

# Differences in the Measurement of Employment in the Labour Force Surveys in the European Community

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**Abstract:** For a better understanding of the comparability of the employment rates in the European Community, we need to know how seriously such rates are affected by the conditions under which these surveys are conducted. This article focuses on one of the essential survey conditions, i.e., the questionnaire. The cognitive tasks put to the respondent in the interview provide a framework for the analysis. We propose a set of requirements that the labour force survey questions should satisfy. These requirements are derived from the different job characteristics of five specific categories of employed

persons, persons who are temporarily absent from their work but who have a job, unpaid family workers, persons with a minor job, casual workers and persons with a job that yields no pay or profit. We then compare the actual questionnaires of the labour force surveys to these requirements. To the extent that these questionnaires deviate from one or more requirements, the comparability of the employment rates is hampered.

**Key words:** Employment measurement; international comparability; questionnaire design.

## 1. Introduction

In the Netherlands, opinions differ considerably on the deviation of the national employment rates from those in the other countries of the European Community (EC). In particular, the seemingly low level of female employment in our country compared to that in other EC countries was a controversial issue (Table 1). The

policy implications attracted equal attention. For these and other reasons, it is necessary to have a good grasp on the accuracy of data from different surveys.

A common source of comparable estimates of employment in the EC countries is the annual labour force survey. The national employment estimates are also compiled from administrative sources and establishment surveys. But these sources are affected by national administrative decisions and are less suitable for international comparison. The labour force surveys conducted by EC countries are harmonized with respect to the variables, the sample size and the time of the data collection. Nevertheless, other design features, e.g., the

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*Table 1. Employed labour force between 15 and 65 years relative to the corresponding population in the EC countries by sex, 1988*

	total	males	females
Spain	46	63	29
Ireland	50	67	33
Italy	52	69	36
Belgium	54	65	44
Greece	55	72	38
France	58	67	48
Netherlands	58	72	44
Fed. Rep. Germany	62	75	50
Portugal	66	79	54
Luxemburg	67	86	47
United Kingdom	68	77	60
Denmark	77	83	72
Eur. Community	58	71	46

Source: OECD, labour force statistics 1969–1989, Paris, 1990.

organization of the data collection and the questionnaire are not harmonized and may differ from country to country. The exact consequences of these methodological differences for the labour force estimates are far from obvious. But these methodological differences do affect international comparability.

The effect of a different questionnaire and a novel approach to data collection on the labour force survey estimates was illustrated in the Netherlands when in 1987 the biennial labour force survey was substituted by the continuing labour force survey. The observed female employment rate in the Netherlands in 1985 was 35% and male employment 67%. In 1988 the female employment rate had increased to 43% and male employment had increased to 72%. This marked increase in employment does not reflect the actual trend. The actual trend is derived from establishment survey data. The relative increase for the number of women in paid employment of 26% according to the labour force survey is far superior to 13% according to the establishment surveys. The discrepancy is somewhat

less for men. The relative increase in the number of men in paid employment between 1985 and 1988 is 12% according to the labour force survey and 7% according to the establishment survey. These net differences in trend cannot be attributed to the differences between the designs of both surveys – e.g., differences in the measurement unit (jobs or persons) and in population coverage (news-boys or domestic servants are not included in the establishment surveys). The more complete measurement of employment in the labour force survey in 1988 is largely due to modified questions on the labour status and a novel approach to data collection. The scientific literature on the interview process also clearly indicates the dependence of the accuracy of the estimates on the characteristics of the questionnaire (Martin 1983; Bradburn and Danis 1984).

Our purpose is to determine which questionnaires are likely to yield a more accurate and complete measurement of the number of employed persons. This comparison of the questionnaires is part of a more comprehensive research project at Statistics Netherlands into the designs of the labour force surveys in the EC countries.

Employed persons are not a homogeneous category (Rodgers and Rodgers 1989; Atkinson and Micklewright 1991). They belong to different categories and they have varying job attachments. The different categories of employed persons and their characteristics are implied by the definition of employment. The next section contains a conceptual analysis of the definition of employment in the twelve EC countries with a description of those different categories. A simple and unique question is not sufficient to identify everyone who actually qualifies as employed. The questions should refer to the characteristics of their attachment to the labour

market. A classification of the questionnaire design features that are most relevant to the measurement of employment is given in Section 3. The actual questions in the EC labour force surveys differ from each other with respect to their content, wording and position in the questionnaire. The differences between the questionnaires of the twelve EC countries are described in Section 4. Each comparison of a questionnaire design feature for the measurement of a particular category of employed persons is concluded with relevant empirical evidence when available. Most questionnaires that we examine have been used in the labour force surveys since 1986. Depending on the fit between the measurement and the questionnaire design requirements, some tentative conclusions are derived in the final section on the differences in the validity of the measurement of employment in the EC countries.

## **2. Categories of Employed Persons and Their Measurement**

### *2.1. Definition of employment*

The current definition of employment was adopted by the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1983 (Husmanns 1989). According to this definition, employed persons comprise all persons above a specified age who, during a short period of a week or one day, perform some work for pay or profit or had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent. In the latter case, it is assumed that the employed person maintains a formal job attachment and is expected to return to her/his work or business. The notion of "some work" is interpreted as work for at least one hour.

The principle for classification by labour status is the precedence of work over other

activities irrespective of the time spent working. Having worked for just one hour a week is sufficient for being classified as employed. It is a simple principle but it introduces identification problems for persons with a main activity other than labour. Their characteristics are described in the next section.

The definition above is adopted by all EC countries although it is subject to national interpretation. In the United Kingdom, the remuneration for the work performed is considered essential. Only persons who are paid are considered employed. This does not imply that all unpaid family workers are systematically excluded from employment. It depends on whether they regard their contribution to the business as a gainful activity. If so, they are not different from wage earners. The assumption that unpaid family workers are not different from wage earners is further reflected in the item about the status of employment. The status of employment is restricted to two response categories: self-employed and employees. Another interpretation concerns the reference period. All EC countries agree upon a week as the reference period except the Netherlands. The Netherlands adheres to the current labour status on the day of the interview. The definition in Ireland combines two concepts of the economically active population (ILO 1990, p. 158). One concept is the usually economically active population. This concept is based on the subjective assessment by the respondent of her/his main activity over a long period. Within this framework, persons who are subject to compulsory schooling or who are retired are considered as students or retired persons even if they perform some work. Opposed to the usual activity, the second concept is based on the current labour status that results from

the application of a set of precedence rules with reference to a week or a day. How these interpretations affect the national questionnaires becomes clear when the specific differences between the questionnaires are described with respect to the unpaid family workers and the casual workers (Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.6).

## *2.2. Categories of employed persons and their measurement*

Those who work almost full-time and on a seemingly permanent basis for an employer or are self-employed are the most obvious types of employed persons when considering the definition. These core categories present no major measurement problems (Husmanns, Mehran, and Verma 1990). Presumably, they will be identified as employed persons by a wide range of alternative questions. The job characteristics of other categories of employed persons (e.g., part-time workers, occasional workers or on-call workers) are different from those of the core category and less common too. Because of these less common characteristics, they are less likely to identify themselves as employed persons unless the questions are tailored to their specific situation.

Part-time workers who work only a few hours per week are a clear example. They may work as reliefs or substitutes during the weekend, in the evening or during peak hours or they may render paid domestic services (e.g., child care or gardening). All these persons have one common characteristic: their main activity is not their job but, e.g., study or family care. Alternatively they may be retired. They are more likely to realize that their job of a few hours per week is relevant if the question on the labour status explicitly refers to their minor economic activities.

A second category consists of casual workers. They frequently have a job but not on a permanent basis. The casual workers resemble persons with a minor job in their evaluation of the importance of their jobs. When they make a global assessment of how they spend their time, they are likely to report activities of a permanent nature and forget to mention their paid job that lasted only a few weeks. Eliciting a more accurate answer depends on an explicit definition of the reference period. This stimulates the casual worker to carefully assess her/his activities within a specific period of time instead of making a global judgment (Bradburn and Sudman 1990).

Another category comprises those who are temporarily absent from their work but who have a job. They have the assurance that they will return to work and they continue to receive a wage or salary. The main reasons for absence are holidays, maternity or parental leave, illness or training (in-house courses or external courses within the context of a firm). When asked whether they are working, they may respond that they are not. Instead, a question about having a job without necessarily working at that moment is more appropriate.

A final category with different characteristics consists of unpaid family workers. They assist a relative in the family business without an employment contract and without prime responsibility for that business. Recognizing themselves as employed persons depends on their perception of the similarities between their work and the characteristics of paid employment. It is difficult to predict whether the doctor's wife who answers the phone and does some administrative tasks considers herself as an employed person. A suitable question therefore explicitly refers to their work as assisting relatives.

Some persons in these categories fail to be identified as employed persons without additional or carefully adapted questions. However, other categories can be improperly considered as currently employed persons. Students, homemakers, county councillors, volunteer workers and people on early retirement under a job release scheme have a different interpretation of the kind of activities which qualify for the status of being employed (Schwarz 1988). A list of less common activities which correspond to paid work may prove useful for the respondent to decide whether her/his activities fall within the boundaries of economic activities. It should be clear that some activities such as volunteer work, social service or community work, or on-the-job training without pay are excluded as economic activities.

Casual workers who frequently enter and leave jobs of short duration are not only overlooked, they may be misclassified as employed persons. Without a clear and precise specification of the reference period the respondent is unable to match the exact dates of her/his job with the reference period of the question. The respondent judges that having a job is an appropriate answer, neglecting the fact that she/he has not started yet. A similar error is possible when the respondent recently left a job. The implicit reference period of the question is extended by the respondent and includes the last days of a job recently left. Although these persons are inappropriately considered as employed persons and are asked questions about their current job, the estimate of the number of employed persons can still be unbiased. Most persons who have not worked in the reference period because they left their jobs, are identified by the question on the actual number of hours worked. Consequently, they can be excluded from the category of

employed persons. This a posteriori solution is redundant, however, when the initial questions on the labour status account for the specific circumstances of the category of persons who frequently have a job but did not have one in the reference period.

### **3. Questionnaire Design Features**

#### *3.1. Requirements of questionnaire design*

The questionnaire needs to be carefully designed for a valid measurement of all particular categories of employed persons. The requirements for a carefully designed questionnaire are derived from the cognitive tasks of the respondent in an interview. For a correct answer a respondent must be capable of first comprehending the question, then relating the question to events and experiences that she/he is able to remember, and finally evaluating which events and experiences are related to the question (Cannell, Miller, and Oksenberg 1981; Tourangeau 1984; Schwarz 1990).

The respondent's comprehension of a question largely depends on the question wording (Cannell and Oksenberg 1983) and on the question context. Simplicity of a question is an obvious condition. The context provides a mental framework for the interpretation of a question by the respondent. This context is created when two or more questions are asked about a single concept.

A respondent is better capable of relating a question to the events in her/his memory or to her/his experience when specific indications or cues are included in the question. The cues for the improvement of the recall of events and experiences explain which kinds of work are implied by the concept of work. Because these specifications are a more familiar description of their activities, the respondent more easily

recognizes them as proper economic activities.

Finally, the respondent's judgment will also be more correct and reliable instead of being a guess when clear and precise cues are included. These cues are different from the cues for the improvement of recall. These cues determine the scope of the question or they restrict the meaning of the concept of work. Such cues stimulate the respondent to match the characteristics of her/his recalled events and experience with those intended by the question.

The application of these general questionnaire design features to the questions on the labour status with reference to the different categories of employed persons is described in the following sections.

### 3.2. *Four types of questions for the measurement of employment*

Four types of questions for the measurement of employment occur in the questionnaires of the EC countries. The first type of question is a general question about the main activity with an extensive set of response categories, one of these covers persons with a job (e.g., Portugal, question 7, see appendix). The other types of questions are more specific. One type addresses the issue of currently working (e.g., Italy, question 102, see appendix), another question addresses the issue of having a job without necessarily working (e.g., United Kingdom, question 6, see appendix). A final type of question is a composite that simultaneously addresses currently working and/or having a job (e.g., Spain, question D1). Each status is represented in this type of question by a separate response category.

The questions for the measurement of employment are distinguished from other questions on the basis of their routing. If the routing of a question includes the

questions on current job characteristics, then that question is intended for the measurement of employment.

### 3.3. *Sequences of questions*

With two or more questions on labour status, the sequence of the questions is important. A possible sequence consists of *the question on having a job next to the question on currently working*. Although a single question about having a job is suitable for the measurement of those who are temporarily absent from their jobs, the question performs better when it is preceded by the question about currently working. In this sequence, the second question asks those who denied being at work, whether they nevertheless have a job. Because of the resulting contrast, the respondent better understands the purpose of the questions. The purpose is not restricted to the identification of persons currently working but it also identifies persons with a job who are not then working. Those who are temporarily absent from their jobs may also be identified with a response category in the general question on the main activity instead of the tailored question about having a job. This is not an ideal solution. The interpretation of a question and its response categories is primarily determined by the question itself. When the question itself does not explicitly ask whether a respondent has a job irrespective of current work, persons with a job but temporarily absent from their work are less likely to pay attention to the response categories and to realize that they actually are employed.

In the sequence resulting when the two questions are asked in the reverse order, *the question on having a job preceding the question on currently working*, the second question does not contribute to a more complete measurement of employment.

There is no contrast in this sequence. The additional question on currently working can only be asked those who already answered that they had a job. Currently working is a logically impossible answer for respondents who previously denied having a job. The question on currently working next to the question about having a job only serves as a filter question.

Another sequence involves the *general question on the main activity*. It precedes the questions about currently working or having a job. The general question on the main activity is a convenient device for measuring the core employed persons. Unlike the general question, the next question specifically concerns work or a job in addition to the activities mentioned in the general question. The additional question about currently working or having a job is only asked those who did not already answer that they are employed. Because this sequence takes into account the relative importance of a job compared with other activities, a more complete measurement of the category of persons with a job of only a few hours per week would be expected. This expectation ignores, however, a sequence effect. When the general question on the main activity is immediately followed by the question about currently working or having a job, the respondent is likely to interpret the latter question as also referring to the usual situation (Schwarz 1988). A sequence effect assumes a transfer of the meaning of the general question to the next question about currently working or having a job. Because of the common interpretation of both questions, the respondent will persist in her/his reply that she/he is not working although she/he has a minor job. Due to this sequence effect, the sequence of the general question followed by the question about work or a job is not an ideal solution

for the measurement of the category of persons with a minor job.

The reverse order, where the *general question on the main activity* is preceded by the question about currently working or having a job, has a completely different result. The questions about currently working or having a job already determine the main category, viz., employed persons. These persons are not asked the general question. The purpose of the general question about the main category in this sequence is no longer the identification of the employed persons but a breakdown of persons not in the labour force.

The *composite question on currently working and/or having a job* seems an obvious alternative for both questions about currently working and having a job because both statuses are included as response categories. Combining both statuses in a single question results, however, in a complex question. The interpretation of this composite question requires more effort from the respondent than the sequence of two separate questions about currently working and having a job. Although the three response categories (currently working, having a job but not working and is not working and does not have a job) are logically distinct categories, these subtle differences are not perceived by every respondent. Without carefully considering each category, one response category (e.g., currently working) may prevail for the interpretation of the question. This obviously affects the identification of persons with a job but temporarily not working. They may reply that they are not working according to a restrictive interpretation that the question concerns currently working. Without probing whether they have a job, they will not mention it. Because of the risk of a biased interpretation, the composite question with categories representing currently

working and/or having a job should be avoided in favour of a sequence of two separate questions.

### 3.4. *Question wording: cues included in the question*

A valid measurement of particular categories of employed persons depends not only on the choice of appropriate questions in a meaningful sequence but also on the inclusion of specific indications or cues in the questions. The inclusion of cues concerns four categories of employed persons: the unpaid family workers, persons with a minor job of only a few hours, the casual workers and persons with a job without pay or profit.

These cues are included in the question itself or in the response categories depending on whether they have an effect on the scope of the whole question (e.g., the reference period) or just one response category. The cues can be presented as a list with examples of economic activities (e.g., France, question 11) or they can be mentioned as a single category in a dedicated question (e.g., Federal Republic of Germany, question 23).

In the next section, we consider the twelve questionnaires in the EC labour force surveys. We describe the different types of questions, in what sequences they occur and which cues they include with respect to the measurement of the five specific categories of employed persons.

## 4. **Actual Differences in the Twelve Questionnaires According to the Classification by Questionnaire Design Features**

### 4.1. *Type of question and question sequence*

Most questionnaires contain more than one question for the measurement of

employment (Figure 1). The general question on the main activity occurs in most questionnaires, except in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany. It usually precedes the question about currently working. However, in Luxemburg, Spain and Belgium the general question on the main activity is inserted at the end of the questionnaire and in Greece it immediately follows the question about having a job. Other questionnaires contain two questions about currently working and having a job (United Kingdom, Greece, Luxemburg and Federal Republic of Germany). Finally, when only one question is included, it is the composite question on currently working and/or having a job (Spain and Belgium).

Depending on the types of questions used and on their sequence, the following configurations occur (Figure 1):

- In the United Kingdom and Greece two separate questions about currently working and having a job are included for the identification of employed persons. The question about currently working precedes the question about having a job without necessarily working. The latter question is asked only of those who have not already replied that they are employed.
- In Luxemburg the same types of questions are included but in the reverse order, the question about having a job precedes the question about currently working. This sequence does not contribute to a more complete measurement of employment compared with the sequence where the question about currently working precedes the question about having a job. In this sequence, only those who already answered that they have a job



are asked the additional question about currently working.

- In the Federal Republic of Germany the question about performing paid work is followed by a question about assisting on the family farm. All respondents, irrespective of their answer to the first question about performing paid work, are asked the second question. This question is not only a filter question for persons working on the family farm but it also contributes to a more complete measurement of this category.
- The general question on the main activity is followed either by the question about currently working (France, Italy, Portugal), by the question about having a job (Denmark and the Netherlands), or by the composite question about currently working and/or having a job (Ireland). Except in Ireland, the complementary question is asked only of persons who did not already answer that they are employed to the first question. In Ireland all persons are asked two questions.
- In Denmark another question is asked about having worked in the past in addition to the general question on the main activity and the question about having a job. Those who have worked in the past are asked how long ago it was. This retrospective question is found in other questionnaires, but in Denmark the routing is different. One response category is provided for respondents who left their jobs in the past week. They are added to the employed persons and are asked the questions about the current job.
- In Spain and Belgium the employed persons are identified by a single

composite question with separate response categories for currently working and having a job.

In Section 3.3, we argued that the composite question about currently working and/or having a job is a complex question (Spain, question D1, Belgium, question 6 and Ireland, question 17). There is one common characteristic in the response categories of the composite question and the sequence of the two separate questions. The order of the response categories (the category for currently working precedes the category for having a job) corresponds with the order of the two questions. Despite the resemblance of the sequence, their wording is different. Instead of emphasizing the contrast between the two separate questions (“Even though you were not working last week, did you have a job...”) the response categories in the composite question are presented as mutually neutral options.

Another salient feature of the composite question is the use of the abstract word “situation” in the question itself. This abstract word is an easy solution for a succinct phrasing of a question on the two different statuses about currently working and having a job. A generic word is needed to cover all the response categories. However, due to that abstract word the interpretation of the question is more difficult. Without additional information the respondent has to resort to guessing the meaning of the question. The response categories provide the respondent with the necessary information (Schuman and Presser 1981, p. 109) but due to the subtle differences between the categories, the respondent’s comprehension of the question requires much effort. Abstract words occur not only in the composite question but also in the general

Country	General question about main activity	Question type	Composite question about working and/or job
United Kingdom		question about being at work	question about having a job
		Did you do any paid work last week...?	Even though you were not working, did you have a job or business that you were away from?
Greece		Did you work last week ... even for just 1 hour?	Even though you were not working last week, did you have a job that you were away from?
Luxembourg			Did you have a job in the week from <day> until <day-month>? <div>→ If so, did you work?</div>
Fed. Rep. Germany			Were you performing paid work or carrying a profession in the reference week ((day) until (day-month))? <div>→ Have you assisted your relatives on the family farm in the reference week ((day) until (day-month))?</div>
Denmark	What is your current position?		Besides do you have a job? <div>→ If so, did you work last week (...)? Did you ever work? If so, how long ago?</div>

Netherlands	.... about your activities. When you look at the possibilities on the prompt card, which category do you belong to?	Are you performing paid work even for just one or a few hours per week or for a brief time?	
France	Current activity?	Nevertheless, did you work in the reference week from (day) until (day – month)?	
Portugal	What was your main situation in relation to the economic activity last week?	Did you do any work last week apart from the aforementioned?	
Italy	What is your current situation	Did you work in the reference week whatever your situation mentioned in Q. 101?	What was person's situation last week?
Ireland	Usual situation with regard to employment		What was your situation last week in relation to your activity?
Spain			Labour status in the reference week?
Belgium			

Fig. 1. The questionnaires of the EC countries by type of question for the measurement of employment and their sequence

question of the main activity (Ireland, question 11, Italy, question 101, Denmark, question 1 and Portugal, question 7). Obviously, the reason for including an abstract word in this question is similar to that in case of the composite question.

#### 4.2. *Inclusion of cues for particular categories of employed persons*

4.2.1. *Cues for the unpaid family workers*  
The appropriate questions for the unpaid family workers explicitly refer to their work as relatives assisting in the family business. These cues are included in all questionnaires except in the United Kingdom, Greece and Belgium, but they show considerable variation (Figure 2). Unpaid family workers are mainly referred to in the question about currently working and/or having a job. Either the question itself (e.g., Portugal, question 8: "Did you do any work... even as an assisting relative?") or the response categories refer to them (e.g., Ireland, question 17: "working for at least one hour for pay or profit, including work on the family farm or business"). When the cue for unpaid family workers is included in the question, it extends the meaning of the concept of work to the assistance of relatives in the family business. When the cue is included in the response category, it is part of a list with examples of possible categories of employed persons.

In four countries, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Denmark, unpaid family workers are referred to in a response category of the general question on the main activity. A clarification of the category for persons with a job specifies that work in the family business is included (e.g., France, question 8: "working (e.g., has a paid job or business... even assisting relatives without wage or salary...)"). In

Italy, this specification is an instruction for the interviewer. Unlike a clarification which is a part of the question and is to be read to every respondent, the instruction is read by the interviewer only.

A suitable alternative for a list with examples of categories of employed persons is to ask about assisting relatives in a separate question (e.g., the Federal Republic of Germany, question 23: "Have you assisted your relatives on the family farm...?"). This question is added immediately after the question of currently working; the latter question already includes a cue for unpaid family workers (question 22: "Did you have a job or business...? (also assisting relative)"). This alternative is perhaps preferable when many categories are concerned, but for just a few categories of employed persons, it seems equivalent to the inclusion of a cue in the question itself.

Unpaid family members are not explicitly mentioned as a category of employed persons in the United Kingdom. The wording of the question about currently working even suggests that they are excluded ("Did you do any paid work?"). However, this is not the intention. The unpaid family workers are identified depending on their query about the exact meaning of paid work. The interviewer instructions assert that an unpaid family worker is considered an employed person if the work contributes to the business owned or operated by a relative of the same household (e.g., a wife doing her husband's accounts) (Chamberlain and Purdie 1992).

The question in the Belgian questionnaire does not seem to refer to unpaid family workers ("has (no) appointment or activity and did (not) carry it on"). The concept of an appointment only applies to the wage earners. The meaning of the concept of an activity is not restricted to paid labour. It includes housekeeping and

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- cue for unpaid family workers in the question about working:
    - France: Nevertheless, did you do any work in the reference week ...?
      - (... even as an assisting relative without wage or salary ...)
    - Portugal: Did you do any work last week ... (even for just one hour or as an assisting relative)?
  
  - cue for unpaid family workers in the question about a job:
    - Luxemburg: Did you have a job in the week ...? If so, did you work?
      - a. did a paid work in the reference week
      - b. unpaid assisting relative
    - FRG: Were you performing paid work or carrying on a profession ...? (also assisting relatives)
      - a. yes, working, incl. assisting relatives
  
  - cue for unpaid family workers in the general question about main activity:
    - France: Current activity?
      - a. working (e.g., has a job or business ..., assisting a relative without wage or salary)
    - Italy: What is your current situation?
      - a. working (assisting a relative who is working for own account without a regular job contract)
    - Netherlands: ... about your activities. When you look at the possibilities on the prompt card, which category do you belong to?
      - a. has a job or business (e.g.) working for payment or profit, assisting relative
    - Denmark: What is your current position?
      - a. working (self-employed, assisting relative, ...)
  
  - cue for unpaid family workers in the composite question about working and a job:
    - Ireland: What was person's situation last week?
      - a. working ... including work on the family farm or business
    - Spain: What was your situation last week in relation to your activity?
      - b. working (as a wage earner, on one's own account or as an assisting relative)
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- Note: United Kingdom (question 5), Belgium (question 6) and Greece (question 1) are not included in this figure because the cue for unpaid family workers is missing.

*Fig. 2. The questionnaires of the EC countries by cues for unpaid family workers*

voluntary work. Correspondingly, that concept may apply to the unpaid family workers. It remains doubtful that every unpaid family worker recognizes her/his assistance at the family business as a relevant activity.

#### 4.2.2. Empirical evidence

An improved identification of unpaid family workers with the inclusion of a tailored question is illustrated by evidence from the Current Population Survey in the United States (Rothgeb and Cohany

1992). The 1967 questionnaire contains two questions for the identification of employed persons: the general question on the main activity and a question on working. The latter question is as follows: "Did you do any work at all last week, not counting work around the house?" This question is accompanied by an interviewer instruction. When a family business is mentioned, the interviewer is supposed to probe for unpaid work on the farm or business. An alternative questionnaire including a preliminary question on the presence of a family business was tested against the current questionnaire in 1991. This preliminary question was the following: "Does anyone in the household have a business or farm?" For households with a family business or farm, the question on working is now revised: "Last week did you do any work for either pay or profit?" Unpaid family workers constituted a significantly larger proportion of employed persons with the revised questionnaire than in the current questionnaire without the preliminary question (1% vs. 0.2%).

#### 4.2.3. Cues for persons with a minor job of a single hour or a few hours per week

A question with a specification that employment comprises all work even for a single hour or a few hours per week is included in all questionnaires except in the United Kingdom, Italy and Belgium, either in the question itself or in the response categories (Figure 3). However, the specification never occurs in the general question on the main activity. The one-hour specification is included in the third question of the Danish questionnaire, but this question is only asked persons who already answered that they have a job. Hence this question does not contribute to a more complete identification of minor jobs. In Portugal (question 8), Greece (question 1) and the Netherlands

(question 201), the question itself contains a specification that work even for one hour is included. In Luxemburg (question B1), Ireland (question 17) and Spain (question D1), the specification of the minimum number of hours worked per week is mentioned only in the response categories. There is a remarkable difference between the wording of the specification in the response categories and the wording in the question itself. The specification in the question is a prompt for the respondent to consider all work, *even just one hour of work*. The respondent will make an effort to search her/his memory for some paid job. Ideally, this searching process continues until a paid job is eventually retrieved. The specification in the response category has a rather restrictive effect. The question simply asks about a paid job or current paid work. The respondent may easily omit a minor job because the question itself does not trigger a search for a minor job. Only after the respondent has retrieved a paid job, she/he is required to verify whether the number of hours per week exceeds the threshold of *at least one hour*.

The question itself about having a job in the Federal Republic of Germany (question 22) or about currently working in France (question 11) does not contain the specification that work even for a single hour per week is included. Instead an interviewer instruction accompanies the question. It indicates that persons with a job of a few hours or just one hour per week should be considered as employed persons.

#### 4.2.4. Empirical evidence

The effect of an explicit reference in a question to minor jobs is illustrated by an experience in the Federal Republic of Germany (Schwarze 1992). A third question about having a minor job was included in the questionnaire in 1990 in addition to the two questions about currently working

Specification of the one-hour criterion	Specification of the reference week		
	"from ... until ..." or exact date	"last week"	no specification
in question itself	Greece: Did you work last week, from Monday until Sunday, even for just 1 hour?	Portugal: Did you do any work last week ... (even for just 1 hour ...)?	Nl.: Are you performing paid work even for 1 or a few hours per week ...?
in response categories	Lux: Did you have a job in the week from ... until ...? If so, did you work? a. did a paid job in the reference week (1 hour or more)	Ireland: What was person's situation last week? a. working for at least 1 hour  Spain: What was your situation last week in relation to your activity? b. working for at least 1 hour	
in the interviewer instruction	France: Nevertheless, did you work in the reference week from ... until ...? (even for 1 hour or an occasional job) FRG: Were you performing paid work ... in the reference week (... until ...)? (including persons who are at work for a few hours or even just one hour ...)		
no specification	UK: Did you do any paid work last week, that is in the seven days ending Sunday ...? Italy: Did you work in the reference week (comprising the reference day ...) whatever ...? Belgium: Labour status in the reference week?		Dk: Besides do you have a job? If so, did you work last week (...)?

Fig. 3. The questionnaires of the EC countries by different specifications of the one-hour criterion and of the reference week in the question about being at work and/or having a job

and assisting on the family farm. The additional question was the following: "Did you have a minor (second or temporary) job in the reference week?" A

minor job is a job of less than 15 hours per week, with a salary of less than 450 DM (\$280 USD) and not subject to social security duties.

This question was inspired by the general question on the labour status in the socio-economic panel with five response categories (full-time employment, fixed part-time employment, apprenticeship, minor or casual job and conscript). The effect of this third question can be estimated from the response distribution in the socio-economic panel. Almost 4% of all employed persons or 1.1 million people indicated that they had a minor or casual job in 1988. About half of them were working less than 15 hours a week. With the introduction of this question in the Microcensus, the number of people with a minor job rose from 0.5 million in 1988 to 1.1 million in 1990 (from 2% of total employment to 4%). This shows that the tailored question for people with a minor job results in a more complete measurement. But it also shows the limited effect of an interviewer instruction accompanying the first question about currently working in the Microcensus before 1990. According to this instruction, persons with a job of a few hours or just one hour a week should have been included as employed persons. Despite this instruction in the survey before 1990, a substantial increase of persons with a minor job resulted from the introduction of a tailored question.

#### 4.2.5. Cue for persons with a job but temporarily not working

A question that probes whether having a job instead of currently working is included in the questionnaires of the United Kingdom (question 6), Greece (question 2), Denmark (question 2), Luxemburg (question B1), the Netherlands (question 201) and the Federal Republic of Germany (question 22). This question is preceded by a question about currently working in the United Kingdom and in Greece and by the general question on the main activity in Denmark. The

contrast between both questions in these sequences is a strong cue for persons with a job but not currently working. It indicates that although someone is not currently working but nevertheless has a job, she/he is considered as an employed person. In Luxemburg, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, the question about having a job is not preceded by a question about currently working. The question wording simply refers to having a job or a steady situation of performing work. The continuous job attachment is further referred to in a separate response category (Luxemburg: "did not work but had a job or activity that person was away from") or in an instruction for the interviewer (Federal Republic of Germany: "Including persons who usually work but who were, e.g., ill or on holiday in the reference week").

A separate response category for the measurement of the category of persons with a job but not working is also used in the composite question about currently working and/or having a job or in the general question on the main activity. The response category in the composite question distinguishes the persons not working from the persons working (Ireland, question 17, Spain, question D1 and Belgium, question 6). The response category for employed persons in the general question on the main activity refers to having a job irrespective of currently working (Portugal, question 7: "had a job or business", the Netherlands, question 101 and France, question 8). In France, it is only in the clarification that persons with a job but not necessarily working are apparently included.

#### 4.2.6. Cues for casual workers

For a careful assessment by casual workers of their activities within the reference



period, the reference period has to be clearly and precisely specified. This reference period is conveniently defined as a week.

The specification of the reference week occurs in the questions about currently working and about having a job because it pertains to both situations. The reference period in the question about currently working or having a job (Figure 3) is specified in a precise way with dates in France, Luxemburg, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom (*"la semaine du jour-mois au jour-mois,"* *"in der Berichtswoche Tag bis Tag-Monat,"* *"week ending Sunday day-month"*). The reference week is specified in Greece in an equally precise way by two days (*"last week, from Monday until Sunday"*). The question in Italy literally contains the words *"reference week"* (*"settimana di riferimento"*) and an exact date for the reference week is printed on the cover of the questionnaire. The question in Belgium contains a similar specification and the interviewer presumably knows the exact date determining the reference week in April. In Portugal, Ireland and Spain, the reference week is vaguely described as the last week. This vague specification hardly stimulates the respondent to assess carefully and allows for multiple interpretations. The last week, without an indication of the first and the last day of that week or an exact date, can be the week preceding the week of the interview, the seven days preceding the day of the interview or the week of the interview itself. The latter is more probable when the day of the interview is at the end of the week. In Denmark and the Netherlands, the question on having a job concerns the immediate present instead of the last week as in the other EC countries.

In the general question on the main activity, the reference week is only specified in Portugal as the last week. The general question in France, Italy and Denmark covers the current situation and includes no specification of the reference week. In Ireland, it refers to the usual situation and consequently, no reference period is specified. In the Netherlands any reference to time is missing. Whether the reference week is specified in the general question on the main activity in Spain, Belgium, Luxemburg or Greece is irrelevant because this question is not asked of employed persons.

#### 4.2.7. Cues for persons with a job without pay or profit

A correct decision of the respondent whether her/his activities fall within the boundaries of economic activities depends on the specification that only work for pay, profit or family gain qualifies as being employed. This distinction is made in all questionnaires except those in Belgium, Greece and Portugal.

The specification of paid work occurs either in the question itself or in the response category. In the United Kingdom (question 5), the Netherlands (question 201) and the Federal Republic of Germany (question 22), it is specified in the question itself. Paid work is specified in the response categories in the questionnaires of Luxemburg (question B1: *"did a paid work..."*), Denmark (question 1: *"working as an occupation"*), Ireland (questions 11 and 17: *"working for payment or profit"*), Spain (question D1: *"working (as a wage earner, for own account or as an assisting relative)"*), France (question 8: *"working (e.g., carries on a profession,..., has a paid job)"*) and the Netherlands (question 101: *"paid work"*). The specification *"paid work"* in the Dutch questionnaire is

displayed on the screen of the hand-held computer as a description for the first response category of the general question but it is replaced by an enumeration of different types of jobs on the prompt card.

Only the instruction in the appendix of the Italian questionnaire stipulates that working for payment or profit is intended. A specification of paid work is neither contained in the general question on the main activity nor in the following question about currently working.

#### 4.2.8. Empirical evidence

The effect of the inclusion of a specification of pay or profit for performed work can be derived from a respondent debriefing interview in the Current Population Survey in the United States (Martin and Polivka 1992). The 1967 questionnaire contains two questions for the identification of employed persons: the general question on the main activity and a question on working. The latter question is the following: "Did you do any work at all last week, not counting work around the house?" In an alternative questionnaire, it was changed to: "Last week did you do any work for either pay or profit?" Respondents were randomly asked either question. All respondents received various descriptions of hypothetical work situations at the end of the interview. One description concerned a person who put in twenty hours of volunteer service at a hospital last week. All respondents were asked whether they would report this person as working last week. Two tests in 1990 and 1991 showed similar results. A significantly larger proportion of respondents assigned to the current questionnaire improperly identified this person as an employed person than respondents assigned to the

alternative questionnaire (45% vs. 8% in 1990; 36% vs. 4% in 1991).

### 5. Summary of the Questionnaire Effects on the Measurement of Employment

The measurement of employment does not simply involve the measurement of a homogeneous category. Besides core employed persons who usually work full-time and on a permanent basis for an employer or are self-employed, we distinguish five other categories of employed persons with quite different job characteristics: persons who are temporarily absent from their work but who have a job, unpaid family workers, persons with a minor job, casual workers and persons with a job without pay or profit.

A valid measurement of these different job characteristics requires carefully adapted questions. The category of persons who are temporarily not at work but who have a job is most appropriately measured by a question about having a job following a question about currently working. A contrast with the question about currently working is not an absolute condition. The single question about having a job, without being preceded by the question about currently working, may already be suitable provided that it contains a specific response category for those who are temporarily not at work but who have a job. The inclusion of a response category in the composite question or in the general question on the main activity is less suitable. The appropriate question for the unpaid family workers explicitly mentions them as a separate category of employed persons. The appropriate question for persons with a minor job of a single or a few hours per week contains the specification that all jobs even for a single hour or a few hours qualify as being employed. For a valid measurement of the

category of the casual workers, a suitable question contains a clear and precise specification of the reference period. A minimum requirement for a valid measurement of the category of persons with a job near the boundary of economic activities is the simple specification that only work for pay, profit or family gain fits within the definition of employment. But, paid work does not exhaust all economic activities. The definition also covers non-market economic activities, e.g., the construction of one's own dwelling. No specific question for the identification of persons engaged in this non-market production is included in any of the questionnaires. Neglecting their measurement therefore does not affect comparability.

The twelve questionnaires reveal many differences with respect to the types of questions included in the questionnaire, their sequence and their wording. Because the validity of the measurement of employment is likely to depend on the inclusion

of particular types of questions, their sequence and their wording, the measurement error in the estimates of employed persons is also likely to differ between the twelve EC countries. The fit between the actual measurement in the twelve questionnaires and an appropriate measurement of the five special categories of employed persons is summarized in Figure 4. These conclusions concern the questionnaires for the labour force surveys since 1986 and 1987. Some questionnaires were meanwhile revised, e.g., the German questionnaire in 1990 and the British and Dutch questionnaires in 1992. Others remained essentially the same with respect to the measurement of employment, e.g., the French and the Italian questionnaires. Consequently, most conclusions still apply.

The questions on the labour status satisfy only the requirements for a valid measurement of the five special categories of employed persons in Luxemburg. Because the appropriate questions are

Country	Special categories of employed persons				
	with a job but temporarily absent	unpaid family workers	minor jobs part-timers	casual workers	work at boundaries of economic act.
	Inclusion of appropriate question or cues				
	question about having a job	cue for unpaid family workers	work of 1 or a few hours	specification of ref. week	specification of paid work
Luxemburg	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Fed. Rep. Germany	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
France	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Netherlands	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Denmark	yes	yes	no	no	yes
United Kingdom	yes	no	no	yes	yes
Greece	yes	no	yes	yes	no
Spain	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Ireland	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Portugal	no	yes	yes	no	no
Italy	no	no	no	yes	no
Belgium	no	no	no	yes	no

*Fig. 4. The fit between the actual measurement in the questionnaires of the EC countries and the most appropriate measurement of the five special categories of employed persons*

included, containing the necessary cues, a more complete measurement of employment in both countries may be expected compared with the other EC countries. The questions on the labour status in France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands satisfy all requirements for a valid measurement except one. An appropriate cue is missing for the measurement of the category of persons with a minor job. Only the interviewer instruction to the question about having a job (Federal Republic of Germany, question 22) and the question about currently working (France, question 11) stipulate that persons with a minor job of only a few hours or even just one hour, are considered as employed persons. Although the interviewer instructions leave no doubt about the inclusion of persons with a minor job, it is not part of the question itself. The interviewer may ignore the instructions. The identification of persons with a minor job depends on interviewer performance. The question itself does not meet the question design requirements. The question about having a job in the Dutch questionnaire (question 201) does not specify the reference period. A retrospective measurement of the labour status, referring to the last week, is rejected in the Netherlands. Instead, the questions on the labour status refer to the present. No precise specification of the reference period is necessary in this case. This omission particularly affects the identification of casual workers.

Five questionnaires fail in two requirements and the questionnaire in Portugal fails in three requirements. All categories of employed persons are equally affected by the question failures. The questionnaires in Belgium and Italy meet just one requirement, the specification of the reference week. The cue for the unpaid family

workers and the specification of paid work are not included in the questions on the labour status in Italy, but is in the interviewer instruction, printed on the last page of the questionnaire. An interviewer instruction may be ignored and is therefore not compensating for the omission of the appropriate cues in the question.

Perhaps other survey methodologists do not share our views about the effects of question type, question order and question wording on the measurement of employment. But they cannot deny the differences between the questionnaires or the problems in the comparability of the employment estimates. This disagreement may be resolved only by empirical research resulting in a better understanding of the measurement of employment.

These differences in the measurement of employment are not trivial. The share of each specific category of employment varies between 1% and 10% or even more. The proportion of persons with a job of less than eleven hours a week is estimated at 1% to 2% of total employment in most EC countries, but it is 5% to 6% in Denmark and the United Kingdom and reaches 10% in the Netherlands. The unpaid family workers are another sizeable category, their proportion is 5% to 6% in Portugal and Spain and 14% in Greece. A few experiments with the Microcensus (Germany) and the Current Population Survey (United States) showed that the inclusion of specific questions significantly improved the identification of sizeable and specific categories of employment. When we assume that a more appropriate question design has a similar effect on the estimated size of a specific category of employed persons in those countries where the questionnaire fails to completely identify these employed persons, the total employment rate may rise in the order of

.1% to 1%. Employment turns out to be larger than previously estimated and the relative ranking of a country on the basis of the total employment rate may change. When the employment rates from the labour force surveys in the twelve EC countries are compared, it should be remembered that the measurement of employment is more valid in some countries, e.g., Denmark, Luxemburg, France, the Federal Republic of Germany or the Netherlands than in other EC countries, e.g., Portugal, Italy or Belgium.

The effect on specific categories of employed persons is even larger. Employment categories which are sensitive to question effects are concentrated in, e.g., specific age categories or industrial branches. Minor jobs are relatively frequent among young people and unpaid family workers are relatively frequent in agriculture and retail distribution.

Three implications for the labour market policy should be mentioned with respect to the measurement of employment. A first and obvious implication concerns the allocation of the structural funds from the EC for regional economic development and economic reconversion. This allocation is justified only on the basis of comparable labour market indicators. The relevant labour market indicators are the unemployment rate with total employment as an element in the denominator, the share of industrial employment in total employment and the industrial employment trends. Incomplete measurement of national or regional employment jeopardizes the comparability of those labour market indicators as eligibility measures.

A second implication is related to national policy making. National policy is concerned with the nation's economic position relative to neighbours and trade

partners. Policy measures are needed when the gap between the national employment rate and that in other countries is considered too large. An increased employment rate is a major target because increased employment contributes to production growth, the social security burden is better distributed over a larger population of employed persons and labour participation is an important means of social integration. However, when the gap is overestimated due to a measurement error in the employment estimates, a concern with employment growth is not really a priority. Moreover, when employment actually consists of many minor and casual jobs, policy measures should consolidate employment rather than facilitate the access to the labour market or support the creation of new jobs.

A third implication follows from the individual characteristics of each specific category of employment. Their shares on the labour market depend on the institutional framework of the labour market and the labour legislation; these categories vary with the fluctuations in production needs (e.g., minor jobs are frequent for segments of the service sector with short daily peaks of labour demand, e.g., food retail outlets, office cleaning and newspaper delivery). A quantitative description of the structure of the labour force with the necessary details on those specific categories requires an accurate estimate of their sizes.

Our analysis is strictly focused on the questionnaires. But the questionnaire is only one of the essential survey conditions with an effect on the validity of the responses. It is designed by the survey statistician but it is used by the interviewer; in many ways, its use is beyond the control of the survey statistician. Well-trained professional interviewers who

are continuously monitored presumably achieve a more complete measurement of employment than temporary interviewers. Although an indication of the interaction effect of questionnaire and interviewer characteristics is hardly possible, temporary interviewers with little training or supervision are unlikely to compensate for the questionnaire failures. The response validity also depends on whether self-reports or proxy reports are provided. Again an interaction is assumed between questionnaire failures and proxy response. Invalid proxy responses most likely occur more often when a meaningful question

sequence or appropriate cues are missing. Nonresponse is another main source of bias. This depends on several factors, e.g., the attitude of the sample person, the interviewer skills and the actual environment where a sample person is living. Comparative research into these survey conditions of the EC labour force surveys is needed. We may then be able to derive a balance of the different types of error. This is the next step in our research on the designs of the labour force survey in the EC countries and how the designs affect the international comparability of the labour force survey estimates.

### Appendix

#### THE QUESTIONS FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE EC COUNTRIES (ENGLISH TRANSLATION).

Note: the appendix is a selection of the questions about the labour status and of the first question about the current job characteristics on the routing for employed persons and the first question about a previous job experience for persons without a job. Copies of the questionnaires in the original version are available from the author.

#### CSO, IRELAND, 1987

11. Usual situation with regard to employment
  - a. working for payment or profit
  - b. looking for first regular job
  - c. unemployed, having lost or given up previous job
  - d. actively looking for work again after interruption of working life
  - e. study
  - f. housekeeping
  - g. retired
  - h. disabled
  - i. other (specify): ...

#### INSEE, FRANCE, 1987

8. Current activity.
  - a. working (e.g., carries on a profession, on one's own account or as a wage-earner, has a paid job, even part-time, assisting relatives without wage or salary, apprentice) → 14
  - b. registered unemployed
  - c. without a job
  - d. study
  - e. military service
  - f. retired
  - g. housekeeping
  - h. other

#### ISTAT, ITALY, 1987

101. What is your current situation?
  - a. working → 111
  - b. looking for a new job
  - c. looking for first job
  - d. military service
  - e. housekeeping
  - f. study
  - g. disabled
  - h. retired
  - i. other

#### 9. Did you ever work?

- a. yes
- b. no → 11

17. What was person's situation last week?
- a. working for at least 1 hour for payment or profit, including work on the family farm or business → 19
  - b. on lay-off → 34
  - c. had a job but not at work → 18
  - d. neither worked nor had a job → 32

18. Why was person not working last week?
- a. new job to start in future → 32
  - b. ... → 19

19. Would person describe this job as his/her principal, regular job and as full-time or part-time?

32. Has person ever had a job, either as employee, self-employed or assisting relative, other than holiday work?

11. Nevertheless, did you work in the reference week from day until day-month?
- a. yes → 14
  - b. no → 12

14. Main occupation.

Instructions for the interviewer.  
Q8. Working: including persons with a job even if they are ill now, with maternity leave or on holiday. Not including persons who interrupted their work due to military service, disability, retirement

Q11. Working: even for 1 hour or an occasional job, even as an assisting relative without wage or salary, voluntary work is not included

102. Did you work in the reference week (comprising the reference day ...) whatever your situation mentioned in question 101?
- a. yes → 111
  - b. no → 131

111. How many hours per week did you work in the week of day-month?

131. Did you ever work?

Instructions for the interviewer.  
Q101. Working: who has a job for own account or as a wage-earner, for profit or payment, who assists a relative working for own account without a labour contract

questions 11 and 17 on the labour status are reproduced in the figures 1–3

**STATISTISCHES  
BUNDESAMT, FRG, 1987**

22. Were you performing paid work or carrying on a profession in the reference week (day until day–month)? (main or casual job, also assisting at the family business)

- a. regular job
- b. casual job
- c. no, has no job

23. Have you assisted your relatives at the family farm in the reference week (day until day–month)?

- a. yes
- b. no

50. What is the economic activity of the firm or company you are/were working for?

questions 8 and 11 on the labour status are reproduced in the figures 1–3

**OPCS, UK, 1987**

5. Did you do any paid work last week, that is in the seven days ending Sunday day–month, either as an employee or as self-employed?

- a. yes → 13
- b. no → 6

6. Even though you were not working, did you have a job or business that you were away from last week?

- a. yes → 7
- b. no → 63
- c. waiting to take up a new job or business already obtained → 63

7. What was the main reason that you were away from work last week?

- 13. What was your main occupation last week?
- 63. Have you ever had a paid job, apart from casual or holiday work?

questions 101 and 102 on the labour status are reproduced in the figures 1–3

**STATISTICAL SERVICE,  
GREECE, 1983**

1. Did you work last week, from Monday until Sunday, even for just 1 hour?

- a. yes → 5
- b. no

2. Even though you were not working last week, did you have a job that you were away from?

- a. yes → 4
- b. no

3. If you were not working last week nor did you have a job that you were away from what were your main activities last week?

- a. unemployment beneficiary → 15
- b. study → 15
- c. retired → 15
- d. disabled → 15
- e. housekeeping → 15
- f. other → 15

4. Why were you not working last week, although you had a job?

5. How many jobs did you have last week?

15. Even though you are not working now, did you ever have a regular job?



Instructions for the interviewer.

Q22. Including persons who  
– are usually at work but who were e.g., ill or on holiday in the reference week  
– are at work for only a few hours or just 1 hour per week...

questions 22 and 23 on the labour status are reproduced in the figures 1–3

DANMARKS STATISTIK, DENMARK, 1988

1. What is your current position?
  - a. working (self-employed, assisting relative, wage-earner, apprentice) → 3
  - b. military service
  - c. without a job
  - d. housekeeping
  - e. retired
  - f. disabled
  - g. study
  - h. other without a job
2. Besides do you have a job
  - a. yes
  - b. no → 22
3. Did you work last week (for reference week look at address label)
  - a. yes, worked for at least 1 hour → 5
  - b. was temporarily absent last week due to ... → 5
  - i. other → 5
  - j. no → 4
4. Why not?
  - a. without a job → 19
  - b. ... → 19

questions 5 and 6 on the labour status are reproduced in the figures 1–3

CBS, NETHERLANDS, 1987

101. We like to talk with you about your activities. When you look at the possibilities on the prompt card, which category do you belong to?
  - a. had a job or business (working for payment or profit, assisting relatives ...) → 801
  - b. military service
  - c. looking for work after loss of job
  - d. looking for first job
  - e. study, apprentice
  - f. housekeeping
  - g. retired
  - h. disabled
  - i. unpaid work with allowance
  - j. voluntary work
  - k. other

201. Are you performing paid work even for just 1 or a few hours per week or for a brief time?
  - a. yes → 801
  - b. no → 301

questions 1 and 2 on the labour status are reproduced in the figures 1–3

INE, PORTUGAL, 1986

7. What was your main situation in relation to the economic activity last week?
  - a. had a job or business → 9
  - b. had a job to take up later → 33
  - c. without a job
  - d. study
  - e. military service → 33
  - f. retired
  - g. housekeeping
  - h. disabled
  - i. other
8. Did you do any work last week apart from the aforementioned (even for just 1 hour or as an assisting relative)?
  - a. yes
  - b. no → 33

5. Are you a wage-earner, an assisting relative or self-employed?

19. Did you ever work? If so, how long ago?
- a. never
  - b. yes, but not the last 3 years
  - c. yes, left job last week → 3
  - d. yes...

questions 1, 2, 3 and 19 on the labour status are reproduced in the figures 1–3

INE, SPAIN, 1987

- D1. What was your situation last week in relation to your activity?
- a. military service
  - b. working (wage-earner, for own account or as an assisting relative) for at least 1 hour per week as a main activity → E1
  - c. working (wage-earner, for own account or as an assisting relative) for at least 1 hour per week as a minor activity without having worked in main job → E1
  - d. working abroad → E1
  - e. had a job but not at work → D5
  - f. not working, looking for work and available → F1
  - g. not working, not looking for work but available → F2
  - h. other → F2

301. Have you ever done paid work?

801. What is your status of employment?

questions 101 and 201 on the labour status are reproduced in the figures 1–3

NIS, BELGIUM, 1986

6. Labour status in the reference week.
- a. has an appointment or activity and carried it on → 8
  - b. has an appointment or activity and did not carry it on
  - c. military service → 20
  - d. has no appointment nor activity → 20

9. What is the economic activity of the firm or company you are working for?

33. Have you ever had a job or business?

questions 7 and 8 on the labour status are reproduced in the figures 1–3

STATEC, LUXEMBURG, 1983

- B1. Did you have a job in the week from day until day-month? If so, did you work?
- a. did a paid work in the reference week (1 hour or more) → C1
  - b. unpaid assisting relative → C1
  - c. did not work in the reference week but had a job or activity that he was away from → B2
  - d. did not work and had no job nor activity → D1

D2. Besides your military service, did you do any work last week even for just 1 hour  
a. yes → E1  
b. no → H1

D5. Why did you not work?  
a. had a job but did not start yet → F1  
b. other → E1

E1. What is your main occupation?

F2. Have you ever done any work for payment or profit or as an assisting relative?

H1. What was your situation last week?  
a. study  
b. retired  
c. housekeeping  
d. disabled  
e. allowance  
f. unpaid voluntary work  
g. other

question D1 on the labour status is reproduced in the figures 1–3

7. Persons with a job but not at work in the reference week due to:  
a. ...  
h. new job to start later → 20  
i. other reasons

8. Did you have more than one job or activity in the reference week?  
a. yes  
b. no

20. Previous work experience and time since the end of previous job.

32. Situation of persons without a job and who are not looking for a job.  
a. study  
b. retired  
c. disabled  
d. housekeeping  
e. other

question 6 on the labour status is reproduced in the figures 1–3

B2. Why did you not work in the week from day until day-month?  
a. ...  
h. new job to start in the future → D1  
i. other reasons

C1. How many jobs did you have in the week from day until day-month?  
a. had one job or one activity  
b. had more than one job or activity

D1. Did you already work in a regular way?

E2. Other situations in relation to economic activities.  
a. study  
b. retired  
c. disabled  
d. other

question B1 on the labour status is reproduced in the figures 1–3

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