

**Werk, arbeidsorganisatie en
herstructurering in de kennissamenleving:
een kwalitatief onderzoek naar
veranderende kwalificatievereisten**

6FP – Citizens and Governance in the KBS

2.1.3 Changes in work in the knowledge society 2005-2009

HIVA-K.U.LEUVEN – Belgium: co-ordination

FORBA – Austria

LONDONMET - UK

FTU – Belgium

UPSPS – Greece

UT – Netherlands

UESSEX - UK

ISB – Hungary

ISF MUNCHEN - Germany

FZK – Germany

IET – Portugal

IRES - Italy

SINTEF - Norway

ATK – Sweden

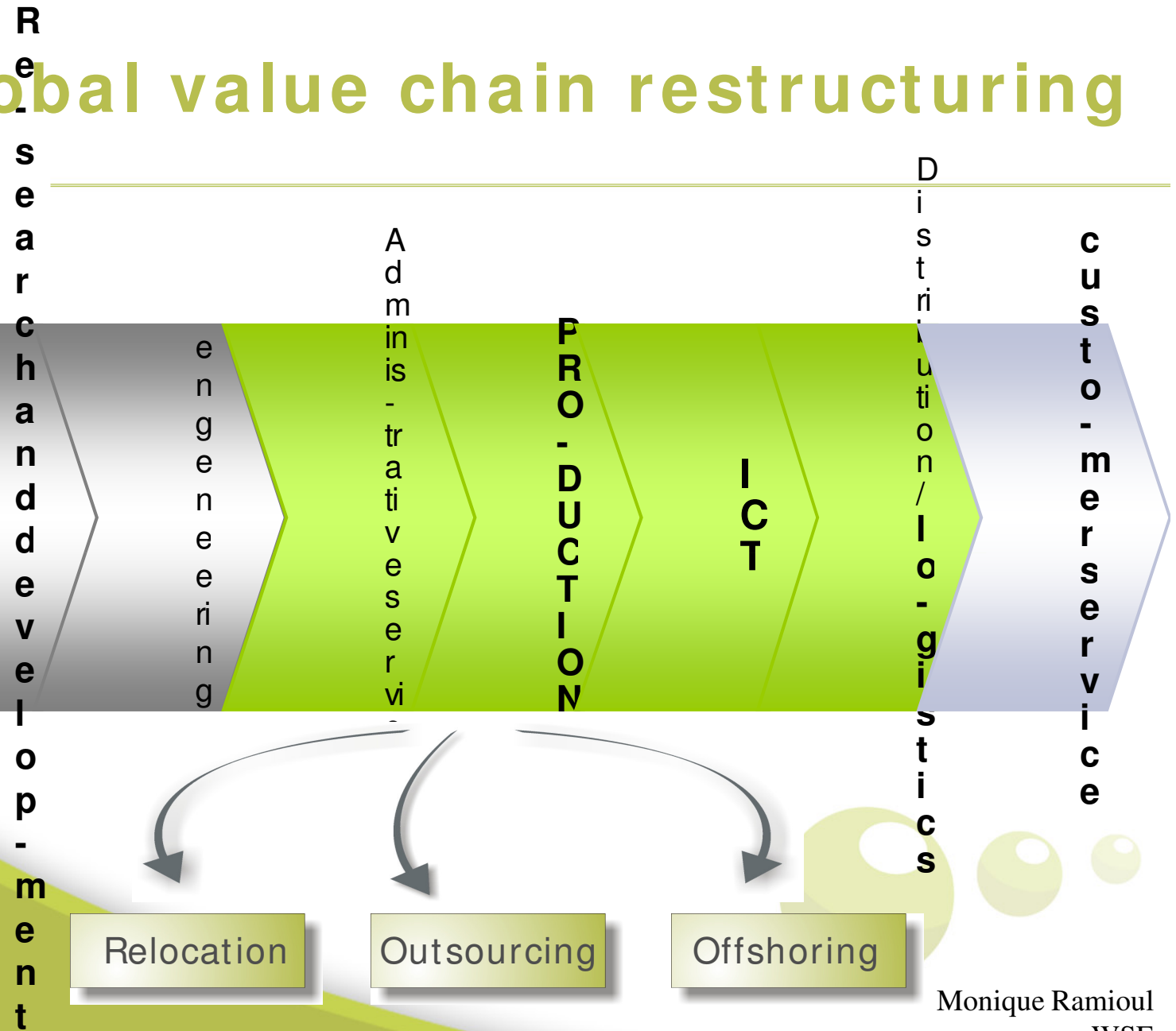
CEE-CNRS – France

IS - Bulgaria

AMI - Denmark



Global value chain restructuring



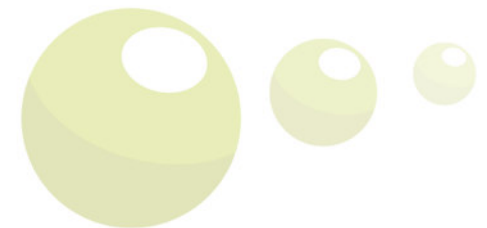
WORKS – empirical data

Business functions investigated:

- **Production**
- **R&D, ICT services**
- **Logistics, customer services**

Sectors investigated:

- **Food, Clothing, IT**
- **Services of general interest (post, railways)**
- **Public sector administration**



WORKS - Empirical data

- **58 organisational case studies:**
 - Selected out of matrix combining: (5)business functions X(5)sectors X(13)countries
 - Restructuring event during past 5 years (2002+)
 - Workplace level interviews
- **30 occupational case studies**
 - Occupational groups in the business functions,
 - knowledge workers, production workers and customer service workers
- (Analysis of EU databases from establishment and employee surveys:
 - CLFS, EWCS, CHP
 - EU and national establishment surveys)

Corporate strategies and changes in work

Are organisations adapting as a response to:

- ...global value chain **restructuring** implying the externalisation of – codified - work
- ...increased **speed** and shorter business cycles which are reported in all sectors
- ...increased competitiveness and the need for more **innovation** capabilities

And with what effect on the use of knowledge and on skills requirements

Innovating companies and competent employees?

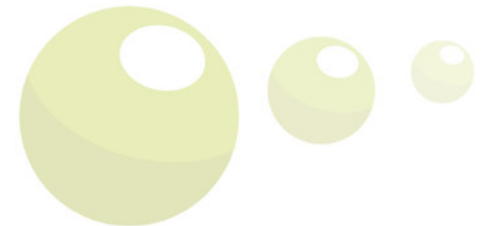
1. GVC restructuring, organisational changes and (indications of) upskilling

- **Quantitative effects:** lowskilled work ‘disappears’
- **Shift of core business** in restructuring companies
- The need for **moving up** the value chain
- These may lead to **new task compositions** for the remaining workforce **eg. clothing, food**
- These may lead to **investments** in a learning organisations **eg. Software programming suppliers**

Innovating companies and competent employees?

1. ...

- **Acces** to training structures and ILM at the level of the value chain
- **Teamwork** across company boundaries
- Growing role of and interaction with **customer**
- These may lead to new learning **opportunities**
- These may lead to diversified career **trajectories**
- **eg. mergers/acquisitions in IT and customer services**
- **eg. projectwork in R&D in IT**



Innovating companies and competent employees?

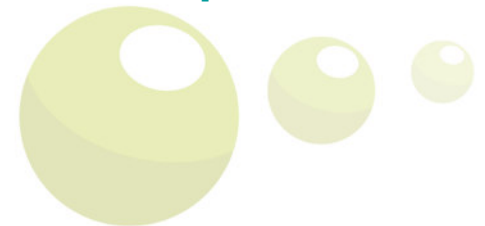
2. Counteracting general trends

- Overall **standardisation and formalisation** eg. **Software programming**
- Mixed effect of accompanying **technologies** eg. **Customer service jobs in public sector, ERP systems**
- Trends of internal **tendering** eg. **Internal competition in (IT) project work**
- Growing need for shorter **market distance** eg. **Design and creative jobs**
- Increasing **speed** of work
- These may lead to **less discretion and learning**
- These may lead to **less knowledge circulation**

Innovating companies and competent employees?

2. Counteracting effects of restructuring

- Restructuring is preceded by **codification** eg. **Public services to customers**
- Formalisation related to **work over distance** and M&A eg. **SLA's in IT, formalised training in software**
- **Loss of knowledge** because of fragmentation and VC lengthening eg. **Confection**
- Organisational flexibility is shifted to workers' skills and **informal capabilities** to compensate for dysfunctional rigidities eg. **Administrative processes**



Innovating companies and competent employees?

3. New skill needs emerging

- Related to organisational and **technological changes** accompanying the restructuring **eg. Clothing, ERP, CAD, new fabrics**
- Required combination and integration of **(conflicting) competences** and speeding-up of business **eg. In R&D jobs**
- Growing importance of **non-professional skills**, not necessarily strengthening these **eg. Public services, software development, creative jobs**

Innovating companies and competent employees?

4. Thus upskilling seems:

- Highly determined by the position of the firm in the value chain
- Closely related to **work intensification**, not necessarily beneficial for **QoW**
- Growing importance of non-professional skills may **jeopardise** competence development of core professional skills
- Capabilities are **under pressure** due to overall work intensification and speeded-up businesses

Knowledge workers and creative occupations (Valenduc e.a.)

- tensions between **creativity** and speed/continuous market feedback
- Broadening of the skills **beyond the core** professional skills
- **Internal dynamics** of the profession is perceived as more determinant than "external" restructuring processes
- **Diversification of organisational careers**: hierarchical patterns, technical expertise, multi-organisational patterns
- **"Competence-based" labour market** (dress designers and software professionals) versus **"professional" labour market** (researchers)

Service occupations (logistics and customer services)

- Wide variety in educational and training **background**
- **Service relationship** as main component of the skills mix
- Job contents linked to a role in an **organisation**
- Increasing **segmentation** between organisational careers and fragmented careers (mainly in outsourced CS)
- **Rigid career models** (back-office model) challenged by fewer-levels career paths (front-office model)"

Manufacturing in clothing and food

- Ongoing "networked automation", but permanence of **routine work**
- Simultaneous increasing need for **specialised (mid-level) technical skills** and disappearing of traditional manual skills.
- Fragmented work biographies, often marked by chronic **flexibility**
- In the clothing sector: organisational career = evolving qualification through **on-the-job training** and experience.
- **Insecurity** about the future: career progression is understood as gaining security

Conclusions

Analysis of **up/deskilling effects** in qualitative research shows the importance of:

- **work organisation**: huge diversity in sectors, firms and business functions (activities)
- **characteristics of jobs**, not just of occupations
- **Informalities** and tacit knowledge
- the link with **working conditions** (flexibility pressures, contract insecurity,...)

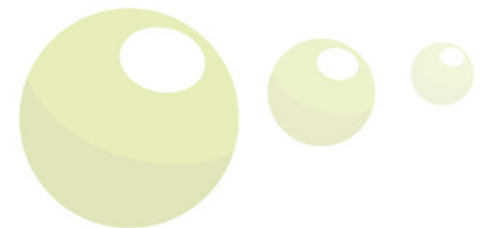
WORKS Thematic reports

- Value chain restructuring in Europe in a global economy
- VCR and company strategies to reach flexibility
- VCR and the use of knowledge and skills
- VCR and the role of technology
- Changing careers and trajectories
- Working time, gender and worklife balance
- Health and safety and the quality of work: psychosocial risks
- VCR and Industrial Relations and workplace representation
- Changing patterns of segregation and power
- VCR and changes in work: future perspectives

works
CHANGES IN WORK

The WORKS project

www.worksproject.be



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