



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Amsterdam Institute for Advanced labour Studies



# Data Base on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts, 1960-2014 (ICTWSS)

Version 5.0

Jelle Visser

*AIAS works!*

*Rebalancing labour between market and regulation*

Code  
book

October 2015

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## Content and organization of the database

The ICTWSS database covers four key elements of modern political economies: trade unionism, wage setting, state intervention and social pacts, contains annual data on 51 countries: all current OECD and EU member states: Australia; Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Canada; Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Germany; Greece; Finland; France; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Israel, Italy; Japan; The Republic of Korea, Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Mexico; the Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Spain; Slovakia; Slovenia; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; the United Kingdom; and the United States of America – with some additional data for emerging economies Argentina, Brazil; China; India; Indonesia; Russia; and South Africa, and for Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore; and it runs from 1960 till 2014.

There are 194 variables, organized in different groups: Rights (6); Wage Setting (14); Social Pacts and Agreements (29), Works Councils and employee representation in the enterprise (5); Union Authority (12); Employer organization (2); Number and membership of unions and confederations (23); Union density and bargaining coverage (18); union concentration and centralisation (15); and membership composition and union density by categories (70)

The biggest changes between version 5.0 of the database and the previous version 4.0, released in April 2013, are in the sections on wage setting and bargaining coverage. This version of the database has new estimates on collective bargaining coverage rates in the private and public sector, adjusted for those employees whose conditions are set by government mandate, as well as on the division between enterprise and sector bargaining, and the extra-contractual coverage of workers through agreements that are extended to non-organized employers. In addition to the ‘dominant level of bargaining’, defined as the level at which most (two-thirds or more, in terms of coverage) agreements apply, a new set of variables tries to capture the actual level of bargaining over wages and working hours through a new set of variables: the frequency or scope of additional of enterprise bargaining in the market sector within the framework of sectoral or cross-sectoral agreements; the articulation of multi-level bargaining; the legal or contractual basis for derogation: general opening clauses in sectoral agreements, and crisis-related hardship clauses in agreements of any type. Combining this information a new variable on the actual degree of centralisation of wage bargaining has been created.

## Development and acknowledgements

The development of the ICTWSS database, from version 1 (released in 2007) to the present version, has taken place in steps, beginning with the sections on social pacts and union organization, membership and authority. The section on social pacts was developed in the framework of the NEWGOV project, financed under the EU FP7 research framework, on “Distributive Politics, Learning and Reform: National Social Pacts”, directed by Sabina Avdagic, Martin Rhodes and me (Avdagic et al 2011). Our database contains information on the negotiation and signing of pacts, the actor combinations involved, whether these are wage pacts or pacts dealing with other issues, whether they are broad or single-issue pacts. In addition the database contains entries on the existence of bipartite agreements between unions and employers, distinguishing between wage and non-wage agreements, and between autonomous agreements and agreements sponsored by the state or depending on legislation. Also covered is the existence of bipartite and tripartite councils or bodies for social economic policy making, advice and forecasting. All data are newly collected based on data from the project and from various national sources and comparative studies, among which Pochet and Fajertag (2000)

and Pochet, Keune and Natali (2010), the biennial Industrial Relations in Europe reports of the European Commission, publications of the European Social and Economic Committee and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, and its online European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO), now renamed EUROWORK. See, for instance, Tóth and Neumann (2004) and the EIRO country profiles. For countries outside Europe various national studies have been consulted as well as the comparative study of Fraile and Baccaro 2010.

The part on wage setting is focusing on features such as bargaining coverage, division between enterprise and sectoral bargaining; level and type (or mode) of coordination, predominant level of bargaining, the frequency or scope of additional enterprise bargaining within sectoral or cross-sectoral agreements, articulation of multi-level bargaining, legal or contractual basis for derogation; the use of opening clauses in agreements, the average length of agreements, the intensity of government intervention, types and grades of administrative extension of agreements, minimum wage setting, employer organization and union centralisation. The data is from various national and comparative sources, including Hartog and Theeuwes (1993); Traxler (1994) and Traxler et al 2001; OECD (1997,2004); European Industrial Relations Online (EIRO, various years); the Global Wage Surveys of the ILO. See for measurement and methods also Lawrence and Ishikawa (2005). For coverage data use has been made from surveys for the US, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, Germany, Finland, Estonia, Hungary, Israel and South Africa, as well as historical estimates from Ochel (2001); and Visser (2010) for Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, and South Africa. The updates and developments in adjusted collective bargaining coverage from 2009 to 2013 are from a joint project (IRData) with the ILO involving some 70 countries (see: Visser, Hayter and Gammarano 2015).

The variables and data on coordination, articulation, opening clauses, and extension have been added, or revised, in this version. They are discussed in a “Wage Bargaining Institutions---From Crisis to Crisis” (Visser 2013), published online by the European Commission, DG Economic and Financial Affairs, in European Economy. Economic Papers, April 2013. On levels of bargaining, articulation and opening clauses, see also Arrowsmith and Marginson (2009), Broughton (2010), Schulten (2005), Schulten and Stueckler (2000), Cultarelli et al (2012), and Marginson and Wetz 2014, as well as the recent paper on “What Happened to Collective Bargaining during the Great Recent”, in IZA Journal of Labor Policy (Visser 2015).

The data on administrative extension have been revised and updated as part of a research project at the ILO, coordinated with Susan Hayter. Previous sources included Traxler and Behrens (2002) and overviews available in the EIRO database.

Kenworthy (2001) is the key source for the coordination of wage setting scores, with my own data for Central and Eastern Europe and recent years added (see my chapters in EC, 2004; 2009; 2011. There are a few subtle differences in the wage coordination scale used here and the one used by Kenworthy (see codebook) and for some years and countries my scores and his differ. Since the Kenworthy scale allows ranking from high to low, I have preferred his approach to the coding in Traxler, Blaschke and Kittel (2001). However, their emphasis on the governability and enforcement of agreements is picked up in the data on union centralisation (or governance) and in a separate variable on the type or mechanism of wage bargaining coordination.

The five-point scale measuring government intervention was developed by Hassel (2006) though I have thought it necessary to make two important changes, one to allow a distinction between (a) non-intervention but supporting and facilitating broad sectoral unions and agreements (the case of, for instance, Germany); and (b) non-intervention while creating or upholding a legal framework that favours fragmented and company

unionism and bargaining (the case of, for instance, the UK). The other change is that the scale used here distinguishes between (a) interventions that impose by law a stop on free bargaining or a ceiling on its outcomes and (b) interventions by means of a social pact negotiated with the unions and employers for some quid pro quo. The data are from Hassel (2006), Golden and Lange (1996), Golden, Lange, and Wallerstein (2006), at <http://www.shelley.polisci.ucla.edu/> (version dated June 16, 2006), and my own updates for Central and Eastern Europe, New Zealand, South Africa, some East Asian and Latin American countries. I have reduced the 15-points Golden-Lange-Wallerstein (2006) scale to my five-point scale based on a revision of Hassel, 2005 (see codebook, below). Addison (1981) and Armingeon (1982, 1994) provide additional data, covering earlier years, on state intervention and incomes policies.

Another key aspect of government intervention relates to minimum wage setting. Based on a study of the institutional aspects of minimum wage setting (does a mandatory exist in all or some parts of the economy; how do governments reach decisions; is there an index; what role do social partners play, etc.) I have made a distinction between whether or not a mandatory minimum wage exists for some or all of the economy; and how decisions regarding the minimum wage are actually made, with or without the involvement of unions and employers. The data are from the OECD, EIRO reports, Funk and Lesch (2005), the European Commission (Industrial Relations in Europe reports), the ILO Global Wage Reports, and various national sources

The index for union centralisation follows the methodology proposed by Iversen (1999) and combines data on the concentration or fragmentation of trade unions with information on the division of authority in the union movement between confederations (or peak associations), affiliated unions, and local or workplace branches (Visser, 1990; Windmuller, 1975). The data are new and presented here for the first time (see below, and codebook). As the index on union centralisation is a composite variable, there are separate entries for union concentration, the intra- and inter-organizational degree of unity (or cohesiveness), and the degree of authority of confederations over their affiliates, and of affiliates over their (workplace or company) members.

On the organisation of unions and key bargaining units, indicated by the concentration or fragmentation of unions and confederations, and by the authority division between them, the main sources are Ebbinghaus and Visser (2000) for Western Europe; EIRO (2003) and the database of the Institut des Sciences du Travail of the Université Catholique du Louvain on les partenaires sociaux en Europe, developed for the European Commission (<http://www.trav.ucl.ac.be/recherche>), Carley, 2004 and 2009a, and various sources as well as EIRO country reports for Eastern Europe, and Golden, Lange and Wallerstein (2006) for non-European OECD countries: The data for the two five-point scales for confederal and union authority are mainly from Visser (1990) for Western Europe and the national (unpublished) reports for the DUES Handbook (Ebbinghaus and Visser, 2000) and from Golden, Lange and Wallerstein (2006) for non-European OECD Countries. The data for Central and Eastern Europe is from the UCL files, Kohl and Platzer (2004), and several national and comparative sources. I mention in particular the research of Gardawski, Myant, Kahancova, Neumann, and Stanojevic on Polish, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Slovenian unions.

Continuing from version 4 this edition of the database has updates on the degree of employer organization, and on the extent, coverage and nature of employee and union representation in enterprises, works councils or similar institutions. The data on employer organization is based on various sources, including Behrens and Traxler (2004), Kohl and Platzer (2004), Carley (2009b), Bohle and Greskovits. 2012; and national sources. The data on representation in enterprises is based on Rogers and Streeck (1995), the two-volume report of the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs (2008), and Hall and Purcell (2011), as well as national sources.

Also carried over from version 4.0 are the variables on rights of association, rights of collective bargaining and the right of strike, with separate entries for the private or market sector and the government sector, defined as the general government, including public administration, defence, compulsory social insurance, education, health and social work. The main sources are the ILO Natlex legal database, Armingeon (1994), Blanpain (2004), and Ebbinghaus and Visser (2000).

Finally, the part on trade union membership and union density comes from Ebbinghaus and Visser (2000) for Western European countries, Visser, 1991, 1992, 1993 and 2006 for extensions to non-European countries, combined with recent administrative data on union organization and membership from the Dublin Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Carley, 2004, 2009a) and from the European Social Survey (waves of 2002 and 2004) for countries in Eastern and Central Europe (for the sources and methods: R. Jowell and Central Coordinating Team (2003): European Social Survey 2002/2003. Technical Report. London: Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University, and <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>. All series have been updated till 2011 in this file. Sources and methodologies are described in Visser, 2006.

New in comparison with earlier versions of the database are the separate series on union density based on national (household or labour force sample) surveys, as reported in national sources, and a variable measuring the presence or recognition of trade unions in workplaces. Continued and updated from version 4.0 are the data on the composition of union membership and union density rates by gender, age groups, industry, public or private sector, skill level, blue- and white-collar, company size, and native or foreign (or migrant) status. The data are from national labour force or household surveys, or dedicated surveys reported in the literature (see, among others, the publications by Anders Kjellberg for Sweden and the Nordic countries more generally, and the publications by the FAOS research institute in Copenhagen, and of FAFO in Oslo). For earlier years, and breakdowns based on administrative data: Visser (1991) and Ebbinghaus and Visser (2000).

Finally, compared to the three earlier versions, many series have been (slightly) revised. In the case of union density rates this may result from changes in the estimated net membership, changes in the employment data, or both. In the latest version of the OECD Labour Force Statistics (accessed 17 October 2015) there are numerous changes compared to earlier versions. For most non-OECD members I have preferred the data provided by ILOSTAT, normally based on labour force sample or household surveys. Newer survey data for union membership has been used to calibrate the estimates for net union membership, including only wage and salary employees in employment.



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# ICTWSS CODEBOOK

## Rights (6)

### RA\_m: Right of Association, market sector

3 = yes

2 = yes, with minor restrictions (e.g. recognition procedures, workplace elections, thresholds)

1 = yes, with major restrictions (e.g. monopoly union, prior authorization, major groups excluded)

0 = no

### RA\_g: Right of Association, government sector

3 = yes

2 = yes, with minor restrictions (e.g., recognition procedures, thresholds, only military, judiciary or police excluded, as per ILO convention)

1 = yes, with major restrictions (e.g., monopoly union, government authorization, major groups excluded)

0 = no

### RCB\_m: Right of Collective bargaining, market sector

3 = yes

2 = yes, with minor restrictions (e.g. registration, thresholds)

1 = yes, with major restrictions (e.g. monopoly union, government authorization, limitations on content, major groups excluded)

0 = no

### RCB\_g: Right of Collective bargaining, government sector

3 = yes

2 = yes, with minor restrictions (e.g. registration, thresholds, only military, judiciary or police excluded – as per ILO convention)

1 = yes, with major restrictions (e.g. monopoly union, government authorization, limitations on content, major groups excluded)

0 = no

### RS\_m: Right to Strike, market sector

3 = yes

2 = yes, with minor restrictions (e.g. recognized union, balloting, proportionality, respect of peace obligation)

1 = yes, with major restrictions (e.g. monopoly union, compulsory arbitration or conciliation, restrictions on issues or content, major groups excluded)

0 = no

## RS\_g: Right to Strike, government sector

3 = yes

2 = yes, with minor restrictions (e.g. recognized union, balloting, proportionality, respect of peace obligation, only military, judiciary or police excluded – as per ILO convention)

1 = yes, with major restrictions (e.g. monopoly union, compulsory arbitration or conciliation, restrictions on issues or content, major groups excluded)

0 = no

## Wage setting (14)

### Coord: coordination of wage-setting

5 = maximum or minimum wage rates/increases based on

a) centralized bargaining by peak association(s), with or without government involvement, and/or government imposition of wage schedule/freeze, with peace obligation

b) informal centralisation of industry-level bargaining by a powerful and monopolistic union confederation

c) extensive, regularized pattern setting and highly synchronized bargaining coupled with coordination of bargaining by influential large firms

4 = wage norms or guidelines (recommendations) based on

a) centralized bargaining by peak associations with or without government involvement

b) informal centralisation of industry-level bargaining by a powerful and monopolistic union confederation

c) extensive, regularized pattern setting coupled with high degree of union concentration

3 = negotiation guidelines based on

a) centralized bargaining by peak associations with or without government involvement

b) informal centralisation of industry-level bargaining

c) government arbitration or intervention

2 = mixed industry and firm-level bargaining, with no or little pattern bargaining and relatively weak elements of government coordination through the setting of minimum wage or wage indexation

1 = fragmented wage bargaining, confined largely to individual firms or plants

[Based on Kenworthy (2001a; 2001b). Note that this is an indicator of the “degree, rather than the type, of coordination” (Kenworthy 2001a:78), (...) “based on a set of expectations about which institutional features of wage setting arrangements are likely to generate more or less coordination” (2001a:80).]

### Type: Type of coordination of wage setting

6 = State-imposed bargaining (incl. statutory controls in lieu of bargaining)

5 = State-sponsored bargaining (this includes pacts)

4 = Inter-associational by peak associations

3 = Intra-associational (“informal centralisation”)

2 = Pattern bargaining

1 = Uncoordinated bargaining.

[Based on Traxler, Blaschke and Kittel (2001). This indicator stresses the modality or mechanism through which coordination of wage bargaining behaviour is produced, i.e. it is based on behavioral patterns or activities of the major players (unions, employers, governments) involved in wage setting, “regardless of whether

these activities were successful in terms of coordination effects" (2001:148). My codes follow a scheme from state (5, 6) to self-regulation (2,3,5) to market (1), but imply no scale or rank-order.]

### Govint: government intervention in wage bargaining

- 5 = the government imposes private sector wage settlements, places a ceiling on bargaining outcomes or suspends bargaining;
- 4 = the government participates directly in wage bargaining (tripartite bargaining, as in social pacts);
- 3 = the government influences wage bargaining outcomes indirectly through price-ceilings, indexation, tax measures, minimum wages, and/or pattern setting through public sector wages;
- 2 = the government influences wage bargaining by providing an institutional framework of consultation and information exchange, by conditional agreement to extend private sector agreements, and/or by providing a conflict resolution mechanism which links the settlement of disputes across the economy and/or allows the intervention of state arbitrators or Parliament;
- 1 = none of the above.

(Note: based on Hassel, 2005, p. 75, with some changes: a) to make a difference between the case of social pacts or pact negotiations (= 4) and government imposition of wage schedules (= 5), which may or may not occur when pact negotiations or agreements fail; b) to add the role of public sector wage setting (= 3, when public sector settlements are used as pattern setter for private sector wage developments); c) to give more weight to the role of Parliaments or state arbitrators in the settling of disputes (= 2); and d) distinguish the case of non-interventionist governments which favour and facilitate broad sectoral organisations and negotiations (= 2) from the pure liberal or pluralist case of non-intervention and/or a liberal-pluralist regime that favours company unions and company and/or individual bargaining (= 1).

### Level: The predominant\* level at which wage bargaining takes place

- 5 = bargaining predominantly takes place at central or cross-industry level and there are centrally determined binding norms or ceilings to be respected by agreements negotiated at lower levels;
- 4 = intermediate or alternating between central and industry bargaining;
- 3 = bargaining predominantly takes place at the sector or industry level;
- 2 = intermediate or alternating between sector and company bargaining;
- 1 = bargaining predominantly takes place at the local or company level

[A level is 'predominant' if it accounts for at least two-thirds of the total bargaining coverage rate in a given year and country. If it accounts for less, but for more than one-third of the coverage rate, we have a mixed or intermediate situation, between two levels. A mixed situation also occurs when bargaining levels alternate and/or it is impossible to assess which of the two contributes more to actual regulation of employment relations.]

CWB: Centralisation of wage bargaining

### CWB or the 'actual level of wage bargaining' is calculated as the sum of:

$$\text{LEVEL} = (\text{fAEB} + \text{OCG})/4 (= \text{max value}) + (\text{Art} + \text{DR} - 1)/5 (= \text{max value})$$

### **fAEB: Frequency or scope of additional enterprise bargaining**

- 3 = additional enterprise bargaining on wages is common
- 2 = additional enterprise bargaining on wages occurs only in large firms
- 1 = additional enterprise bargaining on wages is rare even in large firms.
- 0 = no additional enterprise-level bargaining on wages (or does not apply, if 'level'=1)

### **Art: Articulation of enterprise bargaining**

- 3 = disarticulated bargaining: additional enterprise bargaining on wages when it happens is informal and suppressed or restricted by law or sectoral agreement
- 2 = articulated bargaining: additional enterprise bargaining on wages is recognized and takes place under control of union (same signatory as sector agreement)
- 1 = disarticulated bargaining; additional enterprise bargaining on wages when it happens is, formally or informally, also conducted by non-union bodies (not under union control)
- 0 = does not apply (level = 1)

### **DR: Derogation**

- 3 = favourability is anchored in law and strictly applied, no derogation
- 2 = favourability principle is anchored in law, derogation possible under conditions
- 1 = relationship between agreements is matter for contracting parties (not defined in law)
- 0 = favourability is inversed, enterprise agreements favoured over higher-order agreements.

[Derogation is defined as the possibility of setting aside the favourability principle in higher-order (usually sector) agreements, allowing deviation from norms established in the higher-order agreement that in some aspects are less favourable, possibly in exchange for some other guarantees or benefits.]

### **OCG: General Opening clauses in collective agreement**

- 1 = agreements contain general opening clauses, defined as renegotiation of contractual provisions at lower levels, under specified conditions
- 0 = agreements contain no opening clauses

### **OCT: Crisis-related, temporary opening clauses in collective agreement**

- 1 = agreements contain crisis-related opening clauses, defined as temporary change, renegotiation or suspension of contractual provisions, under defined hardship conditions
- 0 = agreements contain no opening clauses

### **Ext: Mandatory extension of collective agreements to non-organised employers**

- 3 = extension is virtually automatic and more or less general (including enlargement)
- 2 = extension is used in many industries, but there are thresholds and Ministers can (and sometimes do) decide not to extend (clauses in) collective agreements
- 1 = extension is rather exceptional, used in some industries only, because of absence of sector agreements, very high thresholds (supermajorities of 60% or more, public policy criteria, etc.), and/or resistance of employers
- 0 = there are neither legal provisions for mandatory extension, nor is there a functional equivalent.

[Extension is a legal act in which (clauses in) a collective agreement negotiated between one or more unions and one or more employers' associations is (are) declared binding on firms that are not member of the



contracting parties. Extension as defined here does not include employers who, by custom and practice, orient their pay policies on the collective agreement.. Functional equivalents vary in their applicability and include: mandatory membership of employers' associations (Austria and until recently in Slovenia); judicial awards (New Zealand before 1991; Australia, scaled down since 1992; Italy based on court rulings on minimum pay scales]

### Length: Length of collective (wage) agreements

(1- ∞) average length of (wage clauses in) collective agreements, in years.

### NMW: National Minimum Wage

2 = Statutory national (cross-sectoral or inter-occupational) minimum wage exists.

1 = Statutory minimum wage in some sectors (occupations, regions/states) only

0 = No statutory minimum wage

### NMS: Minimum Wage Setting

0 = No statutory minimum wage, no sectoral or national agreements

1 = Minimum wages are set by (sectoral) collective agreement or tripartite wage boards in (some) sectors;

2 = Minimum wages are set by national (cross-sectoral or inter-occupational) agreement ("autonomous agreement") between unions and employers;

3 = National minimum wage is set by agreement (as in 1 or 2) but extended and made binding by law or Ministerial decree;

4 = National minimum wage is set through tripartite negotiations;

5 = National minimum wage is set by government, but after (non-binding) tripartite consultations;

6 = Minimum wage set by judges or expert committee, as in award-system;

7 = Minimum wage is set by government but government is bound by fixed rule (index-based minimum wage);

8 = Minimum wage is set by government, without fixed rule.

[Note: this coding reflects the (increasing) degree of government intervention and discretion in setting the minimum wage, or – reversely – the degree to which the government is bound in its decisions by unions and employers, and/or fixed rules.]

## Social Pacts and Agreements (29)

**PactNeg: A social pact is (publicly) being proposed by the government, the unions or the employers, and negotiations do take place in specified year**

0 = no

1 = yes

**PactSign: A (tripartite) social pact between the government, the unions and the employers, or between the government and the unions, is signed in specified year**

0 = no

1 = yes

2 = two pacts in same year

3 = three pacts in same year

*etcetera*

[Social pacts are defined as “publicly announced formal policy contracts between the government and social partners over income, labour market or welfare policies that identify explicitly policy issues and targets, means to achieve them, and tasks and responsibilities of the signatories” (Avdagic, Rhodes and Visser, 2011: 11). This excludes a) tacit understandings or agreements that are not publicly announced, b) bilateral agreements between employers’ organizations and trade unions that do not involve the government as negotiating party, even if implementation requires legislative action or government support .and c) so-called symbolic or declaratory pacts that do not commit the negotiating parties to specific tasks and responsibilities].

### **AgrSign: A (nation-wide) agreement between the central organisations of the trade unions and the employers reached and signed in specified year**

0 = no

1 = yes

2 = two agreements in same year

3 = three agreements in same year

*etcetera*

### **Aut-W: The (central) agreement is autonomously negotiated and implemented by the unions and the employers’ organisations, and includes a settlement on wages and/or the procedures for wage negotiations and dispute settlement**

0 = no

1 = yes

### **Aut-NW: The (central) agreement is autonomously negotiated and implemented by the unions and the employers’ organisations, and does only regard non-wage issues**

0 = no

1 = yes

### **Sponsor-W: The (central) agreement is negotiated and implemented by the unions and the employers’ organisations and includes a settlement on wages**

0 = no

1 = yes

### **Sponsor-NW: The (central) agreement is autonomously negotiated and implemented by the unions and the employers’ organisations, and includes a settlement on wages**

0 = no

1 = yes

### **All: All pact and (central) agreements signed in a given year**

= Sum of Pactsign + Agrsign

### **PactStructure: Pact or agreement is negotiated by all or some of the (possible) actors**

0 = No pact or agreement

1 = Pact is negotiated by government, all (mainstream) union confederations and employers peak associations

2 = Pact is negotiated without major (mainstream) union(s)

3 = Pact is negotiated without major (mainstream) employers association(s).

- 4 = Pact is negotiated between unions and employers, but with heavy involvement of the government in negotiations ("shadow of hierarchy", threats, side-payments)
- 5 = Agreement is negotiated between unions and employers, but implemented through legislation (or prepared for legislation)
- 6 = Agreement is negotiated between unions and employers and implemented without government involvement or legislation ("autonomous agreement")

[On a strict definition of pacts as tripartite agreement – Avdagic et al., 2011 - , only 1-3, possibly 1-4 constitute social pacts, whereas 5-6, whatever their importance, do not]

### **Pactscope: Scope of social pact**

- 0 = no pact
- 1 = narrow pacts, dealing with one issue and not extending into lower-level (firm or public administration) decision making.
- 2 = broad pacts, dealing with several issues.
- 3 = pact is declaratory or symbolic e.g. declares that henceforth concertation shall apply, etc.)

### **Pacttype: Type of social pact**

- 0 = no pact
- 1 = tax-based incomes policy
- 2 = regulatory or reform pact
- 3 = neither category, unknown or symbolic

### **Wage: pact or agreement is about wage issues**

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes

### **Non-Wage: pact or agreement is about non-wage issues**

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes

### **PactApplies: Wage clause in pact applies in specified year (if pact covers more than one year, or when pacts negotiated in year t are valid in year t+1)**

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes

### **AgrApplies: Wage clause in central agreement applies in specified year (if agreement covers more than one year, or will be implemented in next year)**

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes

### **Wage\_Proc: pact or agreement is about procedure for wage setting: articulation of levels, conflict procedures, etc.**

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes

**Wage\_Max:** pact or agreement contains a norm or ceiling regarding maximum wage rise

0 = No  
1 = Yes

**Tax\_Budget:** Pact or agreement contains, and/or is predicated on, concessions (or promises) regarding taxation and/or budgetary decisions

0 = No  
1 = Yes

**Work\_Hrs:** Pact or agreement contains, and/or is predicated on, concessions (or promises) regarding working hours

0 = No  
1 = Yes

**Empl\_Pol** Pact or agreement contains, and/or is predicated on, concessions (or promises) regarding employment policies (job creation, subsidies, etc.)

0 = No  
1 = Yes

**Empl\_leg** Pact or agreement contains, and/or is predicated on, concessions (or promises) regarding employment protection legislation (labour law)

0 = No  
1 = Yes

**Soc\_Sec** Pact or agreement contains, and/or is predicated on, concessions (or promises) regarding social security (unemployment, sickness, disability, family or children allowances)

0 = No  
1 = Yes

**Pensions** Pact or agreement contains, and/or is predicated on, concessions (or promises) regarding (old age, retirement) pensions

0 = No  
1 = Yes

**Training** Pact or agreement contains, and/or is predicated on, concessions (or promises) regarding vocational training

0 = No  
1 = Yes

**Union\_rights** Pact or agreement contains, and/or is predicated on, concessions (or promises) regarding unions (representation, recognition) rights, including employee representation, works councils, bargaining rights, etc.

0 = No  
1 = Yes

**Inst\_conc. Pact or agreement sets up or changes nation-wide councils for concertation.**

0 = No

1 = Yes

**TC: existence of a standard (institutionalized) tripartite council concerning social and economic policy (private sector).**

2 = tripartite council with representation from the trade unions, employers' associations, and independent experts or government (-appointed) representatives;

1 = council with various societal interest representatives, including unions and employers;

0 = no permanent council.

**BC: existence of a standard (institutionalised) bipartite council of central or major union and employers organizations for purposes of wage setting, economic forecasting and/or conflict settlement.**

1 = yes;

0 = no.

**RI: routine involvement of unions and employers in government decisions on social and economic policy.**

2 = full concertation, regular and frequent involvement;

1 = partial concertation, irregular and infrequent involvement;

0 = no concertation, involvement is rare or absent

**Works councils and employee representation in the enterprise (5)****WC: status of works council**

2 = existence and rights of works council or structure for (union and non-union-based) employee representation within firms or establishments confronting management are mandated by law or established through basic general agreement between unions and employers;

1 = works councils (etc.) are voluntary, i.e. even where they are mandated by law, there are no legal sanctions for non-observance

0 = works council or similar (union or non-union) based institutions of employee representation confronting management do not exist or are exceptional.

**WC\_struct: structure of works council representation**

4 = single-channel works councils, union-based representation, elected by union members or established by union, based on law or national agreement

3 = dual-channel works councils, union dominated representation, elected by union and non-union members, based on law or national agreement

2 = split-channel works councils, employee elected works councils are mandatory where there is no or insufficient union representation, as a structure supplementary to the union, based on law or national agreement

- 1 = single-channel works councils, union-based representation, established by local agreement, no legal provisions for representation if no union is present or recognized;
- 0 = works council or similar (union or non-union) based institutions of employee representation confronting management do not exist or are exceptional.

### **WC\_rights: rights of works councils**

- 3 = economic and social rights, including codetermination on some issues (e.g., mergers, take-overs, restructuring, etc.)
- 2 = economic and social rights, consultation (advice, with possibility of judicial redress)
- 1 = information and consultation rights (without judicial redress)
- 0 = works council or similar (union or non-union) based institutions of employee representation confronting management do not exist or are exceptional.

### **WC\_negot: involvement of works councils (or similar structures) in wage negotiations**

- 4 = works councils (or mandated representatives) formally negotiate (plant-level) collective agreements, alongside or instead of trade unions.
- 3 = works councils (or mandated representatives) formally negotiate (plant-level) collective agreements, if no union is present (and/or subject to ballot)
- 2 = works councils is formally (by law or agreement) barred from negotiating (plant-level) agreements, but informally negotiate over workplace-related working conditions or 'employment pacts', including pay
- 1 = works councils is formally (by law or agreement) barred from negotiating (plant-level) agreements and involvement of works councils in negotiating (plant-level) agreements is rare.
- 0 = does not apply; works councils or similar (union or non-union) based institutions of employee representation confronting management do not exist or are exceptional.

### **SECTOR: sectoral organization of employment relations**

- 2 = strong institutions (both employers and unions, some joint institutions)
- 1 = medium (only one side, no joint institutions)
- 0 = weak, or none

## **Union Authority (12)**

### **Cfrep: Main confederation(s) represent(s) the affiliates politically and is routinely involved in consultation with government – either through bipartite or tripartite contacts**

- 2 = score '2' on RI (routine involvement in consultation)
- 1 = score '1' on RI (routine involvement in consultation)
- 0 = score '0' on RI (routine involvement in consultation)

### **Cfappt: confederal (political) control over appointment of leaders of affiliates**

- 2 = confederation appoints or has veto (directly or through government approval)
- 1 = affiliates and confederations share control
- 0 = confederation has no control over appointment process

**Cfagr: confederal involvement in wage agreements negotiated by its affiliate unions**

- 2 = confederation has mandate to negotiate agreement with employers and/or government on wage issues
- 1 = confederation has mandate to negotiate agreement with employers and/or government on non-wage issues
- 0 = none of above

**Cffund: confederal or joint strike fund from which member unions are reimbursed**

- 2 = joint strike or resistance fund has significant size ( $\geq 50$  percent of total union expenditure on official strikes)
- 1 = joint strike or resistance fund is limited ( $< 50$  percent of total union expenditure on official strikes)
- 0 = no joint strike or resistance fund held by confederation

**Cfveto: confederal power over strikes by affiliates**

- 2 = all strikes need prior approval from confederation
- 1 = confederation can end strikes through central procedures of conflict settlement (arbitration)
- 0 = confederation has no power over strikes organised by its affiliates

**Cfauthority: authority of confederation over its affiliates**

(0-1): additive measure over Cfrep, Cfpapt, Cfagr, Cffund and Cfveto, divided by maximum score (=10).

**Unagr: union (affiliate) role in wage bargaining**

- 2 = union negotiates enforceable agreement at sector level and has veto power over company agreements
- 1 = union negotiates agreements at sector level allowing enterprise or company branches to vary within limits
- 0 = union does not negotiate sector agreements

**Unappt: union (affiliate) control over appointment of workplace representatives**

- 2 = union (affiliate) appoints workplace representatives
- 1 = union (affiliate) can veto candidates for workplace representation
- 0 = union (affiliate) has no control over appointment or election of workplace representatives

**Unfin: union (affiliate) finances**

- 2 = local and workplace branches are financed by the national union (affiliate)
- 1 = local and workplace branches have autonomous funds from direct member or employers contributions
- 0 = national union (affiliates) is dependent on financial contribution from constitutive branches and local (workplace) unions (national union is federation).

**Unfund: union (affiliate) strike fund**

- 2 = union (affiliate) has a large strike fund from which striking members are reimbursed at 70 percent or more of their base wage (without overtime pay and bonuses) for each day of strike.
- 1 = union (affiliate) has small strike funds from which some reimbursement (at less than 70 percent of the base wage) is guaranteed
- 0 = union (affiliate) has no strike fund

**Unveto: union (affiliate) power over enterprise strikes**

2 = union (affiliate) has veto over enterprise strikes

1 = union (affiliate) can end enterprise strikes through central procedure of conflict settlement (arbitration)

0 = union (affiliate) cannot veto or end enterprise strike

**Unauthority: authority of union (affiliate) over their local or workplace branches and representatives.**

(0-1): additive measure over Unagr, Unappt, Unfin, Unfund and Unveto, divided by maximum score (=10).

**Employer organization (2)****NECfs: Number of Employers' Confederations (Organisations)**

(1- ∞) = number of employers' confederations (organisations in agriculture are excluded)

**ED: Employers' organisation density, as a proportion of employees in employment**

(0-100) = WSEE in firms organised in employers' organisations\*100/WSEE

(WSEE is wage and salary earners in employment)

**Number and membership of unions and confederations (23)****NUCfs: Number of Union Confederations**

(1- ∞) = number of confederations (very small confederations are ignored and counted as part of the independent, autonomous or unaffiliated union membership; as a rule NCFs counts only central organisations, that have affiliate unions and membership that exceeds five percent of total union membership in the country)

**ENUCfs: Effective Number of Union Confederations**

(1- ∞) = effective number of confederations, defined as the inverse of the Herfindahl-index or 1/H. The Herfindahl (H) index is given by  $H_{\text{aff}} = \sum_i^n (p_i^2)$ , where  $p_i$  is the proportion of total membership organised by the  $i^{\text{th}}$  confederation and  $n$  is the total number of confederations. By discounting the weight of smaller confederations (achieved through the squaring method), the Hcf index conveys an idea of the actual degree of concentration at the central or peak level in a given country. The effective number of confederations ENCFs is equal to the probability that any two union members are in the same confederation and thus a measure of the degree of fragmentation or unity at the central (political) level (see Iversen, 1999: 53; Visser, 1990: 172).

**NAffCf1: Number of affiliates of confederation 1 (usually largest)**

(1- ∞) = number of affiliated unions to confederation 1 (only national unions or federations)

**ENAffCf1: Effective number of affiliates of confederation 1**

(1- ∞) = effective number of affiliates, defined as the inverse of the Herfindahl-index or 1/H. The Herfindahl (H) index is given by  $H_{\text{aff}} = \sum_i^n (p_i^2)$ , where  $p_i$  is the proportion of total membership organised by the  $i^{\text{th}}$  affiliate and  $n$  is the total number of affiliates. By discounting the weight of the many smaller affiliates (achieved through the squaring method), the H-index conveys an idea of the actual degree of concentration within the confederation. The effective number of affiliates in the first or main confederation ENAffCf1 is equal



to the probability that any two union members are in the same union (affiliate) and thus a measure of the degree of fragmentation or unity in bargaining if that takes place at the sectoral level. We may also think of the effective number of unions or affiliates in the main confederation as the effective number of bargaining units (see Iversen, 1999: 53; Visser, 1990: 172). This number is indicative of the total number of the bargaining units in a country, especially if we assume that there is joint or majority bargaining in countries with unions divided between different union confederations.

### **MemCf1: Total membership of unions affiliated to confederation 1 (usually largest)**

(1- ∞) = sum of members of affiliates in confederation 1

### **NAffCf2, 3, ... 8: Number of affiliates of confederation 2, 3, ... 8**

(0- ∞) = number of affiliated unions to confederation 2-8 (only national unions or federations)

### **MemCf2, 3, ... 8: Total membership of unions affiliated to confederation 2, 3, ...8**

(0- ∞) = sum of members of affiliates in confederations 2-8

### **NindU: Number of Independent (Not-affiliated) Unions**

(0- ∞) = number of unaffiliated or independent unions (only national unions or federations)

### **MindU: Membership of Independent Unions**

(0- ∞) = sum of members of independent or unaffiliated unions

### **TNUnions: Total Number of Unions**

(0- ∞) =  $\sum \text{NAffCf}_{1-8} + \text{NindU}$

### **ETNUnions: Effective Number of Unions**

(1- ∞) = effective number of unions, defined as the inverse of the Herfindahl-index or  $1/H$ . The Herfindahl (H) index is given by  $H_{cf} = \sum_i^n (p_i^2)$ , where  $p_i$  is the proportion of total membership organised by the  $i^{th}$  union and  $n$  is the total number of unions. ETNUnions is approximated by multiplying the effective number of confederations and the effective number of affiliates in the main confederations, thus  $\text{ETNUnion} = \text{ENUCfs} * \text{ENAffCf1}$ . Rather than the total number of unions, this would give an idea of union fragmentation and the number of bargaining units in the country, where confederations bargain separately.

## **Union density and bargaining coverage (18)**

### **TUM: Total Union Membership**

(1- ∞) =  $\sum \text{MemCf}_{1-8} + \text{MindU}$

### **NUM: Net Union Membership**

(1- ∞) = TUM minus union members outside the active, dependent and employed labour force (i.e. retired workers, independent workers, students, unemployed, see Ebbinghaus and Visser, 2000; Visser, 1991, 2006).

### **NUM\_s: Union Membership as based on (national) household of labour force survey**

(1- ∞) = union members among the dependent employed labour force

**WCol: Workers covered by collective agreements or statutory regulation**

(1- ∞) = number of employees covered by collective agreements or statutory regulation.

**WCB: Workers covered by collective agreements**

(1- ∞) = number of employees covered by collective agreements.

**WCol: Workers covered by statutory regulation and excluded from collective bargaining**

(1- ∞) = number of employees covered by statutory regulation and excluded from collective bargaining.

**WSEE: Wage and Salary Earners in Employment**

(1- ∞) = employed wage and salary workers, source (unless stated otherwise) OECD, Labour Force Statistics

**UD: Union density rate, net union membership as a proportion of wage and salary earners in employment**

(0-100) =  $NUM*100/WSEE$

**UD\_s: Union density rate, net union membership as a proportion wage and salary earners in employment, as in national household or labour force surveys**

(0-100) =  $NUM\_survey*100/WSEE\_survey$

**UnionCov: Union coverage of workplaces or establishments**

(0-100) = employees in workplaces or establishments covered by unions or works councils as a proportion of all wage and salary earners in employment,

**SEB: Single Employer Bargaining**

(0-100) = employees covered by firm- or enterprise-level agreements

**MEB: Multi Employer Bargaining**

(0-100) = employees covered by multi-employer agreements (for groups of companies, sectors or occupations, either at local, regional or national level)

**ExtE: Estimate of coverage due to extension**

(0-100) = employees covered as a result of extension orders to non-organized employers

**UnadjCov: Unadjusted bargaining (or union) coverage rate**

(0-100) = employees covered by collective (wage) bargaining agreements as a proportion of all wage and salary earners, =  $WCB*100/WSEE$

**AdjCov: Adjusted bargaining (or union) coverage rate**

(0-100) = employees covered by collective (wage) bargaining agreements as a proportion of all wage and salary earners in employment with the right to bargaining, expressed as percentage, adjusted for the possibility that some sectors or occupations are excluded from the right to bargain =  $WCB*100/(WSEE-WStat)$ .

**ColCov: Collective coverage rate**

(0-100) = employees covered by collective (wage) bargaining agreements and statutory regulations as a proportion of all wage and salary earners in employment =  $(WCB+WStat)*100/WSEE$

**CovPriv: Bargaining (or Union) Coverage, private or market sector**

(0-100) = employees in the private or market sector covered by collective (wage) bargaining agreements as a proportion of all wage and salary earners in employment in the private or market sector.

**CovPub: Bargaining (or Union) Coverage, public or government sector**

(0-100) = employees in the public or government sector covered by collective (wage) bargaining agreements as a proportion of all wage and salary earners in employment in the public or government sector. [The public sector is defined here as the sections O, P and Q of the statistical classification of economic activities of the European Community NACE Rev.2, These Sections include respectively: Public administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security; Education; Human Health and Social Work activities. This is close to what the OECD (Glossary of Statistical Terms, 1997) defines as government sector including "government (financed) corporations". See also Bordogna and Pedersini (2013) for different classifications of the government sector, based on employment relations (and employment status), financing, ownership, or regulation.]

**Union Concentration and centralisation (15)****ShCf1: Membership share of Confederation 1**

(0-1) = fraction p1 of the membership in confederation 1 in the total membership (TUM)

**ShCf2, 3, - 8: Membership share of Confederation 2, 3, - 8**

(0-1) = fraction p2-8 of the membership in confederations 2 to 8 in the total membership (TUM)

**DEME: External demarcations between union confederations**

2 = sharp (political, ideological, organisational) cleavages associated with conflict and competition

1.5 = moderate (occupational, regional, linguistic, religious) cleavages, limited competition

1 = no cleavages – united confederation

**DEMI: Internal demarcations within union confederations**

2 = sharp (organisational, occupational or skill-related) cleavages associated with conflict and competition (multiple unions within same plant or company)

1.5 = moderate (occupational or skill-related) cleavages, limited competition (multiple unionism in same plant or company)

1 = no cleavages (single jurisdictions – industry unions or enterprise unions)

**Hcf: Membership concentration at central or confederal level (Herfindahl index at central or peak level)**

(0-1) = given by  $\sum_i^n (p_i^2)$ , where  $p_i$  is the proportion of total membership organised by the  $i^{th}$  confederation and  $n$  is the total number of confederations.

Haff: Membership concentration at the industry level, within confederations (Herfindahl index at sectoral level)

(0-1) = given by  $\sum_i^n (p_i^2)$ , where  $p_i$  is the proportion of total membership organised by the  $i^{th}$  affiliate and  $n$  is the total number of affiliates.  $\sum_{i=1}^n (p_i^2)$ , where  $p$  denotes the fraction of total membership organised by the  $i$ th affiliate and  $n$  is the total number of affiliates. This variable measures the degree of concentration or fragmentation regarding bargaining units at the industry or occupational level.

### **AUTH: Summary measure of formal authority of unions regarding wage setting at peak and sectoral level**

(0-1) = sum of C<sub>authority</sub> and U<sub>authority</sub>, divided by maximum score (=20)

### **CONC: Summary measure of concentration of unions at peak and sectoral level**

(0-1) = sum of H<sub>cf</sub> and H<sub>aff</sub>, with a maximum of 1.

### **CENT: Summary measure of centralisation of wage bargaining, taking into account both union authority and union concentration at multiple levels (derived from Iversen's centralisation index).**

(0-1) = given by  $\sqrt{[(C_{authority} * D_{EME} * H_{cf}) + (A_{authority} * D_{EMI} * H_{aff})]}$ , weighting the degree of authority or vertical coordination in the union movement with the degree of external and internal unity, and union concentration or horizontal coordination, taking account of multiple levels at which bargaining can take place and assuming a non-zero division of union authority over different levels (see Visser, 1990; Iversen, 1999). Taking the square root serves to magnify the differences at the low end of this scale (cf. Iversen, 1999: 53)

## Membership composition and density rates by category (70)

UM%fem:	Percentage share of females in total membership
UD_fem:	Union density rate of females
UD_male:	Union density rate of males
UM%PT:	Percentage share of part-time workers in total membership
UD_PT:	Union density rate of part-time workers
UD_FT:	Union density rate of fulltime workers
UM%temp:	Percentage share of temporary workers (i.e. workers on fixed duration contracts) in total membership
UD_temp:	Union density rate of temporary workers
UD_perm:	Union density rate of permanent workers, i.e. those employed under open-ended contracts
UM%man:	Percentage share of manual workers in total membership
UD_man:	Union density rate of manual (blue-collar) workers
UD_nonman:	Union density rate of non-manual (white-collar) workers
UM%skilled:	Percentage share of skilled worker in total membership
UD_skilled:	Union density rate of skilled workers
UD_unskilled:	Union density rate of unskilled workers
UM%public:	Percentage share of public sector* workers in total membership [public sector defined as before, under coverage]
UD_public:	Union density rate of public sector workers
UD_private:	Union density rate of private sector worker
UM%size50+:	Percentage share of workers in firms with 50 or more employees in total membership
UD_50+:	Union density rate of workers in firms with 50 or more employees
UD_50-:	Union density rate of workers in firms with less than 50 employees
UM%foreign:	Percentage share of foreign workers in total membership
UD_foreign:	Union density rate of foreign workers
UD_native:	Union density rate of native workers
UM%agr:	Percentage share of workers in agriculture in total membership
UM%ind:	Percentage share of workers in industry in total membership
UM%serv:	Percentage share of workers in services in total membership
UM%mining:	Percentage share of workers in mining in total membership
UM%manuf:	Percentage share of workers in manufacturing in total membership
UM%metal:	Percentage share of workers in metal manufacturing in total membership
UM%util:	Percentage share of workers in utilities (gas, water and electricity) in total membership
UM%construct:	Percentage share of workers in construction in total membership
UM%comm:	Percentage share of workers in commerce in total membership
UM%hotels:	Percentage share of workers in hotels, restaurants and catering in total membership

UM%transport:	Percentage share of workers in transport and communication in total membership
UM%buss&re:	Percentage share of workers in business services and real estate in total membership
UM%socialserv:	Percentage share of workers in social and community services (incl. public sector) in total membership
UM%pa:	Percentage share of workers in public administration (and defence) in total membership
UM%educ:	Percentage share of workers in education in total membership
UM%health:	Percentage share of workers in health services and social work in total membership
UM%otherserv:	Percentage share of workers in other services (leisure, culture, household) in total membership
UD_agr:	Union density in agriculture
UD_ind:	Union density in industry
UD_serv:	Union density in services
UD_mining:	Union density in mining
UD_manuf:	Union density in manufacturing
UD_metal:	Union density in metal manufacturing
UD_util:	Union density in utilities (gas, water and electricity)
UD_construct:	Union density in construction
UD_comm:	Union density in commerce
UD_hotels:	Union density in hotels, restaurants and catering
UD_transport:	Union density in transport and communication
UD_buss&re:	Union density in business services and real estate
UD_socialserv:	Union density in social and community services (incl. public sector)
UD_pa:	Union density in public administration (and defence)
UD_educ:	Union density in education
UD_health:	Union density in health services and social work
UD_otherserv:	Union density in other services (leisure, culture, household)
UM%15-24:	Percentage share of workers aged 15-24 in total membership
UM%25-34:	Percentage share of workers aged 25-34 in total membership
UM%35-54:	Percentage share of workers aged 35-54 in total membership
UM%55-64:	Percentage share of workers aged 55-64 in total membership
UM%65:	Percentage share of workers aged 65 and older in total membership
UD_15-24:	Union density of workers aged 15-24
UD_25-34:	Union density of workers aged 25-34
UD_35-54:	Union density of workers aged 35-54
UD_55-64:	Union density of workers aged 55-64
UD_65:	Union density of workers aged 65 and older



## Information on AIAS

AIAS is an institute for multidisciplinary research and teaching at the University of Amsterdam. Founded in 1998, it brings together the University's expertise in labour studies.

AIAS research focuses on the analysis of labour markets, social security incomes, institutions and governance. It combines various approaches from sociology, law, economics, medical sciences and political sciences. Some of our research programmes are:

- GINI Growing Inequalities' Impacts
- Flex work research centre
- WageIndicator
- Free Choice in Pensions
- EDUWORKS

AIAS offers tailor-made in-company courses in the field of HRM, Inequality and solidarity, labour market development, labour relations etc.

Annually AIAS organizes conference about ongoing research and current trends.

Furthermore several (lunch) seminars and workshops take place during the year, offering interesting opportunities for the exchange and deliberation of research on labour issues between researchers from all over the world. AIAS has a major collection of academic socio-economic data in the field of labour relations, labour organizations, employment and working conditions in the Netherlands and abroad.

AIAS and its staff contribute to society on many subjects, for different audiences and in varying formats (articles, books, reports, interviews, presentations etc. ) Next to this 'Working Papers' Series, we also have the 'Industrial Relations in the Netherlands' Series and the 'GINI Discussion Paper' Series which also addresses a great variety of topics.

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