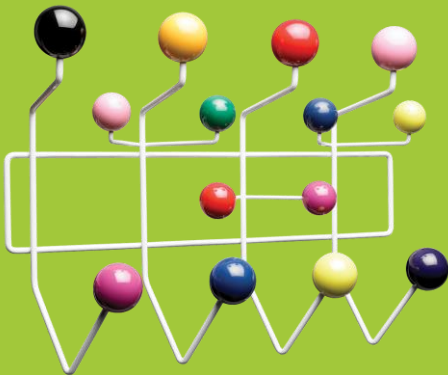


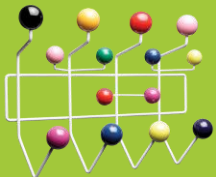
Understanding employment quality in childcare services.



Yennef Vereycken, Monique Ramioul
HIVA-KU Leuven

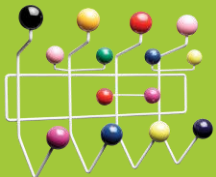
Why childcare became a policy issue

- Childcare only recently became subject of public debate and provision
- A multitude of policy motives can be identified in the provision and funding of childcare:
 - Erosion of male breadwinner/female homemaker family form due to increased female labour market participation.
 - Increase in lone parent household forms.
 - Ageing society and low fertility rate.
 - Pressure on traditional work/family balance.
- In order to reconcile work & family life, childcare policies were developed as an element of the welfare state



European policy: Barcelona Targets (2002)

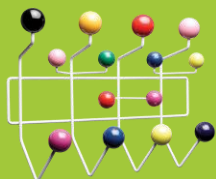
- Goal: Childcare as a means to increase female labour market participation to secure social inclusion (e.g. child poverty)
- Two targets:
 - 33% of <3 years old in (formal) childcare services
 - 90% of >3 years old in (formal) childcare services
- Evaluation (2010):
 - 10 countries realised these targets, 6 countries are getting close, 11 countries are lagging behind.
 - Little progress has been made between 2006-2010
 - Availability of childcare services not enough to increase female labour market participation
 - No targets set for quality of services or quality of employment!



Differences in childcare provisions and uptake

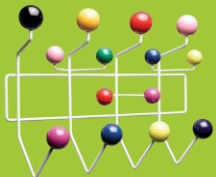
	Sweden	Italy	United Kingdom
Use of formal childcare (<3years old)	>45%	< 25%	<30%
Use of other arrangements (<3 years old)	<5%	>25%	>40%
Use of formal childcare (>3 years old)	>90%	<90%	<90%
Use of other arrangements (>3 years old)	>5%	>40%	<50%
Public Spending on childcare	High	Average	High
Female labour market participation	High	Average	Low

*Other arrangements refer mainly to family, friends or home based childcare.

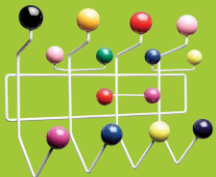
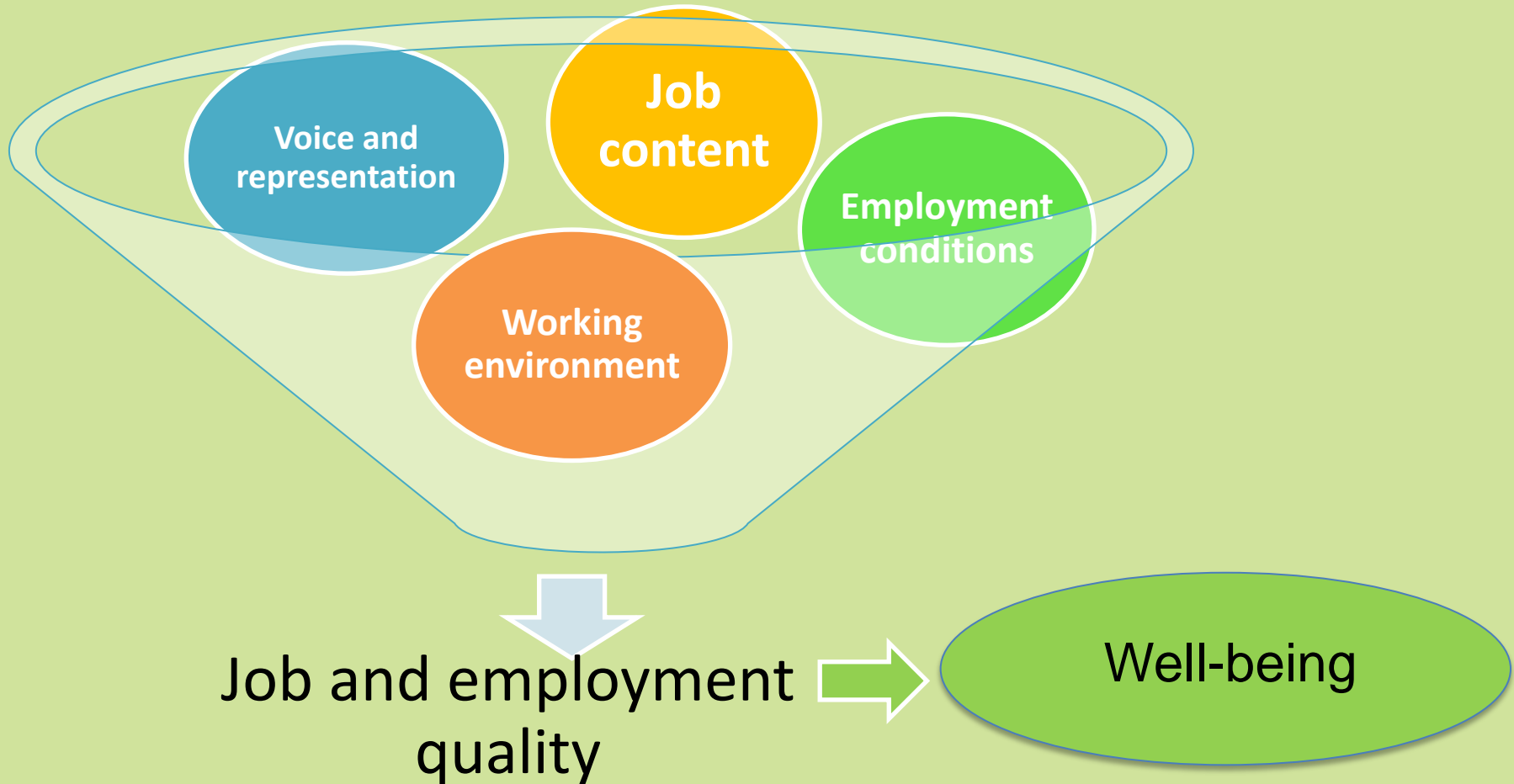


Understanding employment quality in childcare services

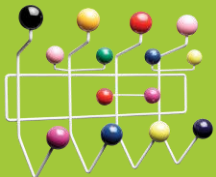
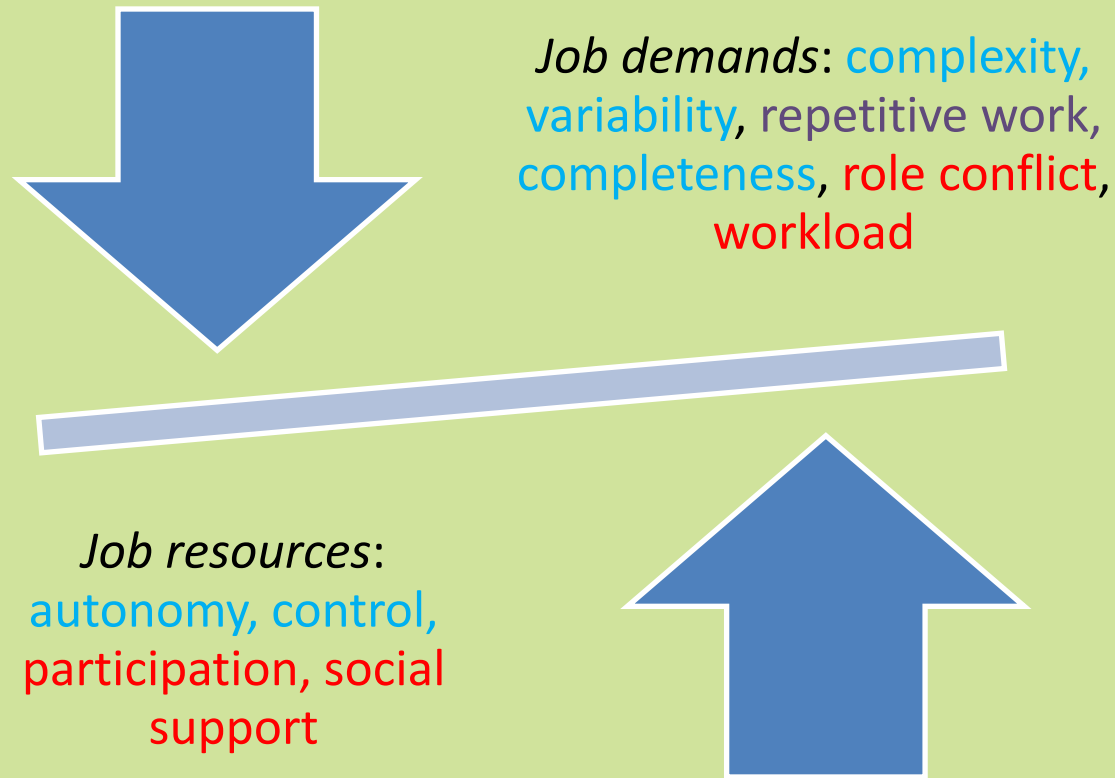
1. Employment quality
2. Understanding the differences



Job quality, employment quality and well-being



Job content



Job content

Threats to job demands

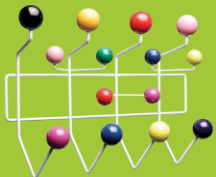
- Increasing workload: staff shortages and growing group numbers.
- Conflicts with parents

Threats to autonomy

- Increasing bureaucratic demands
- Conflicts with parents

Threats to social support

- Increase in self-employed childcare workers

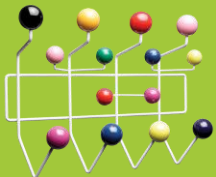
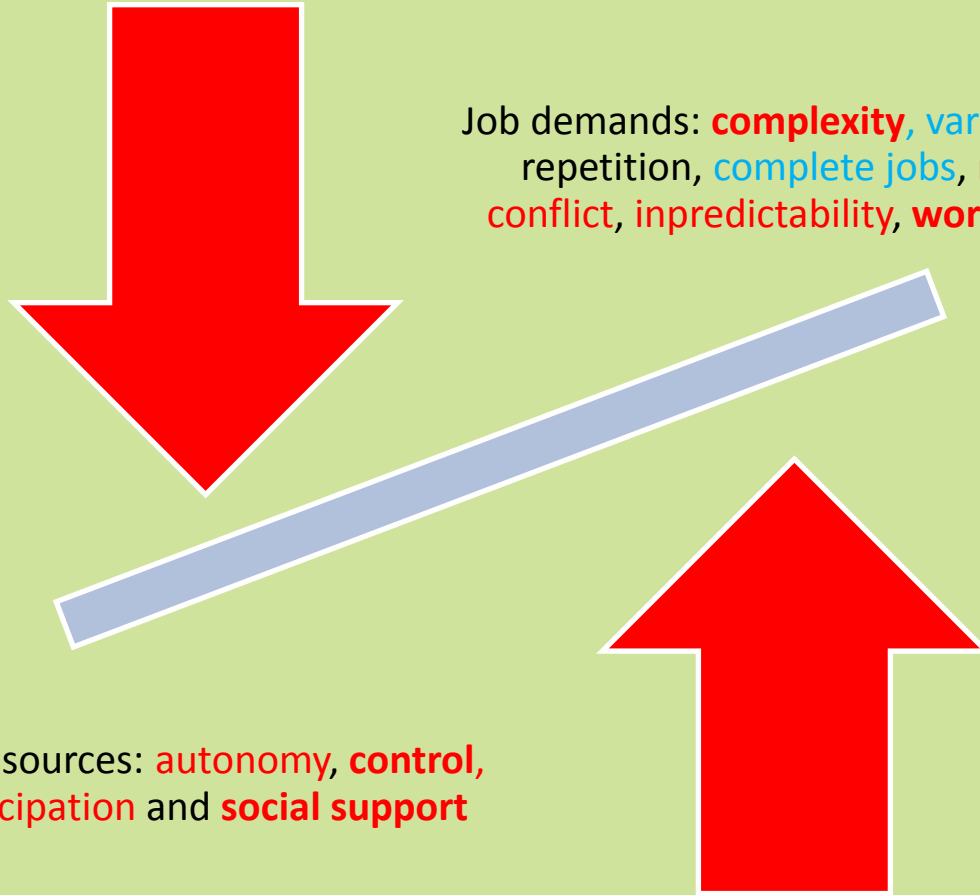


Job content

Not much has been found in literature on the impact of austerity measures on job content of childcare workers

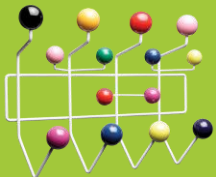
Job demands: **complexity**, variability, repetition, complete jobs, role conflict, unpredictability, **workload**

Job resources: **autonomy**, **control**, participation and **social support**



Working environment

- Three problematic features of the working environment typical of childcare work:
 - High noise exposure
 - Physically demands
 - Setting (especially when working at home)



Employment conditions

A main factor of concern!

Pay

- Often minimum wage
- long working hours
- Reasons:
 - Competition from informal sector
 - Part-time work
 - Vulnerable (unskilled or migrant) workers
- Work previously done unpaid

Career opportunities

- Limited
- Reasons:
 - Bewildering range of job qualifications
 - Little connections to other fields

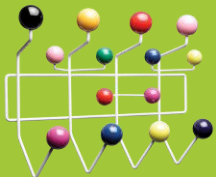
Employment contracts

- Public nurseries/crèches: mostly permanent employment contracts, protected by public collective agreements
- Private provisions: mostly fixed term contracts, minimum social protection.
- Growing group of self-employed

Training

- Educated workers vs unskilled workers.
- Limited on the job training
 - updating courses or supervision
- Pre-job training much depends on country (and region)
- Public provisions often invest more in training

Impact of austerity?

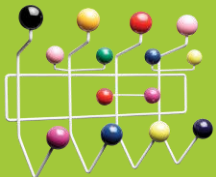


Voice and representation

Most childcare workers remain unorganized

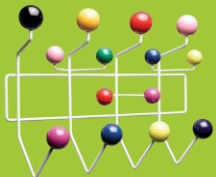
Much depends on:

- the employment created (public vs private)
- Place of work
- Fixed term contracts vs permanent employment contracts
- Status: civil servant, employee, self-employed, undeclared/informal work



Employment quality: outcomes

- Direct outcomes: social, physical and psychological well-being
 - Work related stress very high
 - Risk of burn-out is substantial
- Indirect personal and work outcomes:
 - Staff turnover is high



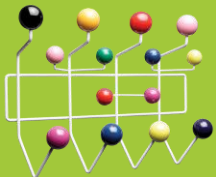
Different outcomes identified

Informal market: low quality jobs for vulnerable workers

Unpaid family labour: often supplemented with (in)formal low quality jobs

Formal market provision: polarisation and race to the bottom

State provision: high quality services and high quality employment



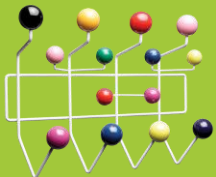
Understanding employment quality in childcare services



- Employment
- Child development
- Gender equality
- State/family role

- Welfare, gender and employment policies

- Job content
- Working environment
- Employment conditions
- Voice & representation



National policy: welfare and gender regime

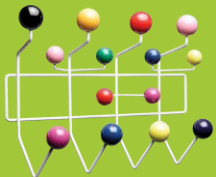
Provision (availability)

- State
- Market
- Parents
- Third sector

Financing (affordability)

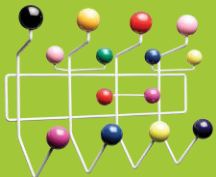
- Public
- Market
- Parents
- Employers

- + what childcare services are being offered: home based childcare, non parental childcare, for how long?
- + Which quality standards are imposed?
- + Financing the supply of child care services: subsidies for childcare organizations
- + versus financing the demand by stimulating female labour market participation: subsidies, and tax incentives for households



Three typical models to employment quality

1. Traditional family-based model
2. Market provision
3. State provision



The traditional family-based model

Drivers of childcare services

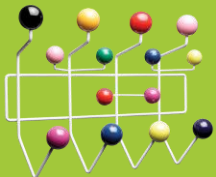
- Facilitating parental/home-based childcare (eg. subsidizing home care)
- Childcare as inborn female responsibility and skill

National policy mix

- Limited female labour market participation
- Gender equality or institutionalised child development not key priority
- Limited investment in universal availability and affordability
- Limited training investment

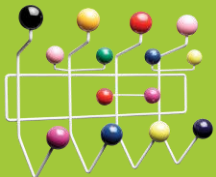
Employment quality outcomes

- Informal labour market in child care (nannies,...)
- Low-skilled, flexible hours, parttime, undeclared work
- Poor representation



The traditional family-based model

- Childcare dominated by traditional values focusing on parental home care, supplemented with limited non-parental home care and childcare facilities (market or state provision).
- Requires 'merely' female skills leading to a low-skilled, flexible work force with low social status. Additionally, little investments in training and generally low attractiveness of sector will lead to low quality services.
- Non-parental home care services: likely to stimulate an informal sector
- Non-parental childcare services:
 - Market provision of childcare: competition based on price, leading to low quality jobs.
 - State provision: low quality services will lead to decreasing state income due to lesser female labour market participation.
- No investment in training, often parttime and temporary employment, poor representation



The market model

Drivers of child care services

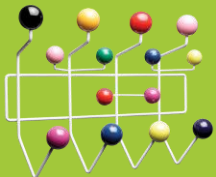
- Focus on female labour market participation and re-integration, but defined as the worker's own responsibility
- Non-parental childcare

National policy mix

- No focus on universal right of children, limited focus on gender equality
- Market-based organisation, focus on demand rather than on provision
- Polarised outcome
- May lead to withdrawal of women from the labour market

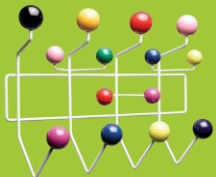
Employment quality outcomes

- Market context may lead to minimum standards in employment conditions
- Poor representation and coverage by collective agreements



The market model

- Childcare as a means to increase employment focusing on non-parental childcare as a pool of unskilled labour.
- Government supports demand, provision mainly organised through the market.
- Educational requirements are limited, to facilitate the inflow of unskilled labour.
- Market competition in childcare services means competing on price, which in childcare boils down to labour costs
- Low social status and little investments in childcare hinders professionalisation and high quality services, unless you can pay for it (=polarisation)
- Polarisation in employment quality as well



The state model

Drivers of child care services

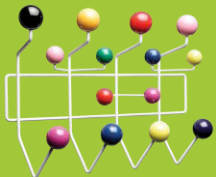
- Childcare as a fundamental right of every child
- Focus on gender equality
- Focus on availability, universal access and affordability

National policy mix

- Provision of high quality service
- Typically by the state (subsidising supply rather than demand)
- Skills are of serious concern: investment in professionalisation
- Leading to high female labour market participation

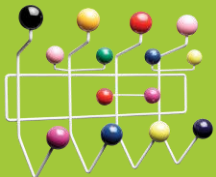
Employment quality outcomes

- State provision: childcarers as civil servants
- Permanent employment contracts
- Protected by collective agreements of public sector



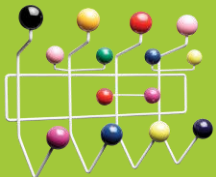
The state model

- Childcare as a universal right of the child, as a means to enhance child development and gender equality, focusing on non-parental childcare, likely through state provision.
- Requires trained and highly skilled staff with sufficient autonomy and social support, possibly working in autonomous teams
- Government invests in training and education. This professionalisation of the workforce will attract high-profile candidates. The status of childworkers will increase and employment quality will be high
- Universal access requires support of the demand side as well, securing the affordability of childcare
- Childcare services are of high quality, available and affordable, which will convince parents to use them. Labour market participation of women will be high, providing the necessary financial return to continue the investments in childcare.



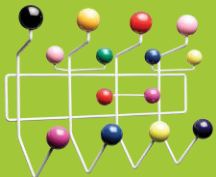
Recommendations

- Key characteristics of traditional family-based model (eg. Italy):
 - Available childcare is insufficient and costly
 - Informal labour market for childcare
- Focus of attention:
 - Availability and affordability to replace informal sector
 - Professionalisation of childcare to change the discourse of inborn ‘female’ duties and skills.



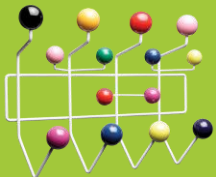
Recommendations

- Key characteristics of market-based model (eg. UK):
 - Polarised labour market for childcare
 - Insufficient availability
- Focus of attention:
 - Working conditions: wages, working hours, health&safety (through licensing, regulation)
 - Making the job more attractive by improving career opportunities, training provision and employment contracts



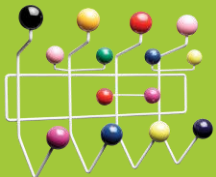
Recommendations

- Key characteristics of state-based model (eg. Sweden):
 - Relatively high employment quality
 - Gap between educational level/working conditions of nursery-staff and pre-school workers
- Focus:
 - Improving educational level, working conditions of nursery-staff



Recommendations

- Key characteristics of countries with weak childcare policy (eg. Romania):
 - Drastic decrease in nurseries and preschools (former communist countries)
 - Huge informal market for childcare (undeclared)
 - Unfavourable working conditions
 - High female labour market participation
- Focus of attention:
 - Availability and affordability of childcare to reduce informal market.
 - Recruitment of informal workers into trade unions



Recommendations

Low quality and low status jobs
Medium or low quality services
Shortage of services



High quality jobs
High quality services

- Increase & support employment in childcare:
 - Pay & training:
 - Raise qualification levels
 - Improve qualification pathways
 - Reward qualifications with wages & working conditions
 - Try to diversify workforce and increase gender equality
 - Rethink funding principle
 - Measures to improve job security and career mobility
- Decrease job demands:
 - Decrease group size (funding/organization)
 - Decrease staff to child ratio (funding/organization)
 - Structure working time and limit flexibility
- Better attune childcare to needs/preferences of parents by involving them

What has been the impact of austerity measures?

