

The Maintenance Crew for the Human Machinery

The book, written as a doctoral thesis, examines the development of the personnel function in labour organisations. Starting from a history of personnel management in the Netherlands during the second half of the 20th century, it analyses the structural transformation in the societal-economic environment from which originate far-reaching changes in employee relations. The transformation from the post-war model of guided capitalism towards its neo-liberal variety has serious consequences for intra-organisational power relations which result in a one-sided articulation of interests. This erodes the moral fabric of the labour organisation as a social institution. In this context special attention is paid to the wide-spread erosion of corporate ethics in the 21st century. The intensification of the labour process - a consistent phenomenon in industrial capitalism – has got a new impulse, due to the lack of countervailing power within an eroding system of labour relations as well as to superior production techniques and technologies. These tendencies have a deteriorating effect on the substance of the personnel discipline, ending up in a loss of function.

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