

# Job quality and the economics of New Labour: a critical appraisal using subjective survey data

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This paper will develop the work introduced in a recent CJE paper 2007 (31), as above. This assessed the record on job quality during the early term of office of the New Labour government by interpreting, from a political economy perspective, changes in a variety of subjective measures of job quality taken from several different data sources. We find some improvements in job quality over the period 1998–2004; however we argue that these improvements have arisen not because of New Labour's policies towards the workplace but because of low and falling rates of unemployment. Despite recent improvements, a large number of workers in Britain remain in low quality jobs and, without a radical change of policy direction, sustained and substantial progress in the quality of work will remain elusive.

**Key words:** Economics of happiness, Job quality, New Labour, Political economy

**JEL classifications:** B50, I31, J8, J28