



Federale Overheidsdienst
Sociale Zekerheid
Service public fédéral
Sécurité sociale

Statistics on access to social protection in Belgium

A look at the current situation

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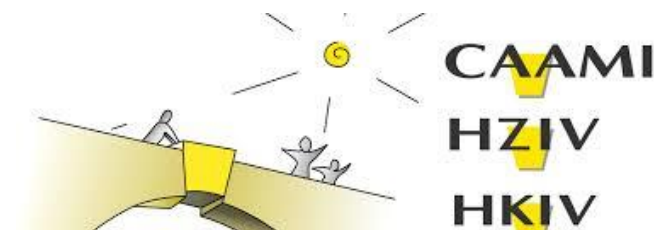
1. BELGIAN CONTEXT

- Our country has a tradition of **using administrative data** in the field of social protection
- However, **the decentralised nature** of the Belgian social security system **leads to a fragmented landscape, and thus to fragmented statistics**:
 - Each social security institution is responsible *for a specific group* (employees or the self-employed) *and/or a specific branch / social risk* (e.g. pensions or accidents at work)
 - This means that each institution publishes *its own statistics and uses its own definitions* (e.g. different reference periods or observation units), based on their own databases
- This means there are **problems of comparability** when statistics from different institutions are used, and they simply cannot be added up (or certainly not without double counting)

1. BELGIAN CONTEXT

- Statistics on access to social protection in Belgium **mainly concern formal and effective coverage:**
- The institutions responsible for **employees and the self-employed** publish statistics that are based on individuals participating in a social protection scheme (and are thus paying social security contributions)
 - This means that these statistics *mainly concern formal coverage*
 - They are available by labour market status, and by some groups of atypical workers (part-time work, seasonal and temporary workers) or specific groups (e.g. flexi-workers)
- The other social security institutions, which are **grouped by branch / social risk**, mostly concern statistics on benefit recipients (or take up)
 - They refer to situations where the risk materialises, or *effective coverage*
 - They are (often) available by gender, age group, labour market status (employees / self-employed / civil servant) and sector

1. BELGIAN CONTEXT



2. THE DWH

- The fragmented nature also **poses problems for exchanging and collecting social security data**
- In this context, **the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (CBSS)** was established:
 - It enables a *well secured and automatic exchange* between the different institutions, *on the level of the individual*
 - It also *reduces the administrative burden* for citizens and their employers
- Linked to this, the **Labour Market and Social Protection Datawarehouse** was created:
 - It collects and links administrative data for socio-economic research
 - Its scope is broader than the aforementioned social security institutions, widening its potential

2. THE DWH

→ It thus not only includes the information collected by the social security institutions, **but also other relevant information:**



- Information from the National Register (e.g. nationality, information concerning the household structure)
- Information from the Census (e.g. level of education, administrative disposable income)
- And **the ability to link to other, external sources that are not in the datawarehouse**, such as the tax register or the cadaster (ownership of property), or established EU surveys such as EU-SILC or LFS

3. ADVANTAGES

→ It means that **the available data is extremely rich:**

- The scope is wider than simply social security data
- This means it also contains career data, as well as interesting context information such as the level of education
- And it can be linked to other external sources (taxes, other surveys)

→ It is also **extremely detailed:**

- It retains much of the information present in the original databases, meaning there is detailed information on specific or small groups (an issue when working with surveys), and this for the whole population

→ And it **avoids double-counting**, since all the data can be linked by using a **unique identifier**

4. PITFALLS

- The potential is thus huge, but for the time being, **the data warehouse is mostly used for specific data requests and research questions, and less for statistics**
- This is due to the **following reasons**:
 - There is an issue with the *timeliness* of some of its sources (e.g. the income of the self-employed)
 - The *level of detail is substantial*:
 - It is *not* a central database: it simply contains all the different data sources (the data are not yet linked)
 - In some cases, an individual may have multiple records or lines
 - Meaning: one needs to know the data (of all the different institutions!) very well, and constructing the variables and data set(s) needed takes a long time
 - One also needs to take GDPR into account, which is of course completely normal, but the *procedure for obtaining the data is not straightforward*

5. PERSPECTIVES

- Nevertheless, **some efforts are being made** to use the data warehouse for the production of statistics
- An example of this is the **development of a number of indicators on benefit recipients** (funded by the FPS Social Security):
 - They will not only show the number of recipients by branch, but also the possible combinations (e.g. what are the most frequent combinations of social benefits in our country?)
 - This means that they can map those individuals who receive one or more benefit, and eliminate double-counting
 - The above will help us mapping *effective coverage*, and might be helpful for other exercises/developments (e.g. ESSPROS)

QUESTIONS?

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