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Kimberly Seung Goulart

What's in a Job?
An Exploration of What We Do and How it Affects Labor and Family Outcomes

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Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona

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For Jon.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to explore what makes up a job–the tasks, skills, personality traits, and rewards–and determine how a job impacts our daily lives. Much of the literature quantifies and describes jobs by their wages. This thesis explores how non-monetary job dimensions impact future labor and family dynamics. I begin with a deep dive into the processes for creating the job descriptions that are used for recruitment. This first step sheds light on how job descriptions are created, viewed by employers, and used throughout the job's life cycle. My co-authors and I find that the content of the work, the hierarchy of the job position, and firm characteristics impact the processes for defining job tasks and skills, drafting the job description, and the recruitment process. In the second step, I explore how job history is viewed by employers in the aftermath of an unemployment spell. I find distinct scarring patterns across a range of non-monetary job quality dimensions. Lastly, I turn to the home domain to determine the extent to which we bring our work home. I find that what we do at work can impact the sensitive negotiation partners have when determining who does the housework. Each of these investigations tackles important questions about society and provides a job task-based approach to answering them.

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INTRODUCTION

The investigatory endeavor of understanding the nature of jobs, the content of work, and who does that work can be traced back to Socrates (Singh, 2008). In his quest for the ideal state, his inquiry was simple: What work needs to be done and who can do it? These two questions have fueled mountains of research, numerous theories, and important ethnographies to help us find these answers. Annie Dillard (1995) famously wrote, "How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives," and within today's capitalist society, much of our day—for better or worse—is spent at work.

On average, an individual spends about 42 hours a week at work (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). Assuming the average person sleeps about seven hours a night, work can account for more than a third of our lives. It is no wonder that our work satisfaction is highly correlated with our life satisfaction (Dolan et al., 2008). Within sociology, the concept of job quality (i.e., what makes a job good or bad), is often credited to Karl Marx (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). His concept of alienation prioritized intrinsic rewards and was later developed into measuring the objective work dimensions of autonomy and skills (Braverman, 1975). Braverman (1975) explicated Marx's theory of autonomy and control by crystalizing the social relations between the worker and the capitalist. Within this framework, the capitalist's, i.e., employer's, main goal was to "seek the maximum amount of control over the pace and manner in which labor power was exerted" (V. Smith, 1994, pp. 404–405).

Braverman, following Marx's theory, suggested that the process of deskilling, stripping the worker of their skills and autonomy, would affect all workers. The labor market within this frame was dichotomous and antagonistic, between the worker and management. Yet, in the aftermath of Braverman's seminal work, Labor and Monopoly Capital, a new crop of researchers began to argue that the process of deskilling was not universal across all workers (V. Smith, 1994). The ability of management to utilize bureaucratic control, by engaging with select workers, delegating more responsibility, decision-making, and discretion became a key tool in the new labor process (Friedman, 1977). This schism in the sociology of work literature has been expanded upon and hotly debated since. Yet, it is impossible to ignore how these two concepts, autonomy and authority are interrelated, with the job quality dimension of authority essentially being a byproduct of autonomy.

While the Marxist theories focus on the objective goodness of jobs, other scholars opted for the subjective approach. Blauner (1977) conceptualized alienation by focusing on "a sense

of control rather than domination, a sense of meaningful purpose rather than futility, a sense of social connection rather than isolation, and a sense of spontaneous involvement and self-expression rather than detachment and discontent" (1977, p. vii). This approach, taking the worker's view on their job quality is often measured by job satisfaction within today's literature and has shown to be quite predictive of labor market outcomes, such as unemployment, life satisfaction, and burnout (Schieman, 2002; Chung, 2017).

Despite various attempts to define job quality, there continues to be a lack of agreement for what measurements should be used for measuring good and bad jobs. Nevertheless, sociologists prefer to use a multidimensional approach. Kalleberg and Vaisey (2005) argue for evaluating jobs based on their earnings, intrinsic rewards, promotion opportunities and security. Green (2006) prioritizes the ability to utilize one's skills within his definition, along with other dimensions such as wages, autonomy and insecurity. Numerous job quality indices include upwards of 10 job quality subdimensions (Leschke & Watt, 2008). Yet, the common thread that runs from Marx to today essentially boils down to the more autonomy a worker has the better the job quality. Autonomy can be defined in multiple ways but simply put, autonomy is the ability "to exercise discretion and initiative over what happens on the job" (Dahl et al., 2009, p. 18). As mentioned above, the precise definition of autonomy has been expanded (and segmented) to include subdimensions such as work intensity or work effort, authority or decision-making, and discretion regarding when to start and end one's day (Green, 2006; Gallie, 2007; Leschke & Watt, 2008; Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011; Chung, 2017).

Nevertheless, Green (2006) and Gallie (2003) argue that there has been a great convergence over what job quality measures are most relevant for a worker's well-being and social inclusion. Green notes that a high quality job is "one that affords the worker a certain capability—the ability and flexibility to perform a range of tasks (including the necessary sense of personal control), to draw on the comradeship of others working in cooperation, to choose from and purse a range of agency goals and to command an income that delivers high capability for consumption" (2006, pp. 14–15). This thesis adheres to the aforementioned approaches by examining autonomy and its relevant subdimensions, notably authority or decision-making and autonomy over one's schedule ("schedule flexibility"). In each of the upcoming chapters, I explore how these dimensions affect our future work outcomes, our searches for new jobs, and family dynamics.

The objective of Chapter 2 is to enhance our understanding of how skills and competencies are communicated or signaled to jobseekers. It chronicles the path of the job description from conception to dissemination. My co-authors and I, provide a qualitative exploration of how job skills and competences are identified, translated, and communicated to future jobseekers. Through 15 interviews with human resource professionals, we extrapolate distinct processes for the development and dissemination of job descriptions depending on the content of work—work complexity, autonomy, and specialization—and the level of authority of the job or hierarchy within the organization.

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to add to the existing literature on unemployment scarring by exploring the extent to which unemployment impacts not only wages, but other job quality dimensions. The occupational structure is experiencing dramatic changes, such as frequent and prolonged interruptions in continuous work that have led to a renewed interest in how unemployment spells impact future wages and career outcomes. Yet far less research has sought to understand how these interruptions impact the content of work and employment conditions. Again, I focus on key job quality measures of autonomy, authority, and job security. Chapter 2 also provides a conceptual framework for job quality that builds on existing definitions and indices and breaks job quality into two overarching categories: content of work and job conditions. This conceptual framework is explained in more detail later in the next section.

Following Gallie's recommendation (2007) to account for work pressures and how they can impact work-family conflict, Chapter 4 dives into the ongoing empirical pursuit to determine who does the housework and what factors contribute to that negotiation process between spouses. Again, researchers have typically tested the impact that wages or human capital investments (i.e., educational attainment) can have on the division of housework. However, their findings have been mixed. Thus, I build on the relative resources theory and power exchange models by using under-investigated work dimensions. I investigate the extent to which job dimensions that are inherently linked to power and resources—authority and autonomy—affect the distribution of housework.

For the last half century, the occupational structure has experienced massive changes, which have led to less security or less autonomy for many workers and has given rise to new skill profiles. These changes have inevitably altered the content of work, job conditions, and subjective feelings of job satisfaction, which in turn have had important consequences for society. New levels of stratification within the labor market are forming, outside of wages,

but also divisions across knowledge, skills, authority level, and employment protection. As prefaced above, the concept of autonomy, and its subdimension of authority, have historically served as a key part of the job quality debate. Thus, this thesis continues with that tradition by exploring their relevancy with regard to intragenerational mobility, job quality, and power dynamics between spouses.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards of Job Quality

The focus on job quality ebbs and flows, often in reaction to economic cycles. In 2002, the development of the Laeken Indicators was among the first European policy steps to quantify and track job quality (European Commission, 2001). However, by 2004 there was a perception that interest in job quality had waned, with policymakers focusing instead on the quantity of jobs regardless of their quality (Kok, 2004). The Great Recession, however, posed a new challenge to the study of job quality, as jobs that were viewed as low quality were the first to be lost, thus masking any broader trends in job quality (Green et al., 2013). Furthermore, vast changes to the occupational structure due to globalization, technological advances, flexibilization and the global pandemic, have drastically changed jobs and the corresponding profiles of the workers filling them, thereby posing even greater challenges to measuring and defining job quality. These contextual and substantive evolutions make job quality even more important for academic study, as they are undoubtedly impacting job and career outcomes and worker well-being. Studying job quality separately from wages also enhances our understanding of potential trade-offs that workers make when seeking new jobs (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011).

While there is a consensus that job quality is multidimensional, the ongoing debate about what specific dimensions comprise job quality is ongoing and hardly settled. Typically, the definition is divided into two overarching categories, intrinsic, or the "content of work" and extrinsic rewards, sometimes referred to holistically as "job conditions."

The content of work has been advanced by sociological study to include dimensions of autonomy, opportunities for skill development and advancement, and social interaction (Dahl et al., 2009; Gallie, 2007; Kalleberg, 2011). The concept of autonomy is the pillar of intrinsic rewards and is often strongly associated with job satisfaction (Kalleberg, 2011). Having autonomy is typically perceived by the worker as having control over his or her work content (e.g., tasks), how it is to be carried out and the manner in which it is done (Karasek et al., 1998). But the concept of control can be confusing because it can refer to the Marxist

viewpoint of the craftsman having absolute control, from conception to execution, or the capitalist having complete control not only over the end-product (and profits), but also over production (labor). But given the vast changes in the occupational structure since Marx's time, and even Braverman's time, control can also be incremental, referring to "the degree of power" which workers can have over tasks and people (Friedman, 1977, p. 45).

A fully autonomy worker within an employer/employee relationship is rare. Even within the "gig economy," workers, who interact on a web application or online platform, are thought to have more autonomy over their labor, time, and products, have been found to express lower levels of autonomy (Wood et al., 2019; Wu & Li, 2019). Breaugh (1985) crafts his approach to measuring autonomy in three parts: 'Method Autonomy,' 'Scheduling Autonomy,' and 'Criteria Autonomy.' He goes on to define each part as follows (1985, p. 556):

> *Work Method Autonomy. The degree of discretion/choice individuals have regarding the procedures (methods) they utilize in going about their work.*
>
> *Work Scheduling Autonomy. The extent to which workers feel they can control the scheduling/sequencing/timing of their work activities.*
>
> *Work Criteria Autonomy. The degree to which workers have the ability to modify or choose the criteria used for evaluating their performance.*

Breaugh (1985) adds work intensity to his Work Scheduling Autonomy by including the autonomy of sequencing and timing one's work, such as having the ability to determine the order and the speed at which tasks are performed. Others have separated work intensity as its own dimension (Kalleberg, 2011). Green viewed work intensity as synonymous with work effort, defining it as "the rate of physical and/or mental input to work tasks during the working day" (2006, p. 48). Furthermore, his view on work intensity is often correlated with skills. Other researchers have suggested that work intensity, whether measured by time, effort, or control over pace, is of great concern to those with more authority or managerial skills (Van Iddekinge et al., 2022).

The example of delivery drivers is perhaps the most salient example for why separating work intensity from other dimensions of autonomy makes sense. The drivers are typically told what stops they have to make and at what times they must arrive, but the route they take is largely up to them. Thus, the pace is predetermined and controlled by external factors,

despite the workers having autonomy over the manner or methods they use to get to each delivery point. This paradox has been further highlighted, as gig workers (i.e., freelance or contract workers) are typically perceived as having more autonomy than traditional employees despite being closely monitored by their employers (Glavin et al., 2021). There continues to be real challenges in measuring autonomy as a global concept or even as individual elements (Breaugh, 1985; Cascales Mira, 2021). In this thesis, I test both a global concept of autonomy and individual dimensions autonomy—discretion over tasks and schedule flexibility—to explore how each impacts future outcomes. I also test work intensity alone, which is an under-investigated work dimension in the literature.

The dimension of job authority within the job quality debate is complicated. Again, the definition can be viewed as having control or discretionary power over people, resources, and things (Wolf & Fligstein, 1979). Defining authority at work as supervising other persons can refer to possessing a higher position within the hierarchy of the organization, which in turn can lead to more power and higher wages. Wright and his colleagues (1982) argued that the ultimate form of authority is ownership over the means of production, which includes the labor of others.

More commonly, however, when we think of authority, we refer to authority over persons. Measurements of this form of authority can differ. For example, the most common description of authority relates to one's position within an organizational structure (Wright et al., 1995). More nuanced measurements of authority can relate to either the sanctioning authority, i.e., the extent to which a person can influence another worker's wage, position, or employment within an organization, which can be called the span of control, or the number of persons the worker oversees, or supervisory authority (Kanter, 2010; Mueller et al., 1989; Rosenfeld et al., 1998; Wright et al., 1995). Authority at work can also be interpreted as the ability to engage in decision-making. In this case, authority is closest to the dimension of autonomy because the ability to engage in decision-making reflects a person's ability to utilize their skills and carry out meaningful or challenging work (Edgell et al., 2016). It is important to note that a person may receive intrinsic rewards from the task of supervising or managing. Wright et al. (1995) note the intrinsic value that authority can have on a worker, as it bestows status (both inside and outside of the workplace). Nevertheless, they also argue that "job authority is one of the central ways in which the financial rewards of work are allocated" (1995, p. 407). One's authority level is often positively correlated with higher wages, higher levels of autonomy over work tasks, and job satisfaction or well-being (Reskin

& Ross, 1992; Clark, 2005; Schieman et al., 2006, 2009). While research has found that higher levels of authority or decision-making at work foster better well-being and feelings of value at work, more recent literature has posited that a paradox that has emerged within high-status jobs, finding that these jobs result in lower levels of well-being and higher levels of stress related to work-to-family conflict (Reskin & Ross, 1992; Posig & Kickul, 2004; Van Belle et al., 2018; Schieman et al., 2013, 2006; Chung, 2017).

Nevertheless, workers with more authority, on average, typically experience better working conditions. However, the inclusion of authority, explicitly in the job quality debate is not always so straightforward. For example, Dieckhoff (2011) explores how previous unemployment affects non-monetary job quality, and she includes job authority but notes that she includes authority as a best proxy for work autonomy. Muñoz de Bustillo and colleagues (2011) provide a comprehensive account of existing job quality definitions, conceptualizations, and indices, and few, if any, include the dimension of authority. While authority may be included in these indices under autonomy or opportunities for advancement and/or promotions or skill development, not many explicitly mention authority as inherently relevant to job quality.

The DGB Good Work Index, created by the Confederation of German Trade Unions (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund) with the purpose of quantifying good work from the worker's perspective, includes management quality, referring to the extent to which the worker received appreciation and recognition from management (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). This take on management and authority has been found to influence job quality, with those with "better bosses" reporting higher job quality (Gallup, 2017). In the literature, job authority can be viewed as related to or synonymous with having high autonomy and high wages (Ashton & Maguire, 1984; Dempsey, 2000; Schieman et al., 2013; Smith, 2002). For example, if a worker has autonomy, we assume that he/she has control over tasks, typically without a supervisor overseeing their work. This can elicit the image of a manager. However, there can be individuals who do not possess the title of manager, who also have some authority either over other individuals or over projects, such as section heads or foremen. Alternatively, there can be managers who perceive themselves to have little autonomy as their work is highly-dependent on other workers, teams, or clients (Kanter, 2010).

The extrinsic rewards of work are typically represented by wages. The notion of wages as a catchall for job quality is noted by Clark, who reflects, "It used to be fairly simple to answer the question, what makes a good job? Good jobs were those that were well-paid" (2015, p.

3). While some would disagree, there continues to be a preference for measuring job quality by its wages, mostly among economists (Cascales Mira, 2021). But as many have pointed out, the relationship between wages and job satisfaction is far from clear (Clark, 2015; Esser & Olsen, 2012; Green, 2007; Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). While wages are important to job quality, most would agree, wages alone cannot even account for all the extrinsic rewards of jobs.

Other estimations have begun to include job security. Muñoz de Bustillo and colleagues (2011) show that job security is a top priority among workers in many European and North American countries. Long gone are the days of the "job-for-life." There are two main reasons for this that are usually cited in the literature: the first refers to long-term and more frequent spells of unemployment, which have been the result of labor market crises, such as the Great Recession and the global pandemic; the second reason is the rise of atypical forms of employment (Schwander & Häusermann, 2013). These atypical forms of employment can include a rise in temporary contracts, zero-hour contracts, and even a rise in part-time contracts. While some of these employment setups may be preferable to some workers, many of the welfare benefits within the Western worlds were created with the job-for-life in mind, thus creating new uncertainties and financial challenges for workers and families. Additionally, with a heightened focus on technological change, many workers have reported higher levels of perceived job insecurity (Padrosa et al., 2021; Yam et al., 2022; Julià et al., 2022). Some scholars opt to include both perceptions of job insecurity, along with the contract type that a worker has (Findlay et al., 2013). A growing subsection of the job insecurity literature has come to argue that we are witnessing a labor market reorganization that is creating insiders, those who fortunate to have a permanent contract, and outsiders, those who work on uncertain schedules or a temporary basis (Peck, 1989; Schwander & Häusermann, 2013; Seo, 2021). These new forms of employment have now shifted workers desires and preferences for seeking new employment (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). Research has found that those who transition from insider to outsider have a harder time transitioning back into their once-held insider position (Dieckhoff, 2011).

In the next chapter, I begin with an examination into the process of drafting a job description for the purpose of recruitment. This qualitative approach provides new insights into how a job description is conceived, how firms identify, translate, and communicate their skill needs to jobseekers and how it is used during the selection processes. This investigation outlines how both the content of work and job conditions vary by firms and jobs. The following

chapter explores how unemployment spells impact the future content of work and job conditions, collectively viewed as job quality. I investigate the extent to which unemployment spells leave long-standing scars on future job quality. The distinction between monetary and non-monetary job quality dimensions adds to the scarring literature, suggesting that unemployment impacts future job quality in varying ways. The last research question asks to what extent do our work characteristics impact the division of housework between heterosexual married couples. Fewer studies have used job quality dimensions, such as authority and autonomy, in their quest to better understand how spouses use relative resources to bargain away their housework responsibilities. Finally, the conclusion provides a synopsis of the findings and points some key themes that I find throughout thesis. I also offer a short discussion for where I hope future researchers will take this investigation into job quality.

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CHAPTER TWO

JOB DESCRIPTIONS: FROM CONCEPTION TO RECRUITMENT: A QUALITATIVE REVIEW OF HIRING PROCESSES[1]

Kimberly Seung Goulart, Jorge Rodríguez-Menés, Josep Maria Caroz Armayones

ABSTRACT

The shift from an industrial economy to a knowledge and service economy over the last four decades has ignited a debate about what skills are now the most critical. The European Commission has placed skills development at the heart of its economic policies, as it believes that skill mismatches can lead to high unemployment rates, increased inequalities, and hindered innovation and corporate investment. However, little is known about the process in defining these new skills and workers' core competencies, and how firms communicate their needs to jobseekers. This article takes a qualitative approach and adds insights into this process from the firm perspective. Through 14 interviews with human resource professionals, we observed that the processes for identifying, defining, and evaluating skills and competences differ greatly by job profile and seniority, as well as firm size. We also found that within our sample, soft and transversal skills were equally regarded and relied on heavily during the selection phase of the recruitment process. The practice of firms to define new and specialized competences by the tools and methods used to carry out the job was also widespread. These findings are a first step in improving our understanding of the firm's recruitment process and talent acquisition.

[1] Goulart, K. S., Rodríguez-Menés, J., and Caroz Armayones, J. M., Job descriptions, from conception to recruitment: A qualitative review of hiring processes, JRC Working Papers on Labour, Education and Technology 2022/06, European Commission, Seville, 2022, JRC131040.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The center of Europe's economic and social policies for growth and sustainability are skills (European Commission, 2016). The OECD (2017) defines skills as the set of both cognitive and non-cognitive abilities, along with technical abilities required to do the tasks in specific sectors or occupations. The development of skills is critical to the promotion of social inclusion, as it allows citizens to be active members of a working society. However, within Europe, and especially in Spain, there is a perception that the skills needed within today's economy are rapidly changing and evolving due to the shift to a knowledge economy and technological advances. These trends can lead to a skill mismatch, such as a working population that either does not possess the skills needed for these new jobs or a shortage of workers who fit these emerging skill profiles. In turn, skill mismatches can result in high unemployment rates until education levels can meet firm needs.

In the aftermath of the Great Recession, Spain experienced high levels of unemployment, particularly among young adults. Spain's youth unemployment (young adults between the ages of 16-24) increased from 17 percent in 2007 to 53 percent in 2013. And for workers between the ages of 25 and 34, the unemployment rate was 28 percent (Landolt & Thieme, 2018). Spain has also been marked by high levels of over-education, both in terms of the subjective notion of feeling overqualified for a job, and the objective measure of having higher credentials or education needed to carry out one's job (McGuinness et al., 2018). This mismatch between skills and production needs can lead to income inequality, low levels of life satisfaction, and polarization in political attitudes, in addition to extended periods of unemployment (Susaeta et al., 2014). From the firm perspective, skill mismatch can hamper innovation, negatively affect labor productivity, and impede corporate investment (Brunello & Wruuck, 2021).

A key instrument for ensuring a good match between a firm's needs and the prospective worker's skills is the job description. The job description can serve various functions. In some cases, a job description serves as a tool to the firm to classify jobs and assign basic compensations to them (Mitra et al, 2010). In many cases, the job description is edited and repurposed as a job advertisement to be used in the recruitment process (Pató 2017). For the purposes of this study, we are interested in the latter. We use the terms job description and job advertisement interchangeably. Within the social sciences and with the advent of text mining and natural language processing technologies, job descriptions are becoming a new form of data by which we can explore employer demand preferences and changes in the

occupational structure (Buchmann et al., 2022). Therefore, it is critical that we fully understand all that goes into drafting and creating this important tool.

The presumption is that the most efficient approach to creating a job description is to write out each individual task and outline the specific skills and competences required to perform the job to the standard of the firm. However, in practice job advertisements are much shorter, with implicit and explicit omissions, and are sometimes constrained by the dissemination services used and the difficulties for defining the functions (Sostero & Fernández-Macías, 2021). Moreover, they exist within a competitive environment with the pressure to attract the best and brightest candidates, thereby influencing the drafting process. The job description itself can become a manipulated tool, such that job titles may become inflated or some routine tasks can be omitted or minimized to make the job more attractive. Job title inflation is a newer phenomenon, whereas a firm may call their human resources manager, a "talent and acquisition manager" instead, to appear more attractive and signal a more prestigious position.

Little is known about the internal processes and challenges that firms face when attempting to define and translate their job needs into job descriptions. The identification of the content of a job has a long history rooted in job analysis. Job analysis is a systematic process that examines the various activities conducted within a job, which was developed to aid training, job design, and compensation scales (Schmitt, 2012). However, the usage of job analysis as it relates to the recruitment process is limited in the literature, which is puzzling, as the result of job analysis is typically a job description for the purpose of recruiting new workers into an organization.

This paper seeks to understand the conditions that might account for defining a job more or less prescriptively. In doing so, we deploy a qualitative approach by following the process of the job description from conception to recruitment. This inductive approach is important for this field of study, as the exploration of the job description at the conception level is limited. Our purpose is to identify which elements are essential in that process to ensure the effective communication of the firm's functional needs to the prospective workers who may best fill those needs. Currently, there are international and national surveys that cover job attributes or working conditions from the perspective of the employee (see European Working Conditions Survey, American Working Conditions Survey, and Spanish Quality of Life in the Workplace Survey as examples), but, here, we investigate firms' perspectives and processes for defining skill needs. We explore the recruitment process from the perspective

of nine private-sector firms, a union representative, a recruiting services organization, and a public organization, all based in Barcelona. Given the exploratory nature of our research, each of the participating organizations were selected to ensure as much heterogeneity as possible in firm size, industry, and job specification. Because job descriptions can be drafted in-house or outsourced to other human resources firms, we also included a recruiting services organization in our sample. Within Spain, union coverage is very high, thus unions also play a key part in the development of job descriptions, as they serve as tools for wage setting and worker protections. While we would have liked to interview more organizations, the recruiting process proved to be somewhat challenging, which is explained in more detail in Section 4.

We contribute to the literature by adding three main insights into the recruitment process. First, we observed that the approach for defining job needs and the hiring practices differed by the content of work (i.e., work complexity and specialization) and the level of autonomy and authority of the job profile. More complex and senior positions, which in many cases required a 'specialist' of some kind with little or no supervision, would follow a different recruitment process than a more junior, more general position. For example, the more specialized the position, the more often the functions were defined by the methods, or the tools needed to carry out multiple tasks and generate different outcomes in the position. The description of tasks would typically be detailed, as well as the competences and experiences needed for the worker to carry out the job. Likewise, for managerial jobs, experience in similar supervisory and managing roles was often used as a requirement and/or validation.

In contrast, for positions performing standard and routine tasks with less autonomy and authority, a generic job title would suffice for explaining the job requirements. For example, the job title of 'engineer' was used to mark the qualifications needed for a junior position doing basic engineering tasks (e.g., of support). Embedded in this title were certain assumptions about the job requirements and qualifications, i.e., an engineering degree, and from the perspective of the human resources (HR) manager, any person with this degree could likely fill the position. It was understood that the supervising manager would later train the hired engineer on the specific tasks relevant to their firm needs, but the baseline of an engineering degree would suffice to demonstrate competence for the job. Indeed, credentials were often used to communicate a minimum standard of competences required for all jobs. Like the standard of competences, the level of flexibility in the job conditions offered to the candidate also varied by the level of specialization and seniority of the position. In many

cases, an HR manager would have more flexibility in the salary range to negotiate when hiring a senior-level position than when hiring a less specialized and lower-level position, although in all there was room for negotiation. Finally, the very same process of search was typically more elaborate and ad hoc when hiring specialists and seniors than when hiring support and junior workers.

Second, we observe patterns in the hiring practices and recruitment strategies according to firm size. The recruitment processes of medium and large firms within our sample were more formulaic, bureaucratic in many instances, and with a 'top-down' approach. Large firms were more likely to report using job description templates with a list of functions and competencies needed for each job vacancy. And in some cases, these firms mentioned that their market strategies, rather than any production needs, dictated the firm's hiring needs. Therefore, the first line of identification for a new hire typically came from the top, rather than from a section or line manager. In comparison, smaller firms were more likely to take an ad hoc and bottom-up approach and were often aimed at solving production bottlenecks. This follows the literature, as the division of labor is less developed in smaller firms and worker turnover is typically lower in comparison to larger firms (Chaney & Ossa, 2012). Smaller firms were also more likely to report the usage of third-party recruitment resources and services for drafting of job descriptions, dissemination, vetting, and in some cases, for candidates' selection.

Lastly, we found that in all firms within our sample, regardless of size and sector, 'soft' skills were very important when drafting job descriptions and selecting candidates. The definition of soft skills often refers to personality traits, motivations, personal goals and preferences. Soft skills allow an employer to determine if the person is a good fit within the firm (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Lyu & Liu, 2021). Many of the firms we interviewed reported that a candidate needed to be a good 'fit' within the organization. This was sometimes referred to as having 'transversal skills' or a candidate embodying the firm's values. They are harder to measure and communicate to potential jobseekers, who in turn may find it difficult to demonstrate having them in their CV. However, in other cases soft skills were more critical to the performance of the position and were treated as technical or 'hard' skills in some specific respects. For example, salespersons would need to demonstrate that they have interpersonal skills, good communication capabilities, empathy, and drive to perform well in the job. Here, we found that experience played a key role in communicating a candidate's fit for the vacancy.

Our findings reveal important insights into the processes of the development of a job description from conception to dissemination. In the next section, we provide a short background on the previous investigations into recruitment processes and the gaps in knowledge about the process from the firm perspective. Next, we explain the approach for our outreach to firms and the methodology used in the study, followed by our main findings. And lastly, we offer our recommendations for future research and the policy implications of our findings.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

The hiring and selection processes for firms have evolved over time, with firms now referring to these processes as 'talent recruitment' or 'people and culture management'. This new nomenclature signals a shift in how firms view the process of recruitment, which has been considered as 'one of the most important human capital challenges faced by twenty-first century organizations" (Dries, 2013, p. 272). Yet, little is known about the internal processes that firms take to define the tasks and skills of a vacancy, and how these affect the recruitment procedures and the negotiation of the employment conditions between firms and workers. What is often communicated to jobseekers is the result of that internal process in the form of a job description (Sostero & Fernández-Macías, 2021, p. 9). Within the human resources and psychology literature, this process of defining work content and competences is often referred to as 'job analysis' (Fine & Cronshaw, 1999) or, as recent scholars have come to call it, 'work analysis' (Sanchez & Levine, 2012), signaling a shift in emphasis from tasks to competences.

Job analysis is a useful tool for guarding against skill mismatches, increasing efficiency within firms, and for codifying jobs for the purpose of research. However, the literature on how job analysis is used for the purpose of understanding recruitment is under-developed (Goldstein et al., 2017). Conceptually, job analysis dates back to the 5th century BC, when Socrates inquired about the work that needed to be done within his ideal state and who would be able to do it (Gael, 1988). In organizational literature, the main turning point came when Frederick Taylor first created his four principles of scientific management (2005[1919]). Job analysis became a tool for increasing productivity by understanding the content of the job.

What was absent in Taylor's analysis were the worker's interests. Unsurprisingly, with the emergence of 'scientific management', a schism also emerged between management and worker, resulting in an 'adversarial approach to industrial relations' (Singh, 2008, p. 89).

Workers initially saw the development of job descriptions as an attempt by management to appropriate worker's craftsmanship and increase exploitation (Nelson 1974). However, as the industrial division of labor expanded during the 20th century, and skilled workers were increasingly replaced by semi-skilled labor, unions' stance regarding job descriptions shifted towards defending them. Job descriptions could protect workers from task creep or management abuse (Katz 1986; Baron and Bielbi 1986) and be used as an objective evaluation tool that determines worker's advancements, bonuses, and promotions (Sostero & Fernández-Macías, 2021).

A long-standing assumption underlying the old view of job analysis is that jobs are static and stable over time (Stewart & Carson, 1997). The notion of 'one person-one job' held for much of the 20th century in job analysis. But as Western labor markets were transformed due to the shift from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge economy, new approaches to job analysis flourished. This shift has been abetted by technological advances that have rendered some jobs obsolete, while creating new jobs that had never existed before, and dynamic work profiles. These new work profiles are often team-based and entail a wider variety of flexible roles and responsibilities that include various functions, thus making the traditional approach to job analysis outdated (Stewart & Carson, 1997). Today, firms need workers who are trainable, adaptable, and multi-skilled (Singh, 2008).

According to Nelson (1997, p. 41) we are witnessing a flattening of organizations, thus making jobs boundaryless, and where 'competencies reside and are recognized throughout the workplace.' Flattened organizations combine several lines of job demarcation: 'vertical (between levels and ranks of people), horizontal (between functions and disciplines), external (between the organization and its suppliers, customers, and regulators), and geographic (between nations, cultures, and markets)' (Nelson 1997, p. 40). Within this 'boundary mindset', there is a concentration of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) at the top, while jobs at the bottom are more specific and have narrower skill sets and less autonomy. Thus, scholars have recently advocated for a shift in focus emphasizing the description of competences over that of tasks when conducting job analysis, as this allows for more flexibility in their definitions (Autor et al., 2003; Tomlinson et al., 2018). Rodrigues and colleagues' (2021) show that job descriptions are typically written to fit a certain task domain (set of similar tasks) with key competences. They go on to define task as 'a discrete unit of work activity that contributes to the production of economic output', whereas competence is the 'general ability to do well in a particular task domain' (pgs. 6-7). These competences

typically require having a set of key skills, specific or general knowledge of the domain, and a 'particular set of 'attitudes." These attitudes can refer to the extent to which workers pay attention to detail, are open to being taught, conduct themselves conducive to working with others, etc.

However, a consensus is lacking in the academia and the public discourse regarding how to define the skills at the basis of workers' competences. This gap signals the limitations of the concept and the diverse ways in which firms view their needs. In a recent examination of job descriptions from online job postings, Sostero and Fernández-Macías (2021) found that online databases referred to over 13.000 different skills. Furthermore, they noticed how the terminology used in the academic literature to refer to skills was inconsistent. For example, keywords such as 'modes of communication and interactions' could include skills like relationship building, management, listening or persuasion. Umbrella terms such as communication or organizational skills were used to refer to very broad sets of skills and competences. On the contrary, specific knowledge about an industry, work organization method or software/tool was often referenced in detail. Examples included 'accounting industry knowledge' or 'Cisco'. In some cases, tasks like 'scheduling' or 'budget forecasting' were mentioned to refer to the skills necessary to perform them. Finally, they found much use of general task domains communicating a broad set of tasks or occupational competences. These might include 'nursing skills', 'sales', or 'engineering'.

One important set of keywords appearing in job descriptions refers to 'soft skills.' These could include words such as 'energetic', 'self-starter', and 'positive disposition'. Within psychology, soft skills are more often referred to as personality traits. Thus, Roberts defined personality traits as:

> *'.. the relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that reflect the tendency to respond in certain ways under certain circumstances.'* (Roberts, 2009, p. 140)

The performance on tests devised to measure these responses is often assumed by HR professionals to capture the corresponding personality trait. A worker needs to have the right personality traits to perform well in a job (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). Being a quick learner (i.e., trainable), a motivated or a self-starter (i.e., a person requiring less oversight), or having a positive attitude (i.e., getting along within a team or with colleagues) are all soft skills that signal positive performance within the job (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Lyu & Liu, 2021).

Just as the definition and usage of skills differ, so does the process for communicating the firm's needs to the jobseekers. The creation of job advertisements is subject to time, contexts, and dynamic labor market conditions, which can lead to alternative signaling processes (Breaugh, 2008). Research finds that job advertisements that do not depict a realistic view of the position can lead to higher turnovers (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Thus, there is an incentive for firms to accurately communicate the skills needed to perform the job well and minimize mismatches (Breaugh, 2008).

In the past, research has focused on the hiring processes of large firms, those with over 500 employees, while interest in small- and medium-sized firms has lagged. This may be due to smaller firms generally having a less developed division of labor and less turnover (Chaney & Ossa, 2012). The few studies comparing large and small firms have found different hiring and recruitment processes based on firm size, with larger firms being seen as more likely to carry out their recruitment processes in-house, and in a bureaucratic fashion (Bartram et al 1995; Barber et al, 1999). The efficiency imperative theory explains this difference as stemming from larger firms experiencing more recurring hiring periods, which will push them to formalize and internalize recruitment for efficiency purposes (Williamson, 1983). Closely related to the former perspective, the resource-based theory of the firm explains small firms' reliance on external help and networks as a tool to overcome their resource poverty and consequent competitive disadvantage vis a vis large firms (Marchington et al, 2003; Wapshott & Mallett, 2016). Finally, the institutional theory argues that large firms' reliance on formalized processes are driven by institutional pressures, both internal and external to the firm (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), such as employment protection laws, pressures to "appear legitimate" among competitors, or even normative pressures like group values or firm reputation. Large firms may want to omit routine or mundane tasks that will be perceived as unattractive to jobseekers in today's competitive labor markets (Sostero & Fernández-Macías, 2021).

The job title is the most vital part of a job advertisement, as it can communicate minimum degrees, credentials or more generally, competences needed to carry out the job tasks efficiently. However, with the increasing use of online platforms to advertise job vacancies, professional occupations tend to be over-represented, and the detail and variety of the skills and tasks they include is higher than for lower-level jobs (Sostero & Fernández-Macías 2021). This points to the potential difficulties in defining more complex jobs placed within flexible contexts. More work is needed to better understand these difficulties or, more generally, to

identify the main factors explaining firms' choices and omissions when defining and advertising their vacancies.

2 | RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Our main research objective is to investigate the process of developing job descriptions for recruitment purposes, defining the skills and competences from the firm perspective and, less so, on workers' starting employment conditions when hired. Additionally, we want to explore if differences in the context of the firm and in its internal division of labor could be associated with variations in job descriptions and hiring practices. We use a qualitative approach that analyzes the practices of a selected number of firms differing in size and sector, as told by their HR personnel.

Our main research questions are:

- *How do firms define the tasks to be carried out by workers?*
- *When hiring, do firms use job descriptions to signal the skills and competences that the prospective candidate must have to fill the job?*
- *Are the screening and hiring processes affected by these descriptions?*
- *Do these practices vary by the complexity (specialization, decision-making) of the work and the context where it is carried out (e.g., the size or sector of the firm)?*
- *Do firms take the job descriptions into account when setting the initial conditions of employment?*

3 | DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Utilizing a qualitative approach, we follow the development of a set of job descriptions for recruitment purposes from conception to recruitment. We conducted 14 interviews with HR professionals working in private and public institutions. Eleven of the interviews were with staff in private companies, but we included a public institution for the comparison. Additionally, we interviewed an organization that carries out recruiting services to small- and medium-sized firms, and a union representative, as unions play a key role in the development of job descriptions in and outside of Spain. In Spain, unions alongside governments and employer associations negotiate working contract terms, conditions, and salaries. Therefore, unions often use the job description as a key tool to guard against task-creep (assigning tasks not included in the job description when hired) and worker exploitation.

As shown in Table 1, the script used for the interviews was subdivided into six sections. This usage of the same script was to ensure comparability in the analysis and identification of patterns. The first section was primarily administrative, asking the individual their job title and their tenure with the firm. The last section, while included in most of the interviews, was not always covered due to time constraints. All interviewees were given time to additional commentary, color, and opinions that they wished to express.

[TABLE 1 here]

Each section used a set of semi-structured questions (See Appendix for the translated version in English). However, many of the questions were open-ended, which offered rich answers from the interviewees, and the ordering of the questions was often altered to maintain the natural flow of the conversation. At times, the interviewer(s) would ask follow-up or clarifying questions, but typically all interviews followed a similar wording to maximize inter-rater reliability. We asked interviewees to focus their responses with a modal position in mind, i.e., jobs for which the firm hired the most. Additionally, we asked about positions that were more (or less) complex in nature, depending on the complexity of the 'modal' position for a comparison context.

The interviews were carried out in Spanish or Catalan and were hosted virtually during the months of April, May, and June of 2022. There were two interviewers in all of them. One would take the leading role and the other would intervene to request clarifications or further details. Each interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes to one hour. The interviews were recorded with audio only, transcribed using an automated service, and translated into English for the analysis.

The sample was selected strategically rather than randomly, to ensure heterogeneity in the firm size and sector. The sample skews toward small and medium firms, as the response rate from our outreach to large firms was low. We covered four firm sizes (< 10 employees; 10-49 employees; 50-249 employees; > 250 employees) and three sectors (Manufacturing, Industry and Energy; Communication and Financial Services; and Health, Professional and Advocacy). Additionally, we interviewed an employer association that participates in recruiting and hiring services for its members and a union representative.

The outreach process began with initial contact via employer associations. Working with these employer associations helped us to identify firms to interview, and we believe, offered

additional validation for our project in the eyes of the firms. While this initial approach was fruitful to get the process started, many of these firms were small- and medium-sized. Therefore, to increase our responses and potentially add large firms, we expanded our focus to large firms and began a cold-outreach process. The initial outreach entailed a generic information email, which was forwarded to the appropriate staff. From this outreach we secured the remaining interviews.

Given the small sample size and the strategic outreach to firms, the following findings should be seen as uncovering useful patterns regarding how a small and selected number of firms and organizations operate. While our findings provide new insights into the hiring processes and practices that have been under-investigated, they should not be generalized to all firms and should instead be taken as an inductive roadmap of the main elements to be considered for studying them. Their relevance (in terms of prevalence) shall be established in the future with other methods.

4 | FIRM DESCRIPTIVES

Tables 2 and 3 provide a description of our outreach effort to firms, by sector and size. In total we reached out to 220 firms that operate within Spain. The response rate was 11 per cent. These responses included generic replies, whereas other replies indicated that the request was forwarded to the appropriate personnel. The positive response rate, those firms that responded and agreed to an interview, was 4 per cent. The initial aim was to interview two to three employees that are involved in the recruitment process within each firm, depending on the firm's size. One employee should have knowledge of the tasks to be performed by the worker and another employee should be responsible for the recruitment process. In many firms, these are distinct employees and/or departments. However, this approach proved hard to achieve, as firms appeared to be more comfortable with offering only one employee for the interview. In two cases we were able to interview two staff from the same firm, an HR manager and an overseeing manager, which yielded great diversity in their opinions of the process.

[TABLE 2 here]

In total, we conducted 14 interviews with personnel in nine private-sector firms, one public-sector organization, an employer's association who managed recruiting for many of its smaller members, and a large union organization. Each of the participants in these interviews

is identified in Table 2 above and the findings below with a *P* followed by a unique number. Of the 14 interviewees, six were women. The average tenure was about 14 years, with the longest tenure being 33 years and the shortest tenure being 2 months (see Table 2). The largest firm interviewed was a multinational firm with over 500 employees in the communications and financial services sector. The smallest firm interviewed was a family-owned business with fewer than 10 employees and operated within the communications and financial services sector. Table 3 provides a matrix locating our cases by firm sector and size.

[TABLE 3 here]

5 | QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Firm Size Matters

Within our sample, we observed patterns in the hiring processes that were related to firm size. Larger firms deployed a more top-down approach to hiring, whereas smaller firms typically carried out a bottom-up approach. Larger firms were more likely to use formulaic or professionalized procedures for hiring, which would be often triggered by external factors, such as market trends and anticipations that were monitored at the top. In contrast smaller firms would react to internal needs communicated from the bottom, resulting in an ad hoc approach to filling firm needs.

Market trends were referenced in four interviews (P2, P4, P8, P10), where the HR professionals would observe what their competitors and peers were hiring for and then attempt to forecast firm needs accordingly. One of the large-sized firms that we interviewed outlined their process very clearly within this top-down approach. For this firm, we were able to interview both the HR professional and section manager. Both described the process where the HR professional would be responsible for informing the section managers about the number of active vacancies within their departments. At times, section managers would bring hiring needs to the attention of the HR professionals, but those requests were not always granted, unless the HR professionals agreed that these requests fell within the firm's broader strategy. The section manager noted that the top-down approach led to hiring cycles that increased the onboarding and orientation workload and a surplus of staff that was not always anticipated at the department level. However, due to market trends and cycles, the HR professional explained that these hiring needs were determined by the sector they operated in and the market trends that were forecasted.

Alternatively, we observed that firms that operated within more competitive and innovative industries, regardless of size, were more likely to report some ad hoc hires. For example, if a new position was deemed necessary for production needs, an HR person would create a new position to meet that new need (P5, P8, P10). In any case, requests for new positions were similarly examined and evaluated against market trends by senior officials and/or HR professionals (P5). These new positions were typically multi-functional, specialized, and senior-level positions.

Many of the larger firms we interviewed explained that they had specific templates for their job descriptions (P5, P9, P10). About a third of the firms in our sample reported using job dictionaries and descriptions produced by consulting firms and third-party recruitment services to describe their positions. In large firms, almost all positions had such descriptions. When asked by the HR professionals to share their resources or tools we received various responses. Some of the HR professionals did not have them on hand anymore, as they were deployed many years ago and have since not been used. It was explained to us that the HR professionals had created the templates, and now use the same template for future job descriptions and edit accordingly. In the cases where HR Professionals used outside consulting help, they were not always privy to the tools the consultants used but rather were paying for the final product. For the public organizations they mentioned job dictionaries and descriptions that were created via governmental processes and negotiations.

Quote 1: P5

'*We have a very complete description model, where we have everything indicated. In fact, we do not start from scratch because these [positions are] recurrent positions.'*

Fewer of the smaller firms reported similar templates. In mid-sized and innovative firms in which new jobs would proliferate, the HR professional we interviewed was the person who first had to create the template or was responsible for updating it. In all firms, when we inquired about the tools, guides, or dictionaries they used to aid their drafting process, many HR professionals reported doing a simple online search. In smaller and mid-sized firms in innovative industries, where official guides and dictionaries might not already exist, it was a common practice to review how competitors described job tasks and demanded competences and adapt them to the firm's own positions.

The Content of Work is Crucial

The processes of defining, translating, and hiring varied greatly by the content of work. Each job varied in competences, skill specialization and position within the organization. While the literature referenced above mentioned the emergence of the boundaryless and more horizontally organized firm, we found a more traditional approach to defining and outlining job profiles within our sample based on vertical (hierarchy) and horizontal (areas) differentiations.

As noted, we asked HR professionals to think of a modal position when answering our questions. When these jobs were at the mean level of rank-and-file specialization, we also inquired about jobs that might be found below and above this mid-position. Many HR professionals would use phrases such as 'simpler' or 'more junior' to describe lower positions. Often these jobs were characterized by fewer functions and tasks and less responsibilities and autonomy, with the latter being understood as less discretion on how to achieve job goals. Interviewees described simpler jobs as having tasks that were more standardized (i.e., always producing the same results) and routine (i.e., carrying out the tasks in similar ways) than in complex jobs. Simple jobs were less likely to vary on a day-to-day basis or be affected by unforeseen contingencies and were not subject to adjustments or customization based on team goals or client needs to the same degree as complex jobs. Some of these lower-level jobs were at the junior level and were designed to give support to workers in more senior and specialized positions (P7, P8).

For the simpler positions, HR professionals were more likely to report using some type of prescribed, pre-existing job description or template. Most of the skill requirements for these positions were communicated through the job titles. For example, many HR professionals used job titles like 'engineer', 'analyst', 'warehouse assistant', or 'stamper', to communicate the core competences needed to apply for such positions (P2, P7, P10, P14). They also often assumed that a person who applied for an entry position, for example, an engineer, would hold an engineering degree and for this reason would not even request proof in the interview (P10). Alternatively, having held a job with the same generic title in the past would often serve as validation of the job skills and competences (P14).

The job descriptions for these lower-level positions were also leaner in comparison to more senior positions. However, in very small firms, jobs that might be viewed (and advertised) as more junior or routine, such as an administrative assistant, could end up being multi-task

positions performing a wide range of tasks, such as bookkeeping, answering phones, database management, ordering office supplies, and event planning, largely due to labor and financial constraints (P6). While multi-task in nature, these positions appeared to differ from those in more senior positions in larger firms, which required adjusting the manner in which the work was carried out.

While manual jobs were typically reported as simpler and more junior, that was not always the case within our sample. For example, one firm explained that the position of an assembler, while more junior in the firm hierarchy, was also a complex job because the worker would be required to assemble sophisticated components produced by various machines in unique ways, based on the client's orders and requests (P8). Therefore, the job description of an assembler, while lower level, was more detailed based on the knowledge and experience working with specific machines and tools.

Quote 1: P8

'Let's see, the mechanical assembler [...], a mechanic. Obviously, there are junior mechanics and senior mechanics who are the adjusters, but a mechanic must know how to interpret the blueprints. You must know how to follow the steps so that the assembly is complete. And then, above all, make the final adjustments that are called for.'

For more senior positions, more coordination was typically required between the HR professionals and the supervising manager when drafting the job description (P2, P5, P8, P10). A plurality of firms within our sample defined the competences for such job positions by the methods (or manner by which to carry out the tasks) and tools workers would use. The more tools, methods, and software that was needed to carry out the tasks, the more complex or senior the position was likely to be within the firm (P5, P8, P9, P10). A desired candidate would have to demonstrate that he or she was familiar with the specific field (e.g., commercial law) or prove his or her ability to use a specific software or programming language. Many managers referred to these as technical skills.

Quote 2: P8

"For me the [technical skills] are those that refer to the tools that I will use to work. If I am an administrative one, I work a lot with MS Office. If you are a programmer, the technical skills will be associated with programming languages.'

Similarly, managerial positions were often defined in terms of the specific supervisory and managerial duties to be carried out. The position of manager varied also within our sample. Within our sample there were lower-level managers, who were expected to have a baseline level of experience and specific skills for managing teams, projects, and clients (P7). The senior-level managers were expected to possess more general skills, such as problem solving, decision-making, oversight of teams, and interaction with clients (P5). While some of these general skills fall into the soft skills category, the approach to determining if a candidate had these skills was typically to refer to their previous experience. For example, a jobseeker with 10+ years overseeing staff, managing projects and teams, would be viewed as having the competences needed to perform well as a manager within the new firm. These positions were more detailed in their definition of competences and came with more responsibilities and authority.

Soft and Transversal Skills Are Pervasive

We found that soft skills played an important role within the recruitment process and were always included in the list of needs and competences required by firms. They were sometimes utilized in the selection process as a differentiating factor between two similar candidates.

The distinction between hard and soft skills, sometimes referred to as cognitive and non-cognitive skills by our interviewees, was not always clear. Furthermore, many HR professionals noted that both sets of skills were highly valued and depended on the position (P5, P8, P10). For example, while a salesperson is a job title people are familiar with, the complexity of the job was found in both the cognitive abilities necessary to communicate the technical specifications of the product being sold and in the soft skills the salesperson would have to demonstrate to engage the client, such as interpersonal skills, empathy, or extroversion (P4, P9). In this regard, these soft skills based on personality attributes were treated as (non-cognitive) technical skills necessary to carry out the job effectively. When describing the specific skills for each of the job positions, many of the HR professionals explained that soft skills were harder to define and measure than hard skills. They were typically observed and evaluated during the interview process or based on the candidate's experience in similar positions. One firm mentioned that they use a widely used 16-Factor personality test to measure soft skills (P10). The usage of these tests suggests that some HR professionals view soft skills as equivalent to personality traits.

Technical or 'hard skills' were far easier to define, communicate, and measure (P10, P14). At the junior level, a degree or credential was typically all that was needed to show baseline knowledge. In this case, previous experience was not a requirement or even an asset, as the firm would later train the hired person based on its needs (P2). However, for most specialized and managerial skills, demonstrating practical knowledge of the methods and tools necessary to carry out the tasks in the job would suffice. On some occasions, technical tests would be carried out to assess competence, but in many others, experience was the way for HR professionals to validate cognitive and non-cognitive skills. For example, if a person had managed a large team within a production department, this experience demonstrated to the HR professional that the jobseeker had the capability to do the same within their firm (P2). Or if a person had worked within their industry selling similar products, or even a competitor's product, this person was deemed as experienced and capable (P14). An interviewee expressed the process of assessing candidates' technical competences in the following terms:

Quote 4: P10

'*I think of how technical skills would be like a clean slate, right? At a minimum, to be able to do this position, we need you to have this training, this experience, and so on. Okay, from here some different candidates are going to come in. So, the first interview, as I said, is always done with the person in charge of the department, where [they] will assess if that person really has the technical skills, has the necessary experience. From there, the next phase of the interview is where we accompany it with competency tests, and we also use a personality test. Then, we'll see if they also have the soft skills.*'

Many of the medium- and large-sized firms also referenced the importance of applicants to have 'transversal skills', which they defined as the skills of a person who embodied the firms' values (P5, P8, P9, P10). It is worth noting that the HR professionals viewed soft skills and transversal skills differently. Transversal skills were required by all employees, regardless of seniority and job complexity and specialization. Whereas soft skills were specific to the individual job.

For example, these transversal skills were often defined by a candidate being 'a good fit' for the company, which may include personality traits such as loyalty and honesty. One HR professional even mentioned that if a person was let go, it was often because they were not a good fit for the firm, rather than having a lack of technical skills (P3). Transversal skills

were often referenced and communicated to jobseekers as company values, whereas soft skills that were specific to the job would be included in the requirements and competencies sections. While loyalty and honesty are personality traits, these skills are not necessarily specific to the job. However, a salesperson may need to display his/her ability to persuade (the personality trait of extroversion) but an engineer may not be asked to demonstrate their persuasion skills.

Quote 5: P10

'*Look, in the end the company has values, right? Each company is different, and we give importance to some things, and another company gives importance to other things. I don't know why, but it is true that there is going to be a right fit into the company, that it is going to be more transversal.*'

While there is no denying that soft and transversal skills are critical to jobs and how we classify skills and tasks, our findings revealed that the ways in which HR professionals measured and observed these skills were less defined. This uncertainty and inevitable lack of transparency could result in implicit and explicit biases against groups of workers such as women, migrants, low-skilled, and those with disabilities (Acker, 1990; Correll, 2004). The union representative (P11) was also wary of firms' use of soft and transversal skills, which he equated with the firm's search for more "docile" workers.

Table 3 refers to the common terminology used by HR professionals to describe hard, soft, and transversal skills. While the terms are classified as hard skills by the HR professionals, these are sometimes not defined as skills, per se, within the literature. For example, degrees and credentials are sometimes considered qualifications, while knowledge and experience are distinct concepts. Nevertheless, these distinctions were not made in our conversations with HR professionals.

[TABLE 4 here]

Recruitment Practices and Dissemination Approaches Vary

The dissemination of the job descriptions and the selection processes differed by the job's placement within the firm and by the level of complexity of the job (horizontal and vertical specialization). The dissemination processes also differed by firm size. Thus, while almost all firms, regardless of size, relied on online job banks or job websites to disseminate their

vacancies, the types of online resources utilized were deferred by the complexity of job and the size of the firm.

Some firms reported using general online job databases for the more junior positions. These online resources typically provided salary information and job conditions, such as flexibility of schedule. However, these firms did not have positive opinions of the interface or the quality of applicants in these online platforms (P3, P5). When hiring senior-level specialists and managers in a profession, most of the firms reported using a well-known online professional networking platform for their dissemination efforts. The platform was used both passively, i.e., posting a job description, and actively, i.e., searching and recruiting potential candidates with specific characteristics to interview for their positions (P5).

The largest firms often posted their vacancies on their websites and internal employee portals (P2). One large firm explained that this did not immediately translate into the internal candidates having an advantage over external candidates, as the hiring processes were carried out in parallel, and the internal candidates were not given prior notice. However, in practice internal candidates seemed to have an advantage since internal candidates often met the standard of being a 'good fit for the firm', as referenced in the previous section.

The smaller the firms and the simpler the jobs to be filled, the more likely firms were to report using outside recruiting agencies or services for drafting of the job descriptions, searching for qualified candidates, and interviewing them (P4, P6, P7, P14). For senior-level positions, the recruitment process was largely held in-house for larger firms.

As noted, we contacted an employer's association that provided many services to its members, including recruiting services. The recruiting agent that we interviewed explained that they were often asked to help fill lower-level positions, especially if the firm was hiring multiple persons for the same job title (P10). The recruitment process carried out in this external organization and in other recruitment agencies described in other interviews was similar to what we detected in internal processes in larger firms. For less specialized jobs, the association's role was to carry out the whole process, from drafting to interviewing. For the drafting, they often used local governmental and non-profit resources and skill dictionaries (P14). If the recruiting agency in our sample was hired to find a senior-level position, the HR professional would be more hands-on throughout the process. While each of the firms made the final selection decisions, some smaller firms were keen on using the recruiting agency to assist in the final decision.

The final subsection of our interview script inquired about the job conditions. Our focus was to determine the extent to which job conditions were flexible upon selection. We found that the most junior and least complex jobs typically had set job conditions attached to their job descriptions. These conditions were predetermined at the top and often followed the industry agreements in place, although there was some room for negotiation within a pre-set range (P5, P10). Due to the high coverage of union representation in Spain, for these junior positions much of the conditions are predetermined by agreements negotiated between firms and union organizations. They include salary minimums, minimum days for holiday, paid sick leave, maternity/paternity leave, and the number of breaks workers are entitled to during the workday.

In contrast, senior and specialized jobs had more flexibility, albeit HR professionals might still be constrained in their negotiating power due to predetermined conditions, although with a wider range of conditions. The most specialized and the top managerial positions were the most open to negotiation, possibly because workers in these positions typically have more individual bargaining power and therefore are not always covered by union representation. The conditions for these more complex positions were more likely set by the 'market', i.e., by what competitors would typically pay for a similar position. One HR professional mentioned that it was common practice to review what their competitors were offering and follow suit (P14).

Conditions also varied by the size of the company. In large firms with a wide range of job positions, from simple to complex, the level of flexibility was larger than in small firms that were more limited by the resources available to them, due to smaller profit margins (P14). Due to these constraints, there was more room for mismatches between competences and job conditions in these small firms.

The union representative noted that in many firms, especially small ones, workers ended up doing many tasks for which they were not hired and were not paid (P13). The representative pointed out that because of digitization and demographic changes (i.e., increase of migrants moving into Spain), many job descriptions were becoming leaner, using vague language, therefore providing room for workers to do more than they were hired for. This can be a double-edged sword for many workers. On the one hand, workers may want to do new and different tasks that will enable them to grow within their position and within the firm, but on the other hand, the workers are not being paid for the additional tasks they are now carrying out. The union representative noted the importance of job descriptions being open

and transparent with the level of career advancement, functions within the position, and the range of tasks that may be asked of workers. He was most concerned about workers in the service sector, such as workers in the hospitality industry. These workers are typically women and/or migrant workers and more likely to work part-time or on temporary contracts with less security and lower salaries. Often the job description is the basis for the worker's contract. In this case, drafting a clear job description is crucial to defend the worker against exploitation.

6 | DISCUSSION

Our investigation following the job description from conception to dissemination provided new insight into the process of drafting the job description. Job descriptions for the purpose of recruitment are only growing in importance, as almost all jobs are advertised online these days, and unions and workers use these job descriptions as protection mechanisms to protect against exploitation and burnout. Our qualitative approach yielded candid perspectives from employers and HR professionals that has been limited in the research.

Overall, our findings reveal that while the recruitment process can vary, within our study we found key patterns depending on the job complexity and hierarchy, as well as firm size. First, we find that the process for drafting and defining core competences varied by the job profiles' levels of specialization and seniority. For lower-level positions, HR professionals relied on the job title to communicate the skills needed to perform well in the job. For a more specialized position, the tasks were defined in more detail and the competences were more often based on the methods, tools, and software the hired person would utilize. These more complex jobs were typically more senior and came with more autonomy and authority. They could be found in both non-manual and manual jobs. The resources to draft the job descriptions varied as well by the complexity of the work. Some reported using simple online searches, while others used formal resources such as consulting reports, online dictionaries or even competitors' descriptions. These would typically be reserved for simple jobs. In other cases, job descriptions were made ad hoc after careful consultation with those most involved with the position. These were more typical in more complex jobs.

Second, we find that smaller firms were more likely to deploy a hiring process in an informal manner because their division of labor is less developed, and they typically experience less turnover in comparison to medium and large firms. Additionally, the smaller firms in our sample were more likely to say that they outsource the hiring process, such as using a

recruiting agency and online résumé bank service. This was typically the consequence of the unfamiliarity with the hiring process but also of the less complex positions they end up filling. Given that small firms represent nearly 99% of all firms and provide about 50% of the total employment in Europe (Eurostat, 2022), the role of these agencies as intermediaries in the process of defining and filling firms' vacancies cannot be overstated. It is an efficient way to overcome the lack of resources and competitive disadvantage that small firms show vis a vis large firms. The identification process for new vacancies was also more bottom-up in smaller firms, compared to a more top-down hiring process reported by medium and large firms. It is worth noting that multi-task jobs and those with more autonomy within innovative and emerging markets were subject to ad hoc processes, regardless of the firm size. In some respects, when hiring for a new position (one that did not exist before), these larger firms operated more like smaller firms. This was likely because vacancies were dictated by the market pressures.

Lastly, we find that soft skills play an important role in the selection of candidates, despite the ambiguity in measurement. Almost all firms reported that soft skills were critical to performing the job well, along with transversal skills. These transversal skills were held in such high regard that one firm explained that they contributed to an employee's success with the firm. The growing importance of soft skills yields new questions for how best to measure these skills, many of which are treated as almost technical requirements depending on the job profile. And within a knowledge economy, it is likely that skills such as interpersonal skills, good communication, strong motivation, ability to be flexible and learn fast, and amiability will only grow in importance. Yet, as the union representative warned, these soft skill requirements can sometimes lead to biases that must be guarded against. He argued that HR officials typically look for workers with personality traits that are more conforming and docile, thereby limiting worker contestation.

7 | LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While this research is narrow in scope and solely qualitative, it is a first and necessary step that should prompt future explorations into how firms identify and translate their needs into job descriptions that can be used to attract talent more effectively and fairly. Our outreach approach, both cold outreach and a connection, proved to be fruitful to reach the companies but were both time-intensive.

Future research should engage with a larger sample of firms or carry out focus groups with specific HR personnel and/or recruiting firms. Our initial aim to interview more than one member of personnel with each firm was harder to accomplish but future research should prioritize this approach, as the one firm who offered two employees provided a richer understanding of their process and potential gaps or inefficiencies.

We hope that future investigations will deploy a similar task-based approach to their interviews and inquiries, given the dynamic nature of the occupational structure, the content work, and advancements in technology and automation. The task-based approach provides a stronger basis for identifying trends in skills (both cognitive and non-cognitive), core competences, and sectoral technical skills. Additionally, the task-based approach enables us to decipher how job profiles may evolve over time.

And lastly, while our research stops at the dissemination stage, our findings highlight the importance to following the job description even further, from the employer's side. The hiring process is critical to ensuring workers have access to the same opportunities as others. A deeper understanding of how firms ultimately high workers that fit their skill needs is critical for reducing unemployment, limited over-employment and overall well-being.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Interview Script Subsections

Interview Subsection	Aim/Focus
1. Administrative Information	Administrative information, name, sector, main business activity, job title, and tenure
2. Process of identifying needs and vacancies	Explore how the functions to be performed in a new vacancy are defined
3. Definition of skills and competences	Investigate the process of translating needs into competences in a job
4. Dissemination and selection	Understand how external platforms and resources are used to support the dissemination and selection process
5. Conditions of the job	Explore the factors that explain the employment conditions that are associated with new vacancies
6. Opinion of the process	Offer the opportunity for the interviewee to add comments and opinions about the process

Source: See Appendix for full interview script

Table 2: Characteristics of Participants

ID	Gender	Tenure	Sector	Size
P1	Woman	< 1 year	Financial Services, Marketing, Consulting, Information & Communications	> 250 employees
P2	Woman	> 20 years	Financial Services, Marketing, Consulting, Information & Communications	250 employees
P3	Man	< 10 years	Manufacturing, Industry, Construction & Energy	< 10 employees
P4	Man	> 20 years	Hospitality, Food, Commerce & Transportation	< 10 employees
P5	Man	< 5 years	Manufacturing, Industry, Construction & Energy	50 – 249 employees

P6	Woman	> 5 years	Financial Services, Marketing, Consulting, Information & Communications	< 10 employees
P7	Man	> 30 years	Education, Health, Professional & Scientific Services, Law	10 – 49 employees
P8	Woman	< 5 years	Manufacturing, Industry, Construction & Energy	50 – 249 employees
P9	Woman	< 5 years	Manufacturing, Industry, Construction & Energy	50 – 249 employees
P10	Woman	< 3 years	Manufacturing, Industry, Construction & Energy	50 – 249 employees
P11	Man	< 1 year	Union	> 250 employees
P12	Woman	< 5 years	Education, Health, Professional & Scientific Services, Law	> 250 employees
P13	Woman	< 5 years	Education, Health, Professional & Scientific Services, Law	> 250 employees
P14	Man	> 5 years	Recruitment	< 10 employees

Source: Conducted interviews, audio recordings and translated transcripts

Table 3: Firm Matrix (Completed Interviews)

	Manufacturing, Industry, Construction & Energy	Hospitality, Food, Commerce & Transportation	Education, Health, Professional & Scientific Services, Law	Financial Services, Marketing, Consulting, Information & Communications	External Organization
< 10 employees	1			1	1

10 – 49 employees		1	1		
50 – 249 employees	4				
> 250 employees			1 (2 interviews)	1 (2 interviews)	1

Table 4: Common Terminology Used by Interviewees

Hard Skills (Cognitive, Technical)	**Soft Skills (Non-cognitive)**	**Transversal Skills (Values)**
Having a degree (e.g., engineering, architect, designer	Having 'empathy'	'Being a good fit' for the firm
Having specific credentials	Being 'extroverted'	Embodying the 'firm's values'
Having knowledge of specific methods, tools, and/or software	Being 'organized'	'Honesty'
Having experience in similar positions	Being a 'team player'	'Good attitude
		Being 'motivated'
		Being a 'happy person'

Source: Translated interview transcripts

APPENDIX

Interview Script

Section One: Administrative information

Focus: Administrative questions

'I would like to start asking some questions about the company profile (name, address, sector, size) and your personal profile within it'

Questions:

1. What is your position or function in the company?
2. How long have you been working here?
3. In which sector does your company operate?
4. How would you describe your company's main business activity? (e.g. direct services, consulting, product development, tool manufacturing, etc.)
5. How many employees work in your company? (If you work in a company with multiple divisions or departments located in different locations, indicate the approximate number of employees who are paid by the same entity that pays you)

Section Two: Process of Defining Needs and Vacancies

Focus: Identifying how the functions to be performed in a new vacancy are defined

'Next, I would like to ask you some questions about how the functions to be performed in a new job vacancy are defined. These questions primarily seek to better understand the difficulties companies face in defining their hiring needs.'

Questions:

1. Please think of a typical job in your company for which there may be a vacancy, the first one that comes to mind and one which you hire for most often. If there is more than one typical position, don't worry, we will ask you about them later.

2. Are they generally simple or complex functions? Are they fundamentally manual, mental, social (relationship with customers, students, audiences, etc.), or supervisory?

3. Are they well-known functions in the corresponding trade or profession or, on the contrary, are we talking about functions that are difficult to define? And if the latter were the case, what explains these difficulties: the idiosyncrasy of work, with unique tasks adapted to the needs of the organization, with work methods, location in teams, and / or technologies also unique to your organization, or with many uncertainties or unforeseen events that the worker will have to face? Please tell us those specificities in detail.

Alternative position (different from the first responses):

1. Apart from this type of employment to which we have been referring, is there any other type of hiring, among those that are usually carried out in your organization, for which the process that has been detailed to me differs substantially?

2. Could you elaborate on it? What kind of functions are performed in that work? Are they manual, mental, social (relationship with clients, students, audiences) or supervisory?

3. Are they 'standard' functions, with clear objectives and well-established working methods in the trade or profession, or are they difficult to define functions, for example, because they can often change based on diverse and unforeseen circumstances?

4. Are the same job function descriptor templates/guides used as for the other vacancies? If not, why not? What other templates are used? What are its sources? How are they developed and updated?

Possible follow-up questions:

1. *Who is the first person to decide that a new job vacancy should be created and the functions to be performed by the person to be hired?*

2. *Does this person use a company or outsider guide or manual to write the job description?*

3. *Do they describe clearly and in detail the functions to be performed in employment? Or do they contain general descriptions that must then be adapted to the specific functions to be performed?*

4. *Do you know how often these templates/guides are updated?*

5. *Are you responsible for writing these templates/guides? (Yes/no) Who is responsible for doing so? What is the origin of these templates/guides?*

Section three: Identification of the competences needed to get the job done

Focus: Expanding on the process of translating needs into competencies in a job

'*Next, I would like to delve deeper into the job offer description process. We are interested in understanding how the functional needs of the job are reflected in a set of competencies and qualifications that the employees to be hired must have. Focus first on the type of vacancy that came to mind at the beginning of the interview.'*

Questions:

1. When writing the job description, is it common practice to use a predetermined language and/or templates with job categories for which the skills, competencies and qualifications that the people to be hired must have are described?

2. Would you say that the language used to describe the core competencies to be demonstrated by a candidate is similar to that used in other companies in the sector? Or would you say that the language used is specific to your company? Where does the language or terminology come from?

3. Would you say that there are specific competencies that the candidate must meet in order for him or her to perform correctly in this position? Are some of them prioritized over the rest? What are those competencies (e.g. manual, numerical, analytical, social, managerial) skills? Are they competencies that can be applied to multiple problems or circumstances, or are they specific, that can only be applied to a limited range of problems/circumstances?

4. Are these competencies normally part of a well-known and accepted cast in the trade or profession, or is it common to complement or replace them with generic and difficult to evaluate attitudinal competencies (enthusiasm, commitment, sympathy, empathy, responsibility, leadership, perseverance, team spirit, etc.)?

5. Is there a difference between skills (knowledge, potentialities,) and competences (demonstrable experience in the execution of similar jobs)? How important is this previous experience in the definition of the vacancy?

6. Are official certifications and qualifications required for vacancy announcements? To what extent are these formal requirements flexible? How important are other non-formal qualifications?

Section four: Dissemination and Selection

Focus: Understanding how external platforms and resources are used for dissemination.

'*Now we would like to focus on the dissemination and selection processes. We are interested in learning how external platforms are used to help with dissemination and selection. And how the selected candidate can alter or shape the job vacancy based on their skills. Focus, as always, on that typical work you referred to in the beginning.'*

Questions:

1. What specific steps does your organization or company take to find and select a worker? Do you have an internal job board for current employees or is it a search of external markets and exchanges?

2. Do you use online, internal and/or external platforms, websites or other social media platforms to spread job ads? Can you share with me the names of the platforms you usually use?

3. Do you use recruiters, headhunters or other recruitment services for dissemination and/or selection? Do you use these services for other jobs? In which cases do you use them and in which cases do you not?

4. Once a job application is received, who is responsible for evaluating it?

5. Are there a number of specific instructions or rules for examining applications and selecting the best candidates?

6. Do you use any kind of algorithm or automated program to identify candidates' competencies for the position and to rank them?

7. What is given more weight in the assessment: generic qualifications (qualifications, etc.), specific qualifications (suitability for the job, previous experience, etc.) or complementary qualifications (first impression, letters of introduction or recommendation, previous references, unemployment history, age, gender, physical appearance, etc.)

8. Is a ranking of candidates made among those selected? Are they contacted following this ranking?

9. For the reference position, do you usually find good candidates?

10. Approximately how long does it take to fill such a vacancy, from the publication of the offer to the hiring?

11. Do candidates generally meet the requirements of the job? In what aspects is it more difficult to find good candidates?

Section five: Specification of the Conditions of employment

Focus: Identifying the factors that explain the employment conditions that are associated with the new vacancies.

'In this third section we would like to better understand the process that is followed in your organization to specify the conditions of employment (type of hiring, duration of employment, job category, remuneration, etc.). Again we ask you to focus on that vacancy that first came to mind.'

Questions:

1. Are there rules in your company to associate the conditions of employment (type of employment, duration of employment, job category, remuneration, etc.) with the functions and competencies of vacancies? Are they fixed rules for different categories of work?

2. If they are fixed, how often are the conditions associated with the different categories modified?

3. How flexible are these rules and what factors does this flexibility affect: the duration of employment (seasonal, temporary or indefinite contract); the working day (partial or full); the shifts (morning, afternoon, night); the work category (internship, junior, senior); or remuneration?

4. Are these conditions negotiated with the workers to be hired? Are they adapted to their qualifications and competences?

5. Who or who is responsible for setting these conditions? Does it depend on the particular condition to be set?

Alternative position: Is there a particular vacancy, among the typical ones filled in your organization, for which this process of specifying the conditions of employment varies substantially? What are these differences? What conditions of employment do they affect (working hours, hiring, category, remuneration, etc.)? What type of vacancy is that? What functions are to be performed and what skills should the person who occupies them have? What are the reasons, in your opinion, that would explain those differences?

Section six: Opinion of Process/Final Comments

Focus: Providing interviewee with final comments.

'Finally, we would like to ask you a few questions about the hiring procedure as a whole and how well 'greased' it is.'

Questions

1. In general, how long does the entire process take? How many different steps does it entail?

2. Are there any departments or staff specialized in doing most of these tasks?

3. Are there external organizations (e.g. trade union representatives, consultancy firms) that are involved in this process at some point? At what stage (definition of functions, definition of competences, allocation of employment conditions, selection of the candidate)?

4. How would you characterize the process? Would you say it's effective and efficient, or it's not? And if it weren't, what are the reasons for these inefficiencies? (disorganization, lack of communication, inflexibility, decisions made by those who should not, etc.)

5. Where in the process do difficulties appear: in the definition of functions, description of qualifications and competences, description of other conditions

such as experience, age, residence, etc., decision on remuneration, etc., job interview, decisions on recruitment?

Any other information or comments you want to share?

CHAPTER THREE

MINOR SCARS? HOW UNEMPLOYMENT SPELLS IMPACT JOB QUALITY

ABSTRACT

Individuals who experience an unemployment spell are more likely to experience unemployment in the future, as well as to incur substantial wage penalties, according to previous research. Recent studies have begun to explore how unemployment spells impact additional non-monetary job outcomes, such as job quality. Using the UK Understanding Society, this article provides new insight into the unemployment scars on job quality. First, from a conceptual perspective, I separate job conditions (employment quality) from the content of work and find that the scarring effect of unemployment varies on each. The analysis shows that the impact of an unemployment spell on autonomy and work intensity is short-lived. I also find that unemployment scars on job security and level of authority persist beyond six months and in some cases, even two years after re-entry. These findings confirm that the trajectory of job quality following an unemployment spell can vary by job quality dimension.

1 | INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the Great Recession and amid the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is renewed interest in understanding how unemployment spells affect future job outcomes. Research has shown that individuals who experience an unemployment spell are more likely to experience subsequent unemployment spells, wage penalties, and future job insecurity (Arulampalam, 2001; Oesch & Baumann, 2015; Tumino, 2015). For example, one study found that an unemployment spell resulted in an immediate wage penalty of six percent, which increased to 14 percent three years after re-entering the labor market (Arulampalam, 2001). This lasting effect is known as a "scarring" effect in the literature.

While much of the scarring literature has previously focused on wages, there is a burgeoning field focusing on how unemployment affects future job quality (Brand, 2006; Dieckhoff, 2011; Lippmann & Rosenthal, 2008; Mavromaras et al., 2015; Voßemer, 2019). Yet, there is less of a consensus on which job quality dimensions to focus on, outside of wages, and the extent to which unemployment might impact each of the dimensions differently. The few studies that have looked at more than one job quality dimension have been pioneering in their findings. What they generally find is that the deepest unemployment scars impact future wages and job security (Brand, 2006; Baumann, 2016; Dieckhoff, 2011; Mooi-Reci & Ganzeboom, 2015; Voßemer, 2019). There are a number of other studies that focus more on solely the conditions of the job, such as occupational prestige, low-wage work, and job security (Näswall & De Witte, 2003; Mosthaf, 2014; Voßemer, 2019). Yet, there is more to a job than the simply the conditions. The content of work, such as the level of autonomy is also important in the literature, as the content of work has been found the greatly influence one's well-being, social inclusion and overall job satisfaction (Gallie, 2003; Kalleberg & Vaisey, 2005; Kalleberg, 2011) Therefore, the aim of this paper is to better understand how unemployment impacts both the job conditions, as well as the content of work. In this study, the focus is on those who experience unemployment and how their future job quality is affected in the aftermath of an unemployment spell. Therefore, the use of fixed effects (sometimes referred to as within-subject) models is crucial to our understanding of how future job quality changes within individual workers.

I contribute to this field in three primary ways. First, I analyze multiple dimensions of the content of work, or intrinsic job quality dimension. I test two subdimensions of autonomy: work intensity and schedule flexibility. To my knowledge, work intensity has not been explicitly studied within the scarring literature. I also test one's level of authority, which has been considered a subdimension of autonomy in some literature. However, here, I test it independently. I also examine job condition measures, such as job security (objectively measured by work contract) and wages.

The last contribution is that I use the UK Understanding Society Household Panel Survey, which enables me to follow individuals over a longer period than most previous investigations. I explore a longer timeframe, with the potential to determine if losses in job quality are ever recovered beyond two years. I examine the scarring effects of unemployment in the UK, as its liberal labor market characteristics are advantageous to my analysis. The UK liberal labor market is characterized by less employment protection and less coordination

with the education system, which provides for a unique country context that is marked by more unemployment spells (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Dieckhoff, 2011). The rise of the blended professional, along with a less specialized workforce provides for an interesting investigation, especially given the variance in the types of skills and tasks that workers need within their jobs (Whitchurch, 2009).

It is important to note that I conceptualize job quality as containing two distinct categories: content of work and job conditions (or employment quality). In the next section, I explain why this distinction is important to the discussion of job quality, but I run models on each of the dependent variables within each category to better understand if and how unemployment impacts different facets of job quality.

I find that unemployment has the largest and longest scarring effect on future job security and levels of authority at work. However, minor scars can be found on job dimensions, such as wages and autonomy. While the initial scarring can be substantial on wages and autonomy, we see a recovery of that penalty after six months back in employment. For job security and authority, we find that scars can last well beyond a year.

While several of the findings from this study concur with previous analyses, some of the findings diverge from what others have found. This may be the case for two reasons. First, the timeframe that I cover in my analysis is longer than most other analyses. Second, my analysis does not employ a method, such as difference-in-differences, to estimate the trajectory of individuals' job quality over time. While there is ample literature that wages tend to increase over one's career, it is unclear if similar trajectories exist for each of the job quality dimensions of interest. Therefore, the point of comparison for my analysis is the respondent's job quality prior to their unemployment spell not, as in other analyses, an estimate of what their job quality would have been absent the unemployment spell. Nevertheless, taken together, they shed new light on the impact that unemployment can have on job quality. The findings also suggest that these job quality dimensions follow different trajectories over time.

The rest of the article is organized as follows; the next section briefly describes the evolution of the definition of job quality. The two main mechanisms typically referred to in the scarring literature are outlined. After this review of the literature, an explanation of the data, construction of the dependent variables and methodology is provided. The results section is followed by the conclusion and a discussion of the policy implications.

2 | DIMENSIONS OF JOB QUALITY

A job is more than a source of income in society; it is also a source of social standing, and what we do can be closely related to our sense of identity (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). Job quality, as a concept, is gaining attention in the media and among policymakers, researchers, and workers. Themes of burnout, the prevalence of "bad jobs," skills mismatch and diminished levels of job autonomy, have sparked new debates about job quality. However, within the literature there has yet to be a settled definition of job quality or what constitutes a "good" or "bad" job (Edgell et al., 2016; Findlay et al., 2013; Kalleberg, 2011). Nevertheless, there is some evidence that certain job quality dimensions such as autonomy, authority and flexible working hours are positively correlated with retention and work satisfaction (Seashore, 1974; Valentine, 2001; Kalleberg, 2004; Eurofound, 2012; Wheatley, 2017; Chung, 2022) .

Economists tend to rely on wages as a catch-all measurement for job quality. Yet, there is some evidence that wages are not always strongly correlated with other dimensions of job quality (Kalleberg, 2004). Furthermore, the importance of wages can vary with where a person is within their career or their background. In a 2017 British Social Attitudes survey, less than half of the respondents reported that a job was solely about the wage or salary (Taylor, 2017). Nevertheless, many researchers do include wages in their job quality definitions (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011) . Wages, within the sociological context, are an extrinsic reward. Extrinsic rewards are viewed as benefits or rewards that workers receive *for* doing their work, rather than the benefits a person receives *from* doing their work (Kalleberg, 2016).

From a sociological perspective, it is clear that job quality is a multidimensional concept that includes both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. However, there is still an ongoing dialogue about which dimensions specifically make up job quality. Despite these different perspectives, there is some agreement. The ability of the worker to exercise a certain level of discretion or autonomy is almost universally maintained as critical to the definition of job quality (Esser & Olsen, 2012). Originally, classical social theorists tended to rank autonomy very high when evaluating job quality. Marx argued that labor could serve as a 'liberating activity' that was critical to self-realization (Braverman, 1975).

Neo-Marxists argue that autonomy and control over one's work is crucial, and that any attempt to reduce the level of discretion of the worker alienates the worker from his or her

own work, regardless of the worker's personal satisfaction with the job. Braverman (1975) explicates the relationship between the worker and the capitalist organization of production by arguing that the goal of the capitalist is to strip the worker of the knowledge needed to carry out a certain process and to reduce, if not eliminate, the worker's control over the tasks to carry out a process. This deskilling approach on behalf of the capitalist allows for more flexibility when managing their labor force during economic cycles. Therefore, within the literature autonomy and skills are typically linked together, as those with higher skills are thought to have more autonomy (Eurofound, 2012). Furthermore, skills utilization can be viewed as an intrinsic reward, such that a person gets value out of performing work to their skill level, rather than performing work that is below their skill level.

A nascent body of literature is beginning to examine how 'gig workers,' those who utilize applications or platforms to sell their labor, are losing autonomy. Initially, these gig working situations were assumed to have more autonomy and flexibility, since many of them work independently without a direct supervisor and oftentimes remotely. However, the concepts of autonomy and independence are sometimes used interchangeably, but as Breaugh (1985) argued, long before gig workers existed, these are two distinct concepts. One refers to one's latitude within a job, while the other refers to the manner in which the person carries out that job. And while they are sometimes correlated, they deserve to be viewed as separate dimensions. Wood and colleagues (2019) even argue that with the use of applications that can carry out constant data tracking, gig jobs, in fact, may be seeing a reduction in their level of autonomy and independence.

Workers can have autonomy over the job tasks, which was referenced above, but recent literature has started to review the extent to which workers have control over their work schedules (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011; Allen et al., 2013; Chung, 2017; Lott, 2015). This concept stems from the constant battle, disproportionately fought by women, to balance work and home life (Chung, 2017). The terminology used within today's lexicon can refer to different kinds of schedule autonomy. Chung (2017) defines three distinct concepts. The first is flexible working, which refers to teleworking. The second concept is flextime. Flextime is the ability of the worker to control their start and end times of work. And the third, working-time autonomy, can be viewed as having complete autonomy over his or her working hours, schedule, and location. Sometimes, more flexibility over one's work schedules can be viewed as a perk or a condition of the job, rather than a function of the job.

Another common dimension of job quality is job security. This dimension has gained more attention due to neoliberal efforts to deregulate the labor market to increase flexibility and openness. Muñoz de Bustillo and colleagues (2011) find that job security is one of the most valued attributes of a job in the US and Europe. Job security can be measured by the subjective view of feeling secure in one's job or objectively based on the type of contract, i.e., a temporary contract or a permanent one (Alexandre, 2019; Böckerman, 2004; Esser & Olsen, 2012). While this study utilizes an objective approach to job security, it is important to note that subjective feelings of job insecurity can affect overall well-being of the worker, along with his or her family members, and has been shown to be a strong predictor for future unemployment (Chung & Mau, 2014). Job security and the type of contract also has been studied for its occupational class implications, differentiating between salary workers or hourly workers. Typically, salary workers have long-term contracts or indefinite contracts. However, hourly workers or non-salary workers might have short-term contracts (Gallie et al., 2017).

The inclusion of work intensity, another sub-dimension of autonomy, can vary from study to study. Marxists and other classical social theorists think of intensity as the extent to which a worker can control the pace by which he or she works. Marx explains that capitalists were able to further exploit their workers by increasing the pace of production lines, thereby creating a surplus from the existing labor force. In some respects, these attempts to increase pace can lead to coercive measures or what is known as the 'stick strategy' (Gordon, 1996). Kalleberg (2004) argues that stripping control over one's work pace or intensity is a 'disutility' of a job and adversely affects one's job quality.

However, recent studies have come to refer to work intensity as work effort. Within human resources literature, work effort can touch upon worker motivation, performance, and organizational behavior (Van Iddekinge et al., 2022). Work effort can be measured by the number of hours or the number of overtime hours a person works in each month (Eurofound, 2012; Katerberg & Blau, 1983). High work intensity has been shown to negatively affect the mental and physical well-being of the worker (Kalleberg, 2016).

Having power or authority at work can be confused with autonomy within the literature. Dieckhoff (2011) notes that she would have preferred to use a different measurement for autonomy in her analysis but due to data constraints used authority as the best proxy. Brand (2006) also examines the level of authority a person has at his or her workplace as part of job quality, as it represents one's status at the workplace. It is unclear if she viewed authority as

a subdimension of autonomy or as its own dimension. Having some level of authority or a supervisory role can have key implications for future opportunities for advancement (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). It is noteworthy that much of the job quality literature is relatively quiet on how managers and supervisors can play a role in the job quality of their subordinates. In a Gallup Poll (2017), 50 per cent of respondents said they left their job to 'get away from their managers'.

The largest disagreement in the literature is whether to include job satisfaction as a measure of job quality, as job satisfaction is vulnerable to various measurement errors and is easily adaptable based on individual perspectives. On one hand, experts argue that job satisfaction is tightly intertwined with one's personal preference, work values, and expectations, and therefore does not provide useful information about the objective quality of the job (Muñoz de Bustillo Llorente & Fernández Macías, 2005). Easterlin (1995) argues that the manner by which a worker evaluates the quality of his or her job is contextual and that he or she comes to a conclusion based on comparative judgements, rather than objectively determining the reality of his or her job. On the other hand, others stipulate that subjective measures of job satisfaction serve as a function of both the job's quality and objective features (Dieckhoff, 2011).

Less common job quality variables include access to health insurance and other fringe benefits (particularly salient in the United States), as well as shift-work and irregular scheduling (Findlay et al., 2017). In public health research, a great deal of weight is also put on the hazards that are associated with jobs that may pose health risks either due to the type of work or the conditions of the working space (Burchell et al., 2014). Within a pandemic context, these health factors may begin to outweigh other traditional dimensions of job quality.

3 | SCARRING EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON FUTURE JOB QUALITY

Within the scarring effects literature, there are two mechanisms to explain why an unemployment spell might result in lower wages or lower levels of job quality that come from the economics field: 1) a decrease of human capital during an unemployment spell (1964); and 2) a perception that a person with an unemployment spell is less productive than someone who has not experienced an unemployment spell (Spence, 1973). Within the sociology field, researchers have turned to theories of labor market segmentation help explain why employers offer lower wages and less job security to those who have experienced an

unemployment spell (Lindbeck & Snower, 2001). Better known as the "insider/outsider" theory, the theory posits that there is a schism between insiders, who maintain a certain level of security, either via their contract or employment status (i.e., permanent contract or full-time employment), and outsiders, who are working under less security, such as a temporary contract, zero hour contract, or even part-time (Emmenegger, 2009; Palier & Thelen, 2010; Schwander & Häusermann, 2013). Research has found that once that initial level of security is lost, for example an insider losing their job, it is hard for the worker to move back into a permanent position due to economic and political forces of labor market segmentation (Peck, 1989; Biegert, 2014). While this paper is unable to test which mechanism is behind the potential scar, it is important to note the rationale of each theory.

Becker (1964) outlines that there are two forms of human capital, *specific* and *generic*. Specific human capital is a person's knowledge of firm-specific processes and practices, while *generic* human capital can be defined as one's level of education or skill level. It is tough to disentangle which part of human capital depreciates and at what rate, but Becker theorizes that a person loses specific capital immediately and generic human capital more gradually. Signaling theory posits that because employers or hiring managers typically have little information to rely on when hiring a person, the employer may rely on certain 'signals' when determining a wage offer (Spence, 1973). These signals can result in various assumptions about the person. For example, unemployment spells may signal lower levels of motivation and productivity on behalf of the worker. Repeated spells might signal to a future employer an inability to train (Van Belle et al., 2018). Brand (2006) and Dieckhoff (2011) both find that those who first had a permanent contract before their unemployment, were less likely to be in a subsequent permanent contract following their unemployment spell, further confirming the difficulties of many workers face, if they transition from insider to outsider.

There is a deep understanding that unemployment can lead to a reduction in wages, while also increasing one's probability of experiencing future unemployment (Albrecht et al., 1999; Burda & Mertens, 2001; Arulampalam, 2001; Edin & Gustavsson, 2008; OECD, 2013; Mosthaf, 2014; Bachmann et al., 2015; Tumino, 2015). However, there are new studies that have begun to extend our knowledge of how unemployment can affect non-monetary job quality. To start, the most notable contributions to the scarring literature on future job quality come from Brand (2006) and Dieckhoff (2011). Each explores multiple dimensions of job quality, albeit with some limitations. Brand (2006) explores how job displacement impacts subsequent non-monetary job quality for a sample of workers based in Wisconsin, USA. She

finds that those who experience job displacement find themselves in lower levels of occupational status and managerial positions, following their displacement, while also enjoying fewer employer-offered benefits. While she tests autonomy, her definition of autonomy is quite limited, denoting whether the worker has a supervisor or not, which could be viewed as measuring authority rather than autonomy. This definition does not take into account varying levels of autonomy. Consequently, she does not find significance with her measurement for autonomy, and she does not measure any sub-dimensions of autonomy. Additionally, she finds that some scars vary based on social class, education level and gender.

Dieckhoff (2011) argues that the existence of unemployment scars on job quality varies by country and suggests that institutions and welfare states can impact the extent to which these scars persist. She also utilizes multiple job quality dimensions: job security, as measured by type of contract, job authority, and job satisfaction. She tests two different forms of job satisfaction, overall satisfaction, and satisfaction with respect to the job's security. She does not measure autonomy. Again, she finds that job authority incurs the largest and longest-lasting penalty. Furthermore, she finds that those who experience unemployment are also less likely to have a permanent contract more than two years after re-entering the labor force. The overall job satisfaction variables yield no statistical significance. However, the satisfaction with the job security follows a similar pattern to contract type, suggesting that she might be measuring two sides of the same coin. These two investigations provide a strong basis for our understanding of how unemployment impacts future job quality.

Other studies have taken a more focused approach, by focusing on only one or two job quality dimensions, outside of wages. Voßemer (2019) also takes a comparative approach, looking at how the institutional characteristics of a country impact the unemployment scar on job quality in 37 countries. While he finds that unemployment negatively impacts job security, he does not find that the country's economic situation serves a moderating role on the unemployment scar. However, what's relevant to this study is his focus on autonomy. He finds an initial penalty on autonomy with a medium-term effect. However, autonomy within his paper is measured by asking the respondent if he or she is "Allowed to decide how own daily work is organized", which can be better defined as work intensity, a subdimension of autonomy. Lippmann & Rosenthal (2008) find that displaced workers do experience a loss in future occupational prestige. While prestige is not always included as a variable for job quality, the level of authority is associated with occupational prestige. This is because the more authority one has work, the higher position is within either the organization or the

occupational distribution, and thus the more prestigious. In another study examining displaced workers in Switzerland, researchers found that two years after an unemployment spell, 69 percent of workers were re-employed within their same industry (Oesch & Baumann, 2015).

Taking into account the research summarized above, the following expectations are outlined. Our first focus is on job conditions, beginning with wages. It is expected that a large and lasting penalty on wages will exist for workers within our sample. As the literature suggests, hiring managers, using little information on candidates, will aim to be conservative in their wage setting. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect a large initial penalty on re-employment wages. As the previous literature suggests, we also expect workers will have less job security after an unemployment spell. Again, this might be due to signaling, as hiring managers may view unemployment with caution, thereby hiring a new worker on a temporary contract, as opposed to a permanent contract. Furthermore, it is expected that this scar will persist over time.

Next, I turn to the content of work. Amongst the literature, I find the most evidence suggesting that an unemployment spell negatively affects future opportunities for authority. In previous studies, authority levels were significantly affected by unemployment spells. Again, while the previous literature is light on the mechanisms driving this long and lasting scar, there are two potential scenarios to consider. The first is an unemployment spell, especially for a person with power and authority at work, is viewed by future hiring managers as a strong and negative signal regarding their productivity and effectiveness as a manager or authority figure. Hiring managers may be more cautious to hire someone with decision-making tasks, since they will directly affect personnel and production. Alternatively, unemployment may be seen by future hiring managers as a loss of specialization or human capital, which can take longer to recover over time. I anticipate that workers within this sample will experience an initial penalty on future authority and that that penalty will persist over time without a full recovery. And lastly, despite the scant evidence on how unemployment affects future autonomy, it is possible that this job quality dimension is the most flexible out of all the job quality dimensions. A reasonable expectation is that the worker's performance can provoke an increase in autonomy that enables a faster recovery. This is because managers may be more willing to offer additional autonomy as a job perk compared to higher wages or more authority, which come at the cost to firm balance sheets

or organizational power structures. Therefore, I anticipate an initial penalty on job autonomy but that that penalty is short-lived.

It is likely that the subdimensions of pace and work intensity follow a similar pattern to our composite autonomy variable. Again, this is because autonomy of one's own work pace and one's schedule may be greatly influenced by the worker's performance. The hiring manager's desire to ensure maximum productivity for the lowest wage incentivizes him or her to grant their employees only intrinsic rewards, i.e., more autonomy and less oversight on one's work intensity or pace. Therefore, it is expected that unemployment will result in an initial penalty on future work intensity and schedule flexibility but that these scars will not last.

4 | DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The analysis was conducted using ten waves (2009-2020) of the United Kingdom Household Longitudinal Survey, Understanding Society, a representative sample of persons living in the UK. The main interest of this paper is to compare the job quality of a person's employment before and after an unemployment spell. For a person to have remained in the sample, he or she must have experienced an unemployment spell during the period covered by the 10 waves, recorded at least two job quality observations and been of working age (18 to 55 years old) at their entry into the survey. Those who were self-employed or retired were excluded from the analysis, as the primary focus was to estimate how unemployment affected future outcomes that are typically dictated by external factors such as the perceptions of hiring managers.

The main outcome of interest is job quality. Given the multidimensional nature of job quality, we break up job quality into two categories, each of which includes various dimensions that are operationalized in the models by specific variables. Figure 1 demonstrates this conceptual framework. The first category of job quality refers to the job conditions or employment quality. This category is represented by two variables: wages, expressed as log monthly wages, and job security, measured by the type of contract, permanent or temporary.

The second category is the content of work: autonomy and authority. The survey question structure was the same for all of the autonomy variables, inquiring how much influence the respondent has over the work tasks, the pace of their work, manner of their work, the order of their work and the work hours. The responses were rescaled as the following: "a lot" (3), "some" (2), "a little" (1) and "none" (0). A mean was calculated across all five questions to

represent a composite autonomy score. The pace of work variable fits the Marxist definition of work intensity; however, as an additional test, I also run a model for work intensity that uses the number of hours a person works in a week, which is becoming more common in the modern sociological literature. I test the two sub-dimensions of autonomy, work intensity and flexibility over work hours, in separate models.

While authority can have both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, I opt to include it in the content of work. It asks the respondent if they have any "managerial duties" or if they "supervise any other employees." The question is less about the status of the job, and more related to the intrinsic reward of power that a person might get from having managerial duties or supervising others. This variable was coded dichotomously.

[FIGURE 1 here]

To establish the scarring effect of unemployment on job quality, the main predictor variable is the time since the unemployment spell. An unemployment spell in this study ends at the time a person finds a new job and whose status is now employed. This is a nominal variable with five categories. The reference category is time zero, in other words, the last observation before the unemployment spell occurred for which there is a job quality value. The other categories were coded as follows: Less than 6 months, 6 months to 1 year, 1 to 2 years, and more than 2 years since the unemployment spell and the reentry into the labor force. A categorical predictor variable was used due to the benefits in interpretability.

I run a series of within-subject models, also known as fixed effects models, in which time is nested within individuals. In the models where the dependent variable is continuous, I run a fixed-effects linear model. For the models where the dependent variables are binary, I run fixed-effects models with GLM estimations. The primary focus of our study is to examine changes in job quality within individuals after reemployment compared to job quality before the unemployment spell. Thus, I opt for fixed-effects models to guard against unobserved individual heterogeneity. Because we use fixed effects, only time-varying variables are included in the model. Therefore, the control variables that could experience variation over time that were included in the model are: education, part-time dummy, marital status, and the number of children a person has (Arulampalam, 2001; Dieckhoff, 2011). A change in education level, credentials or vocational specialization could also lead to changes within job quality over time. While part-time employment is not as common in the UK as it is in other European countries, there are scenarios where a person could opt to work part-time instead

of full-time, to better balance work and care responsibilities. The number of children and marital status have been shown to affect job quality, as personal preferences may vary based on competing and new needs. For example, if a person gets a divorce, he or she may prioritize the job conditions over the content of the work to ensure stability, given the person now must now make ends meet with only one income. All models utilize robust standard errors. Each of the models have varying sample sizes, as the job conditions questions were asked in every wave, but the content of work questions were only asked in the even waves.

5 | RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the pooled sample under study. Again, we limit our sample to those who have experienced an unemployment spell, as we focus on exploring how that spell impacts future job quality. Our sample skews slightly to women, with about 63% of the sample. The average age at the first wave was 39 years with about 54% being married. When looking at our job quality variables, we find that the monthly wage for the pooled sample was £1,954 per month in the las job preceding the unemployment spell, and most workers within our sample worked under a permanent contract. The mean autonomy was about 1.89 on a scale of 0 to 3 with 3 representing a high level of autonomy. The mean pace was similar (1.95), and the mean schedule flexibility (or schedule autonomy) was about 1.2, with 3 representing a lot of control.

[TABLE 1 here]

Figure 2 reveals the first results from the regression analyses, examining how unemployment affects future job conditions. Contrary to previous studies, we find that unemployment does not leave a long and lasting scar on future wages within our sample. There is a sizable penalty within the first six months, but after a year back in employment, that scar is no longer visible. This reveals a new trajectory on unemployment scarring effects on wages that differs from previous analyses. As mentioned above, this minor scar might be a result of my method to measure how wages recover over time, compared to one's wages before the unemployment spell, rather than comparing one's wages to the alternate reality of never having an unemployment spell. Nevertheless, when we look at job security, we see a different pattern. Within the first six months after the unemployment spell, workers are 41 percent less likely to have a permanent contract than before their unemployment spell. This finding resembles what Dieckhoff (2011) found as it relates to the UK. We see that it takes, on average, more than a year to regain a permanent contract.

Figure 3 turns to the content of work. Again, autonomy is a composite index of five underlying questions. For those who experience an unemployment spell, they do incur a sizable penalty on job quality upon their immediate re-entry into the labor market. However, that penalty is not long-lasting. After six months of work, the penalty no longer persists, and the coefficients are no longer statistically significant. Our research design cannot determine the mechanism driving this pattern, but there could be two possible scenarios to explain what we are seeing. The first is that the hiring manager did view the unemployment spell as a negative signal, and therefore hired the worker with less autonomy until the worker could prove him or herself. The second scenario could be that the worker lost firm-specific human capital, but not necessarily general human capital. Therefore, the loss of autonomy during those first 6 months is simply the time it takes for the worker to adapt to the new firm, thereby regaining their firm-specific human capital. Both scenarios and mechanisms are plausible. While the scar is not long lasting, it is important to note that, on average, the worker is likely to lose some autonomy upon return to the workplace.

Model 4 in Figure 3 reveals the longest unemployment scar on future job quality across our models. For those who experience an unemployment spell, the probability that they will have authority duties remains negative even after two years after re-entering the labor force. After a year back in the workforce, workers, on average, do see a slight increase in the probability of having some authority level. Perhaps it takes about a year for supervisors to trust new hires with more authority. Brand found that managers were unlikely to find themselves in a managerial position 2 years after their unemployment, representing a similar pattern.

[FIGURE 2 here]

[FIGURE 3 here]

The last set of regression models looks at the two sub-dimensions of autonomy: work intensity and flexible working hours. It was expected that workers would lose some control over the pace at which they worked, as supervisors would be less trusting of new workers with an unemployment spell and thus, keep that worker on a "short leash." And because flexible working hours can be viewed as a perk or reward for good performance, newly hired workers may see a decrease in their work hour flexibility. Figure 4 confirms our expectation in part. For work intensity, defined as having control over one's pace, we find a penalty (at the 10% confidence level), but the size of the penalty is small. When we look at flexibility alone, we do find an initial penalty that is sizable, but that penalty disappears after 6 months

back on a job. In fact, the coefficient is positive and statistically significant after a year following the unemployment spell.

[FIGURE 4 here]

6 | ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

There is reason to believe that some job dimensions are correlated with each other and therefore should be included in each of the models. Therefore, we run a series of new regressions to account for this cross correlation. First, we include autonomy and authority in our model with wages as the dependent variable (Table 2). As mentioned before, authority and wages are strongly linked, as the more authority a person is bestowed, the higher the wage that person is likely to earn. The second added control is autonomy. Autonomy may increase as wages do. For example, the worker may demonstrate their capability to perform well at the job and therefore, the supervisor may reward them with more autonomy either before or alongside a raise. We cannot know the exact timing for each but controlling for autonomy and authority may shed some light on how all three are associated. When we control for autonomy and authority, the coefficients for wages are no longer statistically significant, suggesting that the wage scar is partly explained by autonomy and authority. Both coefficients for autonomy and authority are statistically significant.

In our second robustness model, we include monthly pay and authority in our model where autonomy is the dependent variable (Table 3). Here, we see that the scarring effect on autonomy is relatively stable, in comparison to our previous analysis. We find a strong and statistically significant penalty on autonomy within the first 6 months of returning to the workforce. However, that scar disappears after 6 months. Additionally, the coefficients for both wages and authority are also quite sizable and strong.

[TABLE 2 here]

[TABLE 3 here]

Lastly, some may prefer a work intensity variable that denotes the hours worked per week over the Marxist view of work intensity. Hypothetically, is it possible that workers would want to work more hours at the start of their new job to impress their supervisors. Therefore, we test if workers end up working more hours upon re-employment. Here, we find that workers work fewer hours within the first 6 months of their re-entry into the labor force,

which may denote a lower workload at the beginning of their new job. However, after that initial 6 months, we no longer find statistical significance.

7 | CONCLUSION

The contributions to this important and growing field are threefold. First, by separating job quality into two distinct categories: job conditions and content of work, we can explore how an unemployment spell affects future job quality with a more nuanced approach. The multidimensional variable for autonomy better captures the concept, compared to previous analyses. Second, work intensity, to my knowledge, has not been included in previous analyses. And lastly, I was able to follow individuals beyond two years. The additional time span revealed that in some cases the scars persisted even beyond two years without a full recovery. The findings suggest that unemployment spells leave large scars on future job security and authority. It is interesting that even though wages are often strongly related to authority, the findings suggested different scarring effects. On wages, we find a strong initial scar, but a recovery shortly thereafter. However, on authority, we do not find a full recovery even after two years since the end of the unemployment spell. The hit on one's authority is meaningful, as it suggests that hiring managers may be more conservative in their willingness to offer authority to those who have experienced an unemployment spell. More validation on behalf of the worker may be needed to prove their continued ability to supervise other workers.

On the content of work, we found a strong initial scar on autonomy, but that scar was short-lived. An important question for future research is why there is a fast recovery of autonomy (and pace) that does not translate into an equally fast recovery of job stability and authority. It is possible that if a worker with decision-making power is laid off, it may be that he or she is coming from an industry that is declining or that the decision to lay off more senior-level workers is related to the occupation rather than the worker. The same may be true for job security. If the worker is losing some specialization advantage when finding re-employment, his or her ability to work with some autonomy is not hindered and therefore, they are able to recover their loss of autonomy faster. Furthermore, the costs of hiring a worker on a permanent contract are higher than hiring someone on a temporary contract, thus offering more autonomy in the job may make the job more attractive to jobseekers, despite the temporary security.

The fact that there continues to be an initial penalty on wages and autonomy may be a result of the signaling mechanism. It is possible that an unemployment spell may signal to future hiring managers that the worker has less motivation or is less productive than others, which results in the hiring manager acting cautiously by dictating the new worker's autonomy, work intensity and wages. After a short period, any negative signals may have been replaced by the worker's job performance.

It is worth noting here the role of worker preferences. While preferences were not included in this analysis it would be useful to consider how workers' preferences affect their decisions when finding new employment. For example, it is possible that workers are willing to accept a new job with less authority and security for a job that has more opportunities for autonomy and schedule flexibility.

Future research should explore how best to test these mechanisms, as the policies to address each of them are very different. If, for instance, the main mechanism behind scarring effects is in fact signaling, then policies to address negative signaling may require additional safeguards in the hiring processes. Workers, themselves, may also find a benefit in demonstrating to future employers their work ethic and motivation to combat these negative signals. Policy efforts to improve human capital, on the other hand, can be costly, both to the worker and governments. Some of the skills, such as technology and data literacy may require intensive training, if not years of re-schooling, before the worker achieves a sufficient level of market competitiveness. Qualitative studies may also contribute to our understanding of how unemployment spells affect future job outcomes.

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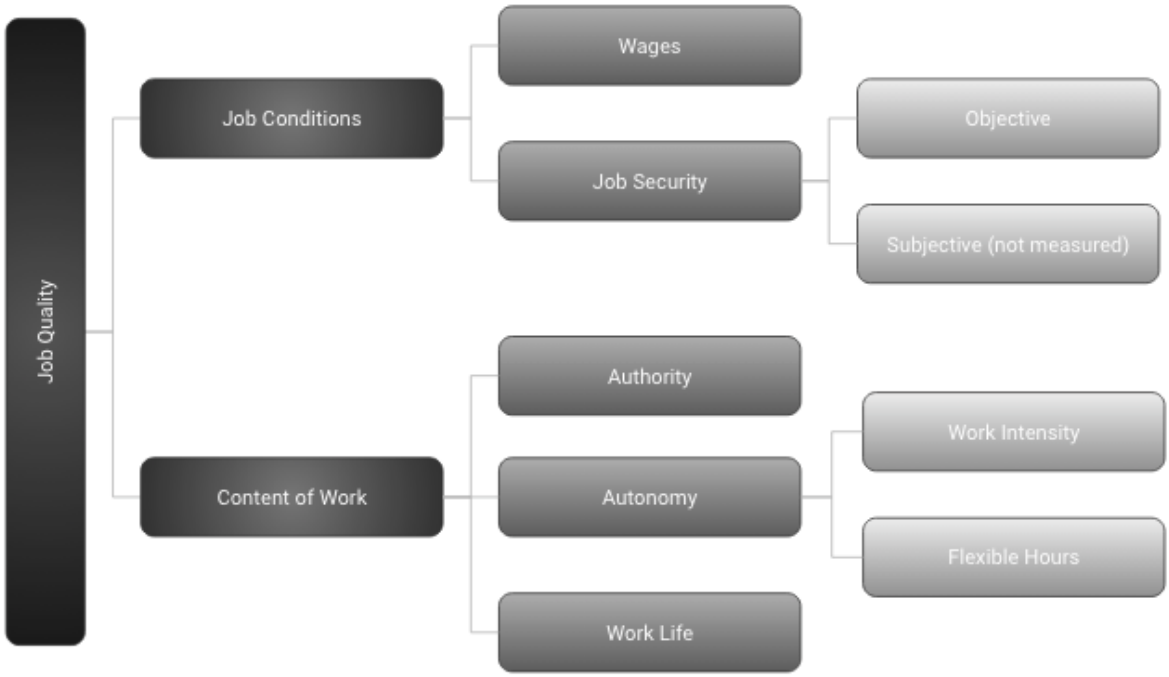
TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Job Quality



Note: This conceptual framework is adapted and simplified using the Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011, comprehensive review of job quality indices.

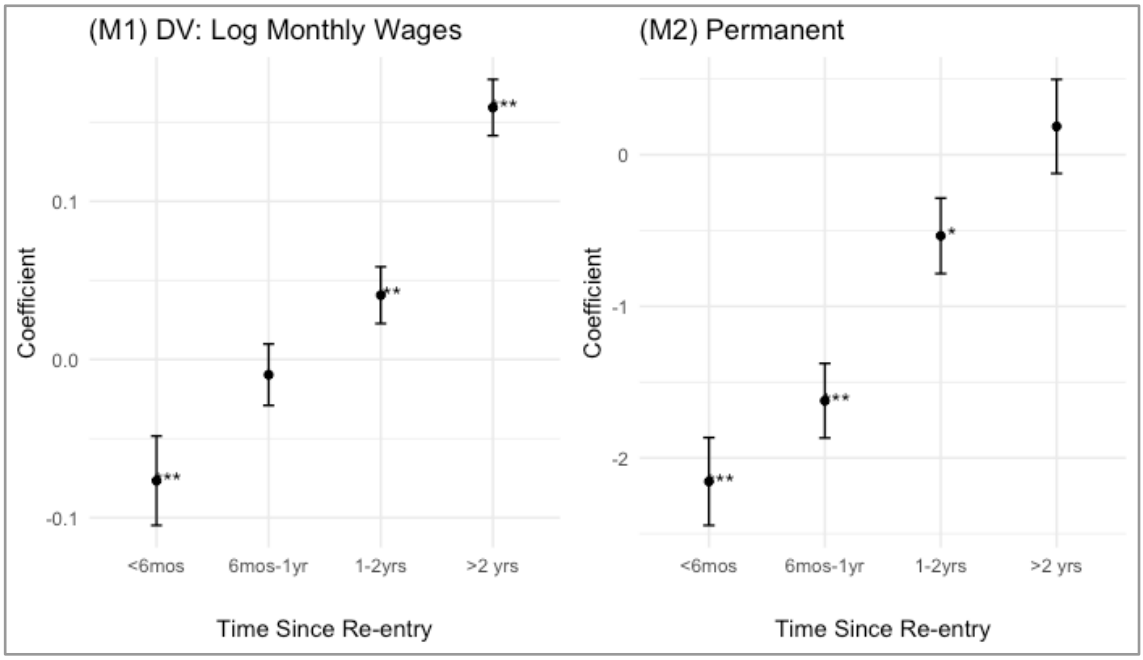
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Median	Max.
Age	38.893	11.512	18.000	39	64
Age in first wave	35.219	11.043	18.000	36	55
Autonomy	1.859	0.829	0.000	2.000	3.000
Authority	0.251	0.434	0.000	0.000	1.000
Monthly Pay	1,664	1,300	0.330	1,365	8,333.
Permanent	0.885	0.319	0.000	1.000	1.000
Pace	1.954	1.049	0.000	2.000	3.000
Job hours	31.759	11.250	0.100	36.000	97.000
Flex	1.178	1.158	0.000	1.000	3.000
Married	0.544	0.498	0.000	1.000	1.000
Number of Children	1.126	1.278	0.000	1.000	11.000
Women	0.626	0.484	0.000	1.000	1.000
Unemployment spell (months)	13.250	11.336	0.000	10.767	98.967

Note: Descriptive statistics were run on the pooled sample.

Figure 2. The Scarring Effect of Unemployment on Job Conditions

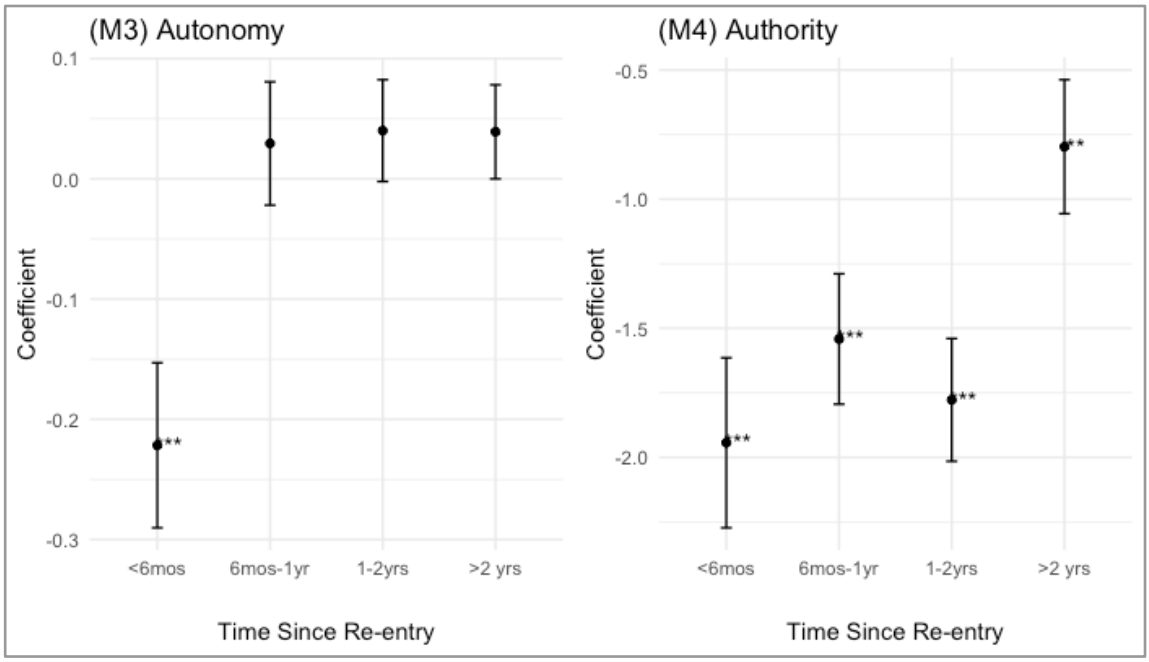
M1 - Fixed effects linear regression estimates; M2 - Fixed effects GLM estimates



*Note: * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Observations for M1 = 10,211; observations for M2 = 3,149*

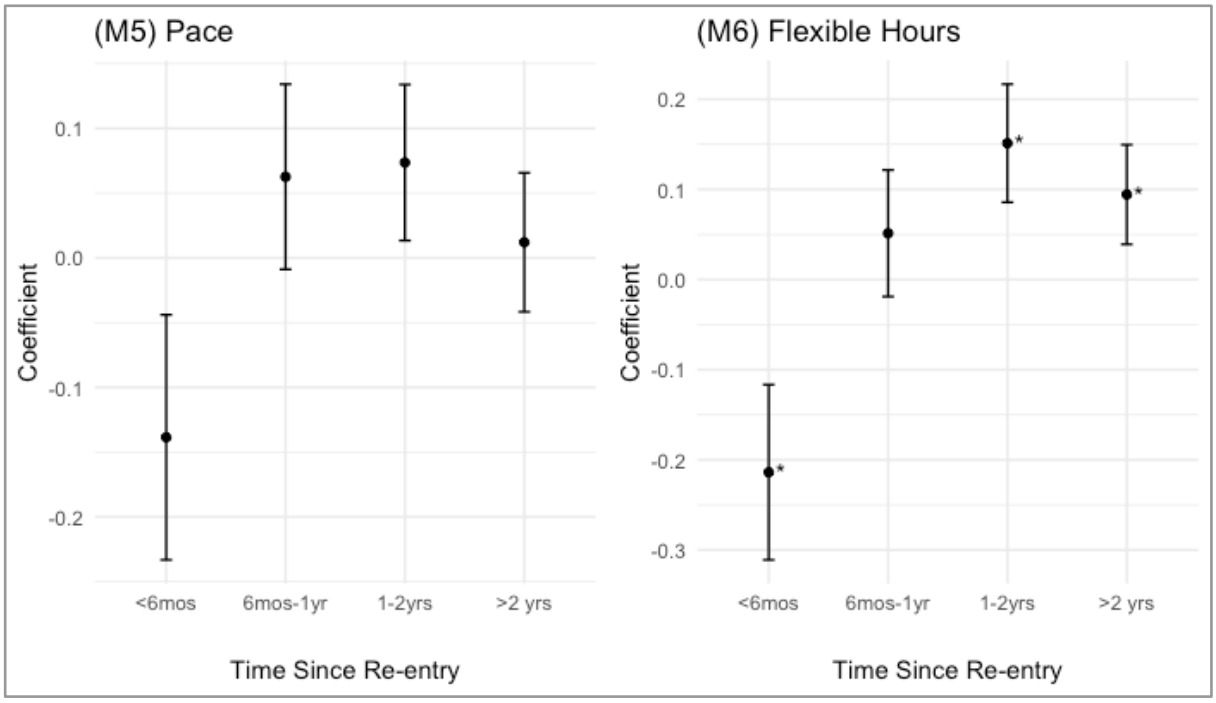
Figure 3. The Scarring Effect of Unemployment Content of Work

M1 - Fixed effects linear regression estimates; M2 - Fixed effects GLM estimates



*Note: * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Autonomy is composite measurement, using the Marxist definition of work intensity. Observations for M3 = 4,952; observations for M4 = 3,290)*

Figure 4. The Scarring Effect of Unemployment on the Sub-dimensions of Autonomy M5 - Fixed effects linear regression estimates; M6 - Fixed effects linear regression estimates



*Note: * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Observations for M5 = 4,964; observations for M6 = 4,971*

Table 2. Fixed effects linear regression models for wage with the inclusion of job quality dimensions

	Log Monthly Pay
Less than 6 months (ref. Before unemployment)	-0.032 (0.041)
6 months to 1 year	-0.019 (0.034)
1 to 2 years	0.045 (0.0268)
More than 2 years	0.146*** (0.023)
Change in marital status	0.030 (0.035)
Change in number of children	0.002 (0.018)
Change in education (ref. Less than degree): Degree	0.092 (0.090)
Change in education: Other higher degree	0.051 (0.076)
Part-time (dummy)	-0.573*** (0.033)
Autonomy	0.061*** (0.012)
Authority	0.167*** (0.026)
Observations	4,934
F Statistic	93.8615***

Note: p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Standard errors in parentheses*

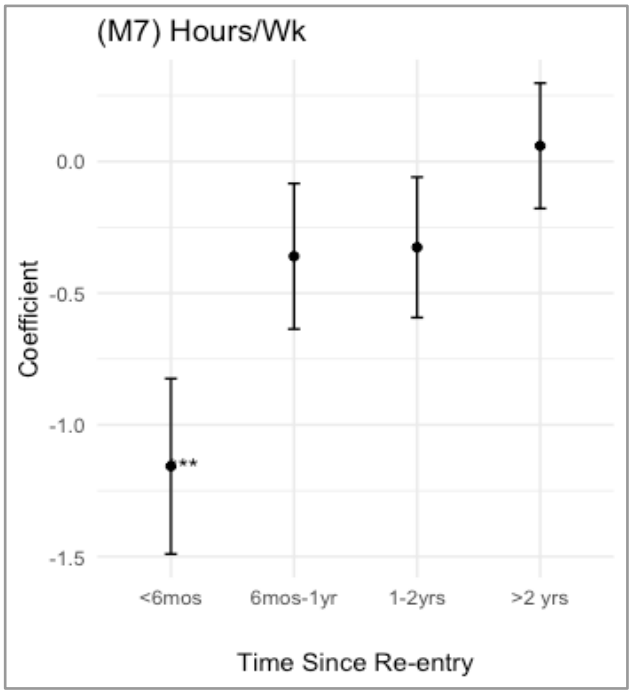
Table 3. Fixed effects linear regression models for autonomy with the inclusion of job quality dimensions

	Autonomy
Less than 6 months (ref. Before unemployment)	-0.168**
	(0.069)
6 months to 1 year	0.062
	(0.049)
1 to 2 years	0.078
	(0.042)
More than 2 years	0.0304
	(0.039)
Change in marital status	-0.064
	(0.054)
Change in number of children	0.026
	(0.025)
Change in education (ref. Less than degree): Degree	0.254
	(0.186)
Change in education: Other higher degree	0.137
	(0.162)
Part-time (dummy)	-0.017
	(0.050)
Wages	0.192***
	(0.037)
Authority	0.273***
	(0.039)
Observations	4,934
F Statistic	13.2711***

Note: p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Standard errors in parentheses*

Figure 5. The Scarring Effect of Unemployment on Work Intensity - Hours/Week

M7- Fixed effects linear regression estimates



Note: * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Observations for M7= 10,211

CHAPTER FOUR

BRINGING WORK HOME: HOW PAID WORK IMPACTS THE DIVISION OF HOUSEWORK IN THE UK

ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to examine the extent to which paid work characteristics affect the division of housework. I extend the current work-family and housework literature by testing two new dimensions of work. I test how having authority, autonomy, and schedule flexibility can influence the division of housework between heterosexual couples. The existing literature on the division of housework typically uses a differential in education and/or income to determine who, between the two spouses, is more likely to take on the housework burden. Yet these previous tests have been criticized for being gender-blind, while yielding conflicting results. This paper tests the relative resources and gender theories by borrowing from a psychology framework for our expected outcomes, arguing that psychology theories of spillover and compensatory effects may help explain why the housework burden continues to fall on women. In each of the models, I find evidence of a spillover effect when men have more authority and autonomy at work. Alternatively, I find evidence that points to a compensatory effect when women have more authority and autonomy than their husbands. In each of the scenarios, women take on a heavier burden of the housework.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Historically, the domains of work and home were typically separated along heteronormative gender lines. The husband was expected to be the sole breadwinner of the family, whereas the wife was usually siloed to the home to care for the house and children. However, expansions in women's educational attainment, feminist movements, and economic and demographic shifts have ushered in dramatic changes to women's employment, forcing the division of housework to serve as a lightning rod for new investigations (Shockley & Shen, 2016). When women left the home for the workplace, the question of who would do the

housework became of great interest. Furthermore, questions about how it should and was divided became a proxy for understanding power dynamics between spouses. The expectation was that as wives caught up to their husbands in the working domain, husbands would pick up the slack at home. In other words, housework would evolve to a more even division of tasks like cooking, cleaning, laundering, and shopping. But the evidence did not bear this out (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). While men, in some contexts, have increased their total hours spent on housework, women continue to do the lion's share (Coltrane, 2000; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010; Schneider, 2012, Mandel et al., 2021).

Several theories try to explain how housework is allocated between spouses. Overall, the theories can be placed into three broad categories: Relative Resources, Time Availability, and Gender-Socialization (see Coltrane, 2000; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020 for a comprehensive review). The relative resources theory suggests that there are power differentials between spouses that play into a theoretical negotiation process to avoid housework (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Brines, 1994, Lundberg, 2005). These theories suggest that spouses use their resources as bargaining chips to do less housework. For example, a husband with more income or education may feel that he contributes a great deal to the household and therefore does not have to contribute in a manual way, e.g., doing housework.

The time availability theory was based on the idea that the more time a spouse had the more they could dedicate to housework (Becker, 1973). More time in the work domain meant less time spent at home and vice versa. However, this theory was resoundingly criticized as being gender-blind, since it ignored the institutional factors that limit worker outcomes for women. Therefore, theories that applied a gender lens began to sprout up. West and Zimmerman (1987) contended that housework enables spouses to carry out their socialized gender processes. They went on further to argue that gender constructs are developed, fostered, and replicated by the behaviors we exhibit, with housework being the epitome of how one might display their gender.

However, the empirical evidence for each of these theories has been mixed (Coltrane, 2000; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020). They continue to fall short of fully understanding why women continue to take on a heavier housework burden despite various work advancements. The objective of this article is to contribute to the literature, by testing the extent to which work characteristics affect the division of housework. I focus on two key characteristics: Authority and Autonomy. Having authority at work is referred to as having "legitimate

power" by Dahrendorf (1959), which may play a role in the negotiation process of dividing housework. Additionally, autonomy at work is also a coveted job quality dimension, as having autonomy at work has been linked to job satisfaction and feelings of independence and utility (Esser & Olsen, 2012; Lopes et al., 2014). A person with high levels of autonomy is said to have control over how work tasks are carried out, with little oversight from a supervisor, other colleagues, or even machines (Karasek et al., 1998). These two work-related elements can influence people's personalities, behaviors, and even the division of housework (Arrighi & Maume, 2000; Harwell, 1995; Kohn & Schooler, 1982).

In his review, Coltrane (2000) argued that housework cannot be fully understood without noting the embeddedness of our social interactions, complex family dynamics, and how the informal and formal market economies operate. Psychology theorists would also argue that given that work and home domains are "mutually incompatible" due to confronting "role pressures," it is inevitable that our work and home domains may lead to conflict between spouses (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 84). The two main theories that are usually cited within psychology literature are the "spillover effect," that what we do or the rewards we receive from work can follow us home, and the "compensatory effect," where we seek to compensate what is lacking in one domain in the another (Byron, 2005). Kohn (1982) suggested that what we did at work and how we were treated could be related to our feelings of self-esteem. His theory adheres to the spillover effect.

This compensatory effect has been tested in the housework literature to some extent. The "doing gender" theory is an example of a compensatory theory. It is rooted in the idea that we display our gender at home, especially when we are unable to display it at work. Another example is the gender deviance theory, which suggests that working in an occupation dominated by their opposite sex can lead to compensatory effect when it comes to housework and parental care (Schneider, 2012).

This article relies on both sociological and psychological theories to enhance the investigation into how the division of housework between spouses is impacted by work characteristics. By testing how two work characteristics, authority, and autonomy, affect housework allocation, I give credence to the idea that what we do at work also acts as a bargaining chip when negotiating away our housework tasks. The findings suggest that differentials in authority, autonomy, and schedule flexibility do impact the division of housework. However, like previous analyses, I find that the effects are typically stronger in couples where the husband has more authority or autonomy, thus resulting in a higher housework burden on women.

The gains that women have made in the workplace do not appear to enable them to negotiate away their housework duties. In fact, I find that in couples where women have more autonomy than their husbands, women continue to carry a heavier housework burden. I contribute to the growing literature with the addition of these two new work elements in hopes that future research might be able to build on these models.

The rest of the article is formatted as follows: the subsequent section further reviews the existing literature and theoretical tests within this field, and it provides an explanation of the two key work elements that serve as the independent variables of interest. The following sections cover the data and methodology used for the analysis before the analytical results are presented. The last section is left for the discussion and conclusion.

2 | WORK AND FAMILY LITERATURE

The literature linking work and family dynamics is vast. It touches on various disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, economics, labor, and feminist studies, just to name a few. The idea that our paid work life would affect our unpaid home life is not new, however, the focus on the intersection between work and family gained traction around the 1960s when women in many Western countries began to work more outside of the home. Goode's theory of role strain (1960) served as a catalyst, arguing that roles can conflict with each other. His theory was tested by those seeking to understand how women handle two roles, mother and career-woman, a duality that continues to plague women today (Johnson & Johnson, 1976; Bird & Ford, 1985; Carlson et al., 2009; Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017). Blood and Wolfe's (1960) seminal research argued that decision-making within couples was a key proxy for understanding power and authority in relationships. Their resources theory concluded that couples bring their economic resources, which are obtained or utilized through paid work, to their marriage when determining key life decisions. The greater the resources of the spouse, e.g., earnings, education and/or occupational status, the more decision-making power and authority he or she would have. However, because this study was conducted during the 1960s, the spouse with the most economic resources was often the husband. Exchange theory, built on the resources theory, suggested that an agreement (implicit or explicit) was made between spouses that outlined varying contributions to the wellbeing of the couple/family. One spouse contributes to the wellbeing of the family with their earnings, while the other spouse contributes by doing the housework (Scanzoni, 1970). The larger the

earnings, the bigger their contribution, and thus, the higher likelihood that he or she can negotiate away their share of the housework.

Housework is often defined as the set of unpaid tasks that are needed to ensure the wellbeing and upkeep of the home and those who reside there. It is often thought of as "drudgery" or more crassly, "women's work" (Coltrane, 2000). These routine chores can include cooking and preparing meals, cleaning the house, shopping for groceries, and washing, ironing, and folding the laundry. Other tasks such as gardening or tending to the lawn, fixing things around the house and car repairs are sometimes viewed as masculine tasks that are carried out intermittently (Bartley et al., 2005; Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). Some studies opt to separate out childcare, as many view childcare as rewarding (Sullivan, 2013). These exchange theories, (e.g., relative resources and time availability) of which there are many, are all rooted in the idea that our paid work affects intimate negotiations between spouses when determining who does the decision-making, the cleaning, the cooking, and the drudgery.

However, many decades since Blood and Wolfe's first investigation into the power dynamics between spouses, there has yet to be a definitive answer for why women continue to do the lion's share of the housework, despite the many economic gains they have acquired. DeMaris and Longmore (1996) found that men's education did have a strong effect on the division of routine housework and that this effect was stronger than women's education levels. Cunningham (2005) found that men's absolute income or relative variables (e.g., men's share of income) was a strong predictor of men's housework hours. However, when women caught up to their husband's income, women's housework hours did not necessarily reduce in similar fashion (Evertsson & Nermo, 2007, Gupta & Ash, 2008). Brines (1994) tested the dependency model, which is based on a "deceptively simple idea: Household labor is provided in return for economic support" (1994, p. 655). However, her findings were less simple. She found that wives who had less income than their husbands followed the normal dependency model, carrying out more housework hours. However, husbands who were more dependent on their wives carried out less housework. Among men with low incomes and long unemployment, men were even more likely to shun housework. Brines suggested that these findings can be better explained by theories of masculinity. These men may view their dependency on their wives as an attack on their masculinity, as they are unable to provide for their family (Morris, 1990; Rubin, 1992).

Becker (1981) believed that higher wages led to more time in the workforce and less time to carry out household tasks, posing the time availability theory. Again, this theory sparked

criticism from feminist theorists, who argued that there are social and institutional constraints that may affect the amount of time a person has to devote to work and home, and that these institutions enable the reproduction of inequalities that hinders women's advancement in the labor market (Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017).

For example, women are more likely to work part-time or via temporary contracts. Furthermore, when women work part-time, they often take on even more of the housework, beyond their fair share (Shelton & John, 1996). Oakley (1974) studied housework, not as a function of marriage, but as a workplace and found that housewives worked, on average, 77 hours a week, far beyond the average paid working hours. Empirical tests for the time availability theory have found mixed results and varying degrees of correlation. Cunningham (2005) found that the theory held up but only for men's working hours. Hook (2017) found a weak to no relationship between women's working hours and men's contribution to housework. And Shockley and Shen (2007) found that in situations where women reduce their hours dedicated to housework, due to higher work demands, men fail to pick up the slack.

One thing to note with these investigations is that the focus is typically on predicting men's absolute hours devoted to housework. This can be problematic when trying to understand the relationship between spouses.

Another criticism was that these theories were gender-blind, ignoring important contextual factors, such as socialization and inequality. The notion that women were more likely to earn less, have less education, and subsequently, occupy a lower occupational status was overlooked within exchange theories. Gender construction theories or "gender-plus" theories, as Hartmann (1981) referred to them, began to take hold in the literature. The most prominent theory within the gender-plus category, is known as doing gender. West and Zimmerman (1987) argued that gender is the "product of social doings," meaning that gender is a social construct which we reproduce and affirm by our actions (1987, p. 129). They focused on housework tasks, referring to it as the "material embodiment of wifely and husbandly roles", by which the husband does gender by avoiding housework to assert their manhood or masculinity, and the wife does gender by carrying out the feminine housework tasks, cleaning, laundering, cooking, and caring for the home (1987, p. 144). When testing doing gender theories, researchers have turned to gender deviance investigations, suggesting that the opportunity to deviate from gender norms at work may affect how gender norms are displayed at home. Schneider (2012) found that women who work in women-dominated

occupations were more likely to do more of the women's work or routine housework, whereas women who worked in more gender-balanced occupations did less.

3 | EXCHANGE THEORY EXTENSION - AUTHORITY AND AUTONOMY

Work has become a large part of our everyday lives, our identities, and our status within society. Coser (1974) went further to call work a "greedy institution" demanding more of our time and energy, thereby blurring the lines between work and home. Kanter (1977) disposed of the idea that work and family are two separate worlds, further heightening the focus on how work and family interact with each other. In the psychology literature there are two hypotheses to help explain how work and home domains interact. The first is the compensatory effect, wherein disappointments in one domain are compensated in the other. Brines (1994) hints at this in her conclusions, suggesting that men who lack authority or the ability to exercise their masculinity in a work setting, therefore assert their masculinity by disavowing housework.

The other hypothesis is the spillover effect. This suggests that our actions or attitudes in one domain affect those in another. Kohn and Schooler (1982) posited the theory of work socialization and found that jobs with low or no autonomy and high levels of routinization are highly correlated with lower levels of self-esteem and high levels of skepticism of society. These lower levels of autonomy can also lead to increased dissociation from family life and social activities (Lopes et al., 2014; Wheatley, 2017). Taking these work socialization theories even further, research finds that work characteristics can affect behaviors at home including decision-making, problem solving and parenting styles (Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017). Again, buttressing the idea that our work and home lives are becoming ever more blurred.

While the work-family literature is expansive, there continues to be a lack of understanding of how the content of our work affects power dynamics within couples. To limit the notion of power within the paid work domain to education and wages, overlooks how the content of our work enables us to assert power and execute displays of gender. Within this study, we focus on two job characteristics that are related to power and decision-making: Authority and Autonomy.

Authority. Marx and Weber were among the first to point out that authority at work served as a means of social stratification and inequality (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011). Weber defined authority as the "probability that a command with a given specific content will be

obeyed by a given group of persons" (1978, pp. 152–153). Dahrendorf (1959) goes on to argue that job authority should be viewed as a "legitimate power," thereby anyone who has authority at work is viewed to wield this power within a sanctioned environment. While authority has been found to be a strong determinate of wages, the degree of authority and the wages that are offered to compensate that authority can vary by gender, race and class (Wright et al., 1995; Spaeth, 1985; Schieman et al., 2013). There continue to be gaps in power differentials for men and women who have some level of authority. Women with some authority level typically report lower salaries than their male counterparts, authority over smaller teams and smaller projects, more insubordination from those they oversee, all culminating in hitting that figurative glass ceiling (R. A. Smith, 2002; Reskin & Ross, 1992).

Previous tests of income within the housework literature may have been biased by differentials in power and authority at work, in addition to differentials in income. While authority can come in different forms, I define authority as supervisory authority, i.e., whether a person has supervisory authority over another person. In addition to authority's strong connection to earnings, authority is germane here because the act of being authoritative typically mimics qualities that are viewed as masculine (Schneider, 2012). If a worker learns to be assertive, decisive, and strong-willed at work, it is possible that these learned qualities do not cease when he or she engages in nonwork domains, such as the home, community circles, or with respect to their political engagement (Smith, 2002).

Mannino & Deutsch (2007) found that more assertive women were able to more effectively negotiate away their childcare responsibilities with their spouses compared to less assertive women. Arrighi and Maume (2000) found that men who fell within the manager classification did less housework, on average, than their non-manager peers. These exchange theories are consistent with the spillover effect. However, the compensatory theory could also be true, especially for women. The compensatory theories are closely related to the gender theories, arguing that women who have authority at work may seek to compensate and thus perform more housework duties. Bittman and his colleagues (2003) found that couples who deviate from the traditional income makeup, i.e., women who earn more than 50 percent of the household income, were more likely to exhibit more traditional housework loads, where the wife took on the heavier housework burden. Similarly, Schneider (2012) found that men in gender-atypical occupations were more likely to do housework tasks and that women's housework is affected by the men's employment. He also found that women in gender-atypical occupations were more likely to adhere to a pattern of "gender deviance

neutralization," which suggests a compensatory effect. Contrary to the compensatory effect, the relative resources theory would argue that the person with more authority at work, regardless of gender, is able to negotiate away more of the housework burden. However, given the literature, the following scenarios are expected:

H1a: In couples where husbands have jobs with authority and their wives do not, the housework burden will fall more heavily on women.

H1b: In couples where wives have jobs with authority and their husbands do not, the housework burden will continue to fall more heavily on women.

Autonomy. Autonomy at work is defined as having control over one's tasks and work content (Karasek et al., 1998). This dimension of job quality is multidimensional. This can refer to having control over the manner in which workers carry out their tasks, the order in which the tasks are done, and/or the pace or effort put into their tasks (Breaugh, 1985; Green, 2006; Findlay et al., 2013). Breaugh (1985) included autonomy over one's schedule in his definition, but recent scholars have explored this subdimension even further, given the rise of remote work, feelings of burnout and policies that aim to balance motherhood and full-time work (Langner, 2018; Chung et al., 2020; Kim, 2020; Chung, 2022). Others have included schedule autonomy or flexibility given its relationship to work and life-satisfaction, as it enables a worker to better balance work and family responsibilities (Glavin & Schieman, 2011; Chung, 2017).

Obtaining high levels of autonomy at work often requires a certain level of engagement in work politics (as is true for authority), a constant demonstration of confidence and capability, and consistent performance outcomes that warrant less oversight by supervisors and managers (Arrighi & Maume, 2000; Gillet et al., 2013). Within the hierarchy of work organizations, management is constantly trying to reduce uncertainty, by increasing oversight and, at times, work intensity. For example, advances in technology and communications technology have expanded the ways in which management can monitor its workers. Thus, workers who can achieve some degree of autonomy have an incentive to maintain their status. The inability to carry out one's tasks without close oversight can be viewed by men and women as emasculating and, specifically for men, a threat to their masculinity. Furthermore, women are less likely to report having high levels of autonomy, as the interest of management is to hire compliant and docile workers, which in some cases are women-dominant workforces (Arrighi & Maume, 2000). To my knowledge, there has only been one

other study that utilized work autonomy within a similar framework to this investigation. In that study, Arrighi & Maume (2000) examine autonomy through a work subordination scale to determine how men's housework hours are affected. The questions they use to measure work subordination are as follows *"(a) Is yours a job in which you are required to design important aspects of your own work and to put your ideas into practice? (b) Can you considerably slow down your pace of work when you want to? (c) Can you decide on your own to introduce a new task or work assignment that you will do on your job? (d) Can you decide when to come to work and when to leave work? and (e) Can you take a day off from work without losing pay or having to claim vacation, sick leave, or compensatory time?"* (2000, p. 475). As you can see, they incorporate several different subdimensions of autonomy, such as autonomy over tasks, the pace, and schedule.

They found that men with higher levels of work subordination, i.e., less autonomy, were less likely to carry out feminine household tasks. Even in couples where women's earnings were closer to their husband's, men did less housework. Their results suggest that there was a strong compensatory effect impacting the division of housework. In sum, they found that autonomy at work served as the third best predictor of men's share of housework. For this work characteristic, I anticipate similar results:

H2a: In couples where the husband has a job with more autonomy, the housework burden falls more heavily on the wife.

H2b: In couples where the wife has a job with more autonomy, the housework burden continues to fall on the wife.

There have been some additional studies to examine schedule autonomy or schedule flexibility, independent of autonomy. This sub-dimension of autonomy can refer to the ability to determine one's own schedule, when to start work and when to end. Both Lyness and colleagues (2012) and Wheatley (2017) found that when women have more autonomy over their schedules, they are more likely to take full advantage of it, in comparison to their male counterparts. An example of utilizing their schedule flexibility is starting their day earlier, so that they may end earlier. Chung (2017) reports that women, and more specifically mothers, use their flexible time to help balance their work and nonwork obligations. Perry-Jenkins and Wasdsworth (2017) explain in their review that when men have more flexibility over their hours, they tend to work even longer hours, if not weekends. In this study, I test schedule flexibility separately from the general autonomy and expect to find the following scenarios:

H3a: In couples where the husbands have jobs with more flexibility over their schedules, that women will take on a heavier housework burden.

H3b: In couples where wives have jobs with more flexibility over their schedules, that they will continue to take on a heavier housework burden.

Lastly, I test how each of the work characteristics affect who has the final say when it comes to financial decision-making. Blood and Wolfe (1960) first tested the relative resources theory focusing on decision-making. They argued that whoever contributed the more resources would hold more influence when it came to the decision-making between spouses. This was contested by feminist theorists that found that even in couples where both believed that they take an egalitarian approach to decision-making, husbands continued to have a greater influence in the decision-making (Fox & Murry, 2000). In these couples, husbands could utilize their power in more subtle ways, such as determining the direction of the conversations, or even ignoring certain conflicts, such as the division of labor (Bartley et al., 2005). Therefore, it is expected that the decision-making process will play out as follows in this sample:

H4: Regardless of who has more authority or autonomy at work, the husband will have the final say in financial decision-making.

5 | DATA AND METHODOLOGY

I analyze data from the eighth wave (2016-17) of the UK Understanding Society Survey to determine the effect of work characteristics on the division of housework. The focus on the UK is interesting for two reasons. For starters, the UK has been referred to as the "modified male-breadwinner" society, suggesting that while a gap still persists between men and women when it comes to housework and childcare responsibilities there are key differences by class, race and education level (Altintas & Sullivan, 2017; Zamberlan et al., 2021). Within that same vein, when looking at working time and work-life balance indices, the gender gaps are extremely large. While it may be easy to say that time availability is simply the reason for why women do more of the housework, it is important that we delve deeper to this intimate negotiation to better understand how spouses divide the housework (Leschke & Watt, 2008).

While the survey is longitudinal, for the purpose of this analysis, I treat the survey as cross-sectional. The sample was limited to heterosexual couples who were married and living together. Both spouses had to report working as an employee and both had to be at least 18

years old. Due to varied levels of missing values for each of the work characteristics, our model sample sizes differed slightly, however, each model included at least 3,000 couples.

Dependent variable. The housework questions within the survey are asked to each partner using the following format: *"Here are some household jobs [grocery shopping, cleaning/hoovering, cooking, washing and ironing]. Could you please say who* ***mostly*** *does this work here? Is it mostly yourself, or mostly your spouse/partner, or is the work shared equally?"* If the answers conflicted between spouses or were missing, I took the wife's answer, as previous literature has found that men tend to overstate their contribution to housework (Treas & Drobnič, 2010). If the response was that the husband does most of that task, the value was coded as -1; shared was coded as 0; and if the wife does most of that task, then the value was coded as 1. I then take the sum of all four housework tasks, thus if the maximum score of 4 is reported, then the housework burden falls heavily on the wife, while the minimum score of -4 means that the burden falls heavily on the husband.

I also test decision-making, as it relates to financial decisions. The question is also a relative measure, asking respondents: *"In your household, who has the final say in big financial decisions?"* The answers options are: Respondent, spouse, both have equal say. Positive numbers reflect couples where the wives have the final say, whereas negative numbers refer to couples where the husbands have the final say.

Authority at work. If the respondent reported having any managerial duties or if they supervised any other employees, they were considered to have authority at work. This classification is distinct from the job class category of "manager or professional." For example, a foreman or section head can still oversee workers while not being a member of the manager class themselves. The variable is a relative variable with four categories: the husband has authority at work and the wife does not; the wife has authority at work and the husband does not; both report having authority at work; and both report not having authority at work. The reference category are couples where both have no authority at work.

Autonomy at work. Autonomy over work tasks was constructed as an index, comprising four questions. Respondents were asked how much influence they had over their a) work tasks, b) the pace at which they work, c) how they do their work (i.e., the manner), and d) the order in which they carry out tasks. For respondents who answered "none", they received zero points. If they responded with "a little", they received one point. If they answered that they had some or a lot of influence, respondents received two or three points, respectively. A

composite index was constructed by calculating the average for each individual. The final variable used in the model was a categorical variable representing the relative autonomy levels: the husband has more autonomy than the wife; the wife has more autonomy than the husband; both report high autonomy; both report low autonomy. The reference category are couples where both have low autonomy levels.

Schedule flexibility. If the person reported that they have control over their working start and end times, they were considered to have schedule flexibility. I opted to separate out schedule flexibility from the other autonomy subdimensions given its connection to the time availability theory. Also, while the other autonomy subdimensions are related to one's specific tasks, the ability to control one's schedule is broader to the content of the job and more related to the conditions of the job. The categories follow the same structure as the previous variables. The categories were threefold, with the husband reporting having more schedule flexibility than the wife; the wife reporting as having more schedule flexibility than the husband; both report having schedule flexibility; and neither reporting that they have flexibility.

Controls. Included in each of the models are a set of confounders that might affect both the housework allocation and our main work characteristics. Previous studies have shown that women who work part-time take on an even heavier burden of the housework (Shelton & John, 1996). Additionally, I include a control for age. I opt for absolute age, as older men have been found to do less housework on average (Coltrane, 2000). The existence of children, particularly children under the age of 15, has been known to increase the burden of housework on women, therefore, the number of children under the age of 15 is also included (Coltrane, 2000; Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Schneider, 2012).

6 | RESULTS

Figure 1 shows who is mostly responsible for each of the housework tasks across the sample. For each of the tasks, more than 50% of the couples report that the wife carries out most or all of that task. About 33% say that the grocery shopping is shared between spouses, as is the cleaning. However, the task of doing laundry falls most heavily on women, with 63% of women saying they do most or all of the laundry and only 6% of men taking on the full burden.

For the work variables, almost 30% of couples report the husband has more authority at work. And only 17% of couples report that wives have more authority than their husbands. Within our sample, the differential between autonomy is less-pronounced than authority. When it comes to schedule flexibility, men are more likely to have flexibility than women.

[FIGURE 1 here]

[FIGURE 2 here]

Figure 3 shows the net effects of authority and autonomy on the wife's housework burden. The reference category for the authority model refers to couples where neither spouse has authority responsibilities. The reference category for autonomy refers to couples where neither spouse reports having high levels of autonomy. In Figure 3, we find that the more children under the age of 15 living at home, the more likely that the housework burden falls on women in both models. Both models also point to a strong relationship between the woman working part-time and a heavier housework burden. We find that the older men and women are, the more likely the burden of housework falls on women, but the coefficients are quite small in substantial terms.

We now turn to how authority and autonomy impact the women's housework burden. We find that in couples where the husband has authority at work and the wife does not, the housework burden is more likely to fall on the wife, in comparison to couples where neither have authority. The same is true for couples where both have authority at the 10 percent confidence level. What we might be witnessing is a spillover effect for men when they exhibit authority at work. And even when both partners have authority at work, we find evidence that points to a compensatory effect for women. These findings confirm our first set of hypotheses (H1a and H1b).

We also find that in couples where the husband has more autonomy at work, the burden of the housework falls on the wife. Interestingly, the same is true for couples where wives have more autonomy than their husbands, though the effect is slightly smaller (at the 10 percent confidence level). While we cannot know the mechanisms behind our results, one possible explanation is the compensatory effect. Women who have higher levels of autonomy at work than their husbands may feel the need to compensate by doing more at home. And in these couples where husbands have less autonomy than their wives, they may be compensating for their lack of autonomy at work by disavowing housework, again resulting in a heavier burden

on women. Arrighi and Maume (2000) argued that men with lower levels of autonomy felt that their masculinity was threatened and therefore established their masculinity by doing less at home. Other psychology theorists might also argue that men with less autonomy at work may feel helpless and thus withdraw from activities both at work and at home. Nevertheless, we can confirm our second set of hypotheses.

When testing how schedule flexibility impacts the division of housework, I find that in couples where the husband has more schedule flexibility and in couples where the wife has more flexibility the housework burden falls more heavily on his wife, when compared to couples where neither spouse has flexibility. The coefficients are almost the same. The literature suggests that men and women use their schedule flexibility differently. Men might opt to work longer hours to get ahead in their careers, whereas women might use their flexibility to balance their work and nonwork obligations. We can confirm our third hypothesis.

[FIGURE 3 here]

[FIGURE 4 here]

Figure 5 explores how work characteristics impact who has the final say when it comes to the couples' financial decisions. The relative resources theory suggests that regardless of gender, whoever has more authority at work gets to have the final say. In this case, negative numbers refer to husbands having the final say and positive numbers refer to women having the final say. What we find is that in couples where men have more authority at work, the final say is more likely to fall to the husband. The same is true for women; in couples where women have more authority at work, we find that the final say falls to the women. However, when in couples where both report having authority at work, we find that the final decision-making is more likely granted to men than women. This may add evidence to the gender-based theories, but the substantiveness of the coefficient is rather small. When we examine how the financial decision-making is affected by autonomy at work, we only find significance for couples where the husband has more autonomy than the wife. And in that scenario, the final say is more likely to fall to the husband. Again, the size of the coefficient is quite small.

[FIGURE 5 here]

7 | ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Some may still prefer to see the housework expressed as hours spent each week. Therefore, I run a series of regressions using men's share of housework hours each week as the dependent variable. The survey asks men and women the number of hours they spend on housework per week. This allocation of hours could also include non-routine housework tasks, such as gardening, fixing things around the house, etc., which are not our primary interest. Figure 6 reveals how the work characteristics impact men's share of housework hours spent each week. Here we find that in couples where husbands have more authority at work, their share of hours devoted to housework each week goes down by 0.02 in comparison to couples where neither spouse has authority. In couples where wives have more authority, the share of men's housework hours each week increased slightly at the 10 percent confidence level. The autonomy model shows that in couples where the husband has more autonomy than the wife, his share of housework decreases, in comparison to couples where neither partner has high autonomy at work, at the 10 percent level. The last model tests how having flexibility over one's schedule affects men's share of housework hours per week. In this model we do not find statistical significance.

[FIGURE 6 here]

8 | CONCLUSION

This article provides new insights into the power dynamics between spouses when determining the division of housework tasks. The findings suggest that the nature of one's paid work can influence the division of housework, possibly contributing to the bargaining process of avoiding housework for men. By utilizing two new dimensions of paid work, I provide additional insight into the relative resources theory and doing gender theory. The work dimensions of authority and autonomy are gender-sensitive and incorporate elements of social stratification and power. What I find is that paid work can affect how housework is divided between spouses. In couples where the authority is skewed towards husbands, I found that their wives end up with a higher housework burden. While previous literature found that in some cases, when women had more authority at work, they could negotiate away some of their housework responsibilities, I did not find this to be true in my sample.

On the contrary, I found that women, in couples where they had more authority than their husbands, took on more of the housework, in comparison to women in couples where neither of them had authority. This suggested a potential compensatory effect, which aligns with the doing gender theories. Women in positions of power, i.e., having authority at work,

may feel the need to compensate when they are at home by doing more housework. Again, I could not determine if the levels of authority were different. For example, perhaps men who have higher levels of authority, such as overseeing a larger team or working in a larger company with multiple hierarchies, do even less housework than their peers who have less authority at work. It is also possible that the level of authority between spouses may impact the prioritization of jobs. For example, perhaps one job is viewed as more important to the couples' wellbeing and therefore, whomever has the less important job is willing to take on more housework. These questions are important and worth exploring in future investigations.

The literature suggested that men and women use their autonomy and their schedule flexibility with different aims in mind. For example, men were found to use their autonomy and flexibility to move up in their careers, perhaps working longer hours. However, women were found to use their autonomy and flexibility to better balance their work and home obligations. While I do not know if this is true in our sample, our results suggest that these scenarios could be true. I find that when the husband has more autonomy and when the wife has more autonomy, the housework burden falls more heavily on the wife compared to when they both have autonomy at work. In couples where the husband has more schedule flexibility, again the burden falls on the wife, thereby supporting the doing gender theories. More research is needed to better understand how women utilize their autonomy. These findings also suggest that perhaps more can be done to ensure both genders use their schedule flexibility in ways that achieve a better work-life balance, while not sacrificing career advancement.

There are of course limitations to this study. One such limitation is the usage of a relative dependent variable. While some research has preferred absolute values, there are empirical and theoretical reasons for why I opted for couple-level variables. First, the survey questions were framed in relation to one's spouse. Therefore, the respondents are answering with that relationship in mind. Second, our main research question is to explore how differences in work impact power dynamics at home. Therefore, I am more interested in the relationship, rather than the absolute values. However, I run a series of robustness checks, and use an absolute measure for the dependent variable: how many hours the respondent spends on housework. A second limitation is that the level of authority that is measured in this study is limited to if the person has some supervisory or managerial responsibilities. Further information about that authority level is unknown. For example, both spouses might have

authority at work, but the husband might oversee a team of 20, and the wife might oversee a team of five. That disparity in authority level can be quite large and thus have differing effects in size (Smith, 2002).

More research is needed in this field to explore how other aspects of work can affect and cause changes in the division of housework. While this paper merely points out the relationship between the content work and the division of housework, it cannot prove that these mechanisms are the causal mechanisms. In the end, what we might find is that the construct of gender, played out via compensatory actions, may be the prevailing theory here. Recent studies have already begun to examine how the division of housework and care responsibilities have fared during the Covid-19 lockdowns, finding that "women have still a greater burden of house chores and childcare, no matter whether they had their income or suffered some loss, and no matter whether they or their partner worked at home or the workplace," suggesting that gender continues to serve as the stronger determinant for the division of housework (Meraviglia & Dudka, 2021, p. 64).

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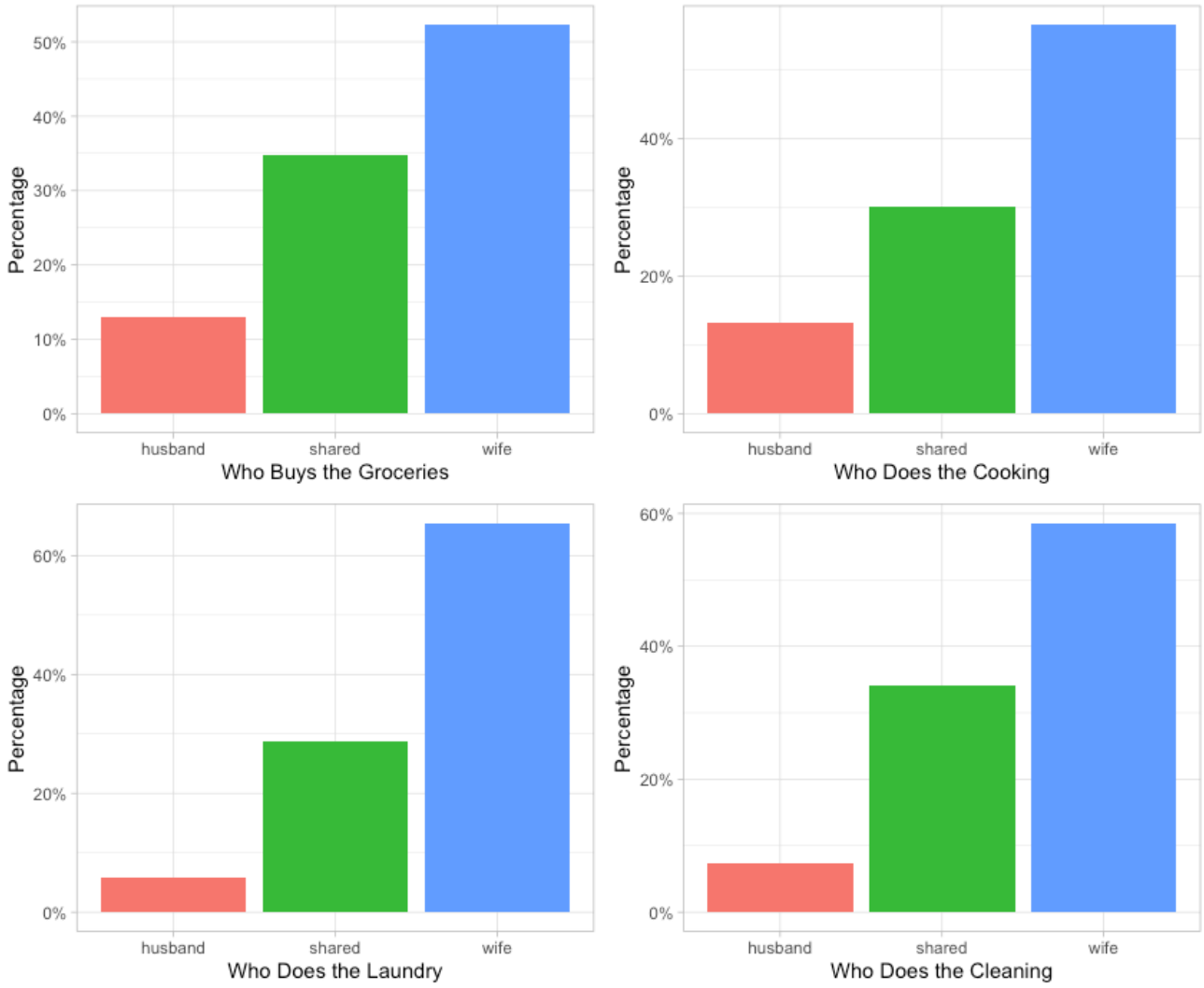
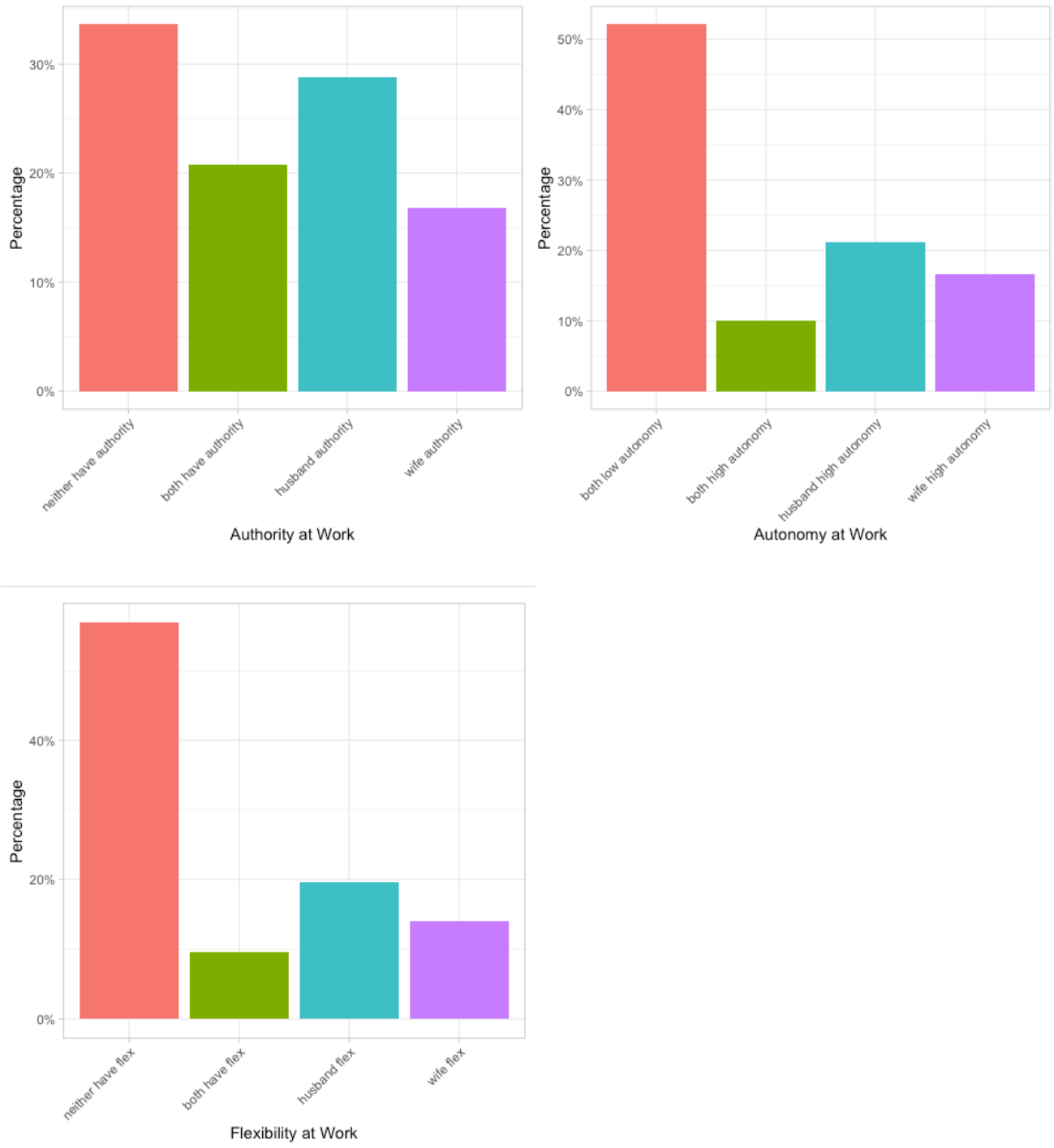
TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1. Response Frequencies for Routine Housework Tasks



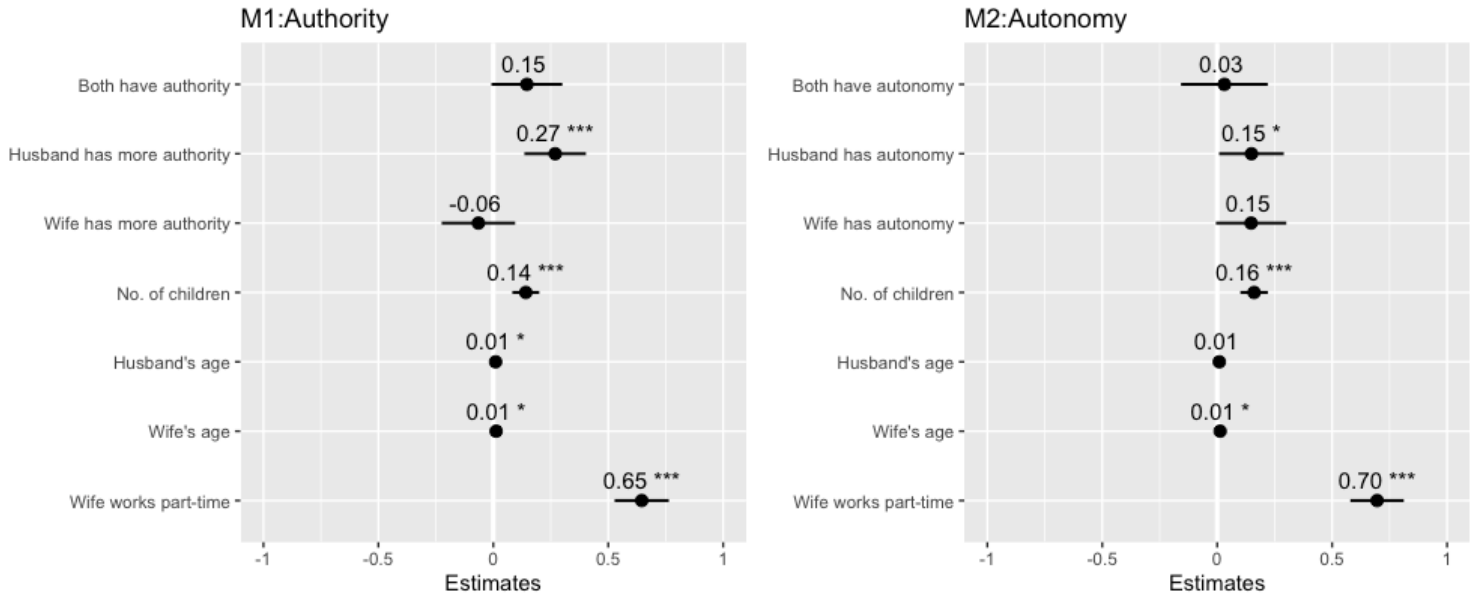
Source: Understanding Society, Wave 8; descriptives were run on the reduced panel for modeling.
Note: Figures were generated using the wives' responses.

Figure 2. Response Frequencies for Work Dimensions



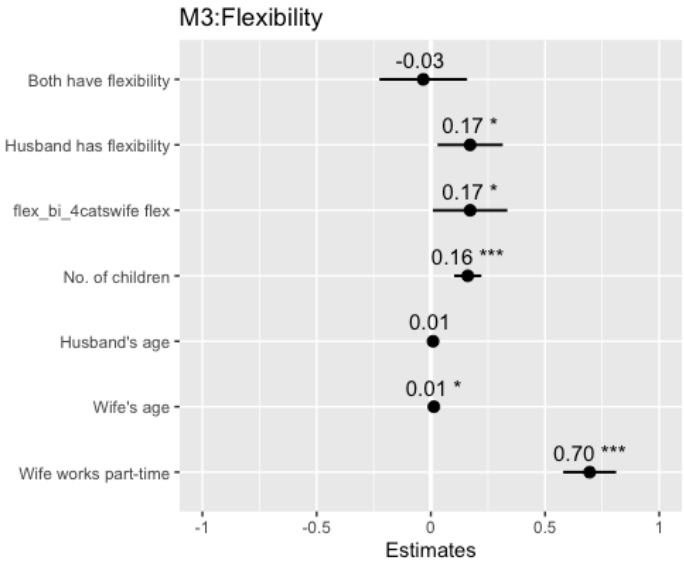
Source: Understanding Society, Wave 8; descriptives were run on the reduced panel for modeling.

Figure 3. Net Effects of Job Characteristics on Wife's Housework Burden



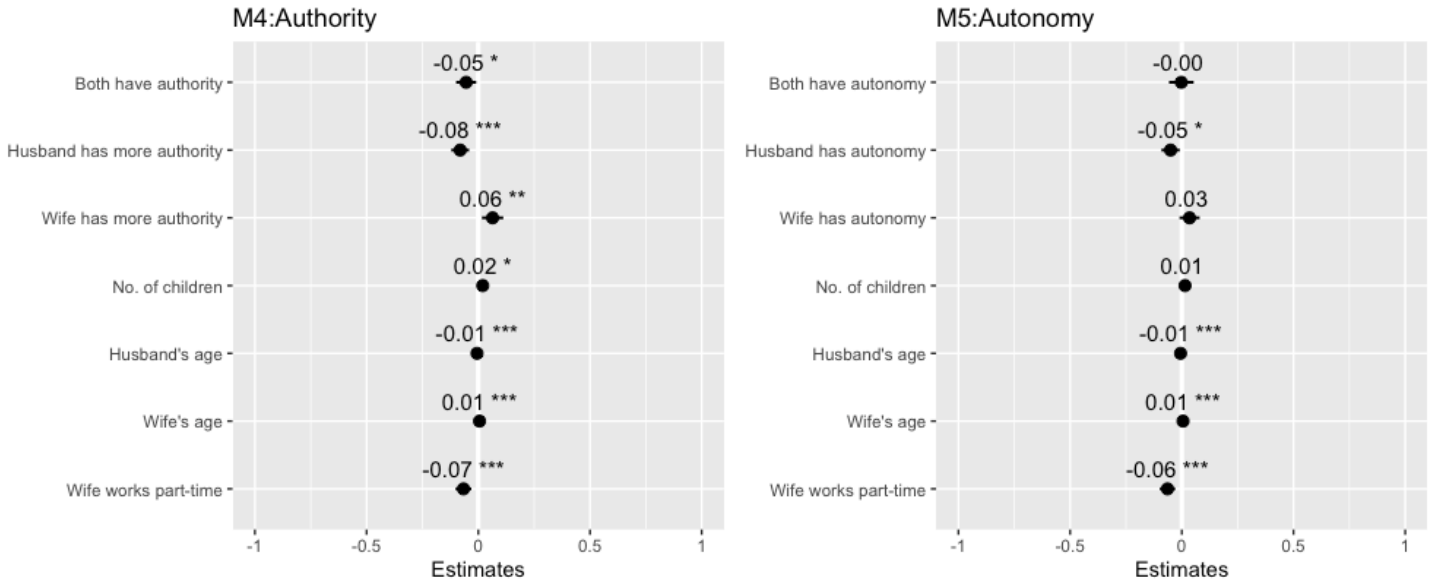
*Note: * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Ref: Relative Authority - Neither have authority; Relative Autonomy - Neither have autonomy*

Figure 4. Net Effects of Relative Flexibility on Wife's Housework Burden



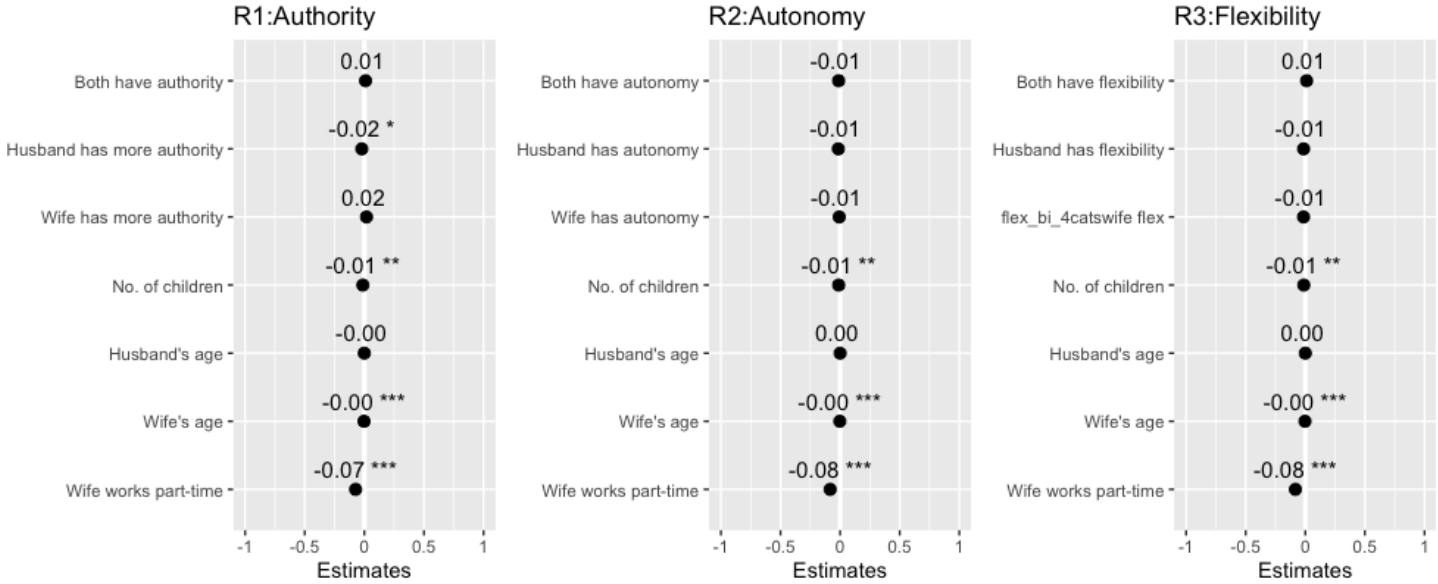
*Note: * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Ref: Relative Flexibility - Neither have flexibility*

Figure 5. Net effects of Work Characteristics on Financial Decision-Making



*Note: * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Ref: Relative Authority - Neither have authority; Relative Autonomy - Neither have autonomy*
Negative numbers refer to husbands making final financial decisions; positive numbers refer to wives making final financial decisions.

Figure 6. Net effects of Relative Work Characteristics on Men's Share of Housework Hours per Week



*Note: * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01*

APPENDIX

Table A1. Net effects of Relative Authority on Women's Housework Burden and Financial Decisions

	Dependent variable:	
	Women's Housework Burden	Financial Decisions
	(1)	(2)
Both have authority	0.146*	-0.054**
	(0.079)	(0.023)
Husband has authority	0.269***	-0.081***
	(0.068)	(0.021)
Wife has authority	-0.065	0.064***
	(0.082)	(0.024)
No. of children	0.141***	0.020**
	(0.030)	(0.009)
Husband's age	0.010**	-0.006***
	(0.005)	(0.001)
Wife's age	0.012**	0.005***
	(0.005)	(0.002)
Wife works part-time	0.646***	-0.066***
	(0.060)	(0.018)
Constant	0.336**	0.013
	(0.142)	(0.042)
Observations	3,479	3,705
R^2	0.073	0.020
Adjusted R^2	0.071	0.018
Residual Std. Error	1.602 (df = 3471)	0.490 (df = 3697)
F Statistic	38.946*** (df = 7; 3471)	10.663*** (df = 7; 3697)
Note:		*p**p***p<0.01

Table A2. Net effects of Relative Autonomy on Women's Housework Burden and Financial Decisions

	Dependent variable:	
	Women's Housework Burden	Financial Decisions
	(1)	(2)
Both have autonomy	0.031	-0.002
	(0.096)	(0.028)
Husband has autonomy	0.149**	-0.050**
	(0.072)	(0.021)
Wife has autonomy	0.148*	0.035
	(0.078)	(0.023)
No. of children	0.161***	0.014
	(0.031)	(0.009)
Husband's age	0.009*	-0.006***
	(0.005)	(0.002)
Wife's age	0.013**	0.005***
	(0.005)	(0.002)
Wife works part-time	0.696***	-0.064***
	(0.059)	(0.018)
Constant	0.320**	-0.0004
	(0.141)	(0.042)
Observations	3,318	3,543
R^2	0.073	0.012
Adjusted R^2	0.071	0.010
Residual Std. Error	1.595 (df = 3310)	0.486 (df = 3535)
F Statistic	37.294*** (df = 7; 3310)	5.988*** (df = 7; 3535)
Note:		**p**p***p<0.01*

Table A3. Net effects of Relative Flexibility on Women's Housework Burden

	Dependent variable:
	Women's Housework Burden
Both have flexibility	-0.033
	(0.098)
Husband has flexibility	0.172**
	(0.073)
Wife has flexibility	0.172**
	(0.083)
No. of children	0.162***
	(0.030)
Husband's age	0.009*
	(0.005)
Wife's age	0.013**
	(0.005)
Wife works part-time	0.695***
	(0.059)
Constant	0.303**
	(0.140)
Observations	3,329
R^2	0.074
Adjusted R^2	0.072
Residual Std. Error	1.594 (df = 3321)
F Statistic	37.782*** (df = 7; 3321)
Note:	*p**p***p<0.01

Table A4. Net effects of Relative Work Characteristics on Men's Share of Housework Hours Per Week

	Dependent variable:		
	Men's Share of Housework Hours/Week		
Both have authority	0.010	Both have autonomy	-0.012
	(0.010)		(0.012)
Husband has authority	-0.021**	Husband has autonomy	-0.015*
	(0.009)		(0.009)
Wife has authority	0.018*	Wife has autonomy	-0.007
	(0.011)		(0.010)
No. of children	-0.012***	No. of children	-0.012***
	(0.004)		(0.004)
Husband's age	-0.0001	Husband's age	0.0002
	(0.001)		(0.001)
Wife's age	-0.002***	Wife's age	-0.003***
	(0.001)		(0.001)
Wife works part-time	-0.073***	Wife works part-time	-0.084***
	(0.008)		(0.008)
Constant	0.489***	Constant	0.490***
	(0.018)		(0.018)
Observations	3,373		3,446
R^2	0.058		0.056
Adjusted R^2	0.056		0.054
Residual Std. Error	0.206 (df = 3365)		0.207 (df = 3438)
F Statistic	29.455*** (df = 7; 3365)		29.024*** (df = 7; 3438)
Note:			*p**p***p<0.01

Table A5. Net effects of Relative Flexibility on Men's Share of Housework Hours Per Week

	Dependent variable:
	Men's Share of Housework Hours/Week
Both have flexibility	0.011
	(0.012)
Husband has flexibility	-0.014
	(0.009)
Wife has flexibility	-0.015
	(0.011)
No. of children	-0.013***
	(0.004)
Husband's age	0.0002
	(0.001)
Wife's age	-0.003***
	(0.001)
Wife works part-time	-0.083***
	(0.008)
Constant	0.489***
	(0.018)
Observations	3,456
R^2	0.056
Adjusted R^2	0.054
Residual Std. Error	0.207 (df = 3448)
F Statistic	29.141*** (df = 7; 3448)
Note:	*p**p***p<0.01

CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis was to investigate how and to what extent the content of our work impacts different facets of our lives. Each of the preceding chapters contribute to the literature by quantifying how job quality plays an important role in our day-to-day lives. I utilize new and existing job quality dimensions, with a focus on authority and autonomy, to explore the impact of job quality on different aspects of society. In Chapter 2, our qualitative findings revealed key cleavages in how human resource professionals define the content of work and the skills needed to do the work, along with how they recruit and seek new workers. The first cleavage was hierarchy within the work organization: the level of authority a person has. The process for drafting and hiring a senior level position (a person with either supervisory authority or decision-making authority) was different from the process for lower-level positions, such as a warehouse assistant. The content of work also dictated who was involved in the drafting process. For lower-level and modal positions, typically a template was used and edited as needed. But for senior level positions, the drafting process involved various colleagues, such as other senior management professionals. And the job conditions for senior positions were more flexible and open for negotiation, whereas the job conditions for junior positions were typically preset.

Secondly, we found when HR professionals drafted job descriptions for new vacancies, the process varied based on the level of specialization and autonomy the worker would have. The process for defining tasks and skills varied based on how specialized the position was. For example, the more specialization, the longer the process was. These jobs typically did not have a template in place, as each individual task or skill profile was carefully outlined in the job description. For those positions with less autonomy and more routine tasks, the process followed a less-complex process.

Credentials and degrees were relied on by HR professionals to some extent, however often HR professionals would simply refer to the jobseekers' previous experience to aid in the validation process. This is a key finding, as we found in the following chapter (Chapter 3) that the ability to regain authority after an unemployment spell was more difficult than other job quality dimensions. The jobseekers might also have to go to additional lengths to prove their capacity to take on a role of authority in the new position, following an unemployment spell. Additionally, we found that soft skills were pervasive, regardless of authority and autonomy levels. In each of the interviews, HR professionals ceded that it was hard to

measure soft skills, but that did not make them any less important to their job description process.

Chapter 3 sought to better understand the trajectory of job quality following an unemployment spell. While previous literature had mainly focused on how unemployment impacts future wages, my focus was to explore how the content of work, namely autonomy and its subdimensions, fared after unemployment. I found that the severity of the scar, i.e., the length of time before a worker can recover the conditions that he or she enjoyed before the unemployment spell, varied by job dimension.

My analysis divided job quality into job conditions, or employment quality, and content of work. The job conditions variables were wages and job security. While I found an initial strong penalty on wages, the scar does not last, which is contrary to what previous literature found. However, as I explain in Chapter 3, this may be the result of my decision to use a within-subjects model, as the focus is to know how one's wages recover in comparison to themselves before the unemployment spell, rather than what their wages would have been if the unemployment spell never occurred. When we examined the scarring effect of unemployment on job security, we find that the scar is long-lasting.

When looking at the content of work, I found yet another lingering scar on the level of authority. Even two years after their re-entry into employment, there was a low probability of a worker to recover their authority level after an unemployment spell. Out of all of the job quality dimensions, authority levels were hit the hardest by unemployment spells. However, I find minor scarring effects of unemployment on one's level of autonomy. Workers, on average, incurred an initial penalty on autonomy within 6 months after returning to the workplace, but after 6 months the scarring effect was not statistically significant. I also tested the effect of unemployment on future work intensity, a subdimension of autonomy. While the patterns of the coefficients were similar to work autonomy, they did not reach statistical significance. These findings reveal that the scarring effect of unemployment varies depending on the job quality dimension.

In Chapter 4, I investigated how job quality affected the distribution of domestic housework, again focusing on two key dimensions of work—authority and autonomy–and on how they could confer power in the negotiations carried out within the couple on housework. The existing literature on the division of housework is vast. Nevertheless, the explicit testing of how job quality measures affect that negotiation process between spouses is under-

investigated. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 lockdown measures, which forced a sizable portion of the working population (albeit mostly white-collar workers) to work from home, the division of housework has gained renewed interest. In these cases, people were literally bringing their work home; therefore, it is not surprising that qualities of our work could affect our home dynamics.

In this chapter, I sought to explore the extent to which authority and autonomy may affect the bargaining process that couples engage in to avoid housework. I argued that authority and autonomy at work are inherently related to power dynamics, which may grant more power also within the household. Leaning on psychology theories, I found that in couples where the husband had more authority at work, the housework burden fell more heavily on the wife, when compared to couples where both spouses reported the same level of authority. This suggested a spillover effect for men, where their authority at work was able to be leveraged at home. However, in couples where women had more authority than their husbands, they continued to carry the housework burden. According to the literature, this suggested a potential compensatory effect, where women may be compensating for their higher authority at work by taking on a more traditional role at home.

When autonomy is tested, I found that regardless of who has more autonomy—the husband or the wife—the burden fell more heavily on the woman, in contrast to couples where both experience the same level of autonomy. I speculated that the way men and women use their autonomy at work for different purposes. The literature suggests that women use their autonomy to better balance work and home life obligations, therefore, finding that wives had a higher housework burden in our analysis was consistent with the literature. However, men are thought to use their autonomy to get ahead in their careers, therefore it is possible that they reduce their home responsibilities at the expense of their work responsibilities.

I added an additional autonomy dimension to the analysis, schedule flexibility or the control over when to start and end work. I found a similar result to the autonomy variable. Regardless of who had more schedule flexibility, the housework burden fell more on the wife. Lastly, I tested how these work characteristics might affect who has the final say on financial decisions. Again, we find the decision-making skewed towards husbands, when they had more authority at work or the authority levels were the same. However, in couples where the wife had more authority at work, the final say skewed toward her. Regrettably we cannot know precisely the mechanisms that affect these outcomes, but the findings offer a new lens to study the division of housework.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis contributes to a growing field seeking to better understand how what we do at work affects our everyday lives. Given the pervasiveness of these effects, it is ever more important to study changes in the occupational structure and their potential consequences. What my research has begun to hint at is the growing dichotomy between those jobs that enable workers more or less autonomy and authority. In Chapter 2, we find that these dichotomy starts from the very beginning of the drafting process of the job description. For jobs that have more autonomy, more specialization and are positioned higher within the firm, they follow a different process than those more junior, characterized by less autonomy and more general skill profiles. While workers can regain their autonomy after an unemployment spell, which is important, it is noteworthy that they incur a penalty regardless. And for those workers who once had some degree of authority at work, they were never able to recover their authority levels during the study period. And lastly, Chapter 3 highlights there are not only power differentials at home but at work as well.

Our understanding of job quality, content of work, and overall well-being would greatly improve with more research that seeks to examine this renewed division of worker and manager. A key goal of my future research is to explore how these changes in the occupational structure and job content affect new and old levels of stratification. I will also explore the extent to which certain jobs and task profiles are marked by increased or decreased autonomy.

Chapter 2 took a qualitative approach to understanding the development of the job description and provided insight into the terminology used by hiring managers, however our conclusions were specific to our sample thereby limiting our ability to ascertain broader conclusions. Therefore, in my future research I will seek to utilize a large-scale dataset of job descriptions, using the SMM, to discern varying skill and task profiles. The findings from Chapter 2 led us to question if some economies are experiencing a dualization in their market, divided by high-quality jobs with strong wages, high levels of autonomy and authority and more job security, and low-quality jobs with lower wages, less security, and far less autonomy and authority. The dual approaches to drafting job descriptions to recruit high-level and low-level employees suggested that such a dualization could exist.

And lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented time for workers, families, and communities. In addition to terrible human losses, many workers lost their jobs, leading to

higher unemployment rates. These job losses were not restricted to certain sectors as they were during the Great Recession but affected workers across the entire occupational structure (Causa et al., 2022). Many essential workers were forced to make the unconscionable decision between their health and their paychecks. These decisions inevitably altered workers' views towards work and likely affected their preferences when seeking a job (Chung et al., 2020). Future research could be more intentional in measuring and accounting for worker preferences. This thesis was limited by a lack of data on the workers' preferences and their levels of power when navigating the labor market; the inclusion of which would have greatly enhanced my findings.

Dubin once remarked (1976, p. 3):

> *There has been relatively little attention directed to the linkages between work and nonwork, perhaps on the assumption that working is so important in an industrial society that it really does not matter what the citizen does with his non-working time.*

Fortunately, we have come a long way from the sentiment that he observed. The field of job quality has advanced greatly, and the study of what we do at work is having another pivotal moment. It is critical that we continue this endeavor.

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