

Training & Employment

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM CEREQ AND ITS ASSOCIATED CENTRES

RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES

Conflicting Rationales of Employment Supply and Demand

Desperately seeking labour. This distress signal sent out by certain company heads would seem to come from times gone by, given yet another decline in the economic situation since 2001. But it may well re-emerge in the course of the present decade with the ageing of the labour force and the inevitable problems of replenishing it. In spite of the reversal of the economic situation, 'labour shortages' thus remain an issue. And especially since they appear to be nothing other than the state-of-emergency version of the difficulties inherent in all recruitment. Indeed, the functioning of the labour market calls into play the various rationales, strategies and representations of employers, job-seekers and employers, all of which impede the matching of employment supply and demand.

With every economic recovery creating a significant increase in the number of recruitments—as was the case from 1987 to 1990 and 1997 to 2001—the companies are quick to alert French public authorities to what they see as an impending labour shortage. In such periods, the selection time is more limited; recruitments have to take place in shorter periods in order to meet production imperatives. And since this is not often possible, the quality of the workforce is called into question with the argument that it is not adapted to the needs of the economy. Such an assertion leaves a number of observers and labour-market analysts somewhat dubious, however. How can there be labour shortages when over 10 percent of the labour force is unemployed? It is thus necessary to explore other possibilities: Is the education and training system adapted to company needs? Are there factors limiting the geographical mobility of the labour force?

These questions reflect a classic image of the way the labour market functions, whereby its equilibrium would lie in a simple match between employment supply and demand. But this functioning brings into play other mechanisms depending on the supposed rationality of the companies, the labour force and the different intermediaries on the labour market. Investigations carried out in different employment areas (see Box page 4) in fact suggest that the way job-seekers perceive occupations and activity sectors, like the companies' representations of the work involved, can hinder the matching up of employment supply and demand.

THE LONG ROAD FROM OCCUPATION TO JOB

Logic dictates that we begin by examining two sectors with recurrent difficulties: the construction industry and the hotel and catering trade. Probably against their will, regardless of the efforts they have made over the years and regardless of the economic situation, they face growing difficulties in recruitment. These difficulties stem from the working conditions they propose, which are seen as far removed from today's prevailing wage standard, namely office work carried in a service activity. It might be expected, however, that the growth of employment in these two sectors would attract a number of workers looking to stabilise their situations. It is quite clear, however, that the unemployed do not necessarily constitute a pool of labour likely to resolve their recruitment problems. A large share of the individuals whom the National Employment Agency (ANPE) classifies as coming from construction-public works or hotel-catering occupations quite often seem to be physically and socially 'done in': many have undergone physical traumas, are faced with psychological problems or have a 'bad reputation' or problems of displacement. These last two factors, which are often overlooked, deserve closer attention.

Investigations carried out in different employment areas show in fact that reputation has major consequences on the labour market, in particular at local level, and that this

CENTRE D'ÉTUDES ET DE RECHERCHES SUR LES QUALIFICATIONS

is true for job-seekers and employers alike. Any misbehaviour has a lasting effect on chances of finding a job on the one hand, or finding an employee on the other. An employee with a bad reputation cannot justify prior work experience and will be forced to seek an activity for which he or she is not immediately qualified, while an employer will not be able to recruit individuals with the desired qualifications. In both cases, a vicious circle hinders the match between employment supply and demand.

Access to the workplace is also a real problem at local level. It emerges quite clearly that the distance between workplace and residence is often one of the reasons for refusing a job: the absence of individual means of transportation excludes the possibility of construction sites which—in spite of the fact that they are far away—do not entitle workers to meal and transportation allowances, and the public transportation schedules are not compatible with those of restaurants or hotel shifts, including those in urban areas. And the purchase of a means of transportation is impossible for the many workers who are generally offered fixed-term contracts (CDDs) which do not allow them to recoup this investment over time. Thus, they find themselves slowly marginalized, headed on a slope which takes them further and further away from what is considered a normal standard of living.

LASTING JOB VERSUS LASTING EMPLOYMENT

The investigations carried out among workers whose activity is presumably less out of phase with the prevailing wage norm (normal hours, sheltered work, etc.)—electricity or mechanics, for example—also shed light on the mechanisms of matching employment supply and demand. Paradoxically, these workers often prefer temporary work. This attraction to temping is motivated by financial conditions better than those proposed to them with limited- or unlimited-term contracts: the required contribution period for unemployment compensation is shorter; they receive a bonus for lack of job security and an isolation allowance over a certain number of kilometres. In addition, the string of temping contracts, even if it is punctuated by inevitable periods of unemployment, guarantees them more lasting employment than a work contract which, although it is supposed to be durable, can be terminated at any moment in function of the company's economic situation.

It is true that temporary contracts are only acceptable, not to mention sought after, to the extent that they permit certain equilibria to be maintained, such as housing, family stability or a long-term investment. But even if it constitutes a risk, temping sometimes permits greater anticipation of the future than a limited- or unlimited-term contract which can be terminated after the trial period or result in a dismissal. And when the assignment is over, the temp worker does not have to start looking for another job because this is the temping agency's responsibility. If the sequences of employment seem to be more certain elsewhere, some job-seekers even envision changing regions rather than being mobile over an employment area; they prefer to settle in an area held to be richer in jobs, even if they are precarious ones.

This kind of rationale seems to have the strongest hold when a very large company dominates an employment area. When a company belonging to a large group sets up a new production line, it sometimes has to recruit hundreds of employees in a relatively short period of time. In such a case, the company sees recourse to temping as the most efficient solution: it minimises recruitment costs and permits the search area to be extended, and the cost of training activities is borne by the temping agencies and public authorities. At the same time, many potential candidates are quite willing to take the risk of temping: for them, it represents a period of guaranteed work, at least eighteen months in many cases, but also the opportunity to enter a large company with the hope of permanent integration and wage prospects which are considerably more advantageous than those in local SMEs or VSEs. Some employees already working for these small companies do not hesitate to quit their jobs, notwithstanding an unlimited-term work contract, and gamble on a precarious job.

At the end of their assignment, however, they are not all hired on a permanent basis. Those who find themselves unemployed, when they address themselves to the public employment service, give their occupation as the one they practiced in the large company that they have just left rather than the one they initially learned or acquired in the course of their earlier work experience. Indeed, the hope of better working conditions pushes many unemployed persons to say that they are looking for a job in a trade which they see as opening the doors of larger companies or activity sectors with a higher social status. Which explains how cooks, waiters, masons and others are disappearing from the labour market.

WAGES: THE PRICE OF STABILITY, THE COST OF SECURITY

Without necessarily speaking of a labour shortage, recruitment problems must also be seen in terms of wages. It might be expected that these problems would lead employers to raise wage levels. But official statistics on this subject do not show any significant rise in wages during the period of greatest tensions. Furthermore, the question of wage level does not in itself seem to be a decisive factor in recruitment difficulties.

Investigations in the field suggest that job-seekers do not consider the level of remuneration the only—or the main—criterion for accepting a post. Other things being equal, it is rather the future prospects which seem to count the most in their decisions. The wage offered by one company is not judged in relation to that proposed by another but rather, in relation to the whole of the costs which might result from accepting the job, such as changing the place of residence, the loss of social networks, transportation expenses, the reorganisation of social time and so on. The remuneration level is also evaluated in a longer-term context, relative to durability of employment and potential career development. Ultimately, a lower wage will win out if the job concerned does not entail 'collateral' costs and offers greater stability or better career prospects.

For their part, the companies do not spontaneously bring up the question of remunerations as a stumbling block in the recruitment process. In any case, they do not play on the wage level to attract immediately employable individuals more easily. From this standpoint, the almost systematic recourse to precarious work contracts might seem paradoxical. At an equivalent level of remuneration for the employee, these contracts are in fact more expensive for the companies than unlimited-term ones. The use of precarious contracts can only be seen as rational if we admit that the companies' anticipated development pushes them to avoid lasting ties with the labour force in order to avoid dismissals in the medium term. In the end, recruitment has more to do with an investment decision than a fleeting exchange on a market. And for employers and job-seekers alike, what is involved is protecting themselves in the future.

FROM REPRESENTATIONS OF WORK TO REAL WORK

A considerable share of recruitment problems also has to do with the companies' representation of the work. They generally describe the jobs with the name of an occupation: mason, framework carpenter, painter, cook, waiter, welder, electrician and so on. These jobs may be specified by reference to training, identified in the terms proper to the national education system: vocational aptitude certificate (CAP), vocational *baccalauréat*, vocational studies certificate (BEP) and others. This form of expression has the advantage of using terminology familiar to both job-seekers and labour-market intermediaries. But it has the disadvantage of hiding the company's singularity and the real outlines of the job it is offering. In most cases, this vocabulary designates a group of skills, knowledge and know-how which will hardly be used by the employee in the work situation. With minimal training and a short adaptation period, someone less trained, or without any experience at all, might be able to fill the job.

This disparity between representation and reality is frequent in the occupations marked by a labour 'shortage'. In practice, the activity of a mason depends on the size of the company, the owner's involvement in production or the company's speciality (i.e., new construction or rehabilitation). Similarly, the demands faced by a cook or a waiter will depend on the standing, geographical location and opening hours of their place of employment. This gap between representation and reality is sometimes unconsciously expressed by company heads like, for example, the owner of a heating company with several dozen employees who deplored the fact that the initial and continuing education systems do not allow him to find the appropriate workforce and indicated that, all things considered, he would prefer "someone motivated with two feet, two arms and a head". He tries to recruit people with a vocational *baccalauréat* or higher technician certificate for specific job profiles but states that he can give almost anyone all the necessary skills in a few weeks.

REDEFINITION AS A MEANS OF GETTING BEYOND THE SUPPLY-DEMAND CONFRONTATION

The labour-market intermediaries have become aware of the problem posed by these disparities between the representation and reality of work. Most of them develop tools for identifying either the 'hidden' competences of job-seekers or the competences which are really indispensable for holding a precisely defined job, and most often both at once. The temping agencies have thus drawn up questionnaires which allow them to identify the whole of the competences which are not immediately obvious from the titles of candidates' occupations and thus to diversify the assignments they can carry out. A painter who has worked outdoors may, for example, know how to climb scaffolding without thinking to mention it. The National Employment Agency (ANPE), the organisation for adult vocational education and training (AFPA), the occupational branches and various ad-hoc structures are all developing methods of analysing jobs and counselling companies in search of labour. The ANPE offers, for example, a method of recruitment simulation (also known as the 'skills method') which is aimed at coaching the companies from the precise definition of the job offer to the recruitment itself. This method involves five steps: the best possible definition of general and technical knowledge, social behaviours and physical capacities to be mobilised in the job, the definition of the means of selection (in the work situation or by analogy), the definition of positive and negative criteria for the position, the selection of the candidates and the final choice, plus complementary training if necessary.

Beyond these specific tools, however, legislators and public authorities have taken recruitment problems into account in existing schemes and encouraged the implementation of genuine plans of action. This is the case with the provisions of the Territorial Objectives Contracts (*contrats d'objectifs territoriaux*) between certain occupational branches and the Regional Councils, or the joint actions carried out by the different labour-market intermediaries. This is also the case with the Local Action Plans for Employment (Plans d'action locaux pour l'emploi, PALE) which have been set up within the framework of the European Employment Strategy. In France, the PALEs come under the Division of Employment and Vocational Training, which, since 1999, has been drawing the attention of the Ministry of Labour's devolved departments to the need for dealing with recruitment problems through partnerships. Thus, at local level, the PALEs bring together the local ANPE, the departmental Labour, Employment and Vocational Training Divisions, the French Business Federation (Médéf), sector-based employers' groups, representatives of the Regional Council and pre-training and training bodies including the AFPA. Working groups come together on a monthly basis to update their knowledge of local labour needs, follow the operations underway and develop new initiatives. Joint groups are set up for regular visits to the companies in order to define their hiring needs.

Training & Employment

A great deal of energy is thus expended for returns which still remain quite limited: nearly 90 percent of the candidates informed and then selected, and possibly trained for a post, do not reply to the hiring notification. But the returns are nonetheless real. These partnerships have, for example, allowed the recruitment of women for redefined industrial work stations in sectors where they had never worked before.

With the sharp decline in the economic situation during the first half of 2001, recruitment problems once again seem to be a thing of the past. But they are still a concern. The situation which is looming over 2005-2010 will bring these difficulties back to the surface. The ageing of the labour force and massive retirements are in fact going to provoke a more drastic situation than the one we have just experienced. The competition for attracting workers will be even tougher. In terms of the qualitative match between employment supply and demand, we have seen that the labour-market intermediaries have acquired recent experience which they will be able to draw on to contribute to greater fluidity in the labour market. But what about the quantitative match? It may well take place through wage competition between companies. And in the absence of

increases in remunerations, certain company heads may have to bring their activity to a standstill for lack of workers or to 'struggle along' in a state of total discouragement, as certain of them recently complained in face of their recruitment difficulties.

Jean-Marc Grando (Céreq)

FURTHER READING

- *Entre chômage et difficultés de recrutement : se souvenir pour prévoir.* [Between Unemployment and Recruitment Difficulties: Remembering in Order to Anticipate.] Commissariat général du Plan, Groupe de prospective des métiers et des qualifications, "Qualifications et prospective" series. Paris: La Documentation française, 2001.
- *2005 : le choc démographique, défi pour les professions, les branches et les territoires.* [2005: the demographic crisis, a challenge for professions, occupational branches and territories.] Commissariat général du Plan, Groupe de prospective des métiers et des qualifications, "Qualifications et prospective" series. Paris: La Documentation française, 2002.

Recruitment Difficulties, a Five-Region Survey

The analyses presented in this issue of *Training & Employment* are based on a 2001-2002 study carried out by Céreq and three of its associated regional centres, IRADES (Besançon), IREDU (Dijon) and CIA Céreq (Lille). Requested by the Department of Research and Statistics (Dares) at the French Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour and Solidarity, this study of difficulties in recruitment focused on the construction-public works and hotel-catering industries and various metal and electrical trades.

It gave rise to field research in some ten employment areas distributed over five administrative regions (Bourgogne, Centre, Franche-Comté, Nord-Pas de Calais and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur). Interviews were conducted among all the labour-market intermediaries: managers and agents of the local job centres, employment-training co-ordinators at the Departmental Divisions of Labour, Employment and Vocational Training (DDTEFs), heads of adult vocational training organisations (AFPAs, GREtas), project heads at the Regional Councils, members of ad-hoc structures such as the Employer

Groupings for Labour-Market Entry and Qualification (GEIQs), representatives of local communities, temping agencies, branch-level employers' organisations and so on. Interviews were also carried out with job-seekers and with two categories of employees: those who had just found a job in their particular field after more than six months of unemployment and those whose post did not correspond to their occupation. Among the companies interviewed were some which had hired a candidate corresponding to their recruitment criteria after several weeks or months of searching, others which had hired someone whose profile was not necessarily suited to the job opening and still others who were continuing to search or had abandoned the idea of hiring altogether.

The research team carrying out this study was composed of Richard Bieganski (Céreq), Mélanie Berroy (IRADES), Sophie Carel (IRADES), Jean-Marc Grando (Céreq), Christine Guégnard (IREDU) and Cathy Perret (IRADES).

FRENCH RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF OCCUPATIONS, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Updates

"Vocational Education and Training in the Era of the Market Economy"

An international conference organised by Céreq's Algerian counterpart, the Centre d'études et de recherche sur les professions et les qualifications (CERPEQ), was held in Algiers on 23-24 March 2003.

This meeting gave the Algerian research centre an opportunity to further its exchanges with its national and international partners. The main focus of the conference dealt with possible linkages between training providers and companies in the development of the training supply. Basically addressed at the business community and heads of public and private training programmes, it had three objectives:

- Making business partners more aware of the 'training' dimension and encouraging them to increase their involvement in the national training system;
- Identifying ways of fostering the organisational development of training in partnership with the companies, with a view to putting them into practice;
- Encouraging the training partners to place more emphasis on socio-economic realities and co-operate more closely with those involved in business activity.

Céreq was represented at the conference by Jean-Louis Kirsch, who gave a talk entitled "Training: What Can We Expect from It? What Can We Ask of It?" This presentation was part of the larger Céreq-CERPEQ co-operation programme set up in June 2002.

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"Analysing School Itineraries and Career Paths"

The LASMAS-Institut du Longitudinal, Céreq's associated centre in the Basse-Normandie region, hosted the tenth workshop on the longitudinal analysis of the labour market on 21-23 May 2003.

This special anniversary meeting, co-organised with Céreq, brought together 120 participants from various research laboratories and other institutions in France and other countries, including Belgium, Canada, Great Britain, Israel, Lebanon, Portugal and Spain. The first day's session featured a round table on the contribution of longitudinal data to research and decision-making in France. The second day was devoted to presentations by foreign researchers invited to discuss research underway in other countries. Their talks attested to widespread interrogations bearing not only on the realisation and comparability of surveys but also on the key issues motivating the community of researchers presently working on the training-employment relationship.

The final day's presentations had as their common denominator the analysis of pathways, whether in terms of schooling, assistance schemes or labour-market mobility. A parallel exhibition of posters and multimedia presentations acquainted participants with research in progress. The emergence of new research issues was amply demonstrated by topics such as downgrading at the time of hiring, 'atypical' jobs in artistic professions, the role of public jobs in labour-market entry paths or the school-to-work transition of PhD-holders. The papers from this tenth Longitudinal Workshop are forthcoming from Céreq: A. Degenne, J.-F. Giret, Y. Grelet, P. Werquin, eds. *Les données longitudinales dans l'analyse du marché du travail* [Longitudinal Data in the Analysis of the Labour Market]. Document no. 171, "Séminaires" series, Céreq, May 2003, 553 pp. 30 €.

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Colloquium

Céreq's associated centre in the Languedoc-Roussillon region and the Groupe de recherches sur les qualifications, la formation, l'emploi et le développement (GREQFED, ex-CERPEC) in Tangiers, Morocco, are organising a colloquium on "The Logic of Competences and Company Strategies in Developing Countries". This meeting, which will take place in Tangiers on 27-28 April 2004, is aimed at analysing the links between the notion of competence, company strategies and sustainable local development in developing countries.

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Administration

Céreq's new deputy director and head of research, José Rose, assumed his functions on 1 September 2003. Holder of a doctorate in economics and professor of sociology, Rose has taught at the University of Nancy and the University of Aix-en-Provence and served notably as vice-president of the University of Nancy II and director of the GREE (Research Group on Education and Employment), Céreq's associated centre in the Lorraine region. He replaces Philippe Méhaut, Céreq's deputy director since 1995, who has returned to LEST (Institute for Labour Economics and Industrial Sociology) in Aix-en-Provence.

Formation Emploi

Recent articles in Céreq's quarterly journal no. 82, April-June 2003

Special Issue

The Stakes of the New Information and Communication Technologies

Technologies de l'information et de la communication : quelles logiques professionnelles ?

[Information and Communication Technologies: What Are the Professional Logics Involved ?]

✍ Marc Zune

The occupations related to the information and communication technologies may be associated with five professional logics which express different relationships to occupational groups and forms of work organisation as well as labour markets. These logics have been established on the basis of a grid of indicators derived from concrete cases (bio-informatics, multimedia, e-publishing, e-banking, etc.). Such an approach brings to light the professional dynamics generally hidden at sectoral or macro-economic level. The article also explores their consequences for training policies and the stakes involved.

États-Unis : la pénurie d'informaticiens persiste

[United States: The Ongoing Shortage of Computer Specialists]

✍ Margaret Hilton

In the United States, the "dot-com" bubble burst in spring 2000 but the shortage of computer specialists continues. Several possibilities for remedying the situation are proposed here: making training programmes less theoretical and more representative of the working world; encouraging greater productivity among young computer specialists by creating an atmosphere of confidence within the companies; giving recent graduates an opportunity to use their basic training through experiments carried out during their in-company placements; creating regional networks to encourage the companies to train their employees as a means of developing loyalty (which is all the more important in view of the fact that the unfilled posts are largely due to the high turnover of the computer industry's workforce). These recommendations are drawn from National Research Council studies carried out in 2001.

Allemagne, pénurie de spécialistes en technologie de l'information et de la communication : la nécessaire réforme de la formation professionnelle

[Germany's Shortage of Specialists in Information and Communication Technology: The Necessary Reform of Vocational Education and Training]

✍ Markus Scheuer, Jochen Dehio, Rainer Graskamp, Michael Rothgang

In Germany, the shortage of labour specialised in information and communication technology is well known and there is an urgent need for measures which will meet the needs of German companies. In the long run, the success of the efforts of conception, development and spread of the new 'occupational certificates' will depend on a profound reorganisation of the traditional vocational education and training system. Such a reorganisation requires a clear political determination and adequate funding.

Comparaison internationale : à la recherche de jeunes diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur compétents en informatique

[The Search for Recent Higher-Education Graduates with Computer Skills: An International Comparison]

✍ Jean-Jacques Paul and Jake Murdoch

At the end of the 1990s, two-thirds of jobs required a high level of computer skills on the part of higher-education graduates; however, only 30 percent of these graduates indicated that they were sufficiently competent. The young people thus had to complement their initial training, notably through recourse to continuing training in order to acquire such skills, which are, moreover, accompanied by higher wages. These findings come from a survey carried out among 35,000 graduates from all disciplines in eleven European countries and Japan.

Une grande École à l'heure du progiciel : les apprentissages oubliés

[An Elite School in the Era of the Software Package: Forgotten Learning Experiences]

✍ Guy Friedmann and Gabriel Gérard

Using a new software package sometimes disrupts company units and can lead to overwork and increased deadline pressure. For this reason, the training period should be anticipated and conceived over time. This is the conclusion of a study on the introduction of Enterprise Resource Planning in a higher-education institution. The training should be tailored to the qualifications, forms of organisation and social relations. If this is not the case, the ergonomic weaknesses of the software package, the truncated participation of the employees and the disruption of the company's units break up the first learning sessions and makes the personnel assume responsibility for the complexity of the initiatives and the search for solutions to procedural failing in worsened working conditions.

Les méthodes de travail des différentes catégories de salaires s'uniformisent

[The Growing Uniformity of Working Methods Among Different Categories of Employees]

✍ Emmanuelle Walkowiak

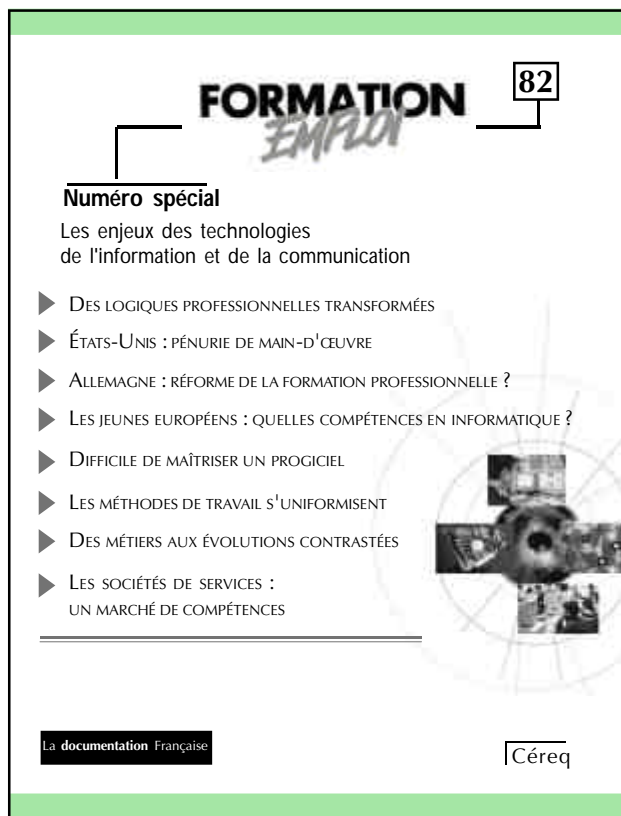
Economic research suggests that the organisation of work evolves with the use of technologies and human capital. This article shows how this joint evolution involves all categories of employees. Thus, with the rapid rise in the use of technologies and human capital, the working methods of the different categories of employees tend to become uniform. In addition, interpersonal skills seem more tied to modern forms of organisation than are the technical competences. Drawing on the 'Wage-earners' section of the 1997 survey on "Organisational Changes and Computerisation" carried out by the Department of Research and Statistics (Dares, Ministry of Labour), this analysis of the organisation of work thus focuses on changes in the company's social capital rather than on technological changes.

Technologies multimedia en réseaux et dynamiques des activités professionnelles : le cas de France Télécom

[On-line Multimedia Technologies and Dynamics of Work Activities: The Case of France Télécom]

✍ Alain d'Iribarne and Robert Tchobanian

On-line multimedia technologies are supposed to be responsible for present transformations in work activities. Is this really the case? This article is based on a study of the uses of four 'tools' associated with these technologies in three major groups of occupations at France Télécom,



the French public-service telecommunications company. On the one hand, by their very nature, these tools leave varied margins of freedom in their use. On the other, they form 'systems' with many other dimensions of company changes, such as their markets and products, the competences of the employees or organisational models. The relative importance of these dimensions differs from one occupation to another, however, and this situation explains the contrasts observed in career development.

Les services informatiques aux entreprises : un "marché de compétences"?

[Computer Departments in the Companies : A 'Skills Market' ?]

✍ Yannick Fondeur and Catherine Sauviat

In most cases, recent graduates get their start in the software houses before moving on to the 'user companies'. Through their numerous assignments and posts in computer departments, they acquire skills on the job which they know are largely transferable. But the recognition and utilisation of these competences depend on their ability to 'sell' themselves and take the risk of mobility. In the absence of any formal regulation of the labour market, this system of mobility might thus be termed a 'skills market' rather than an 'occupational market'.

→ This issue may be ordered from La Documentation française. Issue price: 14 €. One-year subscription (4 issues): 53 € for France, 56 € for Europe, 57.50 € for the French overseas departments and territories, 60 € elsewhere.

New Publications

"Modalités de participation à la formation continue et effets sur la carrière salariale : une approche économique"

[Forms of Participation in Continuing Training and Effects on Career-Long Wages: An Economic Approach]

✍️ Arnaud Dupray (Céreq) and Saïd Hanchane (LEST)

Éditions De Boeck in Brussels has just published a collective work devoted to the role of individuals in continuing vocational training practices in France and Wallonie, the French-speaking region of Belgium. Drawing on a variety of theoretical models and the analysis of master data, it includes studies which place the new contexts of continuing training in perspective, with regard to persons in employment as well as job-seekers. In their article, Arnaud Dupray and Saïd Hanchane offer an economic approach to participation in continuing training.

Using the findings of the "Continuing Training 2000" survey jointly conducted by Céreq and Insee, the French national statistics institute, the authors focus on training courses taken by private-sector employees in the context of their career objectives. The authors' econometric analyses show that training courses have a more significant impact on wages when they are employer-funded. And in addition, that this impact is even greater when the initiative for the training comes from the employee. Beyond these general findings, the authors propose a number of hypotheses and interpretative leads which might account for the differences in the training's 'effectiveness' in terms of wages by taking into account the specific features of these training courses, including their type, length, speciality or objective and whether or not they lead to a formal qualification.

→ J.-L. Guyot, C. Mainguet and B. Van Haepere (eds). *La formation professionnelle continue, l'individu au coeur des dispositifs*. Brussels: De Boeck, 2003.

"L'accès à l'encadrement intermédiaire dans la production industrielle. Comparaison France, Allemagne, Royaume-Uni"

[Access to Middle-Management Posts in Industrial Production. A Comparison Between France, Germany and the United Kingdom]

✍️ Martine Möbus (Céreq)

In a collective volume on the transformations presently affecting middle-management personnel, Céreq researcher Martine Möbus offers an article on the conditions of access to this function in three European countries. This contribution is based on a comparative study funded and published by the European

Commission's Leonardo da Vinci programme (I. Drexel et al., *Neue Karrierewege und lebenslanges Lernen: das Beispiel der Führungskräfte der industriellen Produktion* [CALL], September 2000).

It analyses the conditions giving rise to the implementation of new modes of access to supervisory posts within the companies. It also offers a classification of the different ways of replenishing middle management in industrial production. The British companies are more likely to rely on higher-education graduates for the post of supervisor, in contrast to German companies, where middle management remains in the hands of the *Meister*. In French companies, two paths of access to supervisory posts have been coexisting for the past twenty years.

→ R. Le Saout and J.-P. Saulnier (eds). *L'encadrement intermédiaire. Les contraintes d'une position ambivalente*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002.

"France, la difficile émergence du savoir professionnel"

[France, the Difficult Emergence of Work-Based Knowledge]

In an article in the *DIE*, published by the German Institute for Adult Education, Céreq project leaders Annie Boudier and Jean-Louis Kirsch place the accreditation of prior experience in the French context in order to understand the scope and issues at stake.

This is a context where it is difficult to speak of vocational training without mentioning general training, or to consider the training of adults without referring to that of young people. The authors thus offer a historical reading which takes these dimensions into account and shows in turn the difficulty of recognising the existence of specific professional knowledge in a system of thought strongly marked by Cartesianism.

In spite of everything in the new law which constitutes a real break with French tradition, two major elements preserve the national roots of the existing measures. The first is the reinforced tie with the development of an activity standard. The second is the weight of the diploma, and certification in general. An accreditation of experience which does not take this situation into account would probably have little chance of actually being used.

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The German version of this article is available on the *DIE* website: www.diezeitschrift.de

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