
Summaries

Unemployment, health and death in Post War Netherlands, a macro-analysis based on statistical sources.

by J. van Houwelingen, F. Tazelaar and A. Verbeek

Especially last year in scientific and semi-scientific literature much attention has been paid to the social costs, tied to unemployment, which are much higher than was taken for granted until now. In particular the relation between unemployment, illness and death of the population has been looked into.

The relationship between the economic situation and the rise and fall in the number of deaths at macro-sociological level is described and investigated in this article. According to the increasingly influential research of Brenner in the United States, unemployment figures and death figures in the Netherlands, after World War II, have been analysed. It can be concluded, that Brenner's universal hypothesis, that rise in unemployment leads at macro-level to rise in the number of deaths cannot be confirmed in the Dutch situation. Besides, critical remarks have to be placed upon the method of macro-social analysis in proving this relationship. Therefore, further research on the consequences of unemployment for individuals is necessary on the micro-social level.

Unemployment in old city-neighbourhoods

by J. Epema and F. C. Valkenburg

In 1982 the labour market position of inhabitants of old city-neighbourhoods was studied. The results allowed us to test some hypotheses related to the labour market segmentation literature, especially the American ghetto-studies. We expected that all the inhabitants of old neighbourhoods – whether employed or unemployed – would systematically differ from other citizens by characteristics of work and work-history.

The results of the testing did not confirm the expectations. Systematic differences were found to exist between the unemployed and the employed in old neighbourhoods, while there were almost no differences between the unemployed in old and in more recently built neighbourhoods. Only both unemployed groups answered the expectations from the segmentation-theory: their former work was very unattractive and at a low level, it lasted very short and they had been unemployed several times before. Also they were rather pessimistic and felt powerless to influence their own labour-market position. Unexpected were the long length of their unemployment and the traditional way they look at labour.

Possible explanations for these results are the changing market situation since the late sixties and the cultural differences between American ghetto's and Dutch 'city-slums'.

Unemployment and Social Isolation

by F. Tazelaar and M. Sprengers

In this contribution the relation between unemployment and social isolation is studied. Therefore competitive hypotheses are deduced from two equilibrium theories, the Status Inconsistency Theory and the Theory of Mental Incongruity. The former being a social structural theory stresses the structural causes for disequilibrium, the latter being a cognitive motivational theory stresses the mental causes.

Differences between the hypotheses are expressed not only in the occurrence of social isolation itself but mainly also in prediction about from whom unemployed isolate and from whom not.

After testing the hypotheses on longitudinal data support was found for most of the hypotheses deduced from the Theory of Mental Incongruity and not for the hypotheses deduced from the Status Inconsistency Theory. We found that after one year one can hardly speak of social isolation. If isolation occurs it is mainly from mentally threatening contacts, this being dependent on the disposition towards work of the unemployed in question.

Differences between unemployment and being unemployed

by I. P. Spruit

The leading question in this article concerns the differences between unemployment as an economic-administrative problem and being unemployed as an individual and societal experience. Consequences of the former, which is currently predominant, for the formulation of sociological research questions are explored. Differential views are found in the definition of who is unemployed, in the meaning of unemployment when it is considered as a societal phenomenon or as economic phenomenon and the meaning of being unemployed as a life-event.

Labour market policy: some trends and effects.

by J. A. M. Maarse

Since 1972 there has been a rapid decrease of unemployment in Holland. As a consequence of this development, labour market policy has undergone several changes. The aim of the first part of this paper is to present a concise overview of the main changes. On the level of the policy-goals these can be summarized as follows: a growing priority at the reduction of unemployment; a growing focussing upon specific target groups on the labour market; a growing importance of the market sector instead of the collective sector as source of new employment and a growing interest in a reallocation of employment. On the level of the policy-instruments, we described the following trends: an intensification of the policy-efforts, particularly by a substantial differentiation of the policy-instruments and, from 1972 to 1976, by a considerable increase of spendings; a growing priority in policy-instrumentation at a reduction of the structural causes of unemployment.

The second part of this paper contained an analysis of the main effects of labour market policy. It was shown that in 1980 about 19 percent of the unemployment population was covered by the policy-instruments. This is hardly a satisfying result, particularly if it is realized that since 1980 the unemployment rate has dramatically risen. It underscores the weak position of the government in reducing unemployment.

