

Impact of restructuring on health and safety and quality of work life

Psychosocial risks

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Presentation:

Daniele Di Nunzio, IRES

Authors of the thematic report:

Daniele Di Nunzio, IRES
Pernille Hohnen, NRWC
Peter Hasle, NRWC
Hans Torvatn, SINTEF
Lisbeth Øyum, SINTEF

Aims and methodology

- Analysis of the **consequences of restructuring on health and safety and quality of work life** focusing on **psychosocial risks**, in order to identify new problems and new protection opportunities led by restructuring.
- **58 organisational case studies and 33 occupational case** in several European Countries are analysed with the support of data, literature and previous reports drafted from the WORKS project.
- Analysis **in accordance with five sectors** (Clothing industry; Food industry; ICT; Public Administration and Service of General Interest) **and across sectors** and **across the value chain** with a description of the differences related to: business function, skill levels and occupational groups, different changes led by restructuring.
- Main findings of the report results from a **detailed analysis of the case studies**, six dimensions model (Kristensen, 1999)

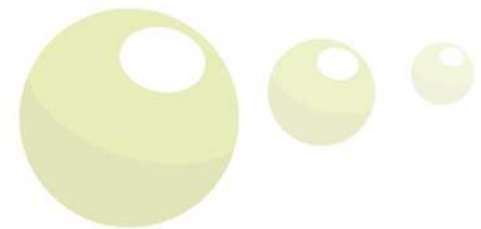
Theoretical model

Six dimensions model

- Demands in work
- Influence over work
- Social Support
- Recognition and Reward
- Predictability
- Meaning



Psychosocial
Risks



Six dimensions model have originally been developed by **Kristensen (1999)** as indicators of work-related stress

Six dimensions model across changes: *analytical summary*

Positive and negative consequences of restructuring on psycho-social health: influence of the main changes on the six dimensions of the Kristensen model

(- = new problems; + = new possibilities)

<i>Changes during restructuring</i>	<i>Six dimensions</i>					
	Demands in work	Influence over work	Social support	Recognition and Reward	Predictability	Meaning
Market and customer orientation		-			-	- and +
Standardisation, formalization and centralization	-	-	- and +		+	-
Increase in surveillance		-				
Intensification in work	-					
Specialization and increase in skills	-	+	-	- and +		- and +
Team work			- and +			
Increase in flexibility			-		-	
Restructuring of the working time	- and +				- and +	
Change in work force consistency	-				-	
The high frequency of the organizational changes	-	-	-		-	-
Changes in industrial relations		-	-			

Negative consequences

Considering the effects on all six dimensions:
negative effects outweigh the positive ones.

There is a trend towards:

- passive work organization *(low influence in work)*
- intensification *(high demands)*
- uncertainty *(low predictability)*
- individualization of responsibilities *(low social support)*

This leads to **very stressful working conditions**, and the case-studies tell a story of a **worsening psychosocial work environment as a result of restructuring**.

High Strain Restructuring

Combined effect of *intensification in demands in work and loss of autonomy* through an increase in standardisation creates a drive towards what Karasek called the most stressful of the four types of organisations described by his model:

the “*high strain organization*”, characterised by a low influence over work and a high demand.

Our findings are consistent with findings of the Dublin Foundation:
European Working Conditions Survey, 2000 and 2005.

Cf. Greenan, N., Kalugina, E., & Walkowiak, E. (2007),
Trends in work organisation, CEE, France,
D9.2.2, Internal Working Paper, WORKS-Project.

New opportunities

However, during restructuring there are some opportunities for workers:

- an increase in *meaning* in their job thanks to customer orientation and the increase in skills;
- more *social support* thanks to team-work and the presence of clear and no-strict standard procedures;
- benefits of *recognition and reward* and, rarely, in the capacity to *influence the work* through the acquisition of new skills;
- a good restructuring of working time can help coping with the increase of the *demands in work* and the low *predictability*.

Intervening factors during restructuring

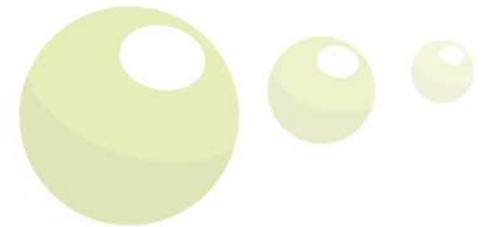
The consequences for h&s led by restructuring depends on a large set of intervening factors:

Contextual level:

- management of the change process
- local legislation and local welfare state
- changes content
- local level of representation
- status and bargaining power of the work force
- level of involvement and information of the work force
- position of the company along the value chain
- sector

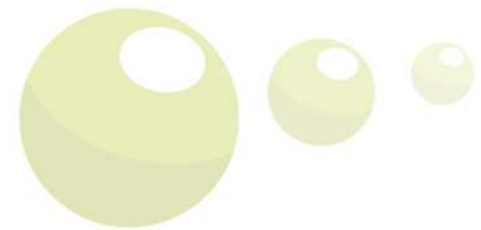
Individual level:

- workers' position in the value chain
- employment group
- educational and social level
- skills level
- gender
- ethnicity



Unequal risk exposure along the value chain

Risks are higher for companies down in the value chain and for more vulnerable and marginal workers in the productive process.



Recommendations - 1

 A more explicit coverage of change and restructuring should be included in both National and European Health and Safety Legislation.

Risk of social dumping: clients can move work to suppliers with cheaper and more hazardous working conditions.

Client has a key role in controlling the health and safety conditions of the employees, but the supplier at the legal employer has the responsibility for health and safety.

Assure an high level of H&S along the length of the value chain in particular during restructuring and changes.

E.g. Norwegian Work Environment Act of 2005: *'during planning and implementation of changes in the undertaking, assess whether the working environment will be in compliance with the requirements of this Act, and implement the necessary measures'*.

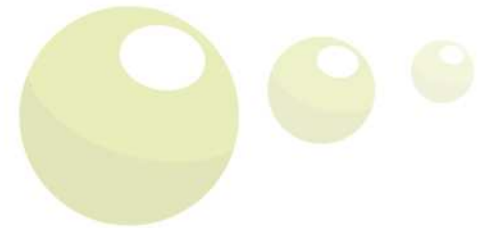


Recommendations - 2

High quality changes management for a high quality development

It is necessary to develop measures which can give a *voluntary push* for higher quality of change management, and which can reduce workload and improve workers influence.

In particular, the high frequency of the changes needs ***a reflexive and participative process to avoid the risks.***



Recommendations - 3



Management of demands in work and in work shift to reduce the workload.

Demands in work is due not only from the intensification in work– even if this is the main factor – but also from other processes, as well as:

- the need for training and self-training;
- the standardization and the related increase in bureaucratic activities and formal documents;
- the negative change in the number of employees and the related uncertainty that lead worker to accept a considerable work load;
- the high frequency of the changes.

Thus, the **right government of all these processes** certainly plays an important role to reduce the workload and to avoid new problems.

In particular, ***work shift organisation*** is a key-factor to manage the demands in work (by a shift manager and a team agreement).

Moreover, ***workers' involvement in the work process*** and in the restructuring is necessary to better manage demands in work considering workers' needs

Recommendations - 4



Strengthen workers' influence: Health and Safety Committees and Works Council.

After and during the restructuring the influence of employees on the changes and on the work content is low.

Lack in influence is a cause of stress, uncertainty and anxiety.

An important challenge is to ensure the workers' influence over work.

Moreover it is important to consider the aspect concerning *the division of worker influence in Health and Safety Committees and Works Council.*

There are strong possibilities of role conflict between the two types of worker representatives.

Good cooperation might of course ameliorate the problem.

E.g. Denmark: improve the discussion of the different problems (occupational, organizational, health and safety, etc.) in the same forum.

Recommendations - 5



A strong attention to the negative consequences of flexibility for health and safety, considering:

- the low bargaining power;
- the low influence over work;
- the ineffective normative protection;
- the specific difficulties for health and safety due to a flexible work biography.

Flexicurity: it is necessary to consider the H&S Security.

Besides the economic-occupational questions, flexibility entails another problem, that is an increase in the health risk for workers.

Insecurity is at the same time psychological and physical.

It is determined by specific features of non-standard contracts, non-standard work process, non-standard tasks: the frequent changes in the team-group, in the processes and tasks, in the working time, in the company, in the job, etc.