RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

Continuous qualification of workers' representatives as a social challenge facing co-determination

RUB

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What Does Co-Determination Do? What Can We Learn from Research?
2nd Bienniale Conference, Hans-Boeckler-Foundation
WZB Berlin, 11th of June, 2018

BACKGROUND

- Foundation 1975 / 1979
- Contract between RUB and IG Metall
- Central institute of RUB
- Equally represented committee
- Bridge between social science and labour

ACTIVITIES

- Transdisciplinary research
- Formation projects
- Further education programmes
- Interdisciplinary lectures

Introduction

- Labour under deep transformation, workers' representatives are facing with numerous challenges
- This transformation is reflected in qualification requirements, forms of participation, and labour policy
- In order to identify relevant fields of action of labour policy and to investigate qualification necessities, the results of two research projects of our institute are presented:
  - QuBA: Qualification requirements of works councils and qualification offers for works councils (Hans-Böckler-Foundation) (2016 - 2017)
  - Imit²: Co-determining and co-creating Industry 4.0 (FGW) (2017 - 2018)

Background QuBA

- Lack of reliable and profound data concerning qualification requirements and qualification behavior of workers representatives

Goals:

- Identification of (future) qualification demands and requirements for workers representatives
- Investigation of qualification behavior of workers representatives and their decision criteria
- Recommendations for action concerning qualification contents and forms (target group specific and union specific)

→ Promotion of co-determination competence and operational co-determination

Database (QuBA)

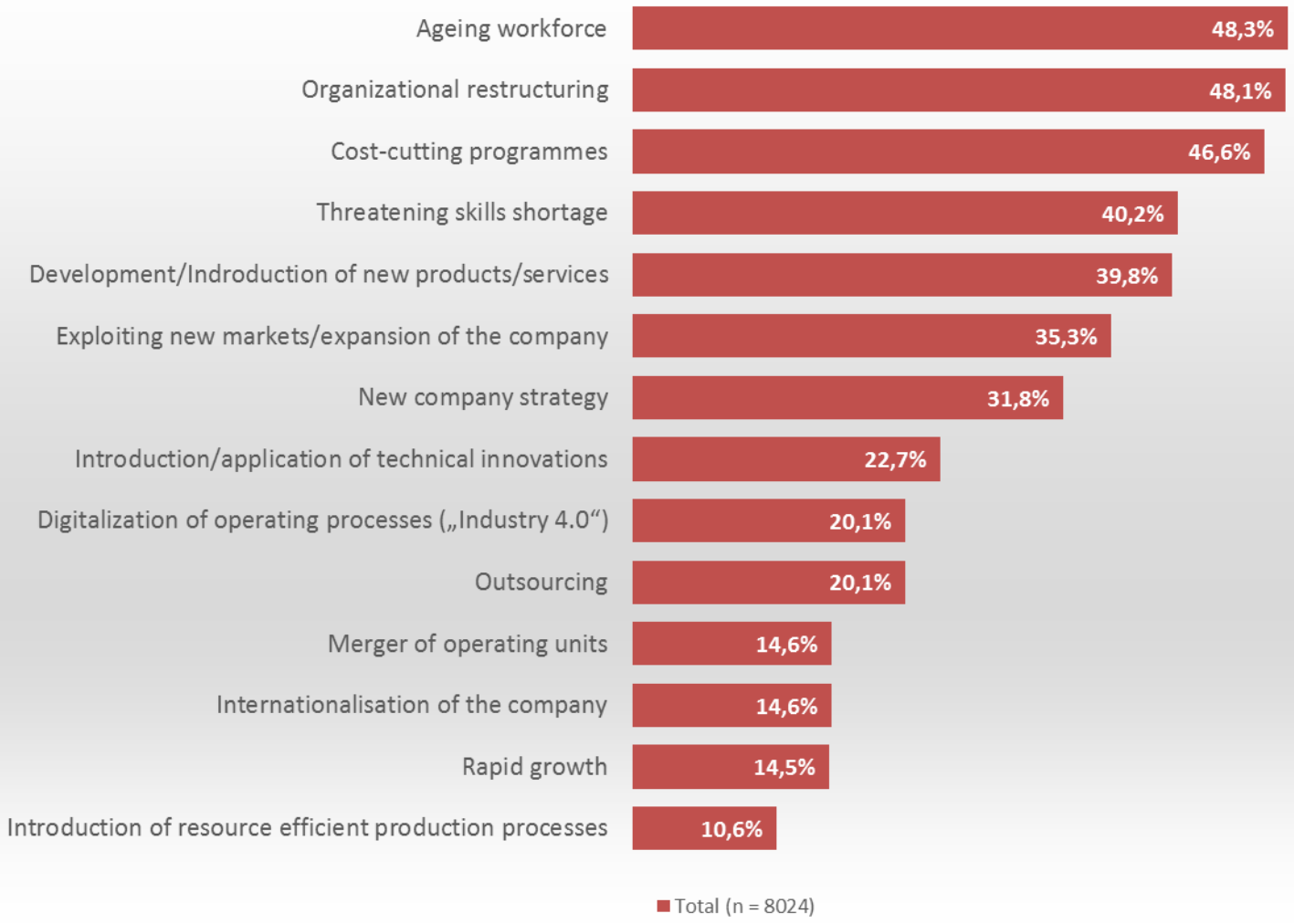
Multi-level sample

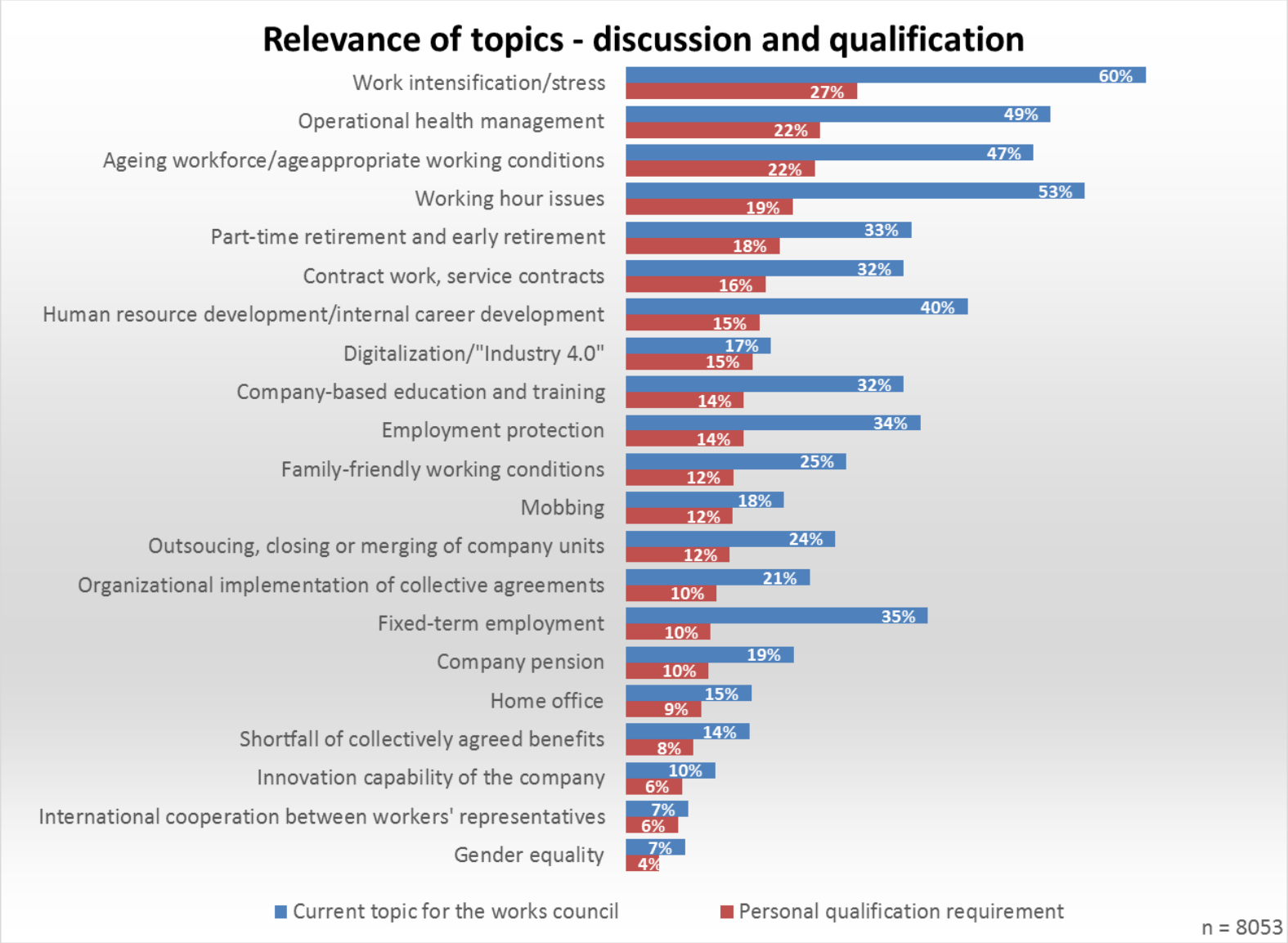
Stratified sample (company size and sector) → Random sample of works council com-mittees → Random selection of works council members to partici-pate *

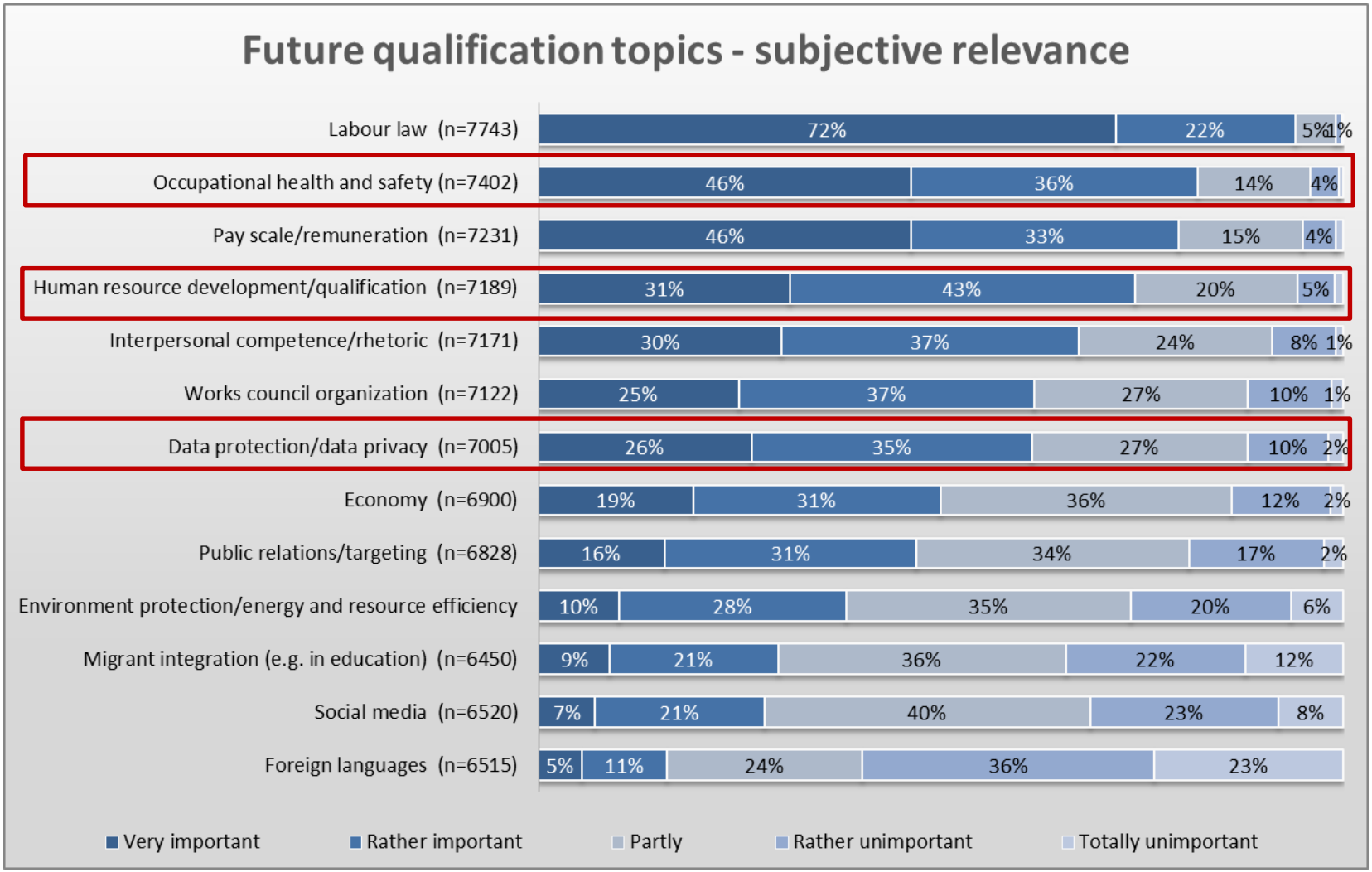
*Selection probability within the committee was adjusted to the size of the works council

Final response rate				
	Paper	Online	Total	Rate
Overall	7304	869 (10,6%)	**8173**	**22,1%**

Current operational challenges




Relevance of topics - discussion and qualification
Work intensification/stress 60% 27%
Operational health management 49% 22%
Ageing workforce/ageappropriate working conditions 47% 22%
Working hour issues 53% 19%
Part-time retirement and early retirement 33% 18%
Contract work, service contracts 32% 16%
Human resource development/internal career development 40% 15%
Digitalization/"Industry 4.0" 17% 15%
Company-based education and training 32% 14%
Employment protection 34% 14%
Family-friendly working conditions 25% 12%
Mobbing 18% 12%
Outsoucing, closing or merging of company units 24% 12%
Organizational implementation of collective agreements 21% 10%
Fixed-term employment 35% 10%
Company pension 19% 10%
Home office 15% 9%
Shortfall of collectively agreed benefits 14% 8%
Innovation capability of the company 10% 6%
International cooperation between workers' representatives 7% 6%
Gender equality 7% 4%
Current topic for the works council
Personal qualification requirement
n = 8053


Future qualification topics - subjective relevance
Labour law (n=7743)
72%
22%
5%
1%
Occupational health and safety (n=7402)
46%
36%
14%
4%
Pay scale/remuneration (n=7231)
46%
33%
15%
4%
Human resource development/qualification (n=7189)
31%
43%
20%
5%
Interpersonal competence/rhetoric (n=7171)
30%
37%
24%
8%
1%
Works council organization (n=7122)
25%
37%
27%
10%
1%
Data protection/data privacy (n=7005)
26%
35%
27%
10%
2%
Economy (n=6900)
19%
31%
36%
12%
2%
Public relations/targeting (n=6828)
16%
31%
34%
17%
2%
Environment protection/energy and resource efficiency
10%
28%
35%
20%
6%
Migrant integration (e.g. in education) (n=6450)
9%
21%
36%
22%
12%
Social media (n=6520)
7%
21%
40%
23%
8%
Foreign languages (n=6515)
5%
11%
24%
36%
23%
Very important
Rather important
Partly
Rather unimportant
Totally unimportant

Relevant findings

- Works councils are faced with multiple challenges with regard to environmental demands and intra-organizational strategies
- The most urgent topics are related to working conditions and employability in general
- The relevance of Digitalization/Industry 4.0 varies among industries and company size, on average it can be classified as a mid-table topic
- In order to co-create transformation processes in the interest of the workforce, works councils require specific training

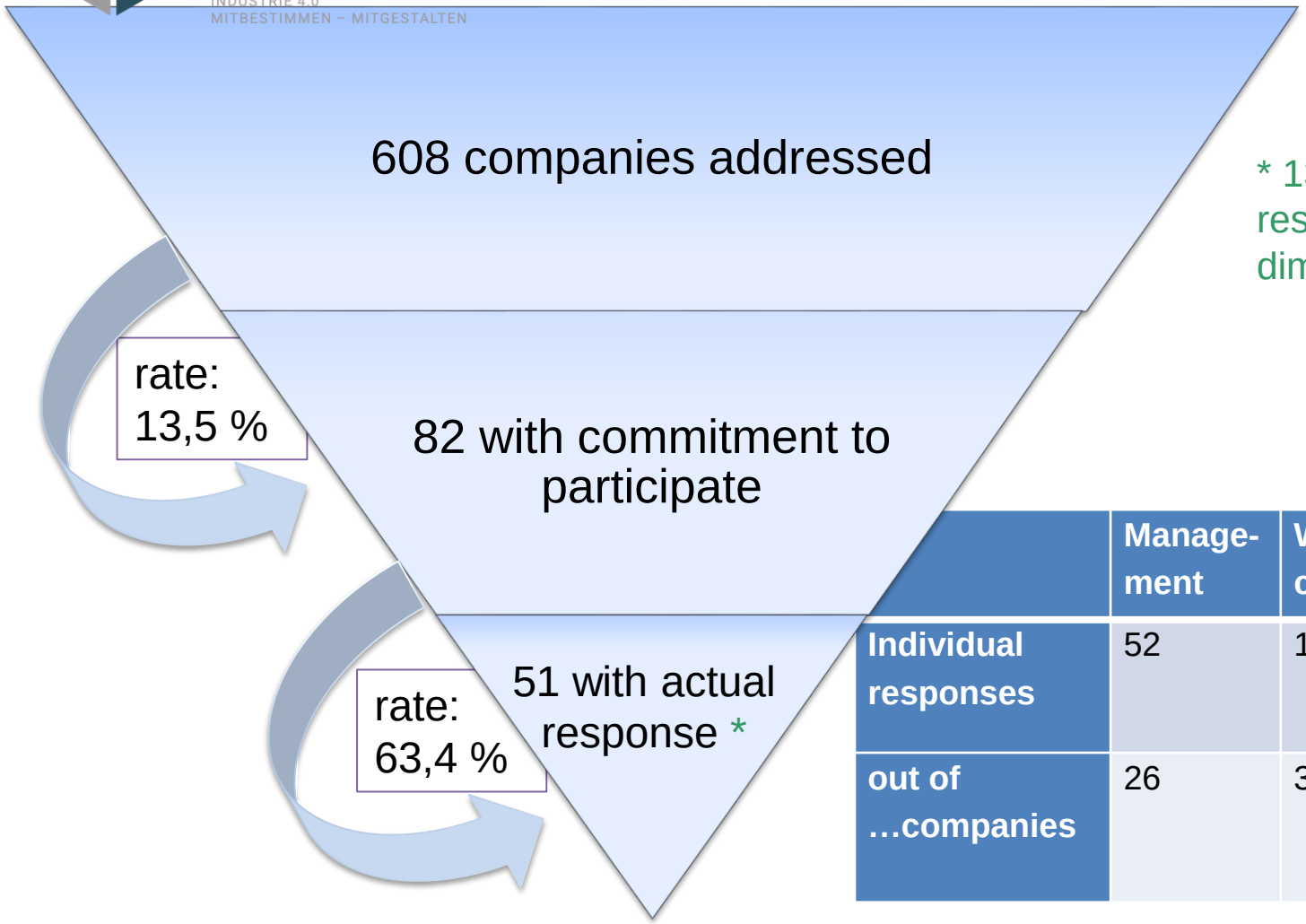
→ What are the implications of these findings for the company level?

imit²
INDUSTRIE 4.0
MITBESTIMMEN – MITGESTALTEN

Background (IMit²)

- To what extent do **works councils currently participate** in processes of technological change in manufacturing enterprises in NRW?
- Do works councils take a proactive role with regard to **involving the employees** in these processes?
- Did works councils take part in **qualification measures** for digitization/Industry 4.0?
- Do works councils feel **adequately qualified** for this topic?
- How have the **working conditions and –activities of the employees** changed so far in the context of digitization?

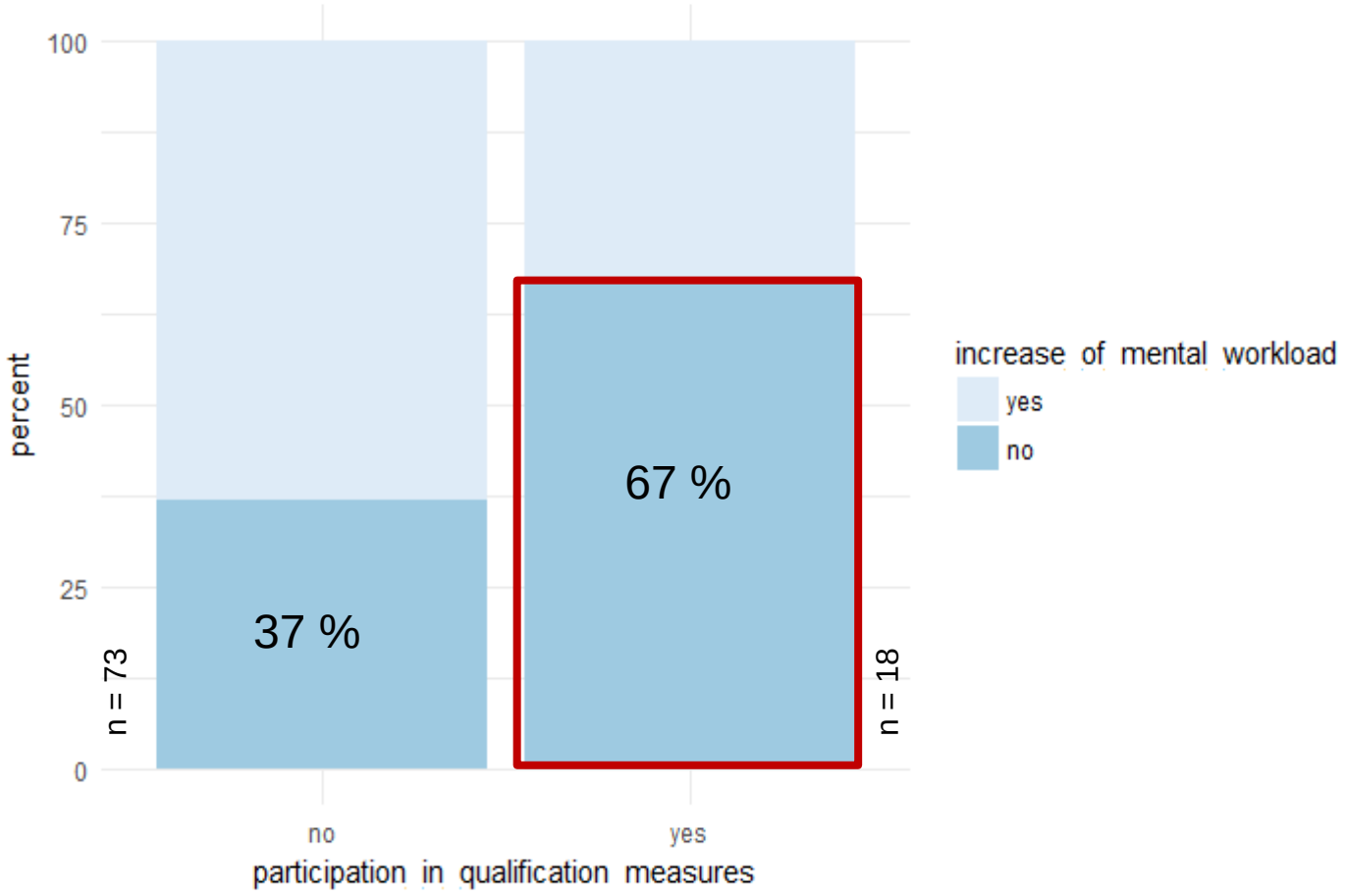
Database (IMit²)



* 13 companies with responses for every dimension

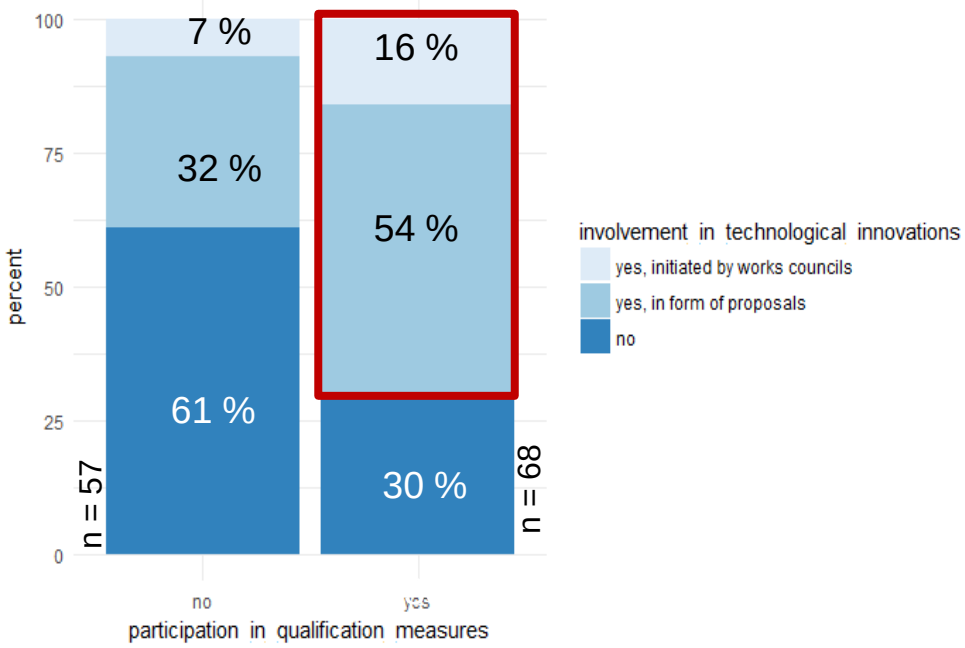
	Manage-ment	Works council	Emp-loyees
Individual responses	52	144	137
out of …companies	26	33	41

Qualification and capability

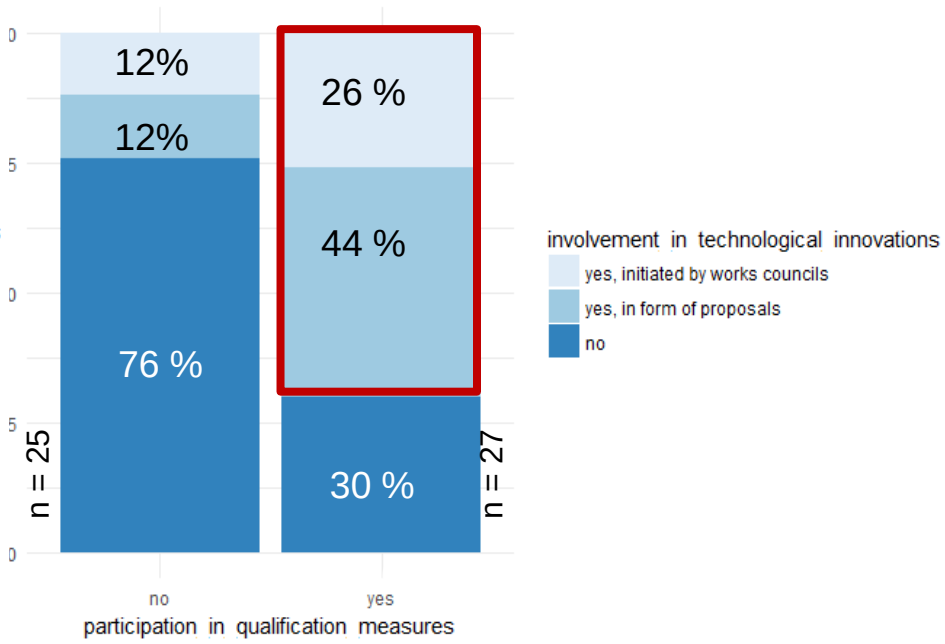


Qualification – a premise for a successful co-creation?

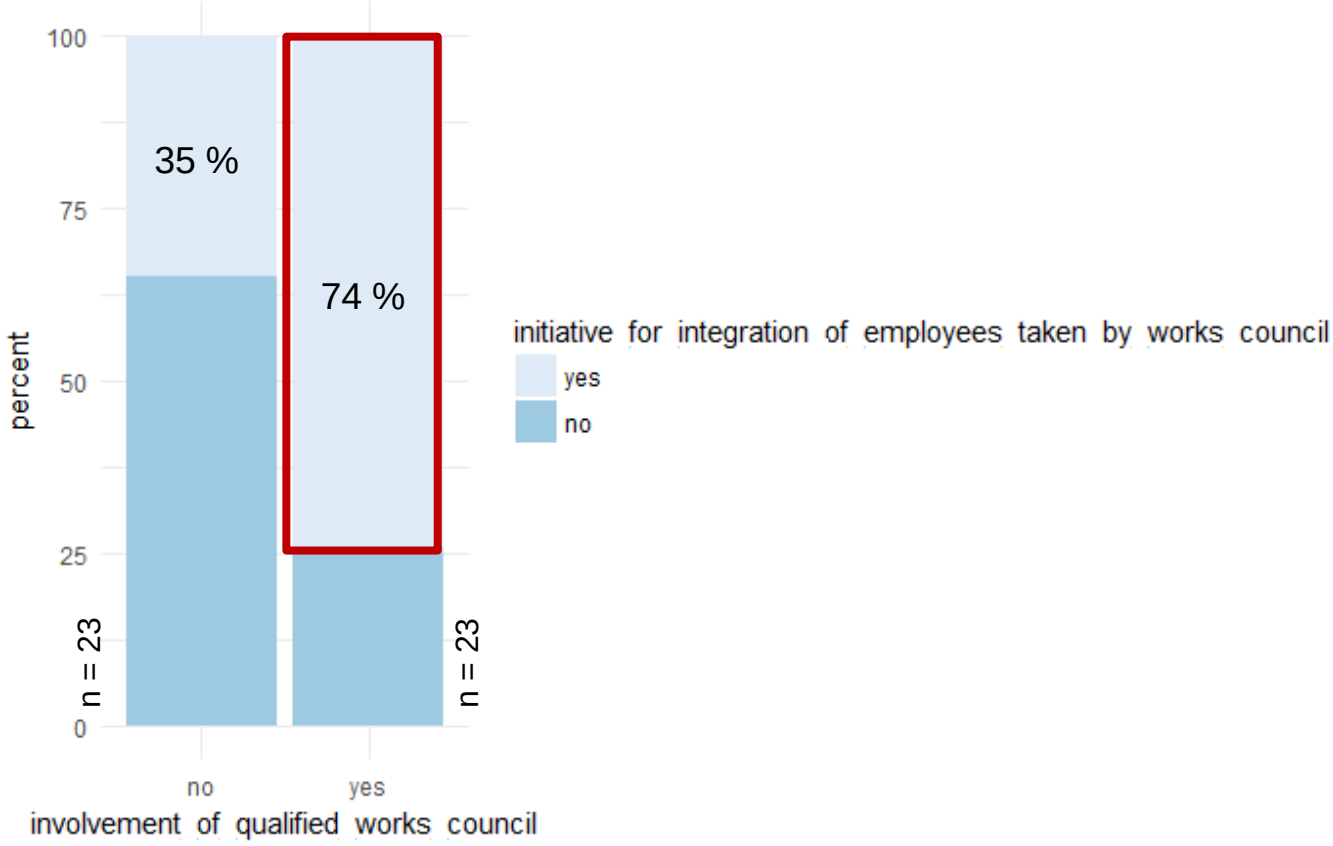
all observed



500-1.999 employees



The proactive works council – implications for the participative change culture



imit 2
INDUSTRIE 4.0
MITBESTIMMEN – MITGESTALTEN

Relevant findings

- Systematic qualification can be an important instrument…
  - to enable **works councils** to take proactively part in processes of technological change
  - for **employees** to handle the increase of functional requirements and complexity
- <u>However:</u> Only **one out of three** works councils feels **adequately qualified** for taking a proactive role in processes of technological change
- **Exemption** represents a significant circumstance supporting the proactive role of works councils, especially with regard to informing the employees in processes of technological change.

Conclusion

- Works councils operate in an increasingly complex environment and are faced with numerous issues to deal with
- The development towards a proactive works council requires continuous qualification
  - challenge: How can non-exempted works councils be enabled to participate in continuous qualification?
  - especially for companies of small and medium size, projects which support the process of transformation into the social practice are of high importance
    - “Labour + Innovation” as a training project for works councils with the central idea of actively involving the social partners into the technological change: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhDVXNSJF7s

Thank you very much for your attention!

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