WSI-Herbstforum 2014  
(YOUNG SCHOLARS SESSION)  
Future working times:  
Time sovereignty, gender equality and sustainability  
27th– 28th November 2014, Berlin  

This year’s WSI-Herbstforum is focused on new challenges concerning working time and working time policy in the context of recent developments on the macroeconomic, company and individual level. There are at least five major developments that support concerns about working time.  

First, redistribution of working time may be an option to reduce the high levels of unemployment we currently observe especially in Southern Europe, and may help to alleviate the social consequences of the expansion of information technology that threatens employment worldwide. Second, there is evidence that the large-scale introduction of new technologies and new forms of work organization (indicator-based performance management) have significantly increased work density and mental strain. Third, the growing share of working women raises challenges on how to combine family and care obligations with demands at the workplace. Moreover, the ongoing demographic change and ageing workforce set new priorities for the organization of work. Older employees are more and more indispensable for employers, however, their employability and working capacity is often limited.  

The increasing knowledge content of work calls for life-long further education and training inside and outside the job. However, long working weeks, and ever-rising demands for flexibility make it difficult to combine full-time work with training, let alone the preparation for a career switch through evening studies at universities or higher education institutions. Finally, individual working time preferences have shifted. Men wish to have more time for family and activities outside work, whereas women want to invest more time in the labor market and their career prospects.  

These trends call for a deeper reflection on working time arrangements that better match employees’ preferences and interests. More flexible options may help to improve the integration of work in our lives, but come along with new risks and challenges: rising work pressure, growing mental health problems and
work-life conflicts demand new concepts on how we want to work in the future and how much time we want to invest in work. The increase of women’s participation in the labor market requires a fundamental redistribution of working time between women and men.

The WSI Herbstforum will discuss these questions from an interdisciplinary perspective. The focus of our debate is on the different working time requirements and preferences of various groups of employees, time for family and leisure as well as the allocation of men’s and women’s time investments.

We are particularly interested in:

- differences between employees' actual working hours and their working time preferences throughout the lifecourse
- concepts for performance management and working time arrangements in companies
- better integration of work and life
- concepts ensuring employees' time sovereignty
- companies’ efforts to reduce employees’ work pressure and stress
- gendered working time arrangements
- concepts of working time reduction.

We invite researchers and PhD students interested in contributing to the WSI-Herbstforum 2014 to send an abstract (300 words) before June 30th, 2014 to Toralf Pusch (Toralf-Pusch@boeckler.de) or Yvonne Lott (Yvonne-Lott@boeckler.de). Please feel free to contact us for further information.