

"Identities and Emotions in De-Stabilised Labour Markets"

Leipzig, Germany, 21-24 February 2002

1. Executive Summary

This workshop opens a new path of inquiry in that it posits the fall of professions whose rise to power and privilege the sociology of professions examined only a few decades ago. In the last twenty to thirty years, a hitherto successful alliance between professions and states/economies has been coming to an end, not only as a result of political transformation, such as took place in Spain in 1974 or in Poland or East Germany in 1989, but also because of the changed economic and political circumstances in the Western World, which first Spain and then Poland joined.

In Europe Fordism and the centrally steered Planning Economies are a thing of the past. Business pursues a variety of new ways of shedding labour and externalising costs. New forms of labour and income-payment mushroom. In this general context two views oppose each other. The first praises economic re-organisation for the autonomy gains it brings to employers and employees alike. It calls on the state to limit its tasks to the support a new, flexible individual. The second view pinpoints that recent economic re-organisation brings more unemployment, exclusion and social vulnerability. It calls on the state to bring in more social security. Not only economy, but also politics shapes the new context. The European nation-states, long ailing under their more or less severe fiscal crises, try to re-legitimate themselves by adopting the rhetoric of austerity. They argue that their new policies will help their own national business groups to (re-)gain competitive advantages in the global competition.

The re-structuring of the national economies and the search of the nation-states for re-legitimation in terms of new policies are the two starting points for a disengaging from the close, symbiotic relationship between the professions and their former allies -- the capitalist economy and the democratic state. In many countries, professions are blamed for system failures. To study these professions today gives us a chance to gain insights into the state of economy and polity from a particular perspective -- from the perspective of societal members who have enjoyed a close and beneficial association with the state and/or economy in the past, but are now on a collision course with their former allies and benefactors. It also provides an opportunity to trace the processes due to which classic professions, such as, for example, doctors, and relatively new professions, such as, for example, managers, have lost their immunity to unemployment and have suffered losses in professional autonomy, income, social status and prestige.

This task can be accomplished by investigating most recent histories of two contrasting professions. On the one hand, we want to draw on the Eurostat and OECD statistics, in addition to national statistical sources, to construct a typology of professions in various labour markets. On the other hand, we wish to focus on professional associations and their collective mobilisation as well as individual professionals, especially where professional associations are non-existent or weak. Of special interest is the loosening of the alliance between professions and economy and/or polity, the relationship between the professionals and their collective organisations/mobilisation, and the individual professional. Not only the changing institutional arrangements, but also individual and collective feelings are of interest. One major question is what professionals feel about their own future and that of their professions and whether these feelings feed into the emotional climate of their associations/the nation-state. One key question is whether and how the feeling of exploitation or unfairness is socially constructed. Does this feeling lead to collective mobilisation or rather hinders it? Have the losses in autonomy, income and prestige led to political re-orientation, to supporting new political parties or groups?

2. Report/Scientific Content

European economies and labour markets have gone through many changes in the last three decades. In most of Western Europe the Fordist Age, characterised by long-term work contracts, protective labour legislation, and/ or neo-corporatist arrangements and the expansion of welfare provisions, has come to an end. Similarly, in former Eastern Europe the centrally steered Planning Economies, characterised by full employment and life-long social protection, are a thing of the past. In Europe business seeks new means of reducing labour costs. It sheds and reorganises management, reduces the size of its stable labour force while simplifying its bureaucratic apparatus. Just-in-time production, simultaneous engineering, outsourcing, project-assignments, etc. are some of the new ways of saving time and so shortening production cycles, while reducing and externalising production costs. Consequently, the last two decades have witnessed the rapid spread of new forms and types of labour, including part-time and temporary employment.

Two opposite views of these changes confront each other within Europe and the EU. According to the first view these changes are positive as they free employers and employees alike to follow their needs and interests. Employers can reduce production costs and adjust rapidly to the market. Both groups can gain access to new and more types of information. Workers can take on more responsibility and increase their autonomy. From this point of view it is the duty of each individual to tackle the unavoidable risks, while the role of the state should be to help equip the individuals to manage risks better. They herald the advent of the so-called Information/Knowledge Society.

The opponents of this view emphasise that unemployment has risen alarmingly in Europe in the last two decades, even though we see a trend towards less unemployment. Unemployment reaching 8 to 20% has become normal. Long-term unemployment remains a problem in France, Germany, Italy, Spain (and Poland). They also pinpoint that most unstable, short-term or part-time work is in fact involuntary. Unemployment and time-limited work affect women, youth, older men and foreigners the most - the four groups typically subject to greatest discrimination. As far as the employed are concerned, new work models supposedly promoting autonomy and flexibility have not brought any changes in the pace of work. On the contrary, they mean greater work loads and more speed-up related stress. In this context, the state should counteract unemployment and poverty, while providing resources which guarantee security and stability. It should protect against risk. It should take care of the groups excluded by their inability to compete on equal terms in the Information/Knowledge Society.

In all European countries women, youth, older men, and foreign workers constitute the social categories which are the most exposed to the unemployment risk. If we look at the new state of economy from the occupational perspective, apart from unskilled workers, clerks, services and sales workers, skilled (craft/trade) workers seem to be the most vulnerable to unemployment. Of those who remain in work force, skilled workers seem to be subject to greatest work intensification and work stress. They definitely belong to the losers of the current economic re-structuring.

Poland and Spain - a new and an old transformation society - illustrate in extreme the consequences of rapidly changing economies. In these two countries, which together can be said to constitute the negative pole of the unemployment continuum for our specific country group, unemployment rates as such, but especially these among women and youth, are extremely high -- much higher than in the core European countries. Unemployment and poverty in the midst of prosperity are one of the key national issues. This situation possibly implies that for these two countries not the professions, but rather the youth, the women or the poor, the very groups excluded from the benefits of the Information/Knowledge Society, should be the object of study. However, even in these two countries the situation of professions is extremely interesting. Regime-loyal professionals were privileged in both Poland and Spain during the time of

authoritarian regimes. The advent of democratic, market economies changed this situation dramatically -- especially for the younger people and most vocal supporters of the authoritarian regime. The most recent collapse of the labour market in Poland has brought much unemployment to young, highly educated people, who stand -- helpless -- at the beginning of their professional careers. In Spain the blocked access of young people to the labour market similarly implies that they do not stand a fair chance of starting their professional careers. Extremely strong respect for seniority on the job reduces their chances.

Denmark constitutes the other, positive pole of the unemployment continuum. Just like the Netherlands, it managed to reduce its rather high past unemployment in the past few years - partly through relying on part-time and temporary work. In between these two poles, we find other European countries, such as, for example, Germany, where the overall unemployment rate is high, but it varies very much by region. In eastern Germany unemployment is higher than in Poland. In north-western Germany it hovers around the European average, while in the south it lies much below it. For these European countries it seems that the exclusive focus on professions makes sense.

An unprecedented phenomena is that professionals such as lawyers, doctors, engineers or architects, whose rise to occupational power and social privilege the sociology of professions studied just a few decades ago, are no longer immune to unemployment. This can be illustrated using just 3 countries as examples. If we take the Eurostat, Labour Force Survey 2000, as our information source, it turns out that professionals constituted 6.6% of the unemployed in Denmark, 5.8% in Germany and 6.4% in the UK in 2000. Lawyers and managers constituted 4.7% of all unemployed in Denmark, 2.9% in Germany but 7.7% in the UK in the same year. If we put the statistics for these three groups together, we see that professionals, lawyers and managers constituted 11.3% of the unemployed in Denmark, 8.7% in Germany and 14.1% in the UK. This means that even when their vulnerability to unemployment is not as great as that of services and sales workers, craft/trades workers, clerks or basic occupations, they also appear to be affected by unemployment. It is perhaps worth a note that according to German national statistics the situation is even worse than the Eurostat describes: in 1999 22,7% of all lawyers, 17.5% of all dentists, and 8,1% of all managers were unemployed. On the other hand, the Danish national statistics tells us that the situation of professions was negative in about 1994, when unemployment among, for example, dentists reached over 10%, but since then it has declined following the improvement in general economic situation. These days most professions in Denmark do not suffer more than 3,2% unemployment rate. In all our European countries, even those which re-equilibrated, however, professions have made the novel experience of unemployment.

The changed entrepreneurial, political and public perception of professions is as interesting as the statistical trends. In many countries such groups as managers, accountants, computer/system analysts and doctors are blamed for system failures. Managers, accountants or system analysts are blamed for enterprise failures. Since the 1980s they have learnt to know mass firings. These occupational groups can therefore be said to have been turned into the carriers of the economic risk. As an occupational group closer allied with the state than with the market and therefore more exposed to political blows, doctors have been blamed for exploding social labour costs and/or state budgets. Faced by a fiscal crisis of the state, politicians have increasingly switched to neo-liberal -- de-regulative and cost-curbing -- rhetorics. They seek to re-legitimate the state by claiming to reduce expenditures on health care in particular and social security in general. Quite independently from whether medical care and health insurance are entirely or only partially nationalised, state representatives blame doctors and/or their associations for unduly raising costs of medical care and health insurance. Governments put political and legislative pressure on doctors to lower health care costs and to reduce their salary claims. Thus doctors have been turned into political targets and so into carriers of political risk.

In this new economic and political context neither managers nor doctors -- used here as typical examples which help to illustrate wider trends -- are able to sustain their claim to social distinction. Their very reputations, job security, high salaries and social prestige are now at stake.

In this specific sense the new, more precarious situation of professions reflects the new state of economy and polity. Therefore to study these professions today would give us a chance to gain insights into the state of economy and polity from a particular perspective -- from the perspective of societal members who have enjoyed a close and beneficial association with the state and economy until the mid-1970s, but who since the mid-1970s are on a collision course with their former allies and benefactors. We can ask whether the negative pressures and experiences to which these groups have been subject and which have caused much frustration and anger on their part, have led to their disengagement or distanciation from democracy and capitalism? Are they still loyal to the system and ready to serve as its pillars or not? In reverse: has the system lost its major past supporters in these professionals or not? How do their feelings feed into the general emotional climate of their nation-state? How do they construct their feelings of failure or unfairness? How, if at all, do these feelings translate into collective mobilisation? Are such tightly organised professions as doctors more capable of constructing collective feelings of injustice and acting on them in a collective form compared to managers (or computer specialists) who are more individualised?

By studying these professions, however, we would not only learn about the economy, polity and possible de-legitimation trends. If we ask individual professionals about their personal experiences, we will gain insights into the difficulties which they face today when they try to pursue social distinction and deference just as they had done it in the past. Given new economic and political pressures, neither their scientific titles nor their organisations (where such exist), are able to protect their collective reputation, privileges or income. Since for many professionals higher education and professions have been the means of maintaining the social status of their parents or achieving their dream of upward social mobility, we can expect that their frustration and anger is not only caused by their inability to continue combining good reputation with privilege, but also the difficulties they encounter in sustaining their personal dream of success. Do these professionals feel anxiety about their collective and personal future? Do they communicate about it with each other or cope in isolation? Can we detect significant differences between more and less tightly organised professions in terms of how their members construct their individual and collective situation, whether they attribute blame to themselves, their associations or the system, how they construct the feeling of injustice?

What is going on in professions treated as reflections of contemporary economic and political trends can be best studied relying on two contrary examples of doctors and managers (or, alternatively, system analysts). While doctors are well organised in most countries and can be said to have pursued (more or less effectively) the politics of distinction through their own associations, managers have remained rather individualised. This implies that while we can research what happened to doctors focusing on their associations and only adding interviews with individuals to fill in gaps, we have to interview many more individual managers to find out what their profession goes through. Our task would also be to locate manager clubs, networks or brain hunters, in order to find out how they assess the current position of their profession and its particular members.

In any case, one task would be to sketch the new economic and political situation in order to set the pursuit of distinction, reputation and professional autonomy by these two different professions in its context. The second task would be to investigate the relationship between professions and their individual members. If there was an association/union before, how did the relationship between its members and this organisation change? Did it loosen or become more conflictual? Are emotions riding high? And on the contrary: To what extent, if at all, did contextual changes push these two professions to more or new forms of collective action. The

question is whether these professionals have re-organised and acted in new ways -- whether they have become more individualised or, on the contrary, better or more organised, intensified collective negotiations and/or engaged in new forms of protest, such as strikes and demonstrations (as was the case for doctors in Germany and France in the beginning of 2002, for example). The third task would be to find out how the new economic and political context has affected the individual search for distinction and reputation. How do doctors and managers feel about their professions and their own lives? What emotional mixes are typical for them: are they anxious, depressed, frustrated and angry or rather anxious but hopeful? Are they supportive of the political and economic system in which they try to construct and unfold their biographies? Have they switched their political affiliations to new political actors?

Ideally speaking, the investigation should expand to also trace 1) the changes in the public and political perception of these two professions and 2) whether and how professional practices and professional ethical/conduct rules have changed in response to the so far described market, state and public pressures. Resources will have to decide, whether these two areas of inquiry can also be covered.

As far as the perception of professions is concerned, some scattered work has been done on which one could draw. It seems that we are witnessing their public fall from grace. In many countries doctors, managers or accountants have become re-defined in the public debates. Far from being associated with the pursuit of public good, they are now cast in the role of egoists interested only in their own power and privileges. They are blamed for political and economic problems. Their professional competence and conduct are also questioned. Although economic failure and the fiscal crisis of the state seem to explain much of the current reversal of public opinion as far as doctors, managers or accountants is concerned, the general decline of professional legitimacy also plays a role. The professions seem to have used up much of the public credit they enjoyed directly after World War II. Scientific controversies which revealed disagreements among experts to the public, malpractice suits which exposed and documented cases of unethical conduct or erroneous work, social movements which challenged various experts, generational change within professions causing explicit conflicts between profit-oriented and public-oriented thinking within professions, and, most recently, entrepreneurial, bank, and financial crises in whose appearance well-known, yet irresponsible, corrupt or criminal experts, played a key role, seem to have worked together to undermine the overall legitimacy of professions. They certainly made them more vulnerable to current entrepreneurial and political attacks on their integrity and purse.

As far as the professional practices and ethical rules are concerned, it is a general impression of scholars interested in professions that such classic professions as doctors or lawyers have been modifying their rules, dropping some and adding new ones. Based on scattered evidence it seems that their increased exposure to the market while retaining their bonds to the state has forced them into an awkward position - they are no longer public servants pure, nor are they, however, entrepreneurs. How this ambivalent positioning between the market and the state feeds into the professional debates about ethical rules as well as how it affects the emotional climate within professions and influences rule changes, would be interesting to find out.

As far as individual professionals are concerned, we can expect that in a personal or professional crisis, their families will turn out supportive of them, only then, when good relationships prevailed among the family members prior to the crisis. Otherwise they will prove to be a burden, placing additional demands on these professionals as well as blaming them for the difficulties which the family has to face. For most people religion seems not to be of much help in difficult situations. Only a small minority will interpret their situation as a message from God. The contours of the welfare state will play insofar a role in shaping the self-understanding of the professional confronted by economic and other difficulties that in welfare states which provide a basic income to all those defined as entitled, the feelings of shame should not be as severe as in the welfare states in which drawing unemployment and welfare benefits are

associated with shame. For professions subject to direct, increased regulation by the state, the austerity and taxation discourse of the state will play a role in their own construction of the feeling of fairness. Where such state taxes high and regulation attempts strong, we can expect that the state's austerity and regulation politics will be perceived as unfair.

3. Final Programme **Identities and Emotions in De-Stabilised Labour Markets**

21 February (Thursday)

7:00 p.m. Welcome Dinner at the Restaurant Weinstock am Markt

22 February (Friday): Project Objectives - Our Target Variables

10:00-12:00 *Labour Markets in a Comparative Perspective*

10:00-10:40 Dr. Serrano - Labour Markets in a Comparative Perspective
10:40-11:20 Brief Individual Presentations of National Labour Markets: the Situation of the Well-Educated People, Professions & Special Groups
11:20-11:40 Roundtable Discussion: What to Compare and How to Compare it? National vs. Local, the Question of Validity
11:40-12:00 Roundtable Discussion: Towards a Typology of Labour Markets

12:00-1:30 Lunch

1:30-3:40 *Individual Constructions of Meaning*

1:30-1:50 Prof. Sarfatti Larson: The Meaning of Profession to the Professional
1:50-2:10 Prof. Bloch: Scientists, Science and Emotion
2:10-2:30 Prof. Tarkowska: Time, Gender and Biography
2:30-2:50 Prof. Porpora: Morality and Biography
2:50-3:10 Doz. Dr. Hoerning: Crisis and Biography
3:10-3:30 Prof. Wohlrab-Sahr, Dr. Fuchs: Gaps - What Still Needs to be Considered
3:30-3:40 Roundtable Discussion

3:30-4:00 Coffee Break

4:00-6:00 *Emotions and Their Management*

4:00-4:30 Prof. Barbalet: Why Are Emotions Crucial?
4:30-4:45 Prof. Flam: How Do I Know I Deal With Emotions? Selected Previous Studies
4:45-5:00 Dr. Rössel: Gaps - What Still Needs to be Considered?
5:00-5:30 Conclusion: Our Target Emotions in a Comparative Perspective
5:30-6:00 Roundtable: How Do Meanings and Emotions Correlate? Our Hypotheses

7:00 Dinner

23 February (Saturday): Project Objectives - Our Target Variables

10:00-12:00 *Our Target Population Group(s)*

10:00-10:40 Prof. Sarfatti Larson, Doz. Dr. Hoerning: Why Focus on the Well-Educated and Professionals? What to Compare and How to Compare it?
10:40-11:10 Prof. Siegrist: Gaps and What Else Needs to be Considered
11:10-12:00 Roundtable Discussion: Our Target Groups

12:00-1:30 Lunch

Our Research Objectives

1:30-3:30 *Autobiographic or Association-Focused*

- 1:30-1:50 Prof. Propora: Against Autobiographic, Narrative Interviews and for Barbalet's Emotional Climates
1:50-2:10 Prof. Sarfatti Larson: Against Focusing on Professionals
2:10-2:30 Roundtable Discussion: Our Research Design
2:30-3:00 Discussions in Two Smaller Groups
3:00-3:30 A Two Profession Research Design
- 3:30-4:00 Coffee Break

4:00-6:00 *A Question of Numbers*

- 4:00-4:05 Prof. Flam: Comparative and Representative?
4:05-4:20 Prof. Huinink: How Many Cases are Enough?
4:20-4:40 Prof. Sarfatti Larson: How Many Architects Make a Good Case?
4:40-5:00 Prof. Porpora: What Should Be Our Lowest IP Number?
5:00-5:20 Doz.Dr. Hoerning: Our Objectives, Our Numbers and Our Research Design
5:20-6:00 Roundtable Discussion: Towards a Shared Number
- 7:00 Dinner

24 February (Sunday): Contextual Variables

10:00-12:00 *Welfare States - Support or Burden*

- 10:00-10:20 Dr. Pioch: Welfare States in a Comparative Perspective - What to Include?
10:20-11:20 Brief Individual Presentations about National Welfare States and the Provisions for Well-Educated People/ Professions
11:20-12:00 Roundtable Discussion: Towards a Typology of Welfare States
- 12:00-13:30 Lunch

1:30-3:30 *Families and Friends: Support or Burden*

- 1:30-1:50 Prof. Tarkowska: Support in Rich and Poor Families
1:50-2:10 Dr. Diefenbach: Families, Assets and Divorce
2:10-2:30 Prof. Huinink, Röhler: Families, Household Labour and Divorce
2:30-2:50 Prof. Flam: Previous Study Results: Unemployment and Families
2:50-3:10 Roundtable Discussion
3:10-3:30 Conclusion: Our Target Family Issues

3:30-4:30 **CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS**

4. **Assessment of results/contribution to the future direction of the field**

As we were preparing for the workshop it turned out that we were dealing with a hitherto unexplored research niche - we had great difficulties finding statistics on the unemployment among professions in our respective countries. For the US some unpublished data reached our workshop participant just in time to be presented at the workshop. In Poland the Central Bureau of Statistics had promised to compile such statistics, but could not accomplish this task prior to the workshop. In Spain and the UK this information seems not to be available. Only for Germany and Denmark some published time series could be found. In this context, comparative Eurostats were really useful, although they only told us of the most recent unemployment trends. They demonstrated that both classic professions, such as doctors or lawyers, and newer professions, such as managers or computer specialists, have made the experience of facing unemployment.

We were innovating not only as far as gathering data was concerned. According to those assembled, including 3 experts on professions, there has been very little done recently on the professions. In pointing out that they were hit by phenomena novel to them, such as, for example, unemployment or relative loss of work autonomy, distinction and good public image, we were staking out a new research territory.

For Parsons the functional necessity of professions explained their high professional autonomy, specialisation or codes of ethics. For his critics professions and their privileges were largely self-constructed. Freidson argued, using medical professions as an example, that autonomy in technical matters was not a functional necessity but a result of pushing for government recognition and later gaining government support for specific types of training and licensing. Berlant and Larson argued that once an occupational group managed to obtain control over entry into the profession through licensing, it could use its monopoly on dispensing certain services to realise its claims to distinction. It could improve its income and social status. Immergut showed that the claim to distinction could not be as unproblematically realised as Freidson, Berlant and Larson implied. She pinpointed, using the example of the medical profession in three countries to make her case that professions had to cope not only with their opponents but also gain access to political institutions in various nation-states in order to score successes. Professional status should be then understood as an emergent phenomenon, dependent on the access structure to a particular nation-state.

In great compatibility with these critical views, but expanding them a bit, we noted that professions and their fate were in part determined by their successful or unsuccessful alliance with the polity and/or economy. But, we noted that, in the last twenty-thirty years, a hitherto successful alliance was coming to an end. Not only as a result of political transformation, such as took place in Spain in 1974 or in Poland or East Germany in 1989, but also because of the changed economic and political circumstances in the Western World which these two countries joined. The re-structuring of the national economies and the search of the nation-states for legitimation in terms of austerity policies are the two starting points for a re-arranging of or disengaging from the close relationship between the professions and their former allies -- the capitalist economy and the democratic state.

What we need right now is research into the preconditions and the process of disengaging professions from their past sponsors. It will not only constitute a document of our time, but, carried preferably in a comparative form, it will catch the emerging patterns of conflict, distantiating and new accommodation.

5. Final List of Participants

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6. Participant Statistics

Age Group Number of Participants

26-36 yrs	6
37-49 yrs	6
51-65 yrs	7

Nationality Number of Participants

American	1
Danish	2
British	1
German	10
Italian	1
Polish	1
Spanish	1
Swedish	1
Swiss	1

Professor Helena Flam
10/05/2002