



ILERA AFRICA

10TH REGIONAL CONGRESS

3 – 4 APRIL 2024

Negotiated happiness in the sky?

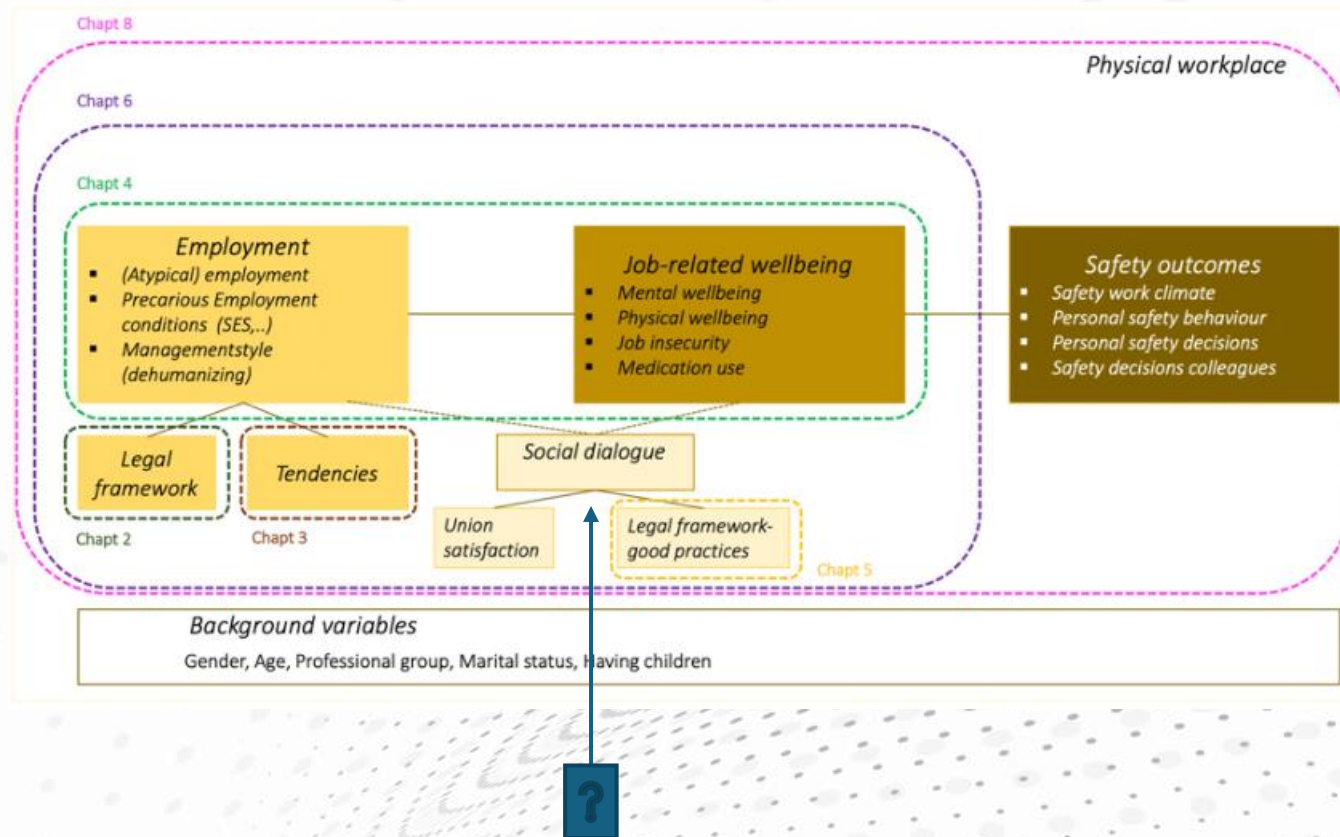
Management factors in European aviation, the effect on wellbeing of the cockpit and cabin crew and the impact on aviation safety –can union representation make a difference?

Dr. Lien Valcke



Prestige, luxury, glamour, freedom ... a lifestyle to be jealous of?

Main research model and question



Do the **employment/working conditions and management culture** of the airline company have an effect on (mental/physical) **wellbeing and safety** (behaviour) of European aircrew?

Goal, scope and methodology



Goal

Policy evaluation research through method triangulation: We opted for a bottom-up evidence based approach towards the formulation of recommendations about the regulatory framework and management (HR)level.



Scope

1. Geographical: Europe
2. Stakeholders: Cockpit and cabin crew - only input from union representatives and workers
3. Occupational Health and safety
4. Time window: 2014 - 2023



Methodology - triangulation

1. Desk research (Legislation, literature)
2. Quantitative (surveys)
3. Qualitative (open questions surveys)



Partners

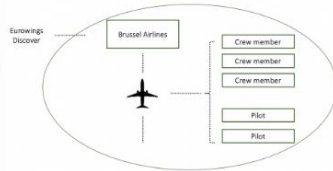


ECA Piloting
Safety
European Cockpit Association

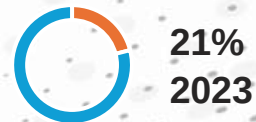
Three dimensions of the main research question – short overview

Working conditions

Need for flexibility dominates → non-standard employment and constructions (e.g. wet- leasing, regime shopping,...)



Non-standard employed



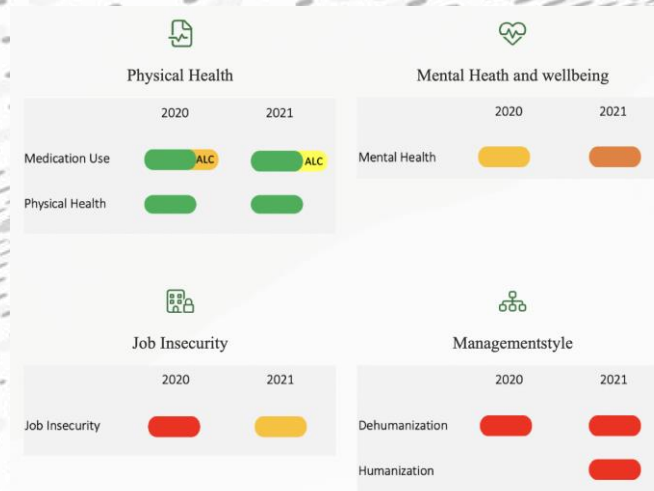
Other prof. activities

25%



Job-related wellbeing

Responsibility of the employer: The employer must create a conducive and safe work environment, and ameliorate cockpit and cabin crew's work-related health and (general) safety (Psychosocial safety). (regulation 2018/1042)



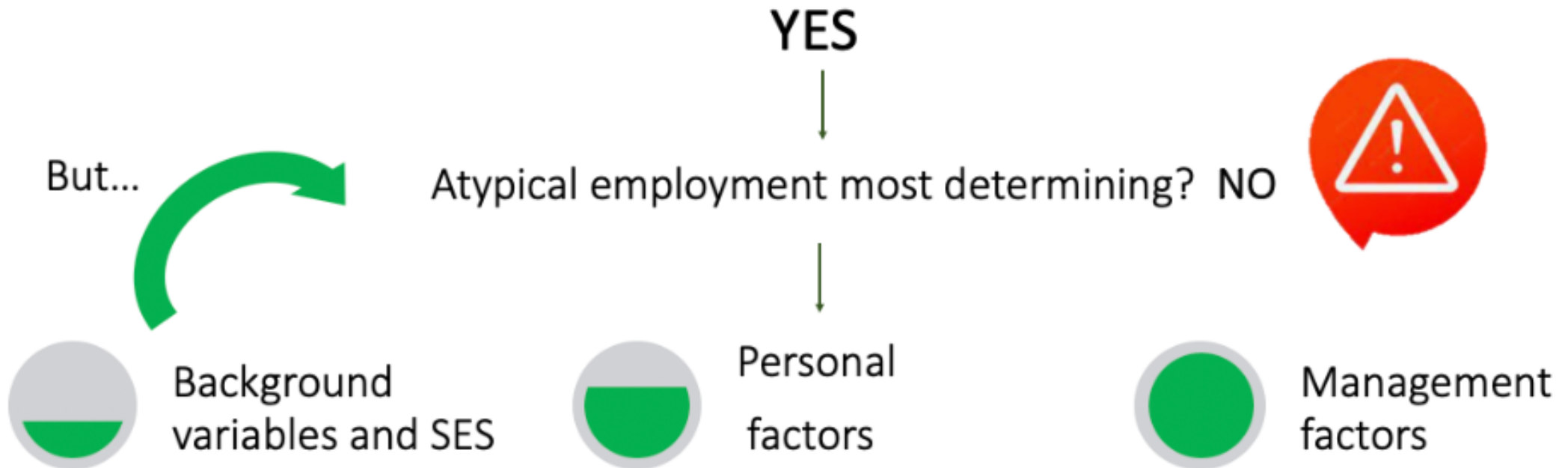
Safety

70-80% Incidents result of human error

- Beyond the technical interpretation of safety
- Multi-dimensional instrument
- Different levels of responsibility pertaining to safety: individual, team and organizational



Associated with safety (behaviour/outcomes)?



Answer main research question



What about union representation and social dialogue?

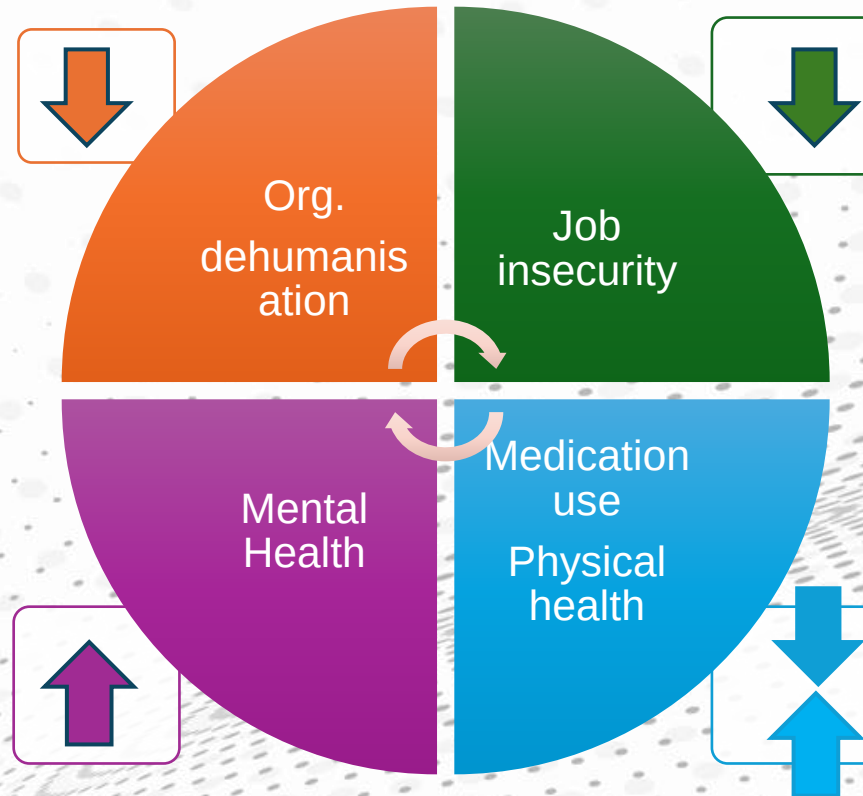
Social dialogue in European Aviation

- Recognition of trade unions
 - Guarantee representation of all workers(self- employed, on demand,freelancers,...) in one union, no private constructions
 - Be aware of complicated recruitment chains and subcontracting
 - Reflection needed about posting in the aviation sector
- transnational unions?
- Despite the shortcomings in the legislation at European level and difficulties in the coordination with the national level, the good practices show us that there is room for constructive transnational social dialogue that can be translated in to (enforceable) agreements. Even for agreements that find (in part) a place in European legislation that counters the race to the bottom.



Does the (subjective) satisfaction with the union representation **protect** employees in the aviation sector (cockpit and cabin crew) against a dehumanizing management style, job insecurity, and medication use?

Association with (subj) union satisfaction



Furthermore, due to the substantial impact on wellbeing, there is an indirect impact on safety.

Recommendations

- The aviation industry must emphasize **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) → not as a cost, constraint, or charitable deed but a potential source of innovation and competitive advantage to improve the multiple bottom lines of profit, people, the planet, and peace (Porter & Kramer, 2006).
- **Airline management must be trained** in all matters related to (mental) wellbeing of workers, and the impact of management styles and on safety issues, ...
- An **open, constructive dialogue** with the trade unions must be a standard practice, in normal and turbulent times. Companies should make use of the positive influence that the presence of a good grievance system, possibly through a trade union, can have on the (mental) wellbeing of their workers. → core: **SAFETY**
- **Union representatives** have to be aware and reminded of the **influence** that their functioning and conduct might have on the labor relations within airline companies and the wellbeing of their members, satisfy their stakeholders' concerns, implement novel strategies to solve problems, and monitor the effects after implementation (Eurofound, 2020a).



Thank you for your attention 😊

Dr. Lien Valcke