

# Savoir Vivre! New Challenges for Work and Family Life in Germany and France

March 21-22, 2017



Participants of the conference

## 1 Panel I: Politics of Work and (Un)Employment

The conference *Savoir Vivre! New Challenges for Work and Family Life in Germany and France* is the third part of a workshop and conference series, organized in cooperation between the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB) and the French Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme (FMSH). On March 21st the conference was opened by Jutta Allmendinger, President of the WZB, and Lisa Crinon, research coordinator of the Franco-German Research Program.



Welcome words by Jutta Allmendinger



Myriam Gaitsch chaired Panel I

## 1.1 Politics of Social Investment and Labourmarket Challenges in France and Germany



René Lehweß-Litzmann

In the first Panel different politics of work and (un) employment were discussed. First René Lehweß-Litzmann (SOFI, Göttingen) compared Social Investment and labour-market challenges in France and Germany since 2006. In this field there have been several developments since the Hartz reforms in Germany, which began in 2002. While unemployment decreased, low wage employment became much more important. In a second step he compared expenditures for labour market policies in both countries. Because expenditures are GDP (Gross Domestic Product)-driven, Germany benefited from favourable economic conditions and could raise its investment. The French system is more under economic pressure than in Germany as in France expenditures are more generous

- whereas the spending composition of active and passive labour-market policies is rather similar in both countries.

## 1.2 Shifted Labor Market Risks? Policy Change and the Consequences of Job Loss in Germany 1984-2011

Martin Ehlert (WZB) added in his presentation a more detailed view on the financial consequences of job loss in Germany. He questioned, to what extend the government protection to job loss has been decreased between 1984 and 2011 and what the individual consequences are. Therefore he analyzed from a micro level perspective economic well-being after job loss for different educational levels. Overall, consequences became worse within the time frame, not only due to the Hartz reforms, but also due to prior political decisions. The reforms mainly deteriorated the situation for those who were already deprived before the implementation of the reforms.



Martin Ehlert

## 1.3 Informal and Illegal Work in Germany's Skillcrafts Sector

From a more qualitative perspective, Tracy Corley (University Duisburg-Essen), analyzed informal and illegal Work in Germany's skillcrafts sector. The Hartz reforms followed a rise of self-employed and marginal workers while the number of core workforces was decreasing, she argues. These developments resulted in paradoxical social and economic indicators: although the unemployment rate is very low, the poverty rate in Germany is high. Meanwhile, the informal work increased. Employing a social constructionist framework, Corley identified four lenses that explain the different discourses about informal work in the society: Centralists (black work as threat to governmental revenues), Crafts Advocates (black work as unfair competition), Worker Advocates (black work as response to poor quality work) and Particularists (black work as competitive advantage and unfair competition).



Tracy Corley

## 1.4 Steps Towards Normalization of Penitentiary Labor: Historical Perspective and Franco-German Comparison

With a focus on a marginal population, Melchior Simioni (Paris Sorbonne), discussed how penitentiary labour and its normalisation may affect or reflect contemporary evolutions in the field of free labour. Simioni compared developments in France and Germany. After World War II the European Prison Rules took the normalization of penitentiary labour a step forward. In the Seventies, Germany and France drifted apart: while Germany promoted the alignment of prison conditions with those of the outside labour market, France implemented in 1987 a deregulation model that sees penitentiary labour as a mean of psychological and professional rehabilitation. Hence, working inside the prison is now voluntary. Referring to these developments, Simioni stated the paradox between deregulation of free labour and the normalization of penitentiary labour.



Melchior Simioni

In the final discussion substantial questions were addressed to all panelists. For example, some questions targeted the French opinion on the German labour-market reforms, referring to the German-French focus of the program. While right-wing parties promote similar reforms in France, the Socialists pronounce the higher risk for poverty. Additionally gender-specific developments due to the Hartz reforms in Germany were discussed. Martin Ehlert indicated that the male-bread-earner-model is still predominant in Germany, but some household structure developments require further research. Finally, Tracey Corley compared illegal work patterns in Germany and in the USA. In contrast to the USA, there is a difference between black work and illegal work regarding the cultural legitimacy in Germany, Black work being more accepted in the German society.

## 2 Panel II: Transformations of Care Work and Family Life

The second panel of the Conference dealt with changing patterns of care work and family life. The panel was structured around three central themes: child care, elder care and long-distance relationships. All three of these care relations experience new challenges due to migration, demographic transitions and the need to keep up with a competitive and mobile labour market.



Panel Discussion

## 2.1 Care Policies in Germany and France: a Biographical Policy Evaluation with Migrant Child Minders as an Example



Janina Glaeser

Child care can be organized in various ways; one of them is the support through migrant child minders. Janina Glaeser (Goethe University) looks at how different care policies in France and Germany influence the outsourcing of child care. She compares Maghrebian migrants in France to migrants from the post-socialist regions in Germany. While both migrant groups come from backgrounds where the extended family plays a significant role, Maghrebian women are still more family-oriented and focused on domestic work. Migrants from post-socialist regions, she says, have usually been longer in formal education and focus on future qualifications.

In France, because child care as a profession can be easily accessed, migrant women can find a way of economically emancipating themselves and being socially connected to other working women. In Germany, however, where child care subsidies provide an incentive for mothers to stay at home and language barriers are more pronounced, migrant women can find it more difficult to establish a professional network.

## 2.2 Which Frameworks for Elderly Care Work?

Much like child care, elder care can take different forms, but all of them are usually invisible to the general public, predominantly performed by women and – if at all – poorly paid. Annie Dussuet (University of Nantes) identifies three frameworks of work in the field of elderly care: the most precarious being domestic care, characterized by part-time work and low qualification requirements. Professional care work, in contrast, is the least precarious form, close to medical environments and with better wages due to higher qualification and full-time jobs. An intermediate type of care would be home helps, where working conditions depend on the negotiations between the employer and the person in need of care. Finally, she argues, new frameworks of work are emerging such as volunteering, civic service, self-entrepreneurship or platform economies, that need further research.



Annie Dussuet

## 2.3 Home Help Personnel in France: Public Policies against Quality of Jobs?



François-Xavier Devetter

Following up on the issue of working conditions, François-Xavier Devetter (University of Lille) investigates the question “Why, despite the demand for and recognition of home help personnel, are these jobs so poorly paid?”. Looking at France, he identifies three “de-skilling” mechanisms. Domestic services and care work, he argues, are devaluated due to 1) the construction of excess labor supply, 2) the negation of skills and 3) the segmentation and division of the work force. Thus, different public policies and human resource policies keep the remuneration for these jobs low.

## 2.4 Love, Distance and a Future Together - How Do Long-Distance Couples Manage the Fragile Balance of Intimacy and Distance and the Transition to Co-Residence?

Moving from child and elder care to the last presentation, Markus Klingel (BIGSSS) explores how couples in long-distance relationship (LDRs) manage to combine intimacy and distance. Today, LDRs can appear as necessary short term solutions during the life course, especially when working environments demand constant mobility. Preliminary results, embedded in a framework of postmodernity, suggest that these couples encounter ambivalent feelings concerning flexibility, as it is both the source for their situation and the key to make it work. Distance as well as proximity seems to be costly, either to the cost of the relationship or the professional development.



Markus Klingel

Following the presentations, the floor was opened for a discussion with the audience. The public raised interesting points, as the role of black market in care work. Often, informal care arrangements can be a first step, especially for migrant workers, to set foot into the labor market - though conditions here are especially unregulated and precarious. Following this line of thoughts, the question whether more professionalization and formalization of care work could exclude exactly these groups from entering the labor market, came up. As a solution, one idea was to implement a more gradual system of care work, not only the lowest qualified and the care managers at two ends of the spectrum, but also jobs with varying degrees in between. Also, policies leading to more recognition of care could aim at a better remuneration in this sector. Interestingly, France and Germany seem to have different backgrounds regarding the recognition of institutionalized care: while in both countries care for the elderly is mostly wished to be provided at home, child care outside the home, e.g. in kindergartens, has long been appreciated in France and is getting gradually more attention in Germany, with more and more mothers participating in the labour market. In the light of mobile and flexible working arrangements that many young couples face, especially those that are living in LDRs, the provision of professional care is a necessity for a gender equal and ageing society.

## 3 Panel III: The Integration of Migrants into the Labor Market in France and Germany



Panel Discussion

The third panel of the Savoir Vivre! conference dealt with immigrants' labour market opportunities in France and Germany. As nations with high proportions of immigrants, the societal consequences of an increasing ethnic diversity in the two countries are a crucial topic in the social sciences. A major question is whether immigrants and their offspring have the same access to economic and other sectors as French and German natives. In this regard, Janina Söhn (SOFI Göttingen) and Susanne Veit (WZB) examined labor market differences between natives and immigrants in Germany, whereas Ulrike Schuerkens (University of Rennes) focused on the French labor market.

### 3.1 The "Ethnicization" of Labor Among Foreign Workers and Immigrants from Africa South of the Sahara in France



Ulrike Schuerkens

First, Ulrike Schuerkens analyzed labour market segregation of immigrants from Africa South of the Sahara compared to French natives. By means of qualitative interviews, she explored in which sectors and occupations African immigrants are employed and which reasons they mention for their vocational choice. As a result, she refers to the term "ethnicization" of professional options, in which African immigrants practice often low qualified jobs like hair dresser, exotic food seller or waiter. In these occupations, employees have in average lower salaries and a higher risk of a precarious working status. Even when immigrants obtain a university degree they still have lower labour market participation rates than natives. Therefore, they have to rely on their social networks in France in order to find a job

in one of the mentioned sectors.

### 3.2 When Biographies Cross National Borders: Socio-economic Dis/continuities in Life Course Trajectories of Immigrants Compared to Native Germans

Janina Söhn examined the negative effects of international migration for the employment pathway of adult immigrants compared to German natives. Similar to Schuerkens results for France, Söhn came to the conclusion that immigrants in Germany have a higher risk of becoming unemployed, even when they have the same educational degree as natives. Furthermore, immigrants in the labour market have more often low-status jobs than German natives. Although having a university degree and a high-status job before the immigration raise the likelihood of maintaining a high-status after the immigration, immigrants still have lower chances than natives to work in a high-status job.



Janina Söhn

### 3.3 Ethnic Discrimination on the German Labor Market? Empirical Evidence from a Large-scale Field Experiment



Susanne Veit

While the two previous contributions concentrated on the description of labor market disadvantages faced by immigrants in France and Germany, Susanne Veit explained the gap between immigrants and German natives. As shown before, unemployment rates are higher among immigrants than those among natives, even after considering human capital indicators. In order to explain this gap, Veit used a large-scale correspondence test on the discrimination of second-generation immigrants in the German labour market. Together with the research team, they sent almost 8.000 fictive applications to job vacancies, by controlling school grades, religious affiliation and pictures. Analyzing the chances of being invited to a job interview comparing natives and candidates with a family background in 34 different countries, they were able to show that

people with a migration background face ethnic discrimination in hiring – though the discrimination degree varies between countries of origin. Particularly, the offspring of immigrants from African countries, Turkey, and the Middle East had the lowest chance to be invited compared to native Germans. Through her input Veit showed that immigrants and their offspring indeed face ethnic discrimination structures.

In summary, panel III of the Savoir Vivre! conference showed that both in France and Germany, significant differences between natives and immigrants regarding the labour market participation are still prevalent. First, the unemployment rate is higher for immigrants than for natives in both countries. Second, after finding a job, immigrants often face an occupational downward mobility. These discrepancies between natives and immigrants can only partly be explained by differences in demographic and human capital variables. However, immigrants mentioned that they feel disadvantaged because of their lack of knowledge of country, culture specific norms and unwritten rules of their host country. In view of these findings, the next political task should be to offer people with different ethnic backgrounds the same opportunities and access conditions to the labour market.

### 3.4 Concluding Remarks



Alexander Stingl and  
Lydia-Maria Ouart

In his concluding remarks, Alexander Stingl wrapped up the conference and praised the open and frank dialogue frame at the Savoir Vivre! conference. Three main aspects could be identified, he argues: labour, care and the future of research. As researchers we tell stories, Stingl states, and from this perspective the Savoir Vivre! conference shows us what we do not know by now. Here lies the real interest in scientific research: identifying deficits and gaps, between countries, between educational levels, between social classes, between ethnic backgrounds, between gender. This kind of data is interesting as it aims to be implemented in political measures. In other words: research aims to advise political makers to shape a better, fairer society.

Furthermore, the comparison between France and Germany shows that our current labour market model does not function optimally. In both countries we still face the paradox of empowerment vs. enablement, labour vs. work, useful vs. meaningful and so have to solve the question of how to re-legitimize the labour market system by implementing adequate consideration and necessary motivation for today's working force? As it was shown during the conference, the debate should also be broadened to the topic of intersectionality. In this regard, researchers with a Franco-German perspective still have a number of questions to address.