

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



**Manfred Wannöffel**

What Does Co-Determination Do? What Can We Learn from Research?

2<sup>nd</sup> Biennale Conference, Hans-Boeckler-Foundation

WZB Berlin, 11<sup>th</sup> 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)
  - Imit<sup>2</sup>: Co-determining and co-creating Industry 4.0 (FGW) (2017 - 2018)

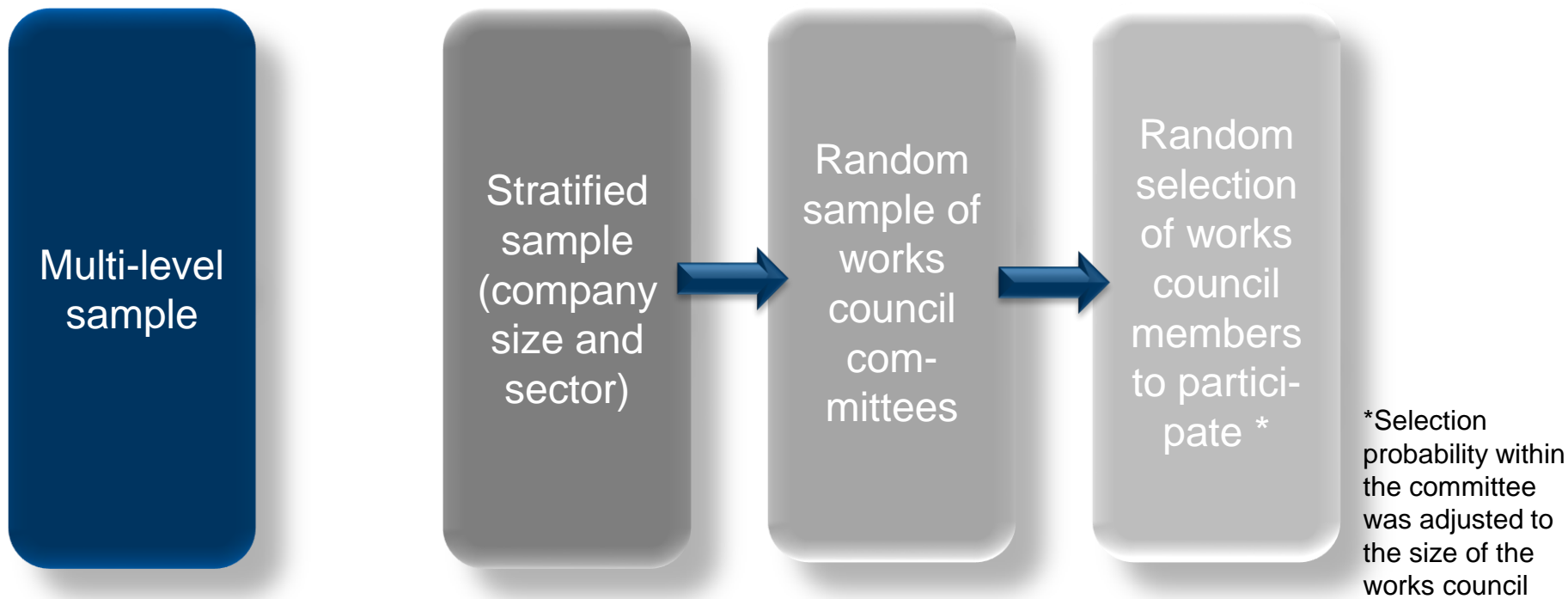
## Background QuBA

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

### Goals:

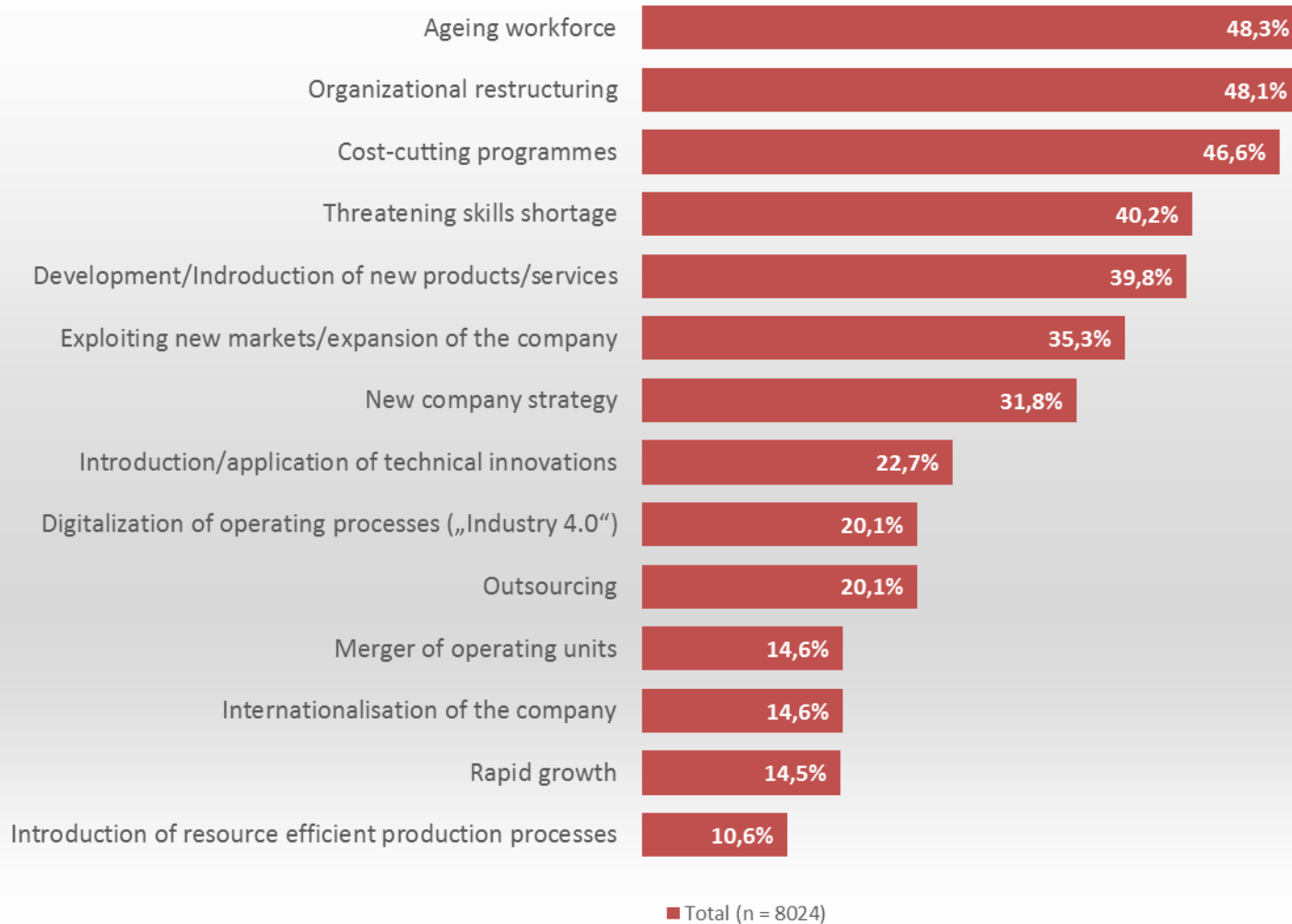
- Identification of (future) qualification demands and requirements for workers representatives
  - Investigation of qualification behavior of workers representatives and their decision criteria
  - Recommendations for action concerning qualification contents and forms (target group specific and union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

## Database (QuBA)

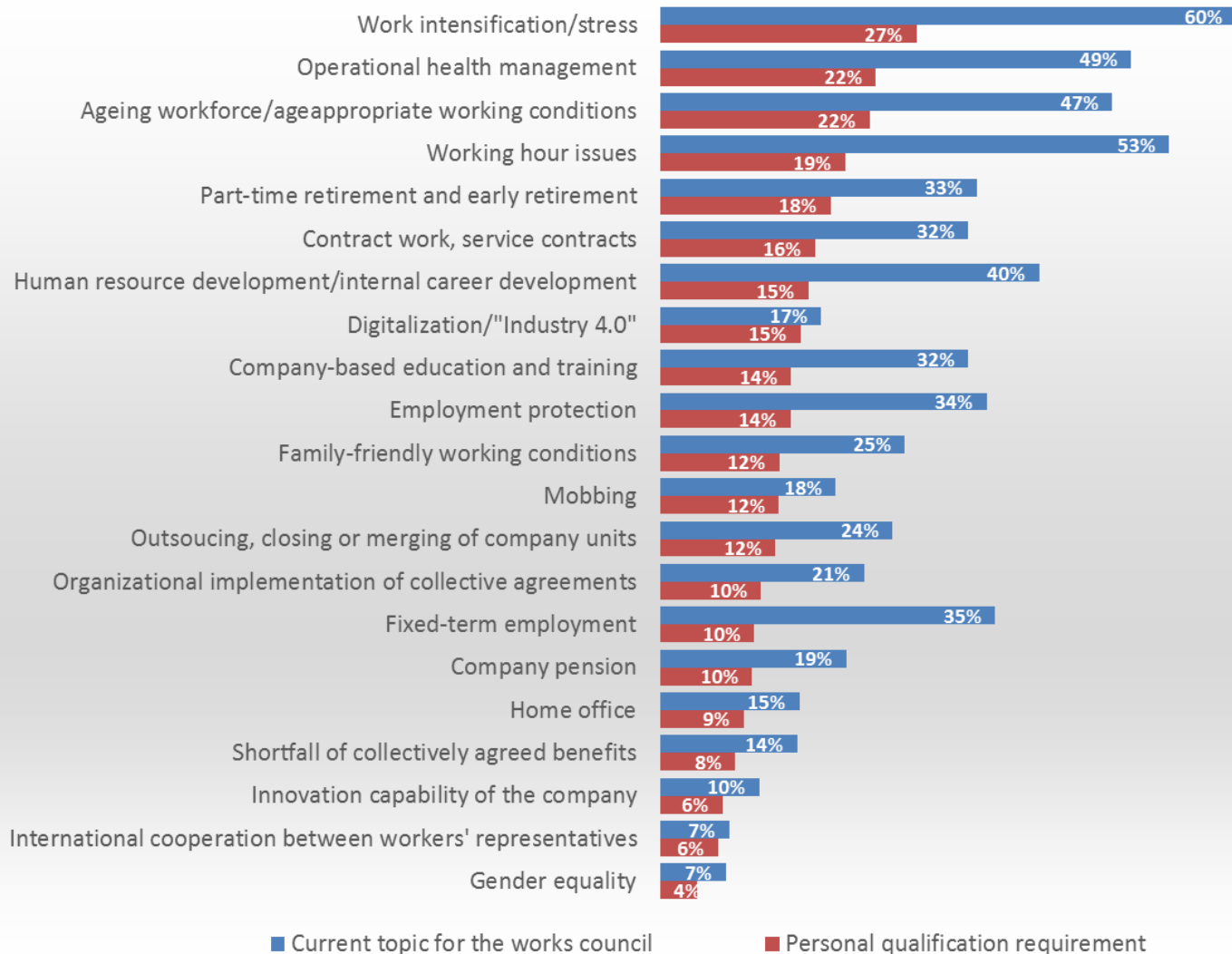


Final response rate				
	Paper	Online	Total	Rate
<b>Overall</b>	7304	869 (10,6%)	<b>8173</b>	<b>22,1%</b>

## Current operational challenges

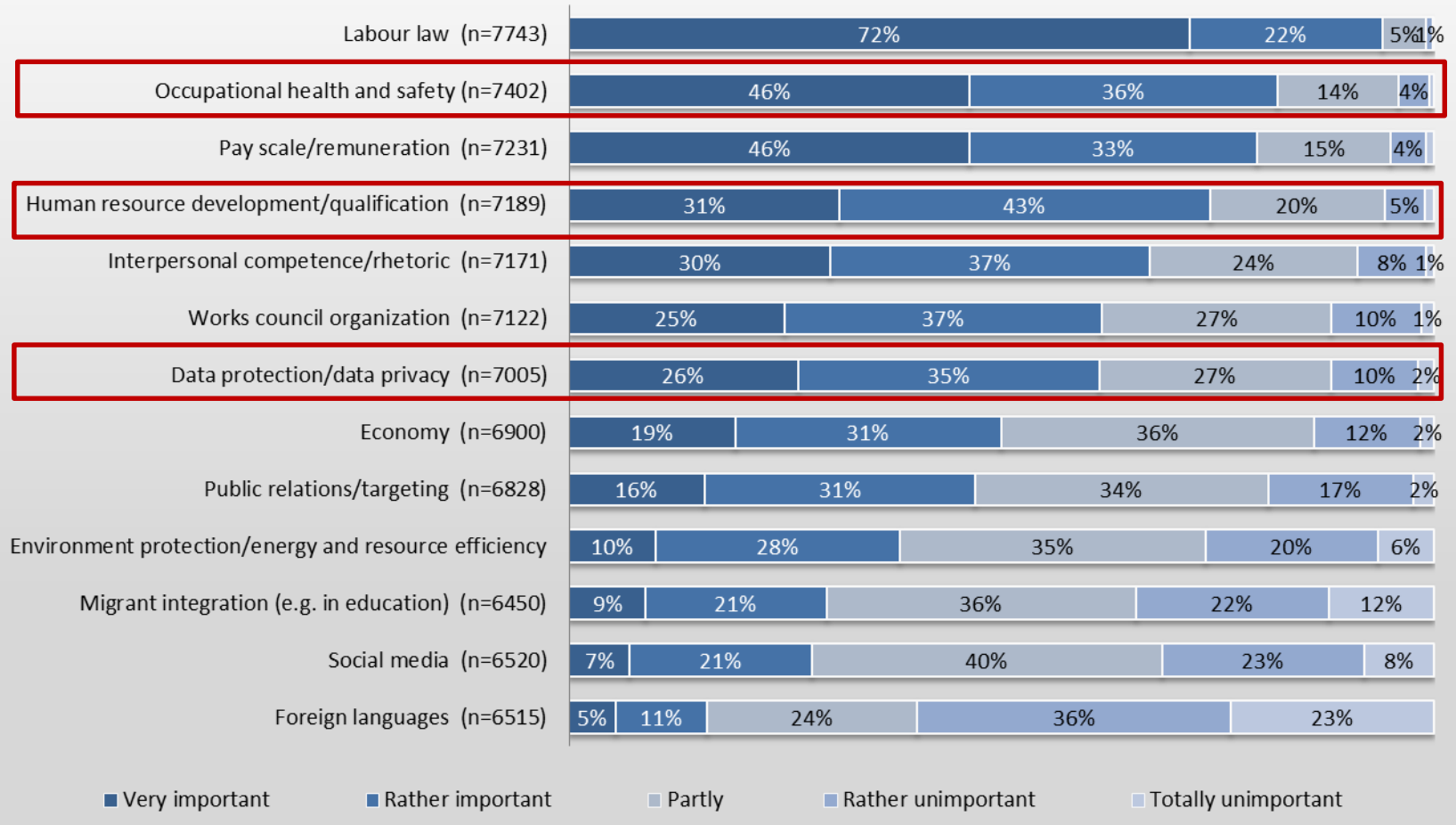


## Relevance of topics - discussion and qualification



n = 8053

## Future qualification topics - subjective relevance





## 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?

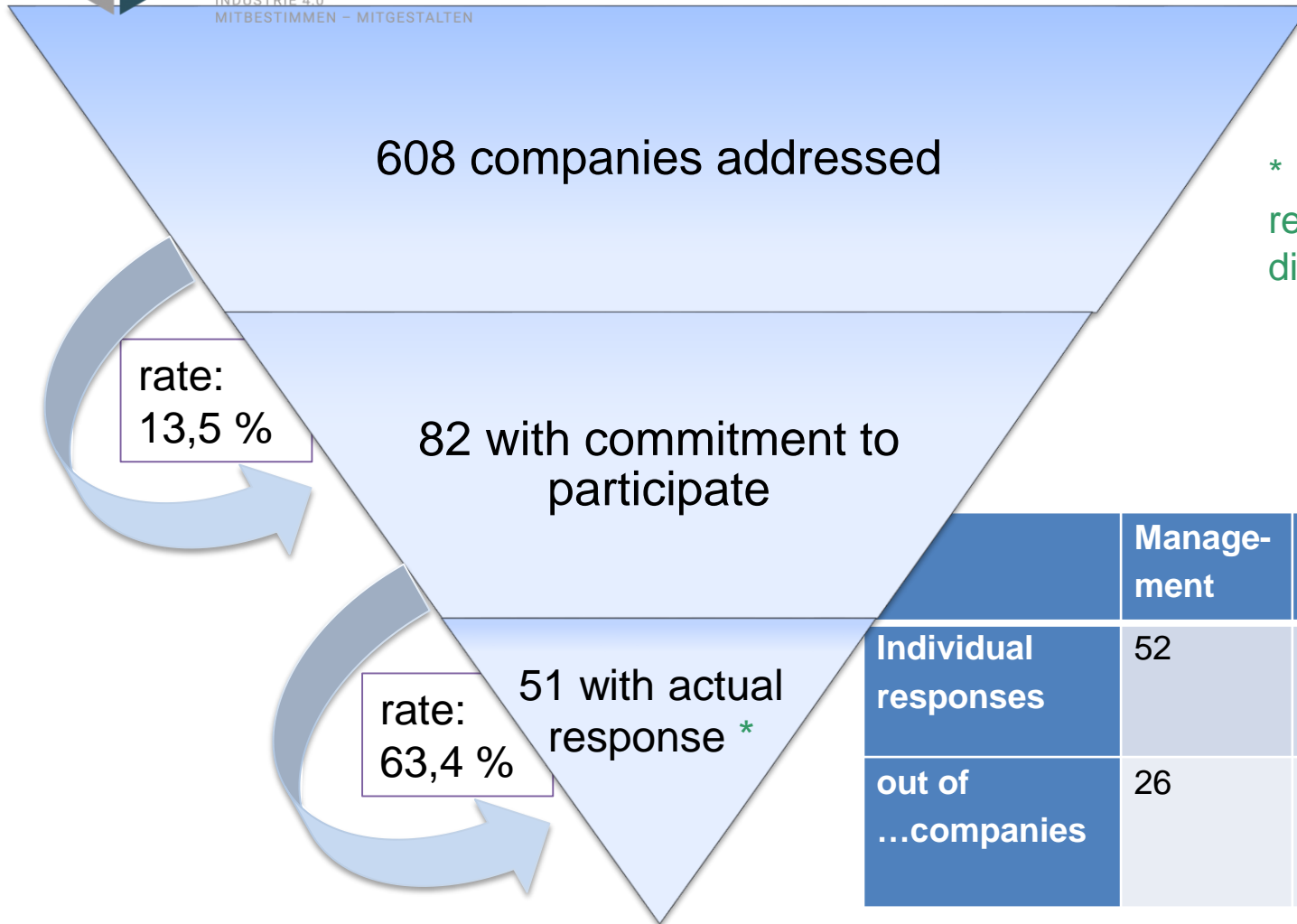


## Background (IMit<sup>2</sup>)

- 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 (IMit<sup>2</sup>)



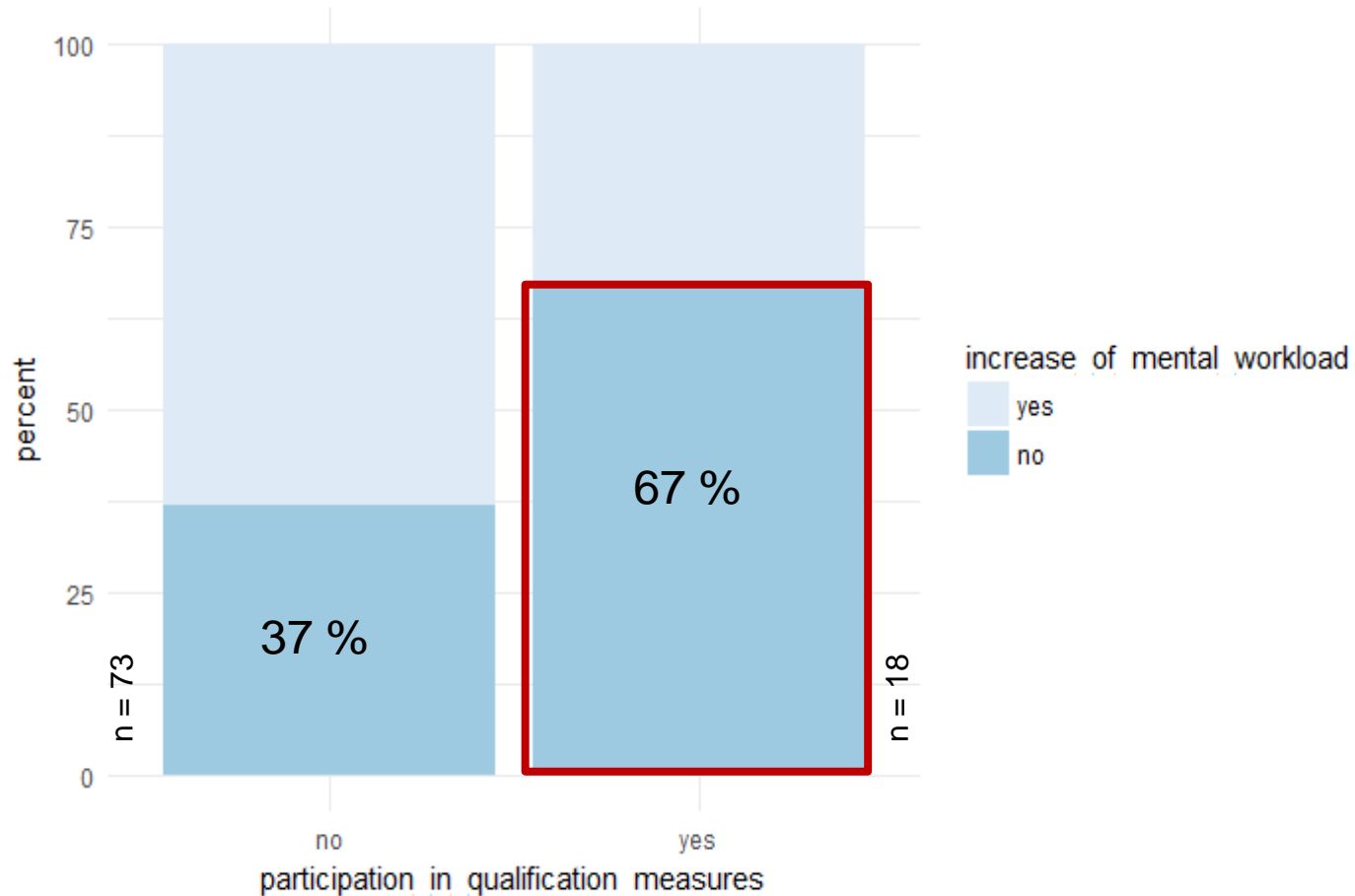
\* 13 companies with responses for every dimension

	Management	Works council	Employees
Individual responses	52	144	137
out of ...companies	26	33	41



imit<sup>2</sup>  
INDUSTRIE 4.0  
MITBESTIMMEN – MITGESTALTEN

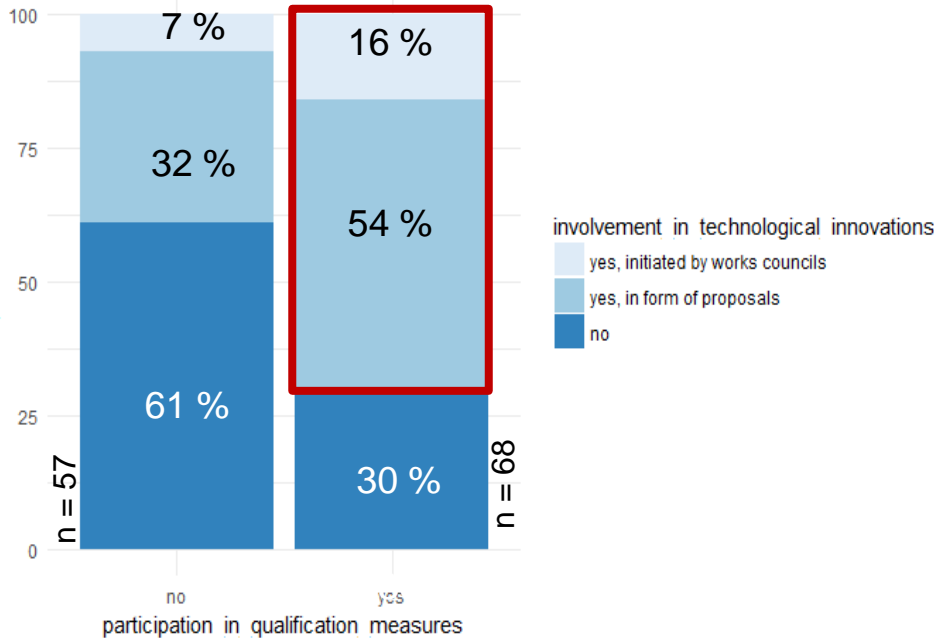
## Qualification and capability



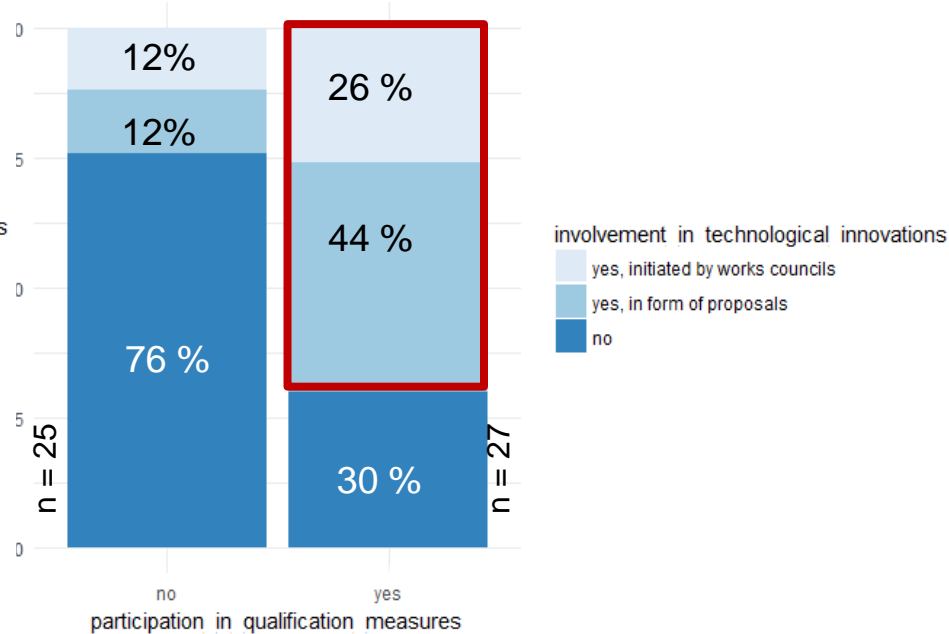


# Qualification – a premise for a successful co-creation?

all observed



500-1.999 employees

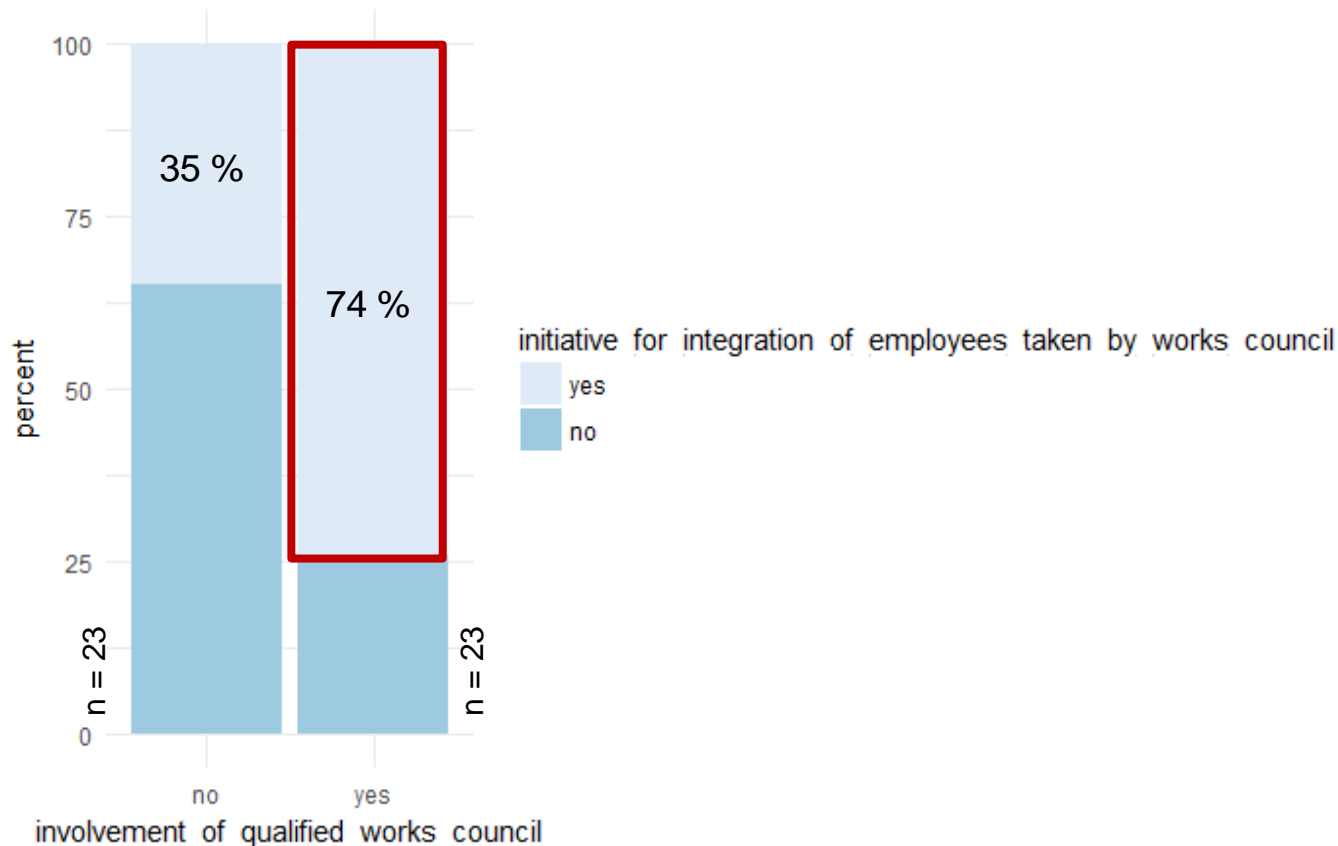






imit<sup>2</sup>  
INDUSTRIE 4.0  
MITBESTIMMEN - MITGESTALTEN

# The proactive works council – implications for the participative change culture





imit<sup>2</sup>  
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
- However: 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!**



[manfred.wannoeffel@rub.de](mailto:manfred.wannoeffel@rub.de)  
<http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/rub-igm/>