

SOWELL

Social dialogue in welfare services



Employment relations, labour market and social actors
in the care services

Overview of the project and work packages

Stefano Neri

Department of Social and Political Sciences

University of Milan

Project financed by the European Commission

DG Employment, Social Inclusion & Affairs

Agreement number no. VS/2020/0242



The project

Object: employment relations, working conditions and social partners' strategies in the care services, concentrating on:

- Early Childhood Educational and Care (ECEC) services for children aged 0-5
- Social and health services for elderly people (Long-term Care, LTC)

These services are

- at the core of EU social investment strategy and of many proposals of welfare reforms
- labour intensive (centrality of labour issues)

The context: transformations in care services

Over the past decades, care services have been affected by relevant changes, with effects on providers, workforce as well as working conditions and employment relations

In many European countries

- increasing demand for care services
- increasing difficulties in providing care services, under austerity conditions

As a result

- 1) more intense trend to service privatisation and marketisation
- 2) pressure on employment relations and working conditions

The quadrilemma in care services

In the care sector, 4 different pressures need to be balanced:

- 1) Public budget constraints
- 2) Job quality
- 3) Service coverage
- 4) Quality of services

How did European countries manage these pressures?

Managing the quadrilemma

Four solutions in care provision, represented on a continuum

- 1) «Hard» privatisation = focus on budget constraint, at the detriment of pay and working conditions; heterogenous quality of service
- 2) «soft» privatisation = focus on public budgets and expansion of service coverage, at the detriment of pay and working conditions as well as of service quality
- 3) Care provision «soft» expansion = «muddling through» strategy, trying to cope with all priorities; difficult balance between (limited) expansion of service coverage and medium level working conditions and job quality
- 4) Care provision integration = focus on job quality and quality of care, with less attention to public budget; extended service coverage; fair pay and working conditions

Analysing the role of employment relations and social dialogue in care services (1)

Literature identified many variables, able to explain country choices in managing the quadrilemma (and therefore in care provision), such as: the role of politics; policy legacy; path dependency: structure and performance of the country's economy; the role of EU institutions...

However: we are interested in **analysing the role of employment relations and social dialogue institutions** in tackling the pressures described in the quadrilemma

playing as «mediating variables», in order to favour some outcomes in care provision instead of others

Analysing the role of employment relations and social dialogue in care services (2)

As to employment relations, the project will provide

1) an analysis of the structure and main features of the employment relations and social dialogue institutions, at local, national and EU level

2) a reconstruction of the strategies and policies carried out by trade unions and employer associations, at different levels.

This will include an analysis of the role played by the state, as both employer and third party in negotiations

Employment relations, social dialogue institutions and models of care provision

The aim is to understand how social partners and social dialogue institutions

- deal with trends to deregulation in labour market and employment relations
- manage and (possibly) prevent the risks of worsening pay and working conditions

HP: the stronger the social dialogue, the more likely there will be a shift from «hard privatisation» to «soft expansion» in care provision or to care provision integration

Country selection

Seven countries were selected in order to account for different

- models of employment relations (industrial relation regimes)
- models of welfare systems
- levels of care provision and investment in child care and LTC services

Selected countries are: Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Slovakia

Work packages and deliverables

WP1 The labour market in the care services at national level

Months 1-9 → rescheduled: September 2020 - May 2021

Partners involved: UMIL, UAB, CELSI, FAOS, UNI BREMEN, UVA

Deliverables:

- part 1 of the country report by April 2021 (UMIL, UAB, CELSI, FAOS, UVA, UNI BREMEN);
- part 1 of the comparative report by May 2021 (UMIL)

WP2 The employment relations in the care services at the national level

Months 1-9 → rescheduled: September 2020 - May 2021

Partners involved: UMIL, UAB, CELSI, FAOS, UNI BREMEN, UVA

Deliverables:

- part 2 of the country report by April 2021
- part 2 of the comparative report by May 2021 (UMIL)

Work packages and deliverables

WP4 The European arena of care services: social dialogue, actors and initiatives

Months 1-18 → rescheduled: September 2020 – March 2022

Partners involved: UMIL, EPSU, FESE

Deliverable:

- European-level report by March 2022 (UMIL)

Work packages and deliverables

WP3 **The case study analysis**

- Months 9-18 → rescheduled: June 2021 – March 2022
- Partners involved: UMIL, UAB, CELSI, FAOS, UNI BREMEN, UVA

Objective: analysis of two cross-country comparable case studies of local authorities responsible for the provision of care services (ECEC and LTC services), within each country of reference.

For each case study, the partners will analyse:

- 1) the features of the local care service labour markets (workforce composition, nature of providers, working conditions and labour regulations)
- 2) the characteristics and the role of actors involved in employment relations and social dialogue at local level
- 3) the strategies adopted by social partners to ensure fair pay and working conditions

Deliverables:

- part 3 of the country report by February 2022
- part 3 of the comparative report by March 2022 (UMIL)

Work packages and deliverables

WP5 **Dissemination**

Months 19-24 → rescheduled: April 2022 – September 2022

Partners involved: UMIL, UAB, CELSI, FAOS, UNI BREMEN, UVA, FAOS, EPSU, FESE

Objective: to disseminate the results of the previous WPs at both European (EPSU, FESE) and national level (UMIL, UAB, CELSI, FAOS, UNI-BREMEN, UVA).

Deliverables:

- Project website (UMIL)
- A policy brief and an executive summary for each country, in each country's language
- A national workshop organised by each partner country
- A policy brief and an executive summary focused on the result of the WP4 at the European level (EPSU and FESE)
- Final conference