"Indicators of job quality in the European Union".

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Study prepared for the European Parliament

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1. The importance of measuring job quality

A) You live, you work…

B) Pervasive absence of wage compensating differentials

C) Globalization and the new capitalism

D) Test the existence of employment regimes

E) Job quality as a luxury good

F) Full-employment is not the only task of governments
2. Different perspectives of looking at job quality

A) Job satisfaction as an indicator of job quality (figure)

B) Ask people (figure)

C) Ask Social Scientists → sketching a model of job quality… (figure)
Outline Model of Job Quality

- Work autonomy
- Physical working conditions
- Health variables
- Risk of accidents
- Speed
- Social working environment

- Participation
- Skill development

- Type of contract
- Working hours
- Distribution of working hours
- Wage
- Social benefits

Work quality

On-the-job training
Formal training

Job quality

Employment quality
3. Technical issues in measuring job quality

A) Results *versus* procedures

B) Static *versus* dynamic indicators

C) Aggregate *versus* individual-based indicators

D) One fits all?

E) A composite index *versus* a system of indicators

F) Aggregating indicators
4. Survey of recent indicators

18 indicators reviewed (chapter 6)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Complete name</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Databases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laeken</td>
<td>Laeken indicators of job quality</td>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>ELFS, EWCS, SILC, AMECO, ICTWSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>EJQI</td>
<td>The European Job Quality Index</td>
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<td>EWCS</td>
<td>European Working Conditions Survey</td>
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<td>QEI</td>
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<td>Canada, U.S. and Europe</td>
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<td>WCI</td>
<td>Austrian Work Climate Index</td>
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<td>IFES omnibus survey (dedicated module)</td>
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<td>IQL</td>
<td>Indicators of Quality of the Labour Market</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>NSI, MLI</td>
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<td>QWF</td>
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<td>ICQE</td>
<td>Index of the characteristics related to the quality of employment</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Ad hoc survey</td>
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4. Survey of recent indicators

Overall assessment: unsatisfactory, more work is needed.

Specific remarks:

→ 8 out of 18 indicators comprises measures not focused on workers (overall productivity, overall educational levels...).

→ Work intensity only included in 2 indicators (those using the EWCS).

→ 5 out of 18 measures only offer a system of indicators.

→ In aggregate indexes, weighting is usually discretionnal.
4. Survey of recent indicators

→ One job quality measure includes job satisfaction, and other 2 mixes job satisfaction and other variables.

→ 8 indicators can be computed at individual level (best strategy to analyse gender or ethnic gaps).

→ Rankings are –in general- consistent: Scandinavia at the top and Mediterranean countries at the bottom.
5. Final remarks

- There is a case for measuring job quality.

- There are different angles from looking at job quality → drawing lessons from Social Sciences literature might fit better than alternatives.

- There is still no established standard in the EU of what constitutes job quality or how it should be measured.

- There are plenty of proposals, overall far from being fully satisfactory.

- This job-quality concept has to be purged of variables that do not directly affect the quality of work and employment. The practice of “anything goes” in constructing job quality indicators has proven to be extremely detrimental to the relevance and usefulness of indicators.

- Many technical issues involved → any indicator should be the result of a very thoughtful and transparent process.
➢ To implement this aim effectively, enhanced sources of job quality data would be required.

➢ If a job quality indicator is going to be used for policy purposes in the EU, it will require not only to be constructed with the highest scientific standards, but to be backed by a strong and wide political agreement between all parties (including social partners, member states and the EP).
Thanks for your attention
Job satisfaction reported by workers in the OECD (2005)

Source: Authors' analysis from ISSP 2005.
% of workers who consider a job attribute very important (2005)

Source: Authors’ analysis from ISSP 2005.
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<td>Skills</td>
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<td>Subjective strand: powerlessness meaninglessness social isolation</td>
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<td>Contractual status and stability of employment</td>
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<td>Opportunities for skills development and career progression</td>
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<td>Conditions: Physical risks Psychosocial risks; Outcomes: Perceived impact of work on health Absenteeism</td>
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<td>Working time: Duration Scheduling Flexibility Regularity Clear boundaries Intensity: Pace of work and workload Stress and exhaustion</td>
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**The traditional sociological approach:** alienation and intrinsic quality of work

**The institutional approach:** segmentation and employment quality

**Occupational medicine and health and safety literature:**

**Work-life balance studies**