

Philanthropin, which emphasized practical education, experimentation, and the preparation of students for citizenship; and the so-called Chalcographie, a society founded to encourage commercial initiative and to contribute to the improvement of morality by improving taste. In the lively, ideologically charged controversy of the time between Volcanists and Neptunists as to how nature evolves, Prince Leopold sided with the Volcanists, who emphasized discontinuity and radical breaks, as against the Neptunists, notably J. W. von Goethe, who defended a gradualist view of natural change, with its conservative political bias. The prince differed from Goethe on other matters as well, mainly in his support for a federalism guaranteed by a revived empire and Fürstenbund, a loose union of independent political entities capable of resisting threats posed by the rise of absolutist national states. Indeed, Wörlitz was meant to encapsulate a vision of Germany that combined the centuries-old legal and institutional bases of the empire with the type of small-state patriotism championed by Justus Möser in his history of his native Osnabrück. Although “enlightened” federalism was but an ephemeral movement that lost out in the nineteenth century to the autocratic Prussian model of good governance, it was one of the few promising episodes in Germany’s political past that, as Urnbach rightly perceives, “is best understood as a repository of cultural tropes which surfaced and resurfaced in debates about the nation at various decisive turning points in the rise of modern Germany” (p. 200).

This book is must reading for students of eighteenth-century Germany and the role of federalism in Germany’s subsequent development. It might also interest readers concerned about economic globalization, political centralization, and cultural homogenization in our time.

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REBEKKA HABERMAS. *Frauen und Männer des Bürgertums: Eine Familiengeschichte (1750–1850)*. (Bürgertum; Beiträge zur Europäischen Gesellschaftsgeschichte, number 14.) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht. 2000. Pp. viii, 456.

Rebekka Habermas’s microhistory of nineteenth-century German bourgeois families is a distinguished contribution to an already impressive body of recent scholarship on nineteenth-century civil society. Its importance lies in its solid presentation of two theses: that the social roles and identities of middle-class men and women cannot be explained without understanding the mutually constitutive nature of male and female gender; and, further, that bourgeois private and public life are too interwoven to be handled as discrete analytical categories. While these arguments may not be particularly new to Anglo-American readers, Habermas’s meticulous research in showing how the everyday practices of husbands and wives of two

families shaped public and private bourgeois lives notably advances the historiography on civil society in Germany. Gender analysis has taken a decidedly subsidiary, if not peripheral, position in the historiography on civil society, and this study exposes the blind spots of prevailing models. This book ought to stimulate the same rethinking that Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff’s *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (1987) did for anglophone historiography. Both persuasively demonstrate that the family was the principal site for shaping not only home life and women’s lives but also men’s attitudes and their socioeconomic roles in the larger reaches of public society.

The study examines two interconnected families from Nuremberg over two generations spanning the period 1750–1850, a century considered to be foundational for modern civil society. The work is divided into three large sections on work, sociability, and family, within which subsections are devoted to the gendering of women and men’s everyday practices. The chief virtue of this organization is that Habermas can trace the development of the bourgeois family over a century while simultaneously analyzing the overlapping influences of gender formation for both men and women. Although a supporting cast of brothers and sisters enter into the story, the families of Paul Wolfgang and Margaret Merkel and Friedrich and Käthe Roth are the study’s principal actors. Connecting the two families is Käthe Roth, the daughter of the Merckels. Her correspondence with her mother as well as both families’ diaries, house inventories, dowry lists, book lists, marriage contracts, wills, and other materials enable Habermas to draw close generational comparisons between two households.

For Habermas both families are model representatives of their generations. Paul Wolfgang Merkel was a successful commercial merchant, an economically independent burgher who held a number of honorific offices and participated in the city’s vibrant associational life. Friedrich Roth, by contrast, was a high-ranking financial official in Bavaria’s civil service, president of the Lutheran consistory, and a member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, thus typifying the professional bourgeoisie. By choosing these two families, Habermas endorses the disputed viewpoint that a seamless continuity existed between the older urban bourgeoisie (*Stadtbürgertum*) of the Old Regime and the educated, professional classes of the mid and late nineteenth century (*Bildungsbürgertum*).

With deft use of historical-anthropological methods, Habermas crafts a patchwork narrative of varying experiences that collectively challenges some long-held assumptions about civil society and bourgeois culture. Three points stand out. First, she takes issue with the standard view of the middle-class work ethic, which posits an insatiable male drive for profit and, conversely, a decreasing importance in women’s work. The meaning of work, she argues, changed for both sexes in similar ways. Both understood their activities

more for moral and civic improvement than for mere economic gain. Cooking, handwork, and the education of servants and children assumed moral, cultural, and religious dimensions that fashioned a female identity. No longer just an economic helpmeet, bourgeois women became coparticipants in the neohumanistic project of cultivating individual worth and virtues (*Bildung*)—a sensibility that later drove women to form charities and welfare societies outside the home. Men, Habermas notes, worked in the same direction, partaking in public activities that burnished social reputations but brought no remuneration. Second, the study underscores the importance of domestic sociability, which disrupts the neat dyad of public and private. Through social gatherings in the home, women gained access to information, social networks, and cultural movements. Domestic sociability, then, cut across the gender divisions of public life, thus undermining arguments that draw a direct correspondence between the categories of public and private with male and female spheres. Friedrich Roth participated actively in the domestic cultural dimensions of family life and, moreover, brought those domestic attitudes and ideals to bear in his public life. Finally, in spite of the book's emphasis on the new cultural enterprise of bourgeois family life, Habermas rejects the argument of an increased bourgeois emphasis on emotion and sentiment in the marriage. Her case study reveals that economic standing and social status were as important as ever.

As with all case studies, the question of typicality arises. Whether or not these families act as a fair proxy for Germany's evolving bourgeoisie, the study nonetheless succeeds in bringing alive the daily social, cultural, and economic practices that concretely constructed a bourgeois *habitus* in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. In this regard, Habermas's study promotes two striking methodological advances. In bringing men and women's private and public lives under one analytical lens, she shows the shortcomings of merely looking at public lives. Further, the study suggests that microhistory, or *Alltagsgeschichte*, can often act as a necessary check against the overarching analytical abstractions of social scientific history. Habermas's excellent book provides arresting material for the ongoing discussion on civil society and should stimulate further research at the microhistorical level.

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UTE PLANERT. *Antifeminismus im Kaiserreich: Diskurs, soziale Formation und politische Mentalität*. (Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft, number 124.) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht. 1998. Pp. 447. DM 84.

The antifeminist movement that emerged in Wilhelmine Germany, Ute Planert argues, can be regarded as a "proto-fascist movement." Her study documents this claim through analysis of the publications

of the main pertinent organization—the Bund zur Bekämpfung der Frauenemanzipation (Union to Combat Female Emancipation)—as well as those of a wide range of other allied or sympathetic organizations such as male professional organizations. The publications she examines range from minor journals of professional organizations through the widely read *Preussische Jahrbücher*.

Planert tracks the lineage of antifeminism from its origins in the hegemonic notions of gender polarity that infused post-Enlightenment German middle-class society and institutions through its linkages with nationalism, anti-Semitism, and conservative Protestant orthodoxy in the 1890s. She carries her analysis into the Weimar era, when continuities in both ideology and personnel linked Wilhelmine antifeminism with *völkisch* nationalism and eventually fascism. She documents the ideological claims, organizational networks, and political resonances that linked racial hygiene, nationalism, and antifeminism during the Wilhelmine era, the wartime crisis, and in Weimar Germany.

Although the book includes one chapter that focuses on the organizational networks and tactics that formed the basis of movement activism, most of the text is devoted to analysis of publications. The book suffers from its relative lack of attention to the political and organizational dimensions of the argument; it rests heavily on Planert's reading of the periodicals that are the book's main sources—with, however, little discussion of the methodological questions that the use of such sources raise. Although Planert's study addresses very significant historical questions and brings important new evidence to bear on them, she engages little with important works of German women's and gender history that address many of the same questions. This narrowing of focus is not unusual in a dissertation, but it is a bit more surprising in a book that has been substantially revised for publication. For example, Planert's discussion of the connections between racial hygiene and antifeminism does not engage with Ann Taylor Allen's nuanced and controversial alternative views (see Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914* [1991]). Nor do her readings of notions of women's special nature engage with Kathleen Canning's analyses of this phenomenon in *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850–1914* (1996). Even closer in topic is Johanna Gehmacher's recent excellent book on a parallel subject: namely, the ideological and political trajectory of conservative women in Austria from *völkisch* nationalism into Nazism. For Gehmacher, too, conservative views on gender relations play a key analytic role (see Gehmacher, *Völkische Frauenbewegung: Deutschnationale und nationalsozialistische Geschlechterpolitik in Österreich* [1998]).

Obviously no scholar can be expected to be familiar with all of the work in so large and rapidly growing a field as European women's/gender history. In this case, however, there is reason to believe that the argument