

## Varieties of European Flexicurity

Impacts of the European Employment Strategy on domestic institutions in Germany, Italy and France

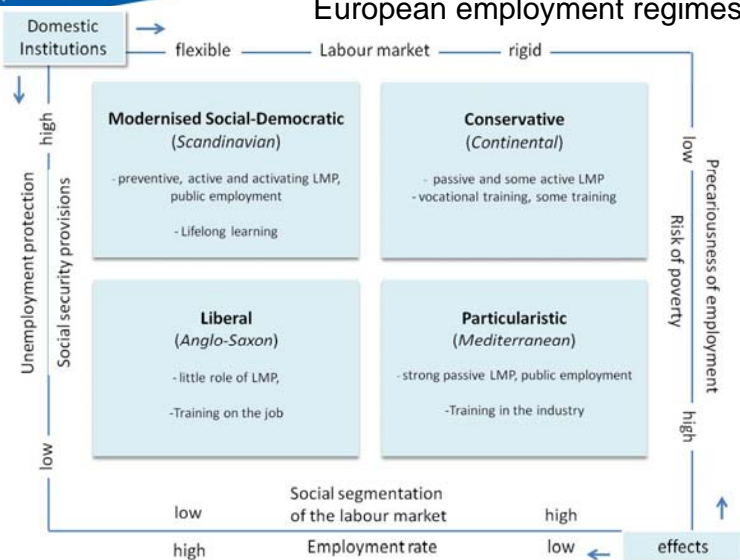
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Second joint Doctoral Workshop  
Development of Work and Welfare  
Reform in European Societies

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University of Hamburg

- One part of the results from a research project on OMC/Inclusion and EES in Germany, France and Italy at University of Bamberg
  - Funded by the German Research Foundation
  - Over 100 interviews with representatives
    - European Commission, European Parliament, Social Partners
    - Ministries on the federal and regional level
    - Social Partners, NGOs
- Main question
  - To what extent can the OMC/Inclusion and the EES contribute to modernize domestic institutions in Germany, France and Italy
- Varieties of European employment regimes and flexicurity
- Theoretical framework and hypothesis
- Analysis in the three states
- Comparison of results

## Varieties of European employment regimes

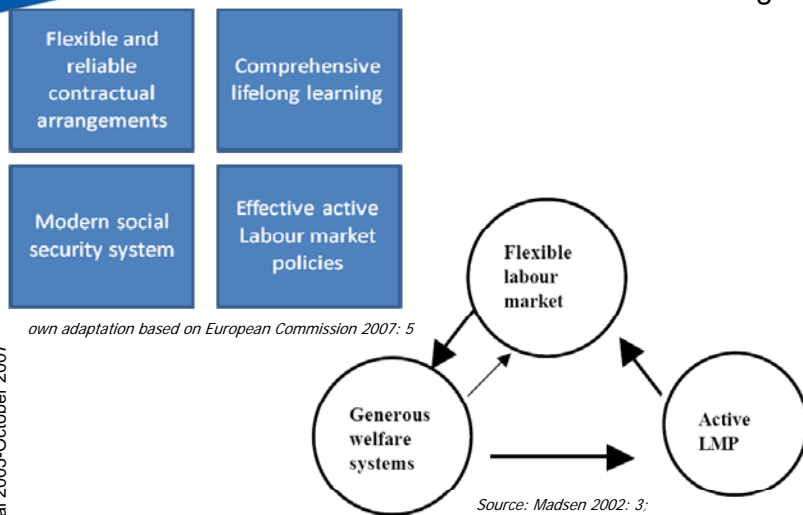


## EES: Need for Modernization

- Include more people into the labour market
- Activate all citizens
- Prepare Social Systems for discontinuous life courses
- Integrate all citizens into the labour market on equal basis
- Improve PES mediation
- Reduce the gender, age, educational and ethnic segmentation of the labour market

## Flexicurity: the answer to new challenges?

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own adaptation based on European Commission 2007: 5

## The Open Method of Coordination

### Open Benchmarking Process

- *in narrower sense: focus on government/ administration*
    - Development of common goals on the European level
    - Implementation report by country
    - Evaluation of the domestic reforms by the Commission
  - *in broader sense including framing programs*
    - E.g. Mutual Learning Program, Social Dialogue, European Social Fund
    - Institutionalization of a transnational exchange
    - Activation of all Stakeholders
- Builds on "cooperation, reciprocal learning and the voluntary participation of the Member States and not on binding legal norms, minimum standards and economic pressures" (Heidenreich/Bischoff 2007: 3)

- **Jacobsson, Kerstin.** 2004a. "Soft Regulation and the Subtle Transformation of States: The Case of EU Employment Policy." *Journal of European Social Policy* 14(4): 355-70.
- **Zeitlin, Jonathan.** 2005. "The Open Method of Coordination in Action: Theoretical Promise, Empirical Realities, Reform Strategy." In *The Open Method of Coordination in Action: The European Employment and Social Inclusion Strategies*, ed. Jonathan Zeitlin and Philippe Pochet, with Lars Magnusson, Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang.

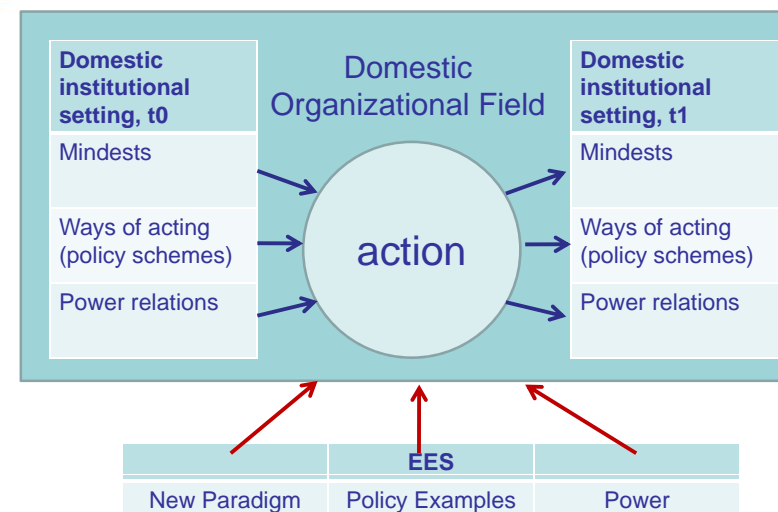
## The black box of transnational learning

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## EES and Domestic Organizational Fields

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## Hypothesis

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- Implications for EES
  - Employment regimes as domestic organizational fields
  - EES cannot have any direct influence
  - National actors interpret EES according to the present institutional setting
  
- Hypothesis
  - *The EES has to be actively appropriated by domestic actors according to existing domestic beliefs, policy instruments and the governance system.*
  - *The EES may incrementally change domestic mindsets, policy instruments and power relations.*
  - *The flexicurity-paradigm has a different notion in each country which is responsive to present mindsets and beliefs*

## Expected Effects

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Institutional dimension	EES	Mechanism	Effects
Beliefs/ mindsets (paradigm)	dominant function of instruments Guideline process: Providing orientation: Flexicurity, Activation, Lifelong learning, Gender Mainstreaming	legitimizing Conditionality: responsiveness to domestic mindsets (at least in critical discourse)	paradigmatic New ends and goals of policy
Measures/ policy instruments (regulation)	Best practice (MLP): Providing good examples on the technical level	good examples Conditionality: Responsiveness to domestic regulative environment	regulative Introduction and/ or improvement of policy instruments to reach present ends
Power relations (governance)	ESF, Social Dialogue Empowering weak actors, enforcing participation	strengthening Conditionality: Power and capacity of political entrepreneur	governmental New coordination New way of policy making Sustainable empowering or weakening of actors

## Effects of EES on labour market reforms in Germany

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Dimension	Conditions in Germany	Mechanism	Main effects
Paradigm	In search for orientation 'window of opportunity'	Strong orientation on guidelines	Reorienting paradigm from passive to active LMP But still strong segmentation, little flexibilisation
Regulation	Dynamic reform process "window of opportunity"	Many attempts to use best practice examples as 'blueprint'	Many failures in implementation
Governance	Strong role of labour market ministry, Close cooperation with social partners, Resistance from regions and municipalities	Strengthening strong programmatic role of labour market ministry (department IIa)	Threat of decoupling in domestic field

## Effects of EES on labour market reforms in Italy

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Dimension	Conditions in Italy	Mechanism	Main effects
Paradigm	Little realisation of comprehensiveness of reform pressures	Strong orientation on Lisbon policy goals, little orientation on guidelines	Little effects, flexibilisation attempts failed due to strong public resistance
Regulation	Split between administration and government	Little, and if so incoherent use of good practices	e.g. New work contracts for marginal labour force lead to persisting segmentation
Governance	Split between administration and government, regions and social partners, strong regionalisation	Strengthening regional PES by ESF	Strengthening local and regional capacities

## Effects of EES on labour market reforms in France

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Dimension	Conditions in France	Mechanism	Main effects
Paradigm	Strong reliance on 'French flexicurity' European dimension not legitimate in domestic field	Only formal orientation on guidelines, 'don't mention Europe!'	Little effects, flexibilisation attempts failed due to strong public resistance
Regulation	Administration in search for improving policy instruments	Many attempts to use best practice examples within administration	Many small reforms orient on good practices
Governance	Strong role of centralist administration, Little role of social partners and regions	Strengthening strong role of coordinative body (SAGE) within administration	Threat of further decoupling in domestic field

## Conclusion: Major Effects

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Dimension	Germany	France	Italy
Paradigm	Comprehensive reorientation of LMP	Little comprehensive reorientation	Little perception of exigency to reform
Regulative	Many failures	Improve policy toolkit of administration	Cherry picking, strengthening segmentation
Governance	little	Better coordination within government	Empower regions and PES by ESF

- Some effects but in all three countries persisting social segmentation of the labour market
- Effectiveness of EES depends on domestic institutional setting
  - Paradigmatic change more likely if EES is accompanied by domestic discourse
  - In the absence of paradigm change, EES maybe valuable for improvement of policy schemes/ instruments/ programs
  - ESF can strengthen weak PES and regions
- EES is reinterpreted according to domestic institutional setting

Thank you for your attention and your contributions in the discussion!

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