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Employee Motivation and Participation in the Age of Digital Economy – Focus: Employee Share Ownership and the Motivation Paradox

Compact course (Blockseminar) held in English language:

5/6/9 ECTS – MES modules: ZB Wirtschaft, ZB Politik, ZB Recht, WPM 1, WPM 6
IBA modules: S & E-Modules

Requirements: regular attendance, active participation, presentations, term paper.

Schedule:

Introduction Tuesday 16 October, 14h-15h, AM02

1st part Fri., 9 November, 10h-18h, GD312

2nd part Fri., 23 November 10h-18h, GD312

3rd part Fri., 14 December, 10h-18h, GD312

4th part (presentation of papers) Fri., 18 January 10h-18h, GD312

Deadline for paper submissions: 11 January 2018, 23:59 CET

Registration until **10 October 2018** at kelso-professorship@europa-uni.de. First-come, first-served.

Course description:

Work is closely intertwined with one's identity. The performed work, the profession provide an orientation for the self and for others (Sennett, 2009) as C.G. Jung put it "You are what you do"; when meeting others, probably the question regarding the profession is one of the first questions following the introduction, if we approve of this or not. Over the decades, different approaches for motivating people in fulfilling a certain action have been modelled, revised, refuted, and refined (e.g. Maslow's pyramid of needs, two factor theory, goal theory, etc.). What is their impact? What are the common forms of motivation nowadays and how stable are these after knowing more about human behaviours and the human psyche then ever before? Some organisations first appeared futuristic in introducing unorthodox human resource practices, but as they grew, they revised or adapted them (e.g., google / Alphabet).

At the same time, some forms of motivation have proven to be counterintuitive and paradox. The expectation that employees improve their performance when offered external, usually monetary rewards, rests on two assumptions: Firstly, that incentives increase motivation and effort, and secondly, that increased motivation and effort will result in higher performance. The "motivation paradox" contradicts these assumptions. It occurs when an external reward decreases a person's motivation to perform a task: While for tasks involving only mechanical skills, i.e., manual tasks which do not require any thinking or creativity (e.g. working at an assembly line) higher bonuses lead to better performances, for tasks that require only rudimentary cognitive skills, a larger reward leads to poorer results.

With regard to the incentive effects, employee financial participation schemes are expected to positively influence employees' motivation and commitment, to reduce internal conflicts because of the compliance of employer and employee interests, to reduce labour turnover and absenteeism, thus resulting in higher individual and company productivity. However there is interdependency between participation as such. While financial participation may provide employees with the incentive for maximal involvement, direct participation gives them the tools to realise it.

Against this background, the seminar seeks to question the rational of different types of employee motivation by paying attention to the needs of both, employers and employees. The overall aim of the seminar is to get acquainted with the theoretical background of employee motivation and to critically dissect their modern forms.