

Guarantee or empty promise

Institutional analysis to explain differences the
Youth Guarantee implementation plans of
Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands



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Preface

“Without struggle, there can be no progress” (Frederick Douglass, 1857). The evening before writing this preface I read the book ‘Hardnekkig Wantrouwen (for stubborn mourning) by Quispel. This book discusses the relationship between black and white in the US, by telling several personal stories. The specific story I read was of Frederick Douglass, born as a slave in Maryland. After learning to read, he escaped and became one of the most important advocates of abolition of slavery. Moreover, with his biography about slave life he is considered one of the most influential writers of American history. The quote relates in multiple manners to my thesis and its writing process.

This quote comes from a speech that relates back to a reform, about the power relations between races and the difficulty to change it. This thesis describes a reform regarding youth unemployment. The main commonality is that they were hard to accomplish. It also refers to my thesis process in a less literal manner. Writing this thesis was a struggle most of the time. Even though there were moments everything seemed to fall into place, mostly I felt stuck. Most of the time it felt like. The end product is in front of you.

I have to thank several people, who have helped me during this process. Most importantly my interviewees, without your time and information, this thesis would not be complete. Secondly, Mr. Brandsen my supervisor for his feedback and patience. Lastly, to my friends and family who were willing to read parts of my thesis, giving me valuable feedback. Especially, Mariëlle for your substantive suggestions and our endless discussions about our thesis’s. Karin for helping me to improve my English and Pien for making the schedules and charts look a lot better.

Ester Wassink, July 29, 2015.

List of abbreviations

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DSP	Department of Social Policy
EC	European Commission
EMCO	Employment Committee
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization.
INTREO	the new integrated employment and support service
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MS	Member State
MP	Member of Parliament
NEAP	National employment action plan
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
PA	Public Administration
PEX	Prediction of Exit Date
PPP	Personal Progression Plan
PTW	Pathway to Work
SOP	Standard Operation Procedure
TE	Employment Office
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
YG	Youth Guarantee

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Summary

“The institutional determinants: policy inheritance, politics and problem cannot declare the degree in which an ‘obligatory’ imported policy is adapted on their own, although there was proof found they influenced the adaptation process.”

International organizations like the European Union (EU) sometimes recommend that policies are transferred from one Member State (MS) to another. However, this ‘enforced’ method of policy transfer is not always successful. This study aimed to create insight, in the ‘black governance box’ of the MS, when such a recommendation is endorsed by the European Commission (EC). The national implementation of the Youth Guarantee (YG) in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands were used to test hypotheses about the influence of institutional factors. Although in case of the YG the MS were obliged to submit a national implementation plan, they had discretionary freedom for its implementation.

The YG was designed to decrease youth unemployment and youth not in education, employment or training. However Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands already had policies to address this problem. EU policies get easier adopted when they are close to the already existing policies. Therefore, there was analyzed whether a paradigm shift of the pre-existing policies was necessary. If this was the case there was concluded that it was more likely for the ‘imported policy’ to be used more adapted. Ireland and German Länder with high unemployment/NEET rates verified this argument, while the Netherlands and the other German Länder falsified it.

The second researched institutional determinant is politics. There was established whether the discourse in politics was positive or negative towards the YG. If the dominant discourse was concluded positive, there was expected that the ‘imported’ policy implemented more literally than when the dominant discourse was negative. Ireland and the Netherlands both verified this hypothesis. In contrast the Germany case rejected the hypothesis.

If the ‘problem’ that the ‘imported’ policy was meant to address was conceived as a crisis the formulated hypothesis predicted that the ‘imported’ policy was more adapted. Ireland and the Netherlands both verified the hypothesis. However, to analysis did not lead to a decision about whether youth unemployment was conceived as a crisis in Germany. Therefore, this hypothesis was questioned but not falsified by the German case.

1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) wants to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy of the world (Council of EU, 2000, p.2). The Europe 2020 strategy establishes how the EU wants to achieve this goal. One of the targets included, is that in 2020 an employment rate of 75% for 20-65 year olds should be achieved. With the current development of employment rates, this is not feasible (Europa-nu, 2015A). In consequence, youth unemployment is high positioned on the political agenda of the EU (EFILWC, 2012, p.3).

The absolute rates of youth unemployment vary more than adult unemployment rates. Generally they increase more in times of recession and recover more rapidly in times of economic prosperity (O'Higgins, 1997). The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions identified several causes for this phenomenon. Most employed youth are concentrated in sectors that are typically more sensitive to the business cycle, for example building. Additionally, often they have part-time jobs and temporary contracts. What is more, a lot of companies use the last in first out principle. Because youth mostly have shorter tenure of office than older employees, they are the first to be resigned (EFILWC, 2012).

To increase employment of youth, various EU tops and conferences were organized. A variety of projects and plans were introduced. One of them is the Youth Guarantee (YG), which was endorsed in 2013. The YG entails insurance for everyone under 25 to get a good quality offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. This offer can vary from a job to an apprenticeship, traineeship or continuation of education. This approach was successful in Finland, where 83.5% of young job seekers received a offer within 3 months of registering as unemployed (EC, 2014A). For the implementation of the YG the Finnish government introduced special services for youth, for example special coaches whom make individual action plans with registered youth to help the them figure out their next steps. (Finland, 2013A).

The Irish government reacted positively on the endorsement of the YG. Since 2007 the unemployment rates had more than tripled. The government saw in the YG a policy alternative that had the potential to battle this increasing rate. Germany's government was quite enthusiastic about the YG as well, but viewed it as an opportunity for MS with high unemployment rates. A category of MS to which Germany does not belong. Contrasting, the

Dutch government reacted reluctantly on the EU endorsement of the YG. Nevertheless, like the other MS it was obliged to develop a national implementation plan. In the designing phase of the national implementation plans the Finnish interpretation of the YG was presented as an example by the European Commission (EC, 2014A).

The Irish approach towards the YG is described in Pathways to Work (PTW) (2012). Similar to Finland, young NEETs get assigned a case worker with whom they draft a Personal Progression Plan (PPP). Furthermore, to achieve the implementation of the YG, Ireland introduced several new measures (DSP, 2012). Germany and the Netherlands approached the implementation of the YG differently, with a focus on risk groups, for example youth with an immigration background or youth with a disability (BMAS, 2014; Rijksoverheid, 2013).

1.1. Problem statement

The EU recommendation of the YG was differently interpreted by the MS (DSP, 2012; BMAS, 2014; Rijksoverheid, 2013). They all were provided with the Finnish example but used it in varying manners. For the implementation of the YG reforms were necessary (EC, 2014A). Within MS there are constraints and facilitators for a proposed reform (Bannink & Resodihardjo, 2006). These constraints and facilitators are factors in explaining the different approaches towards the implementation of the YG. How these factors influenced the designing of the YG in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands is researched with the following problem statement:

Goal statement: Researching which factors influenced the implementation of the YG in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands in order to explain the differences in the national implementation plans.

Central question: Which factors influenced the implementation of the YG in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands and how?

1. What entails the European YG and how is its implementation designed in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands?
2. Which theories could explain the differences in the national implementation plans of Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands?
3. Which method of policy transfer was applied by Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands when they designed their national implementation plans?

4. In which way influenced the institutional determinants: policy inheritance, politics and problem the designing of the national YG in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands?

1.2. Theories

Modern welfare states have a lot of similar problems. Sometimes policy makers use ideas or problems from another country, and apply it in their own (Rose,1991). This process which is called policy transfer can be enforced by an international organization like the EU. The Finnish YG is an example of this phenomenon. However, in case of the YG the MS had discretionary freedom to determine how they implemented the YG. Rose (1991) distinguished several methods of policy transfer, which are used to clarify the differences in the implementation plans. Easton (1965) described government as an intervening variable which consists of institutions. Factors within institutions can either be a constraint or facilitator for policies (Bannink and Resodiharjdo, 2006). Based on insights of previous research three possible determinants were identified: policy inheritance, politics and problem. Existing policies heavily determine policy decisions of the future. Börzel (2002) stated that if EU policy is close to the existing policy arrangements in a MS, it is likelier to be accepted. The second determinant politics was analyzed with the by Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) identified factors that influence an actor's position towards a proposed reform. Furthermore, there was researched whether an actor fitted the description of an entrepreneur of Mintrom and Norman (2009). If the last determinant problem was received as a crisis it created a positive incentive towards change (Boin and 't Hart, 2001).

1.3. Methods

During the research period, there was chosen for a comparative case-study of the implementation of the YG of Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands. Germany and the Netherlands had a more or less similar approach, while the Irish approach was completely different. In the first phase of the study the national implementation plans of the YG and the method of policy transfer applied, were compared. In the second phase there was looked at the factors that (possibly) influenced the designing of the national implementation plans. In the conclusion there is discussed whether these factors declared the applied methods of policy transfer. To conduct this study, there was chosen for a combination of qualitative research methods: literature study and interviews.

1.4. Social relevance

Youth who have been unemployed for long period, have a high probability to get socially excluded or get involved in criminality. Moreover, they get an experience gap, which makes it harder for them to get employed as they become older (EFLIWC, 2012).

One of the programmes set up to reduce youth unemployment is the YG. Studying which factors have influence on the designing of the national implementation plans is socially relevant because as Rose (1973) states when policy fails great costs are involved. Countries with similar problems collaborate, for example by coming together to discuss policy alternatives. These discussions provide an opportunity to learn from each other (Rose, 1973). The EC recommendation to implement the YG is such an opportunity. Trying to establish if institutional determinants influence the possible reluctance of countries to use such a blue print, is relevant because this can be taken into account for future cases and thereby could prevent certain costs for society.

1.5. Scientific relevance

Comparative cross-country policy analysis is especially valuable for science because it can provide insights into the factors that possibly lead failure or success of a policy. Policies are often nationwide implemented thus it makes differences clearer (Rose, 1973). Furthermore, this research has the potential to create new insights because the cases were selected based on Ragin's (1987) method of indifference. Two cases where the phenomenon was similar with different context were chosen (Germany and the Netherlands), and one case where the phenomenon was different (Ireland). Therefore, this thesis could verify and falsify hypothesis about factors. In the end the three formulated hypotheses were rejected. However, the thesis provided insight into the phenomenon.

1.6. Outline

In chapter 2, the general EU social and employment policies are outlined. Furthermore, the YG is discussed in more detail. In chapter 3, the theoretical context of this research is expounded. An elaboration and justification of used methods is found in chapter 4, followed by the operationalization of the theories. Chapter 5 consists of the descriptions of the national implementation plans, which are compared to the Finnish YG. Chapter 6 analyses the institutional determinants. Chapter 7 discusses the conclusion made based on the analysis.

2. Policy framework

The YG is one project of the EU to battle youth unemployment. To fully understand the YG it needs to be placed in its context. Therefore, section 2.1 gives general overview of European employment and social policy. A special subsection is dedicated to EU youth unemployment programmes. Because the YG was based on a Finnish initiative, the original Finnish project is discussed in section 2.2. In section 2.3. the EU recommendation of the YG is outlined

2.1. European employment and social policy

MS have the best means to achieve goals relating to unemployment. To support MS and create more harmony between national policies, the European Commission (EC) gives recommendations to the MS (Europa-nu, 2015C). Hence, the EU MS collaborate in the area of employment. Thereby, they focus on stimulating participation of risk groups, for instance youth, in the labour market. Within the scope of the Lisbon strategy there was decided that in 2005, 67% of the citizens between 15-64 should have a job. In 2006 an percentage of 63.8% was achieved. The Lisbon strategy stated that in 2010, the employment rate of citizens between 15-64 should be 70%. Like many of the other goals set out in the Lisbon strategy, in 2009 it became clear that this goal would not be achieved. Therefore, in 2010 the goals were revised in the Europe 2020 strategy. The Europe 2020 strategy determined that Europe has to become a strong and sustainable economy, through focusing on modernization of employment; education, research and innovation, social inclusion and battling poverty; and climate and energy. With relation to employment the following goals should be reached in 2020: employment for 75% of the 20-65 year olds; decrease the citizens living in poverty with 20 million; and at least 40% of 30-34 year olds should be educated at advanced level (Europa-nu, 2015A).

Because in the EU decisions about employment are made through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) (further explained in section 3.1.1), MS have a considerable amount of discretionary freedom. To achieve a 75% employment rate for 20-64 year olds in 2020 (Europa-nu, 2015A), EC Commissioner for employment, social affairs and mobility of labour: Marianne Thyssen formulated the following priorities: supporting the creation of jobs and entrepreneurship, battling moonlighting and segmentation of the labour market, decreasing the dependence of tax revenues of income tax, modernizing social security systems, including the superannuation schemes and, investing in the enhancement of youth's and long-term unemployed's skills (Europa-nu, 2015A).

2.1.1. Youth unemployment policies

As already mentioned above the EU focuses on specific groups, such as youth (Europa-nu, 2015A). A fifth of the EU citizens is aged between 15-29. Although youth get a lot of chances within the EU, they have significant problems with education and finding a job. At the moment the average youth unemployment rate is 22% (Europa-nu, 2015A)

To decrease this rate, a part of the Europe 2020 strategy is dedicated to youth: ‘Youth on the move’(Europa-nu, 2015B). Youth on the move’ is a “*framework agenda announcing new key actions, reinforcing existing activities and ensuring the implementation of other activities at EU and national levels*”(EC, 2010, p.4). Youth on the move has four main targets. Firstly, the creation of lifelong learning systems, to extend and broaden learning opportunities for youth, including supporting the acquisition of skills through non-formal education activities. This part of the programme stimulates MS to tackle the high rates of early school leavers, the validation of non-formal and informal learning activities and, the promotion of apprenticeship-type vocational training and high quality traineeships. Secondly, stimulating a raise in the percentage of the youth participating in higher education or equivalents. Therefore a benchmark of university performance should be introduced as well as an advancement of academic exchanges and cooperation with universities of other continents. Thirdly, a revision of Europe’s programmes and initiatives for learning mobility, which should be expanded and linked up with national and regional resources. In 2020 all young European citizens should have the possibility to spend a part of their education abroad. To achieve this target a special mobility council was set up, accompanied with a mobility scoreboard to measure MS’ progress and a website about the opportunities. Lastly, the EU should improve the employment situation of young people, which should be a priority at national levels as well. This is promoted by creating a European Vacancy monitor, supporting young entrepreneurs and pushing for the acceptance of the YG (EC, 2010, p.4-5). This YG is based on a successful Finnish experience (EC, 2010, p.4-5), which will be elaborated in the next section.

2.2. The Finnish blue print

After the economic recession in 2008, the youth unemployment rate of Finland was in an upwards trend (Finland, 2013A). Finnish youth had trouble finding a job due to rapid economic fluctuations, high competence requirements and intensifying competition. Notwithstanding because of the ageing population the work-force diminishes, which makes permanent commitment of youth to working life more important than ever. However, the number of jobseekers under 25 grew in 2009 with 56% compared to the previous year. Although in 2010

and 2011 the youth unemployment rate decreased, it stayed significantly higher than before the economic crisis (Finland, 2013A).

After the elections in 2011, the new Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen presented a Government Programme wherein the prevention of social exclusion was prioritized. Because long term unemployment on a young age often leads to social exclusion (Finland, 2013A, p.3), the Finnish government wanted to reach an youth employment rate of 72% in 2015. In accordance, the YG was introduced; *“Each young person under 25 and recently graduated people under 30 will be offered a job, on-the-job training a study place, or a period in a workshop or rehabilitation within three months of becoming unemployed”* (Finland, 2013A, p.55). Furthermore, *“Every school-leaver will be guaranteed a place in upper secondary school, in vocational educational and training, in apprenticeship training, in a youth workshop or rehabilitation activities”*(Finland, 2013A, p.55). A work group was appointed to assess the necessary changes for the implementation of this guarantee, for which the government allocated 60 million. The YG was endorsed at the start of 2013 (Finland, 2013A).

Although they partially overlap, the implementation plan identified three target groups (Finland, 2013A, p.9):

- Youth who does not get a place of study in general or vocational upper secondary education
- Youth who registers as an unemployed jobseeker with a TE (Employment and Economic Development) office
- Youth who is currently not involved in any activities or are otherwise in need of support.

This technical division was created to construct sets of measures for each target group. Nevertheless the measures were constructed to support each other (Finland, 2013A).

Due to the shortage of entry positions in vocational education and strict student admission criteria, groups of young Fins miss the boat. In consequence, more places in vocational level education had to be realised. Moreover, the admission criteria for initial vocational education were revised to prioritize basic education graduation. In addition, a subsidy scheme for employers was set up to send apprentices to basic training. Because apprenticeship training was not regarded adequate as solely form of education, although there is recognized that it has positive effects. What is more, the responsibility of municipalities to provide guidance and counselling in later phases of basic education is pointed out. Special attention should be paid to young immigrants, because they are overrepresented in these target

groups. Therefore, special tuition compensated language courses were set up (Finland, 2013A).

Youth who registers as a unemployed at a TE office, draw up an employment plan together with the staff. A draft of this plan must be prepared two weeks after registering. The jobseeker is obliged to participate in this process and has to follow up the suggestions of the employment services. The policy paper distinguishes two groups of registered youth: young people with and without a vocational qualification. Young people without a vocational qualification are supported to identify their own career path and to apply for education or training. Regional centres were made responsible for creating cooperation networks which provide additional guidance services. For first time job seekers special training courses, such as career training, job search training and vocational rehabilitation training, were set up. Moreover work trials were introduced, so youngster can try out various professions for a fixed term. During this period, they get the opportunity to acquire work experience and obtain information about working life. For the youth with a vocational qualification extra resources were made available to increase their job seeking skills. By providing employers who hire youngsters with training, the placement of young people in the labour market is promoted. What is more job coaches should create relations between possible employers and unemployed youth (Finland, 2013A).

These measures are enforced by a collaboration of multiple public and private sector actors. The Department of Employment and Economy coordinates the provided services. The other departments are also involved, as well as educational institutions, health care institutions and communities. Local centres and municipalities have set up various projects to implement the YG. Ideas and best practices are shared during stakeholders meetings (Finland, 2013B).

Three months after the implementation of YG 71% of the young people aged under 25 found a job as well as 62.4% of recent graduates aged 25-29 (Finland, 2013B). The youth unemployment rate remained stable (EC, 2014D). However, in most MS this rate had been on the rise since the economic crisis (EUROSTAT, 2015). Therefore, Finland scored relatively good. Hence, the EC was very enthusiastic about this programme and created an initiative to implement it in all MS (EC, 2015) .

2.3. The YG

In 2012 the EC made a proposal for the endorsement of the YG. The recommendation of the EC was formally adopted by the European Council on April 22, 2013 and endorsed by the EC

in June 2013 (EC, 2014B). According to this recommendation, EU MS should “*ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education*” (DSP, 2013, p.1). A good quality offer improves a youngsters prospects in education and labour markets, which helps them to integrate better into the labour force (Germany, 2014). The main objective of the YG is an easier transition from school to work. It is expected to help reducing the Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) rates (EC, 2014B). A diagram of the YG can be viewed in figure 1.

Although the EC has little means of enforcement because the YG is only a recommendation, the MS were obliged to submit a national implementation plan. This implementation plan had to entail a description of policy instruments used to achieve the goals of the YG. The role of the EC is supportive. It has no means of coercion, but can issue policy warnings (EC, 2014D).

2.3.1. The role of the EC

The EC has several means to tempt the MS into following the recommendation of the YG. Firstly, every year the EC assesses national implementation plans in the context of the European Semester (EC, 2015). The European Semester is the yearly cycle of economic policy coordination. In this context, the EC analyses detailed budgetary, macroeconomic and structural reforms plans of the MS and provides them with recommendations for the next 12-18 months. The semester starts when the EC adopts its yearly Growth Survey. This document sets out EU priorities for economic growth and job creation. Simultaneously, the EC publishes its ‘Alert Mechanisms report’, consisting of a scoreboard that identifies MS (policies) that require further analysis. The process starts in October when MS have to submit a draft of their budgetary plans. In November, the EC analyses whether this draft is conform the requirements of the Stability and Growth Pact. During the Spring meeting of the European Council, the overall macroeconomic situations and the EU progress towards the targets of Europe 2020 are discussed. Furthermore, the EC publishes an analytical economic assessment of individual MS regarding their economic situation and reform agendas. In April MS present their revised plans. In May the EC issues tailor-made recommendations, which are adopted by the European Council early July (EC, 2015).

The EC issued the Employment Committee (EMCO) to surveillance the progress of the individual MS in implementing the YG. EMCO established a special working group for

this task. The working group exists of members from Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Malta, Spain and the EC. This working group developed an indicator framework for monitoring the YG. The delivery of the YG in MS is analysed on three levels. Firstly, macroeconomic indicators based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are canvassed. Secondly, direct monitoring of the YG delivery through administrative data. Thirdly, a revision through follow-ups with individuals who received a YG offer. An oversight of the exact indicators can be viewed in Annex 1 (EMCO, 2015).

2.3.2. Funding

Lázlo Andor ex Euro Commissioner of employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion stated "*This Package would help MS to ensure young people's successful transition into work. The costs of not doing so would be catastrophic*" (EC, 2012A). The costs of the implementation of the YG differ per MS. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated the total costs at 21 billion Euros (circa 600 euro per participant). MS have to invest in the implementation of the YG (EMCO, 2015). However, for the implementation of YG related projects public and private actors can apply for funding of the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Employment Initiative (YEI) (EMCO, 2015).

The amount of EU funding for which a YG related project can apply is depend on the supporting measures of the MS, the way the national implementation plan is set up and implemented as well as the NEET- and youth unemployment rates in the MS (EMCO, 2015).

Recapitulating, the MS have a considerable amount of discretionary freedom for implementing employment policies. They collaborate focussing on stimulating participation of risk groups, such as youth. Several measures and projects are put in place to battle youth unemployment, for instance the YG inspired by a 'successful' Finnish policy. The MS were obliged to submit national implementation plans for this YG.

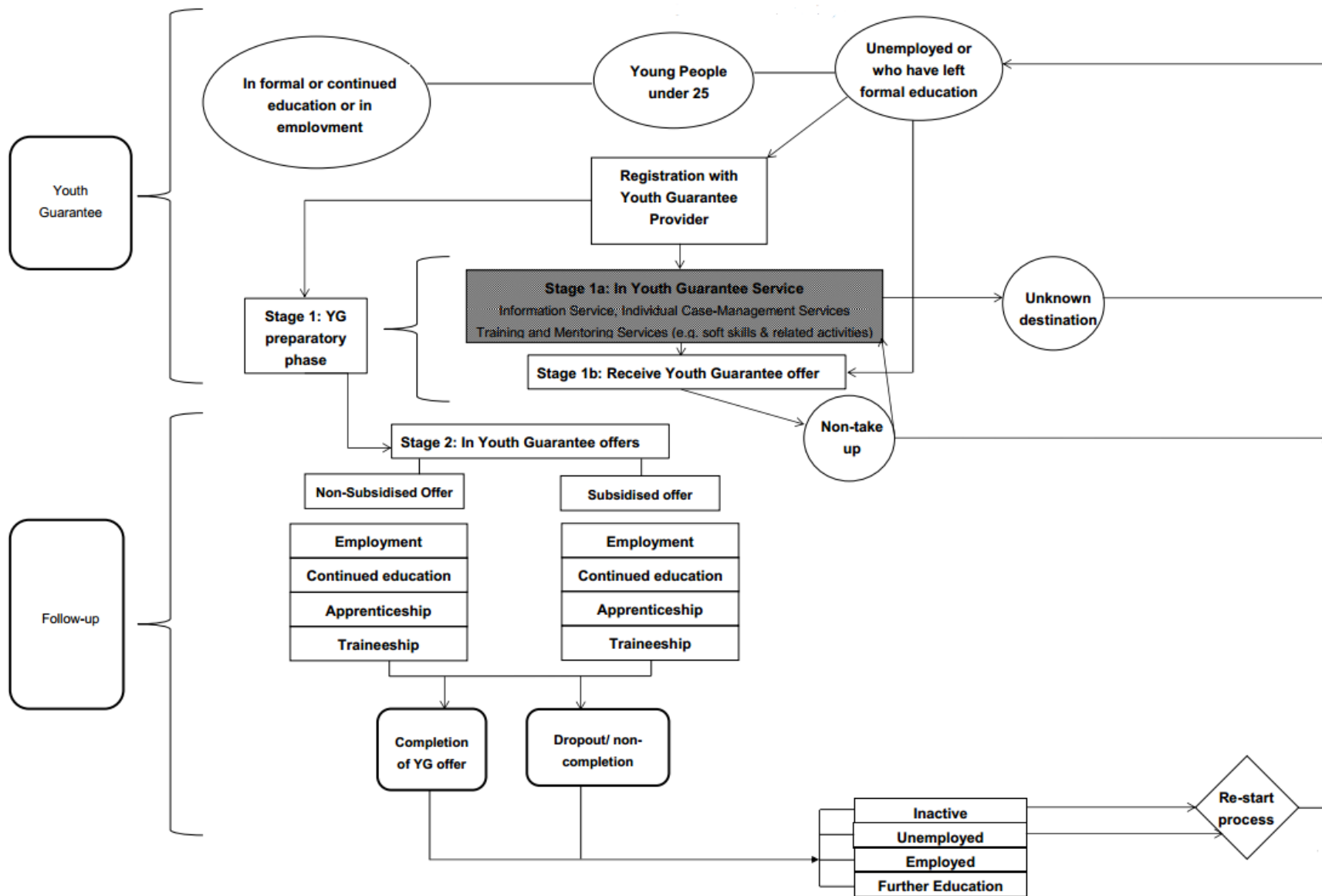


Figure 1: Youth Guarantee pathway diagram (EMCO, 2015, p.14)

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter outlines work of scholars that could declare the miscellaneous implementation plans of the YG in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands. First the policy cycle of policy making is described, followed by an outline of policy making in the EU. In the second section the concept policy transfer is discussed. The third section describes the basics of institutional analysis. In the fourth section the concept reform is discussed. Additionally possible constraints and facilitators of reform are sketched out. The last three sections discuss theories regarding the in this study identified determinants: policy inheritance, politics and problem. A conceptual model based on these concepts, is presented at the end of this chapter.

3.1. Policy analysis

Modern welfare states use policies to solve problems in society. Sometimes (un)successful policies create new problems, for example economic growth caused problems such as environmental pollution. Furthermore, modern welfare states have similar problems (like youth unemployment). Recognized institutional differences between governments may affect policy choices, implementation and outcomes. Notwithstanding, countries regularly draw some kind of inspiration from each other's policies. To understand the outcome of a policy making process it is important to understand the concepts and factors involved in this process (Rose, 1973).

Rose (1973) developed a process approach towards policy making with different stages to consider a policy outcome. These stages must be considered one at a time. They are not static, but occur in a cycle. The sequence of the stages can differ per case. Furthermore, the stages can operate simultaneously. Rose (1973) identifies the following stages in the policy making process:

1. The status quo. To provide a clear image of the policy process it is important to get a clear image of society before the problem was conceived and if there were any signs of action in the area of enquiry.
2. Placing a condition on the agenda of political controversy. Certain conditions (crisis) may change the chance of items to come on the agenda of political controversy.
3. The advancement of demands. For political action to occur it is important that the demands become organized and presented to the government by other actors.
4. The form of government involved in policy making. According to scholars who analysed lobbying, the advancements of group demand is influenced and affected by

the character of the state. The formulation of policy alternatives is dependent on the resources of the countries and the institutional constraints and facilitators present.

5. Policy decision. The choice of a government for a certain policy and the reason why.
6. The implementation of the policies.
7. The output of the policy.
8. Policy evaluation.
9. Feedback on the policy.

Policy-making happens on various government levels. For MS of the EU, decisions are also made on the EU level. Within the EU there are various applied methods of decisions making about policy.

3.1.1. Policy making process in the EU

In the EU there is not one way of policy making. On different policy fields in various policy sectors the policy making process has differing characteristics. Policy processes host different sorts of policy actors that possibly interact with each other based on varying policy making rules and procedures. Within the EU there are three main sets of policy actors: EU institutions, governments of the MS and non-institutional and non-governmental interest groups. During the policy making process each of these (set of) actors have their own role to play. Responsibilities and roles of these actors differ considerably in the various processes. Furthermore, the available channels for these actors differ in complexity, exhaustiveness, degree of formality and structure (Nugent, 2010).

The various policy making procedures (decision-making procedures and circumstances in which they are used) are captured in the various EU treaties. The convention that drew on the constitutional treaty identifies 28 policy making procedures in the EU. Magenette (in Nugent, 2010) identifies four main policy making frameworks, based on the following criteria: the degree of involvement of institutions that are independent of governments, the decision-making rules in the council, and the legal character of decisions. The by Magnette (in Nugent, 2010) identified policy making frameworks are: the community method, intensive transgovernmentalism, OMC and centralized decision-making (Nugent, 2010, p.294-296)

The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, establishes that OMC would be applied for policy making procedures regarding employment (Europa-nu, 2015A). OMC was developed to strengthen

the coordination of broad economic policies of all MS (not Economy Monetary Union members included). Although OMC takes numerous forms, some being more hierarchical or tighter than others, it has several key features. Decisions about broad policy goals and guidelines are made through unanimity by the Council of Ministers. The preciseness of the guidelines and goals differ between policy areas. These goals and guidelines are not coercive or legally binding, but have a voluntary nature. Based on the guidelines and goals, MS design national implementation plans conform the established goals. Regarding the usage of policy instruments and mechanisms, MS have a considerable amount of discretionary freedom. In annual reports, MS report their progress in achieving the goals and meeting the guidelines set by the Council of Ministers. The EC monitors progress through annual reports and encourages MS to not fall behind on meeting the established targets (Nugent, 2010, p. 297-298)

OMC has advantages and disadvantages. Because MS are not legally bound by decisions they potentially do not feel committed to implement them. Although the EC aims to encourage MS to meet the targets, it has no means of punishment. An advantage of this method is that national diversities are respected because policy remains primarily a national responsibility. Thereby, it could tempt MS to commit to orientations and/or actions that they would not accept if the policy instruments were mandatory (Nugent, 2010, p.298).

Bulmer (2007) describes that the EU increases her influence, but it is a two way street. The EU's influence on the MS increases and the MS try to increase their influence on the EU, by aiming to upload their own policies or institutional systems. In contrast, MS sometimes have to implement policy (downloading), which is based on the uploaded policy or institutional system of another MS. When actors try to upload their policies they are the exporting actor in a policy transfer, and when the MS have to download the policies they are the importing actor (Bulmer, 2007). In the case of the YG the Finnish best practice was uploaded by the EC as an example for how to challenge youth unemployment. The other MS had to download this policy. This process of placing ideas or a policy solution from one place to another is called policy transfer (Cariney, 2012) and will be further discussed in the next section.

3.2. Policy transfer

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p.5-6) state that policy-makers seem to be increasingly dependent on policy transfer. Through globalization national public policy making has become vulnerable to global economic pressures, for example by international organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the EU which sometimes enforce policies.

Furthermore, because of technological developments, communication between policy makers has become more apparent, increasing the amount of information and the opportunities for policy makers to look at other policy systems (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000).

Who is involved in a policy transfer affects the transfer itself and to what extent countries have the choice to engage in this process. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p.10) identify nine prime categories of political actors involved in a policy transfer process: political parties, elected officials, pressure groups, policy entrepreneurs, think tanks, supra-national governmental and nongovernmental institutions, civil servants and experts. International organisations engaged in the process could act as an agent of either enforced or voluntary policy transfer. To get insight in the policy transfer it is important to determine the motivations for the transfer, by establishing the level of coerciveness. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p. 13) therefore introduce a continuum, which is shown in figure 2. A distinction between voluntary and enforced policy transfer is not adequate because policy transfer is a complex process, including many cases with voluntary and coercive elements (Marsh & Dolowitz, 2000).

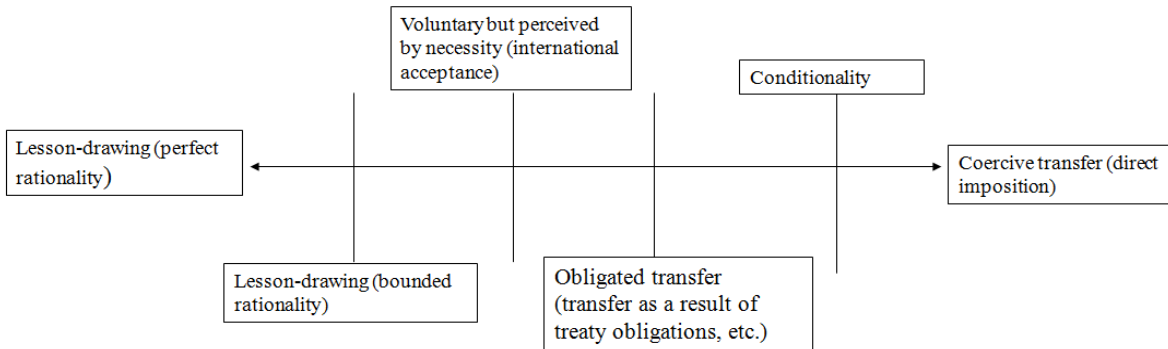


Figure 2: Continuum degree enforcement policy transfer (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p.13)

If a policy transfer is situated at the lesson drawing end of the continuum, the emersion of a problem or the dissatisfaction with the status quo will lead to a voluntary search for ideas to solve the problem, which could lead to policy transfer. Although this search is considered rational, most actors act on limited information. Therefore, often there was acted on bounded rationality instead of perfect rationality. As a policy transfer moves more towards the coercive end of the continuum, governments are more coerced to transfer certain policies, for example because of their obligations as members of international regimes like the EU or in exchange for aid of transnational organizations. However, the governments choose to be part of such organisations or deals, and they have some influence over the adoption of policies. Therefore,

policy transfer in these case is considered a negotiated transfer. Most cases of policy transfer will be situated somewhere along the continuum. Dolowitz and Marsh (2009) state that in times of economic, social and political stability it is more likely for policy transfer to be voluntary. In contrast to times of crisis, when policy transfer is more likely to have some coercive elements (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000).

3.2.1. Methods of policy transfer

There are various methods in which policy transfer can occur. Rose (1991) distinguishes five methods of policy transfer. Firstly, copying: a more or less intact programme enforced in one policy system is transferred to another policy system. This is only possible when a lot of institutional and contextual factors are similar. Therefore, copying is mostly applied within nations. Secondly, emulation: a government tailored an already enforced policy programme of another government to its own domestic circumstances. Thereby, the importing government saw the transferred programme as the best solution for the addressed policy problem.

Thirdly, hybridization: the government created a new policy programme by combining two policy programmes from another/other policy system(s).

Fourthly, synthesis: a government extracted some aspects of one or more exported policy programmes.

By which a new policy was created. Fifthly, inspiration: a government used the rhetoric of a policy programme of another government as stimulus for a new policy (Rose, 1991). These methods of policy transfer are shown in figure 3, with at the bottom step the broadest form of policy transfer, and at the top step the narrowest form of policy transfer.

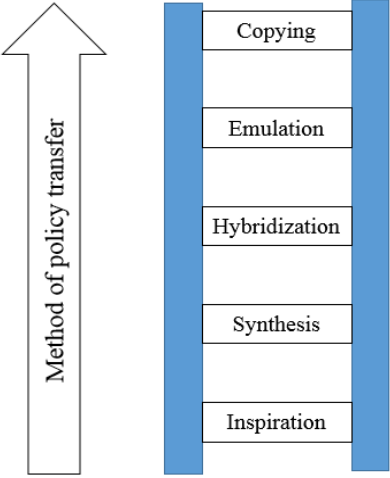


Figure 3: Methods of policy transfer

Although policy transfer is a widely used concept, there is a lot of critique, which is discussed in the next section.

3.2.2. Critique

Scholars use various terms for the process that in this study is identified as policy transfer, for example policy convergence, policy diffusion and lesson-drawing. Although they are all used to describe the same process this could be confusing (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000). James and Lodge (2003) argue that a distinctive definition is necessary for a truthful research. Dolowiz and Marsh (2002) claim that the use of policy transfer as a concept has increased (Dolowitz &

Marsh 2000), but it remains a concept without a generally accepted definition (James and Lodge, 2003). So, the claim that policy transfer is increased is difficult to research. Furthermore, a new concept is only valuable when it offers a new perspective on policy-making, its trends and phenomena, which is not the case for the concept of policy transfer. Moreover, James and Lodge (2003) argue that policy transfer as often defined (Rose, 1991; Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000) is not very different of rational policy making. They state that, decisions by rational policy making are based on “*searching for means to pursue goals in a systematic and comprehensive method, reviewing policy in the light of past experience and any other available information to make adjustments where necessary*”(James and Lodge, 2003, p.181). The concept of policy transfer does not really add something to this definition (James and Lodge, 2003).

When looked in a more empirical manner to the concept policy transfer, James and Lodge (2003) argue that the explanations given by scholars of why policy transfer occurs are conflicting, especially the continuum of Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) because it combines the degrees of rationality with the degree of coerciveness. Through this association a range of explanations for policy transfer is ignored. Policy transfer with bounded rationality could also occur in combination with other forms of coerciveness. Thus, the combination of lesson-drawing with bounded rationality is not necessarily wrong, but not a necessity. However, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) do not take bounded rationality in account at this end of the continuum (James and Lodge, 2003).

Thirdly, it is hard to distinguish what the effects are from policy transfer and their relation to other policy-making processes. Although Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) tried to distinguish factors for (un)successful policy transfer, they give merely a description of the aspects of failed or successful attempts, rather than giving independent variables (James and Lodge, 2003)

Moreover, policy transfer is based on a best practice approach (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000). This could become problematic because best practices could be unique for a certain context. Furthermore there can be problems in identifying best practices. Secondly, it is difficult to identify what one wants to measure. Additionally, it is difficult to determine the actual extent of a policy problem with a policy imported as a best practice (De Vries, 2010).

The concept of policy transfer is not used as an explanatory variable in this thesis, but as a dependent variable. In the case of the YG, the MS were presented with the same blue print. However, the national implementation plans turned out completely different. The concept of policy transfer is used to determine the way in which the cases adapted the blue print. The causes of these differing methods of policy transfer are researched through an institutional analysis.

3.3. Institutional analysis

Easton (1965) describes the government as a black box, whereby government is not a conductor of popular demands but a potentially significant intervening variable. He founded an approach to policy analysis wherein analysing institutions and constitutions (which could be either facilitators or constraints) is favourable to analysing the policy life cycle as a whole (Parsons, 1995). Cortell & Petersen (1999, p.181) describe institutions as “*the formal rules, compliance procedures and standard operation procedures that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the policy*”. Hall takes a broader approach to the concept institutions and defines it as “*the formal and informal rules, procedures and behavioural patterns that structure conduct*” (Hall, 1993). Both of these approaches to institutions are included in this thesis because according to Parsons (1995), the analysis of institutions should go further than the formal institutions and what they are supposed to do. The reality of what they actually do should be incorporated. Thus, the in this study applied institutionalist approach addresses the role of the state and other institutions within the public policy cycle.

The ‘old-institutionalism’ has three major frameworks: rational choice -, sociological- and historical institutionalism. The new institutionalism was developed in reaction to the critique that the distinction between the various institutionalisms was too technical and separately they did not suffice to describe reality. Hence, the new approach combines the various approaches of ‘old’ institutionalism into one approach (Parsons, 1995).

Powell (1991) argues that for institutional analysis to reach its full potential, several improvements needed to be made. Firstly, there was too much focus on the differences between market-driven sectors and institutionalized sectors. In contrast to this differentiation Powell (1991) states that market-driven sectors can only function because of institutional arrangements to insure the reproduction of economic change. Secondly, due to the insight that

practices and structures are loosely coupled with the outcomes, it is argued that institutionalized sectors are ineffective and passive manipulators of symbols rather than substance. Notwithstanding the analysis should focus on why some by rational choice dysfunctional practices and structures are still present. Lastly, individual preferences and choices cannot be seen separately from the historical period in which they are embedded. Although outcomes can be understood in terms of the actors' preferences it is also a product of previous choices shaped by institutional conventions and capabilities

Immergut (1998) describes that 'new' institutionalism differs from the 'old' ones, in the way it looks at the behaviour of actors. Only describing the behaviour of the actors is not sufficient to explain "*all of the phenomena of government*" (Immergut, 1998, p.6). Behaviour should always be understood in terms of its context. Furthermore, 'new' institutionalism states that expressed preferences and 'true' preferences should not be understood as the same thing. Actors in a policy making process have reasons not to specify their 'true interests'. Moreover, Immergut (1998, p.7) states that by combining theories about the status quo and the 'true' preferences of the actors together with the factors that could explain why actors possibly choose not to express their 'true preferences' a valid evaluation of a policy outcomes is given (Immergut, 1998)

Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) combine the 'new' institutionalist approach (which could provide ideas to understand the environment we live in) with reform theories. By combining these approaches they create a list of factors that could either hamper or enable reform. The concept of reform is explained in the next section.

3.4. Reform

The article "Myths of reform" by Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) reacts on arguments of scholars that reform is rare and difficult to accomplish. They argue that three myths support this notion. Firstly, the institutional structure of a policy sector could hamper reform in such a way that reform is unlikely to occur. Secondly, scholars argue that a crisis is required for an institutional structure to change. Thirdly, a strong leader who facilitates reform by standing up to people who hamper reform, uses the resources available to push and create the alliances necessary for reform. By combining institutional and reform literature, there can be explained why reform still occurs, even when strong factors blocking the reform were present (Bannink and Resodihardjo, 2006).

Bannink and Resodihardo (2006) conceptualize reform as *“fundamental, intended and enforced change of the policy paradigm and/ or organization within a policy sector”* (Bannink & Resodihardjo 2006, p.4). A press release of the EC states that *“for most MS implementation of the YG requires in-depth structural reform as of training, job-search and education system or drastically improve school-to-work transition and the employability of young people that cannot be delivered from one day to the next”* (EC, 2014B, p.1). Furthermore, it announces that MS have to develop mechanisms to identify and activate NEETs (EC, 2014B). Thus, major adjustments in pre-existing policies were necessary. Therefore, the YG is considered a fundamental change. The EC presented the Finnish YG as a blue print, with the goal of challenging the upcoming numbers of youth unemployment in the EU (EC, 2014B). For that reason the YG is reasoned intended. The YG was endorsed by the EC, but the MS have discretionary freedom. Thus it could be argued that the change was not really enforced. Notwithstanding, the development of a national implementation plan was compulsory. Therefore the YG is considered enforced. Moreover, because some countries like Ireland got specific recommendations for the implementation (EC, 2014B). Recapitulating, the YG meets the criteria of reforms established by Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) and is therefore reasoned a reform.

Even though Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) state that myths surround the impossibility of reform, they recognize that reform is not easily accomplished. They distinguish several constraints and facilitators that could either hamper or enable reform.

3.5. Constraints and facilitators

There are different constrains that (try to) prevent reform. Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006, p.5-12) describe two approaches towards constraints: the calculus approach and the cultural approach. The calculus approach to constraints focuses on the opportunities that actors get. Within this approach constraints are understood as the institutional rules which limit the capacities of actors who are willing to accept reform. Several types of constrains are distinguished. Firstly, the decision-making structure which could be organized in such a way that actors who want to reform have little chances, for example through the number of veto points in the decision-making structure. Moreover, decisions from the past (path dependence), once certain path is chosen it is difficult to completely change it. Path dependency causes two types of constrains. Firstly policy lock-in, decisions of the past have led to investments in certain products. Changing the policy means new investments are necessary. However, people have interests in the status quo or the necessary money is not available. Secondly, policy

inheritance, governments have to deal with the policy of previous governments. It takes some time, to change this policy. Thus, even when a government does not agree with the policy of a previous government, they at least have to implement it for some time (Bannink and Resodihardjo, 2006).

The cultural approach towards constraints focuses on the positions that actors express. Constraints are preferences, norms and values that actors could develop against reform. Within this category four constraints are distinguished. Firstly, people do not like change. Hence, reform could be upsetting and unsettling for them. Since politicians are dependent on votes to remain in their place of power, they sometimes choose to not upset their potential electorate. Secondly, the current policy paradigm of an institutional system could hamper reform. Hall defines policy paradigm as “*the ideas and standards that specify not only the goals of policy and the kind of instrument that can be used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing*” (Hall, 1993, p. 275). When new policy is not in accordance with the policy paradigm, it could hamper reform. Thirdly, policy makers themselves may benefit from the status quo and therefore resist change. Fourthly, there could be people with vested interests in the status quo. They often lobby against reform. Nevertheless, reform still occurs. Therefore, there also have to be factors present that form a positive incentive towards reform (Bannink and Resodihardjo, 2006).

Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) also distinguish different types of facilitators for reform. Therefore they use the same approaches as for constraints. According to the calculus approach, for reform to occur change is necessary, for example by a disrupted policy making process. In this case coalitions within the government could change, to facilitate reform. Secondly, negative media coverage of the current policy. Negative media coverage can enable reform because it declines the support for policy inheritance or creates a sense by the public that something has to change.

Facilitators of the cultural approach focus on the change in preferences from the actors towards reform. Firstly, actors could simply change their preference towards reform. This could be facilitated by entrepreneurs having the resources and finding backing for their stands. Moreover, the plans have to be unambiguous, clearly defined, focused, and include good planning. It is easier to push a reform through, when it is commensurable with the current trend. Thus, a trend could facilitate reform (Bannink and Resodihardjo, 2010, p.8-12).

3.5.1. Application

As earlier mentioned, Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) did not aim to examine the factors that could enable or hamper reform, only to distinguish them. Bannink and Resodihardjo's (2006) publication was part of the book: "Reform in Europe, Breaking the barriers in Government". In this book several scholars described cases in which some of these factors occurred. However, all of them researched only several of the factors identified by Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006). For this study was chosen for a similar approach, because of limited time and means. Based on experience of other scholars, some of the factors were selected.

The first constraint discussed by Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) is the decision-making structure. Although, several scholars have developed theories relating to this constraint (Lijphart, 1984 and Scharpf, 1988) overall evidence for the influence of this factor is poor (Freier, 2012, p.33). Høj et al (2006) find no significant effect of the nature of the decision-making structure in their empirical study about political economic reform in OECD countries. Therefore, this study does not take this factor into account.

Pierson (2000) states that policies are in place because institutions tend to be reinforcing. Thus, current choices about policy are determined by formally established institutions and policies (Thelen, 2004). According to Arts and Gelissen (2002) policies provide incentives that encourage individuals and groups to act in ways that lock on a particular path of policy development. Furthermore, there is argued that although politics creates policies, policies also create politics. Consequently, pre-existing policy influences policy decisions (Branden en Helderma, 2006). The EC press release about the YG stated that some MS needed structural reforms of the public employment services to meet the targets of the YG (EC, 2014B). Thereby, policy inheritance is found a relevant factor for this study.

Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) distinguish several preference based incentives that could hamper reform: upsetting and unsettling for individuals, policy paradigm, vested interests and beneficiaries of the status quo. Freier (2012) takes a less distinctive approach, which is applied in this study. He describes that policy decisions made in government are influenced by the electorate incentives associated with the policy. Gathering support for reform is difficult, because of the uncertainty regarding acquired benefits and interests. Jean-Claude Juncker once set "*we all know what to do but we do not know how to get re-elected once we have done it*" (Buti et al, 2008, p.2). Olson (1982) describes how well-organized interest groups influence the policy making process. Bijl et al (2013) argue that the influence of these interest groups is partly dependent on membership rates, therefore the same principles discussed for parliament is applied to these actors. Thus preferences are analysed,

based on the expected reaction of individuals that support actors. Immergut (1998) states that the behaviour of actors should can only be understood in terms of its context. The rules of the game could shape actor's preferences (Freier, 2012). For governments, constitutions are the main rules of the game (Gallagher et al et al, 2006), therefore they will be included in the analysis. Preferences can change over time (Freier, 2012), for example by an entrepreneur or leader (Bannink and Resodihardjo, 2006). Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) distinguish the two, by the necessity of a window of opportunity to accomplish reform. Other scholars' like Malness (2005) use different determinants. Barendsen et al (2004) question if an entrepreneur is a leader. Due to the non-existence of consensus about the distinction, the differentiation made by Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) is not adopted.

Another factor that could flip the policy lock-in, is a disrupted policy making process by a crisis (Freier, 2012). The increasing youth unemployed is often regarded as a problem of the EU (EC, 2015A). Therefore, this factor is regarded relevant in this study. However, because there still has to be established whether a crisis was present in for the chosen cases, the determinant will be called problem.

Recapitulating, based on Bannink and Resodihardjo's (2006) list of constraints and facilitators, several for this study seemingly relevant determinants are identified. Section 3.7. will discuss theories relating policy inheritance. Section 3.8. gives an overview of theories in politics. Lastly, section 3.9. focuses on the determinant problem.

3.6. Policy inheritance

Existing institutional welfare arrangements heavily determine national trajectories (Arts en Gelissen, 2002). Castles (1993, p.6) states that historical events and their assimilation create accumulative policy experiences that keep shaping the policy outcomes for many decades thereafter. These accumulative policy experiences create patterns in social public policy. However, "*the welfare state cannot be regarded as the sum of total policies, it is more than a numerical accumulation of discrete programmes*" (Esping-Andersen, in Arts en Gelissen, 2002, p.139). Therefore, Esping-Andersen (1991) focusses on the principles embedded in the welfare state. He argues that three factors are significant: nature of class mobilization, class political action structures and historical legacy of regime institutionalization. He uses two dimensions two identify these factors. Firstly, the degree of decommodification (degree to which a service is regarded as a matter of right, and the degree to which a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market) Secondly, the kind of social stratification promoted by social policy as well the degree of solidarity a state is built on. Based on these

two dimension, three ideal welfare state types were identified: liberal, conservative corporatist and social democratic states.

A liberal state embodies individuals and the open market system. There is little redistribution of income and there is little social right. In conservative corporatist states the direct influence of the state is restricted to the provision of income maintenance. Furthermore there is a principle of subsidiarity, thus the state will only interfere when the family's capacity to support its members is exhausted. In social democratic states, there is a system of generous universal and highly distributed benefits which is not dependent on individual contributions. The market is heavily regulated by the government, which is dedicated to achieve full employment. Furthermore, social policy is aimed at the maximization of capacities for individual independence (Esping-Andersen, 1991).

3.6.1. Critique

There is large overlap in the alternative classifications. Critiques on Esping-Andersen's ideal types mainly question whether certain types of welfare states are either separate categories or are subgroups of a certain main type. Furthermore, some cases like the Netherlands are put in different categories by scholars, using Esping-Andersen's typology (Arts en Gelissen, 2002). In an reaction to Esping-Andersen's article, scholars came with suggestions to include other groups or base the ideal types on other factors.

This study focused on the YG, which can be qualified as an Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP). Bonoli (2010) argues that no clear connection is found between Esping-Andersen's ideal types and decisions about ALMPs. Therefore, this study took a different approach towards policy inheritance. Börzel (2002) states that European policy is easier accepted when it is closer to the status quo policy (policy inheritance) in the MS. This study will use the concept policy inheritance in this manner.

For both the EU recommendation of the YG and the pre-existing ALMPs of the cases a profile of the policy paradigm was established. If a paradigm shift was necessary for the implementation of the YG, policy inheritance was considered a constraint. In contrast, if the YG was commensurable with the policy paradigm of the pre-existing ALMPs, policy inheritance was considered a facilitator. All MS had to design a national implementation plan whether their policy inheritance was a constraint or facilitator. However, they had discretionary freedom, thus policy inheritance could influence the applied method of policy transfer. Thus, a link can be made to the broadness of the applied method of policy transfer.

Hypothesis 1: When policy inheritance was a constraint for the implementation of the imported policy, it is likely that a broader method of policy transfer was applied.

3.7. Politics

When it comes to the decision-making phase of the policy cycle only a limited amount of actors are involved (Howlett e.a, 2009). To determine why a certain choice is made it is important to analyse which actors were still influential in this phase of the policy making process. Moreover, it is important to outline (true/expressed) preferences of the most important actors (Immergut, 1992).

Although decisive power is diffused in all countries, the exact division varies. This division also influences the checks and balances of government. The place where actual policy decisions are taken is mainly dependent on the political system (Hague and Harrop (2010). Parliamentary government is the norm in modern Europe with the exception of France (Gallagher, Laver, Mair, 2006). In parliamentary government the executive is chosen by the assembly. The governing parties emerged from the assembly and can be dismissed by a vote of no confidence. Sometimes the government keeps membership of parliament and sometimes this is not allowed. The prime minister is traditionally equally among other ministers and not the head of state. The head of state is often separated from politics and mostly represents the country in a more formal way. To acquire change the government needs a majority in parliament (Gallagher, Laver, Mair, 2006). Typically left-wing oriented parliaments have a tendency towards distributive justice which requires government intervention and regulation of the labour market (Freier, 2012). Right-wing oriented governments do not have this tendency. The YG is qualified as a ALMP, thus the left-right divide in parliament is important.

MPs have a strong effect on the definition of problems but they do not have the time to do the coordination, selection and presentation of solutions on their own. Therefore, they delegate work to civil servants who may consult interest groups. These interest groups either aim to create enough interest in a policy problem or lobby for a solution (Cairney, 2012).

Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) distinguish various factors which could influence the preferences of actors. Bonoli (2005) describes that within the modern welfare state there are some new risk groups: woman, the young and the low skilled. These groups are largely commensurable with the target group of the YG. Were in the past the risk groups mobilized in labour movements and social democratic parties, this does not seem the case for the new

social risk groups. They have a low participation degree in society and the percentage that votes is relatively low. Putnam (in Bonoli 2005) states that this does not increase when these youngsters get older. Moreover, the capacity of this group to influence the policy making process through the standard democratic channels seems to be limited. Additionally, they are underrepresented in key institutions. Lastly, they are less homogeneous than the previous generation of risk groups (Bonoli, 2005). Hence, the groups that are represented in the actors that are involved in the policy making process could benefit from the existing institutional structures, creating an incentive against change. Thus, they benefit of the status quo. Moreover, reform could be upsetting and unsettling for individuals. Actors who represent these individuals try to create a support base and do not want to upset their members or supporters. Furthermore, the current policy paradigm of the actor could hamper reform. The culture, norms and values are always not always compatible with the reform (Bannink and Resodihardjo, 2006).

However, preferences of an actor do not have to be a constraint to reform, they can also be a facilitator. For example, when actors try to find a new support base or the current support base within an actor changes its position because of a crisis. In addition, one specified person or actor could have an important role in pushing the reform. This person or actor is than alled an entrepreneur.

3.7.1. Entrepreneur

There are many actors and organizations that participate in policymaking or try to influence policy makers. However, policy entrepreneurs distinguish themselves because of their desire to change the status quo in their area of interest (Mintrom and Norman). They try to frame issues and promote their solutions to policy-makers (Cairney, 2012, p.237). Mintrom and Norman (2009, p. 649) see policy entrepreneurs as advocates of change. They distinguish themselves from other leaders through their desire to significantly change current ways of doing things. In general, entrepreneurs have the following characteristics at least to some degree: they display social acuity by making good use of policy networks and understanding the ideas, motives, and concerns of others in their local policy context and respond effectively. Secondly, they can define a problem, for example: by presenting evidence that there is a crises at hand, finding ways to highlight failure of current policy settings and drawing support from actors beyond the immediate scope of the problem. Thirdly, they can

build a team through forming coalitions and making use of their professional network. Lastly, they lead by example (Mintrom & Norman, 2009, p.649-667).

Mintrom and Vergari (1996, p.422) argue that all entrepreneurs perform three functions. Firstly, they discover unfulfilled needs and suggest innovative means to satisfy them. Thus they are alert for opportunities. Secondly, through pursuing actions with unknown consequences their reputation is at risk. Mostly, they also bear financial and emotional risks in these situations. Lastly, they have to resolve collective action problems by assembling and coordinating the actors that have the resources and talents necessary to acquire change. A Policy entrepreneur serves to bring new policy ideas, and gets them accepted in the policy-making process.

Recapitulating, in the cases the parliament is the main decision maker. However, they do not have the time or means to coordinate and select all the solutions on their own. Therefore, other actors (interest groups) are involved. Because these actors influence decision makers, for a reform to be accepted it needs support of these actors. In this case the MS had to design a national implementation plan, although they could determine the content themselves. Therefore, it seems logical that when these actors support the YG as proposed, it will be less adapted, then when they think the set example is not the right approach. Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2: When politics were a constraint to the imported policy, it is likely that a broader method of policy transfer was applied.

3.8. The problem

The issue which a reform aims to address can also be an important facilitator for reform, especially when it is conceived as a crisis by the politicians and public. A crisis often casts a long shadow on the policy in which it occurred. Keeler (1993, p.440) defines a crisis as “*a situation of large-scale public dissatisfaction or even fear of stemming from wide-ranging economic problems and/or an unusual degree of social interest and/or threats to national security*”. Or Alink, Boin, and ‘t Hart (2001, p.287) see a crisis as a “*manifestation of underlying institutional vulnerabilities in policy sectors, sharing a developmental logic that be traced to the pre-crisis period*”. When the press portrays something as a crisis, fiasco or scandal the power and authority of the status quo are delegitimized. A crisis comes to manifest when actors from outside the sector come to realize that the status quo is not

effective or appropriate. Therefore a crisis creates a leadership incentive, because politicians/interest groups want to minimize the damage, alleviate the pain, and restore order (Boin & 't Hart, 2003).

Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) distinguish three manners in which a policy crisis can appear. Firstly, a certain incident occurs which acts as a focal point for creating awareness that the sector is not working as it should. Examples like the death of an asylum seeker or an escape from a high security prison are given. Secondly, a crisis can appear as negative media coverage. This could be caused by an incident, but also be constructed. According to the Thomas theorem we do not behave conform reality, but we behave according to what we perceive as reality. Thus, if we perceive something as a crisis, we act according to it. In consequence, creating a real crisis (Boin, 't Hart, McConnel, 2009). Smith (2007) indicates different ways in which the presentation of the actual facts can be influenced. For example by simplification of the situation, labelling an incident as something, concealing certain elements and over accentuation of certain elements. Thirdly a crisis could be deliberately constructed by actors that want to achieve change (Bannink and Resodihardjo, 2006)

With a crisis is at hand actors adopt varying approaches. Through arguen that the questioned event is more than an unfortunate incident, the incident could be downplayed and the incentive for action could be decreased. In contrast, the events can be regarded as a critical threat to the society. Lastly, the events could be reckoned as an opportunity to expose more errors in the status quo (Boin, 't Hart, McConnel, 2009). Therefore a crisis does not always lead to change.

Recapitulating, when a situation is conceived as a crisis it is more likely that drastic policy change meant to address that problem is accepted. The main target of the YG is to decrease the high numbers of young unemployed/NEETs. If MS want to implement the YG as proposed major changes need to be made in employment services (EC, 2014B). In the case of the YG, the MS did not have the choice if they wanted to implemented the YG, they had to choice how to design the YG. However, because the YG entails drastic change it is likelier to be more adapted when no crisis was present. To test this theory the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 3: When the institutional determinant problem was a constraint, it is likely that a broader method of policy transfer was applied.

These theories and their application will be sketched out in the conceptual model

3.9. Conceptual model

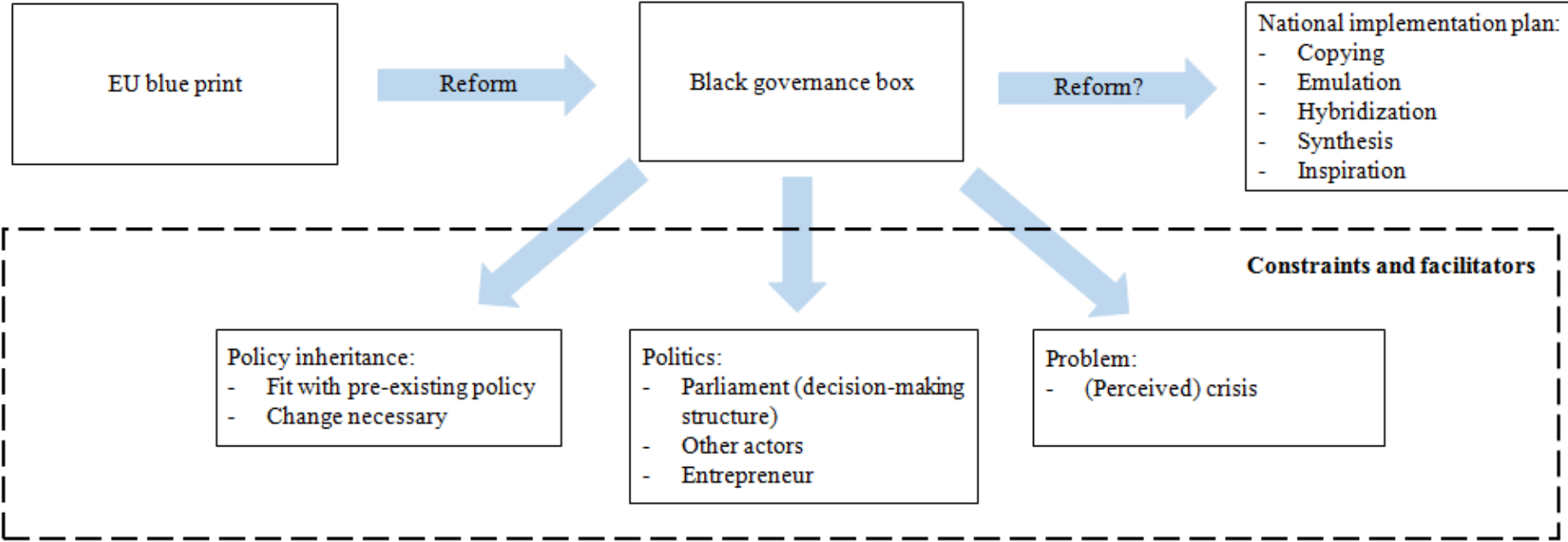


Figure 4: Conceptual model

4. Methodological framework

This study was conducted in the period from November 2014 to August 2015 within the context of the master Comparative Public Administration at the Radboud University Nijmegen. This chapter explains the methodological choices made during the research period.

4.1. Research strategy

In this study there was chosen to conduct a comparative case-study. The implementation plans of the YG of EU members Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands were central and compared. In the first phase, the policy transfer methods of the national implementation plans are discussed. The second phase aims to explain the differences in the national implementation plans with the help of the in the theoretical framework identified institutional determinants.

According to Boeije (2008) a case study is conducted when a researcher studies a phenomenon in its natural context. The phenomenon is considered the case. It is mostly used to diagnose and evaluate problems. Boeije (2008) adds that during a case study multiple methods of data collection should be used. Yin (1989) describes that it is important to use multiple sources of evidence (triangulation of sources). The methodology of the case study should not be based on the requirements of one type of data-analysis but on what the case study needs. A case study researches multiple features from limited research units. Often this results in a detailed description of multiple angles of incidence. Therefore, case studies are especially useful to research why certain processes went down and why they differ in practice (Harder, 2010).

Yin (1989) argues that a case study is a suitable research method when the problem statement imposes a description of an exact situation or the question why that is. The study aims to find the causes for the chosen phenomenon. Case studies are either descriptive or explanatory. The researcher has limited control about the researched phenomenon, because it is impossible to isolate from the natural context. There is also a distinction between multiple case studies and single case studies. In a multiple case study various cases are compared, while in a single case study one case is sketched out (Vennix, 2010).

To describe the phenomenon of the different methods of policy transfer applied for the YG in the EU MS. The cases of Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands are compared in an explanatory multiple case study. Harder (2010) states that explanatory case studies should be employed to explain certain phenomena. They should consist of an description of the facts of

the case, considerations of alternative explanations and a conclusion based on credible explanations that are harmonious with the facts.

Rose (1973) states, that experimenting in the traditional way (lab) is almost impossible in this field. Nevertheless, when policy fails great costs are involved. Therefore scholars should appreciate the “quasi-experimental” features of comparative research. By analysing why institutions or policies fail to transfer across national boundaries, governments and scholars learn from comparative research. Furthermore, cross-country comparative research could give extra input in comparison to national comparative research, because policies are often nationwide implemented. Cross-country comparison reveals more differences and thereby factors that possibly lead to failure or success of the policy. Therefore, it adds another positive dimension to comparative research. In addition, cross-country comparative research of public policy avoids the risks of culture bound generalizations. A scholar who studies public policy problems within a nation, cannot assume its conclusions are true elsewhere (Rose, 1973, p.68). Even a solid empirical analysis of a policy problem and the government’s response cannot justify a conclusion. Cross-country comparisons are likely to refute any proposition about international inevitability. Accordingly, it leads to more solid conclusions about what makes a policy successful. Bleijenbergh (2010) states that a multiple case study is also the best method to test theories because variation is systematically compared. Moreover, using this kind of research, conclusions can be drawn about if institutional differences have significant influence on policy outcomes (Rose, 1973, p.68).

In this study, the same problem for MS is analysed youth unemployment. They all got provided with the same blue print, but they applied various methods of policy transfer. Thereby, this research is especially fit for a comparative cross-country analysis. This study investigated a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, the boundaries between the researched phenomenon and context were not clearly evident and there were multiple sources of evidence used. Hence this study meets Yin’s (1989) criteria for when a case study is the proper research method. Three specific cases (Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands) were chosen. Bleijenbergh (2010) states that the selection of cases is essential for a correct case study. This will be further discussed in section 4.2.

4.2. Case selection

Because a case study only consists of little research units there should be an emphasis on the justification of the selected cases. Ideally these cases are chosen strategically. Researchers should select cases that have the probability of giving the maximum amount of information about the subject or that help identifying specific conditions and characteristics that qualify the researched phenomenon. How the cases are selected is subject to the type of case study is conducted. The central question of this study is explanatory, therefore the cases should be selected based on theoretical considerations. The cases should be screened on their ability to falsify theories or hypotheses of earlier research (Bleijenbergh, 2010).

Scholars regularly discuss how cases should be selected (Bleijenbergh, 2010). According to Mill's (1974) method of difference, researchers should select instances that have the same or comparable circumstances but that differ in the presence or absence of the studied phenomenon. Through comparison the researcher identifies what factors differ in the cases, probably the difference explains the cause of the variation / absence of the phenomenon (Mill, 1974). Ragin (1987) agrees with Mill but states that one factor could not explain the variation / absence of a phenomenon, because they are caused by an interaction of factors. In consequence, he argues for an indirect method of difference: a case with variation or absence of the phenomenon should be selected in combination with a case where the phenomenon is comparable but with a different context. Thereby creating a method, which produces and rejects hypotheses. Hence, Ragin (1987) argues that it has a higher probability to find the factors that cause the phenomenon and its form.

This study focuses on why one EU policy can lead to such different implementation plans in MS. There was chosen to test this on youth unemployment related programme, because this is an often discussed topic with lots of different regulations and projects within the EU. Furthermore, EU decisions relating employment are made through OMC, leaving the MS with a considerable amount of discretionary freedom. The YG recommendation was chosen because it is quite specific. Hence, the completely different implementation plans were noticeable. Therefore, the too explaining phenomenon was clearly present in this instance. Because time and means restrictions, three MS were chosen. Two with comparable results and one which completely differs.

The Netherlands was chosen, because although this a country has relatively low (youth) unemployment numbers, they have been on the rise since the start of the economic crisis. The YG is based on best practices and learning from each other, the Netherlands can still be

considered a best practice. The second chosen MS to be a case was Germany. In contrast with almost all other MS of the EU, the percentage of youth unemployment has been decreasing since the start of the economic crisis in 2007. Hence it can be considered as a best practice. Institutionally and in its policy pattern Germany is quite similar to the Netherlands. Both are among the MS with the lowest youth unemployment rates. Moreover, they are often reviewed as the same type of welfare state (Arts & Gelissen, 2002). Both used a broader method to transfer the Finnish blue print of the YG. The last case chosen was Ireland, which is completely different. Since the start of the economic crisis of 2007 the percentage of the youth unemployment rate has more than doubled. Hence, in comparison to other MS Ireland has high youth unemployment rates. Furthermore, it has a completely other pattern in social policy. By choosing two similar cases and one completely different, Ragin's indirect method of difference was used for case selection.

4.3. Data collection

As mentioned above Harder (2010) states that the methodology of a case study should not be based on the requirements of one type of data-analysis but from what the case study needs. Nevertheless, it is very important to take into account the context of the case(s). To conduct this study correctly, there was chosen for a combination of qualitative research methods, because the chosen factors: policy inheritance and politics cannot be described through a statistical analysis. Furthermore, the problem itself is only partially explained through statistical analysis of the youth unemployment rates, because as the Thomas theorem outlines something is only a problem when it is perceived as one. Thus, a supplementary qualitative analysis was needed.

Different methods of data collection were used in the research period. For the policy framework, where general (youth) unemployment policies of the EU are sketched out, concluding with a detailed description of the EU recommendation and how it came to be, policy documents are studied. Literature was used to establish the theoretical framework. Policy documents were analysed in order to determine the method of policy transfer for the national implementation plans and determine the type of policy transfer. These documents were also used in the analysis to establish if the chosen factors were barriers or facilitators. Sometimes, this is supplemented by information from a literature study. To fill the remaining gaps interviews were conducted. Furthermore some EUROSTAT statistics were used. Thus this research uses multiple sources (triangulation of sources).

For each cases several interviewees were chosen. A selection was made based on the actors involved. Moreover, the selection aimed to have commensurable interviewees for all the cases. The aim was to interview someone who was concerned with the designing of the implementation plans, a trade union representative, an employers' organization representative, somebody of the implementing organization and a MP. Furthermore they were selected on his/ hers knowledge of the YG. A list of the interviewees and the actors they represent is outlined in Annex 2. The interviews were conducted semi-structured, a general interview guide is shows in Annex 3.

4.4. Data analysis and reporting

Resulting from the literature study, context and theories were sketched out in the policy framework and the theoretical framework. The results of this literature study were the foundation of the interviews. Based on the factors, the interviewees were chosen. Furthermore, through the operationalization elaborated in section 4.6. the questions of the interviews were formulated.

During the investigation, the researcher kept up to date with relevant developments regarding the YG. From all interviews written reports were analysed and compared through encoding. The codes were based on the in section 4.6. described factors and indicators.

4.5. Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are two important indicators for the quality of scientific research. Validity refers to the influence of systematic errors in the investigation. A research is considered valid when it measures what it wants to measure (Boeije, 2008, p.145). Vennix (2010) describes the various meanings of validity in more detail. Firstly, content validity: does the measuring instrument measure what is supposed to measure. Between the concepts obtained in the theoretical framework and the question asked are multiple steps. This process is called operationalization (elaborated in the section 4.6.). Vennix (2010) describes two methods in which the content validity can be secured during the operationalization. The researcher should use angles of incidence of other scholars. Furthermore, the researcher should discuss the operationalization with other investigators. Another form of validity that Vennix (2010) describes is construct validity: how does the concept relate to other concepts of the theory. Boeije (2008) states that it is also important that the research as a whole is valid. This only happens if the chosen methods of data collection are valid.

This thesis aimed to be as valid as possible. In the operationalization insights of scholars is used, to meet Vennix' suggestion. If necessary studies were combined or

supplemented with personal insights. Moreover, the operationalization was discussed with the thesis supervisor. Additionally, the researcher used triangulation of sources and multiple research methods to strengthen the obtained statements. Errors in one source are thereby likely to be corrected.

In contrast to validity, reliability focuses on the non-systematic errors in the measurements. Mostly the reliability is measured through the precision of the data collection methods and the measurement instruments. Through standardization the reliability can be increased, because with more structure less mistakes will be made (Boeije, 2008).

Scholars like Pollit (2013), Bailey (1992) and Harder (2010) have multiple comments to take into account to increase the reliability of a case study. Pollitt (2013) argues that case studies in Public Administration (PA) often have a sloppy application of methods. He distinguishes three types of faults in PA case studies. Firstly, PA case studies are often vague about its purposes, often an explanation about wherefore the case study is designed to do misses. Harder (2010) states that defining the purpose of a case is critical. If a purpose is not sufficiently defined it could lead to *“findings that are not actually about the case but rather something else entirely or, in a multiple case study, that individual cases are not in fact comparable”*(Harder, 2010, p.3). According to Pollit (2013), the second fault is a missing description of the contexts and how it can be defined and theorized. The third fault is that cases are regularly wrongly used for generalization. The application theories is supposed to be broadly but it is not discussed in what way (Pollitt 2013, p.11-12).

Bailey (1992) mentions four methods in which scientists could make their case studies more scientifically correct. Firstly, the scientist has to make a case protocol. This is a formal document about the set of procedures used in the data collection (Yin, 2010, p.85). Secondly, it is important to select a good (representative) case. What is a good case differs per research and the research goal. Nevertheless, it is important that a researcher describes why they chose a particular case (Bleijenbergh, 2010). Thirdly, the scientist has to be aware of its possible bias. Thereby he/she can correct it in the research. Lastly, it is important that the research objective and the research method match.

Harder (2010) outlines that case studies should follow a clear outline that indicates priorities. A flow chart or logic model that portrays these priorities is necessary in order to ensure that the investigation keeps focused. Notwithstanding, it is important to be open towards not expected factors.

This study mostly meets the preconditions for a case study as described by Pollit (2013) and Bailey (1992). As mentioned in the theoretical framework this case study was designed to explain the different methods of policy transfer through an institutional analysis which focused on factors that could either hamper or facilitate reform. As mentioned above, Rose (1973) states that a cross-country comparison is the best way, to not only explain success or failure of public policy but also the influence institutional factors have. Because this study aims to identify institutional factors that influence the national implementation of EU policy, a cross country comparison is thus a good research method. In the second chapter the general EU employment policies are summarized. Furthermore, the Finnish example and the EU recommendation are elaborated. The in the theoretical framework introduced institutional determinant policy inheritance could be understood in terms of context. By including these elements, the second fault of case studies in PA is not present. Pollitt (2013) described fault about the overconfident generalization of the case studies is discussed after the presentation of the results. Thereby is taken into account that this thesis focuses only on three out of the twenty-eight MS of the EU.

In order to meet the criteria from Bailey. A separate paragraph was dedicated to the case selection. Additionally, before starting the empirical phase, the researcher searched literature to determine which methods were fit for this study. The logic model that Harder argues is necessary, was sketched out in the conceptual model, which is the backbone of this study. The priorities are the expected institutional determinants. Through taking this precautions, this thesis aimed to conduct a solid case study.

4.6. Operationalization

According to Swanborn (1981) operationalization is the transition from theory to empirical research. In this section, the in chapter 3 chosen institutional determinants are conceptualized so they can be measured. Although in the operationalization some of the factors have high correlation they are separately discussed.

4.6.1. Policy inheritance

Governments have to deal with the policy of previous governments. Even if the government does not agree with a policy it still has to implement the policy, for at least some time (Castles and Mitchell, 1993). Brandsen and Helderma (2006) state that the legacy of past policies can explain current decisions about policy. Conform Halls definition of policy paradigm the ideas and standards that specify goals, kind of policy instruments and the nature of the problems they are meant to address of the YG and pre-existing ALMP will be established. Based on

similarities between these paradigm and statements from interviewees there was established whether a paradigm shift was necessary for implementation of the YG.

4.6.2. Politics

In order to fully understand why certain policy decisions are made, it is important to get an image of who was involved and what their preferences were and how they were expressed. In the theoretical framework three kind of actors in decision-making were identified: parliament, interest groups and entrepreneurs.

The left-right balance in parliament influences the decisions that are made. Typically, left-oriented governments have a stronger tendency towards implementing policies for intervention and regulation of the labour market (Freier, 2012). The YG is such a measure. Therefore, there is analysed whether there was majority of left-oriented parties during the endorsement of the YG.

Furthermore, as Immergut (1992) states it is important to look at the rules of the game for the actors involved. Because the constitution determines the rules of the game for government (Gallagher, Laver, Mair, 2006) several indicators will be briefly discussed. To change policy, every political system has a number of parties whose agreement is necessary for a change of policy (veto players). After elections political parties try to form a government (Doring, 1995). Lijphart (1984) distinguishes between two kind of democratic regimes: majoritarian and consensus democracies. In majoritarian regimes the biggest party after the elections forms the government, creating a one party government. While in consensus democracies, multiple parties have to reach agreement on a number of issues to form a government. Thereby, certain points of the party manifest have to be harmonized with the party manifest of other parties. In consequence, the core of government is more determined by institutional constraints, expectations, goals and resources of all MPs (Gallagher et al, 2006). Thus, consensus democracies have thus more veto points (negative incentive towards reform). Gallagher et al (2006) describe several other factors which could influence the vote of parliament in relation to drastic change, which this study took into account. Firstly, the power of Committees. Policy proposals are mostly not discussed by the complete parliament, but by certain specialized groups consisting of MPs. Between nations the power of Committees differ. Gallagher et al et al (2006) state that if a Committee has the right to make major adjustments to the content it is less likely for drastic change to occur, because the Committee probably adjusts it more fitting to current policy. Another factor that influences the likelihood of reform to come through parliament is the election cycle. With planned elections coming closer on the

agenda, governments are less likely to take unpopular decisions (Gallagher et al et al, 2006). Reform is often considered upsetting and unsettling (Bannink and Resodihardjo, 2006). Therefore it is less likely for reform to come through parliament if elections are close. Lastly, the institutional position of interest groups is important. Some parliamentary systems have institutionalized the role of (some) interest groups, while others have not (Gallagher et al et al, 2006). Freier (2012) states that if interest groups have a powerful institutionalized position, it is more likely for them to change proposals for reform. What factors influences the votes of these interest groups is discussed in the next subsection.

Interest groups

Although it is hard to determine the exact preferences of actors, some factors identified by Bannink and Resodihardjo are used (2006). Firstly, the policy of the status quo may provide benefits for the actors clients. Pierson (2002) states that people react more intensely to potential losses than to potential gain. Therefore, reform can be hard to accomplish. Bannink and Resodiharjdo describe two kinds of benefits. Firstly, the right to be consulted which already discussed under constitution. Therefore, it will not be taken into account in this part of the analysis. Secondly, the supporters of the interest groups receive subsidies of the status quo. The second factors that could influence actors preferences towards reform described by Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) is the policy paradigm. There was researched if the YG fits the main culture, norms and values of the involved actors. Freier (2012) describes that an interest group has more influence if it has high membership rates, therefore this taken into account as well. Because this study has neither the time, nor the measures there is chosen to focus on three types of interest groups: trade unions, employers organizations and youth organizations. Some of the described actors played a especially positive role in the acceptance of the YG in the cases. These so called entrepreneurs will be discussed in the next subsection.

Entrepreneur

Bannink and Resodihardjo (2006) describe that an entrepreneur can be a positive influence for achieving reform. Cairney (2012, p.237) states that entrepreneurs try to frame issues and promote their solutions to policy-makers (Cairney, 2012, p.237). Thus, they are not policy makers, although they promote innovative ideas, to acquire radical policy changes. A policy entrepreneur does not have to be a person, it could also be an organization. Based on agenda-setting literature Mintrom and Vergari (1996, p.423) identify that policy entrepreneurs use the following activities for promoting these ideas: identifying problems, shaping the terms of

policy debates, networking in policy circles and building coalitions. The success of policy entrepreneurs in one of these activities influences his/hers success in other identified activities. After identifying a problem, they have to frame the problem in such a way that it attracts attention of the decision makers and indicates an appropriate policy response. To fetch over multiple groups, the problem needs to be framed differently. Furthermore, policy entrepreneurs need to develop strategies to present them to others. Networking in policy circle gives them insight in the ideas of potential supporters and opponents. Moreover, by increasing their visibility in the circle, they can build a trustworthy and credible reputation. Based on their insights they try to form and maintain coalitions to support their ideas.

4.6.3. Problem

As described in the theoretical framework, a problem becomes a positive incentive for reform when it becomes a crisis. Whether a crisis was present will be measured in two manners. Firstly, several macro-economic indicators as identified by EMCO (2015) to monitor the YG, were analyzed. The main indicator and first set of supplementary indicators will be used. The second set of supplementary indicators will not be taken into account due to time restrictions. Based on these data the EU has also identified several MS which are extra pressured to implement the YG. Therefore, this study argues that if these numbers are negative there is a higher incentive for change. The following macro-economic factors were analyzed:

- The NEET rate for 15-24 year olds (%)
- NEET rate (15-24) by labour market status (unemployed/ inactive)
- Employment rate of young people aged (15-24) (%)
- Youth unemployment ratio (15-24) (%)
- Ratio of youth unemployment rate (15-24) to adult unemployment rate (25-74)

However, solely a description of the rates is not enough, because according to the Thomas theorem we do not behave conform reality, but we behave according to what we perceive as reality (Boin, 't Hart, McConnell, 2009). Alink et al (2001, p.290) describes that a crisis can be best understood as a critical process, that connects phases between a disrupted and delegitimized past and an uncertain future.

Table 1 gives an overview of the theoretical determinants, the used indicators and the identified measures. In case a (+) is put behind a measure it means if present it is a positive factor for reform. In contrast if a (-) is put behind a measure it means if present it is a negative factor for reform. For the macro economic factors, is a high score conceived as a positive

incentive for reform with the exception for the employment rate, which is the other way around.

Theoretical concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Measure
Policy inheritance	Pre-existing ALMPs	Paradigm shift necessary	Statements about necessity paradigm shift (+)
			Similar features of policies (+)
Politics	Parliament	Positioning political parties	Majority left wing (+)
		Constitution	
		- Probability of veto right	Majoritarian system (+)
		- Power committee	Barely (+)
		- Election cycle	Long (+)
	Trade Union / Employers organisation	- Venues interest groups	Institutional position (+)
		Beneficiaries status quo	Receiving subsidies (-)
		Policy paradigm (Membership rates)	YG fits in pre-existing goal actors (+) High (+)
	Entrepreneur	Non policy makers that seek to sell policy ideas that pushes for radical change	Identifying problems (+) Shaping the terms of policy debates (+) Networking in policy circles (+) Building coalitions (+)
	Problem	Crisis	Macro-economic indicators
NEET (15-24) (%) by labour market status (%)			
Employment rate of young people aged 15-24 (%)			
Youth unemployment ratio 15-24 (%)			
Ratio of youth unemployment rate (15-24) to adult unemployment rate (25-74)			
Legitimacy current policy			

Table 1: Operationalization

5. The national implementation plans

This chapter discusses the national implementation plans of Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands. Although all national implementation plans start with a brief assessment of the NEET and unemployment rates in their country, this will not be discussed here but in chapter 6. This chapter aims to compare the measures of the national implementation plans in order to determine the method of policy transfer. Section 6.4. recapitulates the chapter. However, there will be started with a brief retrospect of section 2.2.

The Finnish elaboration of the YG exists of two very precisely described goals. Firstly, every person under 25 or recently graduate under 30, should get a good quality offer within three months of becoming unemployed. Secondly, every school-leaver should be guaranteed a place in further education or training. Table 2, shows an overview of the target groups and measures of the Finnish YG. These are mostly financed through a combination of EU and national funding. The explicit goals, target groups and measures form the basic components of the comparison made in the subsections. The Finnish YG is used as a yardstick, to establish the applied method of policy transfer.

5.1. Irish Implementation plan

The YG for Ireland is formulated as followed. *“Young people under the age of 18 years, who have left the school system without completing secondary education, and who have failed to find employment, will be provided with a quality ‘second-change’ education/training pathway outside the school system such as Youth reach or be supported in re-entering the school system”* (DSP, 2013, p.7). Moreover, *“Young people aged 18-24 years who become unemployed (whether on loss of a job or while seeking a first employment) and register with the benefits/ employment service, and who subsequently remain unemployed for four months, will be provided with assistance to secure work or alternatively with a quality offer of training, education or work experience”* (DSP, 2013, p.7). By the end of 2015, the Irish YG will be implemented (DSP, 2013).

Ireland has existing local arrangements to work with potential early school leavers under the age of 18, through Youth reach and Community Training Centres. Early school-leavers follow a bridge programme and introduction to second-chance opportunities, so these programmes are mostly informative. 77% of the last year’s participants now in education/training or are employed. However, in order to deliver the YG, this processes will

be formalized. Primary schools have to send contact details to the relevant Education and Training board, whom can help uncovering the next steps for the youth (DSP, 2013).

Target groups	Measures
Youth who do not get a place to study in general or vocational upper secondary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more places in vocational education - amendment admission criteria for initial vocational education - compensation to send apprentices to basic trainings - municipalities have to provide guidance and counselling - language courses with scholarships for immigrants
Youth who register as an unemployed jobseeker with a TE-office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drafting employment plan with case workers
Youth without vocational qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - guidance services - career training, job search training and vocational rehabilitation training - work trials
Youth with vocational qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supporting the development of skills of young jobseekers - supporting employers of youth - establishing relationships between possible employers and unemployed - subsidizing employing youth
Youth who are currently not involved in any activities or are otherwise in need of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - activation through rehabilitation programmes

Table 2: Overview YG and measures Finland.

The programme that will be implemented in light of the YG, was made to fit several previous and already existing ALMPs like: PTW, NEAT and the Activation programme (Ms Kasey, personal communication, April 23, 2015). PTW targets jobseekers of all ages and aims to create awareness among individuals of their responsibility to commit a job-search and or other employment, education and training activities with the risk of losing welfare entitlements.

PTW has five main goals (DSP, 2013, p.13):

- More regular and ongoing engagement with people who are unemployed
- Greater targeting of activation places and opportunities
- Incentivising the take-up of opportunities

- Incentivising employers to provide more jobs for people who are unemployed
- Reforming institutions to deliver better services to people who are unemployed

When a job-seeker registers at the local new integrated employment and support service (Intreo) office, he/she gets profiled on the probability of still being unemployed in a year. The Predicted Exit date (PEX) score (based on among other things gender, age, motivation, education, employment history and health status) jobseekers are differentiated. The PEX score is used to establish the intensity and nature of the programme the individuals have to follow (DSP, 2013). The activation process for the YG is essentially a tailored-made version of the PTW and another previous ALMP National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) (Ms Kasey, personal communication, April 23, 2015).

NEAP was introduced by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) in 1998. Based on the duration of administration at the Live Register (monthly series of numbers of people registering for Unemployment Assistance/ Benefits) (CSO, 2015), individuals were referred to the predecessor of Intreo offices. At the start of NEAP referral thresholds were based on age-groups varying from 6 to 18 months. Since December 2006, the referral threshold was three months for all age groups. Case officers interviewed the referred, with the aim of assisting them to enter/re-enter the labour market. Half of the referred were immediately redirected to group engagement sessions. In this group engagement sessions, presentations were given providing relevant information and advice for jobseekers. Participation of the services offered was obligatory. When the referred choose not to attend, they risked losing their welfare payments (DSP, 2012, p.24-27).

Partly to supplement the NEAT Programme (Ms Cunningham, personal communication, May 3, 2015) for the period 2007-2013 the Activation Programme was introduced. In light of this programme, facilitators expanded their services for additional intensive assistance for those identified in need of extra support by Intreo offices (DSP, 2012, p.27). Case workers who worked with social welfare recipients had to identify appropriate training or development programmes, in order to improve the skills and personal development of the referred (DSP, 2012, p.27-28). For this programme several projects were set-up to activate jobseekers and NEETs as well as educational programmes for the less skilled (Mr Bamber, personal communication, May 20, 2015).

The Irish implementation of the YG builds on these existing structures. Within two weeks after registration at a Intreo office, youth have to attend a group engagement session. Furthermore, in line with the PTW approach they will get a PEX score, which determines their further steps. Youth with a low PEX (low likelihood of finding a job) will immediately follow-up their group engagement session by a one-to one interview with a case officers. Youth with a medium PEX score will have their one to one interview two or three weeks after getting unemployed. Youth with a high PEX score have an interview with a case officer when they are four months unemployed. During the interview a Personal Progression Plan (PPP) will be developed, consisting of the following steps of the job seeker. Depending on the PEX score the regularity of meetings with the case officer will be established in the PPP. The client will have to accept any reasonable referral to, and offer of, employment, internship, training or education. When the referred will fail to accept, they are subject to a penalty. If Somebody is still unemployed or not in training/work 12 months after registering, they will be placed in a specialized office for long-term unemployed (DSP, 2013).

Ireland has several general employment activation programmes to which youth can be referred by the case officer, for example Youth reach which is directed at unemployed young early school leavers aged 15-21. Momentum, that supports the provision of free education and training projects to allow long term jobseekers to gain skills and access to jobs. Another programme is Jobs-Plus, which gives employers subsidies if they offer employment to long term jobseekers subsidies. Within these programmes more places will be reserved for youth. In addition, for some the application conditions are reviewed, so they will be easier accessible for young unemployed. Some programmes will get new components specifically focussed on the youth. Also, some new programmes will be introduced (DSP, 2013). Table 3 gives an oversight of the target groups and the measures which will be used for the implementation of the YG.

DSP is the coordinator and focal point for the implementation of the YG in Ireland. Services with relation to the YG are provided by Intreo. Intreo formulates employment strategies, provides incomes support and employment services. Other involved departments are the Department Education and Skills and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation etc. Furthermore, trade unions and employers organizations as well as local actors, will have an important role. To design the national implementation plan a group of officials was set up. To get more input this group organized open stakeholder consultations. Furthermore, the DSP received assistance of the OECD. Agreement is reached on reviewing the progress and the results regularly (DSP, 2013).

Target group	Measures
Unemployed school-leavers between 15-21	- providing opportunities for personal and social development education and training while pursuing nationally accredited qualifications
Jobseekers	- specific skills training - traineeships - local training initiatives - training for people with disabilities
Long term jobseekers	- supports free education and training projects for jobseekers to gain skills
Jobseekers without experience	- assisting in placements for internships for a 6-9 months period
Jobseekers undertaking at least 9 months training/work experience abroad	- fund some of the re-location costs and living costs
Recipients' of social welfare payment who pursue full-time education	- providing allowance for full-time second or third level course in an approved college leading to a recognizes qualification
Unemployed	- providing courses designed to increases their employability
Unemployed youth under 25	- organizing job fairs, with CV clinics and group briefing sessions
Unemployed youth who want to set up their own business	- providing micro/credit support
Longer than 2 year unemployed	- supporting temporary employment by local government authorities.
Long term social welfare recipients	- making self-employment financially attractive by allowing them to retain a reducing proportion of their social welfare payment
Most disadvantaged young people	- requiring employers to make experience places for the target group, including with a certain training element. Employers have to chose from candidates referred.
Youth under 25 classified as low-medium PEX	- encouraging employers to offer employment for long-time jobseekers through subsidies.
Students	- provision of a period of unpaid work

Table 3: overview Irish implementation plan YG

Although the implementation plan states that there are funds made available for implementation, it does not state how much the government reserved. Furthermore, they expect that multiple programmes will be eligible for funding through ESF and YEI (DSP, 2013).

5.1.1. Method of policy transfer

Both Finland and Ireland have a two tailed definition of the YG, a more general one and a part specifically focused on early school leavers, who should be supported into reintegrating in the school system or an apprenticeship. The more general part is different, the Finnish plan states that each person under 25 or recently graduated under 30 should be offered a job or education within 3 months of getting unemployed. While Ireland focuses solely on 18-24 year olds who have been unemployed for four months. The means used to get these groups a good offer are similar: some kind of agreement about a plan of action between a public service officer and the unemployed. In both cases registered NEETs and unemployed are obliged to cooperate. One of the main differences is that Ireland has defined its target groups more specifically and thereby created more specific measures. Both countries pay their implementation of the YG by a combination of YEI, ESF and national funds.

Although Ireland adopted the Finnish blue print to its own context. The basic approach of the YG seems more or less the same. Both comprise of short and long term solutions. Only the exact target groups differ. Irish YG coordinator Ms Kasey stated “*the YG is not only a good start but also a good methodology to tackle the high numbers of NEETs especially NEETs in Ireland*” (personal communication, April 23, 2015). Therefore, the conclusion is made that Ireland expects that blue print of Finland is the best solution for the Irish young NEETs and unemployed problem. However, Ireland tailored the imported policy to its domestic circumstances. For these reasons the applied method of policy transfer is emulation.

5.2. The German implementation plan

Germany has a positive attitude towards the recommendation to introduce a YG in the EU. However, most of its goals are already attained in Germany (BMAS, 2014, p.12). Therefore, short term labour market programmes are not necessary. The implementation plan focuses on strategic long-term measures to support and integrate youth in vocational education, training and employment. There is no time threshold for the implementation plan measured only when some programmes and measures need to be adjusted or implemented. The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs manages the YG. Other involved actors are the Federal Employment Agency as key provider of social insurance contributions and tax funded

security benefits and local-level job centres for the management of basic security benefits for jobseekers (BMAS, 2014).

The Germany implementation plan states that Germany has already labour market policy instruments that can be used to implement the YG, but that they should be structured in such a way that they reach as many youngsters as possible (BMAS, 2014). Not all pre-existing measures that are used for the implementation of the YG are mentioned, but only a selection of the most important: Social Code, Training Pact, Schulewirtschaft and inclusion imitative .

A part of the Social Code states that *“young individuals under 25 who are capable of earning and entitled to basic security benefit for job seekers must be placed in either vocational education and training or employment as soon as possible after they have applied for benefits and assistance”*(Sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de). Thus, under the Social Code youth under 25 is one of the special target groups. Programmes and measures that are part of the Social Code focus on providing vocational guidance for last year students and people with specific concerns. In this guidance, special attention is paid to technical oriented training. Another service provided under the social code is assisting young jobseekers through canvassing employers with vacancies and training places. Educational training schemes were set up for young people to catch up on lower secondary school level or to reinforce employability skills. Moreover, subsidies were created for employers who hire people with a bad labour market position (Sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de).

With people seeking education, training or employment an integration agreement is negotiated, which is based on a person’s strengths and weaknesses. In the case of youth that agreement has to be reviewed three months after it was signed. This agreement should include an objective, the efforts of the individual concerned and the efforts of the employment agency (BMAS, 2014). The Training Pact is a key partner in integrating youngster registered at the public employment offices. The parties involved in the Pact voluntarily committed that to those that are willing should be given the opportunity to enter vocational education and training or a training place that leads to qualifications. When this is not possible introduction training in combination with long-term company placements are made available (BMAS, 2014).

After the EU recommendation for the YG, the Pact developed a pilot scheme for individuals concerned who are not reached by the usual means. The main objective of the pilot is to stabilize and strengthen personally and socially disadvantaged youth, preferably in the form of vocational education, training or paid employment. The exact design is developed by the municipalities involved and the public youth welfare service providers. Specific Länder

with high numbers of inactive NEETs will receive extra financial support to implement this additional service (BMAS, 2014).

Another focus of the national implementation is the transition from school to employment. Schools work together with business alignments through a programme called SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT (BMAS, 2014). By assisting schools and teachers in the personal development of all youth business aim to strengthen the position of youth on the labour market. Furthermore, the programme wants to create more equivalence between vocational training and scientific training. Moreover it offers guidance for study and profession choosing in schools (Schulewirtschafft, 2015). Moreover, there is a focus on early intervention and activation. This is explained as measures to ensure that youth are able to take up vocational orientation, vocational guidance and vocational education and training placement services. Therefore a variety of communication channels are already used: schools and employment services. However, a pilot programme will be launched, which provides chats between vocational guidance staff and young advice seekers (BMAS, 2014).

Based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social affairs introduced the Inclusion Initiative. This programmes aims to include people with a disability in our everyday culture. Several focus groups were identified. The first group consist of parents who take care of children with disabilities or with disabilities themselves. For them special skills programmes were set up (BMAS, 2012). The second group consists of youngsters with disabilities. They are stimulated to enter training before ending their education, to make the transition between school and work easier. Moreover, special training places were created for them (BMAS, 2014). Furthermore, several measures to promote employment opportunities for young people with disabilities are taken (BMAS, 2012).

The last focus of the German implementation plan is on promoting labour market integration. Employment agencies are legally required to provide vocational guidance and training placement to all young people looking for dual education and vocational. The second part of promoting focuses on school and training drop-outs. Risk groups, like less able pupils are targeted. For youth who are unable to enter vocational education and training, vocational preparation schemes and introductory are provided to better their position in the labour market. To help remove mobility barriers, job-seekers can receive benefits from the placement budget. Moreover, during education students are timely informed about the opportunities for self-employment. (BMAS, 2014). Table 4 shows these measures and their target groups in a table.

The monitoring of the effects of the YG will be done through the indicators agreed at EU level on national and individual project level, in order to determine which are the most efficient. The implementation of the YG in Germany is funded by a combination of ESF, national and local funds (BMAS, 2014).

5.2.1. Method of policy transfer

In contrast to Finland the German implementation plan does not assess a definition of the YG. The EU definition is used and there is stated that the current structure of the public employment service should be made more accessible for youth. However, a stated passage from the Social Code is quite commensurable to the Finnish definition of the YG. In comparison to the Finnish blue print, the German elaboration of the YG has broader target groups and is more focused on the promotion of possibilities in contrast to the more compulsory approach adopted by Finland. As in the Finnish plan the importance of non-governmental partners is stressed, but in the German implementation plan further expanded. The most important part of the German implementation plan is about early activation and promotion (comprises 10 pages). Moreover, Mr. Winkler (personal communication, April 25, 2015) argues that Germany mainly focuses on the prevention of possible future NEETs because it has among the lowest rates. However, hereby he stresses the importance of staying on the topic. *“The secret of the decreasing numbers concerning young NEETs and unemployed is never losing the problem out of sight”* (Winkler, personal communication, April 25, 2015).

However, the rates in Germany have major differences among the Länder, especially in eastern Germany there are some weak regions (Mr Schweer, personal communication, May 15, 2015). In these regions the measures of the Finnish approach towards NEETs are adopted more literally. Because of a shortage of means it is not possible to adopt these in all parts of the country (Mr Winkler, personal communication, April 25, 2015).

In contrast to Ireland, Germany has used the Finnish blue print less literally. Some extracts are used to supplement their own projects to challenge young NEETs in certain regions. *“The Finish approach could work in some of the weaker German regions. In that sense we imported a part of the YG as designed by Finland”*(Winkler, April 25, 2015). This part of the implementation plan could thus be viewed as meeting the criteria of a synthesis method of policy transfer. However, the for the other identified target groups are completely different. The rest of the measures could be considered as inspiration because it uses the rhetoric

considering the importance of battling the problem. Thereby using the funds that come with the programme for German policy to early intervene.

Target group	Measure
People seeking education, training or employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establishment integration agreement - benefits from placement budget
NEETs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - employment assistance - opportunity to get vocational education and catch up with lower secondary school
Transits schools to employment / students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advance strength youth - assisting schools and teachers in development youth - provision guidance profession choosing - business days - promoting continuation of training - entrepreneurship projects
Young advice seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improvement of employment services - chats
Less able pupils education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mentor programmes
Disadvantaged youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mobility and exchange projects - subsidizing employers to hire - promotion to hire disadvantaged youth - parent conferences
Non German EU MS 18-35 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - getting vocational training - skilled employment in profession with shortage of workers

Table 4: Overview German implementation plan.

5.3. **The Dutch implementation plan**

The angle of incidence of the Dutch implementation plan of the YG is different than Ireland's and Germany's. Although there is stated that the Dutch government supports the objectives of the YG, it regards it as an opportunity to inform the EC about the Dutch youth unemployment policies and programmes. No dates about the start of the implementation of new programmes are mentioned in the policy document (The Netherlands, 2014).

The Dutch government created an comprehensive approach to tackle youth unemployment, to be carried out with the relevant stakeholders, on regional and sectoral level.

In the Social Agreement the government has made arrangements about labour market reforms and strengthening the economy with social partners (trade unions and employers organizations), which include several measures to prevent youth unemployment. Together they established an approach with extra focus on youth with a non-western background. The Netherlands intends to give youngsters a fair start to participate in society and in the labour market. Good education and obtaining basic qualifications are therein viewed as a starting point. Through early career orientation on primary schools, better information about education choices are stimulated. This is integrated into the early school leavers approach. To many youth have trouble in their educational career and stop school before graduating. Having a certificate or degree significantly improves the position of individuals on the labour market. Thus, it is important to reduce this group. With the motto “preventing is better than cure’ measures aim to solve problems. The taken measures focus on: sufficient work placements and apprenticeships combined with courses that are in one with the demand of the labour market and stimulating youth in senior secondary vocational education to follow extra courses which have greater relevance on the labour market. Moreover, structures have been set up to improve the provision of information to students, and the care structures in schools (Rijksoverheid, 2015). There is a special focus on the chances within the technological side of the labour market (The Netherlands, 2014).

In order to give youth unemployment rates a positive boost, the government launched the ‘Youth Unemployment Approach’ in March 2013 (The Netherlands, 2014). Some of this initiatives have ended while others are still implemented. The first initiative presented in this approach is the School ex Programme. The school ex programme focused on young recent graduates of lower vocational education (Rijksoverheid, 2013). Examinees of vocational training who had little chances of finding a job or no vision were addressed in an one-to-one interview. Therein, he/she received an advice on their specific learning opportunities for the future or were directed towards a process whereby the young person could gain work experience (regular job, job training or internship). With consent of these youth, their individual details were transmitted to “Werkplein”. If the young person was still at home after summer holidays, they were called in for work mediation (Rijksoverheid, 2013, p.16).

Secondly, covenants were made with the labour regions (the country is divided in 35 labour market regions, where the reintegration policies are coordinated, in this relation to partners discuss and implement the relevant policies.). In the covenant municipalities, social parties, employments offices, educational institutions, youth care and think tanks were involved in discussing their contribution to the reduction of youth unemployment. Money is

paid when a region presents its plan and a covenant with the government is made. The plans have to include (Rijksoverheid, 2013, p. 16-17):

- Concrete results corresponding with the governments
- Action which will be used
- To achieve results
- Specific measures for risk groups

The third initiative is the Matching offensive, which aimed to create a better match between the labour market's demands and the skills of the youth mostly through mediation. Special mobility centres had to improve insight in the demand and supply of the labour market, special attention was paid to the minimum youth wage; follow ups with non-successful placements; and youth with an immigration background (Rijksoverheid, 2013, p.17)

The fourth initiative focussed on the creation of more jobs, apprenticeships, traineeship and volunteering places for youth. Extra money was given to businesses, to make youth more fitting for jobs. Furthermore, employment offices should identify problem points for unemployed youth. Moreover, municipalities had to create volunteering positions which can be a link between education and work (Rijksoverheid 2013, p.18)

The last initiative presented in this plan is focussed on chances for risk groups. For 'overloaded' youth special services were set up, which aim to rebuild their trust. Secondly, special boarding schools were set up to, with 24 hour vocational schooling.

The implementation scheme of the YG in the Netherlands is mostly focuses on early intervention and activation, because a large part of youth unemployment is caused by a mismatch on the labour market between demand and supply. The Dutch education policy obliges youth up to 18, to obtain a basic qualification. Youth who drops out beforehand get assistance by a compulsory education department of the municipality of residence. These youth are guided back to education until they get basic qualification or have reached the age of 18. Youth between 18-24 without a basic qualification are monitored by a centre until they have obtained basic qualification. The government has set the specific goal of reducing the early school leavers from 8.8% in 2012 to 8% in 2020. There are no specific measures described, although there is stated that a systematic effort is necessary to create an integrated approach on regional level. Some locally set up projects that could function as an example are referred to, for example 'Top 600' of Amsterdam. This programme focuses on young serious repeat offenders. With a collaboration of municipality, general prosecution department (OM)

and youth and health services, willing youth are provided a way out through a combination of punishment and health care (Amsterdam, 2013).

Youth under 27 who just finished school and register for social assistance benefits at the Public Employment Service fall within a special regime. They have an obligation to look for work, education or training opportunities for a period of four weeks. During this period their own responsibility is of prime importance. The idea is that, a search for training and work can only be successful when youth takes initiative. The Public Employment Service is among other things responsible for communicating lists of vacancies, supporting creating Curriculum Vitae (CV) and tips for finding work. When a youngster is not successful in this four weeks he can formally apply for benefits and request assistance to find a job. The assistance entails drawing up an action plan together with the youngster, the implementation and evaluation of it (The Netherlands, 2014). Youth that does not register and does not work do not take part in any compulsory work programmes and are not directly visible for the authorities, especially those who have been suspected of a crime are often a concern for municipalities. Some municipalities have developed policies to track and support them (The Netherlands, 2014).

In table 5 an overview of the target groups and measures are sketched out. All of these measures are (elaboration of the) pre-existing (youth) unemployment policies. These programmes are funded through the European ESF, national, regional and local funds.

The Ministry of Education Culture and Science is responsible to ensure that everyone has good education. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is responsible for reintegrating (young) unemployed people into the labour market. This is carried out through municipalities and the Public Employment service. In 2013 an ambassador for youth unemployment was appointed. It was her task to see to it that youth unemployment is high on the agenda of all parties involved (The Netherlands, 2014).

5.3.1. Method of policy transfer

The Dutch case is different from the Irish and German. Although there are some similarities between the Finnish blue print and the Dutch action plan, it is not even called an implementation plan, but “*Dutch initiatives to prevent and tackle youth unemployment*”. New measures have no part in this document. Mostly, it sketches out successful Dutch measures and local projects. The collaboration between social, national and local partners which the EC found so compelling in the Finnish plans is already present. For youth that get unemployed there is also a similar structure, when they register for benefits they have to establish a

personal action plan with case workers. However, this structure existed before the endorsement of the YG. The national government has reserved extra money for the problem as well as appointing an ambassador for youth unemployment for two years (just ended). The government does not seem to have any plans for major changes. Mr van Eijben (personal communication, May 14) states that the appointment for the document of the government was to include the goals of the YG in the already existing policies for tackling youth unemployment and NEETs. Therefore, the government just merged the EU initiative into its own policy. In contrast to the other cases who applied and extracted some of the ideas. Thus, there is argued that there was no policy transfer.

Target group	Measure
Youth in secondary vocational education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reinforcing the alignment between senior secondary vocational education and the labour market. - course programmes that match the labour market better - stimulating young people to choose courses with more opportunities (especially) technology or follow extra courses.
Early school leavers	-measures to stimulate passing basic qualification
Youth seeking work, placement or workshop	-subsidy based practice learning. Employers offer trainee workshops
Future students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better information - Greater focus on technology.

Table 5: Overview of Dutch implementation plan.

5.4. **Recap**

The OMC leaves room for MS to fill in the EU directives based on MS own insights own method. In the case of the YG a clear example was presented. The way Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands used this example was completely different. Table 6 shows a comparison between Ireland, Germany and The Netherlands. Finland is used as a yardstick. If the points are mainly commensurable they are coloured with a dark blue. When they have some similarities they are coloured with a light blue. The factors are coloured grey, when there are

barely or no similarities between Finland and the case. The table compares the Finnish YG to cases on three factors: presence of distinctive goals description and its content, target groups and kind of measures

In accordance with the findings in the subsections of this chapter, table 6 shows that the Irish and Finnish YG are quite commensurable. The Germany implementation of the YG has some large differences with the Finnish but also some significant similarities. The Dutch policy document has similarities, but they have little relation to the YG. To explain the variation in the applied methods of policy transfer, chapter 6 compares several institutional determinants.

Finland	Ireland	Germany	The Netherlands
Explicit goal:			
- Unemployed (good quality offer after 3 months)	After four months	As soon as possible	Not present
- School leavers (should be guaranteed a place in education)	Provided offer and supported	Not specifically	Not present
Target groups:			
- Youth who do not get a place of study in general or vocational upper secondary education	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
- Youth who register as an unemployed jobseeker with a TE (Employment and Economic Development) office	Certain groups	Yes	Not mentioned
- Youth without vocational qualifications	If disadvantaged	If disadvantaged	Yes
- Youth with vocational qualifications	Not specifically	If less able	Improving their educational programme
- Youth who are currently not involved in any activities or are otherwise in need of support	Long term unemployed or disadvantaged	NEETs	Not mentioned
- Other	Jobseekers with international ambitions	Jobseekers with international ambitions and international jobseekers	Future students
Kind measures			
- short term and battling	Short/long term and battling	Long term and preventive	Long term and preventive
Funding			
- ESF and national funding (YEI)	ESF, YEI and national funding	ESF and national funding	ESF and national funding

Table 6: Comparison implementation plans

6. Institutional determinants

This second part of the analysis discusses whether the institutional determinants were a constraint or facilitator for the YG in the chosen cases. The first determinant to be outlined is policy inheritance. Secondly, the political situation will be described. The last explained determinant is problem.

6.1. Policy inheritance

The EC recommendation of the YG entails an insurance for all youth under 25 to get a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months after becoming unemployed or leaving formal education (DSP, 2013, p.1). A good-quality offer improves a youngster's prospects in education and labour market (Germany, 2014). The cases had already ALMPs to battle youth unemployment/NEET rates. This section compares the policies paradigm of the pre-existing policies with the policy paradigms of the YG. Consequently there is concluded whether a paradigm shift was necessary for the implementation of the YG.

6.1.1. Ireland

During the revision of PTW in 2013, the EU recommendation of the YG was taken into account. *"The YG was already adopted and the EU required implementation plans"* (Ms Kasey, personal communication, April 23, 2015). Hence, they have a lot of structural elements. *"The intervention and activation process governing the YG will essentially be a tailored version of this PTW activation model with a greater focus on early engagement for all younger job-seekers compared to job-seekers in other age categories"*(DSP, 2013, p.14). According to Ms Cunningham (personal communication May 3, 2015), *"the Irish implementation plan is not only integrated in the PTW 2013 revision, but is a more intensive PTW approach to youth especially with low PEX-scores"*. *"Major changes were not necessary, just some minor adjustments"* (Ms Kasey, personal communication, April 23, 2015). The YG will use the same register system as NEAT used, and maintains the group engagement sessions as introduced there. However, in contrast to NEAT all youth will have to attend a group session, where in NEAT some referrals got an one-to-one interview instantly. *"Some of the projects set out in the Social and Economic participation programme are specified and made more available for youth for the implementation of the YG"* (Mr Bamber, personal communication, May 20, 2015). *"Especially programmes in relation to education are opened up for youth"* (Mr Bamber, personal communication, May 20, 2015).

Recapitulating, the YG fit within the policy paradigm of the pre-existing policies, although some adjustments were necessary to make the measures more available for youth.

6.1.2. Germany

Germany believes that it already has implemented sufficient measures and programmes to reach the targets of the YG (Germany, 2014). *“Germany used to be the sick man of Europe, regarding the unemployment rates, we learned our lesson since then”* (Mr Rauch, personal communication, May 19, 2015). *“The last decade lots of ALMPs were introduced to improve our economy”* (Mr Scheers, personal communication, June 12, 2015). Programmes set out because of the Social Code and inclusions initiative were made easier accessible for youth to the implement the YG (Mr Winter, personal communication, April 25, 2015).

SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT is an effective programme to prevent youth of becoming unemployed (Mr Rauch, personal communication, May 19, 2015). However, in some Länder NEETs will be battled with a similar to the Finnish YG. *“Here new structures have to be set up for the implementation of the YG”* (Mr Winter, personal communication, April 25, 2015). Recapitulating, most of the existing structures can be used for the implementation of the YG, although this differs significantly between Länder. Nation-wide programmes have to be made more accessible for youth. Thus, there are some major regional differences.

6.1.3. The Netherlands

The goals outlined in the Dutch policies could definitely help to achieve the goal of the YG, but they have some different structural aspects. *“Although the YG takes a local approach, the Dutch policies with relation to ALMPs for youth are more decentralized”* (Mr Eijben, personal communication, May 14, 2015). *There are major regional differences in youth unemployment rates and the percentage of youth living in the area”* (Ms Vermij, personal communication, June 6, 2015). *“Where the YG sets goals on a more central level, in the Netherlands it is more locally determined”* (Mr Eijben, personal communication, May 15, 2015). Consequently, the Dutch policies do not include as clearly defined goals as the EU recommendation advices.

Another main difference between the Dutch pre-existing ALMPs and the Finnish example is the terminology used. The Finnish YG speaks of providing an offer, while the Dutch approach speaks of the individual’s responsibility to create its own chances. However, Mr Eijben (personal communication, May 15, 2015) states *“the YG fits within the Dutch youth unemployment approach”*, it has several good aspects. Thus, the Dutch approach towards young unemployed and NEETs is more strict but in principle could be used to reach the goals

of the YG. However, the commitment of the Dutch government towards reaching to goal could be questioned. *“The Netherlands is relatively effective in their youth unemployment approach, revision is always important, but drastic change is not necessary”* (Mr. Robslagmolen, personal communication, May 15, 2015).

6.1.4. Constraint or facilitator?

Based on the assessment of the pre-existing policies in the cases, there has to be determined whether they were a constraint or facilitator. As operationalized in the methodological framework, this was discussed based on the fit between the pre-existing policies and the YG. Section 6.1.1. discussed that Ireland youth unemployment policies were up for revision, and had to be made more effective. Moreover, the basic structures were similar, to the pre-existing ones. Germany underwent major revision in their youth unemployment policies some years ago, before the endorsement of the YG. Because of major regional differences, some Länder have to make major changes, while others only have to supplement current measures. The Netherlands has had effective youth unemployment policies for years, which could in principle be used to achieve the goals set by the YG. Recapitulating, there can be concluded that the policy inheritance for Ireland and the Netherlands was a positive facilitator for the implementation of the YG. For Germany it could be both a constraint or facilitator because for some Länder more change is necessary than for others. The pre-existing policies in the Netherlands have a lot of similar elements with the YG and is therefore considered as a facilitator.

6.2. Politics

The second institutional determinant: politics is described for each of the cases. This outline consist of three parts. First, parliamentary features will be discussed. The positioning of the political parties are analysed, in order to conclude if there was a majority of left parties when the YG implementation plans were designed. Then the constitutions of the cases will be described, with the following indicators: the probability of veto right, the power of committees, the next planned elections and the institutional position of trade unions and employers organizations. From the parliament the focus is shifted to interest groups: trade unions and employers organizations. If other actors were found relevant during the study these are explained as well. The stance of these actors will be analysed with the concepts: beneficiaries of the status quo, policy paradigm and membership rates. Lastly, there will be discussed if an entrepreneur was present.

6.2.1. Ireland

The Irish Parliament which is called Oireachtas has two chambers: the upper chamber (Dáil Éireann) and the lower chamber (Seanad Éireann). The 166 members of Dáil (Deputies) are directly chosen by the citizens. The Senators of the Seanad are chosen within 90 days of the dissolution of the Dáil. Its members are elected in different manners. Eleven are elected by the president, 43 are elected by five panels representing: Culture and Education, Agriculture, Labour, Industry and Commerce and Public Administration, the last six are elected by the universities. Officially the Seanad does not recognize party affiliations, but in practice it represents the party strengths in the Dáil (www.oirachtas.ie).

Figure 5 shows a left-right continuum of the positioning of the six main political parties in Ireland. Based on this image three of them are considered left: Sinn Féin, the Socialist and the Social Democrats (politicalcompass.org). Thereby has to be taken into account, that typically the main division in Irish politics is not the left-right divide (Ms Cunningham, personal communication, May 3, 2015). This becomes clear when looking at the division of seats in the chambers after the 2011 elections. The left parties hold only 19 of the 166 seats in the Dáil and 3 of the 60 seats in Seanand (www.oeirachtas.ie). The numbers for the separate parties can be viewed in table 7. The way MPs vote relates also to the constitution, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

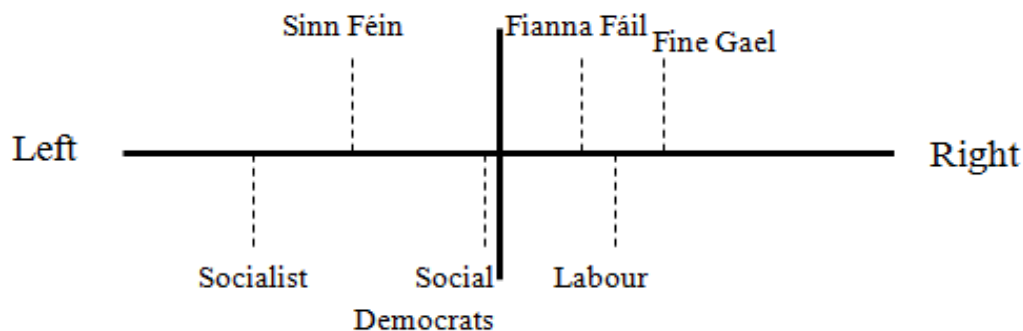


Figure 5: Left-right continuum political parties Ireland

Ireland is considered a majoritarian regime (Gallagher et al, 2006). After elections the largest party forms the government. Doring (1995) states that the government in Ireland has almost complete control of the parliamentary agenda. Members of government are also members of the executive (Gallagher et al, 2006). Therefore, the likelihood for individual MPs to amend or prevent a certain measure is relatively small. The power of parliamentary committees in Ireland is small as well (Gallagher et al, 2006). Officially they have the means to make

amendments to policy but this barely happens (Ms Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015). Elections must be held at least every five years, which means that the next planned elections will take place 2016.

Seat per party	Dáil Éireann	Seanad Éireann
Sinn Fein	14	3
Social democrats	3	0
Socialist Party	2	0
Other left parties	2	0
Total	19 /166	3/ 60

Table 7: Seats left parties Ireland (Oirachtas.ie)

One of the five panels that chooses Senators for Seanad is called ‘Labour’, in which the trade unions and the employers’ organizations are organized. Historically this panel is dominated by certain trade unions (Ms Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015). However, Mr Eustice (personal communication, May 22, 2015) argues that the influence of trade unions is relative little. This can be declared by the fact that the panel holds only eleven seats in the Seanad (Oirachtas.ie). Furthermore, employer’s organization IBEC and trade unions have no consultancy right like their Germany and Dutch counterparts (Mr Eustice, personal communication, May 22, 2015). Both organizations lobby for individual MPs support, “*I have to say quite successful as well*” (Ms Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015). However, in the previous paragraph there was concluded that individual MPs influence is relatively small. Thus, the institutional position of the trade unions and employers organization remains quite marginal.

Interest groups

The Irish trade unions had a positive attitude towards the YG (Ms Kasey, personal communication, April 23, 2015). “*Their position could be explained by their increasing membership rates, especially of the youth*” (Ms Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015). Thus, trade unions also represent the group that benefits of the YG. The unions had been pushing for reform relating to youth unemployment policies for some years (Mr. Eustice, personal communication, May 22, 2015). Hence, the YG fitted with the existing goal of the trade unions.

IBEC was a bit more critical about the YG. “*We were not sure that a construction like the YG would benefit us or the Irish youth*” (Ms. Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015). “*Although it was important for the Irish youth unemployment policies to be re-*

considered, the YG with its terms, does not benefit us” (Ms. Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015). It would mean huge offers and reforms of business (Ms. Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015). The employers’ organizations saw not a huge benefit of the (possible) reform of the status quo. Furthermore, it did not really fit their policy paradigm.

In the case of Ireland there is one more actor that has an important part in representing youth: the National youth council of Ireland (Ms Kasey, personal communication, April 23, 2015). Like the trade unions, the youth council found the EU recommendation of the YG a positive incentive. *“Something needed to change, and the EU made a start”* (M Cunningham, personal communication, May 3, 2015). Thus, the YG fitted the policy paradigm of the national youth council. Furthermore, as they are meant to represent youth, and they assumed Irish youth would benefit from the YG, they could be considered as representatives of beneficiaries of the status quo.

Entrepreneur

Although the operationalization states that an entrepreneur is not a policy maker itself, Minister Joan Burton will be discussed here. Mostly, policy makers are not considered as entrepreneurs because in a way they have to defend the policy (Cairney, 2012, p.237). However, Joan Burton was mentioned several times in the interviews. Therefore, it seemed important to further expand her role.

Joan Burton Irish minister of social protection, and responsible for unemployment policy was very enthusiastic about the EU recommendation of the YG (Meijer, 2013). *“Minister Burton saw a good opportunity in the YG, a starting point for the reduction of youth unemployment numbers in Ireland”* (Ms Kasey, personal communication, April 23, 2015). In 2013 a pilot project was organized in Ballymun, one of the first YG projects to get EU funding (ballymunpilot.wordpress.com). The minister made this pilot possible together with her ministry (Mr Eustice, personal communication, May 22, 2015). *“Since then she has been promoting a national implementation of the YG, so she is definitely an advocate of the YG”* (Ms Kasey, personal communication, April 23, 2015). *“Recently a lot of resistance has originated in parliament, but she keeps pushing for national implementation”* (Ms Cunningham, personal communication, May 3, 2015). Though she will not be considered an entrepreneur in this study her “partners in crime” (Ms Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015) the trade unions will be.

The trade unions have been a very important partner for the minister in their quest for the implementation of the YG (Ms Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015). “Like the minister we think that the YG is a good initiative to start the battle against the high youth unemployment rates” (Mr Eustice, personal communication, May 22, 2015). Recapitulating, the trade union and minister together aimed and shaped the policy debate around youth unemployment in such a way that their solution the YG became the most viable (Ms Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015).

6.2.2. Germany

The German parliament consists of two chambers. Firstly, the Bundestag, the directly elected chamber, has 622 seats. Members of other chamber the Bundesrat, are chosen by the Länder, which get a number of votes according to the number of inhabitants. This chamber has a total of 69 seats. In Germany three parties in parliament are considered left: Die Linke, die Grühne and SPD. The position of these political parties and the other main political parties can be seen in figure 6. In contrast to Ireland, left oriented parties have a majority in both the chambers. They have 320 of the 622 seats in the Bundestag and 50 of the 69 seats in the Bundesrat. The numbers for the separate parties can be viewed in table 8.

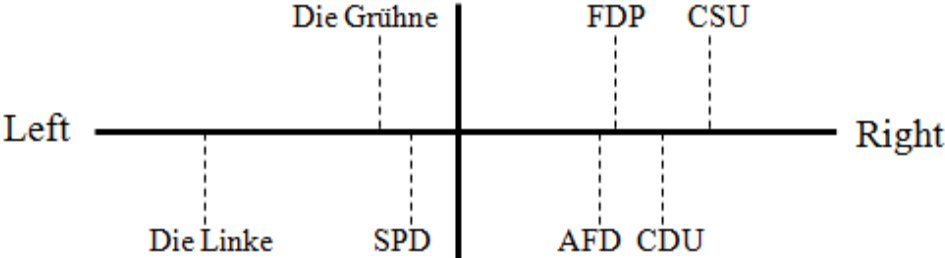


Figure 6: Left-right continuum political parties Germany (Dalton, 2014)

Party /MPs	Bundestag	Bundesrat
Die Linke	64	2
Die Grühne	63	20
SPD	193	28
Total	320/622	50/69

Table 8: Left parties in parliament after 2013 elections (Bundesrat.de)

After elections coalitions are formed. Generally, a party does not have enough seats to form a government. Therefore the German parliamentary system is considered a consensus system (Gallagher et al, 2006). According to Doring (1995) MPs in this system have a higher probability to veto bills. However, Gallagher et al (2006) describe some kind of unspoken

deal in which the opposition does not obstruct the passage of bills. In return, the government is flexible with the details, which are discussed in Committees. Thus, there is a lot of negotiation between the coalition and the opposition. Although officially only an absolute majority is necessary, bills are often passed with unanimity (Gallagher et al, 2006). The last elections were in 2012, the maximum period between elections is 4 years. Hence, the next planned elections will take place in 2016 (Bundesrat.de).

Employers organisations and trade unions have an influential institutional position in Germany. In debates about wages and labour market policies, they are a part of deliberations. In these deliberations the government sees itself as a supervisor, whom creates preconditions for the deliberation. The government is only the guide in the conversations between the trade unions and employers organizations (Mr Schwer, personal communication, 15 May).

Interest groups

Both employers organizations and trade unions in Germany saw a positive incentive in the YG for other MS. *“It is important for Europe to do something about its youth unemployment problem”* (Mr. Haggenmiller, personal communication, May 26, 2015). However, it was questioned whether Germany needed a solution like that. *“We have been focussing on youth unemployment for some years now, we know it is important”* (Mr Schweer, personal communication, May 26, 2015). It is a good initiative for MS whom have real high rates, but for us it is not really necessary (Mr Schweer, personal communication, May 15, 2015). The employers’ organization is even more hesitant. *“The Finnish YG has not the right structure nor it has the right kind of measures for youth unemployment rates to decrease further in Germany”* (Mr Haggenmiller, personal communication, May 26, 2015). Recapitulating, both the trade unions and employer organizations saw in the YG a good approach for MS with high youth unemployment rates but not for Germany. However, in several of the interviews one important actor was mentioned, who created a positive incentive towards the YG, which will be discussed in the next subsection.

Entrepreneur

“The viability of our continent and of the EU is inextricably linked to the prospects we can offer our young people” states Angela Merkel (Bundesregierung, 2013) at the EU top in Paris when the YG was endorsed. Angela Merkel was on EU-level one of the absolute advocates of the YG, *“some Irish MPs argue Germany pressed it on the other MS”* (Ms Cunningham, personal communication, May 3, 2015). Inter alia by organizing a EU top on youth unemployment, she shaped international debate on the issue (Mr Rauch, personal

communication, May 19, 2015). By networking she build coalitions at international tops (Ms Scheers, personal communication, June 12, 2015). Moreover, nationally see keeps issuing the importance of reducing the youth unemployment and NEET rates (Ms Scheers, personal communication, June 12, 2015). However, on national level Angela Merkel is a policy maker and therefore will not be considered an entrepreneur. In contrast internationally she could be considered an entrepreneur. Although as prime minister of Germany she is part of the EC this body did not endorse the YG, therefore see could be considered an entrepreneur on this level. Based on the interviews and news analysis no other possible entrepreneur was identified, for Germany.

6.2.3. The Netherlands

Although the Dutch constitution vests all executive authority in the monarch, who appoints and dismisses ministers, a parliamentary system has been established, with an upper (eerste) and lower (tweede) chamber. The lower chamber is directly elected. The upper chamber is chosen through stepped elections: elected members of legislature and executives of the provinces, chose the chamber. Elections for the provinces are never at the same time as elections for the lower chamber (Gallagher et al, 2006). Figure 7, shows the positions of most of the political parties on a left-right continuum. Four parties are considered left wing: GL, PvdA, SP and CU.

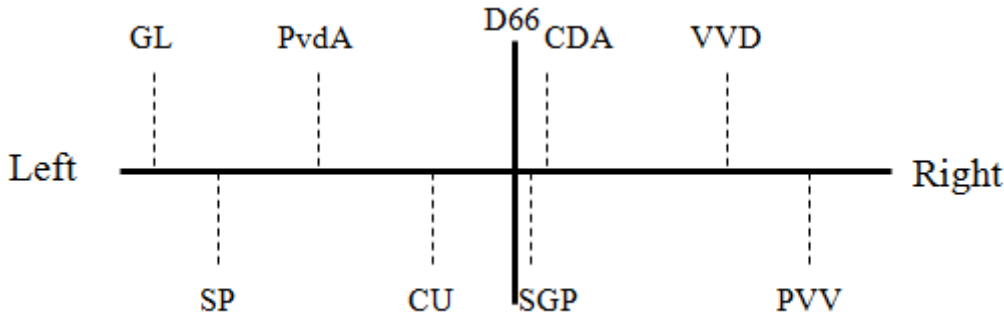


Figure 7: Left-right continuum political parties the Netherlands (Dijkstra et al, 2012)

Party	Lower Chamber (2012)	Upper Chamber (2011)
PvdA	38	14
SP	15	8
GL	4	5
CU	5	2
Total	68/ 150	29/75

Table 9: Number of Seats of left wing parties at endorsement YG. (parlement.nl)

Corresponding with Ireland, the left-wing parties did not have a majority in the designing phase of the YG (parlement.nl). However, they had a considerably higher percentage of seats than the Irish left-wing parties. 68 of the 150 in the lower chamber and 29 of the 75 in the upper chamber. The number of seats per party is shown in table 9.

After the elections for the lower chamber in the Netherlands, an ‘informateur’ is appointed. This ‘informateur’ searches with the parties for a possible coalition (Gallagher et al, 2006). Thus, the Netherlands has a consensus system. According to Doring (1995) individual MPs have a higher probability to veto a proposals than in a majoritarian system. MPs of the lower house also play an important part in designing legislation. Although government aims to ensure that their legislative proposals pass through parliament without much trouble, the opposition can set its own agenda and timetable. Proposals for bills are often discussed in Committees where amendments are discussed and voted on. Followed by a similar process with the upper chamber. An absolute majority is necessary to pass a bill (Gallagher et al, 2006).

The ‘poldermodel’ institutionalizes a consultation between government, trade unions and employers organizations. Trade unions and employers organizations in the Netherlands are main debate partners of the Dutch government. They seat in one of the main advice bodies of the parliament (SER) and are mostly an even partner in meetings regarding wages (Bosch, 2009). However, recently this strong institutional position is under debate. Lately, the government has taken several decisions on which the social partners did not agree (Ms Westerlaken, personal communication, May 10, 2015).

Interest groups

“What do I think about the YG, that is a hard question, to be honest I do not even know that much about it” (Ms Westerlaken, personal communication, May 10, 2015). Both Ms Westerlaken (personal communication, May 10, 2015) of the trade union and Mr Robslagmolen (personal communication, May 16, 2015) of the employers organization state that there was not that much if any discussion about the implementation of the YG. *“I would not say that youth unemployment in the Netherlands is not a problem. However, it is not a problem like it is in the southern and eastern European states”* (Mr. Robslagmolen, personal communication, May 16, 2015). Although Dutch trade unions recently have been focussing more on youth unemployment, the YG was not really part of that (Mr Eijben, personal communication, May 14, 2015). Furthermore, youth membership rates for trade unions are minimal (MS Westerlaken, personal communication, May 10, 2015). Older members are no

beneficiaries of the YG, because they cannot use the services the YG offers. Thus, it does not really fit in the policy paradigm of the trade unions. The employers' organization sees in the current youth unemployment policy enough potential. *"A reform as the YG is not really necessary"* (Mr Rosblsagmolen, personal communication, May 16, 2015).

Entrepreneur

"A Dutch entrepreneur for the implementation of the YG in the Netherlands, there was hardly any discussion about transferring the EU recommendation as such" (Ms Westerlaken, personal communication, May 10, 2015). Furthermore, as stated above hardly any actor in the Netherlands seemed to lobby for the YG. *"If I think of anyone who could have been an entrepreneur for the YG it is Mirjam Sterk"* (Mr Robslagmolen, personal communication, May 16, 2015). By introducing Mirjam Sterk as ambassador for youth unemployment, the parliament hoped to improve youth's position on the labour market (Ms Vermij, personal communication, June 6, 2015). Although she promoted some projects with guarantee-jobs, a link to the YG is hard to make (Mr Eijben, personal communication, May 14, 2015). Both interviews and data-analysis did not give a distinctive answer whether she supported the initiative.

The goals of her appointment correspond with the Dutch interpretation of the YG. Stimulating (future) students to choose a discipline with good career prospect, for example technique (Rijksoverheid, 2013). Thus, there was analyzed if she was an entrepreneur for the YG by promoting the same goals and measures. *"Who does not battle youth unemployment at this moment, will get the bill presented later"* (Mirjam Sterk in Rijksoverheid, 2013). Hence, there can be concluded that she views youth unemployment as a problem that should be reduced. Furthermore, she identified several target groups: youth without vocational degree, youth seeking for internships and apprenticeship and youth with an immigration background (Rijksoverheid, 2013). *"She really tried but she did not succeed in bringing together the social partners, to find a solution"* (Mr Robslagmolen, personal communication, May 16, 2015). Moreover, *"she had trouble to make her point come across"* (Ms Vermij, personal communication, June 6, 2015). Therefore, although she tried to sell policy ideas and create awareness, she did not really achieve to build coalitions or shape the terms of the policy debate. Consequently, Mirjan Sterk is not considered an entrepreneur for the YG.

6.2.4. Constraint or facilitator?

The question remains if the politics of the chosen cases was a constraint or facilitator on the proposed implementation of the YG. As can be viewed in table 10, most facets of this

determinant were positive towards the reform. If a factor is marked with dark blue it is a huge positive influence, when it is marked light blue it is a more marginally positive influence and when it is marked grey it is a negative incentive. In the case of Ireland all factors have a blue colour with the exception of the left-wing majority. Therefore, there is concluded that the politics in Ireland were a facilitator for reform. Germany had more hesitant interest groups, but still there were a lot of positive factors present. Thus, there is concluded that in Germany politics were a light facilitator for the YG. In for the Netherlands most areas are grey. Hence, in the Netherlands politics was a constraint for achieving the reform of the YG. In table 10 an overview of this determinant is given.

Determinants / cases	Ireland	Germany	The Netherlands
Policy inheritance	Facilitator	Facilitator / constraint	Facilitator
Politics	Facilitator	Light Facilitator	Constraint
- Parliament			
• Majority parliament left-right continuum	Right	Left	Right
• Probability of veto right	Majoritarian	Consensus	Consensus
• Power committee	Barely adjustments	Technical adjustments	Content adjustments
• Election cycle	5 years	4 years	4 years
	Next planned election 2016	Next planned election 2017	Next planned election 2016
• Venues interest groups	Represented in lower house	Strong institutional position	Strong institutional position
-Trade Union	Positive	Not necessary, in Germany	Not really discussed
-Employers' organization	Hesitant	Not necessary, wrong structure	Not necessary
- Youth council	Positive	-	-
- Entrepreneur	Trade union	Not present	Not present

Table 10: Overview determinants: policy inheritance and politics

6.3. Problem

A person's labour force status can fall into one of three categories: employed, unemployed and economically inactive. Unemployed are not automatically NEETs because they are not in

education, while this is not the case for unemployed who could be in education. (EUROSTAT, 2015). As explained in section 3.6, the description of the problem of youth unemployment is sketched out using the main indicators which will be used to measure the effects of the YG. Using the EC statistics database EUROSTAT, especially the numbers of the LFS. Time series over de last ten years will be described with the help of charts. The scores of the EU28 average is shown as benchmark.

Figure 8 shows the average labour market status of 15-24 year olds in the EU 28. MS heavily vary in this regard, but it gives an idea of the group the YG is to battle.

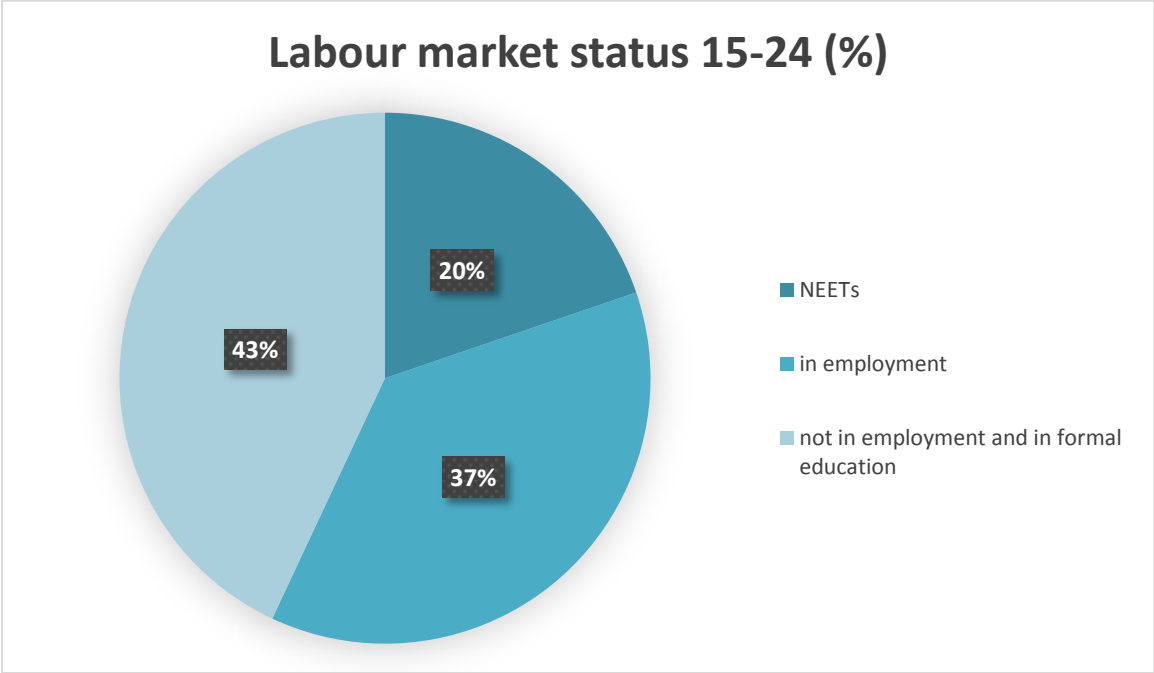


Figure 8: Labour market status

6.3.1. NEET rate (15-24)

Youth that are neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs) between 15-24 are the main target group of the YG. Therefore, it is the main indicator for the description of the problem in the MS. The data are expressed as a percentage of the total population in the same age group. Figure 9, shows the average NEET rates of the cases as well as the EU28 which is shows as benchmark. Figure 10, shows the NEET rate according to labour market status. A dissimilitude between unemployed and economically inactive people was made. Somebody is considered unemployed, when they were during the reference period: without work, currently available for work and seeking work (ILO,2009, p.3). Somebody is considered economically inactive when they cannot be classified as employed or unemployed

(ILO,2009,p.3)

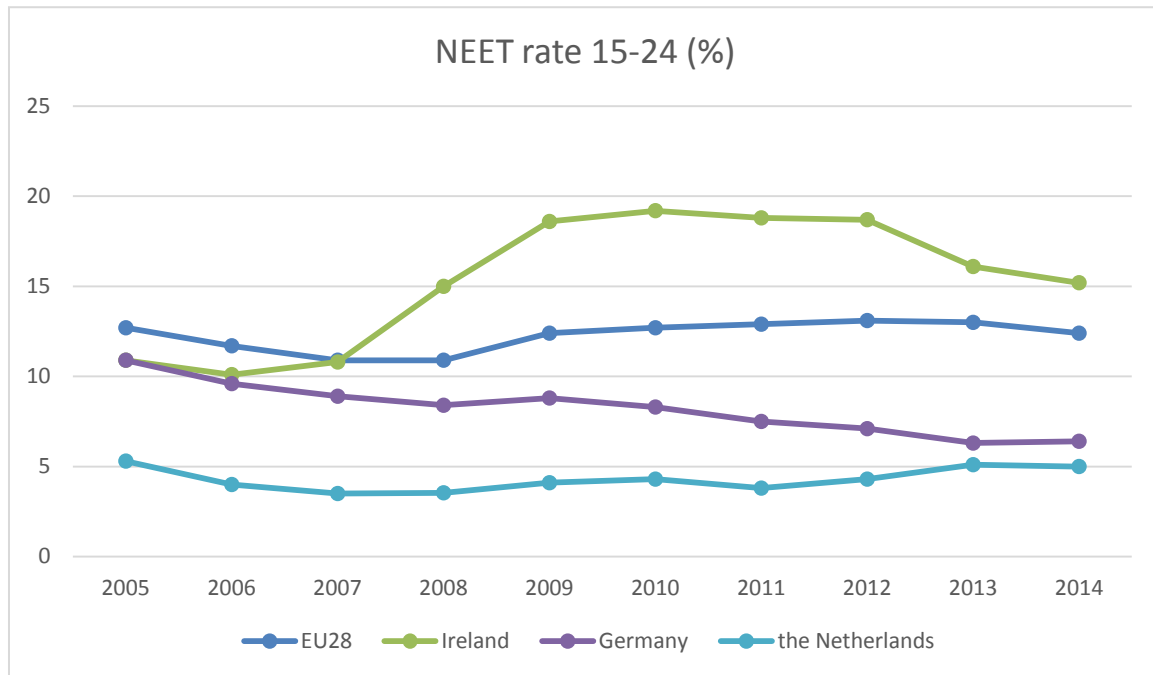


Figure 9: NEET Rate (15-24) (%)

The average NEET rate of the MS of the EU is relatively stable over the last ten years with a minimum of 10.9% and a maximum of 13.1%. There was a slightly downward trend until the economic crisis. Afterwards the number more or less stabilized. For the EU28 as well for Ireland and Germany the rate of inactive NEETs is commensurable to the rate of unemployed NEETs.

Ireland is the only case that has an NEET-rate (15-24) average higher than the EU28 average since 2007. Before, the number was relatively stable. The rate increased from 2008 until 2010. After 2010 a downwards trend became visible. Furthermore, Ireland is the case with the most difference between the peak (19.2%) and minimum (10.1%) (EUROSTAT, 2015). The problem assessment of the national implementation plan speaks of similar numbers, and states that most of them register for social welfare payments. The national implementation plan focuses especially on the inactive NEETs. There is stated that 60% of the inactive NEETs identifies itself as carers and 20% as disabled (DSP, 2013). The trade unions in Ireland see the relatively high NEET-rate as a treat which should be rectified (Mr Eustice, personal communication, May 22, 2015). “Since 2008 the national youth council has had lots of discussion about the increase of the NEET rate of 15-24 year olds” (Ms Cunningham, personal communication, May 3, 2015). Most of the unemployed NEETs register but the inactive part is particularly hard to reduce, because they do not always register. Therefore, it

is hard to estimate the range of the problem (Mr Bamber, personal communication, May 20, 2015)

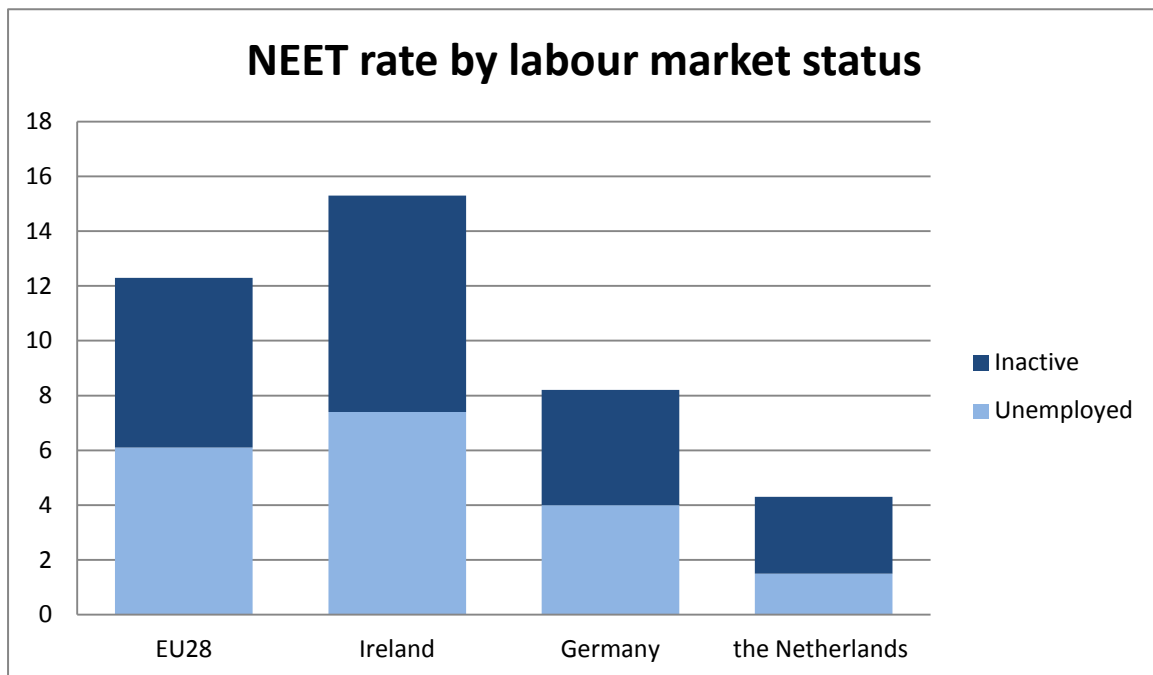


Figure 10: Average NEET rate by labour market status 2013

The NEET-rate (15-24) of Germany shows clear trend downwards. 2005 had the highest rate and 2014 the lowest. Thus, a lot of progress was made (EUROSTAT, 2015). Young people with an immigration background are overrepresented, in the NEET rate. Even though the NEET rate has decreased, the rate is still double of the youth unemployment rate (BMAS, 2012). This worries the German government (Mr Winter, personal communication, April 25, 2015). Most economically inactive people are single parents, have health conditions or are disabled (*Germany, BMAS*). *“I question that all economically inactive people want to work or further their education. We should keep focussing on the disabled. Most of them actually want to work, but do not know how”*(Mr. Rauch, personal communication, May 19, 2015). Although the national rates went down, it is important to keep paying attention to young NEETs, especially in the Länder which have relatively bad scores (Mr Winter, personal communication, April 25, 2015). *“Germany does not want to be the sick man of Europe again, but an example of how it should be”* (Mr Winter, personal communication, April 25, 2015).

The Dutch percentage of NEETs is the lowest throughout the hole period. The differences between the percentages are quite small and consists of irregular fluctuations (EUROSTAT). The Dutch policy document includes a graphic of the NEET rate but no further mentioning (The Netherlands, 2013). *“We do not really use the term NEET that much,*

we like to talk about unemployed or economically inactives”(Mr. Eijben, personal communication, May 14, 2015). The Netherlands is the only case which has a significant difference of percentages between the economically inactive NEETs and the unemployed. Since the financial crisis of 2007 this difference has amplified (EUROSTAT, 2015). *“This a development on which we should keep an eye on”* (Mr Eijben, personal communication, May 14). The Dutch government focuses especially on the groups that are overrepresented in this kind of rates (Ms Westerlaken, personal communication, May 20, 2015). *“Sometimes we feel that the government does not take the growing rates seriously, because internationally we keep scoring good”* (Ms Westerlaken, personal communication, May 20, 2015)

6.3.2. Employment rate (15-24)

The first supplementary indicator to be discussed, is the employment rate of youth between 15-24. The employment is calculated by dividing the percentage of employed in this age group through the total population of this age group. In contrast to the NEET rates in this case a high percentage is considered positive. Therefore, the Netherlands with its high percentage scores the best again. Although the trend has been downwards since the start of the economic crisis. There remains a major difference with Irish and Germany percentages. Second best scorer Germany has an average 20 percent point less. The Dutch implementation plan explains this relatively high rate by the custom of having a side job, besides being enrolled in education (Netherlands, 2014). *“This high rate is particularly because youth get to have work experience from a young age on, thereby they achieve a better labour market position as their counterparts from other countries”*(Mr Robslagmolen, personal communication, May 16, 2015).

On this indicator Germany does not have a clear trend. The rate stays relatively stable after 2008, although it increased before that year. Since 2011 the number has relatively stabilized. Mr Haggemiller (personal communication, May 26, 2015) states that the relatively low employment rate of German youth does not worry him, because *“through the German dual vocational education system German youth get similar working experience even though they have not entered the labour force yet”* (Mr Haggemiller, personal communication, May 26, 2015)

Ireland shows a clear trend downwards since 2007. With a peak of 51% and a minimum of 28.2% the number of employed youth almost bisects. Corresponding with the NEET rate Ireland scored relatively good until 2007. Afterwards the number increased majorly. *“The Irish youth which is part of the labour force was hit particularly hard after the*

economic crisis, they were the first to go “(Mr Eustice, personal communication, May 22, 2015). *“It is worrisome that Irish youth get limited changes to gain work experience”* (Ms Talbot, personal communication, May 6, 2015). Figure 11 shows the time series of the employment rate in a chart.

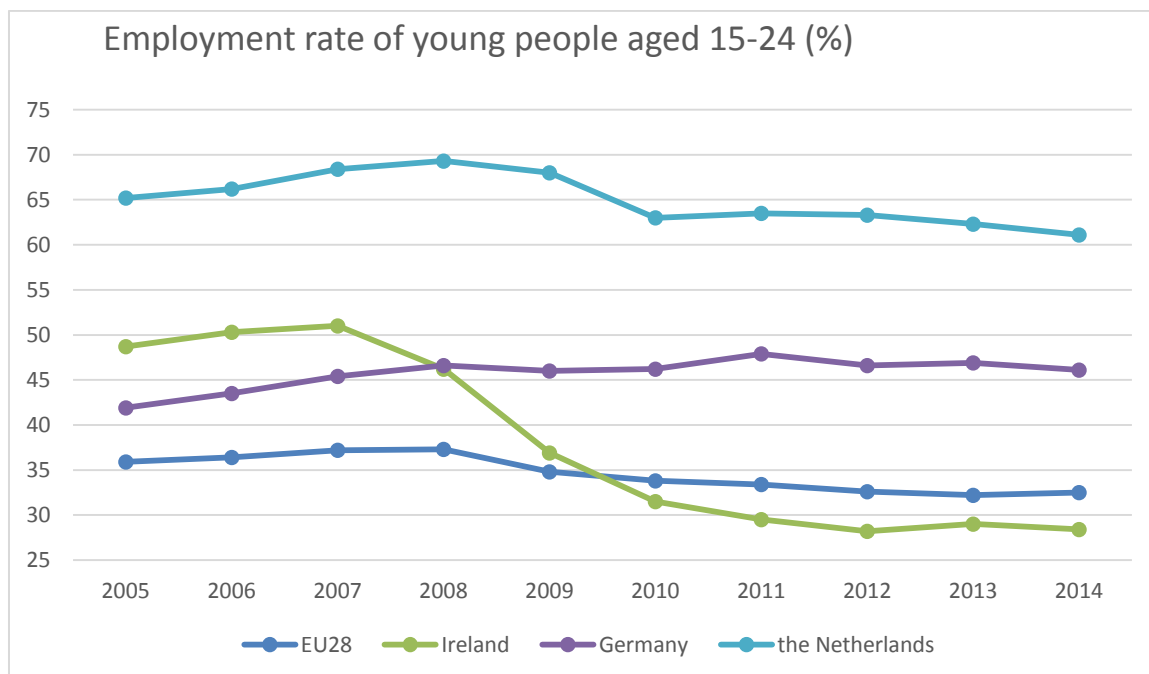


Figure 11: Employment rate of young people aged 15-24 (%)

6.3.3. Youth unemployment ratio (15-24)

The youth unemployment ratio is measured through dividing the number of unemployed youth through the number of people aged 15-24 (ILO, 2009, p.3). As figure 12 shows, the trends correspond with the trends of the employment rate. In contrast, the differences are smaller. Germany shows a relatively small downwards trend. The Dutch time series shows irregular fluctuations. Remarkable is that although the Netherlands has higher employment rates for this age category, Germany scores better on the unemployment rate for this category (EUROSTAT). However, *“this can be easily explained because to be unemployed you have to be searching for a job, because it is more probable for Dutch youth to have already entered the labour force on this age for a side job”* (Mr Eijben, personal communication, May 14, 2015). A representative of the Dutch trade union agrees with this phrasing (Ms Westerlaken, personal communication, May 10, 2015). Ireland had a good rate in 2005 but afterwards there was an upwards trend until 2012. Since then the number has dropped significantly. *“With the recovery of the economy, the position of the youth in the labour market has bettered. However, because the employment rate did not have a similar upwards trend there is a*

chance that they became economically inactive”, which would not be a positive development (Mr Bamber, personal communication, May 20, 2015).

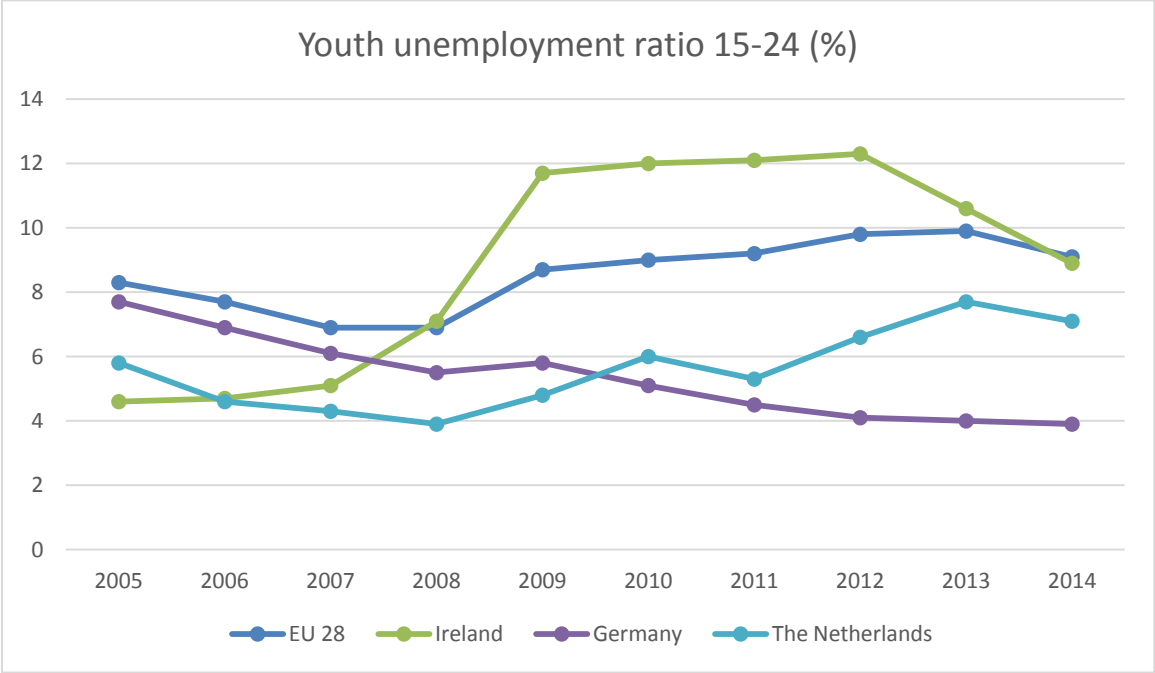


Figure 12: Youth unemployment ratio 15-24 (%)

6.3.4. Ratio of youth unemployment rate (15-24) to adult unemployment ratio (25-74)

To indicate structural aspects in the labour market it is important to look at the ratio of the youth unemployment rate in relation to the adult unemployment rate. This indicator is calculated by dividing the adult unemployment rate through the youth unemployment rate (ILO, 2009, p.14). Remarkably, all the numbers are between 1.4 and 2.6. Both the EU average and Germany score quite stable on this ratio, with some slight irregular fluctuations. This time Ireland does not go above EU average nor has it an enormous increase round 2007-2008 (EUROSTAT, 2015). Thus, there is concluded that the Irish adult unemployment rate is above EU average as well. The Netherlands shows a clear upward trend until 2010 which turned into a downwards trend afterwards. Because the youth unemployment rate went up, there could be concluded that the adult unemployment rate increased more. Figure 13 shows the time series over time.

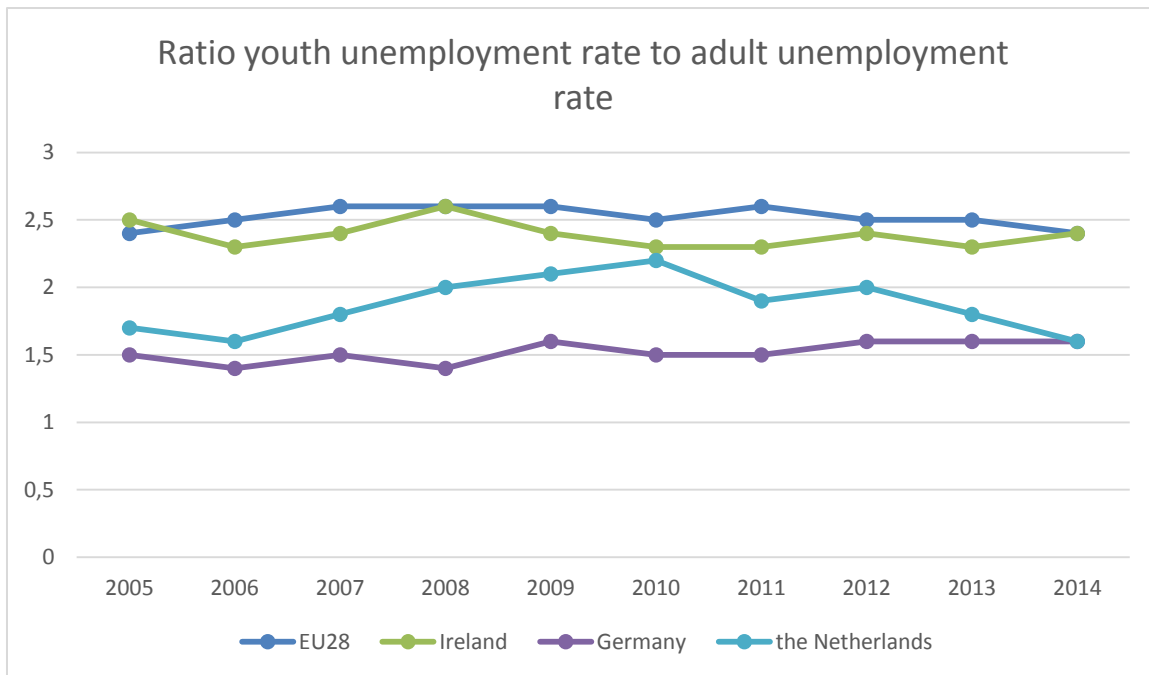


Figure 13: Ratio youth unemployment rate (15-24) to adult unemployment rate (25-74)

6.3.5. Constraint or facilitator?

When recapitulating the determinant problem, a clear conclusion about every case can be made. In Ireland the rates relating to youth unemployment have significantly risen after the economic crisis of 2007. Although the last two years the numbers have gone down, there is still a feeling of urgency. Something has to change. Therefore, the institutional determinant problem is considered a facilitator for the YG in Ireland. The Germany rates concerning youth unemployment have a downwards trend since 2005, with sometimes an hiccup around 2007. However, the actors are still wary about youth unemployment, though there is no sense of urgency. This could be explained by the major differences between the Länder, but it remains contradicting. This ambiguity makes it hard to give an distinctive answer to the question whether the problem was a positive or negative incentive towards reform of the YG. Thus, no decision could be made, whether the institutional determinant was a constraint or facilitator. Overall, Netherlands scores the best on the rates regarding youth unemployment. Since 2011 there is a slight upwards trend, there is not really a sense that massive reforms and chances of policy are necessary. Hence, the institutional determinant problem is not a facilitator but an constraint for the implementation of the YG. Table 11 gives an overview of the earlier discussed factors of the problem. Furthermore, it gives an overview of all the determinants.

Determinants / cases	Ireland	Germany	The Netherlands
Policy inheritance	Facilitator	Facilitator / Constraint	Facilitator
Politics	Facilitator	Light Facilitator	Constraint
Problem	Facilitator	Facilitator / Constraint	Constraint
- NEET (15-24) (%)	Above EU28 average	Downwards trend	Best score throughout
- Employment rate of young people aged 15-24 (%)	Significantly decrease since 2007	Small upwards trend	Significantly higher than others
- Youth unemployment ratio 15-24 (%)	Recovery since 2012, but still relatively high	Downwards trend	Increase from 2008 until 2013, remain relatively high in comparison with years before
- Ratio of youth unemployment rate (15-24) to adult unemployment rate (25-74)	Fluctuation high in comparison with other cases	Lowest score throughout	Downwards trend since 2010
- General attitude	Something has to change	Positive change, but remaining focus is important	Although some negative trends, not really worried

Table 11: Overview determinants: Policy inheritance, Politics and Problem

6.4. Recap

For Ireland all three institutional determinants: policy inheritance, politics and problem were found a facilitator for the implementation of the YG, even though there were some negative incentives. Making a clear conclusion about Germany is more complicated, because of major regional differences, the proposed level of reform varies. Furthermore this also influences the institutional determinants: policy inheritance and problem directly. Moreover, even the institutional determinant politics is not a clear facilitator. The case of the Netherlands had mostly negative incentives towards the YG. Although policy inheritance was a policy inheritance, the politics and problem were a constraint.

7. Conclusion

The EU wants to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy of the world. Good employment numbers of the current 15-25 year olds are of prime importance to reach this goal. However, this generation battles growing unemployment rates. One EU initiative to better the position of these youngsters is the YG. The EU recommendation to implement a YG was based on a positive Finnish experience. All MS were obliged, in the form of a national implementation plan, to formulate how they planned to implement a national YG. Because the EU recommendation contained specific instructions, similar implementation plans could be expected. However, the by the MS submitted national implementation plans differ significantly.

The purpose of this study was to gain insight in the factors which influenced the implementation of the YG in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands. Thereby, it aimed to explain differences in the national implementation plans. The corresponding research question is: **Which factors influenced the implementation of the YG in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands and how?** To answer this central question policy documents were discussed, interviews were held and statistics were studied. This chapter answers the central question of this study, by discussing the in the introduction formulated sub questions, and the in the theoretical framework established hypotheses. Furthermore, this chapter contains a reflection on the choices made during the research period.

7.1. Conclusions

Sub question 1: What entails the European YG and how is its implementation designed in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands?

Although the EU MS collaborate on employment policy, they have a significant amount of discretionary freedom. Decisions about this topic entail broad guidelines and goals of voluntary nature. Nevertheless, MS are obliged to design national implementation plans. The European Commission plays a supportive and encouraging role herein. One of the EU initiatives regarding employment endorsed, is the YG. The EU YG is based on a positive Finnish experience. The in 2013 adopted recommendation states that all “*all young people under the age of 25 years should receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education*” (DSP, 2013, p.1). MS can apply for ESF and YEI funds to supplement financing the implementation of this recommendation.

The Irish implementation plan includes a clear definition of the YG, outlining two main targets. Firstly, a chance to re-enter the school system should be provided for youth under 18 who have left the school system before completing secondary education, and currently unemployed. Secondly, a good quality offer should be provided to everybody between 18-24 who remained unemployed for four months. After registering at the employment office, youth will get profiled on the likelihood of finding a job, in order to establish the intensity and course of the provided assistance. Together with case-officers the jobseekers will develop a PPP, which the jobseeker will have to accept.

In contrast, the German national implementation plan has a more strategic long-term approach, which aims to integrate youth in vocational education, training and employment. A definition of the YG is outlined through the Social Code, which states that: everybody under 25 who is capable of earning and is entitled to security benefits should be placed in education, training or employment as soon as possible. Several pre-existing programmes and policies like the Training Pact and SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT are used to reach these goals. Nevertheless, in order to reach the target of the EU YG, they were made easier accessible for youth.

The Netherlands took a different approach towards the EU recommendation. The government sees the YG as an opportunity to inform the other MS about the Dutch unemployment approach. Together with several local and private actors the national government battles youth unemployment. Specific labour market regions were created, which coordinate the reintegration progress of unemployed. Furthermore, for some time there was an ambassador of youth unemployment. The policy document sets out a long-term oriented strategy based on decreasing the mismatch between education and the labour market as well as improving the quality of secondary vocational education. Youth under 27 who just finished school and register for social benefits have an obligation to look actively for a job. The Employment Service supports them in this quest. More locally, some special projects are set up for risk groups.

Sub question 2: Which theories could explain the differences in the national implementation plans of Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands?

Sometimes policy makers use ideas or problems from another country, and apply it in their own (Rose, 1991). This process which is called policy transfer, could also be enforced by an international organization as the EU. Rose (1991) identify several methods of policy transfer, which use the imported policy in differing manners. From the most narrow to the most broad

method: copying, emulation, hybridization, synthesis and inspiration. The identified methods of policy transfer were used as the dependent variable in this study. Easton (1965) describes the government as a possible intervening variable of reform. Governments exist of institutions which have constraints and facilitators for the implementation of policies (Bannink and Resodiharjdo, 2006). Several of the by Bannink and Resodiharjdo (2006) identified factors were chosen and put together, with the aim of explaining the applied method of policy transfer in the cases. Esping-Andersen (1991) argues that welfare states are focused on several principles. He identified three ideal types of welfare states. Although several scholars linked these ideal types to policy decisions, this study did not use them. Another approach towards policy inheritance was chosen. Börzel (2002) states that a proposed EU policy is easier accepted in MS when it is closer to the existing policy arrangements. Therefore, a proposed policy with a similar paradigm is easier accepted than, a proposed policy with a completely different paradigm. For the second determinant politics several theories were identified who provided insight. Firstly, Freier's (2012) argument that left-wing oriented parliaments have a stronger tendency towards government intervention and regulation of the labour market. Secondly, Immergut's (1992) thesis that interest groups also have opportunities to influence the decision making process. To identify the positions of these interest groups, the by Bannink and Reosidharjdo (2006) identified factors which influence actor's positions were used. Furthermore, a description of entrepreneurs by Mintrom and Norman was included (2009), because entrepreneurs can be quite influential in the acceptance of policy. The last determinant problem was analyzed based on the assumption that a thesis creates a positive incentive towards change as described by Boin, 't Hart and McConnel (2009).

Sub question 3: Which method of policy transfer was applied by Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands when they designed their national implementation plans?

Of the compared cases, Ireland applied the most narrow method of policy transfer. The formulated definitions have similar content to the Finnish. In both cases attendance is obligatory. Moreover, the time frame established is similar. The target groups are not exactly the same. However, the intention of the Irish YG seems commensurable with the Finnish one. Furthermore, Ireland saw the Finnish blue print as a best practice approach. Therefore, the identified method of policy transfer was emulation.

Germany used another method of policy transfer. Although its implementation plan does not include a definition of the YG, there is stated that the Finnish definition is commensurable with the Social Code. Notwithstanding, Germany has broader target groups

and takes a more long-term oriented approach. It is more about preventing than battling youth unemployment. The rhetoric of the Finnish blue print is used as a stimulus for stressing the importance of reducing youth unemployment/NEET rates. Therefore, the applied method of policy transfer is considered inspiration. However, the German implementation plan also states that the Finnish approach could be useful for some weaker Länder. For these Länder the applied method of policy transfer is therefore considered synthesis. The second broadest method of policy transfer.

Whether the Netherlands even applied a method of policy transfer is arguable. The main rhetoric of the policy document explains the pre-existing Dutch initiative. Although some new measures are discussed, no connection is made to the EU recommendation of the YG. Therefore, there is argued the applied method of policy transfer was broad.

Sub question 4: In which way influenced the institutional determinants: policy inheritance, politics and problem the designing of the national YG in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands?

Policy inheritance was considered a constraint when a paradigm shift of pre-existing unemployment policies was necessary for the implementation of the YG. In contrast, policy inheritance was considered a facilitator when a paradigm shift in pre-existing unemployment policies was not necessary. To test the theories about the influence of policy inheritance on the applied method of policy transfer the following hypothesis was formulated: **when policy inheritance was a constraint for the implementation of the imported policy, it is likely that a broader method of policy transfer was applied**

By the time of the endorsement of the YG, Ireland had already implemented several programmes which were set up similar to the Finnish YG. The main unemployment programme PTW was up for revision just after the endorsement of the YG. During this revision changes aimed at reaching the goals of the YG were included into the revised policy. Therefore, it was concluded that the institutional determinant policy inheritance was a facilitator for the implementation of the YG in Ireland. In conformity with the hypothesis Ireland applied a narrow method of policy transfer. Thus, the Irish case verifies the hypothesis.

The second case, Germany, had existing ALMPs with similarities with the Finish YG. Within the pre-existing approach some adjustments needed to be made in order to reach the goals of the EU YG. However, there were major differences between the Länder. In Länder with high unemployment/NEET rates structural adjustments needed to be made. Hence, in

these Länder policy inheritance was considered a constraint for the implementation of the YG. While in Länder with relatively low unemployment/NEET rates it was considered a facilitator. In contrast, for other Länder policy inheritance was considered a facilitator. For all Länder a broad method of policy transfer was used, while the hypothesis established the expectation that for the Länder with high unemployment/NEET rates this should be a narrow method. Therefore, these Länder falsify the hypothesis.

The Netherlands already had good functioning youth unemployment policies based on different premises and structures than the Finnish YG. These policies had already reached most of the goals of the YG. Therefore, policy inheritance for the Netherlands is considered a facilitator, also. In contrast to the hypothesis a broad method of policy transfer was used.

The second researched institutional determinant is politics. The analysis consisted of three parts: parliament, interest groups and if they were an entrepreneur. Politics were considered a constraint for the implementation of the YG when a negative attitude was dominant towards its implementation. If a positive attitude was dominant, politics were considered a facilitator. To test the theories about the influence of politics on the applied method of policy transfer the following hypothesis was formulated: **When politics were a constraint to the imported policy, it is likely that a broader method of policy transfer was applied.**

In the case of Ireland almost all political factors were positive towards the YG. There was no left majority in parliament. The interest groups: IBEC, trade unions and the national youth council reacted positively. The trade unions were considered an entrepreneur. Thus, the politics in Ireland were a facilitator towards reform. According, to the hypothesis a narrow method of policy transfer is to be expected, which was indeed the case. Thus the Irish case verifies the hypothesis.

Germany's interest groups were more hesitant, but still there were a lot of positive factors present. At the time of the endorsement there was a left majority in parliament. Furthermore prime minister Merkel keeps stressing the importance of further reducing the unemployment/NEET rates. Therefore, there is concluded that politics in Germany were a light facilitator for the implementation of the YG. Based on the hypothesis, a more narrow applied method of policy transfer was expected. However, the applied method of policy transfer was a broad method for all the Länder. Therefore, the German case falsifies the hypothesis.

In the Netherlands the YG as a solution for the problem of youth unemployment was barely discussed. The trade unions and employers organization hardly knew anything about the YG. There was a right majority in parliament. In the Netherlands the analyzed actors saw

no gain in implementing the YG. Thus, the institutional determinant politics was considered a constraint towards the implementation of the YG. Like the hypothesis predicts the applied method of policy transfer if it even occurred was very broad. Therefore, the Dutch case verifies the hypothesis.

The determinant problem was analysed in two manners. Firstly, by investigating several statistical indicators, based on the by EMCO identified evaluation criteria for the YG. Secondly, the attitude from the policy makers/interest groups towards these rates was sketched out. If the cases had bad statistical scores and the problem was conceived as a crisis, the institutional determinant was considered a facilitator. On the other hand, if the cases had good statistical scores and the institutional determinant was not conceived as a crisis it was considered a constraint to reform. To test the theories about the influence of politics on the applied method policy transfer the following hypothesis was formulated: **When the institutional determinant problem was a constraint, it is likely that a broader method of policy transfer was applied.**

In Ireland the rates relating to youth unemployment/NEETs have significantly risen after the economic crisis of 2007. Although the last two years the numbers have gone down, there is still a feeling of urgency. Something has to change. Therefore, the institutional determinant problem was a facilitator for the YG. Conform the hypothesis Ireland applied a narrow method of policy transfer.

The German rates concerning youth unemployment have a downwards trend since 2005, with hiccups around 2007. However, the actors are still wary about youth unemployment. Furthermore, there are considerable differences between the Länder. This ambiguity made it complex to decide whether the determinant problem was a facilitator or constraint for the YG. Thus, this question remained unanswered. Therefore, the German case cannot be used to either verify or falsify the hypothesis.

Overall, the Netherlands scores the best on the rates regarding youth unemployment. Although, since 2011 there is a slight upwards trend, there is not really a sense that massive reforms and changes of policy are necessary. Hence, the institutional determinant problem is not a facilitator but an constraint for the YG. Based on the hypothesis, a broad applied method of policy transfer was expected. This indeed occurred. Hence, the Dutch cases verifies the formulated hypothesis.

Recapitulating, all three used institutional determinants influenced the designing of the implementation of the YG in the cases, although how exactly was not established. The hypotheses about the influence of policy inheritance and politics were falsified. In contrast, the hypothesis about the institutional determinant problem cannot be falsified based on this study. Two of the three cases verify the hypothesis. The ambiguity within the German case raised some questions about this hypothesis. Thus the institutional determinants: policy inheritance, politics and problem cannot declare the degree in which an ‘obligatory’ imported policy is adapted on their own, although there was found proof that all of three of them influence the adaptation process.

7.2. Reflection

This study aimed to explain the differences in the national implementation plans of the YG of Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands, through an institutional analysis. This section reflects the choices made regarding to theory and methods.

7.2.1. Scientific reflection

The data collection provided solid information to discuss the chosen determinants.

For every determinants at least two methods of data collection were used to make this study more reliable. Furthermore, for all cases there was aimed to find interviewees representing similar organizations in order to make a better comparison. For all the cases there was tried to find an representative of the national coordinator, trade union, employers organization, MP and somebody of an executive organization. The last was not achieved for the for the Netherlands, because there was no an available respondent. This weakens the analysis of this case. Moreover, there should be taken into account that representatives of interest organizations could have used this study to make their own point come across. Through critical questioning there is tried to restrict this possibility.

Only 4/5 interviews were conducted per case. Although this gives insight into the cases, it gives limited information about them as well. Based on only one interview to represent the opinion of the trade unions, it hard to generalize. This thesis did that knowing that not all trade unions are always on the same line. The same holds for the executive organizations. Furthermore, there are a lot of parties involved in the implementation of the YG in the cases. Five is a limited number to interview. There was chosen for this number because of time restrictions.

Another weak point of this study is the choice of cases. Although the choices were methodological well-considered, in hindsight the Netherlands was not the best choice. It made

this study more complex, because the YG was not really discussed at all as a reform. Consequently, getting specific information about the YG was demanding. The second case Germany had very conflicting results. It seems a very ambiguous case on two of the institutional determinants, therefore it could not provide lots of insight about the influence of the determinants on the applied method of policy transfer. Thereby only third case Ireland was a clear case that could falsify or establish the hypothesis. However, there were more extreme cases. The choice for Ireland was made based on language considerations, but another case could have given more insight. Furthermore, by researching only three of the 28 EU MS, conclusions for the whole EU cannot be made.

To provide insight into the explaining phenomenon the combination of the theories of policy transfer and constraints and facilitators was a good choice. In order to fully understand why certain policy decisions are made it is important to understand how they came about. The specialization in explaining policy-making in the EU, especially the OMC was necessary, in order to understand how the dependent variable was created. Because OMC sets out only broad guidelines and goals, the differences between the national implementation plans exists. The description of the methods of policy transfer provided insight in the way Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands used the Finnish example, which was important for the first part of the policy analysis. By combining the theory of policy transfer with a governance black box approach of Easton, there was aimed to create an understanding of why different choices were made. By filling in this black box with theory about constraints and facilitators, factors were identified to make this concept less abstract.

A weak point of the chosen theories was that the difference between several constraints and facilitators was hard to make. This effect kept existing after the operationalization, though there was chosen to take several factors not into account based on scholars experiences. Moreover, in the analysis for some information it was hard to decide where to put it. For example the part about the institutional position of trade unions and employers organization, this was described under constitution while it could have been situated at the interest group description.

Furthermore the theories about the welfare types according to Esping-Andersen and Castles and Mitchell provided some insight in the way that current decisions are influenced by decisions of the past, but in a later stage of the research there was found out that there is no found link between these ideal types and unemployment policies.

Additionally, not one of the three established hypotheses was verified. Therefore, this study has a limited amount of explanatory value. This can be caused by the way in which the hypotheses were formulated. For example the hypothesis for politics can be split into multiple hypothesis. Furthermore, the hypotheses could have been combined. It makes sense that when the already existing policies are conceived as the right approach, the problem is not conceived as a crisis.

7.3. Recommendations for further research

This study had only limited means and time. Therefore, only three cases were researched. If I there would have had more time, I would have liked to interview more people. More interviews at more organizations but also more interviews per organization, to give a more nuanced view. Therefore, I would advise somebody to do more interviews. Consequently a more accurate description of the cases could be given.

Moreover, it could have been interesting to have a more extensive analysis of the statistics. For example by predicting the rates for the coming year. Thereby a description could have given of the problem in the MS in the future. This gives an opportunity to further explain the attitude of the cases towards the rates concerning youth unemployment.

Another thing that I would have different in hindsight is the theories chosen for policy inheritance. They did not give any clarity about the factor. Furthermore, it remained hard to operationalize this concept, which resulted in a rather vague indicator. This did not really help to structure the analysis.

Additionally it could be interesting to test if the hypothesis holds for other EU cases. Like cases with could case with exceptionally high youth unemployment rates like Spain or a not Western-European case. A not Western-European case could provide another perspective because it has a completely different culture. Moreover, the hypothesis could be tested for different initiatives within the EU.

Furthermore, the interviewed and the national implementation plan partly explained the ambiguity of the German case by the major differences between Länder. Therefore, it could be interesting to research these differences in more detail. Maybe the formulated hypothesis could be tested to compare the Länder. What is more another Federal system could be included into the analysis.

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Annex 1: Indicators monitoring YG

As stated in section 2.3.2. a working group of EMCO has established several indicators according to which the YG will be measured. These can be viewed underneath (EMCO, 2015)

Macro economic indicators

- Main indicator
 - NEET rate (15-24) (%)
- Supplementary indicators (1)
 - NEET rate (15-24) by labour market status (unemployed/ inactive) (%)
 - Employment rate of young people aged 15-24 (%)
 - Youth unemployment ratio (15-24) (%)
 - Ratio of youth unemployment ratio (15-24) to adult unemployment ratio (25-74)
- Supplementary indicator (2)
 - Youth education attainment level (20-24) (%)
 - Youth unemployment rate (15-24)
 - NEET rate (25-29) (%)
 - Employment rate of young people aged (25-29) (%)
 - Employment rates of recent graduates (20-34) having left education and training no more than three years before the reference year (%)
 - Proportion of people with low educational attainment level (20-29) (%)
 - Proportion of people with tertiary educational attainment level (30-34) (%)
 - Proportion of early leavers from education and training (18-24) (%)

Indicators at the direct level of monitoring

- Main indicator
 - Proportion of young people in the YG preparatory phase beyond the four month target
- Supplementary indicators
 - Positive and timely exits from the YG preparatory phase
 - Average annual stock of young people in the YG preparatory phase / NEET population (annual average)

Indicators follow-up level of monitoring

- Main indicator
 - Situation of young people 6, 12 and 18 months after exiting the YG preparatory phase

- Supplementary indicators
 - Situation of young people 6, 12 and 18 months after exiting the YG preparatory phase by type of offer
 - Employment offer
 - Continued education offer
 - Apprenticeship offer
 - Traineeship offer

Annex 2: Interviewees

Ireland

Interviewees	Organization	Date
Ms Kasey	Department of social protection	April 23, 2015
Ms Cunningham	Nation youth council of Ireland	May 3, 2015
Ms Talbot	IBEC	May 6, 2015
Mr Bamber	Centre for effective services	May 20, 2015
Mr Eustice	Labour youth national chairperson	May 22, 2015

Germany

Interviewees	Organization	Date
Mr Winter	Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales	April 25, 2015
Mr Schweer	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund	May 15, 2015
Mr Rauch	Zentrale Bundetage für Arbeit	May 19, 2015
Mr Haggemiller	Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände	May 26, 2015
Ms Scheers	SPD	June 12, 2015

The Netherlands

Interviewees	Organization	Date
Ms Westerlaken	CNV jongeren	May 10, 2015
Mr Eijben	Ministerie van sociale zaken en werkgelegenheid	May 14, 2015
Mr Robslagmolen	VNO NCW	May 16, 2015
Ms Vermij	PVDA	June 6, 2015

Annex 3: Interview guide

The interviews were semi structured. The exact questions differed per interview and interviewee, underneath the general interview guide is displayed. This interview guide was used the structure the interview and as a backbone to not forget some components.

General introduction: master thesis, research differences in national implementation plans YG and how they could be explained

Youth Guarantee

- According to your perception, what is the EU recommendation of the YG?
- How would you describe the elaboration of the YG in Ireland/ Germany/ the Netherlands?
- What are the most important facets of the YG in Ireland/ Germany/ the Netherlands?

Policy transfer

- How was the EU recommendation of the YG received in Ireland/ Germany/ the Netherlands?
- Could you give a short description of the elaboration of the YG in your country?
- How was the Finnish YG used in the elaboration of the YG?
 - Similar target groups
 - Similar measures
 - Attitude towards the example
- What are the most important target groups of the YG in Ireland/ Germany/ the Netherlands?
- What kind of measures were taken in relation to the YG?
- How do you think the target groups and measures relate to the Finnish example?

Constitution (decision making structure)

- What is the power of committees in parliament?
 - Right of amendment / right of consultancy?
- What are the venues of interest groups in relation to their institutional position?

Policy inheritance

- What are the most important policies regarding youth unemployment in your country?
- Could you give a short description of these policies?
- Do you regard these policies as effective?
- Do you think these policies could be used for the implementation of the EU Youth Guarantee?

- Are these policies used for the implementation of the YG?
- Do you think new policies are necessary for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee

Politics

- What is the main political division in your country?
 - Left-right continuum?
- What was the position of the trade unions / employers' organization regarding to the YG?
 - Positive / attitude?
 - Right mean to battle youth unemployment in the country
- Were there any other important interest groups involved in the elaboration of the YG?
- Do you think the YG fits within the goals of these actors?
- Was there any actor or person that played a specially positive role in the elaboration of the YG?
- How would you describe the role of this actor or person?
 - Kind of activities
 - Influence on other actors

Problem

- How do you regard the youth unemployment rates of the EU?
 - Crisis?
- What is the general perception about youth unemployment rates in your country?
 - Crisis
- What are the main factors to measure the problem of youth unemployment?
- How are these factors explained?
- Would you regard these numbers as a positive incentive for the implementation of the YG?

Other:

- Are there other important factors that could influence the elaboration of the YG that not have been measured?
 - Why?
- Any other comments or recommendations?

Conclusion: brief summary of the most important points and thanking. Asking if it is ok to contact if new questions are raised during the study.