

## Abstracts WSI-Mitteilungen 1/2004

Michael Opielka

### **Social political decision in health policy - reflections on citizens insurance and health premium**

The paper discusses the reform proposals concerning health insurance which have been on the political agenda in Germany since the year 2003 with reference to their inherent conceptions of social justice and their consequences for the “conservative” welfare regime which has existed in Germany to date. Starting with a typology of social justice – the liberal achievement-oriented justice, the conservative need-oriented justice, the social democratic justice of redistribution, and the justice of guaranteed participation – three reform models are debated: “Bürgerversicherung” (citizens insurance), “Gesundheitsprämie” (health premium) and “Soziale Gesundheitsprämie” (social health premium). The citizens insurance is compared to the Austrian model, and the health premium to that of Switzerland. The concept of a citizens insurance corresponds best to the idea of participation justice, as is favoured in this paper. Finally it is pointed out that such a concept demands a much more elaborated theory of public goods.

Ralf Himmelreicher/Holger Viebrok

### **State support for private old age pension provision – some distributional aspects**

This study shows that a reduction of the quality of the German compulsory pension insurance scheme combined with the introduction of a voluntary state-supported additional pension scheme (the so-called Riester pension) will lead to growing inequality in the levels of incomes for pensioners – due to the inequality of the determining social factors (for example differences in income and education). It could be possible to compensate old-age poverty at a later date, for example within the framework of a need-oriented basic insurance cover. However, the acceptance of the compulsory pension insurance scheme is in danger of being undermined and may lead to strategies to avoid payment of old-age contributions.

Jochen Ernst/Reinhold Schwarz/Carsta Wiemers

### **The changing doctor-patient relationship – Empirical results on participation of tumour patients in decision-making**

The role of the patient in the medical care system is undergoing change. Traditional forms of relationship between doctors and patients are gradually giving way to a more partnership and patient-oriented model. Strengthening the legal position of patients enables them to take an active and independent role in decision-making processes affecting themselves. Health care reforms foster these developments through several measures which are designed to give an impetus to a greater degree of efficiency. However, mutual relationships between the patient and the doctor cannot be implemented if the general framework conditions of medical care are disregarded. Our study of tumour patients in “Shared Decision Making” does not just point out conceptual problems of this approach but also highlights the practical limits to the implementation of measures relating to particular aspects of the disease and points out problems concerning available resources.

Silvia Krömmelbein

### **Work communication and identity – A contribution to the „subjectivisation of work“**

A substantial dimension of the "subjectivisation of work" arises from the changed role of work communication. By way of internal and strategic decentralisation as well as indirect control structures, an expansion of horizontal communication takes place, which remains structured by time-efficiency compression, and market orientated and hierarchical modes of co-ordination. The mobilization of social interaction enforces the identification with the occupational role and makes the development of role distance more difficult. Moreover, both hierarchical structures of work and internal and external competitive relationships, enhance strategic communication patterns of individual enforcement and control. Subsequently the extension of communication does not necessarily promote self-identity and ability to interact, but definitely triggers new forms of communicational stress.

Werner Schmidt

### **Works council elections 2002 - in large establishments of the metal and electrical industries**

During the works council elections 2002 there was a drastic drop in turnout amongst staff in numerous large establishments of the metal and electrical industries. Taking as an example ten establishments in Baden-Wurttemberg it is demonstrated that there is a close relationship between the decrease in the turnout and a change in the composition of the workforce. It is observed that turnout drops primarily according to the growth in the proportion of highly qualified employees with academic training. As it can be expected that this group will grow further, fundamental changes in the politics of works councils seem to be necessary.

Elke Ahlers/ Astrid Ziegler

### **The fallacy of the small company as ‘the job motor’. Evaluating the WSI works council survey according to size of companies**

On the basis of employment statistics from the Federal Employment Service (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit) and the WSI company and works council survey, the article examines the period 2000 to 2002 and the size of the companies where staff was increased or decreased. It is revealed that small companies with up to 49 employees were not the job motor within the German economy. According to the employment statistics for this period it was rather the middle-sized companies (50 to 249 employees) that created the most jobs in west Germany and were also responsible for the least number of job losses in east Germany. Employment in small west German companies rose at below average rates. And in east Germany practically every second company down-sized, and the small companies were frequently hit. Large companies with more than 250 employees displayed above-average increases in staff levels. The theory that ‘small companies are the job motor of our economy’ is becoming increasingly difficult to verify.

Martin Brussig / Ute Leber

### **Does informal further training reduce existing differences in qualification levels? – Results of a recent firms-survey**

As several studies have shown, further training is more prevalent among skilled employees than less-skilled employees and white-collar workers more than blue-collar workers. The expectation that further training could reduce the skill gap between qualified and less qualified employees could not be confirmed empirically. However, most of the existing studies have so far focused on formal ways of learning whereas informal training activities have not been considered. Since informal training activities are widely in use, and since informal training activities are supposed to have low access thresholds especially for less qualified employees, the neglect of these informal opportunities in further training is unsatisfactory. Using the data of a representative firm survey, this paper discusses potential differences in the participation in employer-provided further training with respect to formal as well as to informal training activities.