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Abstracts

WORKLESS MOTHERS AND WORKLESS FATHERS. AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTERGENERATIONAL LEGACY IN EUROPE

Gabriella Berloffa, Eleonora Matteazzi, Alina Şandor, Paola Villa

This paper examines how the intergenerational transmission of worklessness varies according to the gender of parents, and the gender of their children, across different groups of European countries. In particular, it aims at disentangling the relative role of mothers and fathers in influencing the risk of not being successfully employed for their sons and daughters (in the early stage of their working life), and at assessing the extent to which these effects are mediated by education and other individual characteristics. To this end, we use a sample of men and women aged 25-34 from the EU-SILC cross-sectional data (2011), and information about the working condition of their parents when young adults were aged about 14. We show that fathers and mothers play different roles in different country groups. Fathers' effect is generally mediated by education and other individual characteristics (with only few exceptions), whereas mothers play a role also after controlling for individual characteristics, particularly for their daughters. Our results call for new policy initiatives to improve labour market efficiency and to reduce the inequalities linked to paternal (and maternal) employment in Mediterranean (and CEE) countries.

Keywords: intergenerational legacy, worklessness, young adults, gender, European countries.

WORKING CONDITIONS IN MINIMUM WAGE JOBS

Matthias Dütsch, Oliver Bruttel

There is abundant research on the effects of minimum wages and on the characteristics of minimum wage workers, but there is a lack of evidence on the working conditions in minimum wage jobs. However, this is a highly relevant issue because health research indicates that poor working conditions can lead to severe health problems. Based on the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2018, a nationwide representative study of the German workforce comprising approximately 20,000 individuals, we provide insights into the physical working conditions of workers in minimum wage jobs, and characterise their work situation. Using propensity score matching, we compare workers in minimum wage jobs with workers in higher-paid jobs, controlling for factors such as sociodemographic, industry, and company-level characteristics. Our results show that workers in minimum wage jobs face detrimental working conditions. They must cope with unfavourable physical and environmental working conditions, often have little say in how their work is organised, and are less socially embedded in their workplaces than workers in higher-paid jobs.

Keywords: minimum wage work, low pay, working conditions, propensity score matching.

JOB UPGRADING IN SWEDEN: THE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES MODEL AND THE JOB SECURITY COUNCILS' RE-EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Elisa Staffa

Many labour economists claim that the developed countries' employment structures have been polarising, during the last years, due to several change forces, like technological change and globalisation. In this paper, the attention is focused on Sweden: it seems to have experienced not a process of polarisation but upgrading in the employment structure. This could be due to several elements of the institutional context, such as the labour market policies model. Through it, the Swedish economy welcomes change, and guarantees labour flexibility. Job Security Councils (JSCs) are institutions born from the social partners, and support laid-off workers in the re-employment process. We analysed individual-level data on assistance provided in a re-employment process to a sample of blue-collar workers that belong to the JSC Trygghetsfonden (TSL). All the workers received coaching support, some of them also joined training courses ("treatment"). Using IPWRA models, a differential treatment-effect analysis is carried out to empirically investigate whether the action of the labour market institution could contribute, albeit limitedly, to the upgrading trend of the employment structure. The results in terms of re-employment probability and re-employment quality (upgrading in terms of wage and job qualification) are very good, nevertheless they cannot be attributed to the "treatment" training, because it is not significant for the outcomes.

Keywords: job polarisation and upgrading, Swedish labour market institutions, active labour market policies, re-employment support, Job Security Councils, differential treatment-effect analysis.

REFLECTIONS ON ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND INTERDEPENDENCE IN A POST-COVID-19 SOCIETY

Grazia Ietto Gillies

Taking the lead from the publication of the 2020 UNCTAD Trade and Development Report, the paper reflects on two issues arising from it: a) the need to invest in organisational change alongside investment in physical and digital infrastructure; and b) the increased interconnections and interdependence between countries since WWII. The current interconnections are due to economic exchanges as well as to environmental problems caused by climate change and health problems arising from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The paper highlights the multiplying effects of interaction between these three areas of interdependencies: economic, environmental, and health. Section 4 discusses the key role of transnational corporations (TNCs) in the interconnections and interdependence of countries. It considers their role in integration between countries, as well as their fragmentation role towards labour, suppliers, and governments. Section 5 discusses multilateralism and, specifically, the need for a new type of multilateralism to take on board the new reality of the XXI century; a reality that encompasses the transnational corporations, among which the digital TNCs have a key role.

Keywords: organisational change, countries interdependence, international trade, FDI, transnational corporations, digital transnationals, multilateralism, environment, Covid-19 pandemic and economics.

WHO CAN WORK FROM HOME? THE POTENTIAL AND PROSPECTS BEYOND THE EMERGENCY

Silvia Duranti, Natalia Faraoni, Valentina Patacchini, Nicola Sciclone

Thousands of people are being forced to work from home during the lockdown following the outbreak of the coronavirus emergency. An important element to assess the effects of the pandemic on employment is how many individuals can work from home. This paper proposes a methodology to identify the share of jobs that can be performed in a smart working mode in Italy, using data from the Sample Survey on Occupations (ICP), carried out by the National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (INAPP). We find that the share of individuals who can work from home is 32.6% in Italy, with some territorial heterogeneity due to economic specialisations, which penalises workers in the southern areas of the country. We also document considerable variation in the potential to work from home across industries and workers' socioeconomic characteristics; women and native and mature workers, as well as workers in advanced services, are more likely to be employed in teleworking occupations. This paper also identifies workers in essential and non-essential industries that could work from home during the lockdown, limiting the risk of contracting Covid-19 while continuing to earn a salary.

Keywords: smart working, remote work, occupations, factor analysis, cluster analysis.

PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES AND FIRM PERFORMANCE: WHEN THE EMPLOYER INVOLVES WORKERS

Tiziana Canal, Valentina Gualtieri

By using the IV Survey on Quality of Work in Italy by the National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (INAPP), the paper empirically explores the link between, on the one hand, the adoption of specific practices of development and involvement of workers, and, on the other, some performance indicators of companies, including the propensity to innovation. The results obtained – supported by the literature that considers the direct participation of workers as an element of the increase in the quality of work – suggest investing in policy interventions aimed at encouraging the adoption of participatory models in companies. The adoption of models that involve workers could improve both the well-being of individuals in the workplace, and firm performance.

Keywords: quality of work, performance, work organisation, direct participation.

INFLATION AND CURRENCY DEVALUATION IN ITALY (1971-1979)

Antonio Di Ruggiero, Mauro Rota

Italy experienced higher and more persistent rates of inflation than other western economies during the Great Inflation (1971-1979). The policy response in Italy was prompted by the idea that wages were the carrier of inflation, and that the devaluation of the lira was the only viable response to sustain firms' profit rates and aggregate demand. We discuss the relevance of this policy approach, and conclude, against the prevalent view, that the devaluation worsened the inflation spiral while wages played only a marginal role.

Keywords: inflation, exchange rate policy, cointegration, Italian economy.

THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY TURNS 100

Flavio Quaranta

On the occasion of the centenary of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the paper aims to give a short account of the history of this institution. After going through the stages that, since the beginning of the XX century, led to the spin-off from the Ministry of Agriculture, decided by Prime Minister Francesco Saverio Nitti in 1920, the article deals with the term of office of Mario Abbiate, the first Minister of Labour and Social Security. The ministry was abolished by the fascist regime in 1923 (together with the Higher Labour Council), and was reinstated after the tragedy of WWII, and the restoration of democratic freedoms.

Keywords: history, labour law, welfare state, social policies, social insurance.