

31st Annual Conference of the International Working Party on Labour Market Segmentation (IWPLMS), 14th to 17th July 2010. Valencia (Spain)

NATIONAL MODELS OF EMPLOYMENT, AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Abstract

The activation of employment services in Spain: Experiences of diffuse implementation in the third sector

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The activation policies, which are part of the current flexicurity strategy, constitute one of the branches of the social governance reforms that started in the 80's. Specifically, the administrative reforms related to new ways of struggle against unemployment have been considered as a process of activation of employment services and it has been usually called "modernization". In this way, the activation of subjects/unemployed is necessarily preceded by the transformations of the composition of the 'employment actors' and the interrelations among them. As an example of this new circumstance, in the realm of social exclusion, the implementation of employment policies has been massively transferred to non-profits organisations.

This administrative reform has been based on theoretical tools such as New Public Management (NPM), Management by Objectives (MBO) or contractualism, which entail semantic and political changes that operate in the frameworks of action and civic relation between the different actors in charge of the management of employment and the individual/citizen.

The activation of organisms in order to activate subjects represents an activating chain that implies important transformations in the relationships between employment advisor and unemployed/citizen. The different roles traditionally attributed to both are replaced by mobile positions, presumably positions that are more flexible and adjustable to the needs of both, worker and market, simultaneously and paradoxically.

Through a qualitative methodological approach, this paper focuses on the discourses around the implementation processes of activation policies by non-profit organizations in Spain. It aims to throw light on new dynamics of negotiation and redefinition of the roles of the participants in the processes.

Key words: activation, employment programs, unemployed, non-profits organisations, groups at risk of social exclusion.