Europa, Europae: The EU and the Domestic Politics of Welfare State Reforms
OSE Seminar
Reconciling Work and Welfare in Europe: Research Findings and Policy Challenges
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Research background: RECWOWE WP04

• The objective of WP04 is to improve knowledge on the institutional and political conditions under which it is possible to reduce tensions in the relationships between the requirements of the labour markets and the requirements of social security.
• Research task on “The Europeanization of Employment-friendly Welfare states”
• Task coordinators: Paolo R. Graziano, Sophie Jacquot, Bruno Palier
Europa, Europae: main research questions

Can Europe impose national welfare reforms?
> Is Europe useful in national welfare reforms?
• What is the use of EU policies?
• How does European integration influence national social policies?
• Which European resources are used?
• Who is using Europe (what kind of actors and what is their role with respect to the reforms)?

Research perspective: the usages of Europe

• Starting from the national level
• Analyzing the interactions between the national and European levels: “usages of Europe”
• Role of national actors as necessary variable of European integration
  = whether, when, where and how has the EU been mobilized by national actors during the reform process?
Case studies

‘Employment-friendly’ policies (pensions, social assistance, employment, anti-discrimination) + reconciliation (between paid work and private life) policies

Coverage of the various ‘welfare state worlds’:
- Scandinavian (Finland, Sweden)
- Anglosaxon (UK)
- Continental (Germany, France, Netherlands)
- South European (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal)
- Central/Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary)
- Candidate countries (Turkey)

EU resources (constraint and opportunities):

• Legal (primary and secondary legislation, case law, etc.)
• Financial (budgetary constraints, funding opportunities)
• Cognitive (communications, ideas, etc.)
• Political (argumentation, blame avoidance, etc.)
• Institutional (committees, agencies, networks, etc.)
Evolution of EU resources across time

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<th>Policy Goals</th>
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<td><strong>1970s-1980s</strong></td>
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<td>Reconciliation as a consequence of economic integration</td>
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<td><strong>1990s</strong></td>
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**Findings (1)**

What matters in structuring usages of Europe

- **A) EU membership:**
  We expect national actors in accessing countries to use Europe to a greater extent than in 'old' EU members (scrutiny, 'joining the club').

- **B) Relationship to Europe:**
  The specific usages of the EU for national welfare reforms depend on the general relationship (national attitudes towards Europe) of each country with Europe. The more favourable the attitude is, the more (and diversified) usage of Europe we will expect.

- **C) Gap between European orientations and national model:**
  If there is a total 'match', then there is no pressure from Europe, so we can expect no usage of Europe (and no policy change connected to European prescriptions). If there is a 'mismatch', then it is probable that Europe will be used by domestic actors. Policy change EU-induced will occur if the domestic actors are predominantly favourable with respect to the changes supported by the EU.
Findings (2): different welfare states, different adaptation to the EU

- Scandinavian WS: limited change and usages but importance of showing compliance with EU rules
- Anglosaxon WS: limited change and neglect, EU as a target rather than source of influence (uploading to avoid mismatch)
- Continental WS: shaping the EU policy agenda and using EU to pursue domestically-shaped policy agendas (uploading to promote national model)

- Southern European WS: significant change in the 90s (EMU, elite and public opinion support). Usage of Europe to avoid blame linked to unpopular reforms and exploit all EU resources
- Central/Eastern European WS: significant change (significant ‘mismatch’), Europe as a legitimating reference
- Candidate countries WS: significant change, usage of Europe to frame and legitimate national reforms
Findings (3)

• The EU has contributed to change national WS...
• ... not by imposing its views, but by providing resources which national actors could (or not) seize to help them advancing their own interest and agenda.
• The EU is mainly a reform initiator (employment and conciliation policies) or reform supporter (pensions and social assistance).

Findings (4)

Four main types of usage of Europe:
• Legitimating usage (EU as a means to legitimize national reforms)
• Positive strategic usage (EU instruments used by national actors to pursue own political agenda)
• Cognitive usage (EU model as a substantive guideline for framing national reforms)
• Negative usage (EU used as a negative reference – misfit and euro-scepticism)
Publication outputs
