

Measuring changes in work Workshop of the quantitative pillar of the WORKS project Meeting Friday morning February 24th

Based on the two-day workshop, Monique Ramioul provides a round-up of the state of affairs.

The theoretical pillar has to develop the research questions and the links between the variables.

The quantitative pillar should support the qualitative research. It consists of two streams:

- workpackage 8 = stream on organisation surveys;
- workpackage 9 = stream on individual surveys.

Stream 1: Organisation surveys

The original idea for this stream was to develop some common questions on specific issues; to put databases together and to develop a common approach for their analysis in a Winter School. During this work a contribution should also be made to networking.

Considering the limited amount of resources available as well as the difficulties in comparing data from organisations surveys in Europe, it may be more useful to put more emphasis on networking.

To this end, it is useful to start by looking at what has already been done in publications regarding the analysis of organisation survey data that are relevant for WORKS. An inventory should be made of the publications based on the major organisation surveys in Europe and categorise these according to the five major WORKS topics. This inventory is the basis for a further literature study.

The Winter School would then rather be a conference where the results of existing data analysis on organisation surveys are presented. At this conference, institutions could be invited that join to a new trend and are considering setting up such a survey at the European level such as European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (Bilbao), the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Dublin), Eurostat (Luxembourg) or OECD (Paris).

Comments

CEE: Proposes to focus the theme of the 'Winter School' on linked employer-employee surveys. There are currently no such linked surveys at the European level. The Winter School could show the results of such linked surveys and their usefulness.

ANALYTICA: It may be a suggestion to have a number of recommendations on setting up an organisation survey, e.g. for countries who do not have them currently. In this a way a handbook on organisation surveys could be a result of the conference.

CEE: Remarks that a handbook is not quite realistic as the output of a single conference. What might be possible is setting up a group to do such a study or to provide a list of important recommendations, but a handbook is too much for a conference as such.

CEE: In view of the collaboration for the qualitative pillar it would be useful to look for studies that link employer-employee surveys with case studies. It may also be worthwhile to include the Cana-

dian WES-survey (Workplace and Employee Survey) in the literature overview and the Winter School as this is a good elaborate linked employer-employee survey (see URL: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/survey/business/workplace/workplace.htm>).

KULEUVEN: *To link the qualitative and quantitative pillars as well as in preparation of the Winter School one should also take into account the forthcoming CAFE conference in Nürnberg. This is the 'Conference on the Analysis of Firms and Employees' (CAFE): Quantitative and qualitative approaches, September 29-30, 2006 in Nürnberg, Germany. For more information see URL: <http://iab.de/cafe2006.htm>.*

CEE: *Stresses that matched employer-employee data may be particularly interesting for policy makers as it enables to map the influence of decisions on employees themselves.*

ANALYTICA: *Recalls that organisations should however not be seen individually. Often organisations have only limited power of decision as they are part of larger conglomerates. So next to a link between employer and employees attention should also be given to the link of organisations to other organisations. Organisations are not only customers of other organisations but also suppliers to other organisations. However, it remains hard to get data on the value chain instead of individual organisations.*

Stream 2: Employee surveys

In contrast to stream 1 'organisation surveys', here data analysis is possible at an European level. There are three basic data sources:

- ESWC: European Survey on Working Conditions;
- ELFS: European Labour Force Survey;
- ECHP: European Community Household Panel (since 2003 substituted by EU-SILC).

In addition information on the European level is available from the Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance (ESWT: European Foundation).

In order to be able to perform analysis on these data sources, two preliminary tasks must be done.

- a selection of sectors and occupations;
- a list of clear questions in order to do useful work.

Comments

1. Longitudinal analysis

ANALYTICA: *Suggests to perform longitudinal analyses on the ELFS. This analysis could look for sectoral shifts of occupations. E.g. if one could pinpoint a major shift of accountants from industry A to service B, this may be a sign of outsourcing of this business function.*

CEE: *Remarks that it is very difficult to identify such a shift as it is hard to distinguish between new activities on the one hand and activities coming from others through outsourcing.*

ANALYTICA: *Agrees to this point. However, it should be worth a try as it has not been done before. To arrive at useful results, 4-digit information is preferable. Some countries have only 2-digit level information available, so this will be difficult. In addition, much of the coding is bad. Nevertheless, at aggregated levels it is possible to identify shifts. The ECWS may also be used for such analysis but the information on sectors and occupations is limited to the 2-digit level.*

KULEUVEN: *Remarks that the specification of occupations and sectors will be provided by the theoretical pillar at the end of February. However, while sectoral shifts of occupations might be investigated, a problem remains with relocation of activities to other countries.*

ANALYTICA: *Points out that direct information for such relocation will indeed be unavailable. However circumstantial evidence may well be found. E.g. if a massive rise of some occupations*

in Eastern European countries is occurring together with a substantial decrease of these occupations in some Western European country, this may be a sign of 'offshore outsourcing'.

CEE: Remarks that before analysis is undertaken, an inventory must first be made of what has already been done on these topics with the above mentioned data sources, in order to see what is possible.

2. Background information

FORBA: Draws attention to the fact that the analysis must not merely longitudinal, but that the quantitative pillar should also deliver background information to identify main differences in working conditions between countries, between sectors, etc.

ANALITICA: To provide such information it may be useful to look at the POLIMOD project where data are available to compare wages across European countries taking into account different social security regimes and tax regimes. POLIMOD is a model developed by the Microsimulation Unit at Cambridge: <http://www.econ.cam.ac.uk/dae/mu/microsim.htm>.

KULEUVEN: Refers in this respect to the wage indicator which has already been launched in ten European countries: <http://www.wageindicator.org/main>.

Finally

- In the next weeks the task of WP4 will be to look for publications using data from the major organisation surveys in European countries and distribute these publications according to the five main WORKS issues.
- The core WP4 members propose to meet on April 24-25th to prepare for the deliverable (D4.2).
- The next board meeting is in London on March 23rd-24th.
- It may be useful for partners to know that on July 6th the WERS survey has a launching event for the WERS 2004 sourcebook 'Inside the workplace'.
- All the slides of the presentations on the WORKS workshop are available on the secure part of the website. More precisely at URL: http://www.worksproject.be/Quant_analysis.htm.