

“Constructions of job quality in policy and employees’ discourse”

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What is the meaning of the “good job“?

- Subjective measures – job satisfaction – sensitive to differences in individual aspirations
- Objective measures – multidimensional indices – selection of dimensions arbitrary
- “Good job” as a social construct, i.e. what people collectively agree makes a “good job”
- “Good job” as a fluid and contested concept

NEUJOBS WP2

Good Jobs in a Good Economy

- Janos Kovacs, Institute for Human Sciences (comparative study)
- Christoph Hilbert, Conference Board (UK, Spain)
- Tunde Virag, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Hungary)
- Marcela Veselkova, Slovak Governance Institute (Slovakia)

Flexibility

- *“[T]he flexibility enables an easier adjustment to the crazy market. And it keeps getting increasingly crazier. That means that the Labor Code should be getting increasingly crazier as well. (...) Our labor laws are trapped in the nineteenth century. ”*

Mr. Juraj Borgula

The Vice-President of the Union of Engineering Industry in Slovakia (ZSP SR)

Security

- *“If I have no security and have to be maximally flexible, then it does not work. (...) There is no democracy in employment, there is centralism and it is the Labor Code that brings the balance between the strong and the weak.”*

Mr. Emil Machyna

President of the Metal Trade Union Association (OZ KOVO)

Flexicurity

- *“I am very skeptical of the concept of flexicurity. I think it is an attempt to preserve the traditional approach to employment, the lifetime employment, an attempt to keep this system and create an impression that it is a problem to change the job each second year. (...) The Danish system is extremely expensive. (...) If we wanted the Danish system, we would probably have to abolish the Ministry of Education to be able to afford it.”*

Mr. Radovan Đurana

Institute of Economic and Social Studies

Two Labor Code Narratives

- “Slim” vs. “Necessary Standard”
- Competing visions of the sources of job quality
- Market vs. Policy intervention

Necessary Standard Narrative

- *“Liberals and the right-wing political parties believe that the Labor Code should be as simple as possible, that trade unions should have as little rights as possible, this implies minimum rights for employees and maximum rights for employers. (...) Individually, approximately 1 percent of people is able to take care of themselves. All the rest need a collective protection, they cannot do without it.”*

Mr. Emil Machyna

Slim Labor Code Narrative

- *"The more jobs there are, the higher the competition for the labor supply, the better [employment] conditions employees fight out thanks to the principles of the free market, not because something is ordered by the Labor Code. That is how it should be and therefore the Labor Code should be as slim as possible and stipulate only the basic rules."*

Mr. Jozef Mihál

- *"[T]he [current] Labor Code defines what "work" is. (...) In other words, it tries to define undefinable. It is a relic of an industrial society."*

Mr. Radovan Ďurana

Key themes in the policy discourse

- flexibility/security
- labor costs/wages
- position of trade unions

- "The Labour Code does not quite address it [job quality]." (Mr. Machyna)
- What about appreciation, working environment, team, management?

Employees' constructions of job quality

- Compensation (wages, benefits)
- Notion of progress (career growth, education)
- Work-life balance (working hours, overtime, flexible work)
- Team relationships (team, management)
- Working environment (company site, design)

Individual responsibility for job quality

- “Good job...Each person contributes to the goodness of his job. He must consider his skills, whether he is suitable for a certain company or a certain environment. Our company is very fast and flexible. Call centers are collosi, in which things move on very fast. If a person cannot adjust, it may be difficult for him, the job may be too demanding.” (Respondent 2)

Good Jobs in ITC sector

Spain (Telefonica)

- work-life balance
- secure contract
- professional development
- salary

Hungary (Communication company)

- job security
- good salary
- employee recognition

UK (British Telecom)

- health and safety
- work-life balance
- salary
- long-term contract
- security

Slovakia (ITC company)

- good team
- progress (educ/career)
- compensation
- working environment
- work-life balance