



WORKS PUBLICATIONS

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The transformation of work in a global knowledge economy: towards a conceptual framework

Huws U. (ed.)

Leuven: HIVA, 2006, 242p.
ISBN: 90-5550-424-6

€ 19.5

It is generally agreed that major changes in work are taking place in the organisation of work as corporate structures are transformed in the context of economic globalisation and rapid technological change. But how can these changes be understood? And what are the impacts on social institutions and on workers and their families? The evidence is scattered across a range of different bodies of literature including the sociology of work, economic geography, organisational theory, social psychology, ethnography, gender studies, industrial relations and political science.

This report brings together the work of experts from a wide range of different theoretical perspectives and academic disciplines and from seventeen research institutes in fourteen European countries, each with its own research traditions. In doing so, it provides a remarkably comprehensive overview of the available evidence. This evidence has been carefully sifted with the aim of distilling insights that can help to produce a clear conceptual framework in order to develop hypotheses and research questions to guide the empirical research to be undertaken by the WORKS project.

The WORKS project (<http://www.worksproject.be>) has been funded by the European Commission under its 6th Research Framework Programme with the ambitious aims of: improving our understanding of the major changes in work in the knowledge-based society, taking account both of global forces and of the regional diversity within Europe; investigating the evolving division of labour within and between companies and the related changes at the workplace; exploring the implications for the use of skills and knowledge, for flexibility and for the quality of working life; and examining the impact on occupational identities; time use and learning; as well as the impact on the social dialogue and the varieties of institutional shaping.

The globalisation glossary: a researcher's guide to understanding work organisation restructuring in a knowledge-based society

Huws U. (ed.)

Leuven: HIVA, 2008, 75p.
ISBN: 9789088360022

€ 15

'Outsourcing', 'insourcing', 'offshoring', 'inshoring', 'upskilling', 'deskilling', ... One of the barriers to making sense of current workplace trends is simply coming to terms with the terminology.

As part of its mission to develop a clear conceptual and analytical framework for understanding the restructuring of work in a global knowledge economy, one of the first tasks that the WORKS project set itself was to develop a glossary of key terms and concepts. This task was carried out collaboratively, with inputs from all the WORKS partners, and formed a vital underpinning of the first project publication 'The transformation of work in a global knowledge economy: towards a conceptual framework' now available as a book or free pdf download from http://www.worksproject.be/Subgroup_1_proj_reports.htm.

Reactions to this glossary were so positive that we have now revised and edited it, placed it on the project website, and published it in this small booklet so that others may benefit from it too.

Restructuring across value chains and changes in work and employment: Case study evidence from the Clothing, Food, IT and Public Sector

Flecker J., Holtgrewe U., Schönauer A., Dunkel W. & Meil P.

Leuven: HIVA, 2008, 152p.
ISBN: 9789088360039

€ 17

Both in the private and the public sectors, we are currently witnessing major waves of organisational and corporate restructuring that include outsourcing of non-core activities, relocation of work as well as mergers and acquisitions. These processes of restructuring involve a decomposition and re-composition of sectors, companies, workplaces and jobs and have far-reaching consequences for employment levels, job security, work organisation and the quality of working life.

The WORKS project aims to shed light on these issues by looking at the relationship between changes taking place at the level of the European and global economy and at the level of the workplace. The concept of the value chain is used to analyse changes in the division of labour and in work flows that directly impact on employment relations and day-to-day work practices. The research is based on the assumption that value chain restructuring, by changing the position of companies or units in the value chain and by impacting on the power relations both along the chain and within organisations, directly affects the quality of work.

This report presents the results of a series of 58 case studies that were conducted in 14 countries to provide windows into the restructuring of value chains and to illuminate changes in the organisation of work within and between organisations. The data captures the effects of restructuring by going beyond the boundaries of individual companies and sectors. The business functions covered include research and development, design, production, customer services, IT and logistics. The research looked at these business functions in manufacturing industries such as clothing and food, as well as in the public sector and in services of general interest.

How restructuring is changing occupations: Case study evidence from knowledge-intensive, manufacturing and service occupations

Valenduc G., Vendramin P., Krings B.-J. & Nierling L.

Leuven: HIVA, 2008, 196p.
ISBN: 9789088360046

€ 19

Within the WORKS project, 30 case studies of occupational changes were carried out in fourteen countries, between June 2006 and May 2007. This is the synthesis report and comparative analysis of these occupational case studies, which complement the organisational case studies though emphasising the individual dimension of changes in work. The main body of the report consists of six occupational monographs, concerning dress designers, ICT researchers, software professionals, production workers, logistics workers and front-office employees. The monographs are preceded by an introductory chapter on the concept of occupations and occupational groups, and followed by a concluding chapter, highlighting the comparative dimension of the findings.

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Value chain restructuring in Europe in a global economy

Huws U., Dahlmann S., Flecker J., Holtgrewe U., Schönauer A., Ramioul M. & Geurts K.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 111p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-008-4

€ 12.20

In order to understand the impact of globalisation in Europe it is necessary to understand the place occupied by European workplaces in global value chains, how the structure and governance of these value chains is changing, and what the impact is on work organisation and on workers.

As well as making an important theoretical contribution to the conceptualisation of value chains, this report draws on the quantitative and qualitative research of the WORKS project to examine the impacts of value chain restructuring. Fifty-eight case studies in the food and beverage, textiles and clothing, IT and public sectors were analysed to shed light on questions such as:

- Is it really the case that value chains are getting longer a more elaborated, both contractually and spatially?
- What is the relationship between codification of workers' knowledge and value chain restructuring?
- To what extent, and how, do national institutional environments shape decisions to locate particular business functions on their territories? Is there evidence that new types of value chain are emerging in business services?
- And, if so, do they follow the same patterns as those in manufacturing?
- What power relationships are emerging, between managers and employees within the units of value chains and between the different units and how is this power exercised?

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Value chain restructuring and industrial relations: The role of workplace representation in changing conditions of employment and work

Meil P., Tengblad P. & Docherty P.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 80p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-009-1

€ 10.41

This report analyses the role that workplace representatives and institutionalised systems of industrial relations play in value chain restructuring and asks what workplace actors can do to moderate the effects of restructuring, what structures exist to represent worker interests, what processes take place to influence the restructuring process and outcomes, and what are the impacts on the scope and issues of bargaining. Among the report's conclusions are:

- restructuring is a management prerogative;
- there are identifiable national differences;
- there are major differences between sectors;
- knowledge workers tend to use more individually based strategies;
- production workers draw on a tradition of collective action;
- service workers' strategies depend on whether they are in the public or private sector;
- use of European Works Councils or international networks is very rare;
- employers' use of outsourced and flexible workers often lead to strategies of protection rather than incorporation by core workers.

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Value chain restructuring and company strategies to reach flexibility

Flecker J., Holtgrewe U., Schönauer A. & Gavroglou S.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 104p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-010-7

€ 11.80

This report analyses organisational and employment flexibility from a value chain perspective. Findings show that patterns of flexibility are in fact highly sector-specific and depend on the competition on the product or service markets, on customers' or client companies' demands, on demands by shareholders to increase return on investment or on public policies.

Through value chain restructuring, demands for flexibility are distributed along the chain. Companies and organisations attempt to pass on risks and costs to others – not least to workers.

However, the study does not find many uniform trends. Apart from the national institutional setting, the outcomes for employment and quality of work depend strongly on sector characteristics. Changes of work organisation can offer challenging and more interesting work but this does not necessarily mean more favourable working conditions.

Outsourcing leads to precarious employment chiefly in the public sector and in services of general interest where employers seek to escape from strong labour protection. In manufacturing ongoing Taylorist patterns of work organisation persist, although when standardised work is outsourced and offshored, internal and functional flexibility increases. In the knowledge-intensive functions, standardisation of work and codification of knowledge is directly related to value chain restructuring and may even hamper organisational flexibility.

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<http://www.unibook.com/unibook/site/bookdetail/?bookid=7306>

Global value chain restructuring and the use of knowledge and skills

Ramioul M. & De Vroom B.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 94p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-011-4

€ 11.21

This report focuses on the role of knowledge in the restructuring of value chains and the implications for work organisation and for the use of knowledge and skills.

The key perspective is on the effects of the growing complexity and highly dynamic nature of corporate structures, production and labour processes. Four different questions are investigated:

- What is the role of knowledge in value chain restructuring?
- What is the impact of value chain restructuring on the use and management of knowledge in the organisation?
- What is the impact on the required skills of the employees involved in restructuring?
- What are the effects on internal labour markets and on regional or sectoral vocational training structures?

The results of 58 organisational and 33 occupational case studies undertaken in the frame WORKS project form the major basis for this analysis. In addition, the results of major EU establishment and employee surveys are used by means of secondary analysis.

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<http://www.unibook.com/unibook/site/bookdetail/?bookid=6850>

Changing careers and trajectories: How individuals cope with organisational change and restructuring

Valenduc G., Vendramin P., Pedaci M. & Piersanti M.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 76p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-012-1

€ 10.18

This thematic report focuses on changes in individual careers, trajectories on the labour market and occupational identities. It analyses the driving forces behind these changes and considers wider societal trends concerning the changing meaning of work.

First, it presents the conceptual framework for analysing these changes and reviews a range of theories concerning careers and identities at work. Then it analyses the main driving forces underlying occupational changes including the increasing market pressure, the fragmentation of the labour market, and new developments in workforce management. Finally it addresses the changing meaning of work in society and its influence on individual trajectories, as well as the place of careers in a whole life course.

The conclusions highlight key trends in careers and trajectories: the widening of the spectrum of career models; the multiplication of fragmented trajectories; the plurality of models of identity formation at work; the new balance between internal and external labour markets; the individualisation of human resource management; the decline of traditional forms of collective involvement and the emergence of new forms of social bonding at work; and finally the increasing importance of the expressive dimension in the relation to work. Gender is discussed generally as a transversal issue in careers, as well as in relation to 'glass ceilings', skills requirements and occupational culture.

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Changing patterns of segregation and power relations in the workplace: Results from the WORKS project

Dahlmann S., Huws U. & Stratigaki M.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 93p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-013-8

€ 11.16

The restructuring of employment in the context of technological change and globalisation is bringing about major changes in the division of labour in Europe. In the past, this division of labour has been strongly segregated both by gender and by ethnicity, horizontally, vertically and across other dimensions, such as location and contract type.

Are these changes bringing about progress towards greater equality or are they perpetuating the old divisions, albeit in different forms? Drawing on European statistics as well as eighty-eight in-depth case studies in thirteen EU countries, this report concludes that the picture is complex, with large differences between sectors and business functions and jobs with different skill levels.

In low-skilled manual work, there is evidence that the gender division of labour still conforms to a 'housewife-breadwinner' model, with minority ethnic groups occupying the most precarious positions in the workforce. In high-skilled 'knowledge work' women are making progress towards equality, but in order to do so have to adopt a 'male' lifestyle.

Globalisation is changing patterns of ethnic segregation in international companies.

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Working time, gender and work-life balance

Krings B.-J., Nierling L., Pedaci M. & Piersanti M.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 83p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-014-5

€ 10.58

Drawing on both the quantitative and qualitative research findings of the WORKS project, this report analyses the impact of global restructuring processes on the organisation of working time and also examines its contribution to the creation of work-life balance. With a special focus on gender relations, it illustrates how men and women are dealing with changing temporal demands in different sectors and occupations.

In relation to working time, the results highlight a tendency towards destandardisation and increasing differentiation of temporal models: with an increase in atypical hours, flexitime, and shortened as well as lengthened working hours.

Besides this differentiation, the most important impact of restructuring seems to be a growing intensification of work - not necessarily as a prolongation of working time but as a speeding up of pace and workloads.

In terms of work-life balance, intensified work profiles increase demands on the combination of work and family, a field which remains strongly gendered. Here, occupational contexts are crucial for assessing change processes. A high autonomy in working time offers some women in high-skilled occupations the option of developing emancipated strategies. Women working in lower skilled occupations follow traditional gender rules and depend much more on temporal frameworks laid down by the employers.

In both fields, country differences underline the importance of institutional support in times of globalisation.

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Change processes and methodologies of future perspectives of work

Moniz A.B., Paulos M.R. & Bannink D.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 82p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-015-2

€ 10.53

In this report, a model of work futures in the knowledge society is developed on the basis of the empirical phase of the WORKS project. Work in the knowledge society is structured by increased knowledge and flexibility requirements. This affects the organisation of work, i.e. skills formation, value chain management, contractual conditions and working time. The impact on work is structured by the particular market and regulative context of companies.

This model formed the input for a number of scenarios of work in the knowledge society. These scenarios differ with respect to the extent of value chain restructuring and work intensification. The 'dark side of flexicurity' scenario describes a dual development of work based on its increasing intensification; the 'liberal Lisbon process' scenario estimates the results of increased activation and labour supply quality, however with increasingly failed social policies; finally 'the new welfare' scenario can be considered as an optimistic one, once is based on the development of social dialogue and related policies.

The objective of the report is to develop some conceptual approaches for a methodology of scenario building in order to provide more ideas about the future of work in European countries.

The discussion about possible implications of such scenarios provide policy recommendations that arise from such an exercise and material for a communication process which deals with social policies and economic strategies, work and life balance in the future of European countries.

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Changes in work in transformation economies: The case of the New Member States

Makó C., Illéssy M., Csizmadia P., Kirov V. & Galev T.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 95p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-016-9

€ 11.28

The post-socialist countries of the New Member States do not represent an institutionally homogeneous country bloc in the Central Eastern European region and have followed different development trajectories in terms of efficiency and equity. Because of the importance of foreign direct investment in these states, a study of global value chain restructuring is particularly useful for understanding these differences.

This report draws on the WORKS results to shed light on these differences, demonstrating, for instance, that Bulgaria belongs to the country cluster characterised by significantly higher share of 'Taylorist' work organisation compared to the EU-27 whilst Hungary shows a more fragmented pattern in distribution of work organisation types, with a high share of 'discretionary learning organisations'. There are variations between sectors as well as countries.

The report concludes that the right mix, and appropriate control of, knowledge and the extent of institutional complementarities are the key factors that determine whether a company will move up, move down or remain locked in its current position within a global value chain. Firms in the 'new economy' sectors seem to have the best potential for moving in the direction of the high value added economic activities, whilst firms in the old economy mostly appear to be stuck in their current position in the international division of labour.

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<http://www.unibook.com/unibook/site/bookdetail/?bookid=6514>

Impact of restructuring on health and safety and quality of work life: Psychosocial risks

Di Nunzio D., Hohnen P., Hasle P., Torvatn H. & Øyum L.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 88p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-017-6

€ 10.87

This report analyses the consequences of restructuring on health and safety and quality of work life with a specific focus on psychosocial risks. Drawing on an analysis of 58 organisational and 33 occupational case studies, it outlines some cross national trends concerning health and safety issues in the contemporary European labour market, focusing on the known causes of stress: demands in work; influence over work; social support; recognition and reward; predictability and meaning.

The report concludes that:

- in general, negative effects outweigh positive ones, with trends towards lower influence in work, high demands, greater uncertainty and lower social support. This leads to very stressful working conditions, and the case studies tell a story of a worsening psychosocial work environment as a result of restructuring;
- however, restructuring may also bring new main opportunities, including increased meaning and recognition; upgrading of skills; more social support thanks to teamwork;
- positive restructuring of working time can help workers cope with the increasingly demanding and unpredictable work requirements.

The report's recommendations include: a more explicit coverage of change and restructuring in both national and EU health and safety legislation; improved change management with a focus on reducing workload; greater worker participation in restructuring process; and a strong attention to the consequences of flexibility for health and safety.

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The role of technology in value chain restructuring

Greenan N., Kocoglu Y., Walkowiak E., Csizmadia P. & Makó C.

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 121p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-018-3

€ 12.77

This report investigates the relationship between the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) at the workplace, work organisation, skills and training, in a context of value chain restructuring (VCR).

ICTs are examined in two groups: those that are generic in the value chain, such as supply chain management, workflow management technologies and call centres technologies; and more mixed ICTs. Even if networks evolve in many different directions in the context of VCR (centralisation, decentralisation, mutual dependence or no evolution), centralisation is the most frequent outcome. ICTs often enable outsourcing by contributing to the quasi-integration of the new business partner. Control is obtained through the application of standards, reinforcing the dominance of the unit that generates standards. This is why standardisation generally comes before and enables outsourcing. Standardisation and increases in work control constitute the main organisational dimensions of technological changes. Their impact on job content and working conditions varies according to the role played by management and may involve both deskilling and upskilling, reflected in polarisation in the division of labour and the emergence of new jobs and occupations.

Four types of skill are involved: ICT user skills, customer oriented skills, communication skill and professional ICT skills.

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Challenges for Europe under value chain restructuring: Contributions to policy debates

Meil P. (ed.)

Leuven: HIVA, 2009, 124p.
ISBN: 978-90-8836-021-3

It is mainly at the level of the workplace that deficits in regulation become visible and impulses for policy formulation can be developed. This report, based on empirical results obtained from the WORKS quantitative and qualitative data, targets the issues of skills and knowledge, gender and equality, employment and work, the labour market and social governance in the policy debates because they are identified as major aspects of reaching the Lisbon goals. The contributions explicitly examine what effects specific regulations and what role organisations that are mandated to support and protect worker interests are having at the level of the workplace. We conclude that the various levels of intervention for policy – national, regional, company – will continue to have relevance because the processes for policy development are not uniform across country or sector. Thus multilevel governance is needed. However, supranational institutions such as the EU have a responsibility to use their regulatory power to mitigate inequalities forming across the value chain and to better monitor and enforce existing regulation.

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Understanding a changing world of work: Resource pack for union training on value chain restructuring

Tengblad P. (ed.), Docherty P., Valenduc G. & Pedaci M.
Leuven: HIVA, 2009

This is a training resource pack on how to deal with processes of restructuring and changing work and workplaces. Its aim is to enhance union competence in change in working life and to support employee representatives in unions or works councils all over Europe in their roles as active partners in processes of changes in work. The book is based on the result of a four-year large-scale European research project called WORKS (Work Organisation and Restructuring in the Knowledge Society). WORKS has investigated organisations under restructuring in different industries and different European countries.

This report will be available on the project website:
http://www.worksproject.be/Gen_project_results.htm

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