



WORK INTEGRATION SOCIAL ENTERPRISES
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION:
AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING MODELS

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WISE INTEGRATION SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING MODELS

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Introduction

Within the vast range of activities covered by the social economy, those aiming at the social and professional integration of disadvantaged workers represent only a small part, but one that is of particular interest in these times of high unemployment. So much so, that a specific term has emerged in recent years in Europe to refer to these work-integration initiatives within the social economy: *Work Integration Social Enterprises* (WISEs).

WISEs are autonomous economic entities whose main objective is the professional integration – within the WISE itself or in mainstream enterprises – of people experiencing serious difficulties in the labour market. This integration is achieved through productive activity and tailored follow-up, or through training to qualify the workers. WISEs are active in various sectors, but the most common in Europe are : manual labour (building, carpentry etc.), salvaging and recycling waste, maintaining public or green areas, and packaging products.

This paper is partly based on data collected as part of the PERSE research project (2001-2004), which was carried out by various members of the EMES European Research Network.¹ The main goal of this research project is to measure the social and economic performance of work integration social enterprises through the thorough study of more than 150 WISEs in 11 countries of the European Union, combining *three areas of study*:

- the analysis of the various types of resources mobilised, be they market, non-market or social capital-based resources;
- the measure of individual benefits (for the workers in integration) and of collective benefits (for society at large) generated by these enterprises;
- the study of their organisational evolution over time and their interaction with public policies.

European WISEs have also been studied by the researchers of the EMES Network as part of another research project, namely the ELEXIES project (2002-2003). This project had a mainly descriptive objective: it aimed to list and describe the main features – legal frameworks, support and financing organisations, target groups, types of professional training etc. – of WISEs in 12 member states of the European Union. The present paper is also based on the data collected in this framework.²

¹ For further information on the EMES Network and its various research projects, see: www.emes.net.

² The results of the ELEXIES project were published in the EMES Working Papers series (see bibliography).

The goal pursued in this paper is twofold. In the first section, the wide diversity of WISEs in Europe will be illustrated on the basis of five distinct typologies : modes of integration, status of the workers in integration, modes of social and professional training, main characteristics of the target groups and distribution of the resources mobilised. In the second section, the common features of European WISEs will be studied from the point of view of the definition of the "social enterprise" elaborated by the EMES Network.³

1. The various types of WISE in Europe

We will first establish a "map" of WISE in the European Union on the basis of a few key criteria. For the ten countries studied, 39 different types of WISE are listed; their position on the map varies according to the classification criteria used.⁴

The classifications will make it possible to describe the main trends observed in the operation of European WISEs and thus to compare them. This requires, in counterpart, that these complex international realities be to some extent simplified.

In other words, we limit our analysis to some points of comparison and acknowledge that it will not at all reflect the richness and diversity of the specific dynamics and management modes of these many WISEs.

1.1. Modes of integration

There are four main modes of integration in European WISEs:⁵

a. Transitional occupation

The aim is to give the target group work experience (transitional employment) or on-the-job training, with a view to achieving the integration of these disadvantaged workers in the open labour market. The word "occupation" is used in this paper to emphasise the difference that often exists with a traditional employment contract. It refers both to the people under traineeship and those employed under fixed-term contracts.

Thus, for example, through productive work and qualifying theoretical training adapted to individual needs, on-the-job training enterprises in Belgium or integration enterprises in Portugal offer their trainees the possibility of improving their personal, social and professional competencies, i.e. increasing their employability in the labour market.

b. Creation of permanent self-financed jobs

These WISEs aim to create jobs which are stable and economically sustainable in the medium term for people disadvantaged in the labour market. In the initial stage, public subsidies are granted to make up for the lack of productivity of the target

³ See Borzaga and Defourny (2001).

⁴ In order to make the text more readable, the categories of WISE mentioned as examples are referred to by the English translation of their name. In the figures, the abbreviations are used. For more details, see the complete list of the categories of WISE in the appendix.

⁵ This classification is based on CES, HIVA and CERISIS (2001).

group. These subsidies are often temporary, and they taper off until the workers become competitive in the mainstream labour market. After this subsidised stage, these WISEs must pay the workers in integration from their own resources (mainly market resources).

This type of integration can be illustrated by the example of long-term work integration enterprises (France), which offer unemployed workers a long-term job in order to allow them to acquire social and professional autonomy and to thrive as "economic actors" within a participative management structure. Similarly, social firms in Germany and in the UK create, for workers in integration, sustainable jobs in a rather classical entrepreneurial context. In all these WISEs, funding is mainly ensured by the market resources derived from the sale of the goods and services produced by the enterprises. Where public subsidies exist, they taper off over time or are for specific purposes (trainers, guidance staff etc).

c. *Professional integration with permanent subsidies*

For the most disadvantaged groups, for whom integration in the open labour market would be difficult in the medium term, stable jobs, permanently subsidised by public authorities, are offered, including some in enterprises that are "sheltered" from the open market. These WISEs employ mainly disabled workers, but also people with a severe "social handicap".

Thanks to significant public subsidies, sheltered workshops (Portugal, Sweden and Ireland) and adapted work enterprises (Belgium) can offer various productive activities to physically or mentally disabled people. This work allows them to build a "social identity" and also to acquire some professional competencies (however, few workers find employment in the open labour market).

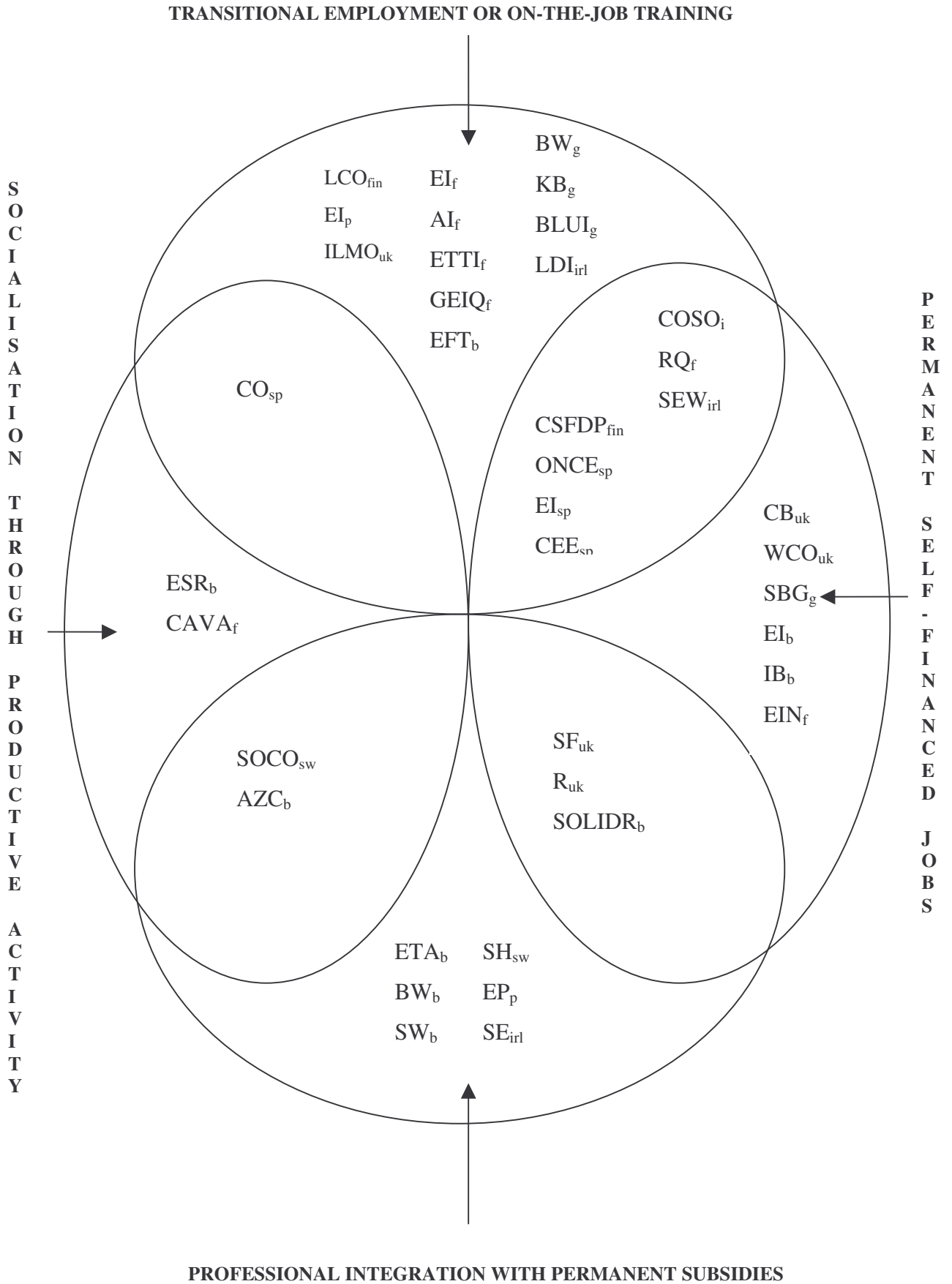
d. *Socialisation through a productive activity*

In this last category, the aim is not professional integration in the open labour market (even though this possibility is not excluded) but rather the (re)socialisation of the target groups through social contact, respect for rules, a more "structured" lifestyle, etc. The activity is thus "semi-formal" in the sense that it is not regulated by a real legal status or work contract. These WISEs mainly work with people with serious social problems (alcoholics, drug-addicts, former convicts etc.) and people with a severe physical or mental handicap.

Two types of WISE are found in this category. Firstly, centres for adaptation to working life in France, whose aim is not to ensure a defined level of productivity but first of all to "re-socialise through work" people with psychological and social problems. Similarly, WISEs with recycling activities in Belgium recruit people with serious social problems to work salvaging and recycling waste, with the aim of giving them back a certain level of social and professional autonomy. Finally, occupational centres in Spain offer occupational therapy as well as adapted social and personal services to people with a serious handicap who thus cannot find work in the open labour market.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of European WISEs on the basis of their modes of integration.

FIGURE 1 : MODES OF INTEGRATION



This figure calls for some comments:

- The majority of the WISEs represented (26 categories out of 39) mainly concentrate on *a single mode of integration*, but others choose to combine various modes within the same enterprise or within one type of WISE. The most common case is the combination of transitional employment with permanent self-financed jobs. This is the case, for example, for type B social co-operatives (Italy) and neighbourhood enterprises (France).
- The most frequently encountered mode of integration among the WISEs studied is that of *transitional employment*: nearly one third of WISEs work in this mode only, and seven categories of WISE combine this mode of integration with that of permanent self-financed jobs. The other two most frequent modes are permanently subsidised jobs and permanent self-financed jobs (six categories of WISE for each mode and three categories of WISE combining both modes).
- *National trends* seem to emerge when observing the distribution of European WISEs on the basis of their mode of integration. While France and Germany concentrate their efforts on transitional employment and on-the-job training, Belgium and Ireland try to ensure longer term employment, be it permanently subsidised or self-financed. The case of Spain is between these two positions: three of the four types of Spanish WISE combine transitional employment and permanent self-financed jobs.

1.2. Status of the workers in integration

Within European WISEs, the status of the workers in integration can be of three main types:

a. Formal work contract

The worker is hired under a contract complying with the labour legislation in force in the country. He/she receives remuneration more or less complying with national salary scales. The contract can be a *fixed-term contract* or an *open-ended contract*.

b. Trainee status

The productive work provides first of all training through experience. The trainee does not receive remuneration, but in some cases receives benefits. The traineeship does not generally exceed 12 to 24 months.

c. Occupational status

The productive work provides an opportunity for occupation and re-socialisation for the target group. Work conditions are easier than those in the open labour market. The workers do not receive a salary but sometimes an allowance or free board and lodging (communal living). This status is close to a form of social support.

Some trends can be identified from figure 2, which represents the status of the people in integration:

- The great majority of WISEs establish a *formal contractual relation* with the people they hire, be it on a fixed-term or an open-ended contract basis. Thirty-two of the 39

categories of WISE studied mainly offer work contracts. In some countries, WISEs use no other form of contract: this is the case in Italy, the UK and Finland.

- In five types of WISE, there are both work contracts and traineeship or occupational status. In only one category of WISE – namely on-the-job training enterprises (Belgium) – are all workers in integration trainees. With this exception, the status of trainee generally co-exists with that of employee.
- Conversely, WISEs offering an occupational status generally do not offer other statuses. This is the case of centres for adaptation to working life (France), WISEs with recycling activities (Belgium) and occupational centres (Spain). Logically, as far as the mode of integration is concerned, these WISEs belong to the category providing *socialisation through a productive activity* (see section 1.1.).

FIGURE 2 : STATUS OF THE WORKERS IN INTEGRATION

<i>TRAINEESHIP</i>	<i>OCCUPATIONAL STATUS</i>	<i>WORK CONTRACT</i>			
		<i>FIXED-TERM CONTRACT</i>		<i>OPEN-ENDED CONTRACT</i>	
EFT _b	ESR _b	GEIQ _f	SE _{irl}	EI _b	SE _{irl}
GEIQ _f	CAVA _f	EI _f	LD _{irl}	ETA _b	LD _{irl}
RQ _f	SW _g	ETTI _f	SEW _{irl}	BW _b	EP _p
LD _{irl}	SE _{irl}	AI _f	EI _p	SW _b	CEE _{sp}
SE _{irl}	LD _{irl}	LCO _{fin}	EI _{sp}	IB _b	ONCE _{sp}
EI _p	CO _{sp}	CSFDP _{fin}	SH _{sw}	SOLIDR _b	EI _{sp}
ONCE _{sp}	SOCO _{sw}	BLUI _g	SOCO _{sw}	AZC _b	SH _{sw}
		KB _g	ILMO _{uk}	EIN _f	WCO _{uk}
		BW _g	SF _{uk}	RQ _f	CB _{uk}
		COSO _i	CB _{uk}	CSFDP _{fin}	SF _{uk}
				SBG _g	R _{uk}
				COSO _i	

1.3. Modes of professional training

Professional training through productive activity does not have the same importance in all WISEs. Many modes of training might be mentioned, but a simpler figure, with two main categories, based on the concrete implementation of the modes of training, is proposed here:

a. "On-the-job" professional training

In this first case, training is not an end in itself, but only a means to quickly provide the worker with information on his/her main tasks, on the use of machines, and on safety rules. This training through field experience is generally rather short (from a few hours to a few days). It is strictly limited to the information necessary to the worker to perform his/her work. Training is generally provided by more experienced workers.

b. "Structured" professional training

In this case, the explicit aim of training is to improve the competencies (manual labour, computer knowledge, languages etc.) and qualification of workers, with a view – among other aims – to increasing their employability in the labour market. This training, although mainly based on a productive activity within the enterprise, also comprises a significant formally organised theoretical part. It is provided by specialised trainers (who may be external or internal to the enterprise). It is generally of a rather long duration (several months).

An analysis of figure 3 shows that only five categories of WISE organise only "structured" training, while nearly one third of the WISEs studied offers only "on-the-job" training.

In reality, in most cases (20 categories out of 39), the two modes of training co-exist within the enterprise. For example, employers' groups for work integration and training (France) define "integration paths" combining training through work (practical knowledge) with qualifying, theoretical knowledge. Some countries, like Spain and Finland, exclusively offer a combination of these two types of training within their WISEs.

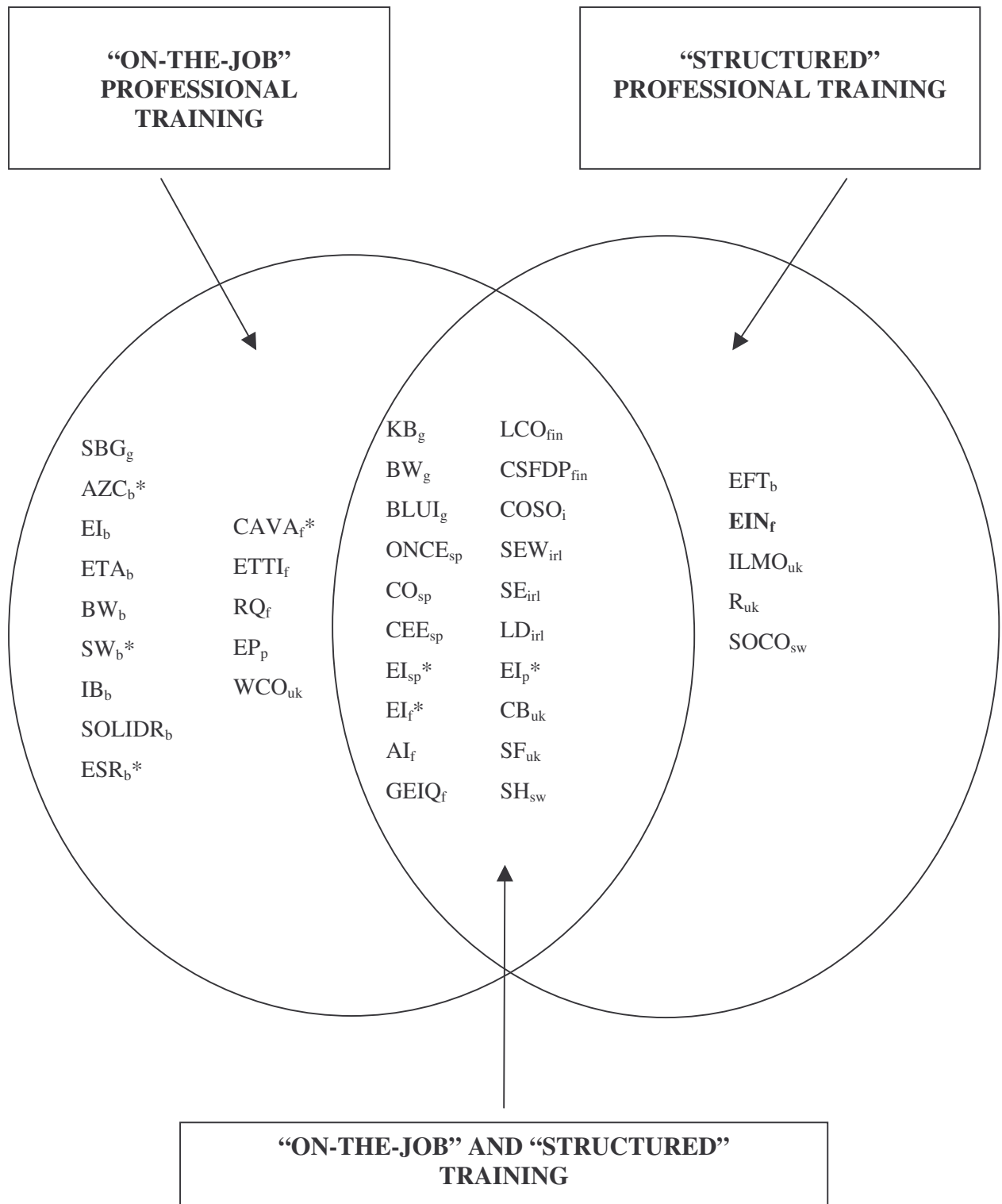
The case of Belgium is also special : besides on-the-job training enterprises, which aim at offering a "structured" professional training to their trainees, WISEs in this country only provide "on-the-field" training.

There seems to be a relation between the type of training offered by a WISE and the modes of integration chosen. For example, "on-the-job" training is mainly linked to *stable jobs*, be they *self-financed* or *permanently subsidised*. Similarly, WISEs focusing on *socialisation through a productive activity* only offer this type of training. Conversely, it seems that WISEs offering *transitional employment* prefer "structured" training, alone or in combination with "on-the-job" training. This relation seems quite logical, since *transitional employment*, by its nature, aims at various types of integration, whilst the other modes of integration instead imply that the worker will stay in the enterprise, often in the same post.

Beside these two modes of *professional* training, some WISEs seek to develop the social and individual competencies of their target group. In this case, training aims at the *socialisation* of the workers engaged in the integration process through an improvement of their capacities to manage social relations, of their competencies in the management of their possessions, and of their sense of responsibility and citizenship.

Two examples in Belgium (Flanders) illustrate this dimension of *socialisation*. Firstly, social workshops hire the most disadvantaged workers with the aim of offering them a stable job in a sheltered environment. Guidance is provided by an "integration guide" who helps them complete an individual reintegration plan. Secondly, work care centres offer a tailored

FIGURE 3 : MODES OF PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION



* Socialisation complementing the professional training

approach to problem-solving for the workers they hire, as well as training in work attitudes (respect for schedules, hierarchy etc.).

From the point of view of *socialisation*, integration enterprises in France, Portugal and Spain deliver, alongside specific "structured" training, programmes aiming to improve social and individual competencies (self-esteem, social contact etc.). This way of combining professional experience, theoretical training and socialisation aims to better meet the requirements of "mainstream" enterprises, which nowadays want "competent actors" rather than people who just follow orders.

1.4. Main characteristics of the target groups

As far as the characteristics of the target groups are concerned, there are two main situations :

- Either there is a *legal framework* defining accurately the characteristics of the people that the enterprise can hire. This is the case of type B social co-operatives in Italy where, since 1991, law 381/91 has defined the target groups on the basis of the following criteria : physically or mentally handicapped workers, drug addicts, alcoholics, minors with family problems, prisoners on probation. Legal frameworks also exist in France and in Belgium for integration enterprises to define the people with social and professional difficulties entitled to subsidies.
- Or there is *no legal framework*. The managers of the enterprise can then define more or less accurately their target group. Generally, in this case, the characteristics of the people hired by WISEs are rather varied. Figure 4 below illustrates this diversity; many types of WISE are to be found in various columns simultaneously, each column representing a specific target group.

It is nevertheless possible to identify among the target groups of European WISEs two main categories: *handicapped people* and *able-bodied jobseekers with serious integration problems*.

Many of the WISEs studied belong to the *first category*: nearly one third of them exclusively focus their work on the integration of the *handicapped*, and all the countries represented contain at least one type of organisation belonging to this category (and they are generally regulated by a specific legal framework). When talking about these social enterprises, the general terms "sheltered workshops" or "sheltered jobs" are often used, to underline the fact that the work environment is adapted to the physical, mental or sensory handicaps of the workers. The productivity aimed at is in direct relation to the specific rhythm of these people, and working rules are more flexible. Some WISEs hire *handicapped people* together with other target groups. For example, three of the four categories of WISE in Germany (municipally-owned social enterprises, social firms and social enterprises organised by welfare organisations) hire handicapped workers, young low-qualified people and long-term unemployed people.

Within the *second category*, various sub-groups can be distinguished:

a. Jobseekers with serious social problems

Some jobseekers suffer serious professional and social handicaps. Besides their lack of qualifications and their – often long-term – professional inactivity, these people

suffer serious social problems which make their reintegration into the labour market very difficult: they may be people affected by alcoholism, drug use or serious family problems, minors under legal guardianship, ex-prisoners or prisoners on probation etc. On top of these problems, these people suffer persistent social stigmatisation.

In France, the centres for adaptation to working life hire "socially handicapped people" (Law of 1974), i.e. people who, because of serious social problems, are deemed unable to perform "normal" work, despite their possible professional competencies.

b. *"Hard to place" and/or long-term jobseekers*

"Hard to place" jobseekers are those who have been professionally inactive for several years (the period varies between two and five years according to the country considered) and who have not acquired sufficient qualification in their school years. Other long-term unemployed people are also included in this category, whatever their level of training.

In Finland, labour co-operatives were created to offer an alternative to the long-term unemployed (especially those over 35). In the Flemish region of Belgium, social workshops hire, among others, "hard to place jobseekers" who meet the following criteria : they must be inactive and have been registered as jobseekers for the last five years at least without interruption, have a low degree of training and have social, physical or psychological difficulties.

c. *Young low-qualified jobseekers*

Some people drop out of school very early and become unemployed without any qualification. Their professional integration will generally require, first of all, training, be it "on-the-job" or "structured".

For example, on-the-job training enterprises (Belgium) and intermediate labour market organisations (UK) both aim to offer structured training and qualifying professional experience to young low-qualified jobseekers with the aim of enabling them to reintegrate into the open labour market (note that, as far as status is concerned, Belgium chose that of trainee while UK chose fixed-term contracts).

d. *Jobseekers belonging to disadvantaged minorities*

Jobseekers who belong to certain minorities (especially ethnic minorities) often suffer discrimination when it comes to finding a job. Some WISEs thus chose to help these groups by providing them with a job and/or training.

In order to create jobs while respecting ethical principles, worker co-operatives in the UK mainly hire jobseekers belonging to foreign minorities and women.

FIGURE 4: MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TARGET GROUPS

PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL, PHYSICAL OR SENSORY HANDICAP	PEOPLE WITH SOCIAL PROBLEMS (Alcohol, drugs etc.)	"HARD TO PLACE" and/or LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED	YOUNG LOW-QUALIFIED PEOPLE	DISADVANTAGED MINORITIES (of foreign origin etc.)	VULNERABLE FEMALE TARGET GROUPS
KB _g ETA _b COSO _i BW _b SEW _{irl} AZC _b SE _{irl} CEE _{sp} LD _{irl} ONCE _s EP _p SF _{uk} CO _{sp} SOCO _{sw} CSFDP _{fin} SH _{sw} SBG _g BW _g	SOLIDR _b COSO _i ESR _b LD _{irl} SW _b SEW _{irl} AZC _b EI _p EI _{sp} CB _{uk} CAVA _f R _{uk} EI _f SF _{uk} RQ _f SOCO _{sw} CSFDP _{fin}	KB _g GEIQ _f BW _g RQ _f SBG _g LCO _{fin} BLUI _g EI _b CSFDP _{fin} SW _b LD _{irl} AZC _b SEW _{irl} SOLIDR _b EI _p IB _b WCO _{uk} EI _{sp} CB _{uk} AI _f ILMO _{uk} ETTI _f R _{uk} EIN _f	KB _g SBG _g BW _g EFT _b EI _{sp} RQ _f ETTI _f GEIQ _f CSFDP _{fin} SEW _{irl} LD _{irl} CB _{uk} ILMO _{uk}	EI _{sp} RQ _f CSFDP _{fin} SEW _{irl} LD _{irl} WCO _{uk} CB _{uk}	KB _g AI _f RQ _f SEW _{irl} LD _{irl} WCO _{uk} CB _{uk}

e. Female jobseekers

For various reasons, female unemployment is high in European countries. Some categories of WISE aim especially to reduce the risks of social exclusion threatening the most vulnerable female target groups.

For example, in France, neighbourhood enterprises hire people with integration problems, among whom there are many women. In the framework of open-ended contracts, these women work for the local development of their neighbourhood: maintenance and cleaning of buildings, maintenance of public green or urban spaces, various minor works etc.

To conclude this section, it should be remembered that the great majority of the WISEs studied do not work with a single target group. Generally, they employ people with various social and professional problems. For example, integration enterprises in Spain and Portugal have "mixed" target groups: the former hire jobseekers from disadvantaged minorities, young people and those with serious social problems; the latter hire long-term jobseekers who are hard to place or who have serious social problems. In this sense, many WISEs can be said to be "generalist", and only a minority of WISEs are "specialised" in working with a more or less well-defined target group.

1.5. Types of resources mobilised

All WISEs mobilise various types of resources to finance their operations. These resources can be monetary or non-monetary. The following table gives an overview of the main resources used by European WISEs :

<i>Monetary resources</i>	<i>Non-monetary resources</i>
<p>Market resources These resources come from the sale of goods and/or services in the market or under contract to public authorities.</p> <p>Non-market resources These are derived from various public policies (in the form of subsidies or indirect support), at the European, national, regional, municipal or other levels. The volume of these resources and the criteria for the granting of public subsidies vary greatly from one country to another and from one type of WISE to another.</p> <p>Donations Some WISEs receive donations from their members, other citizens or legal persons (such as foundations).</p>	<p>Volunteering Some WISEs receive support from people who offer their services without being remunerated. This volunteer work can be found at various levels: among board members (nearly always), among trainers or guidance staff (less often), or through more specific contributions of professional skills etc.</p> <p>Social capital Many WISEs also mobilise other non-monetary resources: local networks and partnerships, trust relations with other operators, sympathetic capital from the general public etc. This "social capital" can be used in many different ways and can have a direct or indirect impact on the enterprise. It often contributes to reducing costs, in particular what economists call "transaction costs".⁶</p>

⁶ Laville and Nyssens (2001), pp. 317-318.

Donations and *volunteering* are often considered as belonging to the same category, that of donations; they are then designated *in kind donations* (volunteer work) and *in cash donations* (money).

Figure 5 graphically presents the distribution of resources of the 39 types of WISE studied, on the basis of three dimensions: market resources, non-market resources and donations/volunteering.⁷

Three quite distinct groups of WISE emerge from figure 5, at this stage of analysis:

a. WISEs mainly financed by market resources

Several types of WISE are run nearly exclusively on the basis of their own market resources; these are obtained through the sale of goods and/or services, including to public authorities in the framework of various types of contracts. This first group includes integration enterprises in Belgium and Spain, temporary work integration enterprises, employers' groups for work integration and training and long-term work integration enterprises in France, worker co-operatives in the UK and labour co-operatives in Finland.

b. WISEs mainly financed by public subsidies

Unlike what is the case in France – where, with the exception of centres for adaptation to working life, WISEs are rather "market orientated" – most German WISEs (three types out of the four in this country) are to a large extent subsidised by public authorities. This trend is also present in the UK, in intermediate labour market organisations: here subsidies mainly take the form of support for the activities carried out rather than the purchase of goods and services.

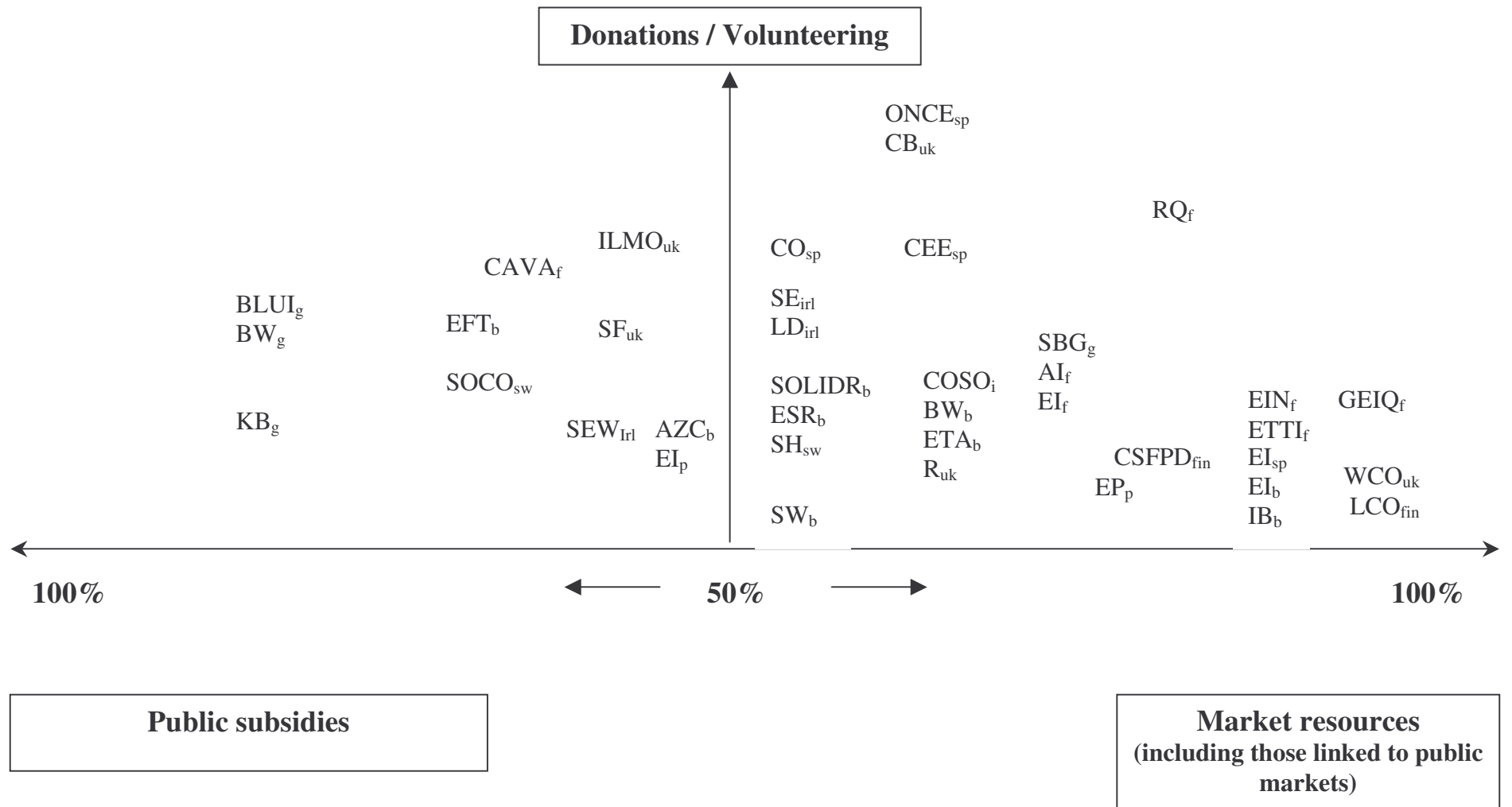
c. WISEs mobilising a high proportion of donations and volunteering

In Spain, with the exception of social integration enterprises, WISEs receive significant donations and/or volunteering. The best illustration is provided by the Spanish national organisation for the blind (ONCE). Community businesses in the UK also belong to this third group.

Beside these three rather well-defined groups, there is a great diversity in the way in which WISEs are financed. Obviously, the institutional context (legal status, current public policies etc.) and also the socio-cultural context strongly influence the relative importance of the various types of resources mobilised by WISEs.

⁷ This figure presents mainly "general trends" in the way in which the various resources are combined within a WISE. It should not be considered as providing accurate "metric" information. Moreover, one of the aims of the PERSE project is to achieve a more thorough analysis of the mix of resources, defining more accurately : 1) their origin (for example : from individuals, from the private sector, from the public sector, from the third sector); 2) the way in which they are obtained (for example : sale of services, subsidies, donations, volunteering); 3) the reasons they are granted (for example : interest, vertical redistribution, horizontal solidarity). See www.emes.net/fr/recherche/perse/index.php

FIGURE 5 : TYPES OF RESOURCES USED



2. The diversity of WISEs and the concept of "social enterprise"

In the first section of this paper, the 39 categories of WISE identified in the European Union have been described on the basis of the programmes of integration they offer (modes of integration, status of the workers, importance of training, target groups etc.). The various classifications reveal the great diversity of social economy initiatives offering social and occupational integration. In the second section, we will examine the extent to which the various types of WISE, despite their diversity, share an identity as "social enterprises".

The notion of "social enterprise" has become widely used in industrialised countries in the last decade. But it sometimes refers to very different realities according to the context. For example, in the United States, any individual developing an initiative with social aims is more and more often referred to as a "social entrepreneur". In other cases, this expression is only used to refer to social and occupational integration activities (this is for example the case of German social firms) but it can also refer to entrepreneurial dynamics within the whole sector of the social economy.

This diversity of meanings is somehow rather logical, at least initially, when putting together two words with meanings as broad as "social" and "enterprise", but it also generates confusion and mutual misunderstanding, especially at the international level. In this sense, the work carried out over several years by the EMES European Network offers a much more grounded benchmark : on the basis of the realities identified in their respective countries, researchers from the 15 countries of the European Union have together built up a definition of the social enterprise which today forms a central point of reference.⁸

Referring to this definition is all the more logical given that the research work conducted on work integration social enterprises that we use here follows directly on the heels of the conceptual work of the EMES Network.

It must be emphasised that the definition of the social enterprise adopted by the EMES Network is in no way a normative reference which would allow to distinguish "real" social enterprises from other initiatives. This definition is rather a Weberian "ideal-type", i.e. a conceptualisation which allows us to locate complex social realities in a conceptual framework.⁹

After describing the criteria for all the WISEs studied, we will propose some concrete examples of synthesis, and we will conclude with the EMES definition of the social enterprise in the framework of the social and occupational integration of people in difficulty.

So let us first consider each of the nine criteria chosen by the EMES Network to define the social enterprise¹⁰, starting with those most frequently observed within the WISE studied:

⁸ Borzaga and Defourny (2001); even before the publication of this work, the OECD (1999) referred to this definition of social enterprise hammered out by the EMES Network in the course of its research (EMES, 1999).

⁹ As points in a geographic space can, for example, be situated in relation to the cardinal points.

¹⁰ See J. Defourny (2001), pp. 16-18.

a. An explicit aim to benefit the community

One of the principal aims of social enterprises is to serve the community at large (for example, through salvaging and recycling the waste of a region) or a specific group of people within this community (for example, through the occupational integration of handicapped people), while promoting a sense of social responsibility at the local level.

All the WISEs studied, by their desire to integrate and/or train people in difficulty in the labour market, pursue an explicit aim to benefit this specific group of disadvantaged people, who are generally not among the founding members or the managers of the enterprise. In this sense, the enterprise aims at a collective interest, or at least an interest which goes beyond the individual interest of the founding members, the owners or the managers.

Moreover, some enterprises have another "societal" objective, through the field of activity they choose : the social and economic development of an area (neighbourhood enterprises in France), the salvaging and recycling of waste (WISEs with recycling activities in Belgium and some municipally-owned social enterprises in Germany), the provision of social services not provided by public authorities (childcare, rehabilitation of affordable housing, etc.).

It does not matter whether these two types of objective are explicitly mentioned or not in the statutes : this first criterion for the definition of the social enterprise is one of the essential keys to the European landscape of WISEs.

b. Limited profit distribution

Some social enterprises, such as traditional "non-profit" organisations, are characterised by a total non-distribution constraint, but others may distribute profits to a limited extent. In all cases, the social enterprise tends to forbid all profit-maximising behaviours.

Most WISEs respect the non-distribution constraint or the limitation on the distribution of profits. Most profits are instead reinvested in social and occupational integration projects. In fact this constraint is often made compulsory by their legal status; this is the case for non-profit organisations, co-operatives and foundations, the most common legal forms among the WISEs studied.

For some types of WISE, this non-distribution constraint or limited distribution constraint is less systematic. In France, for example, nearly half of work integration enterprises are commercial companies (with redistribution of the benefits to a shareholder which is often a non-profit organisation) and some long-term work integration enterprises are "classical" commercial companies. Similarly, in Sweden, Samhall (network of sheltered workshops) has no formal non-distribution constraint : the state, as the sole owner, receives the possible benefits.

c. Decision-making power not based on capital ownership

Unlike what is the case in "classical" private enterprises, where decision-making power is linked to the capital invested, social enterprises often apply the "one member, one vote" principle within their decision-making bodies. When this principle is not strictly applied, the voting power of the shareholders (if any – not all social enterprises have a share capital) is strictly limited to a defined percentage of votes.

In the majority of WISEs, the decision-making power within the organisation is not linked to capital ownership. Participation in the decision-making bodies can sometimes be linked to the ownership of a capital share (for example in co-operatives) but, in this case, the decision-making power is not proportional to the number of shares owned.

Generally, the board comprises not only "managers" of the WISE, "trainers" and members of the "guidance team" (sometimes volunteers), but also workers engaged in the integration process or "users" of the services provided by the enterprise. Moreover, within this decision-making body, the "one person, one vote" rule is often applied, and the election of representatives is democratic.

d. A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services

Unlike some "classical" non-profit organisations, which aim to further the interests of a specific group (advocacy or lobbying groups) or to redistribute money (foundations), social enterprises pursue in a continuous way the activity of producing goods and/or services. This productive activity is one of the main reasons behind the existence of the social enterprise.

The great majority of WISEs operate on the basis of a continuous activity producing goods and/or services, with the aim of providing employment or on-the-job training to their target group. However, this productive activity does not have the same importance in all forms of WISE.

For example, in worker co-operatives (UK, Finland) and in work integration enterprises (Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium), this productive activity – and the sale of goods – is really fundamental, because most of their resources come from the market.

In other cases, the main objective is *training* (on-the-job training enterprises in Belgium) or the *occupation* of the workers in integration (occupational centres in Spain); the productive activity is then only considered as a means of achieving this objective. In these two examples, market resources are not essential, since these WISEs receive significant public subsidies, donations and support from volunteers.

e. A minimum amount of paid work

Social enterprises can combine monetary and non-monetary resources, as well as voluntary and paid workers. However, unlike voluntary organisations operating only with volunteers, social enterprises hire a minimum level of paid workers.

All the WISEs studied generate paid work : there is no work integration social enterprise operating exclusively on the basis of volunteer work. However, this does not mean that all WISEs combine voluntary workers and paid workers (and other statuses) in the same proportions.

While some WISEs hire mostly paid workers (this is generally the case in France, Italy, Portugal and Finland), others have a significant number of volunteers among their guidance staff (we can mention, among others, community businesses in the UK, social co-operatives in Sweden, the Spanish national organisation for the blind, the special employment centres and the occupational centres in Spain). Beside, their boards often comprise volunteers, and the

board members who are also paid workers in the enterprise generally sit on the board without receiving any salary for this function.

Moreover, several WISEs do not offer a salary (in the strict meaning of the term) but rather an allowance, be it in the framework of a traineeship (on-the-job training enterprises in Belgium) or of an occupational status (centres for adaptation to working life in France). Finally, some WISEs do not pay their workers in integration because they provide them, in exchange for their productive activity, with communal living arrangements that meet their basic needs. This is the case, for instance, in some social enterprises with recycling activities in Belgium. However, in these various situations, there are nearly always staff members (trainers, guidance staff etc.) with the status of paid workers.

f. A high degree of autonomy

Even though some social enterprises are financed by public authorities, they are managed and controlled by the people who found them as part of a common project. They are not managed – be it directly or indirectly – by public authorities or other organisations. This autonomy also shows through their capacity to exercise "voice" (freely express their opinion) and "exit" (terminate their activities).

Most of the European WISEs studied enjoy a high degree of autonomy in the management of their activity through independent decision-making bodies. The managers can thus decide the objectives, orientations and management of the enterprise.

Obviously, this autonomy is, as in many organisations, exercised in the framework of some constraints, such as the criteria for obtaining public subsidies, or very tight commercial relations with some customers (especially if the WISE has important sub-contracting agreements with classical enterprises).

g. A significant level of economic risk

The viability of social enterprises, unlike that of public institutions, depends on the efforts made by their members and workers to ensure the efficient running and financial balance of the organisation. The founders of such an enterprise thus assume the major part of the economic risk linked to the activity.

The European WISEs studied generally face a significant economic risk resulting, in some cases, from their commercial activities in competitive markets and, in other cases, from the uncertainties linked to the attribution and renewal of the public subventions they receive.

On the whole, the countries where WISEs seem to assume a more moderate economic risk are Germany, the UK, Ireland and Sweden. Even though some categories of WISE in these four countries are essentially "market-oriented", it appears that most of them are largely subsidised by public authorities and, moreover, their sectors of activity do not present major economic risk, be they specific public markets in Germany (culture, sport, environment etc.), community farms or various social services (culture, childcare etc.) in the UK, or local development initiatives in Ireland and Sweden.

Even though any generalisation should be avoided, because the modes of public subsidising do not necessarily guarantee stable resources, the level of economic risk that a WISE has to face is mainly linked to the share of its resources that is earned in the market. Besides, it is

obvious that, the more market-oriented the WISE, the more is the type of risk it faces similar to that faced by traditional enterprises. This is why it appears that these WISEs often tend to set up modes of management close to those of other enterprises.

h. An initiative launched by a group of citizens

Social enterprises are the result of collective dynamics involving people that share a common project. This collective dimension must in principle remain an essential dimension within organisations of this type.

In the ten countries studied, WISEs are very often the result of collective dynamics involving social entrepreneurs (social workers, trainers, managers of associations etc.) and people representing a specific group or community (parents of handicapped people, long-term unemployed people etc.). Sometimes, a WISE is created by a single organisation, but this organisation is often itself the result of collective dynamics.

However, some WISEs were founded not by physical persons but by the public authorities of a country, a region or a municipality. This is the case of the Samhall network of sheltered workshops in Sweden. The state is the initiator and only owner of this network, even though the board of each workshop enjoys some freedom in the social and commercial orientation of its organisation. This mode of running is similar to that of Remploi, in the UK (Remploi is a very large quasi-state enterprise providing "sheltered" employment to the handicapped).

i. A participatory nature, which involves the people affected by the activity

Social enterprises generally value the participation of users, workers or customers. More generally, they seek to involve the various stakeholders in the decision-making process and in the management of the enterprise, often with the idea of local democracy in mind.

Only a few categories of WISE encourage and concretely implement the participation of workers and/or users in the decision-making process of the enterprise. This is the case in the various types of Finnish WISE, work integration enterprises in Belgium subscribing to the SOLID'R Charter, social co-operatives in Sweden and community businesses and worker co-operatives in the UK.

Conversely, decision-making modes seem less participatory within French and Belgian WISEs (with the exception of SOLID'R WISEs in Belgium and neighbourhood enterprises and long-term work integration enterprises in France).

In most other types of WISE, the degree of participation of workers varies, but is generally very limited. In many cases, this empowerment process is encouraged but is not concretely implemented. To explain this trend, the hypothesis according to which the very nature of the target groups of WISE would not allow truly *democratic management* can be put forward. It might be held that the various handicaps or disabilities of the people engaged in the integration process make somewhat utopian the democratic principles often put forward in the social economy.

Moreover, some categories of WISE aim to offer transitional employment which allows workers to find job in another enterprise; thus it might be thought an aberration, in these cases, to involve people who are only there for a limited period in decisions that have consequences for the future of the enterprise.

Finally, it appears that some categories of WISE tightly linked to public authorities do not offer any opportunity for participation to the workers in integration. This is, for instance, the case for the Samhall network of sheltered workshops in Sweden, the Spanish national organisation for the blind, and intermediate labour market organisations and the quasi-state enterprise Remploy in the UK.

Conclusions

Work integration social enterprises (WISEs) have existed in Europe for nearly 50 years, though many were born in the last 20 years in the framework of policies set up to fight unemployment. Despite the fact that they are often linked to such public policies, WISEs are autonomous economic entities whose common aim is the occupational integration, within the social enterprise or elsewhere, of people who are handicapped or disadvantaged in the labour market.

Through the analysis of a thorough listing of 39 categories of WISE carried out by researchers from ten countries of the European Union, we have sought to apprehend both the diversity of models and the convergences among them.

WISEs as work organisations

First of all, we have shown that the various categories of WISE address, through various modes of integration, the problems of long-term unemployment and occupational inactivity of disadvantaged people in the labour market. This can be explained by the fact that the target groups themselves are also varied. For example, integration cannot be achieved in the same manner for the severely handicapped as for young low-qualified people. These variations in the modes of integration and in the target groups imply the existence of various types of work contract and diversity in the importance given to occupational training. We have also shown that the types of resources mobilised (market resources, subsidies, volunteering etc.) vary greatly among WISEs.

Despite the diversity of the organisations presented in this European overview, we deem it possible to define four main categories of WISE, which are most clearly distinguished by the mode of integration they adopt.

The first group includes enterprises offering occupational integration supported by permanent "subsidies". This group includes mostly the oldest forms of WISE, i.e. those for the handicapped. These organisations exist in most European countries and aim to remedy the discrepancy between the productivity required by the "classical" labour market and the capacities of the handicapped. Nowadays, these organisations, which are mostly recognised and subsidised by public authorities, offer open-ended work contracts. The occupational training they offer is often on-the-job training. Owing to their increasing professionalisation, these WISEs generally mobilise few volunteers, and the share of their resources that comes from the market is ever increasing (more than 50% of resources comes from the market). Among these WISEs, we can mention sheltered employment (Ireland), sheltered workshops (Belgium and Portugal) and the Samhall network of sheltered workshops (Sweden). It should be mentioned that work care centres and social workshops (Belgium) are practically the only organisations in Europe offering sheltered employment to people with no mental or physical

disabilities. Their target group is composed of low-qualified, very long-term unemployed (five years at least) with severe psycho-social problems.

A second group is constituted by the types of WISE that provide permanent, self-subsidised employment, i.e. stable jobs, economically sustainable in the medium term, to people who are disadvantaged in the labour market. These initiatives, which include community businesses and social firms in the UK and social firms and co-operatives in Germany, are generally more recent than sheltered workshops. Most often, they offer open-ended work contracts. Their target group is constituted of able-bodied long-term unemployed people, benefit recipients, young low-qualified people or people discriminated against in the labour market (ethnic minorities, women etc.). Some only offer on-the-job training, while others provide qualifying training to their workers. The pressure to be profitable is higher than in any other type of WISE. These enterprises are thus strongly market-oriented and mobilise little volunteer work.

A third large group comprises the types of WISE that mostly aim to (re)socialise people through productive activities. We can for example mention centres for adaptation to working life in France, occupational centres in Spain or social co-operatives in Sweden. These WISEs target able-bodied workers with serious psycho-social problems or handicapped people. They generally do not provide real work but rather an occupational activity, and not a work contract but rather an occupational status (food and, most often, shelter in exchange for work, for example). The training offered is usually on-the-job training, volunteering is significant and resources from the market rather limited.

The fourth group – the largest among the WISEs studied – comprises WISEs offering transitional employment or traineeships. These initiatives, even though they all share a common goal – namely to help workers in integration find work in the mainstream labour market – are sometimes very different in the way they implement this goal. For example Belgian on-the-job training enterprises offer qualifying training, while French work integration enterprises provide a real job, of one year's duration. These differences generate a different mobilisation of resources. Some survive nearly exclusively on subsidies. Conversely, others are practically independent from any public subsidies. The importance of volunteering also varies greatly. As far as training is concerned, some enterprises clearly favour qualifying training, while others choose to offer only work experience, sometimes with on-the-job training. These WISEs mainly concentrate on a target group of low-qualified young people, or able-bodied long-term unemployed people. The handicapped or people with serious social problems are generally not targeted by these organisations. The main reason for this is that the goal in these WISEs is a relatively quick reintegration of the workers into the mainstream labour market. Consequently, most work or traineeship contracts are fixed-term contracts. We can include in this fourth group labour co-operatives (Finland), temporary work integration enterprises (France) and intermediate labour market organisations (UK).

Finally, it should be mentioned that several types of WISE are difficult to classify in any of these four main groups because they implement simultaneously several modes of integration. For example, type B social co-operatives in Italy and neighbourhood enterprises in France pursue several integration goals for very varied target groups.

WISEs as social enterprises

Another way to go beyond the diversity of WISEs is to analyse them on the basis of the EMES Network definition of the social enterprise. Since it appears that the various criteria that make up this definition are very often met – even though to a variable extent – by European WISEs, it seems that a common profile of the social enterprise combining these criteria can be defined. All forms of WISE share the goal of producing an explicit benefit for the community or at least for a disadvantaged group within it. To achieve this goal, they develop an entrepreneurial logic with a continuous activity producing goods and services, a certain level of paid work, a largely autonomous management and a significant level of economic risk. But what is the most original feature is that this economic organisation is serving an explicitly social goal serving groups who are disadvantaged in the labour market. This project is generally born from collective dynamics involving various types of people, and the primacy of this social goal accounts for the fact that the ownership of share capital is not determinant in the decision-making structures nor for the distribution of any profits.

However, unlike what is the case for social enterprises in other fields, the economic realism necessary to achieve the social goal does not allow the workers to be deeply involved in management, be it because of their disabilities or because they are in the enterprise only for a limited period of time.

This analysis of some 40 types of WISE on the basis of the EMES Network "social enterprise" approach also offers a convincing confirmation of the relevance of this approach and of its operationality. The recent work of J.F. Draperi (2003) on more than 400 socio-economic initiatives supported by the Fondation du Crédit Coopératif in France has already confirmed this, despite the extreme diversity of the organisations studied. At the European level, the present inventory of work integration social enterprises constitutes a further test, covering a much larger geographical area.

It is also striking that this new social entrepreneurship does actually appear in the two ways highlighted by the EMES Network :¹¹ in some cases new productive organisations are created, while in others new entrepreneurial dynamics appear within existing social economy organisations.

Finally, a series of recent legal developments surely recognise and support this emergence of the social enterprise in Europe : after the Italian "social co-operative" (1991) and the Belgian "social purpose company" (1995), the last few years have seen the creation of the "collective interest co-operative society" in France, the "social solidarity co-operative" in Portugal and the "social initiative co-operative" in Spain. Other legal proposals are being prepared, for instance in the UK, where a status of "community interest company" is currently being discussed, and also in Finland and elsewhere. All these initiatives bear witness to an ever more widespread wish to promote and develop real entrepreneurial projects with a social vocation throughout Europe.

¹¹ J. Defourny (2001), p. 2

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APPENDIX 1

THE 39 CATEGORIES OF WISE AND THEIR ABBREVIATIONS

BELGIUM

EI_b = *Entreprises d'Insertion* = Work Integration Enterprises

ETA_b = *Entreprises de Travail Adapté* = Adapted Work Enterprises

EFT_b = *Entreprises de Formation par le Travail* = On-the-job Training Enterprises

SOLIDR_b = *Entreprises Sociales d'Insertion SOLID'R* = SOLID'R WISEs

ESR_b = *Entreprises Sociales d'Insertion actives dans la Récupération et le Recyclage* = WISEs with recycling activities

SW_b = *Sociale Werkplaatsen* = Social Workshops

IB_b = *Invoegbedrijven* = Integration Enterprises

BW_b = *Beschutte Werkplaatsen* = Sheltered Workshops

AZC_b = *Arbeidzorgcentra* = Work Care Centres

FINLAND

LCO_{fin} = Labour Co-operatives

CSFDP_{fin} = Co-operative Social Firms for Disabled People

FRANCE

CAVA_f = *Centres d'Adaptation à la Vie Active* = Centres for Adaptation to Working Life

EI_f = *Entreprises d'Insertion* = Work Integration Enterprises

AI_f = *Associations Intermédiaires* = Intermediate Associations

RQ_f = *Régies de Quartier* = Neighbourhood Enterprises

ETTI_f = *Entreprises de Travail Temporaire d'Insertion* = Temporary Work Integration Enterprises

GEIQ_f = *Groupements d'Employeurs pour l'Insertion et la Qualification* = Employers' Groups for Work Integration and Training

EIN_f = *Entreprises Insérantes* = Long-Term Work Integration Enterprises

GERMANY

SBG_g = *Soziale Betriebe und Genossenschaften* = Social Firms and Co-operatives

KB_g = *Kommunale Beschäftigungsgesellschaften* = Municipally-Owned Social Enterprises

BW_g = *Beschäftigungsgesellschaften von Wohlfahrtsverbänden* = Social Enterprises organised by Welfare Organisations

BLUI_g = *Beschäftigungsgesellschaften von Lokalen, Unabhängigen Initiativen* = Social Enterprises organised by Local Initiatives

IRELAND

SE_{irl} = Sheltered Employment

LD_{irl} = Local Development Work Integration Social Enterprises

SEW_{irl} = Social Economy (National Programme) Work Integration Social Enterprises

ITALY

COSO_i = *Cooperative Sociali di tipo b)* = Type B Social Co-operatives

PORTUGAL

EI_p = *Empresas de Inserção* = Integration Enterprises

EP_p = *Emprego Protegido* = Sheltered Workshops

SPAIN

CEE_{sp} = *Centros Especiales de Empleo* = Special Employment Centres

CO_{sp} = *Centros Ocupacionales* = Occupational Centres

ONCE_{sp} = *Empresas de la Organización Nacional de Ciegos de España* = Enterprises of the Spanish National Organisation for the Blind

EI_{sp} = *Empresas de Inserción* = Social Integration Enterprises for people at Risk of Social Exclusion

SWEDEN

SOCO_{sw} = Social Co-operatives

SH_{sw} = Samhall = Sheltered Workshops for the Disabled

UNITED KINGDOM

WCO_{uk} = Worker Co-operatives

CB_{uk} = Community Businesses

SF_{uk} = Social Firms

ILMO_{uk} = Intermediate Labour Market Organisations

R_{uk} = Remploy (Large Quasi-state Enterprise)

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