Background information on institutional surveys.


1.1 The BERD’98
BERD provides an overview of the workplace industrial/employee relations in Belgian in 1998. This survey has not been carried out for other periods. Other extensive surveys date back to the late 1960s.

1.2 Variables covered
BERD’98 focuses on the employer and trade union characteristics at the workplace level. The content is similar to the British Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS). It contains a wide range of personnel management and industrial relations variables ranging from the structure of employee representation, personnel management methods, pay systems and work practices. However, in contrast to WERS, BERD is restricted to workplaces in which social elections are organised. Therefore, BERD can be seen as a small scale WERS related to a single period.

1.3 Sample size
The survey is based on 180 establishments spread across all sectors in which social election are organised. Establishments with less than 50 employees and the public sector are not included in the sample.

1.4 Data accessibility
Access to the database is relatively complex. Nevertheless, DULBEA has an agreement to use it.

1.5 Use in the PIEP project
It would not be possible to link the data with ESES micro-data directly. Sample sizes are very different. However, like for WERS, we can use it to gain a more accurate characterisation of industrial relations and HR practices in particular sectors (e.g. industry, commercial services, non-profit). The main drawback is that we do not have a panel but only a snapshot overview.

François Rycx. 21.3.2000.
2. Germany: IAB-Panel

The research institute of the Federal Labor Office started its panel in 1993 as an annual survey of about 4,000 firms with at least one employee in West Germany. In 1996, interviews with about 4,500 firms were conducted in East Germany. Due to the inclusion of newly founded firms, the total number of interviews conducted in 1998 was more than 9,000. At the moment there are seven waves of data available for West Germany and four waves for East Germany. The response rate in the first waves was surprisingly high with more than 70% of the firms answering.

In every wave, a number of questions are identical, while others are answered from time to time only. In the past, the following topics have been dealt with:

- the structure of employment (part-time work; fixed term contracts) and changes in the level of employment,
- hirings, dismissals, voluntary quits and other forms of personnel turnover,
- strategic decision making, planning and investments in equipment,
- initial and further training,
- wages and salaries; fringe benefits,
- working hours,
- public funding (wage subsidies; investment subsidies),
- contacts to and experience with the public placement services,
- works councils, collective agreements and trade unions,
- organizational change,
- product and process innovations,
- current and expected future performance of the enterprise.

Direct access to the data is restricted; only employees of the Federal Labor Office’s research team are allowed to work with it. Since the beginning of 2000, however, it is possible to approach a so called "clearing office". Scientists working in labor and/or personnel economics have been invited to present their research questions and data requirements. If the latter are in line with the rather restrictive German laws concerning data protection, it is possible to get aggregated findings from the respective surveys, i.e. wage levels for different qualification groups by firm size or industry. The industry classification is rather detailed and can easily be matched to the industry classification of the wage statistics we are going to work with. The questionnaires as well as a detailed codebook are available upon request.

Recently, I have published two papers on "the economics of fringe benefits", jointly written with the director of the research team that is in charge of the panel. Currently, we are in the process of writing another paper on the influence of organizational change on firm performance. This means that I am, first of all, familiar with that data and, second, that I have rather close working relationships with the Institute.
3. Ireland

3.1 The EPOC Survey 1996: Survey into the role of direct participation in organisational change

a) **Outline**
This survey of workplaces was commissioned by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and was carried out in ten countries (DK, France, Germany, IRL, Italy, NL, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK). Within the workplaces and the postal questionnaire was completed by the general manager or personnel manager. The focus of the survey was the workplace’s largest occupational group. The size threshold was 25 employees in the case of smaller countries and 50 in the case of larger countries.

b) **Sample Details (Ireland)**
- Gross Sample 1000
- Completed Questionnaires 382 (this was the highest response rate of the 10 countries, the overall response rate was only 17.8%)

c) **Topics Covered**
- competitive environment
- characteristics and activity of workplace
- characteristics of main group of employees
- change in work organisation (contract types, management structures, new technology etc.)
- Payment systems (inc. bonus systems, profit sharing schemes)
- Consultation processes (participation of workers in decision making)
- Training


4.1 **Outline: survey of employee relations and human resource practices.**
Postal survey covering all areas of the private sector, excluding construction industry, and commercial (semi-state) public companies. Restricted to enterprises more than 20 employees (but split into workplaces, so smaller workplaces can be included).

a) **Sample:**
450 workplaces in IR-HRM survey
273 in the Productions/Operations Management Survey
Response rate 36%.
b) **Topics Covered**
- Workplace profile
- Competitive environment/ methods of competing
- Payment practices & recent pay settlements (in relation to national agreements)
- Employee representation and involvement
- Recruitment & selection processes
- Training and promotion
- Work practices (teamwork, discretion, functional flexibility)
- Staffing practices
- Trade unions
- Management of workplace change (in working time, payment systems, products, employee numbers etc.)
- Management organisation

5. Spain. Registers of collective agreements (Ministero de Trabajo y Seguridad Social).

5.1 The source.
Registers of all collective agreements on an annual basis. Information available for 1990-99.

5.2 Variables covered

a) **General information for all collective agreements.**
- Number of collective agreements (national level, sectoral level, firm level)
- Length
- Number of workers covered
- Agreed wage increases
- Agreed working hours

This information is also available for sectors and regions.

b) **Information on special clauses (included in some collective agreements only)**
- Employment
- Overtime
- Retirement
- Protective clauses
- Social provisions
- Training
- Incentive schemes, bonuses, etc.
- Collective agreements minimum wage
- Occupational hazard
- New technologies
6. Italy: Labour institutions and personnel policies: Data availability for Italy

The research aims at investigating the relationship between pay inequalities and economic performance (productivity and employment) in EU countries under different institutional settings: industrial relations practices, personnel policies, market competition, level of bargaining and other labour institutions. Data requirements to address those issues is quite demanding, since information on earnings has to be complemented by information on other aspects of the functioning of the firm as well as employment relations. The key data-set for our research is the 1995 ESES, which contains data on wages, individual characteristics of employees, workplace attributes as well as information concerning union coverage and labour contracts. However, in ESES indicators of economic performance are not present.

A possible route, as mentioned before, is to be complement ESES data with other survey data on output, employment, productivity and industrial relations practices. The matching process - ESES is mainly sampled at the plant level - can be conducted at different levels of disaggregation: (i) establishment, (ii) industry/sector, (iii) geographical. Moreover, in order to explain the evolution of structural factors in the economy as well as dealing with some methodological problems, it is necessary to match data from different time periods. In this context the availability of ESES data from the 1978 survey is very important. As far as Italy is concerned, different data sets (at different level of aggregation) originating both from Official (Eurostat or Istat, Italian National Institute of Statistics) and Unofficial sources are available. Hereafter we list them.

**DATA AVAILABILITY FOR ITALY**

6.1 OFFICIAL (Eurostat-Istat):

*Aggregate data at industry / sector level:*

- NEW CRONOS database (theme 3: Population & Social Conditions):
  - Labour force, employment/unemployment, industrial disputes and social protection;
- SBS (Structural Business Statistics):
  - Survey on Industrial sectors;

*Disaggregate data at plant level:*

- ESES (1995 and 1978)
  - data on earnings, employment, hours, pay composition, collective contract, union coverage and individual characteristics of employees;
- Indagine sul Valore Aggiunto (Annual Survey on Value Added)
  - carried out by Istat. Information drawn from balance sheet (output, value added, profits) sampled at the plant level (in industries covered by Istat).

6.2 UNOFFICIAL SOURCES

THEMES:
(i) decentralised bargaining;
(ii) workplace industrial relations.

- **FEDERMECCANICA Survey (FEDS):** carried out yearly by Federmeccanica (Association of firms operating in the metal-mechanic industry). The survey provides detailed information on employment, union activity, bargaining practices, wages, type of contracts, workplace information (labour turnover, days lost by reason, etc…), investment in new capital and innovation activity.

- **CESOS Survey on Industrial Relations:** carried out by CESOS (*Centro di Studi Sociali e Sindacali*). The survey provides detailed information on union coverage, collective bargaining and other industrial relations practices (sampled at firm level).

### 6.3 FEDERMECCANICA SURVEY (FEDS)


**Variables covered**
The main focus of FEDS is plant/establishment characteristics. It covers a wide range of personnel management and industrial relations variables ranging from the structure of employee representation, personnel management methods, pay systems and work practices.

Principal topics of our interest are:
- variable for the analysis of decentralised bargaining:
  - union coverage
  - existence of collective pay agreement
  - issues object of pay agreement (hours of work, flexibility)
- variables related to workplace IR:
  - occupation for type of contract
  - labour turnover
  - hours worked, holidays, days lost (by reasons)
  - training activities
  - type of innovation introduced
- variables for economic performance:
  - number of total employees and its growth
  - total revenue/sales
  - investments

**a) Sample size.**
In 1990/1995, the sample consisted of a little over 3000 establishments with one or more employees of the metalmechanic sector. Coverage is approximately 80,000 employees of the industry.

**b) Data accessibility**
We have access to micro-data for 1990 and 1995 (other years may be obtained).
c) **Use in the PIEP project**

It would not be possible to link micro-data with ESES micro-data directly. Establishment codes cannot be matched. The metal-mechanical industry, however, is the most important sector in Manufacturing (in term of size), and it is one of the leading sectors as far as industrial relations practices are concerned.

### 6.4 VALUE ADDED SURVEY:

Survey on Value Added carried out yearly by Istat

**Variables for Economic Performance.**

a) (i)

(ii)

b) **Use in the PIEP project**

(ref. National Statistical Institute)
7. Norway
Pay inequalities and economic performance: Additional data sets

7.1 Matched employer-employee register data on all Norwegian manufacturing firms 1986-1994

The database is constructed based on different administrative register files from Statistics Norway. Our database contains yearly information for all employed individuals over the age of 16 and all plants in Norway from 1986 to 1994.

7.2 Variables covered

In these administrative registers, individuals are characterised by their personal identity code and plants with an identification code. This enables us to match persons to plants and to combine information on education, age, tenure etc. with employer characteristics at the individual level. In the second quarter each year every worker is matched to the individual’s main employer. The start date of this match is provided by the main employer, as is the stop date it finishes within the year.

For each worker, the following information is available for the period 1986 to 1994: working hours per week, union membership, whether the worker holds multiple jobs, annual income, education, and basic demographic background variables. Education level is based on the normal duration of the education and includes only completed programs of education (and highest attained) education. All courses of formal education exceeding 300 hours are registered. The employers are defined at the plant level by an identification code dependent on geographical location, independent of ownership conditions. A number of plant-specific variables are available to our study: plant and firm size, value of production, insurance value of capital, value added, and investment.

7.3 Sample size.

The database covers all employed individuals over the age of 16 and all plants in Norway.

7.4 Data accessibility

The database is developed by Prof Salvanes, and we have direct access to the data.

7.5 Use in the PIEP project

The database provides an unique opportunity analyse the link between pay inequalities and economic performance, taking into account the individual, the firm and the industry levels.
The main strengths of this data material are:
* time series
* matched employer – employee data
* coverage (all manufacturing firms)

7.6 General

We are currently negotiating with Statistics Norway on the possibility of matching the ESES micro-data with this database. This could open up for some extremely interesting analyses. Still, even if we are not allowed to this matching, our opinion is that our database can supplement the analysis of ESES data significantly.

The “start-up” costs of using the database are marginal: the data are already on our server. Moreover, Prof Salvanes has already done some work on the data, so most start-up problems are already solved.

Lars Johansen 22.3.2000

8. UK: Workplace employment relations survey (WERS/WIRS)

8.1 The workplace employee relations survey (WERS/WIRS)
The 1998 WERS is the latest and most complex in the series of workplace industrial/employee relations surveys carried out in 1980, 1984, and 1990. There is also a WERS panel data set of firms from 1990-1998.

8.2 Variables covered
The main focus of the WERS is on employer characteristics, although in the most recent 1998 one, it also includes data on samples of employees in the sampled firms. It covers a wide range of personnel management and industrial relations variables ranging from the structure of employee representation, personnel management methods, pay systems and work practices.

Principal topics in 1998 were:
- Management of the personnel function
- Recruitment and training
- Consultation and communication
- Employee representation
- Payment systems and pay determination
- Grievance, disciplinary and disputes procedures
- Equal opportunities
• Flexibility
• Workplace performance
• Employee attitudes to work

8.3 Sample size.
In 1998, the sample of consisted of a little over 2000 establishments with more than 25 employees spread across all sectors of the economy, private and public. Around 30,000 employees are also covered.

8.4 Data accessibility
Access to a rich supply of tabulated data from the 1998 survey is available on the web at (http://www.niesr.ac.uk/niesr/wers98/) as is a full documents.

Access to the micro-data is more complex, but open to bona fide researchers. The CEP has an agreement to use it, and has experience of using all the previous WIRS data sets.

8.5 Use in the PIEP project
It would not be possible to link micro-data with ESES micro-data directly. The sample sizes are very different. However, there are a number of possibilities, such as:
• we can use it gain a more accurate characterisation of industrial relations and HR practices in moderately detailed sectors. Better than much used ‘corporatism’ index;
• we can test subsidiary hypotheses used in interpreting the larger ESES data set. This may be very important given the rather crude measures of institutional characteristics in the ESES;
• we may be able to run direct comparisons with similar data sets elsewhere, eg. REPONSE on key hypotheses.
• we can learn from how the web access has been set up.

8.6 General
Colleagues using the WERS 1998 tell me the data set is more complex than the previous ones and there is clearly a big investment to be made in learning how to use it. It would be unrealistic for all of us to gain expertise in each others’ national data sets. Thus, existing CEP expertise would be a good example of how each national team can help the others as we build up our comparative analysis across the sub-themes within the overall project. Those with expertise in REPONSE or the IAB panel would similarly help the common effort.