

# CIPD

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work and working lives

## Research report Part 1 – Thematic literature review

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Understanding  
and *measuring*  
job quality



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# Understanding and measuring job quality

Research report

Part 1 – Thematic Literature Review

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# Foreword

Gross domestic product and related factors, such as growth and productivity, remain standard measures of an economy. Yet it is not contentious to state that, in themselves, they are inadequate gauges of a truly healthy economy. Indeed, even if we include more socially oriented measures, such as the Gini coefficient of inequality, unemployment rates and real wage growth, we get a picture that is fuller, but still not wholly adequate.

To fully understand the interrelationships between our economies and societies, we need to include a broader conception of good quality work and employment. The raw figures of how many jobs there are and what financial value they produce are quite simply not enough.

An obvious starting point to expanding this view is well-being at work, considering not only objective aspects, such as rates of accidents or absence, but also subjective aspects like pressure and stress that vary from person to person. We can also look at employees' opportunities to progress and develop as professionals, job complexity and skills used, employee voice. All these factors and more can be hugely influential in our working lives and must not be ignored.

There is a strong imperative to comprehensively and consistently describe job quality and to measure it robustly. Firstly, it's necessary to develop our understanding of work and employment, building a cohesive body of knowledge. This is especially important in a world of clamour, fads, fake news and competing views, in which clear thinking can be a challenge. Secondly, it is necessary to galvanise action. As the old adage goes, what gets measured gets attention, and hopefully gets done.

The CIPD summarises its purpose as *championing better work and working lives*. This research report reviews the academic literature on job quality, to both flesh out what we can understand by this strapline and propose a usable and meaningful approach to measuring job quality. In part two, the authors review existing measures of job quality, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. Together, these two reports build on the 2017 Taylor review commissioned by the UK government and make an important contribution in thought leadership for a fundamental aspect of working life.

## **Jonny Gifford**

Senior Advisor, Organisational Behaviour  
CIPD

# Executive summary

*‘Despite predictions about the end of work as a consequence of digitalisation, more people than ever are in work.’*

## Introduction

This thematic literature review provides a developed understanding of the purpose of work, outlines the family of concepts related to job quality and identifies the key, agreed dimensions of job quality. A model of job quality is then proposed that includes measures. The review is based on academic and grey literature and, unless otherwise stated, the scope is limited to the UK and other developed countries.

## Changes and challenges to the quality of working life

Despite predictions about the end of work as a consequence of digitalisation, more people than ever are in work. However, work is changing: some ‘traditional’ jobs are disappearing and others are emerging alongside new types of contracts and ever-increasing flexibility (for example zero-hours contracts, ‘Uberisation’ and the gig economy). Not all of these changes are positive for job quality.

There has been growing interest in job quality in the UK and other EU and developed countries because of these changes. However, there is uncertainty about which jobs need to be improved and how. Any intervention rests on a clear definition of job quality, which is not yet forthcoming. Part of the challenge is agreeing what comprises ‘good’ or ‘decent quality’ work.

## The family of concepts

Ten commonly used terms in the ‘family of concepts’ from the job quality literature are highlighted: decent work, fair work, the quality

of working life (QWL), good work, well-being and work, fulfilling work, meaningful work, and job quality (within which the quality of employment and the quality of work are sometimes analysed separately). The scope of this family of concepts ranges from a focus on workers (for example their well-being), to the immediate worksite (for example QWL), to the enterprise (for example fair work) and to the economy and society (for example good work). All contain various dimensions. One way to accept this multiplicity is to regard the concepts as forming a hierarchicalised mosaic.

## Dimensions of job quality

‘Job quality’ covers all relevant concepts and is therefore adopted as the preferred concept. While there is consensus that job quality is a multi-dimensional concept, there is variance in the type and number of dimensions that have been proposed in different studies.

Dimensions of job quality largely reflect the disciplinary traditions of the researchers, for example: orthodox economists (pay); radical economists (power relations and exploitation); behavioural economists (participation in decision-making); traditional sociologists (alienation and the intrinsic quality of work); researchers from the institutional tradition (labour market segmentation and employment quality); occupational medicine and health and safety researchers (risks and health/well-being); work-life balance researchers (working time including duration, scheduling, flexibility and

intensity); industrial democracy researchers (voice, including union membership and collective bargaining); and geographers (spatialised structures and processes at work in labour markets).

### **Objective versus subjective dimensions of job quality**

A further debate considers whether job quality dimensions should be restricted to the characteristics of the job or reflects the preferences of the worker. Studies conducted from the *objective* tradition restrict their analysis to the constituent elements of a job, such as pay. The aim is to obtain a measure of job quality independent of workers' personal circumstances. A *subjective* approach to defining job quality hinges on the assumption that each worker has preferences over different job features; the aim of this approach is to obtain measures of the extent to which a job meets workers' preferences. The objective/subjective distinction is important though not necessarily dichotomous – jobs can be simultaneously objectively and/or subjectively good or bad.

### **Six key dimensions of job quality**

While there is no agreed measure of job quality, a relatively high degree of overlap exists in the number and type of dimensions used by researchers. Six key dimensions emerge: pay and other rewards; intrinsic characteristics of work; terms of employment; health and safety; work-life balance; representation and voice.

### **Factors affecting job quality**

Improving job quality hinges on job quality not being predetermined but shaped by different factors and actors, the influences of which affect managerial choices about the values, strategies and practices of their organisations and which

then impact job quality in the workplace. Key factors and actors highlighted in the literature as potentially influencing job quality are presented and reviewed. The role of HRM in shaping job quality through managerial choice and organisational values, practices and strategies is emphasised.

### **Concluding remarks**

The proposed model of job quality provides an indication of the factors that affect job quality and the outcomes of job quality as well as a six-dimension measure. Measuring job quality at the level of individual workers, it incorporates objective and subjective dimensions.

The dimensions are similar to others in that they are intended to be applied to empirical data rather than tested as a good or bad indicator per se. It can be refined, however, as it is used with the available data (see Part 2 of this review; Wright et al 2017) and developed as new trends and issues in work and employment emerge.

# Introduction

The aim of this thematic literature review is to provide developed understanding of the purpose of work and the core characteristics of job quality. It also provides an outline of the family of concepts related to job quality. The review is based on academic and grey literature and, unless otherwise stated, the scope is limited to the UK and other developed countries. From the review, dimensions that define and measure job quality are selected and offered as part of a model of job quality.

The review includes four broad sections. Section 1 begins by outlining the discrepancy between debates about digitalisation and the end of work, and the fact

that more people are in work than ever before. This outline is followed by sub-sections on the functions of work and the changes to employment and work, and how these changes can affect the quality of working life. Section 2 discusses the core characteristics of job quality, highlighting the scope and origin of commonly used terms in the family of concepts found in the job quality literature. This section then goes on to identify the key dimensions of job quality from the literature. Section 3 describes the factors affecting job quality, with a focus on human resource management. Finally, a concluding section provides an overview and a proposed model of job quality.

# 1 The purpose of work

A curious discrepancy is occurring between predictions of work and the empirical evidence. Indeed, the two are passing each other, heading in different directions. The predictions forecast a world without work, (Arntz et al 2016, Brynjolfsson and McAfee 2011, Rifkin 1995). The empirical evidence reveals that more people than ever are in work and that, far from disappearing, work remains important for many reasons, including – but not only – economic reasons (Bradley et al 2000, ILO 2016).

## The end of work?

With the advent of the World Wide Web in 1994, ICT has advanced dramatically, with important implications for employers and individual workers (Bollier 2011). This ‘fourth industrial revolution’ (Schwab 2016) has seen a revival of earlier Keynesian predictions of widespread technology-driven unemployment. For example, Frey and Osborne (2013) claim that 47% of US jobs are at high risk of being automated within the next 20 years. In the UK, Deloitte suggests that 20–25% of jobs in the UK will go but expects the ‘pace of automation to increase exponentially’ so that the jobs that are safer today will be at risk tomorrow (cited in Spence 2016). The predictions even forecast a ‘jobless future’ and ‘the end of work’ (Arntz et al 2016, Brynjolfsson and McAfee 2011).

What has been overlooked in this debate is its exclusive focus on potential job destruction.

Other researchers have shown that automation can have no negative effect on the jobs market (Graetz and Michaels 2015), while others have even shown a positive effect of automation on job creation (Stewart et al 2015). Degryse (2016) summarises these ambiguities by describing four main trends for understanding how technological change may impact on the labour market: job destruction, job creation, job change (that is, new forms of worker-machine interaction; new forms of jobs which result in new risks) and job shift (that is, the development of digital platforms and crowdworking, facilitating the relocation of services to countries with low levels of social protection and the developing countries).

Certainly, the empirical evidence for the UK shows that more people are now working than ever before. Since the lows of the global financial crisis (GFC), UK employment participation rates and the absolute number of people in work have increased. Total employment grew by 1.5 million jobs between 2008 and 2015. By February 2017 there were 31.84 million people in work – 312,000 more than a year earlier – and the employment rate was 74.6%, the joint highest rate since comparable records began in 1971 (ONS Statistical Bulletin, April 2017). It might be more accurate to say that rather than facing the ‘end of work’, the advanced economies are gripped by a ‘cult of work’ (Bradley et al 2000). This cult exists because work has multiple functions, not just economic.

## Work as transformational

Work can transform lives, providing much more than the means to live: if work is fulfilling, it can have a significant impact on individual well-being, providing ‘a sense of purpose, social connections and personal agency’ (White 2016, p2). Even 200 years ago, writers were developing common understandings of ‘work’ from ‘a hardship, a sacrifice, an expense, an “inutility”... into “creative freedom” whereby humans could transform the world, reorganize it, make it habitable, leave their mark on it’ (ILO 2016, p2). The twentieth century saw the ‘ultimate metamorphosis’, with work being seen as a highly desirable activity, opening the door to self-expression and self-realisation (ILO 2016, p3). Countries having full employment came to be regarded as important. Voswinkel (2007) similarly argues that the subjective evaluation of work has become increasingly important since the 1980s; work has become ‘the locus for self-realization, the place where individuals can exhibit all their worth and all their grandeur, one of the main arenas where they can best perform’ (in ILO 2016, p3).

Such transformations extend beyond individuals. Paid work, even within the informal economy, can be ‘transformational’ in four ways, affecting: (1) living standards (poverty falls as people work their way out of hardship, especially in those countries where the scope for redistribution is limited); (2) productivity (efficiency increases as workers get better at what they do, as more productive jobs



appear and less productive ones disappear); (3) social inclusion (paid work helps mainstream individuals and groups marginalised from society and the economy); and (4) social cohesion (societies flourish as jobs bring together people from different ethnic and social backgrounds and create a sense of opportunity and belonging). In other words, jobs can be transformative for individual workers and their families, for employers and for society as a whole (World Bank 2014).

Jobs are not equally transformational, however: some provide wider benefits than others. For example, part-time workers, predominantly women with children, were historically recruited to meet unpredictable labour market demand and to provide cheap, readily replaceable, flexible workers recruited into 'secondary' or 'peripheral' labour markets of lower-quality jobs (Atkinson 1987, Doeringer and Piore 1971). The women who entered part-time employment in huge numbers were concentrated in lower-level occupations, facing substantial inequalities in the workplace (Fagan and O'Reilly 1998) and the part-time labour market retains its lower status up to and beyond the GFC (Warren and Lyonette 2015). As such, many part-time jobs are not simply full-time jobs with fewer hours, they are qualitatively different. Nonetheless, some women like part-time work (Scott and Dex 2009) and part-time working women tend to report lower work-life conflict (Crompton and Lyonette 2007) and higher life satisfaction (Gash et al 2012) than female full-time workers. Any such subjective evaluations by part-time working women are likely to be influenced by the availability (or lack) of any viable alternatives (Warren and Lyonette 2015).

Davoine and Meda (2008) focus on the French case in explaining the differences between work as a means to an end and work as a 'source of fulfilment'. In so doing, they draw on the work of Galbraith (2004), who argues for a delineation between '*people for whom work is exhausting, fastidious and disagreeable and ... those who manifestly take pleasure from it and feel no stress from it, with a gratifying sense of their personal importance, perhaps, or the visible superiority they feel in placing others under their orders*' (2008, pp75-6). Those in the latter category are almost universally the highest paid workers.

The growing flexibility of the labour market, highlighted by the growth in 'Uberisation' and zero-hours contracts, has been hailed by politicians as facilitating work-life balance and also work productivity. However, Rubery and colleagues (2016) argue that the resulting rise in low-wage employment means that vulnerable workers, such as the disabled, those with caring responsibilities and older workers, are more likely to be excluded from the labour market, given the increasing competition for short-term work. As well as the many within-country differences, there are also large between-country differences in individual workers' ability to gain fulfilment or enjoyment from work (Bollier 2011).

#### **Changes to employment and work**

Despite the discrepancy between the predictions and the empirical evidence, it is clear that changes to employment and work are occurring. Some jobs are in decline, some are stabilising and others are growing in number. Recent figures by Eurofound (2015) demonstrate that the two largest employing jobs across the EU are sales workers in retail and teaching professionals in education, both

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remaining stable over the previous three years. The biggest job losses occurred in construction sector work. Those jobs growing the fastest were health professionals and personal service workers in food and beverage service activities. There is therefore job growth at both the top and the bottom of the wage distribution within the labour market. The fastest annual employment growth has been in ICT professionals but personal care worker jobs have also seen fast growth.

With respect to the impact of technology on work, there are two key debates. The first is the skills-biased technological change thesis, which argues that technological change leads to job-quality upgrade as the volume of higher-skilled jobs increases and the volume of lower-skilled jobs decreases. The second, the routine-biased technological change thesis, argues that technological change leads to the growth of some high-skilled but also low-skilled jobs, with a decrease in the volume of medium-skilled jobs; the result is job polarisation (Wright, forthcoming). The data reveals more mixed developments. White (2016) reports that high-skilled work increased from 1993 to 2014, supporting the notion of a ‘hollowing out’ in the middle of the occupational hierarchy, with increasing concentration of roles at the lower- and higher-skill ends of the labour market. The UK labour market in particular has polarised into what Goos and Manning (2007) term ‘lovely’ and ‘lousy’ jobs. However, most EU countries have experienced a variant of either upgrading or polarisation of the labour market over time. While the UK has demonstrated a predominantly polarising pattern, there has been some vacillation towards upgrading between 1985 and 2014 (Eurofound 2015). As

we note below in Section 3, this variation leads Fernández-Macías (2012) to conclude that technology is not deterministic of the stock of better and worse quality jobs but, at the very least, is mediated by other factors.

Further evidence shows that while there has clearly been a jobs-rich recovery in the UK since the GFC, it has not been a rich-jobs recovery – most of the jobs gain is based on non-standard employment (TUC 2016). In the three months to February 2017, the part-time share of employment was 26.5%: although lower than the previous year, the share still remains above its pre-crisis average of 25.5%. In terms of those working part-time because they could not find a full-time job, ONS data (12 April 2017) show that this proportion is declining but currently stands at 12.6%, still well above the pre-crisis average of 8.3%. Temporary workers in the UK currently represent 6% of all employees, a figure largely unchanged in the past two years. EU-wide data shows a broadly similar pattern in that the proportion of part-time jobs in the EU increased rapidly between 2011 and 2015, representing the main component in the declining share of workers with full-time, permanent work (Eurofound 2016).

‘Precariousness’ is now a catch-all term to describe some changes to work and employment. It is conceived both narrowly and broadly. The narrow version focuses on types of non-standard employment. The broader approach assumes that all forms of employment can have some degree of precariousness. While there has been much debate about the end of work, another vision of the future rests on the end of standard, secure

employment, as it is displaced with non-standard, contingent, precarious employment.

The shift away from standard employment has been most acute for workers in the bottom pay quintile in the UK. Data from Eurofound shows that around two-thirds of jobs created over 2011-15 in the UK in the bottom two quintiles of the pay distribution (that is, the lower-paid jobs) were part-time, temporary or self-employed. By contrast, over two-thirds of jobs created in the same period for workers in the top pay quintile were full-time, permanent jobs; temporary jobs in the quintile were also lost. In other words, already poor quality jobs as measured by pay in the UK are getting worse by contract status, while the already good jobs are getting better (Warhurst 2016). Zero-hours contracts in particular have become an issue, with the number of people employed on such contracts having risen in recent years. The number increased by 101,000 to 905,000 over the year to December 2016. Workers on zero-hours contracts now represent 2.8% of all people in employment (ONS, March 2017). Young, part-time and female workers, as well as workers still in full-time education, are more likely to be on a zero-hours contract.

Precariousness is said to be compounded by the rise of the platform (or gig) economy (Warhurst et al 2017). This rise is a global phenomenon. It is, however, still difficult to measure the extent of gig working. The CIPD (2017) reports that, although the proportion of UK working adults aged 18-70 years engaged in any sort of paid employment in the gig economy is just 4%, involvement varies by type of worker (for example there are more part-time and student workers in the gig

economy). The CIPD predicts that the gig economy is likely to grow, with 12% of working-age adults currently not engaging in the gig economy saying that they are considering it.

In this economy, transactions for goods and services migrate to websites and apps. The most high-profile examples are Airbnb (disrupting the hotel industry) and Uber (disrupting the taxi industry). What is significant about this form of digital disruption is that workers are no longer employed by an organisation but are paid by individual buyers to perform a single task: provide lodging (Airbnb) or offer transportation (Uber), albeit brokered by a third party through a website or app. As such, workers become freelancers and micro-entrepreneurs specialising in task provision (for an overview, see Warhurst et al 2017). However, there are issues around: tax collection for governments; unfair competition for existing businesses; for task brokers, workforce responsibilities; and, for the task providers, rights and regulation. Indeed, the legal status of these workers is yet to be clarified in the UK and elsewhere. In the meantime, debate rages as to whether being a freelancer/micro-entrepreneur represents an opportunity for people to escape being a wage slave (cf. Scott 1994) or a race to the bottom in terms of working conditions (Adam et al 2016).

### **Changes and challenges to the quality of working life**

These changes, for better or worse, affect the quality of working life. In the past, governments have often responded to periods of economic recession and slump by focusing more on job creation than on the quality of jobs, with

an underlying assumption that a trade-off existed between the two. As a consequence, well into the early 1990s, creating *any* jobs rather than *good* jobs became the priority, certainly for UK governments. A 'work first' approach to addressing unemployment was firmly embedded in government thinking.

At present, however, despite the economic uncertainty surrounding Brexit, the labour market is buoyant, at or nearing full employment in many UK localities. It might be expected that as labour becomes more scarce, the market would correct for poor jobs as employers seek to improve the attractiveness of their offer. This has not happened. A persistent bad-jobs trap exists in the UK with too many workers in low-skill, low-wage jobs being able to progress out of these jobs (Warhurst 2016). In-work poverty (having an income that is below the official poverty line) continues to be an issue. Continuing a rising trend that pre-dates the GFC (Palmer et al 2002, Kenway 2008), 2.3 million children in the UK lived in poverty in 2011/12, of which two-thirds (1.5 million) were in families with at least one working adult (Whittaker 2013). In other words, many workers are not provided with a wage basic enough to enable them and their families to live. Moreover, at a global level, the World Bank (2014) reports that half of the world's working population works in predominantly low-productivity activities that offer low earnings and little security.

Furthermore, the operational model of the gig economy also affects the quality of work and possibly the quality of employment. As jobs are displaced by task working, these tasks are often micro-managed by the platform provider which

monitors, assesses and, in some cases, directs how these tasks are performed, leaving the worker little room for task autonomy beyond switching on the app. In addition, income is often low, in some cases below the National Minimum Wage in the UK, trade unions claim. There have been a number of employment tribunal cases in the UK centred on whether these workers are really self-employed (Warhurst et al 2017). There have also been legal challenges in other countries: Germany, Spain, Italy and the US, for example (Adam et al 2016). In 2016, the UK's Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee launched an inquiry to examine the adequacy of current labour law in defining a 'worker', whether an appropriate balance of benefits between workers and employers exists, whether workers in the gig economy need further protections and whether adequate representation exists for these workers. Its report is pending.<sup>1</sup> In 2017, the Taylor Review of modern employment practices in the UK also reported. In setting up the review, the UK Government stated that, in the context of emerging new forms of work, it is important to ensure that all the working population receive decent wages and experience the right balance of flexibility, rights and protections.<sup>2</sup>

This interest in job quality by government is aided by recognition now that there is no automatic trade-off between job creation and job quality (for example, Davoine et al 2008a). European countries with higher job quality (Sweden, Finland and Denmark) also have higher rates of employment participation. The consequence, according to Erhel and Guergoat-Larivière (2016, p25), is that '*job quality should be a specific target for national policies*'. Indeed, the EU's European employment strategy, which constitutes part of the Europe 2020 growth strategy, explicitly recognises that there can be more and better jobs and promotes this dual approach (European Commission 2012). Even Autor (2015) – the must-go-to researcher on technology-driven employment restructuring – now acknowledges that the quantity of jobs is no longer the issue; rather it is the quality of jobs that now needs attention.

A key task for policy-makers is to identify which jobs need to be improved and how (Warhurst and Knox 2015b, Findlay et al 2017). Intervention, however, rests on job quality being well defined. Unfortunately, it is not. Instead, there are a family of related concepts, as we outline in the next section.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/business-energy-industrial-strategy/inquiries/parliament-2015/the-future-world-of-work-and-rights-of-workers-16-17/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/business-energy-industrial-strategy/inquiries/parliament-2015/the-future-world-of-work-and-rights-of-workers-16-17/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/news/taylor-review-on-modern-employment-practices-launches](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/taylor-review-on-modern-employment-practices-launches)

## 2 The core characteristics of job quality

*‘The quality of jobs is important because it affects attitudes, behaviour and outcomes at the individual, organisational and national level.’*

### **What is job quality?**

The quality of jobs is important because it affects attitudes, behaviour and outcomes at the individual, organisational and national level. Research and policy developments focusing on the quality of jobs to create ‘better jobs’ have been expanding steadily across most developed countries (Eurofound 2002, 2012, 2016, ILO 2015, Cazes et al 2015, OECD 2016, Kalleberg 2011, Osterman and Shulman 2011, Muñoz de Bustillo et al 2011, Findlay et al 2013, Warhurst and Knox 2015a).

There have been various attempts to operationalise the notion of job quality. A plethora of terms now exist, covering very broad to more narrow approaches. Sometimes these terms are distinct, sometimes they overlap, and sometimes they are synonymous. In general terms the quality of jobs refers to the extent to which a set of job attributes contributes to, or detracts from, workers’ well-being (Muñoz de Bustillo et al 2011). A number of authors have highlighted the difficulty in translating this general notion of job quality into a set of specific markers (see Muñoz de Bustillo et al 2009, 2011, Sengupta et al 2009, Findlay et al 2013, Warhurst and Knox 2015a, Wright 2015). Findlay (2015) makes the point that competing conceptualisations of job quality hinder attempts to improve job quality as well as evaluation of any interventions intended to improve job quality. Addressing this challenge is necessary if progress is to be made to improve job quality. A first step is to outline the family of concepts found in the job quality literature.

### **The family of concepts**

One of the reasons why so many different terms have been used stems from there being no definition agreement. One result is that different concepts overlap, are sometimes used interchangeably and are sometimes conflated by researchers and policy-makers – and sometimes are simply overstretched. Moreover, what may be considered ‘decent’ or ‘good quality’ work can mean different things to different workers, social partners or policy-makers. For example, in reference to decent work, Anker and his colleagues (2003, p147) note that ‘every person at work or looking for work ... has a notion of what “decency” at work stands for’. However, they acknowledge the difficulty in translating the general concept into easily understandable characteristics of work, including the difficulty in identifying statistical indicators with which those characteristics can be measured with an acceptable degree of consistency, accuracy and cross-country comparability. As Muñoz de Bustillo and his colleagues (2011) similarly note about job quality, it is ‘elusive’ because ‘it is one of those concepts ... which everyone understands yet it is difficult to define precisely’ (p4).

In order to unpack some of the conceptual messiness, the scope and origin of ten commonly used terms in the family of concepts are set out below.

### **Decent work**

Decent work is a popular concept that focuses as much on the state of labour markets as workplaces

within countries. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines decent work as where *'all women and men should work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity'* (ILO 1999, 2001). The concept tends to be connected to poverty reduction in developing countries in the context of globalisation and sustainable economic development. For the ILO, a fundamental right to decent work should be available to all workers: women and men, salaried or self-employed. The ILO's Decent Work Agenda has 11 dimensions: social dialogue, workers' and employee representation; employment opportunities; adequate earnings and productive work; decent working time; combining work, family and personal life; abolition of certain types of work (for example child labour, forced labour); stability and security of work; equal opportunity and treatment in employment; safe work environment; social security; economic and social context for decent work.

Starting in the early 2000s, researchers attempted to operationalise the ILO's concept of decent work drawing on different dimensions, using different indicators and different methods. The result was more a shopping list than coherent measurement (for example Standing 2002, Ghai 2003, Anker et al 2003, Bescond et al 2003, Bonnet et al 2003). More recently, with its origins in development economics, it has been picked up by civic organisations as a means to reduce in-work poverty. For example, Oxfam Scotland applied the concept of decent work to low-wage workers in Scotland. Out of 26 decent work factors it identified, the five indicators rated the highest by low-paid workers were: sufficient pay to cover basic needs; job security; paid holidays

and sick leave; a safe working environment; and a supportive line manager (Stuart et al 2016). Despite many researchers trying to operationalise this concept of decent work, it is probably best understood as an aspirational political and social agenda (Muñoz de Bustillo et al 2009, 2011).

#### **Fair work**

There are two government-led versions of fair work that are different in focus and emphasis: one in Australia and one in Scotland. Fair work in Australia centres on the provision of minimum standards of employment. Fair work in Scotland centres on the promotion of social partnership, both as a feature of, and to support progressive workplaces.

The notion of a 'fair go' has historically underpinned Australian labour law and workplace relations. Since 2009, the Australian federal government's concept of fair work has been enshrined in ten National Employment Standards (NES), plus a national minimum wage (NMW). The NES are legislated minimum conditions of work covering the following areas: maximum weekly hours of work; the right to request flexible working arrangements; parental leave and related entitlements; annual leave; personal carers' leave and compassionate leave; community service leave; long service leave; public holidays; notice of termination and redundancy pay; provision by employer of an information statement; plus the NMW (Cooper and Ellem 2009).

The Scottish notion of fair work encourages social partner dialogue and promotes progressive workplace policies. In Scotland, fair work offers effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect, balances rights and responsibilities of employers and

*'The Scottish notion of fair work encourages social partner dialogue and promotes progressive workplace policies.'*

workers and can generate benefits for individuals, organisations and society. In the mid-2010s, the Scottish Fair Work Convention drew on US-inspired high-performance workplaces and was established arising out of a recommendation from the *Working Together Review*. While including traditional industrial relations and extending to include other forms of employee participation in the workplace, it is also aspirational: the framework is ‘*only a beginning – the start of a decade long journey towards fairer work*’ (Fair Work Convention 2016). The main planks of the Convention are around effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect.

### **Good work**

Three versions of ‘good work’ emerge from the literature: narrow, broad and bridging.

The narrow version centres around three indicators: workers’ rights and participation; equal opportunities, safety and health protection at work; family-friendly organisation of work. It originated with policy-makers wanting to encourage greater labour market participation and is promoted by the EU’s European Council to ensure that workplaces are inclusive. Prior to the GFC it was concerned with promoting the social dimension of the EU as a means to strengthen economic and social cohesion, harmonising and improving working conditions. In this sense, it is an *outside-in* approach, hoping to solve socio-economic problems through work. More specifically, it wants to use work to lever the social inclusion and cohesion of marginalised groups. Measures centre on ‘flexicurity pathways’ tailored to labour market needs and reinforcing a lifecycle approach

to work, with getting into and staying longer in work being the desired outcome. A tightening of labour markets across the EU followed the GFC. Although the European Commission maintained its position, the language of ‘good work’ lessened (Council of the European Union 2007).

The broad version is an *inside-out* approach, seeking to build out from the workplace into society. Positioned to be good for employees and employers, workers are assumed to be capable of self-governance and their work excellent in quality while also being socially responsible and meaningful (Overell et al 2009). It emerged out of civic-minded organisations wanting a new paradigm, linking workplace stakeholders and work and society, and includes seven indicators: safety and job security; autonomy, choice, control, discretion and influence in work; effort and reward that is fair, with reward systems that are open, transparent and equitable; training that provides opportunities to develop and use skills, making work more satisfying and offering progression; being treated fairly in a trusting environment; relationships that build trust and resilience, respectful of diversity; rights to voice and association. The broad version continues to be promoted by civic organisations, loosely defined. The UK’s Good Work Commission, for example, called for a reconfigured social settlement based on a ‘new tripartism’ that delivered ‘wider social gains’, and argues that ‘*good work is an attempt to advance [and] arrive at a new settlement for work in the 21st century that breaks out of the straitjacket of interest-group gains and losses and instead aims at work that is able to deliver performance, engagement and fairness*’ (Overell et al 2009, pp12–13).

What may be considered a bridging version of good work is concerned with changes to the labour market and the quality of work. Offered by the UK’s RSA,<sup>3</sup> there is no definition or measurement. Instead it adopts a dual approach: the first is inductive – letting people voice what good work means; the second is normative, prescribing that good work should exist. In the twenty-first century ‘*bad work ... just feels wrong*’, says the RSA’s Matthew Taylor (2017). Contextualising its approach to wanting to create better working lives, the RSA notes the extent of in-work poverty; the negative impact of bad jobs on health and well-being; its association with low firm and national productivity; and the potential for automation to shape the future of work. Different dimensions and indicators are offered across countries and research teams. Despite arguments that no single perspective (employees, employers or society) can be isolated from others, the most useful indicators focus on the workplace.

### **Well-being and work**

Well-being and work has recently gained much academic and policy attention (for example Blanchflower and Oswald 2004, Bryson et al forthcoming, CIPD 2016, Green et al 2015, Jahoda 1981, Muñoz de Bustillo 2011, OECD 2013). There are two main approaches: ‘well-being from work’ and ‘well-being in work’.

The *well-being from work* approach emerged from concerns about the effect of unemployment on individual psychology as unemployment levels rose over the 1970s–1980s. It was concerned with the (mainly) social psychological effects of not being in work through unemployment.

<sup>3</sup> Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

More recent initiatives, however, are predicated on a need to extend from existing measures of economic performance to broader measures of social progress.

The origins of *well-being in work* also lie in psychology, but there have been many different routes to and spin-outs from it. For example, it has been adopted as a field of study by economics and sociology and is also a feature of human resource management (HRM) (these three disciplines, along with law, are the underpinning disciplines of HRM as a field of study). The well-being in work approach is concerned with the effect on employees of changes to work, with the driver of interest being re-invigorated debates about the link between well-being/job satisfaction and productivity in the workplace and economic growth nationally (a statistical link is accepted between employee satisfaction and performance, although causality, and the direction of causality, has yet to be established).

Different studies use different measures of well-being. The well-being from work approach includes: self-esteem and depressive affect scales; internal-external locus of control scale, and mood scales. A recent OECD 'model' (2013) focuses on three dimensions: life evaluation; affect – a person's feelings or emotional state; and eudemonia – a sense of meaning and purpose in life. The well-being in work approach focuses on 'job-related well-being' with two core dimensions: enthusiasm for and contentment with the job, both of which cover job satisfaction. Indeed, job satisfaction has become a proxy for well-being and is the most commonly investigated aspect of well-being by academics and policy-makers. (However, it should

be noted there are problems with using job satisfaction as a measure as it is difficult to determine if it is a feature or outcome of job quality, see Muñoz de Bustillo et al 2011.)

Other outcomes measured include morale, labour turnover and absence. Broader measures within this approach include: physical and mental health; work demands and environment; organisational values/principles; collective/social relations; and personal growth. Job satisfaction features again, this time as part of the work domain.

#### **Fulfilling work**

There are also two versions of fulfilling work: the first seeks to extend from well-being and the second focuses on the drivers of well-being. Once more, the origins of this concept lie in psychology.

The first version is vague on dimensions but includes pay, achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and the nature of the work. For example, UK recruiter Randstad assessed the relationship between jobs and the level of satisfaction expected by the British public (fulfilment was defined here as '*the achievement of something desired, promised or predicted*'). Results showed that pay was the primary reason for British workers to feel fulfilled and stay in their current job. Workers also valued achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and the nature of the work (Randstad 2014).

The second version covers three themes: availability of work; quality of work; work and well-being. Each theme has a number of factors, with job satisfaction featuring as part of the work and well-being theme (see also above). It is sometimes difficult to disentangle fulfilling work and well-being, as

*'The well-being in work approach focuses on "job-related well-being" with two core dimensions: enthusiasm for and contentment with the job, both of which cover job satisfaction.'*



*‘The concept of QWL emerged from the late 1940s and centred on making the technical and social systems in workplaces fit together better.’*

well as cause and outcome. For example, the civic organisation Carnegie UK Trust positioned fulfilling work as ‘*a significant determinant of people’s well-being*’ (White 2016, p2).

#### **Meaningful work**

Originating again in psychology, the concept of meaningful work draws on 1970s’ concerns with worker motivation being addressed through work redesign (for example Hackman and Oldham 1976) but continues today through the Laboratory for the Study of Meaning and Quality of Work (Steger et al 2012). It has three core components: work is perceived to have significance and purpose; work’s contribution to broader meaning in life; and work’s positive contribution to the greater good. There is an attempt here to displace job satisfaction with the concept of meaningful work: meaningful work can be derived from the individual or the organisation and is argued to be a good predictor of desirable work attitudes (and a better predictor of absenteeism from work than job satisfaction). However, there is no consensus as yet on defining and measuring meaningful work.

#### **Quality of working life (QWL)**

The concept of QWL emerged from the late 1940s and centred on making the technical and social systems in workplaces fit together better. It is a ‘needs-based approach’ aimed at improving the quality of working life in the context of poor industrial relations and worker motivation. The concept emerged from psychology, then migrated to sociology and industrial relations. Initially, the QWL movement sought to address worker alienation, then extended to a drive for industrial democracy and wider social change (Trist and Bamforth 1951, Walton 1974, Cherns 1976). The QWL

movement resulted in job redesign experiments that restructured work groups and enhanced task participation. As theory and practice diffused across countries, variations in operational intent and disagreements about definition proliferated.

The initial concept had a limited focus on job design to improve what is now referred to as ‘employee engagement’ with work. The later, more expansive conceptualisation of QWL evolved to incorporate adequate and fair compensation; safe and healthy working conditions; the development of human capacities; opportunity for continued personal growth and employment security; social integration in the work organisation; worker rights and protection; (what is now termed) work-life balance; and the social relevance of work life (Walton 1974).

There has been a new call to reinvigorate QWL research in the context of the gig economy (Grote and Guest 2017, Guest forthcoming).

#### **Job quality**

Jostling to displace ‘decent work’ given its operationalisation problems, job quality is now probably the dominant term used amongst academics and policy-makers (for example Cazes et al 2015, Davoine et al 2008a, EC 2012, ILO 2015, Muñoz de Bustillo 2009, 2011, OECD 2013, 2016, Knox and Warhurst 2015a, Leschke and Watt 2008, Leschke et al 2012, Warhurst et al 2017, Wright 2015). The origins of job quality arguably lie with eighteenth-century proto-social theorists and economists (the latter’s approach developed into the twentieth century, around the theory of compensating wage differentials). Since then, it has become of interest to sociology, law, geography and

psychology (Knox and Warhurst 2015). However, the main and comprehensive measures still tend to emerge out of economics – more specifically, labour economics infused by a socio-economic perspective.

It is important to understand what a ‘job’ is. A job is an occupation within an industry. Confusion can arise when work, employment and jobs are conflated. Jobs comprise both work (the application of labour to tasks using technology to produce, use or exchange value) and the terms and conditions of employment through which that work is contracted. Sometimes the quality of work and the quality of employment are analysed separately.

#### **Quality of employment**

There are seven dimensions to the quality of employment, each with sub-dimensions: safety and ethics of employment; income and benefits from employment; working time and work–life balance; security of employment and social protection; social dialogue; skills development and training; employment-related relationships and work motivation. An example of a measure that is weighted towards employment is the UN Expert Group of Measuring Quality of Employment (2015).

#### **Quality of work**

There are five dimensions of the quality of work: ergonomic; complexity; autonomy; control; and economic dimensions. An example of an approach weighted towards working conditions is provided by Centra and Gualtieri (2014).

#### **Job quality**

Comprehensive measures of job quality cover both aspects – work and employment. Some measures are broad, extending beyond job quality per se; others

have a restricted focus within job quality; and others attempt a comprehensive focus across job quality.

In terms of extending beyond job quality per se, some approaches repeat past mistakes and have a scope of coverage that is too wide, for example the ILO’s decent work and the European Commission’s Laeken indicators have been criticised for not being confined to the attributes of jobs. The Laeken indicators are an example of measures extending beyond job quality, with ten aggregate dimensions (only some of these dimensions relate to the job, whereas others relate to the wider labour market context): intrinsic job quality; skills, lifelong learning and career development; gender equality; health and safety at work; flexicurity and security; inclusion and access to the labour market; work organisation and work–life balance; social dialogue and workers’ involvement; diversity and non-discrimination; and overall economic performance and productivity.

More narrowly focused approaches restrict their focus to particular aspects of work and employment within job quality. The obvious example is Osterman and Shulman’s (2011) use of only pay to define and measure job quality. Their argument for this restricted focus is that pay data is readily available, usually longitudinally and often in a form that allows international comparison. An example of a slightly more expanded but still restricted focus comes from the OECD (2016). This measure has three main dimensions: earnings quality; labour market security; and quality of the working environment, capturing non-economic aspects of work. The OECD (2013, 2016) argues that these dimensions are

important for worker well-being and are constituents of a ‘good job’. In reality, it is probably better to think of such restricted-scope approaches as weighted towards either employment or work.

Some measurement approaches attempt to scope across job quality and only job quality. An example of such an approach is that of Muñoz de Bustillo et al (2011). In constructing their measure, Muñoz de Bustillo et al complain that some studies of job quality include dimensions that are not strictly properties of the job. For example, certain dimensions are concerned with labour market conditions, organisational context and with outcomes at the individual level (for example job satisfaction, engagement, life satisfaction) and at the organisational level (for example economic performance, productivity).

Muñoz de Bustillo et al (2009, p25) call for a ‘purging’ of variables that do not directly affect job quality: *‘the practice of “anything goes” in constructing job quality indicators has proven to be extremely detrimental to the relevance and usefulness of indicators’*. Muñoz de Bustillo and his colleagues (2011, p2) argue strongly in favour of strictly limiting indicators to those aspects of the job that have a clear and direct impact on the well-being of workers.

Their concept of job quality is linked on the one hand with the characteristics of the work performed and its environment (which they call the ‘work’ dimension, including among other things the level of autonomy at work, as well as its social and physical environment) and on the other hand with the characteristics of the contractual conditions under which the job is performed (which they call the

'employment' dimension, and includes pay, contractual stability and development opportunities, among other things). Their concept excludes issues which may be related to the well-being of workers but which are not characteristics of the jobs they perform (such as their psychological states or the social support they have outside work) as well as concepts which concern the labour market (such as the level of unemployment). Their resulting measure has five dimensions: pay; intrinsic characteristics of work; quality of employment; work-life balance; health and safety. This measure is operationalised via a job quality index (JQI) that has gained traction with the European Commission and its agencies.

**Putting the concepts together**

Taken together, this family of concepts is multi-focus and multi-level. Its scope ranges from a focus on the individual worker (for example their well-being) to the immediate worksite (for

example QWL) to the enterprise (for example fair work) to the economy and society (for example good work). One way to accept this multiplicity is to regard the concepts as forming a hierarchicalised mosaic (see Figure 1). Because it encompasses both work and employment, job quality covers all of the concepts and is their conceptual glue. It is therefore adopted as the preferred concept to progress understanding of how better jobs can be encouraged.

**Dimensions of job quality**

While there is consensus that job quality is a multi-dimensional concept, there is variance in the type and number of dimensions that have been proposed as comprising job quality (Gallie 2007, Muñoz de Bustillo et al 2009, 2011, Antón et al 2012, Kalleberg 2011, Warhurst and Knox 2015a, Wright 2015). This subsection reviews the dimensions used in studies on job quality. It concludes by identifying the key agreed dimensions of job quality.

Mapping 60 published studies conducted between 2002 and 2017 reveals considerable variation in the number and combination of dimensions used by researchers. Typically between four and ten dimensions are used (see Appendix 1). It is not feasible to discuss all of the studies here, so only a selection is highlighted:

- Eurofound (2002) identified four core elements of job quality: career and employment security; health and well-being; reconciliation of working and non-working life; and skills development.
- Clark (2005a) reported data for six dimensions: pay; hours of work; future prospects (promotion and job security); how hard or difficult the job is; job content (interest, prestige and independence); and interpersonal relationships.
- Drawing on Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, Green (2006) proposed a framework for job quality with six

**Figure 1: Hierarchical mosaic of job-quality-related concepts**



Source: Authors.

dimensions: skills' level; work effort and intensification; workers' discretion; wages; risk and job insecurity; and workers' well-being.

- Aligning with the European Employment Strategy (EES), Davoine and Erhel (2006) identified four components of employment quality: socio-economic security (including decent wages and wage inequality); skills and training opportunities; working conditions and ability to combine work and family; and gender equality. These authors have used the same four dimensions as the basis for subsequent research on job quality in Europe (Davoine and Erhel 2006, Davoine et al 2008b, Erhel and Guergoat-Larivière 2010).
- Focusing mainly on the intrinsic characteristics of the job, Gallie (2007) identified five core dimensions: skill level; the degree of task discretion or autonomy; the opportunities for skill development; job security; and the extent to which jobs are compatible with work-family balance. He addresses issues of work pressure in the

context of work-family conflict, and issues of pay are addressed in the context of changing skill profiles.

- Kalleberg (2011) discusses how jobs are made up of 'bundles of rewards' and examines four broad aspects of job quality: pay and fringe benefits (including flexible work time options and whether a job provides opportunities for increasing earnings over time); control over tasks; intrinsic rewards; and time at work.
- Antón and his colleagues (2012, following Muñoz de Bustillo et al 2011) identify five broad dimensions corresponding to the main traditions of job quality, namely: pay; intrinsic characteristics of the job; terms of employment; health and safety; and work-life balance.
- Reviewing the key literature to that date, Hauff and Kirchner (2014) identified 11 dimensions of job quality: autonomy; job content; social relations; working conditions; wage and payment; working time and work-life balance; skills and development; contractual status and stability; workplace; fairness; and outcomes.

While there are many different combinations of dimensions within these studies, what is also apparent is that the various dimensions of job quality found in the literature largely reflect the disciplinary traditions of the researchers. Hurley and his colleagues (2012) identified seven disciplinary traditions of research on job quality, each with a different focus and different measures or indicators. For example, orthodox economists tend to focus on pay while traditional sociologists typically consider issues associated with skill, autonomy and job content. Researchers from the institutional tradition tend to focus on contract status and stability of employment, and opportunities for skills development and career progression. Researchers from the occupational medicine and health and safety approach focus on the physical and psychosocial risks of work. These starting points tend to have quite different normative implications (see Table 1).

One issue is whether dimensions should be restricted to the characteristics of the jobs themselves or extended to also include consideration of the

**Table 1: Focus of different disciplinary traditions**

Disciplinary tradition	Focus
Orthodox economic approach	Compensating wage differentials
Radical economic approach	Power relations and exploitation
Behavioural economic approach	Participation
Traditional sociological approach	Alienation and intrinsic quality of work
Institutional approach	Segmentation and employment quality
Occupational medicine and health and safety approach	Risks and impact of work on health/well-being
Work-life balance approach	Working time, including duration, scheduling, flexibility and intensity
Industrial democracy approach	Voice, including union membership and collective bargaining
Geography	Spatialised structures and processes at work in labour markets

Source: Wright (forthcoming) adapted from Hurley et al (2012), Murray and Stewart (2015) and Weller and Campbell (2015).

*‘The aim of the objective approach is to obtain a measure of job quality independent of workers’ personal circumstances and the external labour market.’*

degree to which the job meets the needs or preferences of the individual worker (Antón et al 2012, Green 2006). Eurofound (2012) makes a useful distinction between ‘objective’ (extrinsic) and ‘subjective’ (intrinsic) dimensions of job quality:

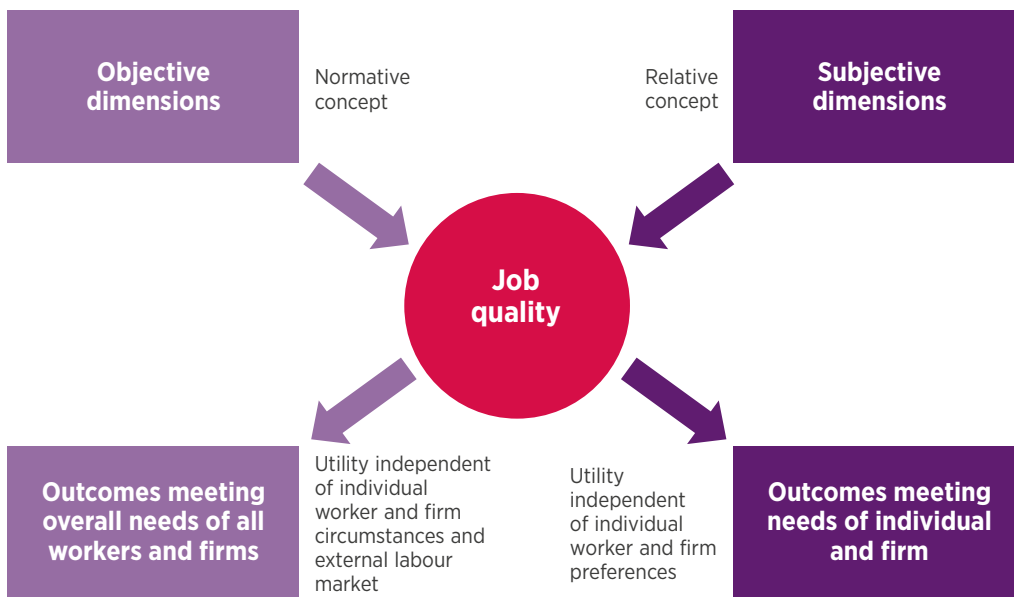
- An *objective* concept of job quality focuses on *‘the essential characteristics of jobs that meet workers’ needs’* (Eurofound 2012, p10). Studies conducted from the objective tradition restrict their analysis to the constituent elements of a job, such as wages, hours and type of work (Muñoz de Bustillo et al 2011, Hurley et al 2012, Eurofound 2012). The aim of the objective approach is to obtain a measure of job quality independent of workers’ personal circumstances and the external labour market.
- A *subjective* approach to defining job quality hinges on the assumption that each worker has preferences over different job features (Eurofound 2012, p10). The aim of the subjective approach is to obtain measures of the extent to which a job meets workers’ preferences (Eurofound 2012, p11). As a consequence, what might be objectively bad might be perceived positively by the job-holder, as Box 1 illustrates.

#### **Box 1: Jobs can be objectively poor but perceived to be good**

A relatively new job, classrooms assistants were introduced into Scottish primary schools to support the work of school teachers, initially doing basic tasks to free teachers to teach. As the role developed, an investigation by the Equal Opportunities Commission expressed concerns about these predominantly female workers. The investigation found that classroom assistant work was low skill and low wage. No qualifications were needed to get the job and none needed for progression – not that many career development opportunities existed. Classroom assistants were one of the lowest paid groups of local authority workers, with annual salaries ranging from £6,810–£11,974. Moreover, two-thirds of classroom assistants worked extra hours of which nearly two-thirds did so unpaid. On many objective indicators, therefore, classroom assistants had poor job quality. However, the intrinsic characteristics of the job – working with young children, some of whom had special needs – provided meaningful and self-fulfilling work. As the union rep explained, classroom assistants are *‘women who really enjoy their job’*. Thus, while classroom assistants recognised that their terms and conditions of employment were objectively poor, their subjective experience of work was positive. During the investigation, one classroom assistant recognised this apparent contradiction: *‘I and my fellow colleagues are being exploited but we love our job.’*

Source: EOC (2007) and Gilbert et al. (2012).

**Figure 2: Objective and subjective dimensions of job quality**



Source: Wright (forthcoming).

Researchers from the subjective tradition believe that the objective approach views jobs as neutral and, in doing so, also ignores worker characteristics such as gender, race and class (Charlesworth and Chalmers 2005, Kalleberg 2011, Pocock and Skinner 2012, Green 2006, Cooke et al 2013). Figure 2 shows the relationship between the objective and subjective dimensions of job quality.

The distinction is important because the meaning of 'good' and 'bad' jobs is not self-evident: workers' assessments of job quality vary, based on their demographic characteristics as well as their life stage, as Box 2 illustrates. In short, what workers value in a job depends upon their life stage and related personal circumstances (Pocock and Skinner 2012).

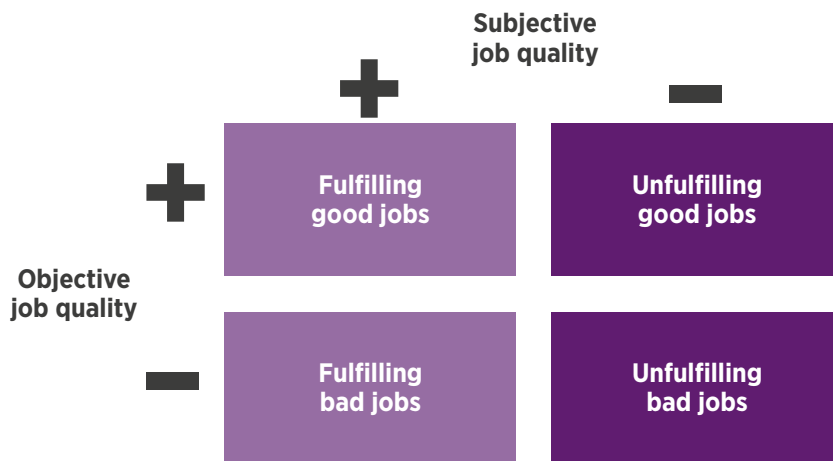
The influence of demographics is most apparent in Sutherland's

(2011) examination of workers' job attribution preferences of what makes a good job. These attributes are separated into extrinsic (for example good promotion prospects, good pay, having a secure job and convenient hours of work), and intrinsic (for example good relations with your supervisor or manager, having a job where you can use your initiative, having work you like doing and opportunities to use your abilities). Drawing on survey data, his findings show that workers overall ranked work that they like doing as most important, followed by having a secure job, opportunity to use their abilities and having friendly people to work with. However, disaggregating by demographic factors, he also found that more highly qualified workers are more likely to value using their initiative, women are more likely to value convenient hours and workers with dependent children

are more likely to value good pay. These findings resonate with Pocock and Skinner's (2012) work.

Knox et al (2015, p1562) argue that including both objective and subjective assessments of job quality 'provides a more nuanced and comprehensive account of job quality because it rightly maintains and incorporates the objective and subjective dimensions and provides a more comprehensive analytical framework of worker types'. In developing a descriptive typology of job quality, they note that jobs which are objectively good can be characterised either as 'fulfilling good jobs' (subjectively and objectively good) or 'unfulfilling good jobs' (subjectively bad but objectively good) and, likewise, jobs that are objectively bad can be experienced as both fulfilling (subjectively good but objectively bad) and unfulfilling (subjectively and objectively bad) (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Job quality categorisation**



Source: Knox et al (2015).

Although incorporating objective and subjective dimensions into definitions and measures of job quality is not universally accepted, it is gaining acceptance – if only for practical reasons. For example, Muñoz de Bustillo et al (2009, 2011) do not specify whether dimensions of job quality should be objective or subjective but have an underlying principle in their JQI to only use subjective indicators if and when no suitable objective indicators exist. With it being difficult, for example, to obtain objective indicators for levels of autonomy at work, their measure

consequently includes both objective and subjective indicators.

**Summary**

Reviewing the literature, it is apparent that while there is no agreed definition and measure, a relatively high degree of overlap exists in the number and type of dimensions used by various researchers (see Appendix 1). When extraneous characteristics are removed, six key dimensions of job quality emerge:

- **pay and other rewards:** including objective aspects

such as wage level, type of payment (for example, fixed salary, performance pay) and non-wage fringe benefits (such as employer-provided pension and health cover) and subjective aspects (such as satisfaction with pay)

- **intrinsic characteristics of work:** including objective aspects (such as skills, autonomy, control, variety, work effort) and subjective aspects (such as meaningfulness, fulfilment, social support and powerfulness)
- **terms of employment:** including objective aspects (such as contractual stability and opportunities for training, development and progression) and subjective aspects (such as perception of job security)
- **health and safety:** including physical and psycho-social risks
- **work-life balance:** including working time arrangements such as duration, scheduling and flexibility, as well as work intensity
- **representation and voice:** including employee consultation, trade union representation and employee involvement in decision-making.

**Box 2: Surf’s up – life’s good and so is the job**

Hotel room attendants clean rooms and corridors and have objectively poor job quality. Their jobs are low skill and poorly paid. Work is also heavy, routine and repetitive, requiring little formal training. These jobs are hard work and getting harder: increasing competition within the industry has led to work intensification, with room attendants having to work faster to complete their room cleaning quotas. Even when career development opportunities exist, they can be difficult to access because of work pressures. However, research examining luxury resort hotels in Hawaii suggests that these jobs can still be viewed as good. The explanation lies in who is employed in these jobs and their life stage and preferences. For young people coming to Hawaii seeking to surf for the season, these jobs require little commitment but offer lots of time to chase waves. By contrast, some older locals in Hawaii, frustrated by the lack of alternative job opportunities on the Islands, feel unwillingly trapped, having to accept *‘the meagre offerings available to them’*. For the surfers, these jobs are ‘fulfilling bad jobs’ (see figure 3), objectively bad but subjectively good, allowing them the lifestyle that they want at this stage of their life. For the locals, these jobs are ‘unfulfilling bad jobs’, both objectively and subjectively bad, misaligning with what these workers want. Different job-holders therefore can have different experiences and perceptions of the same job depending upon their personal circumstances such as their life-stage and accompanying needs and preferences.

Source: Adler and Adler (2004), Knox et al (2015) and Vanselow et al (2010).

## 3 Factors affecting job quality

If identifying key dimensions of job quality is important, so too is understanding the factors that affect job quality. This section examines those factors, starting with the reasons for wanting to improve job quality and ends by highlighting the possibilities and choices that exist for improving job quality.

### Why improve job quality?

The most obvious reason for wanting to improve job quality is the costs that arise from poor quality jobs. Individual workers most directly bear these costs, for example, through low wages, skill under-utilisation, insecure employment, and poor physical and mental health from work (Findlay et al 2017). Society bears the remedial costs of these jobs through, for example, tax credits, healthcare costs and now political crisis (Toynbee 2003, Warhurst 2016). However, the employer position is more ambiguous. On the one hand, some employers may have opportunity costs because of poor quality jobs – recruitment and retention problems, and untapped talent and weakened innovative capacity within the workplace, for example. On the other hand, employers can benefit from poor quality jobs, externalising the welfare, taxation and healthcare costs, for example to government and/or workers. *‘For some individual employers, therefore, providing bad jobs makes good business sense’* (Findlay et al 2017, p8).

Two positions then emerge about the drive to have more better jobs (see also Findlay et

al 2017). The first is essentially a normative one, underpinned by altruism or social responsibility; intervention is needed because, in the twenty-first century, Taylor (2017) states, *‘bad work ... just feels wrong’*, as we noted earlier. The second is an instrumental one, with improvements driven by the gains to be made at organisational and societal levels through better jobs. The two positions are not exclusive. As Green (2006) notes, better performing economies have better jobs, and having more better jobs can have individual, social and organisational benefits, as the Scottish Government (2014) recognises. What factors influence job quality therefore need to be examined.

### What influences job quality?

Technology is often cited as a, if not the, key driver of job quality. It is digital technology, for example, that enables Uberisation and the fragmentation of jobs into tasks, highlighted in Section 1. More generally, the skill-biased technical change thesis predicated an upgrading of job quality as routine manual and routine cognitive tasks are replaced by computerised automation, and the same automation boosts demand for non-routine cognitive tasks (Autor et al 2003). However, research conducted by Eurofound found limited support for this thesis. Using pay as the measure of job quality, data over 1995–2007 revealed trend variation amongst EU countries, with some in which job quality polarised, others in which it upgraded – that is, improved. With no single pattern across the EU countries, these

*‘The most obvious reason for wanting to improve job quality is the costs that arise from poor quality jobs.’*



outcomes show that technology does not deterministically drive the quality of jobs but is instead mediated by institutional factors (Fernández-Macías 2012). For example, during the period under study, some countries deregulated their labour markets, with increased non-standard employment, whereas others had strong trade unions that were able to limit the expansion of non-standard employment'. Fernández-Macías concludes that there is nothing inevitable about the effect of technology; instead, *'institutions have an important impact on what happens'* (p177).

The argument that country-level institutions matter has found its way into the HRM literature, most obviously with the popular 'varieties of capitalism' theory (Hall and Soskice 2001; although there are a number of similar concepts, for example 'business recipes', Whitley 1992). These theories posit that country-specific institutional arrangements – such as financial markets, employer organisations, trade unions, welfare provision, and education and training systems – create 'typologies of capitalism' (Crouch 2009), within which there are differences in employment protection legislation and in minimum employment standards (Gautié and Schmitt 2010). These national institutional arrangements influence organisations' business strategies, with managers adopting organisational forms that are regarded as legitimate within a particular configuration of institutions. Put bluntly, organisations come to reflect the country in which they are embedded.

This symbolic conformity by employers also affects the quality of the jobs they provide. For example, within the varieties of capitalism approach, two main typologies are offered: liberal market economies (LME) and co-ordinated market

economies (CME). Organisations with these different types, exemplified by the UK and Germany respectively, have different business strategies and use their workforces differently. The UK has a low-skill equilibrium, incentivising employers to compete on cost with simplified work processes, dis-incentivising them to train workers and allowing them to easily hire and fire these workers. In contrast, German organisations compete on quality, with highly skilled, co-operative (with management) workers on more secure employment contracts (Finegold and Soskice 1988, Hall and Soskice 2009). Taken in combination, German employers are incentivised to invest in their workers. Within this dualist opposition of types is an implicit, sometimes explicit, assumption that the CME provides better jobs than the LME (Crouch 2009).

Critics have pointed out that the dualism of the varieties of capitalism theory is too neat: analysis reveals differences within countries, not just between countries (for example Crouch 2009, Eichhorst and Marx 2009). Nevertheless, a range of research has revealed that countries do vary in terms of job quality at the aggregate level. Fernández-Macías' (2012) data shows that EU countries cluster with regard to the pattern of their job quality trends from 1995–2007. Continental European countries have experienced job polarisation, Scandinavian countries job upgrading and southern European countries an expansion of middling quality jobs. The UK and Ireland had mild polarisation tipping towards job upgrading. As we noted in Section 1, this finding is confirmed in subsequent analysis showing a predominant pattern of polarisation in the UK, with some vacillation towards upgrading over the longer period of between 1985 and 2014 (Eurofound 2015).

Using work intensification rather than pay as the measure of job quality, Gallie (2013) found it to have increased across all jobs following the GFC, regardless of country – though most markedly in the liberal countries. Using another measure, job control, Gallie also found that workplaces in the Nordic countries now offer the best job quality, southern and transition countries offer the worst, and the continental countries now have middling job quality. More recently, using a range of indicators, Erhel and Guergoat-Larivière (2016) identified four country clusters within the EU: the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) have high wages, training, work-life balance and social dialogue, though non-standard employment is above average. Working conditions are close to the average. The continental countries (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), as well as the UK and Ireland, have high high-wage and low-wage incidence and the highest non-standard employment but they also have good training, work-life balance and social dialogue. The third cluster of eastern and central European countries (excepting Poland) has low incidence of non-standard employment but also low wages and poorer working conditions. The fourth cluster of southern countries (Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain) along with France and Poland has some high non-standard employment, lower training and learning opportunities, and below-average social dialogue and wages, but also lower incidence of low-wage working.

Besides showing differences by country, this data shows that change occurs in job quality. These changes can occur to the stock (or number) of jobs that are good or poor quality, and to the content

of each job. As a consequence, more or fewer better jobs can be created, or existing jobs can get better or worse respectively (Carré et al 2012). Understanding how change occurs then becomes important. Choices can be and are made within these country-level institutional arrangements which can trigger change (Granovetter 1985). For example, in Germany, some new market entrants sought to bypass collective bargaining agreements in the hotel industry, with the outcome being poorer job quality for room attendants (Vanselow 2008). Such practices then create 'wedges' that lead to wider changes both within and across industries (Carré et al 2012). One outcome in Germany was the introduction of its first national minimum wage (BBC 2014).

### **The growing importance of HRM in the job quality debate**

Change requires agency, and a number of actors can also influence job quality. The most obvious, given that they provide jobs, is employers. While employers tend not to have business strategies *driven by* job quality, these strategies do impact job quality.

Historically, HRM within organisations has focused more on employer rather than employee needs, and so has not been a source of inspiration for insights into the problem of job quality, note Boxall and Purcell (forthcoming). This situation is changing. Research has identified how different models of HRM help or hinder aspects of job quality, such as skill utilisation (Skills Australia 2012b), job demands (Schaufeli 2014) and employee well-being (Boxall 2013). Other studies show that employees reciprocate the treatment that they receive at work: *'they perform well for an organisation when it performs well for them,'* state Boxall and Purcell (forthcoming).

One form of HRM that attempts to tap into this 'mutual gains' approach is high-performance work systems (HPWS). In broad terms, HPWS entail managers ceding some control to employees through a range of progressive HR practices, including employee involvement programmes, team-based working, enhanced training and development, forms of gain-sharing and high-wage reward systems (Ramsay et al 2000).

HPWS have generated strong and sustained interest from government both in the UK and internationally because they offer to transform work and employment to the benefit of countries, organisations and employees by improving national productivity, leveraging competitive advantage for organisations and increasing employee well-being, respectively (Guest 2006). The adoption of HPWS by the UKCES (2009) was explicitly aligned with a desire to *'create "better" jobs and good working environments that offer mutual advantages'* (p4).

Unfortunately, HPWS remain more topical than typical in the UK. Only 12% of organisations have adopted all or most of the HR practices that comprise the 'system' (UKCES 2014). Likewise, HPWS exist in only a small proportion of organisations in the US and Australia (Martin and Healy 2009). Moreover, there is ambiguity about the mutual benefits of HPWS. Evidence from the UK, US and Australia suggests improvements in organisational productivity (Huselid 1995, Ramsay et al 2000, Boedker et al 2011). Employees, however, can experience both positive and negative outcomes – on the one hand, job satisfaction (Appelbaum et al 2000), higher discretion and improved relations with management (Ramsay et al 2000) and, on the other hand, work intensification and stress

*'Historically, HRM within organisations has focused more on employer rather than employee needs, and so has not been a source of inspiration for insights into the problem of job quality.'*

(Godard 2001, McGovern et al 2007) and greater risk of being laid off (Osterman 2000). Nonetheless, the introduction of HPWS remains an aspiration of the UK and other governments.

In the meantime, the ‘general principle’ is that, while all organisations have HR practices, the practices that operate within organisations are shaped by the choices made by managers to align with their business strategies and the economic and socio-political contexts in which their organisations are embedded (Boxall and Purcell forthcoming) – which echoes with the ‘institutions matter’ argument outlined earlier.

Another strand of research suggests that these business strategies reflect the pursuit of competitive advantage, not just organisations’ embeddedness in national institutions. Drawing on Porter’s (1980) competitive strategies, organisations can adopt different product market strategies, which in turn determine HR practices. Organisations pursuing quality-based strategies work ‘smarter’, levered by more training and skill development. Organisations pursuing cost-reduction strategies work ‘harder’, providing minimal training and skill development (Schuler and Jackson 1987). Initial confirmatory support of this theory came from a range of research (for a review, see Knox and Warhurst forthcoming).

Subsequent research produced more mixed evidence. In the UK, differences were found between sectors (Mason 2004), and within sectors (Mason et al 2000). Later studies of industries within the service sector went further, suggesting no alignment (for example Lloyd et al 2013). For example, different UK supermarkets operating in the same market niche can offer full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent employment

contracts to their staff (Metcalf and Dhudwar 2010). Research from other countries, for example the US (Bernhardt et al 2003) and Germany (Eichhorst and Marx 2009), reached similar conclusions. Knox and Warhurst even suggested that the alignment shown in manufacturing might also be tenuous. Ashton et al (2017) suggest that the ‘simple determinism’ attributed to product market strategies might therefore be misplaced.

Instead, it has been argued that more emphasis should be placed on managerial choice over forms of HRM. Sung et al (2009), for example, distinguish between two types of organisations: those that choose to be task-focused (geared towards developing only the skills necessary to perform a set of narrowly defined or elementary tasks), with managers seeking tight control over the workforce, and those that choose to be people-focused (geared towards developing skills such as communication, problem-solving, and so on), with managers seeking to harness and develop their workforce. Other UK and Australian case study research seems to confirm managerial capacity to choose forms of HRM, though perhaps driven by more mundane concerns such as tight labour markets and recruitment and retention problems or compliance with government regulations as well as decisions to move into particular product markets (Skills Australia 2012a, SQW 2010). In both of these studies, management values and organisational culture were identified as critical. Skills Australia’s research also made an explicit link between good HRM and good job quality in its case study organisations, suggesting that good jobs arise out of good HRM.

Others agree that managerial choice has been too readily overlooked but also argue that what underpins managerial choice needs to be examined; for example, what motivates managers to be

task- or people-focused (Knox and Warhurst forthcoming). If it is true that HRM impacts job quality, then understanding how and why managers make choices about their organisation’s HRM is important (Skills Australia 2012a). In this respect, it is useful to return to the reasons for wanting more of the better jobs and acknowledge that managers can have different interests and incentives, underpinned by normative or instrumental concerns, and which can inform their choices.

### **Other factors and actors**

Managers’ choices can be affected not just by their own values and their organisation’s culture and business strategy but by other factors and actors. Trade unions, for example, have long been interested in improving job quality, even if this interest has focused on specific aspects of job quality (Knox et al 2011). In this respect, trade unions in the UK and other advanced economies up to the 1970s had an important role within industrial relations in improving pay and benefits, training opportunities and skill development, occupational health and safety, and employment security. Vidal (2013) notes that the Fordist pact between employers and unions during this period created a ‘class compromise’, with workers trading mass production techniques for higher pay and job security. Statistical data shows that job quality is perceived to be better where there is a union presence in the workplace (Hoque et al 2014, Clark 2005b).

However, some of these gains have eroded since the 1980s as trade union power and coverage have declined in the context of cyclical economic downturns, high unemployment and a shift to economic neo-liberalism. Vidal (2013), for example, notes that the new so-called post-Fordism is marked by a logic of employment

externalisation – as employers choose outsourcing and the use of temporary work agencies, for example – which has impacted negatively on wages, training opportunities, work intensification, employment security and promotion opportunities within internal labour markets.

The weakening of trade union influence is, however, uneven within and across countries. Where their rights remain secure or their power has been maintained, trade unions continue to influence some aspects of job quality, for example by collaborating with employers on learning and skills (Findlay and Warhurst 2011). It is also noticeable that the logic of externalisation has led the TUC to make repeated calls for a ‘new deal’ for workers (for example TUC 2007, 2017a). This last call also makes a clear link to job quality, arguing for ‘great jobs’ to be created in the UK with higher pay, more employment security and increased fairness.

Where unions cannot directly influence organisations’ business strategies, they can work in partnership with civil society organisations over job quality. This approach is more common in the US, where, as Bernhardt and Osterman (2017) note, it is not unusual for advocacy and campaigning groups to work with and independently of trade unions on a range of aspects of job quality, such as low pay, occupational health and safety, exploitative working conditions and worker well-being, and often doing so by drawing on wider community groups and interests. Their approach is not simply to call for more regulation and/or better enforcement of regulation but to also appeal to employers’ self-interest, making the business case for improvements in job quality by referencing, for example, the reputational costs of bad jobs with consumers and also potential employees.

As Findlay et al (2017) note, where civil society organisations, trade unions and employers cannot or do not address job quality problems, intervention falls to the state, most obviously through legislation. Indeed, employment law in the Anglo-Saxon countries recognises that asymmetries of power can exist between actors (primarily employers and employees) and that the market alone cannot resolve job quality problems (Murray and Stewart 2015). The hard power of the law can be used to block off the low road leading to poor job quality in organisations and can, in conjunction with other types of regulation, also be used as soft power to encourage employers to take the high road and offer better jobs (Carré et al 2012). Government can, for example, insert clauses into its service contracts with private and voluntary sector organisations which insist on better provision of aspects of job quality, for example training and pay. Government at all levels can also offer itself as a model employer on job quality, as the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council have done by introducing the Living Wage. Likewise, through business development support schemes, governments can encourage forms of management education that focus on or at least acknowledge the workplace benefits to be gained from having better job quality. Such education is absent in the UK, but has greater priority in other countries such as Sweden and Finland, which have some of the highest job quality (see <http://tools.quinne.eu/quinnemap/>). Supported by evidence based on the effectiveness of good job quality and high-road business strategies, and encouraged by government, *‘better business education on the costs and consequences of job quality could facilitate better commitment to job quality’* (Findlay et al 2017, pp13–14).

*‘Where unions cannot directly influence organisations’ business strategies, they can work in partnership with civil society organisations over job quality.’*

**Linking factors of influence to the family of concepts**

As these factors and actors interplay, different possibilities arise and employers will offer different levels of job quality. To return to the discussion about objective and subjective aspects of job quality, and the drivers of job quality, these levels can provide for worker needs through to worker preferences, and have attendant external (for example government legislation) or internal (managerially chosen HRM) underpinnings (see Figure 4 and the left- and right-sided arrows respectively).

In broad terms, as we move up the hierarchy, there is a shift from basic worker needs that tend to be met

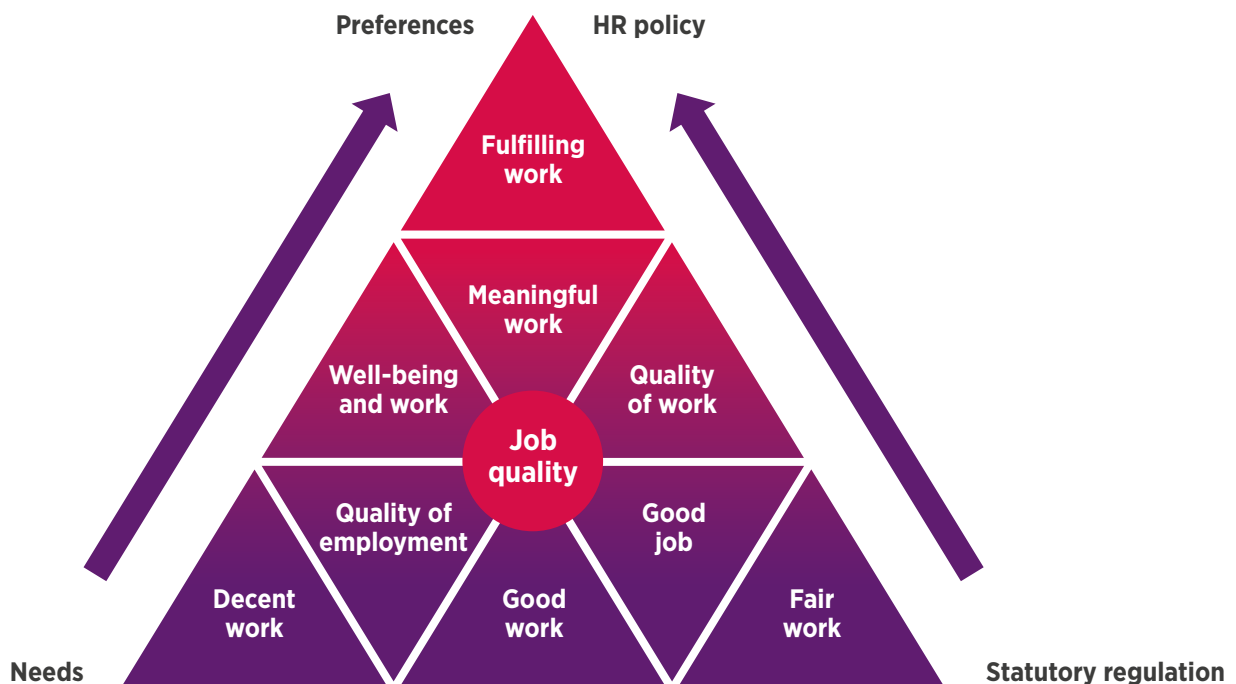
by statutory regulation, towards higher-level employee preferences that are provided by progressive human resource practices within organisations.

Those employers opting for minimum standards derived from external regulation will offer decent or fair work, attending simply to workers' basic needs – for example by paying a statutory minimum or living wage – but only because they are statutorily required to do so. These employers take an instrumental or basic transactional approach, in as much as they recognise that they must comply with that external regulation or face sanctions. Other employers will attend to the needs and preferences

of their workers, driven by internally derived HRM, providing, for example, meaningful or fulfilling work. These employers combine transactional and normative positions because they see merit in mutual gains.

In spite of the complexities, Figure 4 highlights the choices that can be and are made about job quality by managers and that change can be not only desirable but feasible. 'To be sure', Boxall and Purcell (forthcoming) state, '*many types of job and organisation offer unattractive conditions. However, even in challenging circumstances ... it should be possible to find ways of enhancing the quality of working life.*'

**Figure 4: The possibilities and choices around job quality within organisations**



Source: Authors.

# Conclusions

The main objective of this review was to increase understanding and inform the CIPD's position on the question of what good job quality looks like and in turn to inform media discussion, policy-making, research and people management in organisations.

The review began by discussing the purpose of work, incorporating debates surrounding the so-called 'death of work' and the discrepancy with evidence showing increasing numbers of people in work; the potential transformation of work and how that varies by individual and by country; changes to employment and work and discussions surrounding the polarisation of work; an overview of precarious work and the rise of the gig economy and zero-hours contracts; and how these changes can affect the quality of working life. Evidence was then provided on the core characteristics of job quality, using the 'family' of concepts and discussing both objective and subjective dimensions, before moving on to the identification of six key dimensions of job quality drawn from the literature. The third section of the review then described factors affecting job quality, with a focus on HRM, distinguishing between employers who are transaction focused and those who see the merit in mutual gains. Other factors and actors which affect job quality in the workplace were also discussed in this section.

The model in Figure 5, adapted from Eurofound (2013), contains

the selected six dimensions of job quality and provides an indication of both the factors that affect job quality and the outcomes of job quality. The selected dimensions emerge from the review of studies that seek to provide measures of job quality. The model both aligns with the general approach of many of the concepts outlined in this review – being multi-dimensional with indicators – and builds on those concepts by providing a more comprehensive scope of what should be measured. Measuring job quality at the level of individual workers, the model necessarily recognises that how job quality is perceived will be shaped by the demographics and life stage of the worker. It also incorporates recognition of the multi-level outcomes of job quality at not just the level of individual workers but also the organisation and country levels.

The factors that influence job quality include the national institutional arrangements within which organisations are embedded, and which can mediate technological developments. Actors within these arrangements include not only policy-makers in government and other key institutions, but also employers and their managers, human resource professionals, and employees and their representatives. These actors have varying degrees of influence, with the strength of that influence being dynamic, changing over time. Job quality is therefore not predetermined. It is shaped by these different factors and actors, the influences of which affect

managerial choices about the values, strategies and practices of their organisations and which then impact job quality in the workplace.

Our model is generated by reference to existing research. Its selected dimensions of job quality are similar to others in that they are intended to be applied to empirical data rather than tested as good or bad per se. Although dimensions and their indicators of job quality can be derived from theories about work and employment, they tend not to have been tested theoretically. Instead, they are used empirically to identify trends and issues across work and employment. This is not to say that models, dimensions and indicators cannot be refined as they are tested against the data or with respondents, for example. Factors influencing, and dimensions and indicators defining and measuring, job quality can be added or subtracted following empirical application or as new trends and issues in work and employment emerge. Moreover, as we show in Part 2 of this review (Wright et al 2017), the construction of indexes with dimensions and indicators tends to be driven by pragmatism – with data availability the key issue. In other words, what is measured is that which is measurable through existing datasets. Dimensions and indicators are therefore based on their feasible application to data rather than desirable utility for policy (or even social science). Put bluntly, what we know from indexes is based on what data is currently available.

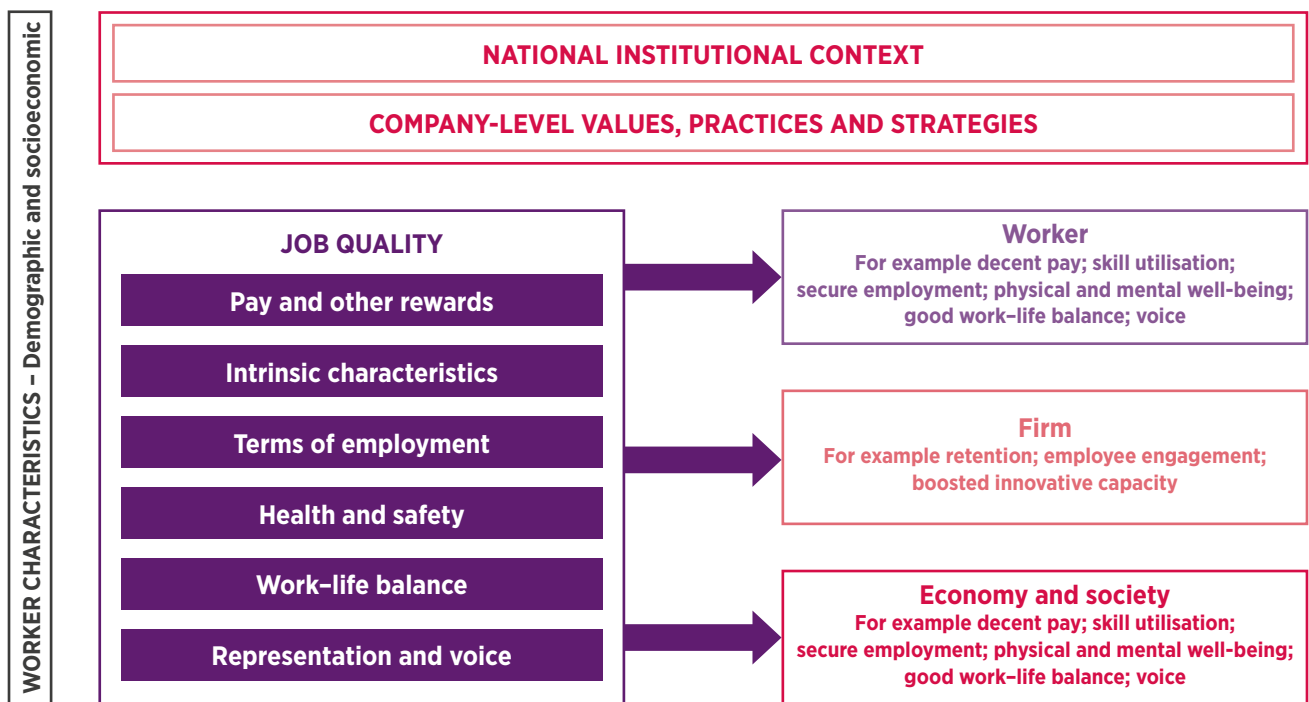
The evidence base at the moment, therefore, is based on the application, not testing, of these measures. It might be useful as part of further research to systematically evaluate existing definitions and measures empirically and also test the theoretical assumptions upon which they are explicitly or implicitly based; in other words, test whether they are fit for purpose. Certainly, there is a pressing need to evaluate existing definitions and measures against what is needed to be known about work and employment and the available data currently to identify any data gaps that create

barriers to more comprehensive understanding of job quality. This task is one that we start to address in Part 2 of this review (Wright et al 2017).

Ultimately, the utility of any model of job quality rests on its capacity to capture information deemed necessary to allow analysis of practices and policies manifest in workplaces that have significant impact on individual, organisation and country well-being, broadly defined. This information can help identify key aspects of job quality that are stronger or weaker. Used longitudinally, it can also help identify trends in job quality over time.

It needs to be appreciated that job quality is not a socio-economic cure-all. While improving job quality can and will achieve much, policy expectation overload should be avoided and realism applied. The information generated from our model would however, enable development of more effective interventions to improve job quality where they are most required. This targeted approach is needed if more of the better jobs are to be created and maintained in the UK.

**Figure 5: Model of job quality**



Source: Eurofound (2013, p. 7) elaborated by authors

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# Appendix 1

## Dimensions of job quality captured in datasets and their use in different studies

Key research: 2002–2010	2002 Eurofound	2003 Anker et al.	2003 Bescond et al.	2003 Bonnet et al.	2003 Brisbois	2003 Ghai	2004 Layard	2005 Clark	2005 Handel	2007 Brown et al.	2007 Gallie	2007 Goos & Manning	2009 Tangian	2008 Davoine et al.	2012 Leschke & Watt	2012 Osterman	2008 Smith et al.	2009 Green	2009 Muñoz de Bustillo et al.	2009 Peña-Casas	2009 Overell et al.	2010 Drobnič et al.	2010 Erhel, C. and Guergoat-Larivière	2013 Greenan	2010 Lyonnette & Baldauf	2010 Olsen et al.
Disciplinary tradition/s	Pol	Dev	Dev	Dev	Multi	Dev	Ec	Sos	Hcap	PE	Soc	Ec	Dev	LEc	LEc	Soc	Soc	Soc	Lec	Multi	Hcap	QWL	LEc	Multi	Gen; WL	Soc
<b>Dimensions</b>																										
Pay and/or other rewards	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Intrinsic characteristics of work	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Terms of employment	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Work-life balance; flexibility	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Work environment (physical and psychosocial)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Employee influence and/or representation and/or voice	✓	✓		✓		✓				✓				✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓			
<b>Outcomes</b>																										
Health, safety and well-being	✓	✓				✓				✓	✓		✓						✓		✓					
Stress/work effort							✓		✓												✓					
Absenteeism													✓													
Job satisfaction/happiness at work					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓				✓	✓			✓
Engagement													✓													
Commitment																										
Turnover intentions													✓													
Work performance																			✓							
Life satisfaction																						✓				
Economic, labour market and/or social (in)security/inclusion		✓	✓	✓		✓													✓				✓			
Equity/fairness/non-discrimination/gender equality		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								✓			✓		✓		✓		✓			
<b>Application</b>																										
Unrelated dimensions included		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓									✓		
Framework of model	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓				✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓		
Country/countries/level	EU	ILO	ILO	ILO	CAN, USA+15, EU	ILO	UK, NL, DE	7 OECD	USA	BRIT	UK, DE, DK, FI, SE	UK	EU		EU	USA	EU	BRIT	EU	EU	UK	EU	EU	EU	UK	USA, GB, DE, NO
Multi-dimensional composite index					✓								✓		✓				✓							

Source: Hauff and Kirchner (2014), Table 1, p4, authors' own adaptations and update to include recent studies and re-grouping of categories.

Key research: 2011-present	2011 Butterworth et al.	2011 Eurofound	2011 Holman & McClelland	2011 Kalleberg	2011 Muñoz de Bustillo et al.	2011 Sutherland	2012 Amossé & Kalugina	2012 Antón et al.	2012 Cloutier-Villeneuve	2012 Erhel et al.	2012 Esser & Olgen	2012 Eurofound	2012 Hurley et al.	2012 Schmitt & Jones	2012 Skinner & Pocock	2013 Berglund	2013 Burgess et al.	2013 Crespo et al.	2013 Green et al.	2013 Holman	2013 Loughlin & Murray	2013 Vidal	2014 Centra & Gualteri	2014 Curtarelli et al.	2014 Gallie et al.	2014 Sweeney	
	Hth	Pol	Hcap	Soc	Lec	Soc	Soc	LEc	Gen	LEc	PE	Pol	LEc	Pol	Soc; Gen; WL	Soc	Soc	LEc	Soc	Psych; Soc	Psych	PE	LEc	Pol	Soc	Pol	
<b>Dimensions</b>																											
Pay and/or other rewards		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Intrinsic characteristics of work	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Terms of employment		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Work-life balance; flexibility		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Work environment (physical and psychosocial)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			
Employee influence and/or representation and/or voice		✓	✓		✓	✓				✓						✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	
<b>Outcomes</b>																											
Health, safety and well-being	✓		✓					✓				✓								✓	✓		✓	✓			
Stress/work effort																										✓	
Absenteeism																											
Job satisfaction/happiness at work																✓											
Engagement																											
Commitment																											
Turnover intentions																											
Work performance																											✓
Life satisfaction																											
Economic, labour market and/or social (in)security/inclusion										✓								✓						✓	✓		
Equity/fairness/non-discrimination/gender equality								✓		✓								✓							✓	✓	
<b>Application</b>																											
Unrelated dimensions included																											
Framework of model		✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓					
Country/countries/level	AUS	EU	EU	USA	EU	SCOT	EU	EU	CAN, USA	EU	EU	EU	EU	USA	AUS	Nord	AUS	EU	EU	EU	CAN	USA	IT	EU	BRIT	UK	
Multi-dimensional composite index	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓								✓									

Source: Hauff and Kirchner (2014), Table 1, p4, authors' own adaptations and update to include recent studies and re-grouping of categories.



<b>Key research:</b> 2011–present	2015 Cazes et al.	2015 Knox et al.	2015 Stier & Yash	2016 Pyörriä & Ojala	2016 Stuart et al.	2016 White	2017 Grote & Guest	2017 Sisson et al.	2017 QuinNE
Disciplinary tradition/s	Pol	Soc	Soc	QWE	Dev; Pol	Pol	QWL	Geo; Dev	Multi
<b>Dimensions</b>									
Pay and/or other rewards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Intrinsic characteristics of work		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Terms of employment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work-life balance; flexibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work environment (physical and psychosocial)			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Employee influence and/or representation and/or voice			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Outcomes</b>									
Health, safety and well-being	✓	✓				✓			
Stress/work effort		✓							
Absenteeism									
Job satisfaction/happiness at work									
Engagement									
Commitment		✓							
Turnover intentions		✓							
Work performance		✓							
Life satisfaction									
Economic, labour market and/or social (in)security/inclusion	✓	✓		✓					✓
Equity/fairness/non-discrimination/gender equality			✓		✓				✓
<b>Application</b>									
Unrelated dimensions included									
Framework of model	✓	✓			✓		✓		
Country/countries/level	OECD	UK AUS	27 countries	FI	SCO	UK	-	UK	EU
Multi-dimensional composite index									✓

Source: Hauff and Kirchner (2014), Table 1, p4, authors' own adaptations and update to include recent studies and re-grouping of categories.



# CIPD

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development  
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ United Kingdom  
**T** +44 (0)20 8612 6200 **F** +44 (0)20 8612 6201  
**E** [cipd@cipd.co.uk](mailto:cipd@cipd.co.uk) **W** [cipd.co.uk](http://cipd.co.uk)

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