

One stop-shops in Europe

**Creating a user-friendly welfare state or introducing
work first policies?**

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Labor market issues are at the heart of the social and political debate (24.3 million or 10% unemployed in the EU in January 2012).

Many are long-term unemployed - needing considerable support in form of financial resources, social support, personalized pathways.

Yet, organizations tend to defend their areas of responsibility, work is based different regulations, rationalities, traditions

More institutionalized coordination is needed to increase the employability of people with difficulties in accessing the labor market and overcome institutional fragmentation of benefit schemes.

Structure

- The concept of one stop-shops
- Arguments behind the trend towards one stop-shops
- Implications one stop-shops can have
- The design and method of the study
- Two analytical perspectives
- Results and conclusions

The concept of one stop-shops

The idea of gathering various welfare services under one roof to simplify access to services is not new

Was the dominant organizational principle and working method in Sweden in the 1960/70s

The origin of the concept of one stop-shops is traced to Australia (developed in the mid-1970s), and defined as:
“as nearly as possible a complete service (including if possible the power to make decisions) in one place, at one visit, and with members of the public having to deal with not more than one or two different officers” (Halligan and Wills 2008)

One stop-shops are empirically conceptualized quite differently

- As a collaboration or partnership agreements without any major reorganization of the system, or a complete merger of two or more agencies (Overbye 2010)
- As a common entrance to one complex organization, or to several different ones (Askim et al 2009)
- Physically available or virtual service
- As a reception/convenience store/genuine one stop-shop (Kubicek and Hagen 2001)



Arguments behind the trend towards one stop-shops

- Increasing unemployment rates and expenditures for social assistance and unemployment support
- Enhance employability of the unemployed
- Gain control over local employment policies
- Improve the organizational framework for active labor market policies by countering the fragmented and specialized structure of the welfare state, citizen-friendly welfare administration
- Increasing government efficiency by reducing transaction costs

Establishment of one stop-shops challenges the distribution of responsibilities across policy areas often located at different territorial levels

One stop-shops have implications for:

- Relation of power between central and local governments
- For the professionals/cooperation partner involved
- Accountability
- The relation between obligation and right of the unemployed

One stop-shops

can assume to affect the nature, quality and responsiveness of services and the treatment of unemployed people in service provision processes in varying ways.

Purpose is to analyze one stop-shops from both an organizational and a labour market perspective.

The organizational perspective directs attention to modes of steering and organizing the services and/or benefits in a cross-sectional, holistic way

The labor market perspective will throw light on one stop-shops in a broader context and captures changes in the relationship between rights and obligations of the unemployed

Data used collected in RECWOWE network (policy documents, evaluation studies, research among the network members)

The article analyzes recent national administrative reforms in Europe aimed at coordinating labor market policies with social and other support



- Jobcentre, Denmark (municipalisation of employment services)
- LAFOS, Finland (integrated service structure for long-term unemployed)
- UWV WERKbedrijf, Netherlands (a single point of access/intake for benefit claimants)
- NAV reform, Norway (merger of employment and national insurance administrations co-located with municipal social services)
- Jobcentre Plus, UK (a merger of employment and social security agencies)
- Job centre in Germany (a merger of unemployment support and social assistance into unemployment support scheme II, one stop- shop for all unemployed)

Organizational perspective (Askim et al 2009)



Direct attention to the collaborative nature of one stop-shops and the intention to overcome fragmentation

- Tasks profile bridging over several/few policies domains (breadth) and tasks covering the whole case processing procedure/only parts of it (depth)
- Number and types of actors involved
- Closeness to target group

The steering of activities/ and its design

- One stop-shops autonomy (voluntary versus mandatory participation, leeway in organizing activities)
- Central management tools (monitoring, performance targets, financing)

A labor market approach to analyze one stop shops

Based on Clasen and Clegg's (2011) analysis of contemporary labor market reforms, three (overlapping) processes of integration

UB Homogenisation (transformation from a parallel compensation system to a uniform system for all or nearly all unemployed)

Risk Re-Categorisation (e.g. transferring claimants to UB systems, merging benefit programs, creating single benefit for working-age people)

Activation (tighter job search conditionality, 'work first' orientation in ALMP, administrative linking active and passive LMP, joint administrative support for all working-age benefit groups ('one stop shops'))

A labor market approach to analyze one stop shops

Based on Clasen and Clegg's (2011) analysis of contemporary labor market reforms, three (overlapping) processes of integration

Risk Re-Categorisation (variable: extension of activation requirements to new groups)

Activation (variable: work first orientation of activation programs)

A typology of one stop-shops

Narrow one stop-shop (Denmark, Netherlands, UK)

Task profile:

Narrow - concentrated on tasks within one policy, main focus on employment services

Actors:

Broad spectrum, focus on work, private actors

Local autonomy/central control:

Strong central steering, reimbursement systems for social assistance clients linked to performance, large share private providers, contract

Closeness:

Close to unemployed, exception Netherlands

Wide one stop-shop (Finland, Norway, Germany)

Task profile:

Holistic - employment services and other support (cross-sectional), LAFOS cross-sectional, more narrow for NAV after 2008

Actors:

Broad spectrum, multi-professional teams

Local autonomy/central control:

Larger local autonomy with respect to organization of measures, local variation, complex/mixed modes of steering (network, partnership)

Closeness:

Close to unemployed, exception so far Finland

One stop-shops from a labor market perspective



	Separation of groups of unemployed	Aggregation of earlier separate groups, widening of activation requirements
Work first orientation	Netherlands (social assistance – insured unemployed)	<p>UK (unemployed in working age)</p> <p>Germany (uninsured unemployed capable to work)</p> <p>Denmark (all unemployed)</p>
Human Capital Orientation	Finland (long-term unemployed)	Norway (all citizens)

Combining both approaches

	Narrow one stop-shop		Wide one stop-shop	
	Extension	Non-extension	Extension	Non-extension
Work first orientation	UK (unemployed in working-age) Denmark (all unemployed)	Netherlands (all unemployed)	Germany (unemployed in working-age)	
Human Capital orientation			Norway (all citizens)	Finland (unemployed far from the labor market)

One stop-shops as new service models, results point to that

- » New service models are used to enforce work-first policies
- » One stop-shops administer activation services that include broader and more vulnerable groups
- » Obligations towards individuals increase but without necessarily improving access to national activation programs
- » Labor market issues dominate over social policy issues
- » New modes of governance (marketization) risk to jeopardize the intention to abolish institutional fragmentation
- » Complex modes of governance (put accountability at risk)
- » Increase central control and standardization, might improve accountability
- » Question of how many services and benefits / compensation can be included is still open