

Summaries

Employees' collective ways of coping in reaction to job insecurity

C.V. van Vuuren, J.H.M. van Gastel and P.G. Klandermans

As the 1980's are drawing to a close, a growing number of people face personnel cut-backs, reorganizations and even closure of their place of work. For many employees this means that they are insecure about their jobs. Little is known about employees' collective reactions to job insecurity. We understand by collective reactions participation in activities of the works council and trade union aimed at doing something about the employment in the organization. Experiences with collective reactions are conflicting until now. Sometimes we see that employees who are worried about the continuation of their jobs turn their efforts to works council and trade union activities, sometimes we see just the opposite. It seems important to distinguish between three forms of participation in either trade union or works council; membership in the union or voting for the works council; being active in these bodies; participating in union or works council actions aimed at doing something about the situation in the organization. This article discusses the results of a survey of job insecurity and actions of 300 employees in three companies in the Netherlands. Results are interpreted in terms of the stress literature; in the past, only individual ways of coping with stress were investigated. Here a new development — collective ways of coping — is discussed.

Vulnerable groups in intermediary labour market provisions

T.J. Veerman, R.A. Wong and H.P.A. Kroft

The efficacy of intermediary labour market provisions

— i.e. educational, training and job opportunity programmes — vis-à-vis vulnerable groups among the unemployed is dependent upon (a) these groups' chances of entering/participating in such programmes and (b) their chances of effectively gaining access to regular jobs through these programmes. Some factors relevant to equal participation and efficiency are discussed. In certain respects, efficiency and equal participation opportunities for 'weak groups' (e.g., drop-outs, long-term unemployed, minority groups) seem to be incompatible. Nevertheless, both requirements should be met. Equal participation opportunities for vulnerable groups often are a part of programmes' goals; equal efficiency results hardly are, and have seldom been studied. Some policy opportunities are suggested.

Social and organizational problems around the introduction of new technology

John Warmerdam

The introduction of new technology in companies and public organizations often shows a problematic development or even a complete failure. In most cases technical factors are held responsible. Management tries to solve the problems by means of the development and introduction of new systems. However, it can be argued that technical factors are not the major cause of the problems. Social and organizational factors might be just as or more important. This is shown by the results of research into the causes of (un)successful automation projects. The nature of the problems is linked up with present and future forms of automation. It appears that at present social problems are less important than organizational problems (but both are more important than technical problems). In the nearby future social conflicts around the introduction of new technology might deepen again, since new forms of automation are

more treathening for workers than present forms.

A new approach to automation projects: effectiveness and quality of work

F. Vaas

A new model is developed to raise the quality of processes of introduction of new technology. This model is to be used by external automation consultants, other kinds of consultants, staff members, management and workers' representatives. In this article it is discussed whether or not the model is a useful aid for the mentioned groups. Conclusions are based on an ex post evaluation of live recent automation projects. It is argued that the model gives new insights in the projects and that problems can be prevented. The model is thus useful for management and consultants. Workers can also benefit from the model, since it leads to a project-based approach, in which consultation of workers and the distribution of responsibilities are important factors. Periods of high pressure of work can be prevented.

A Sociological profile of software engineers

P. de Coninck

A case study into the position of highly qualified workers of a Belgian telecommunication factory shows perspectives and frustrations of this group. In the past few years the position of engineers in the production relations has fundamentally changed, because the nature of their work has changed. Engineers have become production workers and are no longer the future managers of the company. Their labour market position has not changed, however. They can easily find a new job elsewhere. The discontinuity of the labour market position and the position in production relations of engineers is reflected in their attitude towards trade unions. According to the engineers, trade

unions are not supposed to promote their interests. Because of their strong labour market position, engineers feel that they don't need trade unions, although developments within the company indicate the development of a process of proletarianization.

Research into labour mobility in the Netherlands

L. Faase

In January 1988 the Netherlands Universities Joint Institute for Social Research (SISWO) organized a seminar on research into labour mobility. Economists and sociologists discussed recent studies. Some differences in their approaches are expounded and the historical development of labour mobility research in the Netherlands is summarized. Economists have proven to be able to combine different analytical concepts. (Empirical) sociology is tied to particular areas and periods. It is concluded that macro-economical and macro-sociological approaches lack a sound empirical foundation. They can hardly be used to formulate labour market policy. Better results can be obtained by combining the elegance of economic models with the depth and richness of sociological data.

Labour conditions and collective agreements

K. Korevaar, F. Soeterbroek

Experiences in the building industry show that collective agreements can be used as instruments to improve labour conditions. Collective agreements can thus be used as part of a union's strategy to influence job design. This condition is important, since legal arrangements on labour conditions (especially the so called 'Arbowet') leave many topics to be shaped and effected on the level of the company or the industry.