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The Contentious Politics of Unemployment in Europe
Political Claim-making, Policy Deliberation and Exclusion from the Labor Market

A Research Outline

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1 Abstract

1.1 Objectives

This project aims to advance knowledge in labor politics by focusing on the ‘contentious politics of unemployment’, i.e. the relationship between political institutional approaches to employment policy and political conflicts mobilized by collective actors over unemployment in the public domain. It is designed to study this topic at national, international comparative, and transnational levels. Key objectives: (a) to generate new data for longitudinal and comparative analyses of ideological and policy positions of actors and their relationships; (b) to study the potential for political participation ‘from below’ by citizens campaigning for the rights of the unemployed and the conditions under which existing organizational networks and policy dialogues transform in a more open civil policy deliberation; (c) to provide knowledge based on rigorous cross-national and EU-level transnational analyses allowing grounded empirical statements about the Europeanization of the field.

1.2 Description

As the contested and negotiated character of the employment policy field expresses itself both in the public domain and in the institutional arenas for interest mediation, we look both at political claim-making in the public space and policy deliberation within the polity. The overall design of the research has three main components: (a) mapping the field of political contention, i.e. structures of ideological cleavages and actor relationships, both longitudinally and cross-nationally; (b) examining the nature of the multi-organizational field extending from the core policy domain to the public domain, i.e. networks and channels of political influence between core policy actors and intermediary organizations, on one side, and civil society organizations and social movements representing the unemployed (including the unemployed themselves), on the other; (c) studying the nature of the interaction between EU-level and national policy-making by determining the channels of political influence that exist between European institutions and national policy domains in the field (the multi-level governance of employment policy), and examining to what extent there are new political opportunities for the bottom-up empowerment of citizens’ organizations as a consequence of the emergence of the EU as an actor in the field. A new body of data will be generated which will allow for longitudinal (1990-2002) and comparative (F, D, I, S, CH, UK) analyses of ideological and policy positions of actors and their relationships in the unemployment issue-field. This will be backed up by interviews conducted with key actors in the organizational field (policy actors, employers associations, trade unions, parties, NGOs and social movements) both at the national and transnational levels. Innovative attempts will be made to establish networks and links between the involved actors as part of our dissemination strategy, which is key to the overall success of the project.

1.3 Expected results

The success of this project is underwritten by the European dimension. It will provide the first systematic cross-national comparison of the contentious politics of unemployment based on original data. It has a high potential for being a path-breaking academic study in labor politics, social movements and Europe. The findings will feedback understanding to the actors in the field, facilitated through our dissemination strategy which aims to contribute toward a constructive social dialogue.

2 Objectives

2.1 Main Objectives

This project aims to advance knowledge in labor politics by focusing on the ‘contentious politics of unemployment’, i.e. the relationship between political institutional approaches to employment policy and political conflicts mobilized by collective actors over unemployment in the public domain. The research design operates at a six country cross-national comparative level and a transnational European level. Here we summarize our main objectives before introducing the project in more detail:

- A first objective is to generate a new body of data that will allow for longitudinal (1990-2002) and internationally comparative (France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK) analyses of the ideological and policy positions of actors and their relationships in the unemployment issue-field. We focus on the politics of contention at work in this field, i.e. the potential impact that political conflicts and public disputes may have in shaping policy decisions. We do so by providing a systematic empirically grounded comparative study that in addition refers to the transnational European dimension. Our objective is to advance knowledge and also provide a body of research that will give practical knowledge to political actors and policy-makers, whilst allowing future researchers to place their own research within an international contextual framework.
- A second objective is to advance theory and extend knowledge in the labor and employment politics field. Our aim here is to go beyond the current tendency to refer to the socio-economic dimensions of the labor and employment field. This will be achieved by developing a more integrated conceptual approach that systematically relates two dimensions of the field that have previously remained distinct and isolated fields of research: policy-making on one side, and political contentions and collective mobilization over unemployment issues by the organized citizenry (NGOs) in the public domain, on the other. The general aim here is to advance knowledge on the relationship between policy-making and political claim-making in the field of unemployment.
- A third objective is to advance knowledge on the nature of the organizational field of employment politics and investigating the potential for extending the established policy dialogue towards a more encompassing civil policy deliberation. This will be achieved by collecting original data on (a) the national policy domains, (b) the institutional relations between the traditional social partners of capital and labor (i.e., by political parties of left and right, employers associations, trade unions), and (c) the organized citizenry representing or acting on behalf of the unemployed (e.g. social movements) in the third sector, including the unemployed themselves. Within this overall framework a further aim is to assess the potential for political participation ‘from below’ by NGOs and social movements which campaign for the rights and interests of the unemployed and marginalized sectors of society. Our findings here will provide feedback to policy-makers, and social movements, on their positions and strategies, and the potential for new forms of social/civil dialogues and a more participatory and effective policy deliberation.
- A fourth objective is to provide a body of knowledge based on rigorous cross-national comparisons that will allow firmly grounded empirical statements to be made concerning the Europeanization of the field: (a) the levels of convergence and divergence in the contentious politics of unemployment of France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK; (b) the role that transnational political institutions and initiatives – such as

the EU joint European Strategy and measures to tackle unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, and equal opportunities – play as sources and targets of demands. An important objective here is to provide an original analysis and data set that addresses questions relating to the pattern and consequences of European integration on national politics.

- A fifth objective is to establish a research network that will last beyond the lifetime of the project. The wide range of national situations and different geographical areas in Europe included in the study, and the good anchoring of the research partners in both the national and international scientific communities, offer adequate conditions for the creation of such a network. In addition, our dissemination strategy for involving practitioners will extend the network into specialist and wider public domains.

2.2 Problems Addressed and General Research Questions

Creating effective political solutions for reducing unemployment is one of the major challenges facing both policy-makers and societies at large in the member states of the European Union. As the European Commission's detailed report *Employment in Europe 1999* illustrates, in the early to mid-1990s unemployment levels rose steeply in Europe. Although this situation has partly improved, unemployment is currently at an overall level of 10%. It is important to note, however, that unemployment rates are unevenly distributed across countries, regions, and among different sections of the population (men/women, young/old, abled/disabled) and sections of the labor force (temporary/permanent, manual/skilled). The persistence of a significantly high level of unemployment in Europe poses a number of serious problems, such as threatening social cohesion, diminishing economic welfare/prosperity, and making governance at the national and European level more difficult.

The European Union has a long tradition of attempting to combat unemployment and social exclusion through the European Social Fund, but recognizes that new initiatives are necessary to tackle the issue. Indeed the national governments of the European Union considered the unemployment-related parts of the Amsterdam Treaty so important that they decided to implement them ahead of schedule without waiting for ratification. This indicates the high saliency of issues relating to unemployment on the political agendas of both the member states and the European Union itself. In addition, the increasing transnationalization of capital and the free movement of labor within Europe have transformed the traditional nature of labor relations, arguably leading to an erosion of the capacity for nation states to politically manage and deal with such problems in isolation. Finally, the new impetus on a common European social policy is complemented by widening the policy repertoire of instruments and actors involved, e.g. in that the regulatory action of European institutions is supplemented by a social dialogue between capital and labor and a higher participation of social NGOs and citizens' groups which represent the marginalized and are active in social services. The aim of this extended policy deliberation and compliance-oriented implementation is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of European action, as well as enhancing the acceptance and legitimacy throughout the European citizenry. It is not yet clear how far these attempts will prove to be a successful strategy in fighting against exclusion from the labor market.

Much previous research has focused on one side on the socio-economic conditions that give rise to changes in the labor market such as technological transformations and changes in the structure of the working population, and on the other on the policies that national governments have adopted to combat unemployment. Although this body of research offers

important insights into the structural factors that give rise to unemployment and the nature and consequences of policies used to address them, it has so far remained relatively detached from an understanding of how these issues are mediated to the citizenry, and what the potential impact of political contentions and collective mobilization over unemployment can have on shaping the directions of policies and attempts to define the nature of the problems to be addressed. The proposed research will provide a more integrated approach by systematically linking analysis of the policy field on labor and employment to analysis of the field of political contention (collective mobilization and claim-making) on issues relating to unemployment in the public domain. In this way, the proposed research will show how policy-makers in various European nations are responding to the challenges raised by unemployment and how those responses are affected by the claims and demands made in the national political and public arenas by collective actors, such as political parties, interest groups, and social movements. A special emphasis will be put on the impact that organized groups of citizens can have on policy decisions in the field of unemployment and social exclusion from the labor market within each nation. It will focus centrally on unemployment within the labor politics field, thus addressing a topic which is of current policy relevance and is a highly resonant issue in the news.

By the ‘contentious politics of unemployment’ we refer to political conflicts over the sections of the population who suffer from marginalization through the exclusion from the labor market (partial or full, temporary or permanent), on one side, and the policy measures which are designed to address such issues, on the other. The contested and negotiated character of this policy field expresses itself both in the public domain and in the institutional arenas for interest mediation. Therefore we shall look both at political claim-making in the public space and policy deliberation within the polity. Within this framework, an important aim is to examine the relationship between public claims, collective mobilizations, and policy decisions. We shall look at the ways in which the issue of unemployment and related issues are addressed in the public space by social and political actors, and how this relates to the formulation and implementation of policies and legislation to fight unemployment and promote employment. Relevant actors within our focus include governments, parties, unions, employer associations, social movement organizations, as well as other social groups such as the unemployed themselves. Within the actual constituency of the ‘unemployed’, we focus on the long-term unemployed, youth unemployed, unskilled unemployed, temporary employed workers, women (gender inequality), migrants and minorities (race/nationality inequality), and the ‘old’ unemployed (age). We shall focus on the citizens organizations (NGOs) that mobilize on behalf of this constituency, or autonomous collective mobilization by sections of this constituency for greater social rights of participation, empowerment and inclusion within society.

There is as yet no substantive research that addresses the political and public contentiousness of unemployment by empirically mapping the field of ideological cleavages, policy positions, and political alliances on the issue. In addition, there has been relatively little research on how the policy domain exists as a structure of networks extending from national governments and the institutionalized partners of capital and labor to the broader public domain of the third sector (in which non-institutional actors such as citizens’ organizations and social movements represent and act on behalf of the sectors of society that are marginalized and socially excluded through unemployment). Moreover, research examining the extent to which policy decisions are influenced by public campaigns is sparse, especially in the context of unemployment. The proposed research will provide a grounded empirical study of these dimensions of labor politics. By relating the public contentiousness of unemployment issues

to the possible effects this might have on policy-making, it addresses a concern that was explicitly expressed by the Amsterdam Treaty which sought to respond to people's practical concerns by supporting an extension of citizens rights in the field of social and employment affairs and increasing the participation of organized citizenry in European policy deliberation.

In addition to providing detailed national studies, we consider it also vital to place these within an international comparative framework, as this will significantly increase the explanatory potential and scope of relevance of the proposed research. This is all the more important given the multilevel structure of the European Union, according to which national and European policy domains are strongly interrelated, yet remain distinct arenas of policy deliberation and making. A comprehensive study needs to address the realities of the national policy domains and the proper structure of the European level alike. Firstly, through cross-national comparison, we will be able to gauge to what extent the British, French, German, Italian, Swedish, and Swiss experiences of unemployment politics remain essentially nationally bounded, form part of a Europe-wide trend, or some combination thereof. The selection of the countries is based on two principles. The first is to provide a picture of political claim-making and policy deliberation that covers a wide range of national situations and different geographical areas in Europe. With this aim in mind, we selected the two larger central European countries (France and Germany), a southern European country (Italy), a Scandinavian country (Sweden), a country that often shows different patterns than other European nations (UK), and a country not belonging to the European Union (Switzerland). The second reason consists in having six nations that have different institutional arrangements for collaboration within the polity, specifically between the government and the organized interests in society, and different policy traditions.

Lastly, by addressing the transnational dimension, we will be able to determine to what extent the labor politics field has been Europeanized by the growing influence of European institutions and initiatives (EU Court, Commission and Parliament, European employment initiatives), by European peak associations and NGO-networks (e.g. the social/civil dialogue, co-ordinated cross-national protests and lobbying), and/or by transnational debates on the issue (e.g. claims based on European rights to equal opportunities for men and women). This part of the research is potentially of wide-reaching relevance as during the lifetime of the project there are likely to be concrete steps to increase the harmonization of policies to tackle unemployment among EU countries.

Although at present labor policies remain the domain of national domestic politics, changes toward a greater co-ordination are likely to be stimulated on several fronts, as the Amsterdam Treaty's provision for: more nation-state co-operation through the European joint strategy (whereby member states draw up national employment programs which are assessed each year by the Council in the context of the joint strategy); EU measures to encourage co-operation between member states to supplement their action on employment; the activities of the employment committee to co-ordinate national employment and labor market policies; and the EU powers to tackle poverty and social exclusion and improve existing arrangements on equal opportunities for men and women (for example, by allowing positive discrimination if one gender is clearly disadvantaged). In addition, other initiatives by transnational agencies directed at to promote employment in conditions of equality, such as the International Program for More and Better Jobs for Women (WOMEMP) launched by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 1997. The outcomes of such efforts are as yet little known, although they will no doubt have important repercussions on national politics and policy-making – in member states as well as countries in close geographical and economic proximity

such as Switzerland – and are likely to be subject to new conflicts between opposed factions within public debates.

Our research design will enable us to outline the developments of such processes as they become visible in emergent form during the lifetime of the project. For example, in this vein one concrete question to address, is whether the new provisions to eradicate gender inequality in employment have been used by NGOs and social movements to make demands for advancing the position of unemployed or partially employed women. Relevant questions in this respect are: To what extent have European measures provided new political opportunities for such movements to effectively further their goals? Does European legislation provide social movements with adequate symbolic and material resources to challenge the positions of national and regional governments on unemployment issues? Are such challenges effective at achieving their intended political outcomes?

Although there has been a considerable amount of speculation about the extent of the transnationalization of politics and the consequences of this for national approaches to politics (e.g. Jacobson 1996; Sassen 1998; Soysal 1994), there have so far been very few empirical accounts that are informed by original cross-national data sets. The proposed project will examine the contentious politics of unemployment in six European countries through systematic cross-national comparison based on original empirical data, and in addition study the nature of relationships between the EU transnational and national political domains.

To summarize, our main general research questions are:

1. How is unemployment framed and constructed as a contentious political field through the mobilization by collective actors (including the unemployed themselves) in the public domain?
2. What impact does the public contentiousness of unemployment issues have on the potential for effective political management of such conflicts, on one side, and to what extent does it provide opportunities for NGOs and the organized citizenry representing the unemployed to advance their goals, on the other (both within national policy domains and at the EU level)?
3. Are the unemployed and those representing their interests and acting on their behalf becoming part of the institutional policy deliberation (both within national policy domains and at the EU level), and are they capable to define, frame or shape issues, problems and solutions?
4. Does the contentious politics of unemployment in France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK follow a national path or are they part of an emergent European trend, and has the field Europeanized in any sense?

2.3 Relevance to Guiding Principles of the Key Action

The proposed research is consistent with the objective of the key action to ‘improve our understanding of the structural changes taking place in the European society in order to identify ways of managing change and to involve European citizens more actively in shaping their own futures’. We intend to reach this objective by systematically analyzing the interaction patterns among social and political actors as they have occurred in the 1990s and by looking specifically on forms of collective actions in the field of unemployment and the exclusion from the labor market. Our focus on the relationship between various forms of

intervention in the public space and policy-making in this field should provide a basis for the elaboration of new development strategies fostering growth employment as well as diminishing social exclusion, both at the national and the European levels.

Our study primarily addresses Tasks 4 ('Towards social cohesion in Europe') and 6 ('Governance, citizenship and the dynamics of European integration'). The relation to Task 4 regards above all the examination of specific European approaches to addressing the challenges posed by unemployment and the links between political claim-making, collective mobilizations, and policy decisions in this field. Providing adequate responses to those challenges imply improving social cohesion, both within national contexts and at the European level. Given its important European dimension, this project also addresses Task 6. The parts most directly concerned with this task are those dealing with the multilevel governance of employment policy, as well as the activities of the movements of the unemployed at the European level.

Given its focus on unemployment, the proposed research secondarily addresses Task 3 ('Employment and unemployment in Europe'). However, it deals more with unemployment as a contested political field than with the conditions for its generation. By identifying key interactions among social and political actors, we hope to contribute to the development of new knowledge to be used in the political management and of unemployment and development of employment.

3 Expected Benefits

3.1 Scientific Advances

There is as yet no substantive empirically based research that addresses the public contentiousness of unemployment politics. There is also very little research that specifically addresses the nature of organizational networks which extend from the institutionalized policy domain of labor relations to the mobilized citizens' organizations which promote the interests of the unemployed in the public domain. Nor is there much scientific knowledge about the extent to which policy decisions in this field are open to influence by public campaigns. By centrally addressing these questions with an integrated conceptual approach and through original data, the impact that the research will make is potentially very great indeed. By addressing a topic of current policy relevance that is also highly resonant in the news – and on which academic knowledge is lacking – there is a high potential for timely interventions within academic, policy and wider public debates.

Given this potential for innovation, the proposed research – in particular, the analysis of political claim-making – promises to produce a number of scientific advances which locate at the descriptive, methodological, and explanatory levels. On the descriptive side, it will first of all provide a systematic and comparative mapping, unique in its genre, of the political claim-making around issues pertaining to the struggle against unemployment and the creation of employment. This will allow us to determine which actors are most often intervening in the public space to address those issues, with which modalities, and with what aims. In particular, such mapping will show the extent and forms of citizen involvement in the field under study. Second, we shall provide an overview of the organizational structure and participation patterns of unemployed in various European countries as well as at the EU level. This aspect

is especially important from the perspective of the study of social movements, as the unemployed seem to represent an emerging yet still largely unexplored movement.

On the methodological side, the analysis of political claim-making we are using as our principal data source promises to improve the study of social movements and protest behaviors. Recent discussions among specialists in the field have brought to the fore certain limitations of protest event analysis as a method to systematically trace protest actions. Specifically, many have criticized the lack of attention paid to the content of protest as well as fact that important aspects of a movement's political context are not included in the data collection. Our political claims analysis attempts to redress such limitations by expanding the method in three ways: (a) by retaining all types of claims and interventions in the public space, not only protest events or collective mobilizations; (b) by including the entire spectrum of social and political actors, not only social movements; and (c) by paying a greater attention to the content of claims.

Most importantly, on the explanatory side, our study will provide a new perspective for the study of unemployment in particular and social exclusion in general. While there exist a good deal of sociological works on unemployment (e.g. Demazière 1995; Gallie et al. 1994, 1998; Gallie 1999; Jahoda 1982; Kelvin and Jarret 1985; Salais et al. 1986; Schnapper 1981), still very little exists on its political dimension. Specifically, no one has attempted to empirically analyze the relationship between policy-making in this field and the political claim-making by institutional as well as non-institutional actors. Yet the formulation and implementation of policies are to a large extent the product of an interactive game which occurs both within the institutional arenas and in the public space. Our approach allows us to understand how social policy, in general, and policy directed at resolving the problems raised by unemployment, in particular, are inscribed in a contentious political field and depend on a process of political bargaining (in the broader sense). On the one hand, by conceiving of the multiorganizational field of unemployment initiatives and groups as citizen's involvement 'from below', we draw from social movement research in order to understand the structure of this multiorganizational field and its relations to political institutions. On the other hand, by looking at public claims and debates, we are inspired by political discourse analysis to grasp the signification of claims and disputes in comparative and longitudinal perspective.

3.2 European Added Value and Potential Contribution to Policy-making Processes

The proposed research has practical implications at both the national and European level. Generally speaking, the potential contribution of our study to policy-making processes lie in the enhancement of knowledge about the political conditions upon which policy deliberation and policy-making in the field of unemployment are based. This may also lead to an improved understanding of the dynamics of policy-making regarding other social issues as well as the prevention and resolution of social exclusion in general. To the extent that legislators and state actors, both national and European, are better informed they will be better able to propose initiatives that are less likely to fail or to meet public opposition which may add to the political costs or contribute to the overloading of the political process and hence to a possible loss of legitimacy of political institutions.

The considered impact of the study is specifically underwritten by the European dimension. The study will provide not only a valuable and unique research resource – a strictly cross-national original comparative data set – for the international academic community, but it will

also provide a substantive basis for understanding the increasingly significant topic of the degree and extent of the political integration of Europe, and the resultant changes which are taking place in national and European politics. The high standing of the international research team in their respective countries and internationally, guarantees that the findings of the research will reach a broad academic audience.

Our study also has a number of policy-relevant implications concerning the social dialogue in the field at hand. Two of them are worth mentioning which pertain, respectively, to the degree of citizen participation and to the efficacy of policy strategies and instruments. In an historical phase in which the lack of citizen participation is lamented by many, it is important to evaluate the degree and forms of civic involvement by non-state actors and to determine the extent to which organized groups in society are able to improve the formulation and implementation of policies directed to solve the problems raised by unemployment. This, in turn can lead to an improved knowledge of the efficacy of policy strategies and instruments that include the active participation of the civil society.

The fact that unemployment is a question at the forefront of the current national and European political agendas and is likely to remain an important question, makes this study not only timely but of pressing importance. Our research focus will allow us to dig particularly into the conditions and forms of an inclusive and effective policy deliberation that goes beyond the established institutional patterns of the social dialogue. For instance, DG V (social policy) meets with the Platform of European Social NGOs – a transnational forum working to fight social exclusion – twice a year in order to engage into what is called a ‘civil dialogue’, which is intended to complement and to a certain degree also become part of the established social dialogue between the social partners. Indeed, European institutions are already looking for ways of conceiving a policy debate that meets three challenges. First, European institutions are interested in the views of social NGOs and movement organizations due to the fact that these organizations are effectively representing the unemployed and engaging into combating exclusion through the provision of social services. Second, European institutions aim to be more responsive to the concerns and interests of the European citizenry in order to raise the acceptance and legitimacy of European politics. Third, European institutions are at the same time willing to safeguard efficiency and effectiveness of policy-making, and this concern has often been misunderstood as conflicting with the prior two challenges. A careful analysis of the contentious politics of unemployment in the multilevel structure of the European Union will provide insights into the conditions, constraints, and forms of a policy deliberation that meets all three needs in a mutually reinforcing fashion.

Given that the findings of the research have such potential for exerting influence on the policy debate, and the principal actors in the field, we shall aim to establish channels of contact and dissemination at an early stage of the project, so that our findings may feed into the understandings of the relevant actors thus improving communication and social dialogue between the public and policy domains. Special efforts will be made to build on these contacts within the course of the study, and these will form the basis for the proposed dissemination strategy through workshops and meetings. In order to assure an adequate exploitation and dissemination of results, we shall devote a specific workpackage to this aspect.

4 Scientific Description of the Project

4.1 Overall Context of Workplan and Comparative Framework

The overall design of the proposed research has three main components which will be elaborated in detail below:

I. Mapping the Contentious Politics of Unemployment in Europe: Political Opportunities and Claim-making

Mapping the field of political contention (i.e. structures of ideological cleavages and actor relationships), both longitudinally (1990-2002) for each country, and cross-nationally for France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. Systematically comparing the form and contents of political claim-making (a) across time, to examine the relationship between claim-making over unemployment issues and decision-making by political elites, and (b) across country, to examine the degree of convergence/divergence in national political issue-fields, and for signs of Europeanization.

II. Public Campaigning and Policy Deliberation in the National Policy Domains: The Multi-organizational Field of Unemployment

Examining the nature of the multi-organizational field extending from the core policy domain to the public domain, i.e. networks and channels of political influence between core policy actors, political parties, trade unions, employment associations, on one side, and civil society organizations and social movements representing the unemployed (including the unemployed themselves), on the other. This actor-level study will provide a grounded understanding of (a) the degree of elite openness or closure of the national policy domain toward the public domain and (b) the campaign strategies of the organized citizenry for attempting to exert political influence and challenge a variety of unemployment-related issues (e.g. the number and types of jobs, relocation and training, equity and compensation, social exclusion).

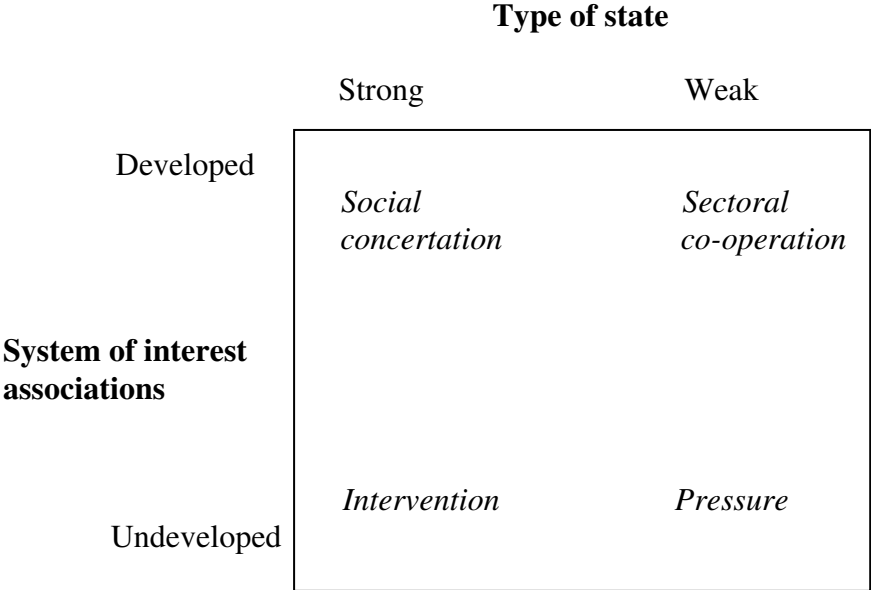
III. Public Campaigning and Policy Deliberation at the EU Level: The Multilevel Governance of Employment Policy

On one side, studying the nature of the interaction between EU-level and national policy-making in the unemployment politics field, and determining the nature of channels of political influence that exist between European institutions and national policy domains in the field (relationship between transnational, national and regional levels of top-down political authority). On the other, examining to what extent there are new political opportunities for the bottom-up empowerment of citizens' organizations that represent the interests of the unemployed (including the unemployed themselves), as a consequence of the emergence of the European Union as an actor in the field. The aim here is to assess to what extent these related developments constitute a new emergent basis for a social and civil dialogue that is capable of re-enfranchising the excluded and marginalized unemployed within the multilevel governance structure of the European Union.

Operating from within this three-level overall framework, we have selected a range of countries with different national traditions and policy approaches toward labor relations. There are sound theoretical reasons for making this selection that are based on the need to ensure variation within the comparative method.

Comparative work on the relationship between states, interest associations, and policy approaches is well advanced (e.g. Schmitter and Streeck 1981; Atkinson and Coleman 1989). Summarizing this body of works, Kriesi (1994) distinguishes between the type of state (strong versus weak) and system of interest associations (developed versus undeveloped) to arrive at a typology that can be used as a basis for classifying states with respect to arrangements of collaboration within the polity, specifically between the government and the organized interest in society (Kriesi 1994; Lehbruch 1979; Lehner 1988), which characterize national styles of policy deliberation (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Typology of styles of policy deliberation



Source: Kriesi (1994)

This existing research on policy networks places our six countries in different corners of this typology. Thus, for example, the German policy approach is more likely to be defined in the top-right (sectoral co-operation) in contrast to France which is closer to the bottom-left corner (intervention), Sweden to the top-left (social concertation), and the UK to the bottom-right (pressure). On the basis of such research in our field distinctions can be made between models for dealing with unemployment. For example, scholars often distinguish between an uncertainty model based on low protection and a security model based on high protection, or between a model with high investment in training and formation (northern and central Europe), on the one hand, and a model with long-term unemployment subsidies (southern Europe), on the other (e.g. Atkinson and Mogensen 1993; Blanpain 1993; Rosemberg 1989). These differences often result from more general but similarly important variations in the form and extent of welfare states (e.g. Bussemaker 1999; Esping-Andersen 1990; Evers and Wintersberger 1990), which also distinguish the countries we selected for our research. Our aim is not to repeat such studies, but to use them as a basis to which our empirical data on claim-making can be related. On the basis of our empirical evidence, the proposed research will explicitly combine an understanding of the multi-organizational policy field of unemployment politics (II dimension) with the dynamics of political claim-making and mobilization (I dimension), that may be shifting the position of a country from one position to another in this conceptual space across time. It is essential to explore this relationship

between political discourse and collective mobilization, on one side, and the nature of the organizational field that extends from the policy domain, on the other, in order to reach an understanding of how changes that may result in transnationalization are taking their emergent forms (III dimension).

In the following, we provide detail on the research design (4.2), methods applied (4.3), and planning and timetable (4.4). Part 4.5 presents the project description broken down in workpackages.

4.2 Research Design and Specific Research Questions

I. Mapping the Contentious Politics of Unemployment in Europe: Political Opportunities and Claim-making

As it now seems to be generally accepted that it is undesirable though ‘normal’ for a minority of the population to be unemployed in Western societies – and in some countries even the traditional social partners of capital and labor accept this as a ‘reality’ – it is pertinent to raise the question of who politically represents the ‘unemployed’? Furthermore, what political institutional mechanisms are in place to prevent a slide into conditions of poverty, social anomie, and exclusion from which the welfare state was designed to rescue the working classes in the post-war period? As a marginalized section of the population, the unemployed possess relatively few institutional channels of access to the national polity and relatively few resources for autonomous mobilization (but this access is of course unevenly distributed across different types of the unemployed constituency). Nevertheless, most political contentions over unemployment tend to be conflicts about the unemployed, taking place between the political representatives of labor and capital within national societies. For this reason, the public construction of unemployment as a contentious issue has the characteristics of a symbolic struggle (Eder 1993; Gamson and Modigliani 1989). The contentious issue is the relationship of the unemployed groups to the national community, and the rights and duties to full participation in society which they possess. Conflicting opinions and political demands are mobilized by public actors which shape the ideological cleavage structure of the political issue-field. At one extreme, unemployment may be presented as an individual-level problem (i.e. individuals themselves are responsible for their own employment status), as opposed to being a problem located in the national or European political institutions, whereas at the other extreme, citizens of European countries may see it is their right to participate in the working life of their nation and Europe itself. Between these poles, there are many different intermediary positions taken up by institutional and public actors.

The important point is that contentions over unemployment are strongly linked to questions of belonging to and participating in a national political community, and take on symbolic forms. Historically, conflicts between labor and capital have been an important part of the development of nations, and current political contentions over unemployment may give important information on the ways that countries defines themselves as political nations in response to contemporary pressures of globalization (increasing European integration, transnationalization of capital, free movement of labor) and pluralization (increasing diversity and political identities, such as gender, among the population). Although they have this symbolic form, however, the political claims that are mobilized by collective actors over unemployment issues in the public domain relate strongly to the institutional domain of politics and involve actual material stakes in political power. In this research we aim to

systematically study the relationship between public debates on unemployment and the forms of policy deliberation, both in regard to interorganizational structures and issue-related debates. In particular, we propose to place a special emphasis on the opportunities that are available for organizations within civil society to represent the interests of the unemployed, by engaging influentially in the public debate on unemployment through public campaign strategies.

The nature of the impact of public debates on the framing and direction of policies has been much discussed in the literature on political discourse and campaigns, but empirical evidence remains sparse and inconclusive. Some authors argue that under certain conditions public debates can shape the timing and outcomes of policy decisions, whilst others claim that political elites are well able to manage policies away from the distortions and noise of public discourse. At present these academic debates have been largely speculative and conducted in the absence of systematic data on political discourses in the public domain. This means that researchers are forced to fall back on descriptive impressionistic accounts rather than empirically grounded analyses, and therefore face difficulties when attempting to link public discourses to policy domains. In order to overcome these limitations we propose to use a political opportunity approach drawn from social movement research (e.g. Kitschelt 1986; McAdam 1999; McAdam et al. 1996; Tarrow 1989, 1998; Tilly 1978, 1986, 1995). This has the benefit of using an analytic framework that relates to both the discursive and institutional dimensions of politics, which relates the policy approaches of political elites – i.e. political opportunity structures – to the claim-making by collective actors in the public domain, and which is also suitable for both longitudinal and cross-national comparative analyses.

In the proposed research, we will build on an analytic approach that has been developed and successfully applied to other topic areas in the same general field (including by the administrative and the scientific co-ordinators of the present project) such as the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities in host societies, and that is currently being applied to the study of social exclusion (by the scientific co-ordinator of the present project). In this project we conceptualize unemployment as a field where political and social rights are contested, i.e. ‘contested citizenship’ (Tilly 1997). National institutional approaches and policy positions on unemployment politics are specified as the key variables for the political opportunities which confront potential claim-makers on behalf of or among the unemployed in the field. By determining the criteria for granting rights to the unemployed, they structure the political field – discursive and institutional – that is available for collective actors to mobilize claims that challenge these terms. By claim-making here we refer to all types of collective action which mobilize political demands into the public domain (ranging from protest to conventional action forms; from non-verbal physical acts to verbal statements; and by institutional and civil society actors). The first aim of the proposed research is empirical and descriptive, it will map the field of political claim-making by analyzing the nature of ideological cleavages (including types of frames) and relationships between actors (alliances/divisions) in the contentious political issue field. This will give information on the amount, form, and discursive contents of claim-making that can be compared across time and cross-nationally.

It is possible to identify three general types of claim-making:

- (a) anti-welfare, i.e. by groups against greater recognition/rights for unemployed and against and for less state intervention in the field;
- (b) pro-welfare, i.e. by groups for greater recognition/rights for unemployed and for more state intervention to fight social exclusion;
- (c) unemployed, i.e. by unemployed themselves demanding greater recognition/rights.

These three types of claim-making over the unemployed are strongly interrelated, due to overlapping concerns (2 and 3), and movement/countermovement dynamics (1 versus 2 and 3).

In addition, to these types of claim-making that directly relate to the constituency of the employed, it is also important to include forms of claim-making that relate less directly to the specific constituency, such as those related themes pertaining to employment policy, economic development policy, and issues concerning the general situation of the labor market. For example, this would include debates about the general policy measures of the European Union, such as European Employment Strategy – the most recent and far-reaching policy instrument to combat unemployment at the EU level.

By relating the political claim-making in this field to state political approaches – that may vary either across time or cross-nationally – it becomes possible to define a number of specific research questions that will be answered by the original data set.

Here are a number of specific research questions concerning this first dimension:

1. How do national state policies on unemployment (opportunity structures) shape the levels, forms (radical/moderate; institutionalized/non-institutionalized) and contents (frames) of political claim-making (public debates and collective mobilizations) (a) across time and (b) in cross-national comparison?
2. The second question reverses the direction to investigate outcomes of public debates and collective mobilizations. How do the types of claim-making (anti-welfare, pro-welfare, unemployed) influence unemployment policies (a) across time and (b) in cross-national comparison?
3. How do different types of claim-making (anti-welfare, pro-welfare, unemployed) relate interactively to one another in the public domain (movement/countermovement dynamics)? Are cycles of escalation evident in claim-making between competing factions? Do coalitions change with different claims?
4. To what extent do policy changes correlate with high or low levels of claim-making in the public domain? Do high levels of public thematization of unemployment issues generally precede or follow important policy decision changes in the field? What kinds of policies provoke more intense phases of claim-making?
5. To what extent is the politics of unemployment becoming transnationalized or Europeanized? Are transnational actors – e.g. European Commission and Parliament, European Trade Unions – becoming important sources and addressees of claim-making, or are claims increasing framed with transnational references – e.g. on basis of European citizenship or human rights – (a) across time and (b) in cross-national comparison? In which specific problem areas is the European level more salient?

II. Public Campaigning and Policy Deliberation in the National Policy Domains: The Multi-organizational Field of Unemployment

Some interactions between political elites, officials, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) occur directly through institutional channels that are partly hidden from the public domain. These institutional forums where political elites negotiate with expert advisers, interest groups and NGOs can be conceptualized as policy domains (Kingdon 1995), and form the structural basis for the process of institutional policy deliberation (Sabatier 1988;

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993) which is the focus of this part of the proposed research. As a key aim of our research is to gauge the potential influence of public contention over employment policy decisions, it is particularly important to gain an understanding of (a) to what extent, (b) under what conditions, and (c) to whom the policy domain is open and closed to public organizations. Determining this degree of accessibility to core policy-makers is a key dimension for the political opportunities that are available to claim-makers. We aim to do this by gaining an understanding of (a) the ideological positions of the core policy-makers that underpin official discourses and (b) their networks/relationships with organizations in the public domain. Key questions are: To what extent are policy decisions based on information mobilized by specialist campaign organizations, e.g. submissions to parliamentary committees, lobbying? What influence does the intensity and framing of the public debate on unemployment have on (a) the adoption of specific policies, (b) the framing of policies, (c) the implementation of policies, and (d) the effectiveness of policies?

In this context it is also important to reach an understanding of the role played by specialist intermediary actors in linking the policy and public domains: political parties and employers associations and trade unions. At what times and under what conditions are the activities of these intermediary actors likely to influence the positions of the core policy elite? Here we propose focussing on (a) electoral campaigns (political parties and MPs) and (b) the public campaigns of the employers associations and trade unions to reconstruct their respective agendas on unemployment. What factors govern the decisions of political parties and employers associations and trade unions on whether to campaign on the issue, and how do they frame the issue in the public domain? Is the issue of unemployment subject to party political competition (left v. right)? Under what conditions does unemployment become a topic for media thematization (e.g. after key symbolic events)?

In addition, we will address the bottom-up dimension of claim-making and movement campaigns. Here we study the perceptions of political opportunities by the pro-welfare movements, movements of unemployed, and their civil society allies (civil rights groups, women's groups, poverty action, etc.) and how they attempt to exert political influence. On the one hand, it is important to gain an understanding of the structure of the internal networks of the movement. For example, do protest organizations have links to conventional campaign organizations, and do these networks extend into broader alliances with mainstream civil society organizations, such as trade unions? On the other hand, what channels of political access do different sectors of the movement use to exert political influence, either (a) indirectly through public constituency-building or (b) through direct lobbying to the policy domain? This requires looking at the movement's organizational forms, action repertoires, types of political claims, framing, targets and addressees.

Within this bottom-up dimension, we shall devote a specific workpackage to the organization and activities of unemployed. To look at this specific collective actor is important as very little scientific knowledge has been produced thus far on the topic (e.g. Bagguley 1999). The aim here is to study to what extent the unemployed are capable of organizing and mobilizing as a collective actor to fight unemployment, and to what extent it succeeds in doing so, both at the national and at the European level. Here we aim to accomplish two tasks. On the one hand, we shall map the organizational structure of unemployed, including the network of alliances of these organizations which will allow us to see to what extent the movement's organizational structures is conducive to collective mobilization. On the other hand, we shall be able analyze the level and degree of participation by the unemployed in processes of policy deliberation in national and EU-level policy domains (see III below for the latter aspect).

In general this actor-level study will be used to test hypotheses drawn from the primary claim-making analysis (see I above), thereby giving a better understanding of the nature of the organizational field linking the public domain to the policy domain, and the role of public campaigns and institutional policy deliberation.

Here are a number of specific research questions concerning this second dimension:

1. What effects do the level/intensity/framing of public thematization have on the degree of access for claim-makers to the core elite of the policy domain and to arenas of policy deliberation?
2. What types of diagnostic and prognostic arguments and symbolic references (framing strategies) do elites use to justify their policy positions?
3. How do electoral campaigning by political parties (party agendas) and campaigns by trade unions and employers associations influence the framing of unemployment in the public and policy domains?
4. Does a political change in government or party competition have an effect on the policy direction?
5. How do pro-welfare movements, movements of unemployed, and their allies attempt to target (a) the political elites, (b) potential allies, and (c) public constituencies?
6. Under what conditions is lobbying or mobilization by the organized citizenry likely to lead to (a) favorable or (b) unfavorable decisions, by the core of the policy domain?
7. What types of diagnostic and prognostic arguments and symbolic references (framing strategies) do pro-welfare movements use to justify their positions to (a) the core policy elite, (b) potential allies, and (c) public constituencies?
8. How are unemployed organized and what is their position within the national policy domain?

III. Public Campaigning and Policy Deliberation at the EU Level: The Multilevel Governance of Employment Policy

Reference to the potential emergence of the transnational level of European governance is clearly built into the first two parts of the proposed project. These will be able to trace patterns of convergence and divergence in claim-making, both within and between the six countries (I), as well as tracing any shift in transfer of institutional influence away from the national political arenas to transnational European institutions (II). In this third part we shall build on the information on claim-making and the nature of the multi-organizational field on unemployment politics, and directly address the role of transnational political institutions and transnational social movements and NGOs. Clearly the European Union is increasingly creating opportunities for interest representation and lobbying activities beyond the national policy domains (e.g. Greenwood 1997; Mazey and Richardson 1993). A particular concern will be to assess to what extent the organized citizenry representing the unemployed is able to bypass and challenge the authority of the nation-centered politics of unemployment, by directly using transnational norms, rights and institutions as a means of empowerment. As such processes are in their infancy and it is as yet somewhat premature to predict the path that they will take, this part of the research will seek insights into the future development of the transnational politics of unemployment.

As the countries of Europe increasingly come to face similar structural problems over the coming decades, such as an aging working population, there is likely to be an intensification

of the European-level dialogue about such problems, including a convergence on resolutions. Such processes are already emerging, and have in part been stimulated by the greater level of national co-operation that has been facilitated by European institutions and initiatives. Whatever the long-term solutions to such problems may be, for example, an increase in immigration from non-EU countries may be a solution to replenishing the decreasing size of the working population, alternatively retraining or re-skilling the unemployed, it is clear that common solutions to such problems will be highly contentious. Politicians will not only need to find appropriate technical solutions to structural problems in the employment field, but will have to find a way of politically selling them to their domestic publics, whose expectations and uncertainties may have been built within different traditions and understandings of their rights and duties to work. Thus contemporary British elite discourse on employment focuses on the need for a dynamic knowledge-based economy and the promotion of competition and enterprise as Prime Minister Tony Blair made clear when addressing the Lisbon Summit in March 2000, where the outlines for common European employment strategies were drawn up. In contrast, his French counterpart, employment minister Martine Aubry explicitly defined the primary needs for employment as a drive toward full employment and greater solidarity. Seen in crude terms, these two competing visions are underpinned by different national policy approaches to unemployment: in Britain, policy concentrates on giving limited access to social benefits and fixing a low minimum wage that provides few inhibitions to the hiring of workers; in France, policies aim to create jobs by shortening the working week and subsidizing youth work, whilst enforcing relatively high costs on employers for hiring and firing workers.

If one takes the British Prime Minister's (competition and enterprise) and French Minister's (full employment and greater solidarity) pronouncements cited above at face value, there would appear to be few chances of reaching a common approach to unemployment between the British and French, without political contention. However, rhetoric can be deceptive, particularly when made by politicians with a keen eye on the domestic impact of their public statements at European meetings. There is evidence that there are considerable cross-national learning processes taking place between European countries when addressing employment issues. Indeed the French advisors to Lionel Jospin are regularly sent to London to learn from the British approach (*The Economist*, 18 March 2000). As this is at present largely an elite level process, it is necessary to question the national policy core as well as transnational policy elites to discover these processes that are in part hidden from the public domain. This will enable us to gather evidence on the possibility of a soft convergence emerging in the co-ordinated approaches of European countries to unemployment. However, such processes have a discursive dimension, specifically because the European Union sponsors framings of potentially conflictual issues in a way that aims to facilitate greater co-operation. Thus in the example we have referred to, Anna Diamantopoulou, the European Commissioner for jobs called for a 'commitment to combine competitiveness and cohesion' at the Lisbon summit, in a strategic attempt to bridge the seemingly divergent and incompatible views expressed by the French and British.

While scholarly writing has been divided in assessing the potentials for a common European social policy, there is consent about the fact that the European policy domain is a proper arena of action within the European Union's multilevel structure (e.g. Hooghe 1996; Keohane and Hoffman 1991; Leibfried and Pierson 1995; Marks 1993; Marks et al. 1996). The latter is not just an intergovernmental body, where social policies remain subjected to only the political bargaining between the member states within the Council of Ministers. The EU has a proper supranational component, which is represented in a bold manner by the Commission and the

European Court, and in part, by the European associations of capital and labor and the renewed vigor of the social partnership amongst them. It is also widely accepted that the earlier strategy for European harmonization has failed largely, given the persistence of diverging national policy styles and institutional constraints, and given the danger of a 'race to the bottom' due to the regulatory competition within the European bargain (Streeck 1998; Scharpf 1998). Instead, the European institutions are seemingly opting for another, twofold strategy: on the one hand, defining broad policy goals and 'rules of the game', leaving nation-states more room for proper policy strategies; on the other hand, opting for a 'compliance' rather than regulatory enforcement strategy, which seeks to integrate the diverging views of member states, European associations and NGO-networks into a common platform of policy deliberation (Ross 1998). In this regard, European politics is increasingly adopting a proper and complementary function that does not necessarily reduce national sovereignty in a zero-sum-game manner, and at the same time it is developing a proper style of policy deliberation and making.

In regard to this European dimension we wish to address: (a) how such European attempts at framing problems are formed, (b) how they are mediated by the European employers associations and trade unions to the national level, and (c) how they provide new political opportunities for the organized citizenry to challenge unemployment and social exclusion through local and transnational forms of collective action. In addition, to the work conducted in parts I and II on the transnational dimension, in this part we shall focus explicitly on (a) European institutions and initiatives to tackle unemployment and social exclusion, (b) European Trade Unions, and (c) transnational NGOs acting on behalf of the unemployed (and local level initiatives funded from Europe).

In regard to the relationship between the national level and the EU level, it is necessary to address to what extent unemployment is located within national politics or becoming Europeanized or localized/regionalized. This can be achieved by referring to representatives of transnational elites (e.g. European Commission and Parliament, Council of Europe, ILO) and transnational citizens' organizations (e.g. European Network of the Unemployed, European Anti-Poverty Network, European Network of Women, Platform of European Social NGOs), as well as representatives of local authorities and local campaign groups. For example, are European initiatives to harmonize and co-ordinate national action on unemployment shifting the context of unemployment politics to the transnational or local levels?

Here are a number of specific research questions concerning this third dimension:

1. What are the impacts of transnational EU political initiatives in changing the debates and policy approaches to unemployment? In what ways do they mediate to the national level? Are they likely to lead to convergence?
2. To what extent have European transnational pro-welfare movements and movements of unemployed emerged 'from below' in response to the new political opportunities arising from EU political sponsorship of policy approaches to unemployment?
3. How do pro-welfare movements, movements of unemployed, their allies attempt to target (a) the political elites, (b) potential allies, and (c) public constituencies?
4. Under what conditions is lobbying or mobilization by the organized citizenry (including the unemployed themselves) likely to lead to (a) favorable or (b) unfavorable decisions, by the core of the policy domain?
5. How has the politics of unemployment developed in Europe over the past decade?

6. To what extent is power located in the national core policy elite relative to transnational elites and institutions (e.g. European Commission and Parliament)? Is unemployment politics multi-level (transnational/national/local), and what is the power balance between the levels? Which problems areas are dealt with primarily at which level?

4.3 Methodological Approach

I. Mapping the Contentious Politics of Unemployment in Europe

As there are no other available data sets on contentious claim-making, and other types of data such as opinion surveys lack the required rigor and sensitivity for the type of analyses envisaged, it will be necessary to produce our own data sets. Our methodological approach follows the tradition of protest event analysis (e.g. Olzak 1989; Rucht et al. 1998; Tarrow 1989) and frame analysis (e.g. Eder 1993; Gamson 1992; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Snow et al. 1986) from social movement research, while it will build on and extend these methods. Newspaper print media coverage of reported acts will be used as the primary data source for claim-making. Newspapers are selected in preference to other media (TV, radio) as this allows the ability to go backwards in time, facilitating longitudinal study. The information from news reports is used as a record of significant political events in the field. The coded acts for claim-making range from protest events (demonstrations, riots, strikes, etc.) to conventional action forms (public statements, press conferences, etc.) to policy decisions. All acts pertaining to unemployment and employment policy are coded. Important variables are: actor types; action forms; the size, target and intensity of protest mobilization (if present); and the institutional or civil society actor on whom demands are made (addressee). Regarding the content of claims, these are coded for political aims, causal reasoning devices, and symbolic frames. The different claims made by one actor in relation to a specific event are coded as part of a unitary act. The journalist's own comments on events are not coded, as we are not interested in the media's own agenda here. For cross-national comparison, a common coding scheme of summary variables will be designed, using one newspaper of similar affiliation for each country. The candidates in each country are the following: *Le Monde* (France), *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany), *la Repubblica* (Italy), *Svenska Dagbladet* (Sweden), *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Switzerland), and *Guardian* (UK). All news reports on the topic will be collected sampling three editions per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) from 1990-2001. Coding will be extended to cover 2002 as well in the course of the project. Where available, CD-ROMs will be used to collate news reports for the two main newspapers as this enables retrieval of information in machine readable formats, which allows text to be pasted into the memo fields of the coding scheme. Coded data will be stored in a text-free database and analyzed using SPSS. Control for news selection and reporting bias will be conducted at the national level and research will be collaborative, as this allows for the important input of local knowledge. Controls will be made by coding additional newspapers for shorter periods and/or more selective samples.

The resultant database will have a high level of flexibility for different types of analyses. It will give detailed information on a particular actor, and specific types of claims and frames, and their strategic location within the national issue-field. In addition, it is suitable for the macro-level analyses of general issue-fields and actor positions that will be required for the international comparison.

II. Public Campaigning and Policy Deliberation in the National Policy Domains

The information derived from newspapers on political claim-making forms our primary data base. This kind of information, however, is not well suited to grasp certain aspects of the contentious politics of unemployment, such as less visible forms of public campaigning by collective actors within the field under study and their participation in processes of policy deliberation in the national policy domains. To give a more grounded understanding of (a) the ideological positions and (b) networks of actors in the multi-organizational field of unemployment politics, 40 to 55 semi-structured interviews will be conducted in each country with the following national-level actors (for EU/transnational level see below): core national policy-makers (10-15); party politicians (from major political parties/coalitions left and right), and employers' associations and trade union leaders (10-15); civil society and third sector organizations, NGOs, pro-welfare and anti-social exclusion movements, and organizations of the unemployed themselves (20-25).

The number of interviews given here is only indicative as it may vary from one country to another. Specifically, in federal countries such as Germany and Switzerland it is likely that a higher number of interviews are needed due to the fragmentation of the political system and the delegation of policy implementation tasks at the regional/local level. The interview schedule for each category of actor will be specifically designed to determine where they locate themselves in relation to other actors in the field (allies/opponents). For the core policy elite, official documents on employment policy positions will be used as a secondary data source on the actor positions. For civil society organizations and movements, we shall collect the organizations' own publications on the issue, including pamphlets, web sites and submissions to parliamentary committees. As political parties and employers associations and trade unions may run their own campaigns for the unemployed, and thereby influence the shaping of the political issue in the public domain, it is important for our study to collect primary data on (a) party programs and statements and (b) publications of employers' associations and trade unions. For political parties we will follow national and European election campaigns that occur during the study (2001-2004), collecting national party programs and publications relevant to our issue.

As indicated above, interviews will be used to inquire into the organization and activities of the unemployed, which form a specific workpackage. However, given the lack of knowledge about the unemployed as a political collective actor, we shall examine in more detail their organizational structure and their campaigns aimed at representing their interests both within the national policy domains and at the EU level. In order to do so, we shall first reconstruct a map of organizations of unemployed in each country. This will include an analysis of the embeddedness of organized unemployed within the larger organizational network of civil society actors and within the policy networks with established institutional actors.

III. Public Campaigning and Policy Deliberation at the EU Level

Comparative methodologies can give considerable explanatory insights into the phenomenon to be studied. The choice of the countries lies in the need to provide a picture of political claim-making and policy-making that covers a wide range of national situations and different geographical areas in Europe. We thus selected the two larger central European countries (France and Germany), one southern European country (Italy), a Scandinavian country (Sweden), a country that often displays patterns clearly distinct from other European nations

(UK), and a country which is not a member of the EU (Switzerland). It also allows us to have a range of different national policy approaches to unemployment that are related to different models of labor politics and styles of policy deliberation, which may also be tested for patterns of convergence/divergence.

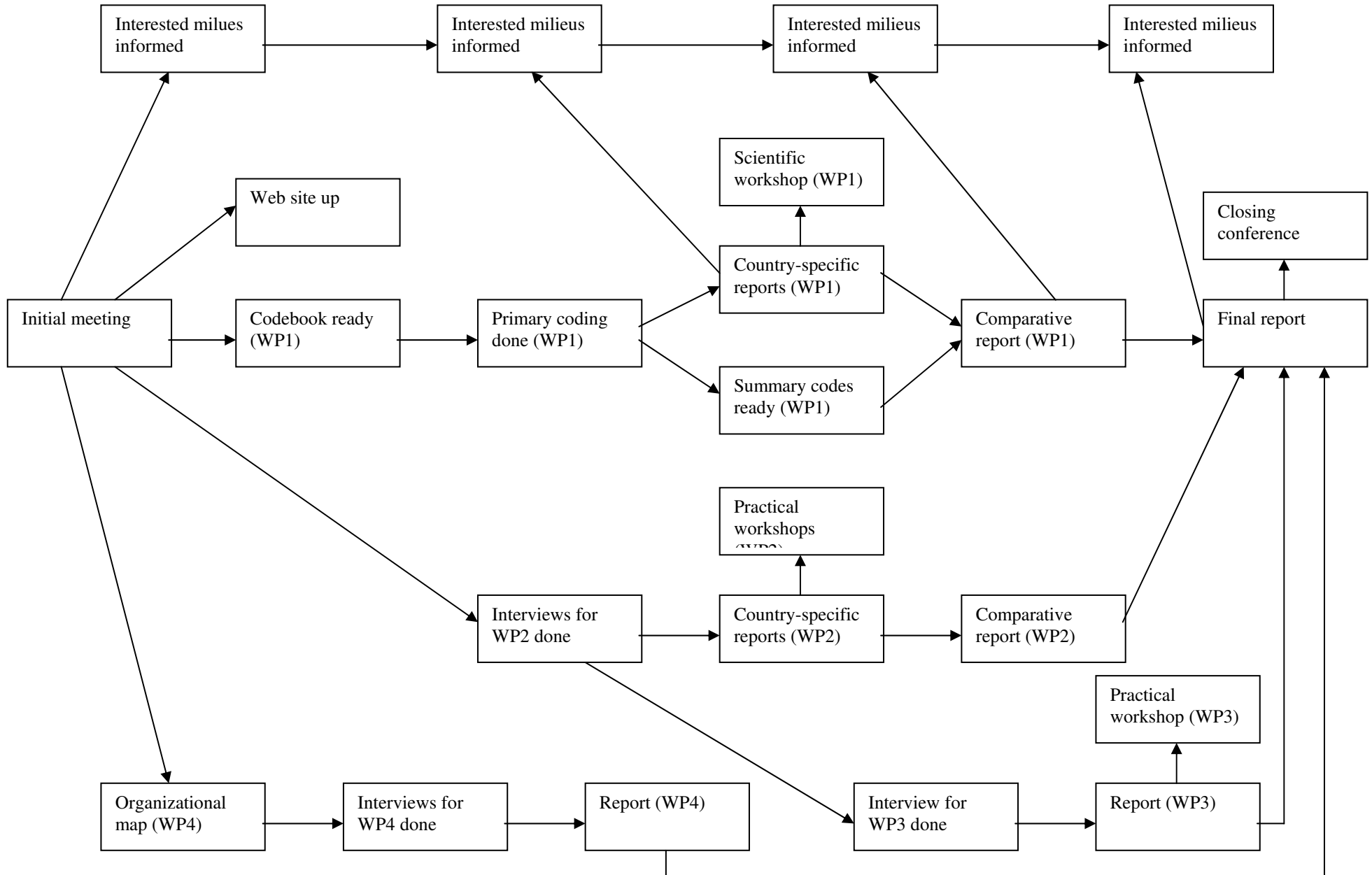
In order to make the research strictly comparative, coding schemes will be developed and used with common variables. This will allow the integration of the different national studies into a single data base and facilitate cross-national comparative analysis of national political debates on unemployment based on original data. It will therefore be possible to arrive at grounded answers to the key research questions regarding: (a) whether national differences continue to be significant in approaches to unemployment politics that are in some way related to structural differences in the countries, (b) whether there are emergent forms of convergence over time, and (c) which proper European forms of policy deliberation are being developed in the realm of the politics of employment and unemployment.

In order to address the further question, of whether any changes observed in the comparison of the national claim-making data can be explained by increasing EU integration and co-ordination in the field, it will be necessary to question the relevant actors. As such processes are in their infancy and largely conducted at the elite level, the focus here will be on the perceptions of the transnational policy elite. We propose to conduct 15 to 20 interviews with key policy actors at the EU transnational level who have been involved in the attempts to co-ordinate national policies (e.g. European Employment Strategy, European Social Fund). In order to give these interviews a prognostic quality, the Delphi technique will be translated into a semi-structured interview schedule. Here we shall attempt to gain insight into what the key transnational policy actors in the field believe will be the outcome of the recent moves toward greater co-ordination of employment (a) at the institutional level and (b) in their potential consequences for the unemployed. In addition, we will interview a number of civil society actors (15-20) such as transnational platforms and organizations working in the field of unemployment and social exclusion at the EU level. Finally, national level actors will be questioned to investigate their prognoses on the impacts and outcomes of EU co-ordination and integration within the framework of the national level study. These interviews will give a grounding and validation to the findings of the international comparison of claim-making data, as well as have a prognostic orientation that will provide valuable information on the potential future development of the field.

4.4 Planning and Timetable

We intend to conduct a genuinely comparative study based on common theoretical framework and methodology. In order to reach this objective as fully as possible, we plan to hold regular meetings of the consortium, including an initial meeting when the research starts. These internal meetings will be held to discuss theoretical aspects, co-ordinate the collection of data, and work on common outputs and publications. They will serve as mutual monitoring of the work done by each partner in the consortium. Project duration is 36 months. We graphically represent the planned research program by means of a PERT chart showing the major events and activities to occur during the research. We also give an overview of the timetable of work program with a Gantt chart (assuming 1 January 2001 as the start date). The two ends of the bars represent estimated start and finish of workpackages and tasks. The chart includes estimated delivery dates of deliverables.

UNEMPOL – Major Events and Activities (PERT Chart)



UNEMPOL – Timetable of Work Program (Gantt Chart, 2001-2003)

Workpackage (WP) / Task (T)	Jan-Jun 2002	Jul-Dec 2002	Jan-Jun 2003	Jul-Dec 2003	Jan-Jun 2004	Jul-Dec 2004
<i>WP1 - Political claims analysis</i>	[Solid black bar]					
T1 - Preparation of coding/codebook	[Solid black bar]	D1				
T2 - Primary coding	[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]			
T3 - Data cleaning				[Solid black bar]		
T4 - Country-specific analyses				[Solid black bar]	D2,D3	
T5 - Preparation of summary codes				[Solid black bar]		
T6 - Comparative analyses				[Solid black bar]		D4
T7 - Secondary coding (bias control)				[Solid black bar]		
<i>WP2 - Policy deliberation in national policy domains</i>	[Solid black bar]					
T8 - Preparation of interviews		[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]		
T9 - Interviews with core policy actors (national)		[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]		
T10 - Interviews with civil society actors (national)		[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]		
T11 - Synthesis of interviews				D5,D6		
T12 - Comparative analyses				[Solid black bar]	D7	
<i>WP3 - Policy deliberation at EU level</i>	[Solid black bar]					
T13 - Preparation of interviews				[Solid black bar]		
T14 - Interviews with core policy actors (EU)				[Solid black bar]		
T15 - Interviews with civil society actors (EU)				[Solid black bar]		
T16 - Synthesis of interviews				[Solid black bar]		D8,D9,D10
<i>WP4 - Organization and activities of unemployed</i>	[Solid black bar]					
T17 - Reconstruction of organizational maps	[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]			
T18 - Preparation of interviews	[Solid black bar]					
T19 - Interviews with unemployed organizations	[Solid black bar]					
T20 - Synthesis of interviews	[Solid black bar]					
T21 - Comparative analyses		[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]	D11,D 12		
<i>WP5 - Exploitation and dissemination</i>	[Solid black bar]					
T20 - Creation of web site	D13		[Solid black bar]		[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]
T21 - Contacting and informing interested milieus	[Solid black bar]		[Solid black bar]		[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]
T22 - Contact with national media	[Solid black bar]		[Solid black bar]		[Solid black bar]	[Solid black bar]
T23 - Preparation of final report						D14, D15, D16

4.5 Workpackages and Deliverables

The workplan of the proposed research is broken down in five workpackages. The first three correspond to the three main dimensions of the research outlined above: political claim-making in the public domain (Workpackage 1), public campaigning and policy deliberation in the national policy domains (Workpackage 2), and public campaigning and policy deliberation at the EU level (Workpackage 3). Workpackage 4 cross-cuts these three dimensions and is specifically devoted to the organization and activities of unemployed, both within national policy domains and at the EU level. As we aim to valorize our research in an adequate fashion from its very beginning, we shall devote Workpackage 5 to the exploitation and dissemination of the results. Again, the latter will be deployed both at the national and the EU level.

We envisage an interactive research process in which a feedback from both scholars and practitioners is built into it from the outset actively. In order to do so, we shall contact the interested milieus – both scientific and practical/policy – when the research starts and at regular intervals during the lifetime of the research (e.g. every year). In particular, we shall deliver the research reports to selected policy actors and ask them for a feedback. The reports and the actor’ feedback will be discussed in the practical workshops which we planned for the single workpackages. A similar process will be followed with academic actors, as it is usually done in normal practice. In addition, national media will be used to spread the results of our research. To this end, summaries of the research reports will be sent to selected media (e.g. newspapers). Finally, we shall set up a web site showing the relevant information about the project to a wider audience. This web site will be updated regularly. Next we provide the list and summary description of the five workpackages as well as the list of major deliverables. Purely internal reports and materials (e.g. codebooks) are not shown in the deliverable list.

Workpackage list

Workpackage no.	Workpackage title	Start month	End month	Deliverable no.
WP1	Political claim-making in the public domain	0	30	D1, D2, D3, D4
WP2	Policy deliberation in national policy domains	6	18	D5, D6, D7
WP3	Policy deliberation at EU level	18	30	D8, D9, D10
WP4	Organization and activities of unemployed	0	12	D11, D12
WP5	Exploitation and dissemination	0	36	D13, D14, D15, D16

Deliverable list

Deliverable no.	Deliverable title	Delivery date	Nature	Dissemination level
D1	Methodological report on WP1 (scientific article)	7	R	PU
D2	Country-specific reports on WP1 (6 reports)	25	R	PU
D3	Scientific workshop on WP1	25	W	RE
D4	Summary comparative report on WP1 (scientific article)	31	R	PU
D5	Country-specific reports on WP2 (6 reports)	19	R	PU
D6	Practical workshops on WP2 (6 workshops)	19	W	RE
D7	Summary comparative report on WP2 (scientific article)	25	R	PU
D8	Report on WP3	31	R	PU
D9	Summary report on WP3 (scientific article)	31	R	PU
D10	Practical workshop on WP3	31	W	RE
D11	Report on WP4	13	R	PU
D12	Summary comparative report on WP4 (scientific article)	13	R	PU
D13	Web site with project information (updated regularly)	1	R	PU
D14	Communication in media (e.g. newspapers)	36	R	PU
D15	Closing conference (WP5)	36	C	PU
D16	Final report (book-length ms. integrating all the WPs)	36	R	PU

Workpackage description: WP1 – Political claim-making in the public domain

Objectives

The principal workpackage deals with analysis of political claim-making in the public domain over issues pertaining to unemployment and employment policy. It has both descriptive and explanatory aims. The descriptive aim consists in mapping the field of political contention (i.e. structures of ideological cleavages and actor relationships), both longitudinally (1990-2002) for each country, and cross-nationally for France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. The explanatory aim consists in systematically comparing the form and contents of political claim-making (a) across time, to examine the relationship between claim-making over unemployment issues and decision-making by political elites, and (b) across country, to examine the degree of convergence/divergence in national political issue-fields, and for signs of Europeanization.

Description of work/methodology

Newspaper print media coverage of reported acts will be used as the primary data source for claim-making. The information from news reports is used as a record of significant political events in the field. The coded acts for claim-making range from protest events (demonstrations, riots, strikes, etc.) to conventional action forms (public statements, press conferences, etc.) to policy decisions. All acts pertaining to unemployment and employment policy are coded. The different claims made by one actor in relation to a specific event are coded as part of a unitary act. For cross-national comparison, a common coding scheme of summary variables will be designed, using one newspaper of similar affiliation for each country. Coded data will be stored in a text-free database and analyzed using SPSS. Control for news selection and reporting bias will be conducted at the national level by coding additional newspapers for shorter periods and/or more selective samples.

Deliverables

Main deliverable include:

- scientific article presenting the methodological approach for the study of the contentious politics of unemployment
- country-specific reports on political claims analysis (6 reports)
- scientific article presenting in a summary fashion the comparative analysis of political claim-making
- scientific workshop once the country-specific reports are available

Expected results

We will provide a unique cross-national database on the political claim-making over issues pertaining to unemployment and employment policy. We expect this data to support an analysis of the contentious political of unemployment that will provide a better understanding of relationship between claim-making and policy-making in the field under study; of the impact of collective mobilizations and public debates on political decisions in this field; and, conversely, of the impact of decision-making and political opportunity structures on collective mobilizations and public debates. The political claims analysis will also allow us to assess the extent to which the politics of unemployment becoming transnationalized and especially Europeanized in the public domain or whether this field continues to refer primarily to the national state.

Workpackage description: WP2 – Policy deliberation in the national policy domain

Objectives

This workpackage deals with public campaigning and the process of policy deliberation in the national policy domains. The principal aim is to examine the nature of the multi-organizational field extending from the core policy domain to the public domain, i.e. networks and channels of political influence between core policy actors, political parties, trade unions, employment associations, on one side, and civil society organizations and social movements representing the unemployed (including the unemployed themselves), on the other. This actor-level study will provide a grounded understanding of (a) the degree of elite openness or closure of the national policy domain toward the public domain and (b) the campaign strategies of the organized citizenry for attempting to exert political influence and challenge a variety of unemployment-related issues (e.g. the number and types of jobs, relocation and training, equity and compensation, social exclusion).

Description of work/methodology

Semi-structured interviews (40 to 55) will be conducted in each country with the following national-level actors in the multi-organizational field of unemployment politics: core national policy-makers (10-15); party politicians (from major political parties/coalitions left and right), and employers' associations and trade union leaders (10-15); civil society and third sector organizations, NGOs, pro-welfare and anti-social exclusion movements, and organizations of the unemployed themselves (20-25). For the core policy elite, official documents on employment policy positions will be used as a secondary data source on the actor positions. For civil society organizations and movements, we shall collect the organizations' own publications on the issue, including pamphlets, web sites and submissions to parliamentary committees. Finally, we will collect primary data on (a) party programs and statements and (b) publications of employers' associations and Trade Unions.

Deliverables

Main deliverables include:

- 6 country-specific reports
- scientific article presenting in a summary fashion the comparative analysis of public campaigning and policy deliberation in the national policy domains
- 6 practical workshops once the country-specific reports are available

Expected results

As a key aim of our research is to gauge the potential influence of public contention over employment policy, here we expect to gain an understanding of (a) to what extent, (b) under what conditions, and (c) to whom the policy domain is open and closed to public organizations. Determining this degree of accessibility to core policy-makers is a key dimension for the political opportunities that are available to claim-makers. We expect to do this by gaining an understanding of (a) the ideological positions of the core policy-makers that underpin official discourses and (b) their networks/relationships with organizations in the public domain. In addition, we expect to reach an understanding of the role played by specialist intermediary actors in linking the policy and public domains. Finally, we expect to improve our knowledge of the perceptions of political opportunities by the pro-welfare movements, movements of unemployed, and their civil society allies and how they attempt to exert political influence.

Workpackage description: WP3 – Policy deliberation at the EU level

Objectives

This workpackage addresses the public campaigning and the process of policy deliberation at the EU level. On one side, we study the interaction between EU-level and national policy-making in the unemployment politics field, and determining the nature of channels of political influence that exist between European institutions and national policy domains in the field (relationship between transnational, national and regional levels of top-down political authority). On the other, we examine to what extent there are new political opportunities for the bottom-up empowerment of citizens' organizations that represent the interests of the unemployed (including the unemployed themselves), as a consequence of the emergence of the European Union as an actor in the field. The aim here is to assess to what extent these related developments constitute a new emergent basis for a social and civil dialogue that is capable of re-enfranchising the excluded and marginalized unemployed.

Description of work/methodology

Interviews (15 to 20) will be conducted with key policy actors at the EU transnational level who have been involved in the attempts to co-ordinate national policies (e.g. European Employment Strategy, European Social Fund). In order to give these interviews a prognostic quality, the Delphi technique will be translated into a semi-structured interview schedule. In addition, we will interview a number of civil society actors (15-20) such as transnational platforms and organizations working in the field of unemployment and social exclusion at the EU level. Finally, national level actors will be questioned to investigate their prognoses on the impacts and outcomes of EU co-ordination and integration within the framework of the national level study.

Deliverables

Main deliverables include:

- report on the policy deliberation at the EU level
- scientific article presenting in a summary fashion the analysis of public campaigning and policy deliberation at the EU level
- practical workshop

Other deliverable regarding the EU level will be drawn from the European dimension in WP1 and WP2.

Expected results

This part of the study should shed light on the multi-level governance of unemployment and the power balance between the levels. Confronting it to the other parts, we should be able to show to what extent power is located in the national core policy elite relative to transnational elites and institutions (e.g. European Commission and Parliament) We expect to gain insight into what the key transnational policy actors in the field believe will be the outcome of the recent moves toward greater co-ordination of employment (a) at the institutional level and (b) in their potential consequences for the unemployed. The interviews conducted at the EU level will give a grounding and validation to the findings of the international comparison of claim-making data, as well as have a prognostic orientation that will provide valuable information on the potential future development of the field. We also expect to provide a better understanding of the political mobilization of unemployed at the EU level.

Workpackage description: WP4 – Organization and activities of unemployed

Objectives

This workpackage focuses on the unemployed themselves, aiming at assessing the position of unemployed within national policy domains (collective mobilization, participation in processes of policy deliberation). The main objective is to provide a better understanding of their organizational structure (degree and forms of organization) and of their political mobilization as a social movement or an interest group. We examine to what extent the unemployed are capable to organize as a collective actor to fight unemployment, and to what extent it succeeds in doing so, both at the national and at the EU level. We aim to shed light on the ways the unemployed are organized and what is their position within the national policy domain, as well as on how pro-welfare movements, movements of unemployed, and their allies attempt to target (a) the political elites, (b) potential allies, and (c) public constituencies.

Description of work/methodology

Two principal tasks will be accomplished. On the one hand, we will reconstruct a map of the organizational structure of unemployed, including the network of alliances of these organizations. On the other hand, we will examine the activities carried by groups of unemployed, both in terms of collective mobilization and participation in processes of policy deliberation. The political claims analysis will provide a good basis for this kind of analysis as it includes public claims by the unemployed, but these data must be complemented with information on less visible forms of action such as lobbying and direct contacts with state representatives and agencies. Semi-structured interviews with organizations of unemployed will be used to grasp the action side of the movement.

Deliverables

Main deliverables include:

- report on the organization and activities of unemployed
- scientific article presenting in a summary fashion the comparative analysis of political mobilization by the unemployed

Expected results

Given the lack of scientific knowledge on this aspect, we expect to provide a better understanding of unemployed as a collective political actor. To have a picture of the strength of the 'movement of the unemployed' is an important objective in itself. Most importantly, however, it is important insofar as it allows us to see to what extent movement organization is conducive to movement mobilization. Furthermore, by linking the political mobilization of unemployed to the national styles of policy deliberation, we can offer relevant insights into the forms and extent of dialogue between policy-makers and a socially excluded group.

Workpackage description: WP5 – Exploitation and dissemination

Objectives

This workpackage is devoted to the exploitation of the proposed research and the dissemination of its results. The principal aim is to assure an adequate valorization of the research since the very beginning and throughout the lifetime of the project. In addition, we hope to be able to set up a scientific network that will last after the end of the project. By making the database on public claims available to other researchers at the end of the project, we also aim to make the exploitation of the data collected possible beyond the specific use made in our study.

Description of work/methodology

Several measures for the valorization of the research and for the exploitation and dissemination of results are envisaged. First of all, we shall set up a web page where we will put all relevant information on the project, including summaries of findings and the database on public claims at the end of the project. This web site will be updated regularly. In addition, we shall contact interested milieus – both scientific and practical/policy – when the research starts and at regular intervals during the lifetime of the research (e.g. every year). We also plan to involve the media to facilitate spreading our findings to the large public. In particular, we shall have newspapers in each country publish a number of articles regarding the project, with a strong accent put on the practical aspects and policy implications of our study. The organization of scientific and practical workshops as well as the closing conference can be considered as being part of this workpackage.

Deliverables

Main deliverables include:

- web site on the research project
- information through the media (e.g. newspaper articles)
- closing conference (concomitant with delivery of final report)
- final report in the form of a book-length manuscript including all the WPs

The database on public claims will be made available to the scientific community after the end of the project.

Expected results

By devoting a specific workpackage to the exploitation and dissemination of the proposed research, we expect information on the project to be readily available since the beginning. This should strengthen the impact of our research both on the scientific community and among the interested milieus (unemployed and civil society organization, policy actors, and so forth). Another expected result is the creation of a network of researchers working on the same topic. Specifically, our approach may create a convergence between two strands that are usually separate within the academic world: social movements and collective action theorists, on the one hand, and students of policy formulation and outcomes, on the other.

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