The fight against poverty and social exclusion in times of crisis

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Background

• The EU aims to bring at least **20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020**.

• The fight against poverty and social exclusion is at the heart of the **Europe 2020 strategy**

• The EU’s **Active Inclusion Strategy** seeks to adopt a novel framework for combating poverty (minimum income support, social services and activation)

  – At the same time poverty is a current problem facing several Millions of European citizens – a problem increasing at local level across Europe in response to the crisis.
Local strategies to combat poverty and social exclusion in the wake of the crisis

- Compared anti-poverty policies and strategies in five European cities facing extensive problem pressures (Malmö, Dortmund, Radom, Turin and Glasgow) in their respective WR contexts
  - RQ. The implementation and/or adoption of national active inclusion models in the local governance of active inclusion policies.
  - RQ. The degree and form of coordination between policy areas in local active inclusion models,
  - RQ. The degree and form of multi-stakeholder involvement in local active inclusion models,

- Methodology: Approx 50-60 expert interviews, analyses of public documents and statistical sources etcetera.
## Our five local cases in perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Industrial decline since</th>
<th>Economic reconstruction</th>
<th>Local poverty level (&lt;60% median)</th>
<th>Local minimum income receipt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dort- mund</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Strong, shift towards knowledge economy</td>
<td>Above average and stable</td>
<td>Rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glas- gow</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Strong but not that successful</td>
<td>High above average and increasing</td>
<td>High and rising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malmö</td>
<td>Late 1970s</td>
<td>Extensive; Shift towards service/ knowledge economy</td>
<td>High above average and increasing</td>
<td>High and rising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radom</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Strong; since mid 1990s</td>
<td>Above average, but decreasing</td>
<td>Strongly increasing since 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turin</td>
<td>Late 1970s</td>
<td>Strong and successful; Shift towards service economy</td>
<td>Below average, but rising</td>
<td>Very low (&lt;1%) but rising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our findings.

1. The status of the poverty issue in local social policy discourses
   - Strong and articulated discourse and policy agenda on poverty and poverty alleviation in some local contexts (Glasgow, Dortmund, and Turin). Direct avoidance among key stakeholders to talk about poverty as a social and political problem (e.g., Radom and Malmö).
   - Poverty mainly subordinated to employment-related concerns. 'More employment – no poverty'.
Our findings.

2. The organization of local minimum income support
   - Strong central steering in GER and the UK; Local autonomy within a national framework in POL and SWE and extensive local autonomy in ITA
   - In cases with weak local autonomy, public actors explore and exploit discretionary powers and sometimes join forces with non-public and directly obstruct implementation of public policies (from weak to strong avoidance strategies)
   - Local cultures, actor-set ups and institutional settings inflict on the actual enactment of active inclusion and anti-poverty policies at local level.
Our findings.

3. Local public and non-public capacities to combat poverty and foster active inclusion
   - Extensive variation in local governments capacities to cater for peoples needs. From large and encompassing minimum income systems (UK, SWE and GER) to fragmented and weak systems for public support (ITA). Most extensive means-testing in the Social Democratic welfare state!
   - However, public systems are complemented by non-public efforts (foundations, charities, voluntary organisations, social enterprises), in most contexts – not at all in Malmö
   - Challenge for research to capture the complex interaction between public and non-public capacities to combat poverty in local welfare systems.
Our findings

4. Integration and coordination in local active inclusion strategies

- Coordination between public agencies and policy fields an issue in most local contexts. Strong integration mainly in Dortmund, less so or even open disputes in most other local contexts.

- We rather find extensive barriers between public agencies that hamper the effective implementation of policy measures and public agencies ability to cater for individuals' needs.
Our findings

5. Fragmented and uncoordinated systems foster/requires poverty entrepreneurs

– Both fragmented systems (with regard to public and non-public support systems) and poorly coordinated systems (e.g. between local PES and MIS) expects individuals to act as poverty entrepreneurs. We find that such systems might have adverse effects when it comes to reaching those in need.
Concluding remarks and policy implications

• Local welfare systems matter. Effective policy implementation needs to recognize local cultures, traditions and local politics.

• A local welfare system is wider than a local welfare state: recognize and take advantage of public as well as non-public efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion.

• Develop tools at the best/same political and administrative level to foster effective policy implementation, service delivery and avoid domain conflicts.

• To improve transparency and accessibility of local services and benefit systems develop information in citizens’ rights and where they can get support and services.