Deliverable D6.1

The Individualisation of Social Citizenship in Europe

WP6

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March 2014

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1. Introduction: The individualisation of interventions

Against the background of the local governance arrangements studied in the previous work packages of the Localise project, this work package (6) focuses on the individual and her position in the local social cohesion policy practice. Reforms in local governance of social cohesion have significant consequences for social citizenship, that is, for citizens' rights and responsibilities in relation to welfare authorities. While social citizenship is defined in legal regulations and written policies, it is in effect implemented by street-level bureaucrats and caseworkers as part of their daily routines for client encounters; thus, it is in the interface zone between the individuals and the organization that the effective social citizenship is ultimately defined. It is at this interface that we can most clearly observe the transmission of normative ideas and rules, as well as the reception, translation, and resistance among individuals – street-level bureaucrats as well as clients (cf. Martin 1997). It is also in the interaction between the organization and the individual that we can discern the establishment, or lack of, trust and reciprocity, and hence the making of social citizenship in practice. Thus, in this work package, we try to reconstruct *what happens in this interface zone and the implications for social citizenship* by means of individual interviews with individual beneficiaries/clients as well as individual caseworkers and other professionals directly engaged in client-related work. The overall aim is to identify the *consequences of individualisation of social cohesion policy on the social construction of social citizenship* and to compare the construction social citizenship at local level in six European countries (Fra, Ger, Ita, Pol, Swe, UK).

Individualisation is a complex process. In a general sense it means that individuals are ever more placed at the centre of attention. Nevertheless, the ideal of individualisation plays out in different ways in current labour market and social policy and practice. One aspect concerns the individualisation of policy interventions, according to which the 'enlargement of the target groups of activation, including sick people, the handicapped, older people, highly vulnerable groups, single parents' (van Berkel & Borghi 2007: 278) requires 'that services should be adjusted to individual circumstances in order to increase their effectiveness' (van Berkel and Valkenburg 2007: 3).

Another aspect of individualisation concerns the role of individuals in service delivery. One current ideal – and today increasingly often a practice – is that the beneficiary/client and the state agree on a contract that defines *reciprocal responsibilities*. Without the beneficiary taking an active role in this process of welfare 'production', the intended service cannot be delivered (Kolbe & Reis 2005: 53), according to this ideal. Fostered by the activation paradigm, thus new forms of cooperation and coproduction in employment and social services develop. The beneficiary is no longer treated merely as the passive object of bureaucratic interventions, but as an active agent and an individual with clear responsibilities to participate towards labour market participation and self-reliance. While this ideally mean that the individual is given 'voice and choice' in relation to the service given it, however, also implies new forms of responsibilisation (and self-responsibilisation) of individuals.

A third aspect of individualisation is the increased emphasis in current labour market discourses on individual agency, but also on individual responsibility, which means that the societal and organizational demands placed on the individual increase. A dominant idea is that getting a job is to a large degree dependent upon the power of initiative of the individual, upon one's own sense of responsibility for one's actions and decisions. The individual has to be 'employable', 'flexible', be 'adaptable' to change, have 'social skills', and be prepared to engage in 'lifelong learning' (e.g. Garsten & Jacobsson 2004). Individuals are encouraged to

reflexively improve and discipline themselves, to live up to current ideals such as becoming entrepreneurial, flexible, employable and self-reliant members of society. Thus, individualisation also means that new forms of control are imposed on the individual and the new governance arrangements as instruments for public authorities to steer, control or discipline individuals (Rose 1999). Individualisation has implications for the division of risk and responsibilities between the state, enterprises, families and individuals and thus for the meaning of social citizenship.

Thus, in order to understand the *process of reciprocity* between the welfare state and its citizens, a close look at the *interface* between the organization and the individual is necessary. Research questions to be addressed in this report include: To what extent do beneficiaries/clients have possibilities for individual voice, autonomy and self-determination in the local delivery of social cohesion policy? Of interest here is both the 'objective' spectrum of choice that social cohesion policies provide and the construction of 'subjective' social citizenship, that is how individual beneficiaries perceive their discretion for individual voice, autonomy and self-determination as citizens. And what are the requirements and the obligations placed on the individual? Are there elements of contracts being set up between the organization and individual, and if so, what is the nature of those contracts? Do they impose obligations on both parties and to what extent are they enforceable? Critical to investigate, of course, is the extent to which interventions actually are individualised (in contrast to standardised) and tailored to the individuals' needs or interests.

As studied in the previous work packages, the shift towards 'activating' welfare states has been accompanied by shifts in governance arrangements, such as introduction of market mechanisms, private and/or third sector service providers, new management techniques (such as management by objective and performance, audit mechanisms and other new public management (NPM) techniques). An additional research task of this work package is therefore to critically investigate the extent to which the current public administration practices and organizational routines actually allow for individualised interventions. What restrictions, barriers and constraints do specific organizational models imply for beneficiaries/clients' ability to choose, determine and access tailor-made programmes and services? What scope for individual considerations and adaptations does the street-level bureaucrat/caseworker have in relation to individual clients, and how is this room of manoeuvre in fact used? Addressing these research questions will allow us to assess the nature of the social contract, as this is implemented in practice in the interface zone of the individual and the front-line staff in the six countries under study.

2. Empirical data and methodological approach

The WP6 study relies on case studies in the six countries of the project. The regions chosen were selected on the characteristic of being 'innovative cases' with respects to organizational routines and ways of dealing with long-term unemployed. The region chosen in each country had previously been subject to study in the LOCALISE project (WPs 2, 3, 4 and 5), which meant that information about the overall governance structure, organizational characteristics, and overall performance were already in place.

The methodology used was that of in-depth interviews. Interviews with caseworkers were conducted in organizations and with professionals that have the capacity to exert authority and make decisions over individuals who are registered as unemployed. This means that in some cases, the organizations targeted were not public employment agencies, but social services,

contracted third parties, or non-governmental organizations. The key defining criteria was that they were dealing directly with unemployed people and had the authority to decide over interventions and forms of activation. The sample of unemployed consists of long-term unemployed according to national criteria. Consequently, the length of unemployment varied across cases.

A minimum of eight interviews with caseworkers and seven interviews with unemployed persons were conducted in each country (while some teams made additional interviews). Interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. Joint interview guides had been developed as part of the project. (See Appendices 1 and 2.) These provided a framework for the interviews and were subsequently adapted to suit specific national and regional circumstances. Generally, interviews lasted between one and 2,5 hours. Interviews were transcribed and stored electronically with protection for project accessibility and analysis.

It should be noted that since the study was undertaken in one local entity in each of the six countries, the results are not generalisable for the national context as a whole, but represents activities and priorities in one particular local context. Furthermore, the empirical material covers both public, private and nongovernmental organizations, which further restricts generalisation. The guiding principle has been to engage with the actual practices of street-level bureaucrats, i.e. caseworkers involved in the direct activation of individual jobseekers, whether they be public or other. Our research is thus qualitative and explorative in nature, with focus on the processes and practices of implementing activation policy. The comparative dimension thus involves the exploration of conceptualisations of the possible relations between policies, procedures, and practices, rather than strict unit-based comparison. Analytically, we have strived to describe and conceptualise the variety as well as the commonalities that exists within the subject under study.

(For more detailed information concerning sample, interview procedures, and considerations, see the National Reports.)

3. Individualisation of interventions

The ideal of individualisation of interventions is one component of the European Employment Strategy (see e.g. van Berkel & Valkenburg 2007). The rationale is that the 'increasing heterogeneity of the labour market' requires 'stronger consideration of personal circumstances of jobseekers' (Eichhorst et al. 2008: 5). Social service provision adjusted to individual circumstances (rather than one-size-fits all approaches) is here also a matter of effectiveness (van Berkel & Valkenburg 2007). Nevertheless, whether this ideal is put into practice depends on a number of factors.

Investigating individualisation of interventions entails understanding the organizational context in which caseworkers operate and into which individual jobseekers are drawn. How interventions are being put to work is to a great extent influenced by the manner in which agencies co-operate (or not) in the implementation; by how resources are allocated between organizations; by the overarching priorities and interests of each organization; and by the mandates given to actors. The organizational perspective alerts us to the significance of organizational resources, interests and boundaries, and how these dimensions set constraints for individual action. Also, organizations may aspire to implement new policies and rules, but often fail to do so (Brunsson 2006). Great hopes can be kept afloat in the face of discouraging experiences, and aspirations of more efficient, targeted and individualised measures may thus

be kept alive despite evidence to the contrary. Power asymmetries may be reinforced instead of erased by the ways in which interventions are organized (cf. Lipsky 2010/1980). Tailor-made provisions tend to require considerable discretionary for street-level bureaucrats. Thus, do street-level bureaucrats have some discretion in deciding of how to execute their jobs, or is their space of manoeuvre constrained by the policy technologies at work (such as New Public Management practices and performance based systems)? And what instruments do have they at their disposal to achieve more personalised support? One instrument available that potentially could be an instrument for individualising intervention is the individual action plans (as encouraged by European Employment Strategy). What is their role in actual practice? Is the plan mainly a document for control or follow-up of job search or other activity (cf. Sol & Westerveld 2005) or is it used to achieved tailor-made intervention and support?

Sweden[1]: The dualisation of labour market policy

In Sweden, there is a dualisation of labour market policy laid down in national policy based on the categorisation into 'regular job seekers' and 'persons in special need'. It is a priority of national policy that the PES should focus on persons far away from the labour market or those having special needs, such as the disabled. Thus, the degree to which measures are individualised (adapted to the individual client) depends on the categorisation of jobseekers.

During the initial period of unemployment (6 months, 3 months for youth up to 25 years), services are highly standardised. The exception is if the jobseeker is deemed to have a special problem (such as a functional impairment or reduced work capacity); in that case a special investigation of work capacity is undertaken. If after such investigation the person is coded as functionally impaired, individualised support based on the person's needs can be provided, (including measures such as job subsidy or job training). If the person instead is deemed to have work capacity, but still in unemployment after a period of about a year for adults and three months for youth, she enters into one of the guarantees (Job and Development Guarantee or Youth and Job Guarantee). Then her individual needs are more in focus than during the initial period of unemployment. However, available resources constrain the options in practice. Demands for work placement and training exceed the availability of these measures, and most clients are offered coaching, courses on CV writing and similar. Even if there is a large number of 'complementary actors' offering such programmes, the content of these are similar. The clients we interviewed for this case-study expressed that they had had limited choice in determining the activation measure, in fact several of them had asked for another measure but been denied it. Several of them did not know the reason why they were placed in the programme they were.

Apart from available resources another factor constraining the degree to which measures can be individualised is the high caseload of PES staff. Together with the frequent change of caseworker, this means that caseworkers in fact have limited information about the individual client; personal information (in contrast to professional aspects) is rather avoided, both for secrecy reasons and due to time constraints (caseworks do not want to become therapists, as one interviewee put it). This means that the caseworkers at PES may not have enough knowledge about the individual client and her life situation as to be able to offer a tailor-made

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[1] This section builds on Hollertz, with Garsten & Jacobsson 2014.

intervention catered to her personal situation or needs.[2] Thus, caseworkers develop strategies to restrict client contact, such as using e-mails rather than phone calls to prevent lengthy conversations or organizing group meetings instead of individual client encounters. The experience of the interviewed clients is that their case managers are not easy accessible. On the other hand, clients may not have the incentive to talk openly about personal problems or circumstances either as their focus in the caseworker contact is on the financial compensation, which they do not want to put at risk. (Cf. the double task of PES staff: to administer unemployment benefit and to provide professional job support). The unemployed also want the caseworker to assist him/her in finding a suitable employment, which could make talking about personal difficulties counterproductive. The unemployed has an interest in presenting him/herself as capable and employable; rather than as a person having problems and barriers to re-enter the labour market. Individuals who are in the guarantees and thus in activation programmes in addition have the project staff to relate to. Interviewed clients express that they feel 'seen' as individuals and encouraged by the programme/project staff, which they value (in contrast to the impersonal relation to the PES staff). However, the support/measures provided in these programmes are not necessarily individualised – on the contrary. The activation programme studied for this case study for instance encompassed individuals with limited language skills together with highly educated individuals. The reason for the heterogeneity of the group in this case was that the selection was made by the computer (in order to avoid unfair competition among service deliverers).

All in all, time in unemployment as well as available resources rather than individual needs decide what support is offered to the individual and when support is offered. This means that for most unemployed standardisation of interventions characterize the activation, the exception being people coded as functionally impaired, as the code gives access to more individualised services (see also Garsten & Jacobsson 2013). Moreover, the system of activation measures is highly complex (and changes frequently following government decisions), and the clients typically do not know enough about the services available to be able to make active choices and claims. To conclude, the voice and choice opportunities for the long-term unemployed in the activation programme studied were very limited. Even so, several clients expressed satisfaction with having a place to go every day to meet other people, thus avoiding social isolation.

It also seems that the discourse on and ideal of 'individualisation of interventions' is not particularly prevalent in Sweden; emphasis is rather placed on legality/rule of law (equal treatment), and 'auditability' (correct documentation in order to enable statistical follow-up of measures). The individual action plan plays no operational role; it is just a paper to be filled in and where the job search activity is documented, for interviewed staff and clients alike. The interviewed clients cannot even recall what their plan contains; they have just signed it in order to get their financial benefits.

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[2] This differs partly from the caseworkers in the social services, which take a more holistic approach to the client (as part of their professional ideology). That social workers were more interested in the personal circumstances of the client was confirmed in our client interviews.

Germany[3]: Individualisation by way of standardisation

Institutional reforms the last decade in Germany have had important consequences for the activation of unemployed. The UB II system in Germany goes back to the Hartz reforms of 2005 that merged social assistance (*Sozialhilfe*) with the former unemployment assistance scheme for insured but long-term unemployed people (*Arbeitslosenhilfe*). By merging the two systems, the Hartz reforms not only drew most former recipients of 'charitable' social assistance into the employment system, making them subject to job-search requirements under the motto of *Fordern* (a rough equivalent to 'sticks'), but also gave them access to employment measures that had previously been restricted to insured claimants under the motto of *Fördern* (roughly equivalent to 'carrots'). Today, the German UB II system is thus characterized by a very heterogeneous benefit population, ranging from people with multiple problems who have never worked to older people with a work-history of several decades who were made redundant, next to university graduates who are entering the labour market for the very first time. In order to accommodate the heterogeneity of problems that can be diagnosed among the UB II population beside unemployment proper, the Hartz policy reforms were accompanied by an organizational reform that created a new type of agency, the so-called 'Jobcenters', for tending to UB II clients. The Jobcenters are for the most part governed jointly by the Federal Employment Agency (FEA; *Bundesagentur für Arbeit*) and the municipalities (*Kommunen*).

A political rationale behind combining national (FEA) and local (municipal) expertise in dealing with long-term unemployment has been the expectation that employment services will have a greater effect if local actors have the discretion to appropriate national instruments and regulations to local labour market contexts as well as individual client cases. Therefore, the Jobcenter reform included a relatively large room for manoeuvre for Jobcenter managers to build networks with other public and private service providers, develop new activation and counselling instruments, and bundle employment and social services into unique parcels depending on each client's situation and needs. § 16a of the Social Security Code II (*Sozialgesetzbuch II*, abbr. SGB II) makes it possible to provide 'holistic and comprehensive support' by linking job-insertion services with care offers, debt counselling, psycho-social counselling, drug counselling or counselling for alcoholics. In addition, the provision of employment services was made voluntary in the SGB II beyond the two basic services of job placement and educational counselling (§ 16 SGB II), which in practice means that individual caseworkers have a large discretionary space in granting activation measures to clients. However, besides this room for manoeuvre, the SGBII also introduced a number of monitoring mechanisms in order to ensure national service standards. Thus, when talking about standardised versus individualised interventions for long-term unemployed clients, it is crucial to take into account the difference between regular casework (*Arbeitsvermittlung*) and case management (*Fallmanagement*) in the German Jobcenter system. Regular caseworkers often have very many clients whom they must see periodically, for which reason it is nearly impossible to counsel clients intensively. Case managers, by contrast, have much lower caseloads, which allows them to spend more time on individual client cases with complex problems. The differentiation between casework and case management in German Jobcenters implies that a deliberate organizational boundary is created between more standardised and workfarist interventions in the 'normal' casework system, and intensive individualised counselling in the special case management system.

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[3] This section builds on Rice & Siebolds (2014).

For caseworkers a large spectrum of measures are in fact available. Besides regular job counselling, at least 16 types of instruments were mentioned in the interviews for the case study. To begin with, a wide array of counselling offers is available for clients with complex obstacles to employment, such as per cent 1) a family coach (i.e. a professional working closely with entire families to improve their home situation and familial relationships); (2) debt counselling; (3) addiction counselling (for alcoholism, drug abuse, compulsive gambling etc.); (4) social-psychiatric counselling; (5) legal counselling (e.g. on pension rights or patient's provisions), and (6) preventive health programmes; (7) driving skills; (8) job application skills; (9) or professional qualifications; (10) substitute jobs geared towards building up a daily routine or testing out which education one would like to pursue (the latter only for young people); (11) internships (for young people even in foreign countries, as was mentioned above); (12) work trials in which an employer can test out a candidate for one or two weeks for free; (13) wage subsidies where the Jobcenter pays up to 50 per cent of a person's wages for 12 months or even longer for people above 50, with the employer having to employ the person further for at least the same duration after the wage subsidy has ended; (14) so-called civic work, i.e. substitute workplaces in the public sector. Finally, caseworkers have a number of auxiliary measures at their disposal such as (15) refunds for travel costs, job applications or working tools; and (16) assisting clients with finding a childcare facility – which seems to be a specialty of the municipality studied for this research.

Hence, the overall conclusion is that the one-stop-shop 'Jobcenter' agencies are organizationally well-equipped for providing tailor-made services. However, in practice, scarce staff resources (to be funded by the municipalities and the FEA) and cameralistic federal funding mechanisms often counteract the smart organizational Jobcenter design (that incentivises Jobcenters to use up their entire activation budgets before the end of the fiscal year in order to demonstrate high demand and thus avoid shrinking budgets in consecutive years. Like in the Swedish case study (above), high caseload and frequent change of caseworker (in Germany because of short-term contracts for caseworkers) were also found to be factors constraining the degree to which interventions can be tailor-made.

The caseworkers in the municipality studied for this research followed a clear target-group approach; thus, caseworkers responsible for different target groups tend to focus on different types of interventions. For example, caseworkers responsible for young people under 25 ('U25') had a special focus on education and training. Also internships were used relatively routinely for this age group. Lone parents were another special target group that is structurally discriminated in the labour market and therefore had a special need for retraining programmes or wage subsidies. Another example of a federal programme creating a new specialised target group is the programme 'Late Starters' (*Spätstarter*) geared towards helping people under 35 without a secondary education. Finally, a last target group that the Jobcenter locally created consisted of self-employed clients. Thus, the degree to which standardisation versus individualisation of interventions takes place depends not only on whether the client is counselled by a case-workers or a case-manager but also whether a client belongs to a priorly identified target group or not. A careful assessment is that the procedural target group approach used by virtually all German Jobcenters can be helpful for developing specialised expertise and tailor-made counselling approaches for the client groups in question. However, the target group approach also has a negative flipside, namely that clients categorised as 'normal' receive only standardised and workfarist job-search assistance although they, too, might be in need of more specific advice (as was the case in Sweden as described above). To conclude, high caseloads (within the regular counselling system) and also a cameralistic budgetary system that incentivises the procurement of 'mass measures' (e.g. application trainings) contribute to standardisation, whereas differentiated counselling approaches, special

target groups, legal caseworker discretion, and a broad range of activation instruments contribute to more individualised interventions.

Poland[4]: Standardisation and the limits of individualisation

Labour market policy in Poland is considerably standardised by national legal acts. Policy instruments, target groups, electronic data basis at disposal of frontline staff as well as standards of services are centrally defined. The funding received by PUP (Powiatowy Urząd Pracy, Public Employment Services in Poland) from the national Labour Fund (including funding from European Social Fund, which is partially calculated as a part of Labour Fund), cannot be spent on other purposes. This limits the margin for manoeuvre of frontline workers as do the severe resource constraints.

Theoretically PUP implements a wide variety of ALMPs: among others, vocational and active job search training, apprenticeships, various forms of subsidised employment, business start-ups. However, due to a decrease of funds from the Labour Fund, participation in ALMPs other than job placement, job counselling and short workshops was not a given in the locality studied. Interviewed frontline workers complained about the fact that they have to conduct severe selection among applicants, who fulfil formal criteria and are motivated to participate in ALMPs. Only the unemployed who apply at the very beginning of year when there are still funds available and predominantly those among them, who are capable of preparing convincing application or finding a potential employer vouching that they will be hired afterwards have a chance to participate. Thus, meeting formal criteria of access to ALMP is not enough and unemployed have to compete in order to participate in more expensive and more popular ones (see also Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming). This demands a lot of the client in terms of initiative, looking for information about available offers, etc. Similarly to other Polish PES, during years of decrease of funds available for ALMPs, the organizational solutions work in favour people with certain skills (e.g. writing application, persuading employer) and resources (e.g. access to Internet, money for bus ticket), with a more advantageous life situation and time at their disposal (e.g. having vs. not having care responsibilities) (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming).

Caseload is too heavy and resources for ALMP too scarce in order to systematically adapt services to the needs of the unemployed. Another constraining factor is the bureaucratic organization of work. In the PES studied as well as other PES in Poland (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming), the work of frontline staff is not centred around individual unemployed. Caseworkers carry out their specific tasks separately with little coordination. For instance, instead of looking for offers that might suit an individual, the job placement agent presents to the unemployed, who happens to come to PUP this particular day, previously acquired offers of (normal or subsidised) employment and apprenticeship that match more or less his or her profile. Another example: instead of thinking what training might be adapted for a specific person, the task of a specialist of vocational development is to oversee the smooth organization of group training, i.e. finding in due time the exact number of trainees according to what was previously planned. As one of the interviewees summed it up:

> 'if we would like to do this properly, then it should be done from the other side. It should start from the unemployed person. This person needs something and we are

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[4]This section builds on Sztandar-Sztanderska (2014).

looking for a post of apprenticeship for her. Not the other way around. So we actually assign people to posts and not posts to people' (PES employee).

In other words, the individual must fit into the current PUP offer rather than the offer being adjusted to fit concrete people. Individualisation understood as tailoring services would demand not only a modification of the legal framework and working conditions, but also a different work organization and a concomitant change of staff practice. Typically, there is no cooperation in this respect with social assistance. Moreover, street-level bureaucrats with more personal contact with the vulnerable unemployed complain about a lack of '*intermediary instruments*', making possible a '*rehabilitation*', by which they refer to tools that will enable them to continue the activation process in a longer perspective for those who have to make substantial changes in their lives before entering labour market.

The bureaucratic way of operating is reflected in the way in which individual action plans are used (pl. *Indywidualny Plan Dzialania*, IPD). IPD was introduced in 2010 as an obligatory instrument that aims to diagnose a person's problem and group together various ALMPs that are necessary in order to achieve her employment. In the PES studied, it is mostly based on a single or several interviews with a person. However, lack of possibility of long-term planning due to uncertainty of resources for ALMP and the defragmented organizational structure, make uses of IPD superficial. Frontline staff signs it to adhere to legal regulations, but – as they all say – it does not change in any way what they used to do, according to the interviewed staff. Its routine character is probably one of the reasons why all long-term unemployed interviewees do not remember at all signing this contract, even though for some of them, it was obligatory according to the law. (This is similarly to the findings of Swedish case study above).

To conclude, top-down reforms of law in Poland were supposed to contribute to activation and individualisation of welfare provision, by initiating organizational changes, introducing new tools (e.g. Individual Action Plan) and making sanctions for noncompliance more severe and forms of control more sophisticated (e.g. IT). However, as the case study reveals, the effects of these reforms were far from the intentions, because they have not influenced elements of broader welfare context that actually shape resources and create constraints for frontline staff. Lack of adequate funds and their cyclical accessibility as well as heavy caseload make tailoring services impossible. They translate into short-term and project-based planning, massive and fragmented people-processing instead of individualised case management. In these conditions, both frontline staff of PES and social assistance institutions are primarily focused on performing their specific tasks and rationing scarce resources.

In the Polish context, the precariousness of many jobseekers must be stressed. The minimalist welfare provision also means that street-level bureaucrats generally lack tools that might assist in overcoming poverty traps and serve as positive incentives in the activation process. In this context some ALMPs are used, *de facto*, as a financial support instead of encouraging activation.

Italy[5]: Selective individualisation

Like in Sweden and Poland, labour market policies in Italy are decided at higher levels of governance and implemented locally. The local public employment service studied for this research (AFOL) is the formal venue for jobseekers who need to register in unemployment lists. After the liberalization of employment services following 90's labour market reforms, placement services and career guidance services are managed both by local PES offices and temporary work local agencies. Some active policy projects are managed by AFOL together with these agencies. The resources dedicated to active policies projects are still very scarce with respect to the number of people that are enrolled monthly in the unemployment lists. These resources come from the regional level or from the central government. Also the framework of these projects is defined at these levels. Organization and implementation are, however, done at the local level (Province).

AFOL hosts the 'Centro per l'impiego' office (CPI) where users have to declare their immediate availability to work in order to obtain the formal status of 'job-seekers'. This registration allows unemployed people to use focused replacement services and, if formal requirements are satisfied, to receive monetary benefits according to Italian labour legislation. Once registered, a long-term unemployed has the obligation to attend every meeting organized by the PES office at which he/she is convened. There is variety of active policy programs and services targeting different users' typologies. Nevertheless, due to inadequate resources only a slight part of the registered unemployed people undertakes active policy paths. These programs are usually targeted to individuals with defined professional or socio-demographic characteristics (age, residence, educational background) and have a limited number of slots available. There is a considerable *ex ante* selection process made by case workers on the huge unemployment lists to find, contact and screen the 'right' people to be enrolled in every project.

The service offered at CPI (Centro per l'Impiego) consisting in the registration in the unemployment lists is the same for all types of jobseekers. In order to receive benefits from the State, the unemployed person has to be registered/listed. These lists are filled in by caseworkers through an online form, called in the case of Lombardy, Sistema 'Sintesi'. Once the form has been filled in, the person is formally classified as unemployed. For example, the user, if formal prerequisites are met, might decide to apply for some training activities or to ask for some help in order to renovate the CV or consult job offers. In general, there are no formal actions that the user must do after the registration is done. The situation radically changes if the jobseekers are selected by the caseworkers to participate in an active policy project. Thus, there is an organizational separation between the first acceptance services which all unemployed encounter (the CPI unit) and the PAL unit (*Politiche Attive per il Lavoro*) in charge of managing the range of activation services.

Thus, a different (and more individualised) path emerges only in a second phase, when and if the unemployed person is eventually called back to enroll in activation programs. AFOL usually receives by the Region the financial and content framework for these programs that are implemented according to the directions given. In this sense, the room of manoeuvre for the caseworkers is limited and the extension of these services is framed by the targeting decided at a higher level in the governance structure. The activation services provided are, by consequence, standardised. Adjustment and individualisation occurs inside the project

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[5] This section builds on Monticelli (2014).

framework when local caseworkers have to develop actions and plans for an effective implementation.

Thus, we can distinguish two types of individual trajectories: the first involves all the jobseekers and it is a compulsory step in order to receive public social aid, the second and succeeding type of trajectory involves only a part of them and depends on several factors (eligibility, individual availability and perceived will to take part in these activities). Every targeted project is developed in several steps. Usually there is a first phase in which the user is asked to participate in some psychological and behavioural testing activities aimed at shaping his/her profile and a second phase during which training activities are performed (class activities, interview simulations, help in CV writing and updating etc). A third step is sometimes present and consists in an evaluation of the program.

This organizational system risks marginalising large segments of unemployed people and it shows a high level of fragmentation between the first formal-bureaucratic step, usually recalled by the interviewed clients as a negative experience, and the second more targeted and optional one, which is usually experienced as positive and useful. In many cases, the individual trajectory is characterized by many attempts to being involved in these activation projects but since these are targeted and involve a selection process, many users might wait for years before being called for a screening interview.

The interviews reveal that the role of unemployed people and the level of satisfaction with respect to AFOL actions increase with the level of individualisation of the project they are involved in. Jobseekers enrolled only in the unemployment lists, who have not undergone any type of activation program, have a very negative opinion on AFOL's effectiveness in listening to their real needs. They feel abandoned and anonymous, sometimes they feel that the front-office operator has even not understood their personal situation. The empirical evidence shows a different situation when the same questions are asked to projects beneficiaries. Among them, the level of satisfaction and of perceived service personalisation increase with to the projects they are involved in.

The main instrument to provide individualised service is the PIP (*Piano Intervento Personalizzato)* – a sort of contract stating that the jobseeker accepts the rights and obligations provided in the project. This document represents the formal agreement through which caseworker and users plan the activation process. This document is crucial for the implementation of these activities because it proves that the jobseeker has agreed to undertake a process of activation tailor-made around his/her specific needs. Before writing down the PIP a long interview takes place. During this interview, the project is described together with the range of activities the user can take advantage of. Moreover, the user is asked to discuss his/her needs in terms of training useful to a fast rehabilitation in the labour market. At the end of this interview, the user can sign the PIP. In the PIP a tutor is assigned to the user and a table, containing the planning of services – divided in 'job services' and 'training services' – is filled in. For each section, there is an indication of the period of execution, of the subject providing this service, of the eventual third parties involved and of the amount of hours dedicated. There is also a sort of score, called 'valorizzazione' (in English 'Value') that assesses the relative importance of that specific activity on the overall process (the score is given in percentage values on a total of 100 per cent). Another part of the PIP describes how financial resources are allocated across different service providers and it reports also the cost per hour together with the total one. The last part of the PIP provides a list of the monitoring and evaluation instruments. These are usually: the timesheet, the presence register, the stage record form and the service output (formal confirmation that the services were really

provided). In the Italian case, the individual action plan is more detailed (than for instance in Sweden) and specifies the obligations of both parties, not just the unemployed.

France[6]. Centralization and caseworker autonomy

Even though decentralisation processes have transferred some responsibilities to subnational bodies, the French political and administrative system remains centralised. The main actors in charge of delivering labour market integration policies for long-term unemployed – as for all other unemployed – are the local national employment agencies that cover one delimited territory and are often specialized on one (or several) sector of activity. They have in turn partners, service providers and other actors such as NGOs. This multiplicity of actors and the important use of outsourcing rely on the will to have specific services for either specific groups, or specific needs. Partners typically focus on specific groups.

In the French context, individualisation of interventions is an explicit ideal; for instance, individualisation is a key concept of the strategic guidelines of PES. The recent strategy of the national employment agency fosters the reinforcement of caseworkers' autonomy. Increasing caseworkers' leeway aims at improving the service delivery for those who need it the most and on a tailor-made basis. Also the caseworkers interviewed for this case-study insisted on the fact that one of the key facets of individualisation is the adaptation of the counselling to the needs of the person: 'individualisation of the path, it's also taking into account the (…) demand'. Individualising the service means being able to identify and address particular impediments (such as health, social, housing or childcare issues) in a more comprehensive way. It both enables and requires taking into account the individual as a whole and not only through the prism of employment.

The task of PES caseworkers is to provide services to the unemployed (information, orientation, unemployment benefit calculation, and programmes). First, they receive the unemployed at the information desk where they come looking for advice, documents or information. Secondly, they manage their 'portfolio'. They also collect offers and set up a hotline for questions from enterprises.

Interviews with caseworkers from the national employment agency revealed the highly formalised structure of the early stages of the support. Registration and profiling are not to vary from one unemployed to another. Caseworkers are supposed to follow the scheme and are provided with framed 'questionnaires'. The first interview (registration and diagnosis interview) thus is formalised and timed (50 min interview). Caseworkers enter online all the information, collect and verify all the documents, eventually calculate the compensation entitlements and make a diagnosis. Based on that diagnosis, the unemployed is put in one of the three profiles (followed, guided or reinforced). When PES caseworkers manage a profiled portfolio they choose between:

- 'Follow-up modality': for job seekers that are relatively independent in their search and do not need regular meetings, thus job seekers considered as close to employment;
- 'Guided modality': for job seekers that need to support from their counsellor and more regular meetings;

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[6] This section builds on Bourgeois, Tourne Languin & Berthet (2014).

- 'Strengthened modality': for those that need strong support from their counsellor in their labour market integration path through very regular meetings.

Regarding the content of the counselling, they remain relatively free to choose the way they want to deal with the person's issues. They choose the programs or actions they propose and service providers they can direct towards. Nevertheless this choice is still constrained. They have to choose amongst existing programs (that according to caseworkers have only changed to a limited extent), and service providers that have been selected through tenders. The organizations that provide services to unemployed that are outsourced by the national employment agency usually still have a certain discretion regarding the way they handle their schedule (their own organization of their timetable), the counselling itself (less pressure on putting the unemployed on other actions, on how to address peripheral hinders, etc.), but are required to follow a more rigid framework (notably with regards to the frequency of the appointments).

Individualisation is acknowledged by all interviewees as crucial to labour market integration services. Understood as giving more room for manoeuvre to caseworkers, this promoted trend is, however, hindered by the lack of time caseworkers have to work with each individual. Moreover, it appears that the way policymakers have fostered individualisation does not enable or equip caseworkers to individualise the service. It may even sometimes impede individualisation. Indeed, the counterpart of a promotion of a more important room for manoeuvre is the development of more rigid frameworks. It takes two different shapes according to the organization studied. Regarding the national employment agency, caseworkers have more discretion on the modalities of the relationship with the beneficiary (the way he/she is contacted, the frequency of appointments). But their schedules are also very constrained and the content of the counselling (what is to be dealt with, where to direct the unemployed) has become more rigid. In the case of private service providers/partners, their room for manoeuvre is high regarding the content of the counselling. They have less power than the national employment agency (cannot formally send someone to another organization for a program or a training as easily as them), but do not have frameworks to follow during their appointments. Nevertheless, they have to follow increasingly rigid guidelines with regards to the modalities of their work (frequency and length of appointments).

All interviewees emphasized the fact that a tailor-made counselling involves addressing social impediments and providing services according to the individual's project. Nevertheless, the empirical study revealed that caseworkers from the national employment agency are not really focused on counselling but rather on prescribing and outsourcing. Caseworkers in service providing organizations, on the other hand, relate the quality of their counselling to their capacity to individualise their service: Appointments usually last longer than within the national employment agency, and the caseworkers here usually have more time dedicated to their counselling task (administrative duties included).

Long-term unemployed expressed various degrees of relationships with the caseworkers they met during their integration path. Indeed, when they meet quickly someone that does not have time to listen to their needs and their trajectory, they usually do not put their trust in them and do not expect much from the service provided. They then may initiate an instrumental relationship (go to appointment when compulsory with no expectations and in return ask for documents, for trainings). When being supported by private providers, they usually meet more often and always with the same caseworker during longer interviews. As mentioned, the interviews here are less standardised making it more flexible according to the beneficiary's

needs. It then depends on both interpersonal matters and on the caseworkers' ability to create a relationship. Thus, the framework in which private providers work seems to represent a facilitating factor for a relationship where the unemployed feels at ease. Because they have no specific framework to follow with regards to the interview they organize, they are less constrained with regards to the content. This landscape facilitates a listening. Just as in the Swedish case study, the long-term unemployed in the French case felt they received a more individualised service with service providers than from the national employment agency that most of them perceive as a 'toolbox' enabling them to get services or as a controlling agency in charge of sanctioning and/or ensuring their active behaviour.

United Kingdom[7]: Limited standardisation, flexible individualisation of services

In the UK, labour market policy is delivered by the public employment service, and by external service providers contracted by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The PES's role is to provide benefits and mainly basic job-matching services for working age short-term unemployed, and help employers to fill their vacancies. The interviews for this case study were carried out with advisors of one WP delivery organization. (It means that there were no equivalences to PES staff interviews in the British case. PES dealings with the long-term unemployed are minimal. Services for this group, i.e. the Work Programme have been subcontracted to providers which could be said to function as 'private employment services'). The aim of the organization studied is to help and support people to find and sustain work, in order 'to change people's lives through sustainable employment'.

An advisor's role is to support and help people through different means to move closer to getting a job and ultimately move into sustainable employment. However, the role of each advisor differs slightly depending on their specific position within the organization. However, there are a number of common characteristics of advisors' roles, such as working with unemployed people (i.e. clients) in a mostly one-to-one basis; and acting as the main and primary caseworker for each of the clients assigned to them. Advisors' responsibilities vary as a result of their position and the nature of their caseload. For example: some advisors meet clients for the first time and decide the most suitable steps for the client; some deal with those closer to the labour market; some with those individuals with multiple barriers; and some with those clients that are near the end of the WP. Counselling is not part of the advisors' role and they will refer clients to suitable organization according to their need. However, one advisor mentioned that there is a small degree of counselling because advisors 'are the kind of doorway to other things'.

Participants confirmed having a main advisor, which changes depending on their needs or their trajectory. Having the same advisor was said to be important to build trust, especially for people with multiple barriers. During courses or referrals to other organizations they may have others caseworkers, however they still maintain 'their' caseworker. Empowering clients was stressed as essential for job sustainability.

All advisors arranged 30 minutes meetings, although it was said to be normal for meetings to vary in length, depending on other pre-arranged appointments and on clients' needs in general or at specific times (for example if they have an interview coming up advisors will expend

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[7] This section builds on Fuertes & McQuaid 2014.

more time with that client). Participants confirmed that the length of the meetings tend to vary from 20 minutes to an hour. Advisors normally arrange appointments with 12 to 15 clients every day (higher if there is group work planned), and attendance is around 75 per cent. Advisors caseloads vary from around 80 to 250 clients depending on the advisors' position.

Participants mentioned that even if job-search is the primary focus of the support received, advisors know and ask about their life circumstances and situation (for example, their housing situation, their depression, etc.), and try to help in different ways depending on what is needed. Therefore they stressed that their relationship with their advisor includes elements of friendship and general support. Interviews with advisors support that view and it was mentioned that in some instances they offer emotional support, by listening but also if necessary by changing arrangements and plans that had been agreed with that client prior to the specific circumstances arising. All participants said that advisors have a very good, positive, friendly, approachable and open attitude, which makes them feel welcome either during and outside pre-arrange meetings, and which they find helpful. While, in contrast, relationships with advisors from JCP or other employment agencies were said to be rather distant and include more pressure (which resonates with the findings in the Swedish, Italian and French case-studies):

> 'I think the attitude of the Jobcentre is that they don't really care, you're just a number, you go in and sign on and you go. Whereas here, they're very... 'what do you want to do, what do you need to do, what can we do for you to get you back into work'.'

There are three standard tools/questionnaires used by all advisors: one that is used in all clients when they first join (and a review every so often), a scale of where the client is situated within the journey towards employment, and a better off calculation. These are standardised in the sense that they contain exactly the same information and that all clients experience the same tool. The format of recording clients' activities is also the same for all clients. However, according to advisors and participants, the service provided, in terms of the type of support offered and the regularity of meetings, is very flexible and tailored to clients' needs. Advisors stressed they will tailor their assistance to clients' needs and to a certain extent their wishes. Tailoring to individuals' needs was seen as necessary for clients to make ownership of the decisions, attain independence in the long-term, building trust and openness to ideas that the advisor may suggest.

In terms of standardisation of the support offered, it would appear that those with physical, mental or learning difficulties, those with specific needs, and those with drug/alcohol misuse or prison records can be referred to specific subcontractors for a period of time. Those wanting to become self-employed and having a realistic chance to be, will be referred for external assistance. The courses available in-house are the same for all clients. In-work support is carried out by all advisors but is also tailored to clients' needs, with variable levels of contact and support.

Advisors interviewed stressed that they are flexible in their approach to clients, in order to adapt to clients' circumstances and unexpected situations. This flexibility in terms of regularity and attendance to meetings was confirmed by participants. Interviewed participants mentioned that they are able to influence what happens in the meetings and advisors will adapt to what they need or feel they would like to focus on. However, one issue mentioned (by clients and advisors) was that the length and times of some courses that may not suit some clients, for example those with young children or without childcare after school hours.

Thus, advisors appear to have the autonomy and flexibility to decide what assistance to offer, depending on clients' needs. Thus it seems that services can be tailored to clients, within the constraints of what has to be done and the available resources. A number of factors could make the service inflexible in terms of the type and pace of support given. The ones mentioned were: the performance targets alongside the caseload and pre-arrange appointments, the minimum standards of support.

To conclude, there seems to be limited standardisation in the format and type of support in the organization studied, perhaps surprisingly when considering the NPM governance characteristics of the WP. There is a typical pattern in terms of number of people seen by advisors, length and regularity of meetings, tools used, and the type of support available. Nevertheless, advisors appear to have a great degree of autonomy and flexibility during service implementation, in terms of their planning of the day, the pace and type of support, and the use of tools. This allows for individualisation within a pre-given framework created by formal policy, organizational context, and available resources. The elements that seem to make provision tailor-made to the needs of clients are:

- The choices and participation of clients shaping the pace and type of support.
- One-to-one and general support provided by advisors (including the relationship between clients and advisors).
- Advisor flexibility and effort to accommodate the needs of clients.
- Creativity in the support given depending on the needs of clients.
- Opportunity to explore different types of support.
- Sustainability factor within the support provided.
- Matching of advisors to clients.

Some factors that could hinder individualisation of services are: hours of service provision, performance targets alongside the caseload of advisors, and minimum standards of support.

As for the voice and choice dimensions, elements that appear to provide choice and agency to clients' are:

- The choices and participation of clients shaping the pace and type of support.
- Lack of pressure to take jobs in certain sectors or with certain conditions (such as hours, distance, etc.).
- Final decision in many areas (jobs, pace and type of support) appears to rest with the client.

There does not appear to be a standard or template 'action plan' that advisors have to use or produce, with or for clients. However, most advisors seem to prepare a plan of activity for their clients, usually called, by advisors and clients, 'action plan'. According to interviewees this action plan consists of planned actions that clients will do in between meetings, or during a longer period of usually four weeks, or it can be a bit of both. It will also include what subsequent meetings will cover. These plans usually focus on job-search preparation and/or activity, including applying for jobs, focusing on clients' weaknesses (e.g. skills gaps such as interview skills, IT, or others). Advisors and participants said that clients are not made to sign these action plans. These 'action plans' seem to revolve around job-search activities and are used as a way to structure and measure clients' activity and progress, thus they encompass an element of control of clients actions. However, there is an element of co-production with the client (within obviously a pre-given frame, therefore are perhaps a 'constrained co-

production') and an element of flexibility within the action plan. According to advisors, involving clients in the planning of, and decisions regarding, their support develops trust, motivation and independence. It appears that at different stages of the programme the shape of the advisor involvement is different: at some points it involves exploring clients' aims and choices, but also, challenging clients. However, all advisors try to involve the client, so the final decision is their decision. All interviewed participants stressed that advisors do not pressure them and that they do not feel they are forced to do anything. In summary, in the British case study that the level of clients' choice and agency is high, at least it is described as such by advisors and participants (but it should be stressed that this is in relation to service delivery organization, not the PES).

Summary

Based on the case studies we can make some general observations:

1) There is a dualisation of labour market policy in many countries, with more individualisation of interventions for the special groups rather than for the 'regular' jobseekers. At the same time, new categories are developed, such as 'weak groups' or 'functionally impaired'. Clients are made up into 'packets' of 'weak' groups, which is another form of standardisation of job-seekers. In some cases, the categories are narrower and based on professional groups (e.g. the Italian case-study) while in other cases (Sweden, Poland) the categories of 'special' or 'weak' groups are very broad.

2) The encounter with the PES staff in charge of registration and benefits is perceived by the interviewed clients as bureaucratic and impersonal while the encounter with staff in charge of activation programmes and external service-deliverers (providing more individualised measures) are generally perceived as more positive, as they are seen and met and supported as individuals. The clients expect a social relationship, not just a bureaucratic one.

3) High caseload constitutes a barrier to individual interventions in most of the countries, and lack of resources or lack of transparency concerning available measures constrain clients' voice and choice opportunities.

4) The financial aspects of the client-caseworker relation reinforce the power asymmetry between the two parties. To distinguish between caseworkers (dealing with the financial aspects) and other staff (advisors in Britain, case managers in Germany), i.e. a differentiation of roles, may have the advantage of not mixing the job support with the issue of entitlement to financial compensation.[8] It may also make it easier for the client to exert agency (including voice and choice) in relation to one's activation. In countries where the role is fused (such as Sweden and Poland), both caseworkers and clients seem to develop strategies that may be counter-productive for successful activation and/or labour market integration; for the client the main aim is to maintain one's benefit (health benefit in the Polish case); for the caseworker it is to reduce one's work load.

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[8] Previous research also indicates that the sanction element makes it hard to establish trust between client and staff, and that the staff has to balance between the role of 'welfare policeman' and 'compassionate officer' (e.g. Howard 2006; Hensing et al. 1997).

4. Organizational classification and legibility

Contemporary, liberal forms of governance build to a large extent on the assumption that what is valued can also be made visible, measured and compared. Such forms of governance as well New Public Management practices are deeply entangled with the ideals of transparency and legibility (Garsten & Jacobsson 2011). As shown by James C. Scott (1998), a central component in the making of the modern state was that citizens, communities, corporations could be read, distinguished, and seen, thus 'legible'. In the view of Scott, the large-scale social engineering characteristic of modernity relies on technologies of legibility, on arranging the population in ways that simplify the classic state functions of taxation and conscription. Here, the legibility of a society provides the very conditions for large-scale social engineering. In a similar manner, one of the prerogatives of contemporary organizations is making the world hospitable for translocal, universal forms of administration and governance, and this entails making individuals, their capabilities, skills, and actions, legible and transparent. Many of the bureaucratic and other types of assessment practices can be viewed as 'techniques of legibility' in their 'reading of individuals'. The range of available diplomas, certifications and other signs of achieved learning goals, are other examples of skills and competences made legible. Furthermore, legibility allows for the follow-up of actions, for verification, control, and for sanctioning, or reward – key mechanisms in NPM practices. For example, by making legible, i.e. categorising, for example the functional impairment of a person, the individual may be funnelled to the corresponding labour market intervention programme (Garsten & Jacobsson 2013). The results of this intervention may then be followed up and evaluated, and compared.

In this work package we direct the attention to organizational classifications because these tend to have huge implications for individuals and their scope of action. Public organizations, such as welfare state bodies, need to classify individuals in order to be able to deal with them and direct assistance to them (e.g. Bowker & Leigh Star 2000). Categories created by techniques of legibility are *performative* in that they contribute to constitute and frame further actions as well as expectations. Categories not only shape policies but also individuals, a process which Hacking (1986) calls 'making up people'. They do so by helping to shape the self-understanding and subjectivity of those classified (see Foucault 1994). The *templates* and *typifications* used in the organizational handling of individuals transforms individuals is into objects of the organization, oftentimes involving a 're-subjectification' along the line of the template of the organizational intervention programme in question.[9] Individuals may take active part in their own self-construction along the lines of organizational discourses and practices (Bergström and Knight 2006); they may also resist the imposition of such and develop their own strategies of resistance and avoidance.

A related dimension is how the 'technologies of self' are employed. Examples include individual action plans for unemployed, career advice, self-evaluation sheets or other types of evaluation instruments. Evaluations, for instance, do not just measure objectively existing qualities – they also signal what qualities are desirable, and thus help shaping the subjectivity of the individual undergoing the evaluation. A personality test may appear as a neutral instrument, but in fact *formats* the person in the vocabulary of the test (Benson 2008). As such they can also be understood as techniques for normalization and self-responsibilisation.

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[9] Bergström and Knight define subjectification as 'the process of interaction contributing to the production of a subject' (2006: 355). Subjectification is seen as the result of interaction, and the process typically involves both active participation and resistance.

Sweden[10]: Categorisation and standardisation as normal procedure

At the PES, there are several tools that caseworkers use in their everyday dealings with unemployed. One of the most important categorisations made within PES is the distinction between unemployed with so-called normal work capacity, and unemployed with reduced work capacity. Other categorisations are age, job sector affiliation (*branchtillhörighet*), time in unemployment etc. However, length in unemployment and division between regular unemployed and unemployed with reduced work capacity are the most important distinctions in terms of what services can be offered by the PES.

When a person registers at the PES, a file is opened in the internal documentation system, called AIS. The official term used in PES to describe unemployed, is *job seeker (arbetssökande)*. The caseworkers use them term *job seeker* and *seeker* interchangeably, and on occasional times the unemployed is referred to as *costumer (kund)*.[11] Data related to previous work experiences, education, desired area of work, desired length of employment, desired geographical area of employment, access to unemployment insurance, possession of driving licence and other competencies are collected and documented in the internal computer system. This process of registration is computer-based, and the case is processed by the caseworkers by selecting the appropriate alternative in each section of the template. This is a technical exercise that has to be completed in order to process the case accordingly. Based on the results of the registration, an action plan is constructed. Part of the registration process in the completion of an assessment support tool (*bedömningsstöd*), which has been introduced in order to facilitate early detection of unemployed with increased risk of becoming long-term unemployment. This assessment support is integrated in the documentation system, and has to be completed by the caseworker for continued processing of the case. The computer-based assessment tool makes a statistical analysis based on variables such as age, country of birth, level of education, area of work, type of financial compensation and level of unemployment in the municipality where the unemployed resides. As a part of the assessment support, the unemployed is asked if he or she has in any way have a functional impairment that could reduce his or her work capacity. The willingness of the unemployed to highlight aspects that could reduce his or her chances of regular employment cannot be taken for granted. As the caseworker is supposed to support the individual in the matching process, and to find a suitable employment, it is likely that the unemployed emphasises strengths and competencies, rather then weaknesses. The unemployed is an active part in the construction process, and there is an immanent need for clients to construct themselves in relation to the services they wish to receive. Several of the caseworkers highlight what they perceive as a problem, when unemployed overestimates their own capacity in relation to the labour market.

There is also certain reluctance on behalf of the caseworker to categorise the person with increased risk of becoming long-term unemployed. One caseworker describes his reluctance to do so in terms of having faith in the capacity of the individual; that he feels inclined to believe that most unemployed after all will be successful in finding employment. Considering the strong emphasis on activation programs to enhance the motivation of unemployed, this is an interesting finding. This seeming mismatch between analysis of the problem and the

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[10] This section builds on Hollertz, with Garsten & Jacobsson (2014).

[11] The terminology used in the social services is *client, person*, or *individual*. In SSIA the term used is *costumer*.

solutions presented emanates from the normative pressure on the organizations. The 'standard stories' (Tilly 2002) and widespread belief that unemployed could – if they only wanted to – get a job, are deeply rooted in modern society. For organizational survival, it can be far more important to meet the expectations of the institutional environment than to act upon the problems such as they are understood by the caseworkers.

The assessment support tool used when registering unemployed is fairly basic and, in the end, the professional judgement of the caseworker is an important factor in detecting clients with special needs. This emphasises, yet again, the role of the caseworker. For instance, it can be easier for a more experienced caseworker to ask personal questions of a sensitive nature; for instance concerning substance intake and other social problems. One caseworker also describes how the appearance of the unemployed in terms of clothing, behaviour, body odour, ability to be in time can be more important aspects when determining the needs of the unemployed, than the formal procedures of registration process. However, to investigate these types of problems is otherwise mainly the task of the special investigation of clients that might have reduced work capacity while the PES caseworkers might rather avoid the personal circumstances and focus more on professional aspects (see section 3 above). (Such special investigations are done by social workers and work psychologists who are consulted by caseworkers. If the person is categorised as having a reduced work capacity, a new range of labour market policies becomes available. In the social investigation, questions related to the entire life situation of the unemployed are asked. These include family situation, substance intake, and interests of the unemployed contacts with other authorities such as for instance social services, psychiatry, health care, prison and probation office etc. However, there is always a tight connection to the labour market in that sense that the caseworkers have to consider the chances for the person on the labour market. This means, that the life situation of the unemployed is taken into account during the investigations performed by social workers and work psychologists. The investigations follow manuals developed by PES internally (centrally by PES). If the person is categorised as having a reduced work capacity, this opens up for tailor-made and individualised services. Special caseworkers are assigned to this group of unemployed; caseworkers who have a much lower case load than "regular" case workers working with "regular" unemployed. The importance of a trustful relation between unemployed and caseworkers is emphasised, and changes in caseworker is consciously avoided (in sharp contrast to the frequent changes for "regular" caseworkers). The profiling for the "regular" unemployed is dependent on the assessment support tool, the ability and/or willingness of the unemployed to express individual needs, and the capacity of the caseworker to detect signs that might imply increased risk of long-term unemployment.

Most of the interviewed long-term unemployed had not, to their knowledge, experienced any assessment tools being used by PES caseworkers. This may have many explanations. First of all, the informants might not actually be aware of tests or assessment tools that possibly have been used. The overall knowledge of what was 'going on' in the cases was generally low among the informants. Thus, assessments might have been done, but the unemployed has understood this as a normal part of the procedure and not taken any notice on this as a 'different' experience. Another explanation is, in fact, related to the sample. The majority of the long-term unemployed interviewed participated in a job-coaching project, and *had not been* categorised as clients with reduced work capacity or special needs. Instead, they were very much treated as regular unemployed, following the standardised interventions schemes in the Job and development guarantee.

To sum up, there are two aspects that are important for the process of categorisation and detection of clients with special needs and in the risk of becoming long-term unemployed:

First of all, unemployed with ability (and willingness) to 'self diagnosis' and who are able to articulate to the caseworkers their special needs have increased chances of being detected. Secondly, an observant and experienced caseworker can more easily detect problems since s/he is more likely to have had the courage to bring up sensitive issues. However, caseworkers draw a line when they argue that the problems of the unemployed are so severe that work is not considered an option. If this is the case, the person is no longer considered belonging to the target group of the organization and instead referred to other organizations, such as social services or health care.

At the municipal level, with regards to social services, investigations made cover a range of areas of a person's life. Caseworkers document aspects that are part of the investigation process, and inherent in the documentation system, on background, previous experiences, health, social situation and personal goals of the unemployed. However, when doing so, they do not follow a manual; rather, the informants describe that experience and 'gut feeling' are important in their investigation methods. Assessments of the work capacity of individual clients are made, but not so much by using tools and assessment forms, but rather by placing individuals in activities that are supposed to give answers to a persons ability to work (*arbetsprövning*) and by discussing with clients. It is hard to draw a line to those areas of life that are important for the caseworkers of social services. One informant describes how this is related to the individual caseworker – not all would see the same things, and not all would act the same way. Some would draw the line earlier, and some would have a more flexible approach to this.

Fairly all aspects of the individual life sphere appear to be relevant for the caseworker in social services. There is also a willingness to support the individual in other areas – which are not directly related to work or financial situation, for instance to accompany the client to the probation office. This indicates a much more holistic approach than that taken by the caseworkers at the PES and the SSIA, where such a treatment appears highly unlikely. Room for manoeuvre and professional judgement is significantly higher for caseworkers within social services, than in the PES and the SSIA. The lack of control (from superiors) is one explanation, but also lack of standardised manuals and guidelines in relation to the every day work with clients. Even if evidence based social services has been heavily enforced by for instance the National board for health and social services; this has not (yet) spread to the work with social assistance. The municipal self governance, as well as strong(er) professional groups within social services are other background factors that matter.

Thus, the Swedish study represents a case of an institutionalised standard procedure of making the work capacity of the individual legible and to subsequently sort the individual accordingly (Garsten & Jacobsson 2013). The procedure is most clearly standardised in the PES and the SSIA, and less so in the municipal social services, where some room for manoeuvre and personal judgement still remains.

Germany[12]: The structuring power of profiling procedures

The German case illustrates the structuring power of profiling procedures. The procedures through which individual jobseekers are profiled function as 'cognitive lenses' through which

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[12] This section builds on Rice & Siebolds 2014.

caseworkers perceive individual clients and select certain behavioural responses. Over time, as these cognitive lenses become more habitualised and hence less elastic, it becomes increasingly difficult for individual clients to disprove caseworkers' standardised mental templates (and thus elicit non-standardised behaviour).

The German Jobcenter caseworkers implicitly or explicitly acknowledged the structuring influence of the profiling categories of the VerBIS system (the FEA's profiling system) on their conversations with clients (typically referred to as "customers" or *Kunden*). In general, client conversations in German Jobcenters are strongly shaped by the information the caseworkers must fill into the VerBIS system, and hence by the profiling categories used by VerBIS. The framing of the case and profiling starts already at the first meeting with the client, at the express counter or another caseworkers who have previously met the jobseeker. There is thus a serial profiling that tends to contribute to leaving non-official problems unaddressed. The profiling thus needs to integrate previously formed perceptions and profiling processes with the actual flesh-and-blood client.

In line with the formal profiling categories, the problem perception that caseworkers seek to obtain revolves around the client's 'Strengths' and 'Potentials' operationalized in the form of 'Qualifications', Capacities', 'Motivation', and 'Circumstances'. The profiling categories 'Circumstances' and 'Capacities' differ from the other categories in so far as they make visible that there might be practical problems of realising labour-market integration in spite of the official policy discourse mandating caseworkers to look primarily at strengths and not at weaknesses. After all the categories and sub-categories have been discussed and the caseworker has entered the relevant information into the IT-system, the resulting client profile is automatically allocated to one of six profile categories that indicate the prospective timeframe of activation. These are:

Integration profiles:

- Market profiles (*Marktprofile*): No action requirements. Labour market integration prospects: up to 6 months.
- Activation profiles (*Aktivierungsprofile*): Action requirements in the category 'Motivation'. Labour market integration prospect: up to 6 months.
- Improvement profiles (*Förderprofile*) Action requirements in one of the three categories 'Qualifications', 'Capacities', or ' Circumstances'. Labour market integration prospects: up to 12 months.

Complex profiles:

- Development profiles (*Entwicklungsprofile*): Action requirements in one of the three categories 'Qualifications', 'Capacities', or 'Circumstances' plus one additional category (or strong action requirements in the min category). Labour market integration prospects: above 12 months.
- Stabilisation profiles (*Stabilisierungsprofile*): Action requirements in the category 'Capacities' plus at least two additional categories (or strong action requirements in the category 'Circumstances'). Labour market integration prospects: up to 12 months.
- Support profiles (*Unterstützungsprofile*): Action requirements in the category 'Circumstances' plus at least two additional categories (or strong action requirements in the category 'Circumstances'). Labour market integration prospects: above 12 months.

Depending on the type of profile, the caseworkers then select a feasible goal for activation or job search in the second phase of the FEA's client-processing cycle. The goals are grouped into four standardised categories: (1/2) Employment in/outside the regular labour market, (3) education, and (4) stabilisation of existing (self-) employment.

Overall, the official categories of the FEA's profiling system VerBIS have a strong structuring influence (Giddens 1981) on how caseworkers and clients interact in German Jobcenters. Especially when there is a high caseload, lack of time favours a standardised procedure of profiling. Nevertheless, caseworkers creatively appropriate the profiling categories in daily practice, extending the meaning of the categories as they see fit. There is also a degree of variation in the judgements made by caseworkers as to how they judge their clients with respect to categories, depending for instance on degree of case load and personality of the caseworker.

Poland[13]: Legibility and representation by way of standardising technology

The interlinkage of bureaucratic categorisation with advanced technologies in making jobseekers legible is made clear in the Polish case. The study reveals a generalised implementation of official categories pertaining to unemployment and a thoroughgoing standardisation by way of technology.

 A person who comes to the PUP, i.e. Poviat Labour Office (i.e. Public Employment Services in Poland, pl. *Powiatowy Urząd Pracy*, PUP) is made legible through documentation.[14] At the registration desk the individual is obliged to present a number of official documents mainly concerning education and professional career, but also a residence permit, medical certificate (if a s/he is not able to perform a particular kind job or has a disability certificate) or other documents in specific cases. S/he also provides additional information in an official declaration concerning, for instance, the number of children s/he cares for, and whether the spouse is also unemployed. In principle, this information is then put into the electronic database (*Syriusz*), which is available for PUP frontline staff and also for social workers from MOPR. *Syriusz* also contains data on the course of current and previous registrations, the time of registration, obligatory and not obligatory meetings in PUP, proposed job offers, reaction (acceptance, rejection) and result (employment or not), participation in ALMPs, reasons for deregistration (e.g. taking up employment, sanctions, etc.). The electronic database works in many ways as an external memory. Frontline staff might also include their own short notes, for instance, on the content of meetings and make use of these over the subsequent appointments.

Syriusz also serves as an instrument to classify a person in terms of administrative categories that are related to official criteria of access to benefits and services. Some services – such as various forms of subsidised employment or apprenticeship – are restricted for specific groups of the unemployed. The most important among them are so-called 'people in a special

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[13] This section builds on Sztandar-Sztanderska (2014).

[14] The official term used for people outside of the labour market is 'unemployed'. However, in practice, people, who come to the office are referred to as varyingly '*unemployed*', '*clients*', '*cases*' or simply '*people'* or '*persons*'.

situation in the labour market'. A person is considered as being in such a situation if s/he fulfils at least one of the following criteria:

- unemployed aged under 25 and over 50 years old,
- long-term unemployed;
- unemployed women, who have not returned to work after a birth of their child;
- unemployed people without professional qualifications;
- single parents;
- ex-prisoners;
- disabled

The long-term unemployed are thus part of this administrative category. However, this group is very broad: it covers approximately 90 per cent of the unemployed in Poland (MPiPS 2013: 3). Hence, it is hardly useful as a targeting tool. Yet, the official categorisation matters, as when PUP organizes additional programmes financed from the ESF. They usually target selected representatives of this group. Therefore, people 'in a special situation in the labour market' generally have easier access to ALMPs.

Introduction of the electronic database has economised the processes of official categorisation, since it is automatically performed by the system after data input. Moreover, information on educational and professional career is used by frontline staff to decide which job offers available in PUP's catalogue should be presented to the person and what other types of treatment might be relevant: for instance, if she lacks experience, the first choice will be to suggest to her to apply for an apprenticeship. Or, if she lacks specific qualification, she might be directed to a vocational counsellor in order to decide on possible career choices, and an application for training might be suggested. In this process, the official information is usually complemented by a judgement based on the street-level bureaucrat's experience and a close (yet usually short) observation of a person's behaviour.

What is different compared to paper files, is that IT opens new possibilities of reading clients' behaviour and controlling their activity. This opportunity is completely new for MOPR employees, who have access to PUP electronic files since 2 years. For example, social workers might verify whether an unemployed is entitled to allowance for participation in ALMPs without every single time requesting PUP for information. The electronic system economises the control. It enables the social workers to detect cases in which clients are withholding important information, which is then usually interpreted as attempts to deceit the social worker and abuse the system.

Permanent access means also constant visibility, in Foucault's line of thinking (Foucault 1998). The minute a social worker decides to verify a client's status in PUP, a person risks losing the entitlement to social assistance, if she has lost her unemployed status in PUP as a consequence of sanctions. An implication of this permanent visibility is that unemployed people applying for social assistance have lost their margin for manoeuvre resulting from delays and misunderstandings in official communication between offices. In this particular case, it means the risk of suffering immediate financial consequences instead of postponed ones. Before, the client would probably have received temporary allowance till the end of a three months' period, now it is more probable she will lose it before.

Syriusz is also a technology of representation of an individual: what actions she undertakes and the degree of her/his deservingness. It gives an immediate insight into the 'self' represented in temporal forms: not only educational and professional career, but also all

contacts with PUP that might go several or several dozen years back. Central categories used to interpret traces of interactions with frontline staff are (besides intention to abuse system) the person's '*activity*' and '*motivation*'. Street-level bureaucrats pay attention, among others, to such manifestations of '*activity*' recorded in the files as visits in PUP initiated by the unemployed and various attempts to deal with joblessness, no matter their final results.

On the other hand, *Syriusz* is also a technology that enables a Panoptic form of observation of PUP frontline staff: what they do and what is their quantitative and qualitative performance. First of all, their actions leave traces in the electronic files. Second of all, they become quantifiable. If a supervisor knows how to use IT, then s/he might generate reports on giving him/her insight into, among others, the following issues:

- whether a frontline worker meets legal standards (e.g. concerning the frequency of obligatory meetings with unemployed),
- how many clients s/he has meetings with,
- how many individual action plan s/he signs (in case of vocational counsellor) or how many formal referrals to employers s/he issues (in case of job placement agent),
- how many unemployed found a job thanks to a job referral,
- what is the time span of a '*realisation of a job offer*' (for a job placement agent) i.e. how much time was needed to find a candidate for a vacancy who is accepted by an employer,
- what is the performance of referrals to employers (i.e. how many candidates were obliged to go to see an employer, before s/he hired someone).

At present, this control function is used only by a few supervisors and mainly to give a broad picture of the work performance of a department as a whole. This limited use is a result of a number of factors. First of all, the system is still quite new. Frontline staff and management are still learning how to use it and some of them lack the necessary technical competences. Second of all, despite the fact IT was centrally implemented, there are no clear guidelines as to how to use it, so practices differ among individual workers and offices. Staff do not know how the IT system translates their actions into statistics, which results in statistical inaccuracies. Finally, the relationship between staff salaries (including bonus) and work performance is far from clear. For instance, several of above-mentioned aspects are included into workers' evaluation sheets together with the qualitative assessment (e.g. attitude towards clients, ability to communicate about PUP services, personal involvement), but workers do not really know how it affects a final decision made by the head of department. It seems that more important when it comes to the level of bonuses is the worker's specialisation (e.g. vocational counsellors have higher bonuses that job placement agents).

While indicators seem not to affect frontline staff practices, potential accessibility to Syriusz by other people surely change the way they work. It may influence their decision concerning quality and quantity of information transferred. Awareness of a permanent visibility, exercised by a kind of 'anonymous power' (Foucault 1998), and consciousness of the right of a client to access his/her files, lead workers to depersonalise and generalise entries. Generally speaking, the main function of these records – what is typical for contractual relations (Garfinkel 1967) – is neither to contain information on the unemployed necessary for successful intervention (as the example of information on disability indicates), nor to reflect actual interactions, but to prove that actions undertaken towards a client were in conformity with the law. Detailed information on individuals, which is not included in Syriusz files, might be remembered by staff, noted in paper files (e.g. the files of a vocational counsellor,

IPD) or simply forgotten. Some workers choose not to write anything down in order to gain the trust of clients they interact with and respect their right to privacy.

Interviewed long-term unemployed seem not to pay attention to the process of collecting information about them and categorising them by PUP. They barely recall it, since it resembles other administrative routines: presenting relevant documents, being given a big number of forms to sign, signing attendance lists, etc. The unemployed who had contact with social workers, contrasted approaches of staff from the two offices, i.e. the Poviat Labour Office (i.e. Public Employment Services in Poland, pl. *Powiatowy Urząd Pracy*, PUP), and the Municipal Family Assistance Centre (i.e. social assistance organization for, among others, the unemployed people, pl. *Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Rodzinie*, MOPR). Social workers were generally described as those who know their life situation. They were depicted as those who care, because they ask about their kids, health problems, family issues. Nobody openly considered social workers' practices as a control and violation of privacy, even though their questions concerned also a way of spending money from temporary benefits paid by social assistance. Two interpretations of this behaviour are equally possible. These excessively positive responses might be an effect of recruitment of interviewees *via* MOPR. They also signify that benefit recipients have interiorised a weaker position in terms of relational power. They tend to accept the imposed rules and rationale behind them: who pays dictates the conditions.

In summary, the Polish case highlights the standardising effects of the use of information technology in the processing of unemployed individuals. The electronic system economises and makes possible the registration of large numbers of people, provides a representation of the characteristics of them, and provides possibilities of oversight and control. It also highlights the awareness on the part of agency staff of the implications of this system, and promotes a degree of discretionary usage of its possibilities.

Italy[15]: Varying degrees of standardisation and flexible usages of categorisation procedures

Italy represents a case of varying degrees of standardisation of jobseekers and flexible usages of categorisation procedures. A high degree of standardisation of information gathered on jobseekers at the initial phase of inscription can be detected, alongside a relatively large scope of choice in terms of what individual characteristics are deemed to be relevant for a particular action programme later in the process of activation. Also, the value of soft skills is stressed, which mitigates the strict adherence to categorisation tools.

To begin with, the terminology used to denote jobseekers changes according to the service they are involved in. As for CPI (*Centro Per l'Impiego*) front office – where the first registration takes place – the most used definition is *utente*. In Italian, the word *utente* is the most common term used to describe someone who's using a public service and its quite formal. In relation to activation projects, the word used is not *utente*, but *beneficiario*. 'Beneficiary' means literally 'a person who draws advantage from a specific service'. To take part in a project, unemployed people have to undergo a selection process, hence individuals who are eventually selected are conceived of as 'beneficiaries'. Moreover, some projects, like the one called *Dote unica lavoro* (in English 'endowment') foresees the possibility to invest predetermined amounts of money per each individual. In this sense, the notion of *beneficiario*

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[15] This section builds on Monticelli (2014).

seems fitting. Generally, the word *utente* is more undefined, while *beneficiario* assumes the existence of 'non-beneficiaries', in other words, of individuals who are not getting advantage from the projects.

Classification and legibility unrolls according to the process of inscription and enrolment in programmes. Every jobseeker that inscribes as unemployed passes through the CPI unit (*Centro Per l'Impiego*) of AFOL. Once this first step is passed, there are a variety of alternative actions the user might take, but many of these are not universally provided. In a general sense, there are two types of individual trajectories: the first involves all the jobseekers and is a compulsory step in order to receive public social aid, the second and succeeding type of trajectory involves only a part of the jobseekers and depends on several factors (eligibility, individual availability and will to take part in these activities). Usually there is a first phase in which the user is asked to participate in some psychological and behavioural testing activities aimed at shaping his/her profile and a second phase during which training activities are performed (class activities, interview simulations, help in CV writing and updating etc…). A third step is sometimes present and consists in an evaluation of the program. The first formal-bureaucratic step is usually recalled by jobseekers as a negative experience, and the second more targeted and optional one is usually defined as positive and useful.

The main activity conducted by the unit CPI (*Centro Per l'Impiego*) is the filling in of the personal record form on the online platform called *Sintesi*. This online platform is used by front-office caseworkers to update the CV, the personal and professional profile of jobseekers and release the unemployment certificate useful to apply for unemployment benefits together with the declaration of work availability. The platform *Sintesi* is highly standardised and synthetic and does not allow for providing a precise description of users' skills and competencies. A jobseeker can update his/her profile online using a special access card that is delivered the first time he/she interacts with the CPI front office.

The details gathered through this platform are visible by all the employment agencies present on the Province of Milan area. Also firms have access to it in order to fill in some compulsory information about dismissals that are matched with jobseekers' declaration of unemployment. Parallel to *Sintesi*, there is another database, called IDO – *Incontro Domanda Offerta* (in English: supply-demand matching) in which professional profiles and job announcements are merged together. This database collects information on a regional basis and public employment agencies act as intermediaries between firms, looking for professional figures, and jobseekers. At the national level, there is a project to create a unique database gathering together all the communications and announcement coming from the regional level. Nowadays, there are two levels of online tools, one is managed at regional level and the other is a national database, called *Click lavoro*, managed by the Ministry of Labour and still under construction.

The large number of people coming to AFOL to register in the unemployment list led to the creation of a *Sistema Saltacode* (in English: queue skipping system), a system of numeration given to the users according to the service they need. When a user arrives at AFOL he or she is given a number with the indication of the number of people queuing before him/her. The attempt is to avoid complaints about long waiting lines.

A different set of tools is used by the PAL unit (*Politiche Attive per il Lavoro*), the unit in charge of managing the range of activation services. The complexity and number of formal documents to be filled in indicates a strong demand for accountability, since projects need to be monitored and controlled as regards services and costs. The main bureaucratic tool used in

individualised projects is the PIP – *Piano Intervento Personalizzato* – a sort of contract stating that the jobseeker accepts the rights and the obligations provided in the project. The first attitudinal interview, usually conducted by a psychologist or a behavioural expert, includes use some psychological tests whose aim is to understand the user's strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes virtual simulations of job interviews are used by to investigate how the jobseeker would behave in a specific setting. These tests are commented together with the experts, who provide some practical suggestions. The document resulting from this phase of attitudinal analysis, is the Competencies Balance (*Bilancio delle Competenze*), a tool used assess individual capabilities (hard and soft skills) and to define professional goals. Usually, information in this balance sheet is used to update and expand parts of the CV. All projects involving targeted and individualised actions rely on the filling in, in the final phase, of several attesting documents. Usually, an activity report or timesheet has to be filled in and signed both by the caseworker and by the beneficiary. This activity report or timesheet provides a brief description of the activities carried on during the project and the relative amount of days and hours. Together with this report, the caseworker has to write down a final paper summarizing the activities, the goals and the results obtained by the user. Sometimes, there is also a sort of diary to be kept during the project, describing day-by-day activities and user's feedbacks. If a final internship is provided, it has to be documented in a specific document signed by the beneficiary, the caseworker and the employer. Caseworkers usually use internal checklists to remember to gather all these documents. After a project is concluded, beneficiaries are called back after two weeks to fill in a Customer Satisfaction Survey used by the managers to evaluate actions' effectiveness and quality. Even in this case, as for the standardisation of procedures, documents are mostly provided by higher governance levels and cannot be modified in their content by caseworkers.

As for categorisation and legibility, there are no specific criteria for labelling used by the CPI front office. As regards the PAL unit, a first categorisation stems from the design and targeting of the projects. Categories and criteria of legibility vary every time according to the range of people the project want to be directed to. The Balance of Competencies serves as a further screening and assessing tool to help in the operationalization of some soft skills in order to build a final individual score used to give right, according to the project, to a different range of services.

Some projects, as *Ricollocami* provide a first session in which jobseekers undergo a process of further screening. For example, the first day fifteen people are invited to take part in a group meeting, during which motivation and attitudes are investigated, and at the end of the session just half of them are selected to continue with the project. By consequence, the beneficiaries have a strong awareness of having passed a sort of double selection process: the first step consists in being selected from the huge database *Sintesi*, the second one occurs during the first day of the project.

Beneficiaries also realize the importance of psycho-behavioural testing and they recognize its usefulness, but there is no clear idea on the categories used by the caseworkers. There is a general intuition on the soft skills that are appreciated and rewarded, so sometimes answers to the psychological-attitudinal tests are kind of biased.

France[16]: The ambivalence of profiling

In the French case, the fostering of individualised counselling and activation has resulted in the reinforcement of categorisation. With the intent of tailoring services for the unemployed, individuals are profiled and placed in categories according to relevant dimensions. These represent the official targeted categories: young, long-term unemployed disabled, people living in sensitive urban zones (*ZUS – zone urbaine sensible*), women, minimum income scheme recipients. These categories open up for specific services/programmes that have been developed for the group in question.

The vocabulary used by caseworkers reveals a variation of terms used to designate unemployed people. The following terms are utilised: *bénéficiaire* (beneficiary), *le demendeur d'emploi* (the jobseeker), *le bénéficiaire du RSA* (minimum income scheme recipient), and most frequently: *la personne qui vient nous voir* (the individual who comes to see us). The term 'client' is commonly criticised for its NPM associations. The vocabulary suggests a concern for the person as a whole, and ambivalence towards a narrowing down of the person. The study also reveals a variation of the very definition of 'long-term' unemployed amongst organizations and caseworkers. Long-term unemployment is generally recognized as a major problem, regardless of the exact duration.

Profiling is considered a key step in counselling. The main dimensions along which individuals are profiled are a) mobility, i.e. whether or not the individual is able to go to another city/neighbourhood for employment, b) language skills, i.e. the individual's proficiency in communicating in writing and speaking, c) autonomy, i.e. self-sufficiency of the individual, d) communication skills, i.e. the ability of the individual to communicate. Formal documents, such as diplomas, are analysed and contribute to the profiling of the individual. Generally, diplomas play a significant role in the French labour market. Whilst profiling is to some degree done along observable dimensions, there is a significant degree of subjectivity in the profiling process. This is enhanced by the fact that the first formal profiling must be validated by a counsellor after an interview with the beneficiary.

What is also discernible in the French case is a degree of ambivalence on the part of caseworkers towards the categorisation itself. Since individual jobseekers are not always easily placed into boxes, caseworkers develop a 'do it yourself' approach to make people fit into the categories and entitled to a particular service.

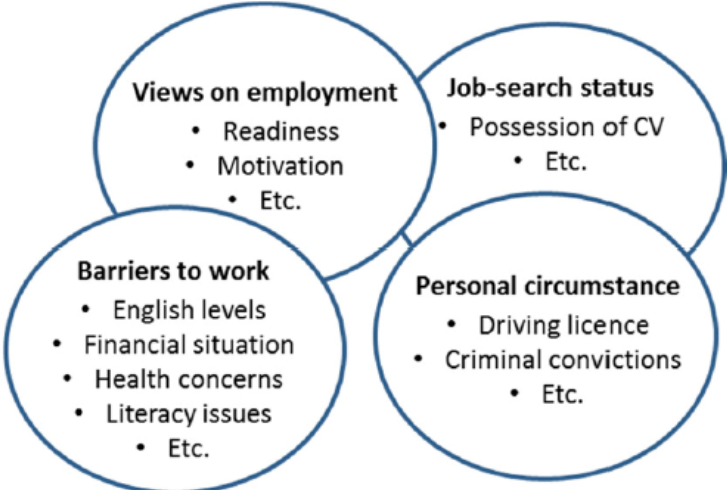## United Kingdom[17]: Scope for subjectivity in the tracking of client activity

There appears to be only one or two mandatory tools that advisors *have to* use. However, it was said that there are multiple tools that advisors *can* use. Participants, i.e. jobseekers, could not think of any tool (i.e. questionnaire, test, etc.) that they have been asked to fill in or that their advisor, i.e. caseworker, uses, with the exception of filling in travel reimbursement, answering a number of questions at the end of courses, and signing in when they come into the offices. Only one participant mentioned signing in with his advisor to have a record of attendance to meeting, similar to JCP attendance recording.

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[16] This section builds on Bourgeois, Tourne Languin & Berthet (2014).
[17] This section builds on Fuertes & McQuaid (2014).

The initial questionnaire that all clients have to complete, during a period of some weeks, when they access the WP (Work Programme) for the first time, is one of the tools that advisors have to use. It is used in order to assess the stage, with regards to participation in the labour market that the client is at and, based on this, the next stage of support for clients is decided. According to advisors, this decision takes into account advisor's and client's opinion. It was stressed that this tool is subjective, allowing advisors to decide in terms of their experience, and matching in some instances advisor and clients according to needs, expertise, and personalities. Some of the questions are mandatory and they are recorded in an electronic format, in most cases while clients are present. Advisors take clients through the questionnaire in a conversational way because, as advisors mentioned, they are very acquainted with it. The questions aim to understand clients' present situation and circumstances, their barriers to employment, and their future expectations. Some of the themes of the tool are presented in the Figure below, however, this is not an exhaustive representation as the questionnaire was never seen and interviewees could not mentioned systematically what it contained.

Themes of the initial questionnaire to clients (non-exhaustive).

Views on employment
- Readiness
- Motivation
- Etc.

Job-search status
- Possession of CV
- Etc.

Barriers to work
- English levels
- Financial situation
- Health concerns
- Literacy issues
- Etc.

Personal circumstance
- Driving licence
- Criminal convictions
- Etc.

The same questions are asked later on during the WP, to review clients' situation (regarding expectations, barriers to work, etc.) and progress made (some of the questions required rank answers, e.g. how much of a difficulty is this from 0 to 6). It appears that this tool should be used before finishing or starting new stages of support, however, there does not seem to be any pressure on advisors to complete it.

There is also a tool that advisors use to situate their clients in a scale of progression into work, and helps them with targeting the right support for clients and managing their caseload. Advisors were unable to cite all the categories and questions, but they appear to relate mainly to employability and job-search. Advisors mentioned using the tool and clients' answers, but also their professional experience when assessing clients' stage on the scale.

Advisors 'screen' and categorise clients, who have already been categorised by the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) and JCP (the public employment service), based on the information given in the tools and in the framework for support.[18] These tools are embedded in and underpinned by the organization's objectives and model of support, and also by the

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[18] The DWP refer to unemployed people as 'claimants', while the organization studied refers to unemployed individuals mandated to the WP by the DWP as 'clients'.

objectives of formal policy. However, there seems to be scope for subjectivity and participants' input. Therefore it is difficult to see only 'mechanical objectivity' (Porter 1995) taken place in the assessment of individuals.

There are no mandatory tools that advisors have to use when supporting clients. From the information gathered it appears that the Better Off Calculation tool is the most used by advisors. It shows clients how paid employment (depending on hours work) would affect them financially. According to one advisor there are tools for motivation and for coaching, and advisors can develop their own tools to help clients to move closer to or into employment.

According to one advisor, all actions related to a client are recorded: appointments, what has taken place during the meeting, what clients have to do between meetings, and what will the focus of the next appointment. Telephone calls, messages and any other activity such as mock or real interviews, applications done online or by phone, speculative letters, CVs, etc. can be added as notes or uploaded to clients' 'journal'. Employer's details can also be added to the system. This information is needed to obtain evidence of a job-start in order for the organization to secure one-off and sustained payments. This journal is used by some advisors to keep track of clients' activity and to have some kind of benchmark of activity required to achieve specific aims. It is also used by advisors when a client is accessing another stage or assistance within the WP, so they 'can see all this information before asking them any information'. However, one advisor chooses not to look at previous notes until after meeting the client, so previous information does not pre-determine his judgement. Only one participant mentioned advisors filling in the 'weekly diary', which includes what they have done, and what they need to do. Four participants mentioned advisors taking notes during their meetings, and they appear to know why these notes were taken: to follow up things that need to be done, to record what has been done, etc. They did not appear troubled about these notes being taken. One participant mentioned that his advisor encourages him to see the notes she is taking 'for my peace of mind'.

In summary, the job of advisors is not crowded with tools they are required to use. The ones that have to be used help to: decide the next stage of support for individuals (classification according to certain characteristics), keep a record of completed and future support.

Clients are mandated by JCP to the WP. The WP is mandatory for certain benefit claimants, primarily those defined as long-term unemployed but also other claimant groups (see section 3.1 p.9 and footnote 6 in the UK report). Only these categories of claimants are able to access WP provision: JCP refers claimants from the profiling categories to WP prime providers Therefore, from that moment they are eligible to WP provision. WP provision in this organization includes: assistance tailored to client need; the client meeting with and receiving support from advisors; and the client accessing in-house and external support according to specific needs.

According to advisors every aspect of the client's situation that could be a barrier to work is considered when planning and/or providing support. These include their health, housing needs, finances, childcare, communication skills and presentation, etc. Advisors stressed that the clients' circumstances are fundamental in their chances of moving into employment, and that barriers to work have to be tackled because 'actually there's no point in bashing on and applying for fifty jobs a week if actually the barrier hasn't been addressed'. The client's situation and barriers are considered not only at the start of the programme, but also at every stage, as the circumstances can change at any point. Advisors tend to let clients talk about what they perceive as barriers to work. In some cases advisors mentioned that they did not want to constrain the client by asking very specific questions. Participants stressed that the

assistance and support given by advisors goes beyond job-search. According to them, advisors ask about their general circumstances and situation, and they try to help in different ways. The majority of participants thought that advisors knew enough of their circumstances and situation to help them adequately.

Meetings are the main service where support is provided or planned. The advisors stated that meetings tend to take place once every two weeks. It was mentioned, however, that this proves difficult in some instances due to caseloads. The majority of participants met their advisor once a week. All participants seemed happy with the regularity of meetings, which had changed over time, but two clients mentioned that in some instances regularity of meetings depends on the advisor's availability. It would appear that clients who are 'more job-ready' tend to be seen more regularly. According to a few advisors this was a 'necessity' in order to maintain the client's activity and motivation. Those who were further away from the labour market were said to require a different pace and type of support in order to bring them closer to be ready for work, so meetings might be scheduled every two weeks or once a month depending on the other activities the client was engaged with (such as courses). In some circumstances (such as people who had to attend lots of hospital appointments) it was said that meetings could be arranged to take place every two or three months (that being the maximum time between appointments). It was mentioned by one advisor that there could be a temptation to focus on those nearest to the labour market, due to the target system, however it was stressed that a balance is required: so when those most ready to work move into a job, there are other clients that have been progressed to be nearer to the labour market.

In some instances, in order to be eligible for accessing support from external organizations, clients need to belong to the particular 'target group' that an organization works with. Courses and external support are not mandatory, but interviewees stressed that in order to be eligible for in-house and external support from a sub-contracted organization, clients 'need to be engaging and attending appointment'. This requirement is justified by both advisors and participants as a way to use resources efficiently. Advisors stressed that they decide to refer clients to the supply chain organizations depending on the client's goals and needs, including whether the client belongs to a 'target group'. On some occasions participants were unable to access specific training due to the costs and lack of available funding.

The UK represents a case of relatively flexible usage of legibility and classification techniques and of profiling procedures. Processes are targeted towards the detection of barriers to work and there is some room for manoeuvre in the role of advisors in the process of detection. In relative terms, the obligatory classification tools are fewer than for the other cases studied. (It should be stressed, however, that this case study focuses only on one of the service delivery organizations, thus not equivalent to the PES, where profiling might be different.)

5. Individualisation as responsibilisation

The general process of individualisation means that the individual is ever more placed at the centre of attention. There is in current policy discourses an increased emphasis on individual agency, but also on individual responsibility, which means, *inter alia*, that the societal and organizational demands placed on the individual increase. Individualisation has implications for the shape of the social contract, for the meaning of social citizenship, and for the division of risk between the state, enterprises, families and individuals. A significant aspect of this development is that responsibility for risk management is increasingly placed on individuals.

This discursive focus on the individual and the demands placed on her is prevalent in contemporary labour market discourses. A dominant idea is that getting a job is to a large degree dependent upon the power of initiative of the individual, upon one's own sense of responsibility for one's actions and decisions. The individual is expected to show certain personality traits: to adapt to labour market demands, to calibrate skills in relation to potential employer needs, to be self-reliant, and to have social skills. Overall, she is expected to assume agency and to undertake the action deemed to be pertinent and needed to enhance employability.

We see in many countries studied a new social contract developing with shared responsibility for individual mobility between enterprises, public authorities and individuals, but with accentuated responsibility for finding employment placed on the individual. Increasingly, sanctions are being implemented to ensure the proper responsibilisation of individuals. Moreover, social protection systems are reformulated from income protection to support for transition. This also implies a changed role for the state, from demand oriented to supply-side oriented politics, and from the role of a redistributor of resources to a service-provider and an 'enabling' state. How, then, does individualisation as responsibilisation of the individual play out in the cases studied?

Sweden[19]: Responsibilisation by upholding the employment norm

In the Swedish case, caseworkers emphasise the responsibility of the individual to find his/her way back to the labour market. All interviewed caseworkers, in PES, SSIA as well as in the municipal social services, had taken part in training in Motivational interviewing (MI). The method was initially used in therapeutic work with clients experiencing problems related to substance intake, and has become very popular in casework in Sweden. According to the National board of health and social services, empathy and reflexivity in listening, as well as conflict avoidance are main components of the methods. The method focuses on encouraging clients to believe in personal change. The role of the caseworker is to help the client to articulate his or her problem, and to find his or her own arguments for a behavioural change. The training in MI is 3-4 days, and no Swedish studies have been made on the relevance in the field of unemployment. However, the method clearly puts emphasis on the responsibility of the unemployed for finding employment, and is very much in line with the over all emphasis on the individuals' responsibility for finding a solution to their unemployment.

Responsibilisation and individualisation occur as well through activation programs. The average time between registering as unemployed and inclusion of the Job and development guarantee is two years (Liljeberg *et al* 2013). This means, that most unemployed will have very little support from caseworkers during the first two years of unemployment, as they are expected to fend for themselves in finding a job. However, many of the informants in this study had been unemployed for a much a much longer period, and most of them had participated in various activation programs. The activities in the program are usually equivalent to full time employment, that is, 40 hours a week. The concept of 40 hours week activity is motivated by normative assumptions of a regular working life; the unemployed has to be able to demonstrate an ability to be active 40 hours a week, and should also become accustomed to this. There are very few exceptions to this rule if the unemployed is categorised as a "regular" unemployed. For instance, parents with small children (over one

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[19] This section builds on Hollertz, with Garsten & Jacobsson (2014).

year) are required to participate full time, as are clients over 60 years. Exceptions are made for unemployed who have been detected and categorised as persons in need for work rehabilitation and work training; a much more flexible approach is utilised (some being in activation only a few hours a week, depending on condition and individual capacity).

Full time activation is thus seen as a goal, and full time working hours is the norm. To comply with this norm, in fact, seems more important than the actual content of the programmes. The daily activities in the activation programmes very explicitly emphasise the individual responsibility for finding a job. For instance, shortcomings in self-confidence, lack of belief in work capacity and an unwillingness to look for jobs in other regions and areas of work are described as reasons for long-term unemployment (www.esf.se/sv/Projektbank/Sok-projekt/ – Dagens jobb). Much effort is put on changing the participants' behaviour in relation to job search, and to encourage the unemployed to find new and creative ways in the competition to find a job. One project manager describes the importance of behaviour of the unemployed, in terms of doing what is socially accepted in a workplace such as not smoking too frequently, being on time and to be able to communicate with fellow workers during break times. The project aims, among other things, to enhance these skills.

This individualisation though activation is also found in the daily routines in the job-search project where most of the interviews were conducted. In the morning meeting, which is mandatory for all participants, the management of the project put much focus on encouraging individuals to become more active, and to show more initiative in contacts with potential employers. To become more persistent, to knock on the doors, to call the HR departments and so on was described as the key to success. Often, participants were asked to share their experiences of the jobs they had applied for recently. This was followed by questions on what they should have done differently; indirectly pointing out that the individual would, in fact, be responsible if the job was not offered.

Sport and fitness are often components of the weekly schedule in activation programmes. The sport activities can, in part, be a way to fill up the time, as activation is supposed to be equivalent to a working week. Another aspect, however, is that sport activities serve as a tool for reinforcing individual responsibilisation. To be 'in activity' is valued in itself and is contrasted with passiveness. Responsibilisation and individualisation are thus 'created' in the daily activities of activation programs. s

Almost all of the informants express a very high motivation in relation to work. Work, or employment, is described as the solution to many of the problems they have, and they describe how they have been actively seeking jobs for years. Rather than lack of motivation, the situation on the labour market is seen as the biggest barrier to their chances for finding employment; high unemployment and increased competition over available jobs. Other long-term unemployed refer to different circumstances in their life, affecting their chances to find a job. Others refer to migration, family situation and health issues preventing them from finding a place in the labour market. The responsibilisation through activation programs implies a strong focus on the individual, and leaves no room for more structural explanations to unemployment (see Engstrand & Vesterberg 2012). Even so, in the clients' understanding of their situation, it is the unemployment context that they refer to in explaining their own unemployment, rather than their individual characteristics.

Responsibilisation is enforced by mandatory compliance to activation requirements. By non-compliance on suggestions made by PES and social services in the area of activation, there is always an immanent threat of loosing the financial compensation. In September 2013, new

rules concerning conditionality and sanctions were implemented in the unemployment insurance. There are different forms of sanctions depending on the degree of "misbehaviour" of the unemployed person. A low degree of misbehaviour are if the job seeker does not collaborate in creating an individual action plan, fails to submit an activity report (written reports on job seeking activities should be submitted to the employment office every month), miss an appointment, not seek a job referral and/or do not actively seek jobs. The first time this happens he/she will receive a warning. The second, third and fourth times the person will be suspended from compensation for one, five and 10 days respectively. The fifth time, he/she will lose the compensation altogether. This means that the person cannot claim an economic benefit until a new work condition is met (see Bengtsson & Jacobsson 2014). The rules are very detailed and give the caseworker little leeway to 'look away' in case of transgressions. One of the new rules is that 'activity reports' (written reports on job seeking activities) should be submitted to the employment office every month. The interviewed caseworkers testified to the new preoccupation with activity reports as one of tasks that consumed time from other client-related work or employer contacts. The government has suggested that the systems for sanctions for those who receive activity support should be equalised to the system applied for those who receive unemployment insurance (Departementsserien 2013:159).

The complexity of rules and regulations regarding both financial benefits and activation programs cannot be understated. The caseworkers highlighted the challenges in keeping updated with laws and regulations, and the importance of having a very good grasp of support systems in different policy fields. They do not think that the unemployed have a real chance in grasping the overall context, and some of the informants highlight problems grasping the terminology used by the PES. For someone who wants to access the services of the organization, it is not all that easy to differentiate between work training, assessment of work capacity, work placement etc. Interviews with the long-term unemployed show that most of them were not very familiar with overall policies and regulations of the respective public authorities. In addition, most of them had very little knowledge of what kind of information the caseworkers had access to, why (on what grounds) they received a specific financial compensation, why they participated in one program and not in another, where they should turn in case they felt a mistake had been made by the case worker and so on. They were to a large extent in the hands of individual caseworkers. The complexity of the system which leads to difficulties for individuals to claim their rights. The scope for choice, as understood by the participants, was consequently limited in relation to activation through PES. The incentives for complying are obvious, as the financial compensation is at risk. It is worth highlighting, that many of the long-term unemployed were in a very vulnerable financial position, due to long periods unemployment and/or sick leave.[20]

The caseworkers in the municipal social services tend to have a more flexible approach to activation and a larger margin for individualised services than the PES. The methods of control are not as elaborated, and the room for professional judgement are higher than at PES. The PES has to uphold and defend the national policies and the work line, more so than the municipality. The fact that the demands placed on the PES by far exceeds available services places barriers on its room scope of action. Increased agency for the unemployed, therefore, is not a general goal for the organization. Clients showing individual agency do have

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[20] As many as 30 per cent of long term unemployed, people on sick leave or in early retirement live in poverty, according to the National bureau of statistics In 2002, the poverty rate for these groups was 10 per cent (www.scb.se). The increase in poverty rates for these groups is an indication of the impact policy changes in benefit systems in Sweden has had.

advantages, but if all unemployed were to be encouraged in terms of agency, however, this would lead to an intensified pressure on the caseworkers. The heavy caseloads (between two and three hundred clients per caseworker) places restrictions on the extent to which they can cater to individual agency and tailor activation measures. Increased agency on behalf of clients could, for the caseworkers as well as the organization, be considered a goal in itself *only if* agency meant a move away from the organization and less pressure on organizational resources. This is also a possible explanation as to why not more effort is put into simplifying the system and to 'enlighten' unemployed of the resources and services available at PES. For the organization, a certain level of 'confusion' and ignorance can be rational, as it protects the organization from demands and reduces pressure on caseworkers.

The Swedish case exemplifies a situation of strong expectations of activation and responsibilisation being placed on the individual, and with sanctions being put in place for non-compliance. The norm of fulltime employment is upheld by the format of programmes and activities. Responsibility and the significance of the work line are upheld by the temporal format and attendance requirements. The heavy caseload places restrictions on how much of agency the PES can handle, as lack of resources places barriers on the extent to which the services may be individually tailored. This does not mean, however, that clients have internalised the norms unquestioningly. They tend to see their own responsibility with regards to the situation in the labour market as a whole, thus moderated by structural factors.

Germany[21]: The framing of unemployment as a personal problem

The German case elicits a workfarist rhetoric in which the individual is discursively framed as responsible for finding employment. In the view of caseworkers, an important part of their job is to make the jobseeker understand that s/he is responsible for getting out of the dependency situation, of being active in job seeking, and of finding a job. The client's motivation to enhance employability and to apply for jobs is perceived as crucial.

In meetings with clients, conversational techniques are used to active long-term unemployed clients and to make them agree on how their situation should best be tackled. Many caseworkers perceive it to be important to reach an agreement with the client about what should be done since otherwise, non-compliance and activation failure are likely outcomes. Conversation techniques are adjusted to the specific individual and his or her needs, depending on the actual situation, motivation and level of activity of the person.

Importantly, the responsibilising quality of the discursive techniques consists of framing the problem of unemployment as a personal problem. Conversational techniques also involve the testing out of the client's motivation or perseverance, which are believed to be important for assuming responsibility. Encouraging and sympathetic conversation techniques are mixed with 'carrots' and 'sticks.'

On the part of clients, one notes a tendency to feel categorised by caseworkers as more passive and irresponsible than what they perceive themselves to be. Hence, clients tend to see themselves as doing their utmost best to qualify for work and to find job opportunities, yet feel pressed into an 'unmotivated' personality category and treated as such. The underlying

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[21] This section builds on Rice & Siebolds 2014.

assumption then, is that clients tend to assume responsibility for finding employment and to feel motivated to do so. Also, the potential sanctions of not fulfilling one's obligations to the agency are not experienced as a major issue. (It should, however, be noted, that the sample of interviewed clients may be biased in favour of highly motivated and active jobseekers.)

As regards sanctions, German UB II caseworkers talk about them in three specific ways. Firstly, sanctioning is simply framed as a bureaucratic procedure and duty that caseworkers have to apply. Sanctions are one measure by which responsibilisation is pushed, and hence something caseworkers are obliged to use. Secondly, caseworkers are well aware of the moral dimension of sanctions for vulnerable citizens and hence device moral justifications for sanctioning. Sanctioning might thus have a pedagogical function, steering individual towards enhanced responsibilisation. Thirdly, caseworkers also take into account the human dimension of sanctions, drawing up an implicit watershed between justified-pedagogical sanctions for clients who are able but unwilling to work, and looser sanctioning behaviour towards vulnerable clients whose capacity to work is mentally or physically impaired. Thus, German caseworkers tend to discuss sanctions from three perspectives: a bureaucratic-procedural perspective, a pedagogical-utilitarian perspective, and human-relational perspective. Whilst sanctions are thus in place and utilized according to procedure, there is room for manoeuvre for the individual caseworker towards the individual client.

In summary, the German case illustrates the putting to work of a strong workfarist rhetoric, in which individuals are framed, by way of discursive conversational techniques and the use of sanctions, as responsible for employment and job seeking. Hence, a sense of individual and moral agency is consciously cultivated in the practice of caseworkers. Clients apprehend the expectations of this framing, responding with unease towards the assumptions of relative passivity and lack of responsibility on their part. The assumption of individual responsibility thus seems to be ingrained also in clients, who resent the assumed lack of it. There is thus a degree of unwarranted mistrust between caseworkers and clients.

Poland[22]: Responsibilisation, sanctions and limited resources

In Poland, our study reveals that individualisation takes shape mainly through the individualisation of risk and responsibilisation of the unemployed for changing their life situation. On the other hand, street-level bureaucrats seem to have problems to carry out even their legally defined responsibilities when it comes to obligations towards the unemployed.

Official responsibilities attached to the access to the unemployment status include obligatory visits in PUP, acceptance of offers of 'suitable employment' as well as readiness to participate in ALMPs. However practice differs considerably from this official image. A small number of job offers and scarce resources for ALMPs make it difficult to test a person's 'job readiness' and apply sanctions in case of refusal. Staff might theoretically issue a job referral for an individual who does not seem interested in (subsidised or normal) employment, apprenticeship or oblige a person to participate in other ALMPs. In the first two cases, a person is obliged to visit employer and come back to the office with an official response of the employer: if s/he decides to employ this person or if a person refused this job offer. However, not complying with the law is counterproductive. It deteriorates already tense

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relations between public employment services and, by doing so, it punishes the unemployed who actually seek for a job (Sztandar-Sztanderska 2009). In the case of other ALMPs, a person might be forced, for instance, to participate in training in order to keep the unemployment status and the right to health insurance. However, street-level bureaucrats treat a forced participation as a waste of scarce resources, which otherwise might be used for supporting those unemployed who seem genuinely interested in improving qualifications. In fact, according to interviewees, one way of testing deservingness is to call more frequently to obligatory meetings with staff and see if a person fails to come by. The statistical data confirms these findings: among all people who stopped being unemployed in PUP X, there were 4 per cent for whom a reason of deregistration were sanctions applied in case of job or LMP refusal, while 27 per cent were deprived of unemployed status in consequence of non-show up for an appointment (MPiPS-01, 2012).

When asked about their responsibilities, the long-term unemployed people mention coming to the office for the obligatory appointments. The official name of these meeting is '*confirmation of job readiness*', the informal one '*coming to tick one's name off*' or simply '*a date*' – as we already mentioned. These, who have longer period of registration or who had been previously registered, also add that some time ago these obligatory meetings happened twice more often, which they correctly interpret as a sign that the number of job offers has decreased. They are also well aware of the unwritten agreement that they have to maintain appearances of compliance and pretend to meet formal obligations.

If any of the formal requirements is not fulfilled, a person risks losing a status of unemployed and all related rights. A period of deregistration was extended to 120 days in case of the first refusal or absence, 180 days in case of the second one, 270 days in case of following ones. For people who have no other basis for obtaining health insurance for themselves and their family members, sanctions are experienced as severe.

Limited resources for activation and heavy caseload work in favour of a narrow definition of staff responsibilities. Frontline workers do not only impose costs on the unemployed for the access to officially 'free' services (e.g. by work organization that makes obligatory queuing), but also they shift the responsibility for both accessing ALMPs and job search activities on individuals.

In case of more vulnerable unemployed, more responsibilities are put on individuals: the unemployed are taught to rely on themselves and they should act as though everything depends only on them. Therefore, since there is no "carrot" in a form of financial support or services, we might say that a division of responsibilities between staff and clients is imbalanced. Almost ideal-typical example of this approach is training in a job club. The main idea is to get participants to change themselves using their own individual or collective resources. This aim of "people-changing" (Hasenfeld 1983) is explicitly stated in the standardised manual used nation-wide. The training is not only about getting knowledge on labour market or about learning skills necessary for job search, but mainly about changing their very subjectivity. The training contains many exercises that might be considered 'technologies of the self' to use Foucault term (Foucault 2000; Gutting 2012). This term originally refers to technologies (such as confession), which are used by individuals to transform themselves. By using only their own means, they perform operations on, among others, their bodies, thoughts, way of being in order to achieve happiness, perfection, immortality etc. The training is considered successful, if people become flexible and open for change (e.g. participants '*will avoid relying only on the things they knew*', also when it comes to openness to learning new things (e.g. they '*will eliminate barriers making learning*

difficult'). The exercises related to each subject often consist of the component, which aims at making people realise about their specific potential. For instance, when it comes to learning, they firstly discuss their learning patterns. By answering a quiz, they find out whether they are the 'visualizer', 'audile' or 'kinetic type' (i.e. whether writing, listening or moving is the way they more easily remember new things). Then they receive tips according to their learning style.

Promoted flexibility is also identified with readiness to lower initial expectations concerning professional life, because – as the manual explains – nowadays professional success means '*continuous employment*' and not necessarily promotion or high professional position. If the group is heterogeneous, the participants are asked to describe their ideal employment and then – confronted with different opinions – they might change their initial beliefs. The other example with the same aim is the following: participants are asked to prescribe various types of employment for hypothetic cases of unemployed and argument their choice.

Another characteristic of ideal citizen is to be able to make one's own decisions, by discovering in inner capacities. In other words, participants should become self-governed or inner-directed instead of being governed by somebody else, which will make them '*feel in control of their life situation*'. The manual provides many exercises aiming at self-consciousness when it comes to professional potential or values. In order to boost their self-confidence, participants also self-evaluate their progress in terms of planning and time management techniques, motivation, information acquired, etc. As job club leader remarks they are very happy to find out that some skills – like those related to planning – seem to increase even though the thematic session on this subject is covered during later sessions. They might use these self-evaluation sheets later.

The other aspect of the 'self' that they are encouraged to improve, is their bodies. Improving one's physical condition by fitness training or walking exercise is considered to improve impressions at a job interview and to increase chances of fulfilling the physical requirements of a fulltime job.

The long-term unemployed, they generally feel to be left on their own when it comes to finding employment and dealing with their life problems. Most of the unemployed did not have any idea what to change in order to improve their situation or how to do it. With the exception of one person, they do not believe that PUP might help them. The majority think they do not have any influence over the planning of activation. Even when it comes to services provided by PUP such as job placement, training, apprenticeships, the interviewed unemployed emphasise that a crucial factor is getting relevant information in time. However, they have to search for information on their own, since staff does not inform them about new opportunities in-between rare obligatory meetings (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming). According to some of them, job placement agents do not take into account their life situation, by proposing offers with requirements they cannot meet: e.g. shift work for a single mother. Moreover, in their experience, information on vacancies is often outdated, but only one of our interviewees decided to complain about it. However, even she gave up and didn't pursue this subject later on, because there was nothing to gain. Other cases of appeal in the office concerned sanctions for not coming to the obligatory meeting. The unemployed, who filed an appeal, claimed that they either were given a wrong date or made a mistake, while writing it down. Despite the fact that it was their first case of disobeying the official rules, no appeal was examined with a positive result. Some of them also interiorised a sense of guilt for their situation: e.g. a person who felt guilty that she went to hospital the moment she was supposed to start a job.

In sum, individualisation in the Polish case takes shape mainly through the individualisation of risk and responsibilisation of the unemployed for changing their life situation. Individual jobseekers are met with the message that it is their responsibility to find a job and enhance employability. Yet, they are not always provided with the means to pursue what is expected of them. Limited resources for activation and heavy caseload work in favour of a narrow definition of staff responsibilities.

Italy[23]: Diffused responsibility

The Italian normative system, as regards labour legislation, does not have a rigid 'stick-carrot' regime establishing clear obligations and sanctions towards job-seekers taking advantage of social benefits and activation services. However, changes are underway. Next year, in 2015, at least in AFOL, there will be an organizational and functional adjustment to link services provided by CIP – Centro per l'Impiego and PAL – Politiche Attive per il Lavoro. With this reorganization, people registering in the unemployment list, benefiting from any kind of public monetary aid, will be redirected immediately to active policies office in order to start a process of rehabilitation. If the person refuses to take part in activities he/she is convoked to take part in, he/she will be sanctioned and will risk to be deleted from the unemployment list, losing the relative benefit.

At present, the norm obliges unemployed to take part at least at the 70 per cent of classes, when they are involved in highly individualised programs as 'Dote Unica Lavoro' or 'Ricollocami', programs in which every user is selected to participate and in which AFOL spends significant amounts of money. Before a project starts, the user is asked to sign some documents (as the PIP) constituting a sort of contract, stating rights and obligations of the parties involved. Moreover, when PAL or CPI convokes an individual for a meeting, an update or an important communication and the individual does not show up without a justified reason, he/she is runs the risk of being deleted from unemployment list. In practice, this seems sanction is rarely applied.

Individual jobseekers generally do generally not assume a personal responsibility for experiencing unemployment. Younger jobseekers attribute a great part of the responsibility to the State and to the established political class' ideas. Another aspect underlined in interviews, is the lack of transparent information about the labour market and the activation services provided by local employment agencies. The principal action undertaken to look actively for a job, is contacting temporary work agencies present in the local territory. Their views on temporary work agencies and their usefulness is usually negative: jobseekers feel abandoned and they feel as they are a small drop in a huge sea of people with the same needs. The general feeling is a feeling of discouragement and mistrust.

As for the older jobseekers, they seem to be less 'angry' towards institutions and politicians than youngsters. They generally do not assume personal responsibility for their situation, but relate it to unfortunate episodes of their personal lives (divorces, transfers, illnesses) that have led to social exclusion and unemployment. A clear distinction emerges between young and adults' attitudes: the former are far less disposed to accept any kind of job is proposed, while the latter are more flexible and ready to accept even suboptimal working positions.

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[23] This section builds on Monticelli (2014).

In general, responsibility for being unemployed is not brought back to personal or professional deficiencies or mistakes on the part of jobseekers. Some evidences of self-analysis emerge after the psycho-behavioural tests or the Balance of Competencies are conducted with the experts. The awareness of what activation means and involves is still far from being well imprinted in jobseekers' mind. Even knowledge of labour market functioning and of the tools used to match supply and demand, is low and confused. The majority of interviewed jobseekers neither have a strategic plan of actions to look for a job nor a project of further training or education when the program they are involved in comes to an end.

Divergences between caseworkers and jobseekers ideas on responsibilities' allocation are marked. As described, jobseekers tend to assume a victimized attitude and to accuse the Government, the State and the economic system in general for their situation. This is perceived also by the caseworkers who, many times during the interviews, report this attitude of pretence among jobseekers. Caseworkers complain about the fact that some jobseekers arrive at the employment office without any idea of where they are or what they have to do.

The Italian case illustrates that the policy of active labour market policy has not been accompanied by a responsibilisation of individual jobseekers. It is also a case in which a stick and carrot system has not been put into operation, but where sanctions exist in theory, but are really used in practice. Limited resources for the individualisation of interventions go hand in hand with limited knowledge on the part of jobseekers as the structural conditions in the labour market at large, and their place in it.

France[24]: Responsibilisation and discretionary limits

The French case reveals an on-going change in the direction of responsibilising the individual jobseekers, yet one in which there is scope for professional discretion of caseworkers. Whilst there has been a move in the direction of making caseworker more clearly accountable for the implementation of general policies, caseworkers see their responsibilities as shared with the authorities on the one hand, and the unemployed, on the other. In the view of caseworkers, the responsibility of finding employment resides largely on the individual jobseeker. Two kinds of responsibilities with respect to caseworkers thus arise: a responsibility vis-à-vis the State (in terms of public expenditure), the public employment service and to bring the unemployed back onto the labour market or on training (caseworkers are responsible for decreasing the number of unemployed); and a responsibility towards the unemployed him- or herself (caseworkers are responsible for the individual's (re)integration on the labour market). The objective is the same in both cases, but the dynamic that underlies the approach differs. They are accountable for the same thing but not towards the same actor. These approaches should not be seen as dichotomous, but rather as embedded in the perspectives that caseworkers develop in terms of responsibility. They are caught between traditional socially orientated approaches that focus on the individual's integration, and a pressure to reduce the number of registered unemployed and the de-legitimatization process at stake in some situations.

Long-term unemployed tend to see themselves as to a large extent responsible for getting a job. They do not expect caseworkers to look for jobs for them, nor do they expect to get a job

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[24] This section builds on Bourgeois, Tourne Languin & Berthet (2014).

as a result of their services. They see the labour market integration counselling as a continuous facilitating service. The relationship with the service provider and the modality of their counselling (increasing frequency, being listened to and having their projects and personal situation taken into account) seems to be more empowering and motivating than the sanctions (even though they tend not to be strictly implemented) and incentives that lead to strategic usages of the service.

Sanctions have been developed over the last decade in France in the national employment agencies and in the framework of the minimum income scheme (Dubois 2007). Service providers are to report any non-attendance or passive activity to the ordering party (the national employment agency or the authority in charge of the minimum income scheme – the general council). Yet, caseworkers have a room for manoeuvre with regards to the implementation of these sanctions.

In the case of the national employment agency, as warnings are automatically sent in case of absence, there is no leeway. But crossing of is very rare according to interviewees. A strict implementation of the sanction would put the caseworker in a situation where his/her own perception of an active behaviour could cross-off one unemployed. It explains why they usually claim that sanctions are useful but rarely strictly implemented. They use their discretion to evaluate a 'right middle': 'the parsimonious usage of the sanction in case of job refusal or insufficient active search could be explained by administrative modes of putting people away, but also by a professional rooted in the willingness to defend a 'right middle'' (Lavitry 2009: 5).'

Hence, sanctions are implemented to a limited extent. There are two levels of sanctions according to caseworker: one that is considered more 'right' (missing several appointments without any justification with a clear lack of motivation and involvement), and one considered too strict and dehumanized (following strictly the rules without taking into account peripheral factors). Some argue that the new generation of counsellors will act differently and may follow the rules without using their room for manoeuvre. It sheds light on the fact that regardless of the level of discretion caseworkers may have, the important thing is their degree of awareness and the usages of this discretion (Lipsky 2010/1980). There is thus a degree of subjectivity involved, reflecting on their professional cultures and personal experiences and perceptions. Management may exercise a degree of control over these subjective criteria. Ultimately, it shows 'the role of shared professional commitments, transcending the distinction between local managers and practitioners' (Evans 2011: 377). Caseworkers seek a balance between the nationally fostered implementation of activation-friendly policies (with its conditionality, sanctions, employment for all, more rigid frameworks and standardisation of some practises) and established practises and professional cultures focused on the individual and the human dimension (meaning they maintain a certain discretion and flexibility).

Over the past decade and longer, contracts have been used in labour market integration and social cohesion policies, stating the rights and duties of actors involved (the beneficiary and the state through the agency and its caseworker) (Berthet & Bourgeois forthcoming). If one goes to a service provider, another contract that corresponds to the specific service he/she will get has to be signed. The signature of the contract usually occurs during the first interview. The contract represents a tool for caseworker. According to them, it is a tool to set the terms of the service and of the relationship between both stakeholders. The commitment dimension remains relatively absent from caseworkers' point of views. The main purpose of the contract

is to open up a space for discussion, shedding the light on its instrumental dimension. Two main objectives underlie this step of the relationship (a third one was also mentioned):

- to express the duties of the unemployed;
  to put the emphasis on the need for an active behaviour;
- to create a relationship based on a mutual involvement where the caseworker's duties would mainly be to give information and the unemployed person's duty would be to be motivated and to be involved.

Except from one case, no caseworker has ever been confronted with a refusal to sign the contract. From the point of view of the unemployed, the contract does not represent an incentive or a document that can be used afterwards by any of the stakeholders. They sign it as they sign the numerous documents they have to sign during their labour market integration path.

The French case revels the growing importance of the contract as a responsibilisation tool and a way to articulate duties, to emphasise the need to be active, and to create a reciprocal relationship. We also see that there is some leeway for caseworkers to exercise their professional judgement and to use their discretion.

United Kingdom[25]: The individualisation of responsibility

In the case of the UK, there is a clear trend towards the individualisation of responsibility for employment and employability. The UK represents the extreme end of the continuum of individual – collective responsibility, with a strong assumption of individual responsibility and agency. Moreover, both caseworkers (advisors) and clients share the general assumption of individual responsibility. Advisors do not perceive it as their responsibility to find jobs for clients. Rather, they see their role as supporting and helping clients to become independent (by coaching, allowing clients to make choices, giving them skills they lack, etc.).

The specific cause of current long-term unemployment is difficult to assess, and no causal relations can be established. There are often two or more factors contributing to long-term unemployment. Participants in work programs mentioned a number of issues that, in their views, resulted in their current unemployment. The reasons for unemployment mentioned were:

- Being made redundant was mentioned most often. Once participants were unemployed, the labour market situation and lack of skills were mentioned as barriers to finding jobs.

- Health issues such as substance misuse and mental health problems.

- Offending backgrounds.

- Care for dependents.

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[25] This section builds on Fuertes & McQuaid (2014).

- Other circumstances such as: having problems with partner or ex-partner; child custody issues; having children in care which impacts on availability for work, due to visits to children and mandatory court appearances.

A minority of the participants were of the opinion that the cause of unemployment was related to their personal circumstances (such as substance misuse). All participants interviewed mentioned that it is was their responsibility to find a job. The majority of participants mentioned that the responsibility of the organization was to support them and help them back into employment: providing the facilities, the knowledge, and the encouragement. Ultimately, however, they stressed it was their individual responsibility.

A shared assumption among advisors and participants is that the role of the agency is to provide support for overcoming barriers to employment. Participants often mentioned the economic situation and employment environment (500 or 800 applicants for one job) as a barrier to them finding employment. Advisors, however, were generally of the opinion that the economic situation does not play a major role, but that the flexibility of the client regarding jobs and opportunities, knowledge of adequate job-search techniques and tools, and motivation, are more important. Advisors stressed that in many instances clients just need the right tools and the right support to challenge perceptions and to find work. The assistance mentioned in those cases was information on job-search, support with job-search tools (CV, etc.), time to explore the situation, transferable skills, exploring aims and objectives, general support and encouragement. It was said that in some instances the barrier, or barriers, to labour market participation are very significant. In some instances it is up to the client to overcome those barriers (e.g. substance misuse), and in other cases the barriers were said to be external to the person (e.g. criminal convictions). However, advisors mentioned motivation as a key aspect to success.

The use of sanctions to enhance responsibilisation varies with the organization in which the person is enrolled. Sanctions are generally not used by the Work Programme provider organization. Relations between advisors and clients tend in this case to be based on trust, with implicit agreements on rights and responsibilities between the parties. An implicit contract is thus established, in which the advisor entrusts the client with agency and responsibility, and the client generally assumes the expected role. In contrast, clients participating in programs organized by the Jobcentre Plus (the public employment agency) experience the use of sanctions more frequently. If a person is claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, he or she must take part in certain schemes (including the Work Programme) if advised to do so by a personal adviser. The benefit may be affected if he or she refuses to do so or leaves a scheme before completing it. If the claimant refuses to take part in, or leave a compulsory scheme before completing it, he or she may suffer a benefit sanction.

In summary, advisors and participants' views on responsibility seemed to converge, both categories placing responsibility for finding work on the individual jobseeker. Although most participants mentioned the economic environment as a factor in their lack of success when applying for jobs, all of them believe the responsibility to find work falls entirely on them. This is reflected in the views of advisors that getting employment depends on individual attributes (such as 'flexibility', motivation, etc.) which places responsibility onto the individual. The results thus indicate that agency is placed heavily on the individual, with the provider organization and its advisors acting as support functions in preparing individual jobseekers for employment.

6. Conclusions: At the crossroads of activation approaches and individualisation models

Our aim in this WP has been to investigate the individualisation of interventions. At focus is the *process of reciprocity* between the welfare state and its citizens, the *interface* between the organization and the individual. It is in the relation between individuals and the state that the character of the social contract and the expectations on both parties can most clearly be evinced. Based on interviews with caseworkers and individuals jobseekers in six European countries (Poland, Sweden, Germany, France, Italy and the UK) we have investigated to what extent beneficiaries/clients have possibilities for individual voice, autonomy and self-determination in the local delivery of social cohesion policy. We have looked into the 'objective' spectrum of choice that social cohesion policies provide and the construction of 'subjective' social citizenship, i.e. how individual beneficiaries perceive their discretion for individual voice, autonomy and self-determination as citizens. Consequently, we have studied the requirements and the obligations placed on the individual and the 'contracts' that are set up between the provider organization and individual. Moreover, we have investigated the extent to which interventions actually are individualised (in contrast to standardised) and tailored to individuals' needs or interests.

As stated in the methodology section, the empirical material does not lend itself to national comparisons or generalisations, but is processual and explorative in nature. At focus are the actual practices and procedures of local activation and individualisation of interventions, as performed by caseworkers at local level. Our results highlight key themes that have emerged out of the analysis of the processes involved and the relations between policies, procedures, and practices.

In a general sense, it is clear that in the contemporary labour market individuals are placed at the centre of attention as concerns activation. Even so, the ideal of individualisation articulates differently in the policy and practice of nation-states and regions. A first aspect explored concerns *the individualisation of policy interventions*, according to which services are expected to be adjusted to individual circumstances in order to increase their effectiveness (cf. van Berkel and Valkenburg 2007: 3). On this point, we have found that interventions that are focused on activating the individual during the unemployment spell have been made more pronounced. There are a number of interventions targeted at the individual, including profiling, direct placement by employment caseworkers, encouragement and monitoring of independent job-search efforts, the tracking of barriers that diminish employability and capacity to take jobs, and – where sufficient resources are allocated – referrals to different types of ALMPs. However, we have also found that there is a trend of dualisation of policy interventions, where 'normal jobseekers' get more standardised interventions while those belonging to specific target groups can more easily access tailor-made measures (Sweden, Germany, Italy, Poland). In the cases studied, only in Britain and France did individualisation of measures seem to be an ideal pertaining to all jobseekers. Important to note here is that our research has not focused on evaluating whether these interventions increase the rate at which jobseekers enter employment or otherwise cease claiming benefits. Our aim has been to investigate the degree to which interventions are being individualised.

Moreover, *organisational dimensions* play a significant role in how the individualisation of services plays out in practice. We found that high caseload and resource constraints constituted organizational barriers to individual interventions in all entities studied, but most

so in the Polish and Italian cases. Overall, the professional role of the caseworker, and more specifically the mandate and the scope of professional discretion, influences the implementation of individualisation services. The prevalence of collaborative practices amongst agencies tends to enhance possibilities of individualisation of services, whilst lack of collaboration and differing priorities tend to work against it. Lack of transparency concerning available measures also constrained clients' voice and choice opportunities. In a context of limited organizational resources, clients who are more vocal and aware of the available programmes are more likely to have a say concerning one's activation. Hence, the ways in which activation policies are organized at the local level to a great extent influence the extent to which individualisation is feasible and the manner in which it is operationalized.

We can also conclude that the cases studied in this WP reveal the strengthening of a 'work-first' approach, implemented through interventions with a focus on job-search, job matching and referrals, with a focus on the individual jobseeker, her motivation and job-search behaviour. Here, early profiling, counselling and the creation of an individual action plan play an important role. This is typically followed by enhanced monitoring, seeking information on job-search activities and confirmation of unemployment status of the individual.

A second aspect of individualisation concerns the definition of *reciprocal responsibilities* in service delivery. Agreeing on a 'contract', it is assumed, increases chances of the beneficiary taking an active role in the process of welfare 'production' (cf. Kolbe & Reis 2005: 53). In the activation paradigm, new forms of cooperation in employment and social services may develop. In this logic, the individual jobseeker and beneficiary is treated as an active agent and an individual with clear responsibilities to participate towards labour employment and self-reliance. The reciprocity involved thus shifts the weight of activation onto the individual, which is expected to assume the agency necessary for enhancing employability. The degree to which this takes place, as well as the way in which it is articulated, varies with nation-state and regional case.

The reciprocity relation also shifts for the provider of benefits. Our research shows that the role of the caseworker (or similar) is proven to be an important one in operationalizing this system. The caseworker has the possibility to check job-search activity, raise awareness of job-search techniques, make referrals to vacancies, improve motivation and self-confidence and, where necessary, refer a jobseeker to further support. Our research shows that caseworkers generally assume increased responsibility for supporting the individual jobseeker (albeit not necessarily finding employment). The role of the caseworker as facilitator, counsellor, and monitor has been significantly strengthened. In most cases, this role has meant an increased variety of assignments, a broader repertoire of vocational duties, and most of all, a heavier caseload. In most cases, this situation has not been matched by additional resources. Thus, the heavy caseload of benefit providers is clearly evident, constituting an organizational barrier to the implementation of individualised activation programmes and jeopardising the reciprocal relationship with the individual client. Also evident is that caseworkers exercise a degree of choice in the degree to which they opt to make legible specific dimensions of the individual and to impose sanctions. A discretionary usage of the professional mandate is a significant finding and complicates the general direction of standardisation of activation procedures. Thus, whilst we detect a clear move towards 'activation regimes' in the cases studied, this regime is varyingly realised.

While this ideally mean that the individual is given 'voice and choice' in relation to the service given it, however, also implies new forms of responsibilisation (and self-responsibilisation) of individuals. It should be noted, however, that most of the long-term

unemployed interviewed in this project expressed that they had had few opportunities for choice of activation measures. They had typically been placed in a programme by the caseworker – if they had accessed an intervention at all. Those who were placed in programmes, for instance in Sweden and Italy, however expressed that they appreciated the more individualised treatment that they got there as compared to the more standardised treatment by the public employment agency. Thus, we can conclude that the voice and choice opportunities of local activation practice are limited in most of the countries studied.

A third aspect of individualisation studied, is the increased emphasis on *individual agency* and *individual responsibility*. Departing from the dominant idea that getting a job is to a large degree dependent upon the power of initiative of the individual, the individual is expected to be 'employable', 'flexible', be 'adaptable' to change, have 'social skills', and be prepared to engage in 'lifelong learning' (e.g. Garsten & Jacobsson 2004). Individualisation also means that new forms of control are imposed on the individual and the new governance arrangements as instruments for public authorities to steer, control or discipline individuals (Rose 1999). Individualisation thus has implications for the division of risk and responsibilities between the state, enterprises, families and individuals and thus for the meaning of social citizenship.

Our research provides clear evidence of the significance given to the responsibilisation of individuals. This involves the raising of awareness of their obligations in enhancing employability, adjusting to labour markets needs, and skills development. It also includes showing an appropriate degree of motivation and engagement in job seeking and skills development, and of one's duties of keeping appointments and generally performing one's share of the contract'. In addition, it implies taking a more generalised responsibility for the structural problems of unemployment, which 'puts the blame on' individuals. Hence, apart from objective responsibilities of activation, this responsibilisation also involves a moral dimension, according to which the individual assumes a generalised sense of responsibility. It should also be noted that individuals do not automatically place the burden onto themselves, but tend to resist a unilateral allocation of responsibility and blame. Oftentimes, there is an understanding of unemployment being a political and financial problem, that should be dealt with more forcefully at a structural level.

Our research has shown the implementation of varying degrees of sophistication and complexity in the procedures by which individuals are made legible and classified. Profiling is exercised in all cases, but to varying degrees and in different stages of the process of activation. It is also the case that legibility procedures are more or less standardised, and adhered to, or resisted, to varying degrees. The stricter enforcement occurs in Sweden and Germany, and the looser in Italy and the UK's Work Programme. Procedures of making legible, and of classifying, tend to be related to the kind of governance system in place, and to the modes of collaboration between relevant agencies. With higher degrees of centralisation, legibility procedures tend to be more standardised and more strictly enforced. With a more collaborative structure with multiple actors involved in service delivery, there appears to be more room for flexibility and discretion on the part of caseworkers.

Our research also revealed a close link between eligibility and legibility. In broad terms, interventions in the unemployment spell help to enforce eligibility criteria for unemployment benefits and services to allocate access to ALMP. Whilst the stricter enforcement of eligibility criteria may motivate and mobilise some beneficiaries, the requirements for reporting, attendance, or participation as a condition for benefit may also deter some claims and increase rates of exit from benefit.

As concerns activation, a number of propositions have made as to how these cluster into types of 'regimes'. Among these, those of Lødemel and Trickey (2000), van Berkel and Hornemann Moller (2002), and Barbier (2004) provide valuable insights into the types of activation that are discernible, and their relation to the national governance structures. Most relevant for our purposes here is the model proposed by Serrano Pascual (2007), that distinguished five ideal types, mirroring existing activation typologies, but more particularly emphasising the status of citizens' different social rights and modes of 'managing the individual,' in particular institutional activation regimes. Its stress on the position of the individual speaks to our emphasis in this project WP. Inspired by Serrano Pascual's typology, we propose a typology of individualisation approaches that more directly mirror our empirical evidence. As noted by Eichhorst and Konle-Seidl (2008: 9), 'ideal types may be helpful tools to structure comparative analysis, but there is significant heterogeneity to be found in the empirical landscape.' Indeed, our empirical landscape shows a significant degree of pluralism, reflecting overarching political ideals, organizational welfare structures, and established work practices. We also hesitate to use the terminology of 'regime', since we perceive of the organizational structures and governance systems as less static and 'frozen' than what is usually associated with the term 'regime'. Nevertheless, a typology may serve to highlight the type of individualisation of interventions, on the one hand, and the allocation principles, allocation of responsibility, and interventions focus, on the other hand:

	Individualisation of interventions			
	Self-reliant citizen approach	*Contractual approach*	*Incentivisation approach*	*Fractional approach*
Benefit/ service allocation principle	Strict implementation of welfare provisions by rule of law	Affirming reciprocity and efficiency through the contract	Allocation of benefits/services subject to conditionality	Segmentation of benefits/services among categories of beneficiaries
Allocation of responsibility	Responsibility placed on individual user, service provider as expert and monitor	Responsibility placed on individual user, service provider as expert and/or monitor	Responsibility placed on individual use, service provider as facilitator	Responsibility partly placed on individual user
Intervention focus	Dualisation of interventions, focus on vulnerable groups	Varying degrees of dualisation of interventions, focus on vulnerable groups	Support and facilitation for individual users, incentive-based activation	Limited resources for tailor-made interventions, Programme based activation

From this perspective, Sweden can be characterized as taking a 'self-reliant citizen approach' to the individualisation of interventions. This entails that entitlements are strictly enforced by adherence to rules in a standardised manner. Also, there is a strong tendency towards dualisation of interventions, where interventions for 'normal' jobseekers are standardised and interventions focused on jobseekers with limited work capacity are individualised.

Germany exemplifies most clearly the 'contractual approach', with the contract playing a significant role in allocation expectation among parties involved. Responsibility is strongly placed on the individual, also implying a moral obligation for enhancing employability on the part of the beneficiary.

France shows some traits characteristic of the 'contractual approach', with its focus on the contract, albeit with a lesser focus on the self-reliant citizen, and a more ambivalent notion of individualised responsibility. France is also a case where there is less of dualisation of interventions and more of a generalised approach.

The UK articulates what is there referred to as the 'incentivisation approach', implying the allocation of benefits (in the broad sense of the term) that are subject to conditionality, and the fostering of awareness of the economic implications of unemployment versus employment. The benefit provider is conceived of primarily as a facilitator and support function.[26] Activation tends to be incentive-based, rewarding motivated and active jobseekers.

Italy can be characterized as a case of the 'fractional approach', with segmentation of benefits according to categories of beneficiaries. Responsibility for enhancing employability is partly placed on the individual, with varying degrees of enforcement. Individualisation takes places through a funnelling of resources into (mostly highly specialized) programmes. Activation projects may sometimes, paradoxically, turn into an instrument of further exclusion themselves: certain vulnerable categories remain at very high risk of exclusion caused by a prolonged persistence outside the labor market.

Poland exemplifies as well the 'fractional approach', with a segmentation of benefits according to categories of beneficiaries, and with limited resources to fulfil an individualisation of interventions. Many unemployed people are not eligible for services, and the degree of conditionality is relatively high. In contrast to the Italian case, and more similar to the Swedish case, there is a high degree of procedural standardisation of enrolment of individuals in ALMP. Also, we see that this approach is combined with placing the responsibility more clearly on the individual. In this sense, the Polish case is a hybrid case, with strong characteristics of the 'fractional approach' combined with the 'self-reliant citizen approach'.

So, what can be said about the implications of emerging 'activation worlds' for the social contract between the individual and the state? What are the implications for social citizenship? Our analysis suggests that citizenship as it articulates in the contemporary European labour market is being remodelled in terms of its socio-cultural dimensions. The emerging contours of citizenship involve an enhanced emphasis on the contractual dimension, the obligations and duties of the individual in relation to the state. A self-reliant agentic citizen-model is being forged, in which the individual has become the prime locus of agency. This involves as well evermore advanced ways in which the individual can be made legible, typified, and classified, according to political and administrative priorities. It involves as well a mobilisation of a sense of moral duty and a particular ethics of responsibilisation on the part of the individual. Whilst this means that the potentials and capacities of the single individual are being highlighted, hence furthering empowerment on the part of the individual, it may also mean that the social dimensions of agency are downplayed. Moreover, the structural dimension of unemployment may be toned down, with potential devastating effects on political action and resource allocation. In our view, the notion of 'Social Europe' obliges a more thorough analysis of how this ideal fits with, or supports, the increased individualisation of risk in the labour market.

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[26] The PES also has a facilitator and support function but only for the short-term unemployed, which we have not looked at in the project. For the long-term unemployed the PES has mainly a monitoring function over claimants' actions and circumstances, in order to provide (or stop) income benefits.

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Acknowledgements

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCENARIO WITH LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED

Note: Text in blue is guidance for the interviewer.

Inform IP about:
- The aim of the interview
- How the information will be handled (confidentiality)
- Who will be using the results and how
- Where the results will be published

Take note of demographical aspects, like:
- Age
- Gender

I. The life situation of the interviewee

(We wish to get an overall idea of the life situation of the individual, i.e. demographic background, socio-economic profile, previous contacts with welfare support structures, etc.)

- Could you please tell me a little about your personal background …
- Do you have a family?
- Where do you live?
- What is your professional experience?
- What is your housing situation?
- What education do you have?
- How would you generally describe your experience in terms of work since leaving school?
- What was your last job position? How long were you employed there? What happened later?
- How long have you been unemployed?

- Was it the first time you applied for assistance from the employment services?
- If no: please tell me a little bit about the circumstances of the first contact with PES. Why did you decide to contact them? What did you expect from them?
- Have you ever applied for social welfare support or assistance from other organisations (NGO, municipal, private employment agencies, etc.)?
- If yes: in what circumstances? Why did you decide to contact them? What did you expect from them?

II. Encounters with the PES agency

a) Structure of relations

(Here, we wish to learn about the path of unemployed in PES, the structure of relation with the employment agency, and the character of the relation. The intention is to get an understanding of how worker-client relations look from the point of view of vulnerable individuals and whether the clients have space to voice their needs and find solutions to their life problems.)

- o Let's talk now about your contacts with the employment services. Could you describe the encounters with them for me?
- o How long have you been inscribed at the PES?
- o How often have you been going to PES during this period?
- o With whom have you met?

- o What were these meetings about? Please give me examples ...
- o Were they useful for you? Why? In what way?
- o Are you encouraged to ask PES workers questions?
- o Are they responding in a way that is helpful for you?
- o How do they address you? (Are they helpful, polite, indifferent, rude?)
- o Have you felt any kind of pressure from them? What has this been it about? (Ask more about any form of pressure put on an individual, positive and negative)

- o Can you describe a typical meeting with the case manager?
- o How would you describe your relationship with the case manager?

b) Diagnosis & categorisation

(The intent is to learn more about contacts during which this person was interviewed for the purposes of preparing his/ her activation plan. We are interested in by what means the individual is subject to categorisation and what topics are discussed, what questions the person is asked, which spheres of life are interesting for the case manager, and which problems are ignored.)

- o In your view, do you think that case managers at the PES/ workers of PES (depending on previous answers) have a thorough understanding of your life situation? If not: What kind of information is lacking? Why is that?
- o We would like to learn more about the meetings during which the case manager/other worker of PES (depending on previous answers) ask about your situation in order to plan further actions. Do you recall such a situation? When was it?
- o What was s/he asking you about?
- o Did his/her questions concern your education? Professional career? Your private life? Did s/he ask you about your expectations?
  Did s/he ask you what you want to do professionally?
- o Was there anything surprising about these questions? What?
- o Did s/he explain the aim of these questions?
- o Did s/he explain how s/he would make use of your answers?
- o Were you asked to fill in some documents/forms? What were they?
- o Did s/he explain the aim of these documents/forms?

- o Have you taken part in some kind of testing of your assets and weaknesses (i.e. skills test, personality test)?
- o If yes: what did this/these test/s involve?
- o What are your views on the test(s) used?
- o Are they helpful in any way? How?
- o Are they problematic in any way? How?
- o Have your been invited to comment on the test results?
- o If so: How was this done?
- o To what extent did your comments influence the end result of the assessment?

c) <u>Services & conditionality</u>

(As a follow-up, we wish to learn about the results of these contacts and conditionality. What was the outcome? Was the person given information s/he was looking for? Was s/he given support s/he was looking for? Was s/he presented with alternative solutions of his/her problem? What was s/he asked to do next? Was s/he obliged to do something? What sanctions were applied?)

- <u>Did you agree with your case manager on a plan for further actions?</u>
- <u>Can you tell me what its content was?</u>
- What was your role in making this plan?
- Was this plan written down?

- Was this an 'individual action plan'? (use the PES term for the instrument)
- <u>How are your responsibilities for finding a job laid down in it?</u>
- <u>Have you been obliged to sign it?</u>
- <u>What would happen if you had refused to sign it?</u> Were you informed about the consequences of refusal?
- Has this ever been close, or happened, to you?

- What kind of offers/proposals did you receive from PES (we want to know about job offers, services, benefits, etc.)?
- What do you think about them? Did they fulfil your expectations? Did they answer your needs? If not, why?
- Were you given a choice – or was there only one offer?
- Have you been able to choose the programme/the services? Have you been able to choose the provider?
- Have you been on any compulsory training schemes (or work experience schemes) and if so, what was your experience of them like?
- Which forms of assistance/services have you benefited from? (Ask for details about types of support)
- Were there any particular requirements you must have fulfilled to get assistance?
- Are you obliged/asked to do something on your own, to receive the support?
- Are there evaluation procedures that follow up on whether you fulfil your obligations in order to get the financial benefits and the support you are entitled to?
- Are these in any way good for you, in your view? How?
- Do they in some way have a negative effect for you? How?
- Have you ever felt that your case manager has pushed you to take part in a certain intervention that you did not want to participate in?
- If so: Can you give me an example?
- Were there any proposals/offers from PES that you did not use? What kind? Why? Have there been any consequences of that?

d) <u>Agency</u>

(The intent is to learn to what extent a person has a margin for manoeuvre or is dependent on case-manager and PES and constrained by their rules and information provided by them)

- To what extent have you been able to influence the assistance you are getting? What aspects of it do you feel that you can influence? Please give me examples.
- Do you feel that you can defend your interest in relation to the organisation? Why/Why not?
- Has it ever happened that you wanted some kind of benefit or service, but for some reason you were not provided this opportunity? Please tell me more about it... What did you do?
- Has it ever happen that you were not satisfied with the service provided? Please tell me more about it... What did you do?
- Have you ever had any unpleasant situation/conflict with case manager? What was it about? What did you do?

III. Responsibility & responsibilization

(We are interested in learning about the individual's understanding of his/her responsibility for the situation s/he is in, and in finding a job, on the one hand, and how the individual perceives of the view of the case managers, on the other)

- Have you been able to get the information you need from the agency?
- Has it been easy for you to get access to people you need to meet with?
- Do you fell that you have been given enough insight into the process and who is responsible what steps?

- In your view, what circumstances caused your unemployment?
- Are you yourself in any way responsible for your unemployment? In what way?
- What, if anything, could you have done differently in order not to be unemployed?
- Who or what else is responsible?

- In terms of who is responsible for getting you a job, what do you think is the view of the agency? Your responsibility or theirs?
- What, in your view, do you think that *you yourself* need to do to find a job?
- What is the responsibility of other parties/agencies involved?
- What are the responsibilities of the local employment agency, according to the individual action plan?

IV. Relations with employees of other agencies

(The intention is to find out if the client has been directed to other agencies as well, as part of the support provided, and how the client perceives the collaboration between agencies. The idea behind is to see whether services are actually integrated and respond to various needs.)

- Have you been directed to other organisations? Which one(s)? Why?
- If yes: What is your experience with their assistance?
- Has it helped you in any way? How?
- Has it complicated things? How?
- What is your impression of the collaboration between PES and other agencies involved?

V. Assessment of people processing by clients, impact on well-being & agency:

- <u>In your view, what is the relevance of the support proposed to you by the agency? How do you assess offers from PES?</u>
- Do you think that they are taking your needs into account? In what way/why not?
- Do you think that they are taking into account what *you* want? Or have you been forced to use a prepared set of services?
- In your opinion, is an individual action plan useful? How/why not? Does it serve your interest? Why not?
- Could you tell me more about your current life and professional situation, as it is now?
- How has your life improved or deteriorated since your contact with the agency? What is the role of the agency in changing it for better or for worse?
- How has the support affected your confidence and general feeling about yourself?
- How could the services be improved so that you would have a better experience and outcome?
- At the end, I would like to ask you, how do you generally assess your experiences with the agency?

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCENARIO WITH CASE WORKER

Inform IP about:

- The aim of the interview
- How the information will be handled (confidentiality)
- Who will be using the results and how
- Where the results will be published

Note about demographical aspects, like:

- Age
- Gender

Ask about demographical aspects, like:

- Educational and professional background
- Special training in dealing with LTU
- Years of experience as a case manager (if relevant, ask about changes over time in work with clients)
- Full time/part time

I. Contextual information on the organisation

(The aim here is to get information on the key role of the organisation, its responsibilities, number of employees and the specific role of the individual case worker being interviewed in order to adapt further questions.)

- o Please tell me, how do you understand the main task of the organisation?
- o What is your role in the organisation?
- o How many people are employed in the organisation?

II. Contextual information on the structure of everyday work

(Here, the intention is to get an understanding of contextual factors that shape worker – client relations and that can, for instance, impede individualisation: the case worker's workload, other responsibilities beyond working with clients (e.g. paper work), ways of dealing with time pressure, clients - case worker ratio, perception of professional role, co-operation, and the structure of interaction with clients)

- Please tell me what your typical day at work looks like.
- How many clients a day do you meet? How much time do you have on average for one person?
- Do you have time to prepare for meeting with the client?
- What other responsibilities do you have (e.g. paperwork, project applications, etc.)?
- How do you manage to reconcile all these tasks? Is there something you cannot do because of lack of time?
- How do you see your role in relation to the client? And in relation to your organisation?
- Do you feel personally responsible for the client?

- What happens when a client first contacts your organisation? What happens next?
- Who does s/he meet?
- Does a client have a specific case worker who is responsible for his/her case?
- Is there one specific person who monitors what happens with the client?
- How many people in your organisation work with one long term unemployed person, on average?
- Is there a fixed number of unemployed you are supposed to meet a day or a month?

- Could you describe a typical meeting with a long term unemployed person?
- Are those meetings scheduled?
- How long do they take?
- Who initiates them (an unemployed person, a case worker)? How often do they take place?
- Where do the client meetings take place? (If possible, take note on spatial organisation: securing privacy *versus* focus on impersonal relations & massive processing)
- Do you also contact clients outside of these meetings, e.g. by phone or email? In what kind of situation?

III. Monitoring and control in the organisation

(We are interested in knowing about how case workers are controlled within the organisation, (e.g. through documentation, indicators, surveys, professional bodies, etc.) What is controlled (e.g. (il)legality of their actions, performance defined according to a set of indicators, compliance to professional standards)? How does it influence their work with clients? What do they do to get good results?)

- How your work is monitored by superiors/managers?
- According to what criteria your work is evaluated?
- Are there any (performance/quality) indicators you are expected to meet? (If possible, collect blank sheets with these)
- What are they measuring?
- Who defines them?
- Are they relevant for your work?
- What happens if they are difficult to meet?
- To what extent do the performance measures control the content of your work at a daily level?

o   Can you be rewarded for good work? How?

o   Has it ever happened that you, or one of your colleagues, have been reprimanded? For what kind of action? What is your view on this?

o   How do the performance goals and indicators influence your everyday work with the unemployed?

o   What happens if an unemployed person makes a (formal) complaint about a worker/case manager?

IV. People-processing

(We want to learn about the use of working tools, such as administrative forms, interview guidelines, psychological tests, individual action plans, etc., in the case workers dealings with clients, the procedures of client work, and the impact of these on the case workers – client relation)

o   What tools do you use when working with a long term unemployment person (administrative forms, interview guidelines, psychological tests, individual action plans, etc.)? (If possible, collect these)
o   What is their role?
o   How do you judge their usefulness (administrative forms, interview guidelines, psychological tests, individual action plans, etc.)? How do they help you in your work with clients? Which instruments do you prefer using? Why?
o   Are you able to influence their form? How do you adapt them in everyday work?
o   Do you have a meeting plan, a template, or a list of questions that you use during the meeting with a long term unemployed person? (If possible, collect these)
o   How is this plan prepared?
o   Do other case workers use it too? Is it obligatory to use?
o   What do you think about its content?
o   How do you use information collected this way?

o   Is the unemployed person asked to fill in any forms/(psychological) tests/other documents?
o   What kind of documents? (Collect all relevant blank documents)
o   What information do they include?
o   What are they for? Are they obligatory? What do you think about their content?
o   Do you discuss the results of these tests with an unemployed person? How do they help the unemployed person to evaluate his/her situation?

o   Do you yourself take notes of a meeting, or do you in any other way gather information about your client? How?
o   What does it include? Do others have access to it? Who? How do you use this information later on?
o   Do you discuss with your colleagues about individual cases? Please, tell me more about it.

(Now we wish to know how case workers deal with an "untypical" situation. What kind of untypical situations do they encounter? To whom they devote more time? How they deal with complex cases/difficult clients? What does "complex case"/"difficult client" mean? The reason behind is to learn what happens if somebody's situation and behaviour do not fit in pre-defined categories of working tools and case managers routines , which might be the case of vulnerable clients and refers to the problem of individualisation.)

- o If there is a list of questions/a plan of the client meeting: Does it ever happen that it is difficult to stick to your list of questions/plan of the meeting?
- o What kind of difficulties might arise during meeting with a long term unemployed person? How do you handle such a situation?
- o Do people who, so to speak, "make trouble" have something in common? (Instead of "make trouble" use your interviewee's words for describing "difficult cases", "complex cases") Can you characterise them?

(Here we are interested in the categorisation of clients which are used in the organisational discourse and inscribed in the working tools, the working tools used, and the dimensions of an individual deemed relevant)

- o In what terms do you speak of the unemployed with which you work ('claimants', 'clients' or 'consumers', 'citizens', 'beneficiaries' etc)?

- o Do you have specific counselling talks with the unemployed?
- o If relevant: How are counselling talks organised? Who is present?
- o If relevant: Can you tell me about their content?
- o If relevant: How does a typical counselling meeting proceed? Could you please give me an example?
- o What kinds of tests do you make use of?
- o If relevant: What is the aim of this test?
- o What forms are used to document the results of the test?

(The intention here is to find out what life spheres of unemployed person are actually taken into account during activation in the main organisation and other cooperating with it. Not taking into account some of them might be crucial for activation outcomes, for instance, housing situation, healthcare, financial situation, family situation, attitudes, education, skills, etc.)

- o What characteristics of a client are taken into account to plan activation (e.g. personality, education, learning skills, etc.)?
- o Why these ones?
- o You have said that you gather information on an unemployed person's xxx (refer to what your interviewee actually said). What about other potential life problems that might decrease chances of finding a job like, for example, difficult family situation, health problems, homelessness (refer to life problems which were not mentioned)? What options do you have to respond to such problems?
- o To what extent is a person's 'employability' relevant? What are the dimensions of 'employability' that are judged relevant (e.g. education, skills, experiences, personality)?
- o What can other employees of your organisation contribute? Other local institutions and organizations?

- o What do you do if something is beyond the scope of responsibility of your institution/organization?

V. The course of activation

(The intention is to understand how case workers decide on successive steps of engagement with a client, the ordering of actions, time frame, conditionality, and the scope of choice for the individual).

- o How do you plan activation of a long term unemployed person?
- o Is an "individual action plan" set up for each individual? (Take note of the term used) Please describe what such a plan involves. (Ask to get a copy of a blank individual action plan)
- o What information does an individual activation plan contain?
- o How are they agreed upon? What is the role of this plan, as you see it?
- o What do you propose to her/him?
- o What decides what you can offer?
- o What do the successive steps of activation look like?
- o What is the time frame?

- o What is the role of the unemployed person in the planning of this process?
- o To what extent are the interventions/programmes tailor-made for the individual?
- o What is the scope of choice for the individual?

- o Do you have some flexibility in adapting to the client's needs or interests? Describe how. (If not, ask why).
- o Do you often use that room of manoeuvre?
- o To what extent can clients choose or have a say in deciding on the specific measures or interventions. (If not, why?)

- o How are the responsibilities of the parties involved laid down in the activation plan? (Does the plan impose obligations also on your organisation too or just on the job-seeker?)

- o In the process of activation, what are the requirements an individual must fulfil to get assistance? Are any of these actions (in the course of activation) obligatory? Do they have evaluation procedures to follow-up on a person's actions, i.e. that s/he fulfils the obligations?
- o What are the sanctions? When are sanctions applied?

VI. Information transfer between organisations:

(The aim is to get an overview of cooperation with case workers of other organisations, how this is organised in the daily routines, when clients are referred to another organisation, the division of work between organisations)

- o Do you cooperate with other institutions/organisations on a daily basis when it comes to activation of long term unemployed?
- o Which ones?

- What does the collaboration consist of?
- How does it affect long term unemployed? How does it influence their chances for finding employment and their well-being?

- In your view, do you have a well-functioning cooperation with other organisations around the individual client?
- Why not?

- What are the challenges/difficulties/misunderstandings resulting from cooperation with the organisations/institutions you have mentioned?
- Where do these problems come from? How do you deal with them?
- Please tell me about your experience in this respect...

- Do you inform long term unemployed clients about other organisations/institutions providing other types of support and services? In what situations do you refer /direct them to these organisations/institutions?

- Do you have anything do wish to add?

Thank you for your time and cooperation!