



Working conditions  
**Working conditions in  
a global perspective**





# Working conditions in a global perspective



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**Authors:** Mariya Aleksynska (ILO), Janine Berg (ILO), David Foden (Eurofound), Hannah Johnston (ILO), Agnès Parent-Thirion (Eurofound), Julie Vanderleyden (Eurofound).

**Project team:** Janine Berg (ILO), Agnès Parent-Thirion (Eurofound).

**Research managers:** Agnès Parent-Thirion (Eurofound) and Greet Vermeylen (Eurofound).

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**European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions**

**Telephone:** (+353 1) 204 31 00

**Email:** [information@eurofound.europa.eu](mailto:information@eurofound.europa.eu)

**Web:** [www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu)

**International Labour Office**

**Telephone:** (+41 22) 799 6111

**Email:** [ilo@ilo.org](mailto:ilo@ilo.org)

**Web:** [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

**Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union.**

**Freephone number\*:** 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

\*Certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access to 00 800 numbers or these calls may be billed.

## Contributors

### China

Yang Du, Professor, Institute of Population and Labor Economics, CASS

Meiyan Wang, Professor, Institute of Population and Labor Economics, CASS

Yanan Li, Institute of Population and Labor Economics, CASS; Capital University of Economics and Business

### Republic of Korea

Yoon Ho Cho, Senior researcher OSHRI, KOSHA

Kyung Woo Kim, Researcher, OSHRI, KOSHA

Bo Kyoung Kim, Manager, OSHRI, KOSHA

Kyung Yong Rhee, Professor, Far East University

### Turkey

Gokce Uysal Kolasin, Bahcesehir University Centre for Economic and Social Research (BETAM)

Mine Durmaz, Bahcesehir University Centre for Economic and Social Research (BETAM)

### United States (US)

Nicole Maestas, Harvard University and NBER

Kathleen J. Mullen, RAND

David Powell, RAND

Till von Wachter, University of California Los Angeles and NBER

Jeffrey B. Wenger, RAND

### Central America survey

David Gimeno Ruiz de Porras, Associate Professor and Director, NIOSH SWCOEH Occupational Epidemiology Program, Division of Epidemiology, Human Genetics & Environmental Sciences School of Public Health, San Antonio Campus, UTHealth, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Mariana Rojas Garbanzo, Regional Coordinador SALTRA Program, Central American Institute for Studies on Toxic Substances (IRET), Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica

### Argentina

The chapter on Argentina was prepared by the ILO based on the data processing and analysis carried out by Amanda Alvarado Martinez (Secretary of Work and Employment) and Cecilia Ines Cornelio of the Superintendency of Labour Risks (SRT) of the 2009 ENTETCML survey. The 2009 ENTETCML survey was coordinated by Cecilia Ines Cornelio of SRT and Fabián Berho of the former Ministry of Work, Employment and Social Security. The SRT team consisted of María José Iñiguez, María Martha Sapoznik and Alfredo Esteban; the Secretary of Work and Employment (formerly the Ministry of Work, Employment and Social Security) team consisted of Julián Labiaguerra, Julio Zelarayan, Héctor Paganini, Verónica Munilla, and Amanda Alvarado Martinez. The chapter was reviewed by José Francisco De Anchorena of the Secretary of Work and Employment, and Fernando Pérez and Natalia Gadea of the SRT, with the collaboration of Claudio San Juan of the SRT.

### Chile

Maria Jose González, Programa Trabajo, Empleo, Equidad y Salud, FLACSO - Chile

Orielle Solar H., Programa Trabajo, Empleo, Equidad y Salud, FLACSO - Chile

Clelia Vallebuona, Ministerio de Salud – Chile

### Uruguay

Redacción del informe: Lorena Funcasta, Universidad de la República, Uruguay y David Martínez-Íñigo, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos de España

Análisis de datos: Martín Brun, Universidad de la República, Uruguay

## Sectors of economic activity cited in the report

The sectors of economic activity mentioned in the report are based on the NACE Rev 2 at the one- digit level. However, for simplicity, the 21 NACE sectors have been condensed into 10 categories. When this was not possible, this is indicated in the text.

Sector	Corresponding to NACE Rev.2 sectors
Agriculture	A. Agriculture, forestry and fishing 01–03
Industry	B. Mining and quarrying 05–09 C. Manufacturing 10–33 D. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply 35 E. Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities 36–39
Construction	F. Construction 41–43
Commerce and hospitality	G. Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles 45–47 I. Accommodation and food service activities 55–56
Transport	H. Transportation and storage 49–53
Financial services	K. Financial and insurance activities 64–66 L. Real estate activities 68
Public administration	O. Public administration and defence; compulsory social security 84
Education	P. Education 85
Health	Q. Human health and social work activities 86–88
Other services	J. Information and communication 58–63 M. Professional, scientific and technical activities 69–75 N. Administrative and support service activities 77–82 R. Arts, entertainment and recreation 90–93 S. Other service activities 94–96 T. Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use 97–98 U. Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies 99

## Occupational groups cited in the report

The occupational groups mentioned in the report are based on the ISCO-08 categories at the one-digit level; shortened forms of these categories have been used throughout the report.

When this was not possible for example in case of insufficient observations, countries have collapsed occupational categories together and this is explained in the text.

In most cases, the ISCO group ‘armed forces occupations’ has been excluded when breaking down by ISCO group because of insufficient observations. The respondents in this group have been included when presenting a total for all occupations.

Occupational group	Corresponding to ISCO-08 group
Managers	1. Managers
Professionals	2. Professionals
Technicians	3. Technicians and associate professionals
Clerks	4. Clerical support workers
Service and sales workers	5. Services and sales workers
Agricultural workers	6. Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers
Craft workers	7. Craft and related trades workers
Plant and machine operators	8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers
Elementary occupations	9. Elementary occupations

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## List of countries and surveys

Country/Region	Name of survey	Abbreviation
European Union	European Working Conditions Survey	EWCS
China	China Urban Labour Survey	CULS
Republic of Korea	Korean Working Conditions Survey	KWCS
Turkey	European Working Conditions Survey	EWCS
US	American Working Conditions Survey	AWCS
Central America	Central American Survey on Work Conditions and Health	ECCTS
Argentina	National Survey of Workers: Employment, Work, Conditions and Working Environment	ENTETCML
Chile	Chilean Survey on Employment Conditions, Work, Health and Quality of Life	ENETS
Uruguay	Survey on Working Conditions, Health, and Safety in Uruguay	ECTSSU

CULS is the main source of information for the China chapter. However the chapter also draws on the Social Status of Women in China Survey (SSWCS).

### Note on numerical data

Numerical data in this report are rounded to zero decimals and therefore percentages may not add up to 100%.

**Sources:** European Working Conditions Survey and national surveys for all figures unless stated otherwise.



# Preface

Good working conditions contribute to the well-being of workers and the success of enterprises. But unbundling the everyday reality of women and men at work is not a simple task. This is particularly true in our changing world of work, where new technologies and new forms of work organisation are continuously being integrated into our workplaces.

In order to understand working conditions, we must measure them. Working conditions surveys – whether conducted in individual countries, or designed (like the European Working Conditions Survey) to compare experience in different countries – allow us to do this by providing objective and comprehensive data on the degree to which workers are exposed to certain risks at work, as well as the attributes of the work organisation and environment that allow them to mitigate these risks and achieve their work goals. They provide information needed to analyse different work situations, including by job and sector. Data from several countries can provide insight into whether there are similar patterns across countries, and thus the need to look beyond specific national explanations and solutions when devising policy. Similarly, the existence of differences

across countries can help shed light on possible national determinants of job quality and support mutual learning between countries.

As a result of our shared commitment to the policy goals of ‘decent work’ and ‘improved job quality’, our two organisations, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), have partnered to produce this report, *Working conditions in a global perspective*. We share the conviction of the importance of measuring, monitoring and analysing trends in working conditions. This report makes a unique contribution by providing a comparative overview of results from the most recent surveys on working conditions available across the world, covering approximately 1.2 billion of the world’s workers.

We hope that this is the beginning of a long and fruitful collaboration between our two tripartite organisations, as the challenges of our diverse but interconnected world are better served when we join forces to advance knowledge in support of evidence-based policy making.

**Guy Ryder**

Director-General, ILO

**Juan Menéndez-Valdés**

Executive Director, Eurofound



# Executive summary

## Introduction

This report provides a comparative analysis of job quality covering approximately 1.2 billion of the world's workers in the EU28, China, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United States (US), Spanish-speaking Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. It is the result of a pioneering project for the collection and analysis of data on working conditions around the world by the International Labour Office, the secretariat of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and Eurofound, both tripartite agencies that aim to improve working conditions and the well-being of workers.

## Policy context

Job quality is increasingly recognised as a major policy concern. It is central to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and to the European Union's Quality of Work policies. For workers, for the enterprises and organisations that employ them and for societies, there are benefits associated with high-quality jobs, and costs associated with poor-quality jobs.

The policy objectives of improved job quality, decent work and a high level of worker well-being can be supported by reliable data on working conditions. Working conditions surveys quantify the extent to which workers are exposed to certain risks at work, as well as the resources workers have to mitigate these risks. They permit analysis of different work situations, including analysis by occupation and sector, and allow researchers to examine the possible effects of changes in the world of work on job quality. They also allow monitoring of progress on working conditions. Comparable data are needed to support evidence-based policymaking on job quality.

## Key findings

The report analyses seven dimensions of job quality: the physical environment, work intensity, working time quality, the social environment, skills and development, prospects, and earnings. While there are important differences across countries on these job quality dimensions, there are also important similarities.

- Exposure to physical risks is frequent. More than half of workers in many regions and countries covered are exposed to repetitive hand and arm movements, making it the most reported physical risk. One-fifth or more of workers are frequently exposed to high temperatures at work; a similar but lower proportion report exposure to low temperatures. Between one-fifth and one-third of workers, and up to 44% in Turkey, report loud noise.
- Intensive work, such as tight deadlines and high-speed work, are experienced by between one-third of workers in the EU, and half in the US, Turkey, El Salvador and Uruguay. Some 25–40% of workers have jobs with emotional demands.
- Differences in working time quality are stark: whereas 15% of workers in EU countries work more than 48 hours per week, in China and the Republic of Korea over 40% of workers do so, in Chile over 50% and in Turkey the figure is nearly 60%. Across the countries, at least 10% of workers work during their free time; long hours often come with intense work. While in most countries men report longer hours of paid work than women, when hours of unpaid work are included then, without exception across the world, women work longer hours than men. Over 70% of workers in the Republic of Korea report that it is very easy for them to arrange to take an hour or two off work to take care of personal or family matters; this is the case for 20–40% of workers in the US, Europe and Turkey.
- The majority of workers report a supportive social environment at work. Around 70% of workers across the countries surveyed give a positive assessment of their managers' performance in managing them, and report high levels of social support from colleagues, (though with some country exceptions). Up to 12%, however, are subject to verbal abuse, humiliating behaviour, bullying, unwanted sexual attention or sexual harassment.
- Regardless of the country, the least-educated get less access to opportunities to grow and develop their skills. The proportion of workers who report learning new things at work varies between 72% and 84% in the US, the EU and Uruguay, but the proportions are lower in China (55%), Turkey (57%) and the Republic of Korea (32%). The proportion of workers who report having some task autonomy is between 45% and 70%, while the proportion having influence on decisions important for their work ranges from 33% to 66%.
- Regarding prospects, job insecurity is of concern across many countries, with one out of six workers in the EU and one out of every ten workers in the US worried that they might lose their job in the next six months. On the positive side, 30–60% report that their job offers prospects for career advancement.

- Across the countries, women earn significantly less than men and are overrepresented at the lowest end of the earnings distribution. The level of earnings varies with employment status and occupation.
- The surveys consistently show differences between different groups of workers: in particular, between men and women, and between workers in different occupations. Differences in job quality between men and women result from multiple interactions between the welfare and family systems, labour market structures, gendered life courses and the division of paid and unpaid labour. Similarly, the data reveal systematic differences between occupations. Many workers in blue-collar occupations are exposed to physically demanding working conditions. Elementary workers and service and sales workers also report both physical and emotional demands.

## Policy pointers

- The existence of similar patterns across countries points to the need to look beyond specific national explanations and solutions when devising policy.
- The existence of differences can help shed light on possible national determinants of job quality and support mutual learning between countries.
- Gender differences are crucial to understanding the pattern of working conditions across the world.
- Job quality can be improved by reducing excessive demands on workers and limiting their exposure to risks – and also by increasing their access to work resources that help in achieving work goals or mitigate the effects of these demands. Each dimension of job quality can also be improved through workplace practices and policies.
- Workers and employers and their organisations each have a role to play in improving job quality; social dialogue is critical for devising policies in the workplace and beyond. Public authorities should regulate with the common goal of improving job quality in mind.

- In relation to surveying working conditions:
  - Data on job quality are vital to support improving job quality. These data permit issues of concern to be identified and provide evidence for policy action.
  - To support policymaking, countries across the world should develop working conditions surveys which include comparable data on job quality.
  - Analysis of working conditions surveys helps to identify how working conditions systematically affect some groups of workers more than others.

## Key messages

- Despite vast differences in economic structure, labour markets and development, 1.2 billion workers in 41 countries across the globe face common challenges and concerns
- Women continue to face the most significant challenges; they earn significantly less than men and work more hours than men overall.
- Wide-scale differences in job quality in all countries are evident, reflecting the different nature of work across sectors, occupations and workplaces.
- Job insecurity is widespread and at least 30% report being in a job without career prospects.
- Exposure to physical risks is still frequent across all countries, with repetitive hand and arm movements most reported.
- Working time differences are stark across the countries and regions covered with long working days common for over a third of workers.
- 70% of all workers report a largely supportive social environment at work and high levels of satisfaction with their immediate supervisors.

# Part 1

## Monitoring and comparing working conditions





# 1 Introduction: Monitoring working conditions

Work is an intrinsic part of society and our everyday lives. Most people spend the majority of their waking hours working, and paid work therefore represents more than just the income it provides. It ‘contributes to quality of life both positively and negatively’ in part due to its fundamental role in influencing ‘identity and social interactions’ (Stiglitz et al, 2009).

For enterprises, workers are an important part of value creation, which in turn contributes to the development of new products and services. For societies, there are gains associated with high-quality jobs, and costs associated with poor-quality jobs.

For these reasons, job quality and its improvement is a recognised policy concern. Job quality is a multidimensional concept, as acknowledged in both the policy approaches and research frameworks. Although the frameworks used to analyse and monitor job quality can vary, they share many common dimensions, and in particular emphasise the importance of capturing the experience of work, as opposed to describing the work performed.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Union (EU) have long-standing commitments to improving working conditions and job quality. The ILO was founded in 1919 with the objective of improving ‘conditions of labour that involve injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people’, based on the recognition that poor working conditions could ‘produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled’. This mission was reaffirmed in the ILO’s 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia, which reiterated the organisation’s founding principle that ‘labour is not a commodity’ and referred to the need to act to ensure that workers ‘can have the satisfaction of giving the fullest measure of their skill and attainments and make their greatest contribution to the common well-being’. Embedded in the ILO’s mandate is the idea that work should be an act of self-realisation, imbued with the notion of personal and collective purpose. Work must certainly meet material needs, but it must also respond to an individual’s quest for personal development and the instinctive desire to contribute to something larger than one’s own or one’s family’s welfare.

Acknowledging the difficulty of realising this vision in an increasingly globalised world, the ILO launched the Decent Work Agenda in 1999. This agenda was designed to focus the ILO’s energies on decent work as a major

global demand, as well as to develop a consensus among the ILO’s constituents – governments, workers and employers – in support of this objective. The term ‘decent work’ sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It recognises that all workers, whether employees or self-employed, should have access to work that meets the following criteria:

- is productive
- delivers a fair income with security and social protection
- safeguards basic rights
- ensures equality in relation to opportunities and treatment
- offers prospects for personal development
- offers the chance for recognition and to have one’s voice heard

The agenda recognises the connection between decent work and efforts to reduce poverty and achieve equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. In January 2019, the ILO’s Global Commission on the Future of Work released its report calling upon governments and social partners to implement a human-centred agenda that is based on investing in people’s capabilities, institutions of work and in decent and sustainable work. Specifically, it calls for adequate protections in respect of working conditions for all workers, regardless of their contractual status, in line with the founding principles of the ILO in support of humane working conditions (ILO, 2019).

In the EU, the improvement of working conditions is considered an important policy goal. This is expressed in Article 151 of the consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which states that:

*The Union and the Member States ... shall have as their objectives the promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions, so as to make possible their harmonisation while the improvement is being maintained, proper social protection, dialogue between management and labour, the development of human resources with a view to lasting high employment and the combating of exclusion.*

This position reflects the ambitions of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 31 – ‘Fair and just working conditions’, which affirms that ‘every worker has the right to working conditions which respect his or her

health, safety and dignity’, and that ‘every worker has the right to limitation of maximum working hours, to daily and weekly rest periods and to an annual period of paid leave’. More recently, the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed on 17 November 2017 dedicated its second chapter (out of three) to fair working conditions. Its tenth principle affirms the right to a ‘healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection’ whereby:

*workers have the right to a high level of protection of their health and safety at work; workers have the right to a working environment adapted to their professional needs and which enables them to prolong their participation into the labour market; workers have the right to have their personal data protected in the employment context.*

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), a tripartite EU agency founded in 1975, helps EU Member States to realise these objectives by increasing knowledge about how to improve working conditions in Europe.

The importance of better working conditions is also discussed in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which reflects widespread concern over a lack of work opportunities and decent work, and recognises the link between full employment, decent working conditions and eradicating poverty. The Sustainable Development Goals include Goal 8 on promoting ‘sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all’. In particular, Target 8.8 highlights the need to ‘protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment’.

The need to monitor and improve working conditions has become more critical due to the impact of globalisation, technological developments and new approaches to work organisation over recent decades. The landscape in the world of work has changed dramatically. Economies have shifted from agriculture to manufacturing to services (and sometimes directly from agriculture to services); new production activities have been developed; global supply chains have proliferated; the demographic structure of the labour force has changed. These shifts are themselves intertwined with evolving cultural norms, changes in labour regulations, and fluctuating business cycles.

The transformations have been facilitated by new information and communication technologies, which have in turn created the conditions for organising and managing fragmented production processes. Developments in information technologies have had a significant impact on work structures, work organisation and working conditions in general. These technologies have also led to the creation of new jobs

and forms of work (e.g. on crowdsourcing platforms), while other occupations have disappeared or been transformed by integrating new technologies into the work process.

As a result, working life is characterised by increasingly diverse circumstances, the separating of job characteristics that used to be combined and growing inequality in multiple areas. Understanding the implications of these changes on working conditions is of the utmost importance when it comes to achieving the policy objectives of improved job quality, decent work and a high level of worker well-being. For this, survey tools are required that can monitor working conditions over time, tools that are based on questionnaires that can cater for more diverse work experiences. Research has shown that it is not sufficient to merely assess some dimensions of a job: a more complete picture is needed. As one researcher explains ‘When it comes to describing specific categories of jobs, the fact that they are “good” on some dimensions is no guarantee that they are high quality on others’ (Osterman, 2013).

## About this report

This comparative report is the result of a partnership between Eurofound and the ILO, both tripartite agencies that aim to improve working conditions and the well-being of workers. This partnership builds on the extensive experience of Eurofound in measuring and analysing working conditions through the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), and the global reach of the ILO, with its 187 member countries and system of international labour standards providing guidance on labour and social policies for decent work. In cooperation with national partners, this report brings together information on working conditions in different countries and regions of the world. Eurofound and the ILO have deemed it of strategic importance to encourage national and international stakeholders to engage in an assessment of working conditions and job quality, in recognition of the importance of these on individual and societal well-being, as well as enterprise and economic performance.

This report makes a unique contribution to the topic by providing a comparative overview of results from the most recent surveys on working conditions available across the world. It takes into account approximately 1.2 billion of the world’s workers by including country and regional studies that cover the European Union, China, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United States, Spanish-speaking Central America (comprising Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

The report begins with an explanation, in this chapter, of the development and relevance of working conditions surveys. This is followed by a comparative



analysis of the results analysed through the dimensions of physical environment, social environment, work intensity, skills and development, prospects, and earnings. The chapters that follow provide detailed results of the surveys conducted in the EU, China, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and the US – the core project countries. In addition, the report includes chapters on Central America, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, where several working conditions surveys have been undertaken over the past decade.

## Measuring working conditions in the world

The main available measurements of working conditions concern remuneration, working hours and contractual arrangements. Other fundamental attributes of the workplace are typically excluded from labour force surveys.

In contrast, working conditions surveys can address a wide array of issues within the workplace, depending on their scope. The EWCS, and many of the other survey instruments covered in this report, capture issues such as:

- job quality (e.g. physical environment, social environment, skills and discretion, work intensity, working time quality, prospects and earnings) and the risks and resources contributing to these aspects of work, including employment status
- work determinants and characteristics of work (e.g. working with customers, use of technology, where work takes place)
- workers and enterprise demographics (e.g. age, sex, seniority, enterprise size, industry)
- second jobs and multi-activity work
- organisational factors that can be validly captured through a workers' questionnaire (e.g. work processes, work pace, pace determinants, employee participation, team work, workplace human resource policies and work organisation characteristics, trust, cooperation and organisational rewards)
- the quality of working life as assessed by workers (e.g. work–life balance, health and well-being, skills match, financial security, sustainability of work, absence and presenteeism, and outcomes such as engagement and motivation)

By including these multiple dimensions, working conditions surveys provide some insight into contemporary challenges in the world of work (e.g. the blurring of the boundaries between working life and private life, the changing nature of work organisation, such as the shift from vertically to

horizontally integrated enterprises, or increased reliance on outsourcing). Further insights can be gained if surveys are regularly updated to integrate emerging risks (e.g. workers' privacy and collection of private data at the workplace).

Working conditions surveys address issues that are at the top of the policy agenda, such as the relationship between work and health, or the different experiences of women and men at work. The next section 'The challenge of capturing real work situations' discusses some of the policy issues of concern in these debates and examines how surveys help answer research questions. First, a brief history of the development of working conditions surveys is provided.

### Short history of working conditions surveys

The first working conditions survey dates to 1969, when researchers at the University of Michigan's Institute of Social Research Survey Research Center – on behalf of the US Department of Labor – launched the Quality of Employment Survey (QES). The objective of this survey was:

*to provide for the description, interpretation, and continuous monitoring of that aspect of society we call quality of employment / to meet the need for reliable data describing for the nation at large the variety of working conditions encountered by employed adults and the behaviors, experienced problems, and attitudes associated with this employment.*

(Staines and Quinn, 1979, p. 1).

However, this survey was discontinued in 1977.

In Europe, the EWCS has provided a (European) comparable and harmonised approach to measuring working conditions since 1990 (Eurofound, 2014; Smits et al, 2017). This survey built on the experiences of surveys developed earlier, in Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain (Eurofound, 1992). From an initial coverage of 12 countries in 1990, by 2015 the EWCS had expanded to cover the EU28, Norway, Switzerland, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. As the EU enlarged, the EWCS acted as a catalyst for the development of working conditions surveys in Europe and across the world, as well as contributing to a better understanding of the measurement of indicators and the analysis of findings from such surveys.

Countries outside Europe began initiating working conditions surveys in the 2000s. In some cases these were government-sponsored; in other cases, they were undertaken by private research centres. All share the motivation to better understand working conditions in the contemporary world of work.

## Box 1: Development of a model questionnaire in Latin America

Policymakers and researchers in Latin America have expressed concern about the impact of changing labour markets on worker health and working conditions. However, efforts to improve working conditions and worker health have been limited by a lack of reliable, comparable and accessible data. Although a handful of countries in the region have conducted research on working conditions and occupational safety and health over the past decade, the research instruments and survey methods used have varied. With the aim of contributing to the knowledge base on quality of work in Latin America and improving the comparability of research findings across the region, intergovernmental agencies including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the ILO joined with regional members to develop a survey on working conditions, employment and health (ECTES), and an accompanying methodology to guide working conditions research in the region.

Creating the survey questionnaire was a multistep process. Existing questionnaires from Latin American countries were reviewed by experts familiar with the region and the topics, in order to establish a comprehensive list of 95 research variables. Next, any variables that were unique to one country were eliminated, reducing the list to 46. The remaining variables were then grouped into research dimensions including individual and family demographic characteristics, work conditions, employment conditions and general health. Ultimately, a 77-question survey was created.

The experts took existing working conditions and health surveys into account when developing specific questions for the survey. These included the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire, the General Health Questionnaire, the WHO's five determinants of health and well-being, and the EWCS. The experts used similar questions to existing research instruments where possible, as this increased the opportunity for comparison with working conditions research outside Latin America. However, all questions were adapted for the Latin American and Caribbean context.

In addition to developing a recommended questionnaire, the group of experts also determined a methodological framework for the purpose of standardising data collection. The minimum criteria included surveying people over the age of 17,<sup>1</sup> a sample selection process, a location for the interview (in the worker's home), protocols for contacting workers (as well as what to do in the event of worker absence), training protocols for interviewers and coding standards for open-ended questions.

The project concluded in 2016. While the experts did point to possible areas for further improvement, the questionnaire and methodological criteria provide a harmonised survey instrument for use across Latin America for the purpose of working conditions and occupational health research.

(Benavides et al, 2016)

## The challenge of capturing 'real work' situations

Work is a rich and diverse experience, with individuals undertaking a variety of jobs composed of different tasks in different enterprise settings, in different labour markets. Working conditions surveys aim to capture the 'real' work activities that the individual is carrying out, rather than what is stated in their job description (e.g. work to be performed, objectives to reach, materials available, methods, operating rules and the organisation of the work).

This 'real' work is influenced not just by how the work is organised and what is to be done, but also the skills and characteristics of the worker, their interpretation of the

tasks, their operating mode and their ability to adapt or respond to unforeseen circumstances. As such, the performance of work as an activity depends on both the work situation and the individual worker.

For this reason, it is imperative that the worker himself or herself responds to the survey. The design of working conditions surveys is a strength in this respect, as the surveys focus on the concrete experiences of workers rather than just their views and opinions. In this way, the surveys gather information on the key characteristics of the work activity, as well as relevant personal information on the worker and information on the framework in which they operate and how the work is organised.

<sup>1</sup> While the specialists observed that there was significant merit in interviewing younger workers, involving this age group in the research was complicated by access to these workers, permission from parents or guardians, etc.

Working conditions surveys therefore capture ‘real work’ situations. They perform the following functions:

- integrate the characteristics of workers and their working methods
- capture information about the risks (and resources) workers are exposed to in their work environments
- provide information on the frequency, level and duration of certain types of exposure
- permit an analysis of between-group differences, defined by industry, occupation, age and sex
- facilitate an analysis of differences over time, when repeated
- facilitate preventive action aimed at large groups of workers

Alternative and complementary sources of information include expert judgements, observations within the workplace, video observations, direct measurements within the workplace, and measurements during simulations in laboratory settings (van der Beek and Frings-Dresen, 1998). While these methods can improve precision and are useful complements to working conditions surveys, they are expensive, time-consuming and do not readily take the whole workforce into account.

## Relationship between work and health

One of the main reasons for the development of working conditions surveys is to explore the relationship between work and health. Clear evidence about occupational health has been gathered over the years, in particular in relation to physical risk factors. This has also built on the impressive progress in occupational epidemiology concerned with stressful work and cardiovascular disease. Of particular importance were the Whitehall cohort studies

(conducted during 1967–1977 and 1985–1988), which examined the health of British civil servants over several years through questionnaires on working conditions and physical examinations. The studies led the way in providing solid evidence about the aspects of work that cause stress and contribute to higher risks of coronary heart disease.

These, and other national cohort studies that followed, are a primary source of evidence on work-related stress. They have contributed to the development of the ‘validated questionnaires’ associated with work-stress models that have, in turn, been influential in explaining the rise of psychosocial risks at work as a policy concern. The most important work stress models are the job demand-control model (Karasek, 1979; Karasek and Theorell, 1992), the Effort-Reward Imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996) and the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). A special mention should also be given to the Copsoq questionnaire (Kristensen et al, 2005), which aims to improve and facilitate research, as well as encourage practical interventions in the workplace. These models have influenced national and European working conditions surveys, by helping to assess the working conditions that are important for (good) health and well-being.

Job strain, in particular, is shown to be the result of a high level of demands in combination with limited autonomy, poor social support and long working hours. Recent meta-analyses on long working hours and the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke,<sup>2</sup> and on job strain as a risk factor for coronary heart disease,<sup>3</sup> provide a very high level of scientific evidence about the working conditions that matter for health.

Over the years, other characteristics of work and employment that matter have emerged such as job insecurity (Virtanen et al, 2013; Quinlan, 2016), and the health consequences of downsizing on ‘survivors’.

### Box 2: Work and health

The relationship between work and health goes both ways, with one affecting the other. Effects can be immediate (when a wrong movement leads to sudden pain) or deferred (when exposure to work-related stress leads to later health issues). They can also be positive (when work contributes either directly or indirectly to health and well-being) or negative (when work leads to limitations in activity, disease or even premature death). Single characteristics of work but also their combined effect can be influential. All of these effects can happen during an individual’s working life or during retirement.

Analysing the relationship between work and health is made difficult by what epidemiological studies call the ‘healthy worker’ effect. The healthy worker effect refers to the common finding that workers who have been exposed to arduous working conditions during their career (for example, night and shift work), are often in better

<sup>2</sup> Kivimäki et al (2015) looked at results for 603,838 men and women.

<sup>3</sup> Kivimäki et al (2012) – results for 197,473 participants.

health than workers who have been exposed over a shorter period of time. The healthy outcome is not necessarily a reflection of the job, but rather results from a bias associated with the selection of 'healthy' workers into those jobs. This effect is greater in the case of exposure to the most difficult working conditions, and it can hide the relationship between health and work, thus suggesting caution in interpretation of cross-sectional findings.

Another important dimension of research on work and health is how health affects participation in the labour market. Health limitations may restrict an individual's ability to hold certain jobs (e.g. occupations that are very physically or mentally demanding) or their ability to meet certain work requirements (e.g. shift work). They may require jobs and workstations to be adapted, which could be hard to negotiate and organise, as well as costly.

The effects vary amongst individuals and depend on other individual and collective circumstances such as healthy behaviours, the ability to recover and access to health services. Effects also vary throughout an individual's life and they can be further moderated by the welfare system and labour market regulations.

Employers and colleagues play a role, not only through work organisation and human resources policies, but also potentially through informal arrangements within the team around the worker. This is where tasks can be shared and arrangements implemented to assist workers at times of difficulty, possibly without the awareness of management.

However, it is important to consider issues beyond health. The development of research on working conditions builds on interests and evidence from the wide range of disciplines dealing with work issues, such as ergonomics, occupational medicine, sociology, occupational psychology, economics, organisational studies and survey methodology. This reflects the interests and concerns of the tripartite stakeholders of the work and research communities. These interests include the changing roles of men and women at work, and the increasing interest in monitoring the quality of work and employment.

## Women and men at work

The increased participation of women in the workforce is a fundamental development in labour markets. Addressing this development in the design of working conditions surveys is important to ensure that the work of both men and women is adequately represented. In the case of the EWCS, this has led to the introduction of a number of adjustments over time.

- The questionnaire has been adapted to integrate the specific risks and resources associated with occupational segregation in the workplace, leading to the integration of more indicators on customer work and emotional demands at work.
- The wording of some questions has been revised. For example, a new indicator on lifting or moving patients was added once it became obvious that female nurses and teachers did not recognise lifting patients as lifting a heavy load.
- Gender differences in the workplace are being captured. For example, since 1995 the EWCS has included a question on whether an individual's 'immediate boss is a man or a woman'.
- Gender differences, the roles of men and women and their contribution within the different spheres of life are being captured. This means that data on household composition and work intensity at household level is recorded, as well as (unpaid) work done in the private sphere.
- Questions now take into account that women and men have different economic power in the household. This is captured, for example, by asking who is the head of the household from a financial income perspective.
- Questions have been developed on work–life balance, as well as work–family conflicts and spillovers.
- Gender issues such as discrimination, sexual harassment and segregation at job level are now addressed.
- Results separated by sex can now be disseminated.
- The analysis of the results is carefully considered, so that the worlds of work for men and women are presented in a gender-sensitive way.

## Measuring job quality

There exist several international frameworks on job quality. (See Box 3).

Most of them have defined and agreed a set of indicators required to monitor and assess job quality. Working conditions surveys are uniquely placed to contribute to this monitoring.

The frameworks emphasise different aspects of job quality, but all assess it in a multidimensional way complemented by information on job characteristics. Depending on the specific focus of the framework, information is gathered on issues such as the personal preferences of workers, their assessment of working life and work–life balance, as well as additional information on labour market indicators, social protection, governance at work and enterprise performance.

### Box 3: International policy frameworks on job quality

The ILO framework on **decent work** was launched in 1999. Its central focus is to create opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions where freedom, equity, security and human dignity are assured. The framework aims to build on employment, social protection, social dialogue and rights at work, with gender equality as a cross-cutting issue. The indicators correspond to 10 strategic elements of the agenda:

- employment opportunities
- adequate earnings and productive work
- decent working hours
- combining work, family and personal life
- work that should be abolished
- stability and security of work
- equal opportunities and treatment in employment
- safe working environment
- social security and social dialogue
- employers' and workers' representation

In the EU, **quality of work** is part of the European employment strategy. The 'Laeken indicators' on job quality developed by the EU in 2001 are:

- intrinsic job quality
- lifelong learning and career development
- gender equality
- health and safety at work
- flexibility and security
- inclusion and access to the labour market
- work organisation and work–life balance
- social dialogue and worker involvement
- diversity and non-discrimination
- overall economic performance and productivity

This approach was revised in 2010 by the European Commission, which defined four dimensions of work quality and proposed a set of indicators for monitoring purposes:

- socioeconomic insecurity
- education and training
- working conditions
- work–life balance and gender balance



The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE, 2015), the ILO and Eurostat have developed a statistical framework to measure and analyse the quality of employment. This framework is multidimensional and includes the following seven dimensions:

- safety and ethics of employment
- income benefits and employment
- working hours and balancing working and non-working life
- security of employment and social protection
- social dialogue
- skills development and training
- workplace relationships and work motivation

The latest framework has been developed as part of the OECD jobs strategy (2014, 2018). The framework focuses on those aspects of employment that are most important for the well-being of workers and builds on three complementary factors that determine it: earnings quality, labour market security and quality of the working environment. Its headline indicator is ‘job strain’, which is made up of excessive job demands such as time pressures at work and physical risk factors, and insufficient job resources such as work autonomy and learning opportunities and social support at work. The job strain indicator methodology is being revised by the OECD to include a larger element of job demands and job resources. In countries where no data were available, ‘working very long hours’ was used as a proxy for job strain (OECD, 2015). Guidelines for monitoring the quality of the working environment recently published propose a conceptual framework based on six dimensions (physical and social environment, job tasks, organisational characteristics, working time arrangements, job prospects and intrinsic job aspects) (OECD, 2017a).

## Policy relevance of working conditions surveys

Working conditions surveys contribute evidence to the debate on major topics such as job quality, the future of work, work organisation and innovation. They provide a description of working conditions in quantitative form, allowing comparisons to be made between different groups of workers, occupations, sectors and work situations. They also allow relationships between the captured data to be analysed, taking into account various contextual factors.

Such analyses – frequently undertaken by independent researchers to whom data is available – have a bearing on many issues linked to the policy agenda. Examples include ICT-based mobile work, workplace developments such as skills development, sustainable or intensive forms of work and selective or inclusive work practices, and such core issues of concern in the relationships between jobs, workers and enterprises as work and well-being (including work-related stress and mental health).

Analysis has also addressed questions related to understanding the importance of enterprise or company practices. This goes to the heart of organisations and their nature: are they learning

organisations or high-involvement organisations? Company practices are also crucial in terms of how workers experience restructuring, and for work practices that support engagement, as well as issues of wider societal concern such as social inequalities at work, gender roles and work–life balance.

In contributing to the evidence base on these topics, working conditions surveys benefit from other sources that describe the institutional context in, for example, different countries, which can help to explain the quantitative differences observed.

In short, new knowledge is often created through the combination of data and research. The use of the EWCS in European policymaking shows that its data and analysis are of relevance not only to governments, but also to social partners and to researchers and civil society bodies dealing with employment, social issues and gender equality.

By providing a first comparison of working conditions from a global perspective, this report aims to encourage similar interest from policymakers and social partners, both by investing in the research needed to provide a reliable evidence base for the debate on working conditions, and in identifying and implementing the changes needed to improve job quality across the world.

## 2 | Comparative overview

### Introduction

Based on the analyses of national and regional working conditions surveys that follow in Part 2 of this report, this chapter provides a comparative analysis of their results on job quality.

Such a comparative analysis has not been carried out before. By undertaking an international comparison of working conditions, the report provides for greater understanding of job quality, since national and regional similarities and differences provide insights into whether job quality levels stem from specific national contexts (in the case of differences) or occupational and sectoral characteristics (in the case of similarities). Given the contemporary debates on the future of work, undertaking an international, comparative study on working conditions allows better assessment of progress and of possible initiatives needed to make greater job quality and decent work a reality for all.

The surveys covered in this report provide information on different dimensions of job quality, although the extent of the coverage, question formulation and responses can differ (Annex 2). As a result, there is some information that cannot be directly compared. The surveys also contain additional information that has not been used in this report. To access this information, interested readers may refer to the national teams and their published work.

Nevertheless, some information is directly comparable. For the Member States of the EU, and for Turkey, the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) provides comparable data; the survey was also the basis for the design of the survey conducted in the Republic of Korea. The data for the US were also gathered using a questionnaire that drew heavily on the EWCS. However, the data were gathered online rather than through face-to-face interviews in respondents' homes, as is the practice for the EWCS. In China, a module of questions on working conditions – derived from the EWCS – was included in the China Urban Labour Survey conducted in six large cities by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Neither the sampling approach nor the conduct of fieldwork was the same as for the EWCS. The chapters on Latin America draw on a range of national surveys, based on different questionnaires and methodologies. The Central American survey provides comparable information for the six Spanish-speaking countries of this region and covers the whole working population. The Chilean survey is a national survey, while the Uruguayan survey samples workers from towns of 10,000 or more inhabitants. The Argentinian

survey is limited to employees in formally registered enterprises in urban areas with five or more employees. It is also important to note that for all the surveys, the dates for the fieldwork vary. (See Annexes for more detailed information on the surveys, the methodology used, and their comparability.)

As a result, the authors do not have a harmonised cross-country dataset for the descriptions and analyses that follow. However, this does not mean that results cannot be compared. The approach adopted has been to favour qualitative comparisons, informed by the quantitative data available, thus providing an institutional context for the analysis of the results. This analysis also reflects the inputs of the national research teams who were consulted during the process to discuss and validate the results. It is hoped that this project can serve as a catalyst for the development of harmonised data on working conditions in the future.

Accordingly, part of the report presents information on the different contexts (concerning the economy and labour market), discusses the extent to which there are common debates and issues of concern, reports on the data from a comparative perspective, and outlines some challenges for the future.

### Looking through the lens of job quality

Job quality is a critical policy concern for countries across the world. National dialogues undertaken by the ILO in the context of its 'Future of work' centenary initiative concluded that the only realistic strategy for the future is through decent jobs for all (ILO, 2017a). Many job quality features that are beneficial for workers are supportive of a positive and fulfilling quality of working life. Thus, high(er) levels of job quality are associated with health and well-being, work-life balance, financial security and skills development (Eurofound, 2016). Statistical analyses included in all national reports confirm these findings.

Job quality features are also positively associated with enterprise performance, productivity and innovation. Improving job quality in particular is associated with reducing sickness absence and the loss of productivity due to working while sick. In addition, job quality contributes to developing organisational commitment and motivation among workers, as well as shaping a climate that is supportive of creativity and the development of the workforce.

Building on the work done by Eurofound on operationalising and structuring job quality against its key features and multiple dimensions, this comparative

chapter and the regional and country chapters that follow are structured across seven dimensions of job quality: physical environment, work intensity, working time quality, the social environment, skills and discretion, prospects, and earnings (Figure 1). These seven dimensions reflect the multidimensional nature of the concept of job quality and the fact that indicators making up these seven dimensions have an independent influence (positive or negative) on the health and well-being of workers (Eurofound, 2012a). Each dimension reflects attributes at the level of the job, where the contractual relationship between employers and workers is set, and where the policies and regulations governing work are implemented; second, they are constructed with indicators of positive and negative job features reflecting the job resources (physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects) and job demands; and thirdly, the indices cover job features captured from an objective perspective, meaning that they refer to specific job quality features, which can be observed and are related to meeting people’s needs from work. In particular, these features have been proven through epidemiological studies to have a causal effect – positive or negative – on the health and well-being of workers.

Because the focus of the analysis is on job quality some characteristics of work and employment available in the surveys, are not analysed in this report. Rather the intention was to reduce the complexity and richness of work situations and focus thus on the ‘risks’ that workers face and the ‘resources’ available to them to lessen these risks. Thus for example, while a person who works with customers may or may not enjoy doing so,

**Figure 1: Seven dimensions of job quality**



Source: Eurofound

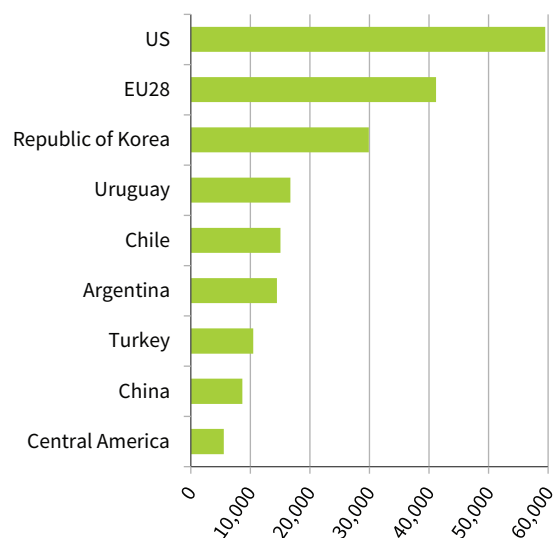
the focus of the analysis is not on the description of what they are doing but what are the potential risks for workers working with customers (for example, noisy environment, uncivil clients) and what are the resources available to the worker in this position to mitigate any potential risks (for example, supportive manager or colleagues, flexible hours, ability to apply their own ideas to work).

## Economies and labour markets

The starting point is to note the diversity of countries and regions covered in the report. Even if the focus is on countries that are (increasingly) integrated in the global trading and financial system, the economies covered range from the world’s largest and most advanced, to emerging and developing countries.

The level of economic development is often argued to be one of the factors underlining the quality of work. Figure 2 provides comparative information on the different levels of GDP per capita of the countries and regions covered in the report, with per capita income levels in the United States outpacing Central America by a ratio of ten to one.

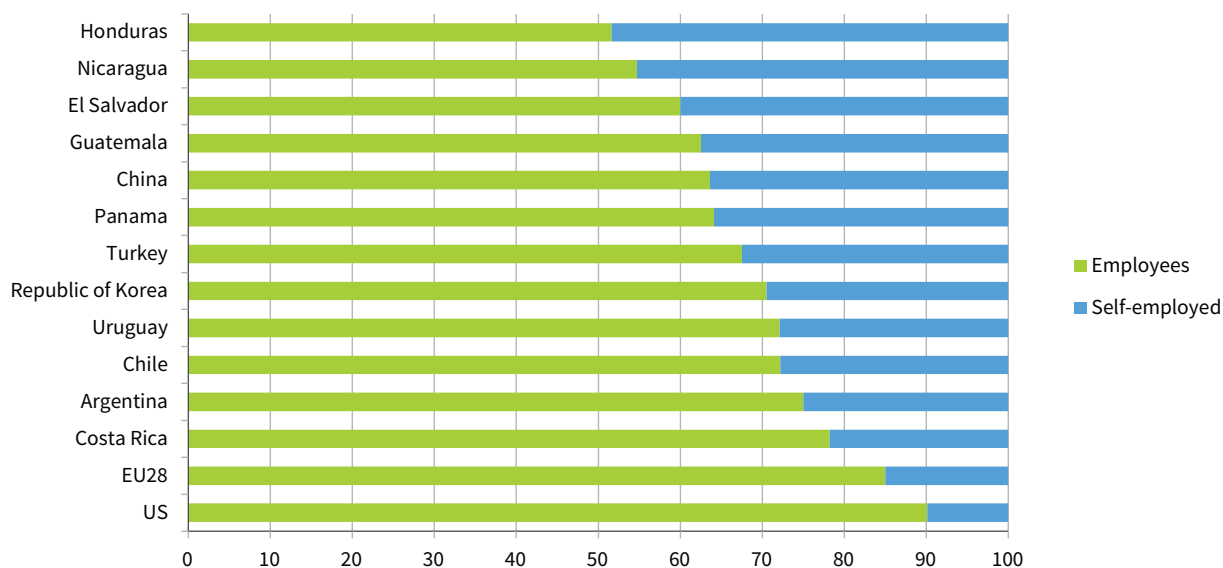
**Figure 2: GDP per capita, 2017**



Note: Measured as USD per capita, 2017.  
 Sources: IMF (2018); OECD (2017) for EU28 data.



Figure 3: Employment status, by country or region (%)



Note: Population aged 15 or over; Argentina is limited to urban areas.

Sources: For individual countries, ILOSTAT for the year 2016. For EU28, EU-LFS 2015, presented in Eurofound (2016).

### Portrait of the workforce

The employed population in the countries covered by this report comprised over a billion workers, including 221 million employed in the EU, 153 million in the US, 776 million in China,<sup>4</sup> 26 million in the Republic of Korea, and slightly over 40 million in the Latin American countries covered.<sup>5</sup> Countries differ substantially in their labour market structures. For example, the share of wage employees is the highest in the US, and lowest in Central America, where self-employment remains sizeable (Figure 3).

While countries vary in terms of their employment, one observation remains constant: employment rates of women are always lower than those of men (Figure 4).

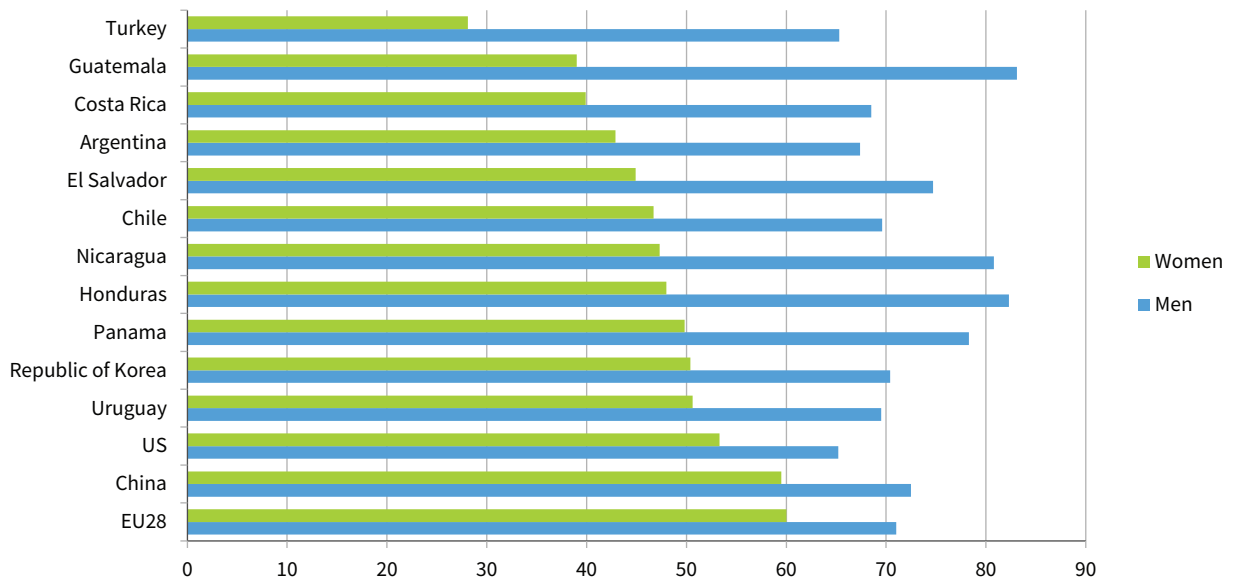
This is despite the fact that, in all countries surveyed, women's employment rates have been increasing over the past decades, while those of men have been generally falling.

The countries considered in this report are different in terms of the structure and specialisation of their economies, which has a direct bearing on the distribution of the workforce across sectors and occupations. Agriculture remains important in Central America, especially in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras, where it employs over 28% of the working population. It is also still considerable in Turkey and China. Manufacturing remains relatively more important in China than elsewhere. At the same time, structural change nearly everywhere has led to the

<sup>4</sup> Two surveys are used in China: the China Urban Labour Survey (CULS) which covers six large cities and includes a module on job quality building on EWCS questions, and the Social Status of Women in China Survey (SSWCS) which has been used to supplement some questions. The SSWCS is representative of all the territory of China.

<sup>5</sup> ILO STAT, 2018. Data on Total Employment, by Country. Latest available year. Accessed: June 2018.

Figure 4: Employment rates, by sex and country or region (%)



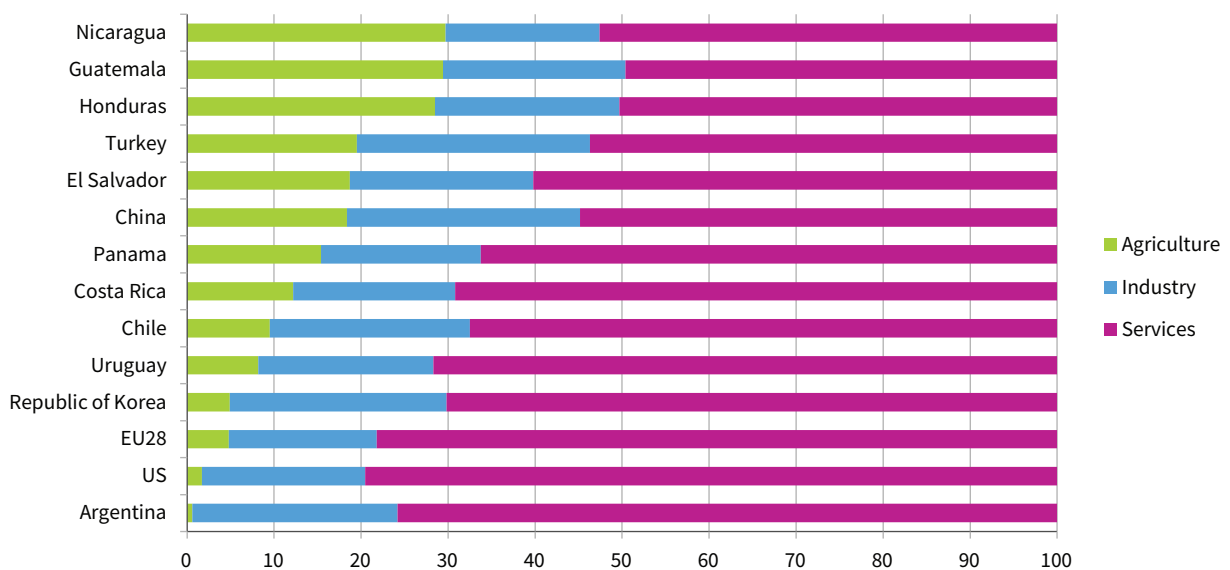
Note: Population aged 15 or over; data for Argentina limited to urban areas.

Sources: For individual countries, ILOSTAT for the year 2016. For EU28, EU-LFS 2015, presented in Eurofound (2016).

services sector accounting for over half of all employment (Figure 5). Within services, the greatest providers of employment are trade, transportation, accommodation and food, business and administrative services, which provide at least 30% of employment in all countries of this report, and over 40% of all employment in the Republic of Korea, Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Argentina, and Chile.

Construction is the largest provider of jobs in Panama, Argentina, Chile, and China, accounting for over 8% of employment. Public administration, community and social services jointly represent between 16% in Guatemala and over 30% in Uruguay and the US (ILOSTAT, 2016, 2018).

Figure 5: Employment, by main sector of activity and country or region (%)



Note: Population aged 15 or over. Argentina: urban population only. Services include construction, transportation, public administration, finance, commerce, trade, and other services.

Sources: For individual countries, ILOSTAT for the year 2016. For EU28, EU-LFS 2015, presented in Eurofound (2016).

The sectoral and occupational distribution of the labour force also remains highly gendered. Almost everywhere, women are overrepresented in services, especially health, education, accommodation and food (Figure 6). In the EU, Chile, Republic of Korea, Panama and Uruguay, there is also a higher share of female rather than male workers in the finance and insurance sector. In commerce, higher shares of women than of men are found in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In China, there are relatively more women than men in agriculture. In general, men are overrepresented in construction, transportation, and industry.

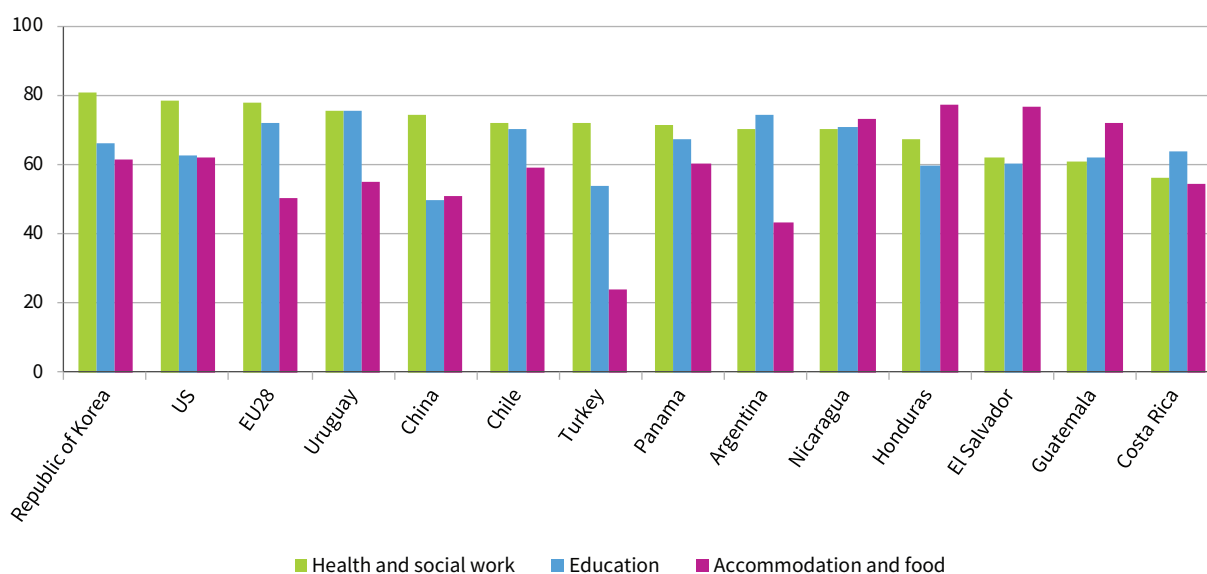
Depending on the economic sector, there may be a higher incidence of non-standard jobs, such as part-time or temporary employment. This is particularly true in the commerce sector, where many women are employed part-time and in the construction sector, where many men are employed temporarily (ILO, 2016a). But even within sectors, there is generally significant gender segregation in occupations, with women more often performing clerical and administrative functions, while men are much more often employed in managerial and technical professions. The greater domestic and care responsibilities of women, as well as stereotypes about gender roles, often influence female occupational choice and career progression, so that when they do participate in the labour market, their opportunities remain more limited.

This diversity in terms of employment, sectors, occupations, and gender sets the scene for the different aggregate outcomes observed across countries. It plays a role in the diversity of outcomes in terms of working conditions, but also some common trends to be

identified. For example, sectoral sex segregation determines to a certain extent the fact that women are more exposed to interactions with clients, patients or students, and thus face greater emotional demands, and men are more exposed to longer working hours and physical demands in their work. The occupational segregation, in turn, has a strong bearing on autonomy at work, the level of responsibility, discretion, and on earnings and career prospects, where male–female differences are often pronounced regardless of the country.

Another important distinction between the countries being compared in this report is the differences in the degrees of formality and informality in the labour market. Informality can be found in both wage employment and self-employment and across various economic sectors. It is present in informal economic units (the ‘informal sector’) as well as in formal establishments, when employees are not declared to the authorities for tax or social security purposes (ILO, 2013a). Informality remains an important feature of labour markets around the world, with millions of enterprises operating and hundreds of millions of workers pursuing their livelihoods, partially or totally outside the scope of labour, occupational safety and health, and social protections. In the countries covered in this report, informality as a share of total employment ranges from levels in the single and low double digits in the EU and the United States to a high of 80% in Guatemala and Honduras (ILO, 2013b). While informality continues to exist in advanced countries, it is far more prevalent in lower-income countries as a result of structural underemployment, which forces many to seek a living as own-account workers.

**Figure 6: Share of female workers, by selected services sector and country or region (%)**



**Note:** Percent of women by sector. Population aged 15 or over. Argentina: urban population only.

**Sources:** For individual countries, ILOSTAT for the year 2016. For EU28: EU-LFS 2015, presented in Eurofound (2016).

The particular characteristics and circumstances of informality vary greatly across countries and regions. Nonetheless, informality has similar and important consequences for workers as it means that they are not contributing to the social security system, and if in an employment relationship, it indicates that the relevant employment law, while still legally applicable to the worker, may not be applied, denying the worker rights such as limits on working hours, the minimum wage, paid annual leave, maternity, paternity or parental leave, or access to social security benefits, including for sickness, disability or retirement. As such, informality can play an important role in shaping the working conditions of individual workers.

## Physical environment

The monitoring of physical hazards and physical conditions under which work is performed has been included in working conditions surveys for many years, acknowledging the long-standing interest in this topic. Eliminating or minimising physical risks is at the core of occupational health and safety and numerous actions have been undertaken over the past century to minimise these risks in agriculture and manufacturing industries in particular. When compared with the past, today's workplaces illustrate progress in this area. Nonetheless, despite progress physical safety at work remains a continuing policy interest, while other areas, such as psychosocial risks (covered in the section on social environment and work intensity), have also emerged as areas of policy concern.

Exposure to physical risks is not confined to agriculture, industry and construction work: it is also frequent in services. In some cases, physical risks are intrinsically linked to specific work activities, such as when a worker has to routinely lift heavy loads, including goods, or has to assist and move individuals, such as patients. When tasks such as these form part of the daily work routine, exposure to the risk is difficult to avoid. In other cases, exposure to heat, cold, or biological agents, for example, may be 'occasional' or 'potential'.

This exposure (physical risks) also depends on the conditions under which work is performed. For example, in cases of high work demands workers may fail to use protective devices or equipment available to them, or they may not think they are in a position to wait for support from colleagues, thus resulting in exposure to posture-related risks.

Exposures to physical risks are very 'gendered' (Thébaud-Mony et al, 2015). This is due partly to labour market segregation and gendered occupational choices. Also, stereotypes on the attributes applied to women and men can result in hiding some physical risks. For example the dangers to which men can be exposed in physically demanding roles may be made 'invisible' as characteristics of physical strength are attributed to

men, thus masking some of the physical dimensions of the activity, failing as well to acknowledge variability in men's physical characteristics. In a similar vein, the physical dimensions of some of the work that women carry out is often not seen: for example, receptionists, hairdressers and retail assistants spend a considerable part of their time standing. Likewise, the higher incidence of computer work reported by women can hide, in some cases, the higher incidence of repetitive movements. Women working as cleaners often work in uncomfortable positions. Finally, case studies have shown that men and women in the same jobs often do not carry out the same tasks: for example, studies on cleaning staff in hospitals indicate that men spend more time washing floors and women cleaning toilets, which exposes the latter to more uncomfortable positions (Messing, 2016). This 'invisibilisation' process can impact on levels of reporting by men and women.

Exposure to physical risks may lead to injuries, incidents and accidents, and have health consequences that can affect the performance of companies. A wide range of prevention and control activities are available in all countries and regions covered by this report to address physical risks. The current analysis considers three groups of physical risks: posture-related, ambient, and biological and chemical risks.

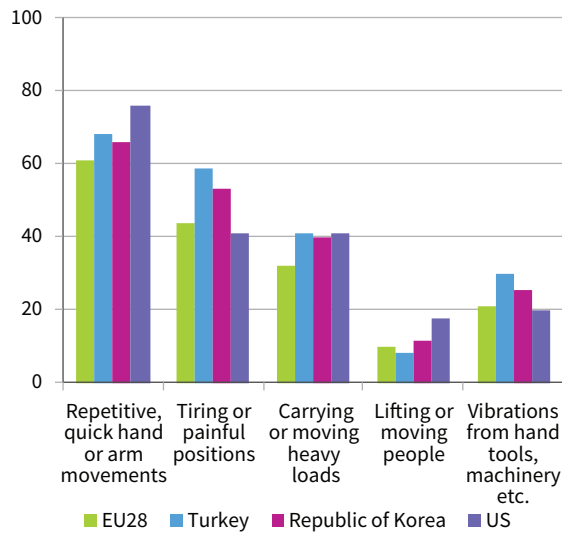
Most national and comparative working conditions surveys included in this study include exposure to physical risks as a core topic. It is extensively covered in all questionnaires, with high comparability of questions, used in the surveys in Europe, Turkey, the US and the Republic of Korea, some comparability with countries in Latin America (though high comparability between them) and low comparability with Chinese data sources (overview of questions – Annex 1). Most surveys include a high range of indicators on the issue.

### Exposure to posture-related risks

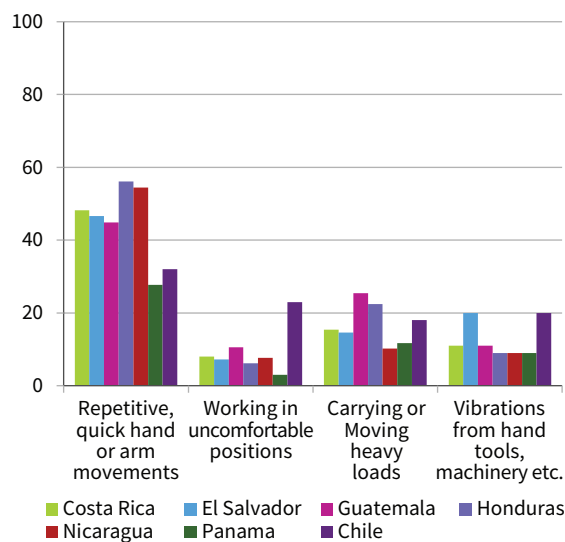
Posture-related risks include exposure to vibrations, tiring positions, lifting people, carrying heavy loads and repetitive movements. These risk factors can affect a worker's posture and stem from work. They have been found to be related to musculoskeletal complaints, and can cause serious diseases (some of which are listed as occupational in some countries) (Tynes et al, 2017). They are also related to labour market participation, as they predict sickness absence, and can lead in the most severe cases to premature exit from the labour market. A significant proportion of musculoskeletal diseases among exposed workers are preventable. Nonetheless, as a worker ages, exposure to posture-related risks can become harder to bear (Eurofound, 2012b).

The data suggest that physically demanding work is very common across the regions covered by this study; for some workers physically demanding work is a major characteristic of their job.

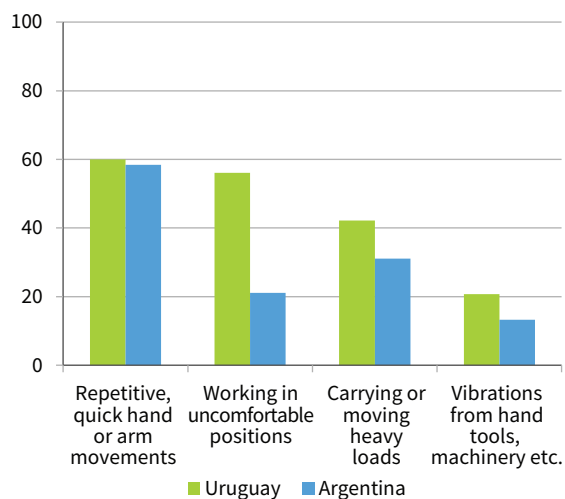
**Figure 7: Exposure to posture-related risks, by country or region (%)**



Note: Exposure to risks one quarter of the time or more.



Note: Central America: exposure to risks at least half of the time; Chile: exposure to risks at least half of the working day.



Note: Uruguay: carrying or moving heavy loads includes people; presence of risks at least sometimes; Argentina: presence of risk always to sometimes. Sources: EWCS and national surveys for all figures unless otherwise stated.

Posture-related risks are frequent across countries as they are prevalent in all economic sectors (Figure 7).

*Repetitive hand or arm movements a quarter of the time or more* is the most pervasive job-related risk, affecting more than 60% of workers in Europe, the Republic of Korea (66%) and Turkey (68%) and 76% of workers in the US. *Tiring or painful positions a quarter of the time or more* are reported by between 40% and 60% of workers in these same countries (US 41%, EU 43%, Republic of Korea 53% and Turkey 59%). A third or more of workers report that their work requires them to *carry and move heavy loads a quarter of the time or more* (32% in the EU, about 40% in the Republic of Korea, Turkey and the US). Some 8–18% report that their work requires lifting and moving people a quarter of the time or more (10% in the EU, 8% in Turkey, 12% in Korea and 18% in the US). At least 20% of workers in the US and in the EU (20%), Turkey (30%) and Korea (26%) are exposed to *vibrations at least one-quarter of the time*. In China, data from the national SSWCS survey reveals that 19% of workers are regularly affected by *long standing or squatting operations*, or by *having to carry heavy loads*.

For the Latin American countries, the questions are similar, but the response scale is different, with Central America using a scale of never, at least one-quarter of the time, between one-quarter and half the time, and more than half the time *during a typical workday*. Argentina measures the extent to which workers' exposure is *never, sometimes or always*; Chile measures whether in general, workers' exposure is *never, occasionally, half the day, or all day*. Uruguay asks whether during normal work, exposure is *never, sometimes, quite often, very often or always* (although data is only available as exposure/no exposure).

Nevertheless, data from Central America, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay confirm the high incidence of *repetitive movements*; about half of workers in all countries included in the Central America survey report being exposed to *repetitive hand or arm movements half of the time or more* with the exception of Panama, where about 30% report such exposure. A similar proportion is reported by Chilean workers. In Central America, carrying or moving heavy loads is more frequent than working in uncomfortable positions, with 10% of workers in Nicaragua reporting it accounts for at least half of the time in their work, compared with a high 25% in Guatemala, while 23% of workers in Chile report working in uncomfortable positions. In Uruguay, 21% report at least some exposure to vibrations in their work. In Argentina, which is limited to workers in formal, urban enterprises, 5% of workers report constant exposure to vibrations in their work; 8% report intermittent exposure.

Because of the differences in scale and coverage, data from Argentina and Uruguay are not directly comparable with Central America or Chile. In Argentina, one out of three workers reports that they lift heavy loads, including persons, always (7%) or sometimes (27%) in their work; repetitive hand or arm movements are more common, with 38% of workers stating that they are exposed always at work and 20% stating that the exposure is sometimes. For Argentina, 15% of the workers surveyed report that they sometimes work in uncomfortable positions, whereas 7% report that they always do. In addition, the survey asks about whether the worker has to use considerable force on the job (such as pushing or pulling): 18% report that they sometimes do this, whereas 6% report they always do. In Uruguay, the available data is on exposure versus no exposure to risks and as a result, the percentages of exposure are higher than those of the other countries surveyed; nevertheless, the same hierarchy is apparent. The Uruguayan survey found that 60% of workers are exposed, at least sometimes, to repetitive movements in their work, 56% work in uncomfortable positions, at least sometimes, and 42% have to move heavy loads at least sometimes. Econometric analyses carried out on these countries studied confirm the significant adverse effect of these posture-related risks on workers' self-reported health.

In general, the surveys find that all occupations have some exposure to tiring, painful, or uncomfortable positions, carrying and moving heavy loads and repetitive hand or arm movements. Exposure to vibrations is more concentrated among craft workers, plant operators and skilled agricultural workers, while exposure to lifting or moving people is more frequent for service (particularly health) and sales workers and to a lesser extent, technicians and professionals.

All sectors report some exposure to posture-related risks. High-risk sectors are the same in all countries (agriculture, construction, transportation and industry and, in a second group with lower exposure, health and other services), but the hierarchy of sectors differs amongst the countries covered.

## Exposure to ambient risks

Ambient risks include exposure to noise, high and low temperatures and these are the second-highest group of reported physical risk hazards. Craft workers, skilled agricultural workers, plant and machine operators and elementary workers are the occupational groups most exposed to these. Construction, agriculture, industry and transport are the sectors where these risks are most frequently reported. Public administration and health report some intermediate levels of exposure, for example in the US.

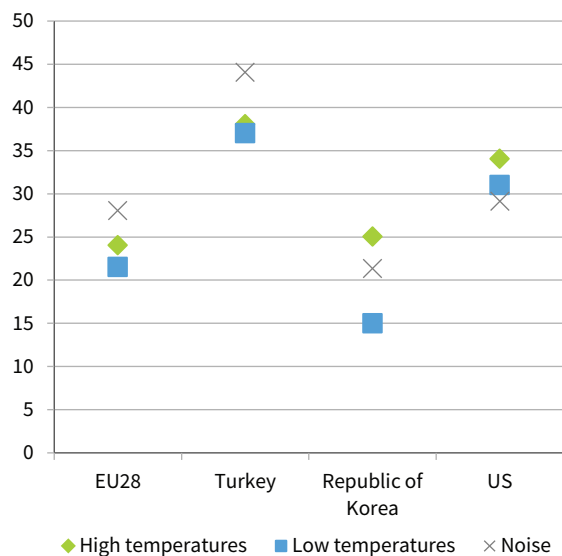
Exposure to loud noise increases risk of deafness, while more generally exposure to noise can lead to sleeping difficulties, digestive pains, fatigue, irritability, and high blood pressure. Negative consequences depend on the nature of the noise and work. In particular, workers can more easily tolerate noise they make as part of the performance of their work as opposed to noise unconnected to their work, such as background music in shops. Also, the inconvenience of noise increases the more the task at hand calls for concentration and focus. It can thus have an impact on the performance of the workers and their safety at work.

In China, data from the national SSWCS reveals that 18% of workers are exposed to noise, with non-agricultural hukou workers<sup>6</sup> reporting the highest exposure. In Chile, 18% of workers state that they are exposed to 'noise so loud that they have to raise their voice to talk to people' at least half of the workday. Loud noise is experienced at least a quarter of the time by 21% of workers in the Republic of Korea, 28% in the EU, 29% in the US and up to 44% in Turkey. In Uruguay, 27% of workers report being exposed to loud noise at least sometimes in their work. In Central America, noise exposure is the highest in El Salvador, with 26% of workers experiencing this risk at least half of the time in their workplaces.

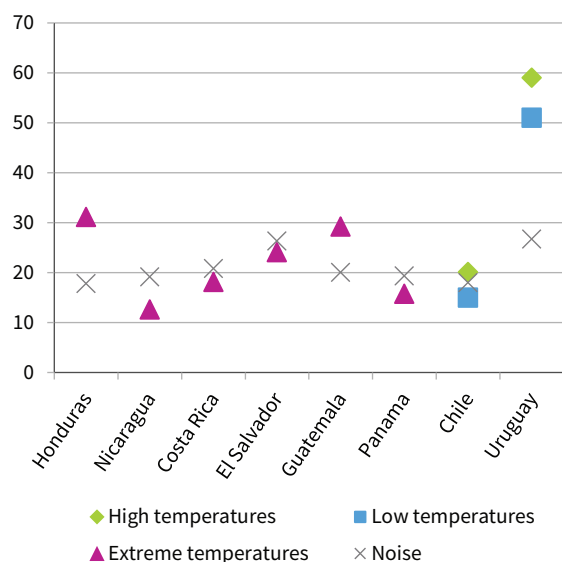
<sup>6</sup> 'Hukou' refers to a registered residency status that has been in use since the 1950s as part of the government household registration system. For decades, every Chinese citizen was assigned a hukou location (local or migrant) and a hukou status (agricultural or non-agricultural hukou). Households with a local, non-agricultural hukou enjoy better social welfare benefits than households with a migrant or agricultural hukou, such as access to better education, social security, health insurance, and wider-ranging job opportunities.



**Figure 8: Exposure to ambient risks, by country or region (%)**



Note: Exposure to risks one quarter of the time or more.



Note: Central America: exposure to risks at least half of the time; Chile: exposure to risks at least half of the working day. Uruguay: exposure at least sometimes

Many people are exposed to heat on the job, outdoors or in hot indoor environments. Operations involving high air temperatures, radiant heat sources, high humidity, direct physical contact with hot objects, or strenuous physical activities have a high potential for causing heat-related illness. Workplaces with these conditions may include foundries, chemical plants, mining sites, and factories but also bakeries, confectioneries, commercial kitchens, laundries, and food canneries. Domestic workers are also exposed to heat on the job. Excessive heat increases overall fatigue and produces sweat which makes it harder to hold tools, requiring more force.

Outdoor operations conducted in hot weather and direct sun, such as farm work, construction, oil and gas operations, asbestos removal, landscaping, emergency response operations, and hazardous waste site activities, also increase the risk of heat-related illness in exposed workers.

Exposure to high temperatures (Figure 8) for a quarter of the time or more is reported by about a quarter to one-third of workers included in these surveys (23% in the EU, 25% in Korea, 34% in the US and 38% in Turkey); 20% of workers in Chile are exposed 'at least half of the day'. Up to a third of workers in Central America report that they experience extreme temperatures. This survey includes a separate measure of exposure to solar radiation, with nearly one-half of workers reporting that they are exposed to solar radiation in their work, reflecting the high incidence of agricultural and construction work, but also street vending. In Uruguay, 59% of workers report exposure, at least sometimes, to 'high temperatures that make you sweat even if you aren't making physical effort'.

Working in a cold environment includes working in fridges as well as working outdoors in cold environments and for extended periods, for example, sanitation workers, police officers, firefighters, emergency medical staff, and street vendors. For middle and lower-income countries, where central heating is less common, it also includes those working indoors in unheated environments. Excessive cold can make the hands feel numb, making it hard to grip and requiring more force. Anyone working in the cold may be at risk of cold stress, frostbite, or other skin or foot problems – including workers in freezers, outdoor agriculture and construction.

Fifteen per cent of workers in Korea, 21% in the EU, 31% in the US and 37% in Turkey, are exposed to low temperatures a quarter of the time or more. In Chile, 15% of workers report exposure to low temperatures at least half of the working day; whereas using the broader formulation in the Uruguayan survey of 'at least sometimes', 51% of workers report at least some exposure to low temperatures 'that make you feel cold'. For Argentina, the formulation of the question is different, asking workers how they consider the ambient temperature of their workplace, ranging from very good to very poor. Seventy-six per cent report that it is good or very good, 12% report that it is average and 5% report that it is poor or very poor.

Climate change is a mega-trend likely to affect worker safety and health in many different ways (see Schulte et al (2016), who consider seven categories of climate-related hazards) including increased ambient temperatures. Many workers spend their entire work shift in a variety of indoor and outdoor hot environments that may become hotter because of

ambient rising temperatures and increases in extreme heat events. Heat exposure can increase the risks of illnesses but also of workplace injuries by sweaty palms, fogged-up safety glasses, dizziness and reduced brain function. Workers with less control over their activities, who have had little acclimatisation to extreme temperatures, who are paid at piece rate or are experiencing financial hardships may be particularly vulnerable to adverse effects.

### Exposure to biological and chemical risks

This section considers exposure to working conditions which can be unpleasant or dangerous such as exposure to smoke and toxic vapours, tobacco smoke, dust pollution, and handling chemical products or infectious materials. In the majority of cases, exposure to these substances is related to characteristics of specific work activities.

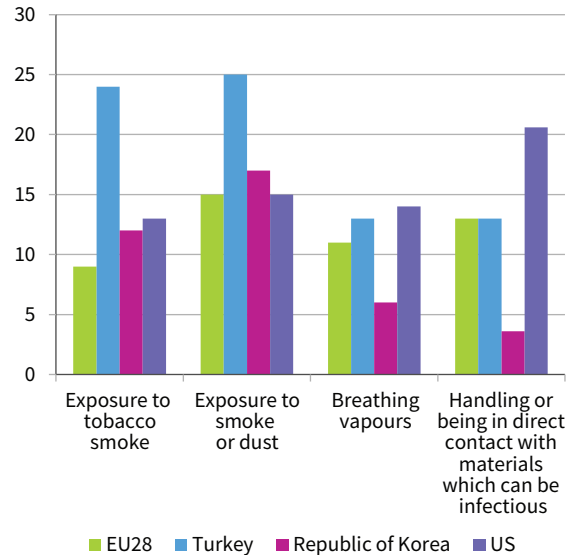
The surveys confirm that, although exposure to these risks is the lowest among the physical risks considered in this section, it nevertheless remains significant, as up to one-quarter of workers included in the surveys are exposed to one or more such substances. Men are more frequently exposed to chemicals, toxic substances and tobacco smoke, while women are more often exposed to biological waste, as a result of their strong representation in the health sector. Exposure to such risks is concentrated in four occupations: craft workers, plant and machine operators, agricultural workers and elementary occupations, with different rankings by country. The range of sectors where workers are exposed to these risks is quite high and includes construction, industry, health, agriculture and transport. Exposure to dangerous substances can also happen in the services industry, in particular in the cleaning, hairdressing and beauty sectors.

Chemical hazards and toxic substances give rise to a wide range of health consequences (such as irritation, sensitisation, and carcinogenicity) and physical effects (such as flammability, corrosion, and risk of explosion). Exposure to these substances is more frequent in industry but also occurs in the health sector and at hairdressing salons. Some of these substances can become carcinogenic when they are transformed in use. The hierarchy of control model in occupational safety in relation to chemicals indicates that total elimination is the preferred option, followed by substitution with less hazardous materials, engineering controls, administrative systems and practices and, finally, use of protective equipment. About 20% of workers in the US, Turkey and the EU and 8% in Korea report handling or being in skin contact with chemical products or substances. In Latin America, 4% in Panama and 21% in Honduras report this risk factor, with important country variations.

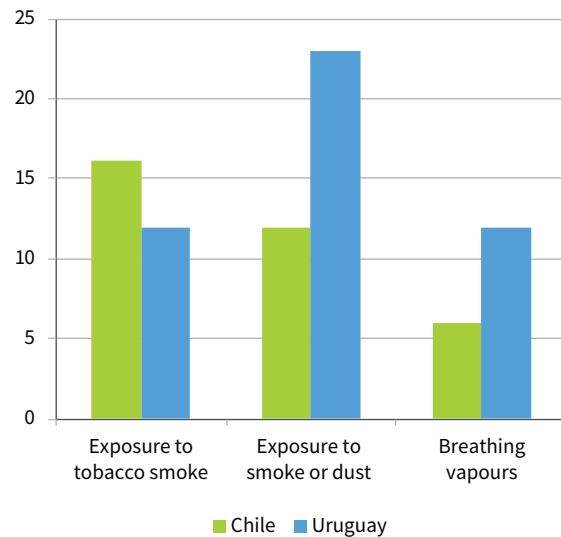
More than one in five workers in China, according to the national SSWCS, report exposure to smoke or dust pollution. Sixteen per cent of workers in China are exposed to chemical risks. Workers with agricultural

hukou report the highest levels of exposure to chemical risks; differences between non-agricultural and agricultural hukou are limited in relation to exposure to dust and smoke.

Figure 9: Exposure to biological and chemical risks, by country or region (%)



Note: Exposure to risks one quarter of the time or more.



Note: Chile: presence of risks at least half of the working day; Uruguay: presence of risks 'always' or 'often'

Fifteen per cent or more of workers in the EU, the US, and the Republic of Korea and 25% in Turkey are exposed to breathing in smoke, fumes (such as welding or exhaust fumes), powder or dust (such as wood dust or mineral dust) one-quarter or more of the time (Figure 9). Eleven per cent in the EU, 13% in Turkey, 14% in the US but about half (6%) in Korea are exposed to breathing in vapours, such as solvents and thinners,



a quarter of the time or more. Using the more demanding scale of at least half of the time, the figure is 6% for workers in Chile; and using the less demanding scale of at least sometimes in Uruguay the figure is 12%.

Biological agents include bacteria, viruses, fungi, other microorganisms and their associated toxins. They have the ability to adversely affect human health in a variety of ways, ranging from relatively mild, allergic reactions to serious medical conditions, or even death. These organisms are widespread in the natural environment; they are found in water, soil, plants, and animals. Because many microbes reproduce rapidly and require minimal resources for survival, they are a potential danger in a wide variety of occupational settings and 'potential exposure' is more frequent than 'deliberate exposure as part of a certain work process'. Eighteen per cent in the US, 13% in the EU and in Turkey, but just 4% of workers in the Republic of Korea report handling or being in contact with materials that could be infectious, such as waste, bodily fluids, or laboratory materials one-quarter of the time or more.

A special mention can be given to exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke at the workplace, which is a public health and occupational health concern. Many countries across the world have attempted to introduce measures to decrease rates of tobacco use, including smoking bans to limit smoking in public places such as airports and public buildings, and also in workplaces. For example, in the Republic of Korea, a workplace smoking ban was instituted which not only decreased second-hand tobacco exposure, but resulted in an overall reduction in the percentage of people who smoke and the number of cigarettes smoked per day (Kim, 2009). Comprehensive or partial workplace smoking bans have been implemented in numerous European countries and empirical evidence suggests that they are an effective policy to reduce exposure to tobacco smoke in workplaces (Origo and Lucifora, 2010). Despite these efforts, rates of exposure remain high: 24% of workers in Turkey, 13% in the US, 12% in the Republic of Korea and 9% in the EU are exposed to tobacco smoke one-quarter of the time or more.

In Chile, 16% of workers report exposure to tobacco smoke for at least half of the day, ahead of smoke or dust (12%), chemical substances (8%), vapours (6%) and infectious materials (4%). Twelve per cent of Uruguayan workers are exposed to tobacco smoke at least sometimes. Across Central America, Guatemalan and Honduran workers report the highest levels of toxic and chemical exposure, while Costa Rican workers report the most frequent exposure to tobacco smoke (17%).

## Key findings on exposure to physical risks

The general description above confirms the importance and relevance of physical risks in the experience of work for a significant proportion of the workforce surveyed.

Results of the surveys confirm that physical risks are very frequent in all countries and regions surveyed and affect significant parts of the workforce. Posture-related risks are very common among the workforce: for example about half of workers (with the exception of China for which data are not available) are exposed to repetitive hand or arm movements. About one in five is exposed to high temperatures. Similar proportions are recorded for low temperatures and noise. There are important variations between countries and regions in relation to exposure to tobacco, suggesting that efforts to ban tobacco in workplaces can be effective.

The same occupations across economies of different types experience high levels of exposure to these risks: craft workers; plant and machine operators, agricultural workers, and domestic workers. Workers in the construction, manufacturing, agriculture and transport, and health and hospitality sectors, accumulate exposure to these risks in combination. Informal workers and workers in rural areas may be at higher risks of exposure.

Men report, on average, higher exposure to physical risks than women, reflecting their greater presence in occupations exposed to greater physical demands, such as construction and transport. Women's greater representation in health means, however, that they are more likely to lift patients. Men and women report similar levels of exposure to repetitive hand or arm movements, a risk that is very frequent across all countries and regions under investigation. Whereas in Europe, older workers report less exposure to physical risks, this is not necessarily the case in other parts of the world, for example in the Republic of Korea. There is variety on exposure to these risks for part-time workers and by employment status and contracts, suggesting that risk protection related to employment status can be implemented and managed in different ways.

The surveys under investigation contain other indicators on exposure to physical risks, physical conditions, prevention practices at the workplace and related subjects. As their cross-survey comparability is limited, these have not been covered in this section.

From a methodological perspective, a possible follow-up to this work might consist of a comparative analysis of the coverage of physical conditions and physical demands questions:

- mapping systematically all questions and concepts that are being investigated in the surveys under consideration
- examining critically how men and women's risks are covered and might need to be reviewed
- developing common modules of questions to capture information on the topic

## Work intensity

This section deals with the topic of work demands in the job. If the workload is very high, if the job absorbs too much mental and physical energy, or if the job requires juggling various demands, it becomes difficult to perform tasks in the most effective and healthy way.

Although work that is too undemanding can be a source of problems, research has found that excessively demanding work is associated with an increased risk of serious ill health. Intense work is a key component of most work-related stress models. In both the ‘demand-control’ model of occupational stress (Karasek, 1979; Karasek and Theorell, 1992) and the ‘Effort-reward imbalance model’ (Siegrist, 1996), the level of demands is examined in conjunction with other important dimensions of work. Numerous epidemiological studies have demonstrated that a high level of demands in itself is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disease and depression. This is especially the case when combined with limited decision latitude (a dimension included in the skills and discretion index) and limited job support (included in the social environment index).

Moreover, from an organisation’s perspective, work intensity is not necessarily linked to better performance. Working in haste does not necessarily correspond to working in an effective way, particularly when combined with a downsized workforce, and can undermine the beneficial effects of technical progress and result in poor implementation of tasks, delays, poor communication, coordination failure and in reduced quality of outputs. High work intensity, even if experienced pleasantly at times as exciting and rewarding, can therefore be considered as a negative contribution to job quality.

Work intensity is difficult to measure. Most surveys include both objective measures such as the type and number of pace determinants and subjective measures (self-assessment by workers).

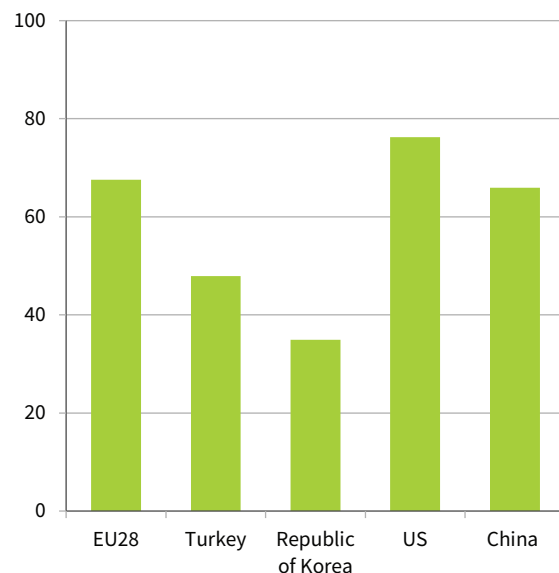
### Pace determinants and interdependency

A key element of job design is the pace or the rate at which people carry out their work. Several types of constraints can affect this: demands from clients, performance targets, the speed of an automated machine or system, direct demands from a supervisor, and colleagues. These pace-of-work determinants are also important from a work organisation and task analysis perspective. As companies have become more flexible in their production and become more reactive to customer demands over time, the balance between ‘machine’ and ‘human control’ over the rhythm and performance of work activity has changed. This is the case whether the control is top-down and exercised by the manager, or more horizontal and performed by

colleagues – who are often in a co-dependency situation for the performance of their own work.

In most countries covered, customers (defined broadly to include patients, students, and the public) have become the first pace determinant for more than half of the workers (68% of workers in the EU, 66% in China and 48% in Turkey, but 35% in the Republic of Korea – see Figure 10). In the US, the question is worded differently, as respondents are asked to quantify direct demands from clients and direct control of boss or client. There again, the direct demands of clients are the first pace determinant for an overwhelming majority of workers (76%). This is also true in Argentina, where responses to the question on key pace determinant (only one option is possible) show that 36% recognise external demand as the main pace determinant.

**Figure 10: Incidence of direct demands from people, by country or region (%)**



**Note:** Item is dichotomous for all countries, proportion indicates ‘yes’.

Internal coordination by colleagues or manager is the second most important pace determinant: horizontal coordination (that is with colleagues) comes first in China and Turkey (in both cases, 45%) and the EU (39%); vertical coordination (that is from the manager) comes first in the Republic of Korea (32%). In the US, horizontal coordination is slightly more often reported (55%) than vertical coordination (52%).

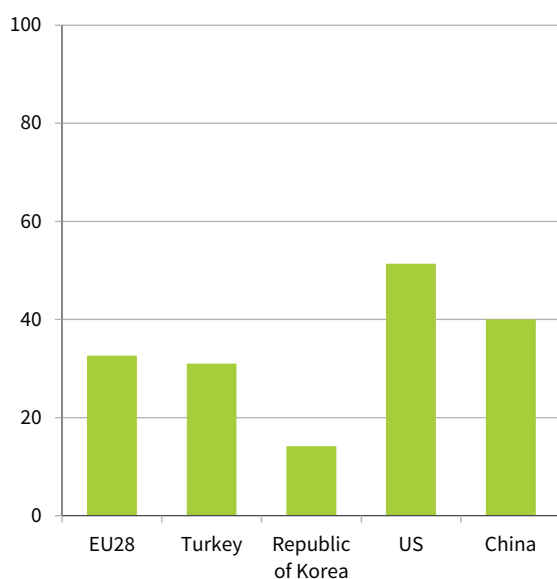
The pace of work being determined by numerical production or performance targets comes next: 44% of workers in the US, 42% in Europe, 38% in China, 37% in Turkey and 16% in the Republic of Korea report such a dependency.

Finally, work pace determined by the automatic speed of a machine or movement of a product is reported by 25% of workers in the US, 17% in China, 30% in Turkey, 18% in the EU and 8% in Korea.

In Uruguay, workers report being exposed to one pace-of-work determinant, at least sometimes in their work, with 65% reporting it as externally set deadlines, 57% stating it is production targets, 54% stating it is demands from their supervisor and 41% stating it is dependent on the automatic speed of a machine or movement of a product. Overall one-quarter of workers report being exposed to all four pace determinants, at least sometimes in their work, with the greatest exposure found among construction workers, where 43% report exposure to all four at least sometimes.

The number of pace-of-work determinants, and their interdependency, are considered an objective indicator of work intensity. The higher the number of pace determinants, the higher the likelihood that workers need to juggle various pace constraints at the same time. In the EU, 33% of workers report interdependency – that is having at least three pace-of-work determinants. The figure is 40% in China, 51% in the US and 14% in the Republic of Korea (Figure 11). Many studies have analysed the effects of having multiple pace determinants on work intensity. They can lead to conflicting demands (between the extra time needed to provide quality service to the clients and orders from a manager to go faster) and a deterioration of other working conditions and the well-being of workers. Interdependency is more frequently experienced by those in elementary occupations, managers, craft workers and plant and machine operators.

**Figure 11: Incidence of three pace determinants, by country or region (%)**



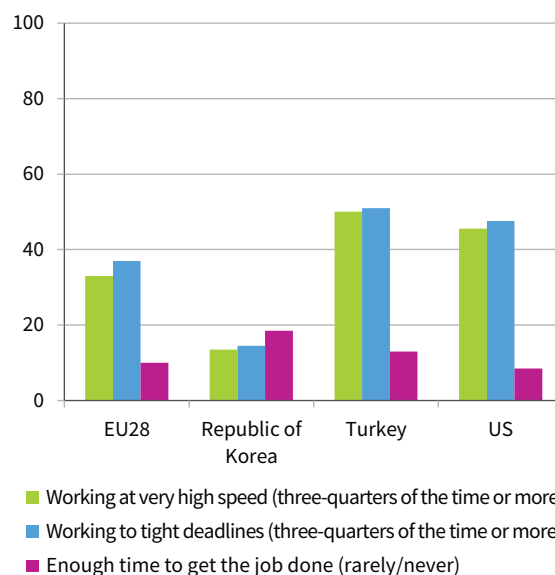
## Quantitative demands

Intensive work is prevalent (Figure 12) in Turkey, the US and Europe, with close to half of the workers in Turkey (51%), 48% in the US, and 37% of workers in the EU working to tight deadlines three-quarters of the time or more. Only 14% in the Republic of Korea do so. High-speed work follows a similar pattern and is experienced by 33–50% of workers in countries where national information is available: 50% in Turkey, 46% in the US, 33% in the EU work at high speed three-quarters of the time or more; but 14% of the workers in the Republic of Korea do so.

In Argentina, 16% of workers reported that they ‘always’ work at high speed, whereas 59% reported that they do sometimes and 25% stated that they never do.

In Uruguay, 51% of workers report being exposed, at least sometimes, to work rhythms that were ‘too high’. In Central America, there was variation among the countries and among workers reporting it was necessary to work intensively always or often, with half of workers in El Salvador stating this was the case, compared with 29% of workers in Guatemala, 28% in Honduras, 24% in Nicaragua and 12% in Costa Rica. In all countries in Central America, the incidence was higher among workers on temporary contracts.

**Figure 12: Quantitative demands, by country or region (%)**



**Note:** Presence of ‘working at very high speed’ and ‘working to tight deadlines’ three-quarters of the time or more, presence of enough time of getting the job done never or rarely.

In Europe, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and the US, men are more likely than women to work at high speed or to tight deadlines, though only slightly. On the other hand, slightly more women than men report never or rarely having enough time to do the job. The proportion of those reporting never or rarely having the time to do their job varies from 9% in the US, 10% in the EU, 14% in Turkey up to 19% in the Republic of Korea. In Chile, 10% of workers nationally report not having enough time to finish their work, this share however is 19% among women.

Frequent disruptive interruptions in the performance of one’s job are reported by 16% of all workers in the EU, 19% in the US, but 4% of workers in the Republic of Korea and Turkey.

Craft workers, plant and machine operators and workers in elementary occupations report the highest levels of quantitative demands. In all countries considered, high work intensity is most frequent in manufacturing, construction and transportation. In the EU, workers in the commerce and hospitality and health sectors report high levels of work intensity.

**Emotional demands**

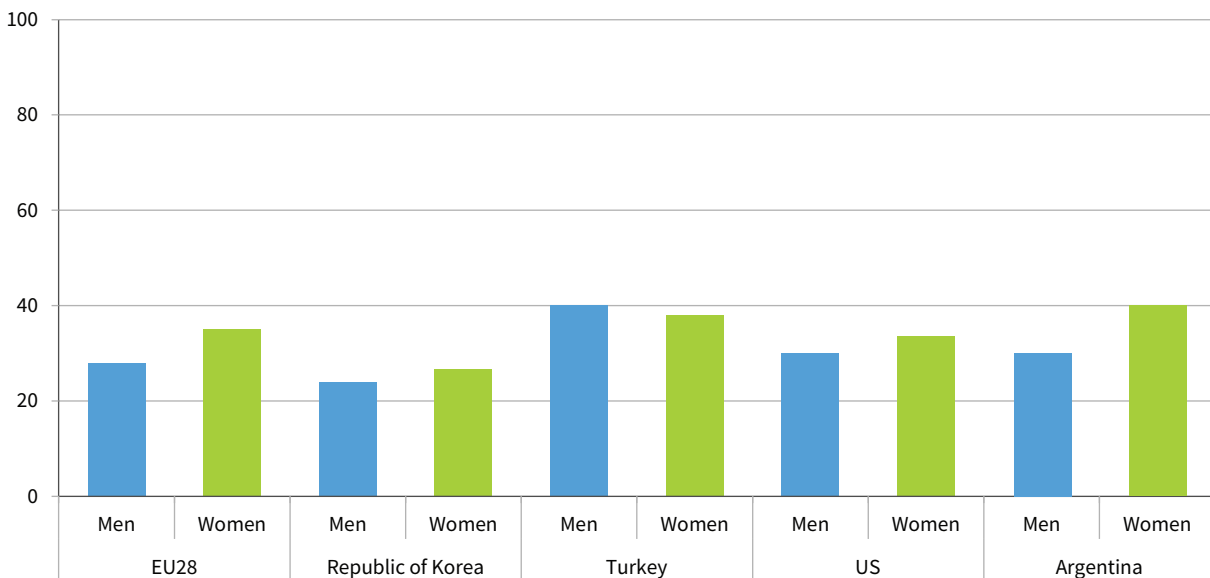
Work with a high level of social interactions, or caring work with high emotional demands, is in most cases rewarding. It can be a part of one’s professional identity and fulfil aspirations in work in relation to the importance of human relations at work, a desire for social usefulness and a desire to help people in difficulties or pain (Meda and Vendramin, 2017).

Emotional demands can be measured by the extent to which workers have to deal with emotionally charged subjects, hide their feelings or affect the feelings of others through their work. Typically, in their contact with clients, patients, customers and others, some workers hide their feelings (repressing fear or remaining friendly), are expected to manage emotions to meet the professional emotional standards set for them (for example limiting compassion or empathy). Workers may thus have to hide their emotions and work in emotionally disturbing situations. Emotional labour becomes a demand when emotions are regulated at work, prescribed, and standardised and the professional emotions that one is expected to display require work on one’s personal emotion.

It takes energy and requires effort to manage emotions. High emotional demands have been found to be a predictor of mental health problems, fatigue and burnout. In jobs where emotional demands represent a significant part of the activity, recruitment and retention have been identified as significant issues. Support measures can be developed at the individual level to equip workers with skills to meet these demands. Supportive leadership can also assist in reducing emotional strain. Work organisation measures can also be used to help workers develop individual and collective strategies to deal with the emotionally difficult aspects of their job.

Hiding or supressing feelings can result in psychological strain: between 25% of workers in the Republic of Korea and 39% in Turkey report that they must hide their feelings most or all of the time (Figure 13). In Argentina,

**Figure 13: Proportion of workers reporting having to hide feelings, by sex and country or region (%)**



**Note:** Selected answer categories ‘most of the time’ and ‘always’; selected answer categories for Argentina ‘always’ to ‘sometimes’ (three-point scale).

14% of workers report that they must always hide their feelings at work and 20% state they sometimes have to. In Uruguay, close to one-third of workers state that they sometimes have to hide their feelings at work, and nearly half report that they sometimes must ‘make others feel better’.

Another important work circumstance associated with emotional demand is handling angry clients or patients. Twenty per cent of workers in Turkey, 16% in the EU and 4% in the Republic of Korea report that they are handling angry clients or patients three-quarters of the time or more. Ten per cent in Europe and 13% in Turkey report being in emotionally demanding situations three-quarters of the time or more.

Emotional demands are more frequent in jobs that involve dealing with people, particularly those requiring care and giving them support. Service and sales workers in the EU, Turkey, the US, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay report emotional demands most frequently. Within this category, in Latin America, personal services, particularly domestic work, are most associated with hiding feelings, followed by service workers in commerce and hospitality. In addition, white-collar occupations, particularly managers, professionals, and technicians, report relatively high levels, as do workers in health, public administration, education and commerce. In all countries considered, women report a higher level of emotional demands than men.

## Key findings

Working hard can be challenging, stressful and costly, but it can also be stimulating, rewarding and financially beneficial. Yet the regular monitoring of work effort is

advisable as it can help understand the trends in workplace stress.

In most countries covered, customers have become the most important pace setter for more than half of the workers. Internal coordination by colleagues or managers comes second, with different country rankings, suggesting different cultures in work organisation. Numerical production or performance targets comes next, followed by the automatic speed of a machine or movement of a product.

Working to tight deadlines and at high speed three-quarters of the time or more is quite prevalent in the US, Turkey, El Salvador and Uruguay, lower in Europe and less frequently again reported in Argentina and the Republic of Korea. A similar hierarchy is observed on most indicators considered. In Central America, there is variation among countries.

There are variations within countries about exposure to work intensity. For example, in Central America, the highest work intensity is observed among temporary workers. Whereas blue-collar workers report higher quantitative demands and higher interdependency, white-collar workers more frequently report emotional demands.

Subjective work intensity is measured in all the surveys considered, apart from China and is partly measured in Chile. There is information on pace determinants in all surveys apart from Chile (although this is in part collected using different questions). The issue of emotional demands at work is least covered in the surveys.

### Box 4: Working hours and work intensity: Is there a trade-off?

There are stark differences in the amount of time that workers put into their work both across and within countries. But is there a trade-off between longer working time and work intensity? Do workers working fewer hours have to work more intensively in order to compensate for devoting less time to work?

In fact, evidence from the EU, the US, and the Republic of Korea suggests an absence of such a trade-off, and instead points to a positive relationship between work intensity and working time.

**Table 1: Working time according to frequency of high-speed work**

		All the time	Almost all the time	Approximately three-quarters of the time	Approximately half of the time	Approximately one-quarter of the time	Almost never	Never
Average weekly hours	EU28	39.47	38.86	39.01	38.50	38.03	36.02	34.79
	US	40.33	41.21	41.39	38.20	37.09	37.10	30.66
	Republic of Korea	47.51	48.07	48.74	48.31	46.89	45.47	45.09

Some of these results can be explained by the attributes of specific occupational cultures. For example, in the EU, analysis by occupation confirms that executives, and to a lesser extent industrial and craft workers, have both long working hours and very intensive work.



But other explanations also include modern work organisation and technological changes. The rise of 'high-performance' management practices, particularly lean production, is associated with more intense work. This type of organisation displays strong learning dynamics and relies on employees' abilities to solve problems themselves. Work is embedded in numerous quantitative and organisational pace constraints and requires the adherence to strict quality standards, granting employees limited autonomy. Technology, in turn, is increasingly effort-biased, in the sense that greater productivity gains from technology are obtained by those workers who put in greater levels of intensive effort to adopt and to use it (Green, 2004). As the new technology spreads, so does work intensification (Green et al, 2013).

As a result, many modern workers are overworked. Work-related stress is the second most frequently reported work-related health problem in Europe (ILO, 2015a). Work-related problems were also a cause of at least 4% of suicides in the Republic of Korea (Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2015). Exposure to a stressful, emotional and tiring working environment is associated with a higher incidence of self-reported fatigue and burnout (Eurofound, 2018). If in the short run intensive, long working hours can temporarily raise productivity, the long-term consequences of generally long and intensive workdays are a cause for concern. They have the potential to ultimately depress productivity and to cause human and economic losses.

## Working time quality

There are only 24 hours in a day and 168 in a week. The allocation of this available time to work, caring, leisure, volunteering and personal time is central to workers' well-being and to the development of society. Social policies, working time regimes and gender norms, in which women continue to bear the main part of domestic work, shape the interactions of households and the labour market. At the same time, the social organisation of households is changing. The growing service economy offers more employment options, particularly for women as 'domestic' services are marketised and childcare and food can be bought. With more workers in the labour force, especially women, increasing numbers of people have to combine employment and caring responsibilities. Working time is 'gendered' in the sense that men's and women's circumstances – and possibly preferences – for working hours are shaped and framed differently.

International competition, accelerating technological change, just-in-time scheduling, the rise of the service then knowledge economy are regarded as key forces that have changed the organisation of paid work and increased flexibility, blurring the frontiers between work and non-work.

Production processes, regulations on opening hours, and also certain occupations, for example in health and social work but also in retail, are associated with the performance of work at 'atypical' or 'asocial' working hours.

More recent developments, with new work arrangements in the 'gig economy' or 'crowdwork' further challenge our traditional models of work, as they facilitate the combination of jobs and the development of multiple work activities, combined in some cases with a fragmentation of jobs into smaller sets of tasks with less working time predictability (Berg et al, 2018).

Historically, considerable attention has been paid to working time and it has been regulated with a view to ensuring the protection of workers. The main focus of regulation has been on the duration of working time. The notion of working time quality goes beyond this, however. It includes also atypical working time, such as working at night or weekends (also referred to as asocial hours) and shift work, control of working time arrangements and advance notice of changes to working time (predictability), as well as the degree of flexibility in working time available to and required of workers.

Working time – its duration, organisation, and predictability – is important for job quality in two ways. On the one hand, working time plays a role in workers' health and well-being. For example, the extent to which workers are exposed to workplace risks increases with the duration of work, while the availability of sufficient periods for rest is crucial for a proper recovery. On the other hand, a good fit between working time and non-working time throughout the life course is essential for workers to be able to work and to continue working. A good fit can be promoted through adapting both the duration and the organisation of working time to the needs of the organisation and the individual. Today, increasingly flexible and non-standard working time arrangements are being developed with regards to starting and finishing times, rest periods, on-call time etc.

### Duration

Although paid working hours, particularly in the more developed countries, have declined dramatically during the past 100 years, long working hours remain a policy concern (ILO, 2015b). Traditionally, countries have regulations that set limits for working hours per week and per day. They often include provisions for exceptions and collective or individual derogations. Self-employed people are usually not covered by these regulations.

The decline over time of working hours is the result of both an increase in part-time work and of a collective reduction in working hours, as well as a reduction in the proportion of the self-employed in a number of economies.

From a health perspective, working long hours systematically over time increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases, depression, anxiety and sleep disorders (Bannai and Tamakoshi, 2014; Kivimäki et al, 2015). In extreme cases, it increases the risk of 'karoshi', a Japanese term for death caused by overwork or job-related exhaustion. It also makes reconciling work with other parts of life more difficult. Long working hours are also discussed in the literature with regard to their impact on personal relationships and home life including their leisure time, personal relationships 'marital quality' and less time with children.

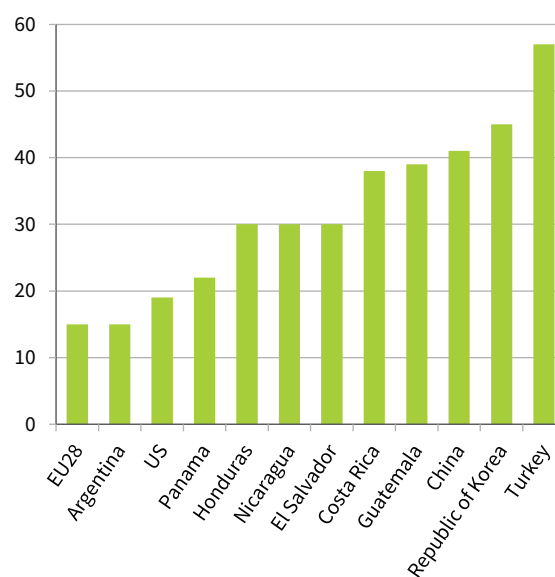
Long working hours and working days are also associated with higher injury risks, attention lapses and a higher risk of accidents, which may have consequences for patients, passengers or other members of the public (ILO, 2015a).

Long working weeks (defined as 48 hours and more) remain frequent. Shares of workers reporting long weekly hours range from 15% of workers in the EU, 15% of employees (in registered firms) in Argentina, 19% of workers in the US, 22% in Panama, 30% in Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador, almost 40% in Costa Rica and Guatemala, 41% of workers in the six surveyed metropolitan areas of China, 45% of workers in the Republic of Korea, and up to 57% of workers in Turkey (Figure 14). In Uruguay, 47% of workers reported working over 40 hours per week.

In all countries included in this report, men work longer (paid) working hours than women. In relation to working 48 hours a week or more the figures are clear: 61% of men in Turkey compared with nearly half of women workers; in Chile, 59% of men and 45% of women; in the Republic of Korea, 50% of men and 39% of women; in Costa Rica, 41% of men and 25% of women; in the EU, 21% of men and 9% of women.

The difference in long working hours between men and women in paid work is a reflection of the unequal burden of domestic and family responsibilities that women shoulder. According to the ILO (2018a), across the world, without exception, women perform more than three-quarters of the total amount of unpaid care work, 3.2 times more than men. For this reason, the findings in some Central American countries are particularly troubling, as women experience longer working hours in both paid and unpaid work. In Nicaragua and Honduras, long work weeks are reported by more than one in three women, and at rates that are seven and ten percentage points higher than for men, respectively. In Guatemala, men work long weeks at almost the same rate (40%) as women (39%).

**Figure 14: Incidence of working over 48 hours, by country or region (%)**



**Note:** Data for China limited to the six metropolitan areas covered by the CULS 4; data for Argentina limited to employees in registered firms.

## Box 5: Unpaid care work

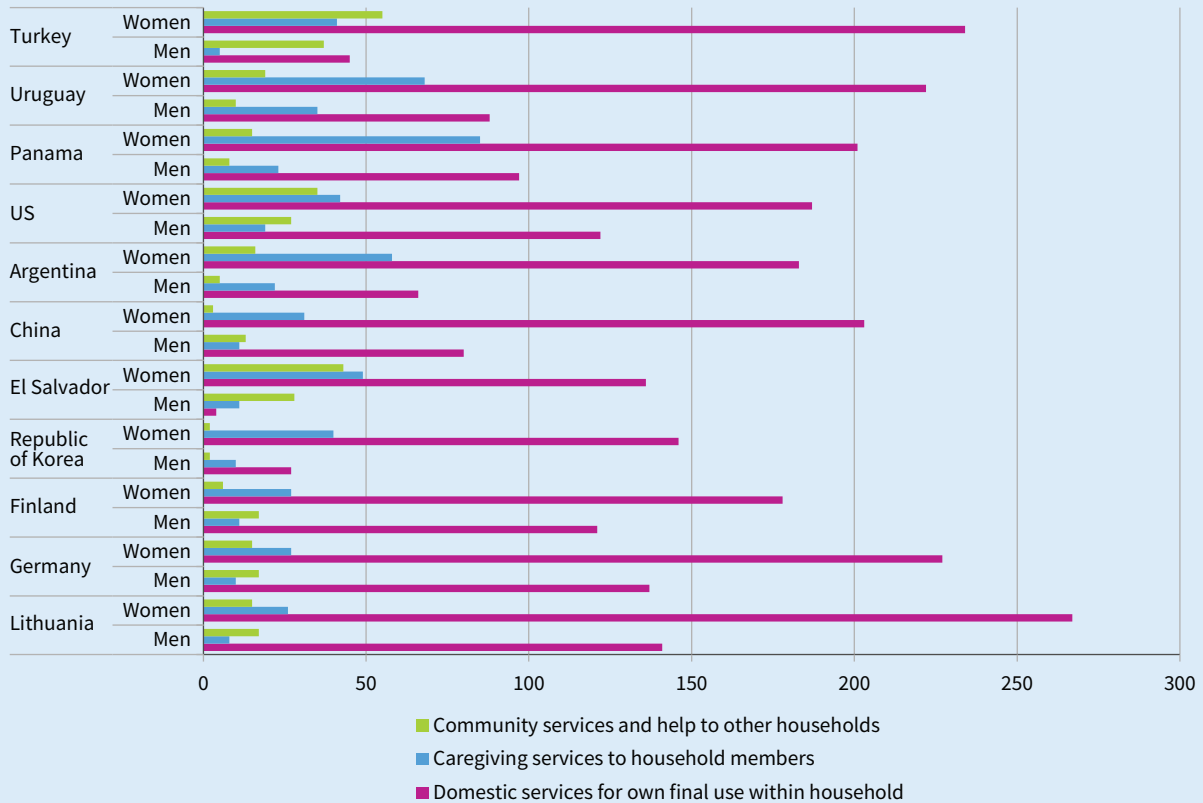
While in most countries men report longer hours of paid work compared with women, when hours of unpaid work (caregiving, domestic activities and community activities) are tallied, then across the world, without exception, women work longer hours than men. Moreover, the hours devoted to unpaid work affect the amount of paid work that women are available to carry out.

Estimates based on time-use data on both paid work and unpaid care work show that time spent in unpaid care work, own-use provision of services accounted for 16.4 billion hours per day globally, with women contributing 76.2 per cent of the total (ILO, 2018a).

In the countries considered in this report with available data, this ranges from 330 minutes per day (or nearly a quarter of the 24-hour day) for Turkey, to 188 minutes per day in the Republic of Korea. Within the EU, the smallest amount of time spent on unpaid care by women is found in Finland (211 minutes), and the largest in Lithuania (308 minutes), with Germany having the median value (269 minutes).

In contrast, men’s unpaid care work ranges from 43 minutes in El Salvador to 168 minutes in the US (Figure 15). On average, men spent 108 minutes in unpaid care work while women spent 266 minutes, or 2.4 times more than men. (Total minutes are for all three categories of unpaid work.)

**Figure 15: Minutes per day spent in the three main categories of unpaid care work, based on primary activity, by sex, latest year**



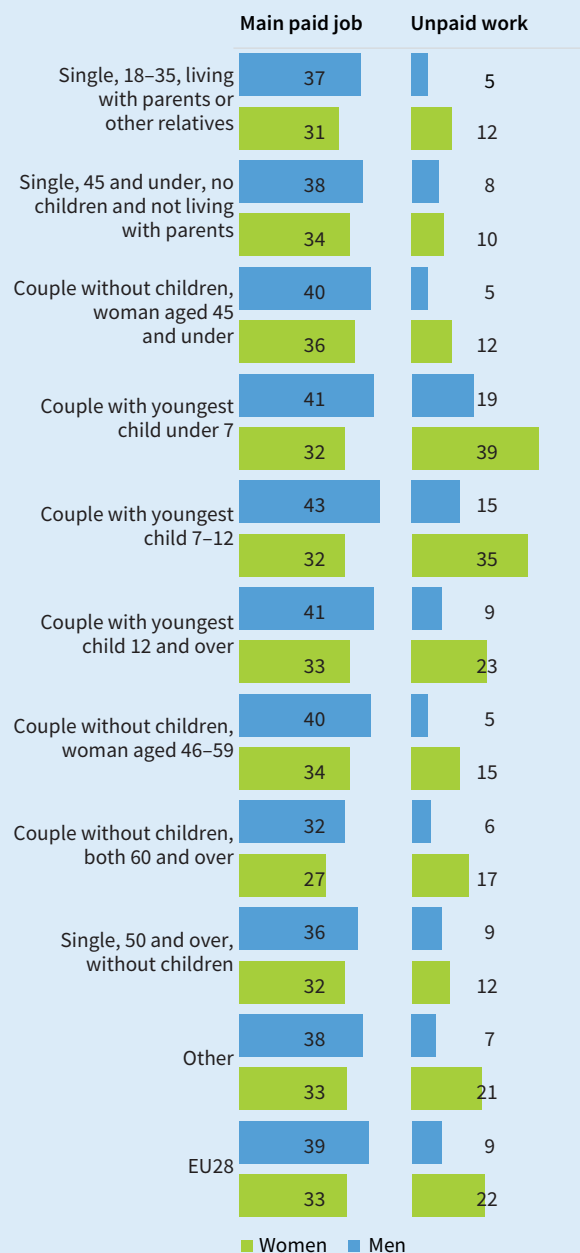
**Note:** Age 15 years and older.  
**Source:** ILO (2018a).

Disparities in the gendered division of unpaid care work and paid work are the result of deeply rooted inequalities based on gender roles, income, age, education and place of residence. Unpaid care work is particularly substantial and strenuous for women and children with low income and education, living in lower-income countries, in rural areas, and who lack basic services and infrastructure, including adequate access to a water supply, sanitation, financial services, electricity, roads, safe transportation, time-saving technology, education, healthcare and other social protection and care policies and services. Without exception, the amount of time dedicated by women to unpaid care work increases markedly with the presence of young children in a household. Women continue to perform the largest share of childcare – on average, three times more than men. This results in what can be termed a ‘motherhood employment penalty’, which is found consistently across all regions for women living with young children and is particularly marked in middle-income countries.

Cultural norms that influence the gender division of labour are additional important factors. The ‘men as breadwinners’, ‘women as caregivers’ model remains the dominant model of gender relations globally. This is despite high or rising rates of labour market participation by women. Consequently, women who work for pay are commonly said to work a ‘second shift’ or experience a ‘double day’, one at home and one at work. At the same time, men’s unpaid care work tends typically to concentrate on ‘masculine’ activities, such as house repairs when their total share of unpaid care work is low.



**Figure 16: Paid and unpaid working time, by household composition and sex (hours per week), EU28**



Source: EWCS

As a result of all these factors, women's availability for paid employment is constrained, as is the quality of employment they can access, thus reinforcing gender gaps in paid work.

Building on data available only in the EWCS, it is possible to describe how men and women in different stages of their life allocate their time to paid and unpaid work. Both men and women spend more time on unpaid work when there are children in the household, but this expansion of unpaid work is greater for women, hence further widening the divide between the different time use of men and women. In addition, the characteristics of the household – such as young single earner living with parents, or a couple with young children – affect the pattern of time use.

Throughout the life course, the needs of workers to devote time to private issues may become more intense at particular times. This can be related to care and health issues, for themselves, their parents, children, grandchildren and other dependants. Whether these time needs are catered for influences the chance for workers to engage in and keep on being engaged in work. As these time needs can change throughout a worker's life, transitions are an important tool.

In order to support work–life balance, it is important to collect data on time use linked to the performance of multiple roles in life, as a citizen, worker, member of a household, parent, child, carer, volunteer and so on.

Industry, agriculture, construction, transport and commerce and hospitality are the sectors with the highest incidences of long working weeks and hours. Managers and farmers also frequently report long hours, long days and less recovery time. In China, information on hukou status revealed significant differences, with 43% of employees with migrant hukou status compared with 26% of employees that are local residents, reporting working more than 48 hours per week on average.

Long days (over 10 hours) at least once a month are quite common for over one-third of workers in the countries included in this report: 32% work long working days (10 hours a day or more) in the EU, 36% in Turkey, 44% in Korea, and 55% in the US. Men work long working days (over 10 hours) more frequently than women: for example, in Uruguay, 42% of men and 29% of women report working long days at least once a month. Workers in part-time employment experience long working days to a lesser extent than full-time

workers, though in some countries, such as Uruguay, about one-fifth of part-timers (17%) report working long days at least once a month. In Turkey 19% of workers report not having an 11-hour recovery period between two working periods in the past month. In the EU, the figure is 23%. Men experience it more frequently than women, with a ratio of 1:5 between men and women.

In most countries considered, the self-employed experience long working days and long weekly working hours significantly more frequently than others. For example, in Uruguay, this is the case for 51% of the self-employed with employees. In European countries (where data are available) and Turkey, the self-employed also more frequently report not having a sufficient recovery period between two working days. On the other hand, in countries with large shares of the self-employed, such as in Central America, large shares of workers also report having the flexibility to set their working time.

### Atypical working time

In certain situations (such as emergency services, or continuous production systems), work is performed at times commonly reserved for other parts of life, and work at night, work at weekends and in the evenings arises. While 'atypical' work schedules had traditionally been concentrated in the manufacturing sector, the expansion of operating hours in the services sector and the increased use of communication technologies have increased the demand for atypical working hours. Atypical working hours are more frequent in transport, agriculture, health services, commerce and hospitality.

Research has shown that working evenings, nights, or on weekends can have a negative impact on the worker's physical and psychological health and well-being and can give rise to a reduction in the quality and quantity of sleep, fatigue, anxiety, depression, cardiovascular effects, gastrointestinal disorders, increased risk of abortion, low birth rate and prematurity, breast cancers and increased risk of obesity and diabetes. Night work is also associated with an increased rate of accidents (especially but not exclusively at night) and can lead to fluctuations of alertness and vigilance which can be important contributing factors to instances of human error and lead to poorer performance and to injuries and work accidents (Costa, 2003). There is a high level of inter-individual variability in (long-term) tolerance to shift work. There are numerous ways to organise shift systems with different effects on workers' health.

Atypical working time has consequences for social and family life, due to the mismatch between atypical workers' working times and the time when social activities take place. Shift work may also interfere with the coordination of family timetables, depending on the family composition, gender roles, personal duties (homework, housework) and the availability of supporting services (such as shop hours, transportation,

child and elder-care services). It can thus have a negative influence on marital relationships, parental roles and the children's education.

Still, some workers may welcome non-standard hours. More generally, the jobs provide additional income sources and the atypical scheduling may not be a drawback for those workers who have fewer constraints in their personal lives.

Between 10% and 20% of workers in most countries carry out night work (19% in the EU, 16% in Turkey, 13% in the Republic of Korea, 11% in Argentina, and 30% in the US). In Uruguay, 28% work at night at least once a month.

Similar proportions work shifts (21% in Europe, 38% in the US, 11% in Turkey, 9% in the Republic of Korea and 12% in Argentina). In the Republic of Korea, Europe and Turkey, the most frequent type of shift is alternating/rotating shifts which are practised by about half of the shift workers. This form of shift work, more frequently practised by women, can be difficult to combine with other life demands, particularly when combined with low predictability.

In Argentina, about one in three workers has only one day off per week. More than half of the respondents in the EU and the Republic of Korea and 78% of workers in Turkey report working at least one Saturday per month. About one-third of workers in the EU and the Republic of Korea and 44% in Turkey report working at least one Sunday per month. Almost 60% of Uruguayan workers work weekends at least once a month. In Chile, over 60% of workers work at least one hour on Saturday or Sunday. Weekend work is quite frequent among all occupational groups but is practised more frequently by farmers, service and sales workers, as well as managers.

### Working time arrangements

Discretion and predictability over working time arrangements is a positive resource for workers, as it allows them to find the best compromise between their work duties and their private circumstances and preferences. From an enterprise perspective, they are a key instrument to coordinate work.

Men and women often face a similar level of control over working time arrangements.

In the Republic of Korea, Europe and Turkey for about 60% of workers, working time arrangements are set by their companies with no possibility for change. Half of workers in China in large companies and SMEs have their working time arrangements set by their companies with no possibility for change. In the US, this was the case for just over one in three workers. Overall, workers in SMEs have the least amount of flexibility (Figure 17). Among occupations, plant and machine operators, craft workers, elementary occupations and services and sales workers report the least flexibility. In Central America, schedules set by enterprises occur most often in

Figure 17: Working time arrangements, by enterprise size and country or region (%)



Note: In China, micro is defined as 1-7 employees and SME is defined as 8-249 employees.

Panama and Costa Rica (40% and 28% of all workers, respectively), where the rates of formal wage employment are also among the highest.

Around ten percent of workers can choose between different schedules offered by their company (fewer in smaller enterprises) but up to 17% in large companies in the US. Setting one's own working time arrangements is rare in all countries and regions considered (around 5%). It is much more frequent in micro firms (30% or more)

About 40% in the US can adapt their working hours; this possibility is open to 19% of workers in the EU, and is far less frequent for Korean (6%) and Turkish workers (4%). In Central America, flexibility of hours as a business option ranges from 8% of workers in Honduras to 24% in Panama. Working hours do not vary for 69% of workers in the EU, 74% in the Republic of Korea and 80% in Turkey, but for only 32% in the US.

For most workers, short notice of changes in working hours can be difficult to accommodate: however a significant minority of workers (13% in the EU, 8% in Turkey) are informed of changes in their working time arrangements either on the day or the day before. Such changes are more frequent for workers in construction, transport and health, as well as plant and machine operators, craft workers and managers.

Flexibility, or lack thereof, is an important feature of working conditions with far-reaching consequences for many conditions of work, as well as personal lives.

Being able to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters is an example of employee-friendly flexibility which is assessed extremely positively by workers and can be accommodated in many cases by employers.

There are nonetheless important gaps among countries. Over 70% of workers in the Republic of Korea report that it is very easy for them to arrange to take an hour off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters; this is the case for one-quarter of workers in the US and the EU, and 36% in Turkey. In Chile, almost one-quarter of workers report that they have difficulty taking time off during the day for medical reasons, and 36% find it hard to ask for or take a day off for personal or family reasons. In Chile, workers with the highest level of education find it easiest to take time off work for such reasons.

On the other hand, working in one's free time to meet work demands is (from the perspective of the employee) more negative, as it can disrupt personal and family lives. In many cases, it equates to work in addition to the work performed on the employers' premises (or elsewhere during working hours), and represents carrying out tasks associated with work during free time or holidays. In the EU (22%), the Republic of Korea (30%), Turkey (24%) and the US,<sup>7</sup> a significant proportion of workers report that they work in their free time to meet work demands. This is more frequent for agricultural workers, and for managers and professionals who can bring their work home. By sector, it is most frequent in education and agriculture.

<sup>7</sup> 67% of workers in the US report working in their free time once a week or every day.

## Work–life balance and working time

Working hours, but also the way working time is organised, and the extent to which workers can balance their working hours with other commitments, have a direct bearing on worker well-being and work–life balance. Moreover, they can affect workers' health, including the incidence of work-related accidents. To establish the linkages, a series of regression analyses was performed, separately for each country included in this report. Dependent variables reflected self-reported mental and physical health, work–life balance, and well-being. Those were related to the number of hours worked and various working time arrangements, isolating their effect from individual characteristics and from other working conditions. The analysis revealed stark uniform patterns: in all of the considered countries, shorter hours have unambiguously positive statistically significant relationships with better work–life balance, as well as with work satisfaction, and often with better health outcomes.

Furthermore, the strongest predictors of poor work–life balance for Korean and European workers are excessive hours, atypical schedules (including night work and work on weekends) and difficulty in taking an hour off during work hours. Positive correlates with work–life balance include schedule regularity and worker input regarding schedules, such as the ability to choose between several fixed working schedules determined by the enterprise, or the ability to adopt working hours within specified limits. Also, those who never work in their free time, as opposed to those who always work in their free time, have the highest likelihood of reporting better work–life balance. Workers perceiving higher health and safety risks attributable to their jobs are also those working excessive hours and experiencing night work.

In the US, working from home correlates with greater work–life balance. Long hours and higher job intensity negatively correlate with levels of satisfaction. Higher incidences of scheduling irregularities and shift work, such as alternating and rotating shifts are also factors contributing to poor work–life balance for workers in the US. Those working in excess of 40 hours and at nights also have a poorer work–life balance compared to others.

In China, workers satisfied with their working time are more likely to have a better work–life balance, and workers satisfied with their work intensity experience fewer work–family conflicts.

In Chile, workers working 35 to over 48 hours per week (and especially those over 48 hours) plus those working Saturdays or Sundays, have the lowest propensity to be able to do other things than work and to feel rested. Night work is particularly detrimental to the reported feeling of tiredness. On the other hand, working shifts and ease in taking time off correlated with greater work–life balance.

For Uruguayan workers, weekend work correlates with difficulty in achieving work–life balance, while working less than 30 hours per week correlates with greater ease in reconciling family and work commitments. Those working in excess of 40 hours per week, on weekends, and on call were less likely to report better propensity to have a life that is satisfactory and relaxed. Higher mental and physical health risks caused by their work are reported by workers who regularly work at nights.

In Argentina, one of the factors that has a significant relevance for accidents and work-related diseases is working hours: all workers reporting over 35 hours of work have higher risks; the risks are particularly severe for those reporting over 60 hours of work per week.

In addition to these findings, in almost all countries surveyed women are more likely to experience work–life conflicts.

Worse work–life balance of women compared to men is found in China, the Republic of Korea, the US, Central America, and Chile. In Turkey, workers with children have the hardest time reconciling work with family commitments.

## Key findings

Despite a secular decline in working hours due to collective and individual forms of working time reduction, long working weeks, long working days and not having an 11-hour recovery period between two working days remain quite frequent.

Atypical working hours are quite common for a significant proportion of the population. Weekend work, particularly Saturday work, is the most frequent form of atypical work and regulation of shop opening hours is an important determinant of this. Between 10% and 40% of workers work shifts. Between 10% and 20% work at night.

In most countries, companies set working time arrangements and these do not change. However up to 15% report changes in their working hours on the day or the day before.

Flexibility granted to workers to take a few hours off to accommodate personal needs is quite frequent, although there are important country differences. On the other hand, about one-quarter of workers work during their free time. There are very important variations between countries and within countries in this regard. Regulation and enterprise policies and agreements can make a difference to this.

These findings clearly show that working time and its quality is more than the duration of working hours. The picture suggested by the surveys is that of an increased diversification of working time experiences. With its focus on job quality, the issue of short working hours has not been covered by this analysis. Future analysis of the surveys could assess whether specific combinations

of working time characteristics are conducive to higher job quality and whether or not some groups of workers report systematic differences or not. Furthermore; as a key determinant of working hours is the workload, the allocation of a manageable workload and mechanisms to address potential overload are also of relevance.

## The social environment

A short illustration of the importance of social relations for workers is that when people are asked about their work, they will very quickly say whether there is a good atmosphere at work and what they think of their colleagues. This judgement matters for more than conversational purposes. Being integrated and feeling accepted in a work community is a critical factor for the construction of mental health at work (Bodier and Wolff, 2018). Work provides considerable opportunities for interacting with other members of society. These interactions are crucial for the individual's feeling of integration, for learning and for developing a positive organisational culture that can help enterprise performance. The quality of the social environment is an important aspect of job quality.

Workplaces that provide workers with support and help uncover the best of their skills and talent are not only the ones where workers feel more motivated and less stressed, they are also the ones where workers are more productive. Good trust established between managers and workers and positive organisational culture are particularly conducive to worker commitment, to preservation and transmission of in-house knowledge and to innovation. They also help to ensure worker retention, thereby limiting costly turnover.

Effective managers ensure collective performance at work, extract synergies from the work teams, and provide guidance and leadership. They have a leading role to play in determining the social climate at work. Over the last century, development of a positive workplace culture with the aim of improving workplace well-being and worker output has become the subject of several disciplines, ranging from psychology to human resource management.

Conversely, adverse social behaviour at the workplace, including bullying, harassment, and violence, results in decreased work motivation, absenteeism and resignations, and may also leave long-lasting individual scars. Workplaces may give rise to situations where power imbalances are abused, be it between workers and management, between senior and junior colleagues, or between workers and clients (Einarsen, 2005). Violence at work can take different forms: physical, psychological and sexual. It can be down to one perpetrator, or the results of a group 'ganging up' on a target. Bullying is not a one-off event, but rather the result of systematic and repetitive incidents when one or more of the workers or managers

is repeatedly and deliberately abused, threatened and or humiliated in circumstances related to their work. Individual acts pertaining to 'mobbing' may look trivial to third parties and victims may be accused of overreacting and advised not to be upset by it. It is their repetition, at least once a week and their occurrence over six months or longer (Leymann, 1990) that cause considerable problems.

An extreme form of adverse social behaviour in the workplace – sexual violence – is a form of sex discrimination that can combine elements of physical and psychological violence and can include a range of behaviours, such as unwanted comments or advances, 'jokes', brief physical contact and sexual assault (ILO, 2017b). Antisocial behaviour is strongly intertwined with gender, and with the traditional balance of power favouring men (Holmes and Flood, 2013). In particular, uptake of jobs by women, especially in traditionally male-dominated industries, can distort existing power relations (Ness, 2012), leading some men to reassert their power through sexual harassment (McLaughlin et al, 2012). Reinforcing of gender roles may also be carried out against non-gender-conforming men.

Violence, and more strongly psychological violence, is a key risk factor for depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and absence from work. Psychological and psychosomatic reactions become more severe and prominent with persistent exposure (Nielsen et al, 2016).

Ensuring safe and productive workplaces has been a long-standing preoccupation of the ILO and is included as part of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2018, the ILO's International Labour Conference initiated a standard-setting exercise on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, with a view to adopting a Convention and Recommendation on the topic at the 109th session of the International Labour Conference in 2019 (ILO 2017a, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d).

It is also in this spirit that the EWCS measures the quality of the social environment in an array of questions, including both positive and negative aspects of the social environment at the workplace. On the one hand, the survey includes questions about social support from managers and colleagues and management quality, such as whether the immediate supervisor: respects the worker as a person; gives praise and recognition for a good job; is successful in getting people to work together; is helpful in getting the job done; provides useful feedback; and encourages and supports development. On the other hand, the survey includes questions about adverse social behaviour experienced in the workplace in the month preceding the survey, such as verbal abuse, exposure to unwanted sexual attention, exposure to threats, exposure to



humiliating behaviours; and adverse social behaviour experienced in the last 12 months, including exposure to physical violence, to sexual harassment, or to bullying. These questions are administered in all countries covered by the EWCS, including Turkey.

The Korean, Chinese, and the US surveys include many of the same questions. The surveys from Latin America have the same or similar questions, making it possible to draw general common lines of comparison. Some countries also included additional questions. For example, the Uruguayan survey asked whether workers would classify their relationships with their managers, co-workers or clients as ambiguous, competitive, non-agreeable, untrusting, or conflict-ridden. In Central America, additional questions included the experience of salary reductions as a form of exercising pressure. In Chile, there is a separate question on whether workers experienced colleagues refusing to speak to them. The Argentinian survey also asked whether workers experienced dismissal threats.

### Management quality

Managers play an important role in relation to job quality and employee commitment. Their mission is to ensure that the collective performance of work produces the expected outcomes. Their position is pivotal as they relay, contribute to and balance ‘top down’ decisions with ‘bottom up’ contributions from their teams. They play a leading role in framing the social climate at work. Managers also have to oversee the implementation of job quality practices. Managers’ lack of politeness, respect and attention is strongly negatively perceived by subordinates and worse again is misuse or, in extreme cases, abuse of this authority.

The quality of leadership has an impact on mental health at work (Kuoppala et al, 2008) including burnout (Borritz et al, 2005; Munir et al, 2010) and the occurrence of cardiovascular diseases (Nyberg et al, 2009).

Most workers report relatively good levels of management quality. In the EU, around 70% believe that their immediate supervisors are successful in getting people to work together, provide useful feedback, are helpful in getting the job done, encourage and support workers’ development, and give praise and recognition for doing a good job. Nearly identical responses are observed in the Republic of Korea (with rates varying from 63% to 75% but not all dimensions are measured in the KWCS<sup>8</sup>). Slightly higher rates are reported in the US (ranging from 73% to 79%).

Similarly, roughly two-thirds of workers had favourable opinions about their managers’ management skills in Chile. In Uruguay, 87% of workers felt that management was concerned about safety and security, but only two-thirds reported that management was worried about bullying, discrimination or the abuse of authority.

In addition, the vast majority of workers believe that their supervisors respect them as a person. This is the case with 89% of employees in the EU and Turkey, and 87% the US; and 84% of employees in the Republic of Korea. However, this still leaves about 10% or more of workers who do not feel respected by their managers.

Regarding the quality of management, men have a more favourable attitude towards the quality and ability of their managers than women. In the Republic of Korea the differences are: receiving feedback (77% for men and 73% for women); being respected as a person (85% and 84%); resolving conflicts (76% and 73%); planning and organising the work (79% and 75%). The discrepancy between men and women is mostly notable in respect of being encouraged to participate in important decisions; 67% of men answered positively on this, while only 58% of women did so. Differences in Europe between men and women on management quality are smaller.

Looking beyond the job level, it is interesting to assess how workers experience the social climate at their workplaces. Data from the EU, Turkey, and the US indicate that 60% (US), 70% (EU) and up to some 80% in Turkey state that work is distributed fairly and conflicts are resolved in a fair way.

### Social support

A considerable share of workers also report positive social support. This can take different forms: help in achieving some task; provision of moral support in challenging work situations; and friendly relationships. It can be provided by close colleagues (peers in the same or a similar activity) who work daily with the worker, or colleagues further away, or even outside one’s organisations. The community of colleagues can be unstructured and made up of interpersonal relationships, or more structured towards the achievement of common goals and building on a set of professional rules with common references on what ‘work well done’ consists of. Support from colleagues is reported by 87% of employees in Uruguay, 72% in the EU, 71% in China, and 69% in Turkey, but only 49% in the Republic of Korea.

<sup>8</sup> Results from the KWCS provide useful feedback 75.2%; respect as person 84.2%; resolving conflicts 74.5%; planning/organising work 77.3%; important decisions 63.3%. A number of EWCS items are not measured, such as: successful in getting people to work together; are helpful in getting the job done; encourage and support workers’ development; give praise and recognition for doing a good job.

Social support from managers matters for workers and can take different forms. This support is best when it is based on the 'real work' performed by subordinates rather than by a 'dashboard' representation of their activities, and when managers understand the real conditions under which their subordinates work. It is often neither compatible with a strict continuous control of workers' performance in their tasks, nor with having little relationship between manager and subordinates.

Support from management is less frequent than social support by colleagues in all countries, where data are available, apart from the Republic of Korea. Still the majority of employees report it: Uruguay (82% of employees), China (63%), the EU (59%), Republic of Korea (52%) and China (63%).

Gender differences with respect to social support are not reported systematically. For example, there is no gender gap in getting social support from colleagues or a manager in China. Slightly more women than men report getting social support from colleagues in the EU (72% for men and 70% for women) and in the Republic of Korea (51% and 48%). Slightly more women than men in the EU and the Republic of Korea reported social support from their managers. In Central America, however, men more often indicated that they felt supported by either their supervisor, or their co-workers, or characterised their personal relationships at work as positive.

In contrast, the differences are quite pronounced across age groups. In the EU, US, China and Uruguay, younger workers tend to get more social support from their supervisors and colleagues than older workers; yet at the same time, younger workers are also more likely to say that there was unfair treatment in the workplace (US). In the US, older workers are more critical of management quality.

There are important differences by sector and by occupation, although there is no universal ranking of occupations in terms of the best social environment across countries. Managers have quite a good level of support in the EU, Turkey, China, and the Republic of Korea, but not in the US, where managers give their own management particularly low marks on nearly all dimensions of quality. In Uruguay, workers in the construction and primary sectors feel most supported by their colleagues. On the other side of the spectrum, workers in elementary occupations and machine operators and assemblers, usually report the lowest levels of social support, whether from management or from colleagues, in the EU, Turkey, China, and the Republic of Korea.

Lastly, in China, the Republic of Korea and Chile, workers in larger enterprises report higher support and better management quality overall compared with smaller enterprises.

### Experience of adverse social behaviour at the workplace

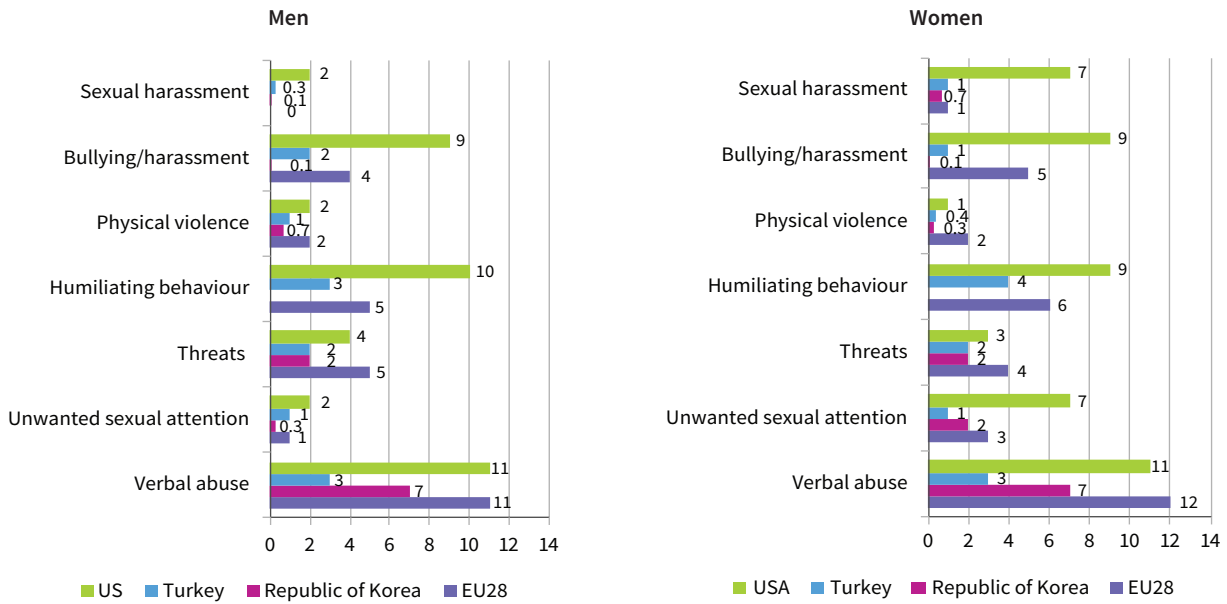
Violence at work is a major risk factor for mental depression and anxiety. It is also associated with absence from work and intention to quit. Causes of violence, and in particular bullying at work, are multiple; numerous research projects have demonstrated how certain organisational factors increase the risk of such phenomena: for example restructuring, reorganisation, and conflicts with management and colleagues on how best to do work.

Across countries (Figure 18) where questions are comparable verbal abuse is the most frequently reported type of adverse social behaviour. The US and EU have the highest rates of all types of reported adverse social behaviour, but this is likely to be a reflection of their longer tradition in raising awareness of these issues, and a strongly developed culture of reporting such behaviour with the aim of combating it. Thus, the high rates may reflect the low tolerance to any degree of adverse behaviour, rather than genuinely higher effective level of abuses at the workplace. The high numbers reported for the US may also be the result of the survey being web-based as opposed to carried out via face-to-face interviews, providing a medium that is possibly more comfortable for workers to report this behaviour. More generally, differences in the reported magnitude of each of the issues might be partly a result of cultural differences, including the different degree of tolerance of undesired behaviours but also underreporting linked to different public perceptions of the issue. Indeed, concerns over abuse at the workplace are only recently entering public policy debates in Asia and Latin America.

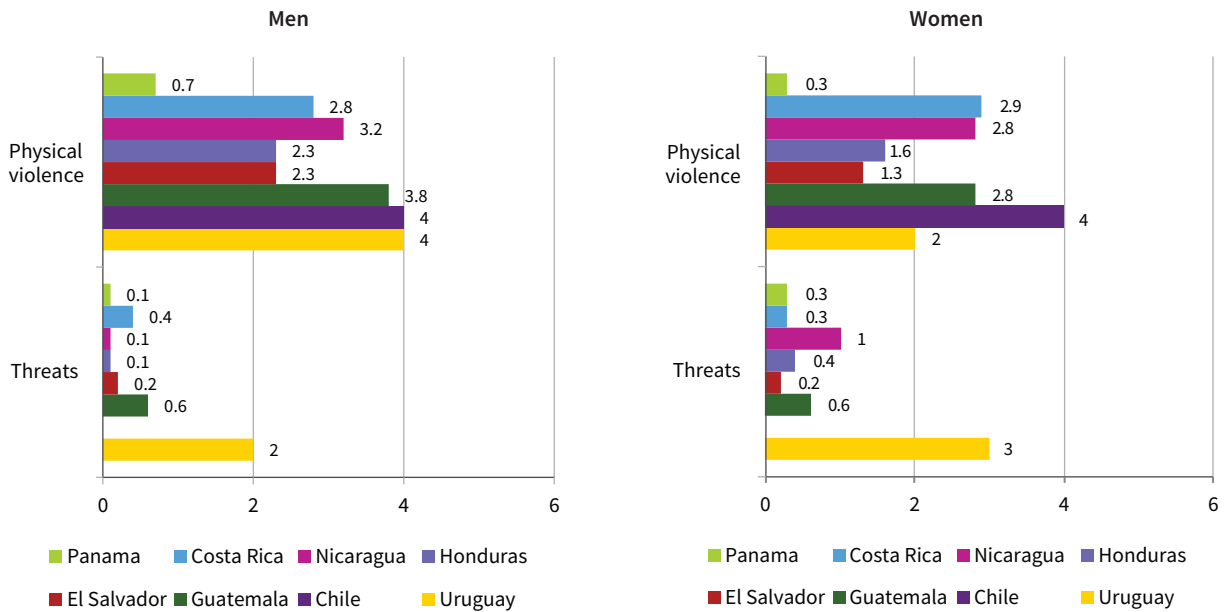
At the same time, the data show strong differences between men and women. Depending on the country, unwanted sexual attention and sexual harassment are reported up to seven times more frequently by women than by men. Women are also often more likely to be the target of verbal abuse (EU, US), including comments undermining personal worth (Uruguay). Physical violence and verbal threats, in contrast, are almost everywhere experienced more frequently by men than by women, although gender differences are small.



Figure 18: Exposure to adverse social behaviour, by sex and country or region (%)



Note: Combined question on threats and humiliating behaviour in KWCS.



Note: Uruguay, question is not time limited. Selected answer categories are 'infrequently' to 'always'. Question on threats refers specifically to 'threats of physical violence'.

Where data are available, they show that adverse social behaviour is most often experienced by younger workers. For example, older workers are nearly 40% less likely to experience an adverse social event at work in the US; the situation is quite similar in Argentina.

In Chile and Argentina, adverse social behaviour is most frequently experienced by professionals and office employees (clerks); and in the US and the EU by service and sales workers. This may partly be explained by the fact that these occupations are dominated by women,

and also because there is more exposure to interpersonal relations, including with clients. Similarly, office workers are often most likely to experience or know someone who experienced sexual assault by their co-workers or supervisors, clients, or service users. Workplace size matters, too: in Central America and in Argentina workers at larger firms report workplace violence more often than workers of small firms. Finally, part-time workers are also at considerably higher risk, as shown by the US and Uruguay data.

## Key findings

The quality of the social environment is critical for workers' well-being and the social climate within companies. Around 70% of workers across the countries studied assess their manager's performance in managing them positively. Levels of social support are high, and higher for support from colleagues than from managers. Adverse social behaviour is reported by a minority of workers, but when it occurs its impact on workers' health and the performance of companies is high and leaves long-lasting scars.

Sociocultural aspects influence the comparability of the reporting. In particular, the level of awareness plays a role in the identification of certain incidents as violent. Higher levels of awareness might lead to higher levels of reporting. Data collection modes are likely to impact on the levels of reporting, with web collection likely to elicit higher reporting than face-to-face data collection. Understanding the level of reporting violence and harassment is complex because of multiple factors, such as the level of awareness, sociocultural aspects, and policies and procedures, which impact on the aggregate number of reported cases. Legislative codification varies among countries, reflecting both sociocultural differences and differences in labour law and social protection, as well as its inclusion in health and safety at work legislation.

Working conditions (organisation of work, high work intensity, low level of task and organisation discretion etc.) and specific circumstances such as restructuring, the introduction of new ways of working and new technologies can foster violent and harassing behaviour in the workplace. Most of these issues call for workplace intervention and training and awareness-raising initiatives. Government policies and social partner initiatives have also a key role to play.

## Skills and discretion

Skills use and discretion is the dimension of job quality dealing with the question of whether work allows workers to develop and grow through their experience of work. It includes the skill content of the job (the cognitive dimension of work), decision latitude, worker participation in the organisation, and training. As explained by Green:

*The latitude over the manner of performance of work, is a matter of great importance to workers ... If there were no discretion left, one might as well be a machine. From the most fulfilling to even the most alienating and tightly controlled lines of work, to have some remaining discretion in the performance of the job is to retain that element of humanity. The exercise of a high level of discretion requires a correspondingly high level of personal skills. To make decisions about task performance, workers must be able to solve problems, make judgements and take*

*responsibilities, all of which also require knowledge and ability. This necessary condition for high discretion and autonomy underpins the empirical correlation between discretion and skill. But the possession and exercise of skill do not constitute a sufficient condition for being granted high levels of discretion. That licence depends also on the balance of power between workers and their bosses and on the extent to which the management of employee relations is conducted on the basis of trust. Where there is relatively low trust, and workers have limited market powers to resist, it is possible to have low levels of discretion – and hence low quality of work life – even when work is highly skilled.*

Green 2006, p. 94

Decision latitude matters for workers' health. A low level of decision latitude has been associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease (Kivimäki et al, 2012), mental health issues (Hoven et al, 2015) and physical symptoms (Nixon et al, 2011). From an enterprise perspective, strict control and monitoring of the workers' performance is expensive, thus greater decision latitude has the double benefit of reducing monitoring and supervisory costs while improving workers' experience at work and overall health and well-being.

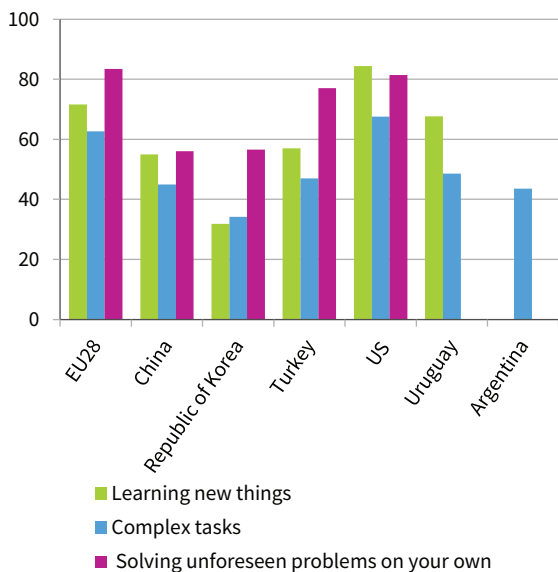
## Learning at work

Creative work, learning at work and task variation are key drivers of work motivation and engagement (Oeij et al, 2017) and contribute to self-development at work; alternatively, not being able to use one's skills at work or to acquire new skills at work leads to deskilling and loss of self-confidence.

The most common opportunities that workers have to learn and be creative are to solve unforeseen problems. Around 80% of workers in the EU, the US and Turkey, and around 56% in China and the Republic of Korea report this experience (Figure 19). This is reported most frequently by managers, professionals, and technicians, and least frequently by elementary workers (in Europe, there is a 30 percentage point gap). Differences between sectors are smaller (about 10 percentage points between health and financial services, which score highest, and agriculture and industry, which score lowest). Part-time workers and temporary employees report solving difficult problems at work less frequently than average.

The Chilean questionnaire asked workers to what extent they had to solve 'difficult' problems at work. Around 30% of workers reported that they 'always' or 'most of the time' encountered such situations at the workplace. The highest share is observed among high-skilled workers with non-manual jobs (46%), as well as self-employed with employees (42%). The lowest share is among temporary workers (20%). Just over half of all workers report that they 'learn new things' on the job.

**Figure 19: Cognitive demands, by country or region (%)**



**Note:** All items are dichotomous for EU, Turkey, Republic of Korea and US; selected answer category 'yes'. Uruguay: all items are 5-point Likert scales, selected answer categories for all items 'sometimes' to 'always'. Argentina: item is 3-point scale, selected answer categories 'always' and 'often'. No data on 'solving unforeseen problems' for Uruguay and Argentina, no data on 'learning new things' for Argentina.

Carrying out complex tasks is more frequently reported in the US (68%) and the EU (63%) compared with Uruguay (49%), Turkey (47%), China (45%), Argentina (44% sometimes or more often) and the Republic of Korea (34%). In a similar country pattern, workers in the US (84%), the EU (72%) and in Uruguay (68% – sometimes and more), report learning new

things at work more frequently than workers in Turkey (57%), China (55%) and the Republic of Korea (32%).

Women in the US and Europe, are less frequently employed in jobs that make use of cognitive skills; in Uruguay, women are less likely to be in jobs that require performing complex tasks (43% for women, compared with 53% for men) or learn new things (66% for women, compared with 69% for men). Strong differences exist by occupation and sector of activity. For example, in Uruguay, only 40% of workers in the primary sector perform complex tasks, as compared to 55% in industry and 66% in construction.

Across the countries, around 80% of workers report that they are able to apply their own ideas at work. The 20% who are not able to do so are more likely to work in elementary occupations, to be plant and machine operators, to work in transport, or to be in temporary employment.

Working with computers, smartphones and laptops at least a quarter of the time is reported more frequently by workers in the US (82%) than workers in China (58%), Europe (57%) and Turkey (31%). No data were available for the Republic of Korea or the Latin American countries. In the US and Europe, men and older workers report working with a computer (at least a quarter of the time) less frequently than average. There are important occupational and industry variations and workers in other services and elementary occupations, as well as farmers and craft workers, also report using a computer in their work less frequently than average.

On all these indicators, elementary workers fare worst and report significantly fewer opportunities to engage in creative work and learning new things.

### Box 6: Working anytime, anywhere

Telework/ICT-mobile work (T/ICTM) includes all work performed by workers using information and communications technologies outside the employer's premises. A joint report by the ILO and Eurofound (2017), building on national studies, in particular from Europe, Argentina and the US, demonstrates in practice how working conditions surveys can support discussions on this issue as they allow to assess the effects of T/ICTM on working conditions.

Much policy attention has been given to telework around the world, both to regulate and to promote it. For example, the European Framework Agreement on Telework was established in 2002 and was implemented by most Member States. In the US, a Telework Enhancement Act was established in 2010. The Ministry for Work, Employment and Security in Argentina has also been promoting teleworking actively. Nowadays, the focus is on the 'right to disconnect' in new policy approaches in an attempt to address the negative effects of T/ICTM work.

National and European data show very different incidences in the world of telework/ICT-mobile work (Table 2).

Within Europe, the incidence of T/ICTM workers varies by country. There is a high proportion of employees doing T/ICTM in Denmark (37%), Sweden (33%) and the Netherlands (30%). It is more common among professionals and managers, but is also significant among clerical support and sales workers in Europe.

In the US, it is estimated that 20% of employees perform T/ICTM at least one day per week. In the public sector, the report found that 29% of government employees do telework infrequently or one to two days a month.

**Table 2: Classification of countries in relation to use of ICT outside the employer's premises from a comparative perspective**

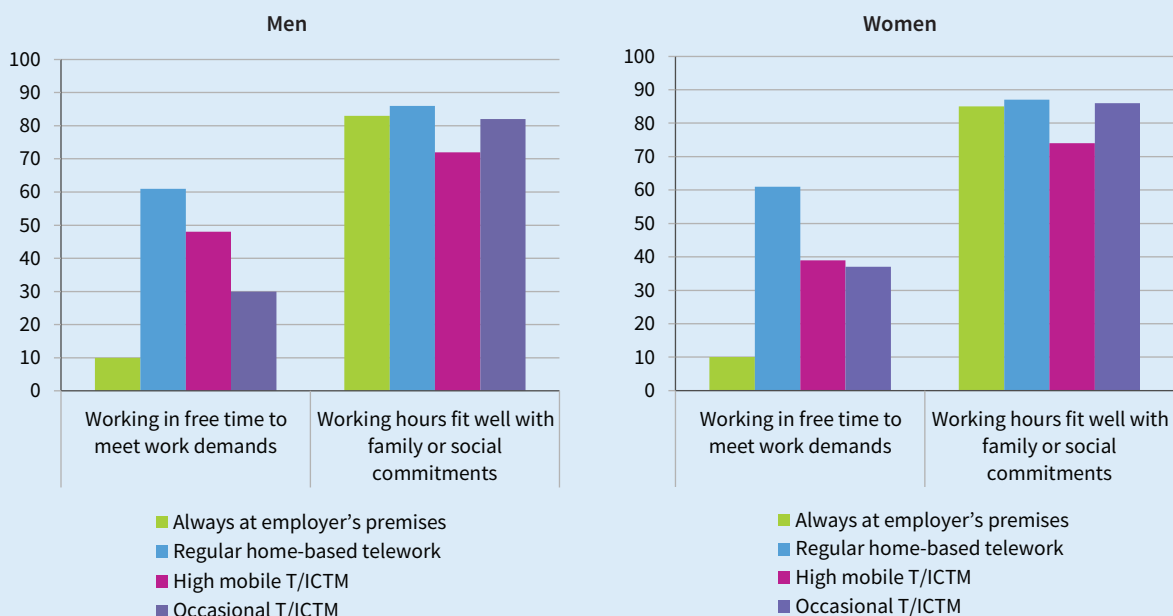
High proportion (> 30%) of employees doing T/ICTM	Medium proportion (20–30%) of employees doing T/ICTM	Low proportion (< 20%) of employees doing T/ICTM
Denmark	United Kingdom	Cyprus
Sweden	Luxembourg	Spain
Netherlands	France	Bulgaria
US	Estonia	Latvia
	Finland	Lithuania
	Belgium	Romania
	Ireland	Germany
	Malta	Portugal
	Slovenia	Hungary
	Austria	Slovakia
	Croatia	Poland
		Czech Republic
		Greece
		Italy
		Argentina

**Note:** For the EU countries, classification is based on the ranking of countries using EWCS 2015 data, for US and Argentina national data is used.

In other words, up to 70% of employees within the governmental sector never do telework. Over time, the use of telework for all workers increased from 9% in 1995 to 37% in 2015 in the US.

T/ICTM work is less prevalent in Argentina, accounting for just 1.6% of workers. Several factors can explain this variation: a more limited spread of ICT, internet connectivity issues, ICT skills, the economic structure, the GDP of the country, and geography and culture of work.

Overall, it cannot be said that T/ICTM work is unequivocally advantageous compared to office-based work (Figure 20). Positive effects linked to T/ICTM work are a decrease in commuting time, a higher degree of working time autonomy and flexibility regarding working time organisation, plus a better overall work–life balance. However, there are also negative effects associated with T/ICTM work: working longer hours, more work–home and home–work interference due to the blurring of work–life boundaries, and work intensification.

**Figure 20: Reconciling work and non-working life, by sex and type of T/ICTM, EU28 (%)**

**Source:** Eurofound and ILO (2017).

## Training

Lifelong learning is needed both as people progress in their career, and as new technologies and ways of organising work emerge. The rise of the ‘knowledge economy’ calls for rising and increasing skill development.

Forty-five per cent of workers in the US, 41% in Europe, 26% in Korea and 16% in Turkey report having had training paid or provided by their employer over the last 12 months. Additionally, on-the-job training was provided to 59% of workers in the US, 34% of European workers, 15% of Turkish workers and 13% of workers in the Republic of Korea. In China, 7% of workers report having had training paid by their employer and 11% report having had training provided by their employer, the government, or a non-governmental or business organisation. In Argentina, half of all workers report that their employers regularly provide them with some type of training. Argentinian workers at larger businesses enjoy training more regularly, with 61% reporting that these opportunities exist, while workers at small firms have the lowest access to training at 37%. In a slightly different question, 69% of Uruguayan workers responded that their job provided an avenue to receive training. In Chile, the survey refers to access to training on the risks of accidents at work, and to training on work-related illnesses. Approximately half of all workers receive such training from their employer.

There are interesting gender patterns in access to both employer-provided and on-the-job training: in the Republic of Korea and Turkey men have higher access to training than women (a few percentage points); this is not the case in Europe and the US, where women report higher access (again differences are minor). Some of these differences reflect women’s higher incidence in part-time and temporary employment, which is commonly associated with less access to training (ILO, 2016a) but also occupational gender segregation and the high level of educational achievement of women. In Chile, men have higher access (by 15 percentage points) to training on both accidents at work and work-related illnesses.

Older workers get less access to training than younger ones in the US and Europe. When the US is compared with Europe, a different pattern emerges on access to training by occupation, as managers, professionals and technicians get more access to training in Europe, whereas professionals and service workers get access to training more frequently in the US. Workers in health, public administration, financial services and education report higher provision of training across the countries. And the self-employed without employees and temporary workers receive less training than average. The same pattern is observed in Chile. In Turkey, workers who have lower levels of education, who are

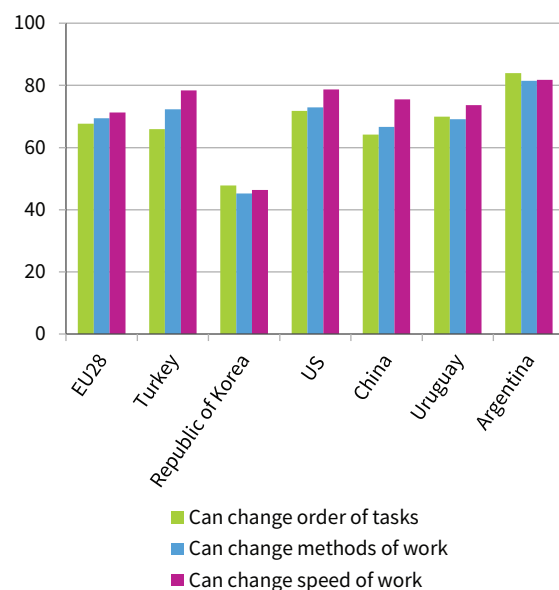
working in microenterprises, or are working part time are at a clear disadvantage when it comes to training.

## Decision latitude

Decision latitude, or discretion, is fundamental for workers, allowing them to deal with the demands of their jobs – particularly when those demands are considerable. Decision latitude allows workers to work in the way that suits them best and is safest for them and lack of decision latitude puts a strain on workers’ health and well-being. Decision latitude is also a predictor of engagement (Oeij et al, 2017).

Between 64% and 79% of workers in the US, Europe, China and Turkey, Uruguay, and close to half in the Republic of Korea report that they are able to choose or change the order of the tasks, the speed or rate of their work, and their methods of work (Figure 21). Somewhat lower proportions are observed in Chile. In Argentina, 84% of workers report ‘always’ or ‘often’ having control over the order of their work, 82% have control over their work methods, and 82% have control over their work rhythm. In Uruguay, 70% of workers report being able to control the order of their work; 69% report being able to change the method of their work and 74% report being able to change the speed of their work. Nearly half of workers in El Salvador consider that they are able to make decisions and control their work in one sense or another. In contrast, only 20% of Costa Rican workers report that they can do this. Around 30% of workers in the US, Turkey and the EU have a say in the choice of their work colleagues (always or most of the time). It is

Figure 21: Decision latitude, by country or region (%)



**Note:** All items are dichotomous for EU28, Turkey, Republic of Korea and US; selected answer category ‘yes’. Uruguay: all items are 5-point Likert scales, selected answer categories for all items ‘sometimes’ to ‘always’. Argentina: item is 3-point scale, selected answer categories ‘always’ and ‘often’.



reported by men slightly more frequently than by women, and by clerks and elementary workers significantly less frequently than by the rest of the workforce. The self-employed, as expected, report it in most cases and temporary employees report it in about 20% of cases.

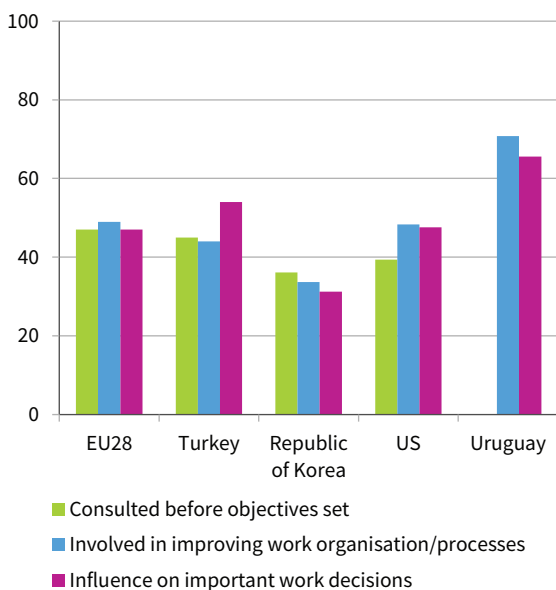
Men and women generally report very similar levels of decision latitude, except for Argentina and Honduras, where women report having more workplace autonomy than men. Differences between occupations are important. In Chile, as elsewhere, the self-employed without employees exercise the most discretion over their work, and workers in large workplaces the least.

### Worker participation in organisational decisions that affect their work

The wider involvement of workers in their organisation's decision-making is important for their motivation, and for the opportunity to bring in their tacit knowledge and experience and to have it transformed into value added for the organisation in which they work. High-performance workplace organisation and workplace innovation emphasise the positive effects of decentralisation on performance, learning and skills development, and creativity

A series of questions in the European, US, Korean, Turkish, Argentinian and Uruguayan surveys allows mapping of the involvement of workers in changes affecting work organisation and their work.

**Figure 22: Organisational participation, by country or region (%)**



**Note:** Selected answer categories are 'always' and 'most of the time' for EU, Turkey, Republic of Korea and US. Selected answer categories are 'a little bit' to 'a lot' for Uruguay. Items for all countries and regions are 5-point Likert scales.

Around 40% of workers in Europe (47%), Turkey (45%) and the US (39%) are consulted, always or most of the time, before objectives are set for their work (Figure 22). In Argentina, the survey asks workers about management's reaction when an employee suggests changes to the work or the enterprise. Two-thirds of respondents report that management is open to receiving ideas and considers the suggestion; 18% responded that management is somewhat receptive; 4% state that management is closed to receiving suggestions and 12% of respondents stated that they have not offered suggestions.

Just less than half of workers in Europe, the US and Turkey are involved in improving work organisation or work processes. In China, one-third of workers report that they are involved in improving work organisation or work processes always or most of the time. A similar proportion of workers reports having the ability to influence decisions that are important for their work always or most of the time. However, in Uruguay 71% of workers report participating in improvements in their organisation and 66% report being able to influence decisions that are important for workers.

In the Republic of Korea, on all these indicators, men report these forms of participation slightly more often than women. In the US and Europe, men and women are equally likely to be consulted before work objectives are set for their work, and are involved in improving work organisation and processes. Men in Europe and the US, however, are more likely to influence decisions that are important for their work. In contrast, in Turkey, the gender gaps in organisational participation are large. Women are much less likely to report that they are consulted before objectives are set for their work, that they are involved in improving work organisation or processes, or that they have the ability to influence decisions that are important for their work. Uruguay also has an important gender gap, with 67% of women and 74% of men reporting that they participate in improvements in their organisation (at least sometimes) and 58% of women and 72% of men reporting that they are able to influence decisions that are important for workers (at least sometimes).

Overall, across the countries surveyed, older workers are better able to engage in organisational participation, but only modestly. The only substantive difference is for influencing decisions, which they report more frequently than younger workers. Part-time workers are consulted on their objectives as much as full-time workers, but are less involved and influential in decisions that are important for them.

Managers are by far the most likely to report that they have been consulted, involved and are able to influence decisions that are important for their work. There is little variation by sector.



## Key findings

Being able to use and grow one's skills at work is important for the health and well-being of workers; it is critical also for companies' performance. There are many ways to learn at work: the most frequent ones are to carry out varied work, involving the use of (new) technological tools and being able to be creative. Such opportunities are frequent, but elementary workers report them least often. There are important country differences in access to these opportunities, with data indicating higher access in the US and Europe than in China, Turkey or the Republic of Korea.

Training (provided by the employer) is a mark of the investment of companies in developing their staff; it can also be critical for the satisfactory and safe performance of work. On-the-job training is more frequent than training provided by the employer, the latter being offered to between 11% and 45% of the workers in the countries covered.

Between 50% and 70% of workers report having some task autonomy, again with a strong occupational gradient. Participation of workers in decisions that affect their work and improvements in work organisation is less frequent, as less than half are involved in such decisions.

These figures could reflect differences in occupational distribution and also differences in work organisation and human resources practices in the workplace, as well as national differences in culture. Higher levels of employee involvement are more likely to be found with relatively advanced technology and a more skilled workforce.

Work organisation is about the control of work and the division of labour: how work is divided into job tasks, bundling of tasks into jobs and assignments, interdependencies between workers in job performance, and how work is coordinated and controlled in order to fulfil the goals of the organisation. The degree of decentralisation and autonomy given to workers (their task discretion in particular) and the influence that employees have over work organisation and product and services development are important distinctive variables. Prior research on the relationship between work organisation and job quality shows that employee involvement and task discretion are critical elements of job quality both in themselves and for other key dimensions of job quality such as work intensity and physical environment (Eurofound, 2013; Eurofound, 2009) and that they also have positive effects on enterprise performance (Eurofound, 2015);

Effective employee involvement is strongly associated with the existence of institutionalised channels of communication. This is facilitated where there is a strong human resources capacity to manage such

arrangements. But it is also likely to be affected by formal legal requirements with respect to consultation and dialogue.

## Prospects

Job prospects relates to those aspects of the job that contribute to a person's need for employment – both the material necessity for an income and the psychological need associated with a person's self-esteem and identity (Eurofound, 2016).

The concept of prospects is broader than stable employment in the current job. It includes the following dimensions: the extent to which the current job offers possibilities for career advancement, the job insecurity measured by workers' concerns over the job loss, workers' experience of restructuring and reorganisation at the workplace; in particular downsizing has been associated with negative effects on health and is a risk factor for those who retain their jobs (Westgaard and Winkel, 2011) and the status of employment and the type of contracts, which is an objective measure of insecurity particularly when the contract has a fixed term or is of short duration. In many countries, employment status and contractual types frame access to social protection and safety net schemes.

The concept of job prospects is different from employability which reflects the worker's assessment of their possibility to find a similar job with the same level of earnings if they were to lose their job. Employability thus, reflects individuals' own qualities, including the relevance of the skills set for continuing doing the same type of work and for career advancement. It also depends on the external factors, such as changes in the organisational structure of an enterprise (including downsizing and restructuring), and a general labour market outlook. Macroeconomic fluctuations may enhance the perception of job insecurity, while robust labour market institutions, such as employment protection legislation and unemployment benefits, can, in turn, alleviate worker concerns over their prospects. Some of the labour market developments of the last decades, such as the growth of non-standard work, including temporary contracts, temporary agency and dispatched work and dependent self-employment, have heightened workers' concerns over employment security even if their skill set remained relevant for modern labour market demands.

The negative impact of unemployment on health has long been demonstrated but other forms of job insecurity also have a negative impact on cardiovascular disease (Virtanen et al, 2013); temporary employment is associated with a higher risk of anxiety and aggressive behaviour (Virtanen et al, 2005).

## Box 7: Job prospects on digital labour platforms

One of the most prominent transformations in the world of work during the past decade is the emergence of digital labour platforms. To learn more about working conditions on web-based platforms, the ILO carried out, in 2015 and 2017, a survey of 3,500 workers living in 75 countries around the world and working on five English-speaking microtask platforms. Microtask platforms are a type of web-based labour platform that provide businesses and other clients with access to a large, flexible workforce (a ‘crowd’) for the completion of small, mostly clerical tasks, that can be completed remotely using a computer and Internet connection.

Like most digital labour platforms, the microtask platforms studied have chosen to classify their workers as self-employed, which means that the workers are not privy to the protections – on working hours, pay, occupational safety and health, voice and representation, and social protection – that are accorded to employees.

For one out of three workers surveyed, crowdwork was their main source of income. Other workers engaged in the work to complement their income or because they preferred to work from home. For 8% of workers, working from home was their only option owing to care responsibilities or personal health issues.

The main concerns of the workers centred around low pay, insufficient work and unresponsiveness from the platforms in the face of their concerns. Some 90% of respondents said they would like to be doing even more crowdwork – if only more were available and the pay were higher. The survey found that the workers earnings averaged to 3.31 USD per hour; median earnings were 2.16 USD per hour.

Part of the low hourly earnings stemmed from time spent looking for more work on the platform or from taking unpaid qualification tests to qualify for work when it became available. Indeed, for every hour of paid work, workers averaged 20 minutes of unpaid work. Thus, even if a 15-minute task paid relatively well, the time spent looking for the work drove average earnings down. Moreover, while workers had the flexibility in deciding when they wanted to work, work availability on the platform did not always correspond with work being available. Forty-three per cent of workers worked during the night (22:00–05:00) and 68% worked during the evening (18:00–22:00). Thirty-six per cent of workers regularly worked seven days per week.

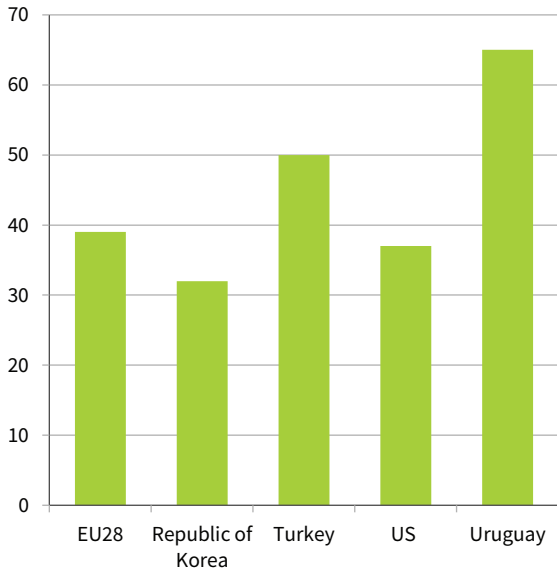
Most of the crowdworkers were well educated, either pursuing university studies, holding a university degree (37%) or a postgraduate degree (20%). Nevertheless, career prospects for the workers were limited, given the invisibility of their work and the lack of mechanisms for the workers to prove to prospective employers that they had been engaged in these activities. In addition, almost nine out of ten workers reported that they had work rejected or payment refused and voiced discontent with the lack of neutral mechanisms available for appealing what they felt were often unfair rejections (Berg et al, 2018).

### Career prospects

Comparing answers to these questions shows a great diversity across countries. For example, the highest proportion of workers who believe that their work offers good career prospects is in Uruguay, despite the fact that in this country there is also the highest proportion of workers concerned about job loss in the near future (Figure 23). In the Republic of Korea, the share of workers who believe that they have good prospects for career advancement is the lowest. But in this country, workers also seem to be least concerned about losing their job.

It is possible that for some workers, job stability comes with a counterweight of further career advancement. This may be the case if workers who project themselves in a particular job with a particular enterprise on a long-term basis develop specific skills that may be difficult to transfer to another employer. Conversely, it is also possible that the overall mobility in the labour market and macroeconomic prospects jointly determine concerns over job losses and prospects for career advancement. Still, generally, there does not seem to be much correlation between the answers to these questions, also suggesting that each question measures a different aspect of prospects.

**Figure 23: Prospects for career advancement, by country or region (%)**



**Note:** Wording of questions: Prospects for career advancement: 'My job offers good prospects for career advancement'. Selected answer categories are 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree'. Uruguay: 'To what extent does your company offer the possibility to progress in your professional career?'. Answer reported includes 'sometimes' and 'always'.

Whenever data are disaggregated, quite clearly, workers in firms of larger sizes generally have better career prospects compared to others. Employees with open-ended contracts and those working full-time usually report better prospects; workers with temporary contracts usually feel more disadvantaged compared to regular employees in terms of their prospects.

Gender differences with respect to career prospects are generally small, though men do report somewhat better career prospects than women in Europe, Chile and in Uruguay.

Other surveys, such as the Chinese SSWCS, additionally ask about general satisfaction with career development (only 35% of all respondents are satisfied), and about general satisfaction with job stability (57% of respondents are satisfied). As elsewhere, men are somewhat more satisfied with their careers than women, and outcomes are generally better for managers, professionals, and also local, non-agricultural hukou holders.

### Box 8: Glass ceiling

A specific illustration of career advancement is the possibility in companies to be recruited or promoted into a managerial role.

Symptomatic of the segregation and discrimination women continue to face at the workplace, the 'glass ceiling' issue has been on the agenda for many years.

The glass ceiling can be assessed in different ways. Here, the analysis will focus on the proportion of workers managed by a female boss.

The proportion of workers managed by a woman ranges between 41% in the US to 34% in the EU, 26% in the Republic of Korea and 13% in Turkey.

In all countries, male workers are managed primarily by a male boss: this is the case for 93% in Korea and Turkey, 84% in the EU and 73% in the US. About an equal proportion more of female workers in the US, Europe and Korea are managed by female managers: 57% of female workers in the US, 52% in Europe, and 50% in Korea. However female workers in Turkey remain managed by men in 72% of cases.

**Figure 24: Proportion of male and female bosses, by sex, EU28, Turkey, Republic of Korea, US (%)**

Manager/ boss		EU28		Turkey		Republic of Korea		US	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Worker	Men	84	16	93	7	94	6	73	27
	Women	48	52	72	28	55	45	43	57
Total		66	34	87	13	78	22	59	41

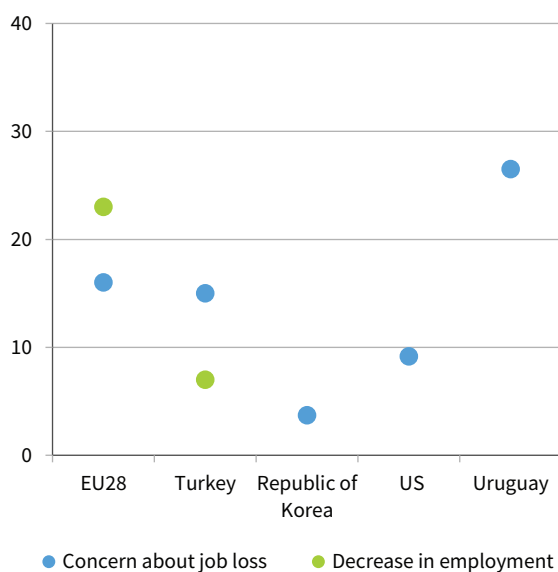
In the Republic of Korea and Europe, where trend data are comparable, the proportion of workers being managed by a woman has been on the rise. In Korea, in 2006, 16% of workers were managed by a female boss; in 2017, this was the case for 26% of workers. In Europe, the percentage has increased by 15 points in 15 years. Without support and actions, it will take years to break the glass ceiling.

## Job insecurity and downsizing

Self-reported job insecurity has been assessed as a good predictor of future unemployment (Green, 2015). Job insecurity is a significant cause of stress. A recent systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective studies on self-reported job insecurity confirm a modest association between self-reported job insecurity and coronary heart disease incidents (Virtanen et al, 2013) adding to the prior evidence having found associations between self-reported job insecurity and physical and psychological symptoms and self-reported diseases.

Between 4% in the Republic of Korea and 27% in Uruguay report that they might lose their job in the next six months (Figure 25). Similar levels of job insecurity were reported for Europe and Turkey (respectively 16% and 15%); and 9% in the US. As data have been collected at different years (see Annex 1), some of the differences may be explained by the onset of the Great Recession.

Figure 25: Prospects, by country or region (%)



**Note:** No data on decrease in employment for the Republic of Korea, US and Uruguay. Wording of questions: Concern about job loss: 'I might lose my job in the next six months (strongly agree and tend to agree)'; for Uruguay 'Losing work soon' (yes); Decrease in employment: 'During the last three years (or last year according to seniority in the company), has the number of employees at your workplace increased, stayed the same or decreased? (decreased)'; year of data was 2015 for all countries, besides Uruguay (2011).

Women generally have substantially larger concerns about re-employability and labour market opportunities in general; especially in the older age groups and in lower-skilled occupations – this is equally true in Europe, Chile and in Uruguay.

Older workers in Europe feel less insecure about their job than younger workers; however, they also feel far less employable. This may relate not only to the different skills set across generations, but also to the

employment protection legislation provisions, which generally ensure greater employment security to older European workers. This may also reflect the fact that the incidence of temporary employment is generally higher among youth, making youth more insecure about preserving their current job yet optimistic about finding a new one. Somewhat similar patterns are observed in Uruguay, where workers under 35 are more concerned about job loss than older workers; and in the US, where youth is significantly more optimistic about future work opportunities than older workers.

As often noted, organisational change is an integral part of today's globalised work life which can provide opportunities for workers to grow. Whereas, not all changes in work are negative for the workers and lead to an unpleasant situation, they make demands on both employees and management, regardless of the content of the change process and lead at least in the short term, to increased job demands and insecurity and lowered control, reduced role clarity and changes in relation to opportunities for social support. Tvedt et al (2009) suggest a number of considerations that can contribute to a healthy change process such as 'awareness of diversity' (where every voice can be heard but also 'polyphonic accounts' are considered), 'manager availability' to provide individualised information and dialogue on issues central to the individual worker, 'constructive conflicts' where all employees' reactions are considered seriously and 'early role clarification'.

Downsizings are clearly associated with increased insecurity for all workers including those who will remain in employment. Seven per cent in Turkey and 23% in the EU are 'survivors', as they have experienced downsizing in their workplace (data not available elsewhere). Some can be affected by the 'survivor's disease': restructuring particularly when there is a reduction in the number of employees, is associated with increased risk of poor health and medically certified sick leave, musculoskeletal disorders and trauma (Vahtera et al, 1997) and psychological ill health (Andreeva et al, 2017). Albeit protected from loss of employment, their integration into a group of colleagues, their loyalty to the enterprise that employs them, their control over their work and their attachment to their work are indeed challenged during downsizing events. Survivors' difficulties are thus more than adaptation to a new way of working in a restructured enterprise.

## Key findings

The comparability of results in relation to prospects may be affected by a number of contextual factors, such as different regulatory frameworks and labour markets, cultural factors and the different times of data collection.

The results show that in each country, job insecurity as well as poorer career prospects affect a significant proportion of the population. At least 30% report being in a job without career prospects, 10% or more are afraid of losing their job in the next six months (except in Korea, where 4% report it).

The comparative analysis of results shows that some groups are more exposed to insecurity, particularly those in certain occupations, or on temporary contracts and all those who assess their employability to be low, such as women in most countries and older workers.

The question of (poorer) job prospects is closely connected with concerns over future insecurity, which can arise as a result of employment loss, poorer career prospects and a qualitative change in one's employment conditions and job content. Systematic differences between some groups demonstrate unequal treatment and increase the risk that some groups combine sources of vulnerability, with a cumulated likely negative impact on them.

## Earnings

Worker earnings – wages for dependent employees and revenues for self-employed workers – are among the most important conditions of work and a core element of job quality. For most employees, the wage is the primary form of compensation received in return for their labour, and is usually their principal source of income. It is one of the main motivators to work. For employers, the wage is the cost of securing the worker's productive capacity, and often accounts for a significant share of total costs. The level of earnings also matters because higher wages tend to be associated with better non-wage terms, particularly for dependent employees.

Promoting 'adequate earnings and productive work' is a central element of the Decent Work Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. In many parts of the world, access to adequate and regular earnings, including wages, is not guaranteed, either due to their low level (below minimum wages or minimum standards of living); non-payment (wage arrears); wage losses if an employer goes bankrupt; payments made in kind, in bonds or in manufactured goods; or if workers are not paid equally for work of equal value. Yet, paying and receiving earnings that correspond to workers' output and productivity is important not only to appropriately remunerate workers and provide them with a feeling of satisfaction and justice, but also to increase the purchasing power of households, ensure fair distribution, reduce income inequalities, and stimulate sustainable and balanced economic growth (ILO, 2016b).

Regulation of wages is an important policy tool, and wages specifically are usually a major subject of collective bargaining. The ILO has developed a series of international standards on wages that contain

provisions on regular payment of wages, on fixing minimum wage levels, on the settlement of unpaid wages in case of employer insolvency and on equal pay for work of equal value.

Monitoring earnings is an important step towards developing appropriate policies with respect to wages, and more generally with respect to redistribution policies and combating inequalities. Almost all working conditions surveys presented in this report contain questions on workers' earnings. Yet the direct statistical comparability of answers remains low for a number of reasons. First, the question is among the most sensitive ones, and the non-response rate varies substantially across countries. For example, in Europe, non-response ranges from 3% in Finland, to 45% in Hungary, with certain categories of workers having a higher non-response rate than others (Eurofound, 2016). Second, the proposed responses to the question are usually provided in brackets, or bands, and those vary across countries as well: sometimes 10 intervals, expressed in local currency, are proposed to respondents, sometimes only 3. In some countries, the question is administered to wage employees only, while in others the coverage is all workers. In some countries, the question asks only about earnings in the main job, in others, earnings from all activities are covered. Last, but not least, some questionnaires ask about earnings net of taxes and social security contributions, others ask about gross earnings, yet other ones also include questions about various pay components, such as base salary, extra pay for dangerous conditions of work, overtime payments, productivity bonuses, reimbursement of expenses for transport, food stamps and other types of payments.

Despite this, some broad lines of comparisons show that, invariably, in all parts of the world, women earn less than men. Moreover, they are consistently overrepresented in the lowest ends and underrepresented in the highest ends of the income distribution. Women make 67% of male monthly earnings in the Republic of Korea, 75% in China, and 77% in Turkey. In Uruguay, 60% of women are in the first earnings tercile, in contrast to 30% of men; the situation is reversed for the second tercile. In Chile, 56% of women are in the two lowest earnings quintiles, in contrast to 36% of men; the share of men in the highest earnings quintile is twice that of women. In Argentina, the incidence of productivity bonuses is higher among men than women. Over 20% of Central American women surveyed earn less than USD 100 a month, versus 14% of men. In the EU, the median income of men is substantially higher than that of women; this finding also joins other studies showing that in Europe, women make up on average 50–60% of workers in the three lowest pay deciles; this share falls to about 35% among the best-paid 10% of employees (ILO, 2016b).



The reasons for the gender pay gap are numerous, and include the fact that women often work fewer hours than men, that they are overrepresented in sectors where the pay is generally lower, and that they continue to face a disproportionate burden of care activities, thus having more breaks in their working lives and more responsibilities that preclude them from taking up more challenging, higher-paid jobs. In addition, there are biases in wage structures. For example, in countries where minimum wages are set by occupation, female-dominated occupations typically have lower minimum wages than male-dominated occupations; this can also be true in collective bargaining agreements. Finally, cultural perceptions about women's roles in society remain strong in many parts of the world, further pre-determining the choice of careers on the one hand, and hiring, promotion and pay on the other hand.

Throughout the world, earnings inequality is also determined by a set of other factors, including status in employment (whether a worker is a wage employee or self-employed), sector of activity and occupation, enterprise type, type of contract (for wage earners), and often formality.

Self-employed workers have very diverse earnings. Self-employed with employees, or business owners, as well as self-employed in the high-end services sectors, tend to have a higher probability of having higher earnings in general, while individual own-account workers are often among the most disadvantaged, especially in developing countries. For example, in Central America, 62% of own-account workers earn less than USD 100 per month, while only 1% of wage employees are in this situation. The low earnings of own-account workers in developing countries are often related to the fact that they mainly work in subsistence farming, and their self-employment is informal in nature. They may also point to the involuntary character of self-employment, due to the unavailability or inaccessibility of other jobs. In China, most types of self-employed workers earn more than employees, except for freelancers.

Workers in manufacturing generally report higher earnings than those in agriculture. In services, the situation is more nuanced. For example, workers in the financial sector and banking, as well as in real estate, are the highest earners globally; this situation is documented in Europe, in Turkey, in the US, and in several Latin American countries. Managers, professionals, and technicians are usually also at the highest end of earnings. In contrast, carers (whether domestic workers, or workers in the organised hospital sector, except medical doctors), and workers in commerce, cleaning and hospitality, are usually more disadvantaged, and many of them are, once again, women. For example, in the US, the only sector with a

proportion of low-paid workers that exceeds one-third is commerce and hospitality.

Earnings also vary across enterprises, and usually rise with their size. In Uruguay, in firms with 10–49 workers, 67% are middle-tier earners and 2% are high-level earners; in firms with over 50 workers, 65% are middle-tier earners and 7% are high-level earners. In the Republic of Korea, employees of large firms earn significantly more than employees of small enterprises. In the US, employees in the smallest firms earn the least, employees of middle-sized firms earn slightly more and employees of the largest firms earn the most. These findings confirm the results of other studies, showing that in the US the higher inequality between enterprises can be attributed to growing polarisation, with high-skilled workers clustering in some enterprises and low-skilled workers clustering in others, consistent with the trend towards restructuring and outsourcing peripheral activities to subcontractors or franchisees (ILO, 2016b).

Finally, for wage earners, a certain hierarchy of earnings is often observed across contract types. Workers with regular contracts typically earn more than workers with temporary contracts. Those, in turn, typically earn more than workers without contracts (where data are available to show this). Such a hierarchy is documented in China, the Republic of Korea, Uruguay and Europe. In Central America, 46% of workers with regular contracts (called fixed-wage earners) are earning over USD 500 per month, while only 6% of workers with temporary contracts are in this situation. In Chile, while some informal workers are found in the upper ends of the income distribution, their share is substantially higher at the lower ends (38% of informal workers are in the lowest quintile of the income distribution, in contrast to 13% of formal workers).

Earnings are often made up of several elements, some of which are flexible or variable depending on enterprise, group or individual performance. Overtime pay is quite common: between 30% and 40% of workers in the surveyed countries receive it. Between 10% in the Republic of Korea and 25% in the US receive benefits in kind or other perks. Extra payment based on enterprise performance is relatively infrequent but not uncommon: between 10% and 15% of workers are recipients. Fewer than 10% receive piece-rate payments.

In the US, gender differences in pay types exist in two interesting areas. First, while women are slightly more likely to report having an hourly wage than men, they are less likely to report receiving overtime pay (35% versus 50%). This difference of 15 percentage points is striking and may partly explain the observed annual earnings differences between men and women. A similar difference exists in Europe (11 percentage points) and in Korea (12 percentage points).



Additionally, women are less likely to receive performance pay for enterprise or team performance: women are 6–8 percentage points less likely than men to receive pay based on enterprise performance in Europe, the US and Republic of Korea. The lack of overtime and performance pay are likely to be important, if under-researched, determinants of gender pay inequality.

The absolute level of earnings, while important in itself, is not the only relevant metric. Equally important is to know whether monetary rewards are fairly determined, whether workers perceive that the level of rewards is in proportion to the effort spent and that the fruits of their work are rewarded fairly. For this reason, some surveys also ask workers whether they feel they get paid appropriately, given their efforts and achievements. In Europe, about half of all workers tend to agree or strongly agree with this statement, though the results also depend on the individual's gender and position in the income distribution. Middle-income workers are least likely to feel they are paid appropriately. In the lowest half of the income distribution, a higher proportion of women than men feel they are paid appropriately.

Some surveys also ask whether these earnings are sufficient to cover expenses. In the Republic of Korea, approximately half of the respondents stated a difficulty in balancing income with expenses. In Chile, the income earners of the bottom quintile have the lowest proportion of respondents who can cover basic needs and unforeseen expenses. Consistently across income quintiles, women report having more difficulties in covering expenses than men.

## Key findings

Part of the employed population falls into the category of working poor. In most countries, women earn significantly less than men and are therefore overrepresented at the lowest end of the earnings distribution. The level of earnings varies alongside employment status and occupation. Earnings are often made up of many elements, some of them variable and associated with performance, and women are less likely to benefit from these opportunities.

## Conclusions

This exploration of working conditions surveys 'across the world' reveals some strikingly similar trends globally.

Results from the surveys indicate that physical risks are still frequent in all regions of the world and affect important proportions of the workforce. It is striking to see the high level of workers across all regions covered in this report exposed to repetitive movements, tiring, painful or uncomfortable positions and involved in heavy lifting or exposure to vibrations. Men report

higher exposure to physical risks than women but men and women are not exposed to the same risks, reflecting partly but not exclusively labour market gender segregation. The same occupations across very different economies report high exposure to these risks: craft workers; plant and machine operators, agricultural workers and farmers. Workers in the construction, manufacturing, agriculture and transport sectors, and also in health and hospitality, are exposed to accumulations of these risks in combination. Workers are also frequently exposed to work at high or low temperature or to smoke and dust. There are important differences between countries in exposure to tobacco.

Long working hours and long working days and supplementary work while at home remain frequent for a significant proportion of the world's workers, despite the secular decline in working hours. A recovery period between two working days of less than 11 hours is also not unusual. Differences between countries in the incidence of long weekly working hours are paramount. Work at the weekend is very frequent across the world: more than half of workers in the world work on Saturdays; and between one-third and half of the workforce work on Sundays. In the countries covered, 10–40% work shifts or at night.

In the majority of instances, particularly in medium and large companies, schedules are set by companies with little or no possibility for change. This is less the case, however, in the US. In most cases, working time arrangements do not change, but for around 15% of workers little notice is given as changes are announced on the day itself or the day before. Flexibility has become an important feature of workplaces: differences between countries on employee-led flexibility are significant. The proportion of workers reporting that it is easy to take an hour off work to deal with domestic arrangements ranges between 20% and 70%, depending on the country. On the other hand, a quarter of workers or more work in their free time.

High work intensity is experienced by over one-third of workers in all countries covered except the Republic of Korea, although Korean workers report the longest working hours. Blue-collar workers report higher quantitative demands, whereas emotional demands in work are more prevalent among white-collar workers. Overall, 25–40% of workers must hide their feelings most or all of the time. Workers with long hours tend also to report intense work in the US, the Republic of Korea and the EU.

Social support from colleagues is an important determinant of well-being at work; fortunately, most workers report being supported by their colleagues. In 60–70% of cases, workers assess the management skills of their hierarchical superiors positively, as they do the social support their superiors provide. However, over 10%, depending on the country, report not being respected as a person by their manager. Not all

countries collect information on violence at work and where data are collected, reported instances of violence and harassment are infrequent but can affect up to 12% of workers (verbal abuse in the EU).

Between 60% of respondents in the US and 80% in Turkey report that work is distributed fairly at their workplaces and that conflicts are resolved in a fair way.

Learning opportunities while working are frequent. Across the world, about 80% of workers report that they are able to apply their own ideas at work. However, a smaller proportion, varying by country, reports learning new things at work and carrying out complex tasks. Access to training paid or provided by an employer is also frequent.

A large majority of workers in the US, Europe, Turkey, China, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay report the ability to change or choose their speed or rate of work, their methods of work, or to choose or change the order of their tasks. Differences across occupations are very important. Fewer than half of workers in countries covered by the surveys report being consulted always or most of the time before objectives are set for their work, being involved in improving work organisation or processes and being able to influence decisions which are important for their work. About one-third have a say in the choice of their work colleagues.

There are important country differences in opportunities for career advancement and job insecurity. For 30% or less of workers, job insecurity is a concern, as they report that they might lose their job in the next six months. On the positive side, 30–60% report that their job offers prospects for career advancement.

Earnings from work are not sufficient for all workers to escape poverty, leaving part of the employed population in the working poor category. In most countries, women earn significantly less than men. The level of earnings varies according to employment status, and workers in manufacturing report higher earnings than those in agriculture, with a varied situation in services. Among occupations, managers, professionals and technicians fare best.

This report presents the data alongside the seven dimensions of job quality identified by Eurofound (2012a). These dimensions are appropriate for organising and presenting the information contained in working conditions surveys considered in this report. At the level of the individual, these dimensions are not

independent of one another. Certain job quality dimensions interact and work together (Eurofound, 2016). Future research could examine these interactions and trade-offs.

There are two issues to emerge clearly from all the surveys considered. First of all, the surveys consistently show differences between the sexes. Differences in job quality between men and women result from multiple interactions between the welfare and family systems, labour market structures, gendered life courses and the division of paid and unpaid labour. Gender relations are socially constructed within different institutional, economic and cultural environments. Women in most countries covered by this report tend to carry out the majority of domestic work, and paid employment remains very gender segregated. As a result, some risks or disadvantages are reported more often by one sex: for example men are more frequently exposed to physical risks, but women more often report a poorer level of earnings. When unpaid and paid working time are counted together, in all countries women work longer hours than men. These are some examples of the multiple differences between men and women workers shown by the surveys.

Secondly, the data show systematic differences between occupations. Clearly and consistently, workers in blue-collar occupations are exposed to very demanding working conditions. Elementary workers and service and sales workers also report challenging working conditions, but their concerns are different from those of blue-collar industrial workers. The patterns of both positive and negative job quality features vary across occupations, as the preceding sections indicate.

Finally, measuring job quality provides a reflection of how companies and organisations manage their workforces. Information can be inferred on work organisation and human resource management practices. From the job quality perspective, researchers can learn about access to training, workers' participation, working time policies, remuneration policies, management behaviour and more. These features help to highlight the relevance of organisational choice and human resource policies, and the leverage available at local level to work for improved job quality. The analysis of the results of the survey show important differences in work organisation and human resources policies in the countries covered.



# Part 2

## Country and region reports

European Union, China, Republic of Korea, Turkey, United States,  
Central America, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay





# 3 | European Union

## Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings of the 2015 edition of the EWCS, as they relate to the Member States of the EU. The survey interviewed nearly 36,000 workers in the EU28 about their work and the factors shaping it.<sup>9</sup>

The chapter aims to reflect on the situation of the European Union as a whole rather than explore the similarities and differences among the EU Member States. This is complicated by both the economic diversity of the Member States and the different governance structures present. In particular, there is multilevel governance of work and employment in the EU, where European-level regulation sets minimum standards in some domains, yet these are often applied through the (very different) industrial relations and regulatory systems of the Member States.

## Labour market overview

At the end of 2015, some 221 million people were employed in the EU28 according to Eurostat's European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). The employment rate among people aged 15–64 in the EU28 had increased over the 10 years to 2015, mainly as a result of increased participation of women in the labour market (from 56% in 2005, to 60% in 2015).

Among the changing features of the world of work in Europe has been the greater diversity of employment relations, notably the rise in part-time, temporary and self-employment. Nevertheless, the notion of standard employment relations – full-time, dependent employment with a permanent contract – remains important as a benchmark, given that such arrangements provide workers with the fullest labour protections, including dismissal protection, and also social benefits and the ability to realise the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Securing these rights and benefits in practice can become more difficult when the core characteristics of the standard employment relationship are modified in relation to the duration of the contract, working hours or the type of employer. In the EU28, the proportion of

part-time workers in total employment has been steadily growing, among men (from 7% to 10%) and women (from 31% to 33%). Further, 15% of the European labour force is self-employed and 12% consists of temporary employees. The EWCS shows that the group with 'other or no contract' amounts to about 8% of the labour force.

The proportion of younger workers in temporary contractual arrangements (19%) or in 'other or no contract' (13%) is much higher than that of the other age groups. A gender division is also evident in all age groups, with self-employment being male-dominated, while among female workers there is a higher proportion of indefinite, fixed-term and 'other or no contract' arrangements. Workers with tertiary and secondary education levels predominantly hold indefinite contracts (72% and 66% respectively), while only about 4 in 10 (39%) of those with a primary education level have this status. Workers with a primary education level are more likely to be found among the self-employed without employees (19%) or employees with 'other or no contract' (21%), while 16% of this category have a fixed-term contract.

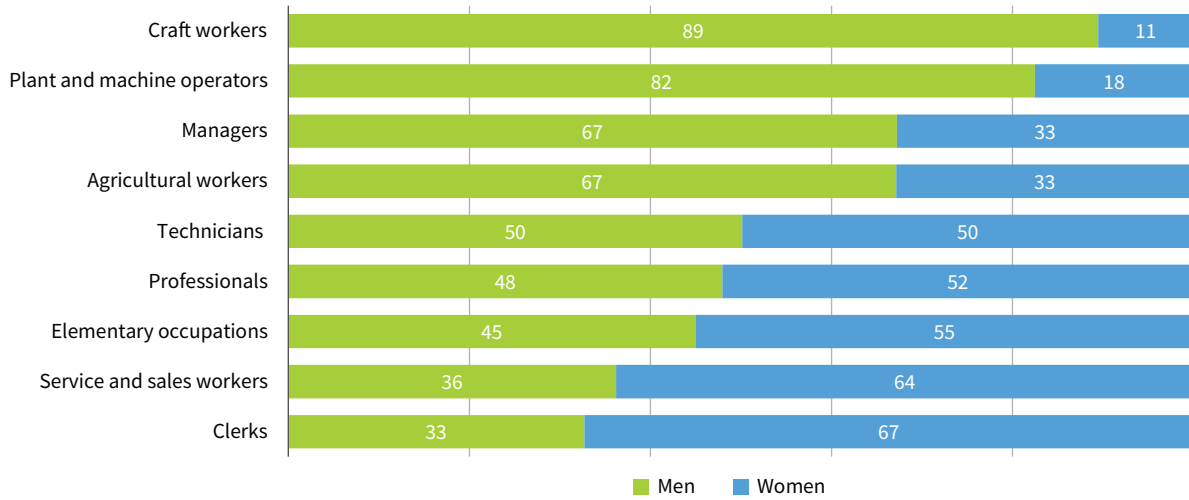
The extent of self-employment as a proportion of total employment of the 28 EU Member States has decreased only slightly since 2005 with different trends between Member States. However, it is difficult to get a full picture of the self-employed group, as the individuals themselves are not always clear about their status and its designation; in addition the heterogeneity of forms of self-employment is increasing.

While the participation of women in paid work is increasing across Europe, labour markets continue to be highly segregated by gender. Some occupations such as craft workers and plant and machine operators are intensely male-dominated (Figure 26). A majority of male workers can also be seen in other occupations, such as managers and agricultural workers. By contrast, some occupations are predominantly female, such as clerks and service and sales workers. At the level of aggregation of occupations presented in the figure, there is less evidence of segregation among elementary occupations, professionals and technicians.

<sup>9</sup> A more extensive and detailed overview report is available from Eurofound (2016).



**Figure 26: Employment, by occupation and sex, EU28 (%)**



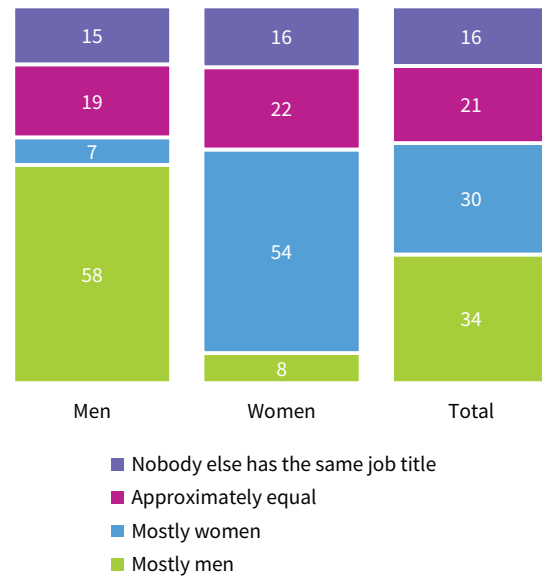
Source: EU-LFS, 2015

There is also a high degree of gender segregation in terms of economic sector. Construction, transport, industry and agriculture remain highly male-dominated sectors, while health and education are female-dominated. On the other hand, commerce and hospitality, other services, financial services and public administration seem to have balanced proportions of women and men.

In order to gauge the level of segregation at the level of the workplace, the EWCS 2015 asked respondents to indicate the sex of the majority of their colleagues sharing a job title with them. The results (Figure 27) clearly indicate that gender segregation continues to be a feature of EU workplaces: 58% of men and 54% of women declare that their ‘co-workers with the same job title’ are mostly of the same sex. Only 19% of men and 22% of women stated that there was an equal number of men and women working in a similar position to theirs at their place of work.

Finally, symptomatic of the segregation and discrimination women continue to face at the workplace, the ‘glass ceiling’ issue has been on the agenda for many years. The glass ceiling can be assessed in different ways (see Box 8 on page 44). In 2015, 84% of male workers are being managed by a male manager, 52% of women are managed by a female manager. Progress over time has been slow.

**Figure 27: Sex of co-workers with the same job title, by sex, EU28 (%)**



Source: EWCS for all figures, unless stated otherwise.

## Policies and laws governing the labour market, working conditions and employment

The social policy of the EU is defined through a wide-ranging body of laws, principles, policy objectives, declarations, resolutions and international agreements. The Commission Staff Working Document entitled 'The EU social acquis', which accompanied the launch of consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights, provides a detailed overview of the *acquis* and its development (European Commission, 2016a). It explains the role of EU primary law (the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the TFEU and the Charter of Fundamental Rights) and secondary legislation in establishing the social mandate of the Union.

A key reference in relation to working conditions is in Article 151 of the TFEU, which states that: 'promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions ... proper social protection, dialogue between management and labour, the development of human resources with a view to lasting employment and the combating of exclusion'. This Article cross-refers to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (incorporated into primary EU law by the Treaty of Lisbon) which includes provisions on:

- freedom of association (Article 12)
- freedom to choose an occupation and right to engage in work (Article 15)
- non-discrimination (Article 21)
- equality between women and men (Article 23)
- workers' right to information and consultation within the undertaking (Article 27)
- right of collective bargaining and collective action (Article 28)
- protection in the event of unjustified dismissal (Article 30)
- fair and just working conditions (Article 31)
- prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work (Article 32)
- reconciliation of family and professional life (Article 33)

In some of these domains all Member States have ratified the relevant ILO Conventions. In others, the issues are addressed by specific EU legislation.

The EU legislates in different forms, including Regulations (of general application, binding and directly applicable in all Member States), Directives (binding as to the result to be achieved, but leaving to national authorities the choice of form and methods, so typically implemented through national legislation) and Decisions (individual measures, binding on those to whom they are addressed and directly effective without requiring implementation into national law).

The largest part of the EU social acquis consists of secondary legislation. Relevant Directives address a wide range of issues linked to working conditions and job quality, including information on the employment relationship, equal treatment in the workplace (of men and women and irrespective of racial or ethnic origin), reconciliation of family and professional life, limitation of working time, protection in the event of termination of employment and the prohibition of child labour and the protection of young people at work. The Directives which provide protection and ensure equal treatment for part-time workers and workers with fixed-term contracts are among those giving legal force to social partner agreements at European level.

In relation to protecting the health and safety of workers, a Framework Directive and 23 individual Directives provide rules on the prevention of occupational risks, the protection of safety and health, the elimination of risks and accident factors. General principles are established in the Framework Directive relating to managing safety and health, employer responsibility, the rights and duties of workers, using risk assessments to improve enterprise/company processes continuously and workplace health and safety representation. In particular, the Framework Directive states that the employer shall implement measures:

*adapting the work to the individual, especially as regards the design of workplaces, the choice of work equipment and the choice of working and production methods, with a view, in particular, to alleviating monotonous work and work at a predetermined work-rate and to reducing their effect on health.*

European legislation also provides rights in relation to the provision of information to and consultation of workers. A Council Directive of 2002 establishes a framework for informing employees and consulting with them in the European Community. It applies to all undertakings (businesses) employing at least 50 employees, or EU establishments (local units) employing at least 20 employees. The Directive is estimated to cover fewer than 3% of all companies,

yet these employ about half of all employees in the EU and it is significant as the first EU law stipulating a general obligation to inform and consult employees. Previous EU law has provided for the information and consultation of employees in specific circumstances, such as collective redundancy or transfer of an undertaking, or on issues such as health and safety. The 2009 Directive on European Works Councils – which replaced the 1994 Directive – provides for information and consultation on certain matters in multinational companies and groups.

It is important to note that efforts to improve working conditions and job quality take place in the context of subsidiarity, and that implementing the standards set at European level requires complementary action from national governments – both legislative and other actions – and actors in the labour market.

The EU, as indicated above, also engages in many non-legislative initiatives to further its policy objectives, including in relation to work and employment. Most recently, the 2017 proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights set out a common framework for adapting labour market and social systems to the new world of work in a manner that protects and develops social rights across the EU. As stated in a preamble:

*It reaffirms some of the rights already present in the Union acquis. It adds new principles which address the challenges arising from societal, technological and economic developments. For them to be legally enforceable, the principles and rights first require dedicated measures or legislation to be adopted at the appropriate level.*

Its Chapter II on fair working conditions includes issues such as: workers' right to fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions; access to social protection and training; access to information in writing about their rights and obligations resulting from the employment relationship; rights to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services in case of need; and a high level of protection of their health and safety at work; as well as the right to a working environment adapted to their professional needs and which enables them to prolong their participation in the labour market

## Dimensions of job quality

As explained in the comparative chapter, working conditions are analysed through the perspective of seven job quality dimensions: (1) physical environment; (2) work intensity; (3) working time quality; (4) social environment; (5) skills and discretion; (6) prospects; and (7) earnings. These dimensions are known to have causal relationships to the health and well-being of workers. Many job quality features that are beneficial for workers are also positively associated with enterprise performance, productivity and innovation.

## Physical environment

The absence of physical hazards that pose a risk to health and well-being is an acknowledged feature of job quality. Eliminating or minimising these risks is at the core of occupational safety and health policy in EU Member States and is a long-standing plank in European social policy. Numerous preventive actions across traditional manufacturing industries have been implemented with the objective of minimising physical risks. Yet, despite these efforts and the shift to service industries in the economy, the level of exposure to physical risks is not declining significantly. Some risks are even increasing: for example, use of chemicals or exposure to electromagnetic fields, while the industrial application of new technologies such as nanomaterials can generate new hazards. Other emerging risks are linked to the development of biotechnologies and green technologies (European Commission, 2014).

Posture-related risks include tiring positions (43% of workers are exposed a quarter or more of the time), lifting people (10%), carrying heavy loads (32%), repetitive movements (61%) and vibrations (20%). These are the most prevalent risks in Europe. Ambient risks include exposure to noise (28%), and high (23%) and low (21%) temperatures. The biological and chemical risks dimension includes inhaling smoke (15%) or vapours, such as solvents and thinners (11%), breathing in tobacco smoke (9%) and handling chemical products (17%) and infectious materials (13%). Biological and chemical risks can have lethal long-term effects. In 2008, according to the Commission's strategic framework on health and safety for 2014–2020, fatalities associated with chemical substances accounted for almost half of all work-related deaths (European Commission, 2014). From 2010 to 2015, this area of risk was the only one shown to be increasing.

High exposure to posture-related risks is most commonly reported in the construction, agriculture, industry, transport and health sectors. Ambient risks, especially in relation to temperatures, are associated with working outdoors and therefore experienced by many workers in construction and agriculture. In agriculture, 53% of workers are exposed to very low temperatures and 51% to very high temperatures; the corresponding figures for construction are 53% and 45%, respectively. The sectors with the highest levels of biological and chemical risk are industry, health and agriculture. In the health sector, the main risk is handling or being in direct contact with infectious materials (experienced by 50% of workers), while in industry both breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust and handling or being in contact with chemical products are more prevalent risks, at 31% and 24% respectively.

In terms of occupation, craft workers, plant and machine operators, agricultural workers and elementary occupations experience the highest levels of exposure to the three categories of risks (Table 3).

**Table 3: Exposure to posture-related, biological and chemical and ambient risk by occupation, EU28: indices (0–100)**

	Posture-related risks	Biological and chemical risks	Ambient risks
Managers	16	6	11
Professionals	16	6	10
Technicians	18	8	11
Clerks	16	3	8
Service and sales workers	24	8	14
Agricultural workers	31	13	30
Craft workers	37	21	31
Plant and machine operators	34	14	27
Elementary occupations	30	13	20
EU28 average	24	10	16

Figure 28 illustrates levels of exposure to the three forms of risk by country and shows the range of differences between Member States.

### Work intensity

As explained in the previous chapter, demanding work, especially when combined with limited latitude for decision-making and limited support, is associated with an increased risk of serious ill health, as well as negative implications for organisations.

In the EU28, economic sectors display differentiated combinations of work intensity (Figure 29). Workers in industry, construction and transport report the highest levels of quantitative demands, while those in health and commerce and hospitality also report high levels. The latter sectors also report high levels of emotional demands (with health workers reporting by far the highest level).

**Figure 28: Exposure to posture-related, biological and chemical and ambient risk dimensions (0–100), by country, EU28**

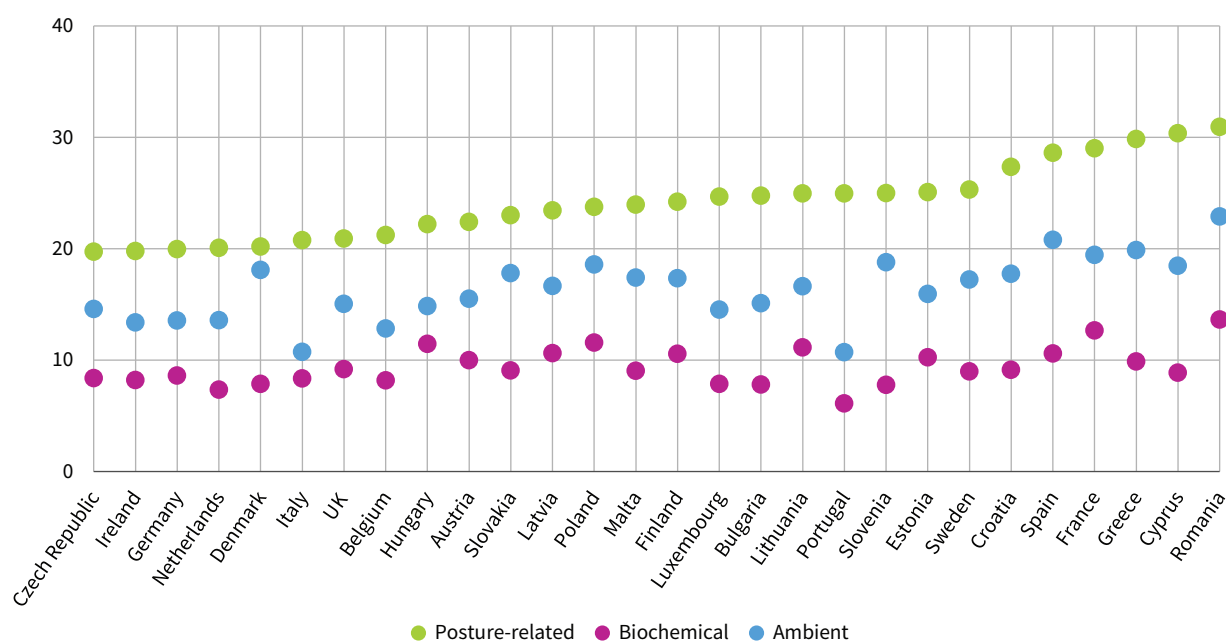


Figure 29: Components of the work intensity dimension, by sector, EU28 (%)

	Working at high speed (3/4 of the time +)	Working to tight deadlines (3/4 of the time +)	Three or more pace determinants	Enough time to do job (never/rarely)	Hide emotions (most of time/always)	Handle angry clients (3/4 of the time +)	Emotionally disturbing situations (3/4 of the time +)	Disruptive interruptions
Agriculture	32	27	20	8	12	6	4	8
Industry	39	43	47	11	23	7	6	16
Construction	39	48	43	9	20	12	6	15
Commerce and hospitality	39	35	33	8	36	20	7	15
Transport	34	44	33	9	29	14	9	9
Financial services	30	37	35	11	35	19	7	20
Public administration	20	29	30	8	38	17	13	22
Education	18	24	21	10	36	22	11	17
Health	34	35	28	14	44	26	22	26
Other services	30	36	24	9	29	13	8	15
EU28	33	36	33	10	31	16	10	16

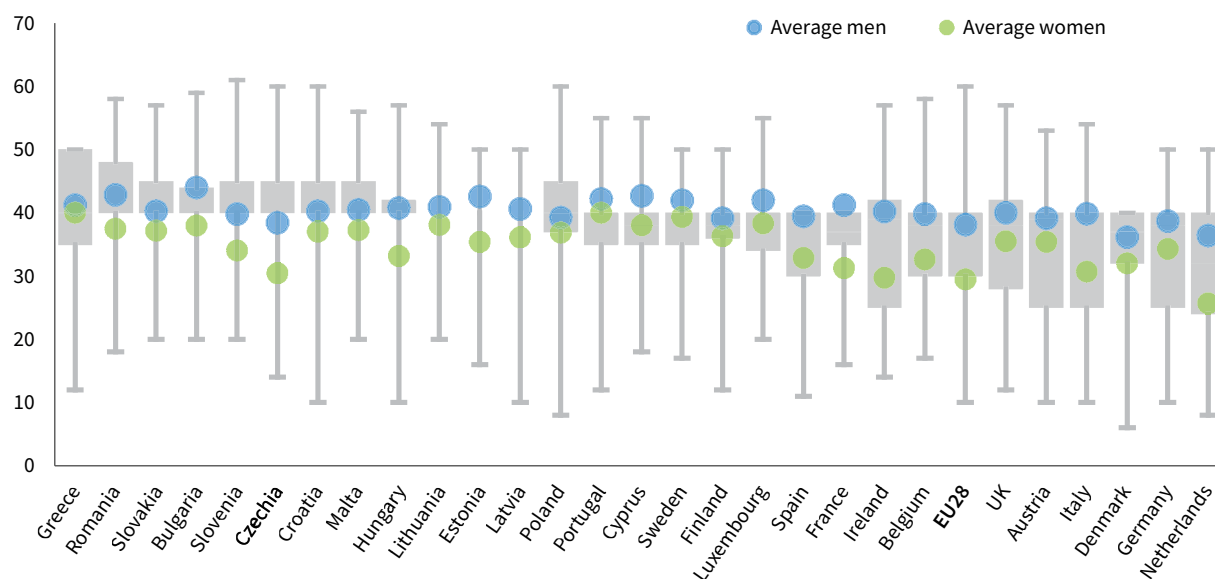
In terms of occupations, craft workers and plant and machine operators report the highest levels of interdependency (three or more pace-of-work determinants) and are most likely to report working to tight deadlines and working at high speed (Figure 30).

Service and sales workers and professionals report the highest incidence of emotional demands, while frequent disruptive interruptions are most commonly reported by managers, professionals and technicians.

Figure 30: Components of the work intensity dimension, by occupation, EU28 (%)

	Working at high speed (3/4 of the time +)	Working to tight deadlines (3/4 of the time +)	Three or more pace determinants	Enough time to do job (never/rarely)	Hide emotions (most of time/always)	Handle angry clients (3/4 of the time +)	Emotionally disturbing situations (3/4 of the time +)	Disruptive interruptions
Managers	31	40	31	13	35	18	9	28
Professionals	28	37	29	12	36	21	15	23
Technicians	30	35	33	10	35	19	12	22
Clerks	32	34	34	9	28	19	9	18
Service and sales workers	35	30	29	8	41	25	13	15
Agricultural workers	31	28	19	9	11	8	5	8
Craft workers	44	48	45	8	20	11	6	13
Plant and machine operators	41	45	46	10	24	9	9	7
Elementary occupations	40	36	27	11	21	6	5	7
EU28	34	37	33	10	31	17	11	16

Figure 31: Usual weekly working hours, by country and sex, EU28



**Note:** The grey box represents the interquartile range (i.e. 50% of the workers fall within the box limits) and the lines (whiskers) represent the 5th and 95th percentiles.

### Working time quality

The first labour laws concerned working time, seeking to limit excessive hours. Other regulations have also focused on regulating 'atypical' or 'asocial' working hours. The notion of working time quality goes beyond this, however. In addition to the duration of working time, it also includes atypical working hours (working at night or weekends, shift work), control of working time arrangements, advance notice of changes to working time (predictability) and flexibility of working time.

Figure 31 presents information on weekly working hours and their dispersion across the EU's different Member States. Some 15% of workers in the EU28 overall habitually work long weekly hours (48 hours or more per week). Self-employed workers are much more likely to work long weeks: 55% of those self-employed with employees and 34% of those self-employed without employees. In contrast, only around 10% of employees work long weekly hours. The Working Time Directive 2003/88/EC entitles workers to a daily rest period of 11 consecutive hours in every 24-hour period. Some 23% of workers reported that at least once in the month prior to the survey they had taken a break of less than 11 hours between the end of one working day and the start of the next. This is substantially more prevalent among self-employed workers (34% of self-employed workers without employees and 43% of self-employed with employees) than employees (about 20%).

The proportion of EU workers who work on Saturdays is largely unchanged since 2010: more than half work at least one Saturday per month. Around a third of workers work at least one Sunday per month (an increase of 2 percentage points since 2010) and 10% work at least three Sundays per month. Some 75% of self-employed workers work on Saturdays and almost 45% work on Sundays.

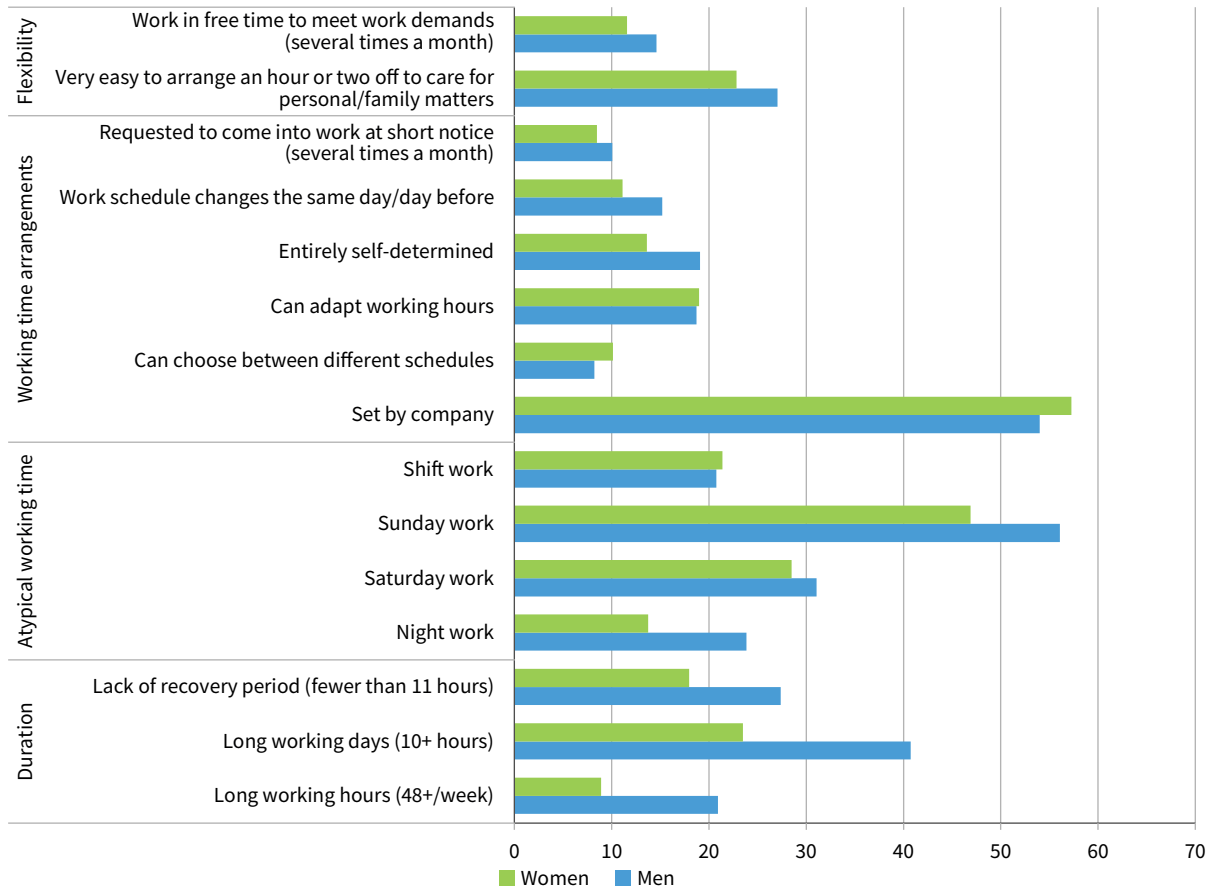
Shift work is more prevalent among service and sales workers and plant and machine operators, and in the sectors of health, transport, industry, and commerce and hospitality.

In considering working time, it is important to remember that women continue to undertake the majority of unpaid domestic and family-related work and that overall patterns of time use remain quite segregated by gender.

Figure 32 shows a number of further important differences between men and women. In terms of working time quality, men are more likely to have longer (paid) working hours and work to 'atypical' schedules more frequently than women. Flexibility – both available and required from workers – is higher for men than for women. Similar proportions of men and women work shifts, and an equal proportion of men and women (each 19%) are able to adapt their working hours within certain limitations. Women however tend to have more regular working hours and are more likely to have their working hours set by their employer.



Figure 32: Components of working time quality dimension, by sex, EU28 (%)



As Figure 33 shows, the degree of working-time autonomy enjoyed by workers is closely linked to their employment status. Most workers in the EU (56%) have their working time arrangements set by their employer and are not granted any flexibility to change them. For the majority of workers (69%), changes to their working time arrangements do not happen regularly.

However, almost 40% of those surveyed were asked to come into work at short notice in the 12 months prior to the survey. In terms of flexibility to suit a worker’s needs, 65% of workers surveyed in the EU28 said it is easy for them to take an hour or two off work during working hours in order to take care of personal matters.

Figure 33: Proportion of working time arrangements and flexibility, by employment status, work status, EU28 (%)

		Working time arrangements				Flexibility	
		Set by company	Can choose between different schedules	Can adapt working hours	Entirely self-determined	Very easy to arrange an hour or two off to care for personal/family matters	Work in free time to meet work demands (several times a month)
Employment status	Self-employed with employees	9	4	12	76	40	28
	Self-employed without employees	8	4	14	75	48	21
	Employee, indefinite contract	64	10	21	6	21	12
	Employee, fixed-term contract	70	10	16	5	20	11
	Employee, fixed-term contract	56	7	19	18	28	9
Work status	Part-time	59	8	19	15	23	14
	Full-time	50	12	19	19	30	10

However, this is not the case for all occupations; around 45% of plant and machine operators and service and sales workers said they find it difficult to take time off work during working hours to take care of personal matters.

The degree of working-time autonomy is also linked to workplace size, with less autonomy enjoyed by workers in small- and medium-sized workplaces (10–249 workers) than in either smaller or larger workplaces. It seems reasonable to suppose that in the smallest workplaces personal relationships permit flexibility to be organised among workers and managers/owners with little formality. In larger workplaces, rules defining the degree of autonomy are more likely to be the subject of negotiation with formal employee representation.

### Social environment

Work is not only the main source of income for most people, but also an activity which provides opportunities for social interaction and integration. The quality of the social environment in the workplace is thus critical for integration and cohesion. On the plus side, the social support provided by colleagues and managers contributes to a positive environment, as does high-quality management. On the negative side, exposure to adverse social behaviour such as bullying or harassment is known to have a serious impact on worker well-being and is also strongly associated with outcomes which are negative for the enterprise, such as increased absenteeism and higher staff turnover.

In the EWCS 2015, respondents were asked if they had been exposed to different forms of adverse social behaviour in the month prior to the study, such as verbal abuse (reported by 12%), unwanted sexual attention (2%), humiliating behaviour (6%) and threats (4%). They were also asked whether they had been exposed to certain forms of behaviour in the 12 months prior to the study, with 2% reporting having experienced physical violence, 1% sexual harassment and 5% bullying/harassment.

All forms of adverse social behaviour are experienced by women to a much greater extent than by men, except for threats (about 60% of the people who reported having been threatened were men). There are considerable differences in the reporting of adverse social behaviour between countries, which may in part be a result of cultural differences. The tolerance of undesired behaviours may differ from country to country, while underreporting may be more of a problem in some countries than in others.

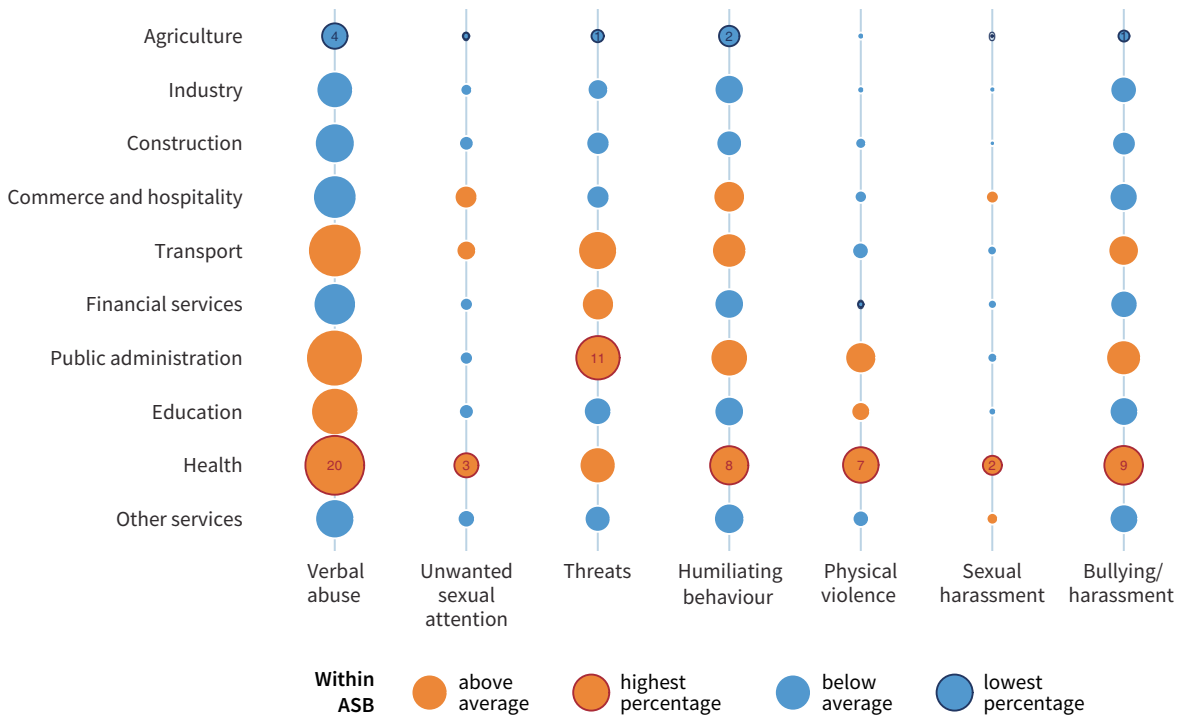
In terms of occupation, almost all forms of adverse social behaviour are most commonly reported by service and sales workers. Workers in this occupational group are considerably more likely to report having been subjected to unwanted sexual attention (4%) and sexual harassment (2%). They are also considerably more likely to have experienced verbal abuse (16%), humiliating behaviour (8%) and threats (7%). As many as 5% of workers in this group report having been subjected to physical violence at work in the past 12 months and around 6% to bullying/harassment.

Adverse social behaviours are particularly prevalent in some sectors (Figure 34). The health sector reported the highest percentage of workers for all of the adverse social behaviour indicators, with the exception of workplace threats, which was found to be highest in public administration (11%).

In the EU28, some 7% of workers felt they had been discriminated against in the 12 months prior to the survey on grounds of sex, race, religion, age, nationality, disability or sexual orientation. As mentioned, European legislation protects workers against all these types of discrimination and provides for equal treatment in employment and occupation. The consequences of discrimination can be very damaging for the individuals concerned, and include negative effects for their health and well-being, as well as for their career.

Ensuring a positive social climate, organisational justice, mutual trust between management and employees, recognition and good cooperation are all important aspects of organisational management. Conversely, failure to provide these may be harmful both for the enterprise and the well-being of the workers, resulting in adverse outcomes such as poorer worker performance, lower organisational commitment and absenteeism. In the EWCS 2015, employees were asked about different aspects of the social environment in their workplaces. Almost three-quarters (73%) agree or strongly agree that employees are appreciated when they have done a good job. Some 73% agree or strongly agree that work is distributed fairly in their enterprise and 71% agree or strongly agree that conflicts are resolved in a fair manner. Around 82% agree or strongly agree that the management trusts the employees to do their work well. Some 69% agree or strongly agree that, in general, employees trust management in their workplace. The vast majority of employees in the EU28 (89%) agree or strongly agree that there is good cooperation between them and their colleagues.

Figure 34: Exposure to adverse social behaviour (ASB), by sector, EU28 (%)

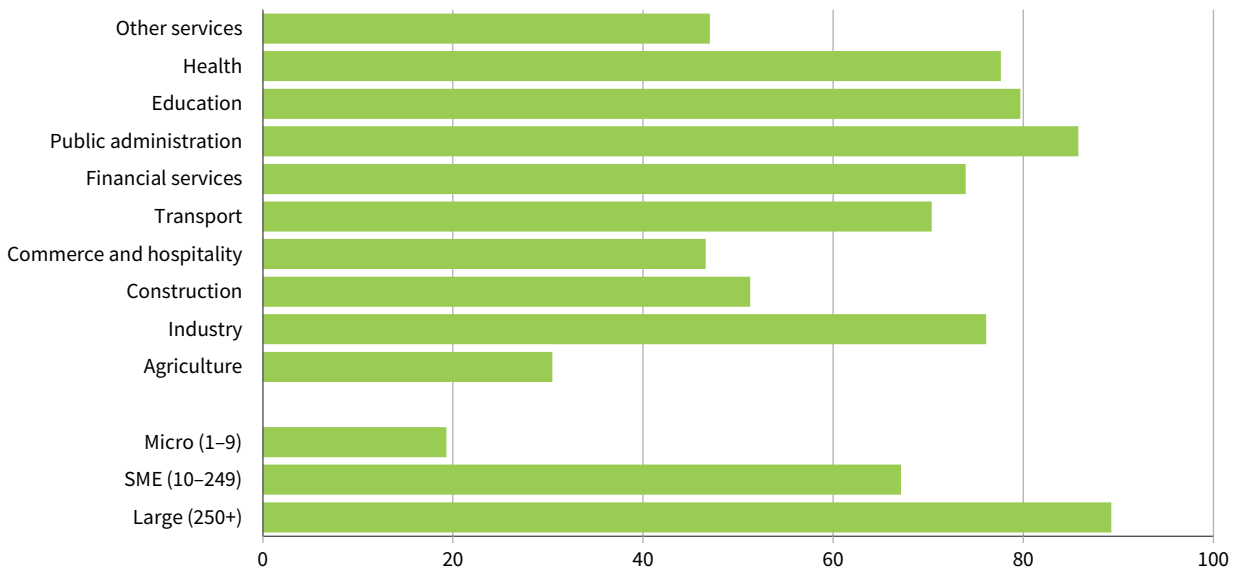


Note: All dichotomous items, proportion indicates 'yes'.

The EWCS also gathered data (from employees only) on employee representation – both strictly in relation to health and safety questions, and in relation to other broader forms of representation such as trade unions or works councils. Enterprise size is an important indicator of the likelihood of such representation being present, and there are important differences by sector (Figure 35).

The survey also asked whether regular meetings take place in which employees have the opportunity to express their views about what is happening in their enterprise. In the EU28, a total of 55% say that such meetings take place. Nearly half (43%) of employees report the existence both of forms of employee representation and of the possibility to express their individual voice in regular meetings; conversely, over a

Figure 35: Formal employee representation, by sector and workplace size, EU28 (%)



quarter (26%) report the existence of neither. Employee representation and opportunities for employees to express their views are much less likely to exist in microenterprises (between 1 and 9 employees) than in large enterprises (more than 250 employees) or SMEs (between 10 and 249 employees).

### Skills and discretion

‘Skills use and discretion’ is a dimension of work allowing workers to develop and grow through their experience of work. The EWCS gathers data to measure the following four elements: the skill content of the job (the cognitive dimension of work), decision latitude, worker participation in the organisation, and training.

There is, in general, a high level of creativity and task variety associated with work in the EU28, as indicated by the large proportion of workers who report that their job involves solving unforeseen problems on their own (83%) or applying their own ideas in their work (78%). Moreover, a considerable proportion of workers say that their job involves learning new things (72%) and that they carry out complex tasks (63%). However, the data also show that almost half of all workers report that their job involves monotonous (46%) and/or repetitive tasks (40% perform repetitive tasks with a duration of less than 10 minutes); in other words, their jobs have little task variety. The lowest levels of creativity at work and task variety are reported by workers in elementary occupations, plant and machine operators, workers

with part-time or fixed-term contracts, and younger workers.

Discretion<sup>10</sup> is of high importance for workers, as it allows them to deal with the demands of their job and to work safely and in the way that best suits them. Between 2005 and 2015, there was an increase in the proportion of workers who reported having discretion to change at least some aspects of their work, although the level of discretion did vary across different occupations. Managers, professionals and agricultural workers, for example, report higher levels of discretion in their work (Figure 36).

About half of all workers in the EU are involved in decisions that directly affect their work: 46% of all workers are consulted (always or most of the time) before objectives are set for their work, while 49% are involved in improving the organisation of work or processes in their department or enterprise. In addition, some 47% report that they are able to influence decisions that are important for their work. However, there are substantial differences between occupations: only a third of plant and machine operators and workers in elementary occupations are involved in decisions that affect their work, but this figure rises to 8 out of 10 for managers.

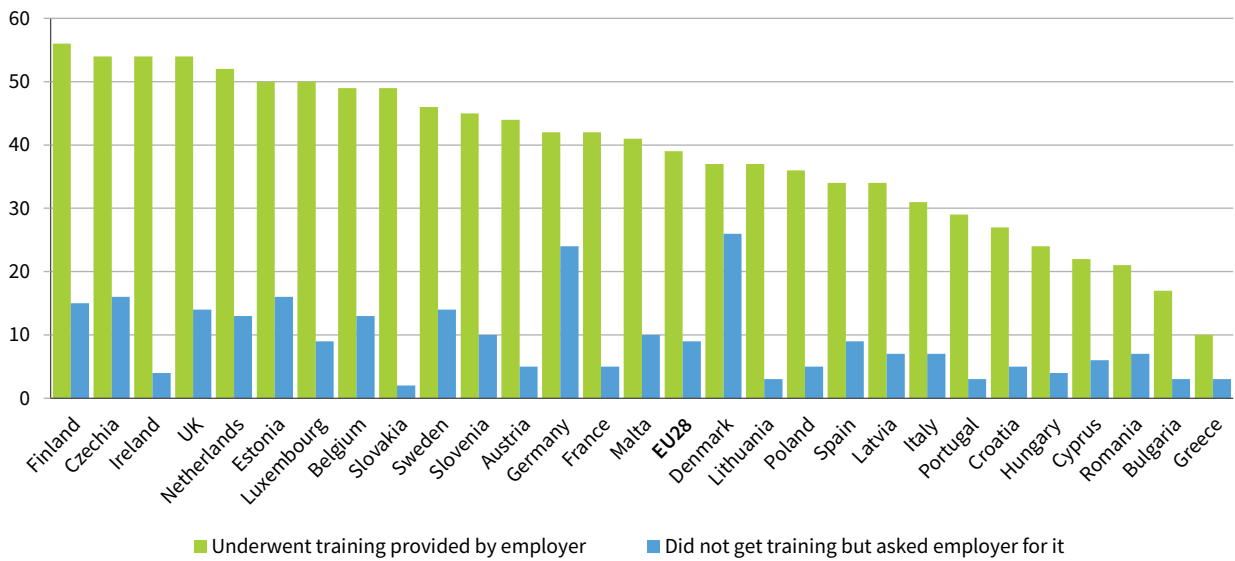
Lifelong learning has been an objective of EU policy since the 1990s. EWCS data show that access to training has increased over time: for example, the proportion of

Figure 36: Decision latitude, by occupation, EU28 (%)



<sup>10</sup> ‘Discretion’ or ‘decision latitude’ refers to a worker’s ability to make decisions about the speed or method of their work, and the order of their tasks. Both terms are used interchangeably throughout this report.

Figure 37: Access to employer-provided training, by country (% of employees), EU28



workers who report having received training paid for by their employer (or by themselves if self-employed) rose from 26% in 2005 to 38% in 2015. Workers appreciate training for its direct benefit in improving their job, and for its potential benefits for job security and employability. When it comes to workers who have received training paid for or provided by their employer, 42% strongly agree that the training has helped improve the way they work and a further 41% agree with this statement, 60% agree or strongly agree that their job is more secure because of their training, and 29% strongly agree that their prospects for future employment have improved because of the training.

There are substantial inequalities in terms of access to training. Of particular concern is the fact that workers who might need training the most have the least access to it: workers in lower-level occupations and with lower levels of education, and those on fixed-term or part-time contracts or with no contract.

### Prospects

The prospects dimension of job quality includes job security and the prospect of career advancement. The inverse of job security – job insecurity – is recognised as a significant cause of stress; when prolonged, it can have damaging effects on people’s career paths and health and well-being. In 2015, 22% of workers reported downsizing of their workplace in the previous three years. Similarly, 16% of workers report that they are insecure about their jobs.

Nevertheless, there has been some improvement. Almost 4 out of 10 workers (39%) agree with the statement that their job offers good prospects for career advancement – 7 percentage points more than in 2010

(32%) and 8 more than in 2005 (31%). In contrast, 38% of workers disagreed with this statement in 2015. Men rate their prospects better than women. A high proportion of older workers (women in particular) feel that their prospects are poor: 50% of those aged 50 or over. Figure 38 shows the differences by occupation, for example a majority of managers agree with the statement that their job offers good prospects for career development. However, most elementary workers and plant and machine operators disagree.

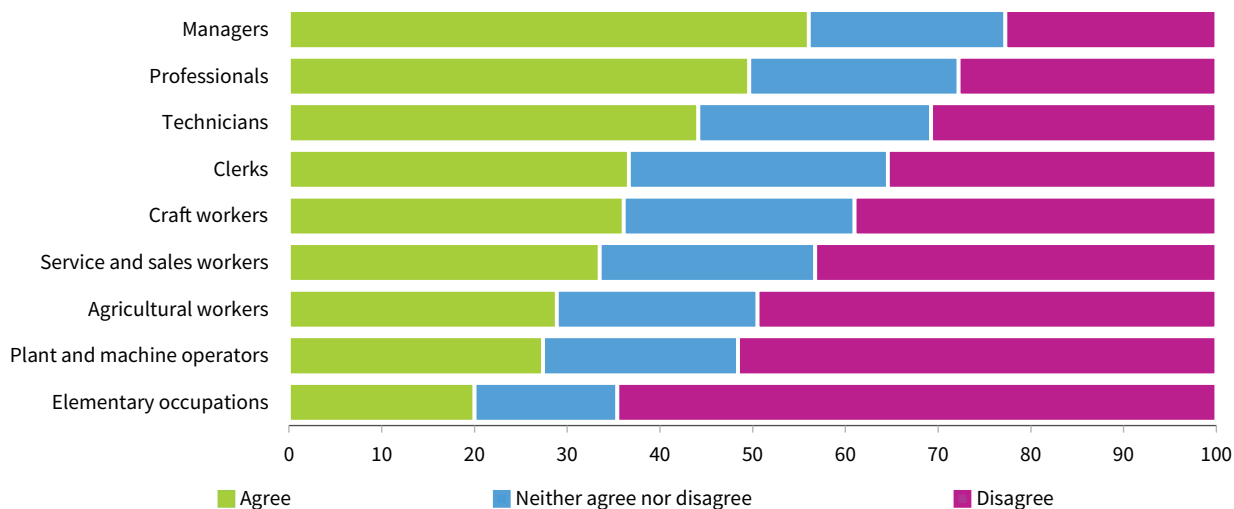
### Earnings

Monetary rewards are a crucial element of working life, even if non-material features of work have rightly gained greater attention in recent years. Earnings are the means to secure a livelihood as well as a factor in motivation to work. In this context, the level of earnings is of obvious importance. A further factor is the perception of the worker whether they are, or are not, paid appropriately. About half of all workers agree or strongly agree that they are paid appropriately based on their efforts and achievements, though there are differences across the earnings distribution.

### Perspectives on working life

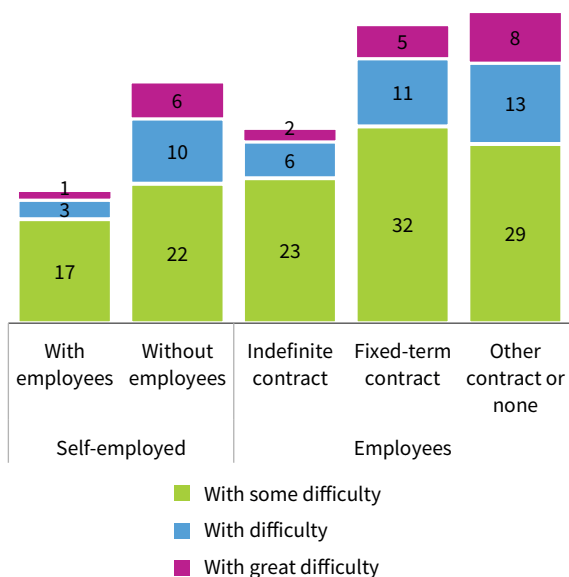
Whereas the previous section considered job quality – the quality of work and employment as measured by characteristics of the job – this section looks at workers’ subjective experience of working life. This experience is shaped not only by job quality but also by contextual factors such as the household situation of the worker, their own preferences, the nature of social infrastructure and services, and the framework of social and employment policies.

Figure 38: Good prospects for career advancement, by occupation (%), EU28



The following dimensions are considered: career and employment security; engagement and motivation; health and well-being; and work–life balance. The section also examines the ‘sustainability’ of work – enabling workers to continue to work over the life course by both safeguarding the quality of their jobs and by taking into account workers’ personal and domestic needs, such as their health situation or care obligations.

Figure 39: Making ends meet by employment status, EU28 (%)



### Career and employment security

A person’s employment status and the terms of their employment determine the level and components of pay, as well as future security of earnings and social protection rights. Workers’ financial vulnerability is assessed in the EWCS by asking to what extent the respondent’s household is able to make ends meet – a well-established indicator of poverty.

In terms of financial security, 65% of respondents said their households could make ends meet fairly easily – a slight rise since 2010 (62%). Self-employed workers with employees and employees with indefinite contracts are the groups with the greatest financial security (Figure 39). In contrast, self-employed workers without employees, employees on fixed-term contracts and employees with no contract (or another type of contract) are the most financially vulnerable.

### Engagement and motivation

Work engagement has been described as a ‘positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption’ (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007). It is positively related to job performance at an individual level and represents a factor that can boost performance, creativity, income and health and well-being, while preventing excessive levels of absence from work. It also has positive implications at a collective level, including commitment to the enterprise, client satisfaction, health and safety at work and employee retention.

Findings from the EWCS paint a generally positive picture across the EU28. A majority of workers (71%) report feeling full of energy always or most of the time. A similar proportion (71%) of workers are enthusiastic about their job, while 76% feel that ‘time flies at work’. On the negative side, 33% ‘feel exhausted at the end of the day’ and 10% ‘doubt the importance of their work’ (always or most of the time).



Performing meaningful work – work that is worthwhile and done well – is a key factor for mental health and well-being. The great majority of workers (82%) have a feeling of work well done either always (40%) or most of the time (42%). Higher proportions report work always well done in agriculture (51%), construction (47%) and health (44%) and lower proportions in transport (33%) and public administration (34%).

Feeling able to perform useful work is important for workers, as it gives meaning to their job and facilitates self-development and personal fulfilment. Just over half of workers in the EU28 (52%) report that they always feel that the work they are doing is useful, and a third report that they feel this most of the time. Over 60% of workers in health, education and agriculture say they feel that they always perform useful work, but the figure is below 50% in transport, financial services, industry and commerce. The great majority (86%) of respondents in the EU28 report being either satisfied (60%) or very satisfied (26%) with their working conditions.

## Health and well-being

There are numerous and bidirectional relationships between work and health. Work has specific impacts on health while health is a determinant of the ability to work and remain in work. The effects on health outcomes may be immediate or delayed. Moreover, work also plays a key role in shaping the socioeconomic status of the individual which, in turn, has been identified as one of the main determinants of health.

The findings from the survey reveal that the health of workers is good and, on average, better than that of the general population. Some 78% of workers report being in good or very good health (52% and 26% respectively). It can be assumed that workers who are unable to work because of poor health exit the labour market and healthy workers remain. There are substantial differences between occupations, and workers at a lower level on the International Standard Classification of Occupations report a greater incidence of poor health – as do those with a lower level of education.

Subjective well-being is measured through the World Health Organization's well-being index (WHO5). Men score slightly higher than women (69 compared to 67). Overall, 6% of workers have a score that indicates they are at risk of mental health problems, with more women than men being at risk (7% compared to 5%). The most commonly reported health problem is backache (reported by 43% of workers), followed by muscular pains in the neck or upper limbs (42%), headache and eyestrain and overall fatigue (all 35%), muscular pains in the hip or lower limbs (29%), anxiety (15%), injuries and skin problems (both 8%) and hearing problems (6%). All of these health problems are strongly associated with the social and physical environment of workers.

## Work–life balance

To encourage people to enter the labour market, and to enable those already working to stay doing so, it is essential to help workers balance their working lives with their lives outside of work.

In 2015, over four workers in five (82%) reported a good fit between their work and their family or social commitments, with just 18% reporting a poor fit. There are considerable differences between countries, with the proportion reporting a good fit ranging from 74% in Greece to 92% in Romania. Workers with care responsibilities more often report a poor fit. Men are more likely to say that their working hours do not fit with their private commitments than women: 20% of men reported this in 2015 compared to 16% of women. However, interpreting this finding is not straightforward as it is generally acknowledged that women continue to carry out the majority of domestic tasks.

When paid and unpaid work are looked at together, women continue to work more hours than men – 55 hours per week, as against 49 for men. Men work more hours in their paying job, but women do the most unpaid working hours.

Those who work long hours are almost four times less likely than other workers to report a good fit between working hours and social commitments. They are also more likely to say that their health and safety is at risk because of work, work affects their health negatively, and they feel exhausted at the end of the working day. And they are twice as likely as other workers to say that they go to work when they are sick (known as 'presenteeism').

A statistical model controlling for various individual qualities shows that working hours are shown to be a significant determinant of individuals' well-being and work–life balance: workers who report working more than 40 hours a week are more likely to report problems in these respects, while those who are working under 35 hours a week register better levels of work–life balance.

## Sustainable work

The concept behind sustainable work is that how we work today will have an impact on how far we engage with and remain in work in the future. Research shows that working conditions and work organisation are critical for sustainability.

Some 73% of the under-55 cohort of workers in the EU28 said they felt they would be able to do their current job until the age of 60, with 27% saying they felt they could not. Men were slightly more optimistic than women in this respect: 74% of men saying they would be able to do this, compared to 72% of women. Of those aged 56 years and over, some 71% report that they would still be able to do their current job in five years' time.

There are notable differences between occupations. More than 75% of clerks, professionals and managers indicated that they would be able to work until the age of 60, compared to fewer than 60% of workers in elementary occupations and service and sales workers. The EWCS also finds significant differences in terms of employment status, with over 80% of the self-employed stating that they feel able to work to 60, compared to 74% of workers with an indefinite employment contract, and around 62% of workers on a fixed-term or other form of contract.

Workers are likely to be less optimistic regarding the sustainability of their work if they are exposed to any of the following adverse working conditions: work intensity, shift work (particularly daily split shifts), night work, fear of losing their job, unfair treatment, and bullying or harassment. (These same factors also apply equally to the older age cohort – aged 56 or over – who were asked about their perceived ability to be doing their current job in five years' time.) Conversely, workers are likely to be more positive about the sustainability of their work if the following conditions are present: the ability to take an hour off work when needed, good support from colleagues, perception that the work they are doing is useful, and praise and recognition when they do a good job.

## Conclusions

The EU has a wide range of policy initiatives and legislative actions in support of improved working conditions and job quality as part of its 'high road' approach to economic and social development. Notwithstanding the great diversity within the EU, in the global context it is clearly a region of relatively high incomes and labour standards.

Long-standing trends towards greater tertiarisation of the economy, and feminisation of the labour force and the spread of non-standard employment arrangements (temporary work, part-time work, agency work) have all influenced the nature of work and employment. Work and employment are also increasingly affected by the new wave of technological change – digitalisation, and associated changes in employment relations in the platform economy.

Each of the seven dimensions of job quality measured using the EWCS has an independent influence on the health and well-being of workers. These dimensions are measured through indicators of positive and negative job features, captured in the EWCS. This approach enables different aspects of job quality to be mapped across sectors and occupations, to assess how different groups of workers fare in relation to job quality, and to compare the different job quality attributes of different jobs. It is important to note that although the approach

to job quality is worker-centred – the association between job characteristics and the health and well-being of workers (and that from this perspective it is clear that all jobs are capable of improvement) – many job quality features beneficial to workers are also positively associated with enterprise performance, productivity and innovation.

When workers' subjective experiences of working life are assessed, there is a clear and positive association with job quality as measured. This association is mediated, however, by the (household and other) circumstances and preferences of the individual, as well as the nature of social infrastructure and services and the wider framework of social and employment policies. In short, it is the interaction of job characteristics and these wider contextual factors which shape the overall experience of 'work'.

While there has been progress in many dimensions of job quality, there remain areas of concern where policy intervention is relevant. A high proportion of workers (more men than women) report being exposed to physical risks at work, with progress reported on some, but not all, indicators. In particular exposures to those risks which can be associated with the development of musculoskeletal disorders remain very frequent. Exposure to psychosocial risks is frequent; workers in these situations also report a poorer quality of working life. Inequalities between workers have been on the increase. There remain many jobs which score badly in terms of job quality. Most of these jobs are held by workers with a low level of education, and more women than men hold them. Overall, one in five workers in the EU holds a poor-quality job.

Moreover, despite the transformation to a predominantly services-based economy, regulation, and investment in upskilling the labour force, the traditional negative features of work have not disappeared. Low earnings or high exposure to physical risks, for example, remain problematic features of many jobs in Europe. Indeed the growing services economy is not immune to either of these traditional negative features. The services sector is itself hugely diverse and encompasses many different types of role. These often require close personal interactions, for example with customers, clients and colleagues. While interactions are at the heart of the positive experiences of work which many workers enjoy, they may in some cases be the source of negative experiences.

Improving job quality in Europe calls for greater rather than less policy intervention and coordination. Progress can be achieved on each dimension of job quality. And the different policies and actions that can support workers over the course of their working lives should be considered together to ensure mutual reinforcement along the path to success. Given that job quality is

crucial for safety at work, productivity, creativity, innovation and public health, and can support gender equality and equal opportunities, it needs to be underpinned by a wide-ranging set of policies and actions that:

- safeguard general health and safety at work, including psychosocial risks and violence in the workplace
- improve working time quality
- support career development and make work pay
- promote the use of skills and workers' development
- support a better allocation and management of workload
- advance the design of meaningful jobs

Improving job quality and working conditions needs continuing action at the levels of national – and supranational – regulation in order to provide protection for workers, and incentives to maintain high standards. It also needs action within enterprises and workplaces, where the crucial issues of work organisation and job design are decided. And in this context, ensuring effective participation of workers is a vital building block. The actors in industrial relations therefore face a significant challenge to find ways, and structures, to redesign work and improve job quality.

As the world of work continues to change, good quality and comparable data continue to be needed to guide evidence-based policymaking.

# 4 | China

## Introduction

Unlike the other countries featured in this report, China does not have a dedicated survey on working conditions. Nevertheless, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), in cooperation with the ILO, decided to include some questions on working conditions in the 2016 China Urban Labour Survey (CULS), covering topics such as working time, the social environment at work and skills and discretion. The CULS, in its fourth iteration, was conducted in six metropolitan areas: Shanghai, Wuhan, Shenyang, Fuzhou, Xian and Guangzhou. The cities vary with respect to geography, economic development, and access to public resources; however, the sample is not representative of working conditions nationally, as the experiences of rural workers and workers in special economic zones are not captured. In addition to that, the CULS lacks some basic variables related to working conditions, such as physical risks, prospects and work–life balance. For this reason, the 2010 Social Status of Women in China Survey (SSWCS) – a nationally representative survey covering both men and women that includes data on selected job quality dimensions, including physical and environment and career prospects – is used to complement the findings of the CULS. While neither survey is as extensive or detailed as the EWCS with respect to working conditions issues, the surveys nonetheless provide insight into key aspects of working conditions in China and are an important first step for further research on these issues.

## Labour market overview

Since its integration into the world economy in the 1990s, China's economy has grown at very high rates, becoming the world's second largest. The country's rapid development trajectory has resulted in a restructuring of the domestic economy, while its important role in global supply chains, as both a producer and consumer of goods, has altered the pattern of global flows of investment and goods.

The country's exceptional growth is demonstrated by the rapid increase in GDP per capita, which rose from USD 709 in 1996 to USD 8,123 in 2016. However, China's per capita growth rate, which measured 13% in 2007, has slowed since the Great Recession, measuring 6% in 2016 and 7% in 2017. Notwithstanding this slowdown, the Chinese economy continues to undergo vast transformations due to economic growth, urbanisation and ageing of the population. These myriad economic, social and demographic forces have had profound

effects on the structure of labour markets and the types of opportunities available to Chinese workers – as well as on their working conditions.

Perhaps the most dramatic change has been the shift of workers across economic sectors. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, between 2000 and 2015, employment in the primary sector decreased from 364 million to 219 million and employment in the secondary sector increased from 162 million to 226 million (accounting for 29% of total employment in 2015). Nevertheless, it is the tertiary sector that has seen the greatest increase in employment, growing steadily from 198 million workers to 328 million (42% of employment) in 2015. These shifts have affected the types of occupations available, with agricultural work falling from 57% of total employment in 2005 to 28% in 2015, while the proportion of professionals and technicians has increased from 8% to 12%. The share of service workers has increased from 12% to 25%; clerks from 4% to 10%; and plant and machine operators from 18% to 23%.

A parallel change is the shift from working in state-owned enterprises to privately owned enterprises. The number of people in employment in state-owned units has decreased by 2.8 million since 2005, to reach 62 million at the end of 2015, and the share of urban employment in state-owned units has decreased to 17%. The private sector is now the main provider of employment. Urban workers in the private sector formed 35% of employment in 2005; this rose to 51% in 2015, with the number of urban workers in private enterprises reaching 190 million in 2015.

Another important trend in employment patterns in China is the ageing of the population. Since the year 2000, the share of workers under the age of 35 has decreased from 44% to 35% of the workforce, while the percentage of workers aged 50 or older has increased by nearly the same proportion (from 19% to 26%). At the same time, the number of people aged 65 and above continues to rise. The decrease in the size of the working-age population, combined with the increase in the size of the elderly population, has led to an increase in the dependency ratio in China.

Additionally, the country is experiencing declining rates of participation in the labour market, among both men and women, which have coincided with increases in household income. The declining participation rate among women is largely attributed to the decision of some women to leave the labour market and instead dedicate their time to unpaid household production activities (Wu, 2015). At the same time, a movement from agricultural production in rural areas to wage

employment in urban areas, increased formalisation of work and rising minimum wages are observed.

China has made substantial progress in raising the level of education of its labour force. According to data from the China Statistical Yearbook, the number of workers with a tertiary level of education (or higher) increased from 44 million in 2002 to 146 million in 2015, resulting in an increase in their share of the working population from 6% to 19% in the same time period. The number of workers with a secondary level of education also increased: from 96 million in 2002 to 134 million in 2015 – an increase from 13% to 17%.

There has also been a rapid shift towards wage employment in recent years. The proportion of employees increased dramatically from 31% in 2005 to 56% in 2015, in line with the economic transformations. Conversely, there has been a dramatic decrease in the proportion of self-employed workers: in 2015 it was 38% – a decrease of 28 percentage points since 2005. Men are more likely to be employees and employers than women, while women are more likely to be self-employed workers and family workers (working to support family businesses, often farms, on a semi-formal basis).

The expansion of wage employment and improvements in the social insurance system have led to greater coverage of basic pension insurance, doubling from 174 million workers in 2005 to 353 million in 2015. A similar expansion has occurred with respect to basic medical insurance (from 138 million workers in 2000 to 289 million in 2015), unemployment insurance (106 million in 2005 to 173 million in 2015) and maternity insurance (54 million in 2005 to 178 million in 2015).

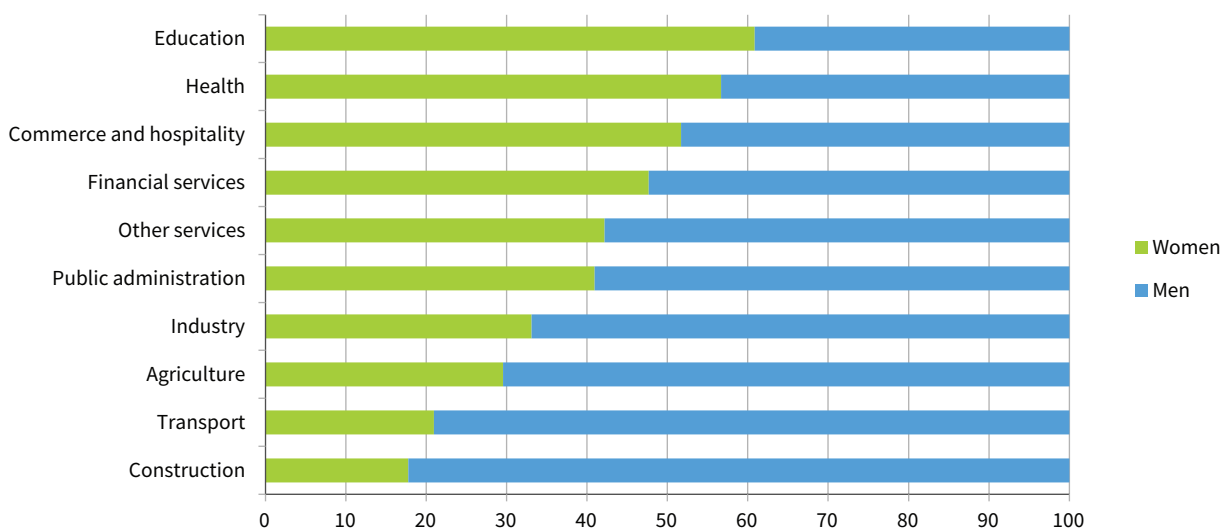
According to the 2016 CULS, for the six metropolitan areas covered, 65% of respondents were employed (either as self-employed or employee), with a higher employment-to-population ratio for men (78%) than for women (53%). The share of wage employees is substantially higher in the CULS data than nationwide, and stands at 76% (19% hold an indefinite contract, 41% a fixed-term contract and 16% have a temporary contract or no contract). Eighteen percent of respondents in the CULS are self-employed without employees and 2% are self-employed with employees.

In addition, the survey finds that 53% of workers work in medium-sized enterprises of between 8 and 249 employees and 20% work in large firms with 250 employees or more. The remaining 27% are either self-employed or work in small firms with 7 employees or fewer.

The CULS data also show that women form the majority of the labour force in the health, education, and commerce and hospitality sectors, while men predominate in all other sectors (Figure 40).

Unlike the CULS, the SSWCS was conducted in both urban and rural areas, and therefore includes data from a greater number of agricultural workers than the CULS. By occupation, agricultural workers accounted for more than 40% of the SSWCS sample, service workers accounted for 17% and craft workers accounted for 10%. In terms of economic sector, more than 41% of respondents in the SSWCS worked in agriculture, more than 16% worked in industry and 15% in commerce and hospitality. Employees comprised 75% of the workers surveyed and self-employed workers made up 21%; less than 3% of the respondents were employers.

Figure 40: Employment rates within sector by sex, China (%)



Source: CULS, 2016



## Hukou

Part of the motivation for conducting research on urban labour markets in China was to understand the experiences of migrant workers. 'Hukou' refers to a registered residency status that has been in use since the 1950s as part of the government household registration system. For decades, every Chinese citizen was assigned a hukou location (local or migrant) and a hukou status (agricultural or non-agricultural hukou). Households with a local, non-agricultural hukou enjoy better social welfare benefits than households with a migrant or agricultural hukou, such as access to better education, social security, health insurance and wider-ranging job opportunities.

At one time, hukou prohibited domestic migration. However, following an open reform policy and the gradual loosening of restrictions on rural labour mobility, more and more of the rural population were able to move to urban areas in pursuit of expanded job opportunities. In 2003, some provinces began to stop labelling hukou as agricultural or non-agricultural; by 2009, some 13 provincial regions had ended the practice. Subsequent efforts have been undertaken to further liberalise the hukou system and to create a more equitable environment for migrant workers. In 2014, the State Council issued the 'Opinions on Further Promoting the Reform of the Household Registration System', promoting a unification of urban and rural household registration systems. By the end of 2016, this recommendation was implemented and the differentiation of agricultural and non-agricultural hukou was abolished throughout China. Nonetheless, hukou location (local versus migrant) continues to define a person's access to public services and welfare; this has particular implications for migrant workers.

The fourth CULS was conducted in 2016 following the unification of urban and rural household registration systems. Although the survey asks respondents to identify their hukou status, survey questions focus on the differences between migrants and locals. The SSWCS, on the other hand, was conducted in 2010 at national level. This survey has information on hukou status and hukou destination; however, the number of migrants is limited in this survey. For this reason, it is not possible to compare the differences between migrants and locals using the SSWCS.

## Policies and laws governing the labour market, working conditions and employment

Five main laws are used to protect the rights and safety of workers in China: the Labour Law of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Labour Contract Law of the PRC, the Trade Union Law of the PRC, the Work Safety Law of the PRC and the Law of the PRC on the Prevention and Control of Occupational Diseases.

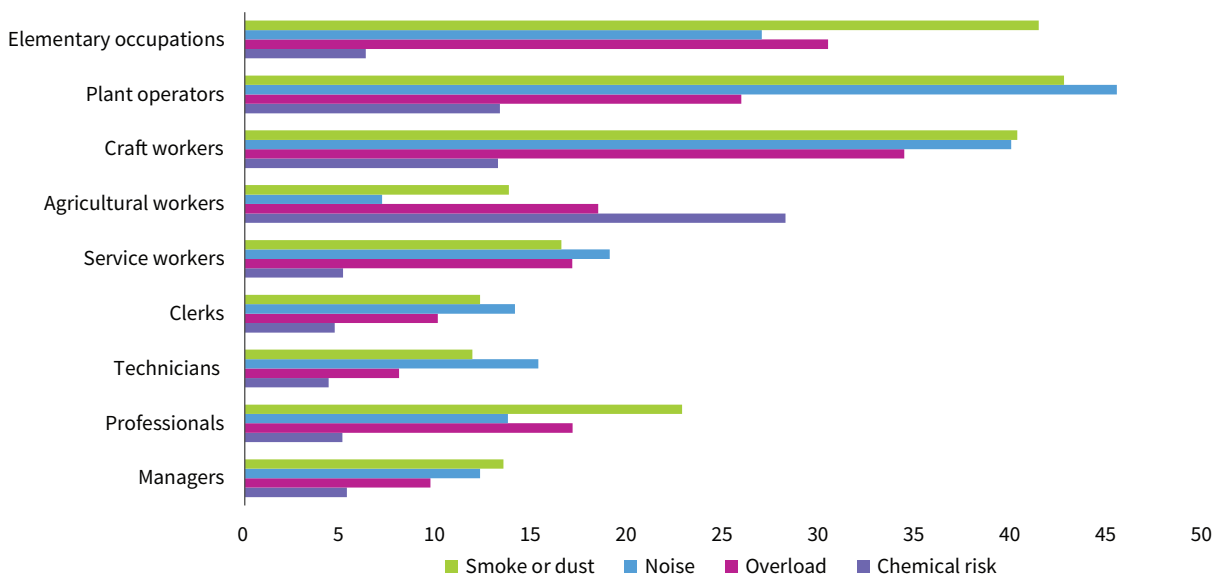
According to the Labour Law of the PRC, the standard working day is set at eight hours, and the standard working week should not exceed 44 hours on average. Employers must guarantee that workers have at least one day off work per week and they are required to grant workers all statutory holidays. If an employee works overtime – meaning more than the standard eight hours – the employer must pay the employee no less than 150% of their normal wages for the additional time worked. If an employee is required to work on days of rest and no time in lieu is granted, the employer must pay the employee no less than 200% of their normal wages. Should an employee be asked to work on a statutory holiday, the employer must pay the employee no less than 300% of their normal wages. The Labour Law also provides statutory annual leave for all employees, provided they have at least one year of cumulative work experience, as well as paid maternity leave.

China implemented a guaranteed minimum wage in 1993. Minimum wage standards are determined regionally, though under the direct authority of the central government. The minimum wage regulation was amended in 2004 to require that local governments revise their minimum wage standards at least once every two years. This revision process was temporarily suspended during the period of the financial crisis but was reinstated in 2010. Since then, increases in the minimum wage have tended to be frequent and rapid (Jia and Du, 2016).

The Law of the PRC on the Prevention and Control of Occupational Diseases was implemented in 2002 and subsequently amended in 2011 and again in 2016. According to the law, the employer must provide working conditions that are in compliance with the state occupational health standards and requirements. Employers must also provide effective measures for the prevention and management of occupational disease. The Chinese Government's newest regulation takes special administrative measures to mitigate high levels of powder and dust exposure.



Figure 41: Exposure to physical risks, by occupation, China (%)



Source: SSWCS, 2010

The Trade Union Law of the PRC is the key piece of legislation on trade union organisations. It gives employees in workplaces of 25 or more the right to form an enterprise union, meaning a union in which all members work for the same enterprise rather than sharing the same trade. This law is accompanied by regulations on labour disputes, mediation and arbitration that have been expanded in recent years to provide stronger protections for workers.

## Dimensions of job quality

### Physical environment

The physical risks experienced by Chinese workers have been evaluated according to four different measures: workers’ exposure to chemical risk; ‘overload’ (carrying or moving heavy loads; long periods of time spent standing or squatting); exposure to noise pollution; and exposure to smoke or dust.

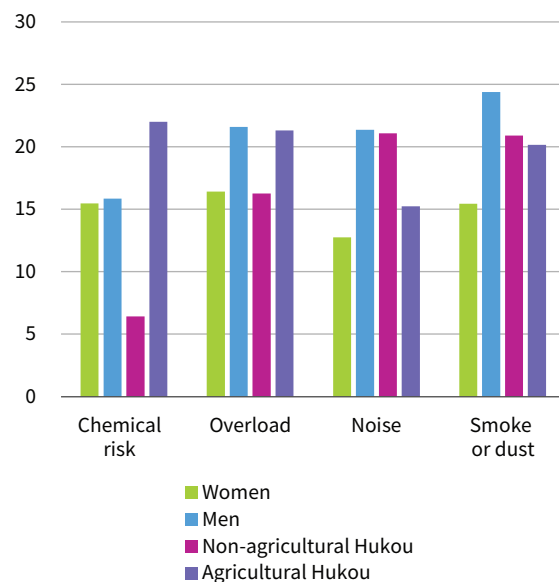
The most recent results, gathered as part of the 2010 survey, show that 16% of all workers are exposed to chemical risk, 19% to overload, 18% to noise pollution, and 21% to smoke or dust pollution. A sectoral breakdown reveals that workers in the agriculture sector are the most likely to be exposed to chemical risks (28%); workers in the construction sector are the most likely to be exposed to overload risks (40%); and workers in the construction and industry sectors are the most likely to be exposed to noise, smoke and dust pollution.

Exposure to risks also varies by occupation (Figure 41). Workers in elementary occupations, craft workers, and plant and machine operators and assemblers experience the highest levels of overload risk,

noise pollution, and smoke or dust exposure. Exposure to chemical risks is most frequently reported by agricultural workers (28%).

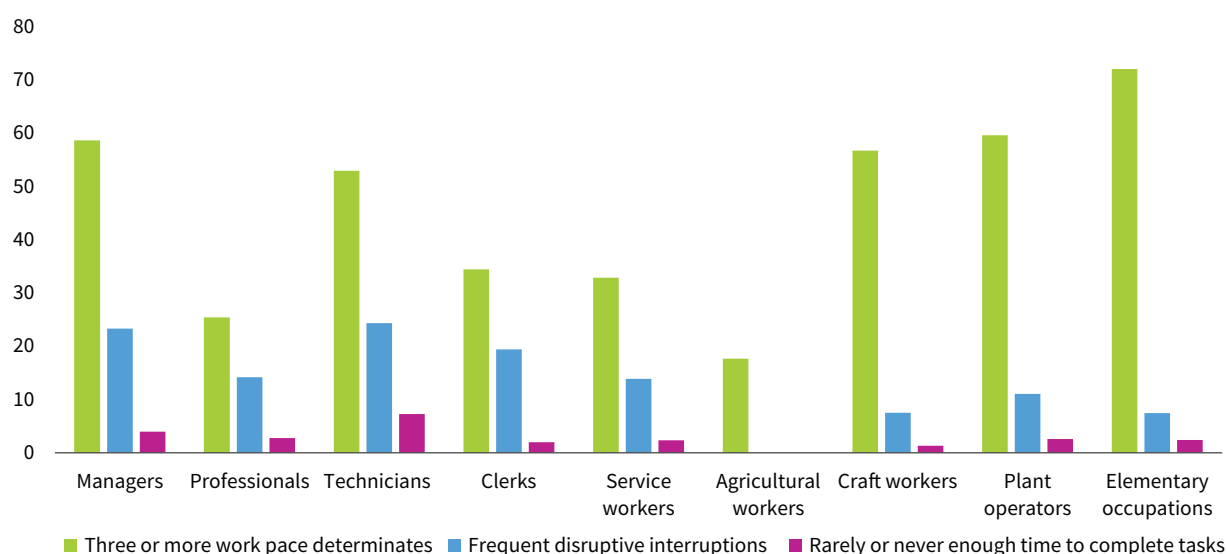
Examining the findings by sex and hukou also reveals key differences in terms of exposure to physical risks. Men are between six and nine percentage points more likely than women to report posture-related risks, exposure to noise, and exposure to smoke or dust (Figure 42). While there is a negligible difference in the frequency of exposure to chemical risk by sex, workers with an agricultural hukou have much higher rates of exposure to chemical risk than workers with a non-agricultural hukou (22% compared to 6%).

Figure 42: Exposure to physical risks, by sex and hukou, China (%)



Source: SSWCS, 2010

Figure 43: Work intensity, by occupation, China (%)



Note: No data available for agricultural workers on items frequent disruptive interruptions and enough time to complete tasks.

Source: CULS, 2016

## Work intensity

The CULS provides information on the work intensity in Chinese workplaces as measured by pace determinants, or the conditions that determine the pace of work. These determinants include demands from clients, performance targets, the speed of automated machines or systems and direct demands from managers.

Some 45% of respondents to the CULS report that their work pace is determined by their colleagues, two-thirds attribute it to the direct demands of consumers and just over half of workers say their pace is controlled by their boss. Some 38% of workers report that their pace of work is dependent on numerical production targets or performance targets. At 17%, a smaller but still significant share of workers report that their pace is determined by automation and product movement.

Almost 40% of workers (41% of men and 34% of women) are exposed to three or more pace determinants. Compared with older workers, younger workers are more likely to be exposed to three or more pace determinants.

The differences between occupations are stark: around 70% of workers in elementary occupations are exposed to three or more determinants, but only 25% of professionals and 18% of agricultural workers report this (Figure 43). In terms of economic sector, 59% of workers in industry and 55% in construction report three pace determinants or more, while only 29% of workers in commerce and hospitality and 26% in education report three or more determinants. By occupation, managers, technicians and clerks most frequently experience disruptive interruptions. However, few workers report that they rarely or never have enough time to complete their tasks.

In terms of size, 51% of workers in large enterprises report three or more determinants, while only 22% of workers in small enterprises report such exposure.

## Working time quality

The questions in the CULS concerning working time quality examine the number of hours that respondents spend at work per day and per week, and ask whether they are able to influence or choose their work schedules.

In 2005, some 44% of respondents worked more than 48 hours per week, but by 2016, this figure had declined to 41%. Over the same period, the proportion of respondents working more than 10 hours a day also decreased from 14% to 7%. In 2016, more men than women worked long working weeks of more than 48 hours (44% compared to 37%). Self-employed workers are much more likely to work long weeks: 63% of the self-employed with employees work long weeks and 80% of those without employees. In contrast, only 35% of employees work long weeks.

Large differences can be observed in the proportion of workers with long working weeks when comparing employees with a migrant hukou and those with a local hukou (43% as against 26%: Figure 44). Between 2005 and 2016, the proportion of workers holding a migrant hukou who worked long working weeks decreased, while the proportion for workers with a local hukou remained largely unchanged. As a result, the difference between the percentages of employees with a migrant hukou and with a local hukou who are working in excess of 48 hours per week is narrowing.

**Figure 44: Proportion of long weekly working hours, by hukou, China (%)**

	2005		2010		2016	
	Migrant	Local	Migrant	Local	Migrant	Local
<21	1	1	0	0	1	1
21-34	2	5	2	2	2	3
35-40	23	63	37	71	50	66
41-47	4	3	4	2	5	4
48+	70	28	57	24	43	26

Source: CULS, 2016, 2010, 2005

Occupational and sectoral differences in the number of hours worked are also pronounced (Figure 45). A majority of workers in agriculture, construction and commerce and hospitality report that they work more than 48 hours per week. In contrast, workers in public administration, education and financial services have the highest proportions of workers who work between 35 and 40 hours per week.

Workers having control over their working schedules is another dimension of working time quality. For 48% of workers, the working time arrangements are set by the employer. A quarter of workers are able to adapt their working hours or modify their schedules, and a smaller proportion (16%) set their working hours themselves. Employees of large enterprises and SMEs are more likely to have their working time set by their employer. In contrast, more than half of workers in microenterprises are able to determine their own work schedules.

The sectors in which workers most frequently report that they are able to set their own working hours are agriculture (42% of workers) and commerce and hospitality (37%). Notably, workers in these sectors are also the most likely to report that they work over 48 hours per week.

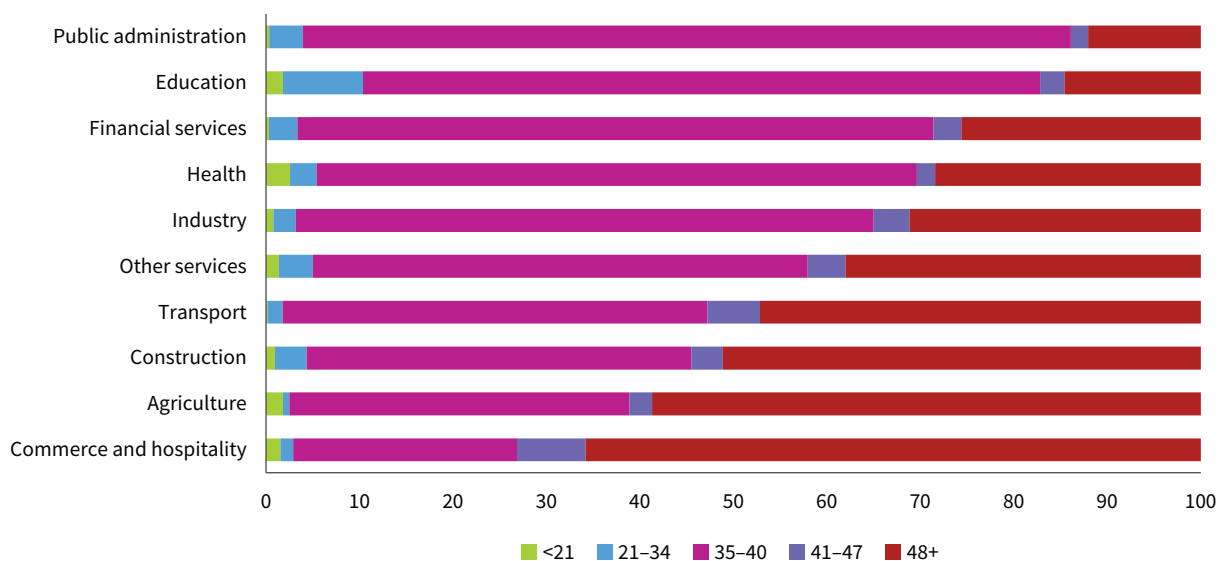
### Social environment

The social environment of a workplace is assessed, on the one hand in relation to the incidence of adverse social behaviour (indicating a poor social environment), and on the other hand in relation to social support that workers may receive from colleagues, managers and organisations that aim to provide them with a voice in the workplace, for instance trade unions or works councils.

The CULS did not gather data on adverse social behaviour in the workplace. Social support from colleagues and managers is measured by two questions: ‘Do your colleagues often help and support your work?’ and ‘Does your manager often help and support your work?’. Workers are asked to respond according to a five-point scale, ranging from ‘always’ to ‘never’.

The majority of workers report that they always or often receive social support from their colleagues (71%) and from their managers (64%). There is no significant difference reported by men and women. However, when it comes to age, younger workers tend to receive more social support from their managers and colleagues (66% from managers, 73% from colleagues) than older workers do. The level of social support received is highest among agricultural workers and managers, and lowest among clerks and workers in elementary

**Figure 45: Proportion of hours worked per week, by sector, China (%)**



Source: CULS, 2016

occupations (Figure 46). As regards the economic sector, workers from the agriculture, public administration and health sectors receive more support from their colleagues and managers. In terms of enterprise size, workers in large enterprises are more likely to receive support from their colleagues and managers, while workers in microenterprises are the least likely to receive social support.

Social support may also be provided through trade unions, which are common in Chinese workplaces. Some 41% of workers report that trade unions have a presence in their enterprise, and 69% of those working in such enterprises report that they are trade union members. Trade unions are most likely to have a presence in large enterprises (84%) and least likely in microenterprises (1.7%); this is unsurprising, given that only enterprises with over 25 workers are able to form trade unions. Large differences are again exhibited with respect to hukou: half of all local workers report the presence of a trade union in their enterprise, compared to only one in five migrant workers.

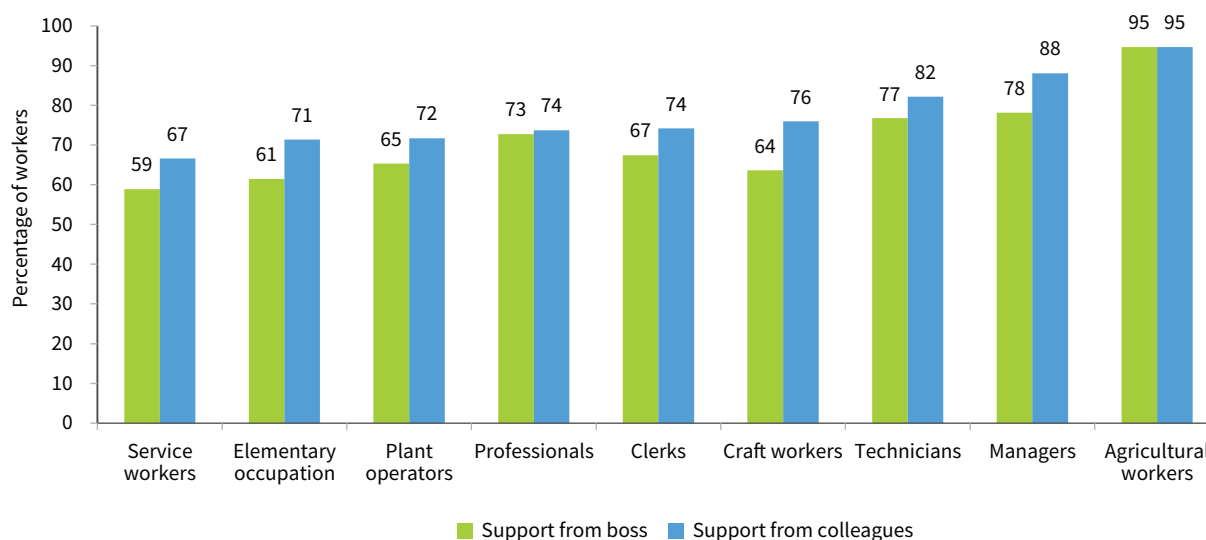
### Skills and discretion

Creativity, problem-solving, carrying out complex tasks and computer use are determinants used in the CULS to measure cognitive skills used at work. At the same time, a worker's ability to decide about the order, method, and speed of work reveals whether they can use their

discretion to influence their work; discretion is also referred to as decision latitude. In general, there is a high level of creativity and task variety associated with work in the Chinese urban labour market. While 45% of all workers state that they carry out complex tasks as part of their job, over half of workers report that they learn new things (55%) or work with computers (58%). Although a similarly large proportion of workers (56%) solve unforeseen problems as part of their job, nearly two in three workers describe their work as being repetitive or having little task variety. The highest levels of creativity at work are reported by younger workers, managers, professionals, technicians, workers in health, education and the financial sector, by self-employed workers with employees, employees with indefinite contracts and by workers in large enterprises and in large cities, such as Guangzhou and Shanghai.

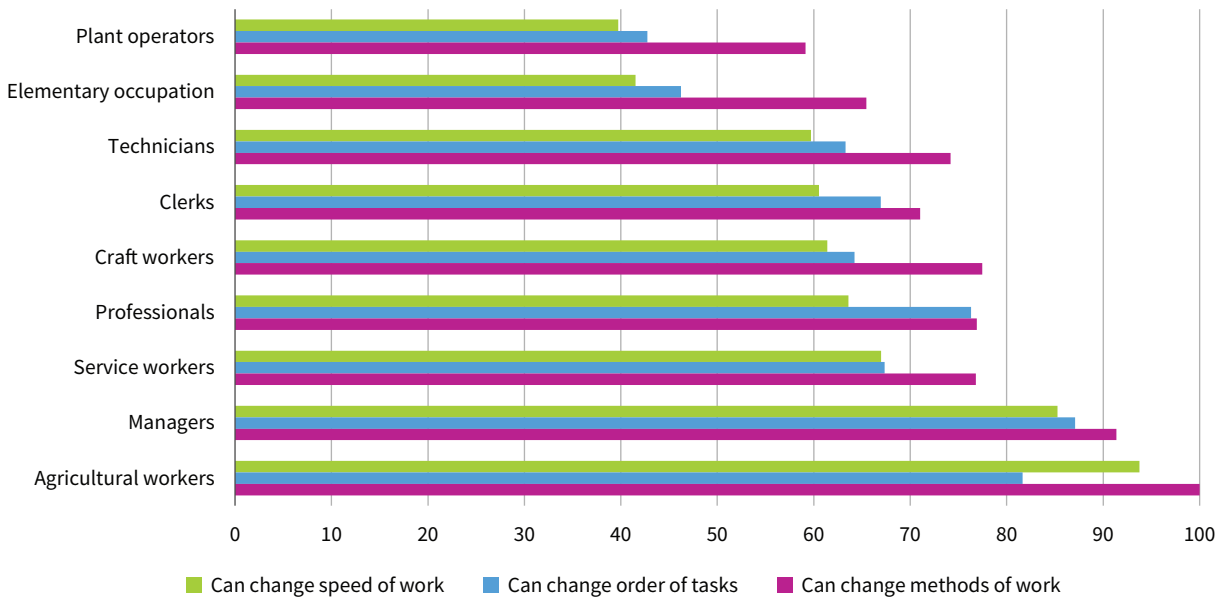
In China, decision latitude among workers is relatively high: 64% of respondents report that they are able to choose or change the order of their tasks, 76% have the ability to change the speed or rate at which they work and 67% are able to change their working methods. There are only small differences between men and women, although the differences between occupations are more substantial: managers, professionals and agricultural workers report high levels of discretion at work, while craft workers, plant operators and workers in elementary occupations report much lower levels of

Figure 46: Social support, by occupation, China (%)



Source: CULS, 2016

Figure 47: Decision latitude, by occupation, China (%)



Source: CULS, 2016

discretion (Figure 47). In terms of employment status, discretion latitude is also greater among self-employed workers than among employees. As regards enterprise size, discretion latitude is higher in microenterprises (reported by more than 80% of workers) than in large enterprises and SMEs.

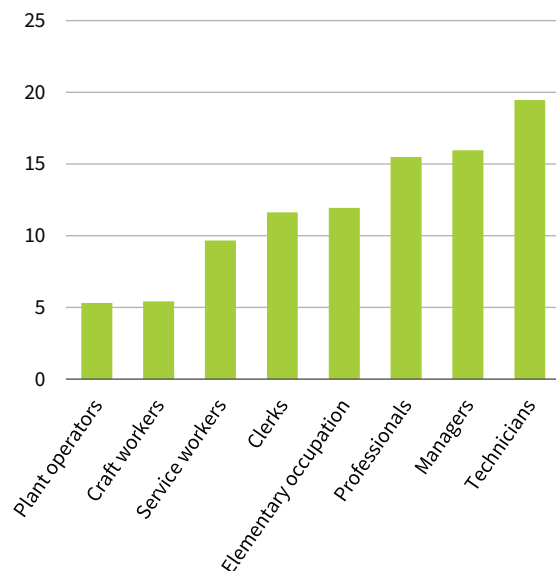
In addition to being able to change the speed, order of tasks, and method of work, 34% of workers report that they take on active roles in improving the organisation of work processes in their job; however, craft workers, plant operators and workers in elementary occupations do so less frequently, with only one in four workers reporting this.

Another important aspect of skills development relates to the training opportunities available to workers. The information on training collected by the CULS pertains only to training experiences that last longer than one month. Some 11% of workers report that they have undertaken training of at least this duration. Of those who have received training, two-thirds report that their training was provided by their current employer, and nearly all (98%) agree that training has been helpful to their work.

Differences between occupations are stark when it comes to training. Technicians, managers and professionals are more likely to have access to training (Figure 48); conversely, plant and machine operators and craft workers are less likely to receive training, and

no agricultural workers report having attended any training lasting longer than one month. In terms of contractual status, employees with an indefinite contract are more likely to have access to training than those with other forms of contract.

Figure 48: Training opportunities, by occupation, China (%)



Note: No data available for agricultural workers.  
Source: CULS, 2016

## Prospects

This section covers the concept of prospects, which includes career development, job security, and changes in the volume of employment – meaning the number of employees in a workplace. The third wave of the SSWCS asked workers about their satisfaction with their career development and job stability; the replies ranged from ‘completely satisfied’ to ‘completely dissatisfied’, on a five-point scale. In addition, a new question in the fourth round of the CULS asked respondents ‘whether the number of employees at your workplace has increased a lot, increased a little, stayed the same, decreased a lot, or decreased a little during the past three years’; this question can be used to measure downsizing.

According to the third SSWCS, 35% of Chinese workers report that they are ‘satisfied’ or ‘completely satisfied’ with their career development. The differences between men and women are small, but again, there are important differences in terms of occupation. Managers (22%), professionals (14%) and technicians (15%) have the largest proportions of workers who report that they are completely satisfied with their career development, while workers in elementary occupations (4%) and craft workers (5%) are least likely to feel completely satisfied (Figure 49). In terms of economic sector, workers in health, education and public administration are more likely to report that they are completely satisfied with their career development than those in other sectors. Workers in industry and construction are the least likely to be satisfied with their career development. As for employment status, 25% of those self-employed with employees report that they are completely satisfied with their career development, compared to only 8% of family workers. Respondents with a non-agricultural hukou are more likely to respond positively than those with an agricultural hukou.

Some 20% of workers are completely satisfied with their job stability, and an additional 37% are satisfied. There are notable differences in terms of gender – men are on average more satisfied with their job stability than women – but only small differences between age groups. In line with the survey results regarding career development, managers, professionals and technicians are again the most likely to report high levels of satisfaction when it comes to job stability, while workers in elementary occupations are the least likely to be satisfied in this regard. The health, education and public administration sectors have the largest proportions of workers who state that they are satisfied with their job stability, while construction and industry have the smallest proportions of such workers. Compared with self-employed workers with no employees and family workers, the self-employed with employees, and employees, are more likely to say that they are satisfied with their job stability. Additionally, while 24% of respondents with a non-agricultural hukou are completely satisfied with their job stability, only 11% of respondents with an agricultural hukou are completely satisfied.

Optimism about job stability may reflect in part the growth in the volume of employment in Chinese workplaces. Although the majority of workers (48%) report no change in the volume of employment in their workplace, the split between those reporting increases (44%) and decreases (8%) in employment levels is consistent with overall growth in employment. By occupation, professionals and technicians are most likely to report an expansion of employment in their workplace, while plant operators and workers in elementary occupations most commonly report decreases. In terms of sector, it is in industry that the largest proportion of workers who report downsizing in their workplace is found, followed by the construction

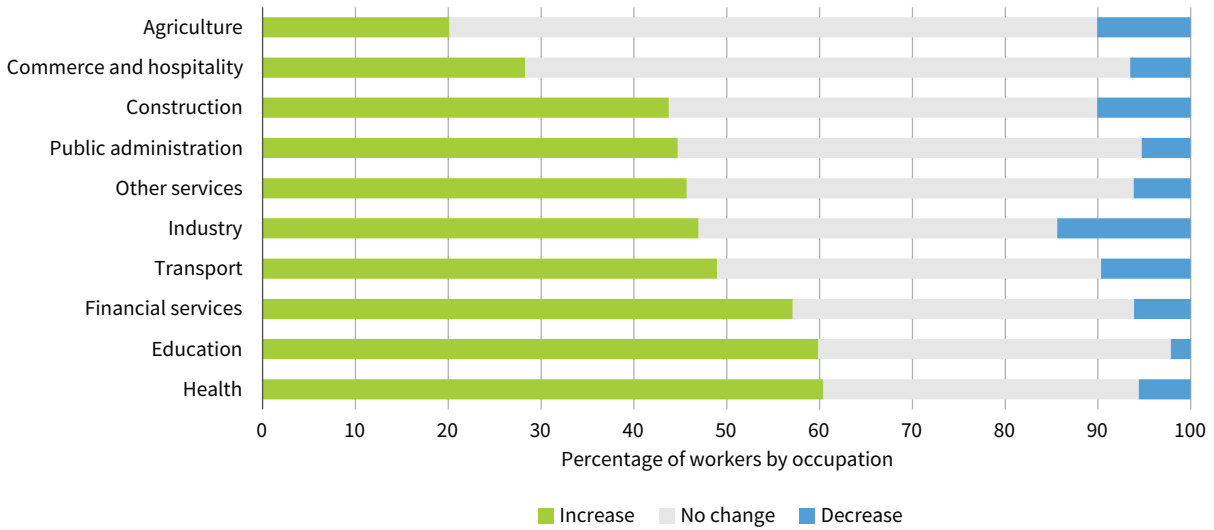
Figure 49: Career prospects, by occupation, China (%)

	Completely satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Completely dissatisfied
Managers	22	40	29	7	2
Professionals	14	35	41	8	2
Technicians	15	31	39	11	4
Clerks	10	24	47	13	6
Service workers	9	20	47	19	5
Agricultural workers	12	29	46	11	3
Craft workers	5	20	49	20	5
Plant operators	7	21	48	19	5
Elementary occupation	4	11	48	23	12

Source: SSWCS, 2010



Figure 50: Employment change at workplace, by sector, China (%) in CNY



Source: CULS, 2016

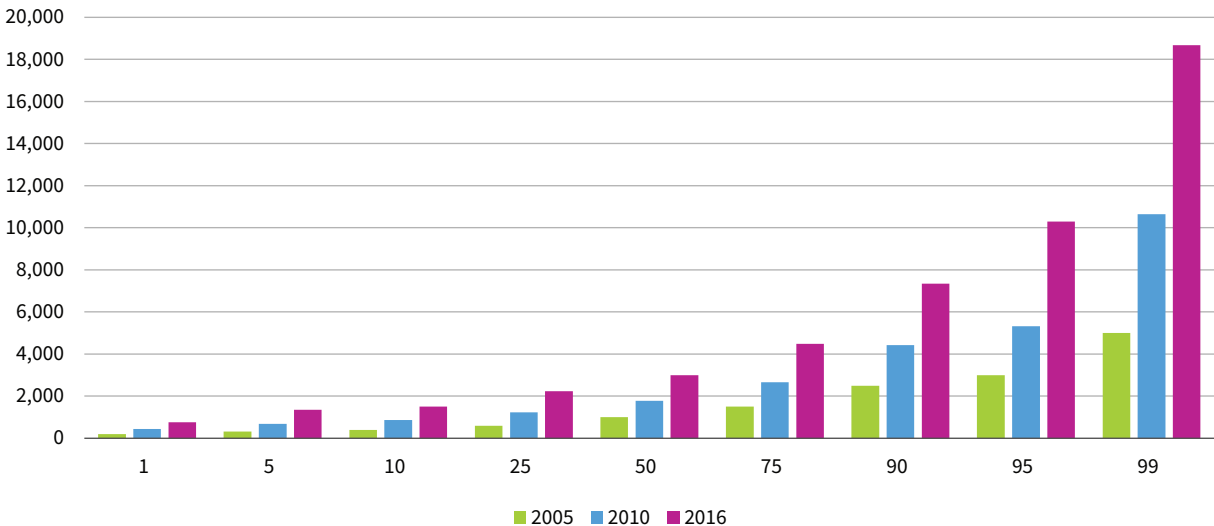
and agriculture sectors (Figure 50). Workers in education, health and financial services have the highest proportions of workers who report an increase in employment levels. By size, 62% of workers in large enterprises report an increase in the volume of employment in their workplace, while only 11% of workers in microenterprises report an increase.

### Earnings

According to data from the CULS, average monthly earnings for Chinese workers have risen continuously over recent years. For most workers, the increase has been gradual, but for the top 10% of workers, monthly earnings have increased sharply; this is particularly true for the top 1% (Figure 51). As a result, urban China is experiencing a widening pay gap in real terms.

Generally, self-employed workers earn more than employees on a monthly basis. The one exception to this trend is freelancers, who earn more than employees with a temporary contract or no contract, but less than employees with indefinite or fixed-term contracts. Overall, partners in private sector enterprises earn the most, followed by sole directors. Employees on indefinite contracts earn higher salaries. In order to account for variation in working hours in relation to monthly pay, the CULS data were recalculated to determine hourly rates of pay. The results show that, by employment type, hourly earnings have a similar distribution pattern to monthly earnings.

Figure 51: Monthly earnings distribution (CNY), 2005–2016, China (%)



Source: CULS, 2016

General increases in earnings across the economy may be partially attributed to increases in minimum wage levels across the country. Minimum wages are set regionally in China, with Shanghai and Beijing having the highest minimum wages. Data on real and nominal minimum wages in Beijing shows how wages in the capital nearly quadrupled in real terms from CNY 534 (yuan) per month in 2005 to CNY 1,934 in 2017 (or approximately €265 at 2017 exchange rates), with similar increases occurring throughout the country. Although recent increases in earnings are promising, almost 5% of urban workers earn below the minimum wage. Furthermore, the polarisation of wages risks contributing to greater inequality in the Chinese labour market.

In addition to the general wage gap between high and low earners, the findings of the CULS indicate that there is also a gender pay gap whereby women have lower average monthly earnings than men. Looking across CULS datasets, the trends show that the gender gap is decreasing in terms of earnings, although differences persist. Whereas in 2010 women earned 71% of what men earned, this percentage had risen to 75% by 2016. Similarly, the ratio of female hourly earnings to male hourly earnings increased from 73% in 2010 to 77% in 2016. Although the gap is narrowing, men continue to earn more than women in every age group.<sup>11</sup>

## Perspectives on working life

Using regression analysis, results on working conditions from the SSWCS were analysed in relation to the issues of respondents' physical health, mental health and ability to balance work and home commitments, in order to identify any possible correlations between them.

### Self-reported health

The first model examines the relationship between working conditions and self-reported physical health. The results from this analysis show that poor working conditions, especially exposure to physical risks in the workplace – particularly posture-related and noise risks – increases the likelihood that workers will report poor health. In contrast, worker satisfaction with their work intensity and working conditions generally shows a statistically significant positive correlation with good self-reported health. Occupation (with the exception of agriculture, in which workers are more prone to reporting poor health) has no significant impact on

worker health. This finding may be explained by the inclusion of working conditions variables in the regression, which likely capture many of the occupation characteristics. In terms of economic sector, workers in commerce and hospitality, financial services, public administration and health are the least likely to report poor physical health. Women are more likely than men to report poor health. The relationship between age and health status changes over time: as people get older, they are more likely to report poor health. Workers with a non-agricultural hukou are more likely to report good health than those with an agricultural hukou.

### Mental health status

The SSWCS captured eight dimensions relating to the status of workers' mental health: sleeplessness; tiredness; feelings of apathy, loneliness, uselessness and meaninglessness; and susceptibility to crying or losing temper. For each dimension, respondents could select from a range of frequencies with which they experience these sentiments: never, seldom, sometimes, or always. A separate model was run for each question related to mental health, in order to determine the impact of demographic and working conditions on these variables.

As an example, women and older workers are the population groups most likely to experience sleeplessness. Better sleep is reported by those who are married, have professional occupations, or hold a school-leaving qualification. Workers who are satisfied with their job stability also report better sleep patterns.

Satisfaction with working conditions shows the strongest relationship with mental health outcomes, although these results imply only correlations and not causality. Indeed, more optimistic individuals may be those who simultaneously feel generally well and who report satisfaction with their working conditions. The general trends show that satisfaction with working conditions makes people less likely to report distress in relation to their mental health. For example, workers who report that they are satisfied with their jobs are also less likely to be tired, have a bad temper, feel apathetic or lonely, or report that they cry easily; they are, however, more likely to report that they feel they have no fun. Meanwhile, workers who are satisfied with their level of income are less likely to report that they are tired, lose their temper, or are apathetic. Finally, workers who are satisfied with their career development are less likely to feel tired, apathetic, lonely or lost.

11 The earnings section is calculated without the inclusion of employees who are not suitable for classification or those serving in the military.

## Work–life balance

Work–life balance is generally thought to promote workers' well-being. However, scheduling can be complicated and be affected by home circumstances or working conditions. In the SSWCS, workers were asked if they had ever experienced having no time for family because they were busy with work. This question was used as a dependent variable in the regression analysis.

Among demographic and occupational characteristics, women are more likely to experience work–life conflicts. This finding reflects the fact that women still do the bulk of domestic work and family care in China. Age also has a significant positive effect on the likelihood that a worker will experience work–life conflict. Workers with a non-agricultural hukou are less likely to suffer from work–life conflicts.

With respect to occupation, workers in elementary occupations and service and sales workers are less likely to report that their job has negatively affected their work–life balance. Clerical support workers and professionals are also less likely to report work–life conflict. Educational attainment, meanwhile, appears to make workers more likely to experience work–life conflict: the higher the education level a worker has, the more likely they are to report work–life conflict.

Daily working time has a significant positive effect on a worker's likelihood of experiencing work–life conflict. This means that those who spend more time at work are more prone to work–life conflict than those who spend less time at work. As expected, satisfaction with working time has a positive effect on work–life balance, while those who are satisfied with their work intensity and working conditions experience less work–life conflict. Other working conditions variables have no statistical significance.

## Conclusions

China's economy has been growing rapidly for decades, with the country's labour market undergoing profound changes during this time. National trends show that the country's labour force is ageing and that participation rates are declining. These trends are offset by increases in educational attainment levels, economic shifts towards formal employment and the tertiary sector, and an increase in the proportion of white-collar workers. Nowadays, more workers are employed by large enterprises and the number of workers covered by basic social insurance is increasing substantially, while the minimum wage has also risen considerably during the past decade.

This chapter on working conditions in China reveals that, among the workers surveyed, exposure to physical risks and to high work intensity affects one in five workers and two in five workers respectively. Exposure to physical risks is concentrated in particular sectors, for instance construction and agriculture. This suggests that, as the country's economy continues to shift towards the tertiary sector, physical risk exposure may affect a smaller percentage of the population. Long working weeks (of more than 48 hours) affect more than 30% of workers, regardless of sector.

While high levels of physical risk and long hours are generally associated with poor working conditions, a high incidence of workplace creativity, task variety, decision latitude and social support typically signifies positive working conditions. Chinese workers frequently report that they are cognitively engaged and socially supported at work, and most workers report that they are satisfied with their career development and job stability.

Past surveys reveal that differences in experiences at work in relation to sex or hukou status are beginning to narrow. For example, gender wage gaps have shrunk, and the difference in the frequency of long hours worked by those with an agricultural hukou compared to those with a non-agricultural hukou is smaller than it used to be. Despite these trends, differences between groups of workers persist. Additionally, a growing wage gap between the highest and lowest wage earners suggests that increases in earnings are not benefitting all workers or may not be shared equally.

Analysis to estimate the impact of working conditions on the physical and mental health of workers, and on work–life conflict, reveals that individuals exposed to physical risks are more likely to report poor health, and that workers with long hours are more prone to experiencing work–life conflict. Meanwhile, satisfaction with working conditions suggests a lower incidence of mental health problems and satisfied workers are less likely to experience work–life conflict. Ultimately, positive working conditions are essential for workers' physical and mental well-being, and for workers to achieve a work–life balance. For China, implementing policies that help to improve working conditions will help the country to ensure the long-term sustainability of the workforce.

# 5 Republic of Korea

## Introduction

The Korean Working Conditions Survey (KWCS) was first undertaken in 2006 by the Korean Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA), an organisation that seeks to prevent occupational accidents and protect the lives and health of workers, and which is affiliated to the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labor. The survey is designed to investigate the working conditions of workers across the Republic of Korea and to discern their degree of exposure to risk factors. Since 2011, the survey has been conducted every three years. This chapter is based on the results of the fourth KWCS, administered in 2014, and covering 50,000 workers throughout the country. The questionnaire was based on the EWCS 2010 and the KWCS 2011.

## Labour market overview

Within half a century, the Republic of Korea has transformed itself into one of the most advanced economies in Asia. The country's economy is highly diversified, there is a comprehensive regulatory framework regarding work and employment, and the majority of workers are formally employed.

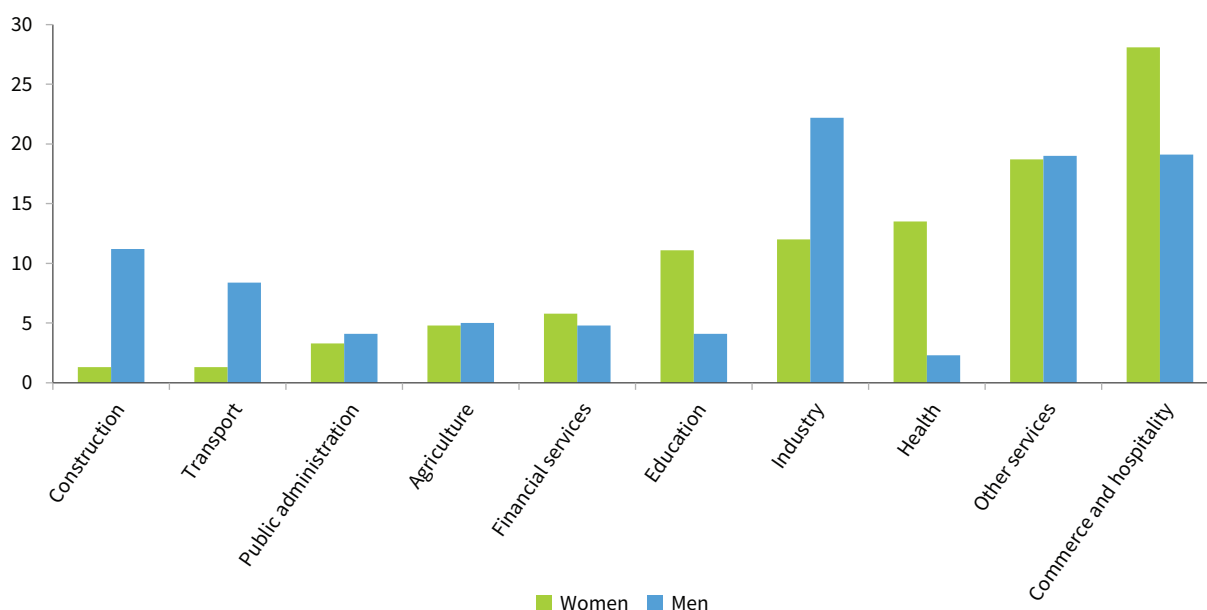
According to Statistics Korea, in 2016, the country's national employment rate was 66%, having increased steadily since 2007 when it stood at 64%. This increase is due to increased employment rates among both men and women, but particularly the latter, whose rate of employment rose from 53% to 56%. Nevertheless, the

increase in employment has also coincided with an increase in unemployment; the unemployment rate stood at 4% in 2016, up from the rate of 3% in 2012. Young people in the Republic of Korea have felt the growth of unemployment most acutely. Among young workers, the unemployment rate in 2016 was 10% – the highest level since the financial crisis in 1998.

Since 2011, GDP has grown steadily thanks to the gradual recovery of the world economy and increases in public investment – particularly in infrastructure. In 2016, the gross national income per capita stood at USD 28,553 (€24,569), up from USD 24,696 (€21,250) in 2012. Nonetheless, and similarly to most other advanced economies, the growth rate slowed during this five-year period, declining from 4% in 2011 to 3% in 2016.

Over the past decade, employment in the Republic of Korea has shifted from industry and construction into services; the jobs that have remained in industry have declined in quality. Overall, the proportion of mid-level jobs in employment has decreased, while the share of low-level jobs has increased. As such, there has been a burgeoning in the numbers of workers on low wages, a situation characterised by stagnant wage levels across the economy since the economic downturn of 2008 and continued difficulty with minimum wage compliance. In 2016, industry, commerce and hospitality and other services were the sectors that provided jobs to the majority of workers; the distribution of workers in other sectors ranges between just 4% and 7% per sector (Figure 52).

Figure 52: Distribution of workers by sector and sex, 2016, Republic of Korea (%)



Source: Statistics Korea, 2017

The gender distribution of workers by sector is notable. Commerce and hospitality, other services and health provide the majority of employment opportunities for women. While there are roughly equal proportions of women and men employed in agriculture, public administration and other services, there is a larger share of working women in commerce and hospitality (the sector employs 28% of working women, compared with 19% of working men) and health (14% of working women and 2% of working men). This is also the case in education (11% of working women, as against 4% of working men). Men outnumber women in all other sectors; industry, commerce and hospitality, and other services are the sectors that provide work to the greatest number of men.

Although the distributions of male and female workers are similar in several sectors, the same similarities do not exist when it comes to the occupations that men and women hold. For example, 2% of all men are employed in management positions, compared to less than 0.5% of women. While 23% of women work as professionals – compared to only 18% of men – the lower rate of employment among women means that they are still outnumbered overall in workplaces. Women do however make up the majority of service and sales workers and workers in elementary occupations. This labour market segregation is a concern, as occupations dominated by women are typically associated with lower earnings and require fewer skills.

Although the majority of workers are employees in comparison to other industrialised countries, a relatively large share of workers in the Republic of Korea are self-employed (21% in total, of which 6% have employees and 15% do not). Half of all workers are classified as employees with indefinite contracts, and one in four workers has a fixed-term contract; 6% are unpaid family workers or have another employment status.

Fixed-term contracts are held disproportionately by women (33% of women, compared with 20% of men). In large part, this is due to cultural expectations that women will exit the labour market upon marriage: thus, their employment is often seen as temporary. Men are significantly more likely to be self-employed than women (27% compared to 14%), while 9% of women are unpaid family workers, compared to only 1% of men.

The level of education in the workforce of the Republic of Korea is continuously increasing. Among those aged 50 and older, 15% of men and 5% of women have a tertiary level of education. Meanwhile, in the youngest age group (those under 35), 34% of both men and women have tertiary education. Among graduates of tertiary education, there is a difference of 22 percentage points between men and women.

## Policies and laws governing the labour market, working conditions and employment

The Republic of Korea's Ministry of Employment and Labor is responsible for implementing national labour laws that concern the employment relationship, working conditions, and occupational safety and health specifically. The regulatory framework includes laws governing individual labour relationships, worker compensation, hiring of dispatched workers (those that are subcontracted, including through a temporary employment agency), worker discrimination, employment insurance and part-time and fixed-term employment. Additionally, the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act regulates collective labour-management relations, and the Act on the Promotion of Worker Participation and Cooperation provides a framework for cooperative labour-management relations.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act defines comprehensive standards for the Republic of Korea's occupational safety and health system. The purpose of this act is to maintain and promote the safety and health of workers by preventing industrial accidents and creating comfortable work environments; it does this by establishing standards on occupational safety and health and clarifying where responsibility lies. The act requires employers to establish a safety and health management system and provide education on safety and health, protective measures, management of harmful agents and risk assessments in order to prevent harm and hazards. Moreover, in accordance with this act, businesses must conduct health examinations and monitor the work environment as part of their management of the health of workers.

The prevention of risks relating to occupational safety and health has been an objective of the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Employment and Labor since the early 1990s. The current five-year plan for the prevention of industrial accidents (2015–2019) states the goal of reducing the country's severe injury and fatality rates to the levels of other developed countries by 2019. The plan focuses on four major strategies:

- clarifying occupational safety and health responsibilities for each entity, such as corporations, workers and governments
- strengthening pre-emptive safety and health responses to factors causing industrial accidents
- establishing a safety and health infrastructure, including laws and information systems
- promoting a culture of occupational safety and health



The construction sector and small workplaces have both been identified as target areas, because of their relatively high rates of workplace injury and disease. Statistics also reveal higher rates of fatal accidents among workers aged 60 and above. The country’s Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act aims to restructure the system for implementing safety and health policies to target these demographics, as well as the growing number of service and sales workers.

Alongside the legal system, the Economic and Social Development Commission (formerly the Korean Tripartite Commission) functions as an apparatus for social dialogue on labour policy and related industrial, economic and social policies. It provides opportunities for labour, management, the government and public interest groups to participate and consult on policy issues. Moreover, the commission plays an important role in reaching social agreements and a consensus on labour matters including working hours, strategies for job creation, social welfare provisions, and methods to mitigate workplace injury and improve occupational safety and health. As part of its governing structure, the commission has assemblies for different sectors and agendas, such as the commission on youth and employment and the innovation commission on occupational safety and health.

## Dimensions of job quality

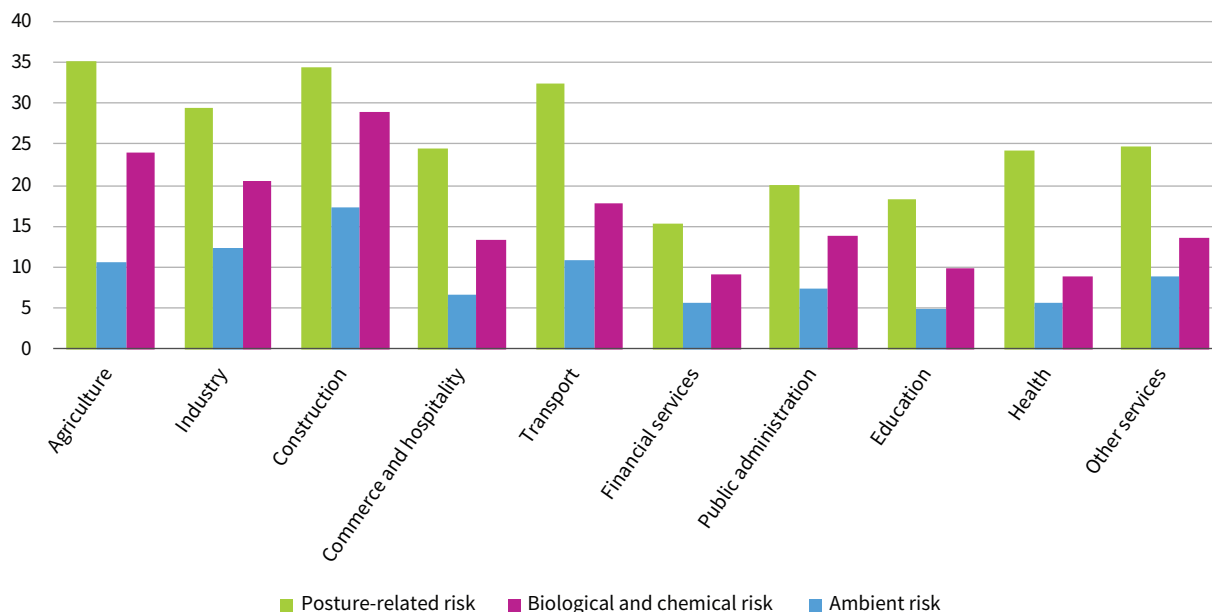
### Physical environment

In the KWCS, participants were asked about their exposure to 13 different types of physical workplace risks. The 13 indicators of risk can be grouped into three broad categories: posture-related risks (measuring exposure to vibrations, tiring positions, lifting people, carrying heavy loads and repetitive movements); biological and chemical risks (measuring exposure to inhaling smoke and toxic vapours and handling chemical products and infectious materials); and ambient risks (measuring exposure to noise and to high and low temperatures in the work environment).

In total, 66% of workers report being exposed to posture-related risks, 26% to biological and chemical risks, and 26% to ambient risks. In all sectors, the level of exposure to posture-related risks was higher than other risk factors. As Figure 53 illustrates, workers in the construction sector have a relatively high incidence of exposure to all types of risk, as do those working in the agriculture, industry and transport sectors.

By sex, 19% of men and 15% of women are exposed to all types of physical risk for at least a quarter of the time they spend working. While men are more exposed overall, women are exposed relatively more frequently than men to some specific factors, such as tiring positions and lifting or moving people, and repetitive hand or arm movements that could entail higher risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders over time.

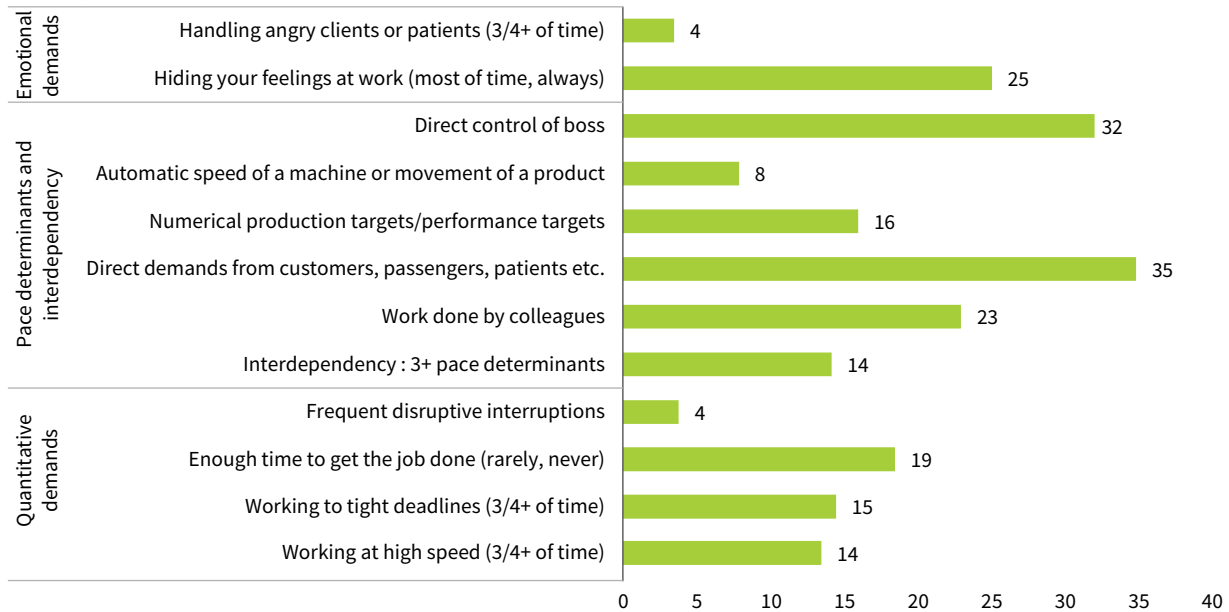
Figure 53: Exposure to physical risks, by sector, Republic of Korea (%)



Note: Exposure to risks one-quarter of the time or more.  
Sources: KWCS 2014 for all figures unless stated otherwise.



Figure 54: Components of work intensity dimension, Republic of Korea (%)



Although these risk exposures are a reflection of the occupational sex segregation mentioned previously, it is also true that workers in microenterprises are more likely to be exposed to physical risks than employees of small, medium-sized or large enterprises and more women than men work in microenterprises.

Of the particular issues included in determining posture-related risk, repetitive hand and arm movements affect the greatest number of workers (66%). This has become the most reported risk. The next most commonly reported risk involves working in tiring or painful positions (53% of workers), followed by carrying or moving heavy loads (39%). The most prevalent biological and chemical risk relates to respiration, specifically breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust (17%). In relation to ambient risks, about one in four workers report that they have been exposed to high temperatures.

### Work intensity

Work intensity comprises quantitative production targets, speed of work and pace of work determinants and emotional demands experienced by workers. A high workload can be physically and mentally taxing for workers and make it difficult for them to fulfil their job requirements effectively. A total of 12 questions are included in the survey to determine the level of work intensity.

Some 15% of the Republic of Korea’s workers work to tight deadlines a quarter of the time or more, while 14% of workers report three or more pace determinants (Figure 54). More than a third of workers (35%) report that their work pace is determined by the direct demands of customers, passengers, patients or other ‘consumers’. Slightly fewer workers (32%) attribute their pace of work to their manager or supervisor, while 23% report that their work pace depends on the work of their colleagues. One in four workers report that they must hide their feelings most or all of time; women experience this more often than men (27% compared with 24%), a finding that may be attributed to the high volume of interpersonal interaction required in service jobs, in which many women work.

Examining selected pace determinants by sector reveals that agriculture has a lower level of work intensity. This differs substantially from the industry and construction sectors, where more than 15% of workers report having a high pace of work, multiple pace determinants and insufficient time to complete their tasks (Figure 55). Emotional demands are highest in financial services, health, education, transport and commerce and hospitality, which tend to involve higher levels of social interaction with co-workers and customers. Indeed, sales workers and service workers report the greatest emotional demands, at 34% and 30% respectively.

Figure 55: Components of work intensity, by sector, Republic of Korea (%)

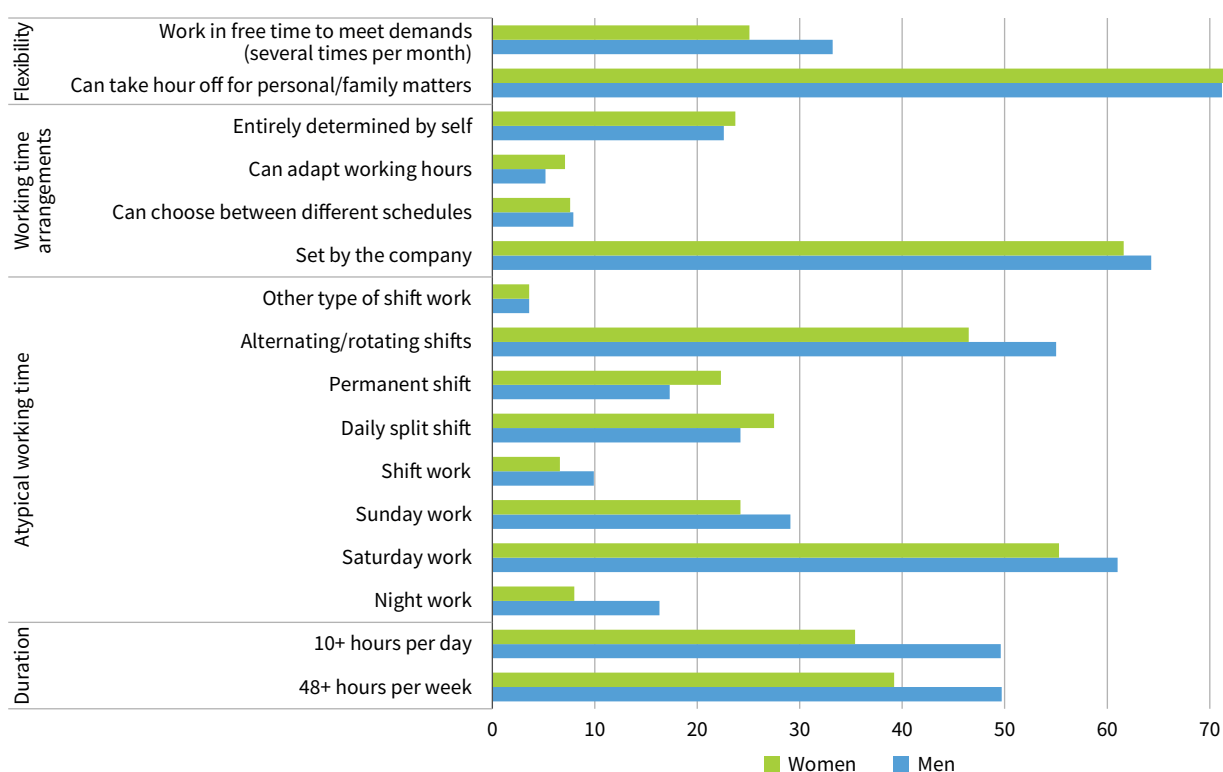
	Working at high speed (3/4 of the time +)	Working to tight deadlines (3/4 of the time +)	Enough time to do job (rarely/never)	Interdependency: three or more pace determinants	Hiding feelings at work (always or most of the time)	Handling angry clients or patients (3/4 of the time +)
Agriculture	9	5	11	2	12	1
Industry	18	21	19	27	20	2
Construction	17	19	21	18	19	2
Commerce and hospitality	14	12	20	10	29	4
Transport	19	19	26	11	27	6
Financial services	9	11	14	13	35	5
Public administration	11	14	14	13	24	4
Education	8	15	16	7	28	2
Health	10	13	20	13	32	8
Other services	12	13	18	12	26	4

### Working time quality

Working time quality is determined by the control and flexibility that workers have over their work schedules, as well as the amount of time they spend working. Long working hours are defined as being in excess of 48 hours per week, while long working days are more than 10 hours per day. Excessive work has been associated with numerous negative health and well-being outcomes, as have atypical working arrangements such as shift work and night work. On the other hand, flexibility and control over work schedules are generally thought to be beneficial to workers.

Long working hours are a defining characteristic of the Republic of Korea’s labour market. In fact, excessive working hours is the issue most frequently reported by workers in relation to their job quality. According to data from 2016, among all OECD countries, the Republic of Korea ranks second when it comes to the number of annual working hours. Indeed, the KWCS found that over 45% of the workers surveyed work 48 hours or more per week, and 44% work more than 10 hours per day. Long working weeks and days affect half of all male workers, while a slightly lower proportion of women report working long weeks almost (40%) and long days (35%) (Figure 56).

Figure 56: Components of working time quality dimension, by sex, Republic of Korea (%)



Of those who work between 48 and 59 hours per week, the majority (59%) are employees with indefinite contracts; for people who report working 60 hours or more per week, roughly one-third are employees with indefinite contracts and another third are self-employed workers without employees. The occupations with the longest reported working hours are service workers and sales workers (Figure 57). In contrast, clerks mainly work 35–40 hours per week. Workers in microenterprises also more frequently report working long weeks than those in large enterprises. For example, of those who report working over 60 hours per week, 78% work in microenterprises (one to nine employees), while only 3% work in large enterprises with over 250 employees.

Although people in the Republic of Korea work long hours and long weeks, the Korean Labor Standards Act states that working hours for adult workers (aged older than 18) shall not exceed 40 hours and that the number of working hours per day shall not exceed eight hours. The act, however, stipulates that working hours may be extended by an agreement between the parties concerned. There are also exceptions to the standard working week for enterprises employing under five people and particular sectors such as transport, health, and various services, including hotels, finance and insurance, and restaurants. Thus, while regulations regarding working hours do exist, a large number of workers may fall outside of their purview.

Men generally report working atypical work schedules (for instance including nights, Sundays or rotating shifts) more frequently than women. In contrast, women report higher levels of influence on their work schedules, greater regularity in their work schedules, and higher rates of flexibility.

The majority of workers (63%) have their working hours set by their employer, and less than a quarter of workers are able to determine them entirely by themselves. About a third of workers are obliged to work in their free time to meet work demands. At the same time, the majority of workers (72%) also report that it is easy for them to arrange to take an hour off during working hours.

### Social environment

The social environment part of the questionnaire measures the extent to which workers experience both positive and negative social aspects in their work environment. On the positive side, this includes supportive social relationships, while on the negative side it refers to exposure to adverse social behaviour in the workplace. Survey respondents were asked about the social support they receive from their colleagues and managers, but also their exposure to abuse, humiliation, violence, harassment and other unfavourable workplace conduct. In total, respondents were asked 13 questions about the social environment in their workplace.

In terms of social support, only half of all workers feel supported by their managers (52%) or by their colleagues (49%). However, the opinions of workers regarding their managers are generally more favourable. By sector, those working in education and public administration feel most respected by their managers and are most likely to be encouraged to participate in important decision-making processes in the workplace. Workers in agriculture report receiving social support with the lowest frequency (and often work alone). When it comes to occupation, managers themselves tend to receive feedback from their own

Figure 57: Usual weekly working hours, by occupation, Republic of Korea (%)

	<21	21–34	35–40	41–47	48–59	60+
Clerks	2	1	58	15	19	4
Professionals and technicians	5	5	48	11	20	10
Managers	3	3	51	11	20	13
Agricultural workers	11	19	24	6	25	16
Elementary occupations	15	12	24	6	19	24
Plant and machine operators	1	3	29	7	31	28
Craft workers	2	5	22	9	34	29
Sales workers	5	5	20	7	27	37
Service workers	10	8	15	5	19	44

Figure 58: Management quality, by occupation, Republic of Korea (%)

	Provides feedback on your work	Respects you as a person	Is good at resolving conflicts	Is good at planning and organising work	Encourages you to participate in important decisions
Managers	79	90	86	91	89
Professionals and technicians	80	91	81	85	77
Clerks	81	88	78	83	72
Service workers	70	82	71	70	53
Sales workers	75	84	73	73	59
Agricultural workers	66	78	72	62	44
Craft workers	77	84	75	78	63
Plant and machine operators	74	83	74	77	57
Elementary occupations	60	68	59	60	38

Note: All dichotomous items, proportion indicates 'yes'.

managers and feel their managers are good at planning and overseeing work and work conflicts. Workers in elementary occupations have the lowest opinions of the quality of their management (Figure 58).

Verbal abuse is the most common type of adverse social behaviour experienced in workplaces in the Republic of Korea, reported by 7% of workers. Exposure to threats and humiliating behaviour is reported by almost 2% of workers. There is no significant difference between men and women when it comes to their exposure to these two types of adverse social behaviour. However, women face higher rates of exposure to unwanted sexual attention (2% of women compared with less than 0.5% of men). Although these figures appear small, being a victim of adverse social behaviour (or even witnessing it in the workplace) can have serious negative consequences – for example, for workers' perceptions of safety, as well as for their overall well-being. Moreover, these small percentages may reflect a culture of underreporting due to the sensitivity of the issue.

In addition to seeking support from colleagues and managers, workers in the Republic of Korea rely on worker organisations, such as trade unions, works councils or worker committees, for support in the workplace. Some 15% of employees in the Republic of Korea report the existence of a trade union or other worker committee or council in their workplace; however, men more frequently report this than women (18% of men compared to 10% of women). This difference is likely due to the gendered distribution of work by sector and occupation. For example, in male-dominated sectors such as transport and manufacturing, trade unions or works councils are present in 36% and 24% of workplaces respectively. Similarly, male-dominated occupational groups such as managers and plant and machine operators also have

relatively high rates of unionisation, at 29% and 25% respectively. These rates are particularly high when compared to female-dominated occupational groups such as service and sales workers, in which the existence of trade unions and works councils is reported in less than 5% of workplaces. In addition, workers with indefinite contracts, full-time workers and those working in large enterprises are also significantly more likely to report the existence of a trade union or works council in their workplace.

### Skills and discretion

The survey also examines the skills required for workers to do their jobs, and the autonomy that they have in applying these skills. In particular, workers are asked about their level of cognitive engagement (such as learning new things, carrying out complex tasks, and problem-solving), their discretion, their level of participation in the workplace, and opportunities for work-related training.

In workplaces in the Republic of Korea, some elements of cognitive engagement are much more common than others. Over half (57%) of workers report that they solve unforeseen problems at work, and four out of five workers are able to apply their own ideas at work at least some of the time. A far smaller percentage of workers report that they carry out complex tasks or learn new things in their job (34% and 32% respectively). Between 45% and 48% of workers indicate that they are able to make decisions about the speed or rate of their work, the method of their work, and the order in which they complete tasks.

In terms of employment status, self-employed workers, as well as unpaid family workers in family businesses or farms, most frequently report that they have the ability to choose or change their working methods (Figure 59).

**Figure 59: Cognitive demands and decision latitude, by occupation and employment status, Republic of Korea (%)**

		Solving unforeseen problems on your own	Carrying out complex tasks	Learning new things	Ability to apply your own ideas in work	Ability to choose or change the speed or rate of work	Ability to choose or change methods
Occupation	Total	57	34	32	82	46	45
	Managers	74	63	50	94	63	60
	Professionals and technicians	62	53	53	89	47	46
	Clerks	56	50	42	86	45	43
	Service workers	54	20	24	82	45	45
	Sales workers	54	23	25	82	43	44
	Agricultural workers	61	15	14	88	71	70
	Craft workers	67	47	37	80	51	48
	Plant and machine operators	58	26	22	76	42	38
	Elementary occupations	40	9	10	65	40	39
Employment status	Self-employed with employees	71	38	34	92	56	55
	Self-employed without employees	60	21	20	88	58	58
	Employees, indefinite contract	59	44	40	83	44	42
	Employees, fixed-term contract	43	18	19	69	38	37
	Unpaid family workers and others	52	15	13	86	59	58

**Note:** All but one item is dichotomous, proportion indicates 'yes'. 'Apply your own ideas' is five-point Likert scale, selected answer categories are 'always' to 'some of the time'.

While self-employed workers with employees also commonly report cognitive engagement (38% carry out complex tasks and 34% learn new things), unpaid family workers and those working in elementary occupations report the lowest levels of cognitive engagement. This means that, although they are able to exercise high levels of discretion in their work, they do not find the work itself particularly challenging.

Workers' experiences of cognitive engagement and discretion are also affected by the size of their enterprise. Over half (53%) of workers in large enterprises report that they carry out complex tasks as part of their job, compared to only a quarter (25%) of workers in microenterprises. Workers in large enterprises are also more likely than workers in microenterprises to report that they solve unforeseen problems (63% compared to 55%) and that they learn new things on the job (46% compared to 25%). For these indicators, workers in SMEs report levels of cognitive engagement that fall between those in large enterprises and microenterprises.

In addition, the KWCS asks workers about the training opportunities they have had in the 12 months preceding the survey. According to the findings, 26% of all workers (28% of men and 24% of women) have received training paid for or provided by their employer (or by themselves

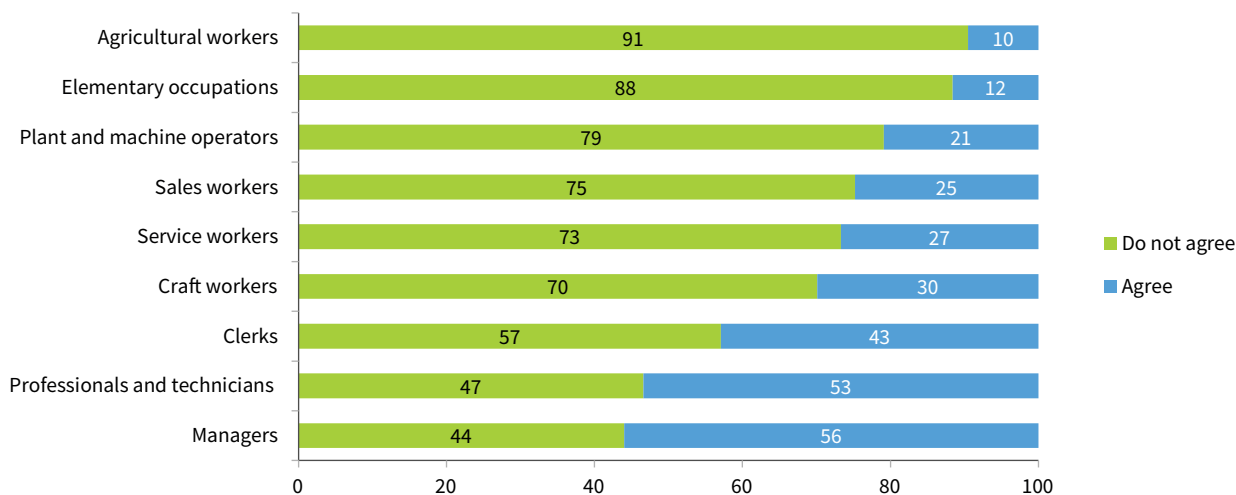
if they are self-employed). Some 13% of workers report having received on-the-job training (14% of men and 11% of women).

### Prospects

Workers' prospects refer to their perceptions regarding their career advancement, as well as their level of concern about losing their job in the next six months. Positive sentiments relating to career advancement are associated with good job prospects, while high levels of concern about job loss indicate poor job prospects. Over 68% of workers in the Republic of Korea report that they do not feel they have good prospects for career advancement. However, despite many workers being concerned about their job prospects, almost all workers are confident in the security of their jobs. Over 96% of workers state that they will not lose their job in the next six months, while only 4% express concern about imminent job loss.

Young workers feel more positive about their opportunities for career advancement than older workers, with 4 in 10 young people agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have good prospects; this compares to only 2 in 10 people over the age of 50 who report the same level of optimism. There are also significant differences by sector; half of all workers in the

Figure 60: Good prospects for career advancement, by occupation, Republic of Korea (%)



Note: Agree category includes 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree'. Do not agree category includes 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree'.

education sector feel positive about their prospects for advancement, while only 9% of workers in agriculture feel that they have good job prospects.

Workers in occupations associated with higher levels of specialisation and skills typically feel more positive about their prospects for career advancement (Figure 60). Over half of managers (56%), professionals and technicians (both 53%) feel optimistic about their job prospects; meanwhile, only 1 in 10 workers in elementary occupations or agriculture feel that they have good opportunities for career advancement, making them the least optimistic in this regard.

Part-time workers are more likely than their full-time counterparts to feel they do not have good opportunities for career advancement (80% compared with 65%). They are also significantly more likely to feel that they will lose their job in the next six months (14% compared to 4%). Unsurprisingly, a larger proportion of workers with fixed-term contracts also express concern about job loss (11%). Workers in most sectors are generally confident about their job stability, with the exception of those employed in public administration, where 12% of workers are concerned that they will lose their job in the next six months.

### Earnings

The majority of the workers surveyed, as dependent employees, earn their main income via a base salary or wage. Some workers (38%) receive additional piece-rate or productivity payments, extra payment for additional work or overtime or Sunday work (35% and 26% respectively), or extra payment for dangerous working conditions (10%).

In every sector except for public administration, the mean wage exceeds the median wage, suggesting that

the wage distribution is somewhat skewed and that smaller numbers of high-wage earners are driving up the average wage for the sector as a whole.

Construction is the sector with the highest median wage. By occupation, managers have the highest average wage (KRW 4.5 million per month, equivalent to approximately €3,065 in 2014), while agricultural workers are paid the least (KRW 1 million per month, or €681).

Workers in the Republic of Korea also display a large gender gap with respect to wages. Women, on average, earn 67% of what men earn, and 77% of the national average. The gender gap is greatest in the 50-plus age group.

The earnings of self-employed workers with employees, wage workers with indefinite contracts, full-time workers, and those working in large workplaces (250 or more employees) and/or urban areas are comparatively higher than those of other workers.

### Perspectives on working life

Workers' lives are complex and multidimensional, and working conditions may have far-reaching consequences on various aspects of their lives beyond the workplace. Working conditions can affect physical health and mental well-being, as well as work-life balance. In order to better understand the relationship between worker well-being and the workplace dimensions discussed in this chapter, a series of regressions was performed. In this analysis, physical health, mental well-being and work-life balance were measured in relation to various individual characteristics (such as sex, age and level of education), sector and occupation, as well as specific working conditions.



## Self-reported health

The first regression looked at the relationship between working conditions and the safety and health risks that workers attribute to their jobs. The analysis shows that men are more likely than women to respond that their work is dangerous in terms of safety and health. This response is also more common among older workers and workers with lower levels of education. Higher levels of risk are also reported by employees – regardless of their contractual status – as compared to self-employed workers with employees. Workers who report high levels of risk in relation to health are more likely to have occupations in services and sales or agriculture, or to work as plant and machine operators or in elementary occupations. By sector, construction, transport and public administration were shown to display a greater positive association with high levels of risk. Importantly, adverse working conditions, including poor physical environments, adverse social behaviour, discrimination, excessive working hours and night work, are shown to be a significant risk factor. Finally, workers who are informed about occupational safety and health are also more likely to believe they are exposed to risks, perhaps indicating that workers in dangerous workplaces are also more informed about the risks present.

## Mental health status

In a similar fashion, the second regression examined the determinants of the self-reported mental health of workers. Almost all of the working conditions examined in this chapter have a statistically significant relationship with worker well-being. Higher levels of mental well-being are reported by those who report high-quality management and autonomy in the workplace. In contrast, adverse social behaviour, discrimination, dependence of pace of work on others, frequent disruptive interruptions, and working over 60 hours per week have negative associations with mental well-being. Interestingly, working to tight deadlines appears to have a positive impact on worker well-being, possibly reflecting an attachment to corporate culture among workers in the Republic of Korea.

## Work–life balance

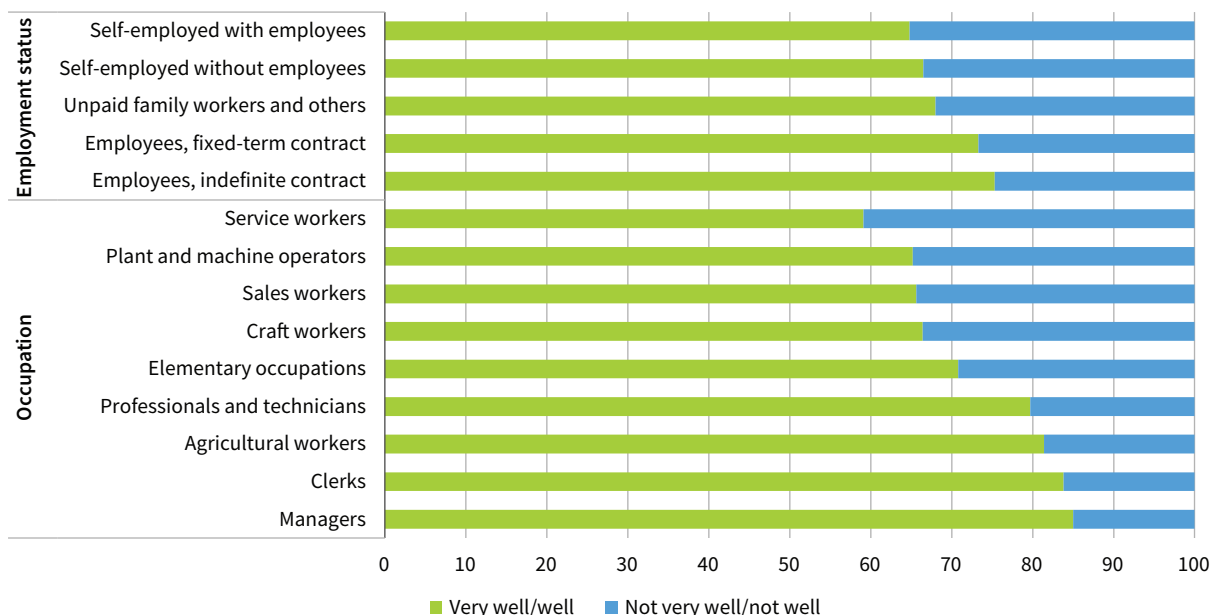
The final model analysed the determinants of work–life balance. When working conditions were examined, the results showed that women and younger workers report worse work–life balance. Employment and contractual status do not appear to be significant in this regard. Working conditions rather than individual characteristics display the strongest association with work–life balance. The greatest predictors of poor work–life balance are excessive hours, atypical schedules – including night work and weekend work – and difficulty in taking time off during working hours. Schedule regularity and input of workers to their own schedules – which may involve workers having the ability to choose between several fixed working schedules determined by the employer or to adopt working hours within specified limits – display positive correlations with work–life balance. Unsurprisingly, those who never work in their free time are more likely to report good work–life balance than those who do so regularly.

In addition to these regression results, it is instructive to analyse the distribution of the ‘fit’ between work, family and social commitments across different groups of workers. In terms of employment status, for example, self-employed workers with employees report a good fit more rarely than others, while the best fit is reported by employees with indefinite contracts. Workers in commerce and hospitality and transport, as well as service and sales workers and plant and machine operators, are least likely to report a good fit between their work and personal lives (Figure 61).

Despite generally having long working hours, half of all workers in the Republic of Korea report that they have some level of difficulty in making ends meet: 30% have some difficulty making ends meet, 16% have difficulty and 4% great difficulty.

Although many workers report that it is hard for them to cover their cost of living, relatively few workers (12%) express an interest in working more hours than they currently do. This is probably because working long hours is already prevalent in the Republic of Korea. Workers who are employed part time or on fixed-term contracts are most likely to want to work more hours (45% and 31% of such workers respectively). Self-employed workers with employees are the most likely to want to work fewer hours (53%). This finding is to be expected, given that self-employed workers with employees work long hours each week and report a poor fit between their work and personal lives.

**Figure 61: Fit between work and commitments outside work, by employment status and occupation, Republic of Korea (%)**



## Conclusions

The Republic of Korea has a highly advanced and diversified economy, with a defined regulatory structure that is taking action to monitor and improve working conditions. Recent efforts concerning occupational safety and health have focused specifically on reducing physical risks in the workplace. These efforts are important, particularly in sectors like agriculture, transport and construction, where almost one in four workers face some sort of physical risk. As Korean workers work long hours, their exposure to physical risks may be higher overall. Stronger regulations might also usefully be considered in order to reduce the long working hours that characterise working conditions in the Republic of Korea.

In sectors such as transport and construction, working conditions are generally lagging behind, while poor working conditions are also quite pronounced in some specific occupations. Managers, professionals and other occupations associated with high levels of training and skills routinely report better outcomes with respect to earnings, skills and discretion, and management quality, as compared to other occupations. The opposite is true of plant and machine operators, agricultural workers, service and sales workers, and those in elementary occupations. These occupational groups are more likely to experience higher work intensity and physical risk, and a poorer fit between work, family and social commitments. Microenterprises also generally have poorer working conditions than small, medium-sized or large enterprises.

The other area of substantial disparity in the labour market of the Republic of Korea is the difference in the working conditions experienced by men and women. Labour market segregation is marked, as women tend to work in lower-paid occupations, for fewer hours, and for less money. Insofar as education may provide a path to equal work opportunities, women also have lower rates of secondary and tertiary education.

Across the different economic sectors, workers' lukewarm assessments of their cognitive engagement suggest that the workforce may be well positioned to take on more demanding jobs. Workers also have mixed feelings regarding the social environments of their workplaces. While most workers feel respected, only half report that they feel supported by their managers or co-workers. The perceived quality of management is better among occupational groups associated with higher skills, such as professionals and managers, and poorest among workers in elementary occupations. Given the finding that more than 1 in 20 workers are exposed to some type of adverse social behaviour, and the extent to which adverse behaviour is shown to correlate with poor levels of worker-reported health, efforts should be made to reduce adverse social behaviour in the workplace.

Analysis of workplace conditions shows a strong relationship between flexibility of working schedules and self-reported worker health. Also, regression analysis shows that workers who work more than 40 hours per week are more likely to report that their safety and health is at risk. They are also more likely to report poor general health, and are less likely to report

a good fit between their work and home commitments. The findings suggest that, in order to prevent accidents and burnout at work, reforms to shorten the working week should be considered.

Finally, more information is needed to understand why such a large proportion of workers in the Republic of

Korea have difficulty making ends meet. The incidence with which workers report difficulty in covering their cost of living should therefore be further investigated in order to determine how best to improve the situation for workers, provide them with sufficient remuneration and generally ensure fairness in the labour market.

# 6 | Turkey

## Introduction

Turkey has had a customs union agreement with the EU since 1995 and is currently a candidate for full membership of the Union. As a result, since 2005, Eurofound has included Turkey in its EWCS survey, financed through the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. As such, the Turkish survey shares the same methodology and the same questionnaire as EU Member States and other candidate countries. However, this is the most extensive effort to analyse the data on Turkey, focusing on the EWCS 2015, the most recent data available. One of the most important contributions of this dataset, and the analysis that follows, is to expand the discussion on working conditions in Turkey on a multidisciplinary basis.

## Labour market overview

Turkey, an emerging economy, has enjoyed steady economic growth over the past decade, but the labour market nonetheless continues to be characterised by low employment rates and a high share of informality that shapes economic and social development.

In 2015, according to the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey, the countrywide employment rate stood at 46%. Of those working, only about half are formal wage earners with a permanent job (51%), while one in five are self-employed (4% with employees, 17% without employees). Other workers are split between formal wage earners with a temporary job (4%), informal wage earners (7%) and unpaid family workers (12%), the vast majority of whom work informally.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the Turkish labour market is also notably characterised by a dual structure with a sharp distinction between formal and informal employment arrangements.

Labour market disparities exist throughout the Turkish labour market and are particularly visible when employment rates are disaggregated by gender. While the male employment rate stands at 65%, the rate of employment among women is a mere 28%, due to both a low labour-force-participation rate and a high rate of unemployment.

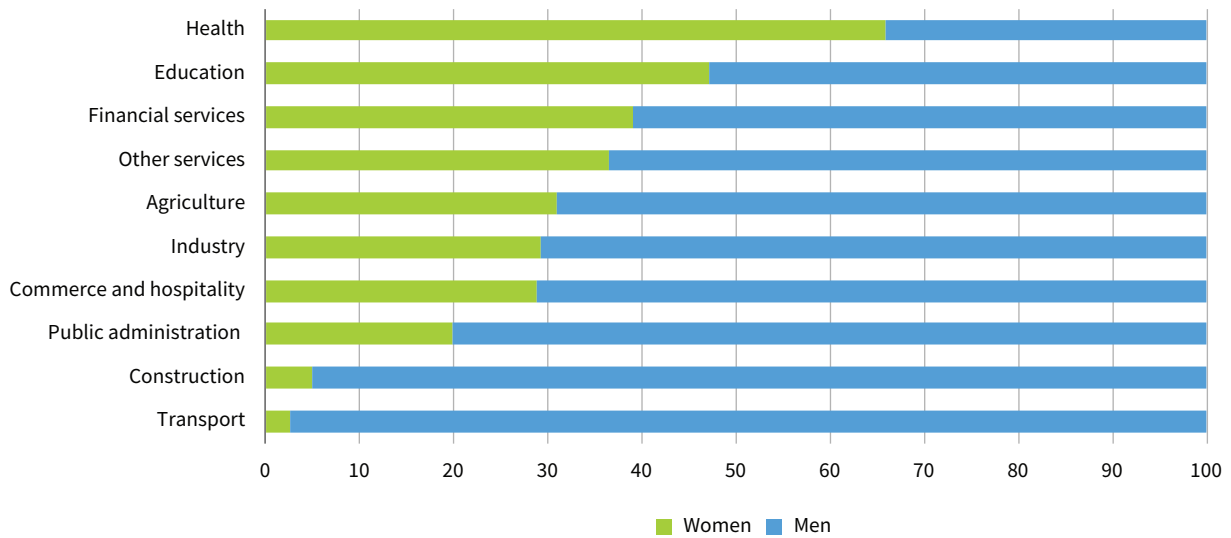
In recent decades, the country entered a period of structural transformation. This has manifested itself in the growth of industry and services, as reflected in both GDP and employment. Nevertheless, the share of employment in agriculture remains sizeable. According to findings from the EWCS,<sup>13</sup> on which the rest of this chapter is based, the proportion of employment in agriculture in Turkey stood at 24% in 2015. This was closely followed by commerce and hospitality (19%) and industry (16%). Figure 62 illustrates the unequal rates of employment of men and women in different sectors of the economy. Health and education are the sectors in which women are overrepresented, which may be due to the traditional views of Turkish society in relation to women's roles in raising children and caring for others.

Gender disparities are also observed across different occupations, and men outnumber women in every occupational category (Figure 63). In terms of the total number of women employed, the most common occupational groups for women are service and sales workers, elementary occupations and agricultural workers. These three occupational groups are also the most common among all workers, irrespective of gender, with agricultural workers outnumbering workers in elementary occupations by 1 percentage point. As a proportion of the occupational workforce, there is a relatively high presence of women who work in clerical support (this occupation also has the greatest gender parity), as professionals, and service and sales workers.

12 As the remainder of the chapter is based on the EWCS, rather than the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey, it is worth highlighting that the EWCS uses a somewhat different categorisation of employment status and contractual arrangements. As a result, in the ECWS sample, self-employed workers without employees represent 25% of the labour force, self-employed workers with employees make up 6%, employees with an indefinite contract comprise 38%, employees on a fixed-term contract represent 4%, and employees with 'other' or no contract make up 27%.

13 Data of the EWCS have been weighted on the basis of the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey.

Figure 62: Distribution of workers, by sector and sex, Turkey (%)



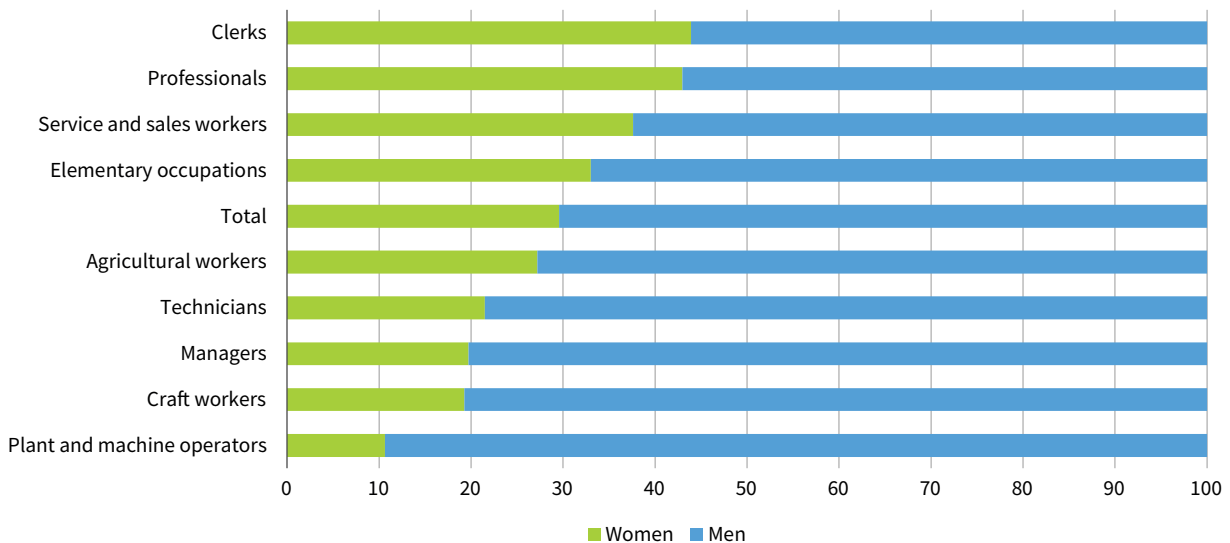
Source: EWCS 2015 for all figures unless stated otherwise.

The relatively high shares of women in such different occupational groups (for instance professionals, but also service and sales workers) is a reflection of a gendered and segregated labour market, and of highly uneven educational outcomes. When compared to men, women have either relatively low or relatively high levels of education. Among active workers, 46% of women have a primary level of education, compared to 37% of men; at the same time, however, 26% of women are graduates of tertiary education, compared to only 19% of men. Women with higher education levels are more likely to participate in the labour market than men, and the gender wage gap is narrowest among those with a tertiary level of education. The higher rates

of labour market participation among women with tertiary education skew the data relating to inequalities in earnings, resulting in a mean wage gap that is narrower than the median wage gap (10% compared to 20%). It is also clear that the gender wage gap is wider among those with lower levels of education, affecting a greater number of women.

Another notable characteristic of the Turkish labour market is the relative youth of the workforce. Nearly half (46%) of all workers are between the ages of 15 and 34. This young labour force is attributed to a generally young population, but also to pension reforms. In the early 1990s, early retirement was introduced, inducing

Figure 63: Employment, by occupation and sex, Turkey (%)



many workers to retire at quite a young age. Workers who had started working before 1980 could retire as early as 44 years of age. Various regulations were introduced, beginning in 1999, to reverse the trend. However, these laws could not be applied retroactively. Current trends show that the 1999 regulations are beginning to have an effect, as older workers retire and are replaced by a younger cohort, unable to access the early retirement provision.

Within the past decade, the Turkish labour market has also experienced significant turbulence due to the Great Recession, which caused non-agricultural unemployment to rise to 18% in 2008. Although unemployment dropped substantially when the economy began to recover, it has been increasing again since 2016. Part of this rise is attributed to the addition of three million Syrian refugees who have obtained temporary protected status. As there have been relatively few formal working permits issued, most Syrians are employed informally.

## Policies and laws governing the labour market, working conditions and employment

Working conditions in Turkey are governed by a substantial regulatory framework.

Turkey has ratified all eight fundamental ILO conventions, as well as a series of technical conventions on both broad and sector-specific (for instance, relating to construction and mining) occupational safety and health principles.<sup>14</sup>

There are four main laws that regulate working conditions and labour relations in Turkey and legally cover the majority of employees: the Labour Act of Turkey (Law No. 4857), Act No. 6356 on Trade Unions and Collective Labour Agreements, Act No. 4688 on Public Servants' Trade Unions, and Act No. 6331 on Occupational Health and Safety. In addition, there are specific laws that regulate individual segments of the labour market. For example, there are special provisions

for self-employed workers, journalists and maritime workers.<sup>15</sup>

Act No. 6331 on Occupational Health and Safety is the key reference regarding physical safety and health in the workplace. This law covers almost all workers in all sectors, including those employed in agriculture and the public sector. According to the law, all employers are required to ensure avoidance of risks that can be avoided, evaluate the risks which cannot be avoided, combat each risk at its source, adapt the work and working conditions to the individuals concerned (making use of technological progress to do so), substitute dangerous substances or procedures with non-dangerous or less dangerous ones, and provide appropriate training and instructions to workers, among other obligations. The employer can help ensure compliance with these provisions either by establishing an occupational safety and health unit in the workplace, or through joint safety and health units. All employers with more than 50 employees and with staff members that have been in their positions for six months or longer and are on permanent contracts, are required to establish an occupational safety and health committee.

Although laws covering working conditions are comprehensive, informal employment poses challenges to their effective implementation. Unregistered organisations, or organisations that do not register employees with the Turkish Social Security Institution, may also be non-compliant with standards that govern workplace security and undercut other conditions of work. The prevalence and impact of informal employment creates market-wide pressures that can in turn affect the working conditions and employment experiences of workers in formal employment relationships too. The high proportion of self-employed workers also means that the laws concern only a limited part of the workforce.

Some working conditions are also regulated through collective bargaining, although as of 2016 the trade union density in Turkey stands at only 8%, and collective bargaining coverage at just 6% (Ilostat, 2016, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 155); Occupational Health Services Convention (No. 161); Safety and Health in Construction Convention (No. 167); Safety and Health in Mines Convention (No. 176). Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (2006) (C187).

<sup>15</sup> See for example: Turkish Code of Obligations (Law No. 6098), which makes reference to the self-employed; Act No. 6735 on International Labour Force, which relates to migrant workers; Press Labour Law (No. 5953); and Maritime Labour Act (No. 854).



## Dimensions of job quality

### Physical environment

The EWCS provides rich and detailed information, gathered through a series of 13 questions, about the physical environment in which Turkish workers perform their work, and their exposure to physical risks. This information can be grouped into three categories: posture-related or ergonomic risks (risks pertaining to inconvenient postures that may affect physical health), ambient or environmental risks (for example working at abnormal temperatures or experiencing other adverse conditions), and exposure to biological and chemical risks.

Across all categories, loud noise, repetitive movements and uncomfortable working positions pose the most common physical risks to Turkish workers. Some 44% are exposed to noise that is so loud they must raise their voice to talk for at least a quarter of the time they spend at work.

Regarding posture-related risks, 59% of workers perform job functions that require them to hold tiring or painful positions, and 68% perform repetitive hand or arm movements. Elsewhere, high rates of risk exposure include 23% of workers who are exposed to secondary tobacco smoke, and 26% who are subjected to other airborne particles and hazards including chemicals, dust, fumes, smoke or gases. The largest ambient risk is

exposure to high or low temperatures, experienced by 39% and 38% of the workforce respectively.

Half of all Turkish workers are exposed to three or more such physical risks at least a quarter of the time. Biological and chemical, posture-related and ambient risks are highest in the construction sector. Other sectors with a high incidence of risk exposure in all three categories include industry and agriculture. By occupation, exposure is highest among craft workers, plant and machine operators, agricultural workers and workers in elementary occupations (Figure 64).

### Work intensity

Work intensity refers to the level or scale of certain demands that workers face in their jobs. It includes several components, such as how often workers have to work at high speed and face tight deadlines, what factors determine the pace of their work (pace determinants), how often they have enough time to do their job, and to what extent the work presents emotional demands (such as having to hide emotions, deal with angry clients or address emotionally disturbing situations).

Half of all Turkish workers face intense quantitative demands. Quantitative demands are particularly high in the construction sector, where 62% of workers report that three-quarters of the time or more they work at very high speeds and 68% report working to tight deadlines three-quarters of the time or more (Figure 65).

Figure 64: Exposure to physical risks, by occupation, Turkey (%)

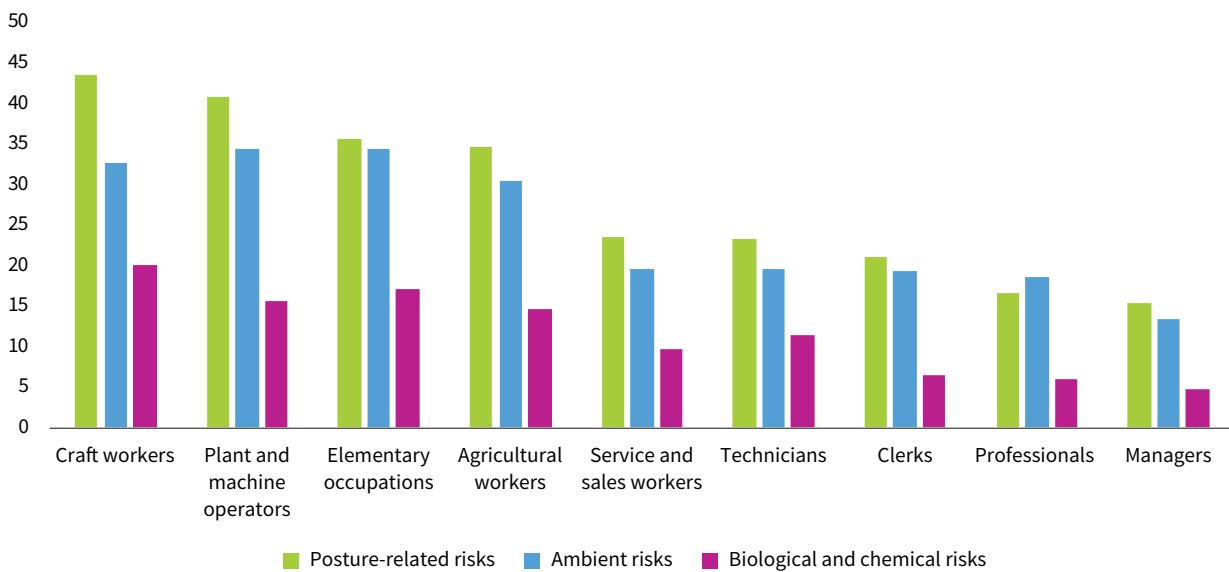


Figure 65: Components of work intensity dimension, by sector, Turkey (%)

	Working at high speed (3/4 of the time +)	Working to tight deadlines (3/4 of the time +)	Three or more pace determinants	Enough time to do job (never/rarely)	Hide emotions (most of the time/always)	Handle angry clients (3/4 of the time +)	Emotionally disturbing situations (3/4 of the time +)
Agriculture	46	47	15	17	20	6	8
Industry	59	60	53	15	38	11	17
Construction	62	68	45	14	34	11	11
Commerce and hospitality	55	51	33	10	47	35	13
Transport	45	44	22	18	35	26	17
Financial services	59	48	30	9	52	34	11
Public administration	27	30	20	12	51	10	8
Education	27	36	16	6	54	47	19
Health	50	44	25	10	46	39	25
Other services	46	51	32	12	51	24	10

A significant number of workers in industry and financial services also experience high quantitative demands (between 48% and 60% per indicator). Despite this, only 13% of all workers declare that they never or rarely have enough time to do their jobs.<sup>16</sup>

Almost half of all workers (48%) say their pace of work depends on direct demands from customers, pupils or patients, reflecting the importance of commercial constraints and their impact on work organisation. Almost half (45%) of workers say that their work pace depends on the work done by their colleagues, and 40% of workers attribute the pace of their work to the direct control of their manager; both of these factors constitute more horizontal and internal constraints. Numerical production or performance targets are slightly less common, cited by 37% of workers.

The most common emotional demand on Turkish workers is the feeling that they must often or always hide their emotions at work. At 20%, those working in the agriculture sector are least likely to experience this phenomenon, while 34–54% of workers in every other sector cite the need to hide their emotions at work. This demand is reported most commonly among professionals, technicians and service and sales workers.

### Working time quality

According to the Labour Act of Turkey, the country's standard working week is 45 hours and each working day is not to exceed 11 hours. There is also a provision that requires at least one 24-hour period of uninterrupted rest within any seven-day window. Workers in public administration are also bound by a specific law whereby their working week is 40 hours and they do not work on Saturdays or Sundays.<sup>17</sup>

Despite these legal provisions, 57% of Turkish workers report working long hours, in excess of 48 hours per week. These long working hours are observed despite the fact that only 4% of all workers have a second job. Short working hours of less than 20 hours per week are reported by just 9% of workers.

The variation in working hours across different sectors is substantial (Figure 66). Workers in commerce and hospitality tend to work the longest hours on average: almost 40% work over 60 hours per week. Other sectors in which workers are particularly prone to working long hours are transport and construction. Interestingly, agriculture is the sector with the highest proportion (14%) of workers with very short working hours (20 or less), and also has a high proportion (28%) of workers with very long weekly working hours (more than 60).

16 The responses to an additional question, measuring whether workers face frequent and disruptive interruptions, are not presented here; this issue seems to be of limited concern, with less than 3% of workers reporting it.

17 The Labour Act of Turkey (Law No. 4857) contains general provisions; Law No. 657 contains provisions for workers in public administration.

Figure 66: Usual weekly working hours, by sector, Turkey (%)

	<21	21-34	35-40	41-47	48-59	60+
Commerce and hospitality	7	5	8	8	34	39
Transport	4	6	14	11	33	32
Construction	5	4	9	8	44	30
Agriculture	14	14	12	9	22	28
Industry	9	6	6	13	40	26
Other services	10	3	10	16	43	18
Financial services	1	3	38	27	21	9
Health	10	16	33	12	24	6
Public administration	4	2	61	13	14	6
Education	10	29	34	9	16	3

Employment status also has a direct bearing on hours worked and work schedules. Workers who are self-employed, with or without employees, are the most likely to report working over 60 hours per week and the least likely to have a regular work schedule.

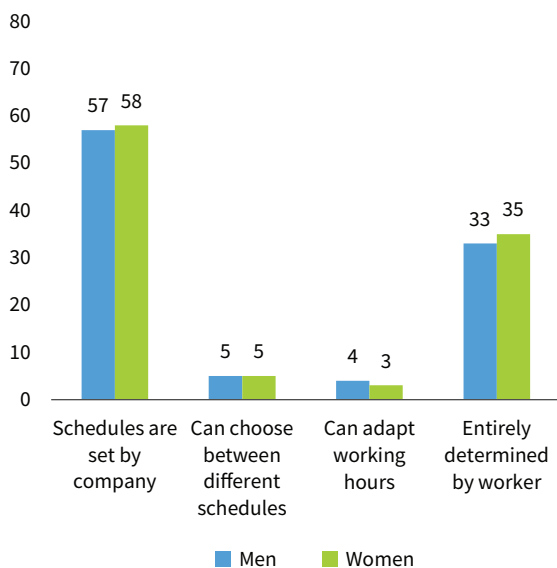
In addition, working on Saturdays and Sundays is very common, reported by 78% and 44% of workers respectively. Around one in five workers (19%) are not granted an 11-hour recovery period between two working days.

Some workers also report having atypical working hours. Night work is reported by 16% of workers and 11% work shifts, of which 62% are rotating shifts and 31% are permanent, with other types of shift work reported by 7%. Both night and shift work are more than twice as common among men as among women.

When it comes to having the possibility to determine their own work schedules, roughly 6 in 10 workers report that their hours are set by their employer; while around a third are able to determine their work schedules themselves. Although the survey identified little variation by sex (Figure 67), it found that self-employed workers have much more control over their work schedules than wage employees. Indeed, the majority of employees (84%) have their working time arrangements set by their employer. In contrast, 89% of self-employed workers indicate that their working time arrangements are entirely self-determined.

As for flexibility, more than a third of workers say that it is very easy to arrange to take an hour off during working hours in order to take care of personal or family matters. Meanwhile, 24% of workers say that they have to work in their free time to meet work demands at least several times a month, without substantial gender differences.

Figure 67: Distribution of working time arrangements, by sex, Turkey (%)



### Social environment

The EWCS measures the quality of the social environment in the workplace by examining exposure to adverse social behaviour and the extent of social support received from colleagues and managers.

In Turkey, less than 4% of workers report experiencing adverse social behaviour in the workplace, defined as exposure to verbal abuse, unwanted sexual attention, threats, humiliating behaviour, physical violence, sexual harassment and/or bullying. The fact that very few workers report adverse social behaviour may also be hiding important gender differences, as there are too few observations in the available data to conclude whether a gender gap exists in this regard. Violence at work is a sensitive topic in Turkey. General awareness about its importance remains relatively low, despite the fact that cases of violence at work are receiving increasing attention in the media. The understanding of what constitutes verbal abuse also differs from one

Figure 68: Social support, by sector, Turkey (%)

	Boss respects you	Boss gives you recognition	Boss provides useful feedback	Boss encourages your development	Boss gets people to work together	Boss helps to get the work done	Colleagues give help and support
Agriculture	90	72	63	71	81	75	55
Industry	86	75	73	72	77	67	72
Construction	86	82	77	78	82	70	80
Commerce and hospitality	86	80	76	79	84	77	77
Transport	94	68	68	73	76	72	56
Financial services	91	79	76	85	81	82	71
Public administration	93	89	92	91	91	88	74
Education	91	89	85	86	85	83	63
Health	90	80	84	82	86	79	63
Other services	91	82	81	79	85	76	74

**Note:** Selected answer categories are 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree'. Selected answer categories 'always' and 'most of the time' for colleagues give help and support.

worker to another, and many are not aware of the meaning of bullying. As a consequence, the respondents' answers may be of lower quality than those relating to other topics.

More positively, a generally high share of Turkish workers report that they receive respect from their managers, irrespective of the sector of activity (Figure 68). The sectors that report the highest management quality – expressed in terms of managers' recognition, useful feedback and encouragement of professional development – are public administration and education.

In contrast, the reported levels of help and support from colleagues are lower and vary substantially across sectors. For example, the lowest percentages of workers who receive help from colleagues are found in agriculture and transport, possibly due to the solitary nature of some of the jobs in these sectors.

Women report lower rates of social support than men and are less likely to receive praise or recognition from their managers in industries such as agriculture, financial services, public administration and other services. Despite this, in all sectors except for public administration, women are more likely than men to report that their immediate supervisor respects them as a person.

## Skills and discretion

The skills and discretion dimension of job quality summarises the skills that are required for workers to do their jobs, and the discretion they have to utilise them. In other words, it refers to a combination of workers having the skills they need (and/or the opportunity to acquire these skills) and the discretion to apply them in their jobs.

In relation to the cognitive dimension of skills and discretion, the data reveal that almost half (47%) of workers in Turkey always, often or sometimes carry out complex tasks (Figure 69).

Slightly more than half of workers regularly learn new things in the workplace. However, a much larger proportion (80%) reports that they are able to apply their own ideas in their work at least sometimes. There are almost no gender differences reported.

Conversely, in relation to decision latitude, an overwhelming majority of workers are able to choose the order of their tasks, the speed at which they work, and their method of work; however, relatively few workers are able to choose their colleagues. Male workers are more likely than female workers to report that they have a say in the choice of their colleagues.

Figure 69: Cognitive demands and decision latitude, by sex, Turkey (%)



Note: All dichotomous items, proportion indicates ‘yes’. Except ability to apply your own ideas in your work, proportion indicates ‘all of the time’ to ‘sometimes’; having a say in choice of work colleagues ‘always’ to ‘most of the time’.

The gender gap in relation to participation (not shown in Figure 69) is relatively large. Women are much less likely than men to report that they are consulted before objectives are set for their own work always or most of the time (39% of women compared to 47% of men), that they are involved in improving the work organisation or processes (39% compared to 46%), or that they have the ability to influence decisions that are important for their work (50% compared to 56%).

An important way to promote workers’ personal and professional development is to ensure lifelong learning opportunities. However, the proportion of Turkish workers who report having received training in the past 12 months – whether it be on-the-job training and/or training paid for or provided by their employer – is only 15%. Men and women are equally likely to receive training that is paid for by their employer; however, men are somewhat more likely to receive on-the-job training than women (16% compared to 12%).

On-the-job training is more common in construction, as reported by 25% of workers. Twenty-four percent of workers in education and finance say that they have received training paid for or provided by their employer.

Workers who have lower levels of education or are working in microenterprises are at a clear disadvantage when it comes to training. Part-time workers are only half as likely to receive training as those who work full time. On the other hand, there does not seem to be any significant difference between employees with

indefinite contracts – of whom 19% receive on-the-job training and 15% receive training paid for by their employer – and those with other or no contracts (16% and 13% respectively). Workers who are self-employed without employees (a relatively large group in Turkey) are much less likely to receive training (3–6%).

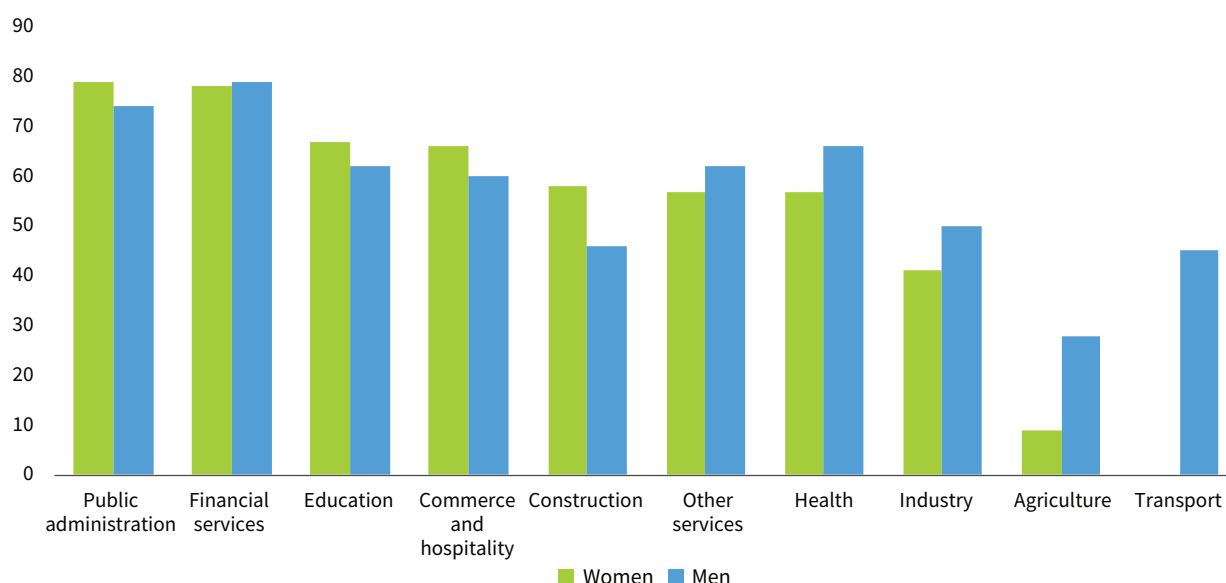
### Prospects

The prospects dimension of job quality reflects workers’ perceptions of job security – measured by their concern about losing their job and recent experiences of downsizing – and prospects for career advancement.

According to the EWCS data, 15% of all Turkish workers believe that they may lose their job in the next six months. However, only 7% report that their enterprise underwent a decrease in employment over the past three years, a finding that reflects an overall recent increase in employment in the Turkish labour market. There are no gender differences in this regard.

Half of all workers say that their job offers good prospects for career advancement – a proportion that is larger than the average in the EU28. A particularly high proportion of workers who report good career prospects is found among employees with indefinite contracts (59%); nevertheless, workers with fixed-term contracts and without any contract are also fairly optimistic in this regard (53% and 51% respectively). This finding could be a reflection of a workforce which is relatively young overall.

Figure 70: Good prospects for career advancement, by sex and sector, Turkey (%)



Note: Sample for women in Transport is too small (two observations). Selected answer categories 'strongly agree' and 'agree'.

In terms of sector, the proportions of workers who report having good career prospects are especially high in public administration and financial services, as well as in health and education (Figure 70). With the exception of those in the public administration, commerce and hospitality, education and construction sectors, men generally indicate better prospects for career advancement than women. By occupation, the proportions of workers who report that they have good career prospects are highest among managers, professionals and technicians, and particularly low among agricultural workers and those in elementary occupations.

## Earnings

The questions relating to earnings in the Turkish survey concentrate on the net monthly earnings of workers; this approach is in line with the EWCS, as tax, social security systems and contributions vary widely between countries. The Turkish survey includes a question on the exact amount of earnings, as well as questions on where the respondents' earnings fall within a given set of bands. The earnings variable used in this part of the analysis is built on a combination of these two variables.

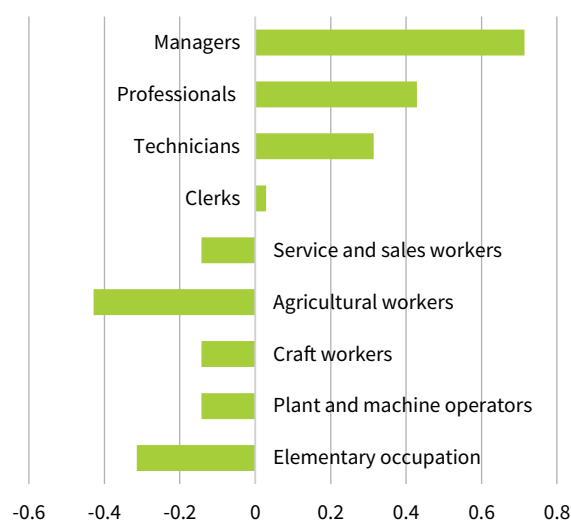
As of 2015, the distribution of monthly net earnings in Turkey was quite skewed, with a significant group of workers earning below the net monthly minimum wage of TRY 1,000 (€312 at February 2015 exchange rate, which was volatile at the time and since). This is due to the high level of informal employment, rather than to part-time work.

The median earnings of men was TRY 1,750 (€545), substantially higher than the median earnings of women (TRY 1,350, or €421). This considerable gender

gap in earnings is accentuated when differences in education are taken into account: when workers are grouped by their sex and level of education, the gaps in wages between men and women in different education groups are wider than the average gender wage gap.

The sectors with the highest median earnings are financial services, public administration and education. Agriculture is the sector with the lowest median earnings (TRY 1,000, or €312). In terms of occupation, managers, professionals and technicians have the highest median earnings, whereas agricultural workers and workers in elementary occupations have the lowest median earnings. Figure 71 illustrates earnings by occupation, as compared to the national median wage.

Figure 71: Earnings compared to national median wage (centred), by occupation, Turkey, as % of median wage of men





Employment status is closely related to median monthly earnings. Those who are self-employed with employees have the highest median income. Employees with indefinite contracts are the group with the second highest median income. Self-employed workers without employees have a lower median income than employees with indefinite contracts. The lowest median income is found among employees without a contract.

Workers' perception of whether they are paid appropriately is linked to their earnings; those who are paid more are also more likely to perceive that they are appropriately paid. In the four highest earnings quintiles, women are slightly more likely than men to believe that their remuneration is appropriate. Managers and professionals, whose median pay is the highest, are also the most likely to believe they are paid appropriately, while the opposite is observed for agricultural workers.

## Perspectives on working life

Job quality may have important implications for other outcomes, including health risks incurred in the workplace, mental well-being and work–life balance.

To assess the relationship between working conditions – as described in this chapter – and these other outcomes, a regression analysis was performed on the EWCS data, using outcomes as dependent variables, and working conditions as predictors.

### Health at work

The analysis of perceived health and safety risk due to work suggests that, if standard individual characteristics are controlled for (age, marital status, education, sector and occupation), women believe they have fewer health and safety risks at work compared to men. However, when job quality predictors are included in the model, there are no differences in perceived health and safety risk at work among men and women. Instead, and as expected, job quality is closely related to perceptions of health and safety risks in the workplace. With respect to sector, workers in transport are the most likely to perceive high levels of risk, followed by those in public administration and construction.

Poor physical environment, night work and exposure to adverse social behaviour are the working conditions that are most likely to increase a worker's propensity to feel that their health is at risk. On the other hand, workers are less likely to perceive their health to be at

risk if they feel well informed about occupational and safety risks and if there is a health and safety delegate or committee in their workplace. These results indicate a correlation, but do not necessarily imply causality. Indeed, they may even imply co-determination. For example, health and safety delegates or committees may be more common in workplaces where there is higher exposure to health risks. Similarly, workers may be particularly well informed about occupational safety and health in more dangerous workplaces.

### Mental health status

The analysis of individual workers' mental well-being reveals that technicians are the occupational group most likely to report being in good mental health.<sup>18</sup> In terms of sector, workers in industry report the poorest level of well-being. No gender differences are found with respect to reported well-being. Good management quality and job security are the aspects of working conditions that are most closely associated with positive well-being.

### Work–life balance

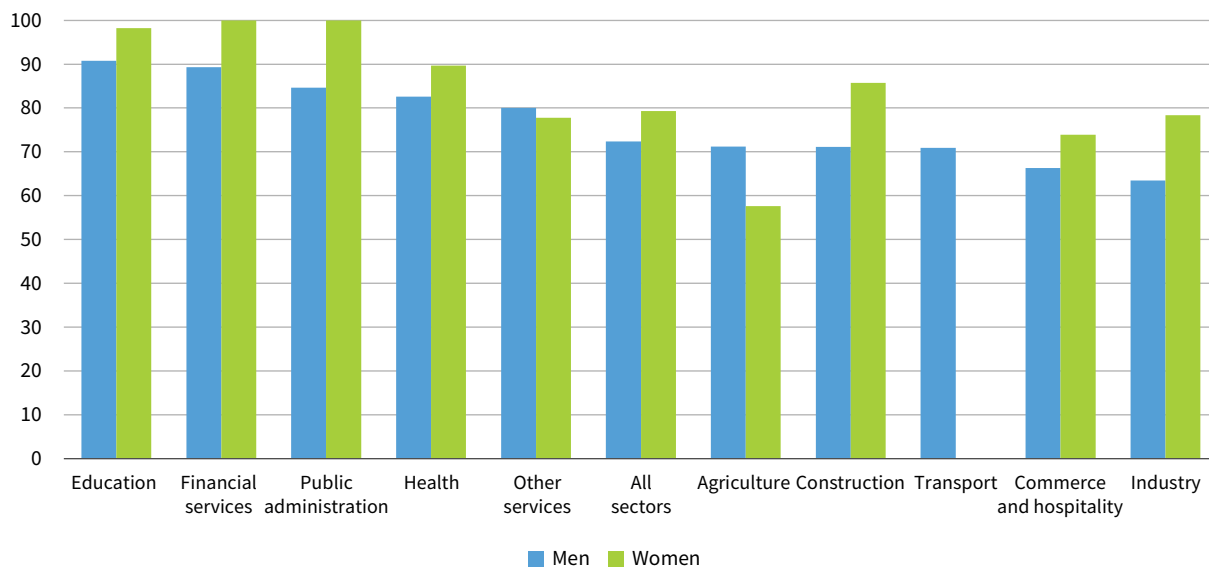
Lastly, analysing the relationship between various working conditions and self-reported work–life balance confirms that those who work normal hours (between 35 and 40 hours per week) and those who are easily able to take an hour off from work are more likely to report a good fit between their work and non-work commitments. Night work and Saturday work, as well as irregular work, have the opposite effects. Important disparities are also clear across sectors and remain after controlling for working conditions and individual characteristics; those employed in financial services, public administration and health are more likely to report a good fit between work and non-work commitments than workers in other sectors. Unsurprisingly, workers with children find it hardest to reconcile work with family; those with a tertiary level of education manage much better.

Despite the fact that some groups of workers are more likely to experience conflict between their commitments inside and outside of work, three-quarters of Turkish workers overall report that their commitments at work and in their private lives fit well or very well (Figure 72).

Further complementary survey questions enable a closer understanding of what may be behind the disparities in work–life balance.

18 Self-reported mental health is a subjective measure of well-being taken from the World Health Organization's Well-Being Index (WHO-5), which assesses 'positive mood' (good spirit and relaxation), 'vitality' (being active and waking up fresh and rested), and 'general interest' (being interested in things).

Figure 72: Work-life balance, by sector, Turkey (%)



Note: Sample for women in Transport is too small (two observations). Selected answer categories 'very well' and 'well'.

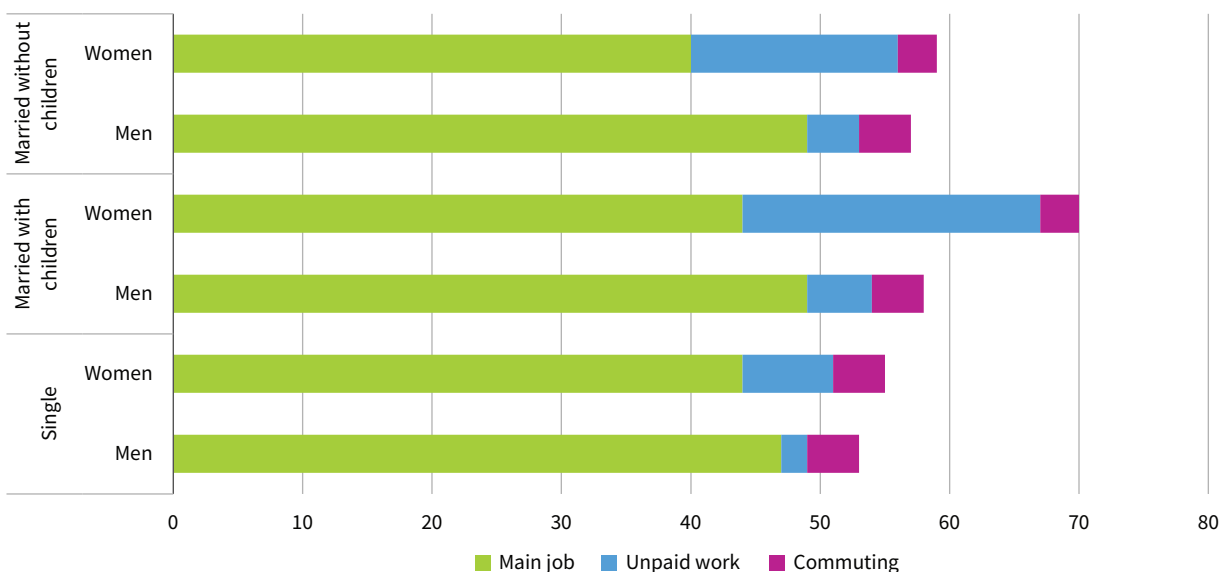
Firstly, while the reasons workers attribute to their work-family conflicts vary, one of the most commonly stated factors is that they are too tired to complete housework after they return from work. Almost 40% of women but only 33% of men report this reason, a finding that reflects the gendered distribution of housework.

The breakdown of paid and unpaid working hours sheds additional light on the length of the Turkish working week (Figure 73). Notably, it further confirms an

unequal distribution of household tasks, putting married women with children at a particular disadvantage. However, there does not seem to be any difference between workers with different family responsibilities in terms of the time they spend commuting.

Working time preferences also indicate that 50% of workers would like to work fewer hours than they currently do, 45% would like to keep their current working hours and only 5% would like to increase their hours.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 73: Total working hours per week, by life stage, Turkey



19 Holding a second job is very rare in Turkey, therefore any time spent in a second job was excluded from the analysis. Some 97% of workers do not have a second job, and only 2% of workers have a second job that they occasionally do.

This is not a surprising finding, given the already high average number of working hours in Turkey.

Finally, work–life balance is likely to have a substantial bearing on the tenure of workers in their jobs, as well as their ability to perform the same job (whether with the same employer or not) until the age of 60. At present, only 39% of workers believe that they will be able to do the same or a similar job until the age of 60. This statistic is marked by a 15-percentage-point difference between men and women, showing men to be significantly more optimistic about their long-term work prospects. This finding must be considered in light of the past governmental policies on early retirement, which are likely to be responsible for these relatively low rates of perceived job sustainability compared to other countries where the EWCS was carried out.

## Conclusions

The results of the EWCS in Turkey reveal that Turkish working conditions are characterised by substantial physical risks in the workplace, long working hours, a high pace of work and emotional demands. There is also a substantial share of workers who earn less than the minimum wage.

Despite this, Turkish workers generally report enjoying a relatively positive psychosocial environment at work. Only a small proportion of workers face adverse social behaviour, although given the seriousness of workplace harassment, and the sensitivity of the issue, this figure should not be readily dismissed. The vast majority of workers consider the quality of management to be good. A sizeable proportion of workers are able to apply their own ideas to their work and solve unforeseen problems in their job. Many are also able to change their speed and method of work, both of which are important aspects of labour productivity. There is room for progress to be made, though, as few workers report that they complete complex tasks or learn new things, and training opportunities are limited.

Aggregate findings hide important disparities across sectors and occupations. Some sectors, such as construction and transport, and to some extent agriculture, are characterised by poor working conditions measured across all dimensions.

Unfortunately, it is rare that these adverse conditions are properly rewarded by the market, as workers in these sectors are also the ones with the poorest career prospects, pay and satisfaction with their earnings. As employment in these sectors remains sizeable, this indicates that poor working conditions are widespread. Continued economic development will hopefully not only allow workers to move to other sectors with better working conditions, but also improve working conditions in these sectors. Formalisation of employment relationships in these sectors may also help to redress some of the poor working conditions.

Descriptive evidence shows that there are also pronounced gender differences in almost all dimensions of working conditions. However, because women are segregated in specific occupations and sectors, it can be difficult to conclude whether adverse outcomes for women are attributed to the specific sector or occupation, or rather to gender inequality. Nevertheless, women often report worse outcomes than men, even in some of the sectors and occupations with better working conditions. Also, it is clear that traditional views on gender roles remain prominent, with respect to women's participation in the labour market, the types of work that they perform and their non-work activities.

The Turkish data indicate a strong link between workers' health, well-being, and work–life balance. Safer physical workplaces, positive work environments, standard and predictable working hours and job security all make Turkish workers more likely to report positive overall health and well-being. These findings suggest that improving compliance with existing laws governing occupational safety and health at work, working time and other related issues may prove an effective strategy. It may also be possible to improve working conditions by informing workers of their rights and improving employers' understanding of how better working conditions can lead to overall gains in productivity. Finally, ensuring that workers stay healthy for longer has an important impact on social protection systems, while ensuring that they have decent prospects, adequate pay and can fulfil varied responsibilities – both inside and outside of the workplace – is vital for social cohesion.

# 7 | United States

## Introduction

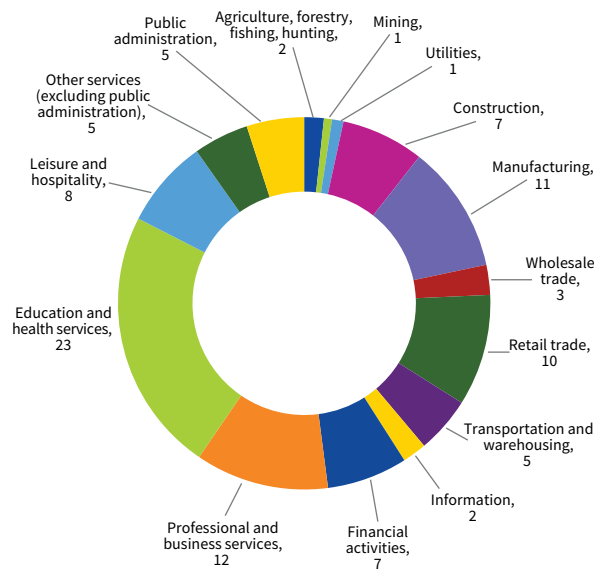
This chapter summarises findings from the American Working Conditions Survey (AWCS), a survey of employed Americans undertaken in 2015 by the RAND Corporation, a private, non-profit policy think tank. The objective of the survey was to collect detailed information on a broad range of working conditions in the American workplace.<sup>20</sup> The AWCS was fielded to over 3,000 individuals, comprising a nationally representative sample of individuals residing in the US using the RAND American Life Panel (ALP), a web-based survey platform. The survey instrument used by the AWCS was closely harmonised with the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) and covers a variety of dimensions of work, including risk exposure, social support, work intensity, work time quality, skills and discretion, and work prospects. It yields detailed findings about the prevalence and distribution of working conditions across the American workforce by age, sex and education.

## Labour market overview

The US, with a workforce of 154 million, is one of the largest labour markets in the world. Although the country remains centrally positioned in the global economy, its labour market has experienced significant turbulence since the economic crisis in 2008; this continues to reverberate on the employment, pay and working conditions of American workers today.

When the economic crisis hit in 2008, it immediately affected the labour market, causing unemployment to more than double from less than 5% in October 2007 to 10% in October 2009.<sup>21</sup> Many workers who managed to hold on to their jobs experienced wage reductions or lost employer-provided benefits. Since the end of the recession, employment has continued to expand, albeit slowly, but has still not returned to pre-recession levels (63% in 2017 as against 66% in 2008). GDP growth rates have been low by historical standards and average hourly wage growth has barely outpaced inflation, at just over 2%. It is in this context that it is instructive to look at the working conditions in the US.

Figure 74: Employment, by sector, US (%)



Source: Current Population Survey of the US Census Bureau

Labour force participation rates have been in decline in the US. Most of this decline has been due to a reduction in men's participation in the labour market. This has fallen steadily from a figure of 86% in the 1950s to 69% in 2017. The decline in labour force participation among men has been partially offset by a substantial increase in women's participation.

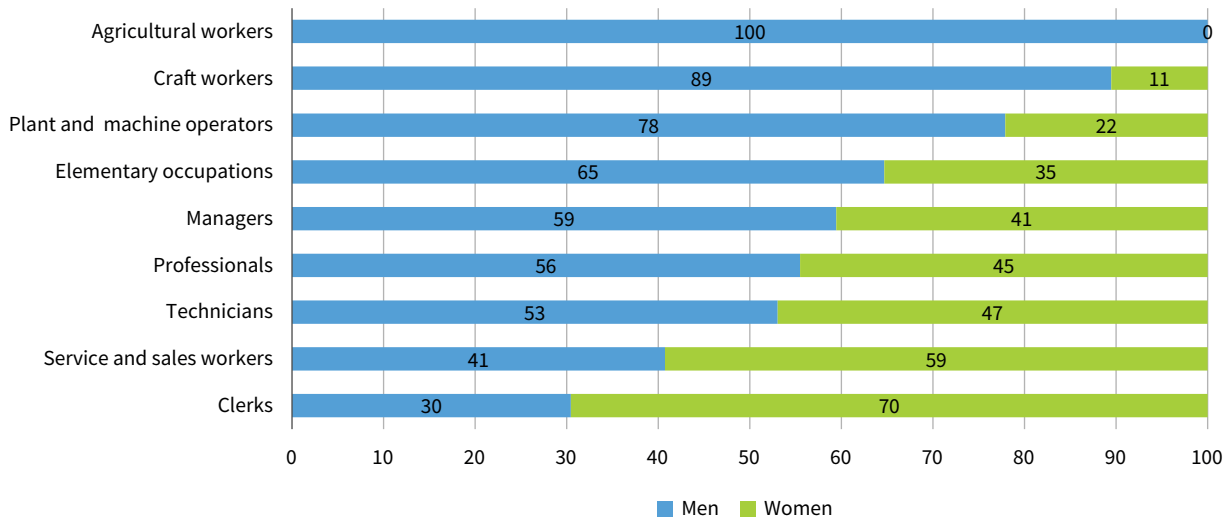
Wage employment is widespread in the American labour market with only 11% of American workers defining themselves as self-employed. Most work is in services. Many industries also feature a significant proportion of highly skilled and white-collar jobs. According to the Current Population Survey (CPS) of the US Census Bureau, education and health services is the dominant sector in the US in terms of employment, providing jobs to 23% of those working; this is followed by professional and business services, and the manufacturing and retail trade sectors (Figure 74). Leisure and hospitality and financial activities are also significant sectors for employment. The primary sector employs the fewest workers.<sup>22</sup> Blue-collar jobs are also

20 The work was funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the Social Security Administration, through the Michigan Retirement Research Center.

21 All statistics, unless mentioned otherwise, are from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (undated-a).

22 The sample distribution of the AWCS varies slightly from national figures of the CPS. In the AWCS, there is a minor underrepresentation of workers in construction, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality, while professional and business services and public administration are overrepresented. There is also a slight overrepresentation of part-time workers, and a slightly higher average number of hours worked. Additionally, occupational categories including armed forces and skilled agricultural workers garnered few responses when the survey was administered. For this reason, these occupations have been omitted from figure representations in this chapter as they are not statistically significant. For more details, see Annex 1.

Figure 75: Occupations, by sex, US (%)



Note: Sample for women in agriculture too small.  
 Source: Current Population Survey of the US Census Bureau

important sources of employment; industry and construction provide work to 11% and 7% of the population respectively.

These numbers correspond with information on occupations, with the top three occupational categories being office and administrative support, management and sales and related occupations. Nonetheless, there are also sizeable gender differences in employment across occupations, with women having the highest relative representation among clerks and service and sales workers (Figure 75). Women are also much more likely than men to work part time (30% compared to 18%).

Nearly all workers in the US have at least a secondary level of education, and 47% have tertiary education. Overall, 43% of women have a tertiary level of education, as against 51% of men. Individuals with tertiary-level qualifications have higher employment rates and earn more than those with a lower level of education. Notably, women who hold a tertiary qualification are much more likely to participate in the workforce than women who do not (70% compared to 58%).

## Policies and laws governing labour market, working conditions and employment

The labour market in the US is regulated at both federal and state level. In most industries, the federal government sets floors for workplace standards, laws on wages, working hours, social security contributions, and a framework for collective organisation. States (and sometimes even municipalities) can also enact their own legislation, provided this surpasses national

standards. As such, there is geographic variability of regulations across the country.

Unlike in many countries, particularly those governed by civil law, workplace regulations in the US are governed by separate legal statutes, each of which has its own administrative agency that governs enforcement. The primary regulation governing working conditions in the US – applying to most, but not all workers – is the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The act sets a minimum wage, requires payment for overtime for any additional work beyond 40 hours per week, and restricts the employment of children. When the act was first introduced, in the late 1930s, these provisions were of particular importance for manufacturing, construction, mining and other blue-collar industries. Despite its broad coverage, there have always been workers who are not covered by the FLSA; notable examples include high earners, and those with professional, administrative and executive occupations, but also low-wage earners, such as agricultural and domestic workers and other select occupations. Historically, it was relatively straightforward to determine who was covered by the FLSA; however, the shift to a service economy in the US has obscured previously clear demarcations between exempt and non-exempt status. In particular, a recent trend has resulted in some workers in the service and hospitality sectors with certain managerial responsibilities being categorised as exempt, thus making them ineligible to receive overtime pay (Bernhardt et al, 2009).

It is important to note that the FLSA does not impose limits on the number of hours an employer can require a worker to work, although some states have imposed their own limits. If a worker refuses to work overtime, their employer is able to cut their pay, change their job responsibilities, or even dismiss them. This is the case



even in instances when the overtime is unscheduled, or when an employee is required to work a split shift, or additional hours, after completing a full eight-hour shift. There are no additional provisions relating to overtime pay; in general, the FLSA does not require overtime pay for work on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, or usual days off. It does however require time-and-a-half pay for all hours in excess of 40 hours per week.

Workplace health and safety is overseen by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and codified through the Occupational Safety and Health Act. This act identifies a multitude of physical risks found in workplaces and details employer responsibilities for risk mitigation. The act provides an avenue for formal grievances that trigger workplace inspections by OSHA. If workplaces are determined to be non-compliant with the provisions set out in the act, it is within OSHA's mandate to issue fines and even suspend operations.

Although many social benefits are provided by employers, the Family Medical Leave Act ensures that workers can take unpaid leave for specified family and medical reasons. Eligibility is contingent on having worked for the employer for at least one year and meeting a minimum number of hours employed, but is limited to employees who work for enterprises with 50 employees or more within close proximity to the place of work. Employers who offer leave policies in excess of the Family Medical Leave Act do so at their discretion.

Workplace regulations that exceed those outlined above have been achieved at enterprise level through collective bargaining, as well as through private sector regulation and individually negotiated contracts. Collective bargaining in the private sector is regulated through the National Labor Relations Act and Board, and in cases where public sector workers are able to unionise, they typically fall under state-level laws concerning labour relations for public sector workers. In all cases, state-level laws and union contracts can provide workers with rights and protections, provided they exceed those outlined in the Fair Labor Standards Act, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Family Medical Leave Act do not fall below the minimum threshold outlined by these regulations. In 2017, the unionisation rate among employees stood at 10.7%, with a much higher rate of union membership in the public sector (34.4%) compared with just 6.5% in the private sector (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

## Dimensions of job quality

### Physical environment

Physical risks can lead to immediate and long-term health problems for workers. The AWCS examines a number of different types of physical risks, including posture-related risks, exposure to loud noises and extreme temperatures (ambient risks) and risks resulting from exposure to biological and chemical hazards. Workers are asked to report on their exposure to a total of 13 risks (five posture-related, five chemical or biological and three ambient) a quarter of their working time or more.

Overall, posture-related risks are experienced with the greatest frequency by US workers (31% report such risks). They are followed by ambient (22%) and biological and chemical-related (13%) risks. Within those, intense repetitive physical exertion on the job is the most frequent.

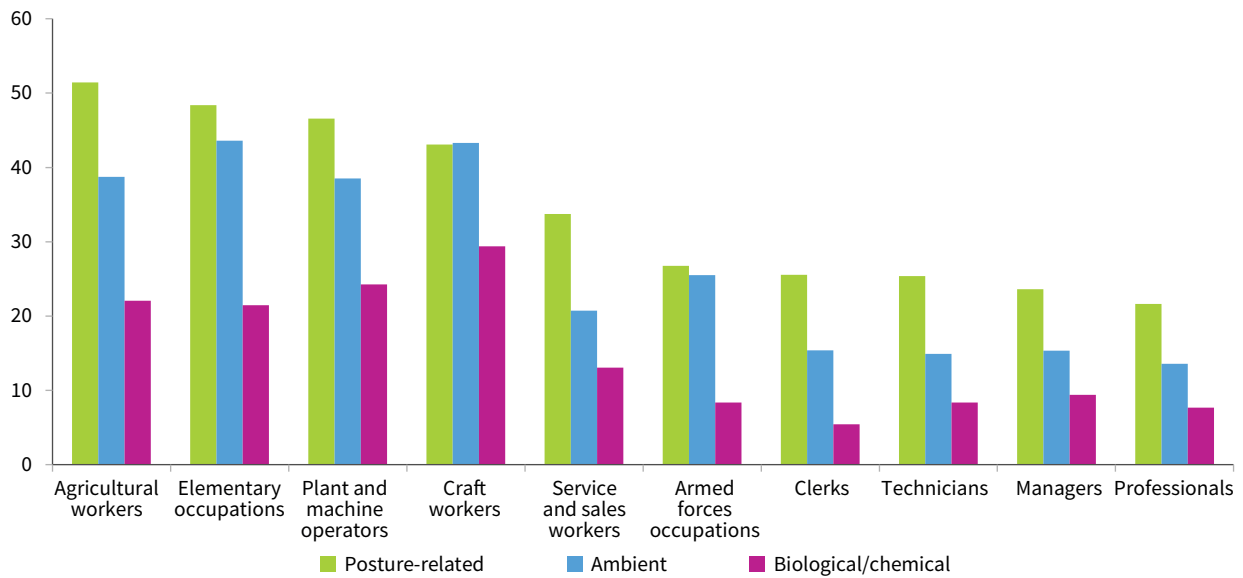
Although this hierarchy of risks is observed across all sectors, there are large differences in exposure rates when looking at sector and occupation. Workers in the construction and transport sectors experience all types of risk with the greatest frequency, while those working in the financial services and other services sectors experience risk with the least frequency. Gender differences also exist, though these discrepancies are likely a product of occupational and sectoral gender segregation. For example, ambient risks (such as exposure to high and low temperatures and loud noise) show the largest percentage-point difference between the sexes, with women being exposed at a rate that is 13 percentage points lower than men.

Repetitive hand and arm movements is the most pervasive job-related risk, affecting three-quarters of workers at least a quarter of the time, and craft workers at a rate of 93%. Other posture-related risks are also common: for example, 4 in 10 workers report that their work requires them to lift or move heavy loads, or that they must hold tiring or painful positions. Each measurement for ambient risk (high temperatures, low temperatures, and loud noise) is experienced by 3 out of 10 workers. Biological and chemical risks are the least common; 1 in 5 workers reports that they handle chemicals as part of their job.

By occupation, agricultural workers, plant and machine operators, craft workers and those working in elementary occupations experience the greatest levels of all types of risk (Figure 76). Workers in these occupations are overwhelmingly male, which explains why men are generally more likely to be exposed to physical risks than women.



Figure 76: Exposure to physical risks, by occupation, US (%)



Note: Exposure to risks one-quarter of the time or more.  
 Source: AWCS 2015 for all figures unless stated otherwise

### Work intensity

Work intensity consists of quantitative demands placed on workers (e.g. whether workers are required to work at high speeds or to tight deadlines), factors that determine work pace and emotional demands that workers experience. Workloads that result in intense working conditions absorb significant mental and physical energy, while juggling various demands can increase the risks of contradictory or hard-to-conciliate demands and make it difficult for workers to perform tasks effectively. Together these factors impact both the quantity and quality of worker outputs.

In the US, nearly half of all workers report working at high speed or to tight deadlines (46% and 48% respectively) at least three-quarters of the time. The frequency of high working speeds is similar at small and large enterprises (43% and 48% respectively) and across the earnings distribution (ranging from 41% to 54%), but workers at large organisations are more likely to work to tight deadlines than workers at small organisations (57% as compared to 37%). There is no significant variation in terms of sex, but men are slightly more likely to experience harsher quantitative and pace-related demands than women. By occupation, workers in elementary occupations are the most likely to report working at high speed (71%, Figure 77).

Figure 77: Components of work intensity dimension, by occupation, US (%)

	Quantitative demands			Pace determinants						Emotional demands
	Working at high speed (3/4 of time +)	Working to tight deadlines (3/4 of time +)	Enough time to do job (rarely/never)	Frequent disruptive interruptions	Work done by colleagues	Direct demands	Targets	Automatic speed of machine/product movement	Direct control of boss/client	Hide feelings (most of time/always)
Managers	53	44	7	21	65	82	49	12	43	42
Professionals	37	51	12	31	54	75	39	11	54	30
Technicians	47	46	8	27	51	79	44	18	57	30
Clerks	46	59	7	17	49	79	44	22	58	33
Service and sales workers	40	35	8	13	56	80	38	28	43	34
Craft workers	42	36	6	20	46	63	47	24	61	28
Plant and machine operators	42	54	6	2	64	75	49	62	47	21
Elementary occupations	71	65	8	10	65	73	51	43	53	28

Note: Proportions for armed forces and agricultural workers not shown.

In addition, 9% of workers feel that they do not have enough time to do their job, suggesting that the work environment is often stressful and potentially mentally taxing for them.

Some of the largest differences in terms of pace determinants can be found by comparing different occupations. More than 4 out of 5 managers indicate that they face direct demands from customers, patients, students or others, while 63% of craft workers experience this. Meanwhile 31% of professionals face frequent disruptive interruptions compared to only 2% of plant and machine operators. These differences, in part, reflect occupational differences, work organisation practices and the extent of workplace automation (in turn, dependence on machine speed and product movement is frequently reported by plant and machine workers).

The employment status of workers also has an impact on work intensity. Generally, trends show that the more autonomous a worker is, the less intense their work environment is, as autonomy can counterbalance demands experienced by workers to some extent. For example, workers who are self-employed are much less likely to report working at high speeds. Indeed, only 19% of self-employed workers without employees work at high speed, in contrast to 29% of self-employed workers with employees and 48% of employees. Self-employed workers also report lower levels of emotional demands, with 15% of self-employed workers without employees having to hide their emotions at work, in comparison to 33% of employees. Self-employed workers with employees fall somewhere in the middle.

When considering workers exposed to three or more pace determinants, self-employed workers without employees are less likely to experience multiple pace determinants compared to other workers. By occupation, professionals experience three or more pace determinants with the least frequency, while agricultural workers are the most exposed.

### Working time quality

Working time quality includes work duration, work scheduling, atypical or asocial working hours (such as nights and weekends) and working time flexibility (or the extent to which workers can choose, adapt or modify their work schedules). Within the US context, a standard working week is between 35 and 40 hours, and the majority of both male and female workers fall within this range. However, women are more likely to work fewer than 35 paid hours per week than men, and men are more likely to work more than 40 paid hours per week than women.

Working time varies by occupation. The fact that a greater number of women work fewer than 35 hours per week can be partially explained by their participation in occupations and sectors where shorter working weeks or part-time work are common, which is itself a reflection of the tendency for female-dominated occupations to have shorter hours as a result of women's greater burden of domestic and family responsibilities.<sup>23</sup> These occupations include clerks and service and sales workers, where up to 40% of all employees work part-time (Figure 78), and sectors such as commerce and hospitality, public administration, education, and health. This differs substantially from the male-dominated craft workers occupation, where only 7% of employees work fewer than 35 hours and 55% work more than 40 hours. Plant and machine

Figure 78: Working hours, by occupation, US (%)

	<21	21–34	35–40	41–47	48+
Craft workers	2	5	39	20	35
Plant and machine operators	10	8	43	10	29
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	13	0	0	78	9
Managers	2	9	52	11	25
Professionals	10	10	45	12	22
Technicians	8	8	59	8	16
Service and sales workers	9	30	42	4	15
Elementary occupations	8	10	60	9	13
Clerks	15	11	60	7	7

Note: Proportions for armed forces and agricultural workers not shown.

<sup>23</sup> According to the 2015 American Time Use Survey, women averaged 3.3 hours per day on household and caring responsibilities compared with 2.0 hours per day for men (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, undated-b).

operators and managers also report long working hours (39% and 36% respectively). In addition, large enterprises are much less likely to employ workers for less than 35 hours a week than their small and medium-sized, or micro, counterparts (10% in comparison to 23% and 30%). In relation to very long hours (48 or more), 19% of US workers report this.

While the distribution of hours provides some insight into a typical working week, there are times when very long working days are required. Therefore, the survey also asks workers whether they work in excess of 10 hours a day at least once a month. Throughout the US, 55% work such long days – men are much more likely to do so than women (62% in comparison to 47%). Once again, this aligns with male-dominated occupations. Long hours are most commonly reported by managers (73%) and plant and machine operators (70%), while they are least commonly reported by clerks (39%).

The percentage of part-time workers who report working 10 or more hours per day at least once a month (38%) is somewhat surprising. One reason for this could be that part-time hours can be highly concentrated in a single day or two during the week. Another could be that these long hours may be gathered accumulatively from several part-time jobs.

The other group of workers who generally have short working weeks but long working days are self-employed workers without employees. While over 57% of these workers report working less than 35 hours per week, 55% also report working long working days at least once a month. This may be explained by the sporadic availability of work or factors that determine work intensity.

About a third of US workers report working nights (38% of men and 22% of women), while two-fifths report undertaking shift work (36% of men and 41% of women).

Workers generally favour control and having input into their work schedules. Just over one-third of US workers (36%) have their working hours set by their employer, 11% can choose from a selection of fixed schedules set by their employer, 39% can adapt their working hours within certain limits and 14% can set their work schedules independently. Blue-collar workers are much more likely to have their working hours set by an employer. Not surprisingly, self-employed workers have some of the highest levels of control over their work schedules (Figure 79). Part-time workers also report greater control of their work scheduling than their full-time counterparts.

Enterprise size also has some bearing on a workers' ability to choose their schedule. Larger enterprises are more likely to offer workers the ability to choose between different schedules, while workers at small enterprises are more likely to be able to determine their own schedules.

Nearly two out of three US workers report working in their free time in order to meet their work demands. This situation is particularly common among self-employed workers (89% without employees and 85% with employees), in microenterprises (69% in comparison to 65% of large enterprises) among older workers (73% in comparison to 63% of younger people) and among part-time workers (70%). The frequency with which workers report working in their free time far exceeds those who report not having enough time to

Figure 79: Working time arrangements, by employment status, firm size and work status, US (%)

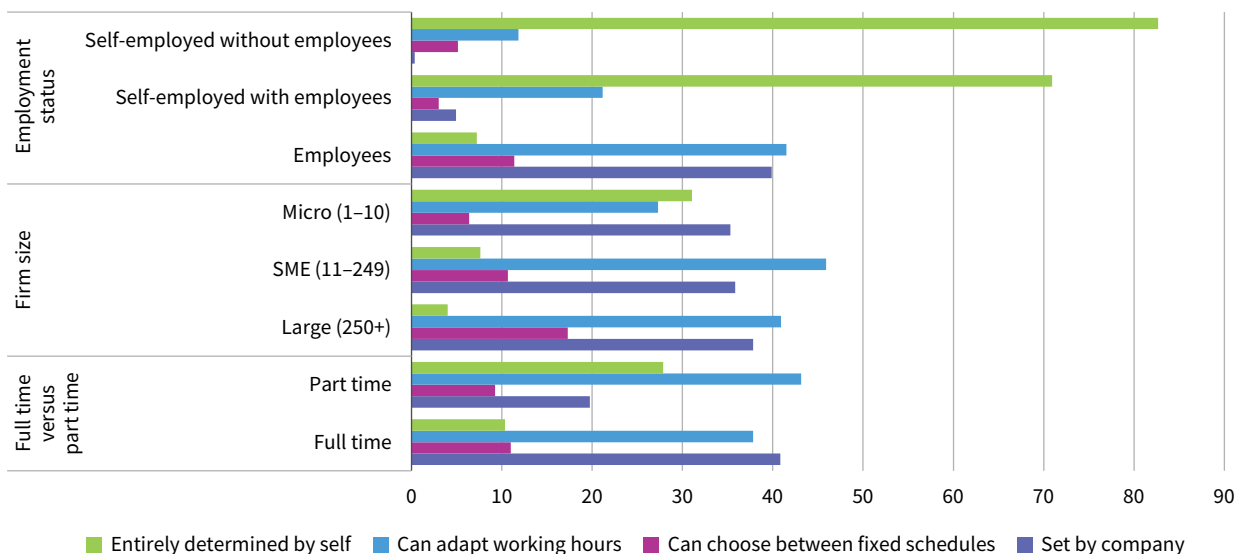


Figure 80: Exposure to adverse social behaviour, by occupation, US (%)

	Within month prior to survey				Within 12 months prior to survey				Experienced any adverse behaviour
	Verbal abuse	Threats	Unwanted sexual attention	Humiliating behaviour	Bullying/harassment	Sexual harassment	Physical violence		
Plant and machine operators	6	2	9	9	16	9	6	29	
Service and sales workers	16	4	5	13	6	7	2	26	
Clerks	14	2	7	9	7	8	0	23	
Elementary occupations	14	4	1	6	11	1	0	21	
Technicians	9	3	5	7	8	3	1	20	
Professionals	9	4	1	10	11	1	1	17	
Craft workers	10	4	0	2	13	1	0	17	
Managers	4	2	1	4	3	0	0	8	

Note: All dichotomous items, proportion indicates 'yes'.

meet their work demands, suggesting that there is an acceptance of this situation within US workplace culture.

A flexible job can help workers to balance their work and life commitments. To determine job flexibility, the AWCS asks workers whether they are able to easily take time off for family or personal matters. Just over one-quarter of workers report that it is either not difficult at all or not too difficult to do this, with professionals the most likely to report this type of flexibility (39%) and plant and machine operators the least likely (10%). Gender differences with regard to flexibility are minimal.

Finally, the AWCS asks workers if they have regular, steady and year-round work, predictable seasonal work, or unpredictable and irregular work. Almost 1 in 10 workers report irregular work, particularly self-employed workers (33% without employees and 26% with employees) and part-time workers (21%). The high level of irregular working hours among part-time employees is a reflection of the limited control that many part-time workers have over their working hours, particularly in low-wage occupations.

## Social environment

The social environment of a workplace takes into account adverse social behaviour, the level of social support provided, how respected workers feel, and workers' perceptions regarding management quality.

There are a number of actions that constitute adverse social behaviour. In particular, the AWCS asks workers about their exposure to verbal abuse, threats, unwanted sexual attention or humiliating behaviour within the previous month, and also if they have experienced bullying or harassment, sexual harassment or physical violence in the previous year. Overall, 21% of workers

report having experienced at least one of these adverse behaviours within the specified time period. No dramatic difference is visible in the reporting rates of men and women, though women are slightly more likely to experience these unfavourable behaviours. However, the types of adverse behaviour vary significantly for men and women. Women are about four times more likely to report unwanted sexual attention and sexual harassment than men.

The differences in terms of age are also striking. Compared to young workers and mid-career workers, older workers are much less likely to experience any adverse social behaviour. More than one in four young workers report experiencing at least one type of adverse social behaviour within the indicated time periods, while it was reported by one in five mid-career workers and one in six older workers.

Differences by occupation are common, with plant and machine operators most likely to experience adverse behaviours at work (29%) and managers the least likely (8%). Service and sales workers also report a high rate of exposure to adverse actions (26%), which are led by verbal abuse and humiliating behaviour (Figure 80).

Another notable difference can be seen between full- and part-time workers. In total, 19% of full-time workers report any type of adverse social behaviour, while 26% of part-time workers do the same. The two most prevalent adverse behaviours that account for this difference are sexual harassment and unwanted sexual attention, which are roughly 10 percentage points higher for part-time workers and are compounded by high rates of verbal abuse (12%). This difference between full-time and part-time workers reflects the high percentage of women who have part-time jobs and the corresponding high rates of sexual harassment and unwanted sexual attention that women experience in the workplace.

Figure 81: Management quality, by occupation, US (%)

	Boss respects you	Boss gives you recognition	Boss gets people to work together	Boss helps to get the work done	Boss provides useful feedback	Boss encourages your development
Elementary occupations	95	84	77	82	81	84
Craft workers	92	67	78	78	72	86
Professionals	89	80	76	77	76	83
Technicians	88	78	78	79	81	82
Clerks	88	74	71	75	73	83
Service and sales workers	85	74	71	78	68	74
Plant and machine operators	81	78	61	68	73	72
Managers	75	64	63	63	62	70

Note: All dichotomous items, proportion indicates 'yes'. Proportions for armed forces and agricultural workers not shown.

Social support can come from many sources including co-workers, management, and formal worker organisations like trade unions and worker committees. Good management can help to reduce the frequency of adverse events and encourage prosocial behaviour and worker development, while worker organisations can help to advocate for better conditions.

Overall, 87% of workers feel that their manager respects them, 79% feel that their management encourages development, 75% feel that their managers help to get the job done and give workers recognition, and 73% feel that their managers provide useful feedback and encourage people to work together. Occupations are highly uneven when it comes to assessments of management quality (Figure 81).

Managers give the lowest scores to their management, while workers in elementary occupations provide the highest scores, on average, across all categories.

### Skills and discretion

The skills and discretion dimension of work comprises the skills workers use while at work, their ability to use discretion and make decisions about how work is done, and the extent to which training opportunities are offered for the purpose of worker development and capacity building. Skills assessment particularly focuses on cognitive engagement such as problem-solving, learning new things, and applying personal ideas on the job. Decision latitude or discretion refers to a worker's ability to make decisions about the speed or method of their work, and the order of their tasks. Questions concerning training ask workers about both on-the-job training and paid training provided by employers.

More than 80% of workers report that their main job provides them with opportunities to solve problems, learn new things and apply their own ideas. By contrast, only 68% of workers indicate that their job involves complex tasks. Women are less likely to use cognitive

skills in their jobs, particularly when it comes to problem-solving skills (75% of women in comparison to 87% of men) and complex tasks (64% of women in comparison to 71% of men).

Problem-solving is a primary task for managers, whereas complex tasks are common for professionals and craft workers (Table 4). The ability to apply ideas on the job varies a great deal by occupation. More than 90% of managers and professionals are able to apply their own ideas. This is similar to the percentages of self-employed workers who apply their own ideas (95% without employees and 97% with employees). At the other end of the spectrum, 68% of plant and machine operators and 73% of workers in elementary occupations are able to apply their own ideas at work.

Decision latitude can be seen as the ability to apply these skills in the workplace. The degree of decision latitude varies considerably by occupation. In general, white-collar workers have much greater decision latitude than blue-collar workers, although there are some notable exceptions to this. Managers, for example, have less control over the order of tasks than professionals, perhaps a function of their larger scale supervisory role or the high level of standardisation in management practices in some sectors.

Across all responses that measure decision latitude, workers have the least control over who they work with. Workers at small enterprises report having greater input on this than those at larger enterprises (41% as opposed to 18%).

A substantial number of workers – three out of four across all sectors – receive formal training related to their work. Overall, 45% of workers receive training provided by their employer (or by themselves if they are self-employed), and 59% had received some on-the-job training within 12 months prior to completing the survey. Younger workers are more likely to receive on-the-job training than older workers (74% as opposed

**Table 4: Cognitive demands and decision latitude, by occupation, US (%)**

	Cognitive dimension				Decision latitude			
	Problem-solving	Complex tasks	Learn new things	Able to apply own ideas	Order of tasks	Methods of work	Speed/rate of work	Choice in working partners
Managers	91	66	90	95	68	87	88	28
Professionals	87	82	88	94	87	85	81	29
Technicians	84	74	87	90	84	77	83	32
Clerks	80	61	85	74	64	55	71	17
Service and sales workers	80	58	81	85	76	74	82	23
Craft workers	84	80	86	87	72	84	76	44
Plant and machine operators	69	60	78	68	35	41	59	18
Elementary occupations	68	61	75	73	49	59	75	25

**Note:** All but one item dichotomous, proportion indicates 'yes'. 'Ability to apply own ideas' is five-point Likert scale, proportion indicates 'at least sometimes'.

to 47%), possibly because they are new to the labour market and are in need of more extensive and broader training to acquire skills for the first time.

## Prospects

Job prospects is a measure of worker sentiment regarding opportunities for career development, perceptions of job security (measured by their fear of job loss) and confidence levels about finding a new job with a similar wage.

Some 37% of all workers believe that their current job provides good prospects for career advancement. Those who work as technicians, plant and machine operators, and professionals are the most positive about their prospects for career advancement (4 in 10 either strongly agree or agree that they have good prospects). Interestingly, plant and machine operators also express the highest level of concern over job loss and the lowest level of confidence in their ability to find a similar job in the future, a combination of findings that could indicate concerns about automation, relocation and changing patterns of work.

Some of the biggest differences in relation to perceived job prospects can be seen by age, employment status and enterprise size. Older workers are more likely to see their jobs as having limited prospects for career advancement. Self-employed workers are much less likely to feel that they have good prospects for career advancement than employees; however, this is somewhat offset by the fact that they are also much less concerned that they will lose their job in the next six

months. With respect to size, workers at larger enterprises are much more likely to feel that they have good prospects than workers at smaller ones. However, there are no clear links between enterprise size and concerns about job loss. This is likely because most employment in the US is 'at-will' (where an employee can be dismissed for any reason and without warning), which applies to enterprises of all sizes.

In general, workers have a fairly neutral opinion about their job mobility, particularly their ability to find a job with a similar salary. There is a clear trend with respect to age, with younger workers significantly more optimistic about work opportunities than middle-aged workers or older workers (52% as compared with 42% and 32% respectively). Workers in jobs associated with higher levels of education, such as managers and professionals, are also more confident in their abilities to find a job with a similar salary.

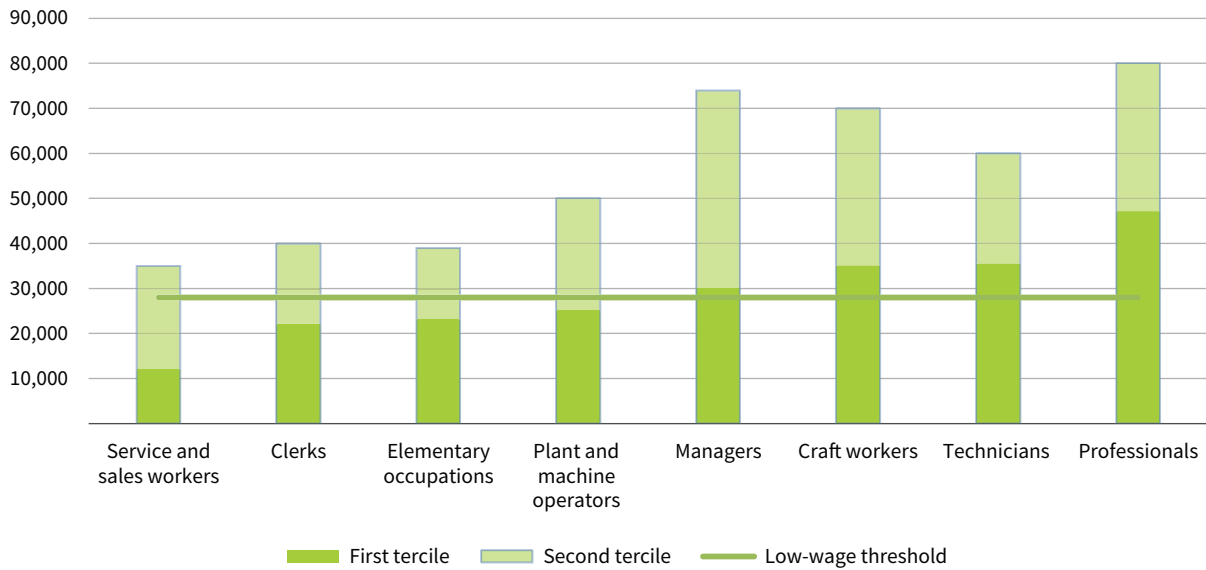
## Earnings

Earnings (the wage for employees, and profits garnered for the self-employed) are a crucial element of working life. In 2015, median annual earnings across all categories of US workers were USD 42,000 (€36,810), while average annual earnings were USD 53,199 (€46,620). This suggests that the earnings distribution is skewed, with a few high earners pushing the average wage up.<sup>24</sup> Differences in earnings can be seen across almost any reported characteristics including sex, occupation, sector, employment status and enterprise size.

<sup>24</sup> According to the CPS data, both median and average earnings are slightly lower at USD 40,000 (€35,050) and USD 52,932 (€46,390) respectively.



Figure 82: Average earnings, first and second terciles, relative to low-wage threshold, US (USD)



In the US, the earnings level separating the bottom and middle income tercile is USD 27,000 (€23,660) per year, with the middle and upper terciles having a cut-off point at USD 55,000 (€48,200) per year. The earnings distribution for men is considerably skewed towards higher earnings as compared to women, with men at the top of the first tercile earning USD 30,000 (€26,290) as compared to USD 20,000 (€17,530) for women. Men’s wages skew much more at the top of the second tercile, with USD 64,000 (€56,090) for men and USD 45,900 (€40,230) for women.

Occupations typically requiring more education are generally higher paying. The upper tercile of managers and professionals earns more than USD 74,000 (€64,850) and USD 80,000 (€70,110) respectively, while the upper tercile of craft workers earn in excess of USD 70,000 (€61,350). The self-employed without employees earn considerably less than the self-employed with employees at each tercile.

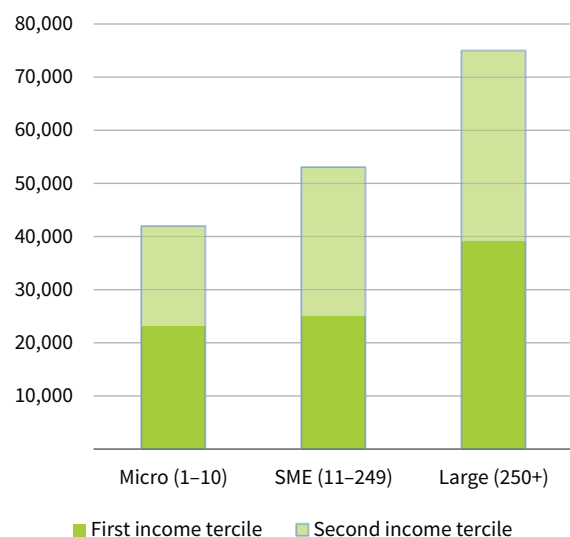
Low-paid jobs provide work to a large portion of US workers. Rates of low-paid work are particularly high for service and sales workers, clerks, plant and machine operators and workers in elementary occupations. Over one-third of workers in these occupations earn below the low-wage threshold, defined as two-thirds of the national median wage (Figure 82). By sector, the only area with a proportion of low-paid workers that exceeds one-third is commerce and hospitality. Key differences in earnings by occupation also help explain the gender pay gap, as more women tend to work in low-paid occupations such as service and sales workers than men.

There is a substantial portion of managers with relatively low earning levels. This suggests that a high number of managers are employed in relatively low-paid sectors, such as commerce and hospitality,

and that management responsibilities are not accompanied by higher rates of pay for roughly one-third of managers. Moreover because managers who earn over USD 23,360 (€20,470) are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act they are not eligible for overtime pay. This is particularly notable given the substantial percentage of managers (36%) who work over 40 hours per week (Figure 78).

Enterprise size appears to have an impact on earnings. Employees at the smallest enterprises (1–10 employees) earn the least, medium-sized employers pay slightly more, and the largest employers pay the most. Employees at the largest enterprises earn almost double what those in the smallest enterprises earn (Figure 83).

Figure 83: First and second income terciles and firm size, US (USD)



Women are slightly more likely to work in jobs that pay hourly, but are less likely to be paid overtime. Women are also less likely to receive performance pay based on enterprise or team performance than men.

## Perspectives on working life

There are a multitude of factors that allow workers to derive purpose and meaning from their jobs. Some of these factors include job quality; however, the level of importance of each of these dimensions varies across the working population. For this reason, the AWCS asks workers about whether their job makes them feel satisfied and if and why they derive meaning from their work.

### Meaningful work

Findings reveal that the majority of workers not only gain a sense of satisfaction from their work, but also feel that their work is useful, makes them feel accomplished, has a positive impact on society, allows them to fully use their talents and gives them goals to which to aspire.

Four out of five American workers report that their job provides at least one of these sources of meaning always or most of the time. Older workers are slightly more likely to give a positive response to these questions. Irrespective of education level, on most variables, women (particularly those in the younger and middle-aged groups) are generally more likely to derive a sense of meaning from their work than are men (Figure 84). This is particularly true when it comes to having a positive impact on society.

In order to further explore the relationship between job satisfaction and working conditions, a regression analysis was performed to determine correlations

between dimensions of working conditions (risks, work environment, intensity) and job satisfaction. Overall, the findings demonstrate the importance of working conditions for job satisfaction, and point to specific conditions that are of particular relevance.

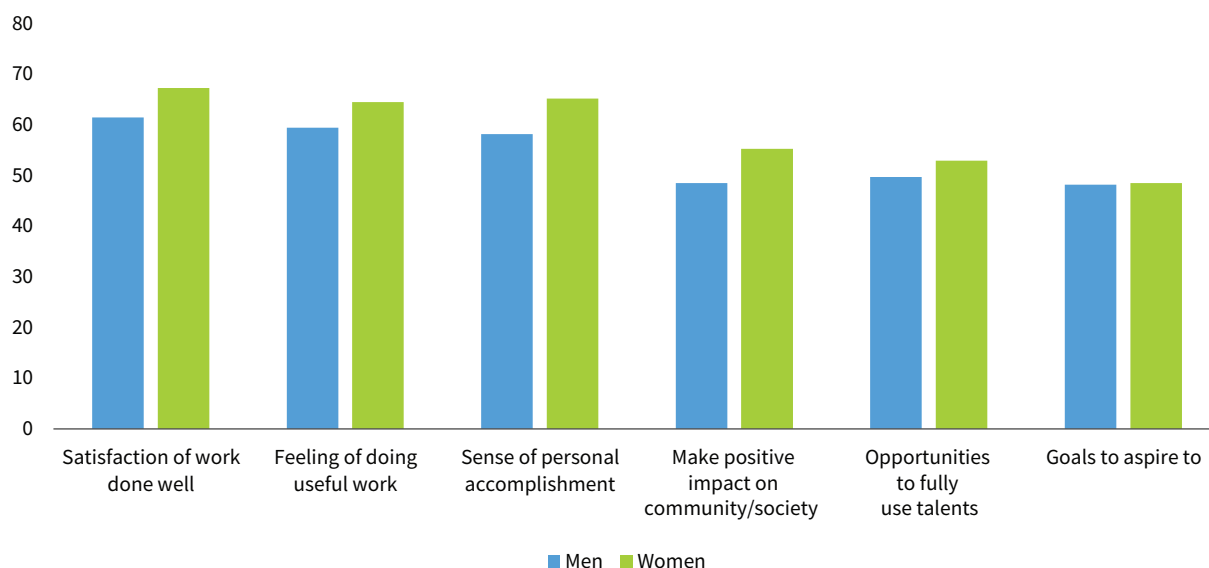
Several work characteristics can have a negative impact on job satisfaction, including long hours, job intensity, experience of harassment, and physical risk exposure. Part-time workers are also less likely to be satisfied with their jobs. On the other hand, key attributes that contribute to higher levels of satisfaction include independence, creative work, having good career prospects, and social support (from both friends and management) in the workplace. As expected, workers who feel that their job is meaningful are also more likely to be satisfied.

### Work-life balance

Finally, a regression analysis was performed to determine the relationship between selected workplace characteristics and respondents' perceptions regarding their work-life balance. Once working conditions are accounted for, there are a number of variables that influence the likelihood of a respondent feeling their work and life are balanced.

Women are more likely to feel that their work and home life are unbalanced, potentially due to an unequal division of domestic responsibilities. Service and sales workers are also less likely to enjoy the right balance, whereas those working in the public administration and health sectors are more likely to report a better work-life balance. A higher frequency of scheduling irregularities and shift work, such as alternating and rotating shifts, are also factors that contribute to a poor work-life balance. As expected, those working in excess

Figure 84: Meaningful work, by sex, US (%)



of 40 hours and at night also have a poorer work–life balance. In contrast, working from home correlates with a better work–life balance; this represents an interesting finding as the impact of working from home is a subject of debate.

## Conclusions

The experience of US workers is complex and multidimensional. Findings from the AWCS reveal that work is intense for many, with long hours, long working days, atypical working hours, and a high pace of work. Time pressures at work spill over into the personal lives of many workers, with about 50% working during their free time in order to meet work demands.

Despite a high level of pressure, workers report that they are able to exercise a significant level of discretion in how they do their work, and that they work with a high level of independence. The vast majority of workers are solving complex tasks and learning new things on the job on a daily basis. Many workers also report feeling supported by their managers and co-workers. This sentiment is particularly encouraging as a regression analysis shows that it highly correlates with overall job satisfaction. In conclusion, a positive work environment may help to offset some of the negative attributes of US workplaces that are documented elsewhere.

While the overall rate of exposure to physical risks is relatively low, the majority of workers report either intense or repetitive physical exertion on the job at least 25% of the time. A surprisingly high number of workers are exposed to a hostile or threatening social environment at work. The frequency of hostile experiences varies in important ways by age, sex and education, with younger and middle-aged women more likely to experience unwanted sexual attention, and younger men more likely to experience verbal abuse.

White-collar occupations, usually associated with high levels of training and education, experience some of the most favourable work conditions across all dimensions included in the AWCS. Educational attainment not only improves access to jobs, but also to jobs with favourable working conditions. Meanwhile, blue-collar occupations that are also associated with high levels of training, such as craft workers, experience higher levels of physical risk, but are generally more optimistic about their job prospects, have higher-than-average earnings, and report favourably with respect to skills and discretion, though at rates that are still below professional occupations.

The most room for improvement is to be found among service and sales workers, plant and machine operators, and workers in elementary occupations – occupations that account for a large share of employment in the country (approximately 40%). Addressing unfavourable working conditions for service and sales workers, and clerks, would also help to close the gender gap, as women are overrepresented in these fields and therefore experience unfavourable working conditions with greater frequency. For example, these occupations provide lower earnings, lower rates of cognitive engagement, and higher rates of exposure to adverse social behaviour. Particular gains to be made for craft workers and plant and machine operators include reducing the high levels of exposure to physical risks.

Ultimately working conditions are closely linked to job satisfaction. Reducing the frequency of adverse conditions, long hours and work intensity, while simultaneously promoting creativity, social support and autonomy will likely improve workers' opinions of their jobs, and have a beneficial impact on the economy as a whole.

# 8 | Central America

## Introduction

The first Central American Survey on Working Conditions and Health (ECCTS) was carried out in 2011 as a result of collaboration between:

- the Saltra programme, a university-based programme launched in 2003 to build national and regional capacities in occupational safety and health
- the Occupational Health Research Centre of the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona
- the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
- the National Institute for Safety and Health at Work (Insht) in Spain (financial support)
- the Ibero-American Organization of Social Security (OISS) (financial support)

The survey had four key objectives: to learn about the conditions of employment and work related to health and safety; to identify exposures to occupational factors and their potential association with health problems; to evaluate the resources and preventive activities adopted to protect the health of workers; and to help promote public safety and health policies in the countries of the region. The survey covered the six Spanish-speaking countries of Central America: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. In total, 12,024 workers were surveyed, including both wage employees and self-employed workers; equal numbers of workers were surveyed across countries. Workers were asked a series of questions about their occupation, industry, workplace environment, working conditions, and various benefits and risks that their work presents. As in other surveys presented in this report, questions regarding the working conditions included those about exposure to physical risks, working time, work intensity, decision latitude, social environment, and earnings. These questions have a significant overlap with the EWCS, presenting an opportunity for comparing worker outcomes across the continents. A second ECCTS was completed in 2018, with results expected in 2019. This chapter outlines the results from the inaugural survey.

## Labour market overview

The Central America region is comprised of Belize (about 350,000 inhabitants), as well as the six Spanish-speaking countries that are the focus of this chapter: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. In 2014, the region's population was nearly 47 million inhabitants, having grown by 27% since 2000.<sup>25</sup> With a population of 16 million people, Guatemala is the most populous country in the region, ahead of Honduras (8 million) Nicaragua and El Salvador (6 million each), Costa Rica (almost 5 million) and Panama (4 million).

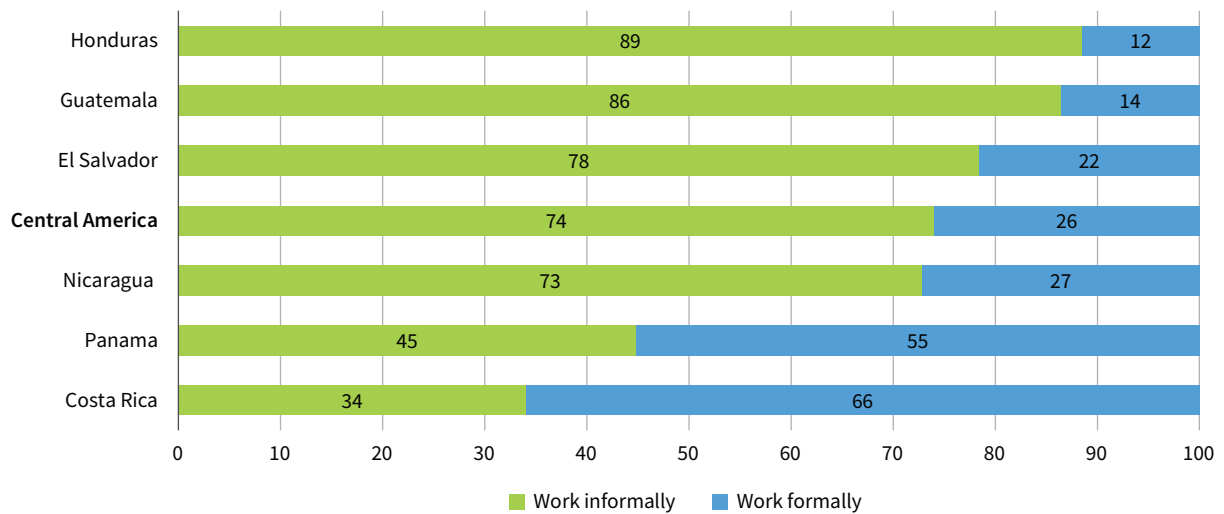
Central America is culturally and socially diverse. The proportion of indigenous people, one of the features of this diversity, varies from 43% in Guatemala to 2% in Costa Rica. At the same time, the six Spanish-speaking countries of the region share certain similarities in their economic structure and their labour market trends.

Over the last 30 years, all the countries of the Central American region have improved their socioeconomic outcomes as measured by the United Nation's Human Development Index. Costa Rica occupies the highest position in the region according to this indicator, and is considered as a country with a high level of development. Other countries occupy medium-level development positions. These improved positions primarily reflect the increase in life expectancy and the reduction in fertility rates. Yet, throughout the region, approximately 40% of the population still lives in poverty, with poverty rates ranging from 62% in Honduras to 25% in Costa Rica and Panama.

Looking at the labour markets, the economically active population of Central America represents 44% of the total population. Between 1999 and 2010, female labour force participation in the region rose from 35% to 43%, while male labour force participation declined from 84% to 79%. Although there has been an increase in the participation of women in the labour market, women's jobs have been marked by poor remuneration and high levels of insecurity. Women are more likely to work part time than men, and to be in the informal sector – characteristics that fuel gender-based inequality in the labour market.

25 Unless stated otherwise, this chapter draws on Benavides et al (2014); Rojas and Gimeno Ruiz de Porras (2016).

Figure 85: Work formality, by country, Central America (%)



Note: Workers aged 18–65.  
 Source: ECCTS 2011 for all figures unless stated otherwise.

Regionally, the labour markets face several persisting challenges. These include various consequences of migration, high rates of informal work and poor working conditions, often associated with the evolving economic structure and persistent informality.

In 2015, an estimated 8% of the Central American population lived outside the region, primarily in the US. There is also significant migration within the region, notably from Nicaragua to Costa Rica and from Guatemala to El Salvador. Remittances attributed to migration have become an important source of national income for many of these countries, sometimes allowing for better educational outcomes, uptake of better jobs by remittance recipients, business creation and new opportunities for emigration.

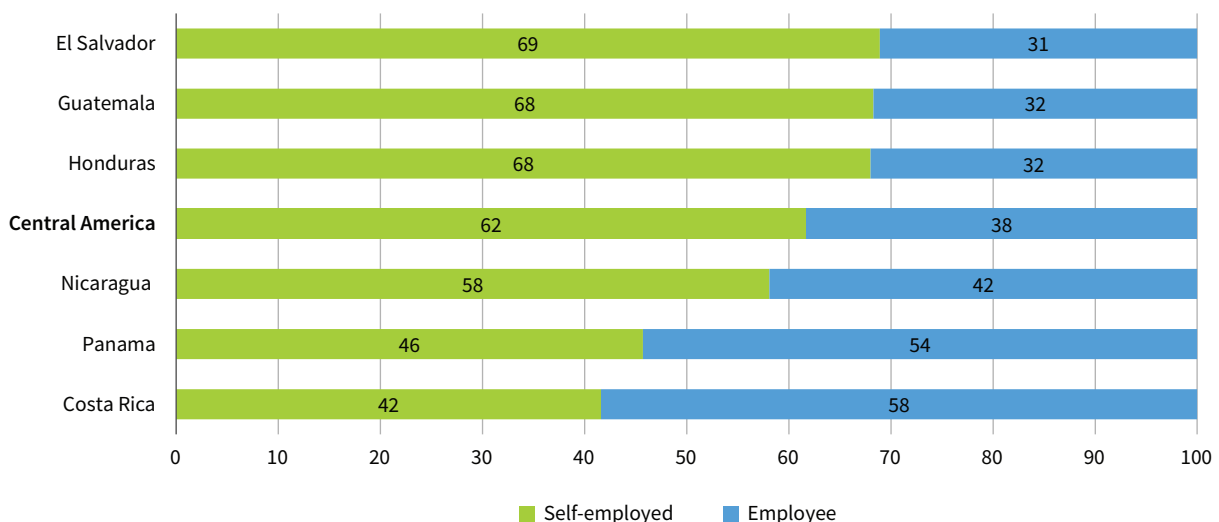
The Central American labour market has a dual structure, with prevalent, persistent informality. The

informal sector is the source of employment for 74% of workers across the region (Figure 85), with the highest informality rates observed in Honduras (89%) and the lowest in Costa Rica (34%). Informality is usually greater among women and young people compared to men and prime-age workers. Informal work can take the form of informal wage employment or informal own-account work (self-employment), and is thus absent from labour and social protection.

Typically the work is characterised by limited qualifications, a low level of education, a limited capacity to adapt to modern productive processes and a lack of access to opportunities, which encourages emigration. Construction and street trade are the sectors in which informal work is most prevalent.

Overall in the region, self-employment is far more common than wage employment (Figure 86), which is

Figure 86: Employment status, by country, Central America (%)



experienced mainly by those with high levels of formal education. Most countries in the region show little, if any, gender differences in the rates of wage employment versus self-employment.

Over the past several decades, the economic structure of the region has changed as a result of capital investment into the manufacturing and services sectors, and especially into the enterprises that are located in free trade zones. These recent developments have led to a relative decline in the importance of agriculture, which traditionally has been the main generator of economic activity in the region. Despite this, agriculture continues to be the dominant sector throughout the region, employing 22% of the working population. It is particularly important in Guatemala, employing 52% of men and 24% of women. Agriculture is least important in Panama, and yet it still provides employment for a considerable share of the working population (16% of men and 4% of women).

Other sectors that provide high levels of employment include sales (both wholesale and retail), and manufacturing. Labour market participation in these sectors is highly influenced by gender. For women in the labour market, sales provides the bulk of work opportunities with over 50% of women in El Salvador and Honduras, 45% in Guatemala, 42% in Nicaragua, and roughly 30% in Panama and Costa Rica working in this sector. For men, these rates are much lower and account for between 15% and 25% of the male working population, depending on the country. Manufacturing also provides important employment opportunities for women, as a result of the labour-intensive nature of the work: by country, between 11% and 19% of women work in this sector (compared to between 5% and 14% of men). Manufacturing is especially important for women in El Salvador and Honduras.

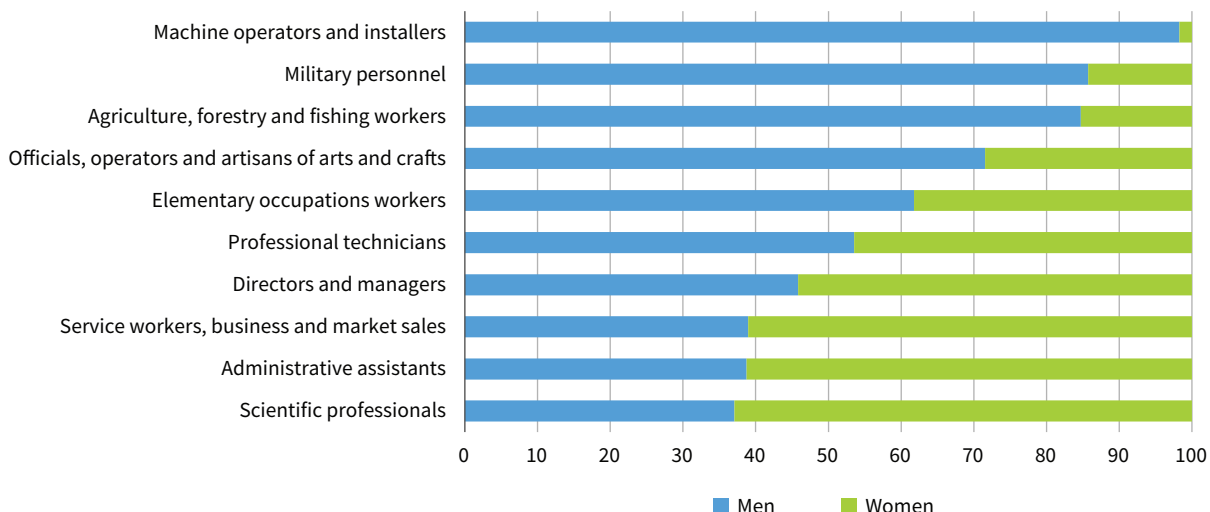
Occupations also feature highly gender-specific patterns (Figure 87). Women are found more frequently than men in science-related occupations, as directors and managers. On the other hand, they are also overrepresented as administrative assistants, and in service and sales worker occupations. Men are more commonly employed as machine operators, agricultural workers, officials, and arts and trades representatives, but also as workers in elementary occupations.

## Policies and laws governing the labour market, working conditions and employment

The Central American countries included in this report have ratified all eight fundamental ILO conventions, covering subjects that are considered to be fundamental principles and rights at work. Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala have also ratified the four governance conventions, considered to be priority instruments by the ILO. Ratification of the ILO technical conventions varies substantially across countries, from 66 in Panama to 14 in Honduras, reflecting the varied histories of industrial relations traditions and movements in these countries.

These international instruments are reflected in the national legislations of the six countries. The main principles relating to the regulation of labour relations are embedded in the constitutions of each country. The central piece of legislation is also each country's labour code. The labour codes outline employee and employer responsibilities, set minimum standards for wages and working time, and outline basic precautions regarding workplace health and safety. The labour codes also regulate employment contracts, and include provisions

Figure 87: Employment by occupation, by sex, Central America (%)





for workers in specific industries such as domestic work, transport, maritime and fishing, and agriculture. In addition, provisions for occupational safety and health, social security and the environment – including the workplace environment – are usually regulated by separate specific pieces of legislation.

Collective bargaining and collective agreements are also an important source of regulation, though their importance varies across countries and reflects the different labour movement traditions and industrial relations systems of the countries. Trade unionisation rates range from a low of 2.6% in Guatemala, to 5.3% in Nicaragua, 12% in Panama, 19% in El Salvador and 19.4% in Costa Rica. Collective bargaining coverage is lower, however, with just 10.6% of workers covered in Costa Rica, 8% in Nicaragua and 5% in El Salvador and Honduras.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, when present, unions can play an important role in ensuring compliance with workplace regulations through participation in mixed commissions that address workplace health and safety and promote and apply risk reduction plans.

## Dimensions of job quality

### Physical environment

The ECCTS survey included a series of questions concerning the physical workplace environment, as well as various physical risks that it may present to workers. These questions can be grouped into three broad categories: posture-related or ergonomic risks (e.g. repetitive movements, lifting heavy loads), biological and chemical risks (e.g. handling toxic substances, exposure to hazardous chemicals and smoke), and work-related ambient or environmental risks (e.g. working in extreme temperatures, being

exposed to noise). Questions pertaining to posture-related risks presented in this report include workplace risks for musculoskeletal disorders: repetitive movements, lifting heavy loads, or working in uncomfortable positions. Biological and chemical risks include handling toxic substances, exposure to hazardous chemicals and tobacco smoke as well as other gases and vapours, and dealing with potentially infectious biological materials. Questions pertaining to the ambient risks are related to working at extreme temperatures and being exposed to noise.

Figure 88 shows the proportion of workers, by country, who report experiencing these physical risks at least half of the time at their workplace. Throughout the region, posture-related risks – particularly repetitive movements – appear to be most common. Roughly half of workers in Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua report that they experience this type of physical risk. When it comes to other types of posture-related risks, Guatemalan workers have the highest exposure to lifting heavy loads or working in uncomfortable positions (25% and 11% respectively) compared to other workers in the region. Panamanian workers, on the other hand, report the lowest levels of posture-related risk generally. Posture-related risks are particularly common among workers in the agriculture sector: for example, in Panama, 93% of agricultural workers experience some sort of posture-related risk even though the country has relatively low rates of posture-related risks overall. Therefore, findings on the prevalence of posture-related risks also reflect the importance of agriculture in a given country.

Across the region, exposure to biological waste is the least common type of risk. Guatemalan and Honduran workers report the highest levels of exposure to toxins

Figure 88: Exposure to physical risks, by country, Central America (%)

	Posture-related				Biological or chemical				Ambient	
	Repetitive movements	Heavy loads	Uncomfortable positions	Vibrations	Handling toxic substances	Chemical exposure	Tobacco smoke	Biological	Extreme temperatures	Noise
Honduras	56	22	6	9	21	17	7	1	31	18
Nicaragua	54	10	8	9	5	12	5	1	13	19
Costa Rica	48	15	8	11	12	14	17	1	18	21
El Salvador	47	15	7	20	8	17	9	3	24	26
Guatemala	45	25	11	11	14	21	4	1	29	20
Panama	28	12	3	9	4	13	1	0	16	19

Note: Exposure to risks at least half of the time.

26 Data on unionisation and collective bargaining coverage rates from Ilostat; latest year available.

or chemicals, while Costa Rican workers are the most likely to be exposed to tobacco smoke. Throughout all countries, men are more likely to be exposed to chemicals, toxic substances and tobacco smoke than women (sometimes twice as likely, depending on the country), while women are more often exposed to biological waste. The latter finding is likely to reflect the fact that women are overrepresented in occupations such as nursing and caregiving, which naturally feature a higher risk of exposure to biological risks.

Finally, with regard to ambient risks, a notable portion of workers in all countries report that they experience extreme temperatures; up to a third of all workers, and particularly men, face these risks. Exposure to noise is particularly common in El Salvador. Across all countries, workers in the agriculture and construction sectors are particularly likely to report ambient risks, as their jobs are most likely located outside.

### Work intensity

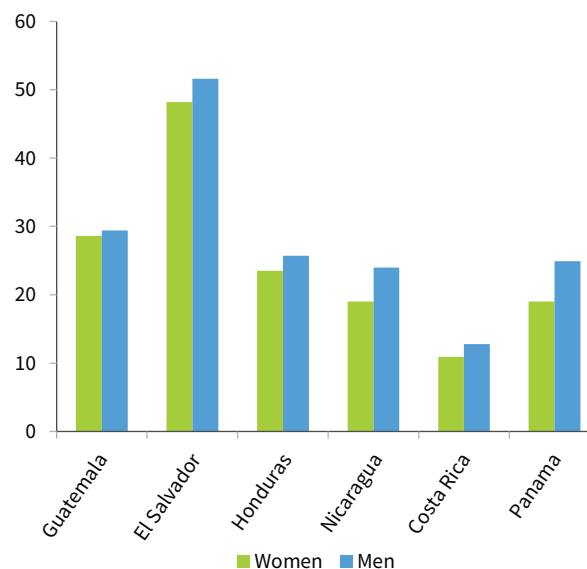
Workers were also asked how often they have to work intensively, on a scale of one to five. Figure 89 shows the percentage of workers, by country and by sex, who often or always work intensively. Across all countries, work intensity is observed more frequently among men than among women. The highest rate is reported in El Salvador (52% of men) and the lowest rate is found in Costa Rica.

Throughout the region, there is little difference in terms of work intensity between workers of different ages. However, the highest level of work intensity is universally observed among temporary workers. In El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, the highest level of work intensity is reported in the manufacturing sector and in larger enterprises, while in Nicaragua and Panama it is mostly found in agriculture and small enterprises.

### Working time quality

Working time quality was assessed using a series of questions measuring the amount of time workers spend at work, as well as their control over their work schedules or the flexibility of their working time. Respondents who indicated that they had flexible

Figure 89: Work intensity, by country, Central America (%)



Note: Selected answer categories 'always' and 'often'.

scheduling were asked if they were able to decide on their work schedule themselves or if it was determined by external factors (such as management or the constraints of their own business). These questions were posed to all workers regardless of their employment status.

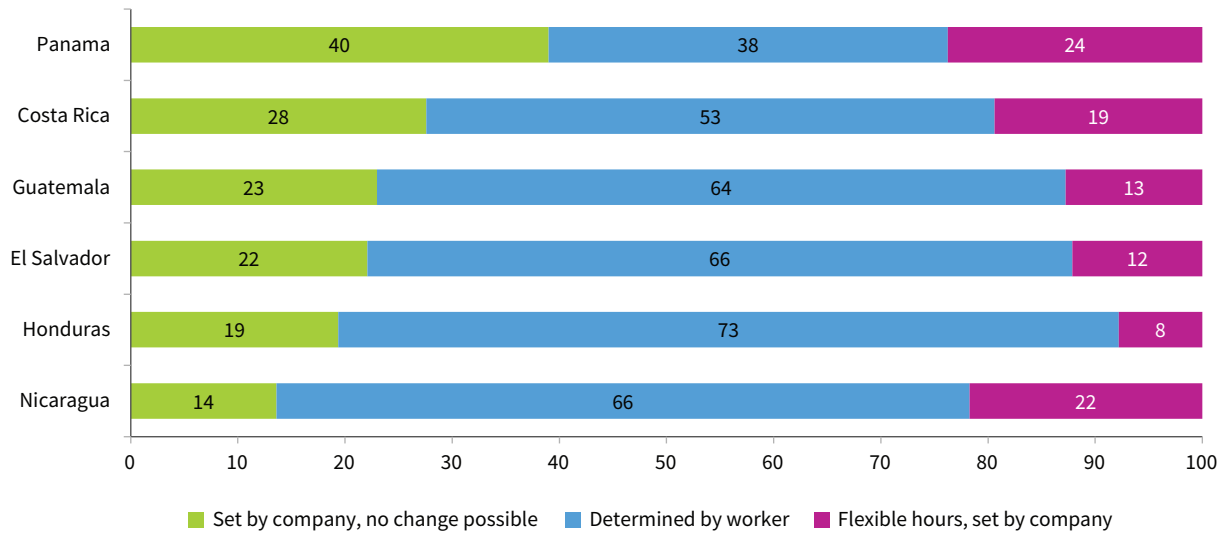
Across the region, almost one in five respondents works part time – defined as less than 36 hours per week – while the remainder work full time (Figure 90). Working weeks of over 48 hours are widespread, with about a third of all workers in the region reporting working excessive hours. Long working weeks are a feature of the working life of almost 40% of workers in Costa Rica and Guatemala, and 30% of workers in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Panamanian workers are the least likely to work long weeks.

In terms of gender, Costa Rican men are more likely than women to work long weeks (41% compared to 25%). Guatemalan men and women work long weeks at almost the same rate (40% of men, 39% of women).

Figure 90: Working hours, by country, Central America (%)

	<12	13-24	25-36	37-48	48+	Irregular
Panama	2	2	4	60	22	13
Honduras	2	5	16	48	30	3
El Salvador	1	5	15	50	30	1
Nicaragua	4	7	18	41	30	2
Costa Rica	5	5	9	41	38	6
Guatemala	8	4	11	37	39	4

Figure 91: Working time arrangements, by country, Central America (%)



In Honduras and Nicaragua, on the other hand, long working weeks are most frequently experienced by women. More than one in three women report long working weeks in these countries, and at rates that are much higher than for men. In Honduras, 36% of women report this, as against 27% of men. In Nicaragua, the rates are 35% and 28%, respectively. Irregular hours are reported with the greatest frequency in Panama.

Central American workers have significant flexibility in their work schedules. The majority of workers indicated that they were able to choose when they started and ended their working day (Figure 91). However, this flexibility is a reflection of the high incidence of self-employment which allows workers greater flexibility in determining their work schedules. In line with this, in Panama and Costa Rica, where the rates of formal wage employment are also among the highest, schedule rigidity or flexibility as defined by enterprises is most common.

### Social environment

The quality of the social environment in a workplace is determined by a variety of both negative factors (e.g. adverse social behaviour) and positive factors (e.g. social support).

In terms of adverse social behaviour, the ECCTS asked workers whether:

- they had experienced physical violence from their co-workers or clients
- they had experienced unwanted sexual attention or abuse in the previous 12 months
- they had experienced threats
- their salaries had been reduced as a form of demotion

The first question was posed to all workers, while the remaining three were posed to wage employees only.

Figure 92 shows the percentage of men and women, by country, who have experienced these types of adverse

Figure 92: Exposure to adverse social behaviour, by sex and country, Central America (%)

	Physical violence		Sexual harassment		Threats		Salary reductions	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Guatemala	4	3	1	1	1	1	4	2
El Salvador	2	1	2	4	0	0	1	1
Honduras	2	2	1	2	0	0	3	2
Nicaragua	3	3	1	2	0	1	2	1
Costa Rica	3	3	2	3	0	0	2	4
Panama	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	0

Note: All dichotomous items, proportion indicates 'yes'.

social behaviours. In general, adverse social behaviour in the workplace is uncommon. The most frequently reported type of violence is sexual harassment and abuse, particularly among women (with the highest rates reported in El Salvador and Panama). This is followed by physical violence, which is reported most often by men (with the highest rates in Guatemala and Nicaragua). Salary reductions also occur and seem to be more common than verbal threats. Rates of violence do not differ much by age. However, there is a link between the enterprise size and exposure to violence, as workers at larger enterprises report workplace violence more often than those at small enterprises.

The existence of social support, in turn, was measured by whether workers could ask their colleagues or managers for help if needed, and if workers considered their personal relationships at work to be positive. These questions were administered to wage employees alone.

Social support is experienced by 20% to 50% of workers, depending on gender and country. Across the region, men more frequently report that they felt supported by their manager or co-workers, or characterise their personal relationships at work as positive. In Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, workers with no formal schooling or with a primary education report higher levels of social support than those with secondary schooling, while those who have attended university report the lowest levels of social support. In Nicaragua, social support is linked to enterprise size, with smaller enterprises offering more social support. The data from Costa Rica and El Salvador do not reveal any clear patterns regarding social support; rates are particularly low (around 20%) in both countries.

### Skills and discretion

The ability of workers to make decisions about their job is generally considered to be an indicator of more favourable working conditions. The ECCTS asked wage employees about the level of decision latitude that they are able to exercise on a typical working day. Some specific questions included whether workers were provided with enough information to do their jobs adequately, received training from their employers, could choose to do work that they were most familiar with, or could apply their own ideas to their work. Responses to these and other related questions were aggregated into a single indicator of decision-making.

According to this indicator, the ability for workers to make decisions while at work varies substantially across the region. Nearly half of workers in El Salvador feel that they are able to make decisions and control their work. In contrast, only 20% of Costa Rican workers feel the same. Rates of decision latitude are similar between men and women in all countries except for Honduras, where over 30% of women indicate that they can make decisions while at work, compared to 20% of men. Region-wide trends include the finding that a larger percentage of full-time workers are able to make decisions about their job than part-time workers. In each country except for Panama, workers in the manufacturing sector report the highest rates of decision latitude. In Panama, workers in the agricultural sector report the highest rates.

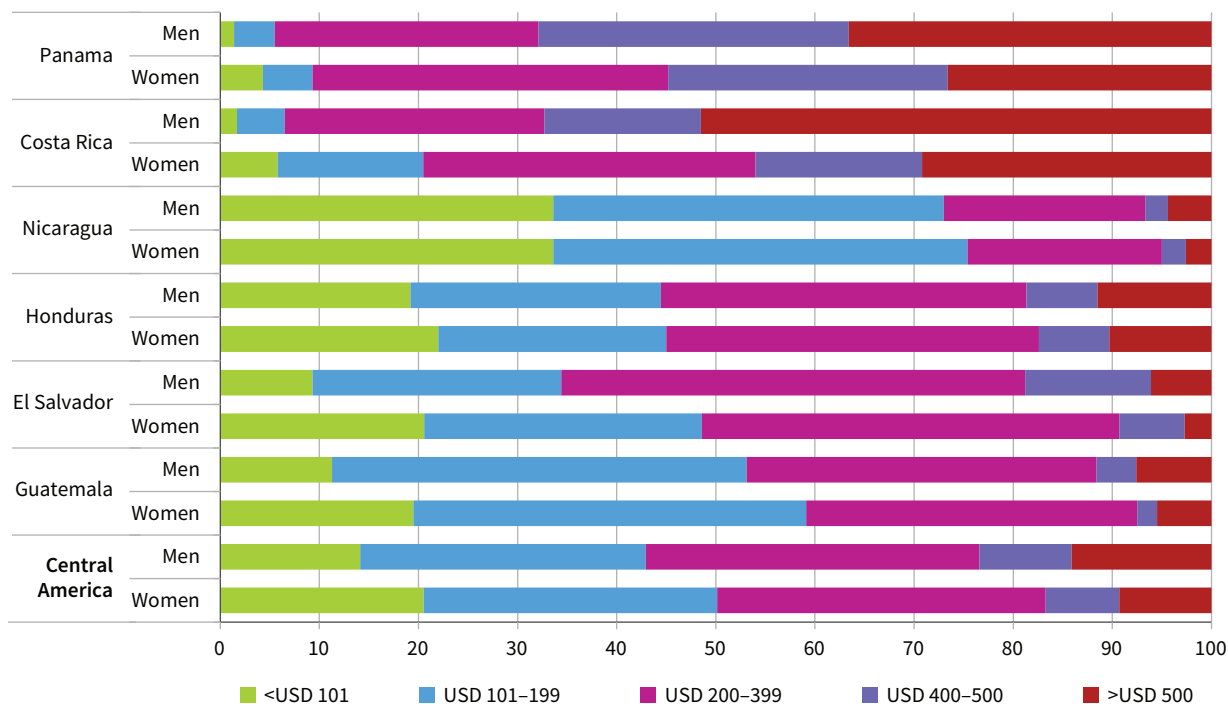
### Earnings

The distribution of earnings among the Central American working population varies substantially by country. Workers in Costa Rica and Panama have the highest income on average, and also the largest proportion of workers in the fourth and the fifth quintiles of the income distribution (the highest), earning between USD 400 (approximately €345 at 2011 exchange rates) and USD 500 (€432), and more than USD 500 (€432) per month (23% and 25% respectively). On the other hand, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua report the lowest earnings. In Nicaragua specifically, the proportion of workers in the first quintile (the lowest) of the income distribution is the highest: 40% of workers earn between USD 101 (€87) and USD 199 (€172) per month, and another 30% earn less than USD 100 (€86) per month.

In each surveyed country, women earn less than men. They are consistently overrepresented in the lowest quintile and underrepresented in the highest quintile of the income distribution of each country (Figure 93). Over 20% of women in the region earn less than USD 100 (€86) per month, and additionally more than 25% earn between USD 101 (€87) and USD 199 (€172) per month.

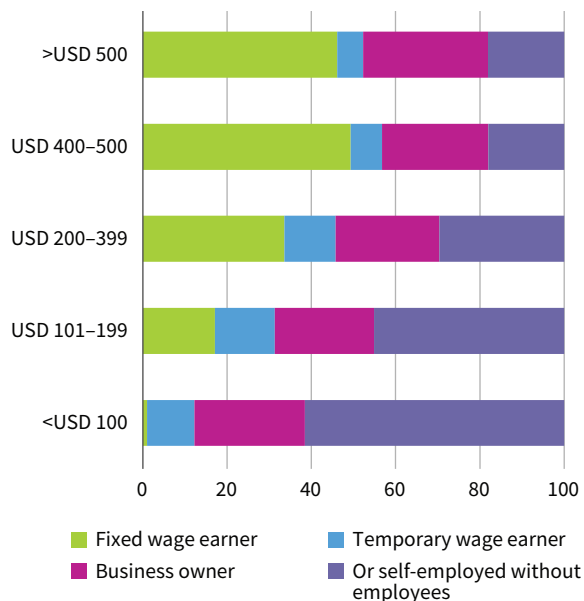
Looking at sector, 20% of agricultural workers in Panama and Honduras have earnings in the highest quintile. In contrast, agricultural earnings are the lowest in Nicaragua, with more than 50% of agricultural workers earning less than USD 100 (€86) per month. In manufacturing, the highest earnings are in Costa Rica and Panama, while the lowest earnings are in Honduras. Service and sales workers also report the highest earnings in Panama.

Figure 93: Earnings per month, by sex and country, Central America (%)



Finally, earnings also vary by employment status. As shown in Figure 94, own-account workers (self-employed without employees) are substantially more likely to report lower earnings, while fixed wage earners have the highest earnings. The low earnings of self-employed workers may reflect the involuntary character of self-employment in the region, due to the unavailability or inaccessibility of other jobs. They may also be related to the informal, subsistence nature of self-employment.

Figure 94: Earnings per month, by employment status, Central America (%)



## Perspectives on working life

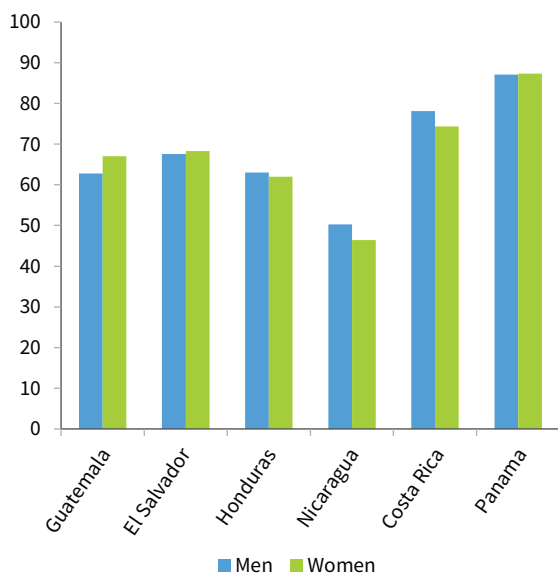
In addition to the specific questions on working conditions, the ECCTS also asked broad questions about the general well-being of workers, including about the state of their physical and mental health, and their perception of work-life balance.

### Self-reported health

Figure 95 shows the answers to the question on self-reported physical health. Physical health is generally quite similar for men and for women, but does vary across countries. More than half of Nicaraguan workers classify their health as poor. The situation is somewhat better in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, where good health is reported by two-thirds of workers. The best outcomes are reported by workers in Costa Rica and Panama.

To determine whether these health outcomes are affected by working conditions, a regression analysis was performed. It related self-reported health to various workplace indicators examined in this chapter, conditional on workers' sociodemographic characteristics. The analysis showed that poorer rates of physical health are more likely to be reported by those workers who experience all types of physical risk, with posture-related risk being particularly linked to poor health outcomes. Workers who experience discrimination are also more likely to report poorer physical health. In addition, women, workers without formal schooling, informal workers, workers aged 35-49, as well as those aged 50 and over, are more likely to report poor health.

**Figure 95: Proportion of workers reporting being in good health, by sex and country, Central America (%)**



## Mental health status and work–life balance

In the same spirit, two additional regression analyses were performed: one relating mental health to working conditions and another relating the perception of work–life balance to working conditions. After taking into account workers' age, sex, education, and informality status, the model nonetheless found that workers who experience workplace discrimination and violence had poorer mental health outcomes. In contrast, working conditions do not seem to affect work–life balance, when individual sociodemographic characteristics are accounted for. Overall, women, workers over the age of 50 and informal workers experience a less satisfactory work–life balance than men, younger workers and formal workers.

## Conclusions

The ECCTS provides rich information about the labour markets and workplace conditions in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. The survey's findings reveal that the economic sector of the worker and whether the worker is informal or not, has a direct bearing on reported working conditions.

Costa Rica and Panama lead the region in terms of structural transformation and development. They have the lowest share of workers in agriculture, and the highest rates of wage employment and formality. This goes hand in hand with higher earnings for workers and a higher share of workers in the top quintiles of the income distribution. It also translates into the wider spread of workplace outcomes such as less flexible (though possibly more predictable) work schedules. Although development is occurring steadily across the whole region, those countries with large shares of workers still employed in agriculture, and mainly informally, are also those with the lowest incomes. These are also the countries where workers report the greatest exposure to posture-related risks and risks relating to working in high temperatures (due to working outside more frequently).

More generally, the greatest risks that Central American workers face are physical, especially posture-related and ambient risks. These risks also have the strongest association with poor physical health outcomes, pointing to the progress that remains to be made to improve occupational safety and health in the workplace.

The next most common risk is prohibitively long working hours, reported by nearly a third of all Central American workers. These long working hours are a reflection of the low levels of earnings, especially amongst the self-employed. Policy interventions to improve productivity and earnings are needed. A related phenomenon, work intensity, is a particularly salient issue for temporary workers in the region.

Also, while workplace violence rates are not necessarily higher than in other regions of the world, attention should be paid to sexual harassment (which disproportionately affects women) and physical violence (which is mainly faced by men). Combating these forms of violence, as well as workplace discrimination, has the potential to improve the mental well-being of workers.

Finally, there is the potential to improve regional working conditions by formalising jobs. Formal jobs not only correspond with higher earnings, but also consistently correlate with a better work–life balance, and improved physical and mental well-being.





# 9 Argentina

## Introduction

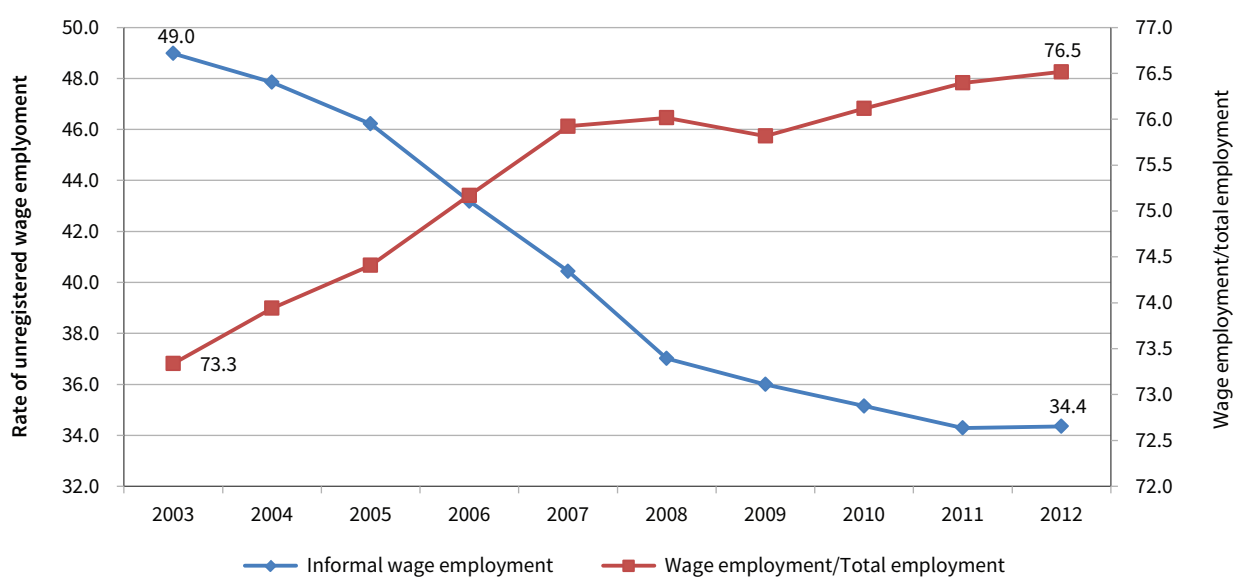
Unlike other countries featured in this report, the Argentinian survey on working conditions only covers formal, salaried employees working in registered private, non-agricultural firms with five or more employees. While the sample is not representative of all workers in the country, it is representative of formal, private sector employment in Argentina in the non-primary sector. The survey, National Survey of Workers: Employment, Work, Conditions, and Working Environment (ENTETCML), was conducted between October 2009 and April 2010, by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and the Superintendency of Risks at Work (SRT), with a view to understanding working conditions in the private sector, with a particular emphasis on occupational safety and health. Given that the survey was undertaken in late 2009, it does not reflect recent developments in the labour market. Nevertheless it is the sole study of working conditions in the country and addresses issues such as overall working conditions, work environment, workplace risks, hours, and income, thereby facilitating the Ministry in its mandate to develop, administer and monitor policies and actions to improve working conditions, training, employment and social protection coverage of all citizens. In July 2018, the survey was conducted in the whole country, covering all economic activities with results expected in 2019.

## Labour market overview

Argentina has a highly diversified economy and labour market with a relatively large manufacturing sector and an important export-oriented agricultural and extractive industries sector, stemming from the country's vast natural resources, including a large and diverse land base. Although the Argentinian economy suffered during the economic depression between 1998 and 2002, and during the global financial crisis in 2008–2009, the country has succeeded in reducing national poverty rates over the past 15 years. This progress is due to an increase in employment, especially formal wage employment; strong wage growth, as a result of increases in the minimum wage, thereby benefitting lower wage earners; and prioritisation of social spending and redistribution, all of which have led to greater shared prosperity and social inclusion (Bertranou and Casanova, 2013; World Bank, undated-a).

Since the early 2000s, Argentina has actively promoted policies to reduce non-registered wage employment by formalising these jobs. These policies have proved successful, with informal jobs falling from 49% of total employment in 2003 to 35% in 2012 (Figure 96). Rates of informality, however, remain high and Argentina continues its efforts to bring workers into formal work (ILO, 2014a).

Figure 96: Evolution of formal and informal employment, 2003–2012, Argentina



Source: ILO (2014a)

The ENTETCML survey covers workers from all sectors of the economy with the exception of the primary and public sectors. The distribution of survey respondents is the following: industry and manufacturing (23%); commerce, restaurants and hotels (19%); financial and business services (19%); community, social and personal services (20%); transportation (10%); construction (8%); electricity, gas and water (1%). Some 36% of formal wage employees work in small firms with 5–49 workers; 29% work in medium-sized enterprises of between 50 and 199 employees and 35% work in large firms with over 200 workers.

## Policies and laws governing the labour market, working conditions and employment

Argentina has ratified 81 (of 189) ILO conventions, including all 8 fundamental conventions and 3 (of 4) governance conventions. It has also ratified the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (P029) and the Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (P155).<sup>27</sup> The country's legislative framework contains detailed provisions on wages and hours, occupational safety and health, and collective bargaining.

Minimum wages in Argentina are set through tripartite consultation by the National Council for Employment, Productivity and the Adjustable Minimum Living Wage, which is composed of an equal number of government, workers' and employers' representatives. The Council periodically determines the adjustable minimum wage to be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the members. Minimum wages for specific sectors are also set through collective bargaining.

The limitation of working hours has constitutional status in all of Argentina's territories. According to the Constitution of Argentina, 'all residents in Argentina shall enjoy decent working conditions, among others, the application of limitations in the working hours' (Article 14 bis). The law fixes daily limits (8 hours) and weekly limits (48 hours). Special provisions exist for workers in designated sectors, such as agriculture or other services, for workers in managerial positions and for young workers. The law also includes provisions on overtime, and guarantees that overtime is paid at 150% of the normal wage (ILO, 2011).

Occupational safety and health in Argentina is guided by two main laws. Decree Law No. 19.587 / 1972 on occupational hygiene and safety at work governs risk prevention in the workplace, by providing workplace health and safety standards and risk mitigation provisions. Law No. 24.557 has a 'curative' purpose. It requires all employers to provide workers with occupational risk insurance, and outlines the types of risks that are covered by the insurance programmes, as well as the benefits provided to workers.

Unionisation rates in Argentina are high when compared with other countries in the Americas, with 27% of workers belonging to a trade union in 2014; however, there has been a substantial fall since 2005, when the rate stood at 37% (ILOSTAT, 2016, 2018). Collective bargaining coverage has fluctuated as a result of labour reforms and counter-reforms. In the early 2000s, Argentina decentralised its collective bargaining system with most agreements affecting conditions at a firm level only. However, since 2002, the partial reinstatement of a centralised negotiation process, in conjunction with the growth in salaried formal employment, reversed this trend and industry-level agreements have once again become the norm.<sup>28</sup> Social partners are also closely involved in advising the government on unemployment insurance, in developing training programmes, and in establishing workers' cost of living – a task that has direct bearing on the setting of the minimum wage (Cardoso and Gindin, 2009).

## Dimensions of job quality

### Physical environment

The ENTETCML asked workers about their exposure to various physical workplace risks, including noise, vibrations, chemical and biological risks. Among the surveyed workers, 7% report being exposed to biological risks permanently or from time to time, 13% report being exposed to vibrations, 20% to loud noises, and 21% to chemical risks. Men are generally more likely to be exposed to physical risks than women. The largest difference is with respect to chemical risks, where 14% of women report being exposed in contrast to 24% of men. The only type of risk where women report higher exposure is biological: 9% of women are exposed, compared to 6% of men.

27 These are the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81); Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122); Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129); and Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

28 In 1991, firm-level bargaining accounted for the minority (19%) of all collective agreements. During this period, 28% of collective bargaining agreements were established at sector level and 50% at industry level. Due to regulatory changes, by 2002, firm-level agreements accounted for 82% of all agreements, and industry level accounted for the remaining 18%. By 2001 there were no sector-level collective agreements at all.

Figure 97: Exposure to physical risks, by sector, Argentina (%)

	Noise	Vibration	Chemical	Biological
Electricity, gas and water	2	3	9	6
Business services	10	5	13	2
Commerce, restaurants and hotels	14	8	16	4
Transportation and telecommunications	17	23	25	3
Social services	21	8	16	16
Construction	27	27	30	4
Industry	30	22	30	8

Note: Exposure to risks 'always' to 'sometimes'.

Source: ENTETCML for all figures unless stated otherwise.

By sector, workers in industry and construction have the highest rates of exposure to physical risks overall (Figure 97). Noise and chemical exposure are experienced by nearly a third of workers in these sectors. Exposure to vibrations is the highest in the construction sector (27% of workers). Exposure to biological risks is highest in the social services sector – notably in health industries and cleaning professions, both of which provide work to large numbers of women.

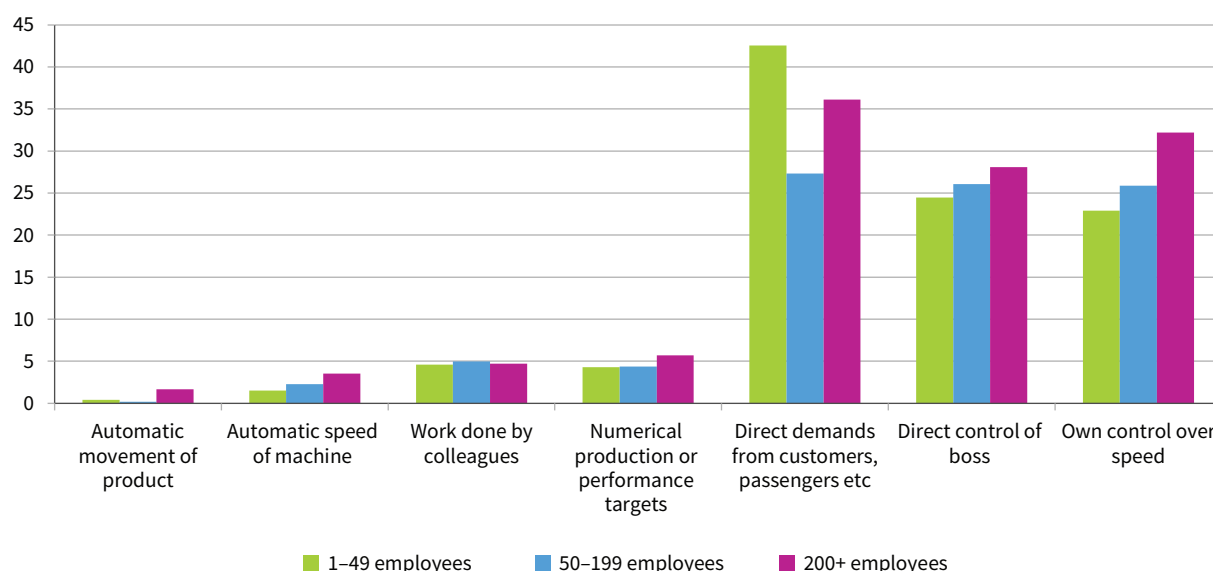
### Work intensity

Work intensity measures the level of work demands in the job. The ENTETCML asked workers how quickly they have to execute their tasks as well as factors that

determine the pace of their work.<sup>29</sup> Overall, almost 10% of surveyed workers report that they have to work very fast all the time; these responses are slightly higher for men than for women (10% and 9% respectively).

Work pace determinants are primarily attributed to external demands and workplace supervision (Figure 98). At the same time, a considerable share of workers report that they are able to determine their own work speed. External demands affect the pace of work most in small workplaces with fewer than 50 workers, while managerial control affects workers the most at large enterprises with over 200 employees.

Figure 98: Exposure to work pace determinants, by firm size, Argentina (%)



Note: All dichotomous items, proportion indicates 'yes'.

29 For a fuller explanation of work intensity, please refer to Box 4 in Chapter 2.

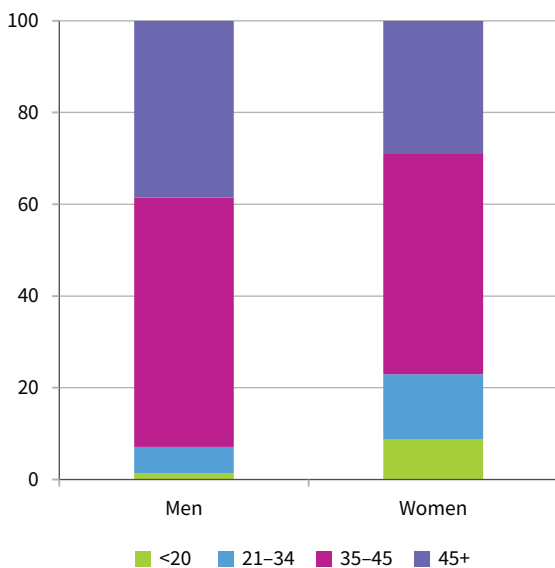
Almost 40% of workers are able to take breaks according to the schedule stipulated by their employer, while 56% are able to decide these breaks themselves. Only 5% of workers report not being able to take breaks.

### Working time quality

The survey's questions relating to working time quality concern the hours worked per week and workers' schedules. Workers are asked about how many hours they work per week in their primary and secondary jobs, and how many days a week this work covers. Regarding scheduling, they are asked about night work, weekend work, shift work and whether they work extra hours.

Two-thirds of surveyed workers work 45 hours or less per week. However, the share of workers working above 45 hours a week remains high. When analysed by sex, men are more likely to work more than 45 hours per week than women (39% and 29% respectively – Figure 99), while women are more likely to hold part-time jobs, including those that involve less than 20 hours of work a week (9% and 1% respectively).

Figure 99: Working hours, by sex, Argentina (%)

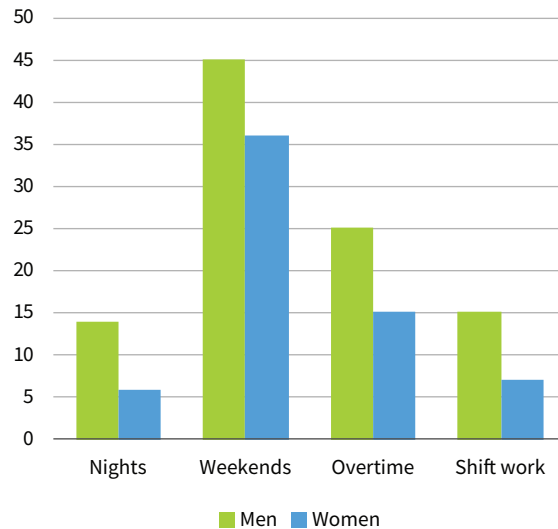


Note: Hours are calculated for primary and secondary jobs.

Nearly all workers (99%), report that they get at least one day off per week. Roughly one in three workers work six days per week and the remainder work five days or fewer. There are no substantial differences based on sex or age.

Regarding work schedules and atypical hours, 42% of workers report regularly working at weekends, 22% regularly work overtime, 12% work in shifts, and 11% work at night. Men are more likely to work at the weekend than women, as well as afternoon shifts, at night and overtime (Figure 100).

Figure 100: Atypical scheduling, by sex, Argentina (%)



One related concern, though affecting a relatively small proportion of workers, is not being paid appropriately for additional work: 7% of the respondents who work extra hours stated that they were not paid for them, and 5% who reported working nights also indicated that they were not appropriately compensated for their work.

### Social environment

The social environment entails both negative and positive social experiences in the workplace. A negative work environment is indicated by the presence of adverse social behaviour, such as threats, violence, and not feeling valued. A positive social environment is characterised by social support either from managers or co-workers. Social support can also be cultivated through union membership or participation in other committees such as health and safety.

Adverse social behaviour appears to be quite a common occurrence among workers surveyed in Argentina. More than a quarter of workers (26%) report experiencing workplace violence or other risk factors stemming from interpersonal relations at work during the 12 months

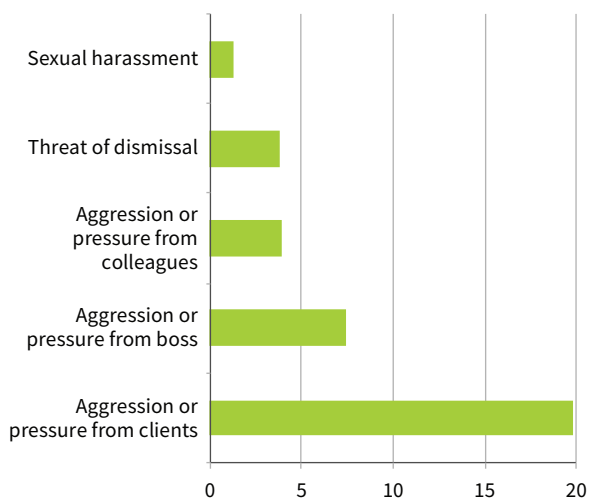
prior to the survey. The definitions covers situations where one is the ‘object of pressure or aggression from bosses, clients (including customers, patients, pupils) or colleagues’ or where one experiences sexual or moral harassment (bullying). Aggression or pressure from clients is the most frequently experienced form of violence: almost 20% of all surveyed workers report this (Figure 101), as do nearly 40% of professionals. Women are the most affected by any type of workplace violence (with 29% reporting that they had suffered some kind of workplace violence in comparison to 24% of men). The sector is critical in this regard: while 20% of workers in industry and construction suffer from some degree of workplace violence, this increases to 30% within the

services sector – typically stemming from aggression or pressure from clients.

In addition, over 6% of workers suffer from various threats (excluding those of dismissal), 4% believe that they are not valued professionally or personally, and 1% think there is no possibility for communication in their work environment.

By enterprise size, those with 200 workers or more record the greatest number of workplace threats, and workers employed at enterprises with fewer than 50 employees are least likely to experience threats (Figure 102). By age, a smaller share of older workers experience threats some or all of the time compared to young or middle-aged workers.

**Figure 101: Exposure to adverse social behaviour, Argentina (%)**



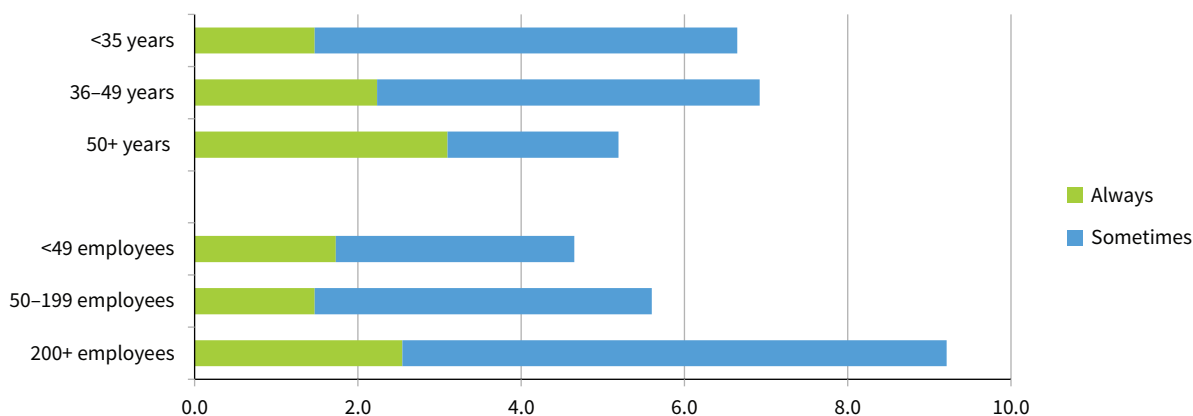
Note: Proportion indicates ‘always’ to ‘sometimes’.

Regarding social support, the overwhelming majority of workers feel valued, either personally or with respect to their job, privacy, or beliefs, some or all of the time. There are no significant differences when responses are analysed by age, sex or enterprise size.

Membership of workers’ organisations, as well as coverage by collective agreement, is widespread among Argentinian workers. Among the survey respondents, 52% declare that they are covered by a collective agreement, 16% indicate that they are not covered, and one-third of workers state that they are unsure of their status.

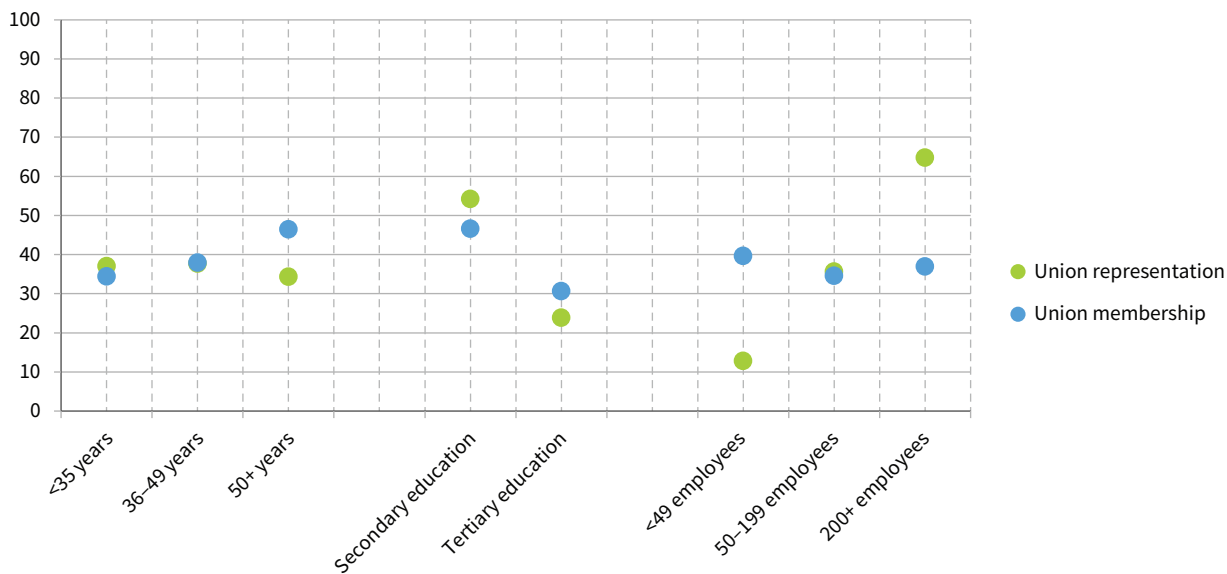
Overall, 37% of workers state that their workplace has union presence, representation or delegates, and the same proportion report that they are members of a union. Although union membership is relatively common, active participation in union activities is reported with much less frequency. Only 11% report that they participate in union votes, 7% in union meetings and 5% in assemblies.

**Figure 102: Exposure to adverse social behaviour, by age and firm size, Argentina (%)**





**Figure 103: Incidence of union membership and union representation, by age, education level and firm size, Argentina (%)**



Union membership rates are substantially higher for men (41%) than women (30%). As shown in Figure 103, rates are higher in the secondary-educated group than the tertiary-educated group (47% and 31% respectively). Membership is also greater among older workers (47% among over-50s) in comparison to those under 35 (34%), with mid-aged workers falling in the middle. Union representation is most common in large workplaces.

Lastly, about one in four workers report that occupational safety and health committees or representation or prevention delegates exist at their workplaces, and that there are opportunities for workers to participate in them. These committees are more common in larger workplaces.

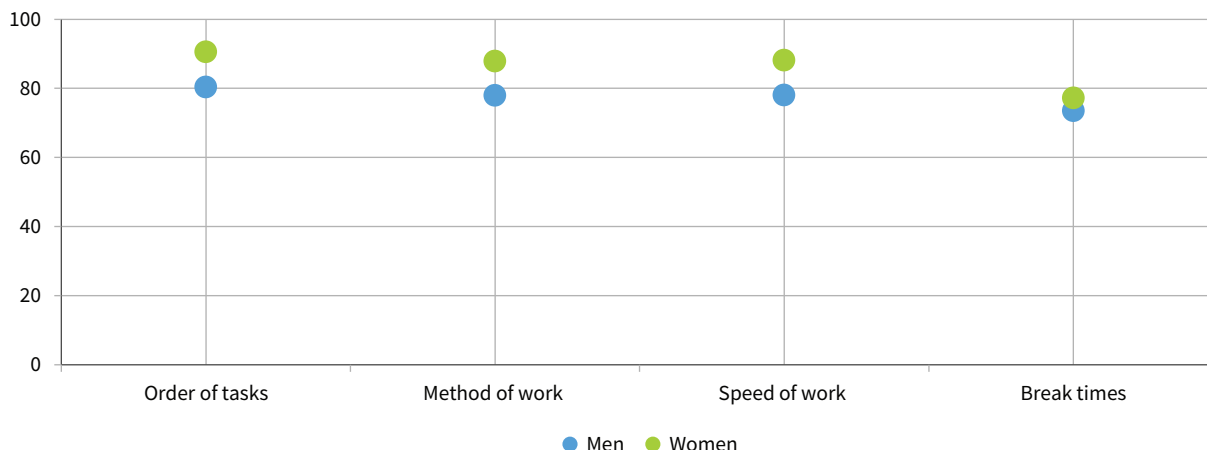
### Skills and discretion

Workers were also asked about their opportunities to acquire new skills in the workplace through training, and their decision latitude regarding their jobs and tasks.

Half of all workers report that their employers regularly provide them with some type of training. Workers in larger enterprises enjoy training sessions more regularly, with 61% reporting that these opportunities exist, while workers at small enterprises have the lowest level of access to training at 37%. Workers in medium-sized enterprises fall in the middle, with 53% reporting that their employer offers training opportunities.

When it comes to decision latitude, a substantial percentage of workers report being able to exercise control over their daily tasks. In particular, 84% report always or often having control over the order of their work, 82% have control over their work methods, and the same percentage have control over their work rhythm. Slightly fewer workers have control over their break times (75%). Women have more workplace autonomy than men (Figure 104), and older workers are more able to make decisions about how they execute their jobs than younger workers.

Figure 104: Decision latitude, by sex, Argentina (%)



Note: Selected answer categories 'always' and 'sometimes'.

### Earnings

Surveyed workers were asked about their earnings. As shown in Figure 105, 13% of surveyed workers reported net earnings below ARS 1,400 (Argentinian pesos) monthly, the standard monthly minimum-wage in 2009 (equivalent to approximately €322 at 2009 exchange rates). This percentage includes workers who work fewer than full-time hours, or whose earnings are at minimum wage level, but whose take-home pay is below the minimum as a result of deductions. According to survey results, 7.6% of workers are paid less than the minimum wage because of non-compliance with legislation.

According to the survey, in 2009 most workers earned above the minimum wage, with 56% earning between ARS 1,400 and ARS 2,799 (€644) per month (equivalent to between one and two monthly minimum wage payments), an additional 20% earning between ARS 2,800 and ARS 4,199 (€966) per month and just 11% of workers earning above this level.

In addition to their basic salary, workers receive family allowances (32% of the workforce being in receipt of these), overtime payments (14%), or compensation for night work (5%). Some also receive non-monetary

benefits, such as mobile telephony services (11%), food aid (5%), day rate supplements (3%) or reimbursement of travel expenses (12%). In terms of bonuses, 10% of workers report receiving bonuses for individual productivity and 6% report receiving bonuses for collective productivity. Productivity bonuses are more common in the secondary sector, where more men are employed.

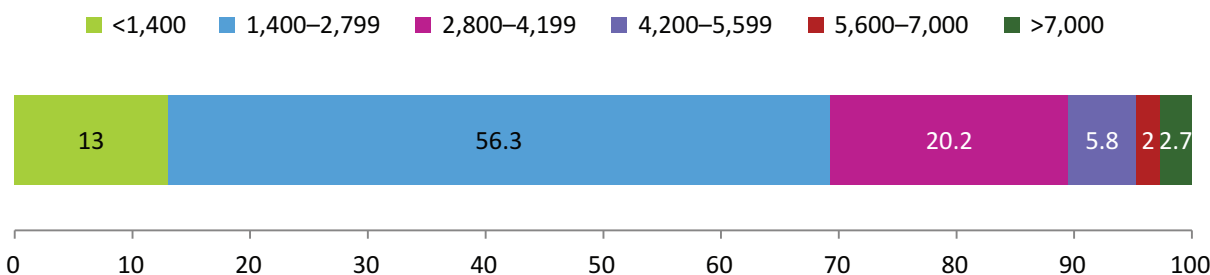
### Perspectives on working life

#### Self-reported health

The survey asked workers about their health – in particular, whether they had suffered any occupational accidents or diseases in their current workplace, and whether they believed that their current work adversely affected their health.

In total, 13% of workers report that they have suffered occupational accidents, 5% have experienced occupational diseases, and 18% believe that their work negatively affects their health. More men than women report occupational accidents and adverse health effects, while slightly more women report being affected by occupational diseases.

Figure 105: Earnings distribution, Argentina (ARS) (%)



In order to understand how working conditions affect these outcomes, a series of statistical regressions were performed.

The first analysis concerned the relationship between the working conditions discussed throughout this report and workers' tendency to have experienced either an occupational accident or disease. Having a low education level correlates with injury, and similarly, a mid-level education also correlates positively with the likelihood of injury, though not as strongly as those with a low level of education. Exposure to physical risks clearly increases the probability of experiencing workplace accidents. Another factor that is significantly relevant to accidents and diseases is working hours. All workers who report working more than 35 hours per week experience greater risks; the risks are particularly severe for those working more than 60 hours. This is unsurprising given the extensive research on worker exhaustion and occupational injury. Workers who have an ability to choose when to take breaks and pauses on the job, on the other hand, are less apt to become injured. Training opportunities and being well informed about health and security are preventive factors in relation to having a workplace accident.

The second analysis examined the same range of working conditions with respect to workers' self-reported health. It showed that the majority of individual characteristics – sex, education level and marital status – have no significant impact on a respondent's well-being. Young workers (below 35 years), however, are more likely to report good health than prime-age (36–49 years) and older workers (50+ years). The greatest predictor of poor health is exposure to physical risks. Poor working conditions increase the probability that workers will report perceived workplace health risks; for example, long work hours correlate with greater concerns about workplace risk. Lastly, having a workplace health and safety representative – or self-identifying as being well informed about occupational safety and health – has a statistically significant negative relationship with perceptions of worker health. However, this finding is likely to reflect the fact that such committees are often located in specific sectors, such as manufacturing, which have more dangerous working conditions overall.

## Conclusions

The ENTETCML reveals some notable findings regarding the physical and social environments of Argentinian workplaces, work intensity, training opportunities and workers' decision latitude. By survey design, these findings only reflect the situation of wage employees in formal private enterprises, who are likely to have some of the best workplace situations in the country.

The survey shows that, even within these relatively privileged workplaces, problems still exist and require policy attention. These problems include exposure to physical risks, especially chemical and noise-related risks, in sectors such as construction and industry. A substantial share of all surveyed workers work more than 45 hours per week, with a small number of workers not receiving overtime payments and not earning the minimum wage. Tertiary sector workers have particular difficulties disconnecting from work, regularly finishing their tasks at weekends.

Both exposure to physical risks and long hours are also found to have a strong impact on a worker's likelihood of experiencing workplace accidents and having poor health. With this in mind, the prevention of physical risks and better enforcement of working time limits are avenues to explore, in order to improve workers' health and, eventually, productivity.

At the same time, many workers report that they have a high level of discretion concerning the methods and the order of their work, as well as their speed of work and the breaks they take. Overall, the situation of workers at large enterprises seems to be better than in small enterprises: training opportunities are more common and social support is more widely available.

A final policy issue that merits attention is the need to reduce adverse social behaviour in the workplace. Given that the most frequent type of workplace violence is aggression from clients, measures to improve workers' outcomes could include general public education and awareness-raising about the adverse impacts of uncivil behaviour.

# 10 | Chile

## Introduction

In 2009–2010, the Chilean government conducted the Chilean Survey on Employment Conditions, Work, Health, and Quality of Life (ENETS) with a view to better understanding the working and employment conditions of Chilean workers.<sup>30</sup> The household survey was administered to a representative sample of employed Chilean workers, both employees and self-employed, as well as unemployed workers who had held a job within the 12 months prior to the survey's administration. The survey is one of the most comprehensive working conditions surveys undertaken worldwide, with an extensive questionnaire and 9,500 respondents. The objective of the interagency survey was to improve understanding of how employment and working conditions affect the health of Chilean workers and to analyse the mechanisms of inequity in health associated with the conditions of employment and work.<sup>31</sup> The survey also explored other pressing policy concerns such as work–life balance.

## Labour market overview

The Chilean economy has undergone significant transformations over the past three decades that have dramatically changed where and how Chileans work. In addition to an important shift into financial and business services, the Chilean economy has also focused on developing industries based on exports of natural resources. As a result, the relative importance of manufacturing has decreased.

Chile's economic growth has been relatively strong over this time, but growth has at times been volatile, with significant shocks in 1999 and again in 2009. Nevertheless, a substantial recovery began in 2010, although it slowed by 2016. This slowing is attributed to falling copper prices, which have negatively affected private investment and national exports. Despite a slowing economy, the Chilean population has achieved significant gains in recent years; among the most

notable is the reduction in (income) poverty (defined as those subsisting on less than USD 4 (€3.55 as at 13 March 2019) per day) from 26% in 2000 to 9% in 2017. High levels of income inequality, however, continue to plague Chilean society.

In 2016–2017, the country's labour market participation rate stood at 60%, with an employment rate of 56%. Over the last 20 years, the rate of women's participation in the labour market has shown a slow but constant increase, rising from 31% of working-age women in 1996 to 45% in 2016. The amount of time individuals spend at school has also risen, from an average 9 years of schooling in 1990 to 11 years in 2015. The majority of workers have completed secondary schooling. This figure includes 7% of workers who have finished university, 3% who have some level of university education and 9% who have some specialised technical training.

These developments have also taken place in the context of an ageing population, with the average age of Chilean workers rising from 42 to 44 years between 2010 and 2016. The country has also witnessed a growth in the number of workers between 50 and 69 years old during the same time period (from 47% to 56%), and a corresponding decrease in the number of young workers.

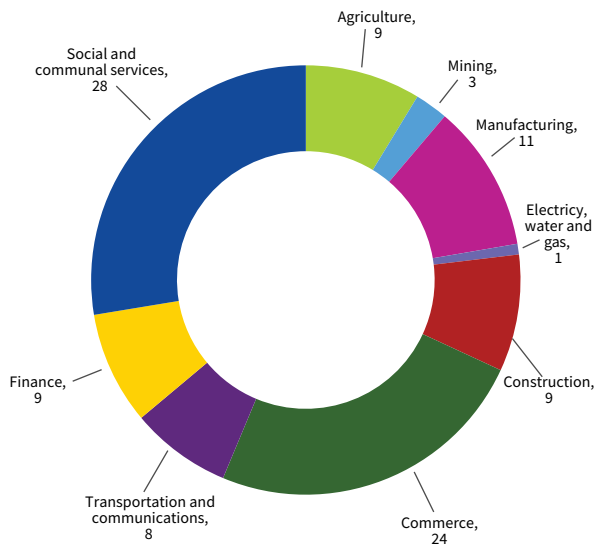
Key economic industries are not necessarily principal drivers of employment. In 2016, the sectors providing employment opportunities to the largest share of workers were the social and communal services sector (accounting for 28% of total employment) and commerce (24%), while mining provided jobs to just 3% of the population (Figure 106). Between 2009 and 2016, the agriculture sector shrank from 16% of total employment to 9%, while the financial services sector increased three-fold.

Small and microenterprises provide the majority of employment opportunities for Chileans.<sup>32</sup> For instance, microenterprises employ 40% of the country's workforce (ENE, 2016). Despite this, according to the

30 The survey was an inter-agency initiative of the Ministry of Health (*Ministerio de Salud*), the Labour Inspectorate (*Dirección del Trabajo*) and the Institute for Workplace Safety (*Instituto de Seguridad Laboral*). A complete report of the survey's findings is available from the *Dirección del Trabajo de Chile* (undated).

31 This analysis was based on the work of Erik Wright, John Goldthorpe and others on the empirical measurement of social class (see for example, Erikson et al, 1979; Wright, 1985).

32 For Chile, microenterprises are defined as those with fewer than 10 workers. Small enterprises employ 11–49 workers, medium enterprises employ 50–199 and large enterprises employ 200 or more. In relation to sales, the size of the firm is calculated according to the volume of its annual sales, net of value-added tax: microenterprise: up to CLF 2,400; small enterprise: between CLF 2,401 and 25,000; medium enterprise: between CLF 25,001 and 100,000; large enterprise: sales greater than CLF 100,000. CLF is the ISO code for *Unidad de Fomento (UF)*, which is a real monetary unit that is indexed to past inflation. In 2016, 1 UF was equivalent to approximately USD 40.1.

**Figure 106: Employment, by sector, Chile (%)**

Source: National Employment Survey (ENE), 2016.

country's National Tax Office, microenterprises account for only 3% of the country's total sales activity (compared to 90% for medium and large enterprises).

Other notable labour market features include a high incidence of non-standard forms of employment. Temporary contracts account for 29% of all contracts, while the proportion of part-time work<sup>33</sup> grew from 5% in 2000 to 17% in 2015. Chile also experienced a large increase in the number of self-employed workers over this period (7% year-over-year growth for those without employees and 15% for those with employees), which was partially a reflection of the economic slowdown. Also, it is estimated that 40% of workers are working informally, either as informal wage workers or as unregistered own-account (self-employed) workers.

## Policies and laws governing the labour market, working conditions and employment

Chile has ratified 62 of the 189 ILO conventions, including the 8 fundamental conventions. These conventions span the issues of wages, working hours, and occupational safety and health, as well as sector-specific provisions regarding domestic workers, agricultural workers, and seafarers. ILO conventions are implemented through national law and corresponding labour legislation is applied broadly.

The central piece of legislation outlining wages and working conditions is the Chilean Labour Code. The code sets a national minimum wage fixing mechanism, and provides minimum wage coverage to all workers, though rates may be differentiated by age. Provisions on working hours define a standard working week of 45 hours, to be distributed between 5 or 6 days, and a working day that should not exceed 10 hours (selected exceptions exist). Overtime is available to those who work in excess of 45 hours, is limited to 2 hours per day, and is remunerated at 150%. Chilean workers should also enjoy an annual leave of 15 paid working days per year and paid maternity leave. Access to maternity leave is dependent on tenure of employment, but is available to employees in most sectors and to all women who are affiliated with the social security system.

Working conditions in Chile can also be regulated by collective bargaining, though Chile has a relatively low level of collective bargaining coverage (15.6% in 2011 among private-sector employees) when compared with its neighbour, Argentina. This is partly because Chile's industrial relations system is limited to enterprise-level bargaining. Nevertheless, coverage rates expanded in the 2010s: in 2011, some 15.6% of private-sector employees were covered by a collective bargaining agreement; by 2016, this figure had risen to 17.9%. Over the same period, the percentage of employees who were members of a trade union rose from 15.8% to 19.6%.<sup>34</sup>

Health and safety labour protections are mostly provided through Law No. 16.744e, which defines compensation to workers in case of occupational accidents or diseases. It also defines preventive occupational health services. According to legislation, both formal salaried workers and self-employed workers are covered. In practice, approximately 70% of salaried workers are covered by insurance, largely provided through private mutual organisations though 13% of salaried workers are covered through a public insurance (ISL) directed at low-income workers. Nevertheless, occupational accidents and diseases are thought to be under-reported, indicating that the insurance programmes offered as a result of the legislation are under-used particularly with respect to occupational diseases (typically, these are diagnosed as emanating from the individual as opposed to the place of work). As such, workers bear a larger percentage of the financial risks associated with employment (SUSES0, 2016).

33 Part-time work is defined as fewer than 30 hours of work per week.

34 Data from ILOSTAT.

In 2016, Chile implemented labour reforms that sought to modify employment relationships, strengthen collective bargaining and negotiation between the social partners, and protect union activities. Data collected through the ENETS and presented in this chapter do not reflect the possible impacts of this labour reform, since the 2010 ENETS predates these legislative changes.

## Dimensions of job quality

### Physical environment

The ENETS included questions for workers about their exposure to three types of physical risks in the workplace: posture-related risks (such as experiencing repetitive movements at work or lifting heavy loads), chemical and biological risks (such as exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke or contact with chemical products), and ambient risks (such as noise or working at abnormal temperatures). Workers who indicated that they experienced these conditions all day or half of the day were considered to be ‘at risk’.

Figure 107 shows the proportion of workers that are considered to be at risk. Across the Chilean economy, posture-related risks are the most common. At least one type of posture-related risk is experienced by 48% of the population, with repetitive movements being the most frequent. This is followed by ambient risks (34% of workers are exposed to at least one of them) and chemical and biological risks (29%).

**Figure 107: Exposure to physical risks, Chile (%)**

Posture-related	Repetitive, quick movements	32
	Uncomfortable positions	23
	Heavy loads	18
	Vibrations	20
Biological and chemical	Tobacco smoke	16
	Smoke or dust	12
	Chemical substances	8
	Vapours	6
	Infectious materials	4
Ambient	High temperatures	20
	Noise	18
	Low temperatures	15

**Note:** Exposure to risks half to all of the time. Data not weighted. Weighted data, representative of the whole population, are slightly different; for example, vibrations are experienced by 19% of workers; most of the differences are within 1 percentage point.  
**Source:** ENETS 2010 for all figures unless stated otherwise.

More than half of men are exposed to posture-related risks compared to about one-third of women. Among men, the most prevalent risks are repetitive movements (33%), exposure to vibrations (27%), and working in uncomfortable positions (25%). For women, the most prevalent risks are repetitive movements (28%), followed by working in uncomfortable positions (15%) and – an ambient risk – exposure to high temperatures (11%).

Exposure to risks shows a strong negative correlation with education levels. Those without formal education experience posture-related and ambient risks at a rate of 50%. In contrast, only 36% of workers who have completed university report posture-related risks and only 21% are exposed to ambient risks. The situation differs slightly for biological and chemical risks, whereby professional technicians (who generally have some level of formal education) are most likely to report exposure. By occupation, craft workers, plant and machine operators, and agricultural workers are the most prone to experiencing all types of risk.

### Work intensity

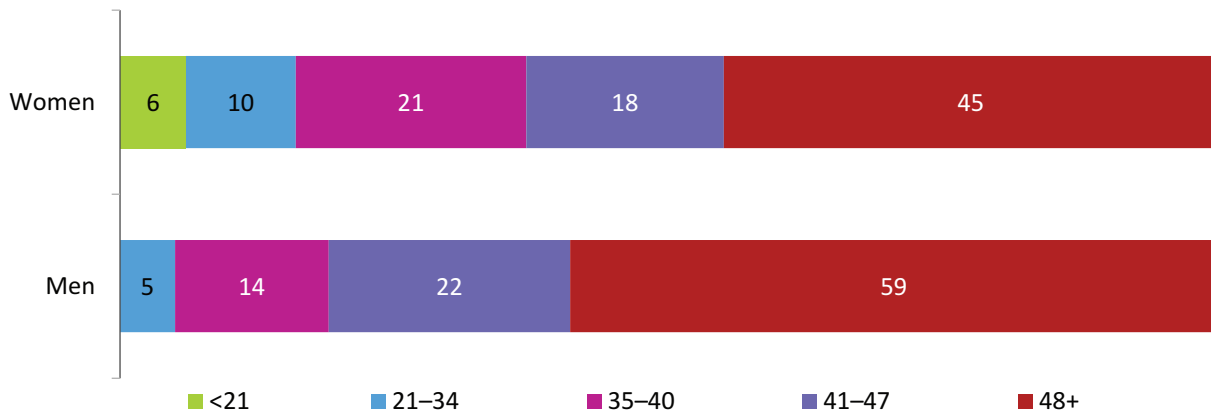
Work intensity measures the level of work demands in the workplace, and can be either quantitative, such as factors that determine work pace, or emotional (qualitative) demands. Work pace can be influenced by work organisation and the established relationship with managers, clients or others. In order to understand the quantitative and qualitative demands that contribute to work intensity, the ENETS asked a series of questions. Results presented here include questions on whether workers have sufficient time to complete their tasks, whether they receive incentive payments that influence the pace of their work, and whether they have to deal with threatening or abusive clients.

The overwhelming majority of workers (approximately 9 out of 10) state that they have enough time to finish their tasks. Female professionals are most likely to indicate that they do not have sufficient time to complete their work (19% reporting this). One explanation for this could be that these women are working slightly fewer hours in order to meet domestic demands, though the survey does not give any insight into this.

The survey sheds interesting light on the extent to which monetary incentives are used to encourage productivity. Managers are most likely to receive bonus payments associated with productivity achievements, almost half of all men and women in this occupation receiving them. Plant and machine operators are next in line (50% of women in this occupation and 44% of men), followed by craft workers (39% of women, 40% of men)



Figure 108: Working hours, by sex, Chile (%)



and technicians (41% of men and 35% of women). Workers without qualifications are the least likely to receive productivity bonuses (29% of men in this category and 13% of women receiving them), followed by professionals (30% of men and 18% of women).

Emotional demands, particularly dealing with angry clients, affects a relatively small percentage of workers. Male managers receive the highest percentage of threats from clients and service users (7% compared to 2% of female managers), male service and sales workers receive the second highest percentage of threats (5% compared to 3% of female workers) and female professionals receive the third (4% compared with 1% of male professionals).

### Working time quality

Working time quality reflects the total time a worker spends working, and their control over their work schedules. Workers were asked about their work schedule the week prior to when the survey was administered. Total working hours were then organised into the same hour bands used by the EWCS.

The majority of the Chilean working population works over 48 hours per week (Figure 108). Among men, 59% report working in excess of 48 hours, and 45% of women report the same. These long working weeks are significant given the country’s 2005 legislative reform, which sought to decrease the official working week from 48 hours to 45 hours. Indeed, extremely long working weeks are quite common with one in five workers reporting that they work in excess of 60 hours.

The survey findings reveal that long working weeks are also related to skills level and gender. Among men, those who finished university education work relatively fewer hours than those with primary, middle school or incomplete secondary education. A similar situation can be observed among women, with less-educated women working longer hours than better-educated women. By sector, mining and transport/communications have the

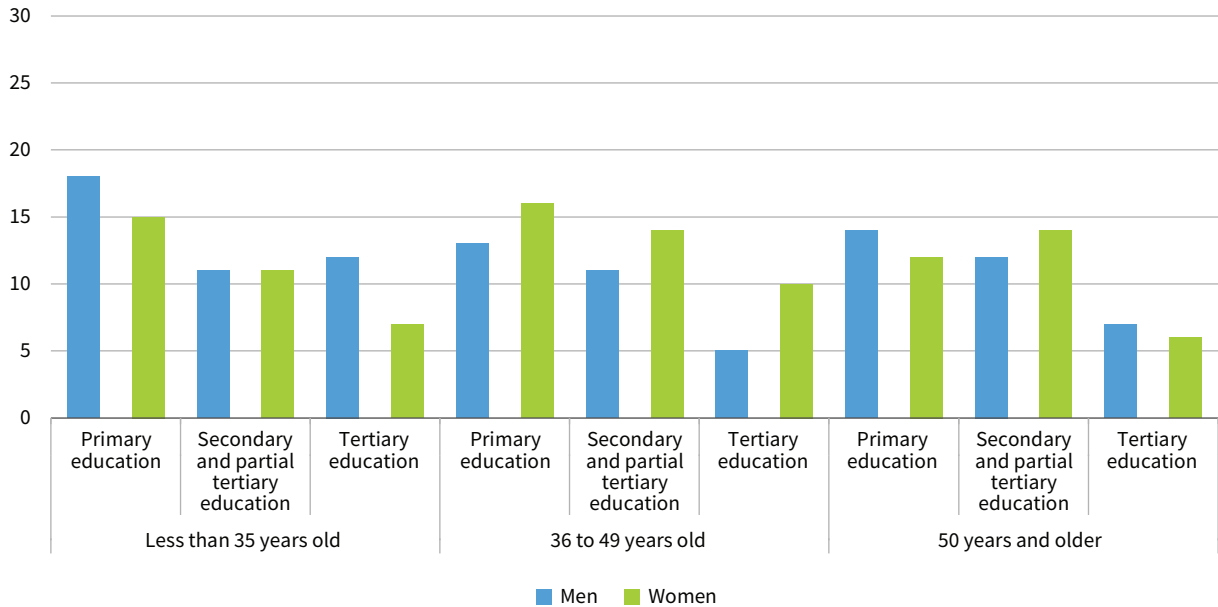
highest rates of long working weeks with 75% and 69% of people working in excess of 48 hours per week. Those working between 35 and 40 hours per week are most likely to be highly skilled workers with non-manual jobs (24% of the male workforce and 37% of the female workforce); in fact, the percentage of highly skilled, non-manual workers working between 35 and 40 hours per week is almost twice as high as in any other job category.

Total working hours are unequally distributed across enterprises of different sizes. Survey data reveal that enterprises with 200 or more workers have the highest proportion of people working over 48 hours a week (with 61% of workers working excessive hours). Small workplaces with 2–9 workers also have a high incidence of long working weeks (56%). Few workers work fewer than 20 hours per week; this is most common among the self-employed without employees.

Although most Chileans report working long hours, the vast majority also report having control over the length of their working day (88% of men and 87% of women). Only about 1 in 10 workers report that their working day is often extended and they have no control over this decision. Women, particularly those with lower levels of education and in the 36–49 years age bracket, are more likely to report that they have no control over extensions of their working day, as do young men with a primary level of education (Figure 109).

In addition to extensions of the working day, the ENETS also asked workers about their ability to take time off for medical, personal or family reasons. Almost a quarter of workers report that they have difficulty taking time off during the day for medical reasons, and 36% of the population finds it hard to ask for or take a day off for personal or family reasons. When responses are tabulated according to age and education level, workers with the highest level of education find it easiest to take time off work for personal or family reasons. For those with less formal education, rates range between 29% and 44% depending on age and educational attainment.

Figure 109: Workers reporting no control over working day extension, by age and educational level, Chile (%)

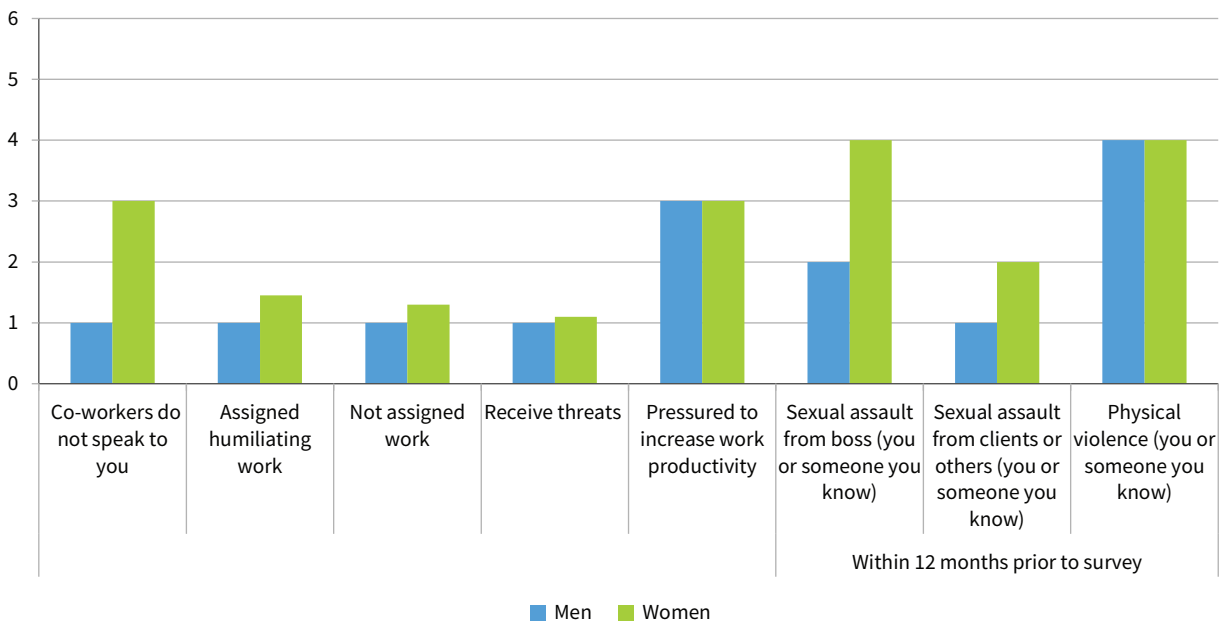


**Social environment**

The social environment of a workplace comprises the social support that workers receive from managers or co-workers; this is counterbalanced by the possibility of encountering adverse social behaviour. Social support can also be cultivated through worker organisations including trade unions. Adverse social behaviour can have profoundly negative impacts on the workplace, while support from management can foster positive sentiment, collaboration and productivity.

The ENETS asked numerous questions about adverse social behaviour that may possibly be encountered at the workplace. Overall, the share of workers encountering adverse social behaviour remains limited, although substantial differences can be seen by gender (Figure 110). Women are twice as likely as men to report experiencing sexual assaults from managers or clients, or knowing someone in this situation. They are also three times as likely to have to deal with colleagues refusing to speak to them. Both women and men report

Figure 110: Exposure to adverse social behaviour, by sex, Chile (%)



Note: Proportions indicates 'sometimes' to 'always'. Proportions for the items on sexual assault and physical violence indicates 'yes'.

relatively high levels of physical aggression, which is the most frequently reported adverse social behaviour.

By occupation, adverse social behaviour is most frequently experienced by professionals, clerks and technicians. Clerks are the most likely to directly experience – or know someone who has experienced – sexual assault by their co-workers or managers (6%), or by clients, service users or others (3%).

Questions about social support in the workplace were only administered to salaried workers. When asked about their manager’s and co-workers’ propensity to listen to their work-related problems, workers at large enterprises feel supported at rates of 62% and 64% respectively, workers at medium-sized enterprises at rates of 55% and 56% and workers at small enterprises at rates of 57% and 59%. Roughly two-thirds of workers have favourable opinions about their manager’s management skills, stating that they always or almost always have good communication skills, are good at solving conflicts, and are good at creating work plans.

The ENETS also asked workers about their involvement with supportive organisations such as unions, and community or worker associations. Some 16% of salaried workers indicated that they were members of such organisations; of these workers, 70% were members of a trade union.

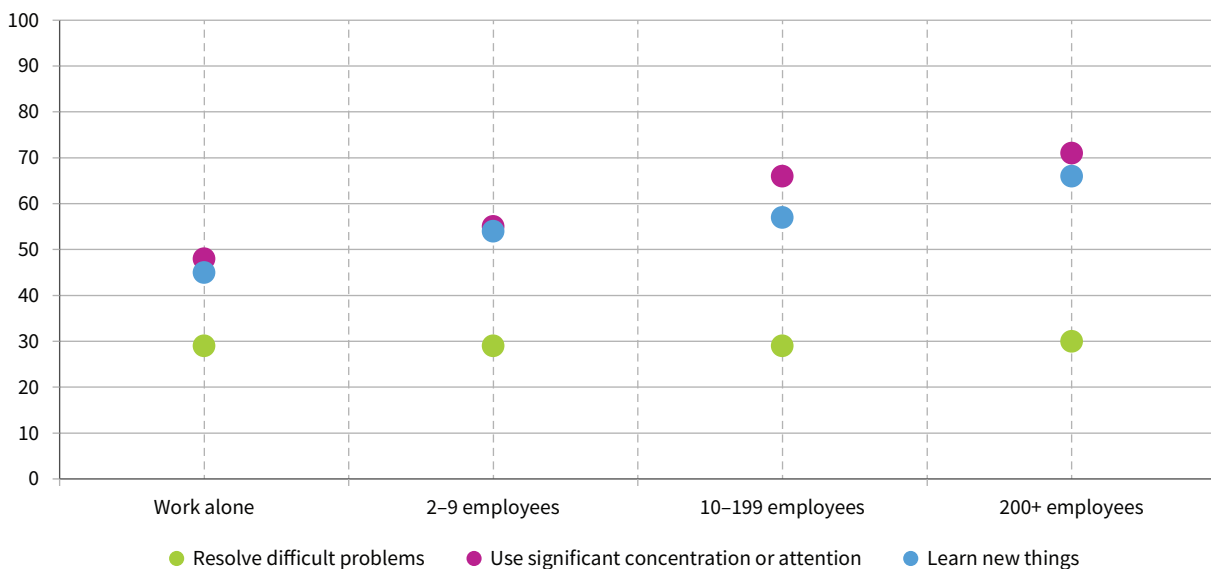
### Skills and discretion

The ENETS asked workers about the cognitive demands that their work involves, as well as their degree of autonomy at work. Questions measuring cognitive demands included how often workers were given the opportunity to resolve difficult problems and how often they were able to learn new things as part of their job. Questions about autonomy at work explored how often workers were able to influence the speed and quantity of their work, the order and method of their tasks, and when they could take a break.

Resolving difficult problems at work is the least frequent cognitive demand. Only around 30% of workers report that they always or most of the time encounter such situations at work. The highest share is among high-skilled workers with non-manual jobs (46%), as well as self-employed workers with employees (42%). The lowest share is among temporary workers (20%).

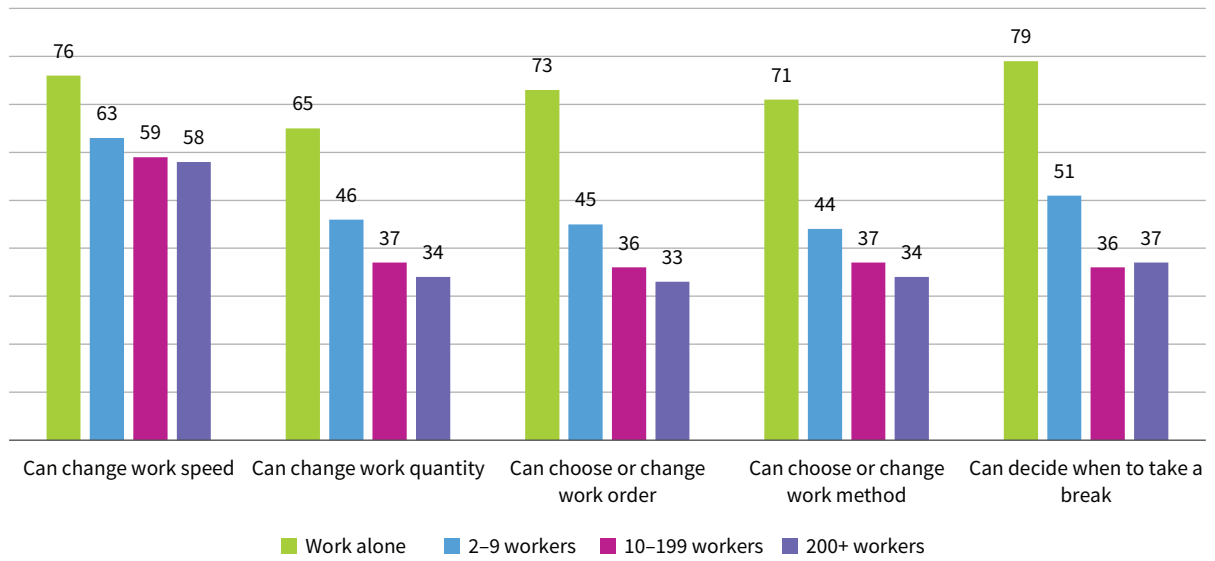
There is a clear correlation between workplace size and cognitive demands in general (Figure 111). Workers at larger enterprises report that their jobs demand high levels of concentration and attention (71%) and that they learn new things on the job (68%) much more frequently than those who work alone (48% and 45% for the corresponding questions). Those at small workplaces and medium-sized workplaces fall in the middle.

Figure 111: Cognitive demands, by firm size, Chile (%)



Note: Proportion indicates ‘always’ and ‘most of the time’.

Figure 112: Decision latitude, by firm size, Chile (%)



Note: Proportion indicates 'always' and 'most of the time'.

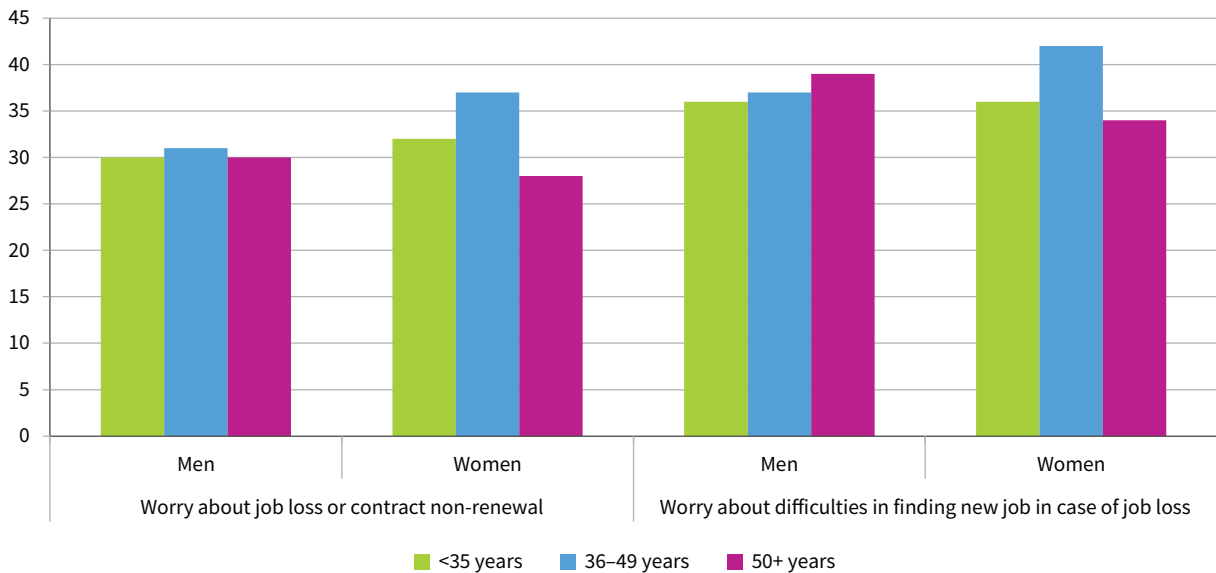
Workplace size also correlates with the ability of workers to make decisions about how they do their jobs (Figure 112). In this instance, the trend is reversed, as solo workers exercise the most discretion or decision latitude, and workers in large workplaces, the least. While those who work alone are less likely to view their jobs as challenging, they are much more likely to have influence over the daily execution of their tasks. Large discrepancies also exist between self-employed workers and wage employees. Self-employed workers (both with and without employees) have much more control over how they do their jobs than wage employees.

### Prospects

Career prospects are measured using workers' assessment of the possibility of career advancement and their concerns about imminent job loss and the prospects of re-employment.

On average, slightly over a third of workers state that they are satisfied with the prospect of promotion that their job offers. Among men, 33% are satisfied or very satisfied, while 34% are dissatisfied, with the remainder being neutral. Among women, 34% are satisfied or very satisfied, 37% are dissatisfied and the remainder are neutral. The largest differences, however, are observed when gender and occupation are considered jointly.

Figure 113: Job security and employability, by sex and age, Chile (%)



For example, the highest level of satisfaction with the prospect of promotion is observed among male managers with 75% feeling satisfied or very satisfied (in comparison to 53% of female managers). In contrast, only 32% of female plant and machine operators are satisfied (in comparison to 49% of male operators).

Roughly 3 in 10 salaried workers express concerns about job loss or non-renewal of contracts. A slightly larger proportion of workers are concerned that they would be unable to find another job if they were fired. Women are most likely to express concern, especially women in the 36–49 years age group (Figure 113).

### Earnings

Earnings are a key part of working outcomes and the data collected through ENETS were classified into quintiles. The key differences can be observed in the earnings of men and women, in the formal and informal sectors of the economy, and between workers of different education levels (Figure 114).

Women, informal workers and workers with a primary level of education are highly represented in the lower quintiles of the income distribution. Women’s high level of representation in this category is likely a partial reflection of total hours worked and of the gender segregation by occupation. For example, the proportion of women in elementary occupations is higher than that of men (28% in comparison to 21%). Moreover, of all women in elementary occupations, 18% work part time. There are also relatively more women in subordinate positions within enterprises than men (69% in comparison to 60%). Of all women in subordinate positions, 13% are part-time workers. Women in these occupations report considerably lower earnings than those reported by men.

The group with the highest proportion of high-income earners is workers who have completed a tertiary level of education. Over two-thirds of these workers have earnings in the fifth (or highest) quintile. In contrast, 38% of informal workers are low-income earners. This finding is notable given the high rates of informal work in the country (over 40%).

## Perspectives on working life

When it comes to general opinions about their work, most workers, both male and female, enjoy their jobs (82% and 77% respectively) and feel motivated to perform them (85% and 81% respectively). Most workers also feel that their work is important (86% and 82% respectively). Yet, up to 40% of workers feel that their work leaves them quite tired.

To better understand the outcomes of working conditions, a regression analysis was carried out, relating working conditions to self-reported health, mental health, and work–life balance. Three series of regressions were performed.

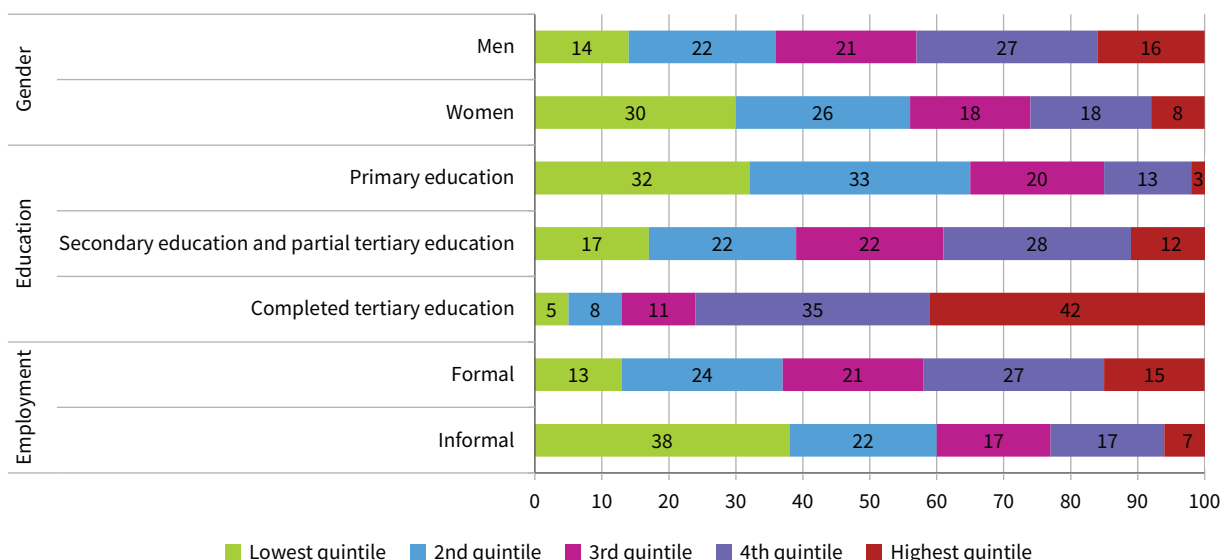
### Self-reported health

In the first regression, the dependent variable used to measure workplace health risks was constructed by combining the answers to survey questions on:

- the perceived likelihood of suffering an accident because of the performed work
- the existence of any diagnosed illness caused or aggravated by the current work

This variable was then related to a series of individual sociodemographic controls, occupation, industry and working conditions. The results of this regression

Figure 114: Earnings, by quintile, education and work formality, Chile (%)



suggest that those who are working in agriculture, manufacturing, construction or mining are more likely to be concerned about workplace accidents, or be diagnosed with a disease attributed to their job, than those in other sectors. Similarly, by occupation, plant and machine operators, or those with unskilled jobs, are more likely to report such concerns.

Employees with fixed-term contracts and workers who operate on multiple worksites are also more likely to report concerns about accidents or be diagnosed with a work-related disease. Regarding workplace risks, workers who report the existence of physical risks in the workplace, and also those who indicate that their workplace is marked by anti-social behaviour or bad management, are more likely to also indicate they are concerned about accidents or have contracted an occupational disease.

### Mental health status

In the second regression, the dependent variable used to measure worker mental well-being was constructed by combining the answers to a series of 12 survey questions which established whether workers reported that they:

- were unable to concentrate
- lost sleep due to worrying
- felt their life was useless
- were unable to make decisions
- felt agitated or tense
- felt unable to deal with difficult situations
- felt unhappy
- were incapable of enjoying normal activities on a daily basis
- felt incapable of dealing with their problems
- felt depressed
- lacked confidence
- felt worthless

These questions make up the Goldberg index of mental health (on the index, those who score more than three points are considered to be at risk of poor mental health). The dependent variable reflected whether an individual was inside or outside of this risk zone. The workers at risk are once again those in manufacturing, construction and mining, as well as unskilled workers, prime-age workers (36–49 years) (possibly because this is the age where many people are simultaneously building their careers and carrying out familial responsibilities) and women. Workers who report poor quality management, experiencing adverse social behaviour or discrimination, or feel that their work is insecure, are also more likely to be at risk of mental health problems. Workers with very short working hours (fewer than 20 per week) are likewise at risk.

### Work–life balance

The final regression used three dependent variables interchangeably to look into the relationship between work–life balance and working conditions. These variables measured whether:

- workers have sufficient time to do other things
- workers end their day so tired that they wish only to rest
- workers cannot enjoy their free time because of another job or their having to be available for work at any time

The third variable does not reveal any particular patterns. The first two suggest that women and prime-age workers are at a higher risk of having a poor work–life balance. While neither physical nor social workplace factors affect these outcomes, working hours and schedules have a clear bearing on them. Workers working 35–48 hours per week (and especially those working 48+ hours), and those working Saturdays or Sundays, are the least likely to be able to do things other than work and to feel rested. Night work leads to particularly high levels of tiredness. In contrast, shift-work, and being able to take time off easily, contribute to a better work–life balance.

### Conclusions

The economic developments and structural transformations in Chile over the past few decades have shifted substantial parts of the workforce into service sectors, including into jobs with a high level of demand for cognitive involvement. This has brought about a necessary transformation in working conditions as more workers have shifted into service-related occupations.

Nowadays, the majority of Chilean workers do not face severe physical risks at work and those who do primarily face posture-related risks rather than chemical, biological or ambient risks. Many jobs are intellectually challenging and one-third of Chileans feel their job offers good career prospects. The majority of Chilean workers are satisfied with their jobs and find work motivating and meaningful.

Nevertheless, one-third of Chilean workers expressed concern about job loss or non-renewal of their employment contracts, reflecting the negative economic conditions that plagued the country in 2009, when the survey was conducted, but also the high share of workers on temporary contracts. Many Chileans also continue to work excessive hours. While the majority of workers report having control over their working time and schedule, quite a few have little discretion over working methods, work order or taking breaks. A regression analysis suggested that such long hours, coupled with work on weekends and at night, have a



negative effect on work–life balance and increase levels of tiredness. As such, efforts to restrict long working hours may be one mechanism to improve working conditions nationally.

As in other countries, working conditions in Chile differ by sex, education level and occupation. Workers with a formal education tend to experience more favourable working conditions. They earn more and have a greater ability to influence their working conditions, including extensions of the working day. Women, on average, tend to work fewer hours of paid work. As a result of this and of the occupations they tend to hold, they earn less

than their male counterparts. Work in the formal economy tends to be accompanied by higher earnings and more favourable conditions, though these differences are narrow when informal workers are compared to formal workers in non-standard jobs.

Continued efforts to reduce working hours, address adverse social behaviour, improve management culture, strengthen the participation of workers and achieve a greater gender equality in the workplace have the potential to benefit the workforce, improve the work–life balance of workers and reduce inequalities.

# 11 | Uruguay

## Introduction

The Uruguayan Survey on Working Conditions, Health, and Safety (ECTSSU) was administered in 2013 in the framework of a cooperative project between the University of the Republic of Uruguay and the King Juan Carlos University of Spain, and financed by the Spanish agency for international cooperation and development (AECID). The objective of the survey was to gain a better understanding of working conditions and labour market opportunities in Uruguay. The survey covered employed workers, either in wage employment or self-employment, living in municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants; just over 2,000 workers completed the survey in face-to-face interviews. The survey is divided into four main sections covering questions on the person's labour market situation and type of employment, workplace risks, preventative measures and health effects, in addition to standard sociodemographic questions.

## Labour market overview

Uruguay is a high-income country with low levels of inequality and an economy that specialises in the services sector.<sup>35</sup> Since 2003, the country has exhibited a period of economic growth with significant improvements in all labour market indicators. Rates of participation in the labour market have increased (particularly among women), the real average wage has increased and there has been a marked reduction in levels of informal employment (ILO, 2014b). These economic and social developments have resulted in Uruguay gaining the distinction of having the largest middle class in Latin America, with over 60% of the total population situated in the middle of the income distribution (World Bank, undated-b).

Indeed, according to official statistics, participation in the Uruguayan labour market in 2017 stood at an average of 63%, with 72% for men and 54% for women. This is up from the 58% in 2003 (INE, 2017). The country's employment rate was an average of 58% (67% for men and 49% for women). After a historically low unemployment rate was recorded in 2014, slight increases in unemployment occurred from 2015 onwards; these are generally attributed to a loss of jobs in the construction sector.

Since 2004, informal employment in Uruguay has declined as a result of a number of public policies implemented in the context of strong economic growth. In 2017, the total percentage of those working informally stood at 26%, down from 41% in 2004. The population groups most prone to informality are young workers and workers over the age of 60 (at 61% and 48% respectively working informally). There are only slight gender differences with respect to informal employment. By sector, informal employment is most common in domestic work, agricultural work and mining.

Despite an increasing number of women participating in the labour market, the country's distribution of work remains highly gender-specific. Men comprise 98% of all workers in the construction sector and 85% of jobs in agriculture, herding, fishing and mining (Figure 115). Men also outnumber women at a ratio of 2:1 in industry and manufacturing work. The vast majority of female employment can be found in the services sector. Not only do women account for the majority of services sector workers, but services also provide work for the largest percentage of workers nationally (73% of all workers are employed in services). In addition, Uruguayan women are three times as likely as men to work part time.

**Figure 115: Employment within sector, by sex, Uruguay (%)**

	Men	Women
Services	45	55
Industry	69	31
Agriculture, herding, fishing, mining	85	15
Construction	98	2

Source: ECTSSU for all figures unless stated otherwise.

Uruguay's workforce has one of the highest literacy rates in Latin America. The country is second only to Argentina in terms of the proportion of secondary-school graduates entering university. Despite this, secondary school drop-out rates remain high (Cid and Ferrés, 2011). Overall, 46% of Uruguayans between the ages of 14 and 29 have not finished secondary education and are no longer enrolled in school. To address the issue, Uruguay is supporting

35 Unless otherwise stated, this chapter is based on ECTSSU – Martínez Íñigo and Crego Diaz (2013) and Funcasta Duce and Martínez-Íñigo (2016).

educational initiatives that include investing heavily in vocational training (OECD, 2017b).

The most significant differences in educational outcomes are found across the rural/urban divide, which is related to differences in educational levels between sectors. The services sector has the highest concentration of tertiary and superior secondary school graduates, while the vast majority of workers in construction and agriculture have either a primary or a basic secondary school education (at least 75%). In terms of manufacturing workers, 70% have some level of secondary schooling.

According to the survey, 78% of Uruguayan workers are employed (76% of women and 81% of men). Most workers are found in the metropolitan region, which includes the capital city of Montevideo, where half of the country's population lives.

Eighty-three percent of all workers work on a full-time basis.

## Policies and laws governing the labour market, working conditions and employment

Uruguay has robust legislation to protect workers' rights and establish decent working conditions. The country has ratified 109 out of the 189 ILO conventions, including 8 fundamental conventions, and a series of technical conventions on occupational safety and health, working time and minimum wages. These international instruments are implemented through national laws and other domestic regulatory mechanisms.

Uruguay does not have a Labour Code or a General Labour Law. The legislative structure of occupational safety and health in Uruguay is dictated by general legislation and, in particular, by legislation issued for each sector or activity. Much of this legislation stems from ILO conventions. The general occupational safety and health regulation is Law No. 5.032, which is the primary legal source governing the prevention of accidents for all industries. This law is supported by other key legislative pieces that provide that workers injured on the job receive compensation, and contain measures in case of non-compliance regarding worker safety.<sup>36</sup>

Several separate laws also regulate working time. They provide for an 8-hour working day, a standard working week of 48 hours per week and overtime payments in excess of those. They also contain regulations concerning rest periods, annual leave, shift work, night work and other issues relating to working time.

National minimum wages are adopted by law at the initiative of the government. The government decides the establishment, operation and modification of the national general minimum wage after consultation with a tripartite board. In addition, specific minimum wages for certain categories of private-sector workers or branches of activities are established and periodically reviewed by tripartite wage councils, which are overseen by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Working conditions are also systematically monitored and improved through Uruguay's well-established system of collective bargaining. In the mid-2000s, the government carried out juridical and institutional changes that restored collective bargaining rights and expanded coverage to more workers as well as instituting measures to ensure that workplace rights and protections, including freedom of association, are afforded to all workers. By 2013, approximately 95% of employees were covered by collective bargaining and 30% belonged to a trade union (ILOSTAT, undated). Moreover, collective bargaining has expanded from enterprise to industry level (Mazzuchi, 2009). In addition, workers in the rural sector and, subsequently, domestic workers were included in the traditional private sector wage councils (Consejos de Salarios) while public-sector bargaining was also expanded.

## Dimensions of job quality

### Physical environment

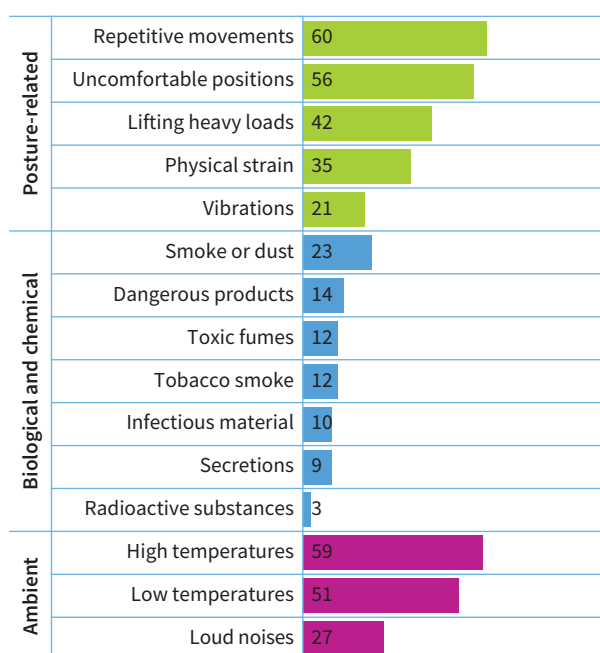
The ECTSSU, asked respondents a total of 39 questions relating to physical workplace risks. Of these 39 questions, 15 corresponded closely to questions included in the EWCS.

Workplace risks can be grouped into three general categories: ergonomic or posture-related risks (such as whether workers face repetitive movements in their work or physical strain); biological and chemical hazards (including exposure to smoke, toxic vapours and infectious materials); and ambient risks (such as exposure to abnormal temperatures, noise).

<sup>36</sup> Specific decrees translate into national law the following ILO conventions: ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129). Decree No. 83/996 establishes the National Occupational Safety and Health Council. See ILO LEGOSH Database, 2017: <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/legosh/en/>

Figure 116 shows the share of workers exposed to each of these risks (sometimes to always) in their work. Across the economy, posture-related and ambient risks are the most common. Sixty percent of workers report that their work involves repetitive movements or that they experience high temperatures in the workplace. Over half of all workers also report that they work in uncomfortable positions or that they experience low temperatures at work. Nationally, biological and chemical risks are much less common. In this category, exposure to smoke or dust is the most frequent risk, reported by 23% of workers.

**Figure 116: Exposure to physical risks, Uruguay (%)**



**Note:** Proportions indicates exposure to risks 'sometimes' to 'always'.

Risk exposure varies significantly by sector. With respect to ambient risk, construction workers face the highest rates of exposure with more than 60% of workers reporting that they experience loud noises or low and high temperatures. Such risks are experienced the least by service workers. Construction also has the highest rate of biological and chemical risks in almost every category.

It is thus not surprising that because of men's overrepresentation in certain sectors, in the aggregate, men report higher rates of exposure to physical risks than women. In addition, the survey finds that rates of exposure to risks for part-time workers are typically a few percentage points lower than rates for full-time workers.

## Work intensity

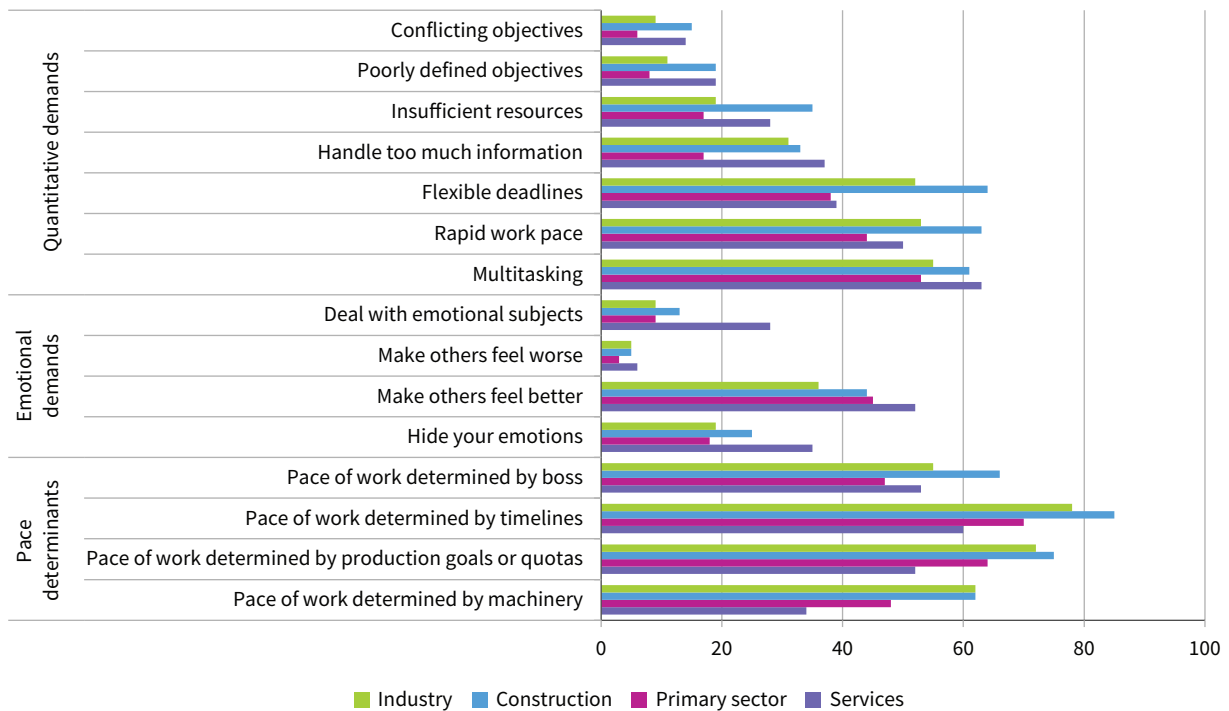
Work intensity comprises quantitative demands that workers experience on the job, emotional demands and pressures that help determine pace. In the ECTSSU, quantitative demands include factors such as the extent to which objectives are well defined and do not conflict with other tasks, or the extent to which deadlines are flexible. Emotional demands can be measured by the extent to which workers have to deal with emotionally charged subjects, hide their feelings or affect the feelings of others through their work. Pace determinants, meanwhile, establish the source or cause of qualitative pressures – whether they are determined by management, operational demands (such as by machinery) or established timelines. In total, the ECTSSU asked seven questions about quantitative demands, four questions about emotional demands and four questions about pace determination. Respondents were provided with a five-point scale to respond (never, sometimes, quite often, very often or always), though the data presented below aggregate the responses of those with any exposure versus no exposure.

Figure 117 shows the proportion of workers who have at least some exposure to various aspects of work intensity in their work. Nearly 60% of workers experience three or more types of quantitative demands. The most common demand is multitasking, which is experienced by 61% of all workers. This is followed by a high work speed (51%). Construction workers are the most likely to experience quantitative demands: 85% experience at least one of these conditions often or all of the time. High-income earners are the most likely to experience high levels of quantitative demands (91%).<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, a considerable share of workers (57%) report that they work under flexible deadlines.

Emotional demands are somewhat less common among workers. By sector, and as expected, services workers are the most likely to experience emotional demands (over 60%). This is likely a product of the higher rates of interpersonal engagement (with customers, clients, pupils, etc.) that services workers have. Women report greater emotional demands, with 36% reporting that they must hide their feelings, compared with 27% for men. Self-employed workers with employees experience emotional demands at a rate that is roughly 10 percentage points higher than wage employees (67% as opposed to 59% for full-time workers and 57% for part-time workers). This difference may be attributed to the personnel management tasks that typically fall on managers.

37 High income earners are defined as those with incomes of over UYU 30,000 per month (approximately €1,140 at 2013 exchange rates).

Figure 117: Work intensity, by sector, Uruguay (%)



Note: Proportions indicates 'sometimes' to 'always'.

Lastly, external factors are shown to have an impact on the work intensity of a considerable share of workers, whether it is established external timelines, requests from management or broader production goals. Work intensity in construction is once again most likely to be subject to such external demands, or pace determinants, followed by industry.

### Working time quality

Working time quality takes into account factors such as the total number of hours worked and the number of long days, work schedules (including atypical working times) and the predictability of schedules. These conditions have a significant impact on job quality and general worker well-being.

To better understand the number of hours worked, respondents' total weekly working time was grouped into three categories: fewer than 30 hours, between 30 and 40 hours, and over 40 hours. The findings show that

- 47% of workers report working over 40 hours
- 37% work between 30 and 40 hours
- 17% work fewer than 30 hours on a regular basis

Men are more likely to work over 40 hours than women (54% as opposed to 37%). Women, in turn, are more likely to work fewer than 30 hours per week than are men (25% as opposed to 10%).

In addition, a separate question asked about the experience of long working days, defined as over 10 hours per day. Men are also more likely to work long days than women (42% as opposed to 29%) at least once per month. Long working days are most frequently experienced by high-income earners (58%) and self-employed workers with employees (51%). As expected, long working days are least common among part-time workers. Nonetheless, almost one in five part-time workers report working long days – a likely indication of the variability in schedules among some part-time workers.

Workers were also asked about atypical or asocial working hours including evening, night, shift, and weekend work. Results show that atypical working hours are quite common in Uruguay. Almost 60% of workers work at the weekend at least once a month. Also, 45% of workers work in the evenings (between 18:00 and 22:00) and 28% work at night at least once a month. By sector, those working in industry experience atypical working hours most frequently, especially because of shift work. Construction and primary sector workers are the least likely to work at night.

With respect to schedules, part-time workers are significantly less likely to have a fixed work schedule than their full-time counterparts (48% in comparison to 65%). Self-employed workers also have greater variation in the times that they work compared to

employees: 50% of self-employed workers with employees and 38% of self-employed without employees report that they work the same number of hours each week, compared to 65% of full-time employees and 60% of part-time employees. Looking at working hours by workplace size shows that very small workplaces (up to nine employees) tend to have higher rates of irregular scheduling than larger enterprises.

## Social environment

The social environment at work is an important component of a workplace. A positive social environment, indicated by high levels of managerial and co-worker support, can create a collaborative, enjoyable and productive workplace. Adverse social behaviour, on the other hand, can have a detrimental impact on workplace cohesion, worker motivation, productivity and well-being.

To better understand the social environment at work, the ECTSSU asked workers if they had been exposed to various types of anti-social behaviour at any point in their current job. The survey also asked about the social support that workers receive in the workplace, and whether workers would classify their relationships with their managers, co-workers or clients as ambiguous, competitive, non-agreeable, untrusting or conflict-ridden. Finally, workers were asked about the quality of their workplace management.

Regarding anti-social behaviour, women are more likely to be the target of abusive comments undermining personal worth, verbal emotional abuse and sexual harassment. In turn, men are more often threatened with or experience physical violence, or are subjected to humiliation (Figure 118). Although the incidence of these events may appear relatively low, their long-term, detrimental impact on workers' health can be

significant, and important gender differences are visible.

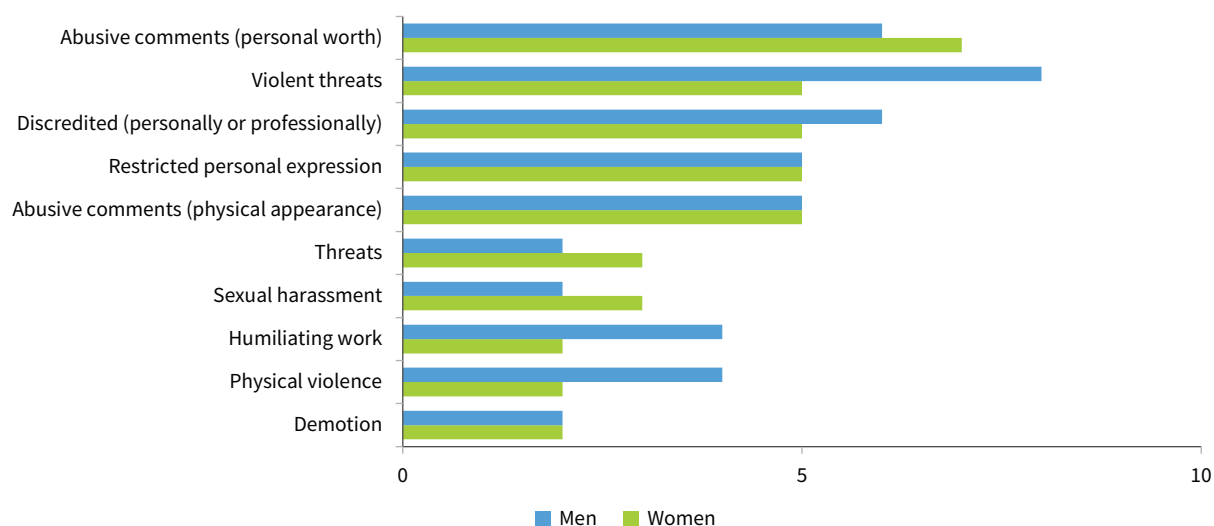
The highest rates of anti-social behaviour are directed toward self-employed workers without employees and occur in the form of abusive comments about a person's worth and violent threats (possibly from clients, customers or patients). Violent threats are also more common among high income earners compared to low and middle earners, and are twice as frequently directed at part-time workers as compared to full-time workers. Physical violence is also reported at the highest rate by part-time workers (8% compared to 2% of full-time workers).

With respect to social support, workers typically feel a higher level of support from their co-workers than from their managers (87% in comparison to 81%). Workers aged 36–49 years constitute the age group most likely to receive support from co-workers, and least likely to receive support from their manager (95% and 80% respectively).

By sector, workers in industry and primary sectors feel most supported by their colleagues (92% and 95% respectively). Service workers, on the other hand, have the lowest opinions of their co-workers: over a quarter of them characterise their relationships as ambiguous, conflicting, competitive and untrusting. Despite this, 84% describe their co-workers as collaborative and 90% report that their co-workers say positive and supportive things to them.

Opinions about management quality, including employers' concern for worker safety, bullying, discrimination and abuse of authority, are mixed. At 87%, the majority of workers believe that management is indeed concerned about safety and security, but only two-thirds report that management is

**Figure 118: Exposure to adverse social behaviour, by sex, Uruguay (%)**



Note: Proportion indicates 'sometimes' to 'always'.



worried about bullying, discrimination or the abuse of authority.

Social support can be cultivated through the existence of worker organisations and committees. In Uruguay, 19% of employees report having a health and safety delegate at their workplace, 25% report that there is a trade union, and 12% of employees report that their workplaces are characterised as having bipartite cooperation (or shared governance) mechanisms.

### Skills and discretion

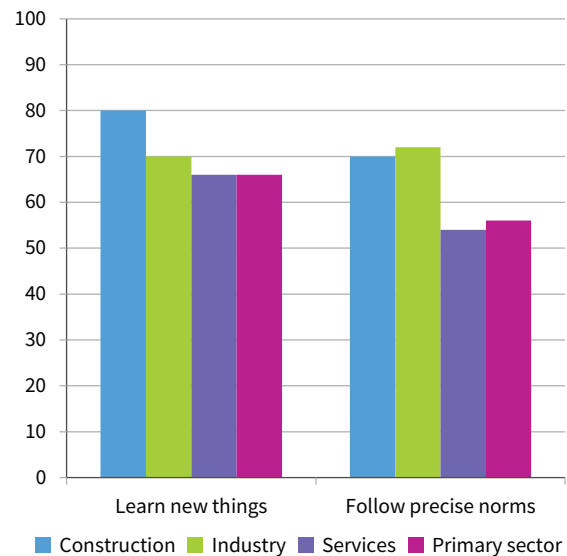
Challenging jobs can provide workers with a sense of meaning and usefulness. Opportunities to apply cognitive skills, as well as sufficient autonomy in the workplace, can not only improve workers' sense of fulfilment, but also lead to higher productivity.

The ECTSSU asked workers about the extent to which their jobs allow them to learn new things, require them to follow instructions or ask them to perform complex tasks. The survey also contained several questions measuring the ability of workers to exercise autonomy and discretion relating to the order, method and speed of their work.

Looking at the first set of questions that measure cognitive work dimensions (Figure 119), two out of three workers report that they are learning new things in the workplace. By sector, construction workers report the highest level of cognitive engagement when it comes to learning new things and performing complex tasks. Workers in manufacturing report that they must follow precise requirements more often than those in construction, likely due to standardised production processes and in order to be compliant with regulations. The lowest level of cognitive engagement is reported in the primary sector, although 40% of workers still report that they deal with complex tasks in the workplace, and over two-thirds report learning new things.

Men perform complex tasks and follow precise directions more often than women (the difference is 10 percentage points), though this partly reflects the gender-specific distribution of work. Cognitive engagement is also reported more frequently by full-time workers than by their part-time counterparts (69% as opposed to 61%). The difference is even greater when it comes to regularly performing complex tasks at

Figure 119: Cognitive demands, by sector, Uruguay (%)



Note: Proportion indicates 'sometimes' to 'always'.

work (51% as opposed to 37%). Overall, the survey's findings suggest that while the majority of workers learn new things on the job, jobs themselves are not challenging enough to realise the full cognitive potential of Uruguayan workers.

With respect to discretion and autonomy, workers usually have greater capacity to change the speed of their jobs than the order of tasks or work methods. Nevertheless, the degree of discretion is relatively high: around 70% of all workers are able to change these aspects of work in some way. Some modest differences can be seen between part-time and full-time workers.

The highest autonomy at work is reported by high income earners. For example, 81% of high income earners report that they can change the order of their tasks, 82% report that they can change their work methods and 84% can change the speed of their work. This level of discretion may be a function of higher paid occupations (typically managers and professionals). Some variation in discretion could also be explained by the fact that 14% of high earners are self-employed, and so are likely to have more control over their daily tasks.

Figure 120: Career prospects, by sector and income level, Uruguay (%)

	Training	Learn new skills	Career advancement	Better labour market opportunities
Industry	75	74	67	65
Construction	74	74	70	71
Services	69	68	65	63
Primary sector	68	71	64	66
<UYU 10,000	61	63	56	54
UYU 10,000–30,000	76	74	73	71
>UYU 30,000	79	77	81	78

Note: Proportion indicates 'a little bit' to 'a lot'.

## Prospects

The Uruguayan survey also asked a series of questions about career development in general, as well as about job security. In particular, questions about career development included:

- whether their current job provides opportunities to acquire new skills
- whether workers have obtained job-related training
- whether workers have career growth opportunities in their current position
- whether their current job allows them to improve their labour market position more broadly

Only wage employees were asked these questions. Questions about job security included concerns about losing their current job in the coming six months, as well as the probability of being rapidly re-employed. These were administered to all workers.

In total, 69% of workers report that their job provides them with opportunities to acquire new skills and receive training. Slightly fewer workers report that their job offers good career prospects or has improved their labour market opportunities (65% and 64% respectively). Men have slightly higher levels of confidence regarding their career prospects than women. The most comparable area when it comes to gender is the opportunity to learn new skills (68% of women and 71% of men). The largest difference concerns having access to greater labour market opportunities (59% of women and 68% of men).

The feelings of workers about their career prospects vary based on sector, with construction and industry reporting higher levels of optimism than the services

and primary sectors (Figure 120). The most pronounced differences can be seen between workers with different income levels: 81% of high earners report that they have opportunities for career advancement, in contrast to just 56% of those earning below UYU 10,000 (€280) a month.

With respect to job insecurity, 27% of workers are concerned that they will lose their job in the next six months. Self-employed workers are slightly less worried about imminent job, or activity, loss than employees. The lowest concerns about job loss are reported by the highest income earners: 12% versus 29% for the lowest income earners. By age, workers under 35 are more concerned about job loss and re-employability than older workers (age 50 and over). By sector, concerns about job losses are the highest among construction workers (42%). This same group is also the most concerned that they would not be able to find another job if they lost their current one (37%). The concerns of construction workers may be a partial reflection of the national increase in unemployment in 2012, which was attributed to decreases in economic activity in the construction sector.

## Earnings

The survey question about monthly income grouped respondents into three income categories:

- low earners: those earning less than UYU 10,000 (approximately €280 at time of survey) per month
- mid-range earners: those earning between UYU 10,000 and UYU 30,000 (€280 and €840) per month
- high earners: those earning more than UYU 30,000 (€840) per month

More than 90% of those surveyed earn less than UYU 30,000 (approximately €840 at time of survey) per month. The income distribution (Figure 121) confirms that, in Uruguay, there is a high proportion of mid-level income earners. However, it is notable that in the lowest earnings tier, the percentage of women is twice that of men, illustrating a significant gender income gap.

The distribution of earnings by sector shows that the services sector includes the largest proportion of low income earners (48%) which partially reflects the higher presence of female part-time workers. Mid-range earnings are most common in construction (72%). The primary and industry sectors hold the largest percentage of high income earners, with 6% and 8% respectively.

By employment status, higher incomes are most frequently observed among the self-employed with employees. Wage employees, especially those with permanent (open-ended) contracts and working on a full-time basis, are also more likely to have mid-range incomes as compared to the self-employed without employees. Dependent employees without contracts are most likely to have the lowest level of earnings.

Specific patterns can also be seen when considering workplace size. The highest levels of income are enjoyed by those who work in enterprises with over 10 workers: for enterprises with 10–49 workers, 67% are mid-range earners and 2% are high earners. Meanwhile, in enterprises with 50 or more workers, 65% of workers are mid-range earners and 7% are high earners.

## Perspectives on working life

In order to better understand the relationship between the workplace characteristics outlined in this chapter and worker-related concerns (e.g. occupational safety and health risks, worker health and work–life balance), three regression analyses were performed. Regression analysis allows specific factors to be isolated, while also taking others into account.

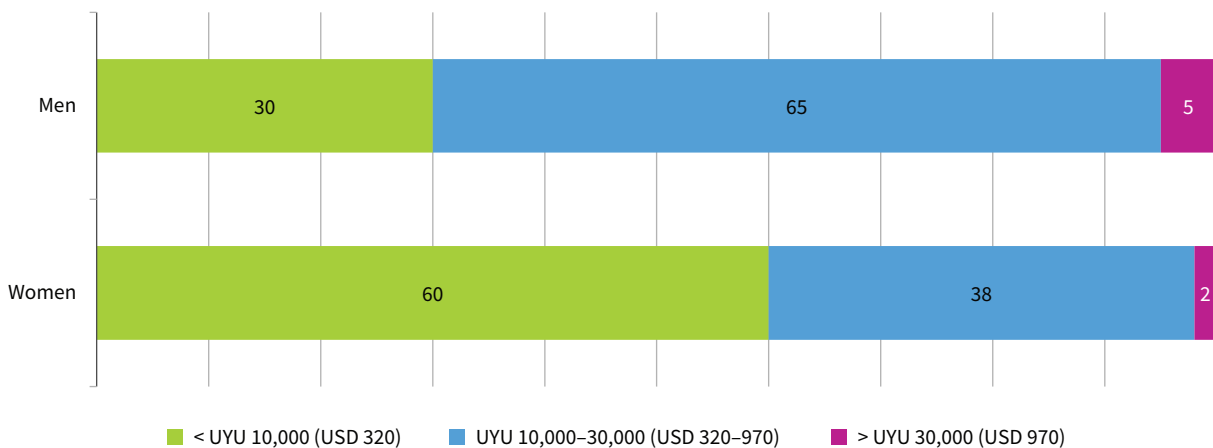
### Self-reported health

Workers were asked whether they believe that their health or safety (mental or physical) is at risk because of their job, with 56% reporting that they do so. The answers to this question were then used as one of the dependent variables in the first regression analysis.

The analysis reveals the most statistically significant factors relating to the perception of occupational safety and health risks. In particular, men are more likely than women to feel that their safety and health is at risk in the workplace. Those who regularly work at night, as well as those who experience adverse social behaviour in the workplace, also report a higher level of concern regarding safety and health risks. These findings are in line with established research on the negative health effects of night work, as well as the detrimental impact of anti-social behaviour in the workplace.

Another significant variable is the absence of bipartite workplace cooperation, suggesting that enterprises where workers can discuss the terms and conditions of their job with management result in greater perceptions of workplace safety. In sectors or enterprises where bipartite cooperation is not underway, creating mechanisms for dialogue may be an effective way to make workers feel safer and more secure in the workplace.

Figure 121: Earnings, by sex, Uruguay (%)



## Mental health status

The second regression analysis concerned the mental well-being of workers. The ECTSSU asked how often workers had experienced 16 adverse mental health symptoms during the previous month. Forty-six percent of workers reported having felt worried, tense or agitated during the past month. Other commonly reported conditions included having felt nervous or anxious (reported by 45%), having felt that nothing they wanted had happened (42%), having woken up neither refreshed nor rested (33%), having felt restless (35%) and having felt sad (31%). In total, 89% of all workers report at least one type of adverse mental health condition.

The regression analysis shows that the respondents less likely to report that they have experienced mental health symptoms are also those who indicate that they have good management skills, as well as those who worked in manufacturing, compared to other sectors.

In contrast, less autonomy at work, tight deadlines, working at high speed, and anti-social behaviour contributed to a higher propensity to report lower levels of mental health.

## Work–life balance

The third and final regression analysis concerned the relationship between a worker's ability to balance work commitments with non-work responsibilities, and working conditions.

The results of the regression analysis indicate that working at weekends correlates with struggling to maintain a good work–life balance, while working fewer than 30 hours per week correlates with reconciling family and work commitments more easily. Finally, those working in excess of 40 hours per week, on weekends and on call are less likely to report satisfactory and relaxed lives.

## Conclusions

The ECTSSU provides interesting and novel insights into Uruguay's labour market and the quality of work that Uruguayans are enjoying. It reveals diverse working conditions that manifest themselves much more across sectors than genders, and to a considerable extent across employment statuses and country regions.

Within broad sectoral categories, construction workers reliably report favourable conditions in terms of wages, training opportunities, social support and cognitive opportunities. However, these same workers also experience some of the highest levels of exposure to physical risks, qualitative work pressures and concerns for their work prospects.

Service workers (who represent the largest portion of the workforce) also face high levels of exposure to physical risks, though the risks mainly include repetitive movements and uncomfortable positions. Jobs in services are particularly emotionally demanding, yet often involve fewer complex tasks than jobs in other sectors. The services sector also offers work that is not always well paid, which partially reflects the overrepresentation of women in this sector – many of whom work part time – as well as the gender pay gap. As the services sector employs the majority of Uruguayan workers, improving these jobs has the potential to positively affect the livelihoods of the greatest number of workers, and especially of women. Some avenues to explore include improving the cognitive dimension of these jobs by allowing workers to engage in more complex tasks, providing better training and fostering better opportunities for career advancement.

Among several positive highlights is the high level of social support that workers report. This includes a fairly high level of support from management and considerable levels of support from co-workers. Worker organisations (unions and committees) are also relatively common and this has beneficial outcomes, particularly in relation to worker perceptions of health and safety risks at work. On the other hand, opportunities to improve working conditions include curbing asocial and long working hours where possible, with a view to improving the well-being of workers and their work–life balance.



# Part 3

# Conclusions

Conclusions, Bibliography, Annexes







# 12 | Conclusions

The ILO and Eurofound's interest in improving job quality motivated this study on working conditions in the EU, China, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United States (US), Spanish-speaking Central America (Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama), Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. The findings presented in this report demonstrate both the importance of monitoring working conditions for assessing job quality and the importance of good working conditions for the health and well-being of workers. Working conditions influence workers' job satisfaction, performance, work-life balance and future courses of action, including whether to stay in their present position or whether to leave. As such, they are equally important for the productivity and success of enterprises, as well as for the sustainability and progress of economies and societies.

The report portrays the important structural differences and inequalities in working conditions across countries, with notable differences in exposure to risks or access to resources that can mitigate these risks. This is not surprising given the differences in economic structure and in the level of economic and social development among the countries, with some countries still highly dependent on agricultural production and with significant shares of workers employed informally or self-employed. But perhaps what is most revealing about the analysis is the similarities.

Despite differences in economic and social development, many of the same risks affect the same groups of workers. Some of this is not surprising, given the association between certain risks and occupation and sector. But it may also be a reflection of similar trends in the world of work affecting all countries surveyed, including the increased participation of women in the workforce, changing production models, technological advances (including digitalisation) and new ways of organising labour within and beyond the enterprise, among them the greater use of non-standard employment arrangements, particularly temporary work.

Using the prism of the seven dimensions of job quality, it is useful to identify some of the more salient findings of the comparative analysis, with a view to informing policy.

- With respect to the **physical environment**, the analysis revealed that, in the countries considered, for a significant proportion of the workforce posture-related risks are the greatest physical risk. For example, about half of workers in regions and countries covered (with the exception of China, for which data are not available) are exposed to the most common physical risk, repetitive hand and

arm movements, increasing the probability of musculoskeletal disorders. About one in five is exposed to high temperatures. Similar proportions are recorded for low temperatures and noise.

Technological advances and the development of new tools, materials, and modes of work can help mitigate some posture-related risks, particularly with respect to carrying heavy loads, but these advances can also introduce new risks, or add to the complexity of the issues to be dealt with. Climate change is predicted to increase exposure to ambient risks at work.

These developments call for the monitoring of exposure to physical risks and the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies mandating preventive safety and health cultures. Alongside established measures, this requires new strategies and solutions for emerging issues, such as biological and psychosocial hazards.

- The analysis revealed how **work intensity** pervades the contemporary workplace. Tight deadlines and high-speed work are experienced by between one-third and half of workers in the US, the EU, Turkey, El Salvador and Uruguay. Many workers, particularly those who deal with customers, patients or students in their work, experience emotional demands such as having to hide feelings at work or dealing with angry clients or patients. One of the consequences of such pressures is an increase in work-related stress and its possible negative effects on health, such as an increase in cardiovascular diseases, and mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety and burnout. Work-related stress is the second most frequently reported work-related health problem in Europe, after musculoskeletal disorders (Eurofound, 2018; ILO, 2015a). Work-related stress can result in lost working days and premature exit from the labour market, leading to significant human and economic costs.

Managing work is a central policy challenge in which action is needed to manage, control and decrease workload, by organising work differently to provide more individual and collective autonomy, as well as support in the case of temporary high workloads. These actions would also assist in addressing some of the negative effects of work intensity. Interventions at the workplace can deliver the best results in this regard. Good practice work organisation and policies for workplace innovation can provide tools and support to companies to manage change in a way which is positive for developing productivity,

innovation and employee well-being. In Europe, Germany, France, Ireland, Nordic countries and some regions (such as Scotland and the Basque country) have experience in delivering such programmes (Oeij et al, 2017).

- Differences in **working time quality** among countries are stark: one-sixth of workers in the EU work more than 48 hours per week, whereas in Chile, the Republic of Korea and Turkey, around half of workers do. Long working hours affect workers across a wide range of occupations, from professionals and managers who respond to demands on their ‘free’ time, to the self-employed, who often work long hours in order to make ends meet. This means that while reducing long working hours will, and should, continue to be an important regulatory focus in some countries, other policies are also needed, including measures to curtail working in supposedly free time. For example, in 2017, France introduced the ‘right to disconnect’ law, obliging companies to set out the hours when staff are not supposed to send or answer emails. In addition, awareness campaigns to tackle cultural habits of presenteeism should be pursued. Working atypical hours (at weekends, at night, or in shifts) is quite frequent: more than half of the respondents in Europe, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, Chile and Uruguay work weekends at least once a month. Between 10% and 20% of workers work nights and similar proportions work shifts. These forms of work are often regulated, and their incidence may increase in the future.

Another related issue is the need for flexibility, such as allowing workers to take off an hour or two during working hours to take care of personal or family matters. While most workers enjoy this benefit, between one-quarter and one-third do not. Other important working time arrangements that improve well-being are having a say in one’s work schedule, or having flexibility in starting and ending times. Unpredictable schedules and working hours are difficult for workers to manage. Furthermore, flexibility in working time arrangements and limits on working hours are important for advancing gender equality. Across all countries, women are more likely to experience work–life conflicts, reflecting the unequal and enduring burden of domestic responsibilities shouldered by women.

- The **social environment** – the degree of support that workers receive from their colleagues and supervisors, the quality of their management and whether they are exposed to adverse social behaviour – has important implications for well-being and job satisfaction. Fortunately, between two-thirds and three-quarters of workers surveyed had favourable opinions of management quality. Nine out of ten workers felt their managers

respected them as a person and most workers also reported that they were supported by their colleagues. Despite these favourable findings, the surveys revealed that 4–10% of workers were subject to verbal abuse and to a lesser but still worrying extent, the surveys reported incidences of humiliating behaviour, bullying, unwanted sexual attention and sexual harassment. Eliminating violence and harassment at the workplace is a critical policy concern. In 2018, the ILO’s International Labour Conference initiated a standard-setting process on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, with a view to passing a convention and recommendation on the topic at the 109th session of the conference in 2019.

- **Skills use and discretion** relates to the opportunities that workers have to develop in their work. It includes the cognitive dimension of their work, their decision latitude, worker participation in the organisation of the enterprise and training. The surveys revealed that four out of five workers in the EU, Turkey and the US and close to three out of five workers in China and the Republic of Korea regularly solve unforeseen problems in their work. Regardless of the country, occupational differences are significant, with most managers, professionals and technicians, but few workers in elementary occupations, reporting this. Similar patterns hold for carrying out complex tasks and learning new things. Around 40% of workers report being consulted before objectives are set for their work, or are involved in improving the work organisation processes. Access to training varies widely among countries, though in most instances, workers in part-time and temporary employment and the self-employed have less access. The surveys highlight the extent to which workers can use, grow and develop skills at work. In light of current important upskilling and reskilling challenges, it is important to continue monitoring the incidence of ‘learning’ forms of work organisation and their availability for those in less-skilled occupations, so that public policies can encourage them further and develop complementary actions to them.
- **Prospects** go beyond job security in the worker’s present job to include possibilities for career advancement. Across countries, some similar patterns can be discerned along individual worker and enterprise characteristics. For example, women generally have larger concerns about re-employability and labour market opportunities, especially among older age groups and the lower-skilled. Regardless of sex, concerns are more pronounced for certain occupations and contractual and working time arrangements. For example, almost everywhere, managers and professionals feel more secure and more

employable, compared to other workers. They also usually report better career prospects. Likewise, employees with open-ended contracts and those working full time usually believe that they have better prospects and more stability. Men are generally overrepresented in such cases. When data are disaggregated, workers in firms of larger sizes generally have better career prospects compared to others.

- **Earnings** are a critical dimension of job quality and worker well-being. Monitoring earnings is a necessary step in developing wage policies and also for redistributive policies to combat inequality. Some salient findings from the surveys include: the significant gender pay gap (with women earning between two-thirds and three-quarters of what men earn); the large variability in earnings among the self-employed, with a few at the top of the income distribution but many at the bottom; the higher earnings of industrial workers compared with agricultural workers; mixed findings in the highly heterogeneous services sector. Also, the surveys revealed the continued importance of overtime pay, and the presence of other group or individual incentive payments in earnings.

Policies with respect to earnings include minimum wage policies and the promotion of collective bargaining. In recent years, many countries have adopted or strengthened minimum wages, as one way of supporting low-paid workers and reducing wage inequality. China adopted a minimum wage in 1994 and strengthened it in 2004; Germany adopted a national minimum wage in 2015; Argentina, Chile and Uruguay strengthened and enforced their minimum wages in the mid-2000s and early 2010s to combat inequality and poverty (Marinakakis, 2014). The evidence shows that, when set at an adequate level, minimum wages can raise the income of low-paid workers – many of whom are women – without significant negative effects on jobs. The setting of minimum wages, however, is usually a complex process; it should be evidence-based and done in consultation with social partners (ILO, 2016b).

Evidence from other sources (such as ILO, 2016b) shows that an important source of earnings inequality is wage inequality within enterprises, especially represented by differences in the earnings of management and average workers. While enterprises have their own role to play in self-regulating to keep wage inequality within socially acceptable boundaries, some legislative action has been taken recently to strengthen transparency on remuneration and shareholders' decision-making over pay, including by making

shareholder recommendations binding in some cases. For example, in 2016 the European Commission, Council and Parliament reached an agreement on a revision to Directive 2007/36/EC, introducing a 'say on pay' for shareholders at EU level. In France, the law on transparency, anti-corruption and economic modernisation was announced, giving shareholders the right to vote on the remuneration of listed company directors. Countries are also taking more proactive steps towards combating gender inequality in pay within enterprises. One such step is the German Act on Transparency of Pay of 2017, which requires companies to disclose salary information.

## Improving job quality

In all the dimensions of job quality considered – physical environment, work intensity, working time quality, the social environment, skills and discretion, prospects and earnings – variations are present across occupations and very frequently the patterns of variation are similar across countries. Many workers in blue-collar occupations are exposed to physically demanding working conditions. Elementary workers and service and sales workers also report both physical and emotional demands. Access to work resources such as training, autonomy, and opportunities to participate in decision-making is most frequent for those in high-skilled white-collar occupations. Economic activities play a role in shaping working conditions: the agriculture, transport and construction sectors usually impose the greatest physical demands. Commerce and hospitality workers often experience atypical working schedules. But even in sectors featuring better pay and prospects, such as in financial services, there are risks: in this case high rates of work intensity and emotional demands.

This report has also shown that some workers – such as young or migrant workers – are also often at a particular disadvantage. Moreover, some types of working arrangements feature particularly high risks of poorer working conditions – those include self-employment, especially in agriculture, and also informal employment and non-standard employment, such as temporary and part-time jobs. Occupational hazards and risks are also more widespread in small and medium enterprises rather than in large enterprises, because the former have limited resources and technical capacity and limited awareness of the existence of labour standards, or of how to comply with them. In Turkey and Latin America, there is great potential to improve working conditions through the formalisation of jobs. Formal jobs not only correspond with higher earnings; they are also positively correlated with better work-life balance, and improved physical and mental well-being.

Improving job quality can be done in many different ways: by reducing excessive demands on workers and limiting their exposure to risks, but also by increasing their access to work resources. Each dimension of job quality can also be improved through workplace practices and policies. Awareness among enterprises and workers of the mutual benefits of realising this potential improvement should be promoted and likewise the acquisition of skills and organisational competency should be better supported. To ensure that policies to improve job quality can work and be best adapted to workplaces, the representation of workers and their involvement in decisions that affect their work need to be supported. Progress can be achieved on each dimension of job quality and the different policies and actions that support workers over the course of their working lives should be considered together with policies improving job quality to ensure coordination and mutual reinforcement among them.

## Sustaining and expanding data collection

Job quality is a global concern. Developing comparative modules and guidelines to monitor job quality is vital to assist comparability and support evidence-based policymaking. As demonstrated in this report, working conditions and job quality are crucial for well-being at work, productivity, innovation, public health, gender equality and the future of our societies. There are inequalities and there is potential for improving job quality and addressing job quality deficits. Many actors and institutions, including workers and the enterprises in which they work, support the improvement of job quality in many ways. The world of work is fragmenting, and the diversity of experiences at work increasing – a setting in which both new concerns arise and more traditional concerns remain. In this context, high-quality monitoring and the regular provision of statistics are key measures to assess whether and how job quality is improving and to guide efforts to improve it across the world.

In order to develop effective policies for improving job quality, countries would benefit from instituting working conditions surveys such as the ones presented in this report. These surveys provide a unique contribution to studies on the world of work, enriching the perspective and analysis of other data sources, including labour force and business surveys. Ideally, the surveys should cover all workers, whether formal or informal, urban or rural and should build on interdisciplinary expertise. Research, particularly survey research based on large-scale representative samples and reliable methodology, is expensive. Nevertheless, finding the resources to invest in monitoring working

conditions is necessary in order to assess and evaluate the changes taking place in the world of work and the policies needed to adapt to these changes. Ensuring that users of survey data, including in particular the stakeholders of work, such as policymakers and social partners, take part in the development of surveys and the analysis of the findings is a key dimension of their quality and relevance.

Countries that already administer such surveys should strive to carry them out regularly to allow up-to-date and recurring monitoring of working conditions. For example, the Korean Working Conditions Survey has been carried out five times since 2006; the China Urban Labour Survey has been carried out four times since 2001, and the Social Status of Women in China Survey has been carried out three times since 1990; the European Working Conditions Survey is carried out every five years and its seventh edition is planned for 2020. Regular data collection allows tracking of changes in working conditions over time and also has the potential to measure the impact of specific reforms. Equally important is ensuring the comparability of questions and methodology across different editions of surveys, to allow monitoring of changes over time.

At the same time, identification of data gaps and improvement of questionnaires should be a natural part of the process. Such improvements should include applying new or updated International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) resolutions. Regular revision and updating of the questionnaires is needed to ensure that available statistics adequately reflect new developments in labour markets and that they incorporate identified best practices and advances in statistical methodology to meet emerging policy concerns. Statistical offices and parties interested in developing data on working conditions and job quality can build on recent guidelines produced with a view to improving the quality and comparability of data on quality of employment (UNECE, 2015) and the quality of the working environment (OECD, 2017a).

The data and findings reported in the individual country and regional chapters of this report present just a small portion of the rich information available from the country surveys on which they are based. In many countries covered in this report, fuller information, based on detailed tabulations of a more comprehensive set of questions is included in the national and regional studies. Given the richness of this information, it is important to allow for wider access to this data, including by researchers from different fields. It is equally important to raise awareness about the availability of this data, and to build knowledge and undertake research to better understand not only working conditions, but also their implications and challenges to their improvement.

This report has shown the value of a comparative approach, whereby findings from countries at different levels of economic development are compared. A next step in the analysis might be to examine factors that underlie the quality of work, such as: economic factors; the occupational structure of the workforce; the role of social dialogue in decision-making at all levels; the extent to which work and employment regulation facilitate the integration of potentially more vulnerable labour market groups; and the content of policies designed to extend both work and employment rights. Another avenue would be to undertake in-depth comparative studies between a more limited set of countries with the objective of identifying the drivers of specific outcomes.

Ultimately, the data should be used as a basis for preventive action, helping to raise awareness and informing policy debate on work quality deficits and on broader issues, such as gender equality and culture in workplaces. Accessible and practical information is critical in this regard. The presentation and dissemination of findings that meet the needs of workers, employers and policymakers, and also attract their attention and encourage their engagement for improving working conditions, is critical to building a demand for better job quality. Research based on these data should also serve as a foundation for the design and implementation of legal frameworks, institutional changes and better policies, programmes and interventions – and as a means to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.





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# Annexes

## Annex 1: Comparative overview of the working conditions surveys

Findings presented in this report build on results from working conditions surveys conducted in the EU, China, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, the US, Central America (six countries), Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. This annex provides a comparative description of each survey, including an overview and a brief description of each survey instrument.

Of the country surveys included in the report, the EWCS is the longest running and has served as a source of inspiration in developing surveys on working conditions elsewhere. For this reason, the EWCS is used as a central reference point in drawing comparisons between other regional and country surveys. Where research methods for other chapters included in the report differ from the ECWS, they are noted accordingly.

Comparability between findings is affected by factors such as data collection mode, date of data collection, sampling methods and the content of the questionnaire. These modalities are presented in Table A1.

Those interested in cross-country comparability may refer to the cross-cultural guidelines (Survey Research Center, 2016) for detailed a presentation of how to assess and work towards greater comparability of survey instruments.

### Methodology for the report

Detailed guidelines for national reporting were developed in 2016. A meeting was organised in Geneva in 2017 to discuss the first series of national and regional reports covering the EU, the US, China and the Republic of Korea. Following this meeting, these national reports were finalised

The guidelines were then adapted to cover Latin and Central America. Ad hoc extra analysis of the relevant surveys has been carried out by national teams for this report. A meeting was organised to discuss national reports in Latin and Central America in the fourth quarter of 2017. These reports were finalised after the meeting.

The drafting of this global report was carried out by staff from the ILO and Eurofound in cooperation with the national teams. In summer 2018, this report was sent for peer review and evaluation by the tripartite stakeholders of Eurofound. At the same time, national teams were contacted to validate and comment on the report.

Table A1: Overview of the surveys used in the report

Country/region	EU	China	Republic of Korea	Turkey	US
Name of survey	European Working Conditions Survey	China Urban Labour Survey <sup>38</sup>	Korean Working Conditions Survey	European Working Conditions Survey	American Working Conditions Survey
	EWCS	CULS	KWCS	EWCS	AWCS
Organisation administering survey	Eurofound	Institute for Population and Labor Economics (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)	OSHRI (Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute), KOSHA (Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency)	Eurofound	RAND Corporation
Survey year included in report	2015	2016	2014	2015	2015
Number of respondents for report year	EU28 35,765 (All 35 European countries 43,850)	6,461 households and 7,440 workers with working conditions information	50,007	2,000	3,131
First year survey was administered	1990–1991	2001	2006	2005	2015
Number of times survey has been conducted	Six (1990–1991, 1995–1996, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015) Next edition 2020	Four (2001, 2005, 2010, 2016)	Five (2006, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2017) Next edition 2020	Four (2002, 2005, 2010, 2015)	One (2015) and repeat
Sample selection method	Residential multistage geographic clustering and random selection	Residence-based multistage simple random sampling	Residential multistage geographic clustering and random selection	Residential multi-stage geographic clustering and random selection	Pre-determined panel
Survey administration method	Face-to-face, computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI)	Face-to-face, CAPI	Face-to-face, PAPI CAPI	Face-to-face, CAPI	Web survey computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI)
Age of respondents	15–64	16+	15+	15–64	18–71
Representativeness of population	All workers (technical information available on Eurofound's website)	Urban population only (six cities in China), supplemented by the SSWCS	All workers (population and household census tracts, currently working)	All workers (technical information available on Eurofound's website)	The RAND American Life Panel
Response rate of edition included in the report (RR3 using AAPOR code unless otherwise stated)	42.5% for all 35 countries covered	92.6%	33%	36.1%	AAPOR-RR2: 64.9%
Dataset availability	Yes. The integrated dataset covering all countries and time editions can be downloaded from the UK Data Archive	The first three rounds of CULS dataset (2001, 2005, 2010) by contacting Institute of Population and Labor Economics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	Yes, through the KOSHA website, and on request from <a href="mailto:uno@kosha.or.kr">uno@kosha.or.kr</a>	Yes. Together with the integrated EWCS dataset, available on the UK Data Archive	Available to third parties at <a href="https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL269.html">https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL269.html</a>

<sup>38</sup> While this survey is the main source of information for the China chapter, the chapter also partly draws on the Social Status of Women in China Survey (SSWCS).

Country/region	Central America	Argentina	Chile	Uruguay
<b>Name of survey</b>	Central American Survey on Work Conditions and Health (Encuesta Centroamericana sobre Condiciones de Trabajo y Salud)	National Survey of Workers: Employment, Work, Conditions and Working Environment (Encuesta Nacional a Trabajadores, Empleo, Trabajo, Condiciones, y Medio ambiente Laboral)	Chilean Survey on Employment Conditions, Work, Health and Quality of Life (Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Empleo, Trabajo, Calidad de Vida y Salud en la Población Trabajadora en Chile)	Survey on Working Conditions, Health, and Safety in Uruguay (Encuesta de Condiciones de Trabajo, Salud y Seguridad en Uruguay)
	ECCTS	ENTETCML	ENETS	ECTSSU
<b>Organisation administering survey</b>	Ibero-American Social Security Organization (OISS) University Pompeu Fabra (UPF) Centre for Research in Occupational Health (CISAL), Barcelona, Spain The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health (UT Health), US SALTRA Program, Central American Institute for Studies on Toxic Substances (IRET) Universidad Nacional Costa Rica	Superintendencia de Riesgos del Trabajo (Superintendency of Labour Risks) and Ministry of Labour	Ministry of Health and the Institute of Labor Security and Work Governance	Inter-university Cooperation Project (University of the Republic of Uruguay and King Juan Carlos University Spain)
<b>Survey year included in report</b>	2011	2009	2010	2013
<b>Number of respondents for report year</b>	12,024	7,195	9,503	2,057
<b>First year survey was administered</b>	2011	2005	2009–2010	2013
<b>Number of times survey has been conducted</b>	One (2011) Next edition 2018	Two (2005, Encuesta a Trabajadores de Empresas; 2009) Next edition 2018 (in progress)	One (2010) Next edition 2019	One (2013)
<b>Sample selection method</b>	Residential multi-stage geographic clustering and random selection	Regionally based random sampling eligible enterprises, targeted workers	Residence-based multi-stage geographic clustering and random selection	Residential multi-stage geographic clustering and random selection
<b>Survey administration method</b>	Face-to-face Personal digital assistant (PDA) Interviewing.	Face-to-face	Face-to-face. Personal digital assistant (PDA) Interviewing	Face-to-face
<b>Age of respondents</b>	18+	18+	15+	14+
<b>Representativeness of population</b>	Yes, census tracts	Employees of registered enterprises with five or more employees only	Yes, Chilean census tracts (currently working or worked within past 12 months), national, regional, urban and rural representation)	Urban and suburban populations (more than 10,000 inhabitants)
<b>Response rate of edition included in the report (RR3 using AAPOR code unless otherwise stated)</b>	Participation rates before replacement were approximately 50% in Costa Rica, 60% in Honduras and 80% in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama	N.A.	73.8%	N.A.
<b>Dataset availability</b>	Yes. The integrated dataset covering all countries) can be requested from any of the ECCTS researchers at UT Health School of Public Health, University Pompeu Fabra (UPF) Centre for Research in Occupational Health (CISAL), Barcelona, Spain and SALTRA Program, Central American Institute for Studies on Toxic Substances (IRET), Universidad Nacional Heredia, Costa Rica	No.	Yes. It can be downloaded from the MOH – Chile data archive website	Restricted access

## European Union

Following the EU enlargements, the geographical coverage of Eurofound's EWCS has expanded from the 12 countries of the European Community in 1990–1991 to 35 European countries in 2015 (the EU28, Norway, Switzerland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo). The 2020 edition of the survey is currently being prepared.

The objectives of the EWCS are to:

- measure working conditions across European countries on a harmonised basis
- analyse relationships between different aspects of working conditions
- identify groups at risk and issues of concern, as well as areas of progress
- monitor trends over time
- contribute to European policy development, in particular on quality of work and employment issues

The EWCS is comparative at heart. The scope of the survey questionnaire has widened substantially since the first edition, aiming to provide a comprehensive picture of the everyday reality of people at work. Themes covered today include employment status, working time duration and organisation, work organisation, learning and training, physical and psychosocial risk factors, health and safety, work–life balance, worker participation, earnings and financial security, as well as work and health.

Eurofound, in its revision of the questionnaire, closely involves its tripartite stakeholders, and representatives of international and European organisations and agencies. Eurofound also builds on expert knowledge from national working conditions surveys, researchers working on these themes and user feedback. Finalisation of the questionnaire involves advanced translation and cognitive testing.

In all countries, data is collected in the respondent's home through face-to-face interview using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). The average duration of the interview in 2015 was 45 minutes. Interviews were carried out in 32 languages (with 9 of these used in more than 1 country) on key topics covering work and employment issues. The source questionnaire for the survey is in English. In total, 49 language versions of the 2015 EWCS questionnaire have been produced.

The sample of the EWCS is representative of those aged 15 and over (16 and over in Bulgaria, Norway, Spain and the UK) who live in private households, are in employment and did at least one hour of work for pay or profit during the week preceding the interview.

The EWCS sample selection is derived from a multi-stage cluster process. Countries are divided geographically and by population density for the purpose of creating population clusters. Then a standardised, location-based process is used to select households from clusters using household registration data. Where multiple households exist at the same address, or where multiple dwellers fit the desired respondent profile, a participant is selected at random based on their date of birth. The minimum reference sample size per country was 1,000, except in Poland (1,200), Spain (1,300), Italy (1,400), France (1,500), the UK (1,600) and Germany and Turkey (2,000 each). Belgium, Slovenia and Spain opted to top up their sample sizes, resulting in target sample sizes of 2,500, 1,600 and 3,300 respectively. The overall response rate was 42.5%.

Three types of weights were applied:

- design weights (to adjust for differences in the probabilities of selection associated with individual country sampling design)
- post-stratification weights (to adjust for differences between the sample and the population distributions on selected variables: age and gender, NUTS2; industry, NACE; and occupation, ISCO)
- cross-national or population weights, to adjust for the different sizes per country of their at-work population

In addition to questions on working conditions and job quality, the EWCS also gathers information on quality of working life (health and well-being, engagement and motivation, work–life balance, skills development, financial security).

## China

The research on Chinese working conditions is from two surveys. The CULS is used as a primary source of information, and the SSWCS (not covered in the comparative table as it is less used in the report) contains some supplementary questions. As indicated by the survey's name (China Urban Labour Survey), the CULS is not distributed to a nationally representative sample of workers. Instead, it focuses on six cities across the country, with a particular focus on clarifying differences between migrant and non-migrant populations. The cities covered in 2016 were Shanghai, Wuhan, Shenyang, Fuzhou, Xian and Guangzhou.

The CULS was first launched in 2001 and collects information on local resident households and migrant resident households. The most recent survey used in this report (the fourth round) was conducted in 2016 and includes 6,461 households (3,887 local households and 2,574 migrant households). All individuals (including children) in each household were surveyed,

though only individuals aged 16 and over were asked to complete the questionnaire that included questions on working conditions for the explicit purpose of enabling international comparisons. Additionally, the questionnaire asked about household-level information on expenditures and assets that are not related to working conditions.

Because of the survey's urban focus, there is limited information on agriculture and industry. Across all households, 7,440 workers answered questions about working conditions.

Topics covered by CULS include earnings, forms of employment, physical demands of the job, skills and discretion (cognitive dimensions of work, use of technology at work, decision latitude, organisational participation, access to training), working time (duration, distribution, working time arrangements), work intensity (pace determinants and subjective assessment), social environment (social support from colleagues and managers), gender segregation and employee representation.

CULS findings are supplemented by the Social Status of Women in China Survey (SSWCS), which is designed to evaluate and observe how the social and economic transformation of Chinese society has affected women's development at national level. The SSWCS is jointly organised by the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) and Chinese National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and has been carried out every 10 years since 1990. The third and most recent survey, used in this report, was conducted in 2010.

SSWCS uses a random-walk approach, where the country is divided into sampling units based on governmental administrative units. Subsequently, each district is stratified based on population density and the level of urbanisation. A predetermined number of sample areas are selected, at random and at a rate proportional to the sample size. Subsequently, towns or communities are randomly selected. This is then repeated at household and individual level.

SSWCS data include responses from 26,171 individuals between the ages of 18 and 64 via face-to-face interviews.

Although the SSWCS provides additional data points for comparison, the different sample populations used in the CULS and SSWCS mean that drawing trends across workplace dimensions is not possible on a national level. The SSWCS includes additional information

relevant for this report on exposure to physical risks (chemical substances, noise, smoke and dust, carrying heavy loads, standing for long periods or squatting), physical and mental health, work–family conflicts, and satisfaction with selected job domains.

## Republic of Korea

The Korean Working Conditions Survey (KWCS) is conducted by the Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute (OSHRI), which is an affiliate of the Korean Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA). KOSHA is a professional organisation that works to prevent occupational accidents and protect the lives and health of workers and is in turn affiliated with the Ministry of Employment and Labor. Since 2002, disorders caused by the working environment (such as musculoskeletal disorders) have emerged as a social issue in Korea. However, not enough data were available to support policy making aimed at improving the working conditions of employees. To meet this need, OSHRI conducted the first KWCS in 2006.

Similar stratified cluster sampling to that of the EWCS was used and data were also collected via face-to-face interviews with workers aged 15 and up. The largest distinguishing factor of KWCS is its impressive sample size. In 2006, over 10,000 people were surveyed. By 2014, the sample size was 50,007 respondents. The survey is conducted every three years.

The questions in the fourth KWCS were based on those in the fifth EWCS (2010), as well as the third KWCS (2011). The questionnaire was developed through discussions with experts in workplace/occupational safety and health and in statistics, taking into account issues related to workplace/occupational safety and health, monitoring issues, and the validity of applying the EWCS questions in Korea. In addition, demands from government organisations such as the Ministry of Employment and Labor regarding workplace/occupational safety and health policymaking were taken into account.

A pre-test was carried out to finalise the questionnaire and it was then approved for modification by Statistics Korea.<sup>39</sup> In the fourth KWCS, the individual's job history, and emotional labour field, and the concept of 'cure rate' were added to estimate the industrial accident rate. In 2014, the response rate was 33%, and design and post-stratification weights (city and province, industry, gender and age) were applied.

39 In the Republic of Korea, modifying the content and method of a survey questionnaire relating to official statistics requires approval, according to Article 18 of the Statistics Act.



## Turkey

Data presented in this report from Turkey is collected in conjunction with the EWCS, and therefore uses an identical survey instrument and survey methods (surveys are administered in country-appropriate languages). The achieved sample size in Turkey was 2,000 respondents.

## United States

The first American Working Conditions Survey (AWCS) was conducted in 2014, with a longitudinal panel component repeated in 2015. This research originated with the Sloan Foundation funding of the ‘Sustainable work conditions and employment of older workers’ project. The main objectives of this project were to develop new knowledge about the characteristics of jobs held by older workers, to determine how older workers value those job characteristics and to understand how job characteristics influence employment decisions.

The AWCS was the 436th survey fielded on the panel to the RAND American Life Panel, which is a nationally representative sample of individuals aged 18–71 who reside in the US. In total, 2,032 workers received a digital link to the survey and completed it online. This represents a notable difference compared to the survey methods used in other countries. As a nationally representative panel, those who received the initial survey were workers as well as non-workers, but the AWCS was only administered to those who were workers. The AWCS compares well with the Current Population Survey (CPS) of the US Census Bureau and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics on most demographic and employment measures when weighted, with some exceptions. Although the aggregate fractions of workers in manual and non-manual industries and blue-collar and white-collar occupations, respectively, match those in the CPS, the individual fractions for a limited number of industries and occupations differ from their CPS counterparts (Maestas et al, 2017).

In addition to working conditions and job quality questions, the AWCS also gathers information about the general labour market experience of non-workers. Information presented in this report, however, excludes these findings.

The AWCS questionnaire is highly harmonised with that of the EWCS: about 85% of the questionnaire is common and additional topics of relevance are added to reflect the context in the US. Topics include: working time (duration, scheduling, control over working hours), paid time off and non-wage benefits, location of work, work–life balance, autonomy, pace of work, learning on the job, working with clients, physical demands, psychosocial risks, management quality, meaningful work, health and wages.

## Central America: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama

The Central American Survey on Work Conditions and Health (ECCTS) aims to understand workplace health and safety in the named Central American countries and develop a minimum survey standard for the purpose of cross-country comparison. It is a comparative survey by design. Findings presented in this report are from the inaugural survey, which took place in late 2011. A new survey is planned for 2018.

In total 12,024 workers aged 18 and over were surveyed, as part of more than 160 census tracts per country. Per census tract, 12 workers in informal jobs were interviewed. Individuals were selected based on their location. In each household, only one worker was interviewed. When there was more than one eligible candidate in a household, the one with the nearest birthday was selected. When a worker did not consent to participation, he or she was replaced by the one with the nearest birthday in the same household, or by someone from the adjacent household. In total, 2,004 people were interviewed per country. The sample was intended to be statistically representative on the basis of economic activity as well as gender and all surveys were conducted in the homes of workers. It should be noted, however, that because the Central American survey (like the AWCS and SSWCS) leaves out workers between the ages of 15 and 18, the true picture of how working conditions affect young workers may not be captured.

The questionnaire was designed on the basis of a prior review of the questionnaire of the Spanish Survey on Working Conditions (mainly health, safety and psychosocial items), the questionnaire of the EWCS, the ILO Manual of Occupational Injury Statistics (injuries) and the internationally used 12-item General Health Questionnaire or GHQ-12 (mental health). The ECCTS asks workers a series of questions about their occupation, industry, workplace environment, working conditions, benefits and work-based risks. As in other surveys presented in this report, questions regarding working conditions include those about exposure to physical risks, working time, work intensity, the capacity to make decisions, social environment and earnings. A number of questions have a significant overlap with the EWCS.

## Argentina

The objectives of the National Survey of Workers: Employment, Work, Conditions and Working Environment (ENTETCML) are, in general, to describe employment and working conditions and their links with the health of the working population through the perceptions of workers.

Specific objectives are to:

- characterise the employment situation of the working population in enterprises with respect to training, recruitment, time of work, income, labour relations, social environment and work intensity
- identify major labour risks and factors associated with accidents, injuries and occupational diseases
- inform researchers about patterns of symptoms and diseases related to work
- identify indicators of accessibility to the system of labour risk
- assess and compare common indicators of the 2005 and 2009 surveys
- contribute to public policy development, in particular on quality of work and employment issues

The ENTETCML, conducted between October 2009 and April 2010, was administered to salaried employees of private enterprises and was based on an earlier survey of the same population conducted in 2005. In total, 7,195 workers were interviewed face to face at 1,516 businesses. The average duration of the interview was 40 minutes. Workers at enterprises with five or more employees were eligible to participate and a comprehensive list of businesses was compiled. From these businesses, respondent demographics were selected to create a representative sample according to region, sector, enterprise size, occupation, night work and gender.

In total, the survey is estimated to represent 3.4 million workers in the private sector. Because Argentina's respondent pool was comprised of private-sector employees only, the final data is not representative of all workers, but is representative of the universe of salaried workers in registered, private-sector enterprises.

The survey focuses on physical working conditions, hours of work, atypical scheduling, social environment (including union membership), psychosocial environment, skills, training, discretion, and income. Many of these are the same themes that are investigated through working conditions surveys undertaken in other countries, although different wording prevents perfect comparisons at times.

A new edition of the survey extended to all the territory and covering all economic activities was fielded in July 2018, with results expected in July 2019.

## Chile

The Chilean Survey on Employment Conditions, Work, Health and Quality of Life (ENETS) looked at the country's working conditions and was the first survey of its kind in Chile. Carried out by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour in 2009–2010, ENETS covered a representative sample of workers (temporary and permanent, employees and self-employed, formal and informal) who were over the age of 15, as well as unemployed workers who had been employed within the previous 12 months. A new survey is planned in 2019.

The sample, which was based on the country's census tracts, was developed to ensure the adequate participation of urban and rural residents, and a statistically representative sample of the working population more generally at national, rural and urban, and regional administrative levels. Interviews were completed in workers' homes and, where all worker residents were eligible to participate, one was selected at random and was interviewed on a second home visit. In total, 9,503 workers were surveyed.

The questionnaire was validated through pilot fieldwork and qualitative evaluation was carried out through 10 cognitive interviews and two focus groups. During the process, three meetings were held with trade union representatives from different sectors who were shown the proposed questionnaire. Some recommendations from them were accepted.

The topics included in the survey were working conditions and employment relations, including: exposure to physical risks; working time quality; work intensity; the capacity to make decisions; social, environmental and cognitive demands; autonomy at work; and career prospects (with a significant overlap with questions from the EWCS). Also included were questions relating to: quality of life and health; healthy lifestyle; perception of health status; and occupational accidents and diseases – plus mental health risks, through the GHQ-12 and balancing work and family life. The survey also involved measurement of socioeconomic position and social class (education, income and income transfers, occupation (CIUO88); Classification of employment situation (CISE-93) and social class according to the Wright and Goldthorpe classification. Workers with both formal and informal arrangements were surveyed.

## Uruguay

The Survey on Working Conditions, Health, and Safety in Uruguay (Ectssu) was administered in 2013 in a cooperative project between the University of the Republic of Uruguay and the King Juan Carlos University in Spain, in the framework of an inter-university project of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

The survey was conducted among respondents over the age of 14 who live in urban communities, or smaller towns. The 2013 survey selected respondents based on the same geographic stratified clustering used in the country's census and other governmental surveys, with automatic inclusion of Montevideo and the surrounding area. Metropolitan regions were automatically included, and bordering communities were assessed by size and selected to ensure geographic variation. In smaller regions, a single urban continuum of more than 20,000 inhabitants was selected. Urban communities were then divided into zones, and households were selected systematically and at a rate that ensured proportional representation. Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted, based on the most common employment

sector of the household. In cases where there was not a clearly dominant sector of employment, those working in underrepresented occupations were surveyed. In total, 2,057 people were surveyed.

The questionnaire was established by building on the EWCS (2005 version of the questionnaire), the Spanish national working conditions survey (2011), the French complementary survey on working conditions to the EU Labour Force Survey (2005) and the Dutch national working conditions survey (2010). The survey included topics and questions that are quite comparable to the EWCS. Survey respondents were both employees and self-employed, the former including different contractual statuses and those without a contract.

## Annex 2: Job quality coverage in questionnaires – a comparative analysis

With the exception of Argentina, the ECWS has been referred to and served as a reference point for developing working conditions questions for all the countries included in this report. Comparability is thus organised around the EWCS.

Information presented in each chapter is limited by the number and types of questions included in the survey; for example China examines fewer characteristics resulting in a more limited discussion.

Detailed tables highlight comparability of the questionnaires together. The comparison of questions is organised around the seven dimensions of job quality included in the report: physical environment, work intensity, working time quality, social environment, skills and discretion, prospects, and earnings. The report includes also indicators available in the surveys considered which are not covered by an existing EWCS question.

**Table A2: Coverage of EWCS questions in surveys included in the report**

Workplace dimension	Dimension subcategories	EWCS Question Number	Question preface	Question variable	EWCS (EU28)	EWCS (Turkey)	KWCS (Korea)	AWCS (US)	CULS (China)	SSWCS (China)	ECTSSU (Uruguay)	ENETCML (Argentina)	ENETS (Chile)	ECCTS (Central America)
Physical Risk	Posture-related	Q30	Please tell me, using the same scale, does your main paid job involve...?	Tiring or painful positions	x	x	x	x	no	no	*	*	*	*
		Q30	Please tell me, using the same scale, does your main paid job involve...?	Lifting or moving people	x	x	x	x	no	no	*	*	*	no
		Q30	Please tell me, using the same scale, does your main paid job involve...?	Carrying or moving heavy loads	x	x	x	x	no	*	*	*	*	*
		Q30	Please tell me, using the same scale, does your main paid job involve...?	Repetitive hand or arm movements	x	x	x	x	no	*	x	x	x	x
		Q29	Please tell me, using the same scale, does your main paid job involve...?	Vibrations from hand tools, machinery, etc.	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	x	x	x
	Ambient	Q29	Please tell me, using the following scale, are you exposed at work to...?	Noise so loud that you would have to raise your voice to talk to people	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	x	x	x
		Q29	Please tell me, using the following scale, are you exposed at work to...?	High temperatures which make you perspire even when not working	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	*	x	*
		Q29	Please tell me, using the following scale, are you exposed at work to...?	Low temperatures whether indoors or outdoors	x	x	x	x	no	no	x		x	

Workplace dimension	Dimension subcategories	EWCS Question Number	Question preface	Question variable	EWCS (EU28)	EWCS (Turkey)	KWCS (Korea)	AWCS (US)	CULS (China)	SSWCS (China)	ECTSSU (Uruguay)	ENETCML (Argentina)	ENETS (Chile)	ECCTS (Central America)	
Physical Risk	Biological or Chemical	Q29	Please tell me, using the following scale, are you exposed at work to...?	Breathing in smoke, fumes (such as welding or exhaust fumes), powder or dust (such as wood dust or mineral dust) etc.	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	no	x	*	
		Q29	Please tell me, using the following scale, are you exposed at work to...?	Breathing in vapours such as solvents and thinners	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	x	x	x	*
		Q29	Please tell me, using the following scale, are you exposed at work to...?	Handling or being in skin contact with chemical products or substances	x	x	x	x	no	x	*	x	x	x	x
		Q29	Please tell me, using the following scale, are you exposed at work to...?	Tobacco smoke from other people	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	*	*	x
		Q29	Please tell me, using the following scale, are you exposed at work to...?	Handling or being in direct contact with materials which can be infectious, such as waste, bodily fluids, laboratory materials, etc.	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	x	x	x	*
Work intensity and work pace determinants	Quantitative	Q49	And does your job involve....?	Working at very high speed	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	x	no	x	
		Q49	And does your job involve....?	Working to tight deadlines	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	x	no	x	
		Q61	For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your situation	You have enough time to get the job done	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	no	x
		Q51		How often do you have to interrupt a task you are working on in order to take on an unforeseen task?	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no
		Q52	For your work are these interruptions....?	Disruptive/Without consequences/Positive?	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no
	Pace determinants				Interdependency: three or more pace determinants	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no
		Q50	On the whole, is your pace of work dependent on....?		The work done by colleagues	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	x
		Q50	On the whole, is your pace of work dependent on....?		Direct demands from people such as customers, pupils, passengers, patients, etc.	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	*	no	x
		Q50	On the whole, is your pace of work dependent on....?		Numerical production targets or performance targets	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	no	x
		Q50	On the whole, is your pace of work dependent on....?		Automatic speed of a machine or movement of a product	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	no	x
		Q50	On the whole, is your pace of work dependent on....?		The direct control of your boss	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	no	x
		Q50	On the whole, is your pace of work dependent on....?				x	x	x	x	no	x	x	no	x
	Emotional Demands	Q61	Select the response which best describes your work situation		Your job requires that you hide your feelings	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	x	no	x
Q30		Please tell me, using the same scale, does your main paid job involve...?		Handling angry clients, customers, patients, pupils, etc.	x	x	x	no	no	no	*	x	no	no	
Q30		Please tell me, using the same scale, does your main paid job involve...?		Being in situations that are emotionally disturbing for you	x	x	no	no	no	no	x	no	no	no	

Workplace dimension	Dimension subcategories	EWCS Question Number	Question preface	Question variable	EWCS (EU28)	EWCS (Turkey)	KWCS (Korea)	AWCS (US)	CULS (China)	SSWCS (China)	ECTSSU (Uruguay)	ENETCML (Argentina)	ENETS (Chile)	ECCTS (Central America)	
Working time quality	Duration	Q24		How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	*	x	
		Q26		How many days per week do you usually work in your main paid job?	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	*	
		Q25		Provided that you could make a free choice regarding your working hours and taking into account the need to earn a living, how many hours per week would you prefer to work at present?	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	no	no	
		Q38		Thinking of the last month, has it happened at least once that you had less than 11 hours between 2 working days?	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
		Q36		In total, how many minutes do you usually spend travelling from home to work and back?	x	x	x	x	x	*	x	x	x	x	x
	Schedule, Atypical working time	Q37	Normally, how many times a month do you work...	at night for at least 2 hours between 10:00pm and 5:00am?	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	x	x	*	no
		Q37	Normally, how many times a month do you work...	on Sundays?	x	x	x	no	no	no	*	x	x	*	*
		Q37	Normally, how many times a month do you work...	on Saturdays?	x	x	x	no	no	no		no	x	*	*
		Q39	Do you work...	Shifts?	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	x	*	*
		Q37	Normally, how many times a month do you work...	more than 10 hours a day?	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	x	no	no	no
	Working time arrangements	Q42	How are your working time arrangements set?	Working hours set by the company/Choose between fixed schedules set by the company/Can adapt hours within limits/Working hours are entirely determined by yourself?	x	x	x	x	no	no	*	x	no	no	x
		Q43	Do changes to your working time arrangements occur regularly?	(IF YES) How long before are you informed about these changes?	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	x	no	no	no
		Q46		Over the last 12 months, how often have you worked in your free time to meet work demands?	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	no	no	no
	Flexibility	Q47	Would you say that for you arranging to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters is...	Very easy/Fairly easy/ Fairly difficult/ Very difficult	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	*	*
		Q61	For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your situation	Your colleagues help and support you	x	x	x	no	x	no	*	*	*	*	*
Social Environment	Social support	Q61	For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your situation	Your manager helps and supports you	x	x	x	no	x	no	*	*	*	*	
		Q61	For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your situation	Your manager helps and supports you	x	x	x	no	x	no	*	*	*	*	

Workplace dimension	Dimension subcategories	EWCS Question Number	Question preface	Question variable	EWCS (EU28)	EWCS (Turkey)	KWCS (Korea)	AWCS (US)	CULS (China)	SSWCS (China)	ECTSSU (Uruguay)	ENETCML (Argentina)	ENETS (Chile)	ECCTS (Central America)	
Social Environment	Management Quality	Q63	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Your boss...	Respects you as a person	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	
		Q63	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Your boss...	Gives you praise and recognition when you do a good job	x	x	no	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
		Q63	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Your boss...	Is successful in getting people to work together	x	x	no	x	no	no	x	no	no	no	no
		Q63	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Your boss...	Is helpful in getting the job done	x	x	no	x	no	no	x	no	no	no	no
		Q63	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Your boss...	Provides useful feedback on your work	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
		Q63	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Your boss...	Encourages and supports your development	x	x	no	x	no	no	no	no	no	*	no
		Q70	The next questions are about your workplace. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Conflicts are resolved in a fair way	x	x	no	x	no	no	no	no	no	*	no
	Q70	The next questions are about your workplace. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	The work is distributed fairly	x	x	no	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	
	Management Quality	Q71	Does the following exist at your company or organisation?	Trade union, works council or a similar committee representing employees	x	x	x	no	*	*	x	x	x	no	no
		Q71	Does the following exist at your company or organisation?	Health and safety delegate or committee	x	x	x	no	no	no	x	x	no	no	no
		Q71	Does the following exist at your company or organisation?	A regular meeting in which employees can express their views about what is happening in the organisation	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	*	*	no
	Adverse social behaviour	Q80	Over the last month, during the course of your work, have you been subject to any of the following?	Verbal abuse?	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	*
		Q80	Over the last month, during the course of your work, have you been subject to any of the following?	Unwanted sexual attention?	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	*	*	no	*
		Q80	Over the last month, during the course of your work, have you been subject to any of the following?	Threats?	x	x	*	x	no	no	*	*	*	x	*
Q80		Over the last month, during the course of your work, have you been subject to any of the following?	Humiliating behaviours?	x	x	*	x	no	no	x	*	*	x	*	



Workplace dimension	Dimension subcategories	EWCS Question Number	Question preface	Question variable	EWCS (EU28)	EWCS (Turkey)	KWCS (Korea)	AWCS (US)	CULS (China)	SSWCS (China)	ECTSSU (Uruguay)	ENETCML (Argentina)	ENETS (Chile)	ECCTS (Central America)
Social Environment	Adverse social behaviour (cont'd)	Q81	And over the past 12 months, during the course of your work have you been subjected to any of the following?	Physical violence	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	*	no	*
		Q81	And over the past 12 months, during the course of your work have you been subjected to any of the following?	Sexual harassment	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	*	no	*
		Q81	And over the past 12 months, during the course of your work have you been subjected to any of the following?	Bullying/harassment	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	*	no	no
Skills and discretion	Cognitive dimension	Q53	Generally, does your main paid job involve...?	Solving unforeseen problems on your own	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	*	no
		Q53	Generally, does your main paid job involve...?	Complex tasks	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	no	x
		Q53	Generally, does your main paid job involve...?	Learning new things	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	no	x	no
		Q30	Please tell me, using the same scale, does your main paid job involve...?	Working with computers, laptops, smartphones, etc.	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	x	no
		Q61	For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your situation	You are able to apply your own ideas in your work	x	x	x	x	*	no	x	no	no	x
	Decision Latitude	Q54	Are you able to choose or change	Your order of tasks	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	x	x
		Q54	Are you able to choose or change	Your methods of work	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	x	x
		Q54	Are you able to choose or change	Your speed or rate of work	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	x	x	x
		Q61	For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your situation	You have a say in the choice of your work colleagues	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	no	no
	Organisational participation	Q61	For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your situation	You are consulted before objectives are set for your work	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	x	no
		Q61	For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your situation	You are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of your department or organisation	x	x	x	x	x	no	x	no	no	no
		Q61	For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your situation	You can influence decisions that are important for your work	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	x	no
	Training	Q65	Over the past 12 months, have you undergone any of the following types of training to improve your skills?	Training paid for or provided by your employer	x	x	x	x	*	no	no	x	no	x
		Q65	Over the past 12 months, have you undergone any of the following types of training to improve your skills?	On-the-job training	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	x	no	no

Workplace dimension	Dimension subcategories	EWCS Question Number	Question preface	Question variable	EWCS (EU28)	EWCS (Turkey)	KWCS (Korea)	AWCS (US)	CULS (China)	SSWCS (China)	ECTSSU (Uruguay)	ENETCML (Argentina)	ENETS (Chile)	ECCTS (Central America)
Prospects	Prospects	Q11		What kind of employment contract do you have in your main paid job?	x	x	x	no	x	x	x	x	x	x
		Q89	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your job?	My job offers good prospects for career advancement	x	x	x	x	no	*	*	no	*	no
		Q89	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your job?	I might lose my job in the next 6 months	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	no	*	no
		Q19	Since you started your main job, ...	Has the number of employees at your workplace increased, stayed the same or decreased?	x	x	no	no	x	no	no	no	no	no
Earnings	Earnings	Q104		Can you please tell us how much are your net monthly earnings from your main paid job?	x	x	x	*	*	*	*	x	*	*
		Q87	Please indicate for each of the five statements which is the closest to how you have been feeling over the last two weeks		x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
				I have felt cheerful and in good spirits	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
				I have felt calm and relaxed	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
				I have felt active and vigorous	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
				I woke up feeling fresh and rested	x	x	x	no	no	no	x	no	no	no
				My daily life has been filled with things that interest me	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
		Q73		Do you think your health or safety is at risk because of your work?	x	x	x	no	no	no	x	x	no	*
		Q75		How is your health in general?	x	x	x	x	x	x	no	no	x	x
		Q44		In general, how do your working conditions fit in with your family or social commitments outside of work?	x	x	x	x	no	no	*	no	*	no
		Q88		On the whole, are you very satisfied, satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with working conditions in your main paid job	x	x	x	x	no	no	no	no	*	no

Note: x = Same or very close wording; \* = Close concept. For full details of the EWCS questionnaire, see <http://eurofound.link/0059>

The comparability of the Turkish questionnaire with that of the EWCS is high, as preparation of the survey and data collection were carried out simultaneously under the central coordination of Eurofound. The translation, review, adjudication, pre-testing and documentation (TRAPD) approach was used to translate the source questionnaire into Turkish.

The Korean and the American questionnaires have used many of the same questions as the EWCS. Furthermore, the survey teams called on the EWCS project team as they were preparing their surveys. The Latin and Central American surveys build on the fourth EWCS questionnaire and there has been cooperation between the Latin and Central American surveys. As a result, these surveys also share some questions. The CULS used a limited number of the EWCS questions to complement its most recent questionnaire.

Although there are similarities in the content of some of the questions listed, precise wording can be different, as in some cases survey managers have adapted the questions to the relevant country context.

It should also be mentioned that although questions might be highly similar, cultural practices and norms might result in alternate interpretations on a population-wide basis. For example, what is perceived as adverse social behaviour in one country may be more socially accepted elsewhere. This phenomenon may be particularly true when it comes to questions where gender is often implicated, such as work–life balance and career expectations.

Furthermore, response options may be different across the surveys. For example, the EWCS asks respondents whether their exposure to physical risks happens never, almost never, a quarter of the time, half the time, three-quarters of the time, almost all of the time, or all of the time. Respondents are also given the option to refuse questions to indicate that they do not know. The US survey, meanwhile, provides five possible options: always, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, or never. The Argentinian survey tends to offer three options when asking about the frequency of work conditions. The Chinese survey asks about these questions on a binary basis. Similarly, some questions in the Uruguayan survey offer only binary response options;

however, others which are binary on EWCS have a greater number of response options in the Uruguayan survey. Information presented in country chapters throughout the report reflects the frequency with which working conditions are reported and nuances are discussed where appropriate in the comparative chapter.

Unless mentioned explicitly in the report, the coding and reporting of occupations, industry and education follows international statistical standards and uses the latest classification available.

Not all questions from each survey have been reported or analysed in this report, as the objective of the report was to provide a comparative picture of working conditions in countries covered through the focus of job quality. For example, the EWCS addresses the quality of working life through a series of questions on career and employment security, developing skills and competencies, maintaining and promoting health and well-being, reconciling working and non-working life and work sustainability. Meanwhile the surveys in Uruguay, Argentina, and Central America ask more extensively about general worker health, quality of life and trade union relations among others. China and the US, on the other hand, include a variety of additional questions about a range of topics, from political engagement to job search strategies. Our qualitative comparison of question content is limited to themes examined in the global report.

The original order of the questionnaires has not been reported. For further information, the source questionnaires and documentation for each of the surveys can be consulted.

The goal of cross-cultural comparative surveys is to produce comparable measures across multinational, multicultural, or multiregional populations. Two surveys considered in this report have integrated cross-comparability in their design, the EWCS and the Central American survey. Those interested in cross-country comparability can refer to the cross-cultural guidelines of the Survey Research Center (2016) for detailed presentation of how to develop and work towards greater comparability of survey instruments.



Job quality is a major focus of policymakers around the world. For workers, the enterprises that employ them and for societies, there are benefits associated with high-quality jobs, and costs associated with poor-quality jobs. This report – the result of a pioneering project by the International Labour Organization and Eurofound – provides a comparative analysis of job quality covering approximately 1.2 billion workers in Europe, Asia and the Americas. It analyses seven dimensions of job quality: the physical environment, work intensity, working time quality, the social environment, skills and development, prospects, and earnings, finding both important differences and similarities between countries. By analysing positive and negative aspects of job quality in different countries and societies, the report provides a way to look beyond national explanations, to see how some groups of workers are affected more than others and understand the particular issues for women workers around the world – in support of evidence-based policymaking to improve job quality.

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**The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency established in 1975. Its role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies according to Regulation (EU) 2019/127.**

