

Summaries

Wage moderation and the 'poldermodel' in historic perspective

This brief historic sketch of the 'poldermodel' attempts to show that this way to organize and regulate labour relations has been an instrument which makes it possible to moderate wage development in times of 'emergency', i.e. when the share of wages in total income was considered to be too high, and had to be lowered in order to increase the growth of GDP and of employment. The 'model' was based on centralized wage bargaining between national organizations of employers and employees, who were able to suppress 'free rider' behaviour of local/branche organizations. If this analysis is correct, employers' organizations and the government have valid reasons to strengthen the role of the trade unions within the 'polder model', as this has come under increased pressure.

'A Dutch Miracle' revisited

In this paper the authors of 'A Dutch Miracle' look back at the successes of the Dutch employment, wage and reform policies of the 1990s and try to explain the paradoxical result of the electoral defeat of the second 'Purple' coalition of Labour and Liberals in May 2002. After a critical reading of the so-called 'Dutch polder model', they analyse the tendency of successful systems to develop a kind of 'introverted complacency' and lose the motivation and capacity for reform and experiment. In order to avert a new phase of stagnation in the Dutch economy, a new 'agreement of Wassenaar' may be necessary. The current political and economic situation has some parallels with the one in 1982, though the sense of urgency that motivated the unions to exchange 'wage in-

creases for jobs' seems to be lacking. In the final part, the authors analyse how, and why, the social partners, in particular the employers, may want to invest in a social pact as an insurance against political instability.

Working time reduction and the Wassenaar Agreement. On part-time employment, leave accumulation scheme and CAO-à-la-carte

Twenty years after the Wassenaar Agreement, both the pay-compensated working time reduction and the uncompensated individual reduction of working hours appear to have had an impact on current working hours. In this article, clauses in Collective Agreements have been studied. Between 1982-85 the annual working time has been reduced by means of extra days off. Between 1982 and 2000 a growing number of Collective Agreements contained clauses that entitled employees to reduce their working hours, which was particularly important for the continuation of women's working careers. The removal of discriminatory clauses has been important to prevent part-time jobs be marginalized. The economic recession of 1992 led to agreements on further working time reduction in the form of a reduction of the working week. The subsequent economic growth induced overtime hours that were not compensated. The recent CAO-à-la-carte agreements solve this problem because employees are allowed to save extra working days for long leaves or have higher pension schemes.

Collective bargaining in Belgium and the Netherlands. Small differences? Large consequences?

In Belgium the importance of collective labour

agreements in the formation of wages and other working conditions is indisputable. In the first part of this article the main structural characteristics of the Belgian collective bargaining system are treated: the predominant bargaining levels, union density rates and coverage rates in sector-level collective bargaining units. In the second part the structure of the Belgian collective bargaining system is compared to the collective bargaining system in the Netherlands. Two differences attract attention: the Belgian trade union movement disposes of more power resources, while the power balance between social partners in the Netherlands is more in favour of employers' organisations. And the Dutch trade union movement is more capable of autonomous and credible central co-ordination of collective bargaining processes, while in Belgium the government – especially since 1996 – has taken this role of central co-ordinator. Finally, the relation between both characteristics is discussed: do the differences in the structure and position of the trade union movements in both countries influence the way collective bargaining is conducted – especially the position of the actors in the bargaining process – and do they explain differences in collective bargaining outcomes?

Employment and poverty

This contribution compares employment and poverty trends in Belgium and the Netherlands in the 1985-1997 period. In this period, social policy became heavily geared towards activation in both countries, but in the Netherlands the policy shift towards activation occurred earlier, more profoundly and more explicitly. As a consequence, the Netherlands has an outstanding employment record. Belgium, however, has, despite a weaker employment record, done comparatively better in combating poverty – absolute poverty came down stronger and the rise in relative poverty was more muted than in the Netherlands. Striking is the fact that in both countries employment growth has not resulted in a proportional drop in poverty. On the contrary, the picture we get for the 1985-1997 period is consistent with the popular view that countries are effectively confronted with a trade-off between employment and poverty. This contribution suggests some explanations for this apparent trade-off.

The German labour market model getting lost

The German labour market model, better known as the 'Rhineland' model, has an impressive history. In the late 19th, early 20th century substantial progress was realised regarding collective wage agreements, labour market regulation, representative bodies and social security arrangements. After the second world war these elements were integrated in the concept of the social market economy, the so-called *soziale Marktwirtschaft*. For a long time it seemed that this concept was able to realise impressive growth rates and sufficient flexibility, while at the same time safeguarding the position of the labourers. In recent times, however, doubts have increased whether this concept is still useful. Of course, German reunification was important, but it is argued in this article that the current arrangements are not flexible enough, especially at the national and individual level, to meet the new challenges. The German labour market model needs revision.

More jobs, less poverty? A comparison of Germany and the Netherlands

The article analyses and compares the socioeconomic performance of Germany and the Netherlands over the past two decades, focussing on employment, income inequality and poverty. Policy makers in both countries consider a paid job the ultimate guarantee for social security and a remedy against poverty and social exclusion. The increased inequality of the primary and secondary income distribution resulted in a higher poverty rate in both countries. Moreover, the polarisation between the poor and the rich increased. In the Netherlands this was accompanied by strong employment growth, and in Germany by a drop in employment. This divergence is explained by Dutch wage cost moderation. It is concluded that the income policy adhered to, pursues conflicting objectives: increasing the incentive to work also increases income disparities and poverty. Policy makers should not only occupy themselves with income distribution for political and social reasons, but also because of the long-term consequences of income distribution for economic growth, and hence employment. Policy should focus on more jobs and upward income mobility. In spite of the recom-

mentations of the Hartz commission, promotion of part-time employment is a better route to create employment than temporary or agency work.

The catching up of the Netherlands. Socio-economic performance in European perspective, 1982-2000

This article assesses the socio-economic performance of the fifteen EU member states with respect to ten different indicators. These indicators refer to the labour market (the labour participation rate in persons and in fulltime equivalents, the unemployment rate and the share of long-term unemployed), social security (the social expenditure rate and the dependency ratio), the level of production (gdp per capita and labour productivity), and income distribution (income inequality and the poverty rate), respectively. Both the levels at the end of the 1990s and the development since the early 1980s are compared. The Netherlands and Denmark turn out to be the countries that perform relatively well with respect to both the present level and the development during the 1980s and 1990s. A good labour market performance does not seem to guarantee a good performance on other socio-economic indicators. There is not one socio-economic model that clearly outperforms the other models.

Epilogue: past and future of the poldermodel

During the post-war history of the Dutch industrial relations system the way of co-operation between the social partners and the state was frequently criticised. This criticism was often followed by proposals to change the Dutch model. The first wave of criticism became manifest during the last years of government wage policy when in the beginning of the sixties, after several years of wage moderation, a very low level of unemployment was accomplished which resulted in a considerable wage growth. Nowadays, with recently a new wave of criticism on the poldermodel, we are confronted with similar developments. In what respect does the present situation differ from the situation some forty years ago?

This contribution starts with a short overview of the Dutch industrial relations system in the past fifty years. This is followed by an evaluation of the results of the poldermodel, partly based upon the different articles in this volume. Finally the possible perspectives for the future of the Dutch poldermodel are outlined. It is expected that EU-level developments will be very important for the continuity of the consensus culture in the Netherlands.