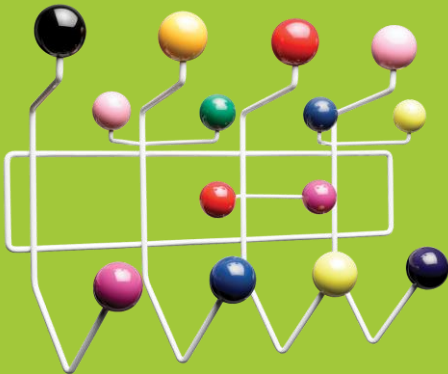


Understanding employment quality in childcare services.



Yennef Vereycken, Monique Ramioul
HIVA-KU Leuven

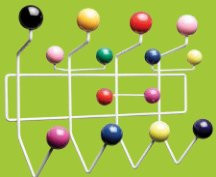
Anchors of employment quality: a framework

Goal:

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

Focus:

- Detection of differences in employment quality of childcare staff between the countries.
- Explaining these differences by the interplay between political choices and mechanisms.
- Recommendations



Childcare workers at risk

80% more chance at **psychological illnesses** than average worker – Sweden

4th **highest risk of becoming ill** of all professions –Sweden

84% of staff **not covered by CLA's** –England

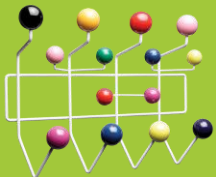
More than 20% receives **less than minimum wage** – England

Having a **second job** is norm rather than exception – Bulgaria

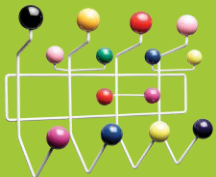
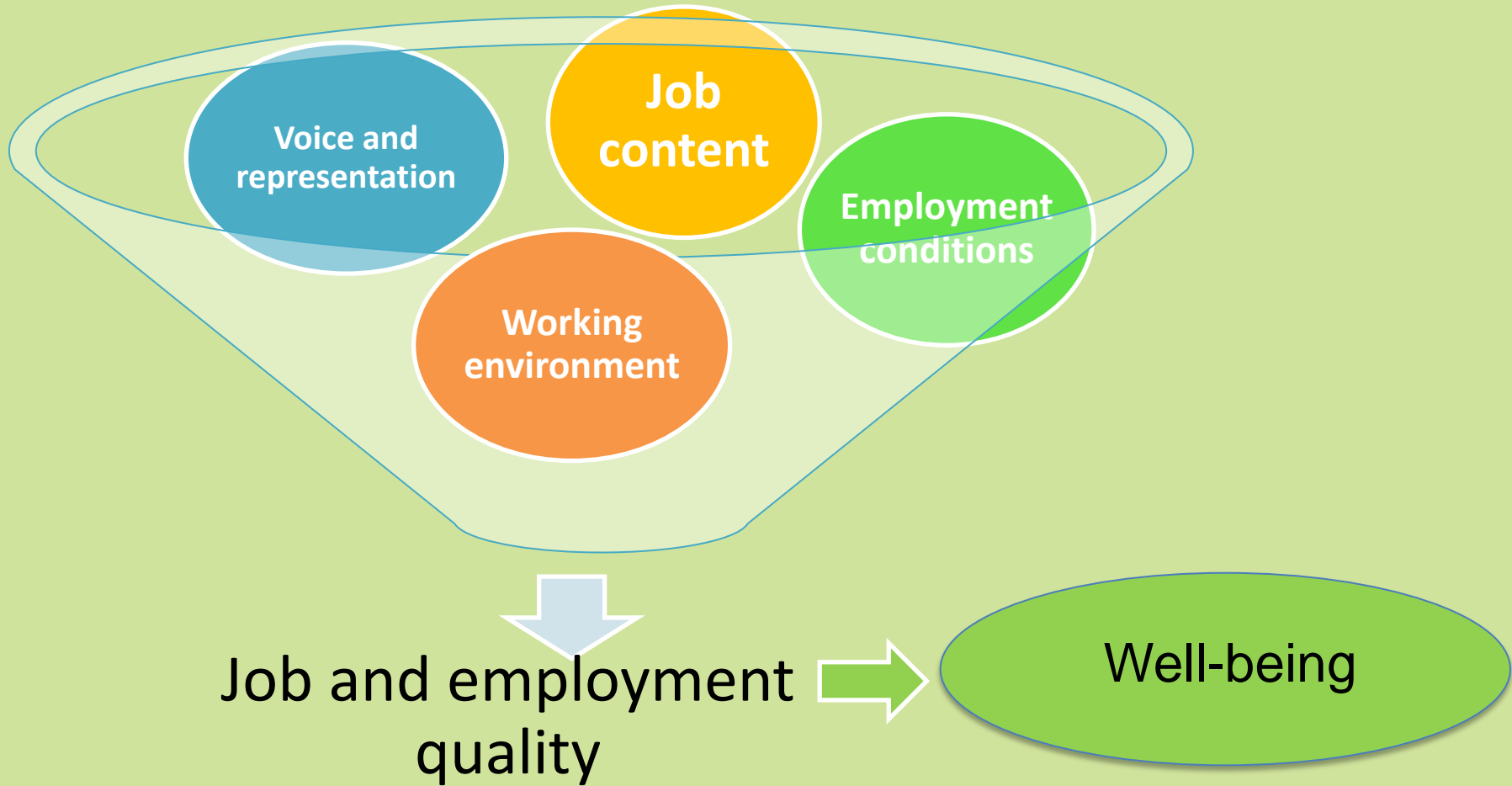
>50% **ages 50** or more – Bulgaria

50% of childcare staff report **emotional distress** – Italy

One in five childcare staff experience **low professional realization** – Italy



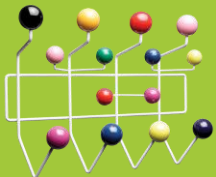
But different causes in QWL



Trends in job content:

- *Pedagogical development time went down*
- *Administrative burden went up*
- *Less interaction with children*
- *More complex and greater groups*
- *More challenging educational tasks*

→ Job content more **complex**



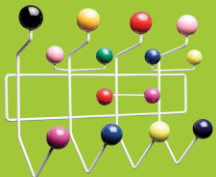
Trends in employment conditions

- *No redundancy rules*
- *Precarious employment contracts*
- *Low pay and no other compensations*
- *Limited training and qualifications not rewarded*
- *Limited career opportunities*

Trends in industrial relations

- *No CLA for private sector (84%)*
- *Almost no trade union coverage in private sector*
- *Limited voice and representation*

→ **“It’s like the far west out here”**



Trends in employment conditions

- *Very low pay in public sector*
- *Long working times*

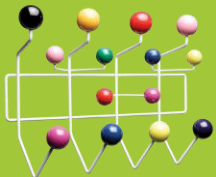
Trends in job content

- *Repetitive work in huge groups*
- *Conflicts with parents*

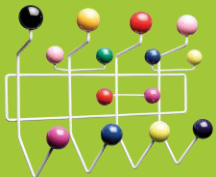
Trends in working environment

- *Old infrastructure (and ageing working force!)*
- *High noise and physically demanding work*

→ Very low employment quality overall



- A lot of positive trends recently:
 - *High quality standards & control (for both public & private provisions)*
 - *Strict requirements for working environment*
 - *High quality education requirements for childcare staff*
 - *Yearly training is mandatory and paid*
 - *Complex jobs but with high levels of autonomy and social support*
- But still some weaknesses:
 - *Stagnant wages (difference public and private provision)*
 - *Temporary employment contracts (difference public and private provision)*
 - *Limited career opportunities*
 - *Still a black market for childcare*



Different explanations in policy mixes

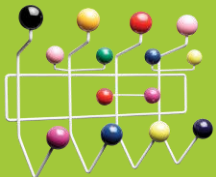
Sweden:

Child development & gender equality

- *Increase in quality of services by promoting higher educational standards*
- *New public management ideals*



- *Budgetary restrictions (austerity) & regional differences*



Different explanations in policy mixes

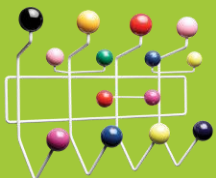
England:

Female labour market participation

- *Pure marketization: childcare as subject of speculation and profit*
- *Austerity decreased parental incomes and already limited budgets & autonomy of local authorities*
- *Little public control*

Heritage of conservative family values

- *Childcare requires merely female skills*
- Polarization of quality of services & employment / race to the bottom



Different explanations in policy mixes

Bulgaria:

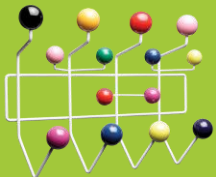
Ambitious child development/equality ideals

- *Public provision*



- *Limited budget (but not a result of austerity)*

= generates low quality services & employment (and the need for second jobs and an informal sector)



Different explanations in policy mixes

Italy:

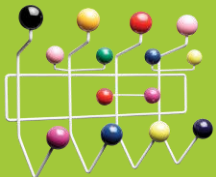
Recent positive trends result from clear policy choice

= *Improving child development and female LM participation*

In the past, a more traditional, family-based vision on childcare

+ *regionally organized*

- Huge regional differences in provision and affordability of childcare
- But general **upward trend in employment quality.**



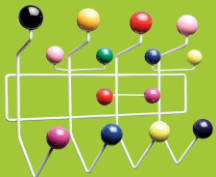
Different recommendations

Sweden:

- *Further professionalization to prepare for additional complexity*
- *More work means more staff*
- *Regional differences in budget*

England:

- *Recruitment of childcare staff in trade unions*
- *More public control on employment conditions / level playing field*
- *Clear system of qualifications*
- *Public provision as counterpart for race to the bottom of private sector*



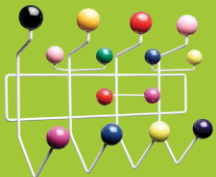
Different recommendations

Bulgaria

- *Making the job more attractive (pay levels, employment conditions, public recognition...)*
- *Investments in number and training of staff*
- *Recruitment of informal childcare staff in trade union*

Italy

- *Wage progression*
- *More stable and permanent employment contracts*
- *Developing career opportunities*
- *Counter the regional differences in availability/affordability*



Conclusions

