

Science at Work

How Academics and Other Specialists Contributed to the Normalization of Work

(late 19th and first half of the 20th century)

September 10, 2013 – September 11, 2013

Campus of the Universität Wien

This workshop will investigate how science and/or scholarship (in the broadest sense) from the late 19th to the first half of the 20th century contributed to the historical production of work.

Work has fundamentally changed since the late 19th century. Emerging welfare states did not only start to intervene more systematically in labour relations but they also brought forward new social facts such as work. Overall, work was increasingly normalized as gainful employment that was regular or (at best) skillful. The history of this normalization is the history of varied and omnipresent struggles over what work should be – and how it should be valued. These struggles cannot be understood without accounting for the “scientification of the social” (Lutz Raphael). On the one hand, successfully defining and imposing what could (or could not) pass for work and how work should be organized became linked to successful uses of science/scholarship. On the other hand, any attempt to participate legitimately in such struggles could no longer do without *Wissenschaftlichkeit* (i.e. making credible reference to science/scholarship). Sciences of labour did not only strive to examine or describe work; they also aimed to form and reform work, thereby producing it. In doing so, the uses made of science/scholarship were manifold: sciences of work were a spectrum of practices.

The workshop will thus present case studies of sciences of work as practices of non-specialists as well as specialists (for instance, experts and/or researchers/scholars in an academic context) in the fields of statistics, labour administration, legal codification, vocational counseling and work psychology (*Psychotechnik*).

Workshop Program

Campus of the Universität Wien
Spitalgasse 2-4, A-1090 Wien
Seminarraum des Instituts für Ethik und Recht in der Medizin (=Alte Kapelle), Hof 2.8

Tuesday September 10, 2013

9.00-9.15 Sigrid Wadauer: Welcome and Introduction

Chair: Sigrid Wadauer

9.15-10.15 Christian Topalov (Paris): National Styles in the Social Sciences: Unemployment Theories and the Rise of Mathematical Statistics in the early 20th Century (Britain and France)

Coffee break

10.40-11.40 Alexander Mejstrik (Vienna): Labour and Occupational Statistics (Austria, 1918-1938)

11.40-12.40 Thomas Buchner (Linz): Early German Labour Market Statistics (Germany, 1897-1914)

Lunch break

Chair: Irina Vana

14.15-15.15 Jochen Mayer (Edinburgh): Writing the Labour Market: The Production and Use of Workbooks and Employment Files in (West) Germany, 1935-1954

Coffee break

15.30-16.30 Julia Moses (Sheffield): Accidental Work: Law, Expertise and the Construction of Labour in Britain, Germany and Italy, 1860-1914

16.30-17.30 Sabine Rudischhauser (Berlin): Collective Agreements, Labour Law, and the Normalization of Work. France and Germany, 1890-1918/19

Wednesday September 11, 2013

Chair: Georg Schinko

9.00-10.00 Paul-André Rosental (Paris): The Notion of Biological Selection of Workforce in mid-20th Century France

10.00-11.00 David Meskill (New York): From “Commonsense Psychology” to Scientific Psychology: The Evolution of German Applied Psychology, 1920-1965

Coffee break

Chair: Jessica Richter

11.20-12.20 Christine Schnaithmann (Berlin): Bringing the Office Chair to the Laboratory. Efficiency, Comfort, and Normalization in the American Office, 1880-1930.

Lunch break

13.50-14.50 Sonja Hinsch (Vienna): Expertise in Forced Labour Facilities. Between “Work-Shyness” and Illness (Austria 1918-1938)

14.50-15.50 Concluding discussion

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the Production of Work