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Methodological and analytical toolkit

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Selection strategy for interviews at local and sectoral /national level for the national case studies WP 3

All eight country-case studies in WP 3 (AT, CZ, IE, LT, SE, SK, RO, RS) shall consist of **at least 15 interviews**, distributed across local and sectoral/national level in three sectors: Metal, Transport, Banking and Finance. The interviews are to be recorded and transcribed verbatim in local language, to enable a thematic analysis (with quotations if needed). No sharing of interview-transcripts will be needed as each team writes their own national report. Please, collect/document and save consent (preferably in written form/consent forms).

The three sectors

As the number of company-case studies/country will be low, and as the sectoral employer and union organisations have varying sectoral divisions/organisational basis, we do not aim for identical selections across countries. What we aim for is a selection of companies and sectoral social partners that are similar, but with flexibility for each team to select on the basis of national relevance, the existence of social partner relations, and access-possibilities. The sectors focused are therefore defined broadly: **Metal** here refers to manufacture of basic metals (NACE C24), metal products (NACE 25), machinery and equipment (NACE C28), and motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers (NACE C29). **Transport** here mainly refers to rail and road transport of freight or passengers (NACE H49:1-2+4), but the national team could argue for including water or air transport (NACE H50-51) instead, if they find that particularly relevant. **Banking and finance** here mainly refer to regular (private and corporate) banking (in NACE K 64). However, if there are good reasons other financial services organizations such as FinTechs or insurance companies (in NACE K 65) may be selected.

Local level case study interviews

Each country-team shall make interviews covering both employer representatives (top management/chief negotiators or/and HR-staff) and employee representatives (trade union and WC/JCC [or similar] representatives) in at least one company per sector (Metal, Transport, Banking and Finance). Try to select large companies (>250 empl.) or at least "larger" medium sized companies (>100 empl.)

Sectoral/national level interviews

Each country-team shall perform interviews with representatives for sectoral level trade union and employer organisations (i.e., chief negotiators or other centrally placed staff involved in sectoral dialogue/bargaining). If there does not exist a sectoral trade union and/or employer organisations, the team may instead make interviews with peak/national level representatives.

Guidelines for semi-structured interviews

General instruction: These guides are semi-structured, i.e., there are a few themes suggested start and follow-up questions, but also quite some flexibility:

- **The order in which these themes are to be covered** is up to the interviewer to decide in relation to how the interview develops. Please consider the start and follow-up questions mainly as a checklist for the interview. If some of the information may be gotten through desk research, you may skip the theme in the interview, but you may of course ask about it if you think is a good way to get the conversation going.
- **The exact phrasings of the questions** are also up to the interviewer to decide, as the interviews generally will be performed in the native language and adjust to the situation and his/her background knowledge of the respondent's organization. However, the guide gives some examples of possible ways to do this: usually by asking the respondent to describe something in very general terms, to get them talking, and then get more details through follow-up questions. However, you will have to rephrase it so that it works in context by e.g. connecting to something already discussed in the interview.
- As there are rather few specific questions, use also **"probing" through follow-up questions** generously, to get deeper into their reasoning: i.e. "could you elaborate on xxx", "why is that?", "what did you mean by xxx?" "can you give an example of xxx?", "did I understand you correctly, that you meant xxx?", etc etc.
- **Not all questions have to be asked.** Since there are overlaps between the thematic areas and subthemes, and the respondents may talk about things besides the core topic, you may skip addressing a theme or certain subthemes if they are already covered.

The point of departure for the interview guides are **the general research questions** stated in the proposal, which are to be answered by all data collection jointly – here summarized:

The general objective of the project is to identify and connect the *determinants* of trust with the *functioning* and *outcomes/effects* of trust in local and sectoral employment relations. That is, we aim to explore, understand, and explain the bases, forms, and effects of trust. The interviews are supposed to give information that helps us answer these questions:

- Does trust (or distrust) exist between Employer reps/EO/HR and Employee reps/WCs/TU at the local and/or sectoral level – and between these levels?
- What are the bases and obstacles for such trust (dimensions such as e.g. personal, process and institutional trust), and/or why is it missing or broken?
- Is trust needed and why, and what are the effects of trust /(and/or distrust) on (relations, dialogue, negotiations, outcomes etc)
- Are there any differences in the need, bases and outcomes of trust in issues of different kinds: **A) WAGES B) H & S C) SKILLS & TRAINING D) NEW TECH.** And if so why: does it have to do with their positions on issues, the processes they are handled through, or surrounding institutional factors (Law, CAs, ECs).
- How may trust between the partners (levels) be maintained/ and or strengthened?

Interview guide – TRUE EUROPE

Inform about the project and get consent before starting the recording.

Theme 1. Getting information about the overall relations and interactions between employee reps/TU and Employer reps/EO/HR

Start question:

- Could you **describe the general relationship** between you as an Employer/EO/HR and the TUs/WCs/Employer reps (*or vice versa*) – **when/how often** do you interact, in **what fora**, and **what** issues do you discuss/negotiate?

Follow-up questions:

- How would you **characterize this relationship** – is it cooperative or conflictual, trustful or distrustful – and in what sense?
- Has this **relationship changed over time** – in what ways, and why did that happen?
- (e.g. critical events, external institutional changes/crises, funding opportunities?)
- Does the current relationship and “climate” between you **vary with different issues or over time**: could you give examples?
- Are there **issues** where you have strongly **opposed positions**, and are there issues on which you easily **agree or reach a compromise** – what are these issues and why do you think this is the case?

Theme 2. Getting information on how personal/process trust is built or broken.

Start question:

- Could you describe how **mutual trust is built and maintained** between you and the counterpart?

Follow-up questions:

- What **obstacles** have you experienced that hamper mutual trust, and what supports or creates **opportunities** to improve trust?
- What reasons may there be to **distrust** the other party and/or its representatives?
- To what extent is such trust **personal**? Does it matter who the individual representatives are?
- Can you give examples **of behaviors/actions** from the counterpart that makes you prone to trust or distrust them?
- To what extent is trust related to **how previous negotiations worked**, why do you say that (e.g. if you have succeeded or failed in dialogue/bargaining)?
- Is the trust between you maintained or changed **if reps. or procedures are changed**? Is it a slow or quick process to develop trust – and how do you achieve that?
- Do the importance of personal trust and the level of distrust vary with different **issues: A) WAGES B) H & S C) SKILLS & TRAINING D) NEW TECH.**
- Does levels of trust/distrust vary because certain of these issues are more difficult, or handled through **different processes** (*i.e. CA:s; WC:s, HR; staff meetings*)?

Theme 3. Getting information on institutional/system trust – i.e. how you trust, or anchor trust in higher-level industrial relations institutions (law, CA etc.)

Start question:

- Does the dialogue, bargaining and collective agreements on the **sectoral/national level** make any difference for local employment relations – in what way?

Follow-up questions:

- To what extent do you trust how the **actors on “your side”** (TU/EO) on the higher/lower level **handle issues**, and in what **outcomes** they produce?
- To what extent do you trust how the **actors on “the other side”** (TU/EO) on the higher/lower level **handle issues**, and in what **outcomes** they produce?
- To what extent do you feel the **overall system of industrial relations** in your sector/country works – do you trust the processes and outcomes?
- What is your opinion on the role of **dialogue and collective agreements on higher levels** in terms of supporting your interests/case in any way?
- What is your opinion on the role of **national legislation and/or government authorities** in terms of supporting your interest/case in any way?
- **What could be done to improve local-level actors' trust** in higher-level processes (legislation/dialogue/collective bargaining)?

Theme 4. Effects of trust/distrust

Start question:

- **What are the main benefits** if mutual trust exists between the parties at your level (local/sectoral)?

Follow-up questions:

- Does trust between the parties locally have any beneficial effects on **how you relate to each other**, in terms of information, consultation, and negotiation – in what sense?
- Does Mutual trust between the parties locally have any beneficial outcomes **for the local companies** – in what sense?
- Does mutual trust between the parties locally have any beneficial outcomes **for the employees** – in what sense?
- Does mutual trust between the partners at the sectoral level have any beneficial effects on the economy, employees, labor market, or society at large – in what sense?

Final question: Given what I have asked about – is there anything important I missed to ask about, or that you find important to add to what we have talked about?

Contact information to respondents

Example of contact mail to respondents

To be translated to local languages (adjust text in yellow):

Topic: Research interview regarding local/sectoral employment relations

Dear XXXXXX,

We are a team of researchers exploring the relations between employer representatives and employee/trade union representatives at local and sectoral/national levels. The study deals with issues relating to how trust may be built and or maintained between the social partners.

The research project is funded by the EU Commission and is called Trust in Relations Between Unions and Employers in Europe (TRUE EUROPE). It is led by Linnaeus University in Sweden, and it is supported by a number of social partners across Europe. Responsible for the Swedish interview study are Professor Ylva Ulfsdotter Eriksson, and Senior Lecturer Glenn Sjöstrand at Linnaeus University. More information about the project can be found in the attached information letter.

As the person responsible for the Swedish interviews, we wonder if we could interview you for the project? The interview is conducted by one of us and is expected to take approximately 1-1.5 hour We gratefully accept suggestions for 1-2 possible dates/times during March-may 2024.

If it is not possible for you to participate, we would be very grateful if you could recommend someone else to interview for this project.

Yours sincerely,

Template for respondent information (next page):

(To be translated to national languages)



**Funded by
the European Union**

Information on the research project TRUE EUROPE

The purpose of the research project Trust in Relations between Unions and Employers in Europe (TRUE EUROPE) is to explore trust in social partner relations at local and sector/national levels. The project performs interviews and quantitative analyses to compare three sectors (Banking and Finance, Metal, Transport) in 7 MS countries and one Candidate Country (AT, CZ, IE, LT, SE, SK, RO, RS),

The project will focus on the present state and development of trust in employment and industrial relations relating to the areas of A) Digitalization and the use of new technologies at the workplace; B) Skills and training; and C) Occupational health and safety. While wage belongs to core areas of bargaining, this broader focus makes possible a more flexible approach towards the building of trustful relations also beyond wage bargaining. This allows an understanding of the role of trust also in countries with underdeveloped wage bargaining, where topics beyond wages can serve as drivers of trust development and in turn strengthen bargaining and increase bargaining coverage in the long run.

The project is led by Linnaeus University in Sweden, with academic partners from Bulgaria, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Romania (see letterhead), and with support from social partner-organisations from European and national levels (see bottom). The consortium will engage social partners in various cooperative and dissemination activities to enable discussion of project results and mutual learning of how to develop and maintain trust-based industrial relations across the EU. Thereby the project promotes an understanding of potential trajectories towards reaching the targets on collective bargaining of the EU Directive on minimum wages.

For further information:

Project Web-page: [XXXXXX](#)

National contact person: [XXXXXXXX](#)

Associate Project Partners: IndustriALL Europe, CEEMET, ETUI, Nordic Financial Unions, OZPPaP (SK), OZ KOVO (SK), OS KOVO (CZ), CPC (RO), UPA (RO), Solidarumas (LT), LMPSS (LT) 

Example of participant consent form (translate to national language)

Consent to participate in interview - TRUE EUROPE

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within six months after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview that may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of research participant

I agree to my interview being audio-recorded (encircle alternative): YES NO

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

Date

Template/disposition for country case study reports

X.2 Introduction (appr 1p)

Here you write a short introduction on the empirical basis of the report. Like “This country case study on Sweden is based on...”. Discuss what kind of documents and/or existing data that were used; how many interviews/respondents in total (with ref to table 1 = fill in); during what months the interviews were performed, and appr. how long they were; if they were physical/digital (give relations X/X); and how the data was recorded, transcribed etc.

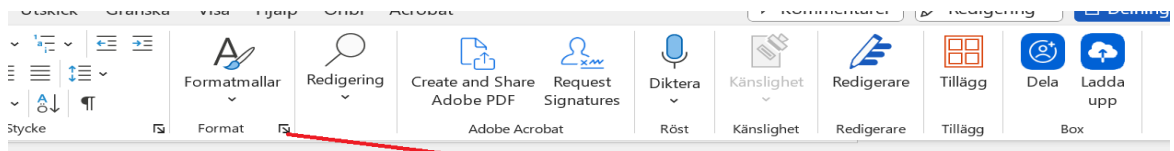
Table 1. Interviewees: levels and sectors (count respondents, not interviews, but min. 15 Int.)

Level	Banking & finance	Metal	Transport	Cross-sectoral	Total
Local Level					
Employee rep.	2	2	2		6
Employer rep.	2	2	1		5
Sectoral Level					
TU official	1	2	1		4
EO official	1	1	2		4
National level					
TU official				1	1
EO official				1	1
Other (Gov./Civ.)					
TOTAL	6	7	6	2	20

Discuss more in detail the selection/balance between different kinds of positions the employer reps and employee reps (e.g. at local level: two HR-officers, two chief negotiators, one CEO, five Tu representatives, three Works council reps). These figures should be in total across the three sectors, so that we avoid possibility to figure out the individuals. Also: mention what subsectors the companies were in, but you do not need to mention company names as this should be confidential.

Notice these instructions:

- The text length should be around 15 pages including refs (+/- 1-2 pp), i.e. approximately 7500words (+/- 1000 words). Use British English.
- Use the “formats” you find by clicking on the arrow in the lower right corner of “Format” (format window on mac) in the “toolkit/menu” above (under “Start”). The formats to use are all in UPPERCASE + TRUE (i.e. 3 levels of “Headline”, “Normal”, “bullet points”, “block quotations” “Table/Figure text”, for references use “REFERENCES TRUE EUROPE” (not REFERENCES TRUE). **SEE FIGURE BELOW**



roduction

entral element of the general well-being of societies. In comparative studies, high generalized trust between individuals correlate with well-functioning democratic i, population health, and economic and social equality (e.g. Charron & Rothstein it has beneficial effects on the functioning, efficiency and performance of different i, organizations, and firms; and positively affect organisational performance and growth (Algan & Cahuc 2010; 2013; Beugelsdijk et al 2004; Dincer & Uslaner 2010; 1995; Knack & Keefer 1997; Lane & Bachmann 1998; La Porta et al 1998; Zak & 1).

- so said to be central to the functioning and effects of local level employment
- We need to keep a high level of analytical condensation. Do not give too lengthy descriptions of details, and don't use too many quotations. Use only if needed or very illustrative, and give ref in anonymous way (e.g., Sectoral/Local employee/employer rep. transport)
- In text references = (Rothstein and Stolle 2001; Lewicki et al. 2016). For Ref list, see examples

X.2 Industrial relations at national and sectoral level (appr 2pp)

Here you give an overview over the national system of industrial relations, refer back to the typologies and the data you sent in for in the "conceptual and contextual report", and present some general aspects such as organisational forms (tripartite, bipartite, level of fragmentation etc), and characteristics (density, CB-coverage, dual/singular local level rep; if they have bi/tripartite joint organisations and for a etc), discuss the two sides' respective strengths and influence/consultation with government, etc. You may also notice if there have been or are any ongoing changes to the system that is of relevance for the case.

Industrial relations in banking & finance, metal, and transport

Here you do the same as above but discuss the particularities of the three sectors in focus - at least one paragraph/sector. You may also notice if there have/been are any ongoing changes to the system that is of relevance in these sectors.

X.3 National and sectoral level interactions and trust (appr 4-5pp)

Write this introductory paragraph after you have written the ones below, since it should be a very brief introduction to the topics of the subheadings, i.e. mention some general features across sectors/levels (and possibly shortly relate to the context above) regarding national/sectoral level trust, while also hint to if there are important differences between levels/sectors. The whole "section" X.3 should mainly build on the interviews with sectoral/national level partners, and documents/reports/research relating to that level.



Characterizing national and/or sectoral level interactions

Here you mainly use the responses on “Theme 1” in the guideline, to describe how actors are interacting, in what for a and on what topics, and if they experience that these relations are characterized by trust/distrust, cooperation/conflict – and whether this has changed over time.

This goes for all subheadings: If there is variation between the sectors, please describe each sector in separate paragraphs, but if there are strong similarities, you may describe all of them simultaneously and instead divide the paragraphs by theme (e.g. different “areas” such as CB, H&S, Skills and training, digitalization/new technology).

Anchoring trust in institutions and trusting lower level actors

Here you mainly use the responses on “Theme 3” in the guideline, to describe what A) importance national level institutions of various kind have for the creation/maintenance of trust/distrust (cooperation and conflict). And B) then move on to discuss to what extent the actors at national level trust the lower level actors (on their side, and on the “other side” between TUs/EMP).

Effects of trust according to national and/or sectoral level actors

Here you mainly use the responses on “Theme 4” in the guideline, to describe what effects of various kinds (for their partner relations and processes, the economy, companies or employees).

Dimensions and bases of trust at national/sectoral levels

Here you mainly use the responses on “Theme 2” in the guideline, to describe what how trust is build and maintained, or broken down (e.g. through personal traits/relations, processes etc. Try to use some relevant concepts from the “Conceptual and contextual report”).

X.4 Local level interactions and trust (appr 5-6pp)

Write this paragraph after you have written the ones below, since it should be a very brief introduction to what you have found below, and thus give something of a joint view of what characterizes local level trust, point what is common for all sectors, and also hint to the most important differences. The whole section X.4 should mainly build on the interviews with local level partners, and documents/reports/research relating to that level.

Characterizing local level interactions

Here you mainly use the responses on “Theme 1” in the guideline, to describe how actors are interacting, in what for a and on what topics, and if they experience that these relations are characterized by trust/distrust, cooperation/conflict, and whether this has changed over time.

Anchoring trust in higher level institutions

Here you mainly use the responses on “Theme 3” in the guideline, to describe what A) importance national level institutions of various kind have for the creation/maintenance of trust/distrust (cooperation and conflict). And B) then move on to discuss to what extent the local actors trust the higher level actors (on their side, and on the “other side” TU/EMP).

Effects of trust according to local level actors

Here you mainly use the responses on “Theme 4” in the guideline, to describe what effects of various kinds (for their partner relations and processes, the economy, companies or employees). If there is variation between the sectors, please describe each sector in separate paragraphs, but if there are strong similarities, you may describe all of them simultaneously and instead divide the paragraphs by theme. (e.g. different “areas” such as CB, H&S , Skills and training, digitalization/new technology).

Dimensions and bases of trust at local level

Here you mainly use the responses on “Theme 2” in the guideline, to describe what how trust is build and maintained, or broken down (e.g. through personal traits/relations, processes etc). Try to use some relevant concepts from the “Conceptual and contextual report”).

X.5 Conclusions (appr 1p)

Here you summarize everything above, by discussing how to characterize the relations, dimensions bases and effects of trust/distrust experienced at both higher and lower levels relates to the institutional context - discuss main commonalities between levels and sectors, and highlight some important differences. Please try to connect to some of the conceptual discussion about trust, and to the contextual typologies in the “Conceptual and contextual paper”.

It would also be god if you could say something regarding how you believe it would be possible to increase or at least maintain trust and its beneficial effects in your country.

References

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