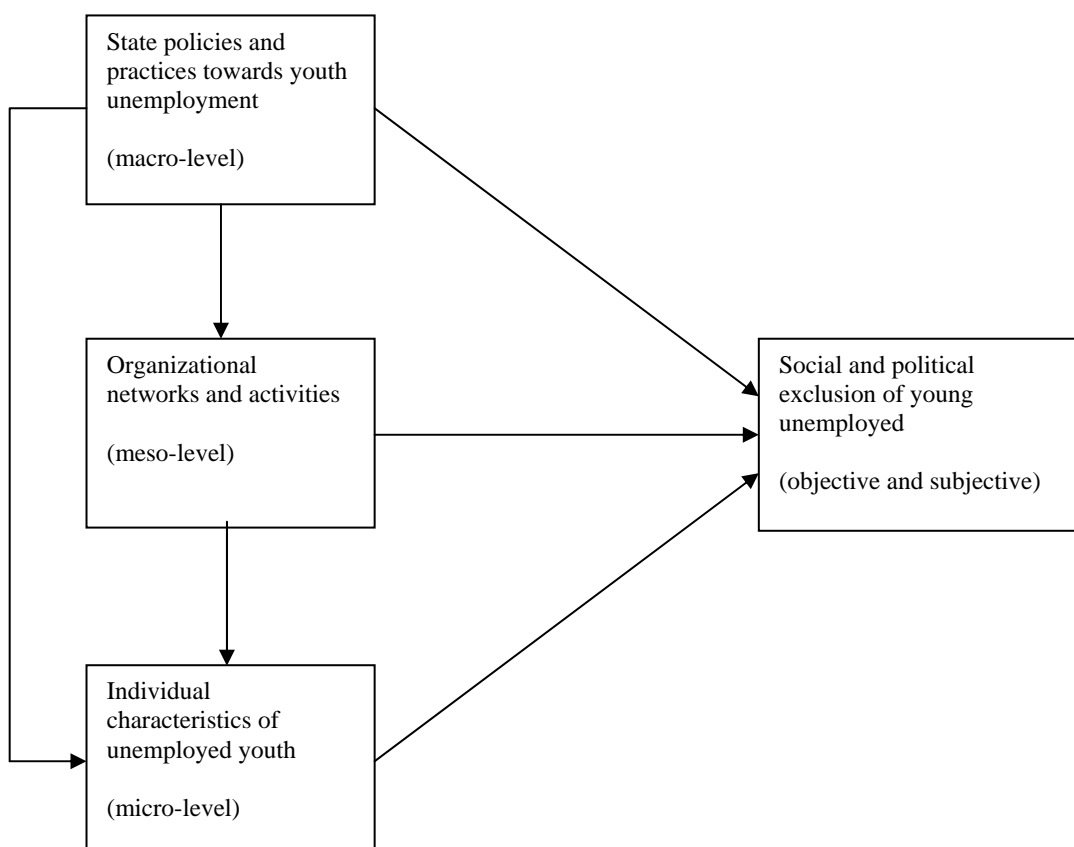


## Design

### Conceptual framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the research. In the context of the proposed research, the concept of exclusion refers to the (objective) lack of integration in the social and political systems as well as to the (subjective) perception of such marginalization. The general working hypothesis is that the social and political exclusion of the unemployed youth is influenced by the state policies and practices towards youth unemployment (macro-level), by the organizational networks and activities (meso-level), and by the individual characteristics of unemployed youth (micro-level).

**Figure 1: Conceptual model of the research**



The proposed research will be comparative in several respects. First of all, following a cross-national research design, it will compare the situation of unemployed youth in different countries. Operating from within the three-level overall framework, we have selected a range of countries so as to ensure sufficient variation to utilize the

comparative method in its fullest. The selection of countries was made according to three main criteria. First, the countries studied cover a wide territorial scope within Europe: the two largest west European countries (France and Germany), a southern European country (Italy), a Scandinavian country (Sweden), an eastern European country and new member state of the EU (Poland), and a non-EU country (Switzerland). Second, the countries studied differ in their relationship to the European Union, with four western member states of the European Union (France, Germany, Italy, Sweden), an eastern and new member state (Poland), and a non-member state (Switzerland). Third and theoretically most importantly, the selected countries vary according to the institutional approach towards unemployment and, more specifically, the unemployed. Both the general conception of the welfare state (e.g. bismarckian, universalist, marginal) and the specific policies adopted to fight unemployment vary quite extensively across these six countries. Put simply, our selection of countries provides significant contextual variations in the ways by which the state deals with unemployment, an aspect that actors face when they devise strategies in response to unemployment and which emerge as one of the three main explanatory factors of integration in our theoretical framework.

### **Local level analysis**

Furthermore, the research will be carried at the local level. Why the local level? First of all, national surveys addressing general aspects of unemployment already exist in most countries. These existing data, indeed, will be consulted to have a broader picture of the situation of unemployed in the countries studied. However, here we aim to focus on more specific aspects, in particular those relating to the social and political integration of unemployed youth. Second, variations among cities and regions in youth employment-related aspects within each country are often so large that a national survey risks to provide meaningless results. It is better to focus on cases (localities) selected according to theoretical criteria and hypotheses. Third, even in centralized countries, policies aimed at fighting and managing unemployment, especially those concerning the integration of young long-term unemployed, are implemented locally. In other words, political opportunities in this field are concretized on the local level. Therefore, if we want to ascertain the impact of such measures on the social and political integration of unemployed youth, we must look to the local level. Fourth, the embeddedness of young unemployed into organizational networks occurs locally as well. Since one of the aims of the proposed research is to ascertain the impact of organizational networks on integration, we must be able to link this aspect to the individual characteristics of unemployed youth. If we conduct a national individual survey, we would not be able to link the responses of the unemployed concerning their organizational membership and activities (retrieved through the individual survey) with the responses of the organizations dealing with unemployment (retrieved through the organizational survey).

### **Data collection**

Original data on the integration of young unemployed (dependent variable) and on the three sets of explanatory factors outlined above will be gathered through a variety of methods in each country: (1) an analysis of state policies and practices towards unemployment; (2) an organizational survey; (3) an individual survey; and (4) in-depth interviews with young unemployed. Each empirical method is designed so as to allow for retrieving information on a specific aspect of the theoretical framework. However, rather than being a simple juxtaposition of methods and data types, the four empirical methods

will form an integrated framework. This will be done on various levels. First, we have formulated several work-packages according to the respective strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative tools of empirical research, for instance, by combining standardized surveys that allow for direct cross-sectional and cross-national comparisons and hypothesis testing with qualitative and interpretive interviews geared to uncover individual (problem- and self-) perceptions, life-courses and coping strategies. Second, the integration of the various methodological tools will be guaranteed by coordinating sampling procedures and tools of data retrieval. In regard to sampling, for instance, we will use the institutional analysis (work-package 1) in order to define the sample for the organizational survey (work-package 2); at the same time, the sample to be generated for the individual standardized survey (work-package 3) will serve as a reference point for the in-depth interviews (work-package 4), i.e. we will conduct a follow-up, qualitative interview with some young unemployed that were targeted already by our standardized poll. In regard to data retrieval, we will strive to generate as many synergies as possible, primarily by matching questionnaires, e.g. by extracting relevant items from the institutional analysis for the organizational survey, and by developing a qualitative, open-structured questionnaire for the in-depth interviews that matches and completes insights and data generated by the standardized survey. Finally, we will triangulate methods also during data analysis and interpretation.

→ I would add a link with city selection that documents city choices.

#### **Selected research case**

- Switzerland: Geneva
- France: Lyon
- Germany: Berlin
- Italy: Palermo
- Sweden: Malmö
- Poland: Kielce