



QUALITY OF THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND EMPLOYEES WELL-BEING

Fabrice Murtin

Head of Section,
OECD Statistics and Data Directorate

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Why look at job quality?

- **Job quality is important for people's well-being** (for their health, competencies, identity, sense of worth)...
- **.. but also for firm's productivity** (lower absences from work, more engagement on the job)
- **Job Quality is the new feature in 2018 “OECD Job Strategy”** (from ‘10 commandments’ of labour market flexibility to more balanced & flexible blueprint for labour market reforms)
- **How does the OECD defines ‘job quality’**
 - ✓ **Earnings quality**
 - ✓ **Labour market security**
 - ✓ **Quality of the working environment (QWE)**



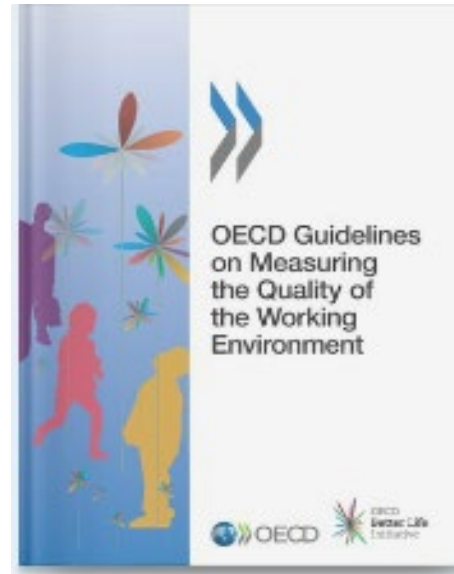
Measuring QWE

- Many organisations have developed their own frameworks for measuring QWE (EU, ILO and UNECE)
- Many national & international surveys
 - **Nationally** (more than 20 surveys)
 - *E.g. Enquête conditions de vie* in France
 - **Internationally** (mainly European, non-official)
 - European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS)
 - European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS)
 - European Social Survey (ESS)
 - International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)
 - Gallup World Poll
- With focus progressively shifting from traditional physical risk-factors (OHS) to psycho-social ones



The OECD Guidelines on Measuring QWE

- ✓ **Designed for NSOs**, other data producers and businesses interested in fielding surveys on this topic



- ✓ **Contain prototype modules**
 - **Extended module**: 25 items, several qs on each job characteristics, based on questions from a variety of sources, 5 item response scales, ~6 1/2 minutes to complete
 - **Condensed module**: 13 questions focusing on 11 key job characteristics (~3mn of survey time)
 - **Core module**: 4 questions on 4 job characteristics, ~60 seconds in total



Some Key Job Characteristics

- Focus on **objective** and **observable** features of the work environment, most commonly available through **workers' self-report** (surveys)
- OECD Guidelines define QWE as combination of **job characteristics** (17) pertaining to (6) broader **dimensions** relevant to all jobs
 - **Physical and social environment** (physical risks, physical demands, intimidation/discrimination, social support)
 - **Job tasks** (work intensity, emotional demands, task discretion)
 - **Organisational characteristics** (participation/voice, managerial practices, task clarity/performance feedback)
 - **Working time arrangements** (unsocial work schedule, flexible hours)
 - **Job prospects** (job insecurity, learning & promotion opportunities)
 - **Intrinsic aspects** (intrinsic rewards, opportunities of self-realisation)



Mapping job characteristics with the job demands-resources model

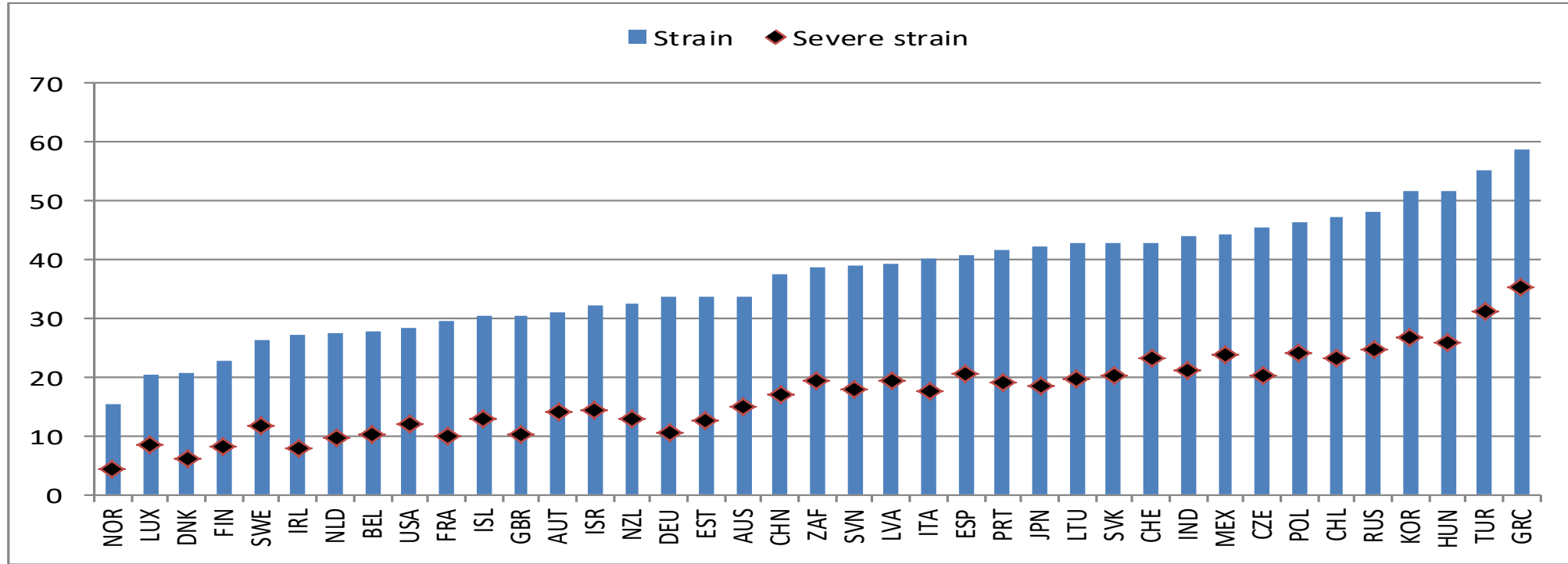
- Theoretical model used in the Guidelines (Demerouti et al., 2001)
 - Balancing demands of the job (-) and resources available to workers (+)
 - Counting job demands and resources allows measuring overall “job strain”

Job dimensions	Job strain as a result of...	
	...too many job demands	...too few job resources
A. Physical and social environment	Physical demands Hard physical work (ISSP) Carrying or moving heavy loads (EWCS)	
B. Job Tasks	Work intensity Long working hours (ISSP and EWCS)	Task discretion and autonomy Free to organise daily work (ISSP) Change order of tasks/methods of work, set working arrangements (EWCS)
D. Worktime arrangements	Inflexibility of working hours Hard to take hours off (ISSP) Hard to take a break when you wish (EWCS)	
E. Job prospects	Training and learning opportunities Training over the past 12 months (ISSP) Training or on-the-job training over the past 12 months (EWCS)	
	Opportunity for career advancement High opportunities for advancement (ISSP) Good prospects for career advancement (EWCS)	



The OECD Job Strain Index: $\frac{\sum(R_i < D_i)}{N}$

- ✓ Official version: 3 job demands, 3 job resources
- ✓ Strain: more demands than resources
- ✓ Severe strain: 2 demands & 0 resource, or 3 demands & 1 resource



Note. Data on Korea are based on results of the 2005 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

Source: OECD Job Quality database (2017) based on the 6th European Working Conditions Survey (Forthcoming) and International Social Survey Program Work Orientations Module III.



A more comprehensive analysis: EU+US+KOR 2010-2015

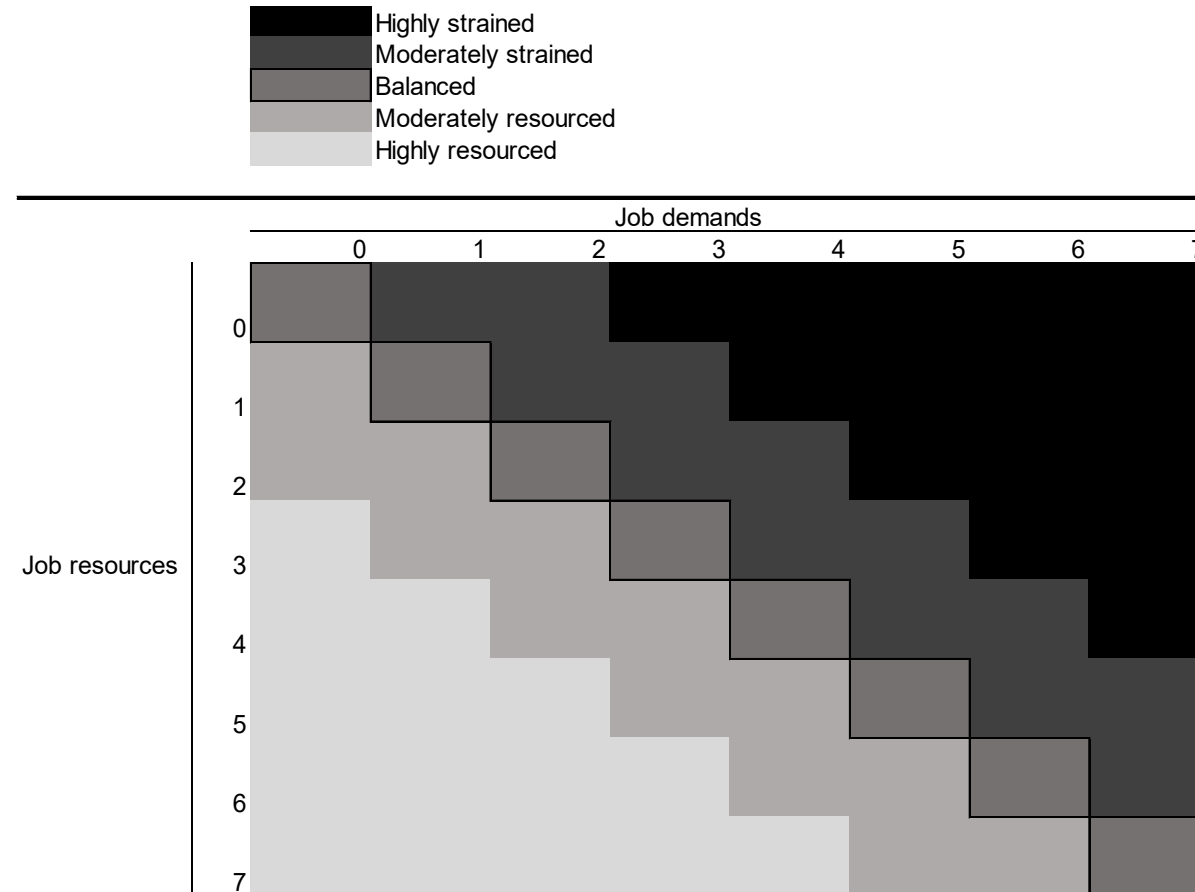
- ✓ OECD working paper: 7 job demands, 7 job resources
- ✓ (Almost) identical questions

Job dimensions	Job demands	Job resources
A. Physical and social environment	i) Physical risk factors ii) Physical demands iii) Intimidation and discrimination at the workplace	i) Social support at work
B. Job Tasks	iv) Work intensity v) Long working hours	ii) Autonomy to organise daily work
C. Organisational characteristics	-	iii) Organisation participation and workplace voice
D. Worktime arrangements	vi) Unsocial work-schedule	iv) Flexibility of working time
E. Job prospects	-	v) Training and learning opportunities vi) Opportunity for career advancement
F. Intrinsic aspects	vii) Perception of job insecurity	vii) Opportunities for self-realisation



A more detailed typology

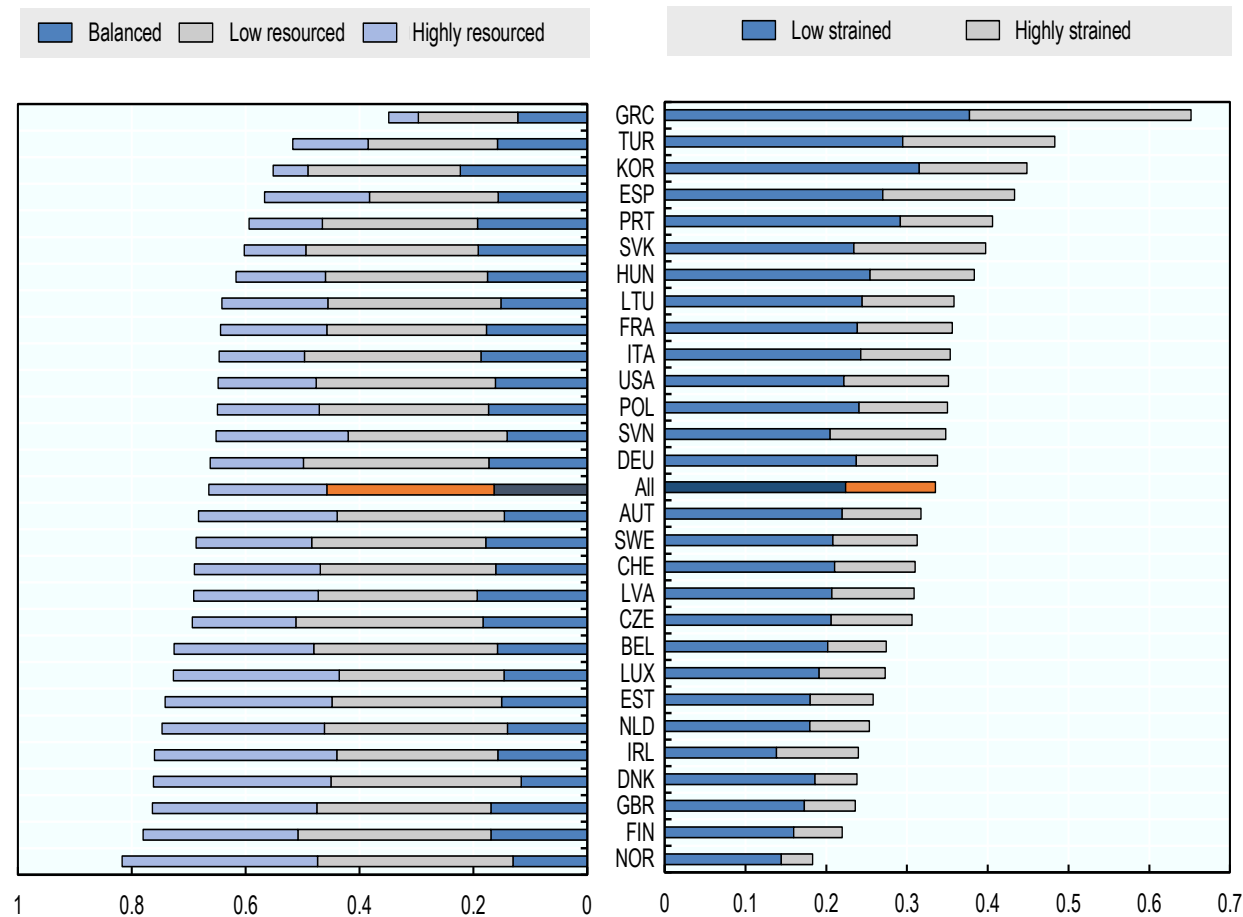
✓ 5 nuances of QWE





QWE in 2015 (1)

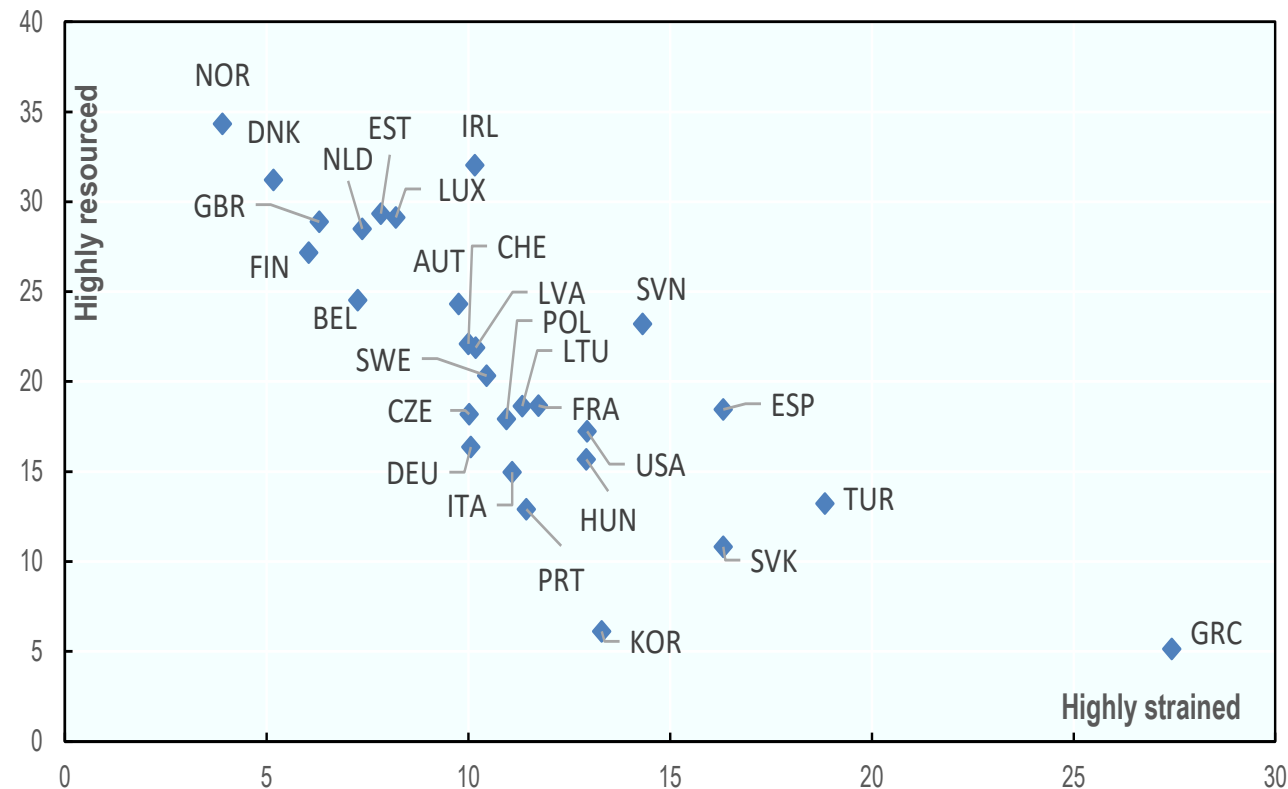
- ✓ 1/3 of employees are strained (10% are severely so)
- ✓ 50% of employees are well-resourced (20% highly so)





QWE in 2015 (2)

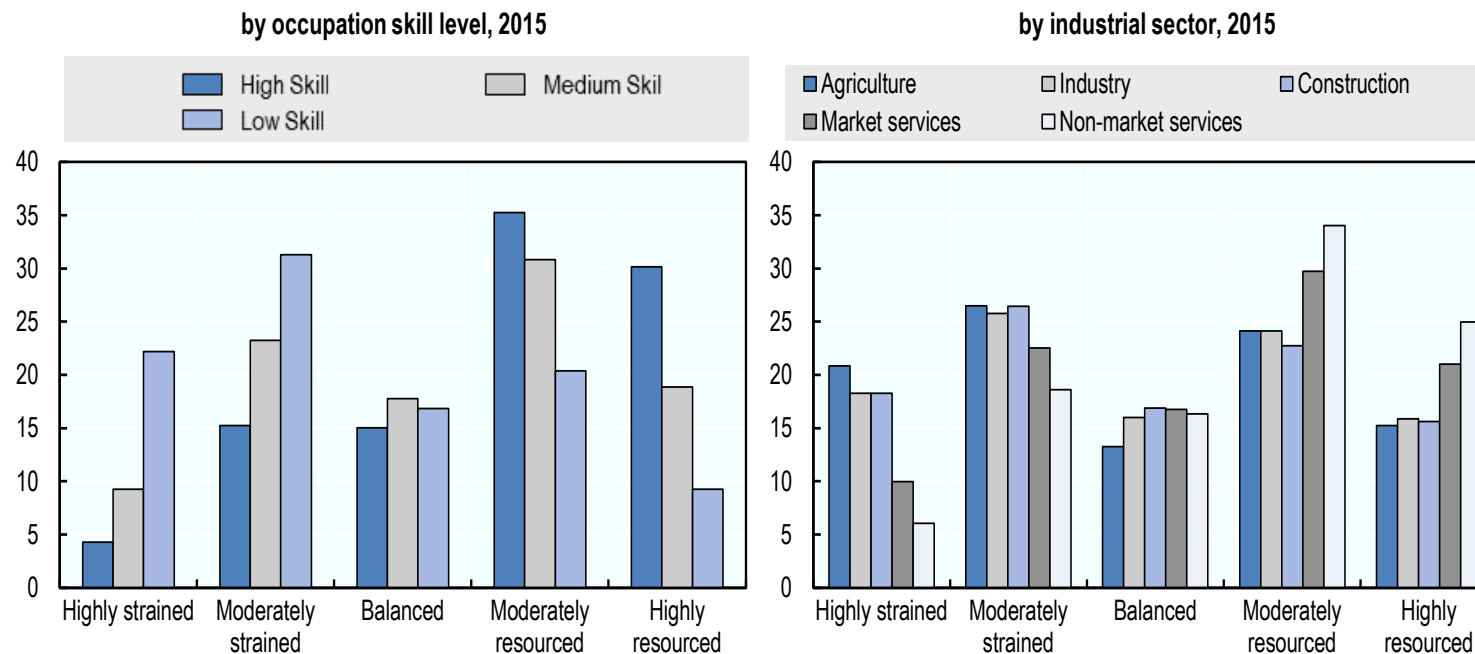
- ✓ 3 groups (to simplify): Northern Europe, Continental Europe + US, Southern + Eastern Europe + KOR





QWE by group

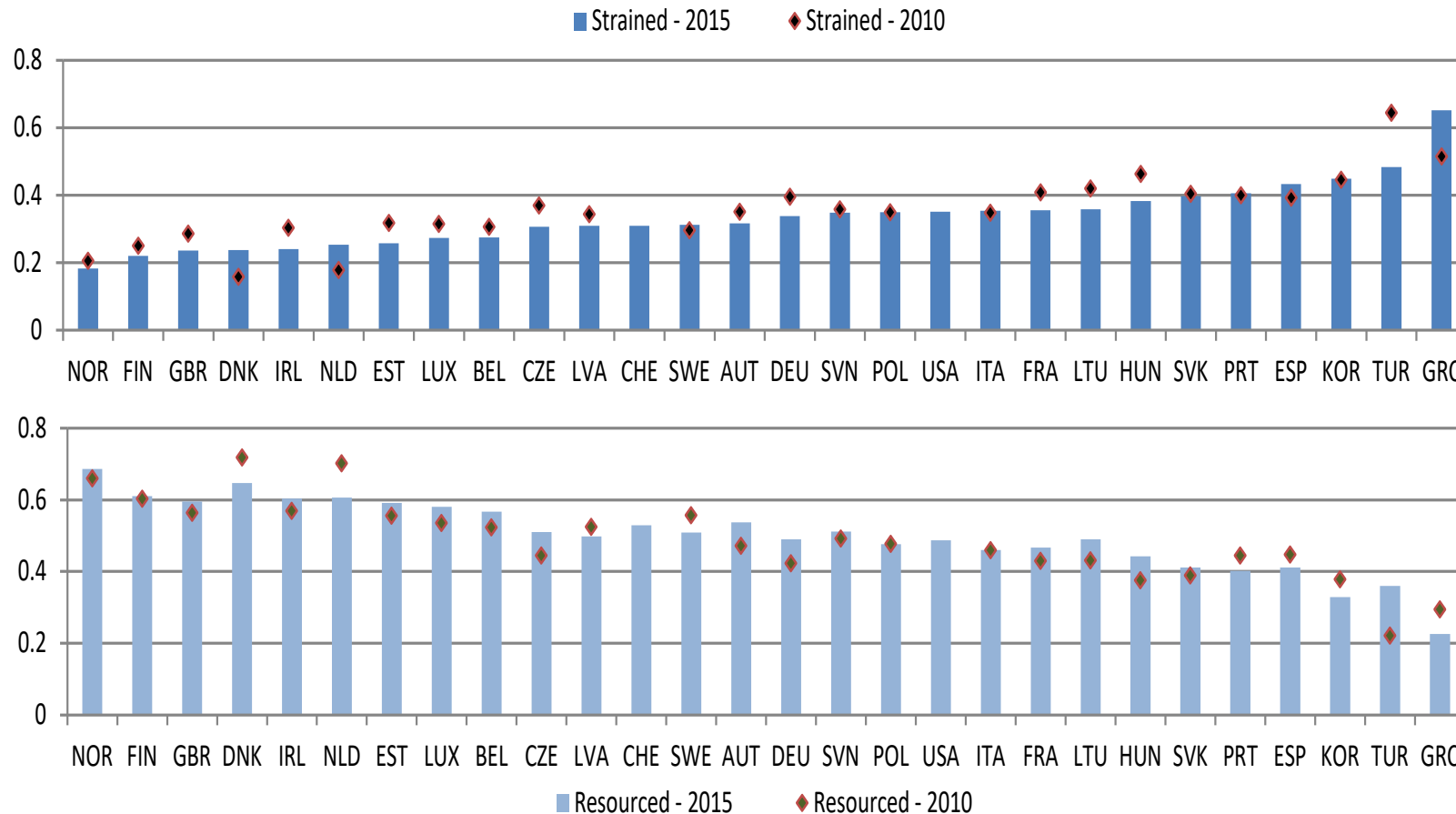
- ✓ The largest differences in QWE are observed across education/skills and sectors
- ✓ Slight differences by age, contract type, gender (females having higher QWE) and size of worksite





Change in QWE over 2010-2015

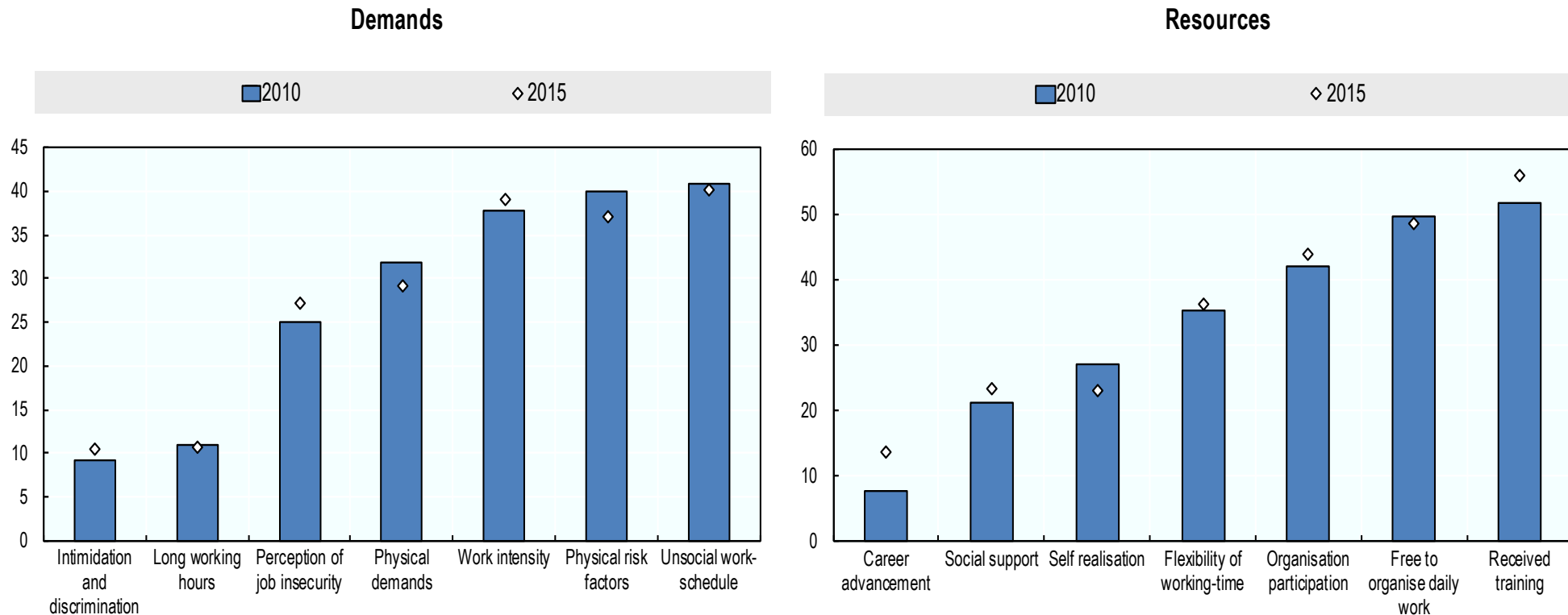
✓ QWE has improved in a majority of countries





Where do changes in QWE come from?

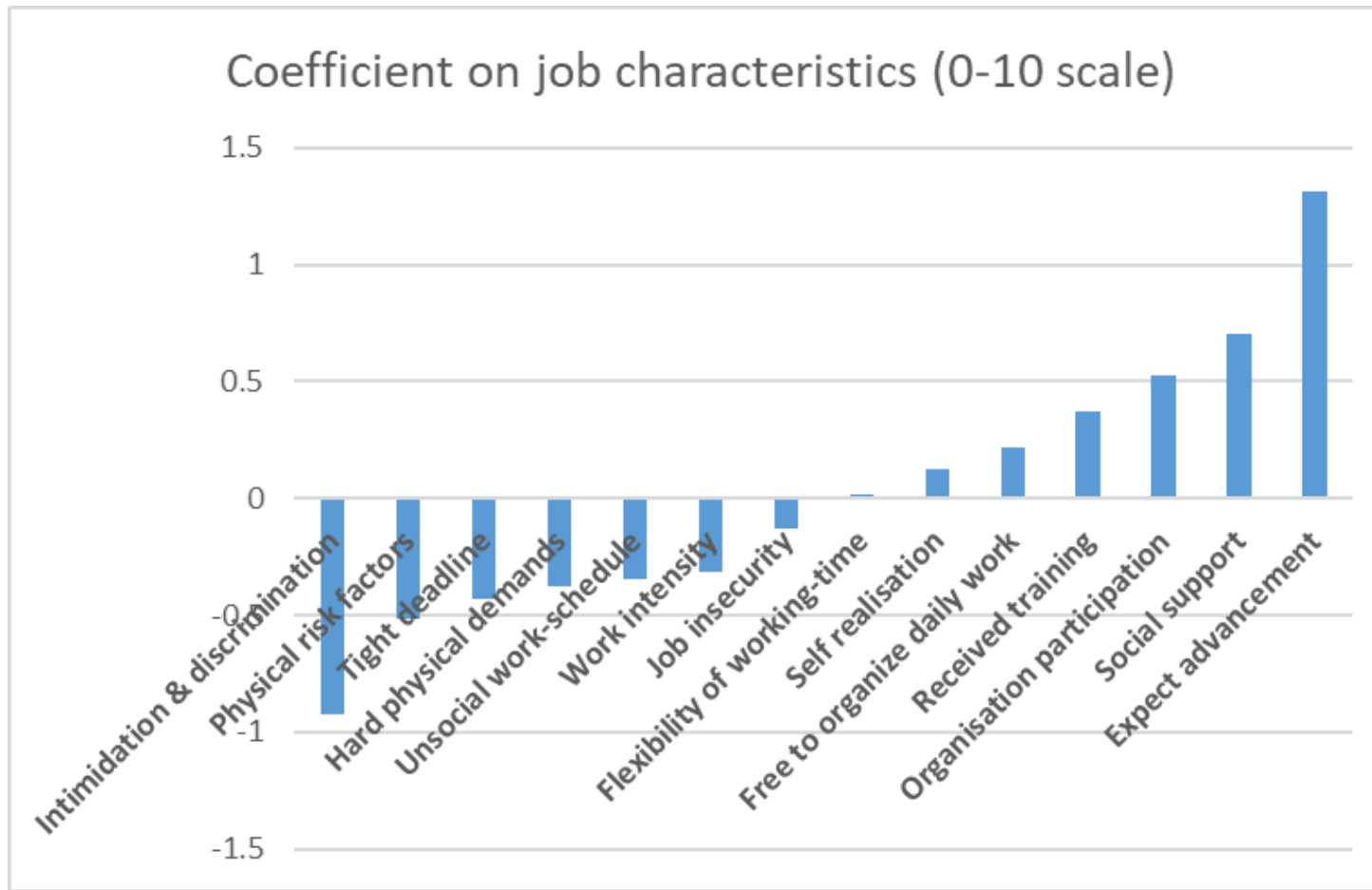
- ✓ Better prospects of career advancement, higher take-up of training, stronger social support and organisation participation at work, higher flexibility of working time, as well as lower exposure to physical risk factors, hard physical demands and unsocial work schedule.
- ✓ On the other hand, perceptions of job insecurity, intimidation and discrimination and work intensity have been on the rise.





QWE and workers' well-being

- ✓ Quality of the working environment is strongly associated with workers' well-being as measured by job satisfaction and to workers' health as measured by days of sickness.
- ✓ Perceived intimidation and discrimination at work is one of the most powerful predictors





Thank you!

fabrice.martin@oecd.org