

In Germany, a Tradition Falls, and Women Rise

Contributed by KATRIN BENNHOLD - International Herald Tribune
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NEUÖTTING, GERMANY — Manuela Maier was branded a bad mother. A Rabenmutter, or raven mother, after the black bird that pushes chicks out of the nest. She was ostracized by other mothers, berated by neighbors and family, and screamed at in a local store. Her crime? Signing up her 9-year-old son when the local primary school first offered lunch and afternoon classes last autumn — and returning to work.

Across the developed world, a combination of the effects of birth control, social change, political progress and economic necessity has produced a tipping point: numerically, women now match or overtake men in the work force and in education.

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