

---

## Summaries

### **Modernisation of social security: towards a new balance between individual and collectivity?**

During the last few years several demographic and socio-economic developments such as ageing and individualisation have made the social security system in the Netherlands – as in many other countries – more vulnerable. The system needs to be (further) adapted in order to secure future well-functioning. It might be asked to what extent these adaptations ought to be fundamental in character. In answering this question the fact that social risks may be influenced by individual behaviour and the resulting moral hazard play an important role. Changing the division of responsibilities may contribute to reducing moral hazard. In addition to this, we stress the importance of social norms. Since changes in social security take place only slowly and because of ‘path dependency’, the necessary change often lags behind the relevant developments. For this reason the system’s self-regulatory capacity needs to be promoted. Social norms may play an important role in achieving this goal.

*Keywords: social security, moral hazard, division of responsibilities, social norms*

### **Determinants of sickness absence among women: work situation, personal characteristics, health, or home situation?**

In this article the main question is whether the work situation of women is less favorable than that of men, and whether this may be related to more days of absence among women. To answer this question, secondary analyses

were carried out on data of the Netherlands’ Central Bureau of Statistics of a representative sample of the working population in The Netherlands (10.759 men and 6.892 women). The results show that men and women differ on a number of work characteristics. Men are more often employed in agriculture, industry and construction, have longer working weeks, and have a higher physical workload. Women are more often employed in health care, experience less autonomy in their work, and are less satisfied with their payment. These work-related differences, however, are not the reason that women are more days absent from their work than men. Instead, among women, the work situation leads to relatively fewer days of absence than among men. Health and characteristics of the home situation appear to be the main causes of higher absence among women.

*Keywords: sickness absence, gender, working conditions, home situation*

### **Conflicts as determinants of absenteeism: process and management**

In this article it is discussed how absenteeism may occur as a consequence of conflicts at work. Fundamental differences in ideas about the exchange relationship between employer and employee may result in conflicts, with absenteeism as a consequence. Four cases have been analysed with four theoretical models: the psychological contract theory (Rousseau, 1995), the absence process model of Steers and Rhodes (1978), Karasek’s (1979) stress model, and an overload model (Van Dijk et al., 1990). The four cases can be explained best by psy-

psychological contract theory: violations of psychological contracts result in fundamental conflicts with severe consequences. The other models do not provide an adequate explanation in all four cases.

Not all conflicts at work result in absenteeism: conflicts may also have positive effects. To prevent absenteeism, organizational policies should pay more attention to psychological contracts of employees, on the individual as well as on the collective level. Continuous mutual adjustment of the psychological contract decreases the likelihood of conflict and helps to prevent absenteeism.

*Keywords:* absenteeism, conflict, psychological contract

### **Winners and losers on the labour market 1995-2000. Towards a knowledge economy?**

In this paper we present – on the basis of the Netherlands' Labor Force Survey – the shifts in the occupational structure of employment in the Dutch economy between 1995 and 2000. We found a further shift towards the 'office occupations'. In particular, there has been a real *marketing boom*. Moreover, there have been relatively large employment increases for higher-level occupations, such as IT specialists, accountants and managers. Employment decreases are concentrated in a number of occupations in agriculture and manufacturing. In contrast with the 1980's employment shrinkage did not merely occur in occupations where low or unskilled people were working.

A shift-share analysis shows that the increase in the average level of education of the working population between 1995-2000 was much lower than in the 1980's and early 1990's. This is due to a strong decrease in the substitution effect within occupations. In technical and IT occupations there was no longer any upgrading of the skill level, despite the fast developments in information technology. In the medical, teaching and care occupations we even found a downgrading in the average level of education. In these occupational sectors the shortage of high skilled workers apparently hampered the develop-

ment of the Dutch economy towards a knowledge economy.

*Keywords:* occupational growth and decline, upgrading, downgrading, knowledge economy

### **Problems in the recruitment of personnel: strategies of employers**

Despite the actual economic decline it is expected that in the near future the labour market in the Netherlands will be characterised by structural shortages. When employers face shortages they may take measures to increase their supply of labour or to reduce the demand for labour. On the basis of data of 1054 Dutch organisations, this article describes what measures Dutch employers, in the public as well as the private sector, took in 2002, during a period which is characterised by labour shortages. Exploring techniques show that these measures cluster into four strategies: (1) taking on new categories of employees in the labour market, (2) increasing the employability of their own workforce, (3) outsourcing and teaming up, and (4) structural adjustments. All four strategies appear to be combinations of measures to increase their supply of labour and measures to reduce the demand for labour.

*Keywords:* recruitment and selection, personnel policy, labour market problems, organisational strategy

### **The effect of collective agreements on wages in the Netherlands**

What effect does the Dutch system of collective bargaining and legal extension of collective agreements have on the wage formation and wage development? To answer this question wage differences between employees working under different institutions of wage formation are analysed. The data used were gathered by the Netherlands' Ministry of Labour and contain actual pay information of Dutch workers. This analysis shows that employees whose wages are set by (legally extended) industry collective agreements do not differ from wages of employees who are not bound by a collective agreement, and furthermore are significantly lower than wages of employees bound by a

company collective agreement. Therefore, it can be concluded that the industry wide collective agreement and legal extension of those collective agreements do not necessarily push wages up and disturb labour market forces. Secondly, the effectiveness of the central coordination of wage policy by social partners has been analysed. This second analysis shows that the average wage rise in collective agreements lies below the centrally coordinated maximum wage demand of the trade unions. Furthermore, the development of the yearly average wage rise is correlated with the development of the yearly maximum wage demands. Thus, coordinated wage policies do effect the development of the wages.

*Keywords: collective bargaining, collective agreements, legal extension, wage coordination*

### **Social side goals in governmental building orders: an unruly experiment**

In the past few years, the Dutch government has carried out an experiment with 'contract compliance' in the building industry. The ex-

periment was aimed at compulsory engagement of long term unemployed by building companies working for state agencies. The experiment, with small and medium sized building projects, had very limited results: only five unemployed got a (temporary) job. Nevertheless, lessons may be learned from this experiment. The evaluation showed that the concept of 'contract compliance' is not able to compete with changing labour market conditions, has little advantage over existing labour market policies, and puts government agencies and job centres rather than employers under an obligation. The results of the evaluation suggest that voluntary agreements between the government and companies should be preferred above obligations. If the government wants to introduce contract compliance, attention should be paid to incentives for employers, to the distribution of responsibilities between the parties involved, to the consequences of changing labour market conditions, and to the institutional context.

*Keywords: unemployment policy, contract compliance, building industry, evaluation*