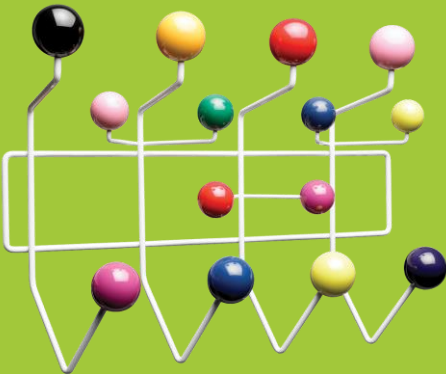


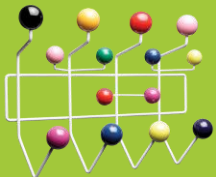
Job and employment quality in prisons: threats, low road policies and anchors for a way forward



Monique Ramioul
HIVA-KU Leuven

Employment quality of prison staff: overview

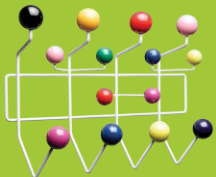
1. A short reminder of theory
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What is employment quality ?

Reminder:

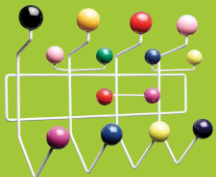
- Job quality: refers to the **attributes of the job** itself (independent of worker characteristics)
- Employment quality: relating to broader concepts linked to the features of the **employment relationship**
- Work quality: refers to the ways and conditions under which the activity of work can affect the **well-being** of workers
- we use the general term employment quality



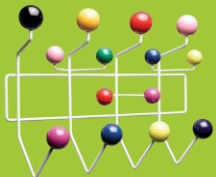
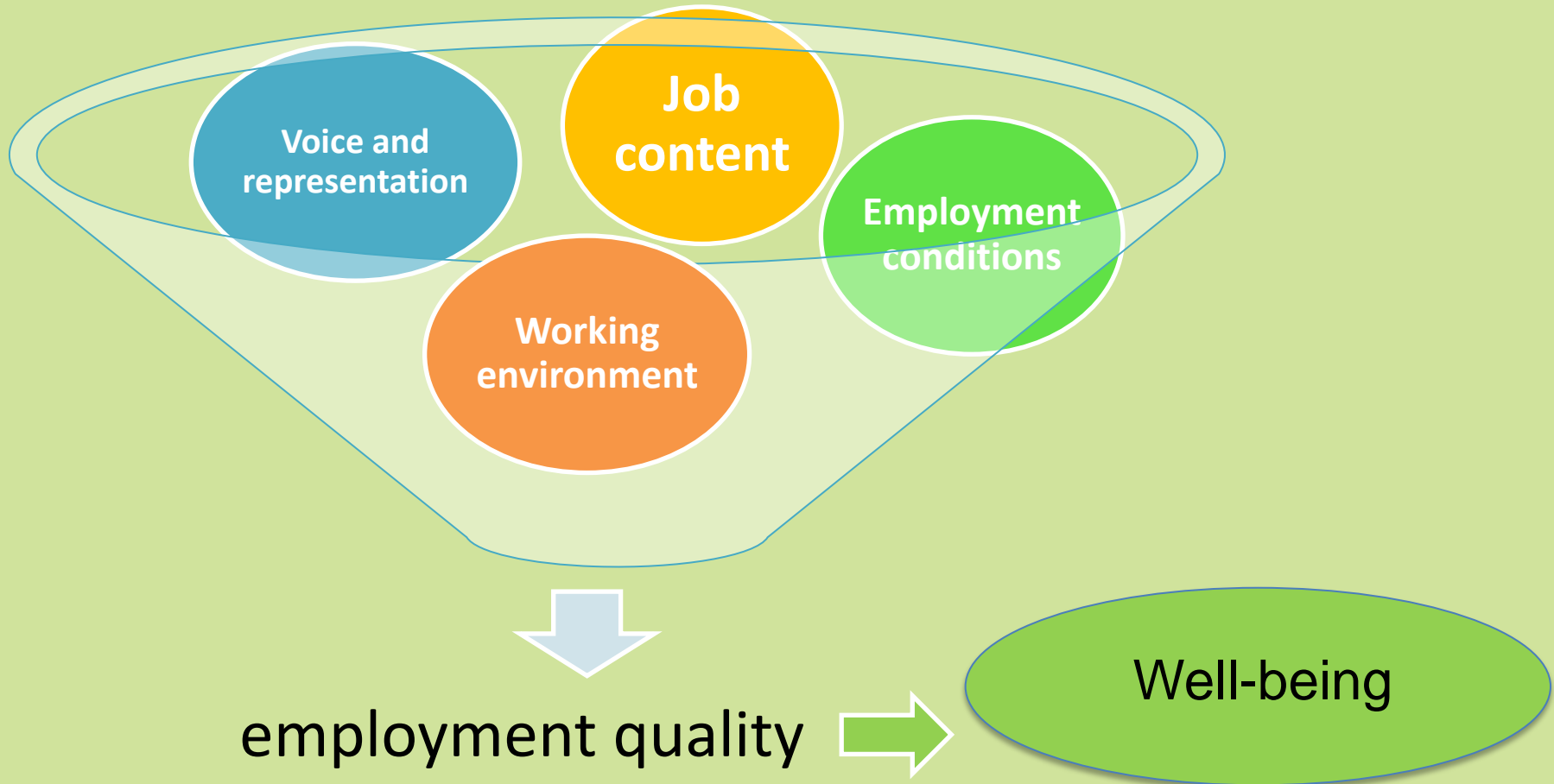
A short reminder....

Some characteristics of good jobs :

- Decent wages and working conditions
- Learning and career opportunities
- Working time arrangements and autonomy
- Security
- Health and safety
- Say, participation and representation
- Contact with other persons
- Support from colleagues and superiors
- Feedback and information
- Autonomy (over speed, method, sequence,...)
- Balanced mix of complex and easy tasks
- No repetitive tasks
- Limited work intensity

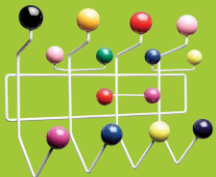


employment quality and well-being

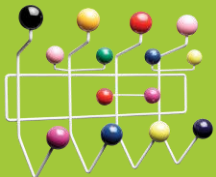
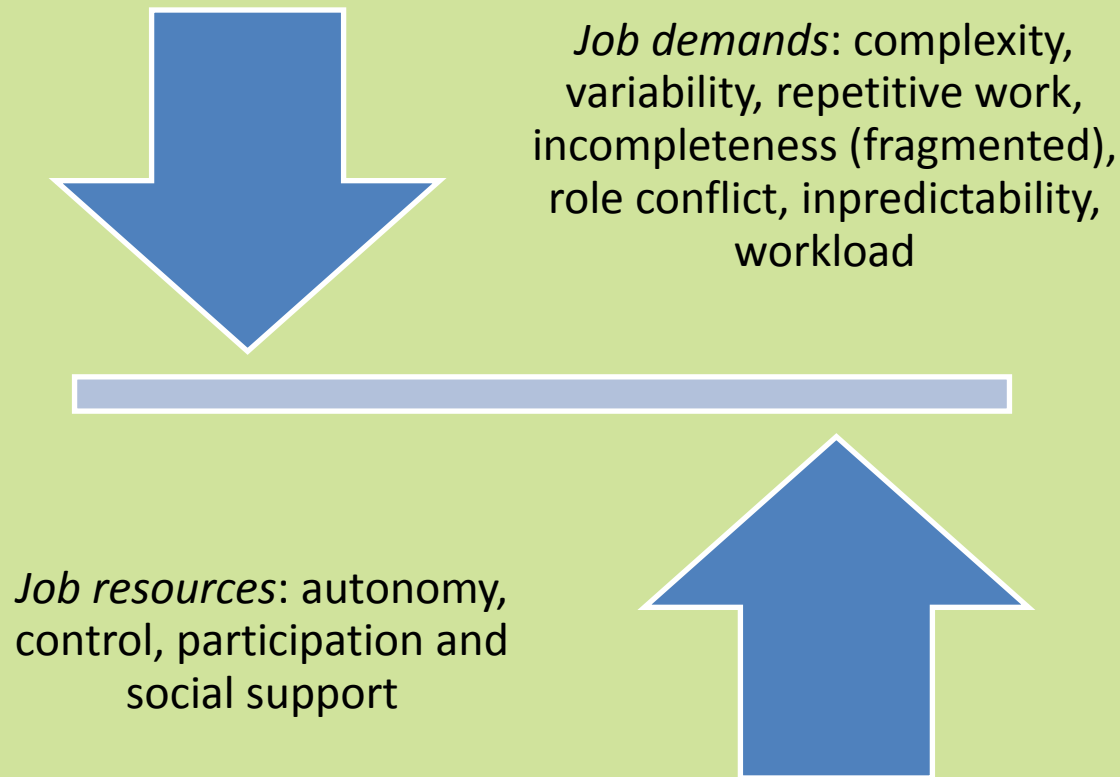


Why is job content important?

- psychological strain is not so much the result of workload, but the result of the **joined effect** of workload plus the level of decision-making power a worker has to cope with workload and the social support (s)he experiences
- Control, autonomy, support and participation reduce the risks of stress caused by high job demands



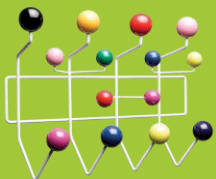
Why is job content important?



Why is job content important?

Direct participation, or job control, at 3 levels:

- Job autonomy (individual task level)
- Support: possibility to ask supervisor or colleagues for assistance and feedback
- Organisational level decision latitude: consultation in regular meetings on unit/organisation level about work organisation, processes, quality issues, targets, etc.



The role of work organisation

Fragmentation: fragmented work, repetitive, no variation AND little control, autonomy and participation



bins



dust



dust



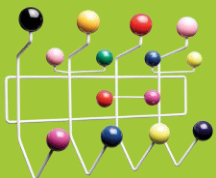
desks



windows

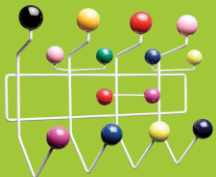
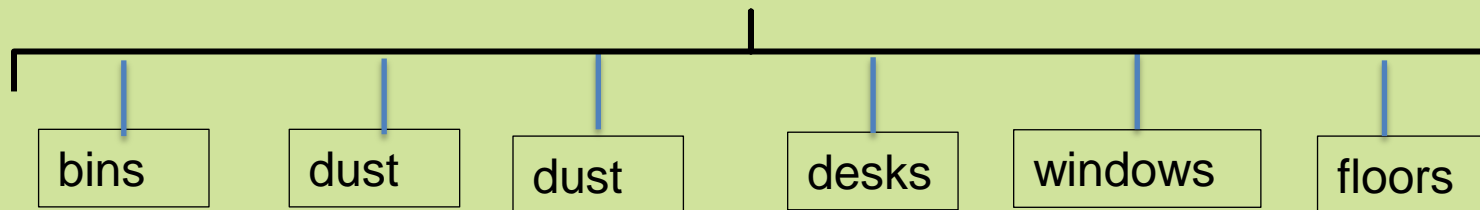


floors



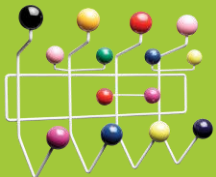
The role of work organisation

self-organised teamwork: variable tasks, good balance, support, autonomy and control



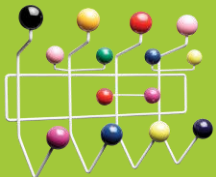
Outcomes

- Direct outcomes: social, physical and psychological consequences
 - Stress, job satisfaction, work engagement, burn-out, learning possibilities, work life balance
- Indirect outcomes: personal and work outcomes:
 - Work experience, turnover-intention, innovative behavior, need for recovery



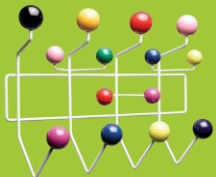
Employment quality of prison staff: overview

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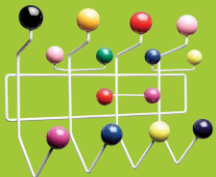
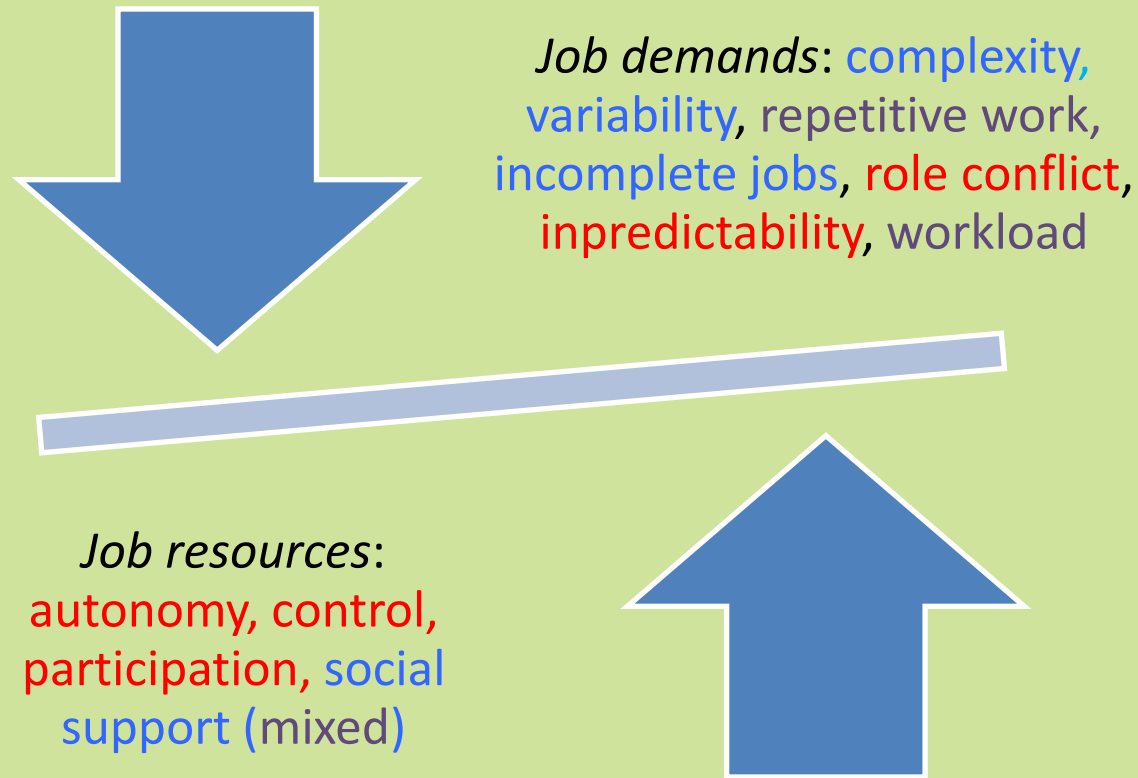


Employment quality of prison staff: overview

What is typical for the employment quality of prison staff?



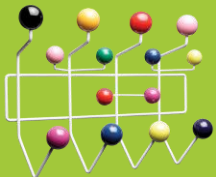
Employment staff of prison staff



Employment quality of prison staff

Job demands

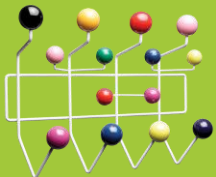
- **Role conflict**: difficulties building up positive role identities: guard or helper
- **Inpredictability**: Working with inmates often results in failure (e.g. recidivism)
- **Variability, completeness**
- “**Jail craft**” (a nostalgic, multi-layered, narrative or discourse, and set of tacit practices which are drawn on by officers to manage the **affective and practical challenges** of working with the demands of the changed prison environment (Peacock et al., 2017))



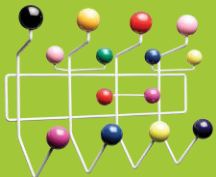
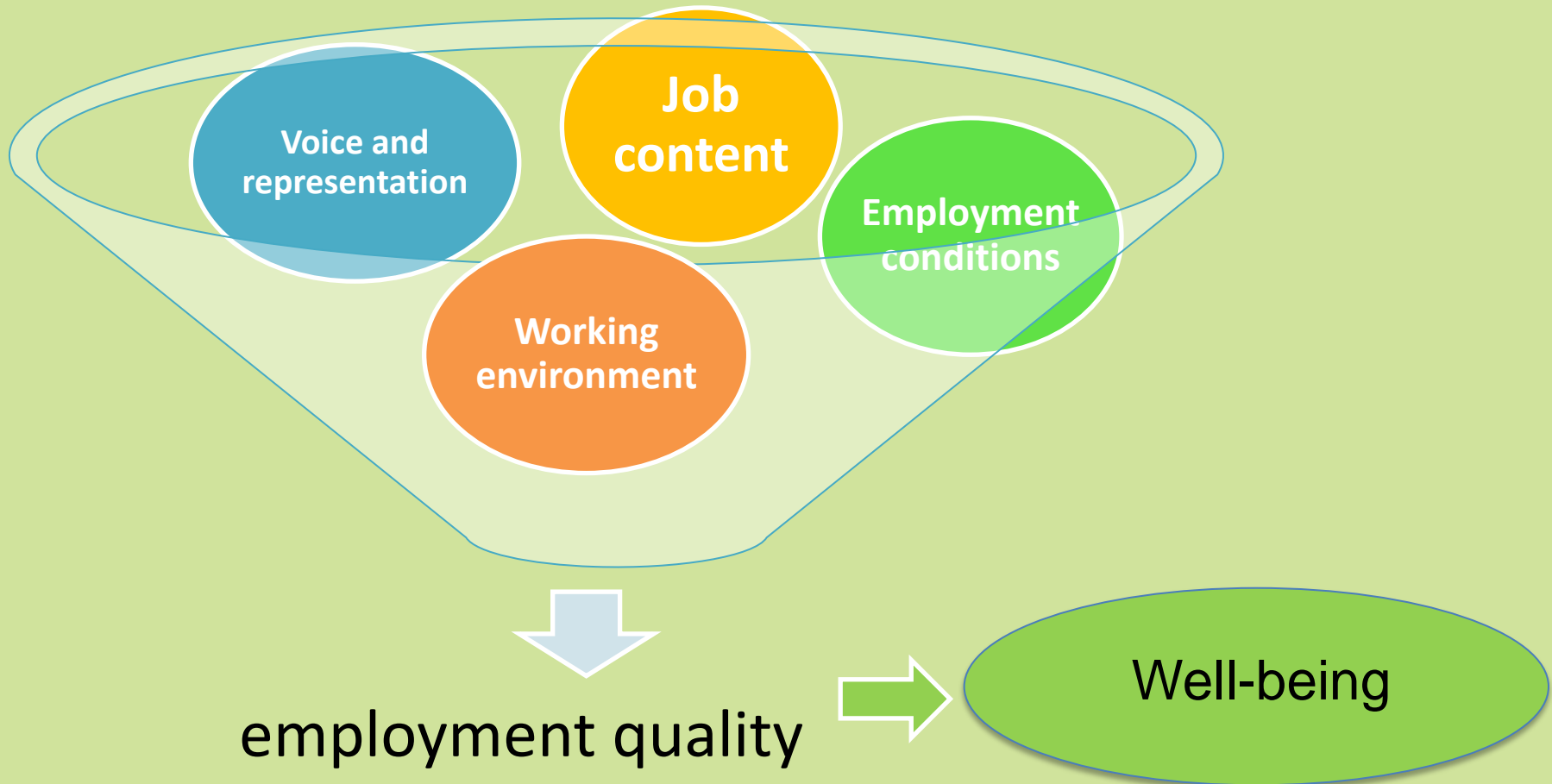
Employment quality of prison staff

Job resources

- **Autonomy and control:**
 - Strict reglementation by work rules
 - Hierarchical organization
 - Available information
 - Frequent communication breakdown and disturbances in daily communication
- Social support :
 - contact, **peers**, **colleagues**, **supervisors**
 - **Isolated workstations**
- **Participation:**
 - lack of participation in decision-making



Employment quality of prison staff: **threats**



Threats to job content

Threats to job demands

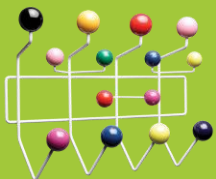
- Increasing workload: staff shortages and prison overcrowding
- Complicated and diverse inmates (culture, language, aging, combined problems, sharp raise in pre-trial detainees)
- More unpredictable outcomes of work

Threats to autonomy

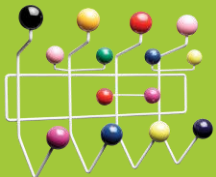
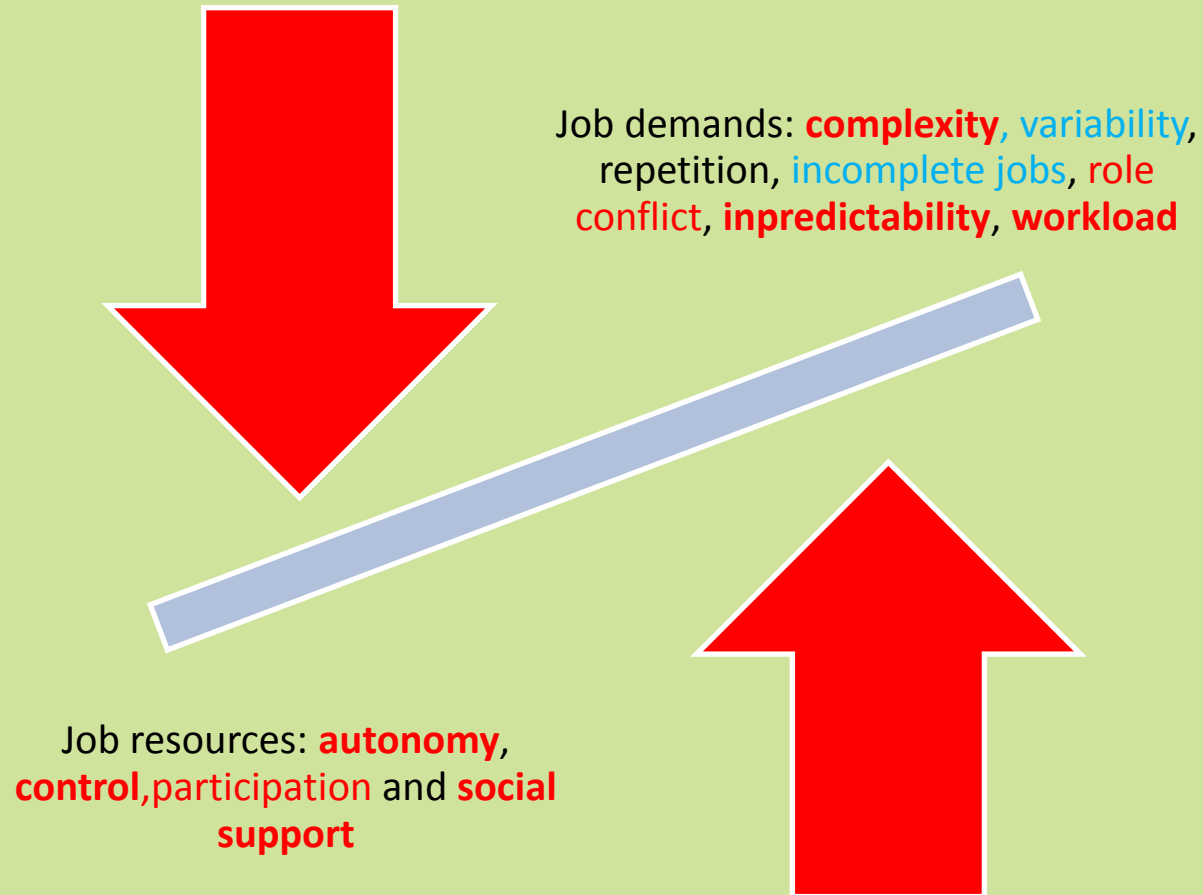
- Inadequate training of prison staff to face this increased complexity and unpredictability of work, growing work intensity and more duties
- Less time and resources for adequate activities and support: increased role conflict
- Growing use of surveilling systems

Threats to social support

- Leadership from a distance
- “Blasé” professionals: managers instead of committed civil servants



Threats in job content



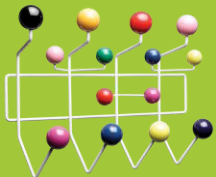
Threats to working environment and employment conditions

Threats to working environment: occupational health and safety

- Complicated and diverse inmates
- less training, more overcrowding and violence
- Work infrastructure: prisons in bad repair and overcrowding create safety issues
- Aging workforce

Threats to employment conditions

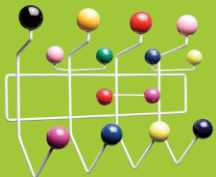
- Inadequate training of prison staff (and supervisors)
- Working times: due to understaffing and overcrowding (overtime), need for flexibility
- Job insecurity: temporary contracts, redundancies due to austerity, privatisation and outsourcing
- Pay levels: generally under pressure
- Administrative practices



Threats to participation and labour relations

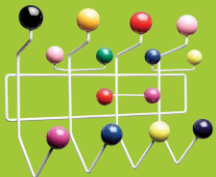
Threats to participation and labour relations

- Privatisation and outsourcing (support functions first)
- Leadership from a distance: expansion of methods of monitoring: target setting, audits, professionalization.
- Goal: Staff behaviour and thinking becomes aligned with centralized objectives.
- Result: competition between prison staff
- Blasé professionals: managers instead of committed civil servants



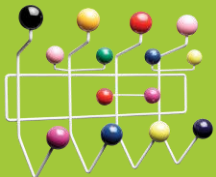
Threats to participation and labour relations

Changes in management style result in a shift in the occupational culture of prisons. Social support of peers and management often decreases, effectively making job demands more difficult to manage.



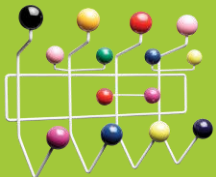
Employment quality of prison staff: outcomes

- Direct outcomes: social, physical and psychological
 - Work-related stress skyrocketed
 - Risk of burn-out is substantial
 - Increase in drugs and alcohol abuse
 - Low job satisfaction
- Indirect personal and work outcomes:
 - Absenteism increased slightly
 - Staff turnover is high



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The role of policy

Production regime

- How is **work organised** in view of economic added value (e.g. Cost-cutting/productivity versus quality)

Production employment interface

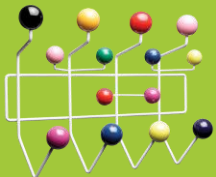
- Education & **training** system

Employment regime

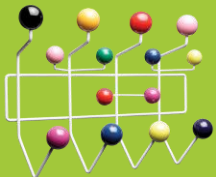
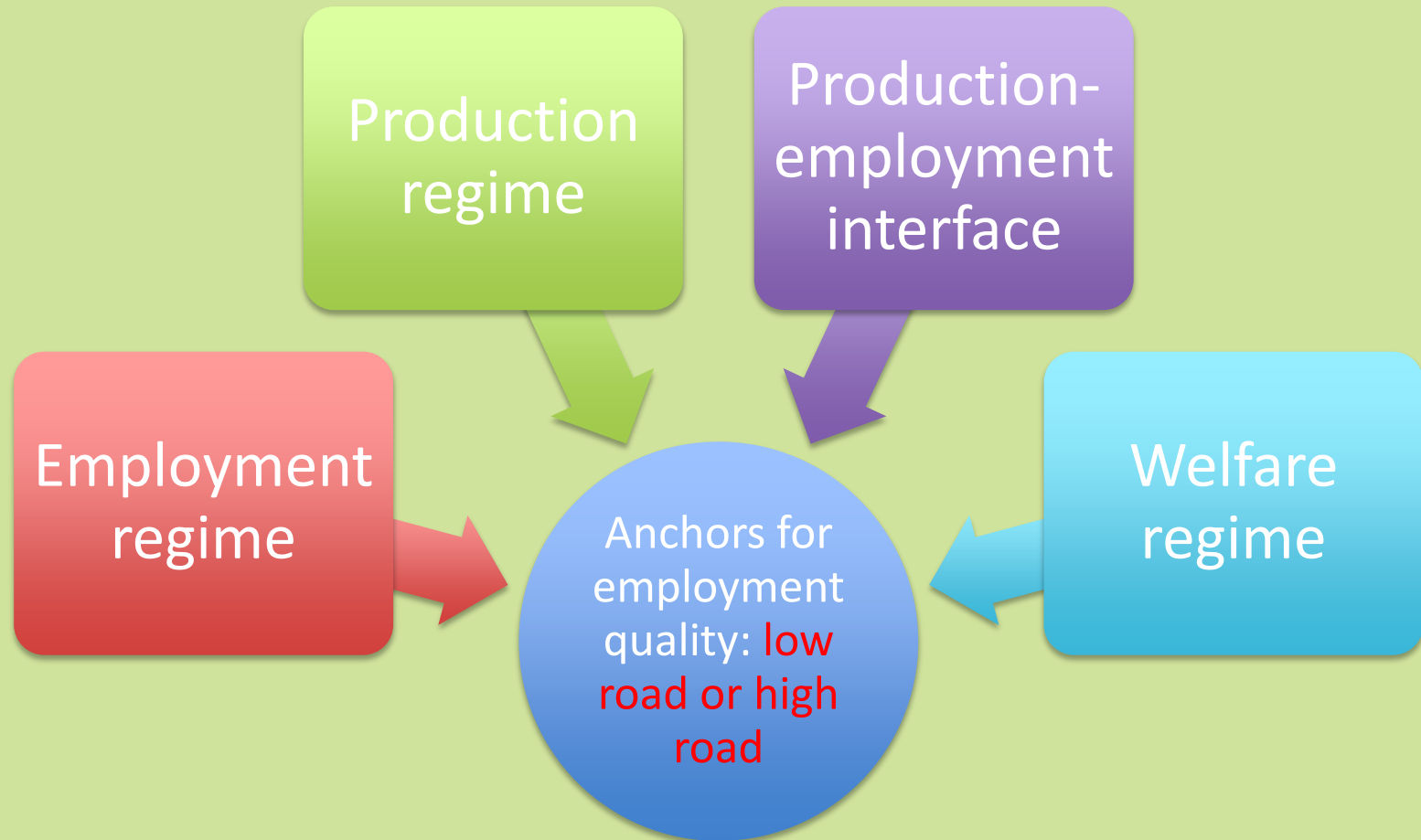
- Collective influence of **worker representation** at different levels
- Inclusiveness and coverage of **collective bargaining**

Welfare regime

- **Social protection**, unemployment benefits, minimum wages, pensions
- Social services, **role of public services**



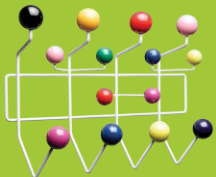
The role of policy



The role of policy

Low road strategy

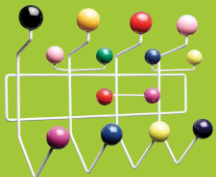
- Imprisonment as **criminal justice** policy focusing on deprivation of liberty
- Requires **low-skilled, flexible prison staff** without any autonomy. Prison work as 'assembly line' work.
- Prison staff as 'guards'
- Generalized **privatization** based on price, leading to downward pressure on labour costs and **fragmented collective bargaining**.
- **Race to the bottom** regarding working environment and working conditions. Low quality of prison services.
- State does **not impose any minimum standards**, prison services privatized.



The role of policy

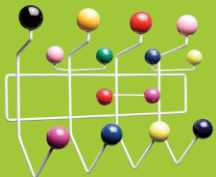
High road strategy

- Imprisonment as **welfare policy** focusing on reintegration of inmates.
- Requires **trained and highly skilled prison staff** with sufficient autonomy and social support, possibly working in autonomous teams.
- Prison guards as ‘helpers’ (educators)
- **Modern prison infrastructure** and organization focusing on **rehabilitative** function. High level of prison services.
- **Strong collective bargaining** leading to high standards for occupational health and safety, high levels of job security, decent working times and investment in job content.
- **Minimum standards** imposed by the state, prison services part of national (social) services.



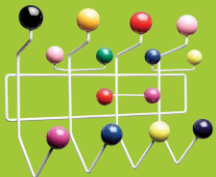
Policies that caused or influenced the identified threats to the employment quality

- Austerity measures
- Law-and-order discourse
- Privatization
- Neoliberal managerialism



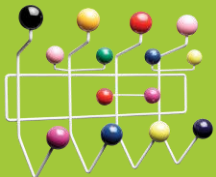
Employment quality of prison staff: the low road strategy

- Austerity measures: cost-cutting and restructuring in most European countries
 - Spending per inmate decreased (median: from 53,4 euro in 2007 to 41,6 euro in 2012)
 - Prisoner/staff ratio increased (from 2,1 in 2008 tot 2,1 in 2013)
 - Number of prison staff mostly dropped (from 308.647 in 2008 to 293.356 in 2013)
- Law and order policies:
 - Shift in goals of imprisonment: from welfare based social policy to criminal justice policy
 - Result: number of inmates increased significantly although varying between countries.



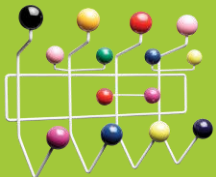
Employment quality of prison staff: the low road strategy

- Privatization and outsourcing of prison activities:
 - Mostly competition on price, resulting in cuts in staff costs
 - Risk of decreasing quality of service and employment quality
 - Risk of fragmented collective bargaining
- Neoliberal managerialism
 - Accumulation of surveillance, growing managerialism and a strive for control that is virtually complete.
 - Influencing the occupational culture of prisons



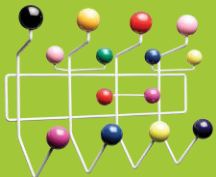
Employment quality of prison staff: summary

- Policies put pressure on all four dimensions of employment quality - job content, work environment, employment conditions and participation.
- This constellation is leading to a low road strategy implying the deterioration of employment quality in prisons, as can be derived from various social, psychological and physical outcomes such as an increase in stress, burn-out and drugs& alcohol abuse of prison staff and some work-related outcomes such as an increase in absenteeism.



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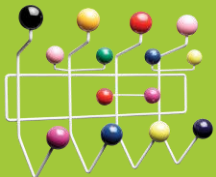
Anchors of employment quality: a framework

Goal:

- Developing a framework that enables case studies in different European countries.

Focus:

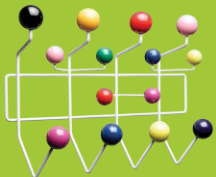
- Detection of differences in employment quality of prison staff between the countries.
- Can these differences be explained by the interplay between political choices and mechanisms.
- Recommendations



Anchors of employment quality

Production regime

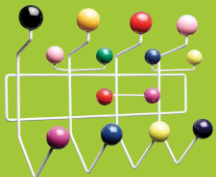
- Imprisonment as punishment or welfare policy? This determines the role of prison staff: guard vs. helper and, consequently, the importance of jail craft. Relates to law and order discourse and the overcrowding and understaffing
- How are prisons organized? Does it contain elements of team-based work organisation?
- Which leadership and management methods are applied?
- Outsourcing or privatization of prison activities?
 - Are quality standards included in public procurement?
 - Local or international providers?



Anchors of employment quality

Production employment interface

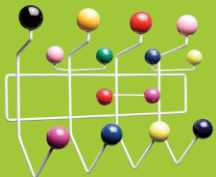
- What are the educational requirements to work in prisons?
- How are formal vocational and educational training and on the job-training organized?



Anchors of employment quality

Employment regime

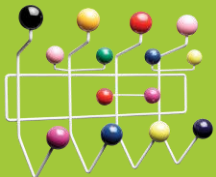
- What are the central themes of the social dialogue and collective bargaining
- How is worker representation organized (in prisons and at sectoral levels)?
- Inclusiveness and coverage of collective bargaining: what are principles of extension of collective agreements?
- Does collective bargaining receive public policy support?



Anchors of employment quality

Employment regime

- How is wage setting organized (collective bargaining, unilateral state-decision, mixed)?
- How are working time arrangements determined?
- What regulations exist on occupational health and safety, how are they negotiated and implemented?
- Which measures guarantee job security of prison staff?
- In case of violence, how are prison staff insured?
- Do prison staff have the right to strike? What other options do they have?



Anchors of employment quality

Welfare regime

- Social protection:
 - Are there any minimum standards such as a minimum health and safety procedures, imposed by the state?
- Social services:
 - Are prison services, such as health, education or care, part of national programs or privatised?

