



Work Climate & Economic Development

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Works:

- Die Geschichte der Zukunft – Sozialverhalten heute und der Wohlstand von morgen. Kondratieffs Globalsicht (Brendow Verlag, Moers 2009)
- Kondratieffs Welt. Der Wohlstand nach der Industriegesellschaft (Brendow Verlag, Moers 2009)
- Der Wohlstand kommt in langen Wellen. Hörbuch (Brendow Verlag, Moers 2007)

The New Rules of Wealth

In an information society economic success depends on the culture of cooperation

Until recently, we imagined the future would be like the old industrial society, with just a few computers more on our desks. Everything would remain as it was: lifelong and safe jobs, closed national economies, with “those on top” telling us “what’s what” (so they are to blame in case of doubt). By and by, however, unnoticed first but more and more obviously, information technology has destroyed the patterns of success of the work we were used to, quite simply by making it unnecessary in most cases. Robots have taken over the operations previously performed by assembly line workers; entire brochures can be designed by means of computers and sent to the whole world within seconds; the switching of phone calls is performed by electronic systems. The level of prosperity achieved so far has not disappeared, but it is now accomplished by electric slaves, whose human predecessors complain that we’re running out of work.

This is nonsense: To work means to solve problems. And as there will always be problems, we’ll not run out of paid work. Quite on the contrary: In the future we’ll have much more work to do than we’ll be able to cope with. Nowadays, unemployment doesn’t mean any more that there is not enough work, but that there are not enough people who are able to perform what is needed to complete all the tasks to be accomplished. We’re not running out of work, but work is changing: While the generations before us were standing in the factories, processing the material world directly with their hands, the point is now to create values in a virtual world. Its not that important whether the machines produce 100 or 100,000 parts – this is only a matter of energy and material costs. The major part of value creation has become intangible: developing, planning, organizing, analysing, deciding, observing the market, finding exactly the right piece of knowledge in the enormous flood of information, the knowledge you need to solve your problem.

New patterns of success in all areas of life

This affects all areas of life: requirements at school, evaluation of shares, economic policy, hierarchies, job routines. Unlike before – when employees had been standing at the punch press for one hour, punching a certain number of pieces – the proportion between working hours and productivity is becoming blurred: A writer may write a good article in three hours. But when he can't concentrate properly, he may possibly need five days to render the same output – and the text may even be more boring to read. At the same time the conditions, methods and routines of work are changing: half an hour's afternoon nap will bring you more than three hours at the desk trying to keep yourself up by drinking cup after cup of coffee; some time spent in a "zone of silence" will bring you closer to the solution of a task than attending hour-long meetings or the exerted generation of ideas in front of your monitor screen in the office. Finding the fault in a broken machine will take a single engineer several days; however, if he can call an expert friend in the neighbour village, he may, with the friend's help, repair the whole machine within half an hour. Investment is getting less and less tangible – like a steam engine to put your hands on – but more and more intangible: continuous learning, continuously refining oneself, but also having coffee with someone to establish confidence and promote flows of information. As the way across many desks is a long one (a disadvantage in the competition for time), we introduced flat hierarchies in the 90s – with one or two hierarchy levels sent to early retirement or falling into formation: not for reasons of fashion but for reasons of scarcity to apply knowledge in a better way. While higher formal education was favourable in the past if you wanted to work your way up, competence is now slipping back to the level of skilled workers and case workers, thus changing the position of individuals in a company. Instead of being an obedient and exchangeable cog, he/she is becoming an indispensable specialist of an intermediate step, however unimportant he/she may be in terms of hierarchy.

Master of expertise

But many skilled workers and case workers are not even ready to fill the necessary freedom of an information worker and to take responsibility for their area. On the other hand, many executives still have to take the blame for the errors of their subordinates. Therefore, in most cases neither the old corporate structures nor the new ones are functioning properly. People are getting uneasy, and finally also tired, because of the many conflicts. But there's no turning back: In the information society the pivotal means of production no longer belongs to the company, but to the employees: It is grey, and it weighs 1.3 kilos on average – it's your brain. As a consequence, when intimidated by commands and punishments, knowledge carriers will take good care to keep the best of their knowledge to themselves. In the tangible economy of the past, people could be instructed precisely, for example to dig a hole into the ground, to assemble two parts or to sort bolts. But nobody can be forced to fall asleep with the problems of his company in his head to wake up with the solution in the morning.

This changes the relationship to superiors: The attitude of a boss who thinks he knows better and slashes or modifies his employee's suggestions for improvement without the latter being allowed to defend the better solution (obediently saving his face) is highly unproductive – and the contract will most likely be gained by the competitor. The required direct communication necessitates flexible hierarchies granting individual employees the appropriate weight according to the competences they need on a day-to-day basis, while maintaining clear responsibilities. The ostensible subordinate in hierarchy is the master of expertise, thus deposing the superior of

old. But that's what ensures ample scope for the new executives to implement their fundamental task: the higher a person's formal position in the hierarchy, the more it is his/her intrinsic function to moderate resources and information flows, to analyse people with their strengths and weaknesses, and to employ them accordingly. And to ask lots and lots of questions: What do you need to solve this task optimally? What are the implications of our management decisions for you and for the customer?

Difference in price = difference in behaviour

All at once, the formally equal have to redefine their relationship. None of them is able to survey a project, a situation, a special field alone – the abundance of information to be considered has become too complex and too big. Instead of working independently in different departments as before – development, production, sales, getting together once a year on the occasion of the Christmas staff party – individual chieftains of individual realms of knowledge are teamed up to solve certain tasks: Someone knows the customer and knows what he/she wants; another knows how to handle a machine; and a third is able to develop a prototype at the computer. Now all these specialists are to cooperate as partners at eye level in a factual and targeted way. This is the new requirement that has nothing to do with specialized knowledge or organizational structures, but a lot with a person's sense of responsibility (does it reach even beyond the scope of his/her own cost centre?) and self-assurance (is he/she able to do without status symbols and signs of power that are publicly visible in the company?). The differences in prices for identical products of different companies suggest differences in productivity – and in future these will mainly be differences in behaviour.

The cost of fear: 75 billion euros

However: People in the industrial society have remained the same. They are slower in changing their ingrained social behavior than organizational structures including official rules of the game are altered. Most of them find it difficult to be important one day and less important the other day. Competitive struggles are the consequence. Flat hierarchies and team work have enormously increased the number and complexity of interfaces; the psychological levels of employees are involved: More and more often we are faced with mobbing, and the mental resignation of employees affects our national economy to the amount of the German federal budget; the cost of fear amounts to approx. 75 billion euros. In the working world of the information society some ancient problems tend to surface: Men and women don't understand each other because of the different wirings in their heads. The young with their more topical knowledge frequently correct the old, while the whippersnappers from university lack in experience, thus being sometimes at fault. And last but not least, we don't have a sufficiently factual and fair culture of social intercourse.

We lack in behaviour patterns that are conducive to the progress of knowledge instead of impeding it. If somebody makes a brilliant suggestion which is five percent wrong, we'll nail him down to the five percent instead of taking up the good idea – since this might enhance his/her status. In a meeting we subtly insinuate to others not to criticize us, otherwise we'd stop talking to them. Of course, this is highly unproductive, but it will keep the others down. However, those breaking cover and addressing undesired developments to establish a lasting healthy corporate climate and an honest basis for decision-making will soon be alone. In case of internal conflicts

in the department we tend to stick by those who seem to be useful for us, or at least less threatening, instead of strengthening those taking the bigger responsibility for the whole beyond their own terrain.

We either keep quiet about conflicts or have it out head-on in the end, up to the destruction of the other, if need be, following the principle that might is right, or using the might of the better relations – knowing the director a little better from Sunday afternoon golfing. A conflict of opinion dwindles into a struggle for power, which may persist until a person goes into retirement, choking off the flow of information. Lots of energy go up in the smoke of self-assertion. Those who think this will never change because “people” are what they are misjudge the forming power of a permanent structural crisis of the economy. Those who fail to solve information work in a sufficiently effective way will incur an ostensible “cost problem” in the future – to finally disappear from the market.

Kondratieff and the long-term economic cycles

In the past, too, there were long periods of depression lasting for decades, when the socio-economic structures around one fundamental invention had become exhausted, while the infrastructure and the competences of the next technological network had not yet been sufficiently developed – for example the 20 years after the completion of railway construction and the Panic of 1873, or the 1920s following electrification, or the automobile “Kondratieff” of the 1970s. Since Schumpeter these long cycles have been named after the Russian economist Nikolai Kondratieff (1892 to 1938). Though it's true that more and better automobiles were built after the oil crisis, but the mainspring that increased productivity was the computer enabling to build cars more cheaply, better and at higher quality – up to one critical point: When hardware alone cannot improve a text or design any more, the intangible value creation of information workers becomes the most important basis of prosperity. However, as described above, the latter has its own new patterns of success: Is a company headed by a boss, or by reality? If it's headed by a boss, employees will always filter information in such a way as to fit his perception (example: the German Democratic Republic and Erich Honecker), thus producing past the market.

This is not only true for companies, but also for entire countries, even for the whole global economy. China, for example, has reduced 25 million industrial jobs within five years, in spite of exploding production: As soon as the familiar technological networks are exhausted and the emerging economies are no longer able to achieve enormous growth rates by moulding plastic parts or casting steel beams, and if people fail to transform quickly enough from industrial workers to information workers, it may become unpleasant in our global economy. This is not necessarily so, provided we manage to adjust to the next structural cycle.

The English of the 19th century weren't wealthy and powerful because their Central Bank had lowered the interest rates, because wages got higher as a consequence of demand or lower for the entrepreneur's return, or because they advanced a tax reform or not. In fact, they were able to drag along a colonial empire that was absolutely useless in terms of economy, they could provide their army with state-of-the-art equipment and sail their boats all over the oceans, because they installed fundamental innovations like the steam engine and subsequently the railway in the best possible way, and because they established infrastructures and adapted company structures. That's why they were much more productive and had more resources to solve their problems. The noblemen of the year 1800 were ready to become entrepreneurs, at a time when the German gentry were still dreaming of being knights, looking down their noses at the moneybags doing business. After all, economy is first and foremost a cultural achievement.

The next cycle – the knowledge paradigm

Kondratieff's theory of long-term economic cycles permits such a view on interrelations in society as a whole – apart from discussions about the effect of money supply or the increase of health insurance contributions on the gross national product. It becomes clear that the ambitions of policy have to focus on developing the structures of the next cycle, i.e. that of the knowledge paradigm.

As soon as we finally acknowledge this, as soon as we finally dispense with the fatal logic of “keeping it up”, we'll stop fighting the battles of the old industrial society in public debates (about locations), but instead we'll follow the practitioners in the enterprises who are the first to face the new rules of information society: In a globalized world everyone can raise capital everywhere, everyone has access to information and knowledge via the Internet, everyone can buy every machine on the world market and bring his products to the market worldwide. The decisive location factor will be the ability of people on site to deal with information – which usually includes dealing with other knowledge workers, project partners, customers, colleagues. These changes in behaviour will be painful everywhere, but they will hurt most in those regions of the world where group-oriented religious and other traditional value systems are shattered.

When the dispersed dust of structural change has settled down, those companies will abide that are as close to reality as possible as they receive information by means of all available sensors. To mobilize the entire knowledge of an organization, a culture of serving management will prevail. People will no longer consider varying importance as an offence against their self-worth; they will even promote each other and enjoy the achievements of the others. They will not manipulate information according to utility, but they will pass it on honestly. They will settle their conflicts decently and reconcile their relationships. In the long run, they will be geared to the justified interests of other partners, customers, suppliers instead of their self-interest (also because we cannot see the consequences of our behaviour in the long run). Companies will invest in further developments and in people, and to some of them they will concede many years to reach a degree of maturity that promotes the company in a seminal way. More and more, pho-neys and freeloaders will have to retreat to possibly remaining reservations of major corporations. As soon as this new culture of cooperation has become globally accepted, economy will pick up again.

The Clash of Civilizations

Granted, this may take a long time, just as the construction of the railway took a long time in the past, and decades went by until the rails had reached the remotest parts of the country. But you can't compare the two. Back then, it was a technical project, today it's a cultural one. The major impediment for a society having internalized the handling of information is the culture that lags behind the technological development. The most widespread attitudes worldwide are social behaviours, ethics and religious convictions focusing on the own group, just as in previous millennia – nationalistic, racist, focused on group ethics, as it were. Now these will break up under the socio-economic pressure of better knowledge work. In paternalistic societies and tribal cultures old social and religious hierarchies will be invalidated, and the relationships between sexes and generations will be completely readjusted – this is the background for the raging backlash of angry Taliban burning down girls' schools.

It will not only be a Clash of Civilizations, for example at the interface between the West, or the USA in particular, and the Islamic world, or between Asia and Europe. All civilizations will be

economically forced to deal with information more effectively. This will lead to a Clash inside Civilizations, along the front between a group ethics (“I do everything for my people/my religion, and all those outside can be fought without mercy”), an individual ethics (“I do what I want, what is good for me, and I pursue my interests”), and a universal ethics (“I have a genuine interest in the equal well-being of others and I respect his/her justified interests”). Let it be understood that this is also a religious dispute – but mainly one on the domestic front, one inside the religion, staged, for example by Christians pursuing a universal ethics and Christians focused on a group ethics. However, it will hit enterprises with full force: After all, they are part of their social environment.

Limits of group ethics

If someone refuses to accept instructions from his superior because the latter belongs to a lower caste whose relatives have been serving their own caste for thousands of years, or if someone doesn't want to cooperate with women or “non-believers”, then such thinking costs a lot of money. It will result either in dismissal or a change in behaviour, or else in economic stagnation. If an Islamic theologian starts asking critical questions about the Koran – for example, what Mohammed took over from Jews and Christians, what has to be understood in a time context – which earns him threats on his life forcing him to emigrate to Europe, then synergies will be paralysed. I, myself, don't like everything written or uttered by certain theologians of the Catholic Church. But if a system does not allow critical questions or comments, this will not be productive.

The group ethics of the Japanese or Chinese, which was very successful in former times, has reached its limits – because a group ethics is no longer productive in a globalized economy in which partners, customers and suppliers are constantly changing. At the same time, a new cultural phenomenon is emerging in Japan, in the Asian tigers and in Chinese cities: It is an individualism that is not an ethical vice, but a consequence of responsible information work. This will lead to social distortions that will have negative economic effects in the beginning, but that will, in the long run, lead to cooperative individualism, that is to say to a universal ethics.

The Americans, however, who keep up individualism as part of their founding myth, will find themselves under a certain pressure to change because of excessive individualization: The fact that one quarter of the world's delinquents are doing time in American jails suggests that the United States have disposed of their social problems in prisons. Excessive mobility tears apart the social structure – and frightened by an excessive individualism parts of the US population respond by retreating to a religious or political group ethics unthinkable 30 years ago.

The future lies in Europe: plurality

Due to its cultural roots, Europe has a good chance to implement the new paradigm. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, when the formerly stifled connections came alive again, a new continent has appeared that is growing together culturally, economically and politically. It has exported its languages to all over the world; many people in other regions are descendants of its emigrants. On the other hand, the European metropolises include small communities of almost every nation in the world. This establishes an emotional connection between Europe and many countries, thus facilitating a continuous exchange of goods and ideas – an aspect the continent has been

cultivating for thousands of years, due to its small scale and its heterogeneity. The ability to handle various cultures on small space grew already back in the Middle Ages: Gentry families throughout Europe married each other, craftsmen hit the road to enhance their professions, artists and students spent years abroad. All European cultures and languages met with each other on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain or to Rome. Trading firms had establishments in bigger cities, and later on also on other continents. Since nation states alone cannot bring about a sense of identity any more, the globalized world is building on this behaviour. The decisive aspect, however, is how well Europeans will manage to create a social climate ruled by a cooperative ethics, where information workers pursue a decent intellectual debate to find the better solution; a climate where the knowledge and the skills of many individuals are multiplied. In this context, Europeans have to cope with some difficulties – demographic problems, the stability of families, growing destructive behaviour patterns. And it remains to be seen how the relation between individualism and community develops. To this end, Europe can leverage the benefits of individualism without becoming as individualistic as the USA.

It seems as if the new paradigm is easier to implement for Europe than for other regions of the world. Europe's intellectual history includes experiences that are not available to the collective memories of other peoples: painful experiences with group ethics like nationalism, fascism, Stalinism. Europe has experienced the disadvantages of a purely individual-intellectualistic or purely materialist way of life. Through the decades, it has struggled through various extremes from fundamentalist confinement to militant atheism. Other than in many regions of the world the individual is free from any limitations of religion, state ideology or culture. It is a freedom that is not confined to the own self, but that is set in a context of responsible cooperation with other knowledge workers. On the basis of team meetings, common projects and "staircase information productivity" Europe might become a formidable success story – to the benefit of other parts of the world, because they will all flow into each other one day.



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Scientific monitoring of the Austrian Work Climate Index
(since foundation)

„Measuring the Quality of Work - the Austrian Work Climate Index“¹

Currently, questions of job satisfaction, working conditions, the „quality of work“ in all its aspects are increasingly popular in the European discourse. This conference is one out of many congresses, seminars and workshops on this topic in the environment between academic research and employee special interest groups.

As the co-author of the “Austrian Work Climate Index” I’m very glad I may now introduce to you an instrument that has been applied for 13 years to measure the subjectively felt working situation of employees in Austria in the context of economic development. The Austrian Work Climate Index was initiated by the Upper Austrian Chamber of Labour, which has also provided financing during the conception phase and throughout its duration. The development of the Index was entrusted to the Institute for Empirical Social Studies (IFES; Georg Michenthaler) and the Institute for Social Research and Analysis (SORA, Mag. Christoph Hofinger).

To begin with, let me give you some figures, data and facts on the „Austrian Work Climate Index“: After the test phase of the Work Climate Index and the final definition of the variables and the method of calculation, the surveying phase proper for the Work Climate Index started in the winter of 1996/1997. In 1998 an interactive online index was developed, and in 2004 we introduced an instrument to measure resigned job satisfaction. In several symposia the Work Climate Index (WCI) was discussed with a view to the methodology as well as its effect and its use for the purpose of employee special interest groups.

¹This text is mainly based on the following articles:

Kistler Ernst / Michenthaler Georg / Mußmann Frank (2009): Qualität der Arbeit fördern – Indikatoren und Berichtssysteme zur Arbeitsqualität entwickeln, in: Zukunft von Arbeitsbeziehungen und Arbeit in Europa (ZAUBER), project documentation, Osnabrück.

Michenthaler, Georg / Hofinger, Christoph (1998): Der Arbeitsklima-Index. Ein mikrobasiertes Meßinstrument für die Entwicklung der Arbeitswelt, in: Diskurs Sozial 1/98, p. 17-38.

Michenthaler, Georg / Hofinger, Christoph / Kein, Christina / Raml, Reinhard (2009): Zwölf Jahre Österreichischer Arbeitsklima-Index – Erkenntnis und Ausblick; in: Kistler, Ernst/ Mußmann, Frank (HG.): Arbeitsgestaltung als Zukunftsaufgabe. Die Qualität der Arbeit, VSA-Verlag, Hamburg 2009 . 122 et seq.

What is the basis for the Work Climate Index, and how are the data collected?

The questionnaire is included quarterly into the IFES omnibus survey with an average survey sample size of about 1,000 employees, including also migrants who have sufficient German language skills for an interview. Recently, the survey sample has also been extended to self-employed persons such as independent contractors.

The interviews carried out orally by qualified interviewers at the household addresses of the target persons (as CAPI interviews since 2004) are based on a multi-stratified random selection based on household addresses. This method of selection and survey ensures – complemented by thorough training and check-up measures of the interviewers – a high quality standard and thus an accordingly high reliability of the census. We aimed at a minimum of accidental variation of the Work Climate Index caused by distortionary influences inherent in the surveying method.

To increase the initial sample and to thus reduce the statistical margin of deviation, two census waves, each, are summarized. From this dataset the current Work Climate Index is calculated twice a year. Therefore, as at December 2009, we've got a continuous time series of more than 50 census waves and more than 50,000 datasets obtained since 1997.

The questionnaire consists of the questions forming the index plus a number of topical questions about working conditions asked additionally, as well as of relevant background questions and extensive social demographic data. These special and extra questions are not directly used for the calculation of the index, but they permit its representation for various parts of the population and/or in various structural frameworks. As already mentioned above, a set of indicators was developed, too, to survey the “resigned job satisfaction”, which is sometimes enquired to evaluate any “resigned” shares of a high job satisfaction in spite of objectively unfavourable working conditions.

On the basis of logical and content-related considerations, and supported by factor-analytical and correlation-analytical processes, the overall index is subdivided into four main dimensions (partial indices). Each partial index contains between 3 and 15 single variables, each. On the other hand, items correlating highly with each other, that is to say measuring similar things, are summarized into sub-dimensions of the partial indices. The list of indicators should sufficiently represent all dimensions regarded as relevant, while not exceeding a certain extent on a quantity basis to keep the questionnaire economical and to keep the strain on the interviewees as low as possible. Supported by factor-analytical investigations the extensive initial questionnaire of the test phase could be finally reduced to a manageable minimum of 25 indicator variables.

The structure of indicators of the Work Climate Index:

25 basic items	Sub dimensions	index components	WORK CLIMATE INDEX
Economic optimism/pessimism	Economic optimism	Society	
Satisfaction with the social position as an employee	Social Status		
Satisfaction with employee rights			
Economic future of the company	Economic Future	Company	
Satisfaction with the company's image	Company image		
Satisfaction with the style of leadership	Leadership style		
Satisfaction with the company's social security benefits	Social benefits		
Satisfaction with the job in general	General job satisfaction	Job	
Aiming for a position in the same company	General life satisfaction		
Satisfaction with life in general			
Work-life-balance	working hour arrangements		
Satisfaction with			
Sufficient level of income	Income		
Satisfaction with one's income			
Satisfaction with one's relations with colleagues and co-workers	Isolation at work place		
Burdened by loneliness,			
Burdened by pressure of time	mental stress/ time stress		
Mental strain/stress, exhausting or taxing work			
Poor health conditions at work place	Physical burdens		
Danger of accident and injury			
Burdened by technological or organisational innovations/changes	Innovations stress		
Burdened by continuous change in work procedures and demands			
Satisfaction with career opportunities	Career opportunities	Expectations	
Satisfaction with opportunities for further education			
chances to find a adequate job	Job market Outlook		

The Work Climate Index is calculated as follows:

To increase the initial sample and to thus reduce the statistical margin of deviation, two census waves, each, are summarized. From this dataset the current Work Climate Index is calculated twice a year.

All questions (items), which are primarily based on a five-stage scale, are standardized between 0 and 1. Thus several scales of answers can be harmonized for the analysis.

Undoubtedly, the weighting of the individual questions and/or partial indices and sub-dimensions, i.e. the magnitude with which these are considered for the calculation of the overall index, is one of the most delicate tasks in preparing an index. In the development of the Work Climate Index these questions are: Which importance has the partial index Job compared with the partial index Expectations for the subjective well-being of Austrian employees? Should any ascertained deterioration of the future professional perspectives be reflected in the change of the overall index in the same way as, for example, a reduction of the stress at work? For defining the weights one of the following procedures can be applied:

- Appraisal of experts
- Empirical data analysis by means of the factor analysis
- Normative weighting

For the interpretation of the index results it is important that the weighting processes are disclosed. Because of the specific structure of the sub-dimensions and partial indices the normative weighting seemed to be the most appropriate procedure. In this context a continuous discussion between experts is required, in which the weighting has to be made transparent and subjected to continuous validation as regards the contents.

For the Work Climate Index the data were aggregated and weighted as follows: The items of the lowest level were weighted equally, provided they were summarized into one sub-dimension. Therefore, where two items form one sub-dimension, both are weighted with 0.5. The sub-dimension Career opportunities, for example, is the median of Satisfaction with career opportunities and Satisfaction with opportunities for further education. A partial index is also calculated as the arithmetic average of sub-dimensions, for example the partial index Expectations is composed of the sub-dimensions Career opportunities and Job market outlook. However, when aggregating the four partial indices to the overall index, weighting was not equal: The partial index Job containing the core questions regarding job satisfaction and burden is incorporated into the Work Climate Index at a weight of 0.4, whereas the other partial indices are weighted with 0.2.

In the following I'd like to deal with some important criteria that are decisive for the quality of a composed indicator. Core aspects are questions of reliability and validity. These aspects were comprehensively evaluated by Reinhard Raml in the course of a research study that was based on data gained in eight years of surveying for the WCI².

²Raml, R. (2006): Arbeitsklima-Index und Gesellschaft. Eine Exploration sozialer Wahrnehmungsprozesse; diploma thesis prepared at the Department of Psychology at the University of Vienna, Vienna.

When instruments to measure job satisfaction are to be subdivided into non-theory-related and theory-related instruments, the Work Climate Index of the Chamber of Labour is to be classified among the first group. It includes processes that do not explicitly refer to a certain approach to explain job satisfaction, whereas the theory-related instruments are based on theoretical models, from which both the content-related determinants of job satisfaction and the “procedural development” of job satisfaction are derived.

Raml could demonstrate that selectivity and homogeneity as regards the contents of the construct is sufficiently high by common convention; moreover, the findings regarding validity (stable factor structure, validation of extreme groups and criteria) of the instrument were also positive (Cronbach's α between 0.65 and 0.79 for the four partial indices; cf. Raml 2006).

What is the use of the Work Climate Index (WCI) – and how can it be realized?

In order for the results of the WCI to take effect as a normative instance in the political action of special interest groups, it has to be sufficiently perceived and also be taken seriously by the experts of the working world. This focussed professional audience includes mainly special interest groups in the narrower sense, such as politicians, trade unionists, shop stewards, but also scientists of the relevant subjects. Moreover, everyone has to be considered as an expert for his own matter, feeling the “climate change” in the working world first-hand, and probably being afflicted by it. In the end, the Work Climate Index is aimed at all employees who are interested in the change of the working world with all its consequences, and who can be sensitized for it. Because, after all, only a sufficient public perception of the Work Climate Index, as well as its political use for special interest politics will justify the expense.

Since 1997, the development of the index or, alternately, partial aspects of the research programme of the Work Climate Index are presented to the public in quarterly press conferences. To be able to make reliable statements also about smaller sub-populations, census data from several waves are accumulated to bigger datasets for special evaluations. At the same time, the Upper Austrian Chamber of Labour produces a four-page newsletter with a print run of about 6,000 copies distributed to media, ministries, special institutions and research institutes, political officers as well as shop stewards of major enterprises.

Each press conference is given a certain heading, for example the situation of women in the working world, job satisfaction in various categories of employees and economic sectors, or the topic of working time regulations and part-time jobs. More and more, they find their way into the prime time news of the Austrian TV.

Moreover, the collection of Work Climate Index data is offered in numerous written or online employee surveys – in addition to company-specific questions. One recent example is a standardized online survey performed by the IFES and initiated by the employee representations and shop stewards of six major Austrian telecommunication enterprises. By comparing those data with representative data of the Work Climate Index and the Occupational Health Monitor it became obvious that there is a high pressure of work in this dynamic economic sector (cf. Michenthaler 2008). A similar study was implemented in the biggest Austrian media company, the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF).

As regards some selected results of the WCI from the past 13 years, it is quite remarkable that clear changes in the domestic employee structure could already be demonstrated, even in this short period of time, for example in terms of qualification, professional status, employment relationships and working hours.

One of the initial aspirations of the WCI was to act as an early warning indicator on the subjective micro level of the individual employee to permit the early detection of possible undesirable developments in the working world, even before these are substantiated by the official economic statistics.

Finally, I'd like to show you which interactions between the Work Climate Index and the indicators of employment situation, economic climate and purchasing power were revealed by a longitudinal analysis (R. Raml).

According to this analysis, the WCI and/or some of its partial indices or sub-dimensions correlate very highly with some of these indicators, thus demonstrating its reliability as a valid measuring instrument for the economic situation from its stakeholders' point of view.



4 Work Climate Index: Facts and Figures

facts & figures

- Commissioned by the **Chamber of Work in Upper Austria** (Hans Preinfalk)
- First developed in 1996/1997 (AKOÖ, IFES, SORA)
- Continuous survey and evaluation since 1997, quarterly press conferences
- Since 1998: **Interactive Online Index** www.arbeitsklima.at (relaunch 2006 in German, English and Russian)
- 1998: **WCI foreign employees** in Upper Austria
- 2000: **Symposium** for the evaluation of the WCI (Vienna)
- 2002: Development of the **Gender Index**
- 2004: Instrument for the measurement of **Resignative Job Satisfaction**
- 2005/2006: **Health Monitor**; Symposium 2007
- 2008: quarterly data conduction of the Health Monitor
- 2008/2009: **self-employment, free-employment, loan workers**

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6 Work Climate Index Database

methodology

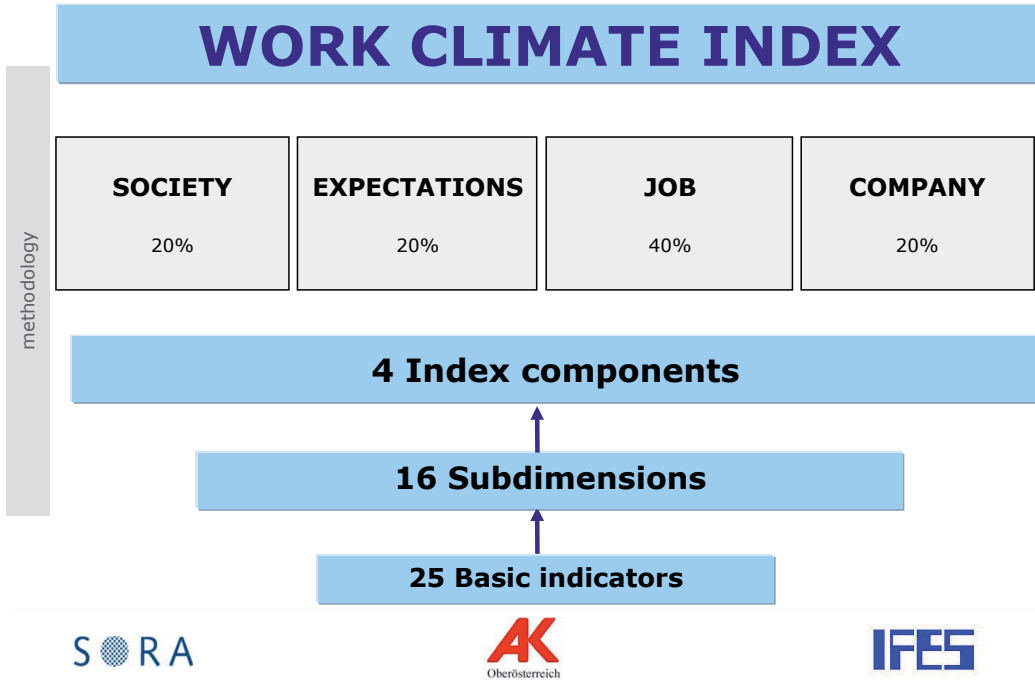
- **Quarterly** computer assisted face-to-face interviews within the IFES omnibus surveys
- Target group: **employed people** (above age 15)
- **Sampling**: multistage stratified random sample based on all household addresses
- **Representative** of the Austrian employed population
- n = approx. **1.000 per poll** wave (approx. 4000 per year)
- Approx. **55.000 interviewed** people since 1997

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9 Index structure



8 Indexstructure

methodology

25 basic items	16th dimensions	Index components	WORK CLIMATE INDEX
Economic optimism/pessimism	Economic optimism	Society	
Satisfaction with the social position as an employee	Social status		
Satisfaction with employee rights	Economic future	Company	
Economic future of the company			
Satisfaction with the company's image	Company image		
Satisfaction with the style of leadership	Leadership style		
Satisfaction with the company's social security benefits	Social benefits	Job	
Satisfaction with the job in general	General job satisfaction		
Aiming for a position in the same company			
Satisfaction with life in general	General life satisfaction		
Work-life-balance	working hour arrangements		
Satisfaction with sufficient level of income	Income		
Satisfaction with one's income			
Satisfaction with one's relations with colleagues and co-workers	Isolation at work place		
Burdened by loneliness,			
Burdened by pressure of time			
Mental strain/stress, exhausting or tiring work	mental strain/ time stress		
Poor health conditions at work place	Physical burdens		
Danger of accident and injury			
Burdened by technological or organisational innovations/changes	Innovations stress		
Burdened by continuous change in work procedures and demands			
Satisfaction with career opportunities	Career opportunities	Expectations	
Satisfaction with opportunities for further education			
chances to find a adequate job	Job market Outlook		

Formula:

Item → sub dimension

e.g. **income:**

$$0,5 * \text{Satisfaction with one's Income} + 0,5 * \text{sufficient level of Income} = \text{INCOME}$$

Sub dimension → Index Component

e.g. **company:**

$$0,25 * \text{economic future} + 0,25 * \text{image of company} + 0,25 * \text{leadership} + 0,25 * \text{social benefits} = \text{COMPANY}$$

WC-I:

$$0,2 * \text{society} + 0,2 * \text{company} + 0,2 * \text{expectations} + 0,4 * \text{job} = \text{WC-I}$$

Standardization of all scale values between 0 -100, e.g.:

WCI of 70 index-points means that a person has reached 70% of the possible points

1 Quality criteria - summary*

Methodology

- Implicit use of theories on job satisfaction
- (Sociological) focus on the meso and macro level
- Conceptual aspects: 4 indices, general factor: working climate
- Analytical aspects: 6 factors
- The typical **quality criteria** of a test are met:
Good values for reliability
Information confirming the validity of the Work Climate Index.

* Cf.: Raml, R. (2006): Arbeitsklima-Index und Gesellschaft. Eine Exploration sozialer Wahrnehmungsprozesse; diploma thesis prepared at the Department of Psychology at the University of Vienna, Vienna



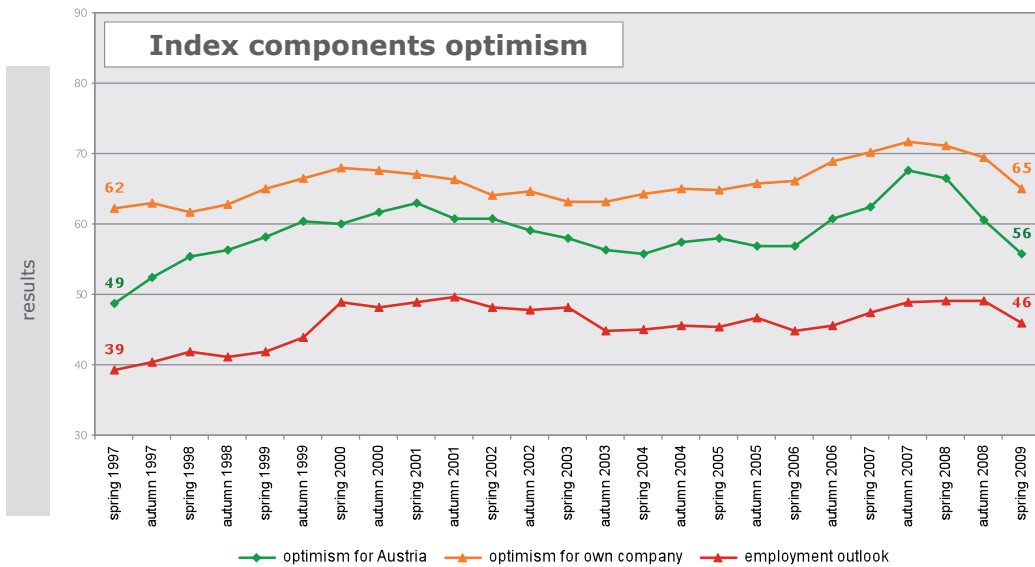
19 Benefits of the Work Climate Index

benefits & impacts

- **For employee interest groups:**
 - Winning of basic data
 - Public relations, input for political interests
 - Analysis of occupational groups
 - Observation of trends
- **For companies:**
 - Measurement of the working atmosphere index
 - Increase of employee satisfaction and motivation
 - External benchmarks (EFQM)



35 SOME RESULTS: CHANGES OF THE WORK CLIMATE INDEX



40 Results of time series analysis I

results

➤ **employment situation**

- high positive correlation
- Equal course over a period of time
- double correlation: rising rate of employment situation has a short positive impact on WC-I; the WC-I displays developments in the employment situations 1-2 quarters of a year before
- high impact on sub dimensions (society, expectations and company); lesser impact on the job satisfaction in detail

➤ **economic climate**

- lower positive correlation than with employment situation
- temporally delayed effects on WC-I; rising economic optimism has a positive impact on WC-I
- high impact on sub dimensions (society and expectations)



41 Results of time series analysis II

results

➤ buying power

- high positive correlation
- development of buying power has a strong impact on WC-I
- high correlation between buying power, position as employee and optimism for Austria (subdimension "society")

➤ unemployment rate

- objective parameter for the WC-I
- cyclic course
- WC-I and inflation rate rise and decline quite parallel, but deeper analysis show that there is a display of the developments of the unemployment rate in the WC-I up to half a year before

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Hans Preinfalk

Head of the Department for Communication

Studies of economics

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Political basic research for the Chamber of Labour Upper Austria,
working life research

Founder of the Austrian Work Climate Index

Work Climate, Quality of Work and Economic Development

Special interest politics, political advice and social science

At the beginning, let me give you some facts about the background of the Austrian Work Climate Index with regard to special interest politics, as well as its development in the past 13 years. Subsequently, I'll make some comments about two recent socio-scientific research projects that are closely related with the Austrian Work Climate Index. Finally, I'll add a few remarks on the relation between special interest political research and social partnership.

The Austrian Chambers of Labour are legal special interest groups that were established almost exactly 90 years ago, on the 26th of February 1920, by an act of the Austrian National Assembly. Their foundation conformed to an old request of the Austrian trade unions demanding to be on a par with the entrepreneurs as regards participation in legislation and in administration. Since the middle of the 19th century, the entrepreneurs have been organized in institutions then called Chambers of Commerce and today called Chambers of Economy. The Chambers of Labour in Austria - each province has one autonomous Chamber – cooperate closely with the trade unions. In many provinces, for example in Upper Austria, the functions of the provincial president of the Austrian Trade Union Federation and of the president of the Chamber of Labour are fulfilled by the same person.

Right from the beginning, the Chambers of Labour have been organizations of experts providing ground-breaking work in the field of social and economic analysis already back in the 20s of the past century. To this day, the Chambers of Labour have had big staffs of highly qualified experts who do not only investigate problems of social and economic policy, but who also provide solutions for the benefit of employees. Quite frequently, these approaches have become a subject of political debate and have been introduced into the legislation of the state and the provinces. For the trade unions, the Chambers of Labour have prepared the scientific basis for wage bargaining as well as for representing the employees' interests in the enterprises.

For about 20 years, the Chambers of Labour have also offered a broad range of services to their members, among them pro bono legal service and representation in court regarding matters of employment law and social law, as well as consumer protection, which is organized in Austria by the Chambers of Labour.

One of the products of the traditional role of the Chambers of Labour as an expert is the Austrian Work Climate Index. It's not a coincidence that it was established in the second half of the 90s of the past century. This was the time when the policy of deregulation pursued not only in Austria but throughout Europe, the reduction of social protection rights, the privatization of public institutions, and the withdrawal of the state from economy as a whole became more and more perceptible to employees. After the collapse of the communist value system, the neoliberal dogmas of faith in the market mechanisms that had been preached for 30 years asserted themselves vehemently, and they had dramatically perceptible implications.

These were the times when the financial markets gained in importance, even in small countries like Austria. Stock market reports became part of the daily routine, not only in the economic pages of daily and weekly newspapers, but also in public broadcasting.

The development on the financial markets was largely put on a level with the development of the real economy - and it still is. It seemed as if economy was nothing more than smart financial transactions of incredibly well paid investment bankers.

At that time and today, we from the Chamber of Labour as well as many others have understood clearly that changes of the stock indices and other key figures of the financial market are an absolutely inadequate description of the economic and social reality in the respective countries.

Therefore, the Work Climate Index is intended as a remedy for this lack in the description of the economic reality, and it is meant to provide a realistic representation of the subjective disposition of the employees in the working life. The Work Climate Index should bring their real situations in life, their expectations, fears and perspectives more into the focus of economic and socio-political discussion than before.

Although we set great store by communicating the results to a broad public and explaining them in a comprehensible way right from the start, it took many years before the Austrian Work Climate Index was actually noticed by the general public instead of only by some government and economic elites.

In the past few years, the situation has changed a little. Our project and its results have attracted some more interest, not only on a national level but also throughout Europe. In my opinion, this is largely a consequence of the fact that the basics of neoliberal economy as they are taught at most European universities have given way.

In fact, the mechanistic view of economy, which in the past decades was but a mere apology for private profit seeking and entirely neglected the socio-scientific tradition of the subject, has nothing to contribute any more to the explanation of the economic and social reality. This is also emphasized by the fact that ten thousands of highly paid university economists have so far kept silent in the face of the crisis.

Currently, the political – though not the academic – debate is again focusing on economy as a social process. Therefore, studies dealing with the subjective point of view of those concerned with economic processes instead of using only some simplified socio-psychological assumptions for their theories have become very important.

I'd like to take the opportunity to say a few words on the relevance of subjective data in socio-political and economic discussion, since we've had this dispute about so-called "hard" and "soft" data since the introduction of the Work Climate Index, both in Austria and beyond.

About the relevance of subjective data

In the economic and socio-political discussion in Austria, but also in all other European countries, we usually work with data that are not gained from direct questioning of the persons concerned, but that are supplied by companies or public institutions. These data are frequently referred to as "hard facts", because the underlying procedures are either substantiated by records or documented by accounting processes in the private or public sector. I'd like to give you three examples to demonstrate how inadequate these "hard facts" are, how misleading the conclusions drawn from them may be, and which importance and relevance subjective data may have, and/or which implications even the subjective interpretation of incorrect so-called "hard facts" may have.

One typical example is the increased consumption of pharmaceuticals, which is a serious problem for the social insurance systems in all countries. However, it's not at all certain that it's actually consumption that's increasing. What is going up is the amount of pharmaceuticals prescribed by physicians and paid by social insurance carriers. If the consumption of pharmaceuticals is rising to the same extent can only be ensured by directly questioning the patients.

Data available in Austria have revealed that more than 40 percent of the prescribed pharmaceuticals are not taken but thrown away. If this is beneficial or detrimental to public health in general is another matter, but it clearly shows that the problem of lowering costs for pharmaceuticals has to be tackled at several levels. By no means, the amount of the pharmaceuticals invoiced is equivalent to the amount of pharmaceuticals consumed. Therefore, we can calculate the costs of pharmaceuticals per head, but not the actual consumption of them. To find out the relevant figures we have to question the people.

Another example is the statistics about working hours. Sector statistics, not only in Austria but also elsewhere in Europe, are usually based on the reports of the enterprises, which will report only those working hours they actually pay. Unpaid work will not be reported. But there is a substantial difference between hours worked and hours paid. The hours actually worked can be established only if we ask the employees.

In Austria, the difference between hours paid and hours worked is one and a half hours on average. In the civil service the two figures are practically identical, in the private sector there are big differences, depending on the line of business. In trade, in particular, the number of unpaid hours is relatively high. If we take the official statistics of companies as a basis for calculating the average hourly wage, the result will be completely wrong. The real income per hour can be established only if the hours actually worked, instead of the working hours reported by the enterprises, are put in proportion to the reported income.

Let me cite another example to demonstrate how important the subjective perception is for economic behavior and economic decision, and how “soft” the so-called “hard facts” may be.

After the end of the Bretton Woods Agreement and the floating of exchange rates in the mid-70s of the past century, considerable economic turbulences emerged in all developed industrial nations. Austria had experienced years of high economic growth, and the economic slump in 1975 came as a shock. Experts observed a contraction of the economy by two and a half percent. Several years and several revisions of national accounts later, the minus of two and a half percent of the economic performance had turned into a plus of 0.5 percent. In retrospect, nothing had left from the big economic slump. Nevertheless, in 1975 and the following year there was a general sense of a sharp decline in economic development, which could be overcome, but which remained perceptible to the working people and many decision-makers in economy and politics, although it had never existed.

Therefore, as a basis for social and economic decisions subjective data are not only an indispensable complement to data derived from the administrative actions of public institutions and from enterprises, but in many cases they are even the more reliable and significant basis for regulatory interventions and/or for decisions made by the social partners.

Experiences with the Austrian Work Climate Index

The Austrian Work Climate Index demonstrates that the general reflections quoted above lead to plausible and relevant considerations even in the actual practice of research. We’ve been calculating the Index for 13 years, and our evaluations have shown a very realistic image of the subjectively felt situation of the employees at the workplaces and in the enterprises, of their social situations and their expectations regarding the future. I use the term “subjectively felt” quite consciously here, because the term “disposition” may be too ambiguous.

Especially in times of crisis-laden events and disruptions of economic development, the Work Climate Index, by providing quantitative descriptions, has shed some light on the implications for the working lives and thus the everyday lives of hundreds of thousands of Austrians.

When using the data of the Work Climate Index, it is not the calculated overall index that is most important. The general index is the plug for communication when the attention of the general public is drawn to working life in Austria twice a year on the publication of the Work Climate Index. The substantial findings and statements, however, are found one or two levels below the overall index, where it comes to searching out and depicting differences and the development of differences.

The diverging development of the social positions, of opportunities regarding life in general and income in particular, the chances to live a good life and to achieve not only satisfaction - maybe resigned satisfaction - but even personal gratification in doing one’s work, is varying widely. There have always been great differences depending on age, level of education, gender, but also according to the economic sector or the region. These phenomena have been documented in many single studies of universities and free research institutions as well as of government agencies, sometimes corroborated by statistical data, but mostly documented by description.

The advantage afforded by the Austrian Work Climate Index is that it describes these different developments on the basis of quantitative data, which makes them really comparable.

The Working Conditions Surveys of the Dublin-based European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has even longer time series than the Austrian Work Climate Index. However, these surveys are carried out only every four years. The data for the Work Climate Index are collected quarterly, and the index is calculated twice a year.

Let me dwell on two aspects out of the abundance of findings gained and published in the past years from the evaluation of the data of the Austrian Work Climate Index. The first deals with the difference in the level of education. In the course of the years, our analyses have provided clear evidence that the level of education is the strongest single factor in the Work Climate Index. It influences not only the professional and social status, but also the level of income, job security and individual development potentialities. This can be shown very impressively in graphical representations.

The second important aspect is age. There are clearly different levels of working climate as a function of age. These different levels reflect mainly the differences in terms of job security and professional perspectives of the individual employees in the course of his working life.

When we started the project “Austrian Work Climate Index”, we consciously refrained from questions that related to the health situation of employees in order to reduce the complexity of our project. Five years ago, however, we started preliminary works for the introduction of an Austrian Occupational Health Monitor as a complement to the Work Climate Index.

In 2008 we began to explicitly ask health questions. That is why we could present the first results of the Occupational Health Monitor last autumn. In future we will do so every year.

Both the individual results of the Occupational Health Monitor and the combination of these data with the results of the Work Climate Index have permitted for the first time a continuous and quantified representation of subjectively felt health impairments, as well as a correlation between psychological stress and subjectively felt physical trouble.

A good example is that employees who feel stressed by their superiors, that is to say by bad management, suffer from pain in the back significantly more often than those who don't have problems with their bosses. Quite frequently, such connections are not even noticed by the employees themselves. The combination of two analyses, however, clearly reveals these effects.

Since last year the Austrian Work Climate Index has been additionally complemented by the Austrian Executives Monitor, which is also published annually. We've been working on this project since 2007, and we think that it will play a very important role in the future discussion about the quality of work and industrial relations.

When economic media talk about executives, or when studies mention the management, they usually refer to and include in their analysis only the absolute top management of an enterprise. In Austria, this group comprises several hundred persons, or some thousand at most. And in most cases, “management” refers only to company managers of the private sector of the economy. Usually, executives of the public sector are completely disregarded.

In our analysis, we include all persons with managerial functions, on all levels of enterprises, organizations and institutions of the public sector. On the basis of such a broad definition, the circle of executives in Austria consists of approximately ten percent of the employees. Of course, problems are different on various levels of the management, and they vary also depending on whether a company belongs to the private economy or the civil service. But again these very differences are extremely interesting for the analysis. Because the decisive factor for shaping the industrial relations in companies and organizations is not only, or not primarily, the top management. For most employees, their relationships to the line managers are much more important than the management conditions two levels higher.

We think that by introducing the Austrian Executives Monitor we contribute a useful share, also in the medium term, to analyse management culture in Austria, thus substantially participating in the discussion about the shaping of industrial relations in the future.

New social benchmarks for Europe

The economic development strategy adopted by the EU 10 years ago, the so-called Lisbon Strategy, was completely rooted in the dogmas of neoliberalism. At that time, it was not only supported by conservative groups, but also by many social democratic governments in the Union. This strategy was based on the faith that economic expansion could be achieved by deregulating the markets, mainly the labour markets, and by promoting the use of information technology, thus considerably reducing unemployment in Europe and increasing general prosperity on our continent. The term “Flexicurity” was coined and became the key word of this strategy. It meant that flexibility – mainly on the labour markets – could and should be combined with more job security for employees.

Today we know that this strategy failed to a large extent. The deregulation of the labour markets, concretely speaking the reduction of protective regulations and rights of employees towards entrepreneurs, the privatization of health and old age provision systems, neither resulted in an increase of the labour volume in the Union, nor could general prosperity be increased. What has grown is the number of poorly paid and precarious jobs. The number of people living below the poverty line in spite of having a full-time job has considerably grown throughout Europe. Simultaneously, in all countries of the Union the distribution of income and property has become even more inequitable than before. For millions of employees, life has become more insecure and deprived, while the wealth of a small upper class has grown on a scale unimaginable 30 years ago.

Therefore, Europe has to reposition. There is already a post- Lisbon strategy that is being prepared in many places in Europe, with many people participating in it and many people thinking about it. This strategy has to abandon the neoliberal dogmas and doctrines for good. It has to give priority to the interests of the many, of the employees and the small self-employed, instead of the interests of multi-national groups, of stakeholders in the financial markets and extremely rich individuals.

The good life of the many and the quality of work has to get priority in the new economic and socio-political strategy of the Union. The implications of economic and socio-political measures derived from this proposition have to be continuously reviewed so we don't have to draw another disillusioning balance ten years later. The point is to make each step of the new strategy verifi-

able, and to continuously review and compare the implications for individual economic sectors and for individual groups of employees in the individual member states of the Union.

After all, is such a procedure that requires a new instrument for social benchmarks in the Union desirable, and can it be implemented? We asked this question on the occasion of an international project we implemented in 2008 and 2009 together with research institutions from eight European countries. Our most important partners in this project were institutions from Italy, Bulgaria, Sweden and Germany that had all close ties to the trade unions. Polish, Slovenian and Lithuanian institutions participated, too.

We dealt with the question whether the present instruments available in Europe to measure job satisfaction and the quality of work are eligible to calculate social benchmarks that seem to be indispensable for the continuous evaluation of a post-Lisbon strategy.

We all agreed on the fact that most European countries have institutional frameworks to review accident and safety risks at the workplace, and that these frameworks are also comparable. However, questions regarding health risks still mainly focus on physical hazards. The significance of mental stress has moved into focus only in the past few years. There are no comparable standards and measuring techniques on a European level to compare the implications of such risks on the quality of work.

In the project, existing statistical series and studies were discussed with a view to their being suitable for a continuous, flexible and annual measurement of the quality of work in the member states of the Union. The result was not satisfactory. The only studies that permit a comparison of countries are the surveys of the Dublin foundation, which, however, are carried out at long intervals. Many individual studies in the member states cannot be compared with each other, both in terms of the problem surveyed and the method applied. This result has been confirmed by a general study performed on behalf of the European Parliament, which was prepared in the spring of 2009. The number of studies describing the situation of employees on the basis of subjective data is rather high. But they cannot be compared with each other. Hardly any of these studies is based on longer time series or is representative for all the employees of the respective country. Therefore, apart from the Austrian Work Climate Index and the studies of the Dublin Foundation performed at intervals of four years, there are no continuous and consistently representative studies regarding the subjectively felt situation of the employees in the working world of Europe.

Today, we've received an impressive description how important the quality of work and the industrial relations will be for the economic development of the 21st century in developed knowledge societies. We've also heard today that there are long-proven instruments to measure such qualities, which have been used for years both on a national and on an international level.

The Union will be able to cope with the global challenges only if it reorients the focal points of its economic strategies, that is to say if it focuses on the quality of work and the industrial relations in the enterprises, but also in the organizations and the public institutions in all member states.

The traditional economic key figures are not only insufficient to describe such a development with its new quality, in many cases they may even be deceptive, attributing something positive to a detrimental development.

The discussions currently held in many places regarding a basic revision of national accounting have to be complemented by the concrete development of measuring tools on a European level to quantify the quality of work and industrial relations, enabling us to describe progress or setbacks in concrete figures. Different developments in individual member states, in different groups of employees and economic sectors, or between the sexes, can thus be revealed at an early stage and made accessible to political treatment.

To achieve this goal, individual scientific research projects will not be sufficient. They are highly necessary and need to be promoted. But it will also be necessary that the development of such European benchmarks is firmly supported by the Parliament and the Commission, as well as by the social partners who are strongly represented in the EESC. This is not a socio-scientific but a politico-economic project.

Climate of Work, Quality of Work and Economic Development

New Social Benchmarks for Europe
Symposium, 24. 2. 10, Brussels



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

AK: an Expert and Research Organisation

- Longtime focus on research since the 20th
- Labourmarket and business cycle analyses, incomes policy, analyses of the national budget
- More than 40 years of experience in working life polls



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

Neoliberal Hegemony and Alternative Economics

- A neoliberal hegemony in economic thinking and policy since the 80th
- AK – one of the few organisations with alternative positions
- A different view on working life – the Work Climate Index



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

The Relevance of Subjective Data

- Economy is a social process
- Limited scope of „hard“ data
- How „soft“ are „hard“ data
- Experienced reality und statistics



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

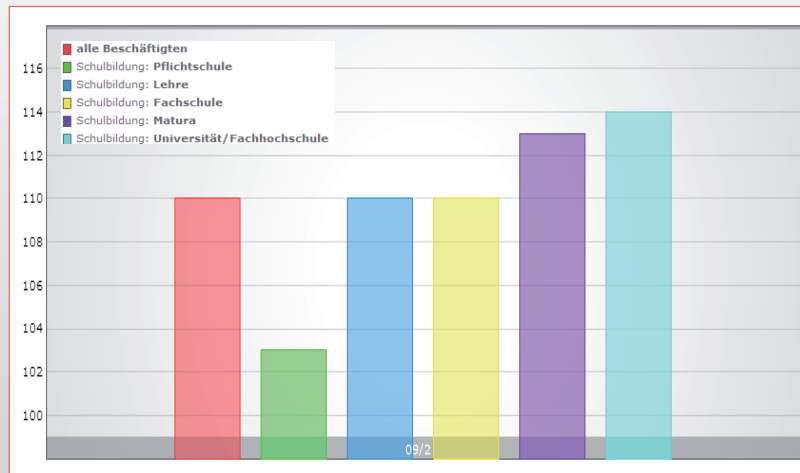
Absolute Values and Differences

- Indices as communicative cliff hanger
- The differences are important
- Benchmarks, sectoral, national, international.



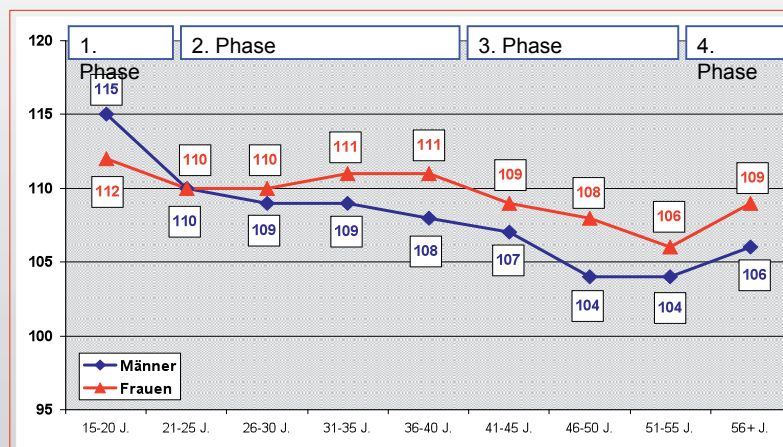
Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

Educational Level and Work Climate



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

Work Climate during Course of Life



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

The Work Climate Index – a Long-Term Project

- Data since 1997
- Additional data by numerous case studies on company level
- New aspects added; occupational health and management WCI



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

Work Climate and Occupational Health

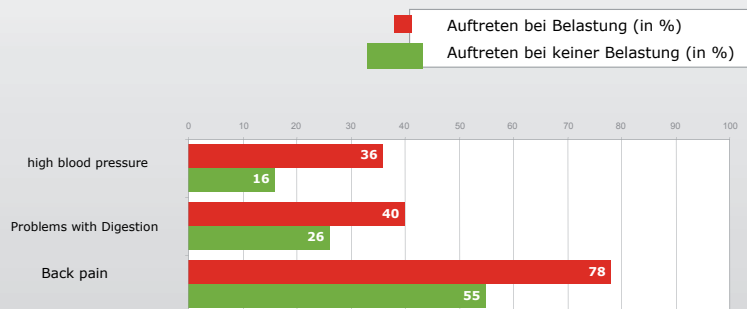
- Health was explicitly excluded at the start of the project
- New: Austrian Occupational Health Monitor since 2009
- Linking Work Climate and Occupational Health



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

Managerial Style and Physical Health

Strain by Management Style



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

Work Climat of People in Management Functions

- An important group for economic development
- In most research only top management is part of the analyses
- About 10 percent of working people are in managerial positions (Austria)



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

Post-Lisbon Strategy und Work Climate

- Radical market ideologies have failed. „Flexicurity“ just a pr gag.
- An urgent need for a new economic focus: Quality of work – work climate
- New instruments for continuous monitoring



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

The Project „well-being @ work“

- Cooperation with research institutions from eight EU member states
- Work climate and Post-Lisbon-Strategy
- European Benchmarking



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010

New Social Benchmarks for the European Union

- Economic Strategy has to be open for critical reviews
- Continuous measurement and discussion
- Quality of economic development and quality of life/work



Mag. Hans Preinfalk, AKOÖ, 24.02.2010