**Activation and self-responsibility: new challenges for European social citizenship**

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The paper analysis how activation paradigm has been interpreted in some European welfare reforms, influencing, as a consequence, the definition of social citizenship. By using the case of active ageing as a bed-test, five paths of change are presented, those of Finland, United Kingdom, France, Italy and Poland, examining how the principle of activation has been put into practice. Activation paradigm is centered on the link between welfare and labour policies, where paid employment is a requirement for having access to welfare services and benefits. In this perspective, holding longer individuals at work, is intended above all a contribute to safeguard the financial sustainability of public social security systems, but also to the quality of citizens life and well-being. But under what conditions similar goals are achievable? This is the main question the paper try to answer to, especially analyzing the role of training in favoring older workers activation. This latter is linked to the concepts of self-responsibility and social citizenship emerging from each reform, especially investigating the nexus between work and welfare. Two theoretical approaches to social citizenship characterizing modern societies (the asset-based approach and of the capabilities-based approach) are used to interpret the different ways that European nation states have interpreted social citizenship. This kind of analysis also allows a deep reflection on the link between citizenship and labour market participation, especially concerning the last stage of professional life.

The role of institutional context is particularly underlined and analyzed in a critical way. If the welfare state wants to play an empowering action to build an active social citizenship, it must ensure a context that allows actors to take responsibility for their activation, in order to play their role of social citizens. Which means, to act first on training and employment opportunities, labour market regulation and the transition to retirement. However, lifelong learning, inserted as the keystone in the active welfare system, is often undermined by inequalities that are handed down and accumulate in key intergenerational training and finally make social citizenship a resource unequally distributed and accessible, without institutional intervention. These considerations allow to highlight some inconsistencies of activation paradigm and the need for a conceptual approach reflecting the complexity of the link among labour, welfare, citizenship.