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Definition: the foundational assumption.

- Job quality constituted by the features of jobs that normally contribute to meeting workers' needs from work

From *Demanding Work* to *Hard At Work*

- Brings together the conceptual and empirical developments since my 2006 book, including my own progress from working with EF
- Overviews the large literature, focusing on evidence of links with wellbeing & health
- Develops the capability approach to understanding the job quality/wellbeing nexus
- Analyses trends in job quality in around 40 countries
- Concludes with a focus on 'bad jobs' and policy principles

Dimensions of Job Quality



Preface

Part A. Framing Job Quality

- 1. The Significance and Terrain of Job Quality Science**
- 2. Job quality, Capability and Wellbeing from Work**
- 3. Better Jobs or Worse? The Forces Shaping Job Quality**

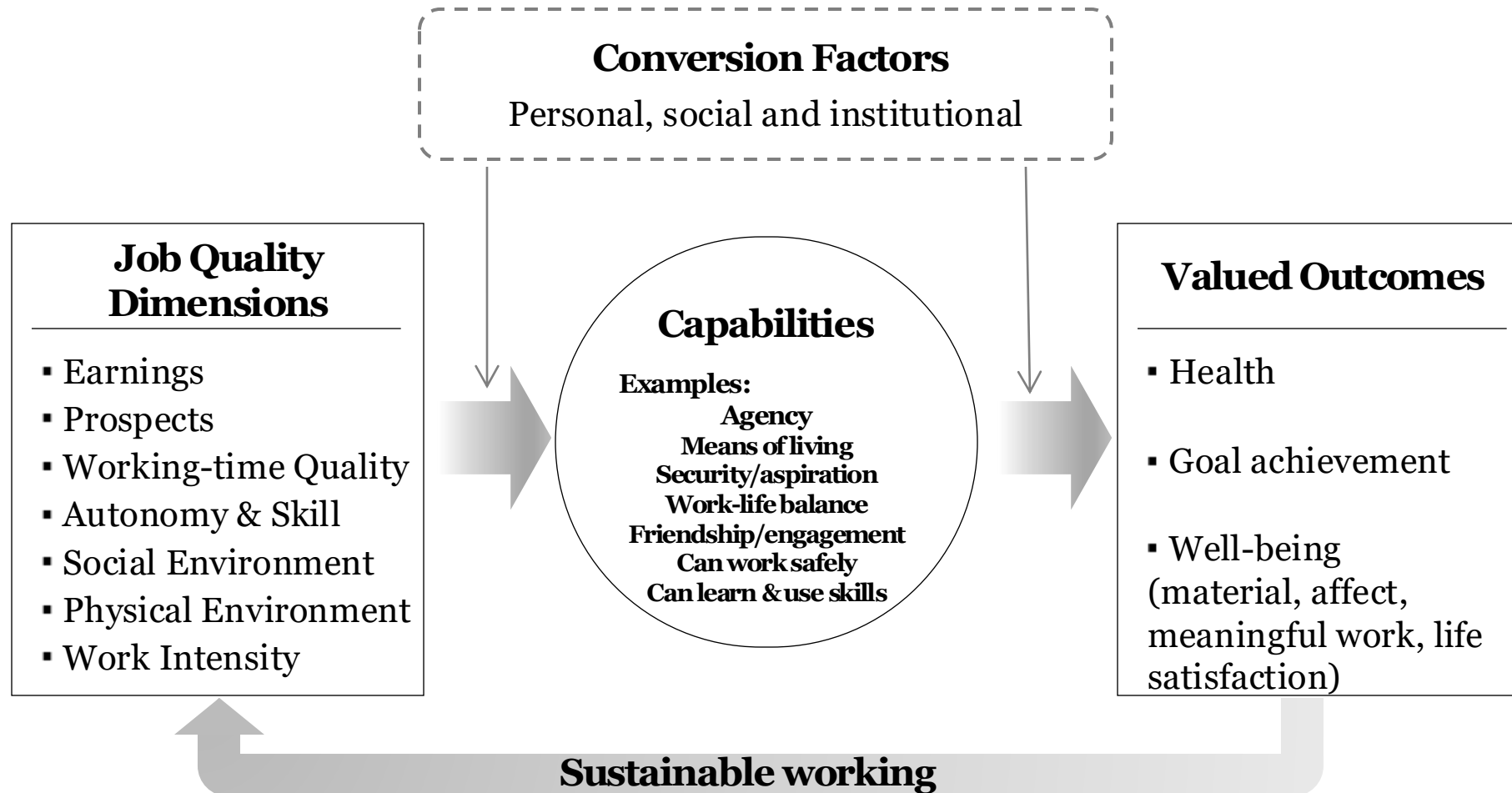
Part B. Job Quality Narratives

- 4. Earnings Quality**
- 5. Prospects and Precariousness**
- 6. Working Time Quality**
- 7. Autonomy and Skill**
- 8. Social Support and Workplace Abuse**
- 9. More Demanding Work**
- 10. Hazards and Harms of the Second Place**

Part C Bad Jobs, Job Quality Policy and the Future of Work

- 11. The Conjunction of Job Quality in the Early 21st Century**
- 12. Making Jobs Better**

Application to the job quality framework



Strong relationship of autonomy with wellbeing

- Autonomy is directly associated, both with work-related wellbeing indicators (job satisfaction, work-related affect) and with general wellbeing (life satisfaction, mental health); possibly curvilinear
 - (Warr 2007; Chung-Yan 2010; Gallie et al. 2012; Gallie 2013; Chen et al 2015; Wheatley 2017; Belloni et al.)
- Meta analysis: low job control associated with elevated chances of taking more than three days sick leave (by around a third) (Duijts et al. 2007).
- Autonomy strongly associated with the experience of meaningfulness at work. (Martela and Riekkki 2018; Nikolova and Cnossen 2020; Saari et al. 2022.)
- In economic psychology, participants in experimental settings are found to be prepared to accept a lower average pay-off in return for having greater control over what they do (Bartling et al., 2014; Ferreira et al. 2020; Buffat et al., 2023; Reis et al. 2023.)

Strong relationship of Prospects with wellbeing

- Substantive effects of insecurity on mental health/ suicide ideation and (in reverse) on general health and on life satisfaction, across multiple countries

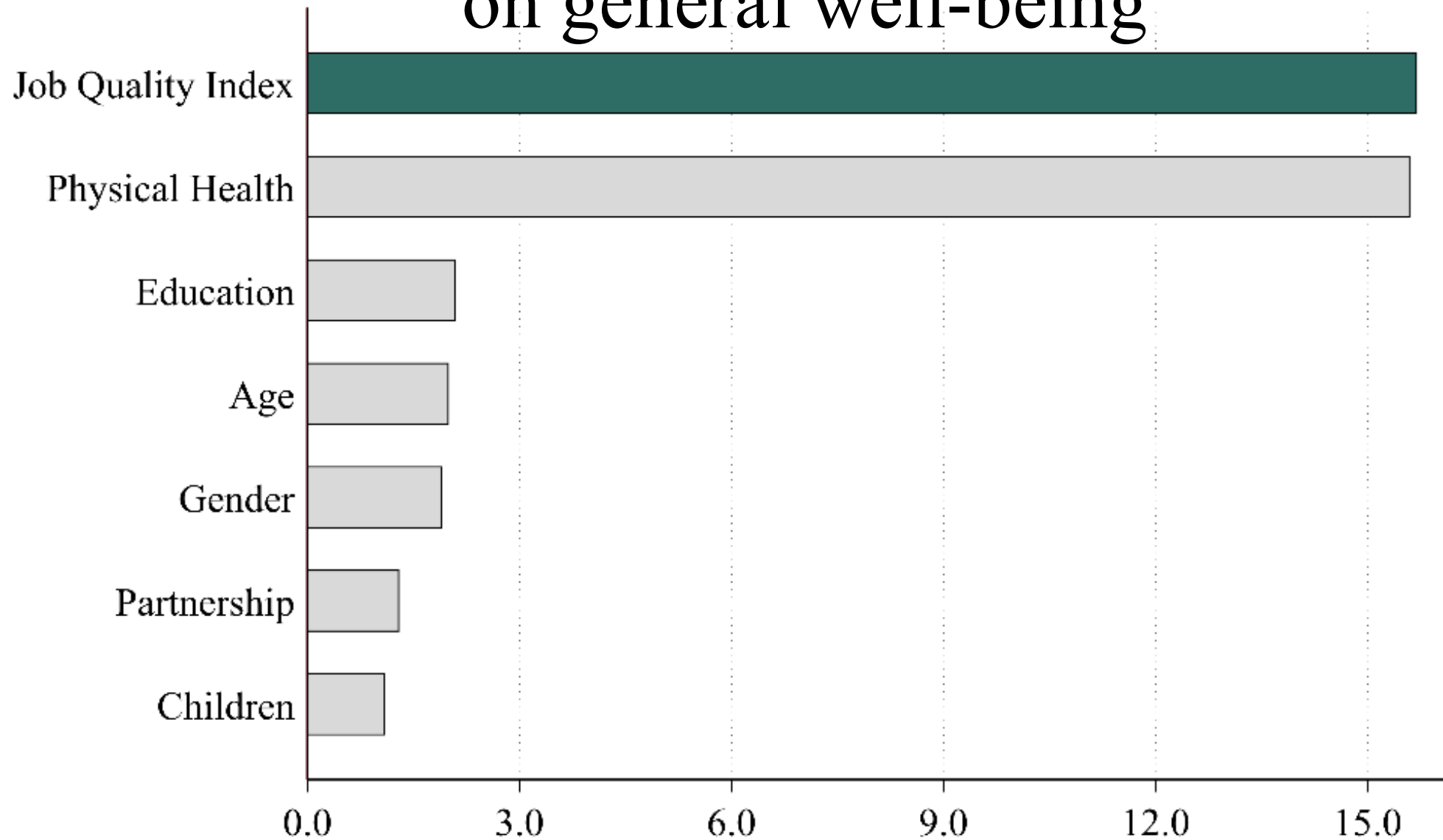
(Kim et al 2017, Green 2011, Cottini and Ghinetti, Caroli and Godard 2016, Horowitz, 2016; Kopasker et al 2018; Llosa et al 2018)

- Worse in situations of low social support
 - (Burchell 1994; Green 2011; Rosa et al 2018 , others)
- Effect varies among groups, eg greater among older workers (Cheng and Chan 2008; Otterbach and Sousa-Posa 2018; Kim et al 2020)
- Affects others in family and community (Piotrowski 2015; Lim 2018; Kalleberg 2018)

All JQ dimensions related with wellbeing

- Substantial
- Growing every year
- Still needs improvements in
 - methods
 - Scope: e.g. persistence, external effects
 - Nuance: e.g. gendered effects and other contextual factors

Effect sizes of job quality and other life domains on general well-being



Development frameworks

- Affluence theory
- Power resources theory (and related institutional regime theories; theories of precarity)
- Technological change
- Strategic human resource management (also: “bad boss” hypotheses; discriminatory practices etc)



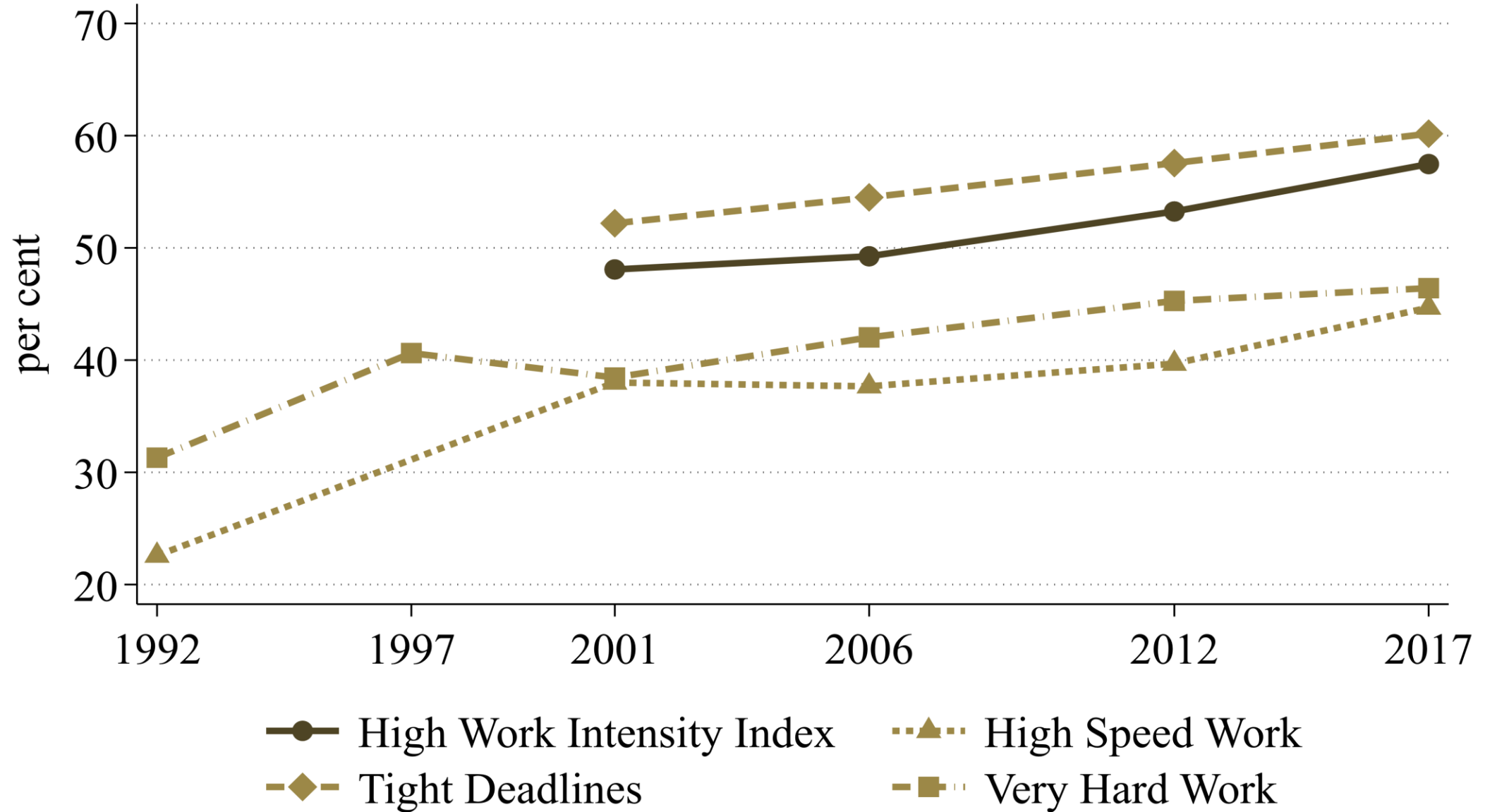
Ambiguous evolution of job quality

Methods

For each Job Quality Dimension:

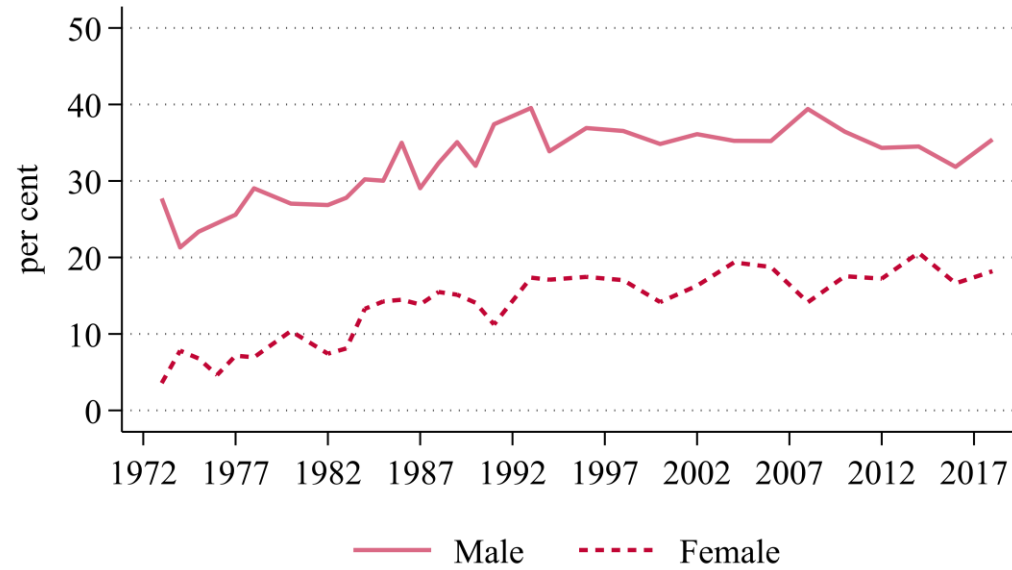
- ✓ **consultation of prior evidence**
- ✓ **new analysis of survey series data**
- ✓ **indices or elements for each dimension**
- ✓ **≥ 10 years since 2000**

Work Intensity in Britain

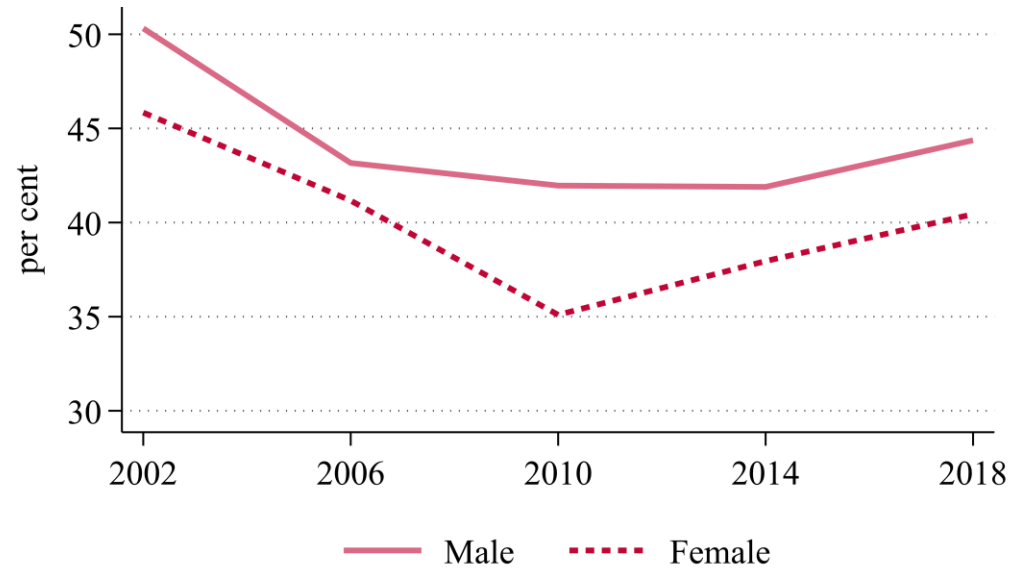


Working Time Quality in the United States

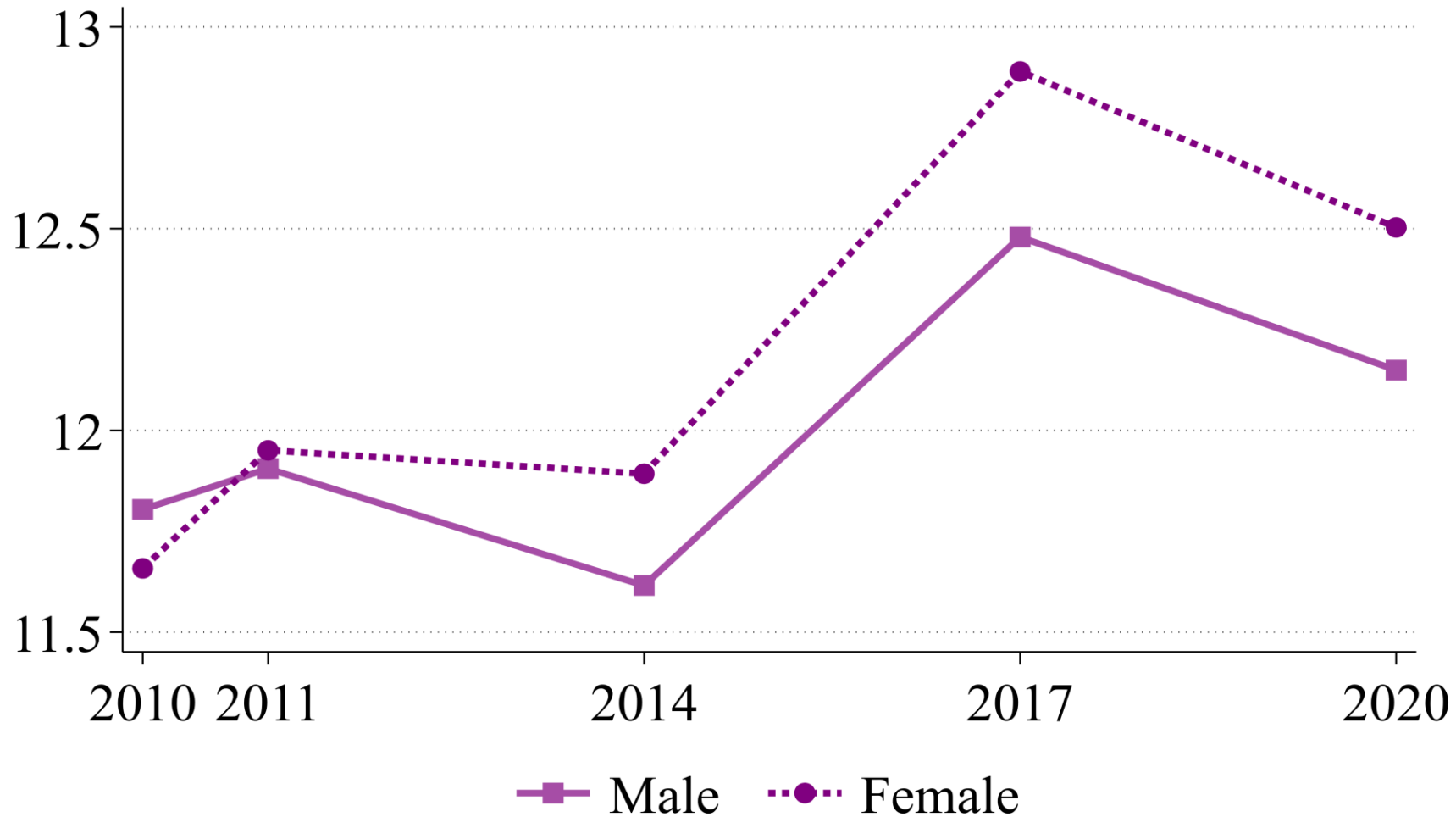
(A) Long Working Hours



(B) Time-off Flexibility



The *Social Environment* in South Korea



Part C: Bad Jobs, Job Quality Policy and the Future of Work

11. The Conjunction of Job Quality in the Early 21st Century

From ‘more and better jobs’ to the coming AI revolution

Overarching Findings

Forced labour and bad jobs as multiple capability deprivation

The future of work and job quality

12. Making Jobs Better

Agents of change

Employers, ‘mutual gains’ and the corporate wellness industry

Workers’ exit and voice

Regulation for job quality in the social democratic state

A future for job quality research and the aspiration for better jobs

Summary of trends in job quality dimensions (Number of countries)

	Wages	Prospects	Working Time Quality	Autonomy and Skill	Social Environment	Work Intensity	Physical Environment
Improving	28	20	18	15	18	6	20
Deteriorating	1	5	2	4	7	17	2
No change	5	15	17	11	14	7	7

Correlation between trends in job quality dimensions & GDPpc

	Earnings	Prospects	Working Time Quality	Autonomy & Skill	Social Environment	Work Intensity (reversed)	Physical Environment
•Earnings (wages)	1						
•Prospects	+	1					
•Working Time Quality			1				
•Skills & Discretion		+		1			
•Social Environment					1		
•Work Intensity (reversed)						1	
•Physical Environment							1
•Real GDP pc Growth	+	+	+				

Some general conclusions:

- The partial failure of affluence theory
- Predominant trends are mixed.
- Coherence is lacking

- Earnings changes do not proxy for changes in job quality
- Each dimension needs investigation
- Adds to critique of GDP as index of socioeconomic progress

Extension: Bad jobs in concept (from Ch 11)

- Low wage jobs

Dead end jobs

Dirty jobs

Multiple deprivation of capabilities

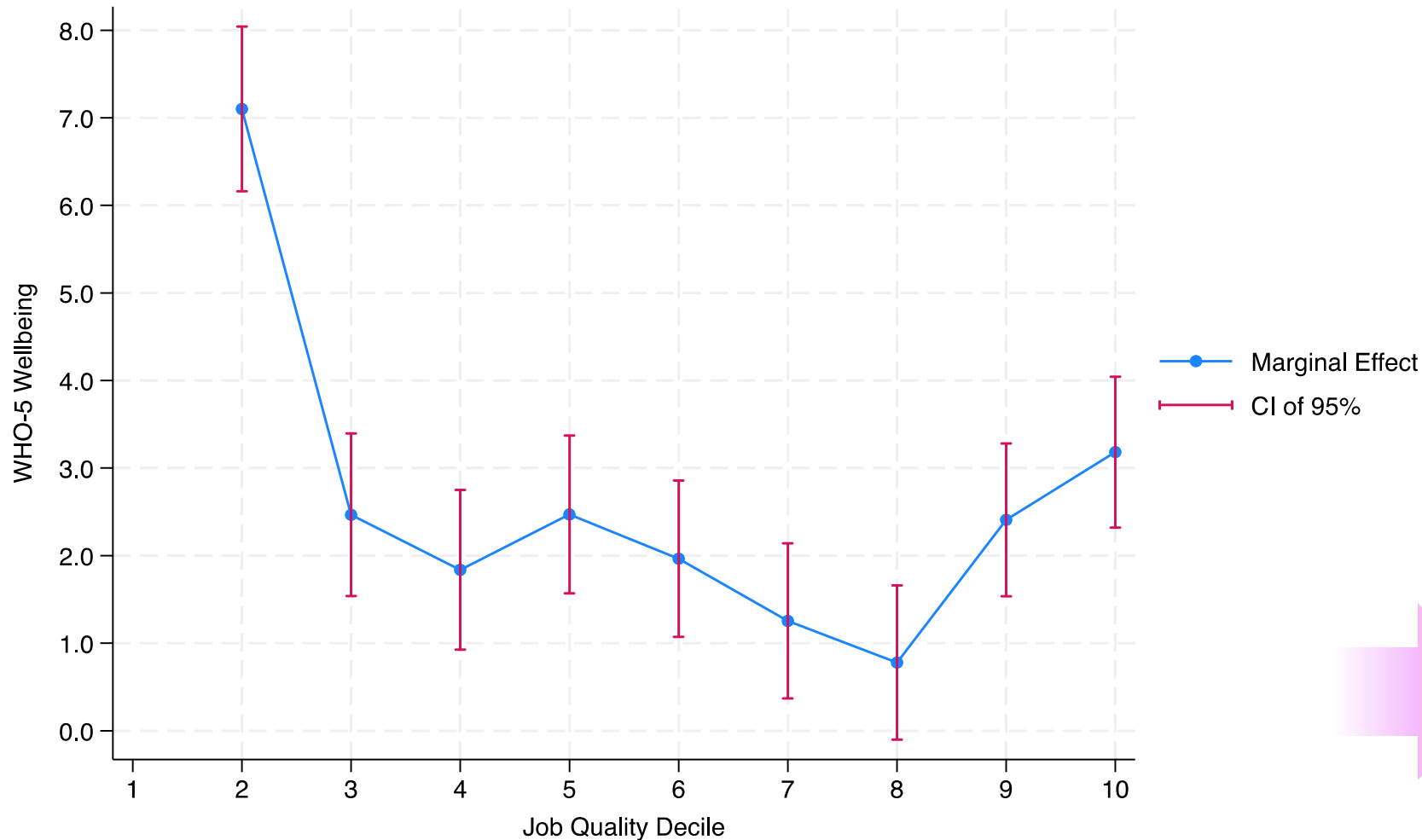
Setting the Threshold

Akire-Foster method

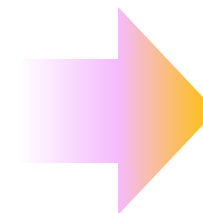
Wellbeing method

Derivation of the Bad Jobs Measure

Figure 1. The change in well-being associated with a one-decile increase in job quality



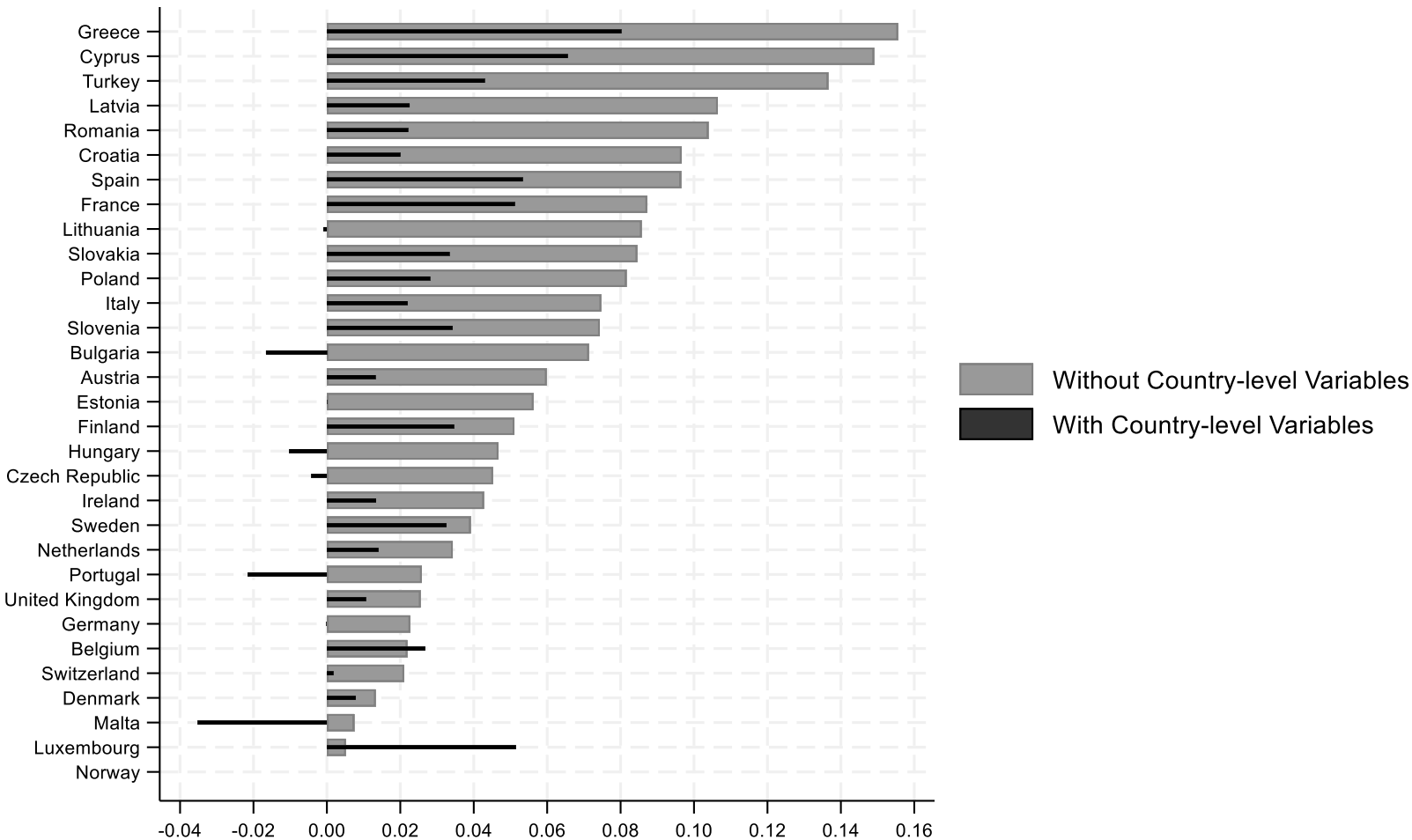
- ✓ A monotonic growth in the WHO-5 well-being with every increase in job quality decile
- ✓ A distinctly large gap in the well-being measure between the bottom and the 2nd decile



A threshold for a 'bad job' = **at the 10th percentile**

Results: Where are the 'bad jobs' in Europe?

Figure 2. Proportion in Bad Jobs (Reference: Norway)



The probability of being in a bad job is lessened:

- ✓ in richer countries
- ✓ in countries with stronger labour regulations

Where are the 'bad jobs' in Europe?

Industry

Construction
Hotels &
Restaurant
Household


Activities

Sector

Private
Self-employed
Large
Establishments

GDP

A rise of \$10,000 in a country's GDP per capita is associated with 1 percentage point fewer bad jobs

- 
- The same industries, which typically record low wages, are disproportionately home to bad jobs.
 - A positive association between employer size and bad jobs stands in contrast to the extended literature on the positive employer-size wage effect

Who have the 'bad jobs' in Europe?

Education

Higher educational achievement reduces the chances of being in a bad job

Migrant

Migrants are more likely to be in bad jobs, by a margin of 4 percentage points

Gender

Little difference between men and women in the prevalence of bad jobs

Green, F. and S. Lee (2024). "'Bad Jobs' in Europe: Derivation and Analysis of a Wellbeing-Related Job Quality Threshold." [Applied Research in Quality of Life](#). 19, 3305-3304.

Lee, Sangwoo, and Francis Green.(2025). "'Bad jobs' in South Korea: A wellbeing-based approach". *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* (2025), 1–19.

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Employers as Agents for change?

- Employers do matter a lot for job quality (recent evidence)
- Effects on engagement/ commitment/ productivity?
- Effects on profitability??
- Conditions for mutuality.
 - High trust
 - Consensual relations
 - High skill/ high autonomy
 - High participation

Future of job quality research

Links with wellbeing

- Methodological improvements
- Long-term effects and externalities
- Multiple wellbeing concepts
- Curvilinear patterns and modifications by contextual factors
- Identifying capabilities and their mediating effects

Explaining job quality

- Identifying and accounting for trends
- Effects of AI and climate change

Evaluating interventions by governments/employers/social partners

Need for interdisciplinary attitude and methods