

Abstract for stream 8.2.

### **Social assistance governance in Europe: a bottom-up perspective**

In the last decades welfare policies in Europe underwent relevant changes affecting in particular two dimensions: a) the territorial organisation; b) the number of actors involved not only in managing and implementing, but also in regulating specific measures. The joint effect of both changes could be labelled as the “*subsidiarisation of social policies*”. The concept of subsidiarity captures well the synergies of the two processes of change, because it points to increasingly complex multi-level governance solutions to social policy reform needs.

In this paper we will address these changes considering social assistance as our main focus and trying to answer two questions:

- 1) Are the subsidiarisation trends homogenous both in terms of dynamics and outcome?
- 2) What are the main similarities and differences across the different countries?

In answering these questions, we will focus on the outcome of the subsidiarisation process and in particular on how the emerging governance arrangements influence the coping strategies of specific welfare users.

Triangulating different methods, the main being the use of “vignettes”, i.e. typical cases submitted to street-level bureaucrats to acknowledge coping strategies in policy networks, we will make use of data collected within in the *Rescaling* project. *Rescaling* is an international research project carried in 8 European countries: Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Poland.

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