

Growing Inequalities in Job Quality? Gendered Trends across Europe, 2005-2024

Theresa Weinöhrl

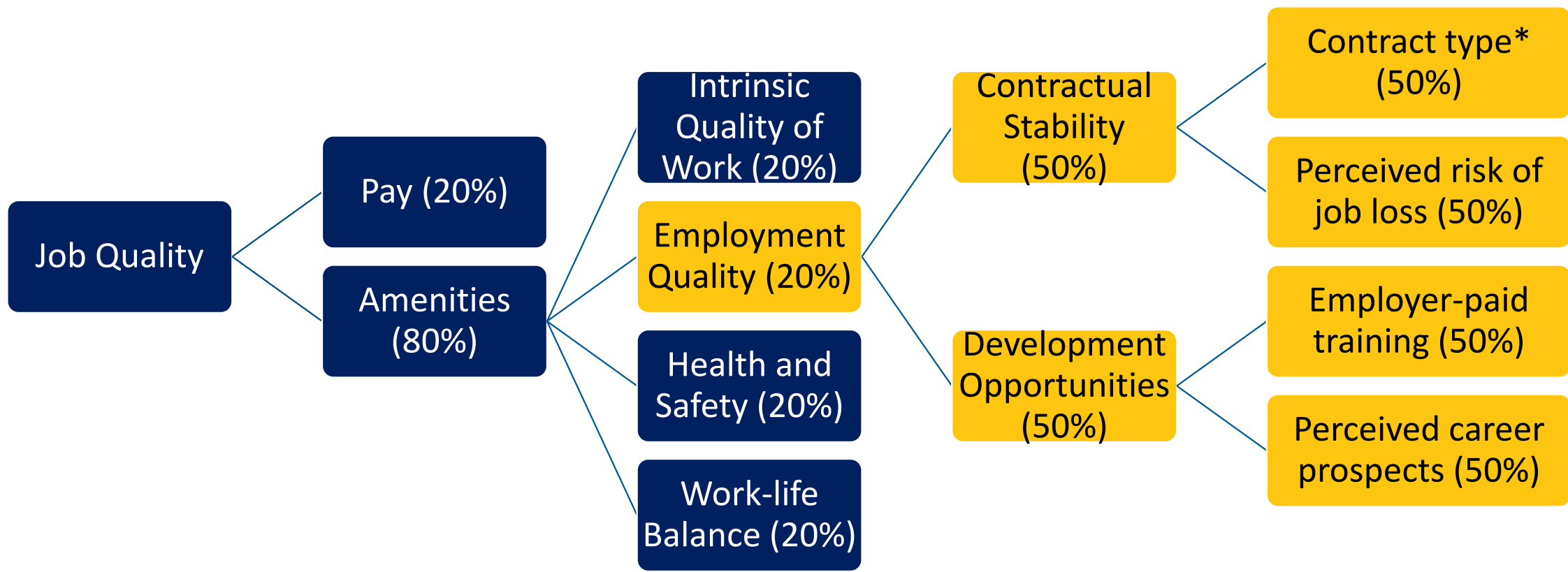
Vienna Institute of Demography, Austrian Academy of Sciences

Background & Research Question

- **Paid work is a central life domain**, closely linked to family life and well-being (Voydanoff, 2005).
- **Job quality matters beyond the workplace**, with working conditions shaping work-family dynamics and family outcomes: dimensions such as employment stability, working time and job demands have been linked to fertility decisions, relationship quality and family well-being.
- Since the 2000s, European Union policy has promoted “**more and better jobs**” (Eurofound, 2021). At the same time, European labour markets have been reshaped by digitalization and flexibilization (Antón et al., 2023) and by the COVID-19 pandemic, with potentially unequal consequences across social groups.
- Updated comparative evidence is therefore needed on how job quality has evolved and whether **inequalities** by, for instance, **gender, parenthood and education** have changed.
- Research question:
How has job quality changed across 29 European countries between 2005 and 2024? How have gender, parenthood status and educational gaps changed over time?

Structure of the Job Quality Framework

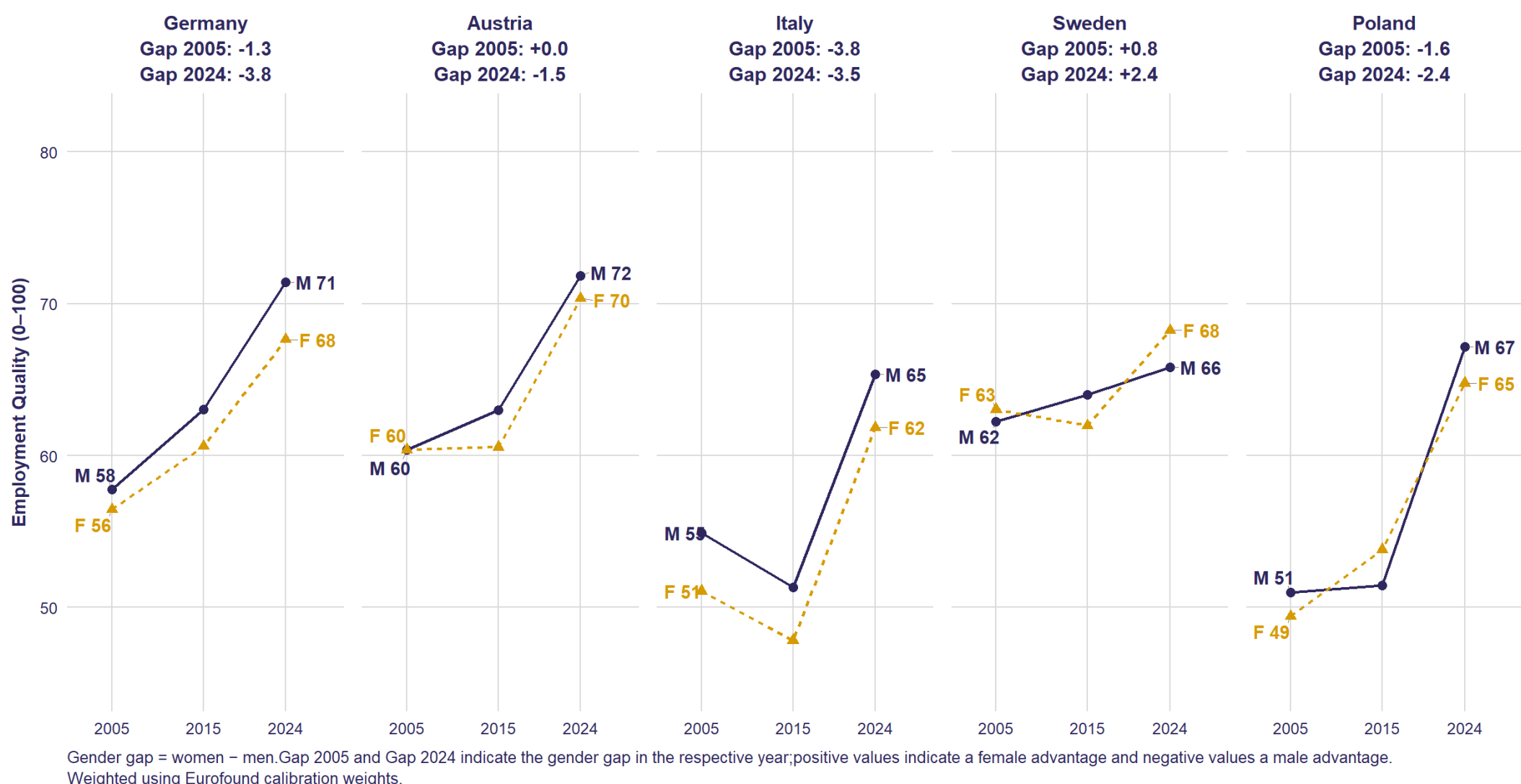
- Overall framework based on Muñoz de Bustillo et al. (2011)
- *Preliminary findings: Employment Quality*



* Contract type distinguishes indefinite contracts from fixed-term, temporary agency, apprenticeship and no-contract arrangements.

Key Preliminary Findings: Employment Quality

- **Gender gaps developed differently across selected countries, with widening male advantages in Germany and Poland, the emergence of a male advantage in Austria, relative stability in Italy, and a growing female advantage in Sweden.** → No common trajectory towards either widening or narrowing gender inequality across the selected countries.
Descriptive findings only.

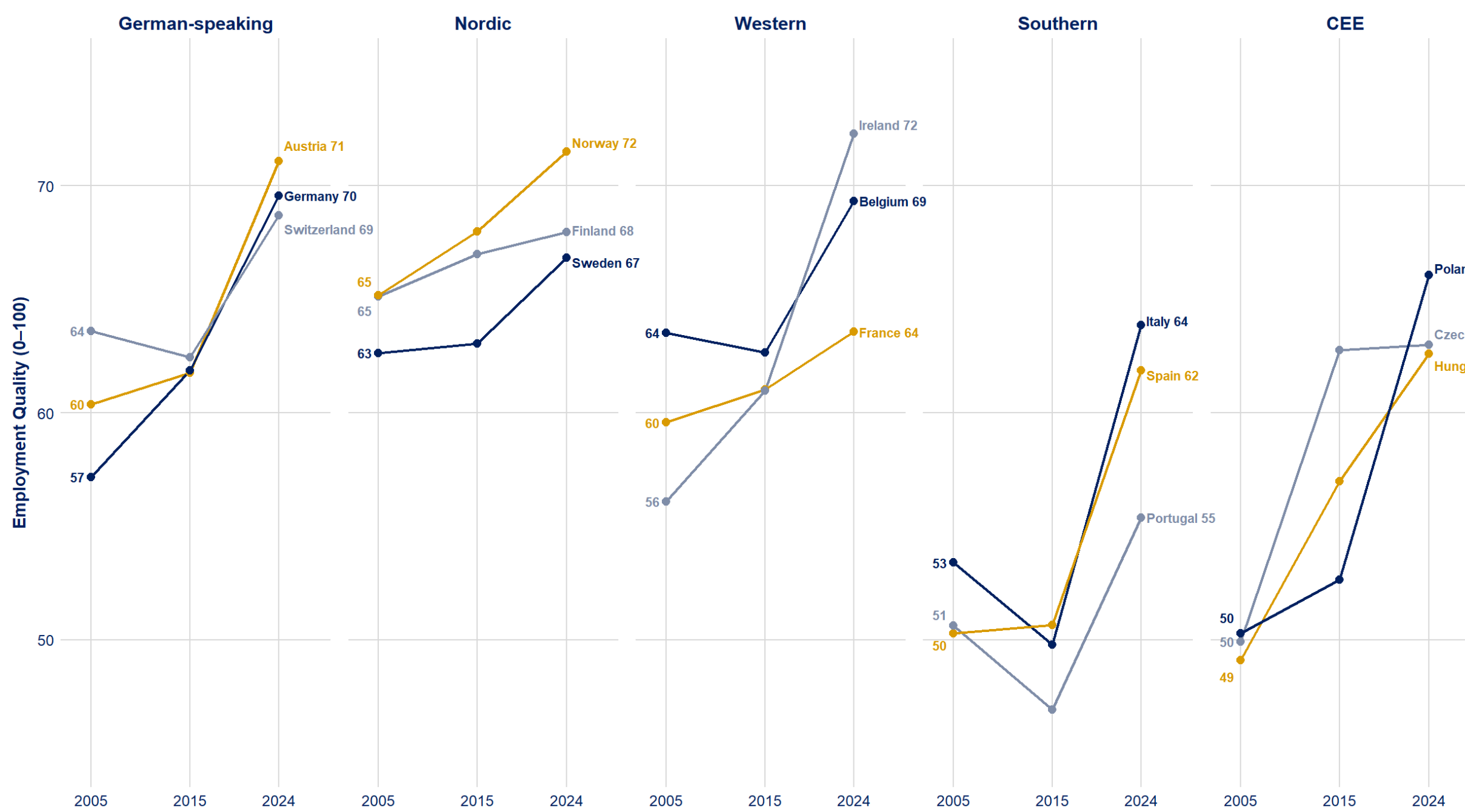


Data & Methods

- European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) 2005, 2015, 2024
- Analysis of employed respondents in the EU-27, Norway and Switzerland
- Job Quality dimensions (0-100; higher = better), based on Muñoz de Bustillo et al. (2011)
- Operationalisation adapted to maximise cross-wave comparability
- Descriptive comparisons across countries and years; preliminary results shown by gender
- N ≈ 1,000 respondents per country and wave

Key Preliminary Findings: Country Trends in Employment Quality

- **Employment quality increased** between 2005 and 2024 across all selected countries, **but the magnitude and timing of change varied substantially.**



Summary & Next Steps

- **Employment Quality** increased between 2005 and 2024 across all countries examined, although the magnitude and timing of change varied substantially.
- **Gender gaps showed no consistent tendency:** trajectories differed across countries, with several gaps remaining relatively persistent over time.

Next steps:

- **Refine and adapt** the Job Quality indicators to ensure cross-wave comparability and extend the analysis to all Job Quality dimensions.
- **Decompose** changes in Job Quality dimensions into their underlying components.
- **Assess cross-country convergence/divergence** in gender gaps and other inequalities.
- **Examine explanations for divergent trajectories**, including flexible working and country-level context, using multivariate analyses.