Combining survey data with administrative and Census records:

A study of trends in social inequality in Flemish education

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Outline

- Background

- Research Question

- "So what?"

- Data and Methods

- Hitting the wall…

- The solution

- The process

- What we learned so far…

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Introduction

The Topic of our Study

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Background

- Commissioned by the Flemish Government
- Het Steunpunt Onderwijsonderzoek (SONO)

- Reveal the trends in educational outcomes for socio-economically disadvantaged youth
- Study of the impact of the measures to foster equity in education in Flanders since 2000 ("GOK-beleid" in particular)

Research Question

- Has the gap in the educational outcomes between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged youth decreased in Flanders since 2003 based on the following?
  - risk of early school leaving
  - social and ethnic bias in transition to higher education
  - impact of social and ethnic background on the earnings distribution

Clarifications

- "Disadvantage" based on the criteria of the GOK-beleid:
  - low maternal education,
  - low income (recipient of school allowance),
  - migration background (language spoken at home)

- Taking into account other factors that might be related to the changing gaps in educational outcomes (effects of wealth, international trends, etc.)

The "So What" Factor

- The Equal Educational Opportunities Act from 2003 was a major milestone to combat inequalities in educational outcomes for socio-economically disadvantaged youth

- Previous evaluations have focussed on cognitive outcomes and yielded mixed evidence about more equitable outcomes by SES (Ooghe 2011; Bellens e.a. 2013; Franck & Nicaise 2018)

- We examine inequalities in longer-term educational outcomes

Data and Methods

and what went wrong…

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Data

Labour Force Survey (LFS)

- Large sample size
- Information on the level of education attained
- Information on whether a training is being followed
- Information on nationality
- Information on parental education (!)

Methods

Multiple options…

- Multiple Regression

- Differences-in-differences

- Kernel Density

- Aiming for the trend, the progression of change from 2003 until now

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Hitting the wall…

Lack of data regarding

- Parents (education, profession, etc.) – especially if they live in another household
- Income (parental and personal)
- Nationality and migration background

The Solution

Upgrading the Study

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Enhancing LFS with official data from STATBEL

- Population register (matching LFS respondents with their parents & demographics e.g. place of residence, migration background, household composition)

- Census (possibility to access the state of affairs in 2001 & 2011 – demographics e.g. place of residence, migration background, economic activity)

- IPCAL (income of parents and respondents at different points in time)

- Detailed version of some LFS variables (e.g. age)

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(Ongoing) Process

- Official application: motivation for the study, requested variables and the motivation for it, information about how we secure data protection, etc.

- Thanks to STATBEL and Patrick

Issues we have been facing

- Data on language not available – we are interested in the students of the Flemish education system)

- IPCAL data – raw data not possible, deciles too much work: hence, income ranges

- A lengthy process

Next Steps

We aim to

- Receive the merged data by December 2019
- Produce the first draft of our report by March 2020
- Finalise the study by June 2020

- Present in international conferences
- Publish in academic journals

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