



# MEASURING DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

**Fabrice Murtin**

**OECD Statistics Directorate**

UNECE Experts Group Meeting on Measuring Quality of  
Employment  
Geneva, 4-6 October 2017



# Discrimination at work in UNECE Handbook: key issues

---

- ***Discrimination at work (self-reported)***: Experiencing any **less favourable treatment** that is explicitly or implicitly **based on a particular ground** (or grounds), **such as sex, race**, etc. (**direct discrimination**), or, although neutral on the surface, the same condition, treatment or criterion lead in practice to a **harsh impact on some persons** on the basis of characteristics such as race, colour, sex, etc. (**indirect discrimination**)
- ***Types***: are plenty, e.g. discrimination, harassment, physical violence, intimidation are all compatible with this general definition (“less favourable treatment”)...
- ***Specific cause***: suggests specific questions (sex, age...)...
- ***By whom?*** Management, clients, colleagues...
- ***Consequences***: hint at subjective harm, implying suggestive questions...
- ***Degrees***: indirect (hidden) vs direct (explicit), episodic or continuous, suggesting a large scale of answer



# Selection criteria for good questions

---

- **Several types can be covered...**
  1. Discrimination
  2. Harassment and violence
  3. ???
- ...but mind loaded questions and **framing effects**
- **Objective** (e.g. employment rate gaps) **versus subjective**: *subjective questions seem fine given the topic*
- **Belief versus Behaviour** : *Experience or perception? Both are complementary*
- **Detailed scale vs binomial**: *detailed scale is recommended in several connex fields (job/life satisfaction) and it makes sense given that there are different degrees in discrimination (i.e. none/hidden/explicit)*
- **How many questions?**: *integration to an extended module (EWCS/ISSP/ESS)? to LFS ? to GSS?*



# Taking stock: EWCS, EU-LFS, Eurobarometer

Binomial scale

Types

Causes

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
<b>European Working Conditions Surveys (EWCSs)</b>	
• And over the past 12 months, during the course of your work have you been subjected to:	
• Physical violence?* (2010; 2000; 1996)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Bullying /harassment? (2010; 2005)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Sexual harassment? (2010)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Over the past 12 months, have you or have you not, been subjected at work to:	
• Sexual discrimination/discrimination linked to gender?* (2010; 2005; 2000; 1996)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Age discrimination? (2010; 2005; 2000; 1996)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Discrimination linked to nationality? (2010; 2005; 2000)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Discrimination linked to ethnic background/race?* (2010; 2005; 2000; 1996)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Discrimination linked to religion? (2010; 2005)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Discrimination linked to disability? (2010; 2005; 2000; 1996)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Discrimination linked to sexual orientation? 2010; 2005; 2000; 1996)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Over the past 12 months, have you or have you not, been subjected at work to intimidation? (2000; 1996)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Over the past 12 months, have you or have you not, been subjected at work to unwanted sexual attention? (2005; 2000; 1996)	1-2 (Yes-No)
<b>EU-Labour Force Surveys Ad Hoc Modules (EU-LFS AHMs)</b>	
• Exposure to harassment or bullying. (2013, 2007)	[Choose one]
• Exposure to violence or threat of violence. (2013, 2007)	[Choose one]
<b>Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)</b>	
• What are the main health and safety risks you face at workplace? Exposure to violence and harassment (list of items). )	[Choose max three]

Loaded types in the end

List format



# Taking stock: GBR and FRA national surveys

Perception rather than experience

## British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)

- How anxious are you about being unfairly treated through discrimination?
- How anxious are you about victimisation by management?

1 – 4 (Very anxious - Not anxious at all)

1 – 4 (Very anxious - Not anxious at all)

## French Enquête de Conditions de Travail (2013)

- Over the last 12 months, have you experienced the following difficult situations at the workplace : some people...

- ignore you
- prevent you from expressing yourself
- make fun of you in public
- make unfair criticisms of your work
- requires useless or degrading tasks
- undermine your work
- claims you have mental issues
- tells you obscene or degrading things
- make unwanted sexual advances
- make offensive jokes

- This person or these people are:

- staff of your company or organisation
- clients, users or customers

- Do you think that this behaviour is linked to your:

- gender
- health situation or handicap
- skin colour
- ethnic origin or nationality
- dress-style
- age
- sexual orientation
- occupation

- Over the last 12 months, have you experienced in your workplace:

- a verbal aggression from your colleagues or managers
- a physical or sexual aggression from your colleagues or managers

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

1-2 (Oui - Non)

larger scale

Types revealed  
from concrete  
experiences

By whom?

Cause

Binomial

Loaded types

# Questions on discrimination in FQWLS

## 1/3

C20. In working life, unequal treatment and discrimination can occur in pay, hiring, opportunities for career advancement or access to further training.

Do you reckon that unequal treatment or discrimination occurs at your own workplace on the basis of:

Causes	Experience			Observed at workplace		Experienced by oneself	
	Yes	No	Not appl.	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Age, especially the young?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
2. Age, especially the old?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
3. Sex, especially women?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
4. Sex, especially men?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
5. Political views or activity in the trade union movement?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
6. Having a family or being pregnant?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
7. Favouritism?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
8. Temporary or part-time employment relationship?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
9. Nationality or colour?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
10. Knowledge of Finnish (Swedish)	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
11. Disability or invalidity?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2
12. Sexual orientation, such as lesbianism or gayness?	1	2	3				

AT THE END, ASK THIS SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION IN RESPECT OF ALL POSITIVE REPLIES:

Have you personally been discriminated against at your current workplace on the basis of REASON)?

# Questions on discrimination in FQWLS

## 2/3

C21. Have you fallen subject to unequal treatment or discrimination at your workplace in the last five years in the following situations:

	Yes	No
<b>Forms</b>		
A. At the time of hiring or appointment?	1	2
B. In remuneration?	1	2
C. In gaining appreciation?	1	2
D. In career advancement opportunities?	1	2
E. In distribution of work or shifts?..	1	2
F. In access to training arranged by the employer?	1	2
G. In receiving information?	1	2
H. In gaining employment fringe benefits?.	1	2
I. In the attitudes of co-workers or superiors?I.	1	2



# Overview and suggestions: extended questionnaire

Survey	Nb. Questions	Nature	Scope	Scale	Loaded questions in the end
EWCS	10	Experience	Types Causes	Binomial	Yes
FIN	>30	Experience	Types Causes	Binomial	
GBR	2	Perception	Types	1 to 4	
FRA	22	Experience	Types Causes By whom	1 to 2	Yes

- **Experience first**
- **Assess types is priority**
- **Depending on space available, cause of discrimination is probably the second priority**
- **Consequences in terms of negative affects could then be assessed**
- **Detailed scale**



# Core question: OECD Guidelines on measuring Quality of the Working Environment

---

- As in the British Skills and Employment Survey, focus on psychological harm...but do not necessarily refer to anxiety
- Capture different types of discrimination
- Use a detailed scale (5 points)

**“I FEEL UNFAIRLY TREATED THROUGH DISCRIMINATION AT WORK.”**

- (1) Completely disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neither disagree nor agree
- (4) Agree
- (5) Completely agree