Julia Nina Baumann:

»Academies of Silence«

in: Dominik Mattes, Janina Kehr, Julia Koroknai, Friederike Rosenbaum, Helmar Kurz, Claudia Lang, Caroline Meier zu Biesen, Ehler Voss (eds.):

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ACADEMIES OF SILENCE Introduction



Photography of a painting by Julia Nina Baumann (2022), acrylic on canvas, untitled.

Dealing with emotional distress in (post-)pandemic German academic institutions was often a challenge for the author herself during her research. Her emotions intertwined with those of her interlocutors in a unique way. In order to untangle the threads, the author was often helped by artistic reflections, like the one above, which also became part of her field notes.

German academic cultures have developed particular cultural norms, power structures, and conventions.[1] Regarding emotions, those conventions foster a value system that generally connotes feelings as 'unscientific' and 'irrational', which I have described as a "culture of no-feeling".[2] This has also led to the exclusion of difficult emotions from academic knowledge production and the construction of research methodologies to involve as little affect as possible.

"Researchers are typically torn between two opposing tendencies: experience from the field research squeezing to be expressed versus professional obligations and expectations restricting their expression [...]."

Dimitris Papageorgiou: "Field Research on the Run: One More (from) for the Road", in: Athena McLean, Annette Leibing (eds.): *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork: Exploring the Blurred Borders between Ethnography and Life*, Malden: Blackwell (2007), pp. 221–239, p. 232.

An exception to the latter is ethnographic methodology. Here the emic gaze, and thus empathy, are regarded as methodological tools, and emotional involvement is explicitly encouraged.[3] Ethnographers must thus perform an emotional balancing act between extremely affective fieldwork, which in addition often takes place in crisis regions, and seemingly unemotional everyday life in the academic community at home. The daily professional obligations of ethnographers usually include much more than the usual academic activities of teaching, fieldwork/research, data analysis and interpretation, reading, writing, publishing, and attending conferences. As many of my interview partners stated, a large part of their day was "lost in bureaucracy", applying for funding, visas, stays abroad and conference visits, in addition to meetings with colleagues, supervisors, and students in university committees, as well as answering emails. All these tasks are part of the everyday ethnographic life as well and are just as essential to the creation of knowledge as data collection or analysis itself. These tasks also shape the everyday emotional experience. To find out the exact role that feelings play in knowledge production and how they are perceived, it was therefore even more important for me to not only focus on fieldwork but to take a holistic view of ethnographic work.[4]

In this article, I will present some of my research findings on how (post-)pandemic German academia is dealing with emotions and mental distress.

I first reflect on my own role in the field and in writing this article. I then explain what led to the increased attention paid to emotional distress at German-speaking universities during the COVID–19 pandemic and to an increase in programmes and services offered by universities and study whether this can be seen as a radical change to the post-COVID-19 institutional handling of emotions. I then introduce my analysis of an academic "culture of no-feeling", in which individual researchers remain quiet about their feelings for fear of condemnation or negative consequences for their careers, as well as how institutions reinforce this culture. As I will show, universities often neglect mental distress, referring to self-improvement and productivity and thereby reproducing the ideal of the emotionally controlled researcher.



The author on her way to the university during the pandemic. In the otherwise typically crowded subway, she is all to herself.

Photograph by Julia Nina Baumann (2022).

ACADEMIES OF SILENCE Cultures of No-Feeling

Researching my 'own kin' has been a challenging but also rewarding privilege. As a social anthropologist myself, I was particularly close to my interlocutors and thus literally performed an ethnography at home. I consider it a great honour to have met inspiring colleagues who shared their feelings with me. However, my unusual proximity to the field also created challenges, as this excerpt from my field diary shows:

"I realized how much my interviews are part of a culture of constant performance pressure in which I feel trapped as well [...]. Even though I always keep asking about emotions, they still very rarely appear in what is spoken. Everything happens in the unsaid, between words, in facial expressions, in what is choked back, behind the defences and justifications [...]. How do I encapsulate the unsaid, the unspeakable, the inexpressible? How do I transform my research experiences into a text that will later be subject to the very evaluation criteria that I am analyzing without jeopardizing my own career?"

Entry from Julia Nina Baumann's field diary (2021). Excerpts from research data of all sorts used, such as all direct quotations from interview transcripts, have been translated into English by the author.

As a female PhD candidate and junior researcher, I was part of the very hierarchically structured academic culture, like my interlocutors. Even in interviews, I recognized the "culture of no-feeling", which made an open expression of sentiments difficult on both sides. Only the process of building mutual trust resolved this dilemma. Nevertheless, in some conversations, emotions were still not explicitly expressed but were instead evident between the lines in gestures and facial expressions. In addition to the many encouraging contacts, I was also often warned by senior colleagues not to become a "troublemaker", a "*Nestbeschmutzerin*" ("fouler of one's own nest/whistle-blower"), or to "navel-gaze" because that would jeopardize my career. Since this research is part of my PhD and academic qualification process, which will be evaluated and graded and will ultimately (re)shape my own chances for further academic achievements, it was sometimes difficult to manoeuvre between mere scientific interest and strategic considerations.

"I do not trust my superiors, and I have an emotion of anger toward them [...]. If I have to be honest, I do not really trust anyone in academia."

Interview with interlocutor, anonymized (2021).

Something similar concerned my interlocutors: no matter what status they possessed, they all saw themselves and their careers as dependent on a system that was characterized by cultures of precarity, mistrust, and silence.

They complained in particular about the employment conditions – a series of poorly paid, fixed-term contracts, with simultaneous overwork, poor work-life balance, and family incompatibility.

I was informed of a feeling of being at the mercy of a system that did not really appreciate them. Some also told me about exploitative relationships, discrimination, bullying, and harassment by superiors or colleagues.[5] All this led to a fundamental distrust and a feeling of competition. Thus, many feared consequences if they opened up to 'academic kin'. This already hints at an association of emotions with vulnerability and weakness within the academic working context leading to negative consequences or even failure. It was equally challenging to take an abstract view of academic realities and structures while being part of and dependent on them at the same time. To achieve a differentiated view, a high degree of self-observation was necessary, which I methodically pursued in the form of autoethnographic emotion diaries. In various supervision groups (a method adapted from psychotherapy), I also had the opportunity to talk about my material and my own experience and was thus able to gain another level of abstraction. At the same time, while strictly adhering to the principle of doing no harm, I was faced with the challenge of providing a holistic and critical analysis of the culture under observation without causing negative professional and psychological consequences for myself or my research participants. This balancing act has not only shaped my fieldwork but also influences how and in what ways I may frame my publications. This text hence purposefully sets itself outside of the artistic-experimental framework of this volume. The more academic style of writing is also a reflection of how academic cultures (re)shape emotions. It follows a structure as well as linguistic formalities and modes of presentation that are formed by the circumstances of its creation. In my case, this also means that certain things should remain unspoken. The radicality of the text thus does not consist in its form of presentation but instead in its content.

Choosing emotions as a subject is already a small act of rebellion in a culture where sentiments are often suppressed and where mental distress is heavily stigmatized.

Despite the academic format, through the raw presentation of my empirical material, underlying feelings will be transferred to the empathic reader who will thereby be able to share some of the emotions. This transfer to the reader is, in my view, a unique feature of ethnographic narration. The photographs inserted into the text as well as the soundscape underpin the more experimental storytelling of this volume.

ACADEMIES OF SILENCE Pandemic Distress

"A middle-aged woman sits on a comfortable armchair upholstered with brown velvet and a white lace blanket. Her hair is pinned up; flowers in delicate pastel shades intertwine on her blouse; plants stand to her right and left. She smiles at the camera. According to her, the online course will help me 'to release some of my exhaustion and frustration with the craziness of modern academia'. She calls the tapping method she presents a 'stress release first aid for academics, to release anger, frustration, exhaustion or other negative feelings'. She explains its 'scientifically proven positive effect', which shuts down stress receptors in the brain. She also describes herself as a 'Stress-Release Coach' and 'Emotional Freedom Therapist' and universities as one of the 'high-demand environments' where her work is desperately needed: 'The system we know is already challenging. It was already challenging before COVID. People are disillusioned with the frequent lack of response [...] and it has just really gone crazy. And you are not the only one even if sometimes it can feel like that', she

tells me sitting on the other side of the screen. [...] With eyes closed and breathing calmly, she begins to draw attention to my own body, to tension and tightness. While tapping on different body points (head, eyebrow, chin, hand...), various statements are repeated about negative emotions (such as "I accept that I am exhausted by this system', 'There is never a good time to take a break', 'It is too much for one person'). Again and again, the own intensity of my feeling is requested after the tapping. The goal is to feel lighter and more relaxed. If the negative feelings 'that you often can't give a voice to' are named, a tapping round with positive associations is added. 'Please don't suffer in silence', she says 'I know you can't change the system and you can't restructure the whole university [...] but you can change your own stress level. And let's hope the changes in the system will happen soon'."

Entry from Julia Nina Baumann's field diary (2022).

This ethnographic vignette describes one of many courses on emotional distress offered to academics that I participated in during my research (online and in situ).

In recent years, there has been an increasing demand for advice on how to "survive and thrive in academia".[6] These academic "fear entrepreneurs" work with their clients' anxieties in a steadily growing market.[7] Recently, universities have increasingly become customers and providers of such services. In many cases, the courses are offered by the institutions and the instructors are paid by them, or by third parties, such as health insurance companies, for example as part of the university's health management. In most cases, however, the coaches at the workshops I attended were not employed by the university but were self-employed and were thus only remunerated for a number of hours. When talking to the course instructors, I was also interestingly told of poor working conditions as well as dependencies in many cases. They often regretted that the payment was usually not sufficient for longer-term offerings or that certain content was not promoted. Many felt that they were not free to design the course content but needed to follow certain guidelines set by the institutions.
In the pre-pandemic German-speaking academic world, such offers could have been found only sporadically. But the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed this situation and can – according to my research findings – be seen as a turning point in the consideration of emotional challenges in academic working life. German university websites now include, for example, online courses on "Dealing with negative emotions at work", offers from psychosocial counselling centres outside the university, such as the Covid Help Lines, and training on how to deal with those affected by crises. The reason for this is that the pandemic years brought everyday changes that affected all social groups in one way or another: for example, they led to persistent social isolation as a result of the stagnation of public life. Even if Germany, unlike other European countries, never experienced a complete lockdown with harsh curfews, so-called "social distancing", which soon became a buzzword for keeping safe distances, also had a significant negative impact on Germans' mental wellbeing, as recent studies imply.[8]

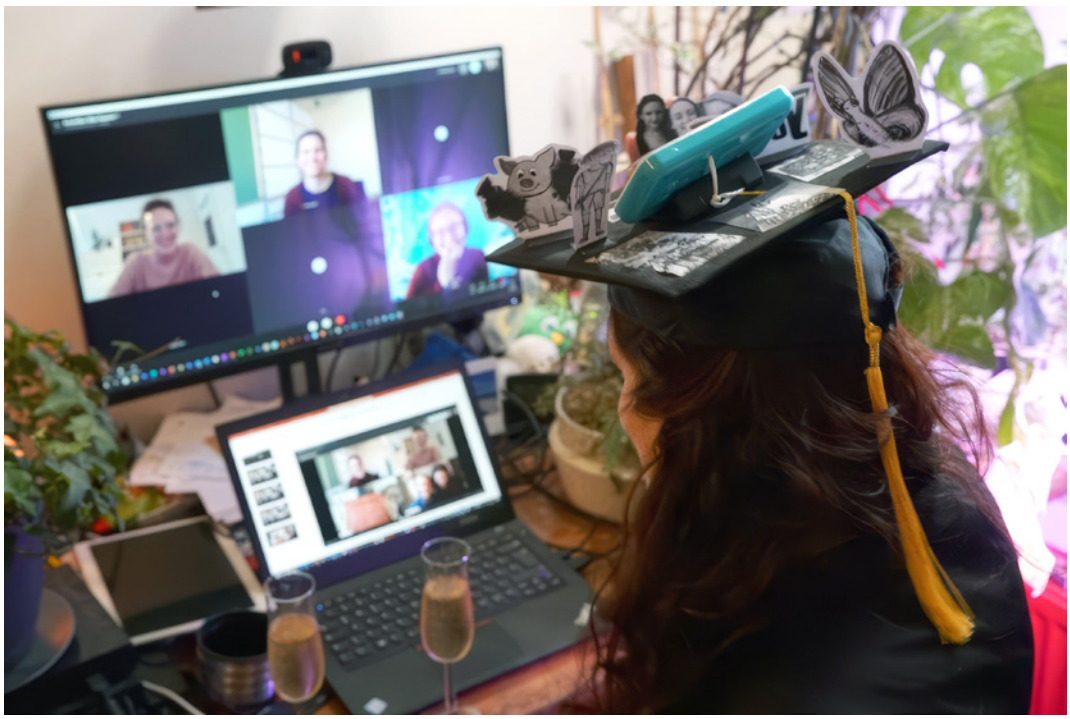
"During Covid and online teaching, the campus was completely dead, of course! [...] Unfortunately, it hasn't recovered from that yet either, and probably won't again."

Interview with interlocutor, anonymized (2022).

"[During the pandemic] I didn't talk to people for weeks, you know [...]. Also, the way the university works is very neoliberal, you know, they were paying us a hundred percent of our salary but were expecting 110%. We were working three times as much with online teaching and everything. There was absolutely no addressing of how that could be tough for anyone [...], no addressing of the emotions, the feelings we all had and the sadness and some fear and [...] I don't know, the loneliness and just [...] the tiredness and economic concerns."

Interview with interlocutor, anonymized (2021).

Academic facilities were particularly affected by the pandemic. The previously crowded campuses were left empty; lectures, conferences and meetings were reduced to a minimum and held exclusively online. Even social events and ritualized celebrations had to be shifted to the virtual realm, as shown in the picture below of a virtual online thesis defence.



Photograph published with the permission of the creator, anonymized (2022).

Virtual Dis(connection): Defending a PhD thesis in the pandemic.

Universities mastered this transformation of everyday academic life into the online realm and virtual spaces only slowly. Subsequently, the pandemic initially began with widespread silence and stagnation, which is also reflected in the soundscape below, which acoustically accompanied the beginning days of my research.

Proximity in distance – an acoustic impression of a PhD student's day in the pandemic: The author has captured her work autoethnographically and acoustically. The focus was on the solitary silence that characterizes her everyday life as an academic, interrupted only by very rough, noisy pauses (footsteps on the asphalt, subway noise, announcements, alarm clocks, keystrokes on the keyboard, etc.). Interpersonal resonance (Rosa 2019) is hard to find in the recording. An exception is virtual conversations, which the author held during lockdown often either with friends and family or with her research interlocutors. But these are not recorded due to data protection but are only represented by empty tones at the beginning of the conversation. In this way, they show another dimension of silence, in this case a protective silence. The soundscape is thus by no means a value-free product but is intended quite deliberately to induce emotions in the listener and to make the insights gained from the research article 'experienceable' also on a physical level.

Soundscape: Proximity in distance – an acoustic impression of a PhD student's day in the pandemic (2022).
AUDIO ▸ cache.ch/1704

For academic staff, however, this still meant working from a home office and at a great distance from professional colleagues. In this environment, emotional impairment, sick leave, and mental health problems increased alarmingly among researchers. The mental health of students was particularly negatively affected.[9] While many surveys and publications have drawn attention to this fact, particularly at the undergraduate level, comparable attention to academic staff has been largely absent. Although there is occasional evidence that junior researchers in particular were extremely affected by the "hyper-uncertainty" brought on by the pandemic,[10] research at the post-doctoral and professorial levels is largely lacking. This reflects not only the previously described academic "culture of no-feeling", in which emotions are often seen as unprofessional but also the general stigmatization of people with emotional distress in Germany.[11] Often, this stigmatization also leads to taboo and thus to silence. Many affected persons do not talk about their condition for fear of condemnation, loss of status or job, or social exclusion.[12] The fear of consequences is particularly felt in professional contexts.[13] This was also reflected in my research.

Many researchers shared a feeling that it was almost forbidden to talk about mental health issues, problems with supervisors, or difficulties with fieldwork and research participants.

They feared being labelled by the academic community as not being a 'good researcher' or not being seen as 'tough' enough. Several early career researchers told me that their attempts to talk about emotional distress had been met with "pull yourself together" and "buckle up" advice by their supervisors or colleagues. However, many tenured professors also told me that they felt overwhelmed when people approached them with emotional problems. They missed having a contact person or advisor in the academic institution to whom they could turn for counselling.

ACADEMIES OF SILENCE University Structures

Although the pandemic has had a strong negative impact on the mental health of academics, it cannot be seen as a single trigger for certain emotional phenomena but rather acted as a burning glass and catalyst highlighting existing problems. As the worldwide biennial "Nature PhD Survey" from 2019 shows,[14] "graduate students are more than six times as likely to experience depression and anxiety as compared to the general population".[15] At the same time, very few of those who sought help found it at their university.[16] This was confirmed by several of my interviewees, who verified that it is very "unusual" or at least "extremely difficult" to apply for research supervision or mental support at funding agencies or universities. Many even spoke of refraining from requesting such support for fear of being seen as not high performing enough.[17] To avoid contacting their supervisors, loopholes are often sought.

"I knew that doing a doctorate is exhausting [...], it was completely clear to me that doing a PhD is pretty much certain to result in a mental health crisis."

Interview with interlocutor, anonymized (2022).

"Getting any kind of supervision has always been difficult [...]. I would say that you must go privately to a psychotherapist, and he/she should diagnose you with something like borderline or schizophrenia. And then you apply privately for health insurance funding, and you will certainly get it with such a diagnosis and then you have your research supervision [...]. That is very common, and many people have done it that way [...]."

Interview with interlocutor, anonymized (2022).

Considering the strong stigmatization of mental illnesses, particularly schizophrenia, I was surprised to find out that academics preferred to face stigmatization from this invented diagnosis over psychological supervision at their workplace. To investigate why so many academics reported that they did not receive help at their workplaces, not even from the existing support services, I visited approximately 35 events, workshops, and programmes relating to emotion and mental distress at various German-speaking universities, online and in situ, before and after the pandemic. For example, I joined a further education programme that aimed to "maintain and strengthen mental and physical health". The course title implied that the workshop goal was "building up resilience" in academic work in particular. But in my experience, it mainly followed the tenor: the more efficiently you plan your time, the more work you can fit into less time, and thus the more opportunities for free time you can have and the better you will feel. Therefore, we learned various time management techniques, which should "ultimately boost your productivity". The course leader explained that stress is mostly caused by oneself, which is why in the second part of the workshop inner doctrines were to be identified and overcome, which would ultimately make us "more efficient" and therefore also more "successful employees": "Doing your job right and getting things done in time will ultimately make you feel better", he said. The script stated:

"The term work-life balance stands for a state in which work and private life are in harmony with each other, or in other words, it is a positive balance between life and work in which I not only feel good as a person, but I also feel particularly productive and meaningful."

Citation from the workshop script (2022).

This example shows clearly how strongly mental resilience is associated with productivity and performance in such courses. It was striking that already often in the title of these events, the words management and efficiency were linked to emotion and mental health. Even the organization of leisure time and relaxation was often placed in a competitive context and viewed through the lens of increasing efficiency. Time for personal sharing was limited to a few courses. Reflection on existing structures, which could also lead to the suffering of the participants, was mainly absent. Instead, psychological stress was stylized as the sole problem of the individual that should be "trained away", "overcome", or at least not become visible in everyday work performance by adopting the various "tips and tricks" taught in the courses.

Within this performance culture, the notion of emotionally or mentally distressed people within academic work cultures as not conducive to academia was particularly striking.

During a workshop on the role of university senior staff who were team leaders of employees with mental health problems, I first observed that the majority of the participants seemed to belong to the university's library and administrative staff. The course leader, a trained psychologist, confirmed that from her point of view researchers or lecturers would only very rarely take advantage of such offers. The realization that they also belonged to the executive staff had "not yet arrived" in most cases, she noted. At the same time, I was stunned at what definitions of mental illness were taught in the course: at first, the instructor presented various clinical pictures, strictly according to the *International Classification of Diseases 10th Revision* (ICD-10) and *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (DSM-5). She regretted that she could "not take anyone like them with her" to "demonstrate" these conditions to the course participants.[18] "Someone told me this might be unethical", she said laughingly. Afterwards, the participants were called upon to describe their own experiences with mentally ill employees. From my point of view, this quickly developed into a round of complaints about employees who were 'not functioning well' and whom one would "actually like to get rid of, but who could not be dismissed so easily because of the regulations in the public sector", as one participant stated. I was the only one who openly stated that I had once experienced a mental crisis myself. I found it particularly frightening that the participants soon also shared quite dismissive stories of people with special needs, in this case a person who was hard of hearing, or older individuals or people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) community.

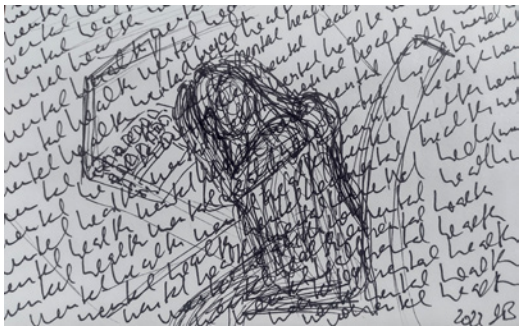
"We have a person in the team who no longer wants to be addressed as Mr. XY, but as Mrs. XY. I just can't remember that, and I think it's silly and now [s]he keeps saying [s]he feels mentally afflicted because we don't address her as Mrs. and [s]he keeps starting to cry and stuff [rolls her eyes]. I can't really take that seriously."

Entry from Julia Nina Baumann's field diary (2022).

Participant at a workshop on mental illness of university employees.

The course instructor did not interrupt these descriptions but used her expertise to give tips on how to deal with these individuals, which were not infrequently ways of "bypassing the staff council and the labour law". Courses like these, unfortunately, cannot be seen as exceptions at all in my field experience and show that the terms emotional distress or mental illness are likely to generally include people who seemingly do not fit into the system and/or seem to make work processes more challenging.

ACADEMIES OF SILENCE Radical Mental Health



Drawing by Julia Nina Baumann (2022), ball pen on paper.

The struggle for mental health in academia often became clear through what was left unsaid. In an attempt to document the unsaid, the author often used artistic methods to capture atmospheres as extensively and vividly as possible. The picture above shows such a drawing, jotted down quickly in her field diary shortly after an interview with an interlocutor. The main thing captured here is the interviewee's posture in quiet moments during the conversation, as well as the recurring mention of word pair "mental health".

German universities have become more attentive to mental distress because of the pandemic, which has certainly contributed to the fact that emotions are discussed at all within academic contexts and has created a greater awareness of emotional challenges in German academia (see #ichbinhanna). However, my findings show that these approaches aimed to integrate the individual back into a culture that has defined productivity and performance as its highest guiding value and understands any form of emotional experience as a constraint or 'personal transgression', even those that are considered beneficial.

"I was very surprised that we even had psychological supervision approved in our project application [...]. The money was there, but nevertheless, the supervision was the first thing cut by the project management due to the COVID restrictions."

Interview with interlocutor, anonymized (2022).

The pandemic has reproduced a certain understanding of what it means to be a good academic more than ever: universities remain places of strict control over one's emotions, where feelings are connoted as unprofessional and must therefore be restrained.[19] But this extreme form of emotion work in highly competitive and insecure environments often does not remain without consequences. In my case, interviewees often told me that they perceived their emo-

tional distress as a personal failure to "endure" the scientific system.[20] In my view, this is precisely why academics are particularly affected by mental health issues. At the same time, the universities' view of mental problems reinforces these predispositions. The idea of easing mental health issues by enhancing one's productivity is entirely in line with the spirit of universities, which are increasingly turning towards constant performance improvements in a business-like manner.[21] This change, often described under the keywords "neoliberalization" or "academic capitalism",[22] includes not only an ongoing shift away from state funding towards increased third-party funding but also a stronger market-based orientation of higher education. Universities established a service culture, education became a consumer good to a greater extent, and institutions now see themselves as success-oriented. Among other things, competition between researchers, universities, and states has been institutionalized and intensified.

Academic work is under growing pressure to perform, like the pressure to publish and to compete in precarious employment conditions.

Failure, formerly a crucial part of the trial-and-error principle of academia, is perceived as a competitive disadvantage. At the same time, university administration expanded constantly while external providers and agencies simultaneously played a growing role, such as in providing mental health courses. A stronger focus on mental distress is thus by no means indicative of a change in this culture. Many programmes are intended to serve only as bridging aid and are soon phased out again or have already been terminated, often accompanied by only short-term funding. This is also shown by the experience of my interlocutors who confirmed that psychological support, if it was provided at all, would be the first service to be cut. The declining number of participants from 2022, which many course providers have told me about, have led to the mistaken belief at universities that the mental load of employees and students has decreased again. But in recent months especially, when the effects of the pandemic gradually subsided, research participants reported to me an above-average number of absences from work due to mental health problems.

In academia, the idea seems to prevail that greater pressure due to the early expiration of contracts affects innovation potential and work effort. However, most scientific studies show that emotional stability is particularly important for good work performance.

Coupled with experiences of discrimination, poor prospects, precarious working conditions, family unfriendliness, and an almost unreachable work-life balance, academia is thus increasingly turning out to be an undesirable working environment.[23] Recent debates concerning precarity (#ichbinhanna) or work operations (#quietquitting) also reveal a shift in the academic community. The increasing number of diagnoses among young people could also be related to the fact that within this age group judgmental doctrines are on a steadily decreasing trend.[24] This might also indicate that they attach more importance to health-promoting working conditions and are more likely to seek psychotherapeutic help. Further research in this area remains immensely important. But certain departments, especially in the natural sciences, are already beginning to have problems properly filling their chairs. German academic institutions will have to respond to this trend, not least because rising illness rates will cause lasting damage to academic operations in the long term. Universities, as usually state-

funded agencies, should play a model role here. This responsibility must be taken seriously, particularly because the health of new generations of researchers depends on it. We all, myself included, shape and stabilize an academic working culture that prioritizes work over health and wellbeing.

It is time to recognize that working cultures deeply affect research projects as well as researchers and have a lasting influence on the creation of knowledge.

A rethinking towards a radical health perspective to counteract this imbalance is therefore required. Attention must be drawn to mental burdens in academia and their systemic basis without fear of professional consequences. Research on one's own academic culture should be strongly encouraged. Emotions must be perceived as a fundamental part of academic work and not as an obstacle. This also includes developing a programme or training, preferably from external providers to avoid dependencies, for university staff, especially with supervising duties, on how to protect oneself and how to support others in dealing with emotional distress. Universities need to establish permanent positions and long-term funding that can offer long-term supervision and support in difficult situations. Power imbalances and dependencies should be reflected upon, in addition to individual agency. Together, academic culture must be redesigned by all of us to become an appreciative workplace that promotes cooperation and support. In ethnographic work and anthropological project assessment in particular, this also means not seeing fieldwork as the only risk for mental distress. Instead, projects must be understood holistically, and threats at home must also be taken seriously.

Notes

1 I would especially like to thank all those who shared their experiences of often difficult emotional situations in academia with me. Without this remarkably firm belief in my work and the trust placed in me here, this article would not have been written. It grew out of a paper I presented at the panel "Subordinate Feelings – Encountering Health Regimes in Psychiatry and Academia", which I co-chaired with Thomas Stodulka and Tynne Claudia Pollmann at the conference "Radical Health: Doing Medicine, Health Care, and Anthropology of the Good" at Freie Universität Berlin, June 24–27, 2021. I would therefore like to sincerely thank the conference organizers as well as my co-chairs and the editors of this volume for their commitment and constructive criticism. I would further like to thank the many friends and colleagues who have supported me on my own often rocky path to a PhD. Special mention should be made here of my partner, Arno Scholwin, in addition to Sakine Yildiz, Isabel Schönle, Veronika Pastorino, and Laura Thurmann, as well as the members of the SECTRA group, the Berlin 'Peer Support Group', and the Freiburg group of the ethnopsychoanalytic interpretation workshop led by Jochen Bonz. Special thanks go to my psychotherapist who accompanied me throughout the research phase and the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung for my doctoral scholarship. I also thank Thomas Stodulka, Anna Tuschling and Dominik Mattes for their effort in supervising my work. This article is part of my cumulative PhD, so small sections may overlap with other publications of mine.

2 Pierre Bourdieu: *Homo Academicus*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (1988); in the following text, emotions, feelings, and sentiments are understood as synonyms. For a more precise specification, see Jack Barbalet: "Science and Emotions", in: *The Sociological Review* 50/2 (2002), pp. 132–150; Julia Nina Baumann: "The Ethnographers' Fear to Feel: Manoeuvring through an Affective Community of No-Feeling within the Academe", in*: Emotions and Society* 4/3 (2022), pp. 375–394; Charlotte Bloch: *Passion and Paranoia: Emotions and the Culture of Emotion in Academia*, New York, London: Routledge (2012), p. 140.

3 Vincent Crapanzano: "Afterword", in: Marc Manganaro (ed.): *Modernist Anthropology: From Fieldwork to Text*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1990), pp. 300–308.

4 I carried out ethnographic research between September 2019 and September 2021 as well as in the spring of 2022 and conducted over forty semi-structured online interviews with a diverse range of ethnographers from different disciplines and backgrounds (in terms of class, gender, age, and ethnicity). My interviews have been accompanied by a series of informal talks with colleagues, academic staff, and academic activists in addition to participant observations at conferences, workshops, meetings, and coaching sessions within German-speaking academia. Gaining trust was therefore a crucial element in my research and is also the reason why in this article all direct quotes are provided without further context to protect the identity of my interlocutors in a rather small ethnographic community. Therefore, all places and persons mentioned in the text, in direct interview quotations and descriptions, are pseudonymized or even anonymized.

5 Julia Nina Baumann: "Contesting Academic Cultures of Power Abuse", in: *Boasblogs – Contested Knowledge*, https://boasblogs.org/contestedknowledge/contesting-academic-cultures-of-power-abuse/ (2023).

6 Kate Woodthorpe: *Survive and Thrive in Academia: The New Academic's Pocket Mentor*, London: Routledge (2018), p. 1.

7 Frank Furedi: "New Dimensions: The Growth of a Market in Fear", in: Havidán Rodriguez, Enrico Quarantelli, Russell R. Dynes (eds.): *Handbook of Disaster Research*, New York: Springer (2007), pp. 508–520, p. 509.

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