

The German Labour Market 'Miracle': Success of skilful institutional recalibration or symptom of creeping erosion of the social system of production?

Symposium at the International Labour Process Conference in Berlin, 4-6 April 2016

Recent developments in the German labour market have been attracting the attention of social science labour market researchers and labour process scholars over the past years: There has been a particular focus on the question whether and how German unification contributed to alterations of the established labour market institutions and employment regulations of the 'coordinated capitalism' of the German type. From the mid 1990s onwards, the experience of about a decade of stagnation with rising unemployment and low economic growth rates fuelled inquiries into the pathogens of the 'sick man of Europe'. Strong changes in labour law and benefit regulations ('Hartz-Gesetze') that had been put into effect by the then social democratic – green government (1998-2005) to combat that stagnation changed deeply rooted institutions in such a fundamental way that these changes became a prominent subject of analysis. In particular, the astonishingly successful surmounting of the financial- and the following economic crisis in the final years of the millennium's first decade generated research on the 'Job Wunder' (Dustmann u. a. 2014)(Knuth 2014).

However, besides these relatively specifically describable and chronologically locatable incidents on the labour market there is some questioning about how far the German social system of production and with it its employment model - attuned to industry rather than services and embedded in a male breadwinner oriented Bismarckian welfare state - has undergone some fundamental change over the past two decades generating new challenges. Apart of an accelerated long term trend of tertiarization the expansion of low wage work, frequent use of atypical forms of employment (Walwei 2014) and rising inequalities in income distribution barely compensated by the activation turn in social policy signal structural change (Apitzsch u. a. 2015) (Eichhorst 2015). To this background debates on risks of old and new labour market dualization as well as the quest of a living wage for a rising share of individuals and households indicate new and ongoing challenges for the German coordinated capitalism and a

society characterized by changing family and gender relations and rising ethnic diversity (Eichhorst/Marx 2012; Gottschall/Schröder 2013).

The symposium will address some of these questions. It aims at giving insights into ongoing scholarly research done by applying diverse disciplinary and empirical approaches. It is organised by the German Association for Social Sciences in Labour Market Research (SAMF) e.V. (www.samf.de)

Apitzsch, Birgit/Shire, Karen A./Heinrich, Steffen/Mottweiler, Hannelore/Tünste, Markus (2015): Flexibilität und Beschäftigungswandel, Weinheim: Beltz Juventa.

Dustmann, Christian/Fitzenberger, Bernd/Schönberg, Uta/Spitz-Oener, Alexandra (2014): From Sick Man of Europe to Economic Superstar: Germany's Resurgent Economy, in: Journal of Economic Perspectives 28, S. 167–188, abrufbar unter: http://www.cream-migration.org/publ_uploads/CDP_06_14.pdf, letzter Zugriff am 25.1.2016.

Eichhorst, Werner (2015): The Unexpected Appearance of a New German Model, in: British Journal of Industrial Relations 53, S. 49–69, abrufbar unter: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjir.12055/abstract>, letzter Zugriff am 25.1.2016.

Eichhorst, Werner/Marx, Paul (2012): Whatever works: Dualization and the Service Economy in Bismarckian Welfare States. In: Patrick Emmenegger, Silja Häusermann, Bruno Palier and Martin Seeleib-Kaiser (eds.) The Age of Dualization. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gottschall, Karin/Schröder, Tim (2013): „Familienlohn“: zur Entwicklung einer wirkmächtigen Normierung geschlechtsspezifischer Arbeitsteilung, in: WSI-Mitteilungen: Zeitschrift des Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Instituts in der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung 66, S. 161–171.

Knuth, Matthias (2014): Rosige Zeiten am Arbeitsmarkt? Strukturreformen und „Beschäftigungswunder“. Expertise im Auftrag der Abteilung Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, abrufbar unter: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/wiso/10866.pdf>.

Walwei, Ulrich (2014): Times of change: what drives the growth of work arrangements in Germany?, in: Journal for Labour Market Research 47, S. 183–204.

Panelists:

- Bernd Fitzenberger, Humboldt-University Berlin
- Karin Gottschall, University of Bremen, SAMF
- Matthias Knuth, University of Duisburg-Essen, SAMF
- Ulrich Walwei, Institute for Employment Research, IAB, Nürnberg, SAMF

Chair:

Heike Jacobsen, Brandenburg University Cottbus-Senftenberg, BTU, Cottbus, SAMF