

WELFARE STATE REFORM DATASET

(VERSION 2.4, AUGUST 2018)

The basic unit to be coded is a reform event. A reform event is defined as change of the 13 policy instruments listed in VAR 7 (e.g., a change in the qualification period, contribution period, or benefit level). What in everyday parlance is known as a “reform” (e.g., the Work Programme in the UK or the Hartz IV in Germany) may, therefore, comprise multiple reform events.

VAR 1: Event ID

Note: This variable is an ID for each individual reform event coded. The event ID is unique and relates to one and only one reform event. Each country is given an ID number that is incorporated into the event ID. Within each country the event ID goes from 1 (the first reform event in chronological time) to 999 (we assume that there will be much less than 999 reform event, but otherwise it is easy to add a digit later).

Values:

UK: 1.000-1.999
DK: 2.000-2.999
DE: 3.000-3.999
FN: 4.000-4.999
FR: 5.000-5.999

VAR 2: Date: Year

Note: This is the year of the legislative decision.

Values: Year (numeric)

VAR 3: Date: Month

Values:

Month, 1-12 (numeric)
-99. N/A

VAR 4: Date: Day

Note: For many reform event there is information on the exact day readily available. In this case this information should be coded, but if the information is not readily available this variable should not be coded (In other words, the really important information is the year and month).

Values:
Day, 1-31 (numeric)
-99. N/A

VAR 5: Uncertainty about date

Note: Sometimes it is not possible to get information about the precise month of legislation. This variable is meant to capture this uncertainty. Note that uncertainty about the day should not be coded here (since our dependent variable is measured in months anyway).

Values:

1. Certain
 2. Uncertain
- 99. N/A (only in FR dataset)

VAR 6: Reform ID

Note: This ID is meant to capture if a reform event is part of a large reform package. Examples of such reform packages are the New Deal in UK in the 1990s and Hartz IV in Germany in the 2000s. Deciding if a reform event is part of a package is to a certain extent arbitrary and relies on the assessment of the coder. However, if existing literature and/or media accounts describe it as part of a package, it should always be coded as such.

If a reform only consists of one reform event a Reform ID should still be given to this single event. In other words, all reform events should be associated with a Reform ID.

If different reform events relate to both policy domains (i.e., unemployment and old age, cf. VAR 25), the same Reform ID should be given to the two event if they are part of the same package.

Values:

UK: 1.000-1.999
DK: 2.000-2.999
DE: 3.000-3.999
FN: 4.000-4.999
FR: 5.000-5.999

VAR 7: Instrument

Note: What policy instrument is changed?

All instruments are meant to capture changes in the social rights of individual citizens. This means that reform events that do not affect these social rights directly should not be coded (e.g., a change in the administration of benefit). It also means that we do not

code changes in the tax system even though these indirectly can affect the value of the social rights.

Instrument no. 1-6 relate to conditions of access; i.e., the requirements for getting benefits in the first place. Instrument no. 7-10 relate to the actual benefits; i.e., how much and for how long benefits are paid out. Instrument no. 11-13 relate to conditions of behavior; i.e., requirements for remaining eligible when already receiving benefits.

If a program is established or abolished VAR 21 or VAR 22 should be used. A few times a program is formally abolished and an identical program is immediately established (i.e., a purely technical reform). In that case only the eventual instrument changes should be coded (in VAR 7). In this case a coder should always note this in the remarks to the reform event.

If a whole new group of individuals, not previously covered, are included into an existing scheme, this is also coded as an establishment (VAR 22), not as a change in existing policy instruments.

Explanatory notes for the individual instruments with examples from Denmark:

0. The program was either established or abolished. In this case VAR 7 should be coded 0 and VAR 20 or VAR 21 should be coded.
1. Qualification period: How long does it take for a person to become eligible? Example: In DK you have to have residence in DK for 40 years to qualify for the full old age pension (folkepension).
2. Contribution period: How long must a person contribute to a scheme before becoming eligible? Example: In DK you have to have paid contributions to the unemployment insurance for 52 weeks before being eligible to unemployment insurance benefits.
3. Contribution level: How much must a person contribute? Example: In DK a person has to pay up to 6.576/year in contribution to be eligible for unemployment insurance.
4. Waiting period: How long after a social risk occurs before a person is eligible? Example: In DK from 1982 to 1986 unemployed had to wait one day before being eligible for unemployment benefits.
5. Age brackets: How old must a person be to be eligible? Example: Retirement age in DK is 67 years.
6. Means-test: Is there a means-test? Example: In DK the supplementary old age pension is not paid to persons with an income of more than 539.500 kr.
7. Duration period: How long can a recipient get benefits? Example: In DK unemployment insurance benefits stops after 2 years.
8. Benefit level: Nominal value. Example: In DK the old age pension 5.997 kr./month.
9. Benefit level: Indexation rule. Is the nominal benefits automatically regulated and with what factor? Example: In DK benefits are typically regulated to match increases in salaries.

10. Benefit level: Assessment base. Is the base for calculation benefits changed? E.g., in the German pension system, the “points earned” for raising a child (which lead to future benefits) are re-evaluated (leading to higher future benefits) for women.
11. Employability: Is the recipient required or is offered the opportunity to voluntarily participate in activities meant to increase the likelihood of getting a job? In DK persons below the age of 30 are required to enroll in activation programs after 3 months of joblessness.
12. Health documentation: Is the recipient required to document that she is unable to work?
13. Residence: Does it matter where and under what circumstances the recipient lives? Example: In DK recipients of social assistance (kontanthjælp) are not entitled to benefits if living together with a spouse that can support the recipient.
14. Other

Note that if a program is either entirely abolished or created from scratch, no instrument should be coded. Instead VAR 21 or VAR 22 should be used.

Values:

0. No instrument (stablished or abolished)
1. Qualification period
2. Contribution period
3. Contribution level
4. Waiting period
5. Age brackets
6. Means-test
7. Duration period
8. Benefit level: Nominal value
9. Benefit level: Indexation rule
10. Benefit level: Assessment base
11. Employability
12. Health documentation
13. Residence
14. Other

VAR 8: Direction

Note: Is the reform event an expansion or reduction of the social rights enjoyed by the relevant citizens?

Reforms where citizens can voluntarily perform certain activities (e.g., pay more into contribution-based schemes or take part in re-training programs) are an expansion of social rights. In contrast, when performance of certain activities is mandatory, they constitute a reduction of social rights.

Values:

1. Reduction

2. Status quo
3. Expansion

VAR 9: Grandfathering

Note: Does the reform event only affect future recipients?

Values:

0. No
1. Yes

VAR 10: Age

Note: Does the reform treat some age groups differently than others? E.g., is a change in retirement change phased in gradually so that those above a certain age are not affected?

Values:

0. No
1. Yes

VAR 11: Gender

Note: Is the reforms aimed at a particular gender? E.g., rising retirement age for women (so that it matches that of males).

Values:

0. No
1. Yes

VAR 12: Residence/nationality

Note: Does the reform affect (potential) recipients based on the length of residency in a country or their nationality?

Values:

0. No
1. Yes

VAR 13: Civil status

Note: Does the reform treat marriage couples differently from singles and unmarried couples?

Values:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

VAR 14: Dependents

Note: Does the reform treat people who have dependents (children, elderly family members living at home, etc.) differently than the rest of the recipients/population?

Values:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

VAR 15: Military

Note: Does the reform treat military personnel and/or veterans differently than the rest of the recipients/population?

Values:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

VAR 16: Insured/uninsured

Note: Does the reform treat insured (e.g., members of an unemployment insurance scheme) differently than uninsured?

Values:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

VAR 17: Other targeted group

Note: If another group is targeted than those listed in VAR 9-VAR 16 then the group should be recorded here. The group should only be coded if the empirical material directly indicates a group. E.g., disabled.

VAR 18: Start date

Note: When is the reform planned to begin? This is meant to be a rough year proxy.

Values:

- 1. Year (numeric)

-99. N/A

VAR 19: Full implementation

Note: When is the reformed planned to be fully implemented? This is meant to be a rough year proxy.

Values:

- 1. Year (numeric)
- 99. N/A

VAR 20: Magnitude

Note: This is an open ended variable where the coder can list any numeric indicators of changes. E.g., if qualification period is reduced from 50 to 25 weeks or if benefits are cut from £150 to £125 per week.

VAR 21: Abolishment

Note: If the entire program is abolished, this variable should be coded “yes”.

Values:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 99. N/A

VAR 22: Establishment

Note: If an entire program is established, this variable should be coded “yes”.

If a whole new group of individuals, not previously covered, are included into an exiting scheme, this is also coded as an establishment, not as a change in existing policy instruments.

Values:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 99. N/A

VAR 23: Age bracket

Note: If VAR 7 (Policy Instrument) = “Age brackets” (value 5 in VAR 7) then the numeric change should be stated here. E.g., retirement age increased from 65 to 67 years.

VAR 24: Dependents

Note: If VAR14 (Dependents) = “yes” then state which social group. E.g., parents or children.

VAR 25: Policy domain

Values:

1. Unemployment
2. Pensions
- 99. N/A

VAR 26: Vote (this variable is only used in the DK dataset)

Note: What parties voted for the reform event in parliament? The variable is open ended and the coder should just list the parties in favor.

VAR 27: Coder comments

Note: This is for any additional comments the coder has regarding the reform event.

Country specific variables:

Denmark:

VAR 98: Efterlon

Values:
0. No
1. Yes
-99. N/A

VAR 99: Folkepension

Values:
0. No
1. Yes
-99. N/A

Germany:

VAR 99: Social assistance

Values:
0. No
1. Yes

France:

VAR 98 UNIDEC

Values:
1. No
2. Yes
-99. N/A

VAR 99 Compulsory supplementary pension

Values:
1. No
2. Yes
-99. N/A

Note: List of country-sensitive coding decisions for FR is in the FR overview.