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ABHANDLUNGEN

How Employment Generates Social Integration: Trends Towards Disintegration and Over-Integration in the Hyper-Work Society

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Abstract Using an analytical framework that further develops Jahoda's ideas and distinguishes between two manifest and five latent mechanisms for the production of employment-based social integration, three research questions are examined: How does employment generate social integration in German welfare capitalism? How have these employment-based integration mechanisms changed in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) since the Second World War? What dangers to social integration can be identified because of these changes? The manifest mechanisms establish socio-economic integration directly via employment or indirectly through de-commodifying welfare state interventions. The latent mechanisms ensure that social relationships can be formed by providing a time structure, extending social contacts, enabling participation in collective goals, offering collective identities and activating people. We analyse different social orders at the macro-level (labour and social legislation), meso-level (company structures, industrial relations, work environments) and micro-level (employment relationships, household models, action orientations, subjective identifications) of society to identify conditions that promote or endanger social integration. On the one hand, the danger of over-integration (reflected in the term "hyper-work society"), which arises from generalising employment-related performance and exploitation criteria, erects integration barriers for other forms of social integration beyond employment because alternative premises for organising one's life are de-

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valued by predominantly adopting capitalist criteria of social recognition. On the other hand, the binding power of employment and the integrative power of workplaces are weakened by disintegrative trends such as insecure employment, blurring organisational boundaries, as well as fragmentation of employment and social relations, jeopardising social integration through employment.

Keywords Manifest functions of employment · Latent functions of employment · Precarity · Blurring boundaries · Fragmentation

Wie Erwerbsarbeit soziale Integration erzeugt: Trends zur Desintegration und Überintegration in der Hyper-Arbeitsgesellschaft

Zusammenfassung Auf der Grundlage eines Analyserahmens, der Jahodas Ideen weiterentwickelt und zwischen zwei manifesten und fünf latenten Mechanismen für die Produktion von beschäftigungsbasierter sozialer Integration unterscheidet, werden drei Forschungsfragen untersucht: Wie erzeugt Erwerbsarbeit soziale Integration im deutschen Wohlfahrtskapitalismus? Wie haben sich diese beschäftigungsbasierten Integrationsmechanismen in der BRD und in der DDR seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg verändert? Welche Gefahren für die soziale Integration lassen sich aufgrund dieser Veränderungen erkennen? Die manifesten Mechanismen stellen die sozioökonomische Integration direkt über die Beschäftigung oder indirekt über dekommodifizierende sozialstaatliche Interventionen her. Die latenten Mechanismen sorgen dafür, dass soziale Beziehungen entstehen können, indem sie eine Zeitstruktur bereitstellen, soziale Kontakte erweitern, die Teilnahme an kollektiven Zielen ermöglichen, kollektive Identitäten anbieten und Menschen aktivieren. Wir analysieren verschiedene Sozialordnungen auf der Makro- (Arbeits- und Sozialgesetzgebung), Meso- (Unternehmensstrukturen, Industrielle Beziehungen, Arbeitsumgebungen) und Mikroebene (Beschäftigungsverhältnisse, Haushaltsmodelle, Handlungsorientierungen, subjektive Identifikationen) der Gesellschaft, um Bedingungen zu identifizieren, die soziale Integration fördern oder gefährden. Zum einen errichtet die Gefahr der Überintegration (im Begriff der „Hyper-Arbeitsgesellschaft“ angesprochen), die sich aus der Verallgemeinerung beschäftigungsbezogener Leistungs- und Verwertungskriterien ergibt, Integrationsbarrieren für andere Formen der sozialen Integration jenseits der Erwerbsarbeit, da durch die Übernahme kapitalistischer Kriterien der sozialen Anerkennung andere Prämissen der Lebensgestaltung entwertet werden. Zum anderen werden die Bindekraft von Beschäftigung sowie die Integrationskraft von Arbeitsplätzen durch desintegrative Tendenzen, wie unsichere Beschäftigungsverhältnisse, verschwimmende Organisationsgrenzen sowie die Fragmentierung von Arbeits- und Sozialbeziehungen, geschwächt und damit die soziale Integration durch Beschäftigung gefährdet.

Schlüsselwörter Manifeste Funktionen von Erwerbsarbeit · Latente Funktionen von Erwerbsarbeit · Prekarität · Entgrenzung · Fragmentierung

1 Introduction

By the second half of the twentieth century at the latest, European societies had developed into work societies (Arendt 1958), in which individual identity, social status and social integration are largely determined by employment status and position in the labour market. The central characteristic of a work society is that the material and immaterial social participation of a large majority of the population is based directly or indirectly on employment (Vorbereitungsausschuss für den 21. Soziologentag 1983, p. 13). Nevertheless, the question of how labour generates social integration has hardly been systematically addressed by the sociology of work. Building on the editors' conceptual reflections on social (dis)integration (Grunow et al. 2023), which we apply to employment, we pursue the following questions: How is social integration generated by employment? How have these integration mechanisms and their modes of integration changed in West and East Germany in recent decades? Which hazards to social integration can be observed for the German work society in its current form, which we call a "hyper-work society"?

In order to link the editors' conceptual reflections on social (dis)integration and the rather implicit theoretical references between work and social integration in the sociology of work, an integrating theoretical concept is required with which key insights from research on labour, labour markets, the welfare state and inequality can be brought together and systematically related to employment-based social integration. Therefore, we build on Merton's distinction between the manifest and latent functions of social institutions[1] (Merton 1968) and the application of this concept to (un)employment (Jahoda 1981, 1982), which allows us to provide a differentiated answer to the *first research question* about the integration mechanisms of employment. We distinguish between manifest and latent functions of employment and thus identify two manifest as well as five latent mechanisms that generate social integration: The manifest function of wage labour is earning money and providing socioeconomic integration (Jahoda 1982). This is achieved through two manifest mechanisms. The primary mechanism is market based and concerns the direct generation of income and employment status from an employment relationship. The secondary mechanism is a de-commodifying one that stems from the welfare state and is indirectly linked to employment via its income-generating role. In addition, the often overlooked five latent functions of employment establish social integration by providing a time structure for one's conduct of life, extending social contacts, enabling participation in the pursuit of joint collective goals, offering collective identities and identification with others, and activating people (Jahoda 1981, p. 188). Therefore, they enable people to build social relationships with each other in various forms and thus to integrate socially in different ways. The different modes of action of these manifest and latent mechanisms are explained in the article.

[1] Manifest functions are intended and recognised by actors and consciously designed to produce certain objective consequences (e.g., employment generates income). In contrast, latent functions are not consciously intended, but still have an impact on society and its members (e.g., employment provides a temporal structure). The editors refer to these functions as mechanisms that integrate actors into a social order and coordinate "actor" as well as "action integration" (Grunow et al. 2023). Latent functions partly concern what the editors call "side-effects".

Societies differ in terms of the institutional, socio-structural and cultural organisation of work, which means that the functioning of mechanisms becomes particularly clear when macro-, meso- and micro-level social orders are compared across different societies or time periods. To answer the *second research question* on the changes in integration mechanisms, we focus on the changes in social orders in German welfare capitalism after World War II. By comparing different periods as well as institutionalised social orders in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), we are able to show how the conditions for social integration have changed, and in what sense social integration has been strengthened or weakened. This assessment of the current state of employment-based social integration provides the empirical basis for addressing the *third research question* on hazards to social integration in the German work society in its present form. We highlight and explain two of these hazards in the article: On the one hand, the danger of over-integration through employment-related norms erects barriers for other forms of social integration beyond employment. On the other hand, the binding power of employment as well as the integrative power of workplaces are weakened by disintegrative trends such as insecure employment (careers), blurring organisational boundaries as well as fragmentation of employment and social relations. Consequently, social conflicts arise and reciprocal ties at work become vulnerable, jeopardising social integration through employment. Overall, we can diagnose both hazards to and from employment-based social integration.

Before we start our analysis, it is first necessary to explicate a basic assumption in the sociology of work that may not be self-evident outside this field of research but is important for assessing integration possibilities: the *ambivalent nature of social integration through employment* (Schmidt 2018). As mentioned above, employment integrates people socio-economically and socially in many ways, but in doing so also assigns them unequal social statuses and social recognition. Social relations are embedded in fields of unequal power relations and conflicting interests that constantly challenge social integration, negotiate heteronomy and autonomy, and can also lead to exploitation and alienation. Therefore, such ambivalence must always be kept in mind when examining employment-based social integration. Second, by focusing on paid work (employment), we largely *lose sight of other forms of work* and thereby systematically limit our theoretical and empirical explanations. In terms of the social division of labour, paid work only represents the socially most valued form of labour, whereas other forms of work that produce goods or provide services for others or oneself are often overlooked or taken for granted, such as unpaid domestic or care work, volunteer work, unpaid trainee work or own-use production work (ILO 2022; Smith 2006; Glucksmann 2005). Their mechanisms of social integration, the changes they have undergone, the differences and intersections with employment-based integration, as well as derived threats to social integration in contemporary societies, are not the subject of this paper, but promise further insights into social integration through work.

In the following, we first focus on the manifest function of wage labour, showing how the primary employment-based and the substitutive de-commodifying mechanisms generate unequal socio-economic integration (Sect. 2). In doing so, we consider different social orders at the macro-level (welfare state regimes), meso-level

(industrial relations) and micro-level (standard employment relationship) of society. This provides a historical reference point and a baseline for assessing the changes in integration mechanisms as well as the current state of social integration later on. In order to complete the answer to the first research question, the latent mechanisms are discussed in Sect. 3, taking a closer look at their functions for social integration in a further development of Jahoda's and the editors' theoretical ideas. Building on one another, the second and third research questions are answered in Sect. 4 to Sect. 6. Macro-level changes in labour and social legislation have modified the manifest mechanisms, leading to our diagnosis of a dominant weakening and a subordinate strengthening of socio-economic integration (Sect. 4). Changing work environments and subjective perceptions at the meso- and micro-levels exaggerated the latent mechanisms and draw attention to the danger of normative over-integration through employment-related performance and exploitation criteria (Sect. 5). This is reflected in the term "hyper-work society", which is explained in this section. Section 6 brings together the effects of these developments on the social structure of society and addresses the integration hazards and social conflicts that result from them. The article concludes with a summary of key findings and an outlook (Sect. 7).

2 Manifest Mechanisms to Generate Unequal Socio-Economic Integration

In work societies, *employment is the primary mechanism* for generating socio-economic integration of the working population and their families (Offe 1984; Smith 2006; Arendt 1958). This is achieved through the monetary returns and legal (benefit) entitlements of employment. To be sure, these returns and entitlements are unequally divided by employment status (in employment, unemployed, outside the labour force) and position in the labour market (e.g. occupational status, type of contract). Consequently, employment grades socio-economic integration unequally through different pay levels, differentiated entitlements to (replacement) benefits, and unequal positions that provide different levels of socio-economic integration. These different levels exemplify the ambivalent nature of integration, which can also lead to (socio-economic) disintegration.

In welfare capitalism, income and participation opportunities are linked to employment through social welfare institutions (Dahrendorf 1983, p. 32; Esping-Andersen 1990, pp. 21–54): Employment is regulated by the welfare state so that socio-economic integration is not solely determined by market forces. (Dependent) employees and their families are protected against market risks through active state intervention in the economy (e.g. labour law regulations, social legislation) and substitutive welfare state support systems (e.g. social security systems). Hence, the primary, manifest mechanism for generating socio-economic integration is interwoven with a subordinate, manifest mechanism. This second mechanism is indirectly related to employment as it mainly relies on wage labour and a redistribution of income. As a *substitutive, de-commodifying mechanism* it complements or corrects the primary, manifest mechanism when the latter is not applicable owing to absence

from the labour market, or when it fails by causing socio-economic integration below socially accepted minimum levels.[2] The dark side of this de-commodifying mechanism is that it strives for socio-economic integration for all, but in fact gradually downgrades its support for socio-economic integration by favouring those in employment over those who are currently not able to work but are willing to and, finally, those who are not participating in the labour force at all (Althammer et al. 2021, pp. 143–158).[3] This underlines the significance of employment as the primary mechanism for socio-economic integration as well as the ambivalent nature of social integration through employment.

The functioning of the mechanisms becomes particularly clear by comparing different macro-, meso-, and micro-level social orders across societies and time periods. The period after the Second World War until the mid-1970s is taken as our baseline observation period in this section and subsequent developments are contrasted with it in the following sections. In addition, we compare the institutionalised social orders in the FRG and the GDR and use a typology of welfare state regimes to specify the modes of both manifest integration mechanisms and to provide a baseline for assessing future developments.

At the macro-level of society, various *welfare state regimes* can be distinguished (Esping-Andersen 1990). These regimes represent different ideal-typical social orders that regulate both manifest integration mechanisms and differentiate diverse modes of generating socio-economic integration. The FRG is classified as a conservative welfare state that implemented a social security system tied to past (unequal) payments from wage labour (Esping-Andersen 1990, pp. 26 ff., 48 ff., 69 ff.). The substitutive, de-commodifying mechanism is primarily aimed at *maintaining previous (unequal) employment-related statuses* and standards of living and grants wage-replacement benefits according to the equivalence principle (higher previous investment guarantees higher benefits). As a last resort, some non-contributory benefits serve to cover basic social needs (e.g. in case of illness or for those not covered by social insurance) and to *avoid social exclusion* if someone or their families cannot support themselves. Overall, the de-commodifying, manifest mechanism is clearly tied to the primary, manifest mechanism and reproduces its unequal socio-economic (dis)integration through employment at a lower level. The special functioning of both manifest mechanisms and especially their relation to each other becomes clear through the comparison with the liberal as well as the social democratic types of welfare regime: The liberal integration mode strengthens socio-economic integration that is directly generated by employment, corrects market-induced inequalities in socio-economic integration to a lesser extent, and provides only minimal benefits via the de-commodifying mechanism with strict and usually means-tested entitlement criteria. In contrast, the social democratic regime strengthens the de-commodifying

[2] As explained below, welfare state interventions make unequal offers for integrating different categories of actors so that in fact *different* minimum levels of social integration exist.

[3] More precisely, these three categories (employed, temporarily not employed and labour force outsiders) are also internally graduated by occupational status, type of contract, reasons for and duration of (temporary) incapacity or unwillingness to work. We return to some of these differences when discussing the "standard employment relationship" and "precarious" employment later on in this article.

mechanism and provides universal, largely tax-funded and comparatively generous benefits aimed at promoting equality and full employment. This comparison shows that the functioning of the conservative regime allows for more egalitarian and participatory socio-economic integration than the liberal regime and more inequality and disintegration than the social democratic regime. This distinction is taken up again in Sect. 4 to assess the changes in socio-economic integration over time.[4]

The GDR was not considered in Esping-Andersen's typology and is often overlooked in empirical analyses of socio-economic integration. Discussing the functioning of both manifest mechanisms during the same time period is necessary for assessing further developments and integration hazards in reunified Germany. Moreover, it is conceptually important for understanding over-integration (Grunow et al. 2023). In the socialist welfare system of the GDR, socio-economic integration was primarily based on the right as well as the obligation to be employed, social policy delivered at the company level as well as price subsidies and family support measures, whereas the social insurance system was less important (Schmidt 2004, pp. 31–47; Scharf 1988). This system guaranteed a job and a minimum wage, so that socio-economic integration was primarily generated by *full employment at a basic socio-economic level*. The secondary, de-commodifying mechanism guaranteed *additional basic state security measures* such as price subsidies for basic goods, travel and energy costs, or a housing policy ensuring low rents. In contrast to the FRG, social insurance was centralised, occupational differences in access to and coverage by social insurance were abolished, and self-employed people were transferred to their own social insurance, so that almost the entire population was covered by more or less similar levels of social insurance. In this welfare regime, the *company played a key role in social integration* that was much more important than in the FRG, as it provided additional payments, health services, meals, childcare, the sale of goods and services of all kinds, as well as social and cultural services (e.g. sports, leisure and holiday facilities, company housing). Consequently, both manifest mechanisms caused on average less inequality and a more participatory socio-economic integration than the previously mentioned regime types. However, the dark side of this form of social integration—which qualifies it as an example of *over-integration*—was that the social order of the GDR linked it to strong political dependency and expected conformity, i.e. demanding the necessity of employment, punishing non-compliance and stigmatising those members of society who did not want to be employed. Despite the equalisation of status differences, this social order distributed privileges and disadvantages in terms of pay, access to special goods and individual choice according to political criteria, as well as the actor's importance for production, population reproduction and political stability—which suggests a stronger consensus- and conformity-based understanding of social integration than in the FRG.

For the period after the Second World War until the mid-1970s, an expansion of the welfare state could be observed in the FRG and the GDR (Althammer et al. 2021; Streeck 2014; Schmidt 2004). This meant that the primary mechanism of socio-eco-

[4] It will be shown that both manifest integration mechanisms have shifted more in the direction of the liberal model since the 1980s—albeit with the exception of women's integration into the labour market, which is more strongly oriented towards the social democratic model.

nomic integration became better protected against market risks and more inclusive than before. The de-commodifying mechanism was systematically expanded for population groups outside the labour force, which also strengthened its integrative potential and weakened its disintegrative tendencies. This created an upwardly mobile society with a large middle class in the FRG (Vogel 2009, p. 56) and upward social mobility from the working class in the early stages of the GDR (Hofmann and Martens 2016).

Industrial relations (Müller-Jentsch 2016), i.e. relations between employers' associations and trade unions, as well as relations between the management of a company and its employees or employees' representatives, also influence the conditions for socio-economic integration. At the meso-level of society, the social orders of industrial relations in West and East Germany during this period were characterised by *collective forms of labour regulation.* These collective regulations reinforced the de-commodifying mechanism and the integrative potential of both manifest mechanisms, but continued to lead to unequal socio-economic integration, albeit to a lesser extent (Artus et al. 2016; Bispinck 1993; Brinkmann and Nachtwey 2013). By joining large unions, workers did not have to negotiate individual employment contracts, but could bargain wages as well as employment and working conditions through their representatives inside and outside the workplace. These collective forms of labour regulation were based on an industrial, more standardised work organisation and practice, the power of large enterprises and strong trade unions, which changed later with the increasing importance of the service sector (Hassel 2007; Müller-Jentsch and Weitbrecht 2003). Collective forms of labour regulation were particularly relevant for those who relied on collective protection and did not have much bargaining power on their own, as collective cooperation empowered the individual worker and *redressed the imbalance of power* between different groups of workers. Nevertheless, even these equalising efforts provided unequal opportunities for socio-economic integration by stratifying integration according to position in the labour market (thus pushing some, such as temporary workers, to the periphery) and not including the unemployed and those who were outside the labour force. The dark side of socio-economic integration through employment is that those who are (temporarily) not integrated into the labour market are systematically overlooked or, as in the GDR, are not tolerated at all.

At the micro-level of society, the different types of employment contracts represent social orders developed by the welfare state and industrial relations to categorise and grade the socio-economic integration offered to employees. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, the *"standard employment relationship (SER)"* became the central social model for dependent employment, guaranteeing the most comprehensive protection for workers against market risks, and the benchmark for other employment relationships that offered less socio-economic integration (Mückenberger 1986, p. 34; Kalleberg 2009). Its core components are its integration into the social security system, a permanent employment contract, plannable and regular weekly working hours that are oriented towards full-time employment, homogeneity of work and employment relationships (i.e. no temporary agency work), the authority of collective bargaining agreements and in the FRG an income that enables the (male) breadwinner to support a family (Geissler 1998, pp. 550 ff.; Mückenberger

1985). Despite their different welfare regimes, it became the most common form of employment for the majority of (male) employees in West and East Germany (Winkler 1990; Simonson et al. 2011)—with the difference that integration into the labour market also applied to large parts of the female population in the GDR and that atypical forms of employment developed in the FRG at a later stage (Sect. 4). According to this social order, the highest level of socio-economic integration is achieved through both manifest mechanisms, which are directly or indirectly related to employment relationships, for skilled workers who are permanently employed full-time in (large) companies (Mückenberger 1985, pp. 424–429).[5] Those who deviate from the core components of the SER bear the costs of this employment-based integration, as they have less employment, income or planning security, as well as fewer collective options for labour regulation, which reinforces the disintegrative potential of both manifest mechanisms. In the GDR, as explained above, this especially holds true for dissidents. In the FRG, this primarily applied to women, men without vocational qualifications and many immigrants (Geissler 1998, p. 552; Krings 2021). Thus, the emergence of the SER was supported, among other things, by a *gender-typical distribution of paid and unpaid work*, in which unpaid work was predominantly taken on by women (von Oertzen and Rietzschel 1997; Jürgens 2011, p. 380).[6] Accordingly, male breadwinner and female housewife family models dominated, which made marriage and the rights resulting from this legally secured relationship important for women's socio-economic integration. This household model was also supported by the lack of adequate professional childcare and welfare state support promoting labour market integration of caregivers (as in social democratic welfare states). In contrast, in the GDR, these measures were developed and in place.

3 Latent Mechanisms to Generate Diverse Forms of Employment-Based Social Relationships

The five latent mechanisms with which employment establishes social integration are providing a time structure for conducting one's life, extending social contacts, enabling participation in the pursuit of joint collective goals, offering collective identities and identification with others, and activating people (Jahoda 1981, p. 188). These mechanisms enable people to build diverse forms of employment-based social relationships and were recognised mainly through the pioneering work of Jahoda (1981, 1982) who discovered them through her research on unemployment. By closely analysing the lack of employment and noting that guaranteeing socio-economic integration through transfer income was not enough to alleviate the suffering

[5] This applied to both the FRG and the GDR, although the better position of the aforementioned groups of people was more pronounced in the FRG as integration levels and employment contracts in the GDR were less differentiated.

[6] For a conceptual framework offering a consideration of gender relations, their contribution to welfare provision, the unequal de-commodification of women and men and the relations between paid and unpaid work, see Orloff (1993) and Grunow (2019).

caused by unemployment, the other integrative mechanisms of employment became apparent and were confirmed in other studies from the sociology of work, labour market research and research on the unemployed (e.g. Bähr et al. 2022; Paul and Batinic 2010; Creed and Macintyre 2001; Kronauer et al. 1993; Vogel 1999). As "latent mechanisms" they are examples of unintended side effects that are generated by employment—and in Jahoda's view correspond to more or less deep-seated human needs, as we strive to be socially integrated. As a social psychologist, Jahoda was particularly concerned with the effects on the individual and their mental health. As sociologists, we take a closer look at the social side and focus on the functions of these latent mechanisms for social integration in the further development of Jahoda's theoretical ideas.

First, employment provides a *time structure* for the 24-h day, the week and the year, enabling people to arrange, plan and coordinate different activities based on a temporal framework for action (Jahoda 1982, p. 22; Wanberg et al. 1997). Access to a temporal order is—in our understanding—a necessary prerequisite for the integration of actors into social orders—including the arrangement of different social orders. This is because sufficient orderliness of social relations between the subunits of a society or an organisation requires a certain time structure. Employment is not the only mechanism that provides time structures for social integration, because planned and regular activities can also arise from self-employment or non-paid forms of work, such as care work or volunteering. Jahoda's (1982) research has shown that employment is the usual mechanism that generates time structures for building social relationships. However, unemployed women resisted the loss of their time structure longer than men because they had to continue doing regular unpaid work. Therefore, substituting employment through other forms of work is possible, but requires more initiative as it deviates from the standard norm of work societies in welfare capitalism.

Second, employment *extends social relationships* beyond the relations within the family and the immediate neighbourhood (Jahoda 1982, pp. 25–26.; Kunze and Suppa 2017). As a result, employment not only expands networks quantitatively but also provides access to a different kind of social relationship that is crucial for aspects of social integration other than the familial networks (Schad and Hense 2023): As Granovetter (1973) has shown, the central function of social relationships between individuals who are less similar to one another (which he calls "weak ties"[7]) is to bridge different networks and thus to exchange information or other resources between them. Weak ties are crucial for labour market (re)integration (Brady 2015) and improving access to resources and social spheres that are not available in familial relationships (in Granovetter's terminology "strong ties"). Thus, employment expands the horizon of thinking or social references to outsiders beyond the familial sphere. Maintaining contact with people who are different might be

[7] Granovetter (1973) distinguishes between strong and weak interpersonal ties. Strong ties are relationships between people who spend a lot of time together and whose relationship is characterised by close emotional bonds, mutual trust and reciprocal social assistance. In contrast, weak ties refer to different types of relationships that do not meet the high requirements for strong ties and establish a connection between people that is looser (e.g. acquaintances) or more functionally oriented (e.g. work colleagues and business relationships).

relevant to multi-layered aspects of social integration such as tolerance for dissent and non-conformity, trust in others or negotiating conflicts (Grunow et al. 2023). In our view, connecting actors who would otherwise have little to do with each other establishes the basis for social integration at the societal level—and employment is a central mechanism to fulfil this function. Some other forms of work such as self-employment, volunteer work or unpaid trainee work can substitute employment's social function, but others such as domestic or own-use production work are less likely to expand private networks.

Third, employment generates *participation in the pursuit of joint collective goals*, thus bringing the normative consensus of a society into focus. Jahoda showed that the goals and achievements of a collective based on the division of labour transcend those of the individual (Jahoda 1982, p. 24; Waters and Moore 2002). In this regard, many unemployed respondents were depressed because they (no longer) felt that they were needed by the social collective. In advancing the editors' conceptual considerations with regard to emotional components of social integration (Grunow et al. 2023), it can be mentioned that feelings (more precisely: feelings of belonging, of being useful, of being needed by others or, conversely, a sense of purposelessness) have not yet been explicitly included in their conceptualisation. In accordance with the theoretical ideas of the editors on co-orientations, giving actors the opportunity to contribute to a higher collective purpose means linking them to socially accepted collective goals. As Sect. 2 has shown, the central mode of integration in a work society is oriented towards employment, which is formative for its members through the institutionalisation of employment-related social recognition in welfare regimes and other social orders. Deviating from this prevailing social-normative consensus and engaging in behaviour that does not conform to the dominant norm requires more justification. Unpaid work is usually seen as inferior, although care and domestic work was a recognised alternative for women during the baseline observation period in West Germany. Even if it is possible to replace paid employment with other forms of work, social recognition for these activities usually has to be related to other social goals beyond the work society (e.g. social engagement/charity, political goals, family or religious values). This is necessary because the work has to be perceived as meaningful and socially valuable in order to substitute the employment mechanism (mere participation in a collective is not sufficient).

Fourth, the *link between status production and identity* created by employment draws attention to the fact that employment is not only about achieving an objective status position (Jahoda 1982, p. 26; Hetschko et al. 2021; Baechtold and Mandach 2007, p. 7). Rather, occupational activity and occupational status are also closely interwoven with identity issues that are relevant for a person's self-definition and for how they are perceived by others and themselves. Individuals identify with different social groups (e.g. their profession, nationality, gender) in order to form their own identity and personality (for a founding sociological perspective on identity: Simmel 1890). This is of central importance for questions of social integration, as it is from this "intersection of social circles" (Simmel 1890) that people become members of society and identify with it both cognitively and emotionally: It is through the references to others that one defines who one is, who one feels close to and who

one belongs to (Blau 1960).[8] Other forms of work may substitute status production via employment and the development of self-identity associated with it (Senghaas-Knobloch 1999), but, as already outlined in the previous paragraph, the focus of the normative basis of a work society lies on employment and other kinds of identity require greater justification.

The fifth mechanism draws attention to *required and regular activity* and the activating role of employment, which refers back to the experience of being busy and active (Jahoda 1982, p. 26). According to Jahoda, being active is better for psychological well-being than being passive. In our understanding, activity is already implicit in the other mechanisms because they refer to the temporal structuring of activities, the active connection with other people, collective goals or collective identities. As all other forms of work are by definition also associated with being active, this function of employment is most likely to be replaced by them.

In Jahoda's view (1981, p. 189), employment is the key social institution that can sufficiently provide *all* latent mechanisms. In addition to the integrative potentials mentioned above, the latent mechanisms also have disintegrative potentials. For example, the temporal structures of employment can prevent integration into other areas. Moreover, social contacts at work can lead to social closure, promote the feeling of uselessness or make exclusionary offers of identity. Therefore, the workplace and its social orders (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019; Hildebrandt and Seltz 1989) are important social spaces at the meso-level of society that guide the integrating or disintegrating effects of latent mechanisms. These social orders are based both on informal negotiations between employees and their superiors and on formal agreements with works or staff councils and trade unions (Rüb et al. 2011). On the one hand, the social orders may help people to articulate and accept different social interests, to deal with conflicts in regulated ways, to collaborate cooperatively with different social groups, to balance unequal power relationships and to experience trust, loyalty and collegiality—fostering the integrative potentials of the latent mechanisms. On the other hand, employees are also externally controlled and exploited in their collective and individual work activities to varying degrees—even as far as being deeply humiliated, which can be a massive threat to self-identity—so that they also experience heteronomy at their workplaces, which reinforces the disintegrative potentials of the latent mechanisms.

4 Predominant Weakening and Subordinate Strengthening of Socio-Economic Integration

Macro-level changes in labour and social legislation in recent decades have altered both the direct employment-based mechanism for generating socio-economic integration and the substitutive, de-commodifying mechanism compared with the baseline period in Sect. 2. We note a predominant and general tendency towards weakening socio-economic integration as well as a subordinate tendency towards

[8] If individual identity is more or less equated with one collective identity, then in our view a form of over-integration occurs (Sect. 4).

strengthening the independent socio-economic integration of women or caregivers through employment.

The first historical caesura, which occurred in the FRG in the mid-1970s, led to a questioning (but not yet fundamentally changing) of the de-commodifying mechanism and diminished direct income generation from paid work due to rising unemployment (Butterwegge 2012, pp. 37 ff.). Although the GDR was also affected by increasing economic problems during the same period, it did not change the modes of either manifest mechanism and continued its policy based on full employment and additional basic state social security measures until the end of the GDR (Schmidt 2005, p. 135).

The second historical caesura occurred with reunification, after which the dismantling of welfare state benefits and protection rights prevailed and changed both manifest mechanisms (Althammer et al. 2021; Diewald et al. 2006). Employment as well as income security became less protected by the welfare state. This increased the emphasis on individual responsibility instead of collective protection (Lessenich 2008; Jacobi and Mohr 2007) as well as the future risk of losing the labour market or socio-economic integration (Hense 2018). For former *GDR citizens* in particular, this was associated with an abrupt and complete *upheaval of social orders* that fundamentally weakened their socio-economic integration through employment as they knew it (Vogel 1999). This meant the abolition of the right to work and of company social policy, a drastic increase in social security contribution rates, a fundamental dismantling of state subsidy policy and the introduction of means-tested social assistance.

The gradual political deregulation of the labour market began with the Employment Promotion Act in 1996. It promoted *fixed-term employment* contracts and restricted protection against dismissal, making future integration into the labour market more uncertain (Bergmann and Mertens 2011; Gash and McGinnity 2007). This development has culminated, so far, in the implementation of the "Modern Services in the Labour Market" reform package (known as the "Hartz Acts") during 2003 and 2005 (Kemmerling and Bruttel 2006). These acts expanded the possibilities for temporary agency work and marginal employment (also called "mini or midi jobs"), which is not covered by social insurance. *Temporary agency work* is usually characterised by limited opportunities for co-determination, low wages and a strong market dependence of employment, so that lasting socio-economic integration and collective representation of interests are less reliable (Giesecke 2009). If *marginally employed* people have no other access to additional income or social insurance (through their household, other employment or social assistance/pension), the pay is too low for independent socio-economic integration through employment (Wingerter 2009). Overall, these forms of "atypical employment" that deviate from the SER (Sect. 2) in at least one respect have increased. Furthermore, they represent alternative social orders for the employment mechanism that provide *less social security for socio-economic integration* than the SER (Keller and Seifert 2013). Accordingly, workers are more dependent on other substitutive integration mechanisms (other household members, substitutive income from welfare state benefits, coordinating multiple employment relations in "multi-jobbing").

Approximately 65–70% of the employed population still have an SER (Statistisches Bundesamt 2023) and (viewed retrospectively) many have still achieved a comparatively high level of employment stability (Struck and Köhler 2005; Mayer et al. 2010). Nevertheless, the *mode of integration was modified* so that the reliable expectation of integration has changed for everyone. Even if de facto (and in retrospect) no deterioration has occurred for most, the *latent risk of disintegration* and an expanding destabilisation of social relationships (Castel 2002) had impacts for all. Among other things, this is observable in increased and profound subjective perceptions and feelings of precariousness (Hense 2018; Erlinghagen 2008). This fundamental change in the integration mode is decisive for our overall assessment of this development as a weakening of socio-economic integration at the societal level. This can also be described as a change in the social order of the welfare state regime with the conservative type moving closer to the liberal model in terms of its labour and social legislation.

This also applies to the de-commodifying mechanism. For example, the "Hartz IV Act" changed the production of socio-economic integration for the unemployed. It reduced the entitlement to benefits and their amount, and also tied them more closely to means-tested criteria and sanctions (Hinrichs 2007). This marked a move away from the former principle of maintaining previous statuses and a *shift to the principle of "avoiding exclusion"* (Bude and Willisch 2006, p. 11). Activating social policies increased the need to take up (any) employment, thus strengthening dependence on the employment mechanism (Grimm et al. 2013, pp. 250 ff.). Overall, this weakening of both manifest integration mechanisms has triggered far-reaching processes of precarisation (Castel and Dörre 2009; Gibb 2009).[9] The concept of precariousness—i.e., the provisionality, revocability and discontinuity of social relations—captures all these developments and addresses future risks of losing social integration (Hense 2018; Grimm 2016; Vogel 2008). Living precariously means more than just living with job or income insecurity, it also means less agency, including a lack of self-confidence, seeing fewer opportunities for personal development or for one's career and being tied to and dependent on one's current job(s).

However, alongside the predominant weakening, there has also been a *subordinate strengthening of socio-economic integration for some former outsiders* through changes in both manifest mechanisms. For example, in the sub-sectors of women's, family and care policy, the expansion of childcare and long-term care facilities as well as the promotion of part-time work have led to an increase in women's labour force integration (Nicolaisen et al. 2019; Pfau-Effinger 1994). In terms of this policy area, it can be interpreted as a turn towards the social democratic welfare regime (Sect. 2)—also with the consequence that (full) participation in the labour market became the new standard norm for women as well. These changes made women less dependent on the redistribution of economic resources within the household and enabled them to improve their independent socio-economic integration. Nevertheless, *women still benefit less than men* from the integration mechanisms (Orloff 1993; Grunow 2019). For example, women are less likely to be in an SER and are particu-

[9] For a more detailed explanation and a conceptual delimitation of precarious, atypical and flexible employment as well as a typology of different dimensions of precarity, see Hense (2018, pp. 35–46).

larly often employed part time because they still prioritise unpaid family work over paid work whereas men do not (Aulenbacher 2009; Weinkopf 2009). With a reduction in working hours, wages and benefit entitlements also decrease proportionally. This makes it more likely to achieve lower levels of socio-economic integration through part-time work alone, and thus increases the risk of socio-economic disintegration. However, this latent risk often does not materialise owing to redistribution within the household (Goebel and Kottwitz 2017; Wingerter 2009)[10]—and part-time work is usually not subjectively perceived as precarious (Hense 2018, pp. 258 ff., 272 ff.). Nevertheless, part-time work may jeopardise women's socio-economic integration (e.g. after retirement or a divorce), as no independent claims to socio-economic integration are generated (Vosko et al. 2009). In addition, women are more likely to work in the service sector, which is less unionised and has less collective bargaining power (Artus et al. 2017; Schnabel 2003). The strengthening of women's (more independent) socio-economic integration has thus not fundamentally eliminated or completely changed distributional inequalities so that socio-economic integration continues to be unequal (Buchholz et al. 2009).[11]

5 En Route to the Hyper-Work Society: The Danger of Over-Integration Through Employment-Related Norms and Barriers to Social Integration Beyond Employment

The diagnosis of the prevailing weakening of socio-economic integration mechanisms can lead to different assessments of future developments. On the one hand, it can be assumed that the work society itself is losing importance for social integration.[12] On the other hand, the weakening could also point to what is missing but needed and thus increase the relevance of employment for generating social integration. Our thesis is that the changes described above have reinforced the need for employment as the central mechanism for socio-economic integration and thus the growing precariousness of employment relationships and the reduction of collective protection have contributed to the increase in the (also subjectively perceived) importance of employment. To underline this extensive increase in meaning we refer to the target horizon towards which the work society is moving as the "hyper-work society".[13]

The *"hyper-work society"* is a society in which employment subordinates other spheres of life to employment-centred normative orientations and rules of social

[10] Thus, when analysing social integration, greater analytical and empirical attention ought to be paid to how different employee groups are embedded in households (Grimm and Vogel 2019).

[11] Socio-economic integration continued to be unequal for other labour market outsiders such as migrants as well (Birke 2022), but a differentiated analysis of the different developments for Germans with a migration background, (non-)EU foreigners or asylum seekers is not possible here.

[12] During the 1980s, German sociologists advanced this thesis (e.g. Dahrendorf 1983; Offe 1984). They justified their assessment, among other things, with the rising unemployment rate, a critique of the compulsiveness of work, the individualisation and pluralisation of lifestyles and an (assumed) change in values away from career and occupation towards leisure preferences.

[13] This term was first used by Voß (2002), but was not conceptually elaborated.

interaction. Social recognition focuses on work-related performance and exploitation criteria, which form the central point of orientation for the actions of society's members and displace other possibilities for social integration and interaction. These criteria bind members of society more closely in the organisation of their time, the selection of their social contacts, and their collective goal orientation and identities. We have chosen the term hyper-work society to indicate the *danger of normative over-integration* inherent in the increasing penetration of different spheres of life by employment-related norms. "Over-integration … consists of an excessive 'reduction of degrees of freedom'. It manifests itself mainly in a repression of individuality and innovation by all kinds of rigorous social control." (Grunow et al. 2023). In our view, the levelling of different premises for organising one's life as well as an excessive dogmatic orientation represent a danger to a well-integrated societal order, even if this over-integration is not enforced by the state, but results from a self-chosen (but socially controlled) adoption of dominant criteria for social recognition.

In order to understand how employment has gained such importance from the perspective of those affected, it is important to draw on findings from the sociology of work that characterise these changes in the German labour market. The findings are based on qualitative studies that have captured changes in social orders at the micro-level and meso-level of society and have derived general social trends from analyses of changing work environments and subjective perceptions. Accordingly, the transition to a hyper-work society is being experienced in most areas of work, *permeating various domains of society, and subordinating them to employment* or to employment-related performance and exploitation criteria (Pongratz and Voß 2003; Vogel 2015; Minssen 2000). Thus, an ever-increasing *blurring of boundaries between employment and life* can be observed (e.g. Beck and Lau 2004; Jürgens and Voß 2007; Kratzer 2003), which is also linked to a so-called "subjectification of work" (e.g. Baethge 1991; Bröckling 2007; Hürtgen and Voswinkel 2012; Kratzer et al. 2019; Moldaschl and Voß 2003). This means that employees are expected to increasingly contribute their entire personality to the work process, increasingly subordinate their entire personal resources to economic exploitation goals and bind themselves more strongly to their employment in terms of identity.

The line drawn between employment ("production") and private life ("reproduction" and leisure time) is dimming, a line that offered employees a refuge from the capitalist logic of exploitation and provided social spaces for experiences that follow different normative rules (Hochschild 1997). The boundary shifts can be seen, for example, in the increasing spatial and temporal blending of the two spheres of life—a trend recently intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Advancing digitalisation makes it possible to be accessible at any time and—in many professions—to work from a wide variety of locations, further blurring the boundaries between work and leisure (Buss et al. 2021; Pfeiffer 2021). Moreover, a far-reaching flexibilisation of working hours places further demands on the flexible availability of employees and is usually not sensitive to their needs (Flecker 2017; Jürgens 2007). The social expectations outlined above are mirrored in expectations employees have of themselves. Permanent accessibility, availability and flexibility are not only demanded by employers, but go hand in hand with internalised work requirements (Veblen 1997).

Employment is at the centre of people's way of living and is necessary for being socially accepted and recognised.

Employment-related requirements and norms are thus the social imperatives of our time. For example, people receiving welfare benefits are seen as "employable people" who need to be "activated" (Sect. 4). Moreover, the "adult worker model" is the new standard norm (Lewis 2001), whereas the (male) breadwinner model (Sect. 2) has lost its dominant role and has been replaced by this new social order for private households and families. In this model, it is generally assumed that adults are employed, so that all adults in couples and families are engaged in paid activities. Correspondingly, other forms of work such as domestic and family work are increasingly perceived in terms of their negative effects on labour market integration. The roles of homemakers or full-time parents as alternative roles to employment have become less recognised in society, as they no longer serve to release unpaid care workers from their obligation to pursue employment. Therefore, *integration into paid work has become even less a matter of choice and more an obligation* (Vogel 2015; Hochschild 1997).

Overall, the dominance of employment-related performance and exploitation criteria reduces the possibilities for experiencing and performing other forms of integration or for recovering from the impositions of the dominant form. Referring back to the latent, time-structuring, activating as well as identity-generating functions of employment oriented towards collective goals and social contacts (Sect. 3): If occupational activities as well as employment-related norms are increasingly seen as the dominant or the only socially accepted criteria for a person's self-definition, other activities and normative criteria become less legitimate. Thus, the link between other collective identities, collective goals or modes of connecting with others at different levels of society becomes weaker or disappears. As a result, alternative possibilities for cognitive and emotional identification with society as well as other goals and achievements of a collective diminish. In this sense, feelings of not being needed in society may increase for those with no reliable integration into the labour market. As outlined in Sect. 3, we understand access to a reliable temporal order as a necessary prerequisite for the integration of actors into (different) social orders. Therefore, the intrusion of employment-related requirements into the private sphere reduces the time for alternative regular activities with others and complicates their coordination owing to escalating and erratic work requirements. Consequently, employment is less and less conducive to integration in terms of its latent functions (time structure, social contacts, participation in collective goals, status and identity, and regular activity). Instead, by making one form of integration dominant, this over-integration will tend to weaken diverse forms of social integration as well as overall social integration into society—especially because integration into the labour market itself has become less reliable (Sect. 4). In short, the dynamism and discord evident in the contemporary work society originate in the tension between the high level of significance attributed to employment, both for individuals and collectives, and the eminent increase in societal hazards associated with employment.

6 Integration Hazards to Employment-Based Social Integration

The developments outlined above do not remain without consequences for the social structure of society, which is affected by integration hazards and social conflicts. At the core of the work society, the forms of cooperation are changing, with less institutional support for a well-integrated state of a societal order (Grunow et al. 2023) that balances the two negative poles of disintegration (a risk explicated in Sect. 4) and over-integration (a risk explained in Sect. 5).

At the macro-level of society, a *new intermediate zone of employment* (Grimm et al. 2013; Vogel 2015; Mayer-Ahuja und Nachtwey 2021) with weakened reciprocal ties between employees and employers has developed (Sect. 3). It constitutes a labour and employment market that neither stabilises integration nor forces exclusion. Those positioned in this zone work in the low-wage sector as temporary agency workers, interns, fixed-term employees, "mini-jobbers" or as solo or pseudo self-employed (Bahl 2014; Staab 2014). Precarious employment in this zone, for example in areas such as long-term care, retail or logistics, cannot be understood as a transitional process that leads at some point to stable employment and reliable socio-economic integration. Rather, workers' employment biographies and experiences shuttle back and forth between different labour market positions (Grimm 2016): Status insecurities and changes in occupation, employment status, income and prestige have become an everyday experience for these employees who are unable to permanently secure their social integration through employment (Grimm et al. 2013; Schultheis et al. 2014). Accordingly, *status inconsistencies and status turbulence* characterise this intermediate zone. These dynamics increase over the course of individual biographies and across all stages of life, and thus force employees to repeatedly deal with (re)establishing social integration (Grimm and Vogel 2008). As a consequence of this ongoing existential struggle for social integration, an *increase in conflicts over status claims* can be observed. This is also reflected in distancing attitudes towards other social groups (e.g. migrants and refugees) who supposedly "deserve" less pay or state support. Therefore, uncertainty about one's own position promotes a social climate of competition, conflict and eroding social solidarity (Grimm et al. 2020). However, this social climate does not only affect those in the precarious intermediate zone of society, nor is it exclusively promoted by them. On the one hand, the fear of losing social status diffuses far into the middle of society and also influences those who are not directly affected by the reality of life described above (Burzan and Berger 2010; Lessenich 2009). On the other hand, processes of claims making (Sauer et al. 2021) as well as a sense of entitlement (Lareau 2011) that drive these processes can be observed above all among those who have so far been able to defend their privileged position in the work society on the basis of the inequality-generating norms and institutions of the work society explained in this article.

At the meso-level of society, less company-bound forms of labour organisation such as "platform economies" and "crowd working", as well as the increase in mobile and virtual teams, are promoting the *dissolution of the office and the factory as social spaces* (Abendroth and Schwarz 2022; Hensel et al. 2019; Vogl 2018). The workplace is thus losing importance as a place of communication, coopera-

tion and collaboration (Sect. 3). This erosion of established company structures also has negative consequences for the collective representation of employees' interests through works councils (Abel and Pries 2005; Keller 2020; Ewen et al. 2022). Overall, the blurring of operational boundaries and the flexibilisation of labour organisation—even in the more protected industrial sector—have led to an ever-greater fragmentation of employment (Wolf 2019). This exacerbates social selection, creates new status differences and fosters competition between groups of employees (Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt 2017). Conflicting work realities are emerging, with significant consequences for individuals, work and life contexts (Grimm et al. 2013). Consequently, the loss, downgrading and partly also the virtualisation of company affiliations—including the corresponding communication and cooperation opportunities—have *weakened the binding power of employment as well as the integrative power of enterprises* (Sect. 3). Instead of promoting proximity, cooperative collaboration, balance and togetherness on site, competition, status conflicts and heteronomy are generated. Conceptually, this reinforces the heteronomous side of employment (labour exploitation and corresponding inequalities) without strengthening adapted collective forms of conflict regulation, so that disintegrative forces are strengthened.

At the micro-level of society, the described developments *fragment the social relationships* of those who are affected directly or indirectly by the changing forms of cooperation. For example, precarious workers see employment not as an opportunity, but as an effort (Grimm et al. 2013, pp. 259 ff.). They need to constantly adapt to new circumstances by reducing their expectations and goals regarding employment as well as their standard of living. The focus of these employees is strongly on the present, and employment is everything and nothing at the same time in a situation in which it becomes increasingly important to have a job at all. This seems to be more intensified the longer social integration through employment remains insecure and fragile (Grimm 2016, p. 394): All thoughts and activities of precariously employed people then revolve around employment, whereas other things, some of which used to be very important (such as family, friends, hobbies, voluntary activities) are neglected. These changes are reminiscent of Robert Castel's concept of "negative individualization" (Castel 2002). The focus on one's own and at best on one's immediate social relations is *at the expense of empathy for strangers*. However, as Sect. 4 has shown, this tendency is immanent in a hyper-work society and does not only affect precariously employed people. As far as the latent social function of employment is concerned, the societal relations described above—including labour relations through and at work(places)—do not tend to contribute to the expansion and consolidation of diverse networks. Instead, social withdrawal and the fragility of relationships are supported. If building diverse and stable networks is relevant to multi-layered aspects of social integration as stated in Sect. 3, integration hazards are more likely owing to the *weakening of the social basis for a balanced state of social integration*.

7 Summary and Outlook

We have shown that our analytical framework, which further develops Jahoda's (1982) ideas and distinguishes between two manifest and five latent mechanisms for the production of social integration through employment, is suitable for systematising central findings from different fields of research. By linking qualitative and quantitative insights from the sociology of work with comparative welfare state and labour market research, which tend to be discussed separately, it is possible to interrelate developments that influence integration at the macro-level (labour and social legislation), meso-level (company structures, industrial relations, work environments) and micro-level (employment relationships, household models, action orientations, subjective identifications) of society. This synthesis allows us to identify conditions that favour the participatory or disintegrative side of employment and thus promote or endanger social integration. For example, socio-economic integration is enhanced by collective forms of labour regulation, employment that protects against precariousness and by strengthening the de-commodifying mechanism and making paid work less discriminatory or rather more tied to universal rights for all members of society. In addition, social integration is supported by work that offers a reliable and not extreme time structure and that encourages reciprocal forms of social networking beyond closed social circles of similar people—both within and outside of the work sphere. In order to prevent over-integration (as in the GDR's obligation to work and political dependency, or the hyper-work society's universalisation of economic exploitation), it is also necessary to extend individual decision-making with regard to the functioning of the integration mechanisms. That means giving individuals the opportunity to participate in different and/or diverse collective goals (also beyond capitalist exploitation criteria) as well as to identify with different collective identities—again both within and outside of the work sphere.

For future research, we would recommend three advancements in particular. First, owing to our neglect of other forms of work (beyond employment) in this article, future research could address the following questions in order to broaden and generalise our understanding of integration through work: Which social integration mechanisms can be found in other forms of work and to what extent are they similar to or different from employment-related mechanisms? How have these changed over time and in comparison between the FRG and the GDR? What threats to social integration result from these other work-related integration mechanisms and are they able to counterbalance the threats posed by employment? We expect that this more general analysis of integration through work will expand and specify our understanding of the manifest and latent mechanisms discussed in this article, especially as unpaid work is necessary to achieve socio-economic integration and offers social integration beyond the labour market (Giustozzi 2023).

Second, by comparing the GDR and the FRG, we were able to better understand how the integration mechanisms work. Future research could therefore compare other societies and in particular reflect on how and to what extent the integration mechanisms are influenced by global dynamics, and what new insights can be gained by detaching the analysis from the nation-state or welfare capitalism in developed countries.

Third, it is necessary to examine whether developments towards a tight labour market, in which recruitment becomes difficult owing to the shortage of skilled workers, and generational differences, such as changing attitudes towards work among younger people entering the labour market, can lead to further changes in the developments discussed in this paper. If skilled labour becomes increasingly scarce in many occupations, as can already be observed with regard to nurses, this might shift the bargaining power in favour of the employees. Finally, employees who attach more importance to norms that are not employment related and interactions that take place outside the labour market may change integration through employment and increase the importance of other forms of work for social integration.

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