
Summaries

Regradation and polarisation in post-industrial labour market

It is generally believed that labour markets have undergone radical changes in the last quarter of the 20th century. These changes are often described as the transformation from an industrial to a post-industrial labour market. There exists however no agreement on the precise nature of these changes. Roughly three conflicting points of view are put forward: according to the regradation thesis the quality of work has shown a clear improvement, according to the degradation thesis the quality of work has deteriorated and according to the polarisation thesis the difference in the quality of work between the top and the bottom of the labour market has increased. This article examines the validity of these theses by confronting them with the actual developments on the Dutch labour market in the last 25 years. Attention is paid to the working conditions, the content of jobs, the occupational structure, labour relations (autonomy), wage disparities and employment contracts. The development in the last quarter of the 20th century can be characterised as regradation of the occupational structure combined with a slight polarisation of occupations and wages. A remarkable finding is, that there was little change in the working conditions, the work content and employment contracts.

Back to basics: the case for an adequate minimum guaranteed income in the active welfare state

The link between unemployment and poverty is not clear-cut. In many countries rapidly growing unemployment in the seventies and early eighties did not lead to more poverty. Some countries experience high poverty rates at the same time as high (non-subsidised) employment. Conversely, the more recently observed job growth appears not always to coincide with a drop in poverty.

These empirical findings lead us to two important policy conclusions. Of strategic importance on the road from 'more work to less poverty' is, firstly, the extent to which new jobs are filled in by members of work-poor households. The second strategic policy factor is the extent to which the social security system continues to provide protection for those who, despite all social activation strategies, are left without a job.

The employability of male and female employees

In this study the factors that may have an impact on the employability of employees were analysed. Therefore we took into account: characteristics of the employee as a person, his or her family situation, the kind of work the employee is involved in, as well as characteristics of the organisation in which the employee is working. Our research is based on a representative sample of 2501 Dutch employees.

We found that five factors have a major positive impact on employability, *i.e.* the presence of a workers-council in the organisation, a permanent position of the employee, a higher job-level, a younger age, and a full-time employment.

It is evident from our findings that women find fewer possibilities for development within the organisation, because they more often work in organisations without a workers-council and because they more often work in lower-skilled jobs and/or in part-time positions. With respect to employability, these are just the kind of jobs that employers do not tend to invest in. Therefore, we recommend that Dutch organisations/companies pursue an innovative employability policy, in which they pay attention to specific target groups such as employees in lower-skilled and/or part-time jobs.

On the effectiveness of employment subsidies and targeted payroll tax cuts: lessons from empirical evaluation studies

This article brings together findings from empirical evaluation studies which look at the effects of temporary employment subsidies or reductions in employers' social security contributions which are aimed at stimulating the recruitment of long-term unemployed persons and other vulnerable groups in the labour market. Most evaluation studies suggest that the net employment effects are more modest than many theoretical models lead us to expect, even under relatively pessimistic assumptions. A number of studies arrive at estimates of around 10 per cent additional employment at most. It appears that the bulk of subsidised unemployed persons who are actually recruited would also have been hired without a subsidy. This deadweight loss alone may reduce the effectiveness of a subsidy by up to 90 per cent, though most studies arrive at a lower estimate. Furthermore, there are indications that recruitment from privileged target groups is to the detriment of employment among categories that are (narrowly) ineligible (e.g. the relatively short-term unemployed). Many assessment studies are based on interviews with interested parties: employers who are claiming or are entitled to a subsidy so that it is conceivable that the real net employment effect is even smaller. Less is known about the impact of subsidies on the careers of beneficiaries. The available studies indicate that the impact of such measures is limited, and possibly negative. However, there are also indications that subsidies that are coupled with training and job counselling are more effective.

Flexibility, turnover and training

For several years now, the encouragement of company training is an important policy goal of the Belgian government. By means of financial support measures, the Belgian government attempts to make the balance of costs and benefits of investing in training more favourable for companies. The main assumption behind this policy is that, without this stimulus, companies would under-invest in training. The risk of turnover is often considered to be one of the main reasons for under-investment in training. The reasoning is that turnover shortens the time horizon of the employment relationship and could therefore diminish the incentive to invest in training. However, few studies, using company surveys to analyse the level of investment in training, are focusing directly on the question what the relationship between turnover and investment in training of companies looks like. This contribution attempts to fill this gap. We investigate whether a high turnover of staff does indeed go hand in hand with relatively lower investment in training. Besides the turnover of staff, we also introduce the level of contractual flexibility and the operation of internal labour markets in the discussion.

Co-determination outplaced? The changing institutional positions of stakeholders within the Dutch enterprise model

This article discusses the position of eight stakeholders in Dutch corporate governance. The main starting point is that institutionalised co-determination in Dutch enterprises as a flourishing practice is changing in nature due to the increasing attention to shareholder value. Based on the relevant literature and an analysis of the stakeholders within the Dutch enterprise model, the authors argue that six institutional factors temper the current developments.