methods

Given the rough outline of the structure and content of the magazines above, the next step is to complete a more detailed content analysis that would provide a better, more nuanced overview of the magazines’ contents. This will, in turn, facilitate the discovery of key nodal points within the discourse(s) at play. In order

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57. ‘Consultation’
to approach this task in a scientific way, and rather than making assumptions based on a limited sample set, I performed a rudimentary quantitative content analysis of the total set of data: that is, all available issues of *Für Dich* and *Sibylle* from 1975. This was not a fully vigorous content analysis, as the aim was simply to elicit the broad trends in the content of the magazines, and highlight frequent subjects and themes. The method I followed for this content analysis is as follows:

- In order to determine the most common themes and categories, I read ten issues of *Für Dich* and two of *Sibylle* closely, taking note of recurring features, subjects, and themes. Each of these was assigned an individual code.58 For a detailed list of the categories and codes, see Table 1 and Table 2.

- Subsequently, I worked through each page of all the magazines’ issues, coding them in a spreadsheet database according to the theme or subject of the article occupying that page.59 In the case of *Für Dich*, I treated the recurring sections (*Informativ* and *Guter Rat*) separately. Both of these sections include ‘blurb’ articles of varying lengths; to code these, I counted the number of blurbs relevant to each subject or topic and kept these totals in separate spreadsheets.60 I used these counts to calculate a rough number of pages per topic within these two sections.

- In the original database, I had created 39 categories for *Für Dich* and 29 for *Sibylle*. In order to facilitate discussion, especially of both magazines at the same time, I then recoded the data so that similar categories between the two magazines shared a code and title. The contents were similar enough in kind between the two magazines to allow this without losing valuable data. See Table 3 for a list of the combined categories.

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58. The codes varied between *Für Dich* and *Sibylle*, as did the contents.
59. For pages that were shared between two articles, I coded the page according to the article that had the most space, unless part was occupied by an article that was only one half-page in length, in which case the page was coded according to the half-page article.
60. The categories for *Informativ* and *Guter Rat* were separately determined using the same method by which the general categories were determined. See Table 3 and Table 4 for a list of the categories.
The datasets that I created allow for various analyses of the magazines’ content; I will present the results and discuss their implications below.

6.2.1. Für Dich

Für Dich, in the tradition of weekly illustrated magazines, devoted much of its page space to photographs. However, the editors were also committed to bringing their readers interesting and informative articles as well as cutting-edge photography. Figure 7 presents the raw data essentially as it was collected and gives a good idea of which features had the most space devoted to them.\(^{61}\) These were, understandably, the repeating sections: Guter Rat, Informativ, the serial stories, and the fashion pages. Of the sections that were repeated in the weekly formula, the most two most common topics were socialism, East German socialist heritage, and international women. The latter is, in part, due to the editors’ decision to focus so heavily on the International Year of Women in the lead up to the Seventh World Congress of the Women’s International Democratic Forum (WIDF) in Berlin – nearly five percent of total page space was devoted to this topic. The coverage the International Year of Women aimed to bring ‘information, awareness, and encounters’\(^{62}\) and ranged from things such as short excerpts from resolutions of the Congress of the DFD\(^ {63}\) to full-spread articles about Vietnam’s women\(^ {64}\).

In fact, a significant amount of content was focused on matters abroad: just under twenty percent of the magazine’s space was dedicated to international issues (see Figure 8). No less than forty-two percent of the contents of the Informativ section were related to current events and issues abroad (see Figure 9, implying that it was considered important for East German women to have such information on international affairs. Most – approximately sixty-five percent – of the international content was focused specifically on women; many of the photo reports that

\(^{61}\) Note that this graph, as it focuses on number of pages, includes the Guter Rat and Informativ as whole entities rather than breaking them down into their constituent parts, as later parts of the analyses will.

\(^{62}\) ‘Informationen – Erkenntnisse – Begegnungen’ was the subtitle of these features.

\(^{63}\) Für Dich 12:2

\(^{64}\) FD 31:2-3.
focused on women abroad were in fact part of series reporting on various aspects of other countries. For instance, *Italienische Notizen* was a five-part series on various aspects of life in Italy – just one of these parts, *Weisse Witwen*, was specifically about women.

Still, the lion’s share of the content was unabashedly and specifically *East German*. There were very few cases of articles in which East German and international issues were considered together, and those that did occur were exhaustively in relation to other socialist countries. For instance, the series *Freundschaft Konkret* was largely international in content, but one instalment considered the similarities between East Germans and their socialist colleagues, for instance from the USSR; another instalment detailed the shared history of the GDR and the USSR. The range of domestic content was broad and varied, covering everything from marriage trends, shopping, sport, and workers. Features on work in the GDR were frequent (comprising approximately five percent of *Für Dich*’s page space in 1975) and generally – but not by any means exclusively – focused on women in the workplace.

By far the largest single topic amongst the domestic issues was that of socialism and in particular socialist heritage. These articles ranged from detailed accounts of the Peasant’s Revolt to commemorations of the eightieth death-day of Friederich Engels and detailed reports on state delegation visits to the USSR. A long, multi-
part segment titled *Ihr Zwingt Uns Nicht* ran for several weeks late in the year, and provided a ‘life picture’ of ‘Communist and pedagogue’ Käte Duncker. The common thread through all of these articles is the strong link they draw between the history of Germany, the history of the socialist movement, and the current socialist state in East Germany, frequently taking care to place women near the heart of this link. This is a key observation, and one I will return to in more detail below.

The rest of the articles that had a domestic focus were flavoured heavily by the *Alltag*, representing many aspects of every-day life for East German women. Such articles discussed trends in family size, new laws, free time, and the work place. Given the intended audience of the magazine, we can assume that the range of subjects covered represented subjects that the editors thought would appeal to East German women or was necessary information for them to have. More than one third of the content of 1975 was explicitly gendered through its focus on women (see Figure 10)

Already, we see evidence of strong tendency by the editors to actively interpellate their (female) audience into the subject matter by presenting it in explicitly female terms. Very few articles focused explicitly on male issues – one short series was dedicated to finding the perfect East German man, and this was very much from the perspective of how those men interacted with women.

Still, there was markedly more page space devoted to interviews with men than with women – twenty-two pages to eight, respectively – and articles that cited experts, politicians, or other leaders tended to be dominated by the opinions of men. The caveat to this observation is that according to this basic content analysis, the largest portion of the material was *not* explicitly gendered. However, part of this result can, in fact, be put down to the very basic nature of the coding process I employed which assigned each article to only one code. Indeed, having read the

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73. ‘You can’t force us’

74. It is important to remember that these are rough estimates only; for instance, this number does not take into account articles on female domestic work as such articles were coded primarily under the ‘domestic work’ category unless they were explicitly profiles of women workers.
magazines, I would estimate that at least half if not more of the material in every issue was focused on women in one way or another. Non-gendered material included articles on sports, scientific advances, new laws, conditions in the workplace, etc. For the most part, though, I argue that *Für Dich* tailored its content directly to women by way of making it *about* women themselves.

### 6.2.2. Sibylle

An overwhelming majority of *Sibylle*’s page space was devoted to fashion plates (see Figure 11), meaning that a large chunk of it was entirely dedicated to photographs – much more so than *Für Dich*. Fashion plates usually featured photographs of East German fashion, but many photo-shoots were set in other socialist countries. Rarely, photo-shoots highlighted foreign fashion. Articles of clothing featured in the fashion plates were often also included as patterns in the magazine’s cut out clothes pattern section, along with recommendations of which fabrics to use (nearly always East German-produced).

Although photo-shoots often occurred abroad, the actual focus on international aspects was negligible. Just ten percent of Sibylle’s page space was spent focusing on international issues or other countries as more than a setting for photographs (see Figure 12). Those articles that *were* focused abroad dealt exclusively with other socialist countries; there was little-to-no discussion of capitalism or the capitalist world. The biggest chunk of these international articles were travel reports, which were often presented in conjunction with fashion photo-shoots – again, featuring East German women in East German clothes. *Sibylle* spared just two pages’ focus on the International Year of Women, and just two more pages on international women more generally. On the other hand, East German content was also limited – just nineteen percent of content was specifically East German material.75 Domestic articles included profiles on East German designers, interior design, laws and legislation, and East German women’s issues.

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75. For the purposes of this analysis, I categorised the fashion plate pages as ‘Not Applicable’ – although they focused overwhelmingly on East German fashion, they did not always make this explicit, nor was it exhaustively true for all of the fashion plates. If the fashion plate pages *were* included in the ‘Domestic’ category, the proportion of ‘Domestic’ material rises dramatically to
Up to eight percent of *Sibylle*’s page space was devoted to more general topics such as cooking, health, cosmetics and sewing. These articles were directly aimed at Sibylle’s overwhelmingly female audience by way of being about women: for instance, by focusing on women’s health, providing patterns for women’s clothing, discussing women’s hairstyles. Indeed, fifty-three percent of *Sibylle*’s content was gendered in this way (see Figure 13). In contrast, just one percent of *Sibylle*’s content was about men. Even the profiles of prominent artists and designers were overwhelmingly about female artists and designers. A significant amount of content was gender neutral – although the biggest chunk of this non-gendered content was the travel reports which, as mentioned above, were frequently accompanied by photographs of female models.

### 6.2.3. Nodal points, subject positions

Both *Für Dich* and *Sibylle* tailored their content to their female audiences by providing content explicitly about women, albeit to different extents (see Figure 14). Proportionally, *Sibylle* was more specifically female gendered than *Für Dich*, while *Für Dich* had a larger focus on gender-neutral and male material. I have discussed above some of the uncertainties created by the simplistic coding methods and the fact that each page was only given one code. I have also argued that both magazines catered directly to their overwhelmingly female audience by providing material explicitly about women, and that this represented an attempt by the editors to interpellate the audience into the subject material. *Woman*, then, becomes a key nodal point for the investigation (unsurprisingly).

The content analysis above, however, also revealed another significant aspect in both magazines: that of location. This is more relevant in *Für Dich* than *Sibylle*, but I would argue that it remains a salient consideration in the discussion of both

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51%. This is a huge discrepancy, because the fashion plates occupied so much of the magazine’s page space. Again, this is a downfall of the very basic method of coding I employed for this content analysis.

76. Note the phrasing: there is a difference between being about women and simply assumed to be women’s interests.
magazines. Nearly sixty percent of Für Dich’s content was specifically located, either internationally or domestically (see Figure 15). Although this is true of less than thirty percent of Sibylle’s content, Sibylle did emphasise its own East Germanness explicitly and frequently in contrast to issues of other countries enough to warrant the serious consideration of location as a significant aspect of its material. East German becomes another nodal point for investigation, as does International. The latter is slightly more complex, as there is a constant and significant differentiation between international but socialist countries and international but capitalist countries. Socialism and capitalism thus are two more salient nodal points in the investigation. The content analysis shows that gender intersects in the text markedly with all these nodal points – East German, International, Socialist, Capitalist. It follows that the following subject positions were also made available by the discourse: East German woman, International woman, Socialist woman, Capitalist woman. The next section of the analysis considers a subset of articles from the magazines that deal explicitly with these topics and identities in order to investigate the intersection of these issues further.

6.3. Discourse Analysis

I turn first to perhaps the most obvious starting point: the question of socialism and socialist discourse. State socialism is perhaps the most archetypal example of a hegemonic discourse attempting to assert its complete primacy over the field of discursivity. This was perpetuated in an apparently conscious way by the party state and its apparatuses. The prevalence of material in the magazines, especially Für Dich, that explicitly dealt with socialism in one or another way cannot be surprising given the explicit directives for the media in a socialist state. However, none of the articles were simply about the socialism or socialist theory alone; it was always written about in conjunction with some other topic – or, more accurately put, those other topics were written about in the context of socialism.

77. Although, as discussed, this figure would rise significantly if the fashion plates were included as ‘Domestic’ – however, I have chosen to keep the fashion plates in both magazines classed as ‘Not Applicable’ here, as the analysis was not rigorous enough in capturing the fact that some of the fashion was international, some domestic, etc.

78. Theoretically the same pattern would be available for men, but that is not the focus here.
Throughout the text, socialism acts as a prism, bending the discussion of each other topic accordingly. The effect of power here is of course evident; the socialist discourse was imbued with the full support of the state and if the writers and publishers were found not to comply with the guidelines set by them, sanctions were imminent. In Section 4, I discussed the institutional placement and restrictions that affected both magazines and concluded that while of course they were expected to toe the party line, in fact both magazines retained a fair amount of editorial freedom. I further argued that the writers’ awareness of the discursive rules – the *scissors in their heads* – were as much the effect of their subjectivity and personhood within society as any other individual’s awareness of an acceptable statement, for instance within their own cultural context.

Clearly, socialism as hegemonic discourse had an important and tangible effect – but perhaps the most important thing to note is that the socialist discourse *did not establish a complete discursive hegemony*. The second important observation is that this was *recognised*, at least to some extent, by those writing at the time. So, for instance, the statement that ‘Difficult and slow is the process of overcoming the old role-thinking in family relationships’ acknowledges that an older structure of gender roles is still prevalent in society, despite efforts to ‘overcome’ them through ‘socialist pedagogy’. The blame for persistent gender role stereotypes is placed summarily in the hands of this older discourse of gender roles. And yet, the text is careful to negotiate between the two.

Consider this excerpt:

> It is important that the adolescent human identifies themselves full with their gender, and feels themselves clearly as a future man, future woman. [...] The promotion of equality in education for boys and girls is not aiming for the sameness of the sexes, nor the removal of the differences between them [...] Equalised education of boys and girls is therefore education in terms of the new socialist personalities of both genders, which acknowledges and affirms the differences between the genders but eliminates gender discrimination.

The text here is very carefully *not* excluding assumed aspects of femininity (which it calls the ‘feminine charms’) and masculinity from the socialist discourse. In fact,

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80. Allendorf, ‘Mädchen werden Frauen’
it affirms these aspects, supports them as ‘biological role of women, the “naturally” determined physical and psychic qualities’.\textsuperscript{81} Socialism, the text assures, allows women to maintain their inherent natures and enjoy full and equal rights while women in capitalist countries ‘often have to use their elbows hard just to fight for the bare minimum of their rights’.\textsuperscript{82} This is an interesting discursive manoeuvre. The aspects of femininity are stripped from their determined position in gender roles in the older (the reader understands capitalist) discourse; but they are subsequently reaffirmed in three ways: 1) through a discourse of biological determinism, which paints motherhood and other female attributes (‘charms’) as natural, unavoidable, and indeed desirable against ‘the dangers of a “masculinised” woman’\textsuperscript{83}; 2) by asserting their centrality in the socialist discourse; and 3) by the claims that only through socialist Gleichberechtigung\textsuperscript{84} can women maintain their femininity while also enjoying equality with men. And yet, throughout, the socialist discourse relies on the meanings of femininity and the gender roles performed by feminine subjects that were previously ascribed to the female subject by competing discourses – in one particularly jarring case, even praising those gender roles as those that were ‘put in place by Adam and Eve’\textsuperscript{85}. These observations show the lamentation of some previous analysts that East German socialist discourse had in large part failed to establish Gleichberechtigung because it failed to eradicate femininity or female gender roles (for instance, Dölling (1989), Einhorn (1993), von Ankum (1993)) to be predicated on the false assumption that socialist discourse equated Gleichberechtigung with an eradication of differentiation in the genders. This, as we can see quite clearly from these discursive manoeuvres, simply was not the case.

There is repeated evidence of similar discursive manoeuvres throughout the text. Gleichberechtigung is a key and frequent topic (nodal point) across the articles

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{84} ‘Equality’, literally ‘equal rightedness’, exclusively used in the text to signify the creation of legal and social equality between the sexes.
  \item \textsuperscript{85} Sylvester, Regine. ‘Wie es weibt und lebt’, \textit{Sib} 3:66-69.
\end{itemize}
that triggers such discursive engineering. It is equated to the ‘development of women’\textsuperscript{86}, ‘emancipation’\textsuperscript{87}, ‘promotion’\textsuperscript{88}. Throughout, the constant spectral Other is the status of women under capitalism, in particular feminists. The following excerpts exemplify the function of this particular Othering:

The development of women cannot be decided in a war of the sexes [...] the development of woman is not thinkable without the development of man. It is a societal question just like the development of the individual as a social creature is a societal task. The status of women in society reflects the substance of the society itself.\textsuperscript{89}

“It's war, and men are our enemies” claim the US women’s lawyer TiGrace Atkinson and her privileged followers. Every man is a “class enemy” and marriage is slavery, the American “Witches of Hell” say aggressively. [...] It is the dictatorship of men that obstructs women’s opportunity for advancement in jobs, lets them earn less money, prevents them from technical and political development, which tethers them to the children’s room, house, and stove.\textsuperscript{90}

The women fighting for their rights under capitalism are described as aggressive, man-hating witches; their arguments are exposed to contain selfishly flawed logics and gross contradictions. Worst, capitalist feminists threaten marriage, reject motherhood, and live in dubious ‘women’s communes’. Under socialist Gleichberechtigung, on the other hand, women and men work together to better society as a whole. Socialist emancipation, on the other hand, is calm, logical; the end-goal of Gleichberechtigung is not to threaten the institution of marriage but to strengthen it by creating it as a pure relationship of love, harmony, and development. The capitalist Other, thus, is portrayed the greatest threat to the nuclear family which only the socialist discourse can preserve in its purest form.

Within the socialist discourse, then, the subject woman retains a deal of its more with traditionalist associations: woman is mother, she is charming, she is the heart of a stable, loving family. All of these elements are stripped of their adherence to

86. Ibid.
87. Allendorf, ‘Der Mann’, \textit{FD} 14:8-9
89. Sylvester, ‘Wie es weibt und lebt’; note the nearly word-for-word reiteration of Marx’s maxim on the position of women in society.
90. Ziegert, Karin. 'Sind die Männer Schuld?’ \textit{FD} 35: 20-23; note the echo of the final phrase (in German, ‘Kinderzimmer, Heim und Herd’) to the infamous Nazi slogan of ‘Kinder, Küche, Kirche’ (children, kitchen, church).
the ‘old’ discourse, the previous arrangement that existed before socialism arrived on the scene, and instead articulated around the nodal point of socialism in order to distance them from the maligned alternative, capitalist Other of themselves. Indeed, capitalism haunts the text as socialism’s ever-present Other and a continuous threat to women, to family, and to morality. The magazines are not subtle about their presentation of capitalism as a threat: in Für Dich, articles that focus on West Germany, for instance, are frequently presented in white text against an all-black background. Interviews with West German socialist activists portray how, under socialism, woman is free to achieve all of these ‘natural’ things and her own rights to social equality with men. Under socialism, woman may eat the cake that has been gifted to her.

But still, the roles of women in the socialist discourse remained sources of antagonism. Throughout, the writers engaged in discussions and negotiations of woman’s roles in family, society and the workplace. The flip-side of Gleichberechtigung and emancipation was the double-burden of over-worked women, increasing rates of divorce and falling birthrates. Women were overrepresented in traditionally female jobs, and part-time work was becoming increasingly more common.91 Worker was an important part of the way woman was created as a subject position in the text; just as Mother and Wife. The failure of real women to seamlessly and fully incorporate these identities into a coherent whole was recognised and the fault, once more, laid at the door of the ‘capitalist Femininity-ideology’92 and the fact that ‘in a change of societal conditions, for instance in the transition from Capitalism to Socialism, the established conceptions of the typically masculine and typically feminine behaviours [...] only change very slowly.’93 The very fact that the text acknowledges these difficulties speaks to the existence of social antagonism between a variety of discourses. I have already spoken about the ‘old’ discourse, the formation that was present before socialism established itself in East Germany. What of other discourses, present at the same

time as the current? How should we discover these? The results of the content analysis furnished me with a starting point for this investigation: that is, the topic of location.

Already, we have seen evidence of how the text negotiated between socialism and capitalism as extremes – what should be further specified is how capitalism was located. This occurred in two main ways:

1) Capitalism was located in East Germany’s past, as an obstacle that had been over come, and

2) Capitalism was located in West Germany.

The text especially exemplified the incompatibility of socialism and communism through profiles of women. Consider, for instance, the effect of this line: 'Bente Clemensen, a young Danish woman like ten thousand others, blond, naturally blue-eyed, the usual seven required school years, married, without training for a job.'

In this formulation, Bente Clemensen becomes the Danish woman, all Danish women.

The article goes on to detail the hardships that Bente, a young mother with no career, faces on a daily basis. Bente and her husband struggle to feed their children and worry about their chances to find a decent career. The economic crisis of capitalism is responsible for Bente’s quandary and thus for the quandary of all Danish women. Such statements are qualified in other instances, for instance in this one where, after discussing further serious crises in capitalist Finland, the author writes, 'How does this fit into the picture of the modern, pulsing city, which Helsinki offers the superficial observer, I would ask, if I – who grew up in capitalism – had not learned long ago to see behind the glittering facade.' Further emphasis is placed on the lack of state support for women – employed, unemployed, married, single, with or without children. The effect is to cast into serious doubt any claims that capitalist discourse makes to offering women a better quality of life.

Other capitalist countries were of course discussed as well: for instance America, Japan, the Netherlands – but in fact it was the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)

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that was used as the most obvious example of capitalism. There are some obvious reasons that can explain this impulse. For the entirety of the GDR’s existence, the FRG existed as its direct counterpart – the two countries shared history, culture and language; their divergence boiled down to the different political systems that were set up after the war. Additionally, as already noted in Section 4, East German media existed in a state of constant competition with West German media, which was pervasive throughout the country. Most households in the GDR admitted to ‘internal emigration’ by watching West German television (Ross, 2002: 61). Articles in the magazines even discuss West German television programmes directly, so widespread and known was the practice that the East German media needed to directly address the charges that the West German media laid against the eastern state.\footnote{For instance, in Hafranke, Ursula and Konrad von Billerbeck. ’Maria, Puppe oder Leichtlohngruppe? - Stationen eines Frauen(ver)leitbildes’, \textit{FD} 31:5-9.} In retaliation, the text undermines the capitalist discourse by holding forth on the multiple ways it betrays women. An excellent example of this manoeuvre is visible in the article ‘Wie lebst du? Warum lebst du so?’\footnote{Allendorf, Marlis and Peter Leske. \textit{FD} 26:16-19, 40.} After outlining the multiple betrayals of capitalism (which uses women as cheap labour, as willing consumers, and subscribers to unattainable dreams) the article presents interviews with several young women who live in West Germany but are sympathetic to the socialist cause. Consider this quote from 19-year-old Ursula:

\begin{quote}
At that time I learned a lot politically, but I was failing in school. I didn’t want to write what they wanted me to anymore. About the free-democratic basic order law … I would rather have written: “Proletariats of every country, unite.” I had to repeat the school year.\footnote{Ibid.}
\end{quote}

Again, the text is highlighting the way women are mistreated by capitalism, but in the case of this article an extra layer is added: these women are punished by capitalist society because of their affinity for socialism.

The effect of these discursive manoeuvres is to draw very clear lines between a beleaguered in-group (those women who identify as socialists) and the vindictive out-group: capitalists. At the same time, the female readers of the magazine are expected to recognise the suffering of these women and to understand it \textit{on their}
own terms. So, in the case of the women profiled, for instance, in Denmark and Finland, the reader is expected to understand their trials as workers, mothers, women, to see how these trials have been brought upon these poor women by a neglectful capitalist state. In the case of the young women profiled in ‘Wie lebst du?’, on the other hand, the reader is expected to identify with the women on the basis of their identity as socialists. In this way, gender identity and gender roles are used by the text to interpellate the readers and negotiate them into a very distinct position: as workers, mothers, and women, but above all socialist. The nodal point of socialism, in turn, imbues the gender identity with very specific forms of worker, mother, and female, adds to these things certain distinguishing features that changes their meaning in such ways as to enable distinctions to be drawn between capitalist workers, mothers, and female.

At the same time, however, there was a (perhaps surprising) amount of distinction maintained between the topic of East German socialism and all other socialist states. The achievement of this feat is remarkable in itself, because the word German is never used in conjunction with the citizens of East Germany unless it is to specify the name of the state. Instead, the personal pronoun ‘we’ is used, in almost all contexts, or ‘in the GDR’, etc. This must be considered in light of a broader policy change that occurred in the early 1970s: after Honecker declared, in 1971, that a ‘purely socialist nation’ was developing in the GDR, the language of the constitution in 1974 such that the GDR was no longer referred to as the ‘socialist state of the German nation’ but simply ‘the socialist state of workers and farmers’ (McKay, 2002: 21). Clearly, the East German socialist state was keen that citizens should identify with socialism as opposed to Germany. And yet, the discourse was careful to maintain distinctions between themselves and other socialist countries. The collective personal pronoun ‘we’ was reserved to denote citizens of East Germany, while other socialists were referred to as, for instance, ‘our neighbours’, ‘our friends’, ‘our comrades’. Here, again, profiles of women were used to solidify these distinct identities.

Many of the travel reports and profiles of international socialist women catalogued the changes that socialism had wrought in their lives. Familiar tactics were
employed to generalise the experiences of the individual women profiled to a broader swathe of their countrywomen: ‘Any of the women that sit here, could be the central figure of my report, my heroine. I choose the tall, strong woman with the serious face in the first row.’ In nearly every case, the text focuses on the way socialist revolution introduced hope into these women’s otherwise bleak lives – using much the same qualifiers as are applied to East German socialist women. What, then, separates them? One might infer an element of superiority stemming from a greater length of experience with socialism in texts referring to more recent socialist revolutions, but by and large international socialist women are treated as equals. They are differentiated only, but persistently, by their nationality.

The nexus of interactions between discourses of nation and socialism have received a lot of scholarly attention, particularly given the developments of the post-communist era and the rise of so many right-wing nationalist states in the wake of state socialism. High socialist theory treated the nations and ethnicity question as an incidental contingency predicated on social and economic development – Marx and Engels believed that when capitalism died out, so, too, would the separation of nations (Smith, 1996: 3). There is not space here to fully consider the reasons behind the persistence of an ethnic-national discourse within socialism. Suffice it to say that there is adequate argumentation to support the thesis that the discourse of ethnic-nations and their right to self-determination was opportunistically manipulated by Lenin and in particular Stalin (see e.g.Ludanyi, 1996). Again, the GDR represents a special case here because of its unique background. The existence of the FRG prevented the SED from linking the East German state unproblematically with the German nation. Until recently, scholars argued that nationalism played ‘next to no role’ in East Germany until 1989 (Palmowski, 2009: 1). McKay argued that the Germanness of GDR citizens was never in doubt, and in fact, that East Germans thought of themselves as the ‘good Germans’ – the idea of the GDR as a purely socialist nation, in turn, was considered artificial (McKay, 2002: 20-21).

This rings true with the general consensus of analysts who – as I argued in Section 2 – have tended to treat identity in East Germany as at least partially artificial. Though McKay tentatively suggests that a somewhat specious, precarious East German identity existed, Palmowski has been one of the first to argue summarily and convincingly for the existence of a genuine East German identity which formed in conjunction with a new discourse developed in part by the state and in part by the people themselves, that of Heimat\(^\text{100}\). The discourse of Heimat, Palmowski argues, granted the SED legitimacy through its historical roots and sense of ‘historical inevitability’ (2009: 37) and, through its surprising popularity in popular culture, was able to refashion social memory to link workers’ culture to socialism (Palmowski, 2009: 39). Importantly, it allowed a definitive line to be drawn between FRG-Germanness, and GDR-Germanness (Palmowski, 2009: 58).

Palmowski’s otherwise excellent analysis of the discourses surrounding Heimat and East German identity neglects consideration of how the discourse of Heimat intersected with questions of gender, gender identity and gendered subjectivity. Beyond a throw-away mention to the ‘moral regeneration’ that was inferred by the link created by Heimat to traditional values (Palmowski, 2009: 34), there is no consideration of gender at all. This is surprising, because the role of women in discourses of nation is well-documented and the subject of much discussion in the post-Communist era. Indeed, Anne McClintock goes so far as to claim that ‘all nations depend on powerful constructions of gender’ (1995: 353). This claim is substantiated by the view that the idea of a nation relies on a homogenous culture which solidifies it as an ‘imagined community’ and, because gender roles are so often considered to be the most basic, most natural of societal norms, members of a nation construct their gender identity and national identity in opposition to and relation with each other (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 16; Meyer, 2000: 5; Wenk, 2000: 63). Furthermore, within nationalist discourse, female bodies often function as an allegory – women literally \embody\ the nation (Mostov, 2000: 102; Wenk, 2000: 69-73) and it falls to them to reproduce that nation. The survival of the collective depends on the cultural and physical reproduction of the nation that women

\(^{100}\) Literally, ‘home’. Heimat as a concept has a long, malleable history, and connotes ideas of community linked to a geographical place.
perform, through their gendered identities and biological reproductive function, to the extent that in many nationalist discourses motherhood becomes women’s prime duty and responsibility (Cockburn, 1998: 43; Wenk, 2000: 47). By including this discussion, I don’t intend to argue that the discourse of Heimat is the sole reason that so much emphasis was placed on motherhood and ‘natural’ gender roles in the text. Rather, I mean to show that these things should be investigated as floating signifiers in a discursive struggle between two or more discourses that sought to articulate them in their own ways around the nodal point woman.

Several concerted efforts were made in the text to situate women summarily at the centre of the history of the East German socialist state. I’ll discuss the most salient example here. Above, I mentioned the way that socialist discourse operationalised the legacy of the sixteenth century Farmer’s Revolt as a historical precedent to the German socialist movement and the socialist state. In 1975, both Für Dich and Sibylle ran articles on the Farmer’s Revolt, a war fought for ‘the marriage between morals and politics’ by farmers who ‘constituted the nation’. The latter article expounds on the key role played by women of the Farmer’s Revolution who, ‘like Joan of Arc’, fought bravely at the side of men. Because of their actions, great progress was made in establishing a new ethical-moral relationship between women and the family. In one fell swoop, this text places women as defenders not only of the German nation but also and inextricably of the morality of family roles. However, it also creates women as key agents in East German socialist heritage, rather than relegating them to mere objects caught in the flow of male-driven history as so many other nationalist discourses do. The weight of tradition is thus added to East German women’s position as the defenders of morality in the family and their own gender roles. Women are furthermore posited as separate but equal agents in the history they share with men. Furthermore, the reader is to understand that this moral-ethical negotiation of the relationship of women to the family had been, since the sixteenth century, neglected and corrupted by the exploitative capitalism. This one example illustrates how the newer discourse of East German Heimat combines with and struggles against the socialist discourse to

articulate female identity and their performed gender subjectivity in slightly
different but complementary ways, both operating together against the spectral
Other of capitalism.

The above analysis is but a scratch to the surface; to analyse such a wealth of
source material to the full extent and depth that it deserves would require more
time and space. However, it has revealed interesting and compelling results. I have
shown how the text made many subject positions available to women but in
particular differentiated between East German woman, International woman,
Socialist woman, Capitalist woman. Subsequently, I explored the way that gender
interacted with the discourse of socialism, which in turn was interacting with the
lasting remnants of the previous discourse. I argued that socialist discourse, far
from trying to eradicate the division of gender roles, sought merely to reinterpret
them within its own framework, and in doing so ended up preserving much of the
structure of the gender binary created by previous discursive formations.
Flashpoints between competing discourses such as Gleichberechtigung were
revealed and I illustrated how the text negotiated to create Capitalism – in
particular, West German Capitalism – as the antithetical Other to East Germany.
The observation that Capitalism was Socialism’s Other will surprise no one; what is
of interest is the convoluted way that this relationship manifested in the struggle
to fix the identity of woman. Key to this discussion was an illustration of how the
discourse interpellated its audience into specific identities by drawing on certain
logics of equivalence and difference to renegotiate the position of the floating
signifier woman within the field of discursivity.

This, in turn, led to a discussion of the role that gender played in the discursive
negotiation of the relationship between the GDR, the FRG, the German nation, and
gender identity. Bearing in mind recent analyses that have attested to the existence
not only of an East German identity but of a particularly East German discourse
analogical to a national discourse, and influenced by the wealth of writing on the
role of gender in national discourse, I briefly considered the way that the
discourses of socialism and Heimat used female gender identity and gendered
performances/roles to imbue motherhood and family with the weight of
specifically German socialist tradition and heritage, contra the corrupted, a-moral form of gender identity and family that existed under the previous social formation.
7. Conclusion

The aim of my thesis project was to explore historical female gender identity and gendered subjectivity guided by poststructuralist theory and the tenants of Discourse Theory, given the serious paucity of serious, critical consideration of the actual, contemporary shape and meaning of womanhood and female identity in the literature. With this aim at its heart, this thesis has been as much about innovation in the practice of writing history and an application of gender history and theory, as it has been about the actual East German woman. The investigation of historical identity and subjectivity is fraught with ontological and methodological quandaries. I relied heavily on a robust theoretical framework to help me chart a logical course through the minefield in my attempt to address the gap left by previous historians interested in East German women. My theoretical convictions combined with a model of discourse and subsequent methodological considerations and in turn I allowed these to shape the research questions that guided my analysis.

The actual practice of discourse analysis is in essence very similar to a traditional historical evaluation of textual historical artefacts. The constant application of post-structural theory requires the historian to persistently ask questions of the text and themselves. In such a broad application of this method, the depth achieved, the full extent of deconstruction that the historian can claim to have accomplished is questionable. It was never my intent, however, to claim to have achieved an exhaustive deconstruction of the text. My source material was far too vast for such a claim to be feasible. Nor did I intend to comprehensively answer my research question, ‘How was female gender identity constructed in East German female-oriented public discourse?’ My aim was instead to begin to answer the
question by shedding as much light as possible on the machinations that occurred behind the scenes, so to say, of the text. In this I believe I have been successful, and in the process have made some fascinating observations. I have shown that, once we discard the preconceived notion that the identities of East German women were somehow falsified by the oppression of socialism and instead attempt an evaluation of the way socialist discourse interacted with the competing discourses in the same discursive field, we can see a much more nuanced picture of the actual way that the identity of woman gained its meaning.

Adopting the split subject as a key tenant further aids the analysis by preserving the individual’s agency, her ability to think critically and react within her discursive field and to modify her identity accordingly. So, while I have shown some of the ways in how female identity and subjectivity was created (perhaps a better term is negotiated) in female-oriented public discourse, I will finish with the caveat that while many women will have been exposed to these texts, the subject positions that it created for them were not by any means the only determining factors in their negotiation of their real, lived identities and gendered performances. Still, some generalisations are supportable, and it is relatively safe to argue that similar antagonisms and logics were at play in other forms of public discourse, in particular those aimed at women, as I have uncovered in the two women’s magazines Für Dich and Sibylle.

The further implications of this analysis are numerous. Much more research is warranted into the interaction of the pseudo-nationalist Heimat discourse with gender, gendered identities and subjectivities, and societal gender roles. The development of a particular East German identity was clearly accomplished in conjunction with definitions of gender and gender roles, as socialist discourse did not strip but rather reinforced them in their traditional binary. Further consideration of the construction of the traditional gender roles and the maintenance of the gender binary in conjunction with a scientific discourse of objectivity and socialist morality would also be prudent. I believe also that an analysis of the way that East German socialist discourse maintained the gender binary while insisting on equality would be a fruitful addition to current, on-going
debates in feminist theory regarding the maxim ‘separate but equal’. In terms of theoretical applications, a similar structure might be constructively applied by Western analysts to debates surrounding the relative emancipation or oppression of women in, for instance, post-Communist or Muslim countries, where a failure to evaluate discourses in terms of their native antagonisms and historical contexts can cloud judgement. For if memory can, in the words of Christa Wolf, put a deceptive colour on things, so too can the fog of preconceptions.

103 I should note that this is, by and large, the basis of post-colonial feminist theory, but the application of that theory to current events has been patchy at best.
8. Appendix I: Readership Statistics
Figure 1 - Für Dich Readership by Age adapted from Löffler

Figure 2 - Sibylle Readership by Age adapted from Löffler
Figure 3 - Social Class of Sibylle Readers adapted from Löffler

Figure 4 - Social Class of Für Dich Readers adapted from Löffler
Sibylle: What are you most interested in and what are you least? Top two responses "Very strongly" and "strongly" in Percentage

Für Dich: Above all, which general social questions do you want to gain more information about?

Figure 5 - Sibylle Readers' Interests adapted from Löffler

Figure 6 - Für Dich Readers' Interests adapted from Löffler
9. Appendix II: Code Tables
**Table 1: Für Dich Category Descriptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Photo Report: International Women</td>
<td>Photo reports focused on the life of women abroad, in the Communist Bloc and beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PR: International Other</td>
<td>Photo reports focused on life and other things abroad, in the Communist Bloc and beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PR: Travel Report</td>
<td>Special features including photos and illustrations, accompanying reports of travels abroad and recommendations for visits within the GDR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>PR: Domestic Work</td>
<td>Photo report focusing on various aspects of work and the workforce in East Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PR: Domestic Women</td>
<td>Photo report focused on various aspects of the lives of women in East Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>PR: Misc</td>
<td>Miscellaneous photo reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>PR: Profile</td>
<td>Photo report on an individual profiling aspects of their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interview: Man</td>
<td>Interview with a male subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Interview: Woman</td>
<td>Interview with a female subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reader Discussion, Letters</td>
<td>Pages presenting readers' letters, sometimes in response to questions from the editors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Reporting DFD</td>
<td>Reports on the actions and meetings of the DFD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Article: Family/Marriage</td>
<td>Articles on family life or marriage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Article: Housing/Domestic Duties</td>
<td>Articles focusing on various aspects of housing and domestic duties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Article: Work</td>
<td>Articles focused on various aspects of work and the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Article: Capitalism</td>
<td>Articles focused on various aspects of life and situations in the Capitalist countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Article: Socialism/Heritage</td>
<td>Articles focused on the socialist and communist history and heritage of the East German state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Article: Women's Issues</td>
<td>Articles focused on various issues specifically related to women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Articles focused on issues related to children.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws</td>
<td>Articles related to various aspects of law.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Articles focused on sports.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc</td>
<td>Miscellaneous articles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Year of Women</td>
<td>A series of reports and articles in relation to the International Year of Women, ranging from reports on women in various countries to articles directly related to preparations for the International Women's Conference.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suche Der Mann</td>
<td>A series of articles looking for the 'ideal' East German man, consisting of profiles of various candidates recommended by the readers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesagt/Getan</td>
<td>A series of articles comparing the promises of lawmakers to actual provisions on the ground.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bereit/Bereut</td>
<td>A series of articles about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ach du Meine Freizeit</td>
<td>A series of articles, also featuring letters from readers, about managing work and free time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Lexicon</td>
<td>A series of cut-away fact booklets about other countries, especially related to the lives of women in them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mütter</td>
<td>A series that featured daily diaries of two new mothers, one from 1943 and the other from 1975.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wo Kaufen Sie am Liebsten Ein?</td>
<td>A series featuring reader discussion and reports on where readers prefer to do their shopping.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freundschaft Konkret</td>
<td>A series of articles focused on the relationship and similarities between East German (women) and those in other socialist countries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial Story</td>
<td>Featured a variety of novels and stories presented in weekly installations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story/Poem/Art</td>
<td>Pages featuring art, artistic photography, short stories or poetry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informativ</td>
<td>A regular feature that included snippets of general information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guter Rat</td>
<td>A regular feature that included a range of useful advice and other snippets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganz Unter Uns</td>
<td>Pages that regularly featured readers' letters about various problems they faced and included responses and advice either from editors or other experts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprechstunde</td>
<td>Pages that featured medical advice and other articles related</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Regular fashion spread, on various themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Misc</td>
<td>Miscellaneous articles and other material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Full-page advertisements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>International Year of Women</td>
<td>Articles and features related to the International Year of Women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Profile: Woman</td>
<td>Features detailing the lives and work of women (usually artists or designers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Profile: Man</td>
<td>Features detailing the lives and work of men (usually artists or designers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interview: Woman</td>
<td>Interviews with women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interview: Man</td>
<td>Interviews with men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Article: Women's Issues</td>
<td>Articles related directly to women's issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Article: Socialism/Heritage</td>
<td>Articles related to East Germany's socialist history and heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Article: Laws</td>
<td>Articles related to laws and regulations in East Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Article: Fashion</td>
<td>Articles related to aspects of fashion and design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Article: Health</td>
<td>Articles related to health issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Article: Cooking</td>
<td>Articles related to cooking and food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Article: Cosmetics</td>
<td>Articles related to cosmetics such as makeup and hair products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Article: House Design/Decoration</td>
<td>Articles related to interior design and decoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Article: International Women</td>
<td>Articles related to women abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Fashion Plates</td>
<td>Pages of fashion plates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>Pages containing letters from readers, sometimes including responses from the editors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Feuilleton</td>
<td>Pages containing editorial opinion pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Reporting DFD</td>
<td>Reports on the actions of the DFD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Pages displaying artwork such as paintings or artistic photography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Travel Report</td>
<td>Photographic reports of travels abroad, sometimes with the view to recommending destinations for visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>Pages discussing various available jobs and the requirements they entailed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Pages reviewing and discussing books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Counts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews of Books</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/Physiology</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness/Health</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs/Construction/Housing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances/Household Products</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Advice</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws/Socialism/DFD</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetics/Fashion/Hair</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housework/Decoration</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabric/Patterns</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Advice</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking/Recipes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Issues</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment/Recycling/Etc.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers/Plants/Nature</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining Guests</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4: Informativ Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International General</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Women</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDR General</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDR Women</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Info</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housework/Housing</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: Combined Category Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combo Code</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>International Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>International General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Focus: Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Focus: German Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Focus: Domestic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Focus: Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Focus: Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Focus: Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Focus: Discussion/Advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Focus: Science/Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Focus: Fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Appendix III: Content Analysis Figures
Figure 7 - Für Dich Pages per Topic or Feature, 1975

Figure 8 - Located Material in Für Dich
Figure 9 - Located Material in Informativ Section

Figure 10 - Gendered Material in Für Dich
Figure 11 - Pages per Topic or Feature, Sibylle 1975

Figure 12 - Pages per Topic or feature (excl. Fashion, Ads), Sibylle 19
Figure 13 – Located Material in Sibylle

Sibylle 1975 Explicitly Located Material

- International: 10%
- Domestic: 19%
- Not Applicable: 71%

Figure 14 - Gendered Material in Sibylle

Sibylle 1975 Explicitly Gendered Material

- Not Applicable: 47%
- Female: 52%
- Male: 1%
Percentage Contents of Für Dich and Sibylle by Topic

Figure 15 - Percentage Contents by Combined Topics
**Figure 16 - Sibylle Contents by Combined Topic**

**Figure 17 - Für Dich Contents by Combined Topic**
11. Works Cited


McKay, Joanna (2002). "East German identity in the GDR" in East German Distinctiveness in a Unified Germany. J. Grix and P. Cooke (eds.). Birmingham, University of Birmingham Press.


