



What is Good Work?

That's what workers expect from their job

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Foreword



Dr. Christa Sedlatschek
Managing Director of INQA

The study 'What is Good Work?' is an extraordinary document. A total of 7,444 workers were surveyed, 5,388 completed the questionnaire comprising 16 pages and over 300 questions. Anyone who goes to such trouble must find the subject important. Therefore, the result is authentic and has tremendous practical relevance to politics and industry. In this report workers are recognised as experts of their work and their opinions are taken seriously.

The results are very informative and provide valuable information on the attitude of workers and the existing shortcomings in company management in Germany. It is not surprising that there is a high level of motivation and job satisfaction, at least as regards the working atmosphere among colleagues at work level. However, above all a very accurate profile was produced of what people in Germany in the 21st century understand by good work: They want fair pay, secure employment, humane working conditions and good leadership. The extent to which almost all workers, above and beyond all degrees of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in other respects, miss one thing therefore comes as a surprise: praise and appreciation by their supervisors. Many comment on these findings with the remark: "That's so important and so simple." It is true that, as a result, a great opportunity to

motivate staff remains unused. Here, the study still sees a need for development in German companies. For the aim is to create value and that is a question of the concept of people. Anyone who wants to tackle the issue of leadership in Germany must start with this issue. The best employers in Germany, determined in the competition 'Great Place to Work', show: Whoever leads well also achieves economic success. That is exactly the philosophy of the New Quality of Work Initiative – INQA. To disseminate this philosophy is a major joint task of politics and industry.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sedlatschek', written on a light-colored background.

1 Your opinion is in demand!

About the project 'What is Good Work?'

With the project 'What is Good Work? – Requirements from the workers' point of view', INQA set out to survey the views of those affected, namely the employees. How do people describe their working situation inside and outside the company? What worries them at present and what are they satisfied with? Where do employees see the greatest need for action? Answers were sought to these and other questions. The aim was to create a foundation for the intended broad-based social debate on the new quality of work using a scientifically based investigation.

A team of scientists was commissioned to develop a theoretically sound and representative survey. The result was a comprehensive written postal survey which was conducted at the end of 2004. This survey focused firstly on the current working and living situation of employees and freelancers. Secondly, the workers surveyed were requested to name important aspects of good work relatively independently of their current working situation. The survey was aimed at developing approaches for a new model of 'good work'. To this end, the experience of the

workers with their current working conditions and their expectations and wishes for future work design were to be compared. The results of the survey show what workers today understand by good work. At the same time, however, it becomes clear how close to and how far away today's world of work is from this goal.

The study shows in a representative overview how workers describe and assess their current working situation: What requirements are placed on an office worker, a teacher, a salesman or a

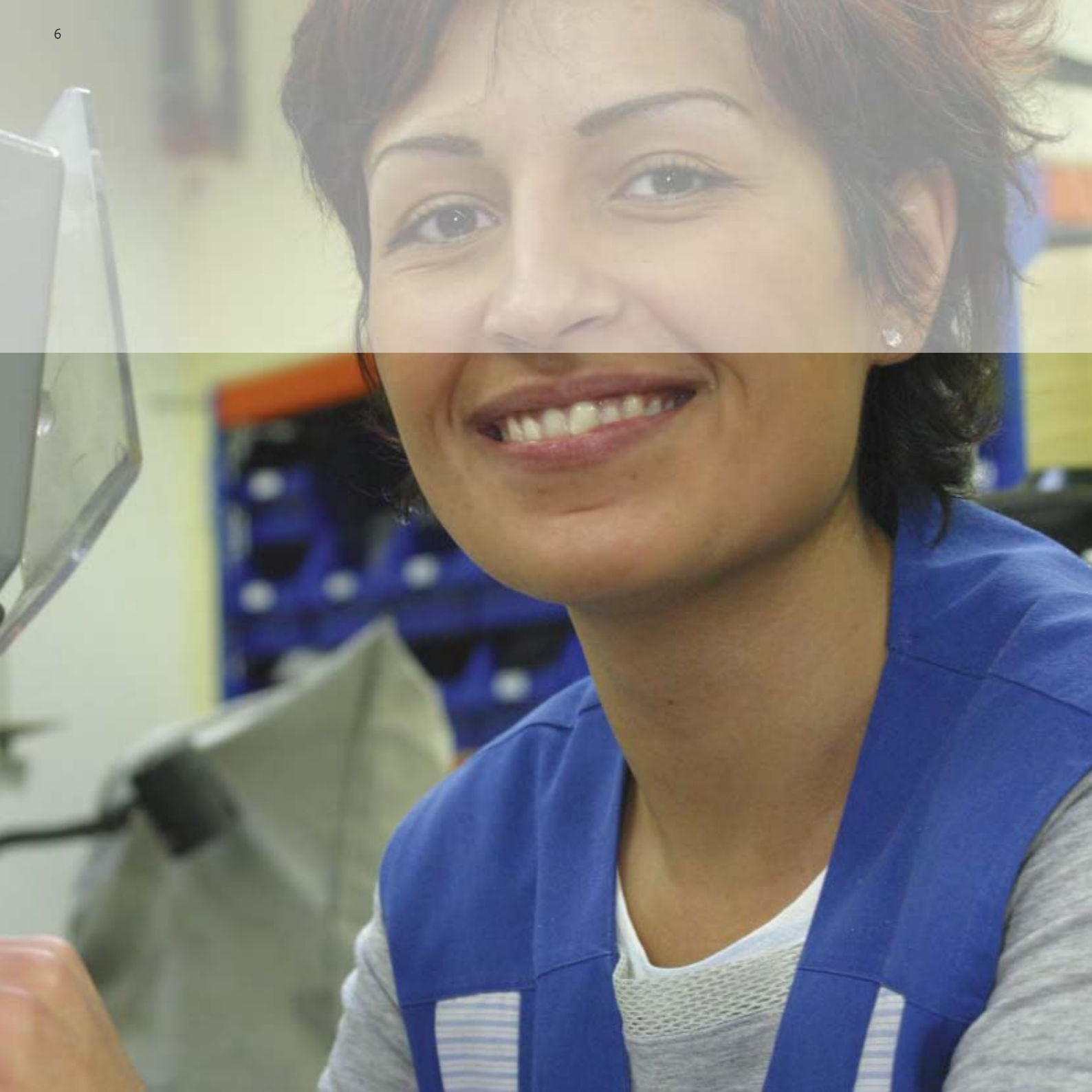
How do people describe their working situation inside and outside the company?

woman on an assembly line? What areas of work come close to satisfying the ideas of good work and what tends to be perceived as an inappropriate load? How do people see and experience their work? Does the consideration of the Codes of Practice play a role? In order to get to the bottom of these questions, a theoretical framework was required first of all. After all, the survey was to ensure that more or less all the requirements which people encounter at their work and which may be of importance for their well-being are taken into account. For this reason the survey's approach is based on the state-of-the-art workload and strain research as well as on stress research. To put it in a nutshell, the fundamental question was: What impairs and what promotes the well-being of a worker? The questionnaire took into account factors hazardous to health as well as those aspects of work which promote well-being and maintain health.

The participants in the survey were (normally) presented with a list of 56 aspects on the subject of work. These were rated by those surveyed using a five-level scale, ranking from extremely important, very important, important, less important to not important.

This summary of the results relates exclusively to employees. In addition, the research report ('What is Good Work? – Requirements from the workers' point of view', INQA Report 19, Bremerhaven 2006) provides

initial empirical findings on freelancers as well as on special occupational groups.



2 What is important to you?

Rating of income, safe jobs and other aspects of good work

Priority is given to safeguarding one's existence

One answer to the question "What is Good Work?" clearly leads the field: A fixed, reliable income is extremely important to 92 % of those surveyed. This aspect of good work is therefore well ahead of other criteria. Other issues which are directly related to material existence rank in the lower positions: a safe job (2nd with 88 %), a permanent employment contract (5th with 83 %) and regular pay rises (18th, 62 %).

Meaning and fulfilment

The safeguarding of one's material existence is, however, followed directly for most of those surveyed by the question of meaning and fulfilment through work: Work should be enjoyable (3rd place with 85 %) and perceived as being meaningful (8th place with 73 %). At the same time, those surveyed expect good work to be highly varied and diverse (10th place with 72 %). And feelings must also not be forgotten: For 73 % of those surveyed it is very important to be able to be proud of one's own work (9th place).

Social cohesion

Man is a social creature. This is also reflected in the results of this survey. 84 % of those surveyed find it very important to be also held in esteem by supervisors and perceived 'as a person' (4th place). This is followed by the promotion of

collegial co-operation and support embracing more than one factory or department (6th place with 76 %). By contrast, performance-related competition among colleagues is viewed critically: 59 % of those surveyed consider it important that it does not take place (22nd place).

Occupational health

Another field, which also belongs to the top 10, is occupational health at the workplace: Almost three quarters of the employees surveyed consider it extremely or very important for emphasis to be placed on the protection of health in the design of their workplace (7th place). And another field of classic occupational safety and health is found in the ranking list of the 25 most important aspects of good work: protection of non-smokers in the company. 57 % of the employees consider this to be very important.

Latitude for action

The health-promoting design of work does not stop with preventive measures and the protection of non-smokers. The social aspects of work already mentioned as well as work organisation, leadership and the possibilities of influencing and developing the worker are core elements of health-promoting work design. The survey results prove that these areas are also of major importance for the quality of work from the workers' point of view: Having an



Fig. 1
Requirements placed on good work from the workers' point of view

Source: What is Good Work? Requirements from the workers' point of view.
 Calculations:
 Tatjana Fuchs, INIFES

influence on the work methods, the pace and volume of work, being able to concentrate on one task, and having the right of co-determination when the design of one's own workplace is involved – all these features, which are characteristic of a broad latitude of influence and action, are viewed by a majority of those surveyed as extremely or very important.

Development possibilities

Employees have a strong need to further develop their own skills (13th place with 66%). 64% want their supervisors to look after their professional development, 65% are not frightened of occupational responsibility and, by contrast, demand work tasks involving responsibility. And the constructive handling of mistakes (19th place) indicates that the workers are interested in innovations and improvements and consider them important aspects of good work. The aspects mentioned do not differ from formal company development paths in the sense of promotion prospects or careers. By contrast, aspects of development are mentioned which relate to the work task and work design and where the aim is to develop one's own skills in the daily process of work.

Correct leadership

According to the results of the survey, good work also

embraces good leadership. Humane treatment by supervisors (84%) has already been mentioned as well as occupational and professional support. Furthermore, good planning (66%) and support in the work process (60%) are related equally to good work as are understanding for an individual's problems, appreciation, praise and constructive criticism from supervisors. The view of roughly two thirds of the employees is that these characteristic features of leadership quality are, at the same time, important criteria of good work.

Good work? Everyone finds these aspects important

The figures mentioned so far summarise the opinion of the majority without making any difference according to age, sex, occupation or location. If the answers are evaluated according to these distinguishing features, differences but also common factors are found. What is the cross section of the features of good work? Which key issues do all groups surveyed agree with, regardless of whether young or old, male or female, east or west, craftsman or commercial employee? The following aspects of good work are assessed by the majority of those surveyed as being extremely important or very important. Differences were merely found in the rankings.

Key aspects of good work in the opinion of employees are:

- a fixed, reliable income
- a permanent employment contract
- the possibility of being able to introduce creative skills into the work and develop them
- seeing meaning in the work
- being appreciated
- developing social relationships
- respect for and protection of health.

restricted to exceptional cases. What is remarkable about these results is that even workers who are not affected largely reject temporary work and time limits. That pay and a sense of justice are connected is shown by the following result: 70% of the employees surveyed are in favour of limiting the differences between very high and very low incomes.

If the results are viewed according to the different employment circumstances, differences can be seen among the workers without a 'normal employment contract' compared with those with a permanent employment contract. For example, the desire for meaningful work only ranked in the 15th place among temporary workers, whereas pay rises were much further up the list.

In demand: opinions on temporary employment contracts, temporary work and pay differences

The outstanding importance of income and employment security is underlined by additional results of the survey. For example, 72% agreed with the statement that the use of temporary work should be limited. 78% of those questioned want temporary employment contracts to be

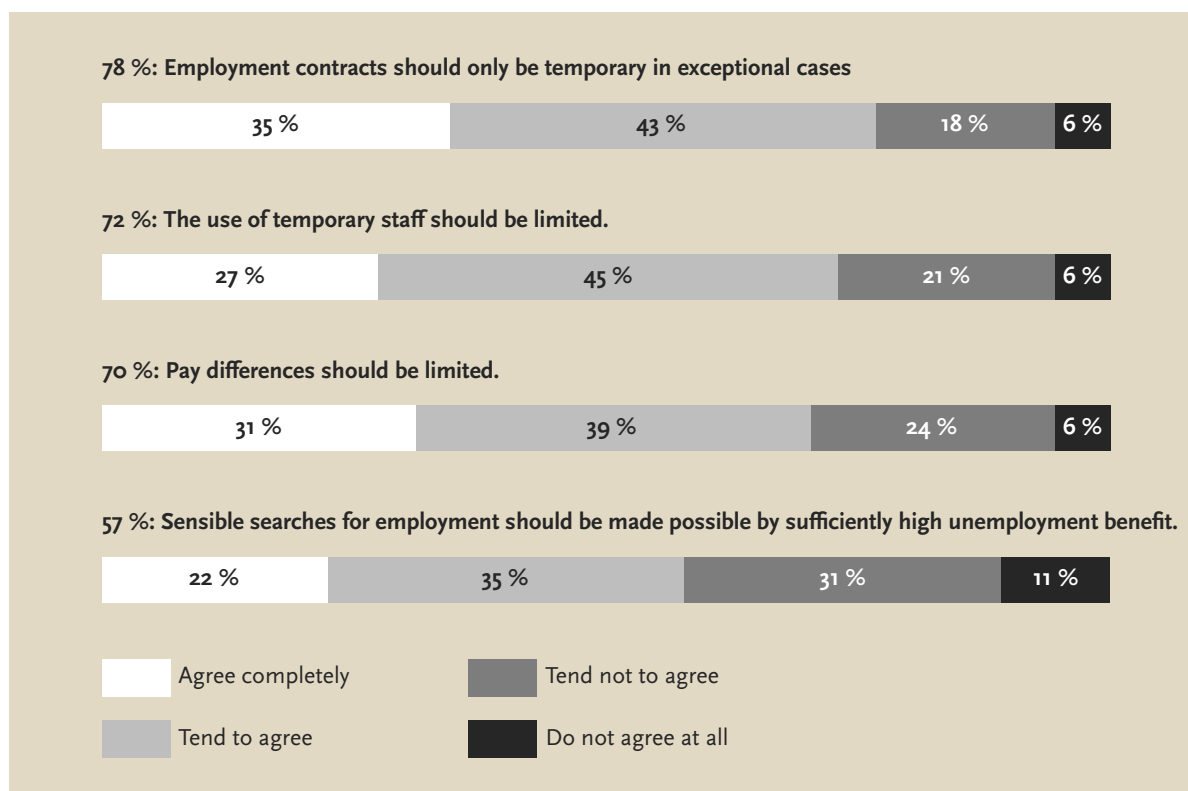


Fig. 2
Opinions on pay and
employment



3 Not always good: That's how workers describe their work

Following the requirements and wishes placed on good work, the following chapter deals with the question of how employees rate and describe their own job. Questions were asked about three areas where a decision is made as to whether this is good work. In addition to income, these are, firstly, the possibility of being able to develop one's own communicative, social, professional and organisational skills as part of the work activity. It is known that stable social relationships and the development of one's own resources promote one's personality. Resources therefore act, at the same time, as buffers against inappropriate strain from work which causes illnesses in that they help, for example, to correctly estimate one's own strengths and prevent behaviour detrimental to health.

Thirdly, in addition to income and the promotion of resources, good work is characterised by the fact that it prevents inappropriate loads. Good work design makes a contribution towards health protection. Therefore, the participants in this survey were also asked about the presence of inappropriate loads.

3.1 In focus: The income situation

One set of findings runs like a thread throughout the survey: the majority of employees consider their income as the focus of their current working situation. Employees are dissatisfied with no other area of work design as with

the relationship between income and performance and in no other area do they see such a strong need for action as with incomes.

Here, it could be assumed that people are always of the opinion that their income could be higher. However, a look at the details of the average gross monthly incomes shows that the high level of dissatisfaction is based on a readily understood foundation. Among the full-time employees – corresponding to roughly 72% – 16% earn a gross monthly income of less than € 1,500 and 19% an income of between € 1,500 and € 2,000. As a result, the present survey also confirms the results of other studies according to which a good third of the income earned by full-time employees lies in a precarious income range. This means that, after deduction of social security contributions, taxes and the necessary cost of living (food, rent), there is only little latitude for savings, retirement schemes or purchases such as clothing. 45% of those surveyed earn an average monthly salary of between € 2,000 and € 3,500 and 17% of the full-time workers earn € 3,500 or more.

Of the part-time workers – i. e. roughly 27% of the workers surveyed – just under one third (29%) earn an income of less than € 400, 18% between € 400 and € 800. Only about 20% of the part-time workers earn a gross income of at least € 1,500. Therefore, the income

Fig. 3
Income distribution
of full-time employees
according to various
features

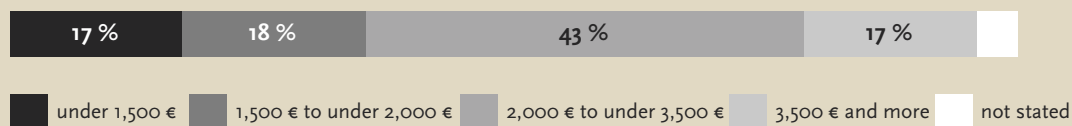
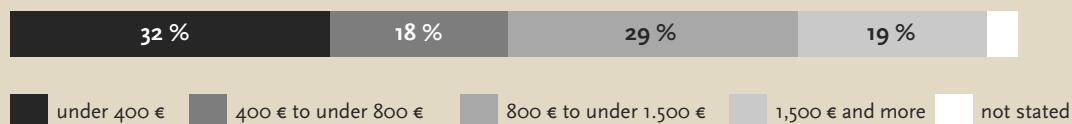


Fig. 4
Income distribution of
part-time employees
according to various
features



from part-time work is generally not enough to cover the cost of living. Naturally, the same also applies to claims to unemployment benefit and pensions acquired from part-time work.

The demand placed on good work – this is shown by the survey – is therefore to build up resources and avoid inappropriate loads. Here, income plays a role which should not be ignored. The connection between the level of income and state of health, the quality of food, education and leisure activities has now been adequately substantiated. The gap between rich and poor not only widens in terms of income but also as regards education, health and nutrition. To this extent, income is a crucial factor when it comes to strengthening resources. And the question of whether work is regarded as motivating and meaningful depends on the level of income. If the income is not in any reasonable ratio to the work demands and

performance from the workers' point of view, it is regarded as demotivating, which the survey also shows. With a view to strengthening the health resources, negative stress caused by a precarious income situation must not be underestimated. Anyone who is frequently worried about not being able to pay current bills at the end of the month experiences this, under certain circumstances, as a great uncertainty and threat. It is known that many people try, by extending their working hours, to counteract this problem and close the gap in their finances. However, with regard to health, this must also be viewed critically. Very long working hours, frequent overtime and unfavourable working time situations are detrimental to health in the long term and place a burden on society in other fields.

All these arguments provide an explanation as to why income is a crucial aspect of good work from the workers' point of view.

3.2 Wasted resources: the opportunities of personality development at the workplace are still not recognised everywhere

Gainful work can mean more than drudgery and earning a living. And with the correct work design there are a host of opportunities for developing personality. Good work is therefore characterised by the promotion of resources such as collegiality, development possibilities, further training or creativity. The social relationships in a company have a particularly important function. The fact that gainful work – and scarcely any other field of work – is organised to a large extent on the division of labour, permits a host of social contacts and relationships with one's colleagues, supervisors, customers, patients etc. These diverse social relationships form the basis for appreciation, communication, critical self-perception and – in the ideal case – for collegiality and friendships.

In addition to these social resources, however, other aspects also play an important role in the development of personality: Have I a lot of or little influence on the workflow in my job? Does my work offer me the possibility of further professional training, of educating myself? Does my work promote creativity or do I only have to perform what others have already thought out for me? Does work give me the experience of having performed something useful? This and similar questions were posed during the

survey and combined into sensible areas of resources. The results show that by no means all areas experience the necessary company support whereas other areas function relatively well in the employees' estimation.

Considerate attitude among colleagues:

This includes help and support

The well functioning areas obviously include social support from colleagues, which is experienced by nonetheless 92 % of those surveyed. 85 % report of a very good or good working atmosphere, 78 % enjoy recognition by their colleagues or appreciate their constructive criticism.

Doing something meaningful:

Most workers experience positive feedback from work content and result

Work can and should be meaningful. The gratifying results of the survey include the fact that relatively many workers (68 %) regard their job as meaningful.

And the alienation of work previously discussed a lot appears not to represent a problem for most employees (75 %): They can read off the quality of their work directly from the work result. These workers therefore receive **positive feedback** both from the work content and from the work result.

Less support than desired:**Supervisors tend to receive bad marks**

Another important source of social resources is a good leadership style geared to appreciation and support. However, this source is not always forthcoming according to the survey: Just one worker in two (52 %) reports a comprehensive level of **social and professional support by the supervisors**. It is noticeable that many supervisors apparently do not succeed in showing sufficient appreciation. There is also a frequent lack of professional and organisational skills, such as good work planning or the appropriate handling of conflicts.

Influence limited:**Participation in the design of work**

Only 40 % of those surveyed state that they can exert an **influence on their work** in various ways, the majority, on the other hand, has only little or no influence on work planning, break regulations, working time organisation, the design of the workplace, the type of work task or the work volume.

Creative potential goes to waste

The situation is equally bad as regards creativity. Only 38 % of those surveyed see in their job both **possibilities for creativity and variety** in their work and only just 12 %

report of **development possibilities** as part of the work process and within the company organisation. Evidently, the development of the creative competencies of workers is only pursued in isolated cases. As a result, there is a lack in many companies of creative potential for the further development of company processes.

Company (further) training crisis

The situation in the field of **in-house further training** is comparatively inadequate: Roughly 70% did not attend one single further training programme in the year prior to the survey or else the further training was considered as being less than helpful.

Their conclusion: The objective of professional development was not achieved and no improvement was recorded as regards general qualifications or coping with the work. This is all the more surprising as qualifications and knowledge are viewed everywhere as key terms for the sustainability of the economy and as preconditions for future economic success.

Difficult promotion:

Career opportunities are rated as low

Learning on the job, i. e. the further development of one's own competencies at work, does not appear for the majority of workers to be an alternative to the lack of further training. Only 46% of those surveyed are convinced of being able to improve their skills and knowledge through their work. Promotion as a motive for improving one's own qualifications does not apply to most of those surveyed: Only 15% of the employees see opportunities for promotion in their company.

Resources must be promoted better

Summarising, it can be stated that good and helpful social relationships in the company are the most widespread resources in everyday working life. Where this is not the case, managerial staff above all are in demand. The work content and work result do not provide any reason for criticism for the majority of employees.

By contrast, there is a clear need for action as regards the question of workplace design. Only a minority (38%) can participate in determining the parameters of the work or have an influence on the design of the workplace (36%). 33% of those surveyed can try something out, only 30% can develop new ideas.

3.3 The spectrum of inappropriate loads

From the point of view of the employees good work includes a work design, which respects and maintains health. The following section provides an impression, based on the results of the survey, of whether and to what extent these demands on good work are taken into account in everyday practice. In concrete terms, people were asked whether certain aspects and flanking circumstances of the work, such as work intensity, work organisation problems, emotional demands or even the threat of unemployment are perceived as inappropriate loads. In the long run these factors have a negative impact on

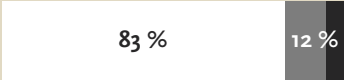
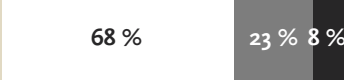

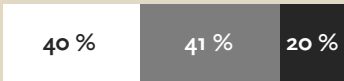
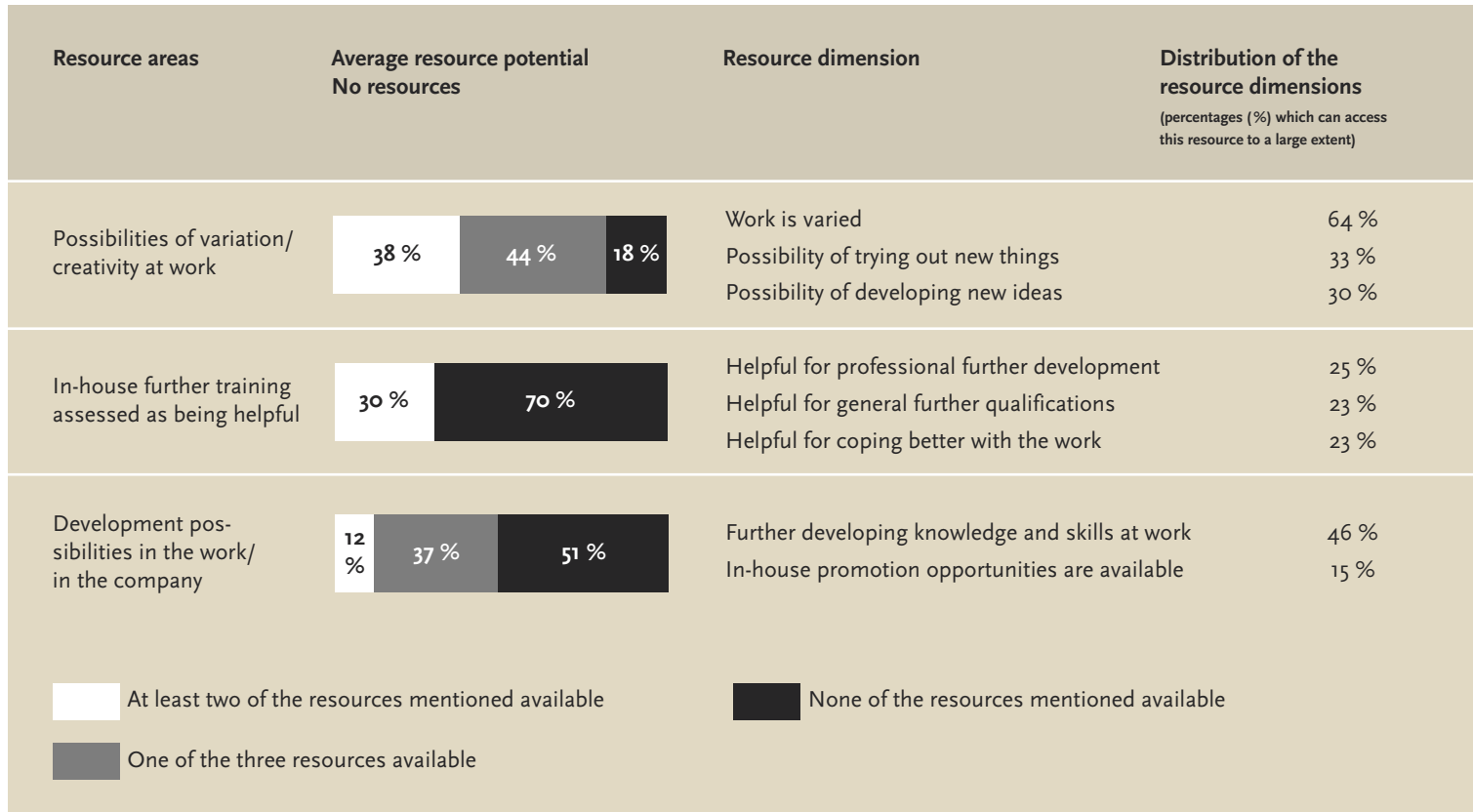
Resource areas	Average resource potential No resources	Resource dimension	Distribution of the resource dimensions <small>(percentages (%) which can access this resource to a large extent)</small>
Social support (colleagues)		Help and support from colleagues when needed	92 %
		(Very) good working atmosphere	85 %
		Appreciation and constructive criticism from colleagues	78 %
Positive feedback through work content/ work result		Evaluation of the job/activity as meaningful	85 %
		Work result shows whether the work was good	75 %
Social support (supervisor)		Shows respect and esteem	78 %
		Ensures satisfaction of the employees	63 %
		Helps and supports when needed	63 %
		Plans the work well	58 %
		Solves conflicts well	56 %
		Shows appreciation	56 %
		Ensures staff development	53 %
Possibilities of exerting influence on the work		Independent work planning possible	59 %
		Individual short breaks possible	58 %
		Influence on the working hours	41 %
		Influence on the general conditions of work	38 %
		Influence on workplace design	36 %
		Influence on the type of work	32 %
		Influence on the work volume	26 %

Fig. 5
The spectrum of
resources of em-
ployees in detail



Example:
 92 % of the employees receive help and support, when needed, from their colleagues. 85 % report of a very good working atmosphere and 78 % indicate that they are shown appreciation by and receive constructive criticism from their colleagues. If these three dimensions are taken together, this leads to the

following result: 5 % of the employees surveyed cannot rely on any of the forms of collegial support mentioned and also describe the working atmosphere as poor. 12 % only experience a positive form of social support in one area. 83 % of the employees report of a very good working atmosphere and collegial support or appreciation (at least 2 of the 3 dimensions).

Source: What is Good Work?
 Requirements from the workers' point of view:
 Calculations:
 Tatjana Fuchs, INIFES

health, in particular when they occur frequently. And they cannot be reconciled with a model of good work.

Fear for one's livelihood tops the list

The result of the survey shows what inappropriate loads are most frequently perceived by those affected as negative stress. Clearly at the top of the list is the fear of losing one's job. In this connection, 59% even report of numerous inappropriate load situations, i. e. they perceive the risk of not finding an equivalent job, losing their current job or being transferred as a burden.

Too difficult, too one-sided

According to the results of the survey, a second focal point of the inappropriate loads lies in the area of one-sided or physically heavy work. 40% of those surveyed mention several inappropriate loads caused by heavy physical work, one-sided physical work or one-sided work at a computer, and 28% of them feel negative stress. However, responsibility is also a burden for many employees. 58% of them indicate that taking difficult decisions or assuming responsibility for operations and other people is a burden on them.

Too many tasks at once

The employees perceive complex work demands as equal-

ly stressful. 65% of them experience it as a negative burden that their work is only slightly error-tolerant and they may only make a few mistakes. 45% indicate that the high accuracy which is demanded from them is a problem in the long term. In addition to the high demands which stem from individual tasks, the now common multi-tasking, performing several tasks at the same time, is also very stressful: After all, 63% of those surveyed feel exposed to inappropriate loads as a result. 67% of those surveyed feel under pressure from time, 41% admit that the quality of work also suffers from this.

The fact that such requirements are perceived by many as overdemanding comes as little surprise. Above all the workload but also the combination of work volume and organisational or occupational demands are perceived by 39% of the employees as excessive loads.

Little latitude for design

37% of those surveyed do not feel exposed to stress due to a lack of possibilities to exert any influence at the workplace. On the other hand, 63% report that they feel exposed to stress through the little influence they have on the work volume, the general conditions, the nature of the tasks, the organisation of working time, workplace design or work planning.

Great working atmosphere?

Many results on the topic of inappropriate loads complement the survey values relating to the resources. The social conditions in the companies is, by and large, not perceived as being stressful even though 19 % see themselves as competing against colleagues or even feel pressurised by them. With the relationship with the supervisors, on the other hand, there is room for improvement: Pressure, a lack of skill in solving conflicts, little commitment to staff development and the lack of appreciation are perceived here most frequently as stress.

Unhealthy environment

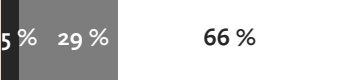

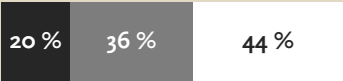


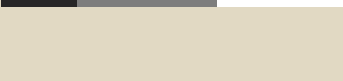
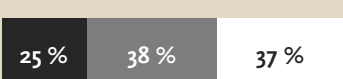
Noise, dust, drafts, toxic vapours – this was once the main field of activity of occupational safety and health. In terms of the inappropriate strains, the environmental conditions are nowadays well down the field. 21 % of those surveyed suffer in this area from a high workload, i. e. they are exposed to several environmental stress factors.

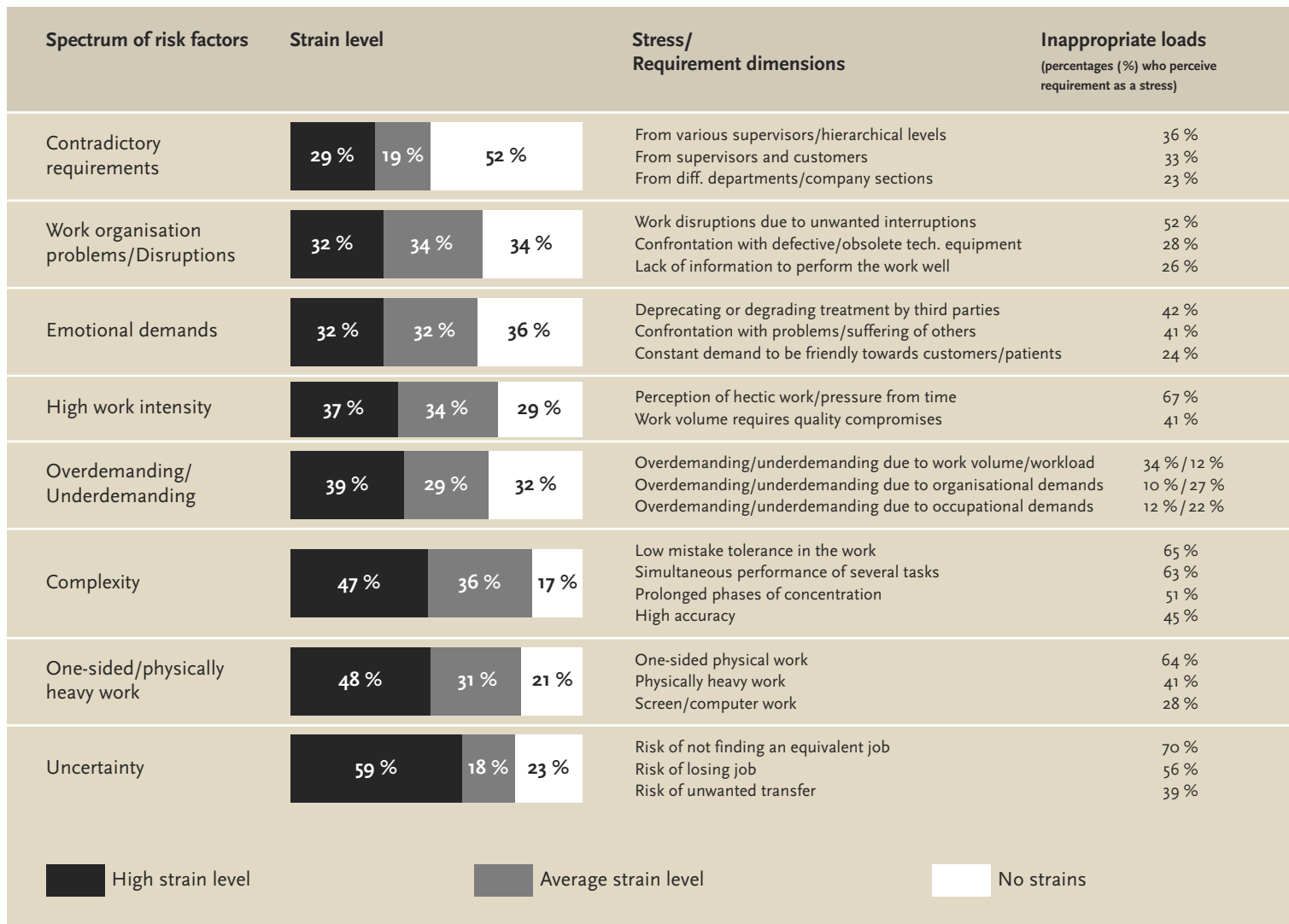
Of the individual stress factors, noise and loud environmental noises top the list, followed by drafts and extreme temperatures, which 41 % of those surveyed regard as stressful.

Multiple loads:

On the whole, strain level very high

Overall, a very high strain level is to be found over the entire spectrum: 57 % of all employees report of inappropriate loads in at least 10 different dimensions of their work (out of a possible 15). To put it in other words: This large group of employees experiences at least two thirds of the requirements placed on their daily work as stress. Merely 11 % of the employees mainly see no negative stress in their present working conditions, i. e. they feel a maximum of four requirement areas have a negative impact.

Spectrum of load factors	Strain level	Stress/ Requirement dimensions	Inappropriate workloads (percentages (%) who perceive requirement as a stress)
Social relationship with colleagues		Pressure from colleagues Performance-related competition with colleagues Lack of appreciation from colleagues Lack of assistance from colleagues	19 % 19 % 11 % 6 %
Special responsibility		Taking difficult decisions Responsibility for goods, sums of money, projects Responsibility for a very large work area Responsibility for the well-being of others	38 % 30 % 27 % 26 %
Few development possibilities		Few promotion possibilities in the company Lack of possibilities to further develop knowledge and skills Lack of possibilities to try out new things at work Few possibilities of variety at work	42 % 32 % 26 % 20 %
Ambient conditions		Exposure to noise, loud ambient noises Exposure to drafts/extreme temperatures Exposure to poor air Exposure to chemicals or hazardous substances	42 % 41 % 29 % 19 %
Social relationship with supervisors		Pressure from supervisors Poor skills in solving conflicts Low input for employee development Lack of appreciation Little care about staff satisfaction/well-being Lack of work planning Lack of support Lack of consideration/respect	43 % 32 % 32 % 31 % 29 % 25 % 24 % 17 %
Few influencing possibilities		Little influence on work volume Little influence on general conditions for work Little influence on type of work task Little influence on organisation of working time Little influence on workplace design Few possibilities of personal short breaks Independent work planning hardly possible	39 % 35 % 30 % 29 % 29 % 19 % 19 %
Organisation of working time		No consideration of private needs Overtime/Extra work Working on Saturdays Evening work (after 18.30) Working on Sundays and public holidays Night work (between 23.00 and 5.00) On call	63 % 49 % 41 % 36 % 28 % 18 % 11 %



Source: What is Good Work? Requirements from the workers' point of view.
 Calculations: Tatjana Fuchs, INIFES

Fig. 6
The spectrum of
inappropriate work-
loads among workers
in detail

In search of good work: work in the field of conflict between income, resources and inappropriate loads

Income, resources and inappropriate loads: these three factors describe to what extent people see in their work development and learning potential as well as possibilities to participate or feel exposed to excessive loads. One basic condition of good work is the maintenance of health and workability. This is a necessary but still not an adequate criterion. Another important condition for a high quality of work is the presence of resources. The survey has shown that, not only from a scientific perspective but also from the viewpoint of those affected, supportive social relationships, influencing and development

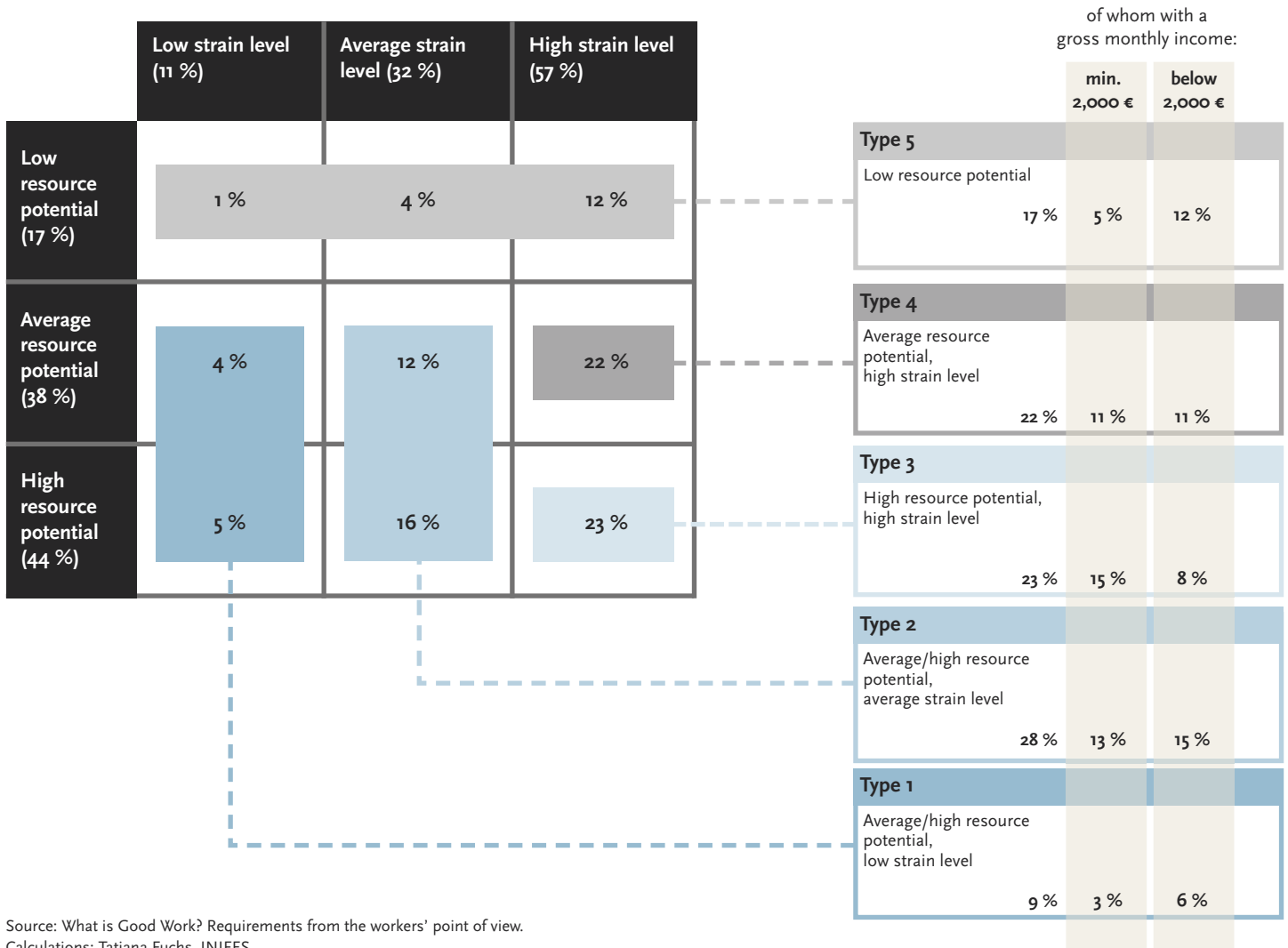
possibilities, creative possibilities and work contents which provide a meaning and create identification are hallmarks of good work.

Good work is therefore characterised by as few inappropriate loads as possible and by as many resources as possible. Conversely, no or few resources coupled with a high level of inappropriate loads are a sign of poor work because it is, to a large extent, detrimental to health and does little to promote personal development. A third indicator of good work is an income which secures one's livelihood in the broadest sense of the term. Its level is approx € 2,000, i. e. about 75 % of the average income.

Resources and inappropriate loads can be read off the matrix in their different levels and potentials. The percentages show the intersections between resources and inappropriate loads. For example, 23 % of those surveyed stated that they were confronted with a high resource potential and, at the same time, with a high level of stress. The nine values determined in the matrix were combined to form five types. The resulting types were then further differentiated depending on whether

the people receive an income securing their livelihood or not. The result shows that many of the workers questioned enjoy 'good work', i. e. work which does not exhibit any appreciable inappropriate loads but offers an average to high resource potential – and an income securing the workers' livelihood.

Fig. 7
Good work – not so good work:
Resources, inappropriate loads
and income in an overview



Source: What is Good Work? Requirements from the workers' point of view.
 Calculations: Tatjana Fuchs, INIFES

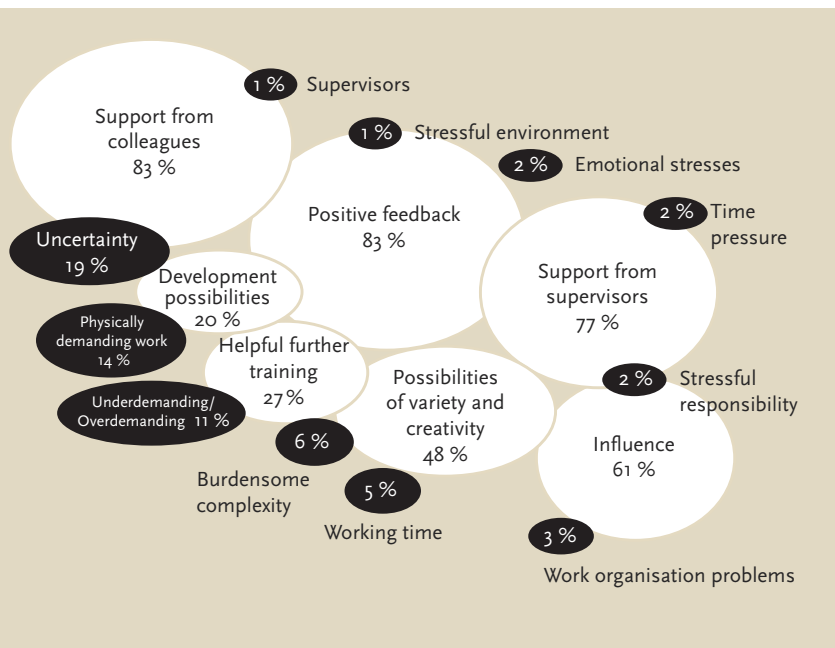


Fig. 8
Type 1: 'Good Work'

Good work: criteria only satisfied for a few

No appreciable inappropriate loads, an average to high resource potential and, in addition, an income which lies above € 2,000 gross – this combination of good work is seldom found according to the survey results. A mere 3% of those surveyed mentioned this combination. Another 6% are worse off as regards their income with comparable working conditions: their income lies below the € 2,000 limit.

One characteristic of 'good work' of the first type is that 83% of the workers in this group experience positive feedback due to the contents of their work. The work result gives them direct feedback on whether they have

performed their work well. 83% are also supported in many ways by their colleagues. For 77% the supervisor is in many respects an important source of social and professional support. Just under two thirds of those surveyed can have an influence in many ways on their work, roughly half have possibilities for creativity and variety. 27% attended an in-house further training course – helpful in their opinion – last year and one in five of them sees development possibilities for themselves both in their work and in the company. This broad spectrum of resources is offset by relatively few inappropriate loads: at 19% the subjectively experienced uncertainty about their employment is the area which is mentioned frequently as being a stress, also among employees who work under conditions of good work quality. Furthermore, 14% report of multiple inappropriate loads in the area of physical work, 11% suffer from overdemanding or underdemanding work, 6% experience the complexity of their work requirements as a stress in many respects and 5% in this group encounter problems with various aspects of their current working hours. In the other areas of work no or only isolated negative stress arises.

How most people work: between prospects and excessive loads

Workers who can fall back on an average or high resource

level but suffer from negative stress to an average extent were combined to form type 2. Although their working conditions offer a broad social and professional development potential, the level of inappropriate loads is already so high that there is no longer a fundamental criterion for humane work, namely freedom from impairment. After all, 28% of those surveyed belonged to this category, 13% of them earn € 2,000 gross. A higher resource potential, a higher level of inappropriate loads – these two criteria characterise type 3, after all 23% of the workers. Most of them (15%) earn more than € 2,000 gross. A similar number of those surveyed (22%) can be assigned to type 4. It is characterised by a high strain level which is, however, reduced by a number of resources. Half of this group must make do with less than € 2,000 gross per month.

If we take a closer look at type 3, there is a broad spectrum of social support by colleagues – this applies to 91% of those surveyed. 82% rate their work or their job as meaningful and receive feedback from their work about its quality. 62% of the employees in this group have numerous possibilities for creativity and variety and almost as many (59%) were able to participate in in-house further training last year. A lot of support from supervisors as well as influencing and development possibilities are also resources which characterise the work quality of these

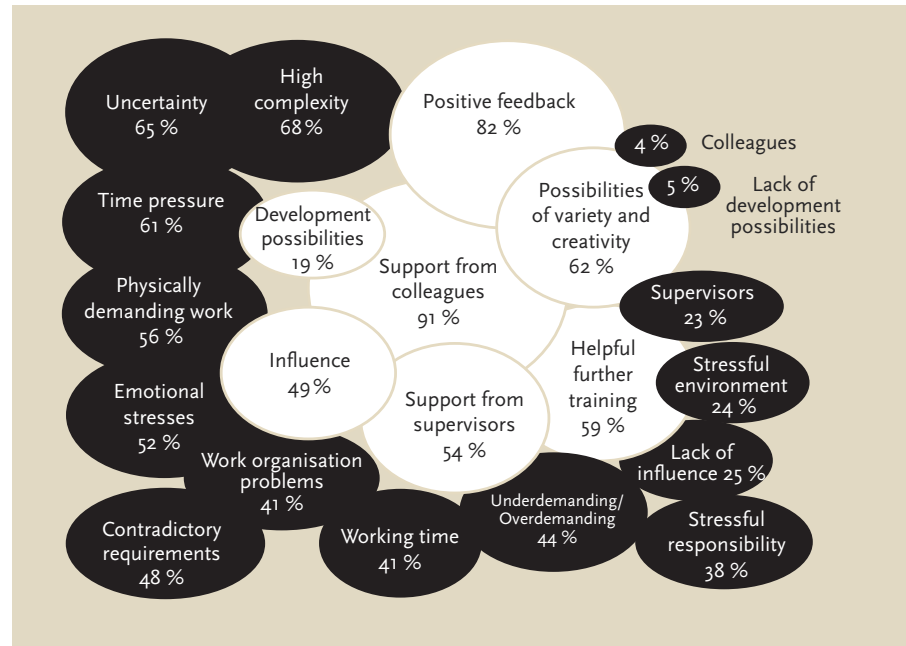


Fig. 9
Type 3: 'Work between prospects and excessive loads'

employees to a very large extent.

In addition to this positive side, there is also a negative side: the spectrum of inappropriate loads in type 3 gives cause for concern: 68% of the workers regard the complexity of their work as inappropriate in many ways, 65% experience a stressful uncertainty with regard to their employment. 61% work under so much time pressure that they have to compromise the quality of their work, which they in turn experience as an inappropriate load. Furthermore, more than half (56%) of the workers in this group have a high level of inappropriate loads in the area of heavy or one-sided physical work and emotional demands cause negative stresses for roughly as many

again (52%). In the areas mentioned so far 50% of the workers in this group experience a high level of inappropriate loads.

Reality for many: low resource potential, high level of inappropriate loads

Type 5 characterises poor work. When workers of this type describe their present job, supporting potentials are mentioned in a maximum of three dimensions of the

work, i. e. there are almost no occupational or social development possibilities. This reality affects 17% of employees. 12 of the 17 percentage points stand for the worst conceivable combination of low resource potential and high level of inappropriate loads. What is more, the majority of the incomes of this type are less than € 2,000 gross.

A huge spectrum of inappropriate loads is characteristic of type 5. At the same time, these jobs by and large

Positive experience, collegiality and design latitude contrast with considerable inappropriate loads for many workers

do not have those aspects which make up the development potential of work: just under two thirds of those surveyed experienced support from their colleagues, only 32 % see any meaning in their activity or receive feedback from their work result about their own work. Just under one quarter report of support from their supervisors (23 %). This lack of development-promoting factors is compounded by a host of widespread inappropriate loads. On top of this comes a particularly great fear of unemployment or occupational change (70 %).

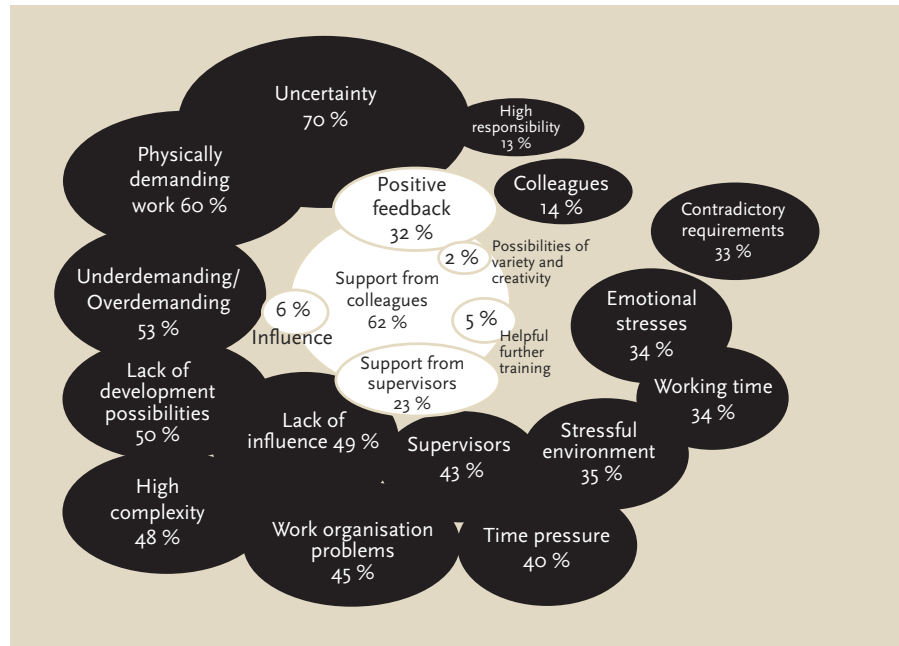


Fig. 10
Type 5: 'Stressful, low-resource work'

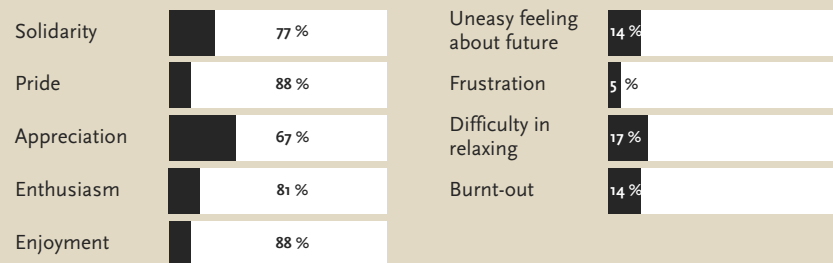


4 Good attitude through good work

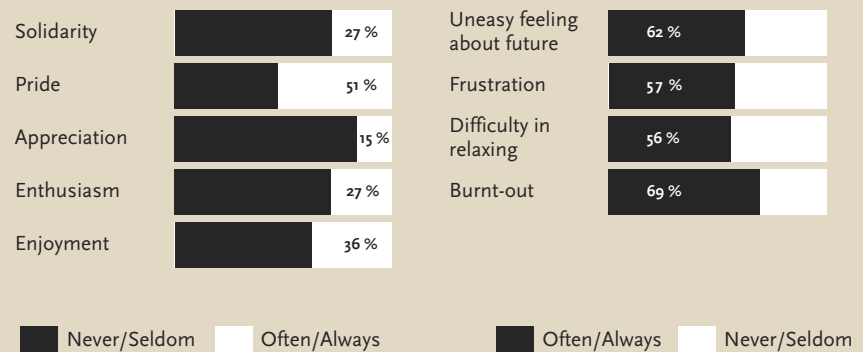
One fundamental assumption of the survey 'What is Good Work?' was that jobs which are characterised by many resources and few inappropriate loads are also seen as positive by the workers. The results of the questions on the emotional aspects of work confirm that good work has direct consequences. The more positively workers rate the quality of work in their company, the more frequently job satisfaction, enjoyment of work and other positive work emotions are recorded. The reverse also applies: the further away work is from the ideal of good work, the more dissatisfaction, frustration and negative work emotions increase. And forecasts of one's own health are directly related to the quality of work: the better the quality of work, the more optimistic those surveyed are of being able to pursue their occupation up to retirement age.

Fig. 11
Positive and negative work emotions
among employees allowing for the quality
of work

Work quality: Type 1 'Good Work'



Work quality: Type 5 'Stressful, low-resource work'



Source: What is Good Work? Requirements from the workers' point of view.
Calculations: Tatjana Fuchs, INIFES

The result of the survey is clear: The vast majority of workers whose job exhibit the highest quality of work according to the results so far have positive emotions as regards their work – job satisfaction, pride in their work, enjoyment and enthusiasm about the work as well as loyalty to the employer are often or even always experienced. On the other hand, negative feelings such as a queasy feeling about the future, frustration, the feeling of being burnt-out and problems with recuperation rarely or never occur with most of them.

These employees generally also consider it very

probable that they reach retirement age in a healthy state under the present conditions. This is not least of all due to the fact that the majority of them already feel healthy at present and rarely complain about disorders.

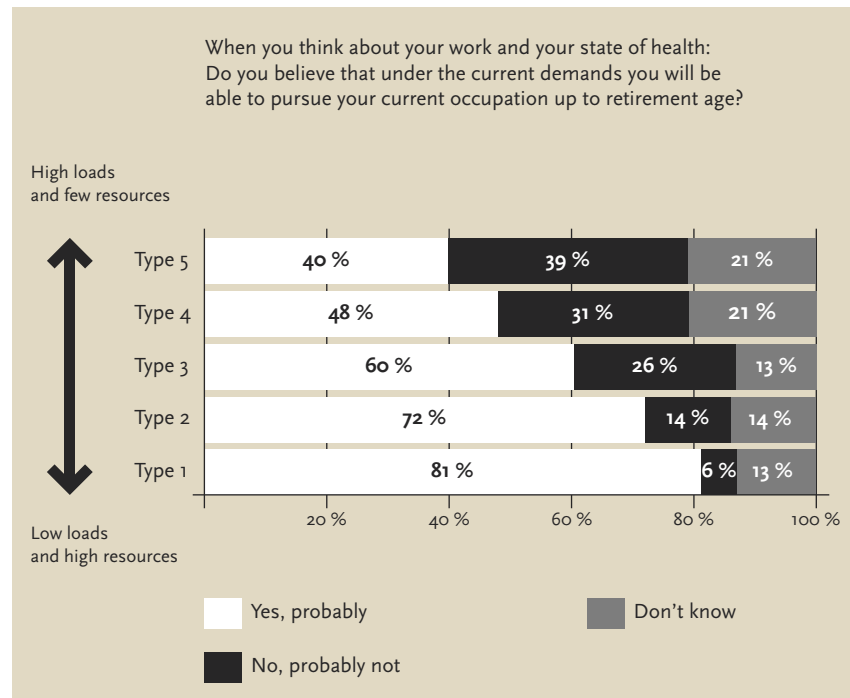
And what's more: good work also shows its effects outside work. Men and women who work under good working conditions regard gainful employment as an important supplement to their family work and their life outside work. The feeling of a double workload rarely occurs with these people. By contrast, above all full-time female employees who work under stressful and low-

The better the quality of work, the more optimistic those surveyed are of being able to pursue their occupation up to retirement age.

resource working conditions feel they have a double workload. They can only reconcile their occupation and family life with a great deal of effort.

As much as good work can have a positive impact on emotions, the reverse case applies all the more so. Workers who have to work under not so good working conditions (types 3, 4 and 5) experience particularly strong dissatisfaction, frustration, feelings of emptiness and an inability to recuperate. By contrast, they only rarely have positive feelings. Their working life is dominated by a low level of loyalty to their employer, they only seldom experience satisfaction, appreciation and enthusiasm. And optimism in relation to their own health is lost by the wayside: these workers tend to be sceptical as to whether they will reach retirement age in a healthy state under the present conditions. And this scepticism is, in turn, reflected in a very high level of health disorders on a normal working day. Work inside and outside the company is also experienced as a double workload.

Fig. 12
Self-estimation of
workability by em-
ployees allowing for
the quality of work



Source: What is Good Work? Requirements from the workers' point of view.
Calculations: Tatjana Fuchs, INIFES

5 That's good work:

The results of the survey at a glance

The results of the study 'What is a Good work?' confirm: Work is always rated as being particularly satisfying and positively experienced when it offers as many development, influencing and learning opportunities as possible and is characterised by good social relationships. At the same time, it must prevent inappropriate loads. If work

greater the lack of these three main factors for good work is, the more frequently dissatisfaction, frustration and resignation dominate the picture which workers paint of their current work. Moreover, these workers report frighteningly often of a high degree of health disorders on working days and, subjectively speaking, consider it rather improbable that they will be able to maintain their workability under these conditions up to retirement age.

Good work does not come from an ivory tower.

impacts on health too much, this cannot be offset by so many development and learning opportunities, creative and social potentials. Vice versa, work which is described by the employees as not being a negative burden but not as exciting and promoting is also far removed from good work. Thirdly, income also plays a major role. If it does not secure a livelihood or it is in a very unfair relationship to performance, this is perceived by the workers as an inappropriate load and has an impact on daily work. The

According to the results of this study, only a few people enjoy the ideal of good work:

Only 3% of the employees have a job which satisfies these criteria:

- an income of at least € 2,000
- a low level of inappropriate loads
- a high resource potential

13% of the jobs offer a good foundation for good work which can be expanded:

- an income which secures one's livelihood
- influencing and development possibilities as well as social integration.
- However, the spectrum of inappropriate loads would have to be reduced considerably in this case.

84% of the jobs, on the other hand, are characterised by

- an income which does not secure one's livelihood,
- extremely low resources or
- a worryingly high level of inappropriate loads.

There are, and this is also a result of this survey, many empirical reasons to create jobs which satisfy the criteria of good work. Employees who work under good or at least more or less good working and income conditions are motivated, satisfied and experience enjoyment or even enthusiasm about their work. Workers who report of numerous resources and few subjectively stressful working conditions also see more frequently an enrichment instead of a double workload in the interaction of work inside and outside the company. This, in turn, should have positive effects on work in the company.

Good work – and this study has provided the evidence – does not come from an ivory tower. Admittedly, it is based on recommendations according to the Codes of Practice but in many areas also corresponds to the ideas and wishes of the workers.

Imprint

What is Good Work? That's what workers expect from their job



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