

New Modes of Governing Activation, Social Benefits and Social Assistance: Bridging the Gap between Welfare and Work?

Research team

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Research questions

What governance reforms have been taking place in the European countries involved in the project? Do we observe 'shifts of governance regimes'?

What do we know about the intended and unintended outcome, output and process effects of these reforms?

Constructing a common research framework

During the last decade, many European countries introduced extensive **reforms of the implementation structures** through which income protection and activation programmes for the unemployed are implemented and delivered. These governance reforms include: the creation of **markets** for the provision of activation and employment services, the promotion of **cooperation between benefit and employment agencies**, processes of **decentralizing** policy making authority, the introduction of **new public management** in the public sector.

This project **analyses and compares these reforms**, exploring a relatively new research area. The book covers **nine European countries**: the UK, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Sweden and Finland. It focuses on the **reform programmes** themselves, and on what is known about their **effects**. One of the central arguments is that **governance structures are not without consequences for the social programmes** they implement and deliver: the treatment of the unemployed, the accessibility and quality of services, and so on.

Main research findings

Governance reforms: similarities and differences

- All countries introduced reforms, but timing, intensity and central orchestration of reforms differ
- Decentralization processes highly complex, often accompanied by both 'explicit' and 'implicit' forms of centralization
- Marketization trends in all countries, though significant diversity exists
- Inter-agency cooperation is promoted in most countries. Complexity increases where national and sub-national (local) cooperation is promoted
- Countries use different mixes of traditional regulation and NPM in steering public agencies
- Governance regime hybridization rather than shifts are taking place

Effects

- Systematic comparative research into effects of governance reforms is scarce
- Available studies show a large variety of outcome, output and process effects, showing that governance reforms are all but merely technical reforms
- Governance reforms and substantial policy reforms are interrelated in complex ways: they may reinforce or counteract each other
- Agencies and actors need capacities to make governance (and substantial policy) reforms work

Publication outputs

The Governance of Active Welfare States in Europe. Edited by R. Van Berkel, W. De Graaf and T. Sirovátka
Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 (Work and welfare in Europe series)

"The governance of active welfare states" by Rik van Berkel, Willibrord de Graaf and Tomáš Sirovátka

"The administration of income provision and activation services" by Rik van Berkel

"Accelerating governance reforms: the French case" by Anne Eydoux and Mathieu Béraud

"Fragmented governance continued: the German case" by Irene Dingeldey

"Steering with sticks, rowing for rewards: the new governance of activation in the UK" by Sharon Wright

"The governance of activation policies in Italy: from centralized and hierarchical to a multi-level open system model?" by Paolo R. Graziano and Annelies Raué

"The liberal governance of a non-liberal welfare state? The case of the Netherlands" by Rik van Berkel and Willibrord de Graaf

"Marketization in a federal system: new modes of governance in unemployment insurance and social assistance in Switzerland" by Franziska Ehrler and Fritz Sager

"Governance of activation policies in the Czech Republic: uncoordinated transformation" by Tomáš Sirovátka and Jiří Winkler

"Decentralization and back to centralization: the Swedish case" by Renate Minas

"Governance of integrated activation policy in Finland" by Vappu Karjalainen and Peppi Saikku

"The governance of active welfare states in Europe in a comparative perspective" by Rik van Berkel, Willibrord de Graaf and Tomáš Sirovátka

Governance of Activation Policies in Europe

Special issue of *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 2012

"Decentralization and centralization in governance of activation" by Renate Minas, Sharon Wright and Rik van Berkel

"Activation markets in Europe: the diversity of a new service provision model" by Rik van Berkel, Fritz Sager and Franziska Ehrler

"Network governance and activation" by Vappu Karjalainen

"New public governance and activation" by Franziska Ehrler

"Governance and implementation of activation policies" by Paolo R. Graziano, Tomáš Sirovátka and Jiří Winkler

"Governance and effects of activation policies" by Willibrord de Graaf and Tomáš Sirovátka

"Converging worlds of activation? Activation policies in Europe and the role of the EU" by Paolo R. Graziano

WP04
Towards
employment-friendly
welfare state



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