



**UNIVERSIDADE DE ÉVORA**

**ESCOLA DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS**

DEPARTAMENTO DE PSICOLOGIA

**Decent Work Clues in Knowledge Work Job  
Advertisements**

**Ana Isabel dos Santos Marques**

Orientação: Professor Doutor Nuno Rebelo dos  
Santos

**Mestrado em Psicologia**

Área de especialização: *Psicologia Clínica*

Dissertação

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## **Acknowledgements**

Primeiramente, gostaria de agradecer ao professor e orientador, Doutor Nuno Rebelo dos Santos, pela disponibilidade, acompanhamento e motivação que sempre me deu para tornar este projeto possível.

Agradeço também à Professora Doutora Leonor Pais e à Professora Cristina Pereira pelo forte contributo de ambas durante o processo de revisão deste projeto.

Gostaria também de agradecer aos colegas do Serviço de Psicologia da Junta de Freguesia de São Domingos de Rana por todo o apoio e compreensão que tiveram ao longo deste ano letivo, por permitirem que fosse possível conciliar dois momentos tão importantes sem deixar nenhum para trás. Um especial agradecimento à Dr.<sup>a</sup> Sara e à Dr.<sup>a</sup> Catarina pelos conselhos que me deram.

Às amigas que me acompanharam desde o primeiro dia em Évora, Ana Pepe, Ana Teles, Cecília Myriam, Joana Costa e Joana Quarenta. Também aos que chegaram pouco depois, Diana Machado, Eunice Silva, Joana Lucas, Juliana Braulino e Jorge da Silva. Obrigada por tudo o que vivemos em Évora juntos.

Verónica Lourenço, Inês Calixto, Diana Duarte e Ricardo Silvestre. Estes anos à distância nem sempre foram fáceis, mas entre as idas e vindas houve sempre espaço para mantermos a amizade que nos une há quase uma vida.

Maria Silva, agradeço-te não só pela amizade, mas por teres estado sempre comigo. Acima de tudo, por teres acompanhado este processo, que claramente foi apenas mais um dos tantos que ainda havemos de partilhar.

Miguel Neves, estes cinco anos devo-os também a ti pelo carinho, compreensão e amizade. O teu apoio foi essencial para que conseguisse chegar até aqui sem vacilar.

Por último, quero agradecer aos meus pais pelo apoio incondicional que tem sido uma constante ao longo de toda a minha vida. Por tudo, muito obrigada por serem quem são e por nunca terem colocado barreiras aos meus sonhos.

## **Indícios de *Decent Work* em Anúncios de Emprego para Trabalhadores do Conhecimento**

### **Resumo**

O conceito de *Decent Work*, proposto pela *International Labour Organization*, recebe a contribuição de várias disciplinas, como a psicologia, para a sua definição, aprofundamento e aplicabilidade. O objetivo deste estudo é a descrição e caracterização de indícios de *Decent Work* em anúncios de empregos para trabalhadores do conhecimento. A amostra é composta por 1000 anúncios de emprego. Os principais resultados demonstram que embora alguns Elementos Substantivos de *Decent Work* estejam geralmente presentes nos anúncios de emprego outros estão ausentes. Os três Elementos Substantivos totalmente ausentes são: “*Safe Work*”, “*Work that should be abolished*” e “*Social and Economic Context*”. Este estudo realça a importância da informação e transparência para uma futura relação de maturidade e confiança entre empregador e empregado. Realça ainda a importância de um compromisso aberto dos empregadores relativamente à oferta de trabalho que possa ser adjetivado como *Decent Work*. Muito se evidenciou estar por fazer a respeito disso.

Palavras-chave: Psicologia; Decent Work; Anúncios de Emprego; Trabalhadores do Conhecimento; Análise de Dados Qualitativa.

## **Abstract**

The concept of Decent Work, proposed by the International Labour Organization, receives the contribution of several fields, such as psychology, for its definition, deepening and applicability. The purpose of this study is to describe and characterize Decent Work clues in job advertisements for knowledge workers. The sample consists in 1000 jobs. The main results demonstrate that although some Decent Work Substantive Elements are usually present in job advertisements, others are absent. The three totally missing Substantive Elements are: "Safe Work", "Work that should be abolished" and "Social and Economic Context". This study highlights the importance of information and transparency for a future relationship of maturity and trust between employer and employee. It also stresses the importance of an open commitment of employers on the job offer that can be termed Decent Work. Evidences suggest that much remains to be done.

Key-words: Psychology; Decent Work; Job Advertisements; Knowledge Workers; Qualitative Research.

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## **Introduction**

Decent Work was proposed as a unifying framework and central priority by the International Labour Organization during the 87<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference in June 1999 (ILO, 1999). This concept corresponds to the aspiration of people on their working lives (<http://www.ilo.org>). Briefly, it is related to work opportunities, fair salary payment, security in the workplace and social protection for both employees and their family, possibility to achieve personal development and social integration, opportunity to express their interests, organize and participate in the decisions which may affect their personal lives and equal prospect and treatment for all men and women (<http://www.ilo.org>). The ILO proposed eleven substantive elements which have been used to reflect and cover this concept: employment opportunities; adequate earnings and productive work; decent working time; combining work, family, and personal life; work that should be abolished; stability and security of work; equal opportunities and treatment in employment; safe work environment; social security; social dialogue, employer's and worker's representation; and social and economic context (ILO, 2012).

During the past decade, some procedures have been taken to ensure the propositions made by the ILO would be implemented in different countries worldwide, such as Australia, India, Nepal, Brazil, Venezuela and Italy (Bletsas & Charlesworth, 2013; Saha, 2009; Adhikari, Takakubo & Pandey, 2012; Tosetto & Orsi, 2012; Gómez, 2014; Lavagnini & Mennella, 2016). Also, different efforts have been made to enhance the cover of this concept through different subjects for its accurate definition and appropriate application. Psychology is one of the realms that can offer worthy advances in refining the meaning of the concept and the way it can be operationalized and applied to human resources management in organizations, policy making at national and international levels, and career guidance of individual workers. Decent Work can be considered a health matter – both physical and psychological – and the efforts aiming to promote it worldwide are welcome.

Considering employment is the main institutional framework within which workers carry out their work, the expression of Decent Work applies to employment relationships between employers and their employees. That relationship begins when a job vacancy is announced or informally communicated. Therefore, Decent Work criteria

should be checked from that moment onwards. Job advertisements is often the starting point for employment relationships. It states tacitly the framework of values and rules that encompass the relationship between the organization and the candidates even before the recruitment process. Afterwards the relationship between the selected candidate and the employer will be developed from that starting point. The importance of the job advertisements as a way of attracting candidates aligned with the values and principles of the organization was highlighted by Tsahuridu and Perryer (2002). In this sense, considering the central role of job advertisements at the beginning of the establishment of an employment relationship it is worthy to examine in which extent Decent Work is appropriately addressed in this kind of communication tool.

Many researchers assume that nowadays work is more knowledge demanding than it used to be, this being the major growing occupational concept in developed economies (El-Farr, 2009). Davenport (2005) defines knowledge workers as the employees with higher degrees of judgment, education, and experience. According to Winslow and Bramer (1994) knowledge work is intimately related with the creation of favourable solutions to the emerging problems inside of an organization. It also, means being capable to achieve psychological insights to enhance better conceptual puzzles of problem solving (Ackroyd & Batt et al., 2005).

In the present study knowledge workers are among workers in general those who are required to have a university degree for being accepted as candidates for a job position. Although it might be argued that in many job positions there is a high level of knowledge creation and application without requiring a university degree for performing the role, this criterion is accurate enough and at the same time is easy to operationalize. Furthermore, this definition was already applied before in researching Decent Work (Ferraro, Pais, dos Santos, & Moreira, 2017a; Ferraro, Pais, Moreira, & dos Santos, 2017b).

Therefore, the aim of the present research is to verify in which extend the job advertisements intended for knowledge workers in Portugal comply with the Decent Work criteria. Through this study it is possible to analyse how the Decent Work concept is considered and announced since the first contact established between the organization and the employee; if the organizations are aware of this problem; and which

improvements might be suggested and introduced in job advertisements in order to achieve better transparency and caution with the information provided in job vacancies. The present thesis presents the study carried out to address this objective, following the structure described below.

The first chapter includes the Theoretical Framework of the present study. The framework, focus the historical overview behind the emergence of the Decent Work concept and the categorization of the eleven sustentative elements as proposed by the International Labour Organization. Since this thesis follows a Psychology grounding, it seemed important to frame this concept within previous studies and theories which overlaps the Decent Work conception. In this sense, and due to the core background of job advertisements, the important role of Recruitment and Selection processes is also described. Since the knowledge workers are the target population of the collected job advertisements, their description regarding previous theories seemed appropriate.

The second chapter explores the main study which aims to verify in which extent clues of Decent Work are presented in job advertisements for knowledge workers. Here are included the method section, and then the main results are described and discussed.

Finally, the third chapter highlights the most important conclusions reached with the results of the present study. Also, its limitations and proposals regarding the contribution to the development of this subject with future studies. In this section, improvements which can be introduced in job advertisements to better express their concern about the concept of Decent Work from the outset will be suggested.

# Chapter I

## Theoretical Framework

### *Historical overview of Decent Work*

Before the emergence of the Decent Work concept, proposed in 1999 by Juan Somavia, the ILO's director-general, different key ideas and movements arose which guided and contributed to the presently known Decent Work definition (Ferraro, dos Santos, Pais, & Mónico, 2016). The International Labour Organization was established in 1919 as a condition of the Treaty of Versailles to foster a lasting peace built upon social justice (Deranty & MacMillan, 2012). It was founded in the aftermath of the First World War – where it was presented as part of the agreement under the topic of “Labour” and the need to create a permanent “work organization” (TV, 1919; Ferraro et al., 2016).

Therefore, the aim of this organization is since its early beginning the improvement of working conditions leading to a major social justice, peace, and world harmony, eliminate suffering, and abolish deprivation work (TV, 1919). Accordingly, work is considered one of the best ways to avoid inequalities, to ensure social justice and consequently world peace (Ferraro et al., 2016). The preamble of its constitution identifies different areas where intervention was needed: the regulation of the hours of work, including establishment of a maximum working day and week, the regulation of the labour supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage, the protection of the worker against sickness, disease, and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons, and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interests of workers when employed in other countries other than their own, recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organization of vocational and technical education and other measures (ILO 1919, 5). More than lasting it should be *Universal*, for instance, the failure of any nation integrating the conditions previously stated would be considered an obstacle to the ones that desired better working conditions for their workers (ILO 1919, 5).

It was established that the Decent Work structure should be tripartite: Governmental officials, workers associations and employers (Deranty & MacMillan, 2012). So, when a problem is identified, it should be considered from those three points

of interests: the government, workers, and employers through their representatives (Ferraro et al., 2016).

Therefore, ILO works in identifying problems and searching possible solutions promoting discussions with representatives of member countries, workers and employers. Afterwards it proposes the adoption of “conventions” and/or “recommendations” which respond to the questions raised (Ferraro et al., 2016). In order to guide and develop better working conditions, the ILO produces different conventions, recommendations, declarations resolutions, protocols and working papers.

During the 26<sup>th</sup> International Labour Conference, it was assumed the *Declaration concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organization*, known as the *Philadelphia Declaration* (1944) and the principles which should underlie the policy of its members (Ferraro et al., 2016). The ILO reaffirmed its fundamental principles with the first and most important one, being that “labour is not a commodity” (ILO 1944, 1). Labour is property of human beings, and “all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity” (ILO 1944, 1). To this end, the Declaration of Philadelphia also committed the ILO to the promotion of programs that, among other things, strove to achieve “full employment and raising of standards of living (...) [and] the employment of workers in the occupations in which they can have the satisfaction of giving the fullest measure of their skill and attainments and make their greatest contribution to the common well-being” (ILO 1944, 2).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) was referring to Human rights in general, but also related to work – it focused on human rights in the workplace. Therefore, Decent Work as an international concept, was firstly defined by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), expressing the need for work as an integral aspect of human rights (Athanasou, 2010; Blustein Blustein, Olle, Connors-Kellgren, & Diamonti, 2016). This declaration proposed concerning work, the following:

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to fair and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment;

2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work;
3. Everyone who works has the right to fair and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection;
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests (United Nation Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

To define the attributes of a work life which fulfils the mission of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO focused its agenda on the Decent Work concept (Blustein et al., 2016). Furthermore, the main purpose of the ILO's agenda is to promote equal opportunities of Decent Work for both men and women (ILO, 1999).

Fifty-four years after the Declaration of Philadelphia, in 1998, the ILO reaffirmed its core values with the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Four principles and rights were established: freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination with respect to employment and occupation (Deranty & MacMillan, 2012).

### *Decent Work*

Decent Work is an intricate concept introduced by the International Labour Organization. It was proposed in those terms in 1999 during the Report of the Director-General the 87<sup>th</sup> International Labour Conference. Juan Somavia, the first director-general of the ILO from the developing world, introduced the ILO's Decent Work initiative with the following statement: "The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity" (ILO 1999, 3). The Decent Work initiative promoted the association of the ILO's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work with the ILO's four strategic objectives (ILO 1999). The four strategic objectives are as follows: the promotion of rights at work; the creation of opportunities for decent employment and income from work through a macroeconomic policy, which

promotes full employment; social protection; and social dialogue (Deranty & MacMillan, 2012).

The Decent Work initiative can be perceived as an attempt by the ILO to address some of the limitations associated with its traditional approach to understanding work as employment (Deranty & MacMillan, 2012). For instance, Somavia noted that while the ILO is concerned with all workers, it has traditionally dedicated more attention to the wage workers' needs in formal companies, but this is "only part of the world of work. Almost everyone works, but not everyone is employed" (ILO 1999, 3). Somavia acknowledges that the ILO must also be concerned and actively involved in the promotion of the rights of workers working in the informal or unregulated economy, those that are self-employed, domestic workers, and work in community and voluntary sectors (Deranty & MacMillan, 2012).

The promotion of employment, social security, social dialogue, and rights at work (Ghai, 2003; MacNaughton & Frey, 2011) should guide the policy of the nations and the human resources management practices of corporations and organizations in general. The promotion of employment refers to the right of a complete employment, with the access to professional training and new job opportunities. Social security includes the access to social protection and security in the workplace. Social dialogue reflects the possibility of a democratic participation in decisions of those who are affected by these decisions. Rights at work is related to the work that should be abolished, for instance forced work, slavery, child labour, discrimination in the workplace and the possibility of workers association (MacNaughton & Frey, 2011).

The United Nations (2006) defend that the Decent Work Agenda aim to promote the freely chosen employment, the recognition of fundamental rights at work, an income to enable people to meet their basic economic, social and family needs and responsibilities, and an adequate level of social protection for workers and their family member. This definition assumed by the ILO (1999) is interpreted by the international community as a productive work for both man and woman employees in work environments which promote freedom, equity, security, and human dignity. The Decent Work Agenda reflects a well-adjusted and integrated approach to the achievement of

broad and productive employment and Decent Work for all workers at international, national, regional, sector-specific, and local levels (Di Fabio & Maree, 2016).

Therefore, Decent Work deficit occurs when involuntary unemployment and poverty are evident, abuses of rights occur in the workplace, when forced child labour exists, basic income security is compromised, employees and employers are not organized well enough to express themselves openly or effective dialogue is impeded, and when work-life is not balanced with legitimate family demands (Di Fabio & Maree, 2016).

### *Substantive elements*

Since the proposal of the Decent Work concept, efforts have been made to operationalize it. The ILO suggested an updated formulation of Decent Work, described in 11 substantive elements also included at the Decent Work Agenda (ILO, 2008; 2013). Each substantive element describes one aspect of the concept and has a set of implication for practice (Ferraro, Pais, & dos Santos, 2015). We describe them below.

#### *1. Employment Opportunities*

Job opportunities are a base element for Decent Work (ILO, 2009, 2014). It is intimately related to a country's market and socio-economic conditions, also for the perspective of growth and expansion (Ferraro et al., 2015). Here can be all the working conditions offered to the employee which might contribute to his development inside and outside the company.

#### *2. Earnings and Productive Work*

Within the concept of Decent Work, work must be productive and provide adequate earnings to the employee (ILO, 2012). This substantive element can include salaries, the payment for rest hours, bonuses, awards, and discounts allowed to both employee and his family (Ferraro et al., 2015). Productive work is the positive contribution to create a personal value through work. Requiring both performance from the employee and working conditions which allow it. This Substantive Element is also related to the previous one, once higher levels of professional education, could promote more job



opportunities and, consequently, an adequate income. (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Ferraro et al., 2015).

### *3. Decent Working Time*

As previously stated one of the great concerns of The ILO since its beginning is the workload present at Universal Human Rights, where the regulation of the working hours should be one of the topics – mostly because its influence on workers' physical and psychological health. The Decent Working time covers indicators related to employment and working time, which is related to the System of National Accounts production boundary (ILO, 2012).

### *4. Work, Family and Personal Life*

This substantive element covers a few sets of Decent Work indicators related to standards and fundamental principles and rights at work and social protection (ILO, 2012). Here it is possible to include different aspects, since job opportunities, the earnings and the working hours influence the balance between work, family, and personal life (Ferraro et al., 2015).

### *5. Work should be abolished*

International Conventions and The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work propose that certain types of work should be abolished (ILO, 2012). Anker, Chernyshev, Egger, Mehran, & Ritter (2002) designated this concept as all forced work, which does not respect the human rights. For instance, forced work, such as slavery, and child labour (Ferraro et al., 2015).

### *6. Stability and Security*

Stability and security in the workplace is a dimension which allows the establishment of a difference between the workers whose jobs are perceived as solid and permanent from those which these characteristics are absent (ILO, 2012). Also, this substantive element is related to que possibility to have a steady and secure work place, where the contract agreement gives to the employee the perception their future at a certain job is secure.

### *7. Equal opportunity and treatment*

The promotion of equal opportunities in employment is a grounded element of Decent Work (ILO, 2012). Decent Work includes equal job opportunities for women and men, without discriminating their age, race, ethnic group, political opinion, sex orientation or religious belief (Ferraro et al., 2015).

### *8. Safe Work Environment*

Occupational safety and health at work are also an important component of Decent Work (ILO, 2012). A safe work environment includes both physical and psychological conditions which promote health and well-being for the employee (Ferraro et al., 2015).

### *9. Social Security*

Social security covers all benefits provided, both in cash or in kind, to ensure the protection of the employee during a period marked by a lack of work-related income (ILO, 2012). Countries have thus created different ways to promote social security and protection. In this case, it is related to the extra earnings that every individual can access as a result of sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, old age, death of a family member, lack of access or unaffordable access to health care, insufficient family support and general poverty and social exclusion (ILO, 2012).

### *10. Social Dialogue, workers' and employers' representation*

Social dialogue covers the different types of negotiation, consultation, and exchange of information between the governments, employers, and employees (ILO, 2012). The participation of the employee might be essential to the company, more than the opportunity to express their discontentment about a specific characteristic of their work place, is the possibility to express solutions. Also, the possibility to access free association and protection of the workers' (Ferraro et al., 2015).

### *11. Economic and social context*

Both economic and social context are essential for Decent Work, in order to analyse the Decent Work indicators at a national level (ILO, 2012). Through this, it is possible

to cover an analysis of the actual Decent Work system classified under the ten substantive elements. The eleven statistical indicators previously stated can give a general idea of the economic and social context of Decent Work (ILO, 2012).

### *A Psychological Approach*

Work is an essential human activity in society, it gives meaning and is an expression of one's feelings, thoughts, and full humanity, it is also a source of self-esteem, self-actualization, and security (Edralin, 2014). Decent Work is a health matter. Work that is not Decent can cause significant adverse health issues through material and social deprivation and unsafe working conditions (Benach, Muntaner & Santana, 2007). Therefore, the Decent Work concept calls up the contribution of several disciplines for its accurate definition and appropriate application. Psychology is one of the realms that can offer worthy advances in refining the meaning of the concept and the way it can be operationalized and applied to human resources management in organizations, policy making at national and international levels, and career guidance of individual workers.

The initial development of both the International Labour Organization and the psychological study of working can be traced to nearly a century ago when the labour market was on the path to major changes (Blustein, Masdonati & Rossier, 2017). Many of the psychological constructs which have been researched in work and organizational psychology overlap the Decent Work concept. Most psychological empirical research overlapping the concept focuses on some of the substantive elements but just a few are starting to approach the concept as a whole (Ferraro et al., 2017). Several of its components have been approached in psychological literature and many authors have been paying attention to these components. For instance, well-being (Brooks & Greenberg, 2017), work-life balance (Andrade, 2011), workload (Cain, 2007; Morris, MacNeela, Scott, Treacy & Hyde, 2006), career development (Paradnikė, Endriulaitienė & Bandzevičienė, 2016), health and safety in the workplace (Zanko & Dawson, 2012) and compensations (Nazir, Shah & Zaman, 2014) to name a few.

That large amount and diversity of studies means the content of the Decent Work concept is considered relevant in work, organizational and personnel psychology. The development of a comprehensive psychological approach to Decent Work is then relevant

as it can contribute to the deepening of understanding of the concept and consequently helping in spreading its application worldwide. The same can be said regarding psychological empirical research. That research on the Decent Work concept contributes to establishing a nomological network which helps in designing interventions for the improvement of Decent Work compliance. Those interventions can contribute to healthier contexts. According to Swanson (2012) employees which present elevated rates of well-being in their labour contexts, tend to feel better on a general mode in other contexts of their daily life, which is a main contribution to their physical and mental health.

The Humanitarian Work Psychology perspective (Carr, Thompson, Reichman, McWha, Marai, MacLachlan et al., 2013) concerns ensuring Decent Work for all workers who face challenging responsibilities and offers opportunities for promotion. The aim is to prevent the workers' disregarding by ensuring them the access to productive tasks, reduction of stress and workload, recognition of their achievements, and provide access to a living wage and work-related support structures (Di Fabio & Maree, 2016). In this sense, the fight against poverty is enhanced by the promotion of the principles of economic growth, equitable and sustained employment opportunities, and quality of work (Bell & Newitt, 2010).

Burchell, Sehnbruch, Piasna, & Agloni (2014) reflect on Decent Work as part of job satisfaction, intrinsic job quality, and a job desirability. Here, Job satisfaction is considered the relationship between workers' perceptions of the quality of work and their expectations of work (Agassi, 1982), also the workers' ability to adapt to adverse conditions (Nussbaum, 2004). Intrinsic job quality is related to workers' well-being and employers' contribution to it through health insurance, education, compensations, child care programs, adequate wages, and promotion opportunities (Burchell et al., 2014). The job desirability refers to job characteristics which promote quality of work and workers' appraisal of their situation and contribution (Burchell et al., 2014).

Ferrari (2009) extends psychological perspectives by emphasising the value of any work as an instrument to enhance the poverty reduction. Also, highlights the importance of the right to work and workers' rights as well as the

meaning of work in terms of its power to facilitate cohesion and its instrumental value.

Career psychology also supports the Decent Work initiative. The 2001 International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance declaration states “Effective educational and vocational guidance and counselling can assist individuals to understand their talents and potential and enable them to plan the appropriate steps to develop essential skills that will lead to personal, educational, economic and social advancement for individual, family, community and nation” (IAEVG, 2001). In this sense, Athanasou (2010) points out the relation between Decent Work and career, once this concept is recognized and promoted globally and includes reasonable income, equal opportunities, safe working conditions, trade union representation and social safety. This point of view can be used as a guideline to vocational counsellors’ social obligation to advance equity and fairness in occupational contexts (Di Fabio & Maree, 2016).

Based on the Psychology-of-Work Framework (PWF; Blustein, 2006; Blustein, 2013), Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin (2016) recently proposed a conceptualization of Decent Work which incorporates contextual factors into an index of one’s own psychological experience. However, their conceptualization doesn’t include the whole Decent Work concept as defined by the ILO. On the contrary, they define Decent Work according to a specific conceptualization even if the ILO’s definition inspired it. Considering they kept the label “Decent Work” changing its meaning can bring about some confusion to the research on Decent Work as defined by the ILO, the organization that coined the expression.

Also, recently and taking a perspective of work, organizational and personnel psychology (WOPP), Ferraro et al. (2017a) proposed the development of a measure of the Decent Work concept through the workers’ perception of their work and professional context. Ferraro et al. (2017b) also undertook a research which aims to understand the role of Decent Work as a predictor of different types of Work Motivation and the possible role of Psychological Capital as a mediator in this relationship. These authors found significant effects of Decent Work on the several types of Work Motivation. They adopted the work

motivation concept as defined by the Self-Determination Theory (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Gagné, Forest et al., 2015). The Ferraro et al. (2017)'s findings highlight that Decent Work, regardless, it is believed to be an expression of human values and rights related to dignity which also plays a role in human behaviour related to well-being and performance.

Decent Work is an important concept to the people's work life being considered internationally an indicator of civilizational progress. The ILO's Decent Work framework aims to promote human rights at work and contribute to the creation of vacancies which meet a considerable standard of Quality of Work Life (Ferraro, 2017b). Considering that the employment relationship is one of the more usual context where people do their work, it is relevant to pay attention to the first step in the building of that relationship. We consider here that job advertisements are the first formal interaction between the organization that announces a job vacancy and the future owner of the position. So, we can look inside job advertisements for describing in which extend its content expresses that the organization has concerns related to the Decent Work concept. Although several interpretations can be made regarding the possible absence of Decent Work clues in job advertisements, to focus on that content can highlight (a) the organization is unaware of the values tacitly or explicitly strengthened in their job advertisements and therefore its statement is disregarded; (b) the organizational policy is made against the Decent Work concept; (c) the organizations considers the main function of job advertisement being just to attract potential applicants and omit information concerning the organizational values and policy.

While (a) and (c) correspond to some kind of naïve position, (b) is a clear position against the values of Decent Work proposal and consequently unacceptable practice that policy makers, governments, and consumers should overtly criticize and punish. The label "naïve position" is used here based on the idea that values are always present even where they are not explicitly stated. As we will see below, the statements made by organizations in job advertisements, the description of requirements or even the offers explicitly made include tacit

values and underlying assumptions that express the way the organization sees and values people and the social system.

### *Recruitment and Selection*

Recruitment and Selection constitute one of the oldest and most respected areas in the field of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (García-Izquierdo, Derous & Searle, 2013). They are vital functions of human resource management in different type of business organization, both related to the process for providing the organization with adequate workers who fit the job position (Ekwoaba, Ikeije & Ufoma, 2015). The quality of the human resources is highly related to the effectiveness of these functions (Gamage, 2014). Recruiting and selecting the wrong candidates who are not along with the principles of the employment might originate in a huge negative cost which businesses cannot afford (Ekwoaba, Ikeije & Ufoma, 2015). Therefore, the aim of recruitment and selection within the organization is to guarantee a number and quality of employees to achieve the strategic objectives of the organization (Ofori & Aryeetey, 2011).

The importance of recruitment in organizations has received increased recognition. In the highly competitive global market, recruitment has emerged as a key antecedent of organizational effectiveness (Barber, 1998; Breugh, 1992; Rynes, 1991). Regardless of the type of organization, it is generally accepted that an employer's success is closely related to the type of individuals it employs (Dineen & Soltis, 2011).

Several definitions of recruitment were used to define the variables included in the recruitment header (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin & Jones, 2005). According to Rynes (1991), recruitment covers all organizational practices and decisions which affect the number or types of individuals willing to apply for, or to accept a position. This practice can also be seen as a broad set of activities that connect applicants to organizations and their jobs (Ployhart, Schmitt & Tippins, 2017). It consists of organizational activities and practices whose primary goal is to identify and attract potential employees and persuade them toward becoming an organizational member (Barber, 1998; Breugh & Starke, 2000; Allen, Mahyo & Otondo, 2007). According to Gamage (2014), the purpose of recruitment is to provide the organization with qualified job candidates.

On the other hand, selection is the process of choosing the most suitable person from the roll of applicants recruited to fill the relevant job vacancy (Opatha, 2010). This includes the use of different methods to assess an applicant's suitability to achieve the best decision. Selection involves identifying the need for effective performance on critical aspects of the job, creating an accurate way of measuring individuals, and then using the scores on these assessments to make hiring decisions (Schmitt & Chan, 1998). The ultimate goal is to enhance not only job performance, but also organizational performance and competitive advantage (Ployhart, Schmitt & Tippins, 2017).

Both, recruitment and selection have to be carried out meeting ethical standards (dos Santos, Pais, Cabo-Leitão, & Passmore, 2017). These ethical standards go beyond what is compulsory by law and beyond what is determined by the competitive context wherein organizations are operating. The ILO's concept of Decent Work can be applied in order to contribute to meet those ethical standards. This international organization has legitimacy since it is the United Nations agency for labour issues, as mentioned above.

#### *Job advertisements*

Since the mid-90's, the extension of the internet into virtually all branches of economic activity has led to the development of a new interactive medium used by both workers and employers – to search for job and locate applicants, respectively (Marchal, Mellet, & Rieucan, 2007). Attracting and retaining high-quality employees is vital for organizational success (Rynes, 1991; Rynes & Barber, 1990; Turban & Greening, 1997). Where there is a lack of qualified applicants in some fields, the organization need to increase their attractiveness to potential employees (McNab & Johnston, 2002). According to research carried out about 20 years ago, for applicants the most important characteristic of a vacancy are the features of the job itself, such as payment level, job suitability, the level of challenge and interest in the job, and the location of the vacancy (Barber & Roehling, 1993; Thomas & Wise, 1999). It is important that recruitment advertisements detail these features (McNab & Johnston, 2002) since that statement avoid disappointment among candidates and corresponds to a higher standard of employer-employee relationship from its early begin. Nowadays, job advertisements have become more sophisticated, acting more than a device to list job openings (McNab & Johnston,



2002). They work as an opportunity to market the organization (Kaplan, Aamodt & Wilk, 1991), meant to sell the company's image, promoting its benefits, and often bear more resemblance to advertisements for products than advertisements for jobs (Martinez, 2000).

Through the analysis of Job advertisements' requirements, it is possible to achieve a better comprehension about the ideal employee, who reflects the various employers' expectations (Kuokkanen, Varje & Väänänen, 2013). During the mid-1940's to the end of the 1950's, blue-collar worker position job advertisements were shorter and contained few skill requirements – often classified regarding gender and referred to the age of the applicant (Kuokkanen, Varje & Väänänen, 2013).

McNab and Johnston (2002) found the evaluation of the organization by applicants to a job vacancy was affected by the inclusion of a statement about equal employment opportunity in the job advertisement. Where this statement is included applicants rate the organization more positively. Nater and Sczesny (2016) studying leadership positions job advertisements also found that the affirmative action policies written in the job advertisements affect the decision of possible candidates to apply.

Job advertisements seems to carry an underlying concept of the identity of the worker who is desired for the position (Askehave & Zethsen, 2014). That idea implies that job advertisements are not value-free whether these values are explicit or tacit. Therefore, the study of the values and substantive elements that are part of the Decent Work concept in job advertisements can have the relevance of bringing to light the possible missing aspects of the concept and help human resources professionals in being aware of ways they should improve performance of their own job while recruiters.

### *Knowledge Workers*

In the 1950's, Peter Drucker noticed that “the most important contribution of management was to increase the productivity of laborers by fifty times. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, the most important assets of organizations are knowledge

workers, and their productivity” (Drucker, 2006). Therefore, some questions could be raised: Who are knowledge workers? Which characteristics are typical of knowledge workers? (Zhan, Tang & Zhang, 2013).

“Knowledge worker” was firstly pointed out in *Landmarks of Tomorrow: A report on the New Post- Modern World* (Drucker, 1999; Drucker, 2006). Then, other authors like Kidd, Vogt, Dove, David, Itzhak, John, Patricia and Davenport conducted further studies about knowledge worker’s performance, motivation, and other related matter (Zhan, Tang & Zhang, 2013). Since, Peter Drucker is perceived as the pioneer of the concept of Knowledge Work and Workers, which can be defined by the cognitive effort to use, generate, and extract value from knowledge (El-Farr, 2009). Also, employees with higher levels of expertise, education or experience and the main purpose of their jobs involves the creation, distribution, or application of knowledge (Davenport, 2005).

In a growing knowledge society talent and creativity are becoming more and more decisive in shaping economic opportunities and knowledge based urban development (Yigitcanlar, Baum, & Horton, 2007). Progress now tend to depend less on access to physical resources and increasingly on the ability to create economically useful ideas (Yigitcanlar, Baum, & Horton, 2007). The contribution of knowledge workers is often mentioned as strategic and valuable (Florida, 2005; Baum, Yigitcanlar, Horton, Velibeyoglu, & Gleeson, 2006) in scientific literature which confirms the importance of knowledge work and knowledge workers as the engine of growth (Glaeser, 2000; Raspe & Van Oort. 2006).

In our study, knowledge workers are defined as those who are required to hold a higher education degree. Our decision to focus on knowledge workers job advertisements is based on the idea that knowledge workers are required to hold a university degree which means at least three years of higher education studying. Since they expended at least three years making different kind of efforts in order to accomplish a higher education, the possible Decent Work deficits demonstrate how undermined is the labour market. This concern is obviously extended to other professional categories but considering our research is a first step, we can easily

reduce the huge differences of job positions through more operationalized variables.

As one of the most relevant parts of the people's life, work should be an expression of dignity at all levels. Therefore, the contribution to the development of the Decent Work Initiative should be embraced by the academic research which overlaps the knowledge referent to work-life relation. As previously mentioned, Job advertisements are here considered the first step in framing the relationship between employers and employees. The present study aims to verify if job advertisements provides information that meets the concept of Decent Work and through this tacitly recognizes Decent Work as a relevant concept that should be positively present since the early beginning of that relationship. To undertake this research Knowledge Workers' Job Advertisements were analysed as described in the following chapter.

## **Chapter II: Empirical Study**

### **Aim of the Study**

The present research has as its main objective to describe and characterize the Decent Work clues in knowledge workers job advertisements. Analysing the content of these job advertisements it will be described to which extent there is information saying whether decent work substantive elements are met or not.

### **Method**

#### *Data Sources*

As a first step of the study, it was decided that the data sources would be a set of job advertisements websites as large as possible. The websites were chosen considering currently cases where online media is used for announcing a job vacancy. Furthermore, considering we are focusing this research on knowledge workers, the job search through the Internet is even more applicable.

To be included the website should post vacancies available in Portugal. All the data sources were collected through a search performed on the Google search engine, using the key words “*anúncios de emprego*” (job advertisements). Sixty-one websites were retrieved and checked for verifying if job vacancies for knowledge workers were posted there. To verify their reliability and prevent undermining the data collection process, all the websites were accessed three times, having been eliminated all the websites that worked only as a search engine. The websites kept as data sources after applying the inclusion criteria (posting knowledge workers job advertisements in Portugal and not being just a search engine) were 31 in total.

#### *Data Collection*

The data collection was performed three times in 2016: on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the 1<sup>st</sup> of August and the 5<sup>th</sup> of September. These dates were decided (the first Monday of the mentioned months) to avoid duplications and expand the number of job advertisements retrieved. During collecting data days all the data sources were accessed and all the job advertisements were collected following the criteria previously defined: a higher

education degree was required and the position was based in Portugal. Volunteer work advertisements were excluded. All advertisements collected were saved as a *Word 2016* file, one per file.

After the three rounds of data collection, we reached 1200 job advertisements. All of them were verified again, having been eliminated 200 since they were duplications, or were referring to unpaid internships or even were wrongly retrieved. At the final stage, we retained for analysis 1000 job advertisements meeting the inclusion criteria.

### *Coding System*

To carry out the first moment of the data analysis, the software NVivo11 was used. The coding system followed the previously stated substantive elements defined by the ILO to reflect and cover the Decent Work concept: employment opportunities; adequate earnings and productive work; Decent Work time; combining work, family and personal life; work that should be abolished; stability and security of work; equal opportunities and treatment in employment; safe work environment; social security; social dialogue; and social and economic context (ILO, 2012). Accordingly, the following correspondent categories were included: “Opportunities”, “Earnings”, “Working Time”, “Work-Life Balance”, “Unacceptable Work”, “Stability and Security”, “Equality”, “Safe Work”, “Social Security”, “Participation” and “Context”.

Additionally, the following categories were added: “Type of Information” with the subcategories “General Information”, “Requirements”, “Job Content” and “Offers”. This way, it would be possible to verify the type of information most present in each advertisement. Other coding categories emerging from the data were created as needed during the further steps of analysis.

Finally, the education subject required was added as a category which included the subcategories inspired in the sectors division of the website of Michael Page: “Engineering”, “Health & Life Sciences”, “Finance”, “Law”, “Hospitality & Tourism”, “Design”, “Architecture”, “Psychology”, “Human Resources”, “Marketing and Social Media”, “Secretarial Management”, “Others” and “Not specified”.

## Coding Procedure, Results, and Discussion

The researcher coded all the advertisements one by one. The unitarization process considered each phrase or separate expression as a unit that should be coded. To be considered a unit the expression or phrase should have a specific and understandable meaning *per se*. Different parts of the same advertisement were then coded on the corresponding category, allowing the analysis of specific components of the advertisements. All content of the advertisements was coded. After its categorization on this initial coding system, emergent categories were created. When ambiguity arose in the coding procedure a second researcher and cross validation were undertaken, then a double coding was required. Both researcher discussed the coding applied until agreement was reached.

Some coding and word searches were performed which produced also new categories. To sum up, after this process was finished the coding system had three first order categories, 17 second order categories, 11 third order categories and 18 fourth order categories which were hierarchically organized (see Figure 2, included in Appendix).

After all the coding, it was important to find one category that included the 1000 advertisements to verify the education frequency through the matrix research. Since the category “Type of Information” included all the advertisements necessary, it was used to achieve the intended result.

Table 1

*Job Frequency and Education Matrix (N=1000)*

Education Required	Job Frequency
Engineering	370
Finance	191
Health & Life Sciences	68
Marketing & Social Media	41
Human Resources	33
Design	31
Psychology	23
Law	17
Hospitality & Tourism	12
Architecture	10
Secretarial & Management Support	7
Others	92
Not Specified	105
Total	1000

The brief analysis showed that the most required education subject was “Engineering” with 370 out of 1000 job advertisements coded (which includes different types of engineering) and the second one was “Finance” with 191 out of 1000 job advertisements coded (which includes mathematics, economics, management, etc) (see Table 1). Through this, it is conceivable to state that a possible applicant with these educational backgrounds had more opportunities comparing to the remaining educational backgrounds. Nevertheless, 105 out of the 1000 advertisements requiring a higher education level didn’t specify the education area.

## 1. General Analysis

### 1.1 Type of information

Following the coding procedure, it is also relevant to reflect about the results obtained regarding the “Type of Information”.

Table 2

*Job Advertisements and Type of Information Matrix (N=1000)*

Type of Information n=1000	Job Advertisements n=1000
General Information	789
Job Content	668
Requirements	973
Offers	694

As presented on Table 2, most of the advertisements provide some information about the company here coded as “General Information”. That is one of the most important part of the advertisements where the recruiters usually highlight the best about the company. It seems to work as a way of convincing the possible candidate that it is a great place to work. Linked to this content the category “Offers” provides information about the personal gains of the job. The most intriguing result is about the requirements information. We can observe 27 out of 1000 job advertisements which do not explicitly refer any requirement. After consulting the advertisements not coded in this category it was possible to conclude that they are very simple, providing very few information. The lack of information describing the vacancy may be considered unethical for the potential employee, and a serious omission failure regarding the principles and values of Decent

Work. The potential candidate is treated as if they did not need to know (and the right to know) anything other than that there is a job vacancy. Although less than 3% of job advertisements miss this point it is an unfair starting point for an employer-employee relationship.

## 1.2. Word Cloud

The first step was to conduct a research through a word cloud, executed 4 times until the most adequate results were found. During the process, it was possible to understand that some words did not have a great impact on this study, for example “de”, “com”, “para” (the Portuguese words which reflect the words “of”, “with” and “for”). The final word cloud performed had five letter length which allowed the elimination of most of the irrelevant words.



Figure 1. Word Cloud



For a more accurate view of the words frequency presented on Figure 1 (Word Cloud), Table 3 shows the word frequency of the ten most used words in the job advertisements analysed.

Table 3

*The Ten Most Frequent Words*

Word	English Translation	Word Frequency	Weighted Percentage (%)
Empresa	Company	1310	0.69
Experiência	Experience	1298	0.69
Emprego	Employment	1072	0.57
Gestão	Management	1037	0.55
Oferta	Offer	1014	0.54
Conhecimentos	Knowledges	1008	0.53
Trabalho	Work	954	0.51
Equipa	Team	937	0.50
Capacidade	Ability	902	0.48
Lisboa	Lisbon	810	0.43

According to the results (see Figure 1 and Table 3) the most present word is “Empresa” (Company), also not so relevant to the research, but the second one is “Experiência” (Experience) which seemed more relevant. Through this analysis it is clear the importance of this word and its major presence on job advertisements. However, a more accurate analysis was needed since the mention of the word experience in the job advertisements could have a different meaning from the one which emerges at a first glance.

Within the ten most frequent words, we emphasize the words “Experience”, “Management”, “Knowledge”, “Ability” and “Lisbon”. Although this is a preliminary analysis of job advertisements in the present study, these words are relevant for further analyses. In general, the advertisements highlight experience, define management as important, stress the relevance of knowledge and abilities, and show that most of the companies are hiring in Lisbon.

### 1.3. Word Search

#### *Experience*

To understand the impact of the word “Experiência” (Experience) a word search was performed. Through this procedure, it was possible to verify that there were two types of experience - one where defined as a requirement (e.g. “at least three years of work experience”) and other where experience was explicitly not required (e.g. “recently graduated”). So, two new categories were created: “Experience is a plus” and “Experience is not required”. This refinement of the coding showed that 720 out of 1000 advertisements stated that previous experience was a requirement and 37 out of 1000 mentioned that experience was not required.

This high rate of experience requirement showed that opportunities as stated by the Decent Work definition is hardly reached by those who are starting their professional careers. Maybe the experience is being overrated by recruiters while a relevant predictor of the subsequent performance. In 2016 Portugal was yet under the pressure of public debt and jobs in general were scarce. The result that shows that 72% job vacancies require previous experience highlights how difficult was (and have been) the entry into the labour market. This particular circumstance led many young graduates to take volunteer jobs for getting experience which many times created a vicious cycle since these volunteer employees provided for the corporation’s needs for free, decreasing the number of opportunities at the labour market.

Tabela 4

*Experience and Age Matrix N=1000*

	Age					Age Not Referred	Total
	<25	25 to 29	30 to 35	36 to 40	Others*		
Experience is a plus	0	4	6	3	2	705	720
Experience Not Required	0	0	1	0	0	36	37
Experience Not Referred	3	2	15	0	2	221	243
Total	3	6	22	3	4	962	1000

\* Age is not clearly specified

Furthermore, Decent Work deficit seems to be present when long experience is required for a junior position which charge less the employer (see Table 4.). Since 1999, Portugal integrates the Bologna Process which brought some changes in higher education. Nowadays, most of the students prioritize their graduation before entering on the labour market. Those who attend the five years courses (such as Integrated Masters) might be in a disadvantageous situation, in comparison to the ones that can integrate the labour market after their first Degree. Accordingly, it might be good for the companies to adapt their expectations regarding newcomer’s experience.

### *Age as a Requirement*

Some of the advertisements required a specific age range. To understand deeper this requirement a word search was performed with the words “*idade*” and “age”, both words meaning the same. The English word was used since some of the vacancies were written in English. Thirty-eight advertisements were retrieved under this condition. A new code was then added (“Age”) under which the following subcategories were also added: “<25”, “25 to 29”, “30 to 35”, “36 to 40” and “Others” (which includes information where age is not clearly specified).

Table 5

*Age as a Requirement Frequency (N=1000)*

Age as a Requirement					Age Not Referred
<25	25 to 29	30 to 35	36 to 40	Others*	962
3	6	22	3	4	

\* Age is not clearly specified

The results concerning Age do not express significant expression in terms of their quantity, not allowing its generalization. Nevertheless, it is possible to make an explanatory interpretation of the advertisements coded in this category. The results regarding age (see Table 5) can be related with the substantive elements “Equal Opportunity and Treatment” and “Employment Opportunity” (ILO, 2012), once they

work as an elimination factor. Thus, the advertisements coded in this category, announce Age as a condition to select their possible candidates. Age as a requirement show that more opportunities are offered to a candidate within the age range 36 to 40 years old (see Table 5). Although it is understandable that for some jobs a specific age range can be a requirement and therefore acceptable (e.g., a senior consultancy position taken by a too young worker can undermine credibility) the analysis of the job advertisements shows that most of those that require a specific age range do not make it clear why this requirement is made.

### *Gender*

During the coding process, the researcher found that some advertisements used the expressions “M/F” or “F/M” to explicitly claim that the job available could be done by both man and woman. A further analysis was undertaken. A word search with the expressions “M/F” and “F/M” retrieved 502 sources. Emerging from this result the category “M/F” and corresponding code label were created. A fine-tuning procedure examining other ways to state equality between genders was undertaken. Some advertisements used the expression “o/a” (e.g., “*administrativo/a*”), which means both men and women are equally accepted as candidates. The final version of this code has in total 543 out of 1000 advertisements. On the other hand, this means that 45.7% of advertisements do not state equality between genders explicitly. That does not mean they affirm inequality and express a Decent Work deficit. However, the lack of stating equality in almost half of advertisements suggest a recommendation to recruiters that they should state it as a way to reinforce the values and principles of Decent Work, namely the “Equal opportunity and treatment” and “Employment Opportunities” substantive element (ILO, 2012).

### *Stress*

Also during the coding process another word was found as relevant: “Stress”. Once, some of the job advertisements explicitly claim that it’s a requirement the capacity to cope with stress. So, a word search concerning the following words both in Portuguese

and English: “stress”, “*stresse*”, “*tensão*” (tension), “*pressão*” (pressure), and “*resiliência*” (resilience) was performed - due to the existence of both Portuguese and English draft advertisements. The advertisements retrieved were analysed it was confirmed that the use of those expressions had the meaning expected. After this procedure, the final result showed 91 out of 1000 job advertisements explicitly expressed that the ability to cope with stress, tension or pressure environments was a requirement.

That result is related to the substantive element “Safe Work Environment” (ILO, 2012) which involves both physical and psychological well-being promoted by the environment in the workplace (Ferraro et al., 2015). The description of the workplace as stress-intensive seems to be important for creating the appropriate expectations and help applicant in deciding whether or not they apply and in case they decide to apply they can be prepared to mobilize their internal resources for coping with that kind of environment. Additionally, the statement of a stressor job is also a way to put into practice transparency. This transparency is a component of dealing with candidates as people with rights who deserve to be informed and treated with interactional justice (Wang & Jiang, 2015). The lack of information is often perceived as unfair and seems to impact the way organization is perceived (Qin, Ren, Zhang, & Johnson, 2015). Finally, it is more stressful environment in order to avoid having candidates who do not fit in this kind of workplace.

## **2. Clues of Substantive Elements**

After the coding procedure above described, more complex algorithms were then performed for verifying in which extent job advertisements comply with the Decent Work substantive elements. The first one was a coding matrix relating “Education” and the several Decent Work substantive elements (see Table 6). Three Substantive Elements were excluded from the Table 6 since no content was coded there: “Unacceptable Work”, “Safe Work” and “Context”. The lack of content coded in the “Unacceptable Work” Substantive Elements is understandable. It would be surprising if job vacancies were announced as unacceptable work. However, the lack of mention of “Safe Work” and the mention of social and economic context for Decent Work would be possible and constructive. In general, we argue here that to state compliance with the Decent Work concept in job advertisements express a starting point more respectful employer-

employee relationship and developed than the omission of this type of content. Furthermore, stating compliance with Decent Work on this starting point expresses a compromise that can be brought back when necessary and is part of transparency in the hiring processes.

Table 6

*Education and Substantive Elements Matrix of Job Advertisements*

	Opportunities	Earnings	Working Time	WL Balance	Stability & security	Equality	Participation
Engineering	225	149	106	68	53	188	6
Healthcare & Life Sciences	17	25	37	30	25	43	0
Finance	74	67	66	37	54	128	9
Law	7	3	2	1	2	6	0
Hospitality & Tourism	6	5	7	7	4	12	0
Design	10	10	13	6	9	18	2
Architecture	7	8	1	0	1	5	0
Others	48	40	28	20	20	56	1
Not Specified	32	45	48	17	40	67	1
Psychology	14	8	6	3	7	16	0
Marketing & Social Media	21	17	11	14	13	23	2
Human Resources	17	17	17	5	14	27	0
Secretarial & Management Support	3	1	2	2	2	4	0
Total	481	395	344	210	244	593	21

### 2.1 Opportunities

As previously stated, the substantive element “*Employment Opportunities*” (ILO, 2012) is one of the most important to define the Decent Work concept. It is related to growth and expansion of the employee inside and outside of the company. The content coded in this node refers to the references in job advertisements of career and training that will be provided by the employer to the applicant hired (e.g., “You will have the opportunity to

participate in both challenging and ambitious projects in international environments”, “Very good opportunity to your career, with professional evolution perspectives”).

Table 7

*Opportunities Frequency (N=1000)*

Opportunities n=481	Opportunities Not Referred n=519
------------------------	-------------------------------------

Four hundred and eighty-one job advertisements (48.1%) having content coded in this node (see Table 7) make it one of the most present substantive elements. The content coded within this node means a statement regarding developmental policies and practices within the company that apply to the future employee. It seems that the possibility to enhance professional development inside of the company is important to the ones who created the job advertisement in the first place.

Nowadays it is common among workers changing jobs to achieve better position or better earnings. A company which provides their employees career paths and opportunities attracts ambitious candidates. Moreover, that company is playing an important role training people who haven’t been such skilled before this opportunity, contributing for the society in general. Otherwise corporations put into practice opportunistic human resource policies and strategies through predatory work (dos Santos, 2008) which uses workers as resources regardless of them being human beings whose competence was developed by other social agents (e.g., family, school). This Substantive Element is above all the expression of values tuned with one aspect of Decent Work considering employees as more than just resources.

It is true that this Substantive Element is related to market labour in general. The employer is not the one responsible for offering employment and alternative paths for employees to progress and develop. However, employers are among those who share the responsibility for providing employee development opportunities.

Considering almost 50% of job advertisements include content coded as “Opportunities”, we can see the glass half empty or half full. The fact that the results are so divided leads us to think that it might not only be perceived as positive, but also as a

negative result. It is an asset as it reinforces the access to the “opportunities”, but on the other hand almost half of the job advertisements do not take into consideration the need to include this kind of information – which configures the construction and development of the employees’ career.

Considering the social and economic context in Portugal at the time that data was collected, it is possible that the recruiters regard the employment opportunities as secondary, prioritizing information such as job function or earnings. It almost works as a game of expectations and priorities for both recruiter and candidates – where the first one tries to provide the best information to attract the second one and at the same time to prevent the application of those who do not meet the relevant criteria. Maybe the recruiter has a feeling of power when hiding the information instead of releasing it in job advertisements. However, our claim is that higher quality of relationship employer-employee is reached when transparency and information is present from the beginning. Therefore, for intervention, it is important to consider both: reinforcing the behaviour of those who have already included the statement of opportunities and for those who are missing this to reinforce the importance of changing their practice.

## *2.2. Earnings*

The substantive element “Earnings and Productive Work” (ILO, 2012) is also here considered one of the most important for the employee, since payment is required for the worker to be a participative citizen in society. Earnings correspond also to a recognition of the value that work has. Money is usually the more expressive component of earnings but not the only one. Accordingly, the content of advertisements coded in the corresponding node “Earnings” is all information about the salary or other kind of retribution regardless of it is a specific value or a qualitative indication (e.g., “competitive salary”, “negotiable salary”, “according to experience and knowledge” – see Table 8). After a first codification, new categories emerging from the data were created. It was possible to verify that earnings are intimately related with experience. Therefore, a new category emerged as “Salary accordingly to experience and knowledge” (e.g., “productivity bonus”, “exclusive discounts for employees”). Also, “Other Earnings”



(e.g., bonuses, awards, discounts) were mentioned in the job advertisements. Both seem to act as a reward/something appealing to the candidates.

Table 8

*Earnings Frequency (N=1000)*

		Earnings N=395		Earnings Not Referred
		Specific N=141	Vague N=326	605
Salary Values per Month	40	According to the Function	101	
Other Earnings	101	Competitive Salary	66	
		According to Market Figures	1	
		Negotiable Salary	4	
		According to Experience and Knowledge	154	

Concerning earnings, it is important to say that only 39.5% (see Table 8) of advertisements mention them which means 60.5% lack information on this point. Considering earnings is the retribution for work, it should be expected that there be some indication regarding earning in all advertisements. The lack of this kind of information can be seen as an expression of an unbalanced relationship where one part uses their power to omit information in this first phase of the relationship. Although it is possible to say that in some employment opportunities the compensation can be negotiated, an indication of the range within which values will be put would be a demonstration of more transparency. Even if it was the case of hiring managers choosing to hide information from competitors a qualitative reference would contribute to frame a more transparent relationship from the early beginning where both employer and employee assume more parity and maturity in its best expression.

Table 9

*Specific Salary Values per Month (N=40)*

<b>Specific</b>	
<b>Salary Values per Month (Euro)</b>	<b>n=40</b>
350	1*
400	1**
500-599	5
600-699	3
700-799	7
800-899	6
900-999	7
1000-1499	8
1500-1999	1
2000-2499	0
2500-3000	1

\*Internship Contract (40 working hours per week)

\*\*Part-time Contract

Finally, only 4% of advertisements indicate the precise value of salary which ranges from € 350 to € 2860 (see Table 9). Only 10 out of the 40 advertisements indicating the salary, reach 1000€ or more, which means 30 are under 1000€. Considering is most likely salary is indicated when considered attractive to candidates the low values are an expression of the economic and financial crises and maybe a general trend of more and more income inequalities (Beal & Astakhova, 2017; Cobb & Stevens, 2017; Kosta & Supic, 2017). This point brings the issue concerning which is the fair amount for what is considered a decent salary. The practical implementation of human rights needs to offer as retribution of full time jobs a salary that is enough in amount for allowing people to pay their bills and as a citizen play an active role in society. That role includes the possibility to raise a family. It is an unfair that a social system proposes to people, who spend at least three years at university and for a full-time work, a salary that is not enough for them to pay their bills and raise a family as an autonomous and independent citizen without needing the help of their relatives. In sum, employers and hiring managers show respect for their future employees when they provide some information in the job advertisements regarding earnings that will be paid.

### 2.3. Working Time

As previously stated one of the main concern of the ILO has been the workload. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) includes the working hours (Article 24). Also, the “Decent Working Time” substantive element is highly related to both physical and psychological health. This substantive element covers indicators related to the Decent Working time and the content coded in the corresponding node refers to part-time or fulltime job and to the schedule that will applies to the newcomer hired (e.g., “9 am until 18pm”, “40 hours per week”).

Table 10

*Working time Frequency (N=1000)*

	Working Time n=344		Working Time Not Referred
Full Time	Part-Time	Schedule	656
259	40	56	

It seems most of the information related to the working time refers the need to recruit a person with availability to work in a full-time regiment which is highly common. Here the most concerning result is related to the schedule information, which only 5.6% (see Table 10) of the job advertisements include it. The “Decent Working Time” is highly related to “Balance Work, Family and Personal Life”. In most job advertisements candidates would apply without knowing any information about the schedule, and so being prevented to anticipate how they can achieve balance between work, family, and personal life. The lack of information related to this subject do not allow the possible candidate to deliberate if the job advertisement that he/she is applying to, interferes to his/her personal life. It is fair that the possible candidate has access to this kind of information, to guarantee that the information provided reflects transparency from the recruiter company and respect for those who will be employees in the near future.

## 2.4. Work-Life Balance

The “Work, Family and Personal Life” is also one of the most related substantive elements to the physical and psychological health. It includes different contributions of the organizational world which provides balance between the employees’ life and his/her family such as job opportunities, earnings and working hours. The references coded in this node refers to information about the availability to travel, contract duration information, flexible schedule and rotative schedule (e.g., “shift schedule to define”, “regional mobility”, “availability to travel in business”, “flexible working schedule”). These are the main contents considered here as relevant for the work-life balance.

Table 11

*Work-Life Balance Frequency (N=1000)*

Work Life Balance n=210				Work Life Balance Not Referred
Availability to Travel	Contract Duration	Flexible Schedule	Rotative Schedule	790
103	48	27	49	

According to the results presented in Table 11, the “Availability to Travel” is considered a relevant information and it was included in 10.3% of the job advertisements. Although not everyone’s ambition is a vacancy where there is the need to travel the country, it might be perceived as an opportunity to enhance more contacts outside of the Portuguese labour market and a possibility to achieve knowledge which contributes to the employee’s developing curriculum. The presence of this information in the advertisements allows to the possible candidate to know if a certain job vacancy ensures the work-life balance, according to his/hers needs. The same is applicable to the information related to contract duration. If a possible candidate has previous access to the duration of the contract, it allows the possibility to discriminate if it is a long or short-term job. This promotes more transparency between the company and the possible candidate, and also closer relation between them. Nevertheless only 4.8% of the job advertisements (see Table 11) provides information about the contract duration.

The application to a vacancy which practices a flexible schedule anticipates the possibility of regulating the working schedule in accordance with own needs. Only 2.7% of the job advertisements provide this information to the possible candidate (see Table 11). In this particular case, it might be perceived as a positive and useful offer that can be used by the employee – for example, the possibility to arrive to work latter in order to attend a medical appointment. However, it is possible that this flexibility is related to job vacancies whose employee can have more autonomy, not extendible to all jobs – in the recruiters’ perspective.

According to the Table 11, 4.9% of the job advertisements announce the job shifts. The literature provides different perspectives: on one hand employees try to achieve better work-life balance through shift work (Staines & Pleck, 1986; Becker & Moen, 1999; Tausing & Fenwick, 2001a); on the other hand, job shifts are a constraint (Fenwick & Tausig, 2001b). Although there are attempts to cope with this kind of working schedule, the impact on the work-life balance might emerge in a long-term. Nevertheless, providing this information allows the candidate to ensure if they are available this kind of contract.

## *2.5. Stability and Security*

This substantive element is related to the perceived solidness of a certain workplace – the guarantee that a contract fulfils stability and security to the employee. This substantive element is related to que possibility to have a steady and secure work place, where the contract agreement gives to the employee the perception that their future at the specific job provides security and stability. The content coded in this node refers to the information that allows to have expectations on those points regarding the job that is announced. That information in mainly about the type of contract that will be made (e.g., “direct contract with the company”, “12 months contract”, “Internship contract”).

Table 12

*Stability and Security Frequency (N=1000)*

Stability and Security n=244					Stability and Security Not Referred
Contract					756
Without Term	Internship	Service Provider	With Term	Uncertain Term	
52	36	14	142	0	

Most of the contract information provided in the job advertisements collected, refers to contracts with a determined term. Table 12 shows that 14.2% of the job advertisements indicate the possibility to sign a contract with a pre-defined term. This might be a consequence of the tough times of living in the country at the time of data collection. Moreover, when considering this node and the one previously described (contract duration) the huge lack of information become evident. Only 4.8% of the job advertisements indicate information regarding duration of the contract (see table 11) and only 142 out of 1000 advertisements are coded in the node “with term”.

The results presented in the Table 12 also show that 5.2% of job advertisements provide information about vacancies with contracts without term – allowing more stability and contributing to a positive work-life balance to the possible employee. The access to this kind of information allows for the discrimination between a vacancy which offers a permanent contract or a temporary one. In view of the tough times the country was crossing at the period of data collection, a low frequency of this type of vacancies was expected. This means that Decent Work should be approached taking into account the social and economic context that limit the complete compliance with it.

It is also important to mention the 3.6% of internship contracts (see Table 12). When related to the “Employment Opportunity” substantive element (ILO, 2012), an internship contract might be perceived as a possibility to a junior integrates a company, to enhance the first contact with the labour market, job training and knowledge. Also, the presence of this information guarantee that the candidates who apply to the vacancy already fulfil the prerequisites.

An interesting result is the one related to the “Uncertain Term” contract – which is probably the one providing less security and stability to the employee. In this node, 0% of the job advertisements were coded. Considering the tough times described above, it was expected that great part of the advertisements would be coded in this category. This result might reflect the reality of the job advertisements of the reality of the hiring policies. Maybe the lack of information stated in this category reflects the need to fulfil the attractiveness of job advertisement to the candidate. Taking that into account it is possible that the recruiters do not provide this information to attract candidates.

In general, only 24.4% of the job advertisements provide information about the “Stability and Security” substantive element which comply with the Decent Work concept. It is important to reinforce the need to contemplate this type of information to the other 75.6% which do not understand it as priority. Again, transparency and information would correspond to a trust relationship where maturity and parity play a central role.

## 2.6. Equality

The Equality concept has been one of the most current topics across the globe (Hepple, 2001). The promotion of “Equal Opportunity and Treatment” in employment is a grounded element of Decent Work concept (ILO, 2012) which is related to equal job opportunities for both women and men, without any kind of discrimination. Here were included information related to gender equality (e.g., “M/F”). After, were created the subcategories “Age as a Requirement”, “Gender as a Requirement” and “Residence place as a Requirement” (e.g., “Age required: more than 18 years old”, “M”, “F”, “Residence place near Lisbon”).

Table 13

*Gender as a Requirement Frequency N=1000*

Gender “M/F” or “F/M”	Specific Gender	Gender Not Referred
543	2	455

The Table 13 shows that 54.3% of job advertisements were coded at the subcategory “M/F” stating that the job allows both female and male candidates. On the other hand, 45.5% have no specific information about gender which might mean equality is a given. The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work made by the ILO in 1998 states that “the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation” is an obligation of all member states (Hepple, 2001). Nevertheless, another subcategory was created “Specific Gender” (see Table 13) where the references which explicitly state that it is a requirement to be a female or a male were coded - to be hired for a job that could be performed by both gender – neglecting the current law. Therefore, it is an explicit Decent Work deficit which do not comply with the “Equal Opportunity and Treatment” substantive element proposed by the ILO (2012).

Table 14

*Residence Place as a Requirement Frequency N=1000*

Residence Place Required	Residence Place Not Referred
71	929

Concerning the “Residence Place” category, the Table 14 shows that 7.1% of the job advertisements state the need of a candidate whose residence place is near the working place. In this case, the distance between the working place and the residence area is considered an exclusion factor. This not only calls into question the “Equal Opportunity and Treatment”, but also the “Employment Opportunity” substantive elements.

Regarding the “Age as a Requirement” category, the same can be argued when 3.7% (see table 5) of the job advertisements require a specific age range to the candidate. Although the results in general do not express a significant Decent Work deficit, they should be changed concerning the aspects that go against equal opportunity and treatment. In practice, recruiters should understand and promote the equality of opportunities and treatment for all the candidates.



## 2.7. Social security

The “Social security” substantive element covers all benefits provided, both in cash or in kind, to ensure the protection of the employee during a period marked by a lack of work-related income (ILO, 2012). In this node are included references on protection in case of illness, unemployment, and retirement, whether from public or private social security systems (e.g., “health care insurance to the employee and extendable to the family”, “Residence Subsidy”).

Table 15

*Social Security Frequency (N=1000)*

Social Security n=23	Not coded in Social Security n=977
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According to Table 15, the results show that only 2.3% of the job advertisements provide information related to the employee’s social security. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) stated everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social, and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality (Article 22). In Portugal, these matters are mainly ruled by law, but several human resources put into practice actions which aim minimize the organizations financial costs at the expense of job quality. The lack of information on social security might express that disinvestment, but in some cases, it might correspond to social security that is taken for granted. The access to the national healthcare service and the national pension system, is provided by the Portuguese State built upon the income taxes. Nevertheless, some companies provide an extra social security such as PPR (*Plano Poupança Reforma / Retirement Savings Plan*), health care or life insurance for the employees and their families. Above all and once again, transparency and information providing would be better for mutual trust and high maturity relationships employer-employee.

## 2.8. Participation

The references coded in this node correspond to job description presented in the job advertisements regarding employee participation in policy definition and decision-taking. This category corresponds to the “Social Dialogue, workers’ and employers’ representation” – the right to access free association and protection, also the possibility to negotiation and consultation between employers and employees. Here assumed as a possibility to contribute to the development of the company policies and practices (e.g., “Contribution and participation in the decision process”, “provide critical feedback about the products”).

Table 16

*Participation Frequency (N=1000)*

Participation n=26	Participation Not Referred n=974
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Only 2.6% of job advertisements include references coded in this node (see Table 16). It is unexpected that “Social Dialogue, workers’ and employers’ representation” is almost absent of job advertisements, since it corresponds to a more democratic way of making decisions and enrich their quality. We know from previous research that overt participation under some conditions improves the quality of decisions and is an antidote of groupthink (Rose, 2011; Oluwatayo, Opoko & Ezema, 2017). Therefore, on one hand social dialogue and participation is an expression of civilization and social development being valuable by its own; on the other hand, participation and social dialogue under adequate conditions improves decision-making and the quality of work performed.

Concerning social dialogue, the statement on expected participation and democratic organizational climate can contribute to mutual trust and employee-employer relationship quality and would be congruent with a more parity between both social agents and the correspondent accountability that can be fostered in them.

### 3. Opportunities and Other Significant Results

After the previous analysis, it was possible to identify that the most present substantive elements in the job advertisements is “Employment Opportunity”. It was considered important to verify in which extent this node is related to other variables previously discussed, such as Experience, Stress, Work-Life Balance.

#### 3.1. Opportunities and Experience

Since experience is one of the most present words in the job advertisements, the researcher thought to understand the relation between opportunities and experience. So, a matrix was created were it was possible to find the following results:

Table 17

*Opportunities and Experience Matrix (N=1000)*

	Experience is a plus	Experience Not Required	Experience Not referred	Total
Opportunities	372	15	94	481
Opportunities Not Referred	348	22	149	519
Total	720	37	243	1000

In this case, 37.2% of the job advertisements coded in the node “Opportunities” are also coded in the node “Experience is a plus” (see Table 17). It seems that the candidates with a previous experience are more likely to find new opportunities during their career than the ones with no experience. Yet, a minority of advertisements states the possibility to achieve other work opportunities or job training – expressing that it is not necessary to have previous experience to enhance the possibility of a developing career. In this particular case, it is possible that the newcomers or juniors who intend to apply to these job advertisements might have a chance to achieve a career development inside the company.

### 3.2. Opportunities and stress

This association intended to verify if any of the 91/1000 job advertisements with references coded at the category “*Stress*” have also references coded at the node “Opportunities”. That relationship can be viewed as a way to compensate employees since stress is highly demanding and opportunities is highly appealing.

Table 18

*Opportunities and Stress Matrix (N=1000)*

	Stress	Stress Not Referred	Total
Opportunities	45	436	481
Opportunities Not Referred	46	473	519
Total	91	909	1000

As presented on Table 18, reporting to the 1000 job advertisements, 4.5% coded in the node “Stress” are also coded in “Opportunities”. Yet, considering the node “Stress” *per se*, almost 50% of the job advertisements coded in this category are also coded in “Opportunities”. This explicit relation between these two categories might express the need to cope with stressful work environments to achieve opportunities at work and a way to compensate stress. Therefore, a resilient person, with better strategies to cope with stress, would probably have more chances to achieve a career development inside this companies.

### 3.3. Opportunities and Availability to Travel

As previously stated, 10.3% (see Table 11) of the job advertisements were coded in the node “Availability to Travel” which we assumed that can be perceived as an opportunity to enhance better career options, once it is an opportunity to foster professional network outside the national labour market and to have intercultural experiences.

Table 19

*Opportunities Availability to Travel Matrix (N=1000)*

	Availability to Travel	Availability to Travel Not Referred	Total
Opportunities	60	421	481
Opportunities Not Referred	43	476	519
Total	103	897	1000

Through this matrix it was possible to verify that 6% (see Table 19) of the job advertisements coded in the node “Availability to Travel” are also coded in “Opportunities”. On one hand availability to travel contributes to professional development, on the other hand can be seen as compensation for the stress brought as a consequence of frequent traveling.

#### 4. No Coded Categories

Since the beginning, all the categories were created with the expectation of being used as a code, but not all of them had correspondent references to be coded. Categories like “Safe Work”, “Unacceptable Work” and “Context” had no references. Nevertheless, all of them might reflect a global perspective of the results emerging from the present study.

Occupational safety and health at work are vital components of Decent Work concept. Generally defined as the anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control of possible risk which might emerge in the workplace (ILO, 2008). The workers’ protection against sickness, disease and injury has been a central preoccupation for the ILO since its creation in 1919 (ILO, 2008). Therefore, a safe work environment is a key element to achieve sustainable Decent Work conditions and preventive interventions. Yet, none of the job advertisements collected for the present study explicitly express that the company behind the advertisement has a safe work environment. As previously stated, we reinforce the need for companies to adopt transparency policies, through which it is possible to ambition relations of greater responsibility and commitment.

The category Unacceptable work was created in order to cover the “Work that Should be Abolished” substantive element (ILO, 2012). This substantive element,

emphasizes the need to abolish any kind of work that structurally does not respect human rights and so is unacceptable work (e.g., forced labour, child labour). As expected, none of the content was coded in this negative statement of Decent Work, otherwise employers would be announcing they were acting against the law. The fact that none of the advertisement content was categorized as “Unacceptable work” is at first glance a positive thing. Nevertheless, when analysed as a global idea it suggests that they do not provide the necessary information for the candidate to feel safe. Some of them point out the existence of Decent Work deficits.

The category “Context” was included to cover the “Social and Economic Context” substantive element (ILO,2012). No content was included in this category due to the inexistence of clues of this Decent Work Substantive elements. However, all substantive elements should be interpreted within the context which this category refers to. Considering the crises which arose eight years before the data collection and still affects people lives, some caution has to be taken in interpretation of the results.

In sum, regarding the job advertisements the glass can be seen half full or half empty. Although some of the job advertisements explicitly express Decent Work clues, others do not consider the substantive elements defined by the ILO (2012) as an integrative concept. As previously stated, job advertisements are the first contact between the company and possible candidates and should take into account that the information provided to the future candidate is important and essential to improvement of the employment relation. The employee requirements of job advertisements reflect the changes in the organization of work, work organizations and work cultures (Kuokkanen, Varje & Väänänen, 2013). The transformation of “ideal worker” is part of a changing society. In this sense, the possibility to find explicit clues of Decent Working conditions in job advertisements is a way to express the respect to all the candidates that intend to apply to a certain vacancy in the company. The lack of information might be perceived as an over empowerment of the company which do not believe that a job advertisement should be as transparent as possible to future candidates once they express the values of the company.

### **Chapter III: Conclusion**

The present study has as main objective to verify in which extent Decent Work as defined by the International Labour Organization were expressed in job advertisements announcing job vacancies in Portugal for knowledge workers. In the literature reviewed we described the historical roots of Decent Work and its central role in structuring the ILO's action. We also presented a detailed definition of Decent Work based on its Substantive Elements. We show that it has been argued that this concept is an expression of Human Rights at work and corresponds to people aspirations related to their work. Furthermore, Decent Work is proposed by a United Nations agency which is the main legitimate forum for World coordination.

We characterized also the concept of knowledge worker since the empirical research focused on job advertisements for those professionals. Although some authors suggest that currently knowledge workers are all workers, we have chosen a conservative position and propose a concept which is able to deal with in terms of empirical research: knowledge workers are those who are required to have a university education level for being accepted as candidates to a job position. With this definition, it is possible to operationalize the Knowledge Workers.

Finally, the theoretical framework was completed showing that job advertisements are commonly the starting point of an employment relationship. Within that starting point the way the organization views the tacit and explicit rules that configure the employment relationship is expressed. Therefore, we argued it is relevant to verify to which extent the job advertisement complies with Decent Work criteria.

The empirical research undertaken collected job advertisements whose target were knowledge workers. These job advertisements were published in a period of time of three months in the summer of 2016. A google search allowed previously to identify some dozens of websites which have as core the announcement of job vacancies. We performed a content analysis of 1000 job advertisements coding their content in a coding system designed in accordance with the substantive elements of the ILO's conceptualization.

The results have shown that while some substantive elements are commonly complied with by job advertisements, others are missed in most of them. We found none of the job advertisements comply with all the Decent Work substantive elements. Three

substantive elements were totally missed in job advertisements: “Safe Work”, “Work that should be abolished” and “Social and Economic Context”. The remaining eight are more or less mentioned, not as Decent Work substantive elements but some information is presented referring to the Decent Work content on these substantive elements: “Employment Opportunities”; “Earnings and Productive Work”; “Employment Opportunities”; “Earnings and Productive Work”; “Decent Working Time”; “Work, Family and Personal Life”; “Stability and Security”; “Equal opportunity and treatment”; “Social Security”, ”Social Dialogue, workers’ and employers’ representation”.

The “Employment Opportunities” is one of the most present substantive elements. The content coded within this substantive element reveals a statement regarding developmental policies and practices within the company that apply to the future employee. It seems that the possibility to enhance professional development inside of the company is important to the ones who created the job advertisement in the first place. Nevertheless, almost 50% of job advertisements include content coded as “Opportunities” – supporting that it might be perceived as positive, but also as a negative result.

The “Earnings and Productive Work” category revealed only 39.5% of advertisements mention them which means 60.5% lack information on this point. Attending this asymmetry, employers might make use of the possibility of omitting this information in their favour - Not saying can have the effect of attracting more candidates, consequently more chances of choice. But that reasoning Decent Work to misunderstanding the main point: the configuration of a transparent and trustful employment relationship that is undermined since its early begin.

Regarding “Decent Working Time” most of the information related to this substantive element refers to the need to recruit a person with availability to work in a full-time dedication which is highly common. Here the most concerning result is related to the schedule information, which only 5.6% of the job advertisements include.

In the “Work, Family and Personal Life” criteria the availability to travel is considered a relevant information and it was included in 10.3% of the job advertisements. Also, only 2.7% of the job advertisements provide this information about the schedule flexibility - which might not be so significant, but can be perceived as a positive and useful offer that can be used by the employee. Finally, 4.9% of the job advertisements



announce the rotativity of working schedules. Although, the fact that this information is given allows the candidate to ensure if there is the availability to agree with this kind of contract.

Regarding “Stability and Security” only 24.4% of the job advertisements provide information about this substantive element which comply with the Decent Work concept. In this sense, it is important to reinforce the need to contemplate this type of information to the other 75.6%. Most employers seem to miss the importance of providing this information.

In the “Equal opportunity and treatment” substantive element, 54.3% job advertisements express that specific vacancy allows both female and male candidates. Nevertheless, two job advertisements explicitly express that it is a requirement to be a female and the other one a male, to a job that could be performed by both. Also, 7.1% of the job advertisements explicit the need of a candidate whose residence place is near the working place. This not only calls into question the “Equal Opportunity and Treatment”, but also the “Employment Opportunity” substantive element. The same might be argued when 3.7% of the job advertisements suggest as a requirement (or elimination criteria) the need of the candidate to comply with a certain age.

The “Social Security” substantive element reflects an essential part of people’s life, related to the construction of a healthy society which provides living conditions built upon the protection of the citizens. Here, only 2.3% of the job advertisements provide information related to the employee’s social security. Although the access to the national service of health care and the national pension system is provided by the Portuguese State, some companies provide an extra social security to the employees and their families. Above all and once again, transparency and information providing would be better for mutual trust and high maturity relationships employer-employee.

The “Social Dialogue, workers’ and employers’ representation” here assumed as a possibility to contribute to the development of the company policies and practices. Seems not to be one of the most present substantive elements with only 2.6% coded job advertisements. It might be a topic taken as guarantee and not having a significant expression on job advertisements. But it seems also a missed opportunity to encourage and attract those who like and are able to participate in decision-taking.

Finally, the matrixes provided an accurate perception on the relations that might be established between different substantive elements. Here we focus on the “Opportunities” related to “Experience”, “Stress” and “Availability to Travel”. It was possible to verify that the “Employment Opportunities” might emerge as a compensation of a certain job. When previous experience was expected, the ability to cope with stress and the possibility to travel in work, the employee is compensated through the opportunities provided by the company.

The results previously discussed must take into account some limitations which can be surpassed by further researches. The extension of the period for collecting data could consolidate the results here obtained. Also, the screening of job advertisements of other type of workers could help in getting the whole picture. Finally, although the interpretation of the advertisements’ meaning is easy, the systematic cross validation by a second researcher could achieve more consolidated results. In the present research, the cross validation only occurred where the first researcher had doubts regarding the coding process.

Our claim in this research was showing that job advertisements compliance regarding Decent Work represents a more developed way for starting an employer-employee relationship when compared with job advertisements that miss information. While parity and mutual information in this relationship is more able to foster accountability among both parties, hiding information by the more powerful member of the future relationship is less than an optimal solution. Decent Work compliance corresponds to a civilizational achievement. Where hiring managers state in job advertisements the job is in accordance with Decent Work they are also assuming a responsibility for being tuned with it, otherwise they will be contributing to undermine credibility and organizational value. Some years ago, job advertisements start to include the label “M/F” (or vice-versa) for stating compliance with equal opportunity between women and men. Following the same rationale hiring managers should start to include compliance with Decent Work in job advertisements. However, more important is to include information allowing possible candidates to feel they will be in a transparent and high standard employment relationship. Information covering the 11 Decent Work substantive elements would be welcome and strongly contributing to that high standard

relationship which positively impacts on future attitudes and behaviours from those who are hired.

During the research process some questions were raised, the main one being: How can this contribute in a positive way to the recruitment processes? More than reflect about the negative or positive results it could serve as a base for an informative guideline to future job advertisements.

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# Appendix

Figure 2. Categories and Subcategories

