

## Europeanisation of Social Policy

### The influences of OMC/Inclusion on national institutions in Germany, France and Italy

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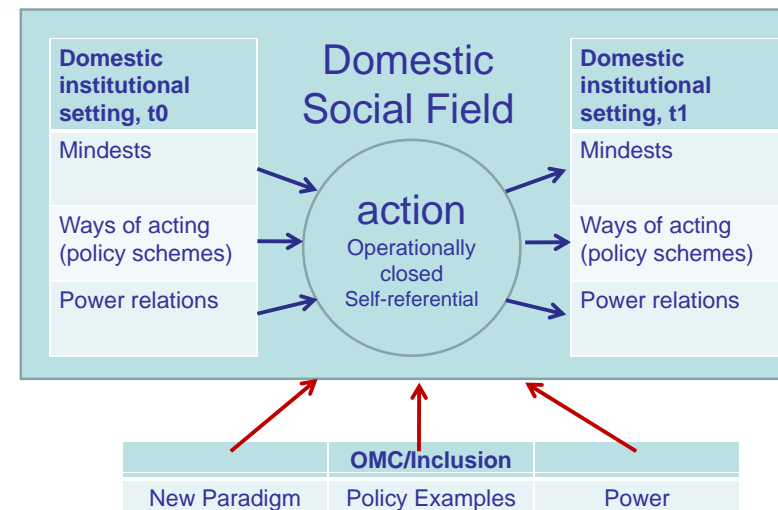
- One part of the results from a research project on OMC/Inclusion and EES in Germany, France and Italy at University of Bamberg
  - Funded by the German Research Foundation
  - Over 100 interviews with representatives
    - European Commission, European Parliament, Social Partners
    - Ministries on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

## 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 like 'Common Action Program to Combat Social Exclusion', conferences etc.*
    - Institutionalization of a trans national 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)
- Multidimensional approach towards social exclusion

## OMC and Domestic Social Fields



## Hypothesis

- Implications for OMC/Inclusion
  - Welfare regimes are operationally closed social fields
  - OMC/Inclusion cannot have any direct influence
  - National actors interpret OMC according to the present institutional setting
- Hypothesis
  - *The OMC/Inclusion has to be actively appropriated by domestic actors according to existing domestic beliefs, policy instruments and the governance system.*
  - *The OMC/Inclusion may incrementally change domestic mindsets, policy instruments and power relations.*

## Expected Effects

Dimension	Domestic condition	Effects
Beliefs/ mindsets ( <i>cognitive</i> )	Responsiveness to domestic mindsets ( <i>at least in critical discourse</i> )	New ends/goals of policy
Measures/ regulation ( <i>regulative</i> )	Responsiveness to domestic regulative environment	Introduction and/or improvement of policy schemes ( <i>to reach present ends</i> )
Power relations ( <i>strategic</i> )	Power of the domestic <i>political entrepreneur</i>	Shifts in governance New coordination New way of policy making Sustainable empowering or weakening of actors

## Characteristics of German, French and Italian welfare regime

- Germany
  - System of social security based on employment
  - Welfare benefits for those who cannot work
  - Focus on financial dimension of poverty
  - Federal state + strong welfare associations (corporate)
- France
  - Guarantee of social cohesion by the state
  - Social System not only based on employment
  - Broad variety of schemes to reintegrate citizens
  - centralistic system (etatistic)
- Italy
  - Social security strongly based on ‚standard employment‘
  - Highly secured family bread-winner
  - Social security by families (and the church, municipalities, private)
  - Strongly regionalized, fragmented system (particularistic)

## Effects of OMC/Inclusion on German Social Policy

Prevalent Conditions in Government	Interpretations of Government	Interpretations of civil society actors	Main effects
Poverty is considered as defeated by welfare benefits	Interpret OMC as a program to combat poverty → no problem	OMC confirms historically evolved critics of financial bias	Formal implementation by government; strengthens new paradigm among NGOs
Rely on financial provisions to prevent from financial poverty	Already sufficient set of instruments → no problem	Not satisfied with financial bias in instruments	NGOs only: Actively use of best-practice examples, benchmark their work
Horizontal and Vertical Subsidiarity → federal state as weak actor, NGOs as very strong	Good cooperation of municipalities, ‚Länder‘, NGOs and government → no problem	want to strengthen their position by OMC	NGOs only: Use OMC to strengthen their position in domestic debate, Stronger coordination amongst NGOs

## Effects of OMC/Inclusion on French Social Policy

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Prevalent Conditions in Government	Interpretations of Government	Interpretations of civil society actors	Main effects
Social cohesion, equal social inclusion for all citizens	OMC in line with domestic policy	Strong resistance to EU influence, considered to be 'neo-liberal'	Concept of Social Inclusion and French social cohesion closely aligned
Dominant instrument: Revenue minimum d'insertion (RMI) (but many others)	Useful process to improve domestic policy schemes	No reference to EU level, refer only to domestic discourse, OMC considered to be a governmental process	Civil servants: Actively use of best-practice examples, benchmark their work; Management by objectives in budget
Centralistic state, Minor role of regions, Very weak civil sector	Don't mention EU in domestic discourse, Chance to improve social integration in EU	Cannot profit, maybe even weakened	Useful for administrative level to improve interministerial coordination

## Effects of OMC/Inclusion on Italian Social Policy

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Prevalent Conditions in Government	Interpretations of Government	Interpretations of civil society actors	Main effects
patriarchal family and the church as central institutes to prevent from poverty	OMC paradigms contradict domestic notion of social policy	Historically evolved critics of family and church centered welfare particularly by NGOs oriented to the left	No effects, no responsiveness of concepts
Good social protection for employees and pensioners, poor for others, no RMI	Procedural orientation for OMC within Italy	Strong reference to EU to coordinate their work, conferences (action program)	Better coordination of NGOs, ideas for better coordination of regionalized social policy
Very regionalized state, diffusion of power, except caritas no big NGO	EU as abstract reference to justify all kinds of reforms	Chance to strengthen their position, but lack of own resources	NGOs try to strengthen their position in the domestic field

## Conclusion: Major Effects

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Dimension	Germany	France	Italy
Cognitive	Enriching discourse in civil society		
Regulative		Improve policy toolkit of administration	
Strategic			Empower structurally weak NGOs

- OMC/Inclusion depends heavily on domestic institutional setting
  - Paradigmatic change more likely if OMC/Inclusion accompanied by domestic discourse
  - In the absence of paradigm change, maybe valuable for improvement of policy schemes/ instruments/ programs
  - Action program may strengthen civil society
- OMC/Inclusion can effectively strengthen pre-existing projects.

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

## Main challenges of Conservative/ Southern Welfare Regimes

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- Low activity level
  - i.e. low employment rate
  - Focus on the male/family bread winner
- Changes in life course
  - Growing number of excluded people
  - Decreasing number of regular jobs and increasing number of precarious jobs
- Demographic change
- discontinuous life courses
- System of Social Security in Bismarck-Systems which focus on employment related contributions not prepared to meet these new challenges

## Need for Modernization

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- Prepare Social Systems for discontinuous life courses
  - Integrate all citizens into the labour market on equal basis
  - Reduce the gender, age, educational, ethnic and ability specific exclusion from inclusion into the labour market and society
- Fight social inclusion and enhance re-integration of disadvantaged citizens into society
- Lisbon-European-Council, 2000:  
 “The number of people living below the poverty line and in social exclusion is unacceptable”

## OMC/Inclusion

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- OMC in a narrower sense
  - benchmarking process
  - Common objectives and indicators
  - National Action Plans
  - Common Report
  - Good/Best Practice
  - Peer Reviews
  - Focus on government
- OMC/Inclusion in a broader sense
  - Including the Common Action Program to Combat Social Exclusion
  - Study
  - Transnational and National Projects
  - European Networks
  - Conference etc.
  - Focus on civil society

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 Sascha Zirra, September 2007

## Possible effects

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- Substantive policy change/shifts in thinking
  - Two-way interaction: creation of a common language and categorical framework to discuss and evaluate different solutions to similar problems
- Mutual learning
  - Mutual awareness of policies, practises and problems in other states
- Learning new way of acting
- Procedural shifts in governance and policymaking
  - New vertical/horizontal coordination among government levels
- Participation and transparency
  - Weaker and less constitutionally entrenched actors show greater interest in seizing opportunities for participation

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