

## **Employee-friendly labor time: a key element to a sustainable pattern of production and consumption**

*Gerd Grözinger / Verena Tobsch / Wenzel Matiaske (Flensburg University)*

Whereas preferences of consumers are a cornerstone of market economies, preferences of employees concerning the amount of paid labor are mostly not. However, we have found that a difference between the aspired weekly hours and the really worked one has a serious negative impact on the life satisfaction, the labor satisfaction and the health satisfaction. The first one has an impact on many dimensions of social life, the second one is directly connected to productivity, the last one to morbidity and mortality, as studies e.g. of the WHO show.

Our research uses the German Socio-economic panel, one of the world's best databases for such questions with some 3.000 publications based on it. Although restricted to Germany, the basic findings are much in accord with European-wide research projects, especially by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

The central analyzed question was, how many hours one would like to work, under the condition that the income from work would change correspondingly. A majority wanted a labor time reduction, a small minority an enlargement. Both effects combined, more than 2 million additional employees could have been statistically brought into work again. In addition, satisfaction would have improved, consumerism somewhat mellowed. And, since mostly persons with children wanted to reduce their working hours, family life would have gained significantly.

Keys: Labour market, workings hours, unemployment, life satisfaction, gender, family