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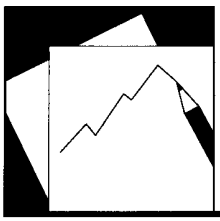

IMF Working Paper

Labor Market Regulations in Low-, Middle- and High-Income Countries: A New Panel Database

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Labor Market Regulations in Low-, Middle- and High-Income Countries: A New Panel Database[1]

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Abstract

This paper documents a new database of labor market regulations during 1980–2005 in 91 countries, including low-, middle- and high-income countries, and contains information on *unemployment insurance* systems, *minimum wage* regulations, and *employment protection* legislation. In this paper, we provide details regarding the data, methodology and sources. Descriptive statistics indicate that there exists substantial heterogeneity in labor market institutions across regions and income groupings, and that much of the sample variation is driven by institutional changes over time in low- and middle-income countries. All indicators are at an annual frequency, allowing for the dating of major changes in regulation, and are based on data from a variety of sources, including the ILO, OECD and national agencies.

JEL Classification Numbers: J31, J65, K31

Keywords: minimum wages, unemployment benefit systems, gross replacement rate, benefit coverage, advance notice, severance payment

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[1] The data described in this paper were constructed as part of an IMF project on structural reforms, in cooperation with the Fondazione Rodolfo DeBenedetti (fRDB). The dataset can be downloaded from the IMF and fRDB websites, and can be freely used, provided that users cite this paper as the data source.

We are indebted to the late Alessandro Prati whose guidance and support were essential to the construction of this database as part of the IMF's work on structural reforms. At the Fondazione, we are grateful to Tito Boeri for guidance on methodology and for technical advice throughout the project, and to Paola Monti for project coordination. For valuable insights on methodology, data sources, data search strategies, as well as for providing data, we also thank the ILO experts Sandrine Cazes, Nomaan Majid, Sarah Elder, Sangheon Lee, Corine Vargha, Adriana Mata Greenwood, Daniele Vaughan-Whitehead, Susan Hayter, and Claire Harasty; the OECD experts Stefano Scarpetta, Pascal Marianna, Herwig Immervoll, Maxime Ladaique, and Dominique Paturot; and many others, especially Mirco Tonin. Manzoor Gill provided excellent research assistance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Labor markets, and the policies and institutions that shape them, play a key role in the functioning of modern economies and have substantial welfare implications. The importance of labor market issues has been increasingly reflected in economic policy discussions where, according to Freeman (2007, p. 3) "[q]uestions regarding labor market institutions [have] replaced macroeconomic policy at the center of much policy debate in advanced economies." The medium-term impact of the current global crisis on labor market outcomes is likely to underscore the need for reallocation of workers from declining industries to those with better growth prospects, while at the same time ensuring that labor market institutions achieve equity and social insurance objectives.

Labor market institutions and their impact on economic outcomes have been widely studied in many OECD countries, but much less so in others. Consistent comparative analysis of labor market institutions in developing economies has so far been hindered by a lack of comprehensive panel data. This paper aims to fill part of this gap in data coverage. Building on an intensive data-collection effort, it documents a new panel dataset on labor market regulations covering a broad sample of countries during 1980-2005 representing all income groups and regions. The labor market indicators in this database cover three key areas of labor market regulations: minimum wages, unemployment benefits, and employment protection. The dataset is based on de jure labor market institutions, as enshrined in current legislation, distinguishing it from survey-based datasets that aim to describe de facto institutions.

For many countries, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, Latin America and, more recently, Asia, the time period covered by the database has been a period of numerous substantial reforms and global changes in the labor market environment, all of which are documented in this database in the three areas considered. Applying the same methodology to countries at different stages in their economic development also allows for more meaningful comparisons across income groups and provides more scope for extending research on the functioning of labor markets to countries outside the set of advanced economies.

An important caveat to keep in mind is that while the de jure nature of this database provides for relatively objective criteria for determining when major changes in regulations occur, they leave open the issue to what extent they are applied and enforced in practice. This is of particular relevance in many low- and middle-income countries with often large informal sectors.

This paper documents the database, which is being made publicly available along with this paper. In Section II, we discuss the construction of each subcomponent, including their sources, and some methodological difficulties that were encountered in their construction; in Section III, we briefly survey existing labor market datasets; in Section IV, we provide and discuss descriptive statistics of the dataset; and in Section V we conclude. Appendix I provides a detailed description of the coding rules, and Appendix II contains an exhaustive list of data sources.

II. CONSTRUCTION OF THE DATA

The indicators in the database are constructed to capture three dimensions of labor market institutions and regulations: minimum wages, unemployment benefits, and employment protection legislation. To ensure comparability across countries, over time, and across varying data sources, we follow the OECD methodology for collecting and coding the information (see Appendix I for details on our coding rules). The country coverage of the database is provided in Table 1. Table 2 provides a list of the variables in the database.

For each of the broad data categories, we describe below the construction of each of our indicators and in each case also note methodological issues that we encountered during the process of data collection. We make explicit the cases where the calculation of the indices required us to make certain assumptions. We urge users of the data to be aware of these assumptions and constraints, and, wherever possible or appropriate, to make necessary adjustments depending on the research question.

Minimum Wages

We report nominal minimum wages in national currency, as a ratio to the mean wage, and, in some cases, relative to the median wage. All wages are reported on a monthly basis. The main data sources are IMF, OECD, Eurostat, ECLAC, Inter-American Development Bank, CIS statistics, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, and national statistics offices. Data on average wages were primarily collected from ILO KILM and ILO Laborsta, although for a range of countries also from national sources. Appendix II contains all sources of information on a country-by-country basis.

When minimum wages are set on other than a monthly basis, we convert them to monthly wages based on a number of assumptions (see Appendix I). These assumptions, such as a 40-hour working week (set by the ILO C47 Forty-Hour Week Convention, 1935) may not be fully appropriate in many developing countries, either because the C47 Convention has not been ratified, or because it is not applied. Thus, users are invited to adjust the monthly measures to the actual hours worked wherever additional information is available.

Several shortcomings in the measurement of minimum wages should be emphasized. First, they reflect only the formal sector, an important caveat especially for studies focusing on developing countries, where informal sectors can be large. Second, in a number of countries, there can be several minimum wages, differentiated across regions (such as in Indonesia), sectors (Sri Lanka), types of skill (Nepal) or type of enterprise (Vietnam). In these cases, we report the simple average of existing minimum wages.[2] In other countries, especially those with periods of high inflation (such as Belarus), minimum wages were reset several times during a given year, and we report only the ones in effect on the first of July 1 of the corresponding year. And third, even though many countries, including several in Europe, do not have statutory minimum wages, collective

[2] Preferably, one would calculate a weighted average, accounting for the distribution of workers across these categories, but such information was not available to us.

wage agreements often form de facto wage floors, so reporting minimum wage as zero would be misleading. In the database, we have marked explicitly where collective wage agreements are in place; however, further data collection in such countries would be fruitful.[3]

Minimum wages are also reported as ratios to average and, in a subset of countries, to median wages. Relating minimum wages to some measure of the aggregate level of wages is important for cross-country comparisons, but neither measure is without limitations. Median wages are less sensitive to outliers than mean wages and thus may be a better measure when income distributions are highly skewed, such as those in many developing countries. They are, however, only infrequently reported, thus limiting the sample severely. Mean wage data, by contrast, are relatively noisy and volatile, and inconsistently measured across countries (e.g., detrended in some countries but not in others). Also, mean wages typically correspond to average wages in manufacturing for males and females in full-time employment, even though in many countries, especially low-income countries, the manufacturing sector represents only a small part of the economy and women may represent only a small part of the workforce in these sectors. Nevertheless, to maximize data coverage, we calculate the ratio of minimum to mean wage as our baseline indicator.[4]

Unemployment Insurance

We construct two unemployment insurance (UI) indicators to capture different aspects of unemployment insurance systems:

- The *level of UI benefits* captures the generosity of the unemployment benefit system and is measured by the gross replacement rate (GRR), that is, the ratio of UI benefits a worker receives relative to the worker's last gross earning.[5] The database contains GRR measures for the first year of unemployment, the second year of unemployment, and the average of the two.

- The *number of UI benefit recipients* is calculated as the number of individuals who, at a given point in time, receive UI benefits. Relative to the number of

[3] An upper bound for the "implied minimum wage" could be constructed as the employment-weighted average of collective wages agreements in all sectors.

[4] However, gaps in mean wage coverage remain. If users are to extrapolate the missing data on average wages, preferably extrapolations should be done based on within-sector growth indices. Alternatively, beyond the measures provided in the database, cross-country comparisons of minimum wages could include the ratio of minimum wages to value added per worker, labor productivity, the subsistence minimum, or the poverty line.

[5] An alternative indicator, the net replacement rate, is arguably more informative as it measures after-tax benefit levels and thus better reflects income security and work incentive issues (OECD, 2006). However, this measure is more difficult to construct as its calculation requires detailed knowledge of the tax structure and the distribution of individual characteristics among the unemployed. Even for OECD countries this information is available only in few instances. We thus focus on gross replacement rates only.

unemployed, it can proxy the extent and reach, or exclusivity, of the UI system in a given country and thus provide complementary information to the generosity of the UI system.

To construct the GRR, we collect information on the earnings base, waiting period, rules of UI payment, maximum duration, and minimum and maximum payments (UI benefit ceilings). We also determine the year of introduction of the first legislation and the years of all consecutive reforms, and record the rules and procedures set out by each law, following six steps:

1. Based on the *Social Security Programs Throughout the World* (2002–08) country reports, determine whether any UI regulation exists, and obtain the year of first legislation.

2. Verify reform years and track reforms changes using the ILO *NATLEX*.

3. In case of the European countries, verify the latest rules and the reform years with the *MISSOC* and *LABREF* databases.

4. In case of the OECD countries, verify the procedures with the *OECD Benefits and Wages* database and country-specific chapters.

5. For Latin American countries, verify with country information from Heckman and Pages (2004).

6. For all other countries and for earlier years, explore further the *US Department of State Reports on Human Rights Practices*; national legislation databases; direct contacts with national experts, researchers in the field, policy-makers, representatives of trade unions and employers organizations; press, business news and analytical reports in various languages (including English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Ukrainian, and other Slavic languages).

For information on the number of UI benefit recipients, we additionally rely on the following sources: national statistics offices and national statistical yearbooks, ministries of labor, social protection, and employment, social security administrations, labor funds, other bodies who administer the programs, ministries of finance and economy, national central banks, local research institutes, and national libraries wherever available.

Unemployment assistance is not generally considered part of UI, and we thus do not include such information in the calculations of GRR and coverage. However, some countries, namely, Australia, Hong Kong, and New Zealand, do not have an unemployment benefit system, but instead highly developed unemployment assistance schemes; in these cases, we calculate GRRs on the basis of unemployment assistance. In other countries, such as Chile (2002–05), and Venezuela (2002–05), reforms took place towards broader social insurance systems (see, e.g., Acevedo, Eskenazi, and Pagés, 2006). For example, Chilean unemployment insurance is based on two components: individual capitalization accounts, to which workers are contributing, and a common

fund, to which the employer and the state are contributing. We compute the amount of benefits for reference individuals with the maximal legislatively set length of contributions to the individual savings accounts.

In most countries, we calculate GRRs on a de jure basis. However, this is possible only in countries where rules for UI payments are expressed in percent of previous earnings. In a number of countries, however, UI payments are set as a percentage of a minimum wage or a subsistence minimum, or as a flat rate payment. In these cases, we calculate GRRs on a de facto basis, as the ratio of these payments to previous earnings, proxied by the average wage in manufacturing. See Table 3 for the list of such cases. This procedure may affect comparability of the calculated GRRs across countries.

A methodologically difficult area is that of UI coverage, conceptually, the fraction of unemployed individuals who collect UI benefits.[6] While its calculation is straightforward, cross-country comparability is problematic. In most countries with UI systems in place, the number of UI benefit recipients (the numerator of the coverage index) is a highly accurate statistic: it is collected by the offices that effectuate the payments, based on officially claimed and received benefits, and is further aggregated by bodies administering the UI system, such as UI boards, national insurance institutes, or national employment offices. It is typically reported on a cumulative basis, such as the number of recipients for a given period of time, usually a month, a quarter, or a year.

By contrast, the number of unemployed individuals (the denominator of the coverage index), is usually measured with less precision, especially in non-OECD countries, and it is often particularly difficult to account for unofficial and hidden unemployment. Labor force surveys may also underestimate actual unemployment. For example, in many countries, labor force surveys focus on metropolitan regions where unemployment rates are often lower. Because the statistics of recipients cover the whole country, the UI coverage ratio can be implausibly high, exceeding one in some cases.

The number of unemployed is a statistic that is also conceptually different from the number of recipients: the former is usually given for a specific point in time, while the latter is reported on a cumulative basis, that is, as the number of all individuals who during a given year received UI benefits for any length of time.[7] Lastly, countries also set different rules for UI payment, with, for example, some making UI payments even to partly-employed workers. These caveats imply that cross-country comparisons may not always be informative. However, to the extent that national definitions remain unchanged

[6] Ideally, to capture the breadth of a UI system, one would want to measure the fraction of the labor force that is *potentially* eligible for UI benefits at any point in time, but such a measure remains infeasible.

[7] For example, in Sweden, based on monthly survey data, the ILO reports the number of (fully) unemployed individuals (average over monthly measures) during 2005 as 270,000, while the Swedish Unemployment Insurance Board counts 601,370 UI benefit recipients. The latter number is to be interpreted as the number of individuals who during 2005 received UI benefits for some period, including individuals who may have received benefits for only one day, as well as those who received UI benefit and were in part-time jobs, a situation which is quite common in Sweden, especially among women.

over time, the indicator can provide useful information on within-country dynamics. That said, we report both the number of recipients and the number of unemployed in the database to allow researchers to choose whichever variable best suits their purpose.

Employment Protection

The database contains two main indicators of employment protection legislation (EPL), reflecting advance notice requirements and legally mandated severance payments, for workers with 9 months, 4 years, and 20 years of experience, respectively. We report advance notice and severance pay requirements both in monthly salary equivalents and coded according to the OECD methodology. For their construction, we followed the same (six) steps as those for UI, based on the various EPL publications. In particular, the ILO *Termination of Employment Legislation Digest*, a database that describes EPL currently in place in a selection of countries, served as one of the main sources of information for EPL provisions. The main data sources for most of Africa, Asia, and the former Soviet Union were national labor codes and national legislation, some of which were obtained from the ILO Library Archives and the ILO NORMES Database, which are open to the public at the ILO head office in Geneva. For transition economies, we also relied on the Tonin (2007) database of EPL.

Unlike UI systems, EPL, in the form of either advance notice or severance payment requirements, has been in place in the vast majority of countries during 1980–2005. All of the EPL indices in the database are *de jure*, based on the provisions of legislation in place, such as labor codes, employment protection acts, and other types of laws[8].

III. COMPARISON WITH OTHER DATASETS

OECD Benefits and Wages, Minimum Wages, and Employment Protection Databases

These databases contain detailed information on all indicators that we are reporting for the period from 1960 to 2005, but restricted to OECD countries. The OECD databases are the main point of departure for our database. Specifically, for the OECD countries, we use the data directly from these datasets (except for the data on UI coverage, which we construct for both OECD and non-OECD countries). For all countries outside the OECD, we also apply the OECD data coding methodology in addition to providing the actual raw data. For example, some of the indicators, such as advance notice and severance payment, are part of the OECD EPL indices. Thus, an important contribution of our new dataset is

[8] Some Latin American countries have EPL schemes that additionally contain elements of unemployment insurance. For example, Colombia moved towards a system of fully-funded Severance Payments Savings Accounts (SPSA) in 1991, which requires employers to deposit a percentage of wages into guaranteed individual accounts available to workers in the event of job separation (Kugler, 2002). This system resembles traditional unemployment insurance, since employers pay a payroll tax contribution into a fund even though such a fund takes the form of guaranteed individual accounts. Such contributions may be withdrawn in full by the worker at the time of separation. Hence, the payments received can be relatively high compared to standard severance payment or unemployment insurance schemes in other countries.

its extention of three subject areas to non-OECD countries, especially lower-income countries, and the addition of information on UI coverage for all countries.

Social Security Programs throughout the World (SSPTW)

The SSPTW reports are descriptive in character, in contrast to the quantitative nature of our dataset. They contain information on UI systems (among other indicators) for most countries in our sample as well as additional ones. These reports describe mainly the current legislation, although they also provide the year of the first law for unemployment benefit provisions and the year of entry into force of current legislation. Our dataset uses the SSPTW as one of the main information sources for coding current UI regulations, and for determining whether regulations exist at all.

World Bank Doing Business (DB) Indicators

The DB database covers 181 countries, but provides information only starting in 2004. Among many other subjects, the DB database contains information on firing cost and on the difficulty of firing workers. The main difference from our new database is that the DB database is based on experts' assessments of the severity of laws and regulations, and the coding of indicators is based in large part on survey questionnaires completed by local law firms. Partly reflecting their subjective nature, the DB indicators, especially those pertaining to the "Employing Workers" component, have been criticized (see Berg and Cazes, 2008, for a detailed discussion). By contrast, our database is a descriptive coding of the actual laws and regulations that are in place and does not take a stance on the desirability of a given level of regulation.[9]

Botero, Djankov, La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer (2004)

This dataset covers 85 countries and a variety of indicators in the areas of employment laws; collective relations laws; and social security laws, partly overlapping with our database. However, it provides only a one-year snapshot (1997) of these regulations. By contrast, our database allows for the tracking of changes in labor market regulations over time.

Rama and Artecona (2002)

This database provides information for 121 countries, partly overlapping with our sample, during 1945-1999. It contains 44 labor market indicators, including the nominal minimum wage (in current US dollars); the initial UI benefit (in percent of earnings before job loss); the maximum duration of continuous unemployment benefits; and the mandatory severance pay after three years of employment (in months of salary). The data are reported in the form of five-year averages. While this aggregation was done deliberately, as many institutions are rigid and do not often change over time, it hinders the dating of

[9] Other aspects of the DB indicators that Berg and Cazes (2008) object to are: a selection bias regarding the hypothetical case respondents are asked to consider; an omitted variable bias in not considering the degree of enforcement; the aggregation and weighting system; the ranking procedure; and the coding method.

reforms and cannot pick up rapid changes, such as those during 1990–2005 in many transition economies. Thus, Rama and Artecona's (2002) and our database are complementary in that they cover similar regulations but using different approaches.

Other datasets

Several other datasets exist that are related to ours along various dimensions, including the LIS Comparative Welfare States Dataset (see Huber et al, 2004); the Fondazione Rodolfo Debenedetti Social Reforms Database; the Fraser Institute Economic Freedom of the World Annual Reports; and the Harvard Labor and Work Life Program's Global Labor Survey (Chor and Freeman, 2004; Freeman, 2007). Interested readers are encouraged to review these databases for further detail.

IV. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Tables 4 and 5 provide a number of descriptive statistics for the variables in our database. What stands out from Table 4 is that while countries on average have substantial labor market regulations in place, the median regulation for many of them is zero, such as for UI systems and severance pay at short tenures.[10] The zero median in these cases is driven by low- and middle-income countries during the early part of the sample period. High-income countries have had fairly high levels of UI benefits and have had EPL regulations in place throughout the sample period, while less developed countries have started to regulate their labor markets only more recently. (Table 5 provides means by income and regional subgroups.)

As Figure 1 indicates, however, the dynamics are not linear. While high-income countries exhibited fairly limited variation over time, other income groups expanded labor regulations more dramatically, albeit from typically low initial levels. High-income countries still exhibit substantially higher levels of UI benefits than other countries, and there appears to be little convergence movement, with the exception of a marked increase of replacement rates in middle-income countries around 1990 (driven largely by Emerging Europe and Central Asia, see Figure 2). EPL provides a more mixed picture: on the one hand, by the end of the sample, advance notice requirements had broadly converged at the (high) level of high-income countries; on the other hand, large differences in severance pay requirements across income groups persisted throughout the sample period. Interestingly, severance pay is the only category where high-income countries score as the least regulated group.

The dynamic patterns of minimum wage regulations are also complex. Low-income countries converged with (and even exceeded) average minimum wage levels in higher income countries in the early 1990s, but fell off again subsequently, while those in other countries continued their moderate upward trend. As a result, in 2005 minimum wages in

[10] The high maximum values for severance pay at the 20-year tenure level stem from the regulations in Colombia, where workers with more than 10 years of tenure receive 45 days' wages plus 30 days' wages for each year of employment (excluding the first one), and an additional one month per year of tenure, paid as a lump sum at time of separation

low-income countries were about a quarter the level of those in other countries, similar to their relative level at the beginning of the sample period.

Figure 2 provides a regional perspective. It confirms the notion that Western European countries have on average more regulations in place, especially UI benefits and advance notice requirements. Along other dimensions, however, it may be surprising to note that South Asia has substantially higher minimum wages than Western Europe; the latter has been broadly on par with North America, but average minimum wages went up in Western Europe after 2000, while they slightly decreased in North America. By contrast, severance pay requirements are highest in Latin America and lowest in North America and Western Europe, the former finding due to the specific nature of these provisions in many Latin American countries, which combine elements of severance pay systems and unemployment benefit systems at the same time.

One lesson that can be drawn from these descriptive statistics is that substantial differences in labor market institutions exist between advanced and developing economies, as well as between regions. Substantial variation in labor institutions can also be observed over time in developing economies, to a much larger extent than in advanced countries during the same time period. These large variations in labor market regulations across countries and time suggest that much can be learned from including developing economies in studies of the effects of labor market regulations.

Interesting patterns also emerge when considering the correlations between different types of labor market institutions (see Table 6). In general, the various regulations are fairly uncorrelated, by itself suggesting that policy makers do not necessarily view the various aspects of labor market reform as part of an overall package.[11] This is surprising as one might expect that policy makers either fine-tune regulations by offsetting higher regulations in one area with lower regulations in another (negative correlation) or, alternatively, that countries fall into different camps, some with low regulations on all or most dimensions, and others choosing the opposite strategy (positive correlation). Possibly, the absence of any correlation in the full sample reflects a mix of different countries pursuing different reform strategies. Further research could shed more light on this.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has documented a new database on labor market regulations, including unemployment insurance, minimum wages and employment protection legislation. The impact of such regulations on economic outcomes is at the heart of the policy debate in advanced and, more recently, developing economies. In part reflecting data constraints, however, most existing research on the effects of labor market institutions has focused on advanced countries, the findings of which are not easily generalized to low- and middle-

[11] Two exceptions are UI benefit levels and advance notice requirements, which are positively correlated in levels (.28), and severance pay and advance notice requirements, which are positively correlated in changes (.34).

income countries. It is in this area that this database adds most value by covering a broader range of countries, including especially emerging and developing economies.

Simple descriptive statistics indicate that labor market regulations have varied substantially over time in developing countries, and remain high in many of them. This variation can provide useful information on the effects of reforms. While caveats apply—namely, large informal sectors in many low- and middle-income economies that are, by definition, outside the regulatory framework—we hope that the new database will be a useful resource to researchers interested in studying the functioning of labor markets also outside advanced economies.

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Table 1. List of Countries

High income: OECD	High income: Non-OECD	Middle income	Low income
East Asia & Pacific	***East Asia & Pacific***	***East Asia & Pacific***	***East Asia & Pacific***
Australia	Hong Kong	China	Vietnam
Japan	Singapore	Indonesia	
Korea	Taiwan	Malaysia	***Europe & Central Asia***
New Zealand		Philippines	Kyrgyzstan
	Europe & Central Asia	Thailand	Uzbekistan
	Estonia		
Europe & Central Asia		***Europe & Central Asia***	***South Asia***
Czech Republic	***Middle East & North Africa***	Albania	Bangladesh
Greece	Israel	Azerbaijan	Nepal
Hungary		Bulgaria	Pakistan
		Byelorussia	
North America		Georgia	***Sub-Saharan Africa***
Canada		Kazakhstan	Burkina Faso
USA		Latvia	Côte d'Ivoire
		Lithuania	Ethiopia
Western Europe		Poland	Ghana
Austria		Romania	Kenya
Belgium		Russia	Madagascar
Denmark		Turkey	Mozambique
Finland		Ukraine	Nigeria
France			Senegal
Germany		***Latin America & Caribbean***	Tanzania
Ireland		Argentina	Uganda
Italy		Bolivia	Zimbabwe
Netherlands		Brazil	
Norway		Chile	
Portugal		Colombia	
Spain		Costa Rica	
Sweden		Dominican Republic	
Switzerland		Ecuador	
United Kingdom		El Salvador	
		Guatemala	
		Jamaica	
		Mexico	
		Nicaragua	
		Paraguay	
		Peru	
		Uruguay	
		Venezuela	
		Middle East & North Africa	
		Algeria	
		Egypt	
		Jordan	
		Morocco	
		Tunisia	
		South Asia	
		India	
		Sri Lanka	
		Sub-Saharan Africa	
		Cameroon	
		South Africa	

Table 2. Variables in the Dataset

Variable Name	Description
Country	Country name
IFS	IFS 3-digit country code
ISO2	ISO 2-letter country code
ISO3	ISO 3-letter country code
Year	Year
mw_orig	Minimum wage data in original units, National currency
mnw	Mean wage data in original units, National currency
mw_mthly	Monthly minimum wage, National currency
mw_mnw	Ratio of minimum wage to mean wage
mdw	Median wage
mw_mdw	Ratio of minimum wage to median wage
UB_yearlaw	Year of first law introducing unemployment benefits legislation
UB_grr1	Gross Replacement Rate, year 1
UB_grr2	Gross Replacement Rate, year 2
UB_grr12	Gross Replacement Rate, average over 2 years
UB_coverage	Unemployment Benefits Coverage
EPL_anmax	Advance Notice (maximum, in months)
EPL_an9m	Advance Notice Period after 9 months, in months
EPL_an9moecd	OECD Score for Advance Notice after 9 months
EPL_an4y	Advance Notice Period after 4 years, in months
EPL_an4yoecd	OECD Score for Advance Notice after 4 years
EPL_an20y	Advance Notice Period after 20 years, in months
EPL_an20yoecd	OECD Score for Advance Notice after 20 years
EPL_spmax	Severance Pay (maximum, in months)
EPL_sp9m	Severance Pay after 9 months, in months
EPL_sp9moecd	OECD Score for Severance Pay after 9 months
EPL_sp4y	Severance Pay after 4 years, in months
EPL_sp4yoecd	OECD Score for Severance Pay after 4 years
EPL_sp20y	Severance Pay after 20 years, in months
EPL_sp20yoecd	OECD Score for Severance Pay after 20 years

Table 3. Countries in the Database with De Facto Gross Replacement Rates

Albania (1993-2005)	Hong Kong (2001-2005)
Algeria (1994-2005)	Ireland (1980-2005)
Argentina (1985-1991)	Kyrgyzstan (1991-2005)
Australia (1980-2005)	Lithuania (1991-2005)
Chile (1985-2005)	New Zealand (1980-2005)
China (1999-2005)	Poland (1996-2007)
Estonia (1992-2002)	Portugal (1980-1984)
Finland (1985-2005)	Tunisia (1982-2005)
Georgia (1998-2005)	UK (1990-2005)

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Number of Observations	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
mw_mnw	1490	0.34	0.35	0.22	0.00	1.32
UB_grr1	2310	0.17	0.00	0.23	0.00	0.87
UB_grr2	2310	0.06	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.66
UB_grr12	2310	0.12	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.72
UB_coverage	2109	0.21	0.00	0.37	0.00	3.23
EPL_an9m	2340	0.77	0.83	0.66	0.00	3.00
EPL_an9moecd	2340	2.30	2.00	1.70	0.00	6.00
EPL_an4y	2340	1.09	1.00	0.86	0.00	4.00
EPL_an4yoecd	2340	2.11	2.00	1.55	0.00	6.00
EPL_an20y	2340	1.79	1.00	1.97	0.00	10.00
EPL_an20yoecd	2340	1.07	1.00	1.00	0.00	5.00
EPL_spmax	2340	7.39	3.00	8.66	0.00	46.83
EPL_sp9m	2340	0.43	0.00	0.70	0.00	3.50
EPL_sp9moecd	2340	0.94	0.00	1.40	0.00	6.00
EPL_sp4y	2340	1.79	1.00	1.97	0.00	16.00
EPL_sp4yoecd	2340	2.61	2.00	2.27	0.00	12.00
EPL_sp20y	2340	6.88	3.00	8.53	0.00	46.83
EPL_sp20yoecd	2340	2.25	1.00	2.19	0.00	6.00

Table 5. Averages 1980-2005 by Region and Income Level

Variable	East Asia & Pacific	Europe & Central Asia	Latin America & Caribbean	Middle East & North Africa	North America	South Asia	Sub-Saharan	Western Europe	All
mw_mnw	0.27	0.30	0.41	0.29	0.36	0.58	0.18	0.40	0.34
UB_grr1	0.12	0.18	0.05	0.21	0.39	0.05	0.01	0.50	0.17
UB_grr2	0.05	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.06
UB_grr12	0.08	0.09	0.03	0.12	0.19	0.03	0.00	0.39	0.12
UB_coverage	0.18	0.19	0.05	0.10	0.48	0.00	0.01	0.72	0.21
EPL_an9m	0.70	0.84	0.68	0.39	0.13	0.82	0.84	1.02	0.77
EPL_an9moecd	2.14	2.50	2.00	1.31	0.50	2.48	2.46	2.93	2.30
EPL_an4y	0.85	1.08	0.90	0.48	0.43	1.12	1.31	1.66	1.09
EPL_an4yoecd	1.65	2.04	1.79	1.04	1.00	2.24	2.49	3.11	2.11
EPL_an20y	0.94	1.64	1.25	0.50	1.00	1.12	1.54	4.38	1.79
EPL_an20yoec	0.76	0.88	0.82	0.44	0.50	0.80	1.11	2.22	1.07
EPL_spmax	9.22	3.07	16.31	8.20	1.13	11.74	4.61	3.40	7.39
EPL_sp9m	0.30	0.68	0.71	0.10	0.00	0.21	0.39	0.23	0.43
EPL_sp9moecd	0.72	1.43	1.52	0.31	0.00	0.60	0.83	0.47	0.94
EPL_sp4y	2.36	1.10	4.15	1.74	0.23	2.04	0.89	0.62	1.79
EPL_sp4yoecd	3.52	1.99	5.17	2.71	0.50	3.11	1.48	1.00	2.61
EPL_sp20y	8.35	2.58	16.15	8.08	1.13	10.21	3.84	3.21	6.88
EPL_sp20yoecd	2.91	1.23	4.56	2.68	0.50	3.31	1.30	1.12	2.25

	High income	High income: OECD	High income: Non-OECD	Middle income	Low income	All
mw_mnw	0.34	0.38	0.20	0.35	0.24	0.34
UB_grr1	0.37	0.41	0.16	0.11	0.01	0.17
UB_grr2	0.17	0.20	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.06
UB_grr12	0.27	0.30	0.08	0.06	0.01	0.12
UB_coverage	0.53	0.62	0.12	0.08	0.02	0.21
EPL_an9m	0.83	0.89	0.56	0.70	0.84	0.77
EPL_an9moecd	2.47	2.61	1.80	2.13	2.43	2.30
EPL_an4y	1.29	1.39	0.83	0.93	1.17	1.09
EPL_an4yoecd	2.45	2.61	1.66	1.83	2.22	2.11
EPL_an20y	3.11	3.55	1.04	1.09	1.33	1.79
EPL_an20yoec	1.69	1.86	0.88	0.71	0.92	1.07
EPL_spmax	5.33	3.90	12.18	9.09	6.63	7.39
EPL_sp9m	0.25	0.22	0.38	0.56	0.41	0.43
EPL_sp9moecd	0.55	0.46	0.95	1.21	0.93	0.94
EPL_sp4y	1.04	0.81	2.11	2.49	1.33	1.79
EPL_sp4yoecd	1.77	1.39	3.61	3.36	2.15	2.61
EPL_sp20y	4.81	3.58	10.75	8.79	5.65	6.88
EPL_sp20yoecd	1.68	1.32	3.41	2.77	1.95	2.25

Table 6. Correlations among Key Labor Market Regulations: Levels and Changes

	(a) Levels			
	mw_mnw	UB_grr1	EPL_an4y	EPL_sp4y
mw_mnw	1			
UB_grr1	0.10	1		
EPL_an4y	0.06	0.28	1	
EPL_sp4y	0.13	-0.24	0.01	1
	(b) Changes			
	dmw_mnw	dUB_grr1	dEPL_an4y	dEPL_sp4y
dmw_mnw	1			
dUB_grr1	0.06	1		
dEPL_an4y	-0.03	0.00	1	
dEPL_sp4y	-0.02	-0.02	0.34	1

Figure 1. Labor Market Regulations by Income Level

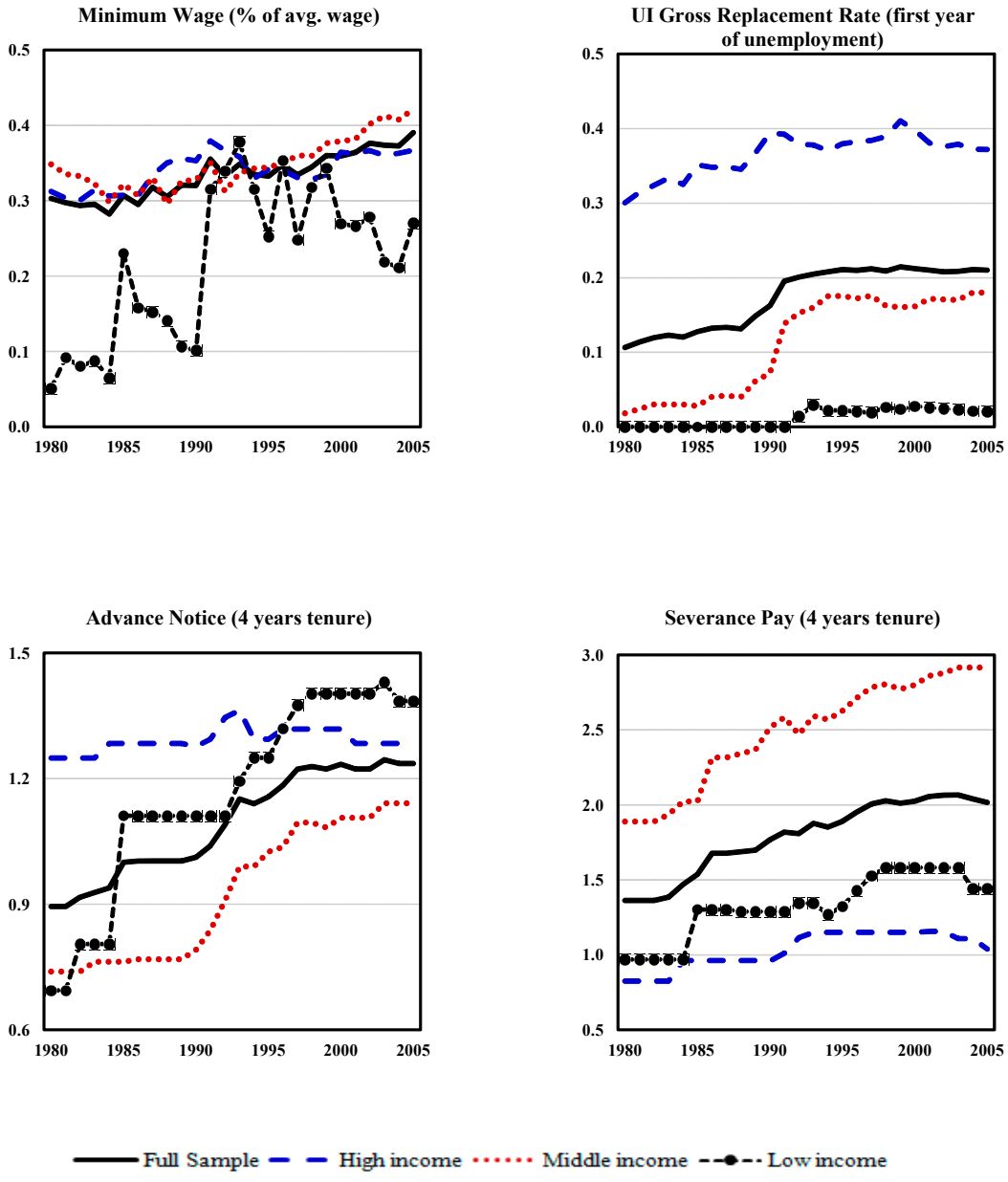
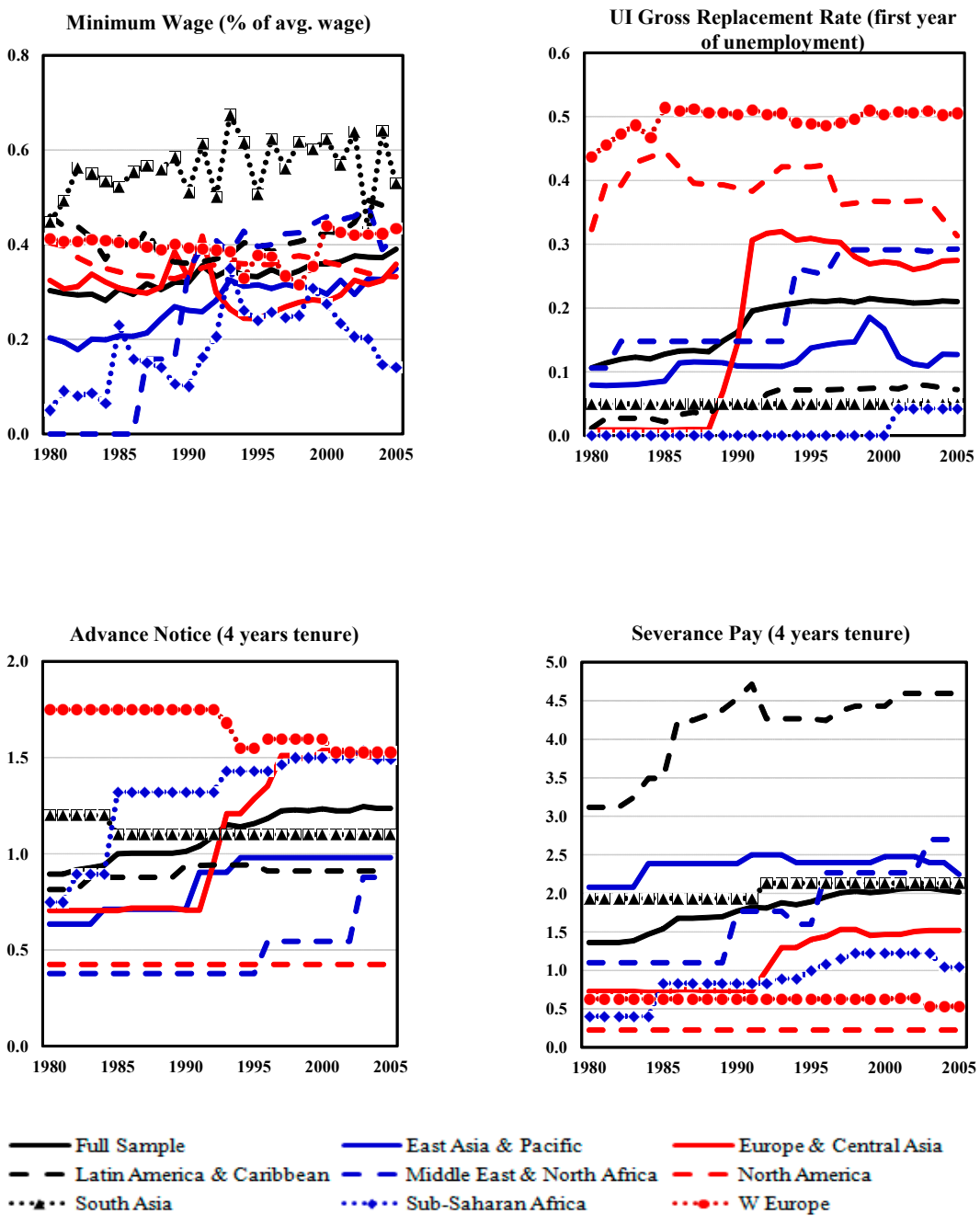


Figure 2. Labor Market Regulations by Region



Appendix I. Coding Rules

Statutory Minimum Wages

Four indicators for statutory minimum wages are reported:

1) Minimum wages in countries with statutory regulations, in national currency and original units (i.e., set weekly, daily, or monthly). Reported data correspond to the values in effect on July 1st of each year, unless otherwise specified. In countries were several minimum wages were in place, varying by sector or by location, a simple average minimum wage was constructed.

2) Minimum wages in national currency on a monthly basis. Whenever original data are available on another scale, the following assumptions are made for recalculation:

- working day: 8 hours,
- working week: 40 hours
- working month: 22 days
- working year: 52 weeks, 12 months

3) Ratio of minimum monthly wage in national currency to the average monthly wage in national currency.

4) Ratio of minimum monthly wage in national currency to the median monthly wage in national currency, for a selection of countries, for which data on median wages are available.

5) Data Coding:

0 – no minimum wage legislation in place, wages are determined by the market

. – missing value: legislation is in place but the data are not available

n/a – no statutory minimum wage arrangement; but other wage setting arrangements may be in place, such as wage grids, as for example, in the former Soviet Union

c/a – wages determined by collective agreements

Unemployment Benefits

Two groups of indicators for unemployment benefits are reported:

1) Gross Replacement Rates, defined as levels of statutory entitlements over average wages show what percentage of earnings is replaced by benefits; reported are values after the first year of unemployment, after the second year of unemployment, and a simple average for two years of unemployment.

In calculations, the OECD methodology is followed as closely as possible (see OECD, 1994, 2004, 2007; and Martin, 1996).

The following assumptions were made:

- Calculations are made for a worker of 40 years of age, who has been continuously full-time employed and has the maximum amount of contributions for a given profile. GRR are calculated for 100% earners; one family situation (single worker without children). Ceilings are taken into account; 2-year unemployment period is assumed.

- Even though the information on the earnings base is collected (gross or net payments), gross base is assumed, and no account of the tax base is made. Current earnings are used in calculations, and de-facto replacement rates are reported, facilitating comparison for countries with flat-rate payments or flat-rate ceilings. When no information on average wage is available, de-jure rates are reported.

- No unemployment assistance is included

2) Unemployment Benefit Coverage: the ratio of the number of UI Benefit recipients to the number of unemployed.

Data Coding:

0 – no legislation or specific provision is in place
. – missing value: legislation is in place but the data are not available

Employment Protection: Notice and severance pay for no-fault individual dismissals

The following indicators are collected and reported:

1) Maximum advance notice

2) Advance notice period after 9 months of service, in months

3) Advance notice period after 4 years of service, in months

4) Advance notice period after 20 years of service, in months

5) Maximum Severance payment

6) Severance payment after 9 months of service, in months: a lump-sum payment to the dismissed employee at the time of cessation of employment

7) Severance payment after 4 years of service, in months

8) Severance payment after 20 years of service, in months

The data are collected and reported for the following cases of workers:

- Regular contracts of unspecified duration after any trial period for the job
- Dismissed on personal grounds or individual redundancy at the initiative of the employer
- Fair dismissals only
- Rules for workers paid on monthly basis
- When dismissal is specified differently for personal and for economic reasons (individual redundancy), the average of the two is taken
- When dismissal is specified differently for skilled and unskilled workers, or blue collar and white collar workers, the average of the two is taken
- In case when rules depend on worker's age, assume that the start of work is at 20 years of age

Maximum AN and SP are the maximally possible provisions: at 20 years of service, economic or personal reasons, whichever is highest, blue collar or white collar, whichever is highest.

In addition, these values were also coded according to the OECD methodology (Table A1), and the scores based on the OECD coding scheme for AN and SP are also reported.

Table A1. The OECD Coding Methodology

Original Unit and Short Description			Assignment of Numerical Strictness Scores						
			Assigned Scores						
			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Advance notice period at	9 months of tenure	Months	0	≤0.4	≤0.8	≤1.2	<1.6	<2	≥2
	4 years of tenure	Months	0	≤0.75	≤1.25	<2	<2.5	<3.5	≥3.5
	20 years of tenure	Months	<1	≤2.75	<5	<7	<9	<11	≥11
Severance pay at	9 months of tenure	Months pay	0	≤0.5	≤1	≤1.75	≤2.5	<3	≥3
	4 years of tenure	Months pay	0	≤0.5	≤1	≤2	≤3	<4	≥4
	20 years of tenure	Months pay	0	≤3	≤6	≤10	≤12	≤18	>18

Source: OECD Employment Outlook (2004), Chapter 2, Annex 2.1, Table 2.A1.1, items 3 and 4.

Appendix II. Information Sources by Country

Albania

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

National Statistics Bureau of Albania (1997-2004). *Albanian Annual Business Structural Survey.*

National Statistics Bureau of Albania (http://www.instat.gov.al/).

Vodopivec M., A. Wörgötter, and D. Raju (2003). "Unemployment Benefit Systems in Central and Eastern Europe: A Review of the 1990s," The World Bank Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 0310.

Unemployment Benefits and Coverage

EBRD (1999). Albania Transition Report. Available at: http://transitionreport.co.uk.

ILO and the Council of Europe (2006). *Employment Policy Review: Albania*. Council of Europe.

National Statistics Bureau of Albania (http://www.instat.gov.al/).

Employment Protection

Law on Labor Relations (1991). ILO Library Archives.

Labor Code of Albania (1966). ILO Legislative Series, 1966-Vol. I.

Labor Code of Albania (1995). *ILO NATLEX Country Profiles Database*. Geneva. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.home .

Algeria

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

Ministère du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale.

ILO *NATLEX Country Profiles Database*. Geneva. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.home .
ILO *Laborsta Database*. Geneva. Available at: http://laborsta.ilo.org/ .

Unemployment Benefits and Coverage

Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, US Social Security Administration (2002-2007). *Social Security Programs Throughout the World*. Annual Country Reports. Available at: http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/.

Employment Protection

Law on a General Status of a Worker of the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria (1978).

ILO *NORMES Database*. ILO: Geneva.

The World Bank (2004). Unlocking the Employment Potential in the Middle East and North Africa: Toward a New Social Contract. MENA Development Report. The World Bank: Washington, DC.

Argentina

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

ECLAC *Statistical Database*. Available at: http://websie.eclac.cl/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp. Accessed: September 10, 2007.

ILO *Laborsta Database*. Geneva. Available at: http://laborsta.ilo.org/.

ILO (2006). Para Qui Sirve el Salario Minimo? Elementos Para Su Determinacion En Los Paises Del Cono Sur. (Eds) Marinakis A., J Velasco. ILO: Geneva.

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Employment Protection

ILO *Termination of Employment Legislation Digest*. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/info/termination/.

Marshall, Adriana (2004). "Labor market policies and regulations in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico: Programmes and Impacts," Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas and Instituto de Desarrollo Económico y Social: Buenos Aires.

Jaramillo, M., and Saavedra, J. (2005). "Severance Payment Programs in Latin America," *Empirica*, Vol. 32, No. 3-4, pp. 275–307.

Australia

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

OECD *Statutory Minimum Wages in 21 OECD Countries*. Available at: http://www.oecd.org/document/34/0,3343,en_2649_33927_40917154_1_1_1_1,00.html#minwage.

ILO *Key Indicators of the Labour Market*, Labor Related Establishment Survey. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/empelm/what/lang--en/WCMS_114240.

Unemployment Benefits and Coverage

Australian Bureau of Statistics. http://www.abs.gov.au/.

Australian Statistical Yearbooks. Various years. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCS). http://www.facsia.gov.au/.

OECD *Benefits and Wages Database.* Available at: http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,3343,en_2649_34637_34053248_1_1_1_1,00.html

Employment Protection

OECD (2004). *Employment Outlook.* Paris: OECD.

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The Workplace Relations Act 1996.

Austria

Unemployment Benefits and Coverage

MISSOC. *Comparative Tables on Social Protection*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/missoc/db/public/compareTables.do?lang=en.

OECD *Benefits and Wages Database.* Available at:

http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,3343,en_2649_34637_34053248_1_1_1_1,00.html

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Labor Market Service Austria, AMS (http://www.ams.at).

Austrian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/siteEN/).

Employment Protection

ILO *Termination of Employment Legislation Digest*. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/info/termination/.

OECD (2004). *Employment Outlook.* Paris: OECD.

Azerbaijan

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. http://www.azstat.org/indexen.php.

Unemployment Benefits and Coverage

Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States. *CIS Statistics Database*. Available at: http://www.cisstat.com.

Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, US Social Security Administration (2002-2007). *Social Security Programs Throughout the World*. Annual Country Reports. Available at: http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/.

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Labor Code of the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic (1971). Provided by ILO Library Archives.

Labor Code of Azerbaijan, 1999. *ILO NATLEX Country Profiles Database*. Geneva. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.home.

Bangladesh

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

Bangladesh Minimum Wage Board.

Ministère de la PME et de l'Artisanat (1989). Bulletin d'Information Economique, N. 8. Bangladesh. Accessed at: La Documentation Francaise, Paris.

ILO *LABORSTA Database*. Geneva. Available at: http://laborsta.ilo.org/.

Employment Protection

The Employment of Labor Act (1965).

The Amendment to the Employment of Labor Act (1985).

ILO *Termination of Employment Legislation Digest*. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/info/termination/

Belgium

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

ILO *KILM Database. Geneva*, Labor Related Establishment Survey. Available at:

http://www.ilo.org/empelm/what/lang--en/WCMS_114240.

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Unemployment Benefits and Coverage

Direction générale Contrôle des lois sociales.

European Commission. *Eurostat Database*. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/.

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MISSOC. *Comparative Tables on Social Protection*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/missoc/db/public/compareTables.do?lang=en.

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Office National De l'Emploi. http://www.rva.be/home/menufr.htm.

Employment Protection

OECD (2004). *Employment Outlook.* Paris: OECD.

Bolivia

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

ECLAC *Statistical Database*. Available at: http://websie.eclac.cl/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp. Accessed: September 12, 2007.

ILO *LABORSTA Database*. Geneva. Available at: http://laborsta.ilo.org/.

Employment Protection

ILO *Termination of Employment Legislation Digest*. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/info/termination/.

Brazil

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

Banco Central do Brazil, Departamento Economico.

ECLAC *Statistical Database.* Available at: http://websie.eclac.cl/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp. Accessed: September 12, 2007.

ILO *LABORSTA Database*. Geneva. Available at: http://laborsta.ilo.org/

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Cunningham W. (2000) "Unemployment Insurance in Brazil: Unemployment Duration, Wages, and Sectoral Choice," The World Bank Working Paper.

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Bulgaria

Minimum Wage and Average Wage

FedEE: Federation of European Employers.

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Minimum Wage and Average Wage

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ILO *LABORSTA Database*. Geneva. Available at: http://laborsta.ilo.org/.

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