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Changing forms of conditionality in Spanish regional minimum income schemes 1989–2017

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Welfare Conditionality: Principles, Practices and Perspectives
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Ron Cooke Hub, University of York

1. Conditionality(ies)

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Forms of conditionality

- *Category*: belonging to a group
- *Circumstance*: means test or specific need
- **Conduct**: behaving in certain ways

Watts et al., *Welfare Sanctions and Conditionality in the UK*, JRF 2014, adapted from Clasen and Clegg, *Levels and Levers of Conditionality: Measuring Change within Welfare States*, 2007.

1. Conditionality(ies)

Traditions of (conduct) conditionality

- *Cold* conditionality: well defined requirements that may be «mechanically» verified.
- *Warm* conditionality: vaguely defined requirements, need «magistrates» or street-level bureaucrats to enforce

1. Conditionality(ies)

Spain has a long tradition of *warm* conditionality

- Rooted in *poor relief* (beneficencia).
- Poor relief reform in the mid 19th century rejected «cold», English-inspired «legal charity».
- Closer to Continental tradition (Elberfeld system).
«...close personal bonds between poor guardians and the poor, close investigation of personal circumstances of the latter»
(Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany from the Reformation to World War I*, 2008)

1. Conditionality(ies)

Two different *traditions* in Spain

- *Cold* conditionality in social insurance (nation-wide) programs
- *Warm* conditionality in social assistance (regional and local) programs, both in cash benefits and social services

2. Spanish regional minimum income programs

2. Spanish regional MI programs

- A complex set of income maintenance programs
 - Contributory social security (=insurance)
 - Non contributory (means-tested) social security
 - Social assistance (regional and local)

Spanish means-tested income support programs

Out of the labor market

Minimum pension supplements

Minimum income

Non contributory pensions

Minimum income

In the labor market

Unemployment assistance

Flat-rate categorial

Employment schemes

Conditional/selective

Regional minimum income

Minimum income

Conditional/selective

Discretionary

Both in and out of the labor market

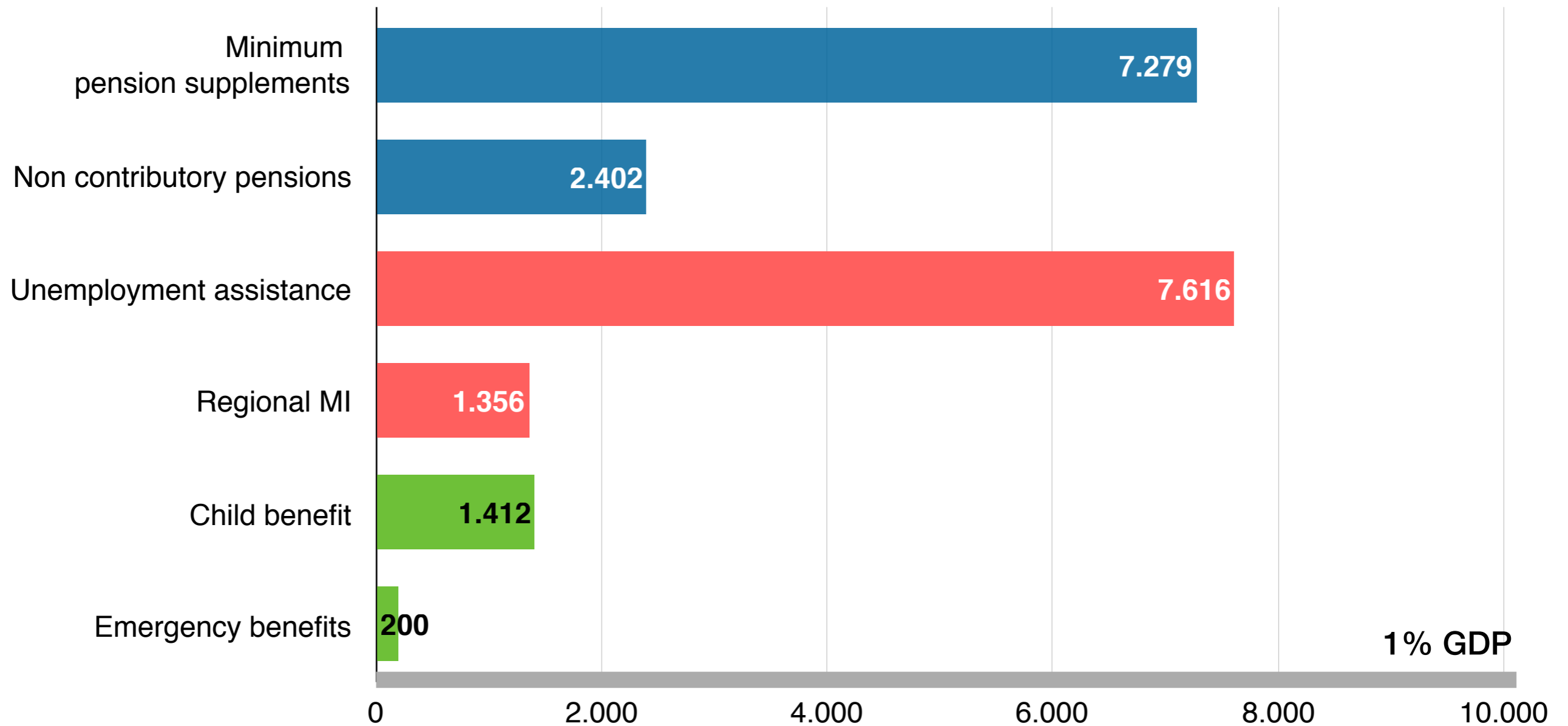
Child benefits

Flat-rate categorial

Emergency/extraordinary benefits, social cards

Discretionary benefit

Means-tested income support expenditure in Spain 2015



Source: Employment ministry statistics

2. Spanish regional MI programs

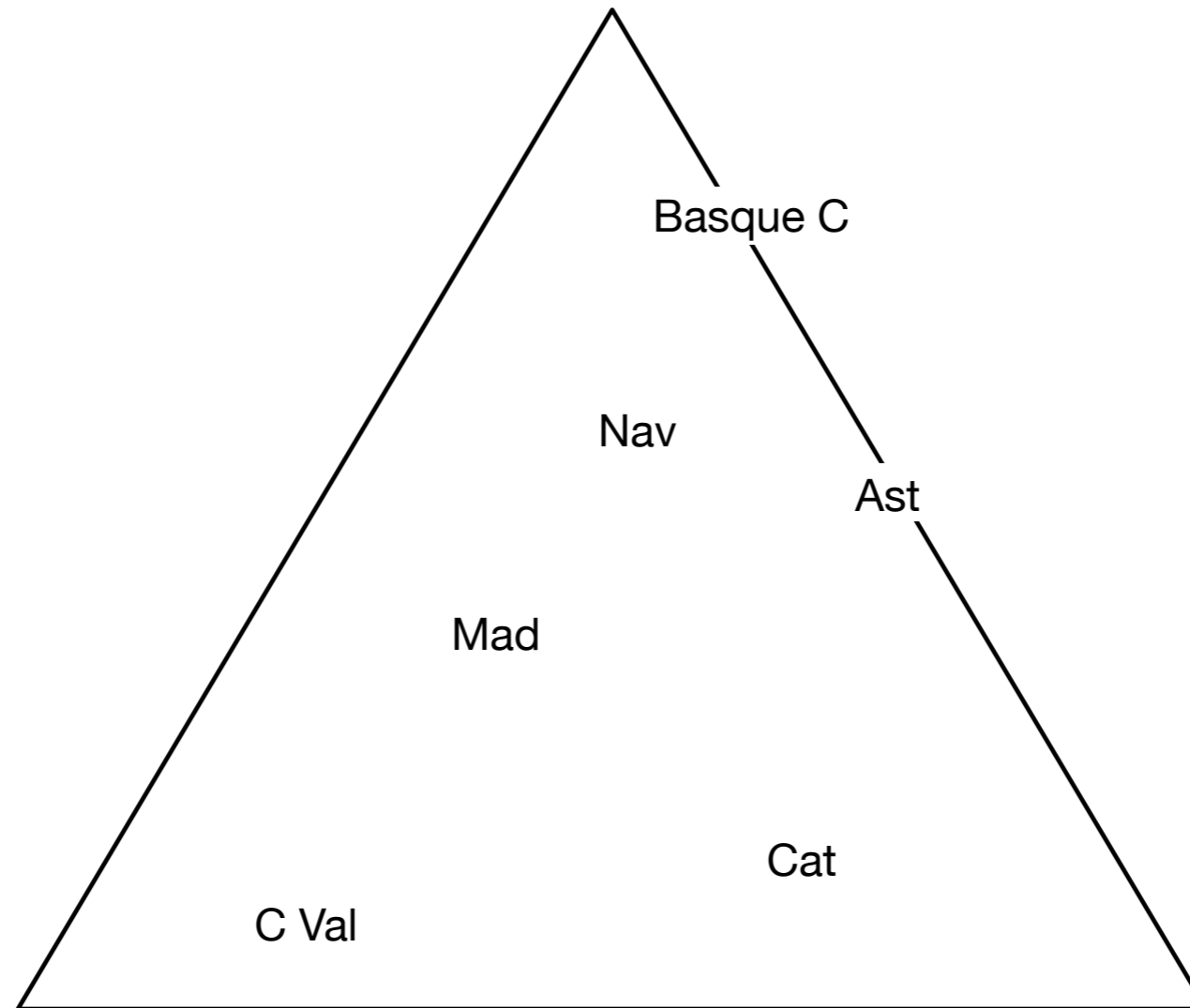
- Created in the late 80s, early 90s.
- Regional social assistance rather than national social security.
- Mostly for working-age persons without disability.
- Mostly targeted at the «excluded» rather than at the «unemployed».

3. Varieties of conditionality in regional minimum income programs

3. Varieties of conditionality

- General «model»: French RMI, minimum income + integration compact
- In most cases, a strongly conditional version (except the Basque Country)
- Very diverse
 - MI entitlement + «soft» conditionality
 - Strictly conditional (money if you do something)
 - «Regulated» discretionary payments

Minimum income
(entitlement, differential)



Discretionary
(not entitlement, ad hoc)

Conditional CT
(selective, behavior)

3. Varieties of conditionality

Uses of conditionality

- Political legitimation
- Cost containment
- *Warm*, close-quarters control

4. The Great Recession and beyond

4. The Great Recession and beyond

1. Eligibility criteria

- Moving back and forth about nationality, legal residence and time in the region
- Adding (and later suppressing) the requirement of «being excluded»
- Slowly expanding age limits

4. The Great Recession and beyond

2. Behaviour conditions

- Different «traditions»: some regions require no begging and taking children to school, others don't
- Strengthening work availability requirements, but with exceptions.

4. The Great Recession and beyond

3. Activation conditionality

- Still strong, but becoming more flexible
 - Accepting it's not adequate for some recipients
 - Two benefits, one conditional, one unconditional
 - Delaying activation obligations

Thank you!