

European comparison of national governance patterns of integrated social and employment policies

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Major changes have occurred in the field of employment and social cohesion policies within the last decade. The promotion of a rising activation – thereby new integrated employment and social cohesion policies - increased all through Europe. This fostered trend questions the way employment and social issues are dealt with and thus their governance. Indeed, new governance schemes not only aim at reducing State expenditure, but also aim at implementing activation policies. More important, given that “*the feasibility of social policy reforms may be influenced by specific governance configurations*” (Van Berkel, Borghi, 2007), the focus is then put on another objective of new governance patterns: to increase the efficiency of these policies. Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) have stressed that, regarding social and employment policies, governance is not only ‘a way of doing’ but has deeper implications in terms of welfare state transformations (Van Berkel, Borghi, 2008). It highlights the need to question

the evolution of new ways to deal with employment and social cohesion policies and their governance's schemes.

To address these matters, national governance patterns of these policies will be analysed. How different policy fields, different political levels and different actors are regulated at the national level? This promoted integrated approach and its governance will be questioned through a comparative analysis based on six national studies (Germany, Italy, Poland, UK, Sweden and France).

These statements raise many questions. Nonetheless, prior to describing and analysing the different ways national patterns deal with the governance of integrated social and employment policies, some key concepts will be defined in order to set the context of the research. What does an integrated approach consist of? Is there a convergent dynamic regarding the integrated approach? How is such approach governed at the national level? Finally, do these changes make us re-consider established welfare states' models?

Barbier defines activation as follows: *“an increased and explicit dynamic linkage introduced in public policy between social, welfare, employment and labour market programmes, which implies critical redesigning of previous income support, assistance and social protection policies in terms of efficiency and equity, as well as enhancing the various social functions of paid work and labour force participation”* (Barbier, 2000). This definition, which highlights the importance of including several fields, also shows the many restructuring consequences activations policies may face. Therefore, when working on activation policies, it appears of paramount importance to take into account employment policies and wider social services.

Hence, the previous definition puts the emphasis on the need for an integrated approach. Over the last two decades, this concept of an “integrated approach” was used to promote a new way of dealing with employment and social cohesion challenges to an increasing extend. Yet, what does it refer to? Raised as an obvious answer to employment and social cohesion issues, it has not really been defined. Even though the use of this concept has increased, its definition remains vague.

In a European context, it was first used to promote a new way to deal with gender inequalities in the labour market (Serrano Pascual, 2002). In that work on gender issues, this approach was presented as an innovative response to inequalities, consisting of the integration of women's problems in all public policies. Progressively, this approach started to be used in other fields such as environment, migration and also employment and social cohesion

(notably through the Lisbon agenda and the OMC processes). Concerning this last field, this approach aims to reduce inequalities in terms of employability, and to facilitate social inclusion. The term ‘integrated’ notably implies that the different challenges vulnerable populations may face should be linked and coordinated together. For example, the need to conciliate social inclusion and employment issues has progressively been reinforced. Public stakeholders realized that increasing unemployment did not reach the whole population in the same way, but was much more focused on some categories of the population. Considered for a long time as two distinct objectives, inclusion and employment issues became more and more interdependent. In a recent report entitled “Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2011”, Laszlo Andor - Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion – also put the emphasis on this broader integration when defining the approach: *“the integrated approach which the Commission has applied in preparation of the review corresponds to the Europe 2020 strategy. This is a long-term development strategy which sees social inclusion, the fight against poverty, greater labour market participation, employment and job quality as essential elements for Europe’s prosperity”* (European Commission, 2011).

In sum, new challenges in terms of social cohesion require a wider approach including social and employment policies: an approach that does not isolate problems, but fosters the inclusion of several policy fields, several actors and several levels.

This paper aims at presenting and analysing this approach in regard with its governance, which also have a broad definition. In the context of social policies, Mary Daly defines governance as the *“organisation of collective action”* (Daly, 2003). This term may also refer to the articulation of old public administration, new public management and new public service or to the growing importance of the local level. Moreover, when analysing the governance of employment and social policies, most academics have only focused on the delivery of services. Nonetheless, it appears relevant to widen this analysis, which does not take into account policy making. Thus, not only will the governance of service delivery be analysed, but the way policies are designed will also be analysed in terms of governance.

To address these questions, we will first present key concepts of this ‘activation friendly integration’. Then, a dynamic analysis of change will put the emphasis on the real implementation of these policies.

1. Toward an activation-friendly integration

Prior to analysing the actual implementation of this activation-friendly integration, we will focus on political discourses in order to reveal the nature and the means of the taken decisions. The analysis will focus on a series of central notions in order to understand these cognitive changes that are at stake, and to explain the way these changes were institutionalised. It will then enable us to tackle the actual implementation of this ‘activation-friendly integration’ in a last part.

1.1 Conditionality

Activation has often been characterized by the increase of conditionality that follows the implementation of such policies. *De facto*, social benefits’ conditionality is a key issue with regard to activation. It relies on two pillars: the unemployment insurance’s access conditions, and the definition of a system of sanctions to ensure an active behaviour from the unemployed.

Eichhorst and Konle-Seidl (2008) explained that: “*redefining the link between social protection and labour market policies on the one hand and employment on the other by stronger benefit conditionality has been a common issue in labour market reforms*”. It promotes a new relationship between the state and the beneficiary of services: a relationship, which puts the emphasis on rights and duties. If the beneficiary does not fulfil its duties, sanctions may apply. Duties are highlighted and individual responsibilities are reinforced.

At first, conditionality affects the access to unemployment benefits. All national systems of benefits rely on the definition of access’ criteria to receive the unemployment insurance. Except in the UK, where access to benefits is related to the participation in active labour market policies (ALMP), the five other countries rely on duration criteria. In France as in Sweden, access to unemployment benefits relies on a minimum duration of six months of work¹. Regarding Germany, Italy and Poland, the base period is 12 months during the 18 last months (Poland) or the 24 last months (Italy).

When one does not fulfil the conditions he or she is supposed to, sanctions should occur. In some cases, such as in Italy, the existence of severe sanctions (unemployment insurance’s

¹ In France, one must have worked at least six months during the 22 months before unemployment. In Sweden, one must have worked 80 hours per month during the last six months prior being unemployed.

withdrawal) seems to result in its non-implementation *de facto*. In France, to make the implementation of sanctions acceptable to the PES' employees, the introduced sanctions were made progressive. Such progressivity is a common rule for five countries (France, Germany, UK, Sweden and Poland) and is expressed through status (radiation), level (percentage of benefits) or benefits' duration.

Sanctions that may apply in case of refusing to attend an appointment with the placement services are generally equal or less severe than the ones that occur when refusing a job (with the exception of Sweden, where such refusal results in radiation). The same level of sanctions applies for job refusal and appointment refusal in France and Poland. Sanctions are less severe in Germany (withdrawal of ALGI for a week) and in the UK - where a system of softer sanctions results in a shorter duration of the suspension than for a job refusal (1 week for the first appointment refusal, two weeks for the second and 4 for the third) -.

Table 1. Nature of sanctions

Sanctions (only the most common ones will be developed in that table)	FRANCE	GERMANY	ITALY	POLAND	SWEDEN	United Kingdom
	The amount of people that were sanctioned was tripled in a year (2005-2006) but sanctions are still largely unapplied (2% of beneficiaries)	Different sanctions for beneficiaries of ALGI & ALGII and difference infringement (refusal a suitable job, training or job creation scheme)	NOT USED IN PRACTICE			JSA allowance: full conditionality (sanction heavier when refusing to apply for a job than to comply to work preparation); ESA allowance: mild conditionality (prepare to work); Lone parents: low conditionality (prepare to work), ESA lone parents: no conditionality
Job refusal	1st refusal = unregistration for 15 days 2nd refusal & more = unregistration for 1 to 6 months (can also be definitive)	1st refusal= -ALGI: no benefit for 3 weeks, -ALGII : 30% reduction of benefit 2nd refusal= -ALGI: no benefit for 6 weeks -ALGII: 60% reduction of benefit 3rd refusal= -ALGI: no benefit for 12 weeks -ALGII: no benefit	Benefits are not delivered	Loss of the status of unemployed for: 1st refusal = 120 days 2nd refusal = 180 days 3rd refusal = 270 days	1st refusal = -25% for 40 days, 2nd refusal = -50% for 40 days 3rd refusal = end of benefits	1st refusal: 100% payment ceasing for 3 months 2nd refusal: 100% payment ceasing for 6 months 3rd refusal: 100% payment ceasing for 3 years
Missing an appointment	1st refusal= unregistration for 2 months 2nd refusal = unregistration for 2 to 6 months (can also be definitive)	- ALGI: no benefit for 1 week - ALGII: 10% reduction of benefit		Loss of the status of unemployed for: 1st refusal = 120 days 2nd refusal = 180 days 3rd refusal = 270 days	Unregistration	1st refusal: 100% payment ceasing for 1 week 2nd refusal: payment ceasing for 2 weeks 3rd refusal: payment ceasing for 4 weeks

Source: National Reports

Conditionality also increased regarding the obligation to accept a suitable job, notion at the core of the idea of conditionality, and which gives a good example of the rise of conditionality. The definition of a suitable or adequate job has though not been

institutionalized in all six countries (e.g. Italy does not have a proper official definition, nor as the UK). However, the two examples of France and Sweden reveal a different use of the idea that some jobs should be considered as acceptable for some people. What is interesting, with respect to our issue, is that, once defined, someone cannot refuse such job opportunity, without losing progressively its benefits. Moreover, the definition of the job you have to take may vary after a certain time (e.g. after few months being unemployed, you may have to take a job further from where you live).

Table 2. Definition of an appropriate job

A/unappropriate job	FRANCE	GERMANY	ITALY	POLAND	SWEDEN	UK
	After 4 months : a suitable job represents at least 95% previous salary After 6 months : 85% of previous salary + maximum 1 hour on public transportation After 1 year : salary at least equal to unemployment benefit	<i>NOT appropriate job :</i> ALGI : lower income than former income (first three months: more than 20%; following three months: 30%; after six months: lower than ALG I) & longer commuting (2,5h) or relocation (for some) ALGII : every job is appropriate except for some beneficiaries' (according to incapacity, children, family care, etc.)	No clear definition	Employment or remunerated work, subject to payment of social contributions, Unemployed person possesses sufficient qualifications and professional experience to perform the job, or will be able to perform it after training, Her health condition makes it possible to perform the job, Journey to work and back home does not exceed 3 hours and can be made by means of public transport, The gross income should equal at least the national minimum wage, if it is a full-time job (or should be calculated proportionally to the time of work)	Since 2007 the unemployed has to accept a job in the whole national labour market straight away	No clear definition but it is noted that a good reason for refusing to follow a 'direction' might be, for example, because it conflicts with religious beliefs or because the job involved would mean the person would be worse off than on Jobseeker's Allowance

Source: National Reports

Indeed, it would be unacceptable to sanction jobseekers for having refused a job obviously inappropriate. It is thus necessary to define the nature of these jobs as a feature characterising the job seekers' required compensation. The notion of suitable or appropriate job is set in these terms. National employment systems now rely on the definition of what is an appropriate job; in other words a job, which refusal may result in a sanction for the unemployed. The level of the demand is generally based on two variables: the distance from the place of residence and the level of salary. In Italy, this notion has not been clearly defined, which should be related to the weak implementation of sanctions. Poland defined the suitable job by a distance, according qualifications and professional experience, health condition and the salary. In 2001, Sweden gave up the geographical reference from the place of residence and, since 2007 the national labour market is taken into account. In Germany, the definition of a suitable job for the beneficiaries of ALGI is expressed in terms of inappropriate job based on its level of earnings and on the distance. For the beneficiaries of ALGII, all jobs are considered as suitable, subject to the compatibility with the characteristics of the beneficiary (incapacity, family, etc.). Finally, in France, the notion of suitable job initiated important

political and technical debates. It is mainly earnings that are taken into account. During the first 4 months, a suitable job is a job with a salary that cannot be less than 95% than the previous one. After 5 months, the level of earnings goes down to 85% and a condition of distance is included. After 1 year, as in Germany, the reference becomes the amount of the unemployment benefit. Thus, about this technical question on the appropriate job, differences are again important between European countries both as regards the nature of criteria, and their intensity.

The risks resulted from this conditionality appeared as one of the best incentive to take up a job and not to remain unemployed for many countries (except from Italy, which did not put such a strong emphasis on social benefits' conditionality). The difficult task is then to manage, to implement efficient conditionality.

1.2 Cross-sectoriality

As demonstrated previously, the integrated approach is based on the inclusion and the connection of several policy fields, several actors and several levels. These components of the approach all aim to face new challenges regarding employment (employment being understood as at the core of social cohesion). A broader understanding of new challenges, a non-isolated approach that include all problems that someone may face regarding its social and employment integration thus define the approach, which emphasizes the need for cross sectoriality.

The identification of vulnerable groups is a transversal component of the six national systems analysed in this paper. It is a key element of intersectoriality and a good indicator of its level of progress. It is indubitably a central element taking part to the employment policies' individualisation trend (cf. *infra*), but in a way it is also an indicator of the level of integration of fields of public action, in a logic of cross sectoriality. Indeed, in each of the studied countries, and with regards to singular social matters, a certain amount of exposed populations have been identified.

Another transversal statement is that in each of these countries, targeting of activation policies can be observed. Such targeting measures for some categories of the population considered as more problematic in terms of employment are broadly used to facilitate the access to the labour market. It is interesting to highlight that these categories do not systematically overlap.

For example, in Italy, women and youngsters appear as vulnerable categories, whereas activation policies mainly target the first group. In Sweden, vulnerable categories are youngsters, foreigners and people with mental handicap, while activation policies' target groups are first of all people on long-term sick leave, youngsters and immigrants. Poland also represents a significant case. Populations at risk are youngsters, women, low qualified, elderly workers (>55 years old), homeless, and long-term unemployed. Their active policies' targets represent a long list of categories defined according to their relation with the labour market².

This statement raises questions. Indeed, on the one hand, activation policies' targeting is first established with regard to labour market's selection mechanisms. Thus, such targeting is built according to the identification of populations based on their difficulties to access employment. However, categories identified as vulnerable may be considered this way because of broader social factors, which more generally refer to social policies' targeting rather than employment policies' targeting.

This statement is strongly significant regarding the integration of policies in a perspective of activation and priority access to employment. The decoupling of categories in terms of activation and vulnerability may reflect quite a weak integration. Indeed, we could assume that in the logic of fulfilled integration, socially vulnerable categories would be prioritized in activation policies. However, it appears that it is not yet the case in all the studied countries.

Table 3. Vulnerable groups

Population	FRANCE	GERMANY	ITALY	POLAND	SWEDEN	UK
Vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long term unemployed - Youth - Disabled - Senior workers - Women - Foreigners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long term unemployed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women - Youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth - Women - Low skilled - Disabled - Senior (>55) - Homeless - Long term unemployed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth - Foreigners - Person with psychological disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long term unemployed - People on sickness benefit - Senior (>50) - NEET
Activation policies focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long term unemployed - Youth - Senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Older workers - Youth - Long term unemployed - Foreigners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young unemployed (below 25) - Elderly unemployed (over 50) - Long term unemployed; - Unemployed whose social contract with social assistance has terminated - Unemployed; women, who have not returned to work after a birth of their child; - Unemployed people without professional qualifications, without professional experience or without secondary education - Unemployed single-parents; - Unemployed ex-prisoners, who had not taken up job after being released from a prison - Disabled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long term ill - Youth - Immigrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IB Claimants, young (focus on 16-17 years old on jobseekers allowance) - Lone parents

Source: National Reports

² Young unemployed (below 25); elderly unemployed (over 50); long term unemployed; unemployed whose social contract with social assistance has terminated; unemployed; women, who have not returned to work after a birth of their child; Unemployed people without professional qualifications, without professional experience or without secondary education; Unemployed single-parents; unemployed ex-prisoners, who had not taken up job after being released from a prison; disabled.

1.3 Individualisation

We have just shown that one of the main principles of activation policies is to target specific groups. The definition of these groups is of paramount importance regarding our questions. Not only does it concern activation policies, but also it was transferred to the matter of integration and is a possible indicator of its level. Indeed, all attempts to promote such integration were based on specific policies targeted at some groups nationally identified as encountering difficulties in accessing the labour market. It shows that integration is not only promoted to make policies more efficient, but also aims at individualising the way employment and social cohesion policies are dealt with.

To set up targeted policies and tailor-made services, profiling individuals becomes necessary (George, 2006). Categorising groups requires analysing several variables regarding the individual. The main variable at stake is the measure of the “distance to/from employment”. Hence, it will establish different categories that are entitled to different services.

In all cases, profiling is a good indicator of the diffusion of a managerial model of the individualisation of back to work policies. Profiling is first of all a management technique, which – even if it is spread in Europe – does not mechanically mean that countries using it have a strongly individualised job seekers’ support, and that those not using it implement non-individualised policies.

Among our six countries, two do not use job seekers’ profiling (Sweden and Poland). Two countries have established a profiling based on three categories: Italy and France. In Italy, the three profiles are defined according to the employment policies’ programmes: ordinary unemployed, cassa integrazione (without suspension of the work contract) and beneficiaries of the mobility programme. In France, job seekers are profiled based on their risk to become long-term unemployed. Their profiling results in three levels of services: simple, reinforced or social supports. It is important to highlight that the French situation represents a case of negotiated statistical profiling, as the profiling by statistical indicators must be confirmed by an interview with a placement adviser. Finally, in the UK, profiling is based on four categories also corresponding to level of services: full conditionality, work preparation, keeping in touch with the labour market, and no conditionality.

Targeting and profiling people result on an individualised support. By promoting such individualisation, countries expect more efficient services, closer to real needs and to real

individual situations. Obviously, such dynamic questions the governance schemes on several issues: multi-dimensional, multi-levels and multi-stakeholders. Indeed, it implies not to focus on sectorial issues, but rather on a group of issues that affect one person. Hence, the way the citizen is conceived, and the way his / her concerns are dealt with radically change.

1.4 Marketization

According to Eichhorst and Konle-Seidl (2008), *“at the heart of (this) general redefinition of relations between actors are the concepts of ‘management by objectives’ and ‘steering by outcomes’, which are the foundations for more contractual relationships, not only between the individual and the state, but also between different levels of government and between public entities and private or privatiser service providers”*. The New Public Management, to which we often refer in regard with new governance schemes, emphasizes on *“introducing techniques of business management, service and client orientedness, market mechanisms and competition”* (Van Berkel, Borghi, 2007). Hence, most have broadly promoted contracting out to private actors, even though it remains a very complex task to implement in many European countries.

Indeed, UK is the country the most far ahead regarding the marketization trend. Except from this example, our national cases studies show only very weak attempts to implement real marketization. The partnerships approach has been implemented but mainly with respect to long-standing tradition of public administration. Thus, the established partnerships and involvement of new actors remained within public administration. NGOs and social partners are taking part to these policies at different extends and mostly regarding social issues rather than employment and labour market policies. Increasing contractualisation facilitates the increase use of contracting-out, or at least its promotion.

Hence, UK is the most obvious example of such movement. The intensive development of public / private partnerships and marketization of public services has led to implement a technology of government based on PPP. The new Work Program has led to a kind of devolution of the employment services for long term unemployed to private companies. This program is based on public tendering and payment by results of the service providers. Sweden also shows a long experience of purchase of training actions from private providers. In general, training represents one of the main policy fields where externalization is used. It is the case in Italy, where regions, provinces, and local employment agencies regularly use private offering. In France, the decision has been made in 2002 to make compulsory the use

of the public market code for unemployed training programs. It has considerably impacted the organization of the professional training market and the delivery of services to beneficiaries. In Poland, although private organizations play a minor role in service providing, training actions' measures are also one of the fields where externalization is developed.

1.5 Contractualisation

The increase of individualisation, marketization and conditionality results in new relationships between the state and the citizen, but also between the state and other actors (public and private, local and national).

The operational process of reinforcing sanctions and tailor made services thus introduced a new social contract, which changes the equilibrium between the citizen's rights and duties that are emphasized, and transfers an increasing responsibility on the citizen. Hence, it relieves the State from this responsibility.

Even though the process of contractualisation was put forward in the context of active welfare states as a way to make sure the balance between rights and duties was respected. However, it appears that nowadays, the citizen's duties are being much more emphasized than its rights. Indeed, as Van Berkel and Borghi explain (2008), contractualisation has mainly been *“formalised in the form of individual action plans. At the same time, clients have few institutionalised resources at their disposal to ensure that an activation offer is made to them that fits their needs and circumstances, or to force agencies to provide the services agreed upon in the contract”*.

Changing the nature of the social contract through this shift of responsibilities may have an impact in terms of services quality.

The idea of a 'social contract' developed by Rousseau and the more managerial notion of contractualisation of the employment administration are both vague. They refer to uncertain contents and practices, in which it is generally difficult to distinguish what comes under a contractual relation and what is pure rhetoric.

Firstly, we should question the mutual obligations between the job seeker and the placement and compensation services. Some of those obligations have already been highlighted in this part of the article with regard to conditionality and individualisation. It is expedient to complete these first elements by two other indicators: the level of financial compensation of a job loss as an incentive to get someone back to work, and the definition of appropriate (or inappropriate) job regarding job seekers' obligations.

The level of compensation of the lost salary when starting a period of unemployment is an important factor of securing professional transitions (Gangl, 2008). The unemployment benefit system, as well as being a way to put pressure on the unemployed to ensure his/her active behaviour, is also a key component to avoid the shift into long-term unemployment and social assistance. We already showed that criteria to access unemployment benefits are variable from a country to another. The level of compensation is also very different from a country to another. It varies in intensity (percentage of previous salary) and in time (in the previous job or during the unemployment period).

Table 5. Unemployment benefit: conditions and compensation level

Unemployment benefit	FRANCE	GERMANY	ITALY	POLAND	SWEDEN	United Kingdom
Conditions to be entitled to unemployment benefit	6 months of work during the last 22 months	Have accomplished eligibility period (at least 12 months in a job subject to social insurance contributions)	<i>Ordinary:</i> - 1 year of work during the past 2 years - payment of contribution during 2 years - declaration of immediate availability <i>Cassa integrazione:</i> - temporary economic crisis - the employer must have more than 15 employees <i>Mobility:</i> - work for 12 months and according to size of the firm - the employer must have a minimum amount of employees	- Work for 1 year during the last 18 months earning minimum salary - Paid eligible contributions	the person needs to have worked, during the last 12 months before unemployment, at least 80 hours a month in at least six months or, alternatively, having worked 480 hours during six consecutive months and then at least 50 hours per month	<i>Job seekers allowance (JSA):</i> contributions based (up to 6 months) or income-based <i>Employment and Support Allowance (ESA):</i> The person must have an illness or disability which affects his/her ability to work. Contributions based or income-based (in this case, the person should have savings of less than £16,000 and have a partner or civil partner that works for less than 24 hours a week on average).
Compensation level The overall replacement rate (OECD) is of 44%	The average compensation level is of 62% of the previous salary (ARE).	2 successive levels : -ALGI (12 months, not means tested, 67% if with children, 60% otherwise) - ALGII (means tested, infinite duration, stronger activation)	<i>Ordinary:</i> Duration : 8 months if the worker is below 50 years old and 12 otherwise Level : 60% for the first 6 months, then 50% months 7 & 8, and finally 40% until the 12th month <i>Cassa integrazione (52 weeks):</i> never above 80% of the previous income <i>Mobility (1 year if below 40 years old, 2 years if between 40 and 50, 3 years if above 50 years old → if in the South of Italy +1 year for each category):</i> level variable	- People who have worked less than 5 years receive 80% of the standard allowance - people who have worked more than 20 years (fulfilling above mentioned conditions) get 120% of it - standard allowance : 22% of average salary and 54% of minimum salary during first 3 months, reduced to 17% of average salary and 43% of minimum one during the following months	Maximum 300 days (exception for parents of children under 18 à 450 days) The compensation level for the first 200 days is 80 percent, thereafter 70 percent until day 300	<i>Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance :</i> up to 6 months

Source: National Reports

These synchronic elements reveal an important difference in terms of financial compensation's generosity. This difference can better be assessed in a diachronic perspective, which the net replacement rates express.

Table 6. Net replacement rates in percentage (NRR³)

³ The net replacement rate indicator is defined as the average of the unemployment benefit net, the replacement rates for two levels of salary, three familial situations and 60 months unemployment (<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/60/7/49971180.xlsx>)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Germany	61	61	61	57	45	46	45	44	45	44
France	55	55	49	50	50	49	49	49	49	49
Italy	21	21	21	21	22	22	22	24	24	23
Poland	23	23	23	23	23	23	22	22	22	22
UK	30	30	30	30	29	29	29	29	29	29
Sweden	43	44	44	43	43	43	40	44	43	43

Source OCDE

This last table shows the difference between replacement rates offered to jobseekers by unemployment benefits systems. We thus notice major differences, as the rate can easily double from a country to another. In a chronological perspective and within the last decade, we observe a relative stability in time with two exceptions: Germany and France that went through a significant decrease. It should also be noticed that a previous OECD report analysing replacement rates from the 1990's) reveals that replacement rates have also decreased in other countries earlier (Martin, 1996).

Following the activation trend, the unemployment benefit becomes an incentive mechanism. It has the role to financially compensate for the efforts made by the job seeker to return to work. Among the required efforts of the unemployed' active behaviour, accepting job offers made available by the placement services is an important one. We have highlighted in the part dedicated to sanctions that in some countries (notably Germany and UK), refusing a job results in reinforced sanctions. Therefore, the nature of the jobs offered by the placement services has an important role.

More generally, the activation friendly integration has changed the former conception of welfare states in all six countries. It has introduced new ways of conceiving the relationship to the State, new ways to understand the way policies were structured so far, and the role of non-public actors. These changes have challenged traditional governance schemes that try to fit into, to deal with and to facilitate these new dynamics.

2. The implementation of changes: a difficult task in troubled times

Beneath the current situation that was presented through the cognitive world of activation they resulted in, a question of paramount importance remains. How did we get there? What are the exogenous and endogenous factors of change? To what extent have these new governance schemes been implemented? To answer these questions, we will first address the question of the reforms' timing in order to understand when policies change and whether there is any reason why they change at such or such time. And then, we will try to go past the cognitive elements that were presented so far in order to understand to what extent are these reforms really implemented.

The question of the change analysis is of paramount importance as it brings to light the reforms' efficiency as well as the way change occurs. It will thereby enable a better understanding of the dynamic that underlay the policies' changes.

2.1 Activation throughout time

It has already been demonstrated that the last decade has witnessed many reforms towards stronger activation and more decentralisation in the field of employment and social cohesion. Hvinden (2001) opposed two different kinds of activation: a "soft" one that would be based on financial incentives, on an individual right to access activation's programmes and on quality employment services, versus a "hard" one, which involves the restriction of eligibility conditions to benefit from social assistance and financial pressure and/or legal obligations to reduce the level or the duration of benefits (Barbier, 2006). This distinction could be used in a dynamic way, and not as two opposed paradigms that would each represent different countries. Thereby, the last decade could be distinguished in two main periods, which went through continuing changes that can notably be explained by exogenous factors that will be described in the following part.

The first period (approximately from the beginning of the decade to 2006) would be characterised by what Hvinden called "soft" activation. The launch of the European Employment Strategy, and the relative - but noteworthy - economic growth (even though the economic situation was more difficult at that time than during the second part of the decade in Poland), enabled most European countries to transfer European recommendations in their national context in a quite serene setting. Moreover, the pressure to reduce expenditure did not yet reach a crucial stage/point and it seems that the main aim was to reach full

employment and quality services. Then, the second period (2007 until nowadays) mainly represents a time of economic crisis, which brings the emphasis on the need to drastically reduce the public expenditures. The “hard” type of activation is subsequently fostered as a result of economic difficulties and may consist of a more formal activation system or of instruments putting the emphasis on sanctions, conditionality, etc. In sum, reforms that focuses on the citizen’s duties rather than on its rights. This differentiation between two periods characterized a tendency rather than very strict activation modes. Indeed, all countries have very different backgrounds in respect of their welfare state (cf. Barbier, 2006, Esping Andersen, 1991, etc.). However, a move towards even stronger activation and towards more restrictive access to benefits supports the idea of a second “harder” period.⁴

This distinction can apply to each country to different extents. However, we can still notice that several new reforms that could be qualified as ‘hard’ were passed during the second part of the decade. In Sweden, there was a decrease of the unemployment insurance, while in Germany the 2009 labour market instrument re orientation act cut or restricted some instruments – mainly training – and the currently discussed new act will reinforce sanctions and obligations. In France, the PPAE set up progressive disciplinary measures. Regarding the UK, such evolution does not clearly appear from the table as no new measure was established at that time (even though some existing reforms were reinforced – Pathways to Work for instance -). However, in 2007 the Freud report concluded by recommending ‘stronger conditionality’ for those already on incapacity benefits, which once again reveals not a shift but at least a move toward ‘harder’ activation. Even though Poland does not really correspond to the previous framework, the 2010 Act on employment that initiated stronger sanctions may reveal a current will to foster ‘harder’ policies. Finally, Italy does not seem to follow the same evolution as *“from the mid-Nineties to 2011 employment and social cohesion policies have been subjected to both major and marginal reforms, and thus this period can be regarded as dynamic especially if compared to the stagnation of the previous decades. However the lack of a long- term and comprehensive strategy and the contradictory logic, with which these policies have been approached, have created a sort of “fragmented incrementalism” (Naldini and Saraceno 2008) that has added new inefficiencies and overlapping without solving the previous ones”* (Italy National Report, p.32).

⁴ Poland does not fit in this periodization notably because of its different economic situation during the decade given that important restrictions were set during the first half of decade (or even before).

As Bonoli argues, the role of politics “*remains unresolved*” (Bonoli, 2010). It is a very complex question to tackle politics as a possible variable explaining these changes. Even though it has been demonstrated that activation policies “*are not a typical liberal welfare state phenomenon*” (Van Berkel, and al., 2011), one can wonder if and in what manner the fact that as right wing governments increasingly govern European countries has impacted the nature of activation policies? The relation of cause and effect between political parties and the nature of reforms is obvious (this statement is less obvious in case of post-communist countries: post-communist parties were also introducing reforms regarded as (neo)liberal, while right wing parties might have a more solidaristic). For example, between 2006 and 2008, Italy went through a time of left wing legislature, which highlighted the need for a major change in terms of social and employment policies (based on the recommendations made in 1997 by the Onofri Commission) notably regarding their governance scheme. The will to implement these objectives was soon stopped by the new centre right government, which did not implement any of these recommendations. Nevertheless, the activation trend seems to overcome political differences. Even though politics thus appear as a very complex variable, the nature of this activation, the way it is interpreted and transferred into national policies may differ according to political factors. Indeed, when the centre right government took office in 2006 in Sweden, it seems that the nature of activation policies changed. From then on, the focus was put on tax reforms (deductions and allowances) as one of the main incentives. At the same time, the unemployment insurance became less generous. Moreover, even though the social democratic government had increased the ceiling of health insurance in 2006, the new right wing government decreased it just after it took office.

Concerning this politics’ variable, one could expect activation to be ideologically situated (it is often describe as a neoliberal way of considering social integration). In reality, the situation seems more blurred. It appears that socio-democrat governments launched central activation measures, such as the Hartz reform in Germany or the New Deal program in the UK. Hence, the variable of politics is not necessarily decisive when it comes to fostering activation, but in the same time activation is clearly sensible to political changeover, especially regarding the choice of policy instruments. To sum up in somehow caricatural words, activation’s reforms are not necessarily conducted by right-wing governments, but they are often launched inside a policy window following a governmental reshuffling.

Thus, these changes affect the nature of activation policies, and thereby they also impact its governance. Indeed, it was stated that activation fosters integration of several actors, levels

and policy fields and that it thereby automatically involves new governance schemes. How did these changes occur? And what kind of changes are at stake?

Some of the six national analyses suggested a strong relation between reforms' timing and national or European events. It stresses the importance to focus on the period reforms were passed in regard with politics' changes and European key moments. For example, the launch of the European Employment Strategy in 1997 clearly appears as a time of changes for all countries as many reforms were passed during the following three years (approximately), especially in Italy and UK (followed by France and Germany at the beginning of the decade). Evidently, its impact varies according to the country's political and economical context. Nevertheless, it initiated for some, and clearly reinforced for others, the need for stronger activation and flexicurity. Thereby, several reforms fostering activation were passed around that time (except from Poland which did not enter the European Union until 2004): Treu Law in Italy (1997), New Deal Programmes in UK (1998), etc. (see table below). Were these reforms passed in order to change the way to deal with employment and social cohesion issues or were they only passed to fit into European objectives? What was the role of politics in the reinforcement of these new trends?

The analysis of the promoted changes' implementation will help us answer these questions, as it will throw light on the transfer of the paradigm to the field.

2.2 From a cognitive discourse to implemented changes

It was shown that the activation of integrated social and employment policies, and the new governance schemes it requires, have clearly been spread and adapted in each of the six countries to different extents. However, this statement does not give a deep enough analysis by itself, as it does not inform us about the actual implementation, neither does it inform us about the effect of these new modes of governance⁵.

The components of these changes that have been presented in this paper reveal that all countries have fostered the integration of several actors, levels and dimensions in employment and social cohesion policies in order to face new challenges and to make activation policies more efficient. However, this promoted integrated approach did not affect the three aspects of integration the same way in all six countries studied. Even though all tried to reinforce more

⁵ The impact of such governance will be developed throughout the LOCALISE project.

or less conditionality, cross sectoriality, individualisation, marketization and contractualisation, different instruments were used and to very different extend.

At the beginning of the decade, all western European countries acknowledged the need to integrate social and employment issues. Employment is more and more understood as at the core of social cohesion, as one of the main lever to maintain a social equilibrium among the population. To put it in a nutshell, not only is employment of paramount importance with regard to the national economy, but it also becomes important in terms of social inclusion. However, the integration of several dimensions into new employment and social policies represent a very challenging task to implement in regard with national attempts.

Poland faces major difficulties to set up an integrated approach. Their political context and their tradition of a central state may explain these difficulties. Indeed, Poland started to foster activation policies later than all other western European countries, as it went through a structural transformation from centrally planned economy into market economy. As already stated, Western Europe's priorities in regard with activation policies did not reach Poland at the same time. Policy fields' fragmentation in this country remains quite strong. Nonetheless, Poland is opened to various innovation and experiments, which might make integration at the local level easier.

Italy also faces strong difficulties regarding the implementation of these new governance schemes. Not only does it concern the multi-dimensional issue, but it also applies to the multi levels and multi stakeholders involved. There is an important gap between, on the one hand political will and policy-making, and on the other hand, real implementation. The means dedicated to such implementation might be an explanatory factor. However, the State's unclear positioning in that matter certainly holds back any changes.

France appeared to be concerned with this issue before this decade. For example, the widening of the Public Employment Service, which, in 1998, included social action, shows this new understanding of employment issues. During the first half of the decade, the shy attempt to foster such integration was mainly operated through vocational training and its aim to secure professional path. Then, the second half of the decade was launched with the Social Cohesion Law, which widened again, and scaled the definition of the PES. The part of the decade witnessed the implementation of the RSA established in 2008, which made the minimum income conditional under active job search and thereby reinforced the link between social assistance and employment.

Germany faces a distinct situation as it has fostered such integration progressively but in a way that managed to reach several other fields (family policies, training policies, health policies, etc.). The Hartz IV measure (2005) that bridges employment with health insurance and housing issues illustrates that.

These few examples reveal that the multi-dimensional integration implemented in these countries was shaped according to national's definition of target groups in terms of employment issues. The Swedish example clearly shows that the goal was to bring back to work as many people on sick leave as possible. Therefore, the link between the sickness insurance and the public employment service got reinforced. However, as for many countries, there is still a remaining division between these formerly separated fields. This division can be explained by the lack of global and comprehensive strategy, which could notably take the form of regulatory systems. It leads up to unclear situations for institutions and beneficiaries (e.g. in the Swedish case, the sickness insurance and the PES may give two different definition of someone's work capacity, which let the person in undefined situation).

The increased connection between employment and other related policies thus remains a difficult task that governments seem to tackle in a very timid way. Furthermore, it requires involving many different levels and stakeholders that are asked to work together, and towards the same objective. Decentralisation processes that have occurred in the six countries, aim to develop this integration of these different levels.

Whether decentralisation takes the form of giving more responsibilities to local authorities in terms of policies' implementation, or whether it means giving them more responsibilities in terms of policy-making, decentralisation still has not reach its objectives yet.

Employment policies have often only been territorialised to a small extent. Either it was territorialised through the delocalisation of policies' implementation, with a very limited scope of adaptations and innovations; or it was let as a voluntary task (e.g. in Germany, labour market policies are a voluntary task for Landers). Most of the time, the decentralisation process concerns what is at the margins of this field: target groups (e.g. persons on social assistance in Sweden, youth in France), related policy fields (e.g. vocational training in France and social assistance in many countries), etc.

Even though local authorities are increasingly involved in employment policies, they are still mainly centralised, especially when it comes to labour legislation. The reason for this relative centralisation in a context of increasing decentralisation should be questioned. Indeed, is this statement a matter of governments' will or is it a matter of policies' efficiency? Both these

reasons appear relevant when observing the situation in many countries. A remaining unclear division of responsibilities represents the main reason for this difficult implementation (France, Italy, etc.). Local authorities often do not precisely know what they are responsible for. It results on a kind of consensus taking the shape of timid actions, which do not affirm a responsibility, but show that the issue is not left apart for all that.

The fear of too strong territorial differences can also explain the reticence about this process. States thus try to manage equilibrium between giving more responsibilities to local authorities and keeping a national cohesion. It often results in territorialising policies' implementation and keeping policy-making quite centralised.

Finally, the horizontal coordination's role has increased all through the last decade, in parallel with the promotion of integrated social and employment policies. Indeed, the integration can only be achieved through the inclusion of more and more actors – public and private - working together.

In terms of public/public cooperation, one-stop shops were created (e.g. German and UK Jobcenters, French Maison de l'Emploi). This comprehension of the way to integrate several public actors represents, according to Van Berkel and Borghi (2008) a "*popular strategy*". The French example of Pôle Emploi shows further developments than the only co-location of services. It has merged the unemployment insurance and the national employment agency services, as the Hartz IV Reform did, merging long-term unemployment assistance and social assistance.

Regarding private/public partnerships, UK is certainly the most far-reaching example. Indeed, through the rise of new public management, the marketization of public services was made more likely. Contracting out has resulted on putting more importance on results (the payment is calculated according to results: e.g. higher payments for hard to help participants). "*The welfare state has been conceptualised as a burden on the productive growth enhancing economy*" (UK National Report). That partly explicates the devolution of services to private organisations.

Except from the UK, other European countries have promoted some private/public partnerships, but it faces strong tradition of public services.

2.3 The diffusion of change

This change analysis has highlighted the importance of exogenous factors to explain the intensity of change and the way these changes were implemented. How can this changes' intensity be characterized? Peter Hall's typology of changes (Hall, 1993) discerns 3 orders of change:

1. Level of setting of policy instruments' modification;
2. Policy instruments change, but the policy's overall goals remain unchanged;
3. Goals, instruments and their settings are transformed in a change of policy paradigm.

Based on this typology, we agree with Eichhorst and Konle-Seidl (2008) who argued that: "*turning to activation can be seen as a paradigm shift (Hall 1993) involving both modification of policy instruments and policy goals*". Indeed, integrated social and employment policies' instruments and goals have encountered a change of third order in these six countries. This change of paradigm appears in regard with the important cognitive changes, as well as in regard with the amount of reforms that were passed over the last decade about these issues.

However, this third order change goes along with a lesser important change: a change of first order, which affects the involved institutions. It can be explained by the fact that "*the major challenge here is to overcome this institutional barrier and to ensure that demanding and enabling measures follow the logic of necessity and not primarily an institutional logic*" (Eichhorst and Konle-Seidl, 2008, 18).

On the one hand, important changes have occurred regarding instruments and goals. On the other hand, organisations have not managed to implement very effective changes. Even though they were promoted and sometimes even implemented through new reforms, their implementation often did not reach their goals. The functioning internal logic of these organisations represents a strong lever to slow down changes. It makes the actual implementation difficult, which explains the gap between changes of different orders (Berthet, 2012).

The change thus seems to spread faster in regard with goals and instruments than within organisations.

The integration, whether it concerns the several dimensions, levels or stakeholders to include, seem to be acknowledged by all as a response to societal issues, and especially in those economically-troubled times. Many reasons can explain this trend: financial reasons (e.g. the creation of a one stop shop might reduce expenditures, the transfer of responsibilities to private organisations may too), efficiency reasons (to address several problems at the same time), etc.

However, despite these facts, the integration's implementation remains unclear, vague and clearly unsettled (to different extent). Two assumptions can be made: on the one hand, the economic crisis brings back the emphasis on economic issues rather than social ones, and the priority is thus put on financial matters; on the other hand, integration is particularly hard to implement because of the tradition of formerly compartmentalized policy fields. It thus involves a change of paradigm (a change of third order according to Peter Hall's theory), which thereby questions us on whether, in a time of economic crisis, a change of paradigm be realised.

Hence, the recent activation friendly integration called into questions its former governance scheme. It now appears even more multi-faceted and the way it addresses new ways of governing employment and social cohesion policies is complex. It tackles several issues: actors, level of actions and decisions, and involved dimensions. Our analysis showed that all the six countries involved – Poland, France, Sweden, Italy, UK, and Germany - acknowledge the need to foster an activation friendly integration. Decentralisation and cross sectoriality, both appear to be common responses to this need. It was obviously nationally defined and implemented in different ways. However, in terms of broader understanding, it clearly shows that activation, in the context of the XXIst century, seems to require more local and multi dimensional policies. It also promoted the multiplication of actors. Indeed, it automatically followed decentralisation processes along with the link established or reinforced between several policy fields. However, notably based on very different public services' traditions, the increase involvement of private actors did not happen everywhere.

Moreover, through a dynamic analysis, this article highlighted the importance of taking into account exogenous factors such as the economic crisis to understand the way activation evolves. Activation policies are not fixed, or beyond these exogenous factors that make national Welfare States readapt their policies with regard to their priorities (reducing expenses, etc.).

The different degree of efficiency in terms of implementation was also analysed and revealed very various situations that highlighted both results of these exogenous factors (for example, some may have implemented policies to fit into European objectives, and thus, did not really put any effort to implement them), and also the importance of national definitions of Welfare State (a formerly very sectorialized country will face more difficulties to implement multi dimensional policies)⁶.

In sum, new modes of organisation regarding activation friendly integration policies have rose during the last decade. They are still unstable and changing time to time based on several factors (exogenous and endogenous). However, trends toward more cooperation and collaboration at different levels (local and national), with different actors (public or private) and involving different fields (social, housing, health, etc.) can clearly be observed.

⁶ The question of the implementation will be further developed later in the LOCALISE project thanks to an empirical work.

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