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Atypical Employment in Belgium

Discussion Paper

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Research Area

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Project

The Institutional Determinants of Atypical Employment and Social Inequality in Europe, founded by the Hans Böckler Foundation and supervised by Jutta Allmendinger, Johannes Giesecke, and Kathrin Leuze



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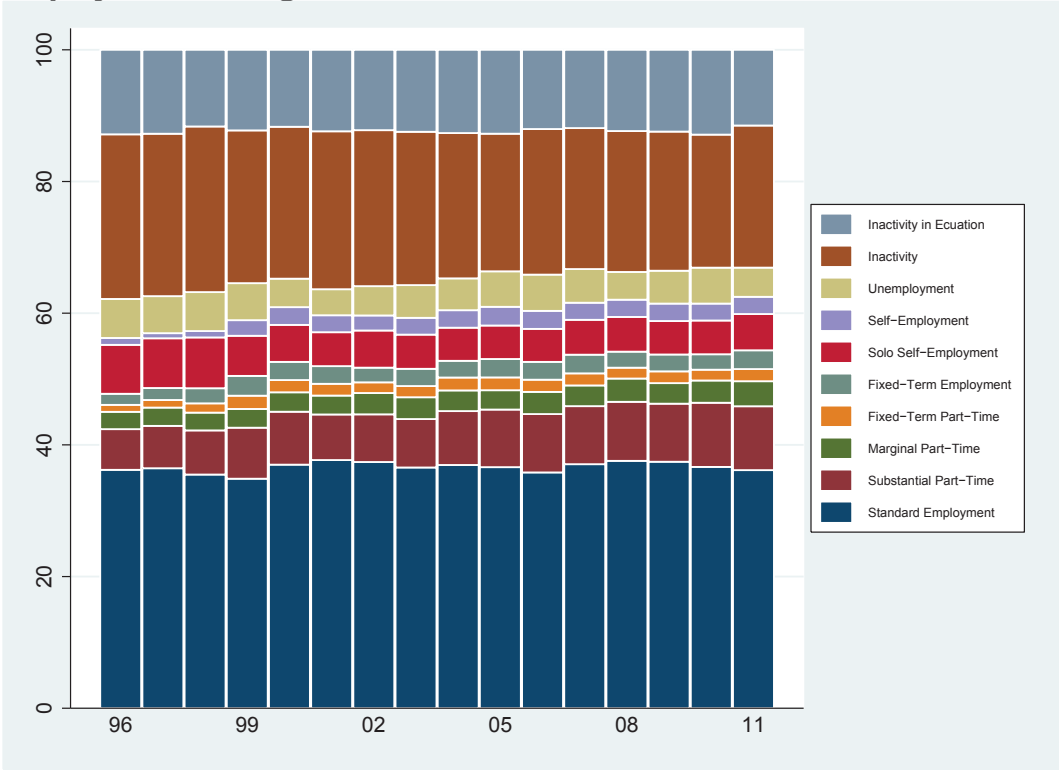
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Belgium

In the period studied, the Belgian labor market only experienced slight fluctuations. In total, the proportion of inactive individuals in the working-age population is relatively high. Above all, women and low-skilled workers had lower employment rates than men or more highly qualified individuals, who were frequently in permanent and full-time employment. Younger and older people were also less well represented in the labor market compared to those in the middle age group. While many younger people were economically inactive due to participation in education and training, older people were for the most part not integrated into the labor market at all. Of all the forms of atypical employment, substantial part-time employment and solo self-employment were the most common. Within these forms of atypical employment, women tended to work part-time, whereas men were more frequently in solo self-employment.

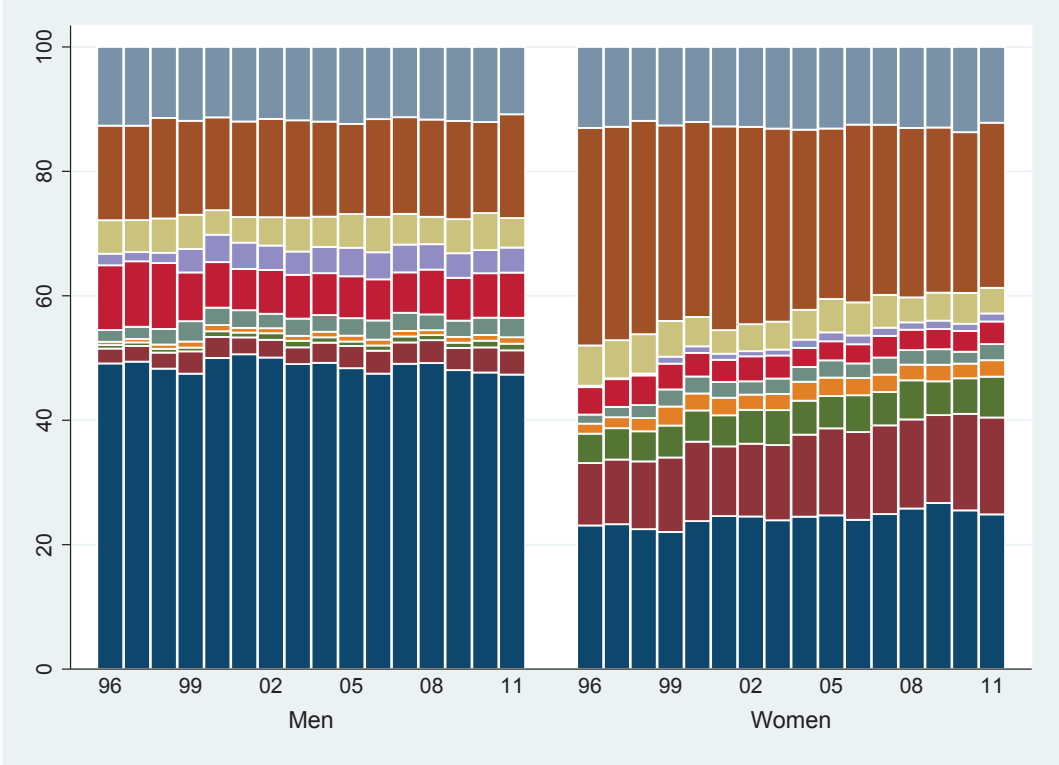
Employment remained stable during the crisis period. The proportion of atypical employment rose slightly, a development that was largely confined to substantial part-time employment. The crisis led to a decrease in youth employment rates, which had previously been stagnating. Among older people, employment in the crisis even increased, from almost 48 percent in 2008 to almost 53 percent in 2011, although most of this increase was due to increases in part-time employment

Employment in Belgium (1996–2011).



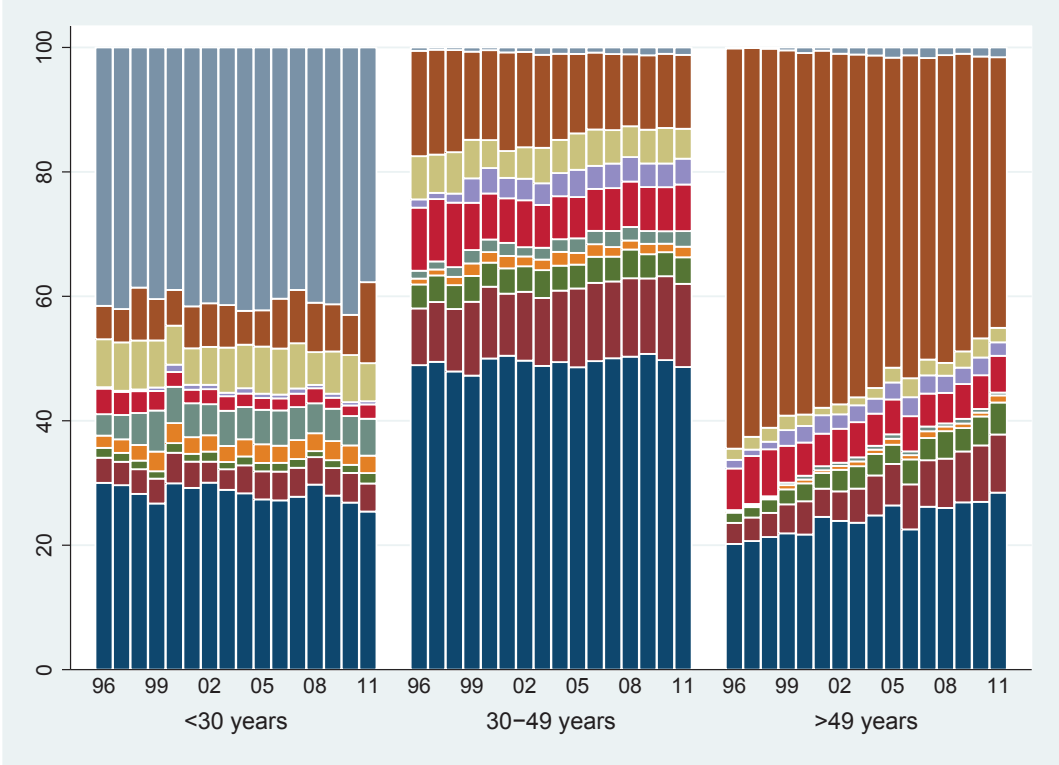
Data source: ELFS (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys).

Employment in Belgium by Gender (1996–2011).



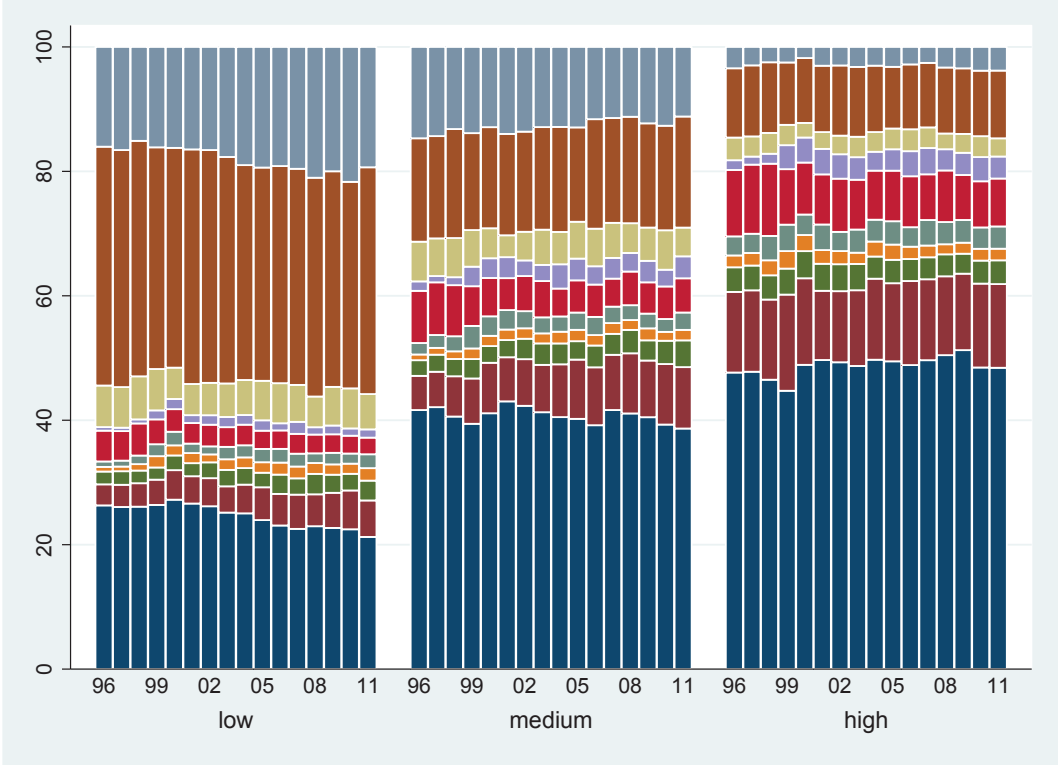
Data source: ELFS (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys).

Employment in Belgium by Age (1996–2011).



Data source: ELFS (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys).

Employment in Belgium by Education (1996–2011).



Data source: ELFS (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys).

Important terms

The **population studied** includes all people who were of working age (between 15 and 64 years of age) at the time of the survey but excludes those living in collective living quarters (monasteries/convents, hospitals, etc.) and those doing military service.

A person was considered **employed** if they were working in the private or public sector, either in a dependent or self-employed capacity, for at least one hour a week and received a salary, wage, or other monetary remuneration for this.

Individuals were considered **unemployed** if they were not employed but were actively seeking work and were available to the labor market or if they were entering employment within the following three months.

Those who were neither employed nor unemployed were considered economically **inactive**. Inactive individuals who were in education or training were assigned to the inactive **in education or training** category.

A **standard employment relationship** exists when an individual is in a dependent employment relationship for at least 35 hours weekly and has a permanent employment contract.

Marginal part-time employment is employment with fewer than 20 hours a week.

Substantial part-time employment is employment with 20 hours and more a week but less than 35 hours a week.

Fixed-term employment exists when the period during which a contract is valid is limited. We differentiate between fixed-term employment (35 hours and more a week) and fixed-term part-time employment (less than 35 hours a week).

Self-employment exists when an individual's main economic activity is not dependent employment.

Solo self-employment refers to self-employment without employees.

The **educational/skill levels** "low," "medium," and "high" are based on the ISCED classification of qualifications developed by UNESCO.

The aggregated data used in our country profiles can be downloaded from the project's website (www.wzb.eu/atypical). Interested users can also find explanations regarding some of the methodological problems that exist for certain years or variables.