

Abstracts

Gábor Kártyás: Stepping stone or dead end? What role may temporary agency work play in employment policy?

After the millenary it is generally believed that temporary agency work might play an important role in labour markets. As a flexible form of employment it may help to employ those who could not find work in a traditional employment relationship, and serves as a springboard towards more stable, better paid jobs. While the European Union, the International Labour Organization and the Hungarian legislator take these characteristics as evidence, it has not been scientifically proven yet. Clarifying the employment policy aspects of agency work nowadays is of crucial importance, as Hungarian regulation faces its biggest reform ever during the implementation of directive 2008/104/EC on temporary agency work. This paper examines what theoretical possibilities agency work offers for permanent employment to the ones outside the labour market, and how these are supported by empirical research. The results can help us to make a well-established decision on how agency work shall be regulated in future.

Jean-Paul Fitoussi and Éloi Laurent: Macroeconomic and social policies in the EU 15: the last two decades

This draft of our contribution to "The politics and economics of change in European social models" book project, is focused on the relation between macroeconomic policies and social models in the EU 15 during the last two decades. It first describes the shift towards the Maastricht "culture of discipline", i.e. the effect of the implementation of rules governing macroeconomic policies management for euro area countries, assesses its consequence in terms of economic performance and evaluates how those rules are playing out so far in the current crisis. We then attempt at detailing the second shift towards "structural reforms" of social models to show how it has resulted in a weakening of "automatic stabilizers" that, therefore, can't fully play their role in the current crisis. Finally, we offer some analytical insights to make sense of those two shifts.

István Budai: After 20 years ... with self criticism, or what does social worker education do for shaping professional identity?

The autumn of 1990 can be regarded as the time for restarting social worker education in Hungary, and now 20th anniversary offers a good opportunity for the professionals working in education for a comprehensive and/or detailed, emotional or rational overview and analysis of the activities and results of the past twenty years. This is the time to explore the difficulties and obstacles, to systematically sort out the experiences and to draw the conclusions about the past period – what

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did it mean, what could it achieve? Based on Hungarian and international literature and experience, the study looks into one of the most essential issues of social work profession: the formation and changes of the professional identity of social workers in the course of their education. The paper gives an overview about different approaches how to define professional identity and what the Hungarian social worker education has done for shaping this identity. The author gives a critical analysis of the Sopron Conference as well, and describes the duality of academic-professional attitude that has been present in the education from the very beginnings. Finally, the advantages and limits of competence-based education and standardisation is examined.

Erzsébet Berki: Labour and consumption: what's the use of a Sunday outing?

The paper studies the correlation between production and consumption from the aspect of the ways the limited nature of consumption influences the production. Its main thesis is that in the so called welfare societies the limited nature of consumption restrains the growth of production whilst the capital's urge for productivity growth is unalterable. The author also studies the correlation between productivity and employment growth, between consuming ability and the aggregation of knowledge, between the time spent for labour and for consumption. The paper sets forth that the consumption can be increased by the more even distribution of goods (income, knowledge and spare-time) which would lessen the tension between the urge for productivity growth and the limited consumption and would induce positive social processes.

Petra Baji – László Gulácsi: „Patient payment” – willingness of the population to pay for health care services

As part of project ASSPRO CEE 2007, 8 focus group discussions and 7 in-depth interviews were carried out with health care consumers, providers and health policy makers during the summer 2009 in Hungary. Their objective was to study the opinion and attitudes of the Hungarian population towards patient payments. The results indicate that there is a gap between the opinion of policy-makers and health insurance representatives on the one hand, and health care consumers and providers on the other hand, with regard to patient payments. While policy-makers see formal patient payments as an adequate instrument for increasing the efficiency of health care utilisation – decreasing unnecessary visits and promoting healthier life style; consumers mostly consider these payments a resource for health care provision. Respondents agreed that patient payment is not the adequate instrument to abolish informal payments for health care services. They also doubt whether the introduction of patient payment would be able to fulfil expectations thanks to abuses and “back-stairs”.

esély

2010/4

Social Policy Journal

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