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International Research Workshop/Call for Papers

Exploring the Dynamics of Organizational Working Time Regimes:

Managerial, Occupational, and Institutional Perspectives on Extreme Work

29–31 March 2017, University of Graz, Austria

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Organizational working time regimes that are characterized by extra-long working hours, constant availability expected by clients and superiors, and a poorly predictable, high-paced workflow, have become a salient phenomenon (e.g. Costas, Blagoev, & Kärreman, 2016; Hewlett & Luce, 2006; Muhr, Pedersen, & Alvesson, 2012). Whilst they are particularly prevalent in professional service and other knowledge-intensive firms (e.g. Kärreman & Alvesson, 2009; Kuhn, 2009; Michel, 2011; Perlow, 2012), they may spread over other sectors, too. For a long time accepted as a symbol for loyalty, excellence and commitment to work (e.g. Bailyn, 2006; Hochschild, 1997), more recently, such working time regimes have been called into question in the context of work-life/family balance and health issues (e.g. Michel, 2011; Pfeffer, 2010). As a result, the question of *how to change such extreme working time regimes* has come to the fore. Pressed by environmental shifts such as changing workforce demographics (i.e.

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raising share of dual-career couples and single parents) and critique in the public (Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013), many firms have launched interventions to redesign work and alleviate regimes of extreme work (for an overview, see Kossek et al., 2010; Perlow & Kelly, 2014). Yet, regimes of extreme work have proved particularly difficult to be changed: managerial efforts to attenuate the long hours patterns often do not bring about the intended results, whilst the established working time regimes largely persist despite their drawbacks for individuals and organizations (e.g. Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2015; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2009; Kellogg, 2011; Michel, 2014; Perlow, Mazmanian, & Hansen, 2015).

This international research workshop invites *empirical and conceptual papers* that examine and theorize organizational regimes of excessive working hours, their emergence, evolution, persistence, consequences for employee well-being and work-life balance, and, in particular, approaches to changing them. Indeed, scholars increasingly observe that the traditional "accommodation model" of addressing regimes of excessive working hours through the provision of workplace flexibility programs (e.g. part-time work, flextime, teleworking, etc.) are likely to fail or fizzle out (e.g. Perlow & Kelly, 2014). There are various reasons for this surprising persistence: resistance to change, path dependence, fear of marginalization or negative career consequences (Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2015; Alvesson, 2000; Bailyn, 2006; Perlow et al., 2015; Perlow & Kelly, 2014; Reid, 2015, Sydow, Schreyögg, & Koch, 2009).

Only more recently, management scholars started to study the drivers of the emergence and perpetuations of regimes of excessive working hours. In particular, research points to the importance of, among others, organizational control and power (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2009; Michel, 2011), gendered cultural norms (Bailyn, 2006; Williams, 2010), reified occupational identities (Ashcraft, 2013), path dependence (Schreyögg & Sydow, 2011), and the use of communication technologies (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2013; Wajcman, 2014).

The purpose of the workshop is to extend these lines of inquiry by explicitly examining the *organizational, occupational, technological* and *institutional drivers* underlying regimes of excessive working hours in an effort to deepen our knowledge of how to change them. We particularly invite empirical studies and other approaches that look at the emergence, evolution and change of organizational working time regimes. In terms of business sectors, we also welcome work on areas beyond the "classic" extreme work organisations, such as oil rigs, surgeries, IT start ups. Furthermore, we invite research that compares and contrasts working time regimes from an institutional perspective aiming to explain differences among countries and cultures.

Contributions could focus on one or more of the following questions:

- How are long working hours regimes enacted in different organizations, industries, and institutional environments?
- What kind of organizational temporal structures (e.g. boundaries of work vs. non-work), rhythms (e.g. periods of intensive vs. non-intensive work), and orientations (e.g. concerning the past, present, and future) are prevalent in different organizational contexts?
- What are the consequences of existing regimes of long working hours regimes work for individuals, organizations and societies (e.g. in terms of work-life conflict, health, gender issues, changing demographics, etc.)?
- How are bodies entangled in the continuous (re-)production of regimes of extreme work?
- What factors form the gendered nature of long working hours regimes, and what does this mean for approaches to change?
- In which way may socio-materiality provide new insights into the dynamics of working time regimes?
- What dynamics arise when different rhythms of families, organizations, industries, and countries meet and/or collide?
- How does law affect organizational working time regimes and changes thereof – and how are legal regulations circumvented?
- What is the impact of organizational control and unobtrusive forms of power on the stability and/or change of working time regimes?
- What is the relation between systemic processes, on the one hand, and individual agency, on the other, in particular when individuals do not conform to and/or resist established regimes of extreme work?
- What models and interventions are most likely to succeed at modifying and/or breaking highly institutionalized regimes of long working hours regimes?
- What kinds of working time regimes – beyond common flexibility programs – can foster sustainable forms of working and living?

To apply, please send an abstract (1,000 words) to: **time-workshop2017@uni-graz.at** by **October 30th, 2016**. Applicants will receive a feedback by November 30th, 2016. Successful applicants will be asked to submit either short papers (approx. 3,000 words) or full papers (8-10,000 words) by February 28th, 2017 in order for other participants to read them before the workshop. All paper presentations will be commented by a discussant from the group. Session chairs will be asked to provide an open and encouraging atmosphere for discussion.

Further information on the program, travelling, accommodation etc. will be available from the conference website: http://time-workshop2017.uni-graz.at (as of June 2016).

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