

“Immigrants in their Own Homes: East German Women and the Effects of German Reunification”

In the 25 years since the opening of the Berlin Wall, academics have framed East German women as either the winners or losers of German Reunification. My thesis argues that the dichotomy of women as winners or losers does not accurately depict the complexities of East German women’s experiences after German Reunification. To fully understand the situation of East German women after German Reunification, one must look at the before, during, and after of the situation. How much a woman struggled or excelled after Reunification depended on her personal history and intersection of factors such as age, political affiliation, and previous employment. Only by considering all of these factors and different experiences can one understand both the overarching and individualized effects of German Reunification on East German women. To support my argument, I use oral histories to illustrate the wide range of experiences East German women had. While in Berlin, I conducted these interviews with former East German women, 18 of whom appear in this thesis. Using these interviews and other primary and secondary sources, I weave a narrative of East German women’s lives before and after German Reunification.



Courtesy of Deutsches Historisches Museum <https://www.dhm.de/ausstellungen/archiv/2014/farbe-fuer-die-republik.html>