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Measuring collective bargaining coverage in the WageIndicator questionnaire

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WOLIWEB

The socio-economic determinants of citizens' work life attitudes, preferences and perceptions, using data from the continuous web-based European WageIndicator survey

Measuring collective bargaining coverage in the *WageIndicator* questionnaire

Deliverable: D11 State of the Art Report

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The overall objective of WOLIWEB	2
2. Work Package 3 Collective bargaining coverage.....	3
3. Reviewing collective bargaining coverage	5
4. Collective bargaining questions	8
4.1 Collective bargaining coverage	8
4.2 One's opinion about collective bargaining coverage	9
4.3 The name of the collective agreement	9
5. Measuring employees' workplace representation	11
5.1 The workplace representation systems	11
5.2 The country-specific terminology	12
5.3 Membership	13
5.4 The name of the trade union.....	13
References	14
Appendix 1 National comments on Measuring collective bargaining coverage	15
Appendix 2 National comments on Measuring employees' workplace representation	17

1. THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF WOLIWEB

WOLIWEB addresses the impact of the socio-economic framework on attitudes, preferences, and perceptions. Attitudes, preferences, and perceptions are inherently subjective in nature. They are potentially influenced by a host of factors related to one's socio-economic framework, referring to concepts such as occupation; labour market status; earnings; working, household and leisure time; marital status and family phase; socio-economic status; gender and ethnical background; and spatial characteristics. WOLIWEB focuses on four issues:

- perceptions of pay discrimination by gender or ethnicity in relation to any factual pay gap;
- preferences for more or fewer working hours in relation to working hours and household duties;
- attitudes towards collective bargaining *coverage* in relation to actual coverage by agreements;
- perceptions of job insecurity in relation to dismissals and reorganisations at the workplace.

The data needed for the proposed analyses are gathered through the international, continuous web-based *WageIndicator*, consisting of:

- an attractive website with labour market related information for a large public;
- a crowd-pulling Salary Check providing with very detailed salary information related to a set of variables such as education, firm size, supervisory position;
- a *WageIndicator* questionnaire with 60 – 80 questions; the dataset provides insight in issues related to work and wages;
- nation wide promotion, publicity, and answering visitors' email.

All WOLIWEB papers are downloadable from <http://www.wageindicator.org/>, section Research Lab.

2. WORK PACKAGE 3 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING COVERAGE

This paper is WOLIWEB's Deliverable 11 (D 11) 'State-of-the-art-review on collective bargaining coverage', which is part of Work Package 3 (WP3) 'Research on bargaining coverage attitudes and perceptions of job insecurity'. Among others, WP3 deals with modelling attitudes towards bargaining coverage. According to the WOLIWEB proposal, its contribution to the modelling is threefold.

1. WOLIWEB will produce a working paper that models attitudes towards bargaining coverage from actual coverage, controlling in detail for occupation, branch, firm size and region, as well as for individual characteristics such as age and gender. Logit analyses will be used to estimate attitudes towards bargaining coverage across countries.
2. The questionnaire will be designed to measure bargaining coverage and attitudes towards coverage. In addition, the design will include the major variables that are assumed to influence the model.
3. The possibilities to ask for the name of the agreement the respondent is covered by – as currently is the case in the Dutch Wage Indicator Survey – will be explored. It is however assumed that the efforts to do so do not counterbalance the advantages of having such a variable in the dataset.

According to WP3 the work concerning collective bargaining coverage includes (p.24 Annex 1):

- review the literature as how to measure bargaining coverage attitudes and bargaining coverage, as well as their major determining variables
- in cooperation with the national researchers draw an inventory as to how these issues usually are measured in national surveys
- propose how to synchronize the questionnaire with regard to these issues
- report the findings in State-of-the-art reviews (D11), to be discussed at the kick-off conference (M1)
- draw an analytical framework for understanding the relationship between attitudes towards the coverage of collective bargaining agreements and the actual coverage
- analyse and test this analytical framework across countries, using the Wage Indicator dataset
- report the findings in Working Papers (D12) at the Final conference (M3) (provided funding).

The WP3 deliverables concerning collective bargaining coverage include (p.19 Annex 1):

- D11 1 State-of-the-art-review on collective bargaining coverage; This State-of-the-art-review on the measurement of collective bargaining coverage and perceptions of coverage should include the major determining variables, resulting in proposals for the survey.
- D12 1 Working paper on collective bargaining coverage and perceptions of coverage in 9 countries (P3 WSI)

As regards this WP, a first inventory, called 'National comments regarding the measurement of working hours, wages, collective bargaining coverage, job insecurity, education, ethnicity, self-employment and employee representation in the *WageIndicator* questionnaire', was distributed among the WOLIWEB partners in April 2004. National comments were received in May and June (see Appendix). These comments led to a proposal for the *WageIndicator* questionnaire, discussed at the launch meeting 8-10 July 2004 (the kick-off conference M1). Based on the discussions at the meeting, a next paper was distributed among the partners, summarizing the decisions taken at the meeting: 'Proposal Country Specific Questions in the *WageIndicator* questionnaire', dated 16.07.2004. Partners could once more react and then the so-called master questionnaire was made. This version was distributed for translation. Since October 2004, the *WageIndicator* questionnaire became operational in the WOLIWEB countries, one after another.

This paper, D11, discusses the results of the discussions with regard to collective bargaining coverage. In Section 3, theoretical approaches and measurement of collective bargaining coverage are reviewed. In Section 4, the questions about collective bargaining coverage and coverage attitudes in the *WageIndicator* questionnaire are presented. In Section 5, the questions about employees' work place representation are presented.

3. REVIEWING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING COVERAGE

In most countries of the European Union, collective bargaining is considered to be a major instrument of wage setting. The collective bargaining is the responsibility of the employers' and the employees' organisations, and takes place at industry or company-level (Bispinck, 2002). Apart from wages, many topics may be discussed in collective bargaining, both procedural and material in nature. The societal need for cross-national comparisons is enlarged by the further development of the European Union, and in particular the formation of the EMU. This has tremendously increased the interest in features regarding the labour market, employment policies, industrial relations, and wage setting processes. Quite obviously, the EU cannot act as a coherent body when wage competition is highly developed. Yet, at present countries set their economic positions relative to each other. Within this game, the wage setting processes and thus the collective bargaining systems are of great importance. In the EU, wages are primarily moderated by collective bargaining (Teulings and Hartog, 1999). Of particular interest is the notion of wage dispersion that is firmly embedded in collective bargaining. Both unions and employers have strong opinions about wage equality.

Regarding the wage-setting processes, comparisons across countries have shown that a fairly robust relation exists between cross-national differences in earnings inequality and bargaining structures. More centralised or co-ordinated economies have significantly less earnings inequality compared to more decentralised/uncoordinated ones (OECD, 1997). In addition, collective bargaining will enable industries to shift focus from price competition, and thus from wage competition, to competition based on product quality and labour productivity. Higher wages strengthen incentives for labour saving strategies through process innovation, leading to raising productivity levels.

In the European context collective bargaining coverage is typically studied at aggregated levels of analyses, as part of the national industrial relations systems, and not at an individual level. Little is known how workers appreciate being covered by a collective agreement. High correlations may be expected between actual coverage and positive attitudes towards coverage, but this topic needs more study, particularly across the European countries.

The many dimensions and levels of collective bargaining create serious difficulties with regard to collecting accurate statistics on bargaining coverage (OECD, 1994). Measuring collective bargaining coverage is difficult, because some employees may

how their working conditions regulated by more than one collective agreement, which makes it important to avoid double counting. Some countries compile statistics on the basis of questionnaires completed by the bargaining units. One statistical problem this creates arises from collective agreements without a specified termination date, because the bargaining units might report on them only in their first year of validity. Extension mechanisms can also complicate data collection, since the bargaining units may be poorly informed about the number of employees and/or employers to whom their respective agreement is extended. Furthermore, bargaining domains may cut across conventional branch classification systems, thus making analysis of coverage by sectors difficult.

Some countries rely on household or labour force surveys, which include a question as to whether the respondent's job is covered by a collective agreement. The advantage of such surveys is that they avoid the problem of double counting as a result of workers being covered by more than one agreement. On the other hand, a statistical difficulty may arise from multiple jobholders. There is also uncertainty about whether non-union members know how their working conditions are regulated. Other countries use employer surveys. These could be more accurate; as employers are likely to know of any agreement they have entered into (including those extended to them) and are likely to have a reliable count of employees at the enterprise.

Apart from these difficulties, any calculation of national coverage rates needs to take account of the fact that, in a number of countries, some employees are excluded from the right to conclude collective agreements. Hence, it is important to differentiate between the *unadjusted* coverage rate, defined as employees covered by a collective agreement as a proportion of all employees, and the *adjusted* coverage rate, defined as the ratio of employees actually covered to the potential number who could in principle be covered as determined by the formal provision of bargaining rights. The adjusted rate is a better measure of the diffusion of collective bargaining within its potential domain and because it shows the relative importance of collective bargaining compared with individual contracts as an alternative mode of employment governance. Of course, identifying the potential domain of collective bargaining implies the difficult task of disentangling the groups of employees with bargaining rights from those without. Detailed sources and methods used in compiling coverage statistics and in calculating coverage rates are outlined in Annex 5.A.

Regardless its importance for wage setting and working conditions, the coverage of collective agreements is seldom asked in individual surveys, as the responses in the

inventory indicated. The German partner had a survey with a similar question as proposed for the *WageIndicator* questionnaire. Other partners did not report about similar questions in surveys, known to them. A review of European surveys also revealed little attention to this issue. For example the 1996 European Foundation's Working Conditions Survey does not ask such a question (Paoli, 1997). The European Community Household Panel (codebook Wave 8, 2001) does not ask about collective bargaining coverage. The survey 'Paid Work in Britain' (codebook January 1997) does also not ask for collective bargaining coverage. The *WageIndicator* questionnaire however does ask respondents whether they are covered by a collective agreement. The questions are discussed in the following sections.

Major determinants of collective bargaining coverage are related to industry and to firm size, as well as to employees' work place representation. Some industries, particularly in manufacturing, are better covered than other industries. Large firms are expected to show higher coverage rates than small firms. And finally, employees working at workplaces with an employee representation, be it a works council, a trade union representative, or similar, are expected to have higher coverage rates than employees in workplaces without representation. Questions measuring industry, firm size and employees' work place representation are present in the *WageIndicator* questionnaire.

4. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING QUESTIONS

4.1 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING COVERAGE

Collective bargaining systems vary greatly across countries. Therefore, the questions about bargaining coverage are different across countries, as the first column in the table below shows. The answers are Yes/No/I don't know/Not applicable, unless otherwise indicated. Some countries also have one or two follow-up questions. The question about collective bargaining coverage is not posed to respondents who never had a job, who are self-employed, own-account worker, freelance, or who are a family worker / working for family business.

IN COUNTRY	Q nr	Var lab	QUESTION
IN BE	B12	caofirm1	Is in your organisation a collective agreement about wages?
IN DE, IT, NL	B13	caofirm2	Is your organisation covered by a collective agreement? A: Yes/ Only by a national collective agreement/ Also by a company level agreement/No/ I don't know/Not applicable
IN DK	B14	caofirm3	Has your organisation entered into a collective agreement with a trade union?
IN ES	B15	caofirm4	Is your organisation covered by a specific collective agreement or statute of regulation?
IN PL, GB	B16	caofirm5	Are your pay and conditions affected by negotiations between your employer and a trade union?
IN FI	B17	caofir11	Is your organisation or are you personally covered by a collective agreement?
FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS			
IN FI	B18	caofirm6	Is this agreement sectoral and/or made for your vocational or professional group? A: Yes, sectoral/ Yes, for the vocational or professional group/ Both, sectoral and for the vocational or professional group/ Neither/ I don't know / Not applicable
IN DK, FI	B19	caofirm7	Are you yourself covered by a collective agreement?
IN DE	B20	caofirm8	Is this collective agreement ... a sectoral agreement?/ an agreement at company level?/ I don't know
IN PL	B21	caofirm9	Are working conditions negotiated as well in this agreement?
IN FI	B22	caofir10	Is there also a local agreement for your workplace or company?

4.2 ONE'S OPINION ABOUT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING COVERAGE

As a consequence of the different regimes of wage setting, a question in Section E also varies across countries. This question is asking about one's opinion about collective bargaining coverage. The questions are shown in the table below.

E36		More about your wage
<i>1 yes, 0 no, 8 n.a.</i>		
IN BE	caoimp01	I think it is important that my wages are covered by a collective agreement
IN DE, DK, FI, IT, NL	caoimp02	I think it is important to be covered by a collective agreement
IN PL, GB	caoimp03	I think it is important that my pay and conditions are negotiated between me and a trade union
IN ES	caoimp04	I think it is important to be covered by a specific collective agreement or regulation

4.3 THE NAME OF THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

In the past year, the possibilities have been explored to ask for the name of the collective agreement the respondent is covered by. For some years, this question is asked in the Dutch *WageIndicator* survey. A so-called Collective Agreement chooser allows the respondents to identify their particular collective agreement, once ticked that they are covered by an agreement. This country-specific chooser has approximately 800 agreements. It is classified according to industry, allowing the respondents to choose their collective agreements easily in two steps.

B23	cao	Please select your collective agreement.
IN NL		chooser CAO

The Belgian partners indicated that they also wanted to have a question about the name of the collective agreement. They presented a list of approximately 200 agreements, available in French and Dutch. The question asks for the 'Paritair Comité' s/he belongs to. This is the important sectoral level in Belgium, on which many collective agreements are bargained. This so-called PARCOM chooser database is posted at www.WageIndicator.org, section research lab. Here, the agreements are also classified according to industry, allowing the respondents to choose their collective agreements easily in two steps.

B23	parcom	Please select your collective agreement.
IN BE		chooser PARCOM

For the remaining countries there is no question asking for the name of the collective agreement, because for several reasons they did not want to join this question. In some countries, collective agreements do not exist. In other countries there is no list of all agreements available or there are ten thousand or more agreements, which is impossible to measure.

5. MEASURING EMPLOYEES' WORKPLACE REPRESENTATION

5.1 THE WORKPLACE REPRESENTATION SYSTEMS

Countries vary with regard to their workplace representation system. Two models are most used, the works council or the trade union representative. Some countries have both. Therefore, one question addresses this variety in employees' workplace representation. The question is shown below. The first column indicates the countries where the items are asked.

B25	item_52	In your organisation ...
		<i>1 yes, 0 no, 8 n.a.</i>
IN BE, ES, PL, GB	firmrep1	... is there a trade union representative?
IN DK, FI	firmrep2	... is there a shop steward system?
IN IT	firmrep3	... is there a plant / unitary union structure?
IN BE, ES, NL	firmcou1	... is there a works council?
IN DE, GB	firmcou2	... is there a works / staff council?
IN DK, FI	firmcou3	... is there a co-operative committee?
IN BE	firminfl	... do the trade unions influence the way the organisation is managed?
IN IT, NL	firmequ1	... is there an equal opportunity committee?

5.2 THE COUNTRY-SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY

As countries vary largely with regard to their workplace representation system, the wording used in these questions had to be based on a country-specific terminology. The table below shows the translations of the English master questionnaire with regard to the issues of employees' workplace representation.

	English master questionnaire	national language
FI	co-operative committees	yhteistoimintaelin tai Euroopan yritysneuvostossa (EWC)
DK	works council	Samarbejdsudvalg
PO	-	-
UK	works council / staff council	Works council / staff council
DE	works council	Betriebsrat / Personalrat
nl_NL	works council	Ondernemingsraad
nl_BE	works council	Ondernemingsraad
fr_BE	works council	Conseil d'entreprise
ES	works council	Comité de empresa / delegados de personal
IT	a plant / unitary union structure	un'organizzazione sindacale a livello di unità produttiva
FI	shop steward / healthy and safety shop steward system	luottamusmies
DK	shop steward	Tillidsrepræsentant
PO	trade union	Związek zawodowy
UK	trade union representative	trade union representative
nl_NL	trade union delegation	vakbondskaderlid
nl_BE	trade union delegation	vakbondsafgevaardigde
fr_BE	trade union delegation	délégué syndical
ES	Union Representation/ union delegates	representación sindical

5.3 MEMBERSHIP

One question asks whether the respondent is a member of a trade union, a works council, a professional organisation or whether he/she is a trade union representative. The question is shown below.

F37	Are you currently ...	
	memtrad1	<input type="checkbox"/> ... a member of a trade union
IN BE, ES, IT, NL, PL, GB	memtrad2	<input type="checkbox"/> ... a trade union representative
IN DK, FI	memtrad3	<input type="checkbox"/> ... a shop steward
IN BE, ES, NL	memdele1	<input type="checkbox"/> ... a member of a works council
IN DE, GB	memdele2	<input type="checkbox"/> ... a member of a works council or staff council
IN DK, FI	memdele3	<input type="checkbox"/> ... a member of a co-operative committee
IN BE, DK, ES, FI, IT, NL, PL, GB	memstaff	<input type="checkbox"/> ... a member of a staff association
	memproff	<input type="checkbox"/> ... a member of a professional organisation

5.4 THE NAME OF THE TRADE UNION

Once ticked that one is a member of a trade union', in a number of countries a follow-up question is posed: 'Of which trade union are you a member?'. Here, the TRADE UNION chooser is used. Currently, this question is posed in four countries (FI, DE, UK, NL), for the remaining countries the question is switched off, because they did not want to join.

The TRADE UNION chooser allows for a choice of the national or regional trade unions or trade union confederations. If the list of trade unions is longer than 15 items, a hierarchical structure is proposed to allow the respondents to choose the applicable trade union. In some countries, a division of industries is used in the first step, in other countries the first step consist of the trade union confederations. The TRADE UNION chooser posted at www.WageIndicator.org, section research lab.

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APPENDIX 1 NATIONAL COMMENTS ON MEASURING

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING COVERAGE

BE

Specify more: In your organisation, is there a collective agreement about wages?
E.g. extra question: In your organisation, is there a collective agreement on working time?

D03 the number of hours is agreed by collective agreement (CAO)

A07: We should specify which type of collective agreement we are interested in. I guess the most important topic for the WIQ is wages, so we should ask 'Are you covered by a collective agreement on wages?'

A05: We should add a question, asking the respondent for the 'Paritair Comité' he belongs to. This is the important sectoral level in Belgium, on which many collective agreements are bargained. This could be in the questionnaire right after the question A04b about the 'business activity' A05c. (Voor België bijzonder relevant: lijst met *paritaire comités*, een 'chooser' kan worden gecreëerd, eventueel reeds geselecteerd via het antwoord op de vraag naar het statuut. Paritaire comités voor bedienden en arbeiders zijn immers nog steeds gescheiden in België, en zijn de plaats waar de meeste aspecten over loonvorming worden onderhandeld.)

GE

A07 Are you covered by a collective agreement. Here we would prefer to ask: 'Is your organisation covered by a collective agreement? (in German: Gilt in Ihrem Betrieb oder Ihrer Dienststelle [public sector!] ein Tarifvertrag?)'

If yes: people should be offered three more options

1.1. My organisation is covered by a sectoral collective agreement (in German: Branchentarifvertrag)

1.2. My organisation is covered by a collective agreement at company level (in German: Firmen- Haustarifvertrag)

1.3. Do not know

We consider this an important extension of the survey in so far as it would enable us to research on the extent of decentralisation of collective bargaining. In general we have observed that decentralised collective bargaining leads to lower overall bargaining coverages than centralised collective bargaining, this is why we consider the distinction between the levels to be important.

DK

Exclusive agreements are a topical issue in the Danish political debate at the moment and also interesting from a research point of view. From a Danish point of view it would therefore be interesting to include exclusive agreements in the questionnaire.

SP

In Spain, all collective agreements affect all workers in its scope/field (general coverage of all agreements, *eficacia general*), it does not matter whether the worker is union member or not, even if there is no union in the firm. And as there are many collective agreements in all levels (national, regional, local, by sector, etc.), we can say with no doubt that all workers, and all organizations, are covered by collective agreements. So we think that the only interesting question here is whether there is a collective agreement SPECIFIC of the company.

Encuesta de Calidad de Vida en el Trabajo: Could you tell me if in your firm there is a specific collective agreement or statute of regulation? Y/N/NA

PO

Collective agreement are not popular, sometimes employee doesn't know if hi/she or his/hers organization is covered by collective agreement. It could be better to ask about trade union (similar to question B07d from questionnaire).

UK

This question is likely to produce a lot of don't knows. It might be better to rephrase more in line with the question asked in the UK Labour Force Survey ie: 'Are your pay and conditions affected by negotiations between your employers and a trade union?'

FI

No comments at this level

APPENDIX 2 NATIONAL COMMENTS ON MEASURING

EMPLOYEES' WORKPLACE REPRESENTATION

UK

Staff councils would include non-statutory representation that has been set up by the employer

GE

Betriebsrat ~ works council (employee representation applying to the private sector)
 Personalrat ~ staff council (employee representation applying to the the public sector)

DK

The shop steward (tillidsrepræsentant=a particular person representing a group of workers in relation to the employer) is a representative chosen by the workers in a workplace. It is often required that the steward has worked for some time before he/she may be elected. For example the period laid down by the collective agreements in industry is nine months in the past two years at the workplace before a candidate is eligible. If workers from different trades are employed, they normally chose individual stewards. In such cases, a joint shop steward will be elected to represent all workers. The shop steward represents the workers in relation to the employer and is a compulsory member of the works council of the workplace, if it exists.

The works council (The Danish terminology for this is "Samarbejdsudvalg".) consists of an equal number of representatives of employer and employees. The number of members depends on the number of employees. For example, the present rules decide that industrial companies with more than 50 employees must set up a works council if the employer or employees wish so. Shop stewards are compulsory members of the council and if there are more stewards than places, an election is held among the shop stewards. Per definition, the works council does not deal with matters that relate to the collective agreements. It is only an informative and guiding body, but in practice this is not always adhered to.

PO

Komisja zakładowa związków zawodowych – Trade Union Council or simply Związek zawodowy - trade union

The main part of a trade union is the company trade union organization, members of which are the employees in the workplace (company). The purpose of the Council is to protect employees' rights. It works for improving the conditions of employment, social entitlements and work. It has right to give opinion on the executive's decisions.

SP

In Spain, there are two different systems of employee representation (they are related, but different):

- (1) Works council: it is compulsory in medium and big firms, and it is elected by all workers every four years. It is the main representation body in the firm for workers.
- (2) Union Representation/union delegates: it is protected by law, when there are workers of a union in a firm, they can constitute a union Representation body. They are entitled to receive information, money, etc. So they are also a representation body in the firm for workers, but with the difference that this body does not represent all workers, but just the workers of the union.

The unions are like the parties in democracy: they make lists of candidates for union elections, and the elected candidates are in the Works Council. But not all Works Council Members are union members, as there are also independent representatives (depending on sectors, more or less, but in general, most of them are union members).

So it would be interesting to add a question about trade union presence in the firm (existence of union representatives or delegates).

FI

Here are two parallel workplace representation systems: (1) shop steward and healthy and safety shop steward system, (2) co-operative committees. The "works council" is not used in the national level.

The shop steward system takes care of controlling national agreements at workplace level and negotiating local level agreements.

The co-operative bodies are statutory only in workplaces which have more than 30 employees. They are quite formal and most important when dealing with redundancies.

Most employees work in workplaces where there are less than 50 employees and the representative system is quite weak or does not exist at all.

BE

It is important is to split up B07d: (1) is a works council (2) is a trade union delegation

Another interesting question in a cross-country research on collective bargaining would be the question on the impact of the collective bargaining on the company strategy, e.g. as part of B08: "The trade unions have an important impact on the strategy of my company."