Impact of digitalisation on job quality in public services

Homecare and Public Employment Services

R. Peña-Casas, D. Ghailani & S. Coster

European social observatory – OSE

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« How TU can use collective bargaining to uphold and improve working conditions in the context of digital transformation of public services »
Berlin 26-27 June 2018
1. Aim of research
2. Conceptual framework and methodology
3. Findings case studies
   3.1 Information gathered
   3.2 Digitalisation pathways in two sectors
   3.3 First assessment influence digitalisation
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   3.6 awareness on social dialogue, practices and policies
5. Conclusions
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1. Aim of the research

- The aim of the research is to assess to what extent digitalisation changed the way people work in the sectors in which EPSU organises, with a dedicated focus on job quality and job content, on how that content is being/has been transformed by digitalisation.
- Focus on two sectors/occupations: homecare workers and workers in public employment services (PES)
- Geographical coverage: UK, France, Spain, Italy
- Exploratory project and method
- Future research prospects
2. Conceptual framework

CONTEXT CHARACTERISTICS

WORKERS' CHARACTERISTICS:
- GENDER
- AGE
- EDUCATION
- ORIGINE

LABOUR CHARACTERISTICS:
- ECONOMIC SECTORS
- OCCUPATIONS

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS:
- POLICIES
- REGULATIONS
- INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

DIMENSIONS OF JOB QUALITY

WORKING CONDITIONS
- WORK ORGANISATION
- WORKING TIME
- HEALTH & SAFETY
- SKILLS & TRAINING
- EARNINGS
- QUALITY OF CONTRACTS
- WORKERS RIGHTS

TASKS AND RELATED SKILLS

PHYSICAL TASKS
- STRENGTH
- DEXTERITY

INTELLECTUAL TASKS
- INFORMATION PROCESSING
- PROBLEM SOLVING
- INFORMATION GATHERING
- CREATIVITY/RESOLUTION

SOCIAL TASKS
- SERVING/ATTENDING
- TEACHING/TRAINING
- SELLING/INFLUENCING
- MANAGING/COORDINATING

PROCESSES RELATED TO TASKS

CONTENTS
- PACE
- ROUTINE
- TEAMWORK
- AUTONOMY
- LEARNING
- CONTROL
- PROTECTION

OUTCOMES FOR WORKERS

PHYSICAL HEALTH
MENTAL HEALTH
CONCILIATION WORK & SOCIAL LIFE
CAREER PROSPECTS
JOB AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
SOCIAL PROTECTION

DIGITALISATION

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2. Methodology

![Diagram showing methodology]

- **Desktop Research**
  - Job Quality Dimensions
  - Tasks
  - Trade Unions’ Positions

- **Impact of Digitalisation**

- **Applied Exploratory Research**
  - Homecare
  - Public Employment Services

- **Focus Groups**
  - Workers and Trade Unions

- **Outcomes for Workers**

- **Challenges for Trade Unions**

- **Practices**

- **Questionnaires**
  - Workers and Trade Unions

**Countries**
- France
- Italy
- Spain
- United Kingdom

**Approach**
- Top-down
- Bottom-up
3. Findings

Case studies
### 3.1 Overview of collected information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Focus groups Place</th>
<th>Focus groups Participants N=39</th>
<th>Questionnaires N=94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Dijon 02/05/18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Paris 06/03/18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAIN</td>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Madrid 29/05/18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Madrid 28/05/18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED KINGDOM</td>
<td>PES</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>West Bromwich 23/05/18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITALY</td>
<td>PES</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Digitalisation in the sectors

**PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

- Older process implementation (around mid-90’s)
- Include all tasks of the work of a job counsellor
- Sedentary work (workplace+telework)

**HOMECARE WORK**

- Recent introduction
- Limited to digital tool on smartphones of homecare workers
  - Work agenda / follow-up
  - Recording WT
  - Communication with dispatching, colleagues and users
- Core work of homecare workers not concerned
- Nomad work
## 3.3 First assessment impact digitalisation on job quality aspects – Own evaluation

**Question:** Indicate the degree of relevance of these potential effects of digitalisation for your daily work? Note from 1 - not relevant at all - to 10 – totally relevant (63 valid answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work dimensions</th>
<th>Home care</th>
<th>Public employment services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work intensity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the pace of work</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensification of work</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contents of tasks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of control over task contents</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking over routine analytical tasks</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns also analytical and decision-making tasks</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blurring of boundaries between occupations or merges them</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasks execution</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of control over working processes/methods</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control over work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of work and workers</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance oriented management</td>
<td>+ -</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss/standardisation of social relationships with users</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss/standardisation of social relationships with colleagues</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital skills gap</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Earnings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on earnings</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work life balance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blurring of frontiers between work and social/family life</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>- +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcomes for workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes for workers</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health outcomes</td>
<td>+ +</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health outcomes</td>
<td>+ -</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prospects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career prospects and employment security</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rights</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social protection rights</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 PES (1) : work dimensions

Positive impacts

• Better organisation through rationalisation of tasks
• Better time management
• Better internal and external communication
  – Between departments in the workplace and decentralised agencies
  – New channels for users
• Less travels and physical meetings
• E-training allows
  – to move at your own pace in the learning process,
  – offers more thematic choices,
  – is easier to access in a decentralized way,
  – reduce the need for travel

Negative impacts

• Increased workload
• Increased pace of work
• Technical problems delay execution of tasks → frustration/stress
• Increased routinisation of tasks bc simplification
• Loss of control over tasks contents → dematerialisation of work
• Less contact with users and colleagues
• Digital skills gap of users
• Tensions in team bc difference in ability with digital skills
• Weak vocational training related to digital tools
• e-training :
  – substitute to group training
  – Loss of group dynamics, interaction
  – Time not well taken into account in WT
  – Concerns about use as performance benchmark
3.4 PES (2) : outcomes for workers

Positive impacts

- Decrease physical aggressivity / harassment from users
- No impact on earnings
- No impact on social protection rights
- No estimated impact on workers rights
- Right to telework: work life balance
- Right to disconnect : positive improvement for FR, needed for ES

Negative impacts

- Physical health:
  - Fatigue,
  - Vision,
  - musculo-skeletal,
  - less mobility = cardiovascular problems, obesity
- Mental health:
  - Mental overload,
  - Stress,
  - Demotivation, loss of meaning
  - E-harassment (internal and external),
    - Mental exhaustion / burn out
    - Breakdowns
- Digital skills gap within teamwork
- Right to telework : overtime, not for all, problems of ressources
- Right to disconnect : not enough respected by employers and users
### 3.5 Homecare workers (1) : dimensions of work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive impacts</th>
<th>Negative impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Better work planning and organisation</td>
<td>• Planning of work:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Better centralisation of information</td>
<td>– Difficulty to go back and correct errors when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Better interaction with colleagues and supervision</td>
<td>problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Improved management of working time and time travels</td>
<td>– Rapid changes without sufficient prior warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– More disponibility for users at home</td>
<td>• Recording of WT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– No possibility to check WT previous periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Underestimation of ‘social time’ in scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>time of tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Underestimation of standby WT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Underestimation in estimated commuting time to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>home of users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feeling standardisation of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Less direct communication with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Weak vocational training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.5 Homecare workers (2): outcomes for workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive impacts</th>
<th>Negative impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• No impact on earnings</td>
<td>• Mental health:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No impact on social protection rights</td>
<td>– Mental fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No estimated impact on workers rights</td>
<td>– Stress bc need to consult electronic planning and quickly answer sollicitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Right to telework: difficult for a homecare worker</td>
<td>• Physical health:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Increase in traffic accidents bc use of smartphone while driving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 awareness of social dialogue, practices and policies

- Very limited workers awareness of social dialogue, practices and policies in the field of digitalisation
- Bc employers exclude bargaining on digitalisation issues claiming it is only a management question, part of employers’ right to self-organisation
- Weak mention of right to disconnect and telework as positive achievements of social dialogue and policies
- Laws on data protection
- Good practice of TU: use of digital tools and channels to inform and communicate with workers, or to train them
5. CONCLUSIONS

- Impact of digitalisation is concrete and affects all dimensions of job quality and workers.

- Measuring the impact of digitalisation at the level of occupations and tasks blurs the differences between countries, as the content of the work itself is largely similar across countries.

- Impact varies significantly according to sectors and occupations, in terms of the tasks performed and the skills applied.

- The impacts of digitalisation vary according to the sectors and occupations considered, in terms of the tasks performed and the skills applied.
  
  - In the public employment sector, digitalisation is a long-standing fact and concerns all the tasks and skills mobilised by job counsellors to do their job. The effects mentioned by the workers therefore cover all the dimensions of employment, notably increases of the workload and the pace of work and decreases in the control of the job content.

  - In the home care sector, digitalisation is more recent and is limited to the use of digital tools to organise work and task planning, but do not affect yet the core of the job of home care workers, home-based support for dependent persons. The impact of digitalisation mainly concerns the organisation and the planning of tasks.

  - Workers in both sectors emphasize significant effects on physical and mental health.

- Need to better understand and study the differentiated impacts of digitalisation according to sectors and occupations:
  
  - At inter-professional, sectoral and company levels of bargaining
  
  - at local, regional and national levels

- Need to integrate the issue of the impact of digitalisation on all aspects of job quality in a cross-cutting way in the context of collective bargaining and the definition of policies.
4. Recommendations 1

- Guarantee that digitalisation is not detrimental to users. **Keep the users at the heart of the services** and reach a right balance between digital tools and personalized services to users. Ensure that quality of services is guaranteed (monitoring, evaluation, updating...)

- **Understanding:** Need to carry on detailed studies of the impact of digitalisation at local/regional/national levels, across sectors and occupations, to be equipped to better understand impact of digitalisation on work dimensions and prepare to changes in occupations. These studies should be part of an integrated approach under the auspices of multi-stakeholders alliances, including social partners.

- Increase the **availability of digital skills** through the education and training system /tackle the digital divide. Allows each citizen/user/worker to make the most of technological advances.

- Promote **access to learning and training** (including e-learning and e-training, but not exclusively). Digital skills and wide range of skills.

- **Improve vocational training** on the use of digital tools
4. Recommendations 2

- As digitalisation impacts job quality across all its dimensions, it should be placed more centrally in social dialogue agendas as a **cross-cutting concern**, at interprofessional, sectoral and company levels. (notably on impact on physical and mental health).

- Impact of digitalisation should be part of national, regional, local as well as European levels of governance in a **multi-faceted perspective**, not only focused on economic growth or productivity gains. Digitalisation is not just a management/production tool. Social dialogue structures should be consulted and associated from the beginning of the process to the end.

- Improve and/or **develop regulations as safeguards** against potential negative outcomes of digitalisation: across all levels of governance and social dialogue

- **Rights**: protect existing rights (digital access for all/tackling digital gaps, privacy, workers rights ...) and introduce new ones: right to disconnect?
THANK YOU!

Contact:
penacasas@ose.be