

## **Understanding Active Labour Market Policies**

### **An institutional perspective on intended and unintended consequences**

Luc Benda

1. Studying active labour market policies devoid of their institutional context hinders the sociological understanding of their underlying mechanisms.
2. Institutional complementarities are not fixed but change according to variations in their social, economic and cultural environments.
3. When average social risks that active labour market policies ought to address do not differ between groups, it does not mean that the underlying distributions are similar. Not taking the variance into account masks distributional differences that matter in terms of policy goals.
4. The strong focus on rational choice theories in active labour market policy research leads to suboptimal policy designs. Cultural and moral aspects of active labour market policies need to be addressed more in both academic and policy debates.
5. Understanding welfare state effects and processes requires more theoretical and empirical investigation into employer behaviour.
6. Local knowledge of the institutional environment and the individual characteristics of participants is crucial for a successful implementation of labour market programmes.
7. Practices and techniques that are commonly used in data science are also beneficial for the production of social scientific knowledge.
8. Opposing theoretical positions are not necessarily incompatible.
9. The lack of job security and employment stability greatly reduces the quality of academic research and teaching.
10. Double-blind peer review is a less objective quality instrument than people outside of the scientific community realise, due to gate-keeping and personal preferences. Making review reports publicly available with the names of the reviewers improves the quality of the peer-reviewing process.
11. It is not the beard on the outside that matters but the beard on the inside.