

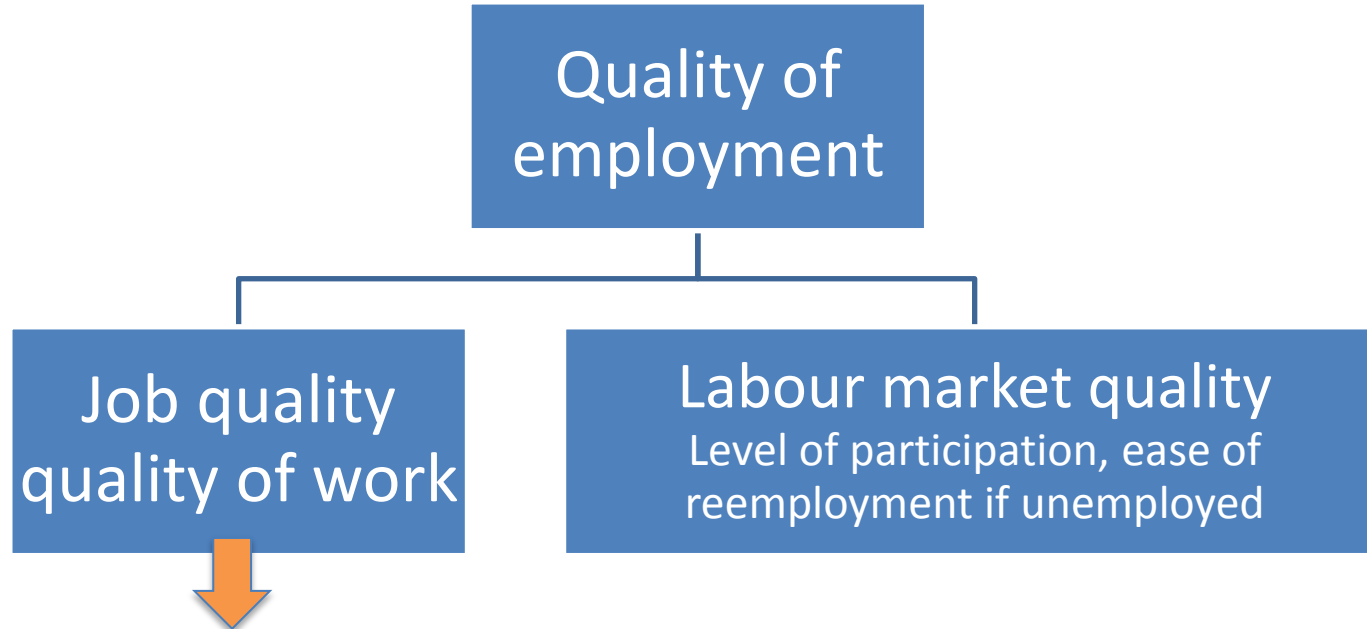
Job quality

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10 January 2017

Overview of the presentation

- 1. Concept of job quality
 - Definition
 - Subjective approach
 - Objective approach
 - Exemplary evidence – EWCS2015
 - Challenge of policy indicators
- 2. Job quality from a European policy perspective
 - Order and chaos
 - Signs of a new dawn

What is job quality?



*“Job quality can be defined as the extent to which a <current> job has **work and employment-related factors** that foster **beneficial outcomes** for the employee, particularly psychological well-being, physical well-being and positive attitudes such as job satisfaction” (Green, 2006; Warr, 1990; Holman, 2013)*

How do job characteristics translate into quality?

- “Index discussion” – Norm – Evaluative
 - **Subjective approach:** each individual’s subjective evaluation of a job; high quality jobs are those that lead to a high personal satisfaction
 - **Objective approach:** job quality encompasses job features that can be shown empirically – by scientific facts – to enhance or to deteriorate workers’ psychological and/or physical well-being

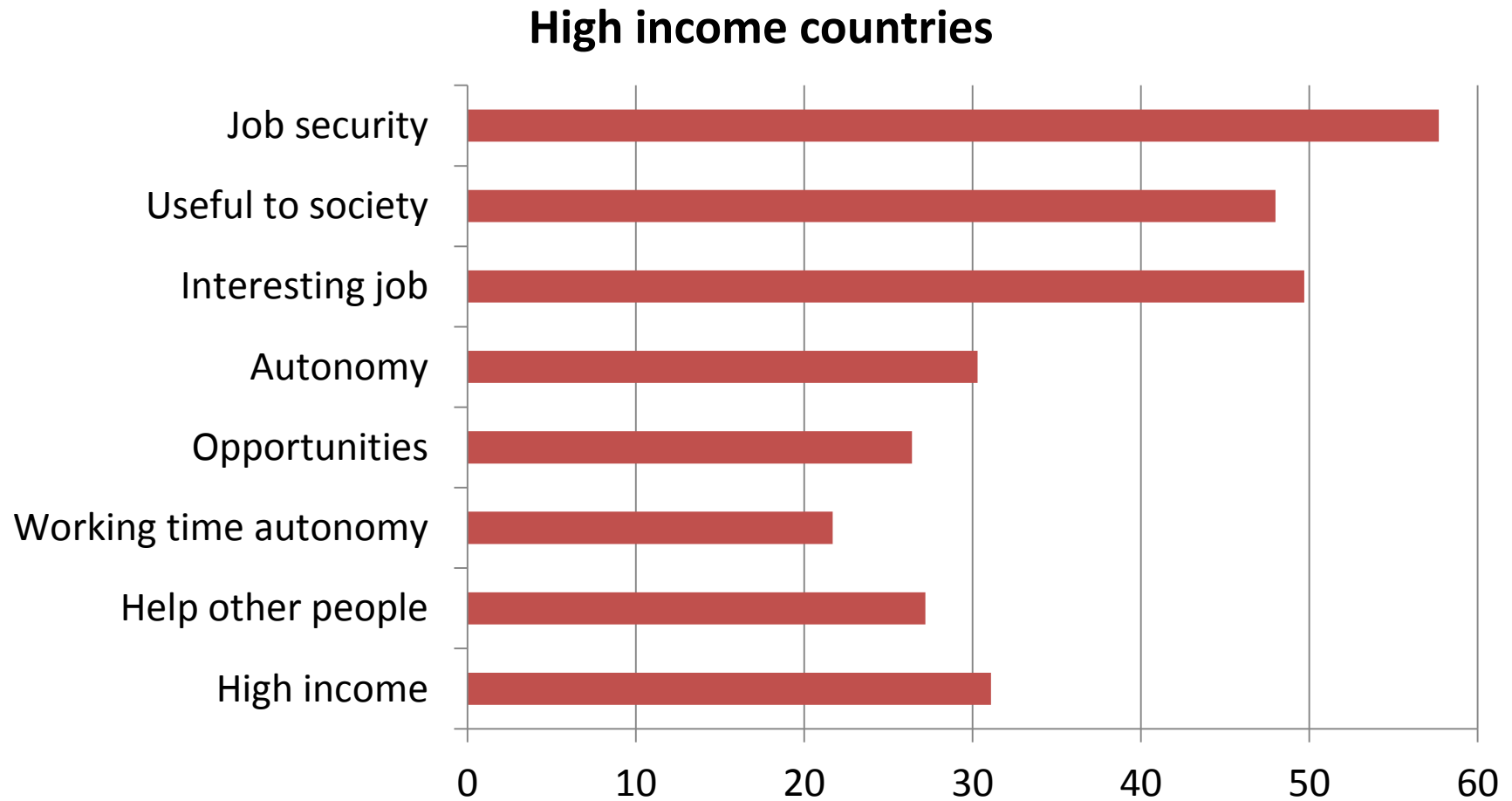


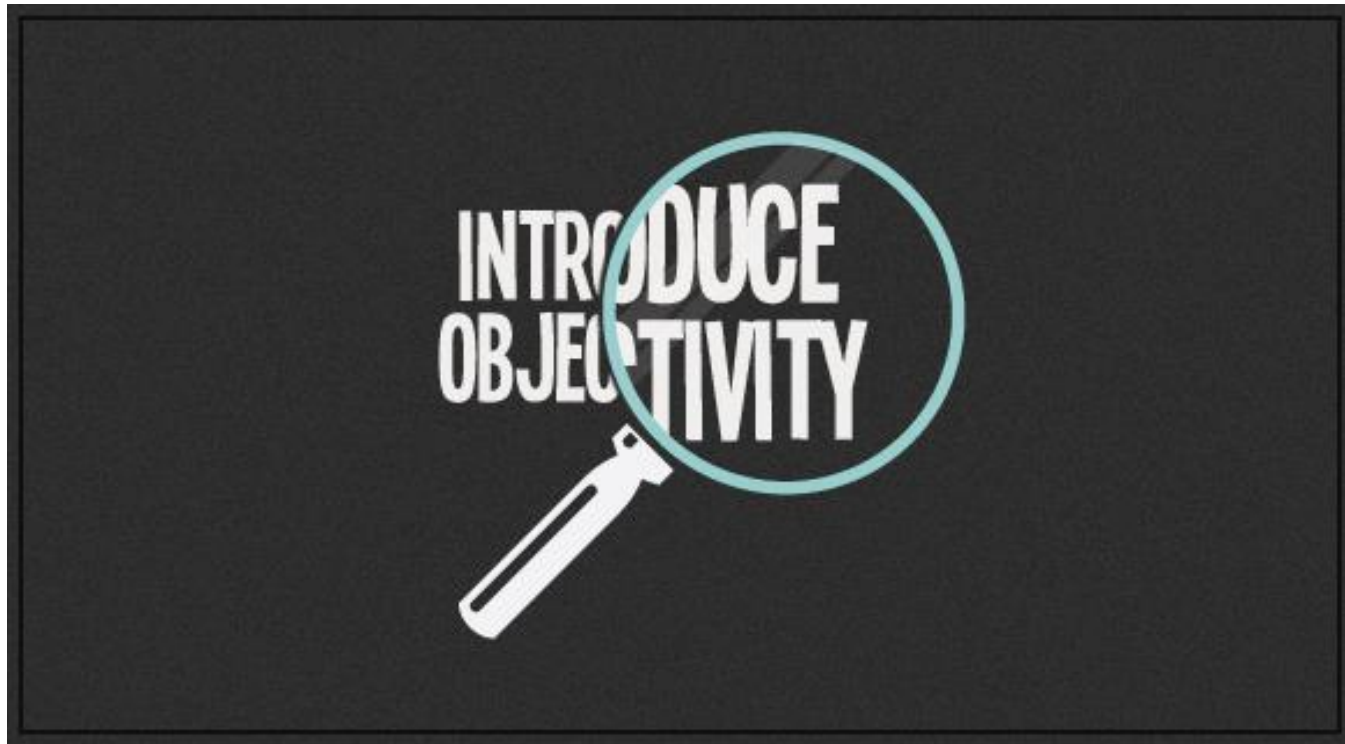
SUBJECTIVE APPROACH

Subjective job quality

- Taking *individual* preferences into account
 1. Catch-all: “*Are you satisfied with your work?*” (Green & Tsitsianis, 2005)
 2. Ask importance/satisfaction for each item/preference
 3. Construct of outcomes/states (Warr)
- Critique on this approach (Schokkaert et al, 2011) – Leaving the evaluation to the subject/individual itself
 - Physical-condition neglect (Sen): downgrading of yourselves evaluation to situation (‘happy/satisfied because no hope of getting a better situation’)
 - Valuation neglect (Sen): not making the right judgement, because not having all the knowledge (‘happy/satisfied because not knowing better’)
 - Rising expectations – also more critical (‘having it all and still dissatisfied’)

What makes a good job?



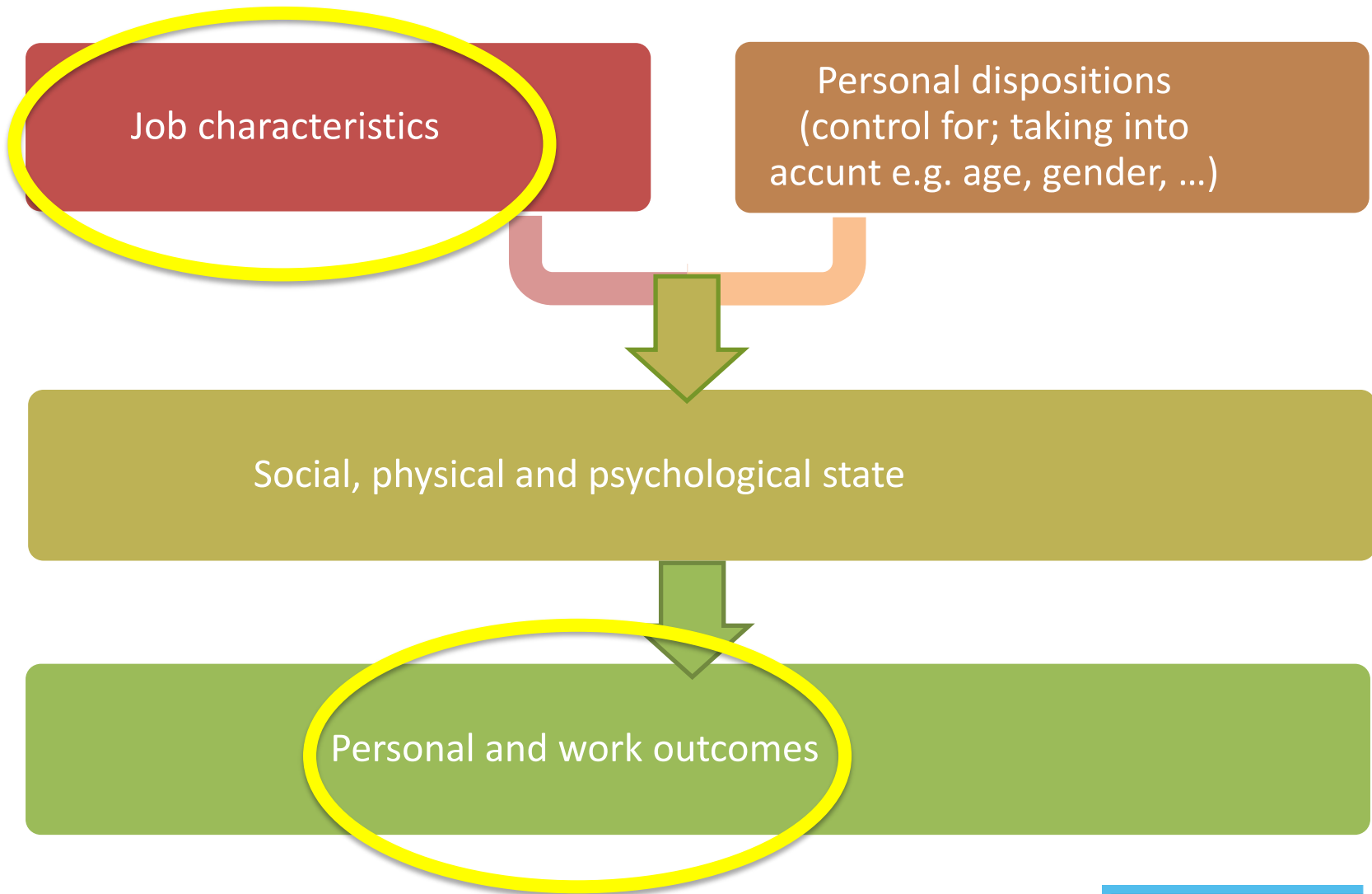


OBJECTIVE APPROACH

Starting point: Measurement challenge

- Descriptive: relevant knowledge about the job situation and the consequences for the employee
 - Normative: a series of norms to distinguish 'good' from 'bad' jobs
 - Cross-national; trend
-
- It is about measuring inequality in quality

General framework



Objective approach

- Evidence-based approach
- Critique: paternalistic
- Defense
 - Avoids better the fallacies of subjective, individual judgement
 - Definite link with issues that have been for a long time considered as important in relation to work from a societal, human value perspective (cf. decent work)
 - In-between solution: subjective measurement – objective approach
 - “Does [job characteristic] suit you?” (Eurofound, 2012): subjective measurement (asking the worker) – objective approach
 - Example: Involuntary part time work (Leschke, Watt & Finn, 2008)

What is job (ine)quality? Dimensions

WES model	Bustillo et al. (2012)	Holman (2012)	Green (2013)	Vandenbrande et al. (2012) JWES model
Work organization	Intrinsic job quality	Work organization	Work Quality	Job Content
	Work life balance (work intensity)		Work intensity	Work environment
	Health and Safety		Physical environment	
Employment conditions	Pay	Wage & Payment systems	Working time quality	Employment Conditions
	Employment quality	Skills and development		
	Work-life balance (working time)	Security and flexibility		
Social relations		Engagement and representation		Social Relations

Four key dimensions and some indicators

Job content

- Teamwork
- Emotional efforts
- Repetitive tasks
- Work intensity
- Autonomy
- Task complexity
- Working time autonomy

Working environment

- Environmental risks
- Contact with other persons
- Fixed or mobile workplace

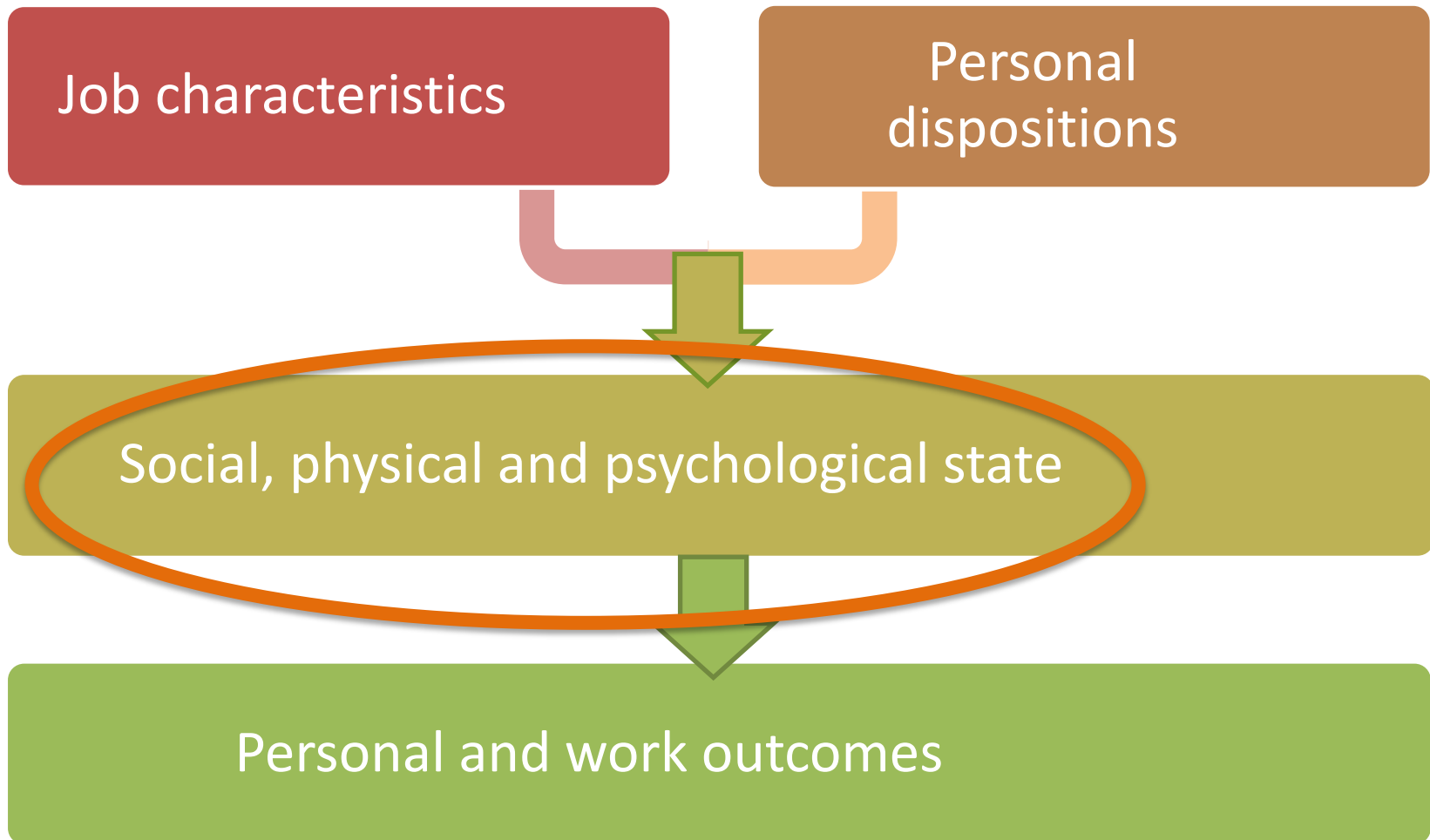
Employment conditions

- Contract (temporary)
- Career perspectives
- Income
- Fulltime work
- Training
- Atypical working hours
- Flexible working hours

Labour relations

- Say
- Supportive management
- Social support
- Violence and harrasment
- Employee representation

General framework



Social, physical & psychological states

- **Job satisfaction:** *‘the pleasurable feeling that results from the perception that one’s job fulfills or allows for the fulfillment of one’s important job values’* (Locke, 1976)
- **Life satisfaction** (Poggi et al, 2011)
- **Work engagement:** *‘a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption’*, also drive, morale, job involvement (Locke, 1976)
- **Burn out:** *‘prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, that is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynisme and inefficacy’* (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001)

Social, physical & psychological states

Psychological health

- Depression, anxiety, sleeping problems, burn-out,...

Physical health

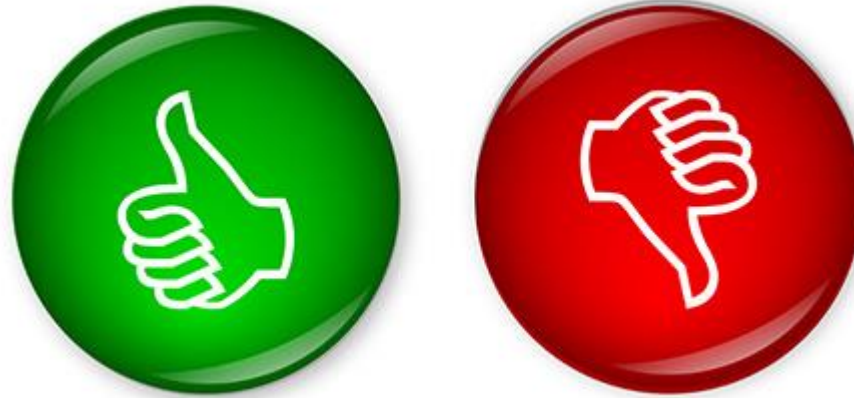
- Back ache, MSD, injuries, headache,...

Work performance

- Productivity, work effort, withdrawal, turn-over,...

Attitudes and behaviour

- Absenteism, presenteism, commitment...



<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys>

EXAMPLE EVIDENCE FROM THE EUROPEAN WORKING CONDITIONS SURVEY

In the EWCS: 7 key indices of job quality

Physical environment

- Posture-related (ergonomic)
- Ambient (vibration, noise, temperature)
- Biological and chemical

Work intensity

- Quantitative demands
- Pace determinants and interdependency
- Emotional demands

Working time quality

- Duration
- Atypical working time
- Working time arrangements
- Flexibility

Social environment

- Adverse social behaviour
- Social support
- Management quality

Skills and discretion

- Cognitive dimension
- Decision latitude
- Organisational participation
- Training

Prospects

- Employment status
- Career prospects
- Job security
- Downsizing

Earnings

Some snapshots from the latest EWC Survey-2015

(Eurofound (2016), *Sixth European Working Conditions Survey – Overview report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg)

Work intensity

- One-third of workers in the EU work to tight deadlines and at high speed.
- Workers in the health sector are exposed to the greatest levels of work intensity.

Working time quality

- Overall, the working time quality index has improved in the EU28 since 2005.
- 44% of workers have very regular working schedules.
- One worker in five (22%) works in their free time to meet work demands several times a month.

...

Social environment

- The social climate in work is generally positive, 89% of workers stating they enjoy good cooperation with their colleagues.
- Around 16% of workers – more women than men – report exposure to adverse social behaviour.

Skills and discretion (learning)

- 31% of workers in elementary occupations are directly involved in decisions that affect their work; for managers the figure is almost 80%.

...

Prospects (career, insecurity)

- Part-time workers score less than full-time workers (58 points compared to 65).
- Job insecurity remains at the same level as in 2010: 17% of workers feel they could lose their job in the next six months.

Earnings

- Most workers are concentrated at the lower end of the income distribution, with very few at the upper end.



CHALLENGE OF POLICY INDICATORS

Reducing the complexity

- Focus on 1 dimension or aspect
 - Easy to measure & compare
 - In depth and detailed
 - Too narrow & out of full context
- Composite indices
 - compare one number
 - Assumes equal impact on job quality
 - No room for trade-offs
- Job types = specific configurations of job quality indicators
 - Broad view
 - Interrelations and trade-offs

The multidimensional character of job quality

It is crucial to consider all dimensions!

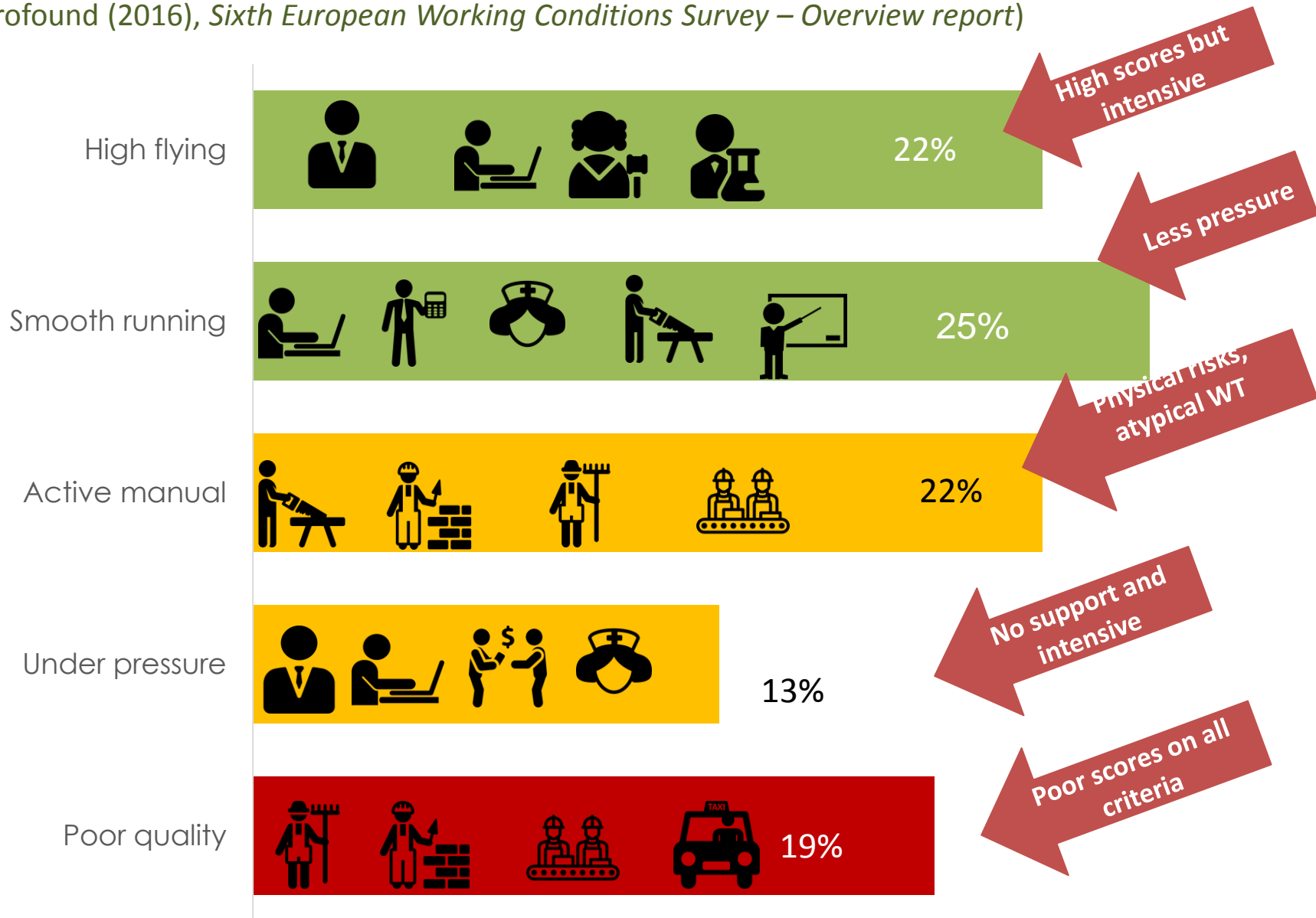
- What are teamwork and autonomy worth when:
 - wages are under pressure
 - working times are becoming flexible
 - job insecurity increases
 - basic health and safety are not adequately guaranteed
 - employee representation and social dialogue are not taken seriously
- Sustainable work (work until retirement) is not only having a permanent contract, it is also not getting sick or burn-out from your work

Patterns or job types

- Between simplicity and complexity
 - ‘Balance’ principle: some ‘risky’ job characteristics can be compensated by other characteristics (ex. atypical working time by wage premiums)
 - Linking it with consequences => differentiation of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ based on different elements
- => catches better diversity (cross-country)
- => enables more diversified policy measures

A clustered approach: five jobtypes (EWCS2015)

(Eurofound (2016), *Sixth European Working Conditions Survey – Overview report*)





EUROPEAN POLICY FRAMEWORK

Job quality indicators and EU policy

- Previous order
 - Credo: more jobs, better jobs (Lisbon strategy)
 - European employment strategy 1997-2010
 - Laeken indicators – 10 dimensions of job quality 2001
 - Indicators defined, but soft monitoring by EU
 - Promotion of new forms of work organisation (combining job quality and productivity)
- Current Chaos
 - Evaluation Lisbon strategy: too much targets; indicators
 - Credo: new jobs, new skills (EU2020)
 - European employment strategy integrated in European semester approach (cf. Country-specific recommendations)
 - No indicators, but stronger monitoring
 - Only employment rates, unemployment rates, youth, ... only about labour market quality
 - Low-profile initiatives on social innovation

Signs of a new dawn

- Revision of European Employment strategy 2015 - Moving towards more inclusive markets
 - “Job quality has a particularly important role to play, encompassing adequate earnings, training opportunities and access to lifelong learning, the possibility for career progression, measures to improve work-life balance, the quality of the work environment and safe transitions between jobs and back into work for those losing their job.”
- Recent debate linked to ‘EU crisis management’
 - Pillar of social rights
 - Fair working conditions, to set an adequate and reliable balance of rights and obligations between workers and employers, as well as between flexibility and security elements, to facilitate job creation, job take-up and the adaptability of firms, and promoting social dialogue.
 - Motion of European Parliament for a decent work index as part of the indicators used in the annual growth survey to monitor the economic and social situation

Signs of a new dawn

- New OECD jobs strategy 'More and better jobs'
 - Job quality = earnings quality x labour market security x quality of the working environment
- Growing awareness, to have sustainable economic growth, we need more inclusiveness and attention for quality and well-being (>< growing inequalities => right-wing populism/extremism)



CONCLUSION

Conclusion

- Objective approach to job quality = possible, recommendable = BUT still challenges
 - Capturing the multidimensionality
 - Establishing, agreeing about (minimal) norms
 - Taking into account the career perspective (cf. arduous jobs discussions in relation to early retirement and active ageing)
- At the policy level
 - Complexity used to do nothing (in a neoliberal reasoning focusing on more jobs and labour 'costs')
 - BUT New opportunities
 - Pillar social rights – New framework EES – OECD new jobs strategy
 - WE NEED Stronger business case (micro-macro): quality => innovation => productivity

Trade union challenge

- Pick-up the job quality agenda in a new productivity coalition focusing on 'working smarter'
 - Why?
 - Asked by new generations of membership (work to live attitude is growing)
 - Rising psycho-social risks
 - New technological opportunities/dangers
 - New economic growth perspective
 - How?
 - In the past: accept 'working harder' and distribute the productivity profits by negotiating better labour conditions
 - Today and in the future: develop 'working smarter' and improve the job quality and well-being at work by an open and trustfull social dialogue on the organisation of work

**CONSTRUCTIVE, BUT VIGILANT TRADE
UNIONISM FOCUSING ON
“...SPECIFICATION OF THE CONTENTS,
METHODS, AND RELATIONSHIPS
OF JOBS IN ORDER TO SATISFY
TECHNOLOGICAL AND
ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AS
WELL AS THE SOCIAL AND PERSONAL
REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOB HOLDER.”**