

The Textile Workforce (1882–1925)

Abstract

Women had long been a part of Germany's economic development. In the early period of German industrialization, manufacturers utilized female labor in the countryside to avoid the urban guild system. By the end of the nineteenthth century, a significant increase in women's participation in the formal economy was already evident (the growth rate for their participation averaged over 30 percent from 1882 to 1925). The figures for Prussia are even more striking – there, the dominant role of agriculture was first supplanted by industrial production in the 1890s.

Source

	German Reich			Prussia			Rhine Province			Government District Düsseldorf (Prussia)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1882												
Number	527,079	323,780	850,859									
%	61.9	38.1										
Growth												
1895												
Number	517,230	427,961	945,191	125,210	120,492	245,702				50,880	40,846	91,366
%	54.7	45.3		51.0	49.0					55.7	44.3	
Growth	- 1.9%	32.2%	11.1%									
1907												
Number	529,008	528,235	1,057,243	234,867	210,585	445,452	101,282	73,425	174,707			
%	50.0	50.0		52.7	47.3		58.0	42.0				
Growth	2.3%	23.4%	11.9%	87.6%	74.8%	81.3%						
1913												
Number				199,058	205,120	404,178				60,852	62,992	123,844
%				49.3	50.7					49.1	50.9	
Growth				- 15.2%	- 2.6%	- 9.3%				19.6%	55.6%	35.5%
1925												
Number	514,858	681,262	1,196,120	229,012	245,471	474,483	88,205	78,915	167,120			
%	43.0	57.0		48.3	51.7		52.8	47.2				
Growth	- 2.7%	29.0%	13.1%	15.0%	19.7%	17.4%	- 12.9%	7.5%	- 4.3%			

Source: Wilhem Bochemert, "Wandlungen der deutschen Volkswirtschaft 1888–1907: Ergebnisse der Berufs- und Betriebszählungen", in *Arbeiterfreund*, 48 (1910): 24–25, 136; George Neuhaus, "Die berufliche und soziale Gliederung im Zeitalter des Kapitalismus", in *Grundriss der Socialökonomik*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1914, 9: 399, 424–25; reprinted in Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850–1914*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996, p. 32.

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