LEISURE TIME OPTION AND ON ALTERNATIVE WORKING TIME ARRANGEMENTS

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PROJECT & QUESTIONS

➢ Research Team: Michael Soder (AK), Stefanie Gerold (WU Vienna) and Michael Schwendinger (WU Vienna)

➢ Project: 2016 – 2017

➢ Main Questions:

„How did companies or employees manage to implement new and reduced working time models“

„What are the subjective experiences of employees with the leisure option“
METHODS & CASES

• Collective case-study approach (Creswell et al. 2007; Yin 2003; Baxter & Jack 2008; Luck et al. 2006; Stake 2000)

• Multiple data sources (7 companies, 21 interviews, company and union reports)

• Broad variation in key variables (firm size, business stage, economic sector)

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KEY MESSAGES I: STARTING POINTS

- Recognition of specific administrative or organizational problems
  - Increasing sick leaves & health problems
  - Growing job dissatisfaction & staff turnover
  - Blurred lines between leisure and work
  - Issues of work-life balance
KEY MESSAGES II: SUPPORTING CONDITIONS

- **Employee perspective:**
  - Desire for higher flexibility and autonomy
  - Value Change (subjective valuation leisure time > income)

- **Firm perspective:**
  - Prospects of higher productivity and cost reductions
  - Attraction of skilled workers through improved company image
  - Creation of positive working atmosphere

- **Other factors:**
  - Powerful works council
  - Existence of institutional arrangements
KEY MESSAGES III: A SUCCESSFUL REALISATION

- **Implementation process:**
  - Democratic processes: deliberation, votes
  - Provision of information
  - Pilot projects with probation periods

- **’Success factors‘:**
  - Financial ‘cushioning‘, e.g. (partial) wage compensation
  - Experiences during test/pilot phase helped to diffuse resistances
TO SUM-UP PART 1:

- Companies and employees face different conditions (according to business stage, sector, blue- vs. white-collar workers)…
- … there is no „one-size-fits-all“ approach (Differences between sectors, cluster or companies)
- Investigated company cases can provide some interesting blueprints of “how it can be done”

However, all of the cases are situated in the high income, high-skilled sectors.
EXAMPLE: THE LEISURE OPTION
IN THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT 2013 OF THE ELECTRICS/ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY IN AUSTRIA
THE LEISURE OPTION: HOW TO?

- 3% pay raise or additional leisure time (approx. 5h/month or 60h/year)

- Agreement between works council and company management

- Agreements between employees and company management
THE LEISURE OPTION: FIRST EXPERIENCES I

How do employees use the leisure option?

- Mostly for single days, e.g. long weekends, or combined with regular holidays
- Some accumulate over time (for early retirement or sabbatical)
- Time mostly used for family and children, also for sports, weekend trips, recreation

Implications on well-being and work-life balance

- Positive effects, mostly due to additional autonomy and flexibility in time management, but also due to recreational effects
THE LEISURE OPTION: FIRST EXPERIENCES II

General Experiences:

Well received in the sector and high acceptance among employees

Barriers:

Job security and the leisure option
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

NOT SURE IF I'M WORKING HARD SO THAT I CAN HAVE A GOOD LIFE LATER

OR IF I'M WASTING MY LIFE WORKING SO HARD
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