1. Introduction

Martin Heidenreich and Deborah Rice

1.1 LOCAL ACTIVATION IN A MULTILEVEL SYSTEM

The local level plays a crucial role for the regulation and provision of employment and social services. This claim, which is at the core of this edited volume, would have been no surprise in the nineteenth century, while for most of the twentieth century, it would have been seen as unfounded. From the nineteenth century until the prosperous ‘glorious thirty years’ (Fourastié 1979) after the Second World War, the modern welfare state succeeded in constructing poverty and unemployment as societal problems (cf Whiteside 2014), creating safety nets for the poor and unemployed, and centralizing employment policies. While anti-poverty measures had been the obligation of the municipality of origin since the late medieval age (as the history of the mostly urban workhouses shows), job placement and early forms of unemployment benefits were organized by a plurality of actors in early industrial society – mostly locally organized trade unions or trades that acted on the specific requirements of the local economy (Leibfried and Tennstedt 1985, Whiteside 2014). In the course of the twentieth century, the local focus of social and employment policies was radically transformed by the emergence of national labour markets and systems of social protection: job placement, training and further education, unemployment assistance and social benefits came to be mostly provided by national employment agencies in accordance with national regulations, and financed by national taxes or national social security contributions. These national regulations and organizations formed the basis for the creation of translocal labour markets and were legitimized by the idea of a universalistic solidarity among citizens based on the merits and needs of each person. However, it should be noted that beside national employment systems, social assistance systems – as successors to the poor relief – remained in place throughout the post-war period, often administered and financed by the municipal level (although benefit levels, eligibility criteria and financing mechanisms are usually regulated nationally).

This co-existence of national unemployment insurance systems/employment agencies and local forms of social assistance has been challenged by activation in the area of employment and social inclusion. Since the late 1990s, activation policies have been at the core of the new welfare state – a state that ‘puts the emphasis less on income replacement and more on the promotion of labour market participation through activation and investment in human capital’ (Bonoli and Natali 2011: 8, Hemerijck 2013). Partly as a result of the OECD Jobs Study and the European Employment Strategy (Weishaupt 2011), activation policies aim at facilitating the access of long-term unemployed, women, younger and older people, migrants, lone parents and unskilled or disabled people to the labour market.¹ Furthermore, the activation paradigm has become a core concept in European labour market and employment policies, because it promises to reconcile different and potentially conflicting economic and social aims, such as lower expenditure on ‘passive’ labour market policies (for example benefit payments), higher employment rates and hence a more productive labour force, increased employability, and also a better inclusion of unemployed and otherwise inactive groups into the labour market (as a strategy for reducing the poverty risk of these groups). In this way, especially, the European countries have sought to buy their way out of the potential downsides of high social security standards and unemployment protection, namely high and persistent unemployment and poverty.²

In order to be effective, activation policies require a new, coordinated approach towards social cohesion beyond the traditionally separate domains of employment policy and social assistance. By providing not only a minimum income but also social and employment services to those unable to work and/or living in financially deprived households, it is projected that even social assistance recipients and many long-term unemployed can be enabled to take up paid employment. The importance of bridging the traditionally separate worlds of employment and social policies has already been highlighted by Ferrera et al. (2000) who indicated a need for a re-calibration of the welfare state owing to new risks (such as social exclusion, family break-ups, chronic illnesses or disability) and inadequate social protection for weaker segments of the workforce (for example households with single earners and many children). To face these new challenges, Morel et al. (2012: 2) have proposed a social investment state that fosters ‘human capital development [. . .] and that help[s] to make efficient use of human capital’ for example ‘through policies supporting women’s and lone parents’ employment’ or ‘through active labour market policies’.

In organizational terms, this requires bridging the gap between mostly centralized employment policies focused on working-age individuals, and often municipal social support focused on poor households. In particular,

formerly separate policy fields such as employment, housing, child care, transportation and social services must be brought together under the umbrella of active inclusion. Yet how is such a wide-ranging policy coordination to be achieved? The central thesis of this book is that this challenge must be faced mostly at the local level (see also Kazepov 2010, Rice 2015). Local worlds of welfare and service provision are at the core of the ‘new’, activating and service-oriented welfare state (Heidenreich and Aurich-Beerheide 2014), because the traditional welfare state, with its large bureaucratic organizations and benefit schemes, reaches its limits when faced with new social risks and integrative policy approaches such as activation. As a reaction to these limitations, local public organizations increasingly develop and provide their own employment and social services (such as job placement, training, addiction counselling and other counselling services) in coordination with actors from various policy fields, societal sectors and political levels. This ‘localizing’ trend has been further invigorated by the decentralization of competencies, a stronger role of private and third-sector actors in policy implementation, and moves towards a closer collaboration among different public agencies.

These observations served as the starting point of the EU-financed research project ‘Local Worlds of Social Cohesion: The Local Dimension of Integrated Social and Employment Policies’ (LOCALISE) on which the contributions in this volume are based.³ Our basic assumption was that the social integration of disadvantaged groups through activation policies requires a coordinated approach towards social and employment policy, especially at the local level. This is the fundamental challenge faced by new local organizations and networks at the interface of social and employment policies such as the British Work Programme providers, the German Jobcenters, the French PLIE (*Plans Locaux pour l’Insertion et l’Emploi* – Perennial Local Plans for Inclusion and Employment) catering to long-term unemployed or otherwise vulnerable unemployed persons, the Italian Provincial employment agencies *Centri per l’Impiego*, the Swedish Coordination Unions that provide services to the long-term unemployed co-funded by national, regional and local actors, and the Polish district Poviats Labour Offices (*Powiatowy Urząd Pracy*) that are obliged to cooperate with the municipal level (*gmina*). Our research question was how local public, private and third-sector organizations deal with the challenges provoked by the need for increased inter-organizational cooperation across different political levels (local, national and in some cases regional and European), societal sectors (public, private and third sector) and formerly separated policy fields (for example family policy, social policy, employment policy and health policy) (see Figure 1.1). While acknowledging that

Figure 1.1 An integrated approach to active inclusion

the national institutional and political context has a strong influence on the local provision of activation services, we focus on the local level's generic contribution to the coordinated governance of activation. This issue is addressed from a comparative perspective by research teams from France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, based on three local case studies per country.

Our sample of six European countries covers all established types of welfare state regimes: Germany and France as representatives of the continental regime, the United Kingdom as representing the liberal regime, Sweden as a representative of the social-democratic regime, Italy as representing the Mediterranean regime and Poland as representing the post-communist regime (Esping-Andersen 1990, Ferrera 1996, Cerami and Stubbs 2011). In order to gather in-depth and comparable knowledge on local worlds of active inclusion in Europe, the LOCALISE project started with a literature review and document analysis of national activation policies in the six countries. Both the governance dimension and the substantive dimension of national social and employment policies were analysed and compared, with a strong focus on links between the policy dimensions, stakeholder types and administrative levels relevant for activation.

The national-level comparison served not only as a background template for local governance configurations in the area of activation, but also as a departure point for selecting the local cases – the core of the project.

The national teams selected three local entities per country: one over-performing, one average-performing and one under-performing case based on the criteria of regional GDP, labour force participation and unemployment (at NUTS III-level). Table 1.1 gives an overview of the 18 selected European regions and cities, amended by some additional indicators on social exclusion. As the Table shows, both economic performance and social inclusion vary considerably, not only between but also within countries. Therefore, the question is whether local actors in different regional and national settings have structurally different capacities to tackle unemployment and social exclusion – an issue that will be explored in depth in the empirical chapters of this book.

In each local entity, a systematic and detailed analysis of patterns and challenges of organizing the local governance of active inclusion policies was carried out. Empirical research consisted of in-depth interviews with around 15 to 20 stakeholder organizations per region, complemented by a document analysis. Interviewees were selected based on their institutional affiliation in order to ensure that similar organizations (for example employment agencies, unions, service providers) would be researched in each country. Later interviews also relied on the snowballing technique. This sampling approach ensured comparability but also allowed some room for taking into account national and local particularities.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted on the basis of a joint research framework that was reflected in the interview topic guide. The topic guide contained separate sections on policy development and policy implementation, with each section containing questions related to policy goals, actors and instruments (in order to capture the multi-level, policy-crossing or multidimensional, and multi-stakeholder aspects of locally coordinated activation policies). Furthermore, the topic guide contained a short section on the role of the European Union in local social and employment policies.

In a second interview round in the most ‘innovative’ local case per country (in terms of organizational routines and ways of dealing with the long-term unemployed), emphasis was put on the micro-level dynamics and outcomes of activation. Respondents were recruited from among street-level bureaucrats and benefit recipients in the most relevant local organization(s) dealing with long-term unemployed individuals. A minimum of eight interviews with caseworkers and seven interviews with unemployed beneficiaries were conducted in each country. The interviews were again semi-structured, open-ended and based on a comparable but also country-specific interview guide. Table 1.2 gives an overview of all respondents interviewed for the research underlying this volume.

Table 1.1 Economic and social indicators on the 18 LOCALISE regions, 2010

Region	Performance classification	Regional GDP as % of EU GDP ¹	Labour force participation (2008) ²	Unemployment	Long-term unemployment ³	NEET ⁴	Low education ⁵	Poverty ⁶
<i>Germany</i>		119	77.2	7.1	46.9	11.4	13.7	15.6
Stüderfeld	Over	172	65.3	5.2	36.0	9.0	14.6	12.8
Neustadt	Average	142	72.2	6.0	44.6	11.8	15.6	15.6
Osternburg	Under	94	74.7	11.4	55.3	14.5	7.1	19.8
<i>France</i>		108	68.8	9.7	41.7	16.3	22.8	13.3
Gironde (Bordeaux)	Over	108	69.3	8.5	35.8	14.7	20.2	12.8
Indre-et-Loire (Tours)	Average	94	67.0	7.3	39.1	12.1	24.1	11.0
Hérault (Montpellier)	Under	96	63.5	14.4	47.2	24.2	25.7	17.7
<i>Italy</i>		104	63.8	8.4	48.0	24.2	35.8	18.2
Milan	Over	198	72.8	5.6	41.9	18.1	34.8	10.5
Rome	Average	128	67.8	9.3	48.5	20.8	27.4	15.7
Naples	Under	65	46.8	14.0	58.5	36.6	40.5	35.8
<i>Poland</i>		62	62.8	9.6	31.1	14.5	7.6	17.6
Bydgosko-Torunski	Over	66	55.7	7.1	31.0	17.6	8.7	19.2
Czestochowski	Average	52	63.4	7.5	32.5	14.1	4.1	12.4
Slupski	Under	46	52.1	10.1	25.2	14.8	7.3	15.1

<i>Sweden</i>		126	81.2	8.4	18.1	10.6	16.2	12.9
Stockholms län	Over	174	83.5	6.8	16.4	9.7	13.2	10.2
(Nacka)								
Örebro län	Average	109	78.2	10.9	21.2	11.0	17.0	13.2
Västra Götalands län (Trollhättan)	Under	123	81.0	9.0	19.5	9.5	17.0	13.1
<i>United Kingdom</i>		108	76.6	7.8	32.6	17.7	18.0	17.1
Edinburgh	Over	172	77.4	7.0	26.9	17.9	15.6	19.0
Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	Average	102	73.2	7.4	32.8	21.2	16.3	23.0
Tyneside	Under	91	72.5	10.9	35.8	21.6	20.1	24.0
(Newcastle)								

Notes:

The first four indicators refer to NUTS3 regions, the last four indicators refer to NUTS2 regions.

- 1 Gross domestic product at current market prices, purchasing power standard
- 2 Labour force in percentage of the total population aged 15–64
- 3 In % of total unemployment
- 4 Young people aged 18–24 not in employment, education or training
- 5 Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education – levels 0–2, in % of the economically active population 15yrs+
- 6 At-risk-of-poverty rate (in % of population)

Source: Eurostat.

Table 1.2 Interviews by country and type of organization

Country	Type of organization							Total
	Government (national)	Government (regional)	Government (local)	Employment agency	Public (other)	Private	Third sector	
France		21	27	8		2	25	93
Germany			15	31	1	11	14	82
Italy			35	11	5	1	11	71
Poland			11	17	13		8	60
Sweden			6	12	31	2	4	65
UK	2		8	4	12	20	24	83
Total	2	21	102	83	62	36	86	454

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

As we saw above, the local coordination of the varied services required for bringing vulnerable groups (back) into paid and quality employment is only beginning to become a topic of research in comparative social policy. Therefore, we begin this volume with a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, followed by our own approach that takes into account three dimensions of inter-organizational policy coordination, namely coordination across multiple political-administrative levels, societal sectors and policy fields (multilevel, multi-stakeholder and multidimensional coordination, respectively) (Chapter 2). Chapters 3 to 8 then provide a unique inside-view on how local actors deal with the challenges of coordinated activation policies in Sweden, Poland, the UK, Italy, France and Germany – six countries that we take as examples of the Nordic, Eastern European, Anglo-Saxon, Southern and Continental European ‘worlds of activation’. The final four chapters of the book (Chapters 9 to 12) close with a comparative perspective on European, national, local and individual influences on the provision of coordinated social and employment services to vulnerable citizens.

In the following, we give a more specific overview of each chapter in this volume. The main focus point of Chapter 2 (written by *Martin Heidenreich and Deborah Rice*), which lays the analytical groundwork for the empirical chapters in the book, lies on the organizational challenges associated with the coordinated delivery of employment and social services at the local level. The chapter discusses how the fragmentation of services between the local, regional, national and European level (vertical fragmentation), between public actors, private companies and third-sector organizations, and between policy areas such as employment, social assistance, family, health and housing (horizontal fragmentation) manifests itself and can be overcome (for example via central reorganization, one-stop shops or decentralized collaboration in the case of horizontal fragmentation, and by the decentralization of competencies or local discretion in the case of vertical fragmentation). Also a broad overview of multilevel, multidimensional and multi-stakeholder activation governance arrangements in the six European countries studied in this book is presented. The final part of Chapter 2 turns to inner-organizational factors that either enable or hinder the provision of coordinated and individualized employment and social services at the street-level, namely service budgets and staff resources, client-processing procedures, categorization tools and professional norms.

In Chapter 3 on Sweden, *Katarina Hollertz* highlights paradoxes in the local implementation of labour market policies in Sweden. Hollertz argues

that in spite of a formal commitment to active labour market policies and the provision of coordinated and individualized services to the long-term unemployed, neither state agencies nor the Swedish municipalities can live up to this expectation in practice, due to a hindering regulatory and normative environment (for example strong control mechanisms, strict client categorizations, management by objectives and the 'Work Line' concept). In order to circumvent these limitations, local actors are trying to create new arenas of collaboration where they can provide more individualized services to selected groups of long-term unemployed. According to Hollertz, this can be understood as symptomatic of a declining universalism in Swedish welfare policies.

In Chapter 4 on Poland, *Slawomir Mandes* casts new light on the ongoing debate concerning the local governance of activation in Poland. Departing from a detailed overview of the Polish employment and social assistance system, Mandes presents case studies of three Polish cities, discussing why a local coordination of employment and social policies is difficult due to a hierarchical governance tradition, lacking inter-ministerial collaboration and local governments' strong sense of autonomy. Even funding from the European Social Fund is seen by Mandes as creating only temporary platforms for multidimensional and multi-stakeholder service coordination at the Polish local level. Mandes's chapter concludes with a discussion of resource scarcity as a factor inhibiting the provision of individualized services to vulnerable groups of unemployed at the street level.

In Chapter 5 on the UK, *Vanesa Fuertes and Ronald McQuaid* study how coordinated activation policies, which have been at the core of the UK welfare state since at least the 1990s, are implemented locally. Although service coordination is officially acknowledged as a necessary requirement for supporting people with complex problems into employment, the authors perceive a number of barriers to service coordination in three local cases (Cardiff, Edinburgh and Newcastle) and at the street-level (in one Work Programme provider organization). Thus, marketization seems to have increased fragmentation among service providers, not only because local public agencies are wary of letting Work Programme participants benefit from specialized public services, but also because Work Programme subcontractors (among them many NGOs) are receiving less referrals than expected. However, Fuertes and McQuaid conclude that local and devolved government discretion can result in an increased coordination of employment and social services in places, especially when it comes to services provided outside of the Work Programme.

In Chapter 6 on Italy, *Serida L. Catalano, Paolo R. Graziano and Matteo Bassoli* discuss the extent to which devolution has brought about a territorial/institutional and sectorial task division in the fields of employment

and social policy at the Italian local level. Departing from a detailed analysis of local activation governance modes in Italy, the authors highlight how a specialization ethos pervading the entire Italian bureaucratic system shapes both the multilevel (vertical) and multidimensional (horizontal) coordination of the policy fields related to activation. In particular, Catalano, Graziano and Bassoli emphasize that the multidimensional divide exacerbates the multilevel divide. One prominent reason for this is the predominance of politics over administration in Italy, which leads to a highly fragmented multidimensional and multilevel coordination in all three Italian city cases analysed in the chapter.

In Chapter 7 on France, *Thierry Berthet, Clara Bourgeois and Karine Tourné Languin* analyse the challenge of delivering coordinated or cross-sectorial employment policies in France. Although cross-sectoriality has a long tradition in the French public employment system and also in the professional culture of street-level bureaucrats, new modes of cooperation, an increasing role of private actors and new types of regulations challenge established coordination modes. Based on three local case studies, Berthet, Bourgeois and Tourné Languin come to a somewhat paradoxical conclusion: precisely the formalization and national promotion of cross-sectoriality has curtailed rather than strengthened (formerly relatively informal) cross-sectorial practices at the street-level.

In Chapter 8 on Germany, *Katharina Zimmermann and Deborah Rice* address the question of how far the one-stop-shop design of the German Jobcenters for the uninsured unemployed fosters the provision of coordinated and individualized activation services. Based on interview findings from three German cities, the authors argue that service delivery is less individualized than one might expect based on the favourable regulatory context and a strong corporatist tradition in Germany. On the inter-organizational terrain, Zimmermann and Rice identify particularly data security concerns and financing mechanisms as barriers to service coordination between Jobcenters and external actors. At the street-level, individualized service provision is found to be mainly restricted to the case management system and other implicit target groups, while 'regular' clients receive fairly limited, standardized and purely employment-focused support.

The final four chapters of the volume address the local coordination of employment and social services from a comparative perspective. In Chapter 9 on the local usages of European resources, *Serida L. Catalano and Paolo R. Graziano* analyse whether and to what extent the EU affects the delivery of activation policies at the local level. Focusing on cognitive, strategic and legitimating usages of legal, financial, cognitive/normative, political and institutional EU resources, the authors find that strategic

usages and direct/indirect financial resources (such as money from the European Social Fund or financial constraints) are by far the most crucial EU resources at the European local level. However, there also seems to be some variation between countries: while economically healthy regions make less use of EU funds in Sweden, Germany and Italy, less country-internal differentiation is observed for the UK, France and Poland. Another core finding of Catalano and Graziano's chapter is that not only national settings, but also local political-administrative features (such as leadership and know-how) play an important role in explaining local actors' willingness to use EU resources.

In Chapter 10 on national regimes of coordinated activation in Europe, *Thierry Berthet and Clara Bourgeois* explore how different countries approach the challenge of integrating activation-related policies and services across political-administrative levels and policy sectors. Berthet and Bourgeois's main finding is that a fully integrated national activation policy is lacking in all six countries studied in this volume owing to persistent sectorial and territorial boundaries. However, at the specific policy nexus between employment policy and professional training, strongly coherent multilevel coordination patterns are found. Furthermore, at the nexus between employment and health, differentiated country patterns emerge due to different institutional legacies and national political agendas. The authors conclude that political agendas and governance structures in the welfare domain currently still hinder more than facilitate the emergence of coordinated activation in Europe.

In Chapter 11 on local worlds of coordinated activation in Europe, *Katharina Zimmermann, Vanesa Fuertes and Patrizia Aurich-Beerheide* shed light on the role of the local level as a generic actor in the organization of activation. The authors apply a standardized fuzzy-set analysis to implementation patterns in all 18 local entities studied for this book, focusing on the local coordination of policy areas, administrative levels and stakeholders relevant for activation. Zimmermann, Fuertes and Aurich-Beerheide find no explicitly local patterns of implementation in the area of activation policies that transcend the boundaries of nation states. However and instead, they find three country clusters that do not correspond with established welfare state or activation regime typologies: 'coherent coordination', 'partial coordination' and 'stakeholder coordination'. This seems a highly interesting starting point for more research on the mechanisms shaping the coordination and implementation of activation in different policy and governance contexts.

Finally, in Chapter 12 on the individual level of coordinated employment and social policies, *Christina Garsten, Kerstin Jacobsson and Karolina Sztandar-Sztanderska* examine how the individualization of

policy interventions with its focus on the individual responsibility of the unemployed and tailor-made service provision plays out in the interactions between individual service providers and service users in Sweden and Poland. The authors perceive an immanent tension between the individualization of services and the requirement to cater for a large number of jobseekers, ration access to limited resources, accommodate new management techniques and apply formal eligibility criteria. Garsten, Jacobsson and Sztandar-Sztanderska argue that individualized interventions often rely on surprisingly standardized assessment tools in practice, and that workfarist and NPM-type public sector reforms have introduced new task priorities conflicting with individual assessment. Paradoxically, thus, institutional changes that were geared towards a better diagnosis and treatment of the unemployed's social problems, motivation to work and job-search activities have contributed to a depersonalization of the caseworker–client relationship. The key finding of Chapter 12 is that individualization is currently enacted as an individualization of responsibility rather than as an individualization of interventions.

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NOTES

1. Activation policies are characterized by a 'broad range of policies and measures targeted at people receiving public income support or in danger of becoming permanently excluded from the labour market [in order . . .] to assist the target group to enter or re-enter the labour market' (Drøpping et al. 1999: 134).
2. In 2014, 49.5 per cent of the unemployed in the EU-28 were unemployed for more than a year and 30 per cent for more than two years. Fifty-four per cent (2013) of the currently poor are persistently poor, that is they have been poor for the current year and at least two out of the preceding three years.
3. The research leading to these results received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no. 266768 for the project 'Local Worlds of Social Cohesion: The Local Dimension of Integrated Social and Employment Policies' (LOCALISE). The project was coordinated by the University of Oldenburg (CETRO). The consortium members included: Ronald McQuaid, Vanesa Fuertes and Matthew Dutton (Edinburgh, UK); Thierry Berthet, Clara Bourgeois, Karine Tourné Languin and Lucie d'Artois (Bordeaux, France); Martin Heidenreich, Katharina Zimmermann, Patrizia Aurich-Beerheide, Sebastian Künzel, Deborah Rice, Christina Siebolds and Manfred Klöpper (Oldenburg, Germany); Paolo R. Graziano, Serida L. Catalano, Matteo Bassoli, Lara Monticelli and Alessio Bertolini (Milan, Italy); Sławomir Mandes, Karolina Sztandar-Sztanderska and Maria Rogaczewska (Warsaw, Poland); and Christina Garsten, Kerstin Jacobsson, Katarina Hollertz and Mattias Bengtsson (Stockholm/Gothenburg, Sweden).

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