

NATIONAL POLICIES TO COMBAT SOCIAL EXCLUSION

**First Annual Report
of the European Community Observatory**

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This report was produced by independent experts,
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of the European Commission

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FOREWORD

This report brings together the first year's work of the Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion. It is based upon the national reports prepared by the members of the Observatory, independent experts who are listed below. These reports have not yet been published.

The Observatory was created at the beginning of 1990 by the Commission of the European Communities, Directorate General V (Employment, Social Affairs and Industrial Relations) and operates under the responsibility of Division V/C/1 (Social Security and Actions in the Social Domain).

The report does not necessarily represent the views of the European Commission.

During the course of our first year, there were two replacements within our team. Peter Abrahamson was unable to continue as the Danish national expert; and Manuela Silva as the Portuguese expert. We are most grateful to them for their contribution to our work.

Georges Abou Sada arranged the translation of this report into French and German. Lindsay Libby organised the publication of the report at the University of Bath.

Further information on data sources can be made available on request.

Future annual reports of the

Observatory will not necessarily follow the same pattern as the present report.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE OBSERVATORY

This Observatory is charged with studying the efforts of the public authorities within each member state to combat social exclusion. On the basis of these studies, the Observatory is intended to assist the Commission in promoting a transfer of know-how between the member states and an improvement in the effectiveness of their interventions. This may, in turn, lead to a convergence in their national policies.

The work of the Observatory is therefore strictly in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, under which the Community institutions undertake only those activities which, while essential to the good functioning of the Community, are beyond the scope of action at the national level alone.

The Observatory was established early in 1990, in response to three political concerns.

First, the Council Decision which launched the new Community Programme to Foster the Integration of the Least Privileged underlined the need for improved knowledge in the field of poverty, in particular concerning the characteristics of the less privileged (Council of the European Communities, 1989a).

Second, the Resolution of the Council of Ministers on combating social exclusion called on the Commission to study the measures which the Member States are taking to combat social exclusion: in particular, in terms of guaranteeing aid and resources and of assisting social integration and insertion into the labour market (Council of the European Communities, 1989b).

Third and more generally, the Commission is concerned with the whole range of measures which are being undertaken or supported by the Community in order to promote economic and social cohesion, in the context of the development of the Single Market. According to the declaration by the Heads of State or Government who in December 1989 adopted the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers "in a spirit of solidarity, it is important to combat social exclusion" (Commission of the European Communities, 1990a). The Action Programme by which the Commission proposes to implement the Charter includes a number of initiatives which give expression to this goal (Commission of the European Communities, 1989a).

This first report of the Observatory aims to contribute to these three political concerns.

1.2 THE ORGANISATION OF THE OBSERVATORY

The work of the Observatory requires the regular collection of information in each country of the

EC: statistical and administrative data, legislative texts and regulations, research findings, etc. For this purpose, the European Commission has established a network of independent experts, which are coordinated within the framework of the programme for

The reports of the independent experts reveal the precedents which exist at national level for such systems of "observation" at Community level. In France, for example, it is the administrative decentralisation to the regions during the 1980s that has made "observatories" popular; and indeed, in June 1990 a new national observatory was established, concerned with "decentralised social action". These French observatories, by revealing what developments are taking place at the local level and what strategies are being adopted by different social actors, are intended to contribute to coherence in policy planning at the national level.

the least privileged ("Poverty 3"). The experts have prepared detailed reports on the measures undertaken in their countries to combat social exclusion, using a common framework. The present document brings their results together.

Links are being built with the other elements of Poverty 3: first, and most obviously, with the various initiatives in the field of statistics and research; second, with the action projects and their efforts to "observe" changing patterns of social exclusion at the local level. No less important, Directorate V/C/1 of the Commission is

coordinating the activities of this Observatory with analogous and related systems of "observation" which the Commission is sponsoring in such fields as family policy, child care, employment, social security, disability, housing, education and migration.

Close cooperation has also developed with the Social Fund in particular, which is providing financial support to the Observatory. The Observatory will therefore take a particular interest in policies which fall directly within the scope of the Fund: for example, in relation to groups which have difficulty in gaining access to, or returning to, employment and which are therefore at risk of marginalisation: young people, one-parent families, migrants, long-term unemployed, disabled people and women.

This annual report may in future years include detailed analysis of specific policy issues, selected in the light of the changing preoccupations of the Commission. A special study of social care services in relation to social exclusion is foreseen for 1991. It may also include comparative tables on specific trends and policies, in order to provide information about the different institutional arrangements that exist in different countries and to assist in classifying strategies of intervention (cf the comparative tables of social protection systems and the ways in which they are changing, produced by the Commission Observatory on Social Security: MISSOC, 1990).

1.3 THE THEORETICAL DEBATE

The notion of "social exclusion" is neither clear nor unambiguous. If it is to provide the focus for the work of this Observatory, it must

(i) be given a precise theoretical content, which usefully distinguishes it from such concepts as poverty, marginalisation, etc;

(ii) be identifiable empirically by means of well-defined indicators (in the broadest sense);

(iii) provide a point of reference for the design and evaluation of practical interventions to combat it.

Here we define social exclusion first and foremost in relation to the social rights of citizens. Within the countries of the EC, it is generally taken for granted that each citizen has the right to a certain basic standard of living. This right may or may not be expressed in legal terms; and it may be precise or only vague in its formulation. Indeed, some statements of rights - including the EC's Social Charter - are no more than a declaration of policy that it is hoped to put into effect some day (Marshall, 1950). Nevertheless, the social right to a certain basic standard of living is regularly reaffirmed in policy statements at national and Community levels and it reappears in the Community legislation which provides the terms of reference for this Observatory.

Social rights are not of course the same across the twelve countries of the EC. In one country there may, for example, be a formal right

to a minimum income, guaranteed by government legislation; in another, there may be no more than the general sentiment that public action is required if a citizen is destitute. Nor do rights remain the same over time. During the past century, there has in general been a steady expansion in the social rights which are formally guaranteed by legislation. However, in recent years some governments have resorted to increased use of means-tested and discretionary benefits: benefits where the element of rights is much weaker.

Social exclusion can be analysed in terms of the denial - or non-realisation - of social rights. Here the most obvious points of reference in the social scientific literature include T H Marshall's essay on citizenship and social class (Marshall, 1950). But no less significant (within the UK at least) was, for example, the pioneering work of Atkinson (1969), taking the UK government's own standards of income maintenance and examining how effective were the government's efforts as judged by these standards. An essential part of the Observatory's work must be to extend this type of analysis, studying the extent to which public authorities have been effective in implementing the citizenship rights which are implicit or explicit in their own declarations.

However, citizenship consists of more than social rights. It also includes civil and political rights (Marshall, 1950). Political rights - the right to participate fully and effectively in the political process - are at the centre of current debates about the "democratic deficit" in

the EC institutions. Exclusion from political rights often goes hand in hand with other forms of exclusion. Political rights will, however, be included in the present report only in so far as they are directly linked to our analysis of social exclusion.

Civil rights - the right to buy and sell freely within the market place - are no less relevant. For market freedoms not only dominate the system of production in EC countries; they also, and in some countries to an increasing extent, pervade the welfare system. And within the welfare system, therefore, the attempt to guarantee the social right to a certain basic standard of living can be in tension with the civil right of market freedom. But again, such rights will be included in the present report only in so far as they are directly linked to our analysis of social exclusion.

To speak of exclusion suggests restrictions on access, whether these are intended or not. But citizens may fail to make use of their rights because of their own lack of capacities or, indeed, by deliberate choice. Where incapacity or choice result from previous exclusions - from education, from information, etc - then they can be counted as a denial of access. But it is necessary to identify the specific mechanisms that have operated.

Here, of course, comparative study of different national systems can be particularly illuminating. For within individual countries efforts have been - and are being - made to identify and remove these mechanisms of exclusion. Comparisons are liable to put in

question patterns of social exclusion which have until now been taken for granted within a country; to expose the interests of particular actors in the perpetuation of such exclusion; and to suggest new policy initiatives, including perhaps the abandonment of certain well-established practices and interventions. At the same time, cross-national comparisons can reveal variations in the precision, the content and the coverage of these social rights of citizenship in the countries of the Community.

To repeat, we define social exclusion in relation, first of all, to social rights. We investigate what social rights the citizen has to employment, housing, health care, etc; how effectively national policies enable citizens to secure these rights; and what are the barriers which exclude people from these rights.

But this is only the first step. We go on, secondly, to study the evidence that where citizens are unable to secure their social rights, they will tend to suffer generalised and persisting disadvantage and their social and occupational participation will be undermined. The Observatory therefore makes use of studies of multiple, persisting and cumulative disadvantage. We refer to patterns of generalised disadvantage in terms of education, training, employment, housing, financial resources, etc; and we have investigated whether those who suffer such disadvantages have substantially lower chances than the rest of the population of gaining access to the major social institutions.

For this work, the most obvious points of reference in the scientific literature include Townsend's work on poverty and deprivation (Townsend, 1979). Within this literature, one of the principal points of debate has been the identification of discontinuities in the distribution of disadvantage which separate one sub-group of the population from the mainstream (Robbins, 1990). This scientific debate is of particular interest for the work of the Observatory, highlighting as it does the ways in which inadequate resources and the denial of access to social rights can also involve separation from the normal living patterns of the mass of the population.

It is, of course, a matter for debate as to how far the patterns of disadvantage which research reveals can be taken as demonstrating the ineffectiveness of existing policies or as establishing a case for new interventions by the public authorities. Some writers have been ready, for example, to take persisting inequalities in educational achievement between different social classes or between people of different ethnicities as sufficient to demonstrate the failure of the educational system to provide equal access and opportunity (Halsey, 1972, Chapter 1). But even among these writers, there is disagreement as to how far changes in educational policy alone will suffice to ensure equal access. Other writers, however, are ready to regard these educational inequalities as the result of choices and incapacities which reside in the individual and the family concerned, except where specific

mechanisms of exclusion can be identified. And some see these persisting inequalities as the perverse consequences of over-extended public intervention, rather than as evidence that any increased intervention is justified.

The Observatory and this report will not be able to escape from these debates. Here again, however, comparative study of different national systems can be particularly illuminating: first, to display the extent to which such inequalities and disadvantages reappear, in the same form and to the same extent, in different social systems; secondly, to reveal the political choices which different countries have made as to the public effort that should be made to combat specific disadvantages.

1.4 POLICIES TO COMBAT SOCIAL EXCLUSION

We have been charged with studying the efforts of the public authorities within each member state to combat social exclusion. This is not without fundamental difficulties.

For a start, for many national governments social exclusion is not an explicit policy concern or point of reference. They tend to regard social inclusion and well-being as being determined by the general condition of the economy and the labour market, rather than by measures focussed specifically on social disadvantage and exclusion. Even social policies are framed more in terms of the delivery

of particular services than in terms of social exclusion. Those organisations - governmental or non-governmental - which seek to combat social disadvantage generally focus their activities upon one particular policy area or population group, rather than upon social disadvantage and social exclusion in general.

In so far as governments hold to larger concerns in their social and employment policies, these may be very different from those which preoccupy this Observatory. The UK Government, for example, has been concerned less with social integration and patterns of distributive outcome than with introducing improved value for money and greater consumer choice. Public policy has been aimed at producing a society in which individual citizens can compete freely in the supply and purchase of good and services and are led by that competition to maximise societal efficiency. Consumer choice and competitive efficiency are, moreover, defended as being at the very heart of the liberal model of citizenship, and as preferable to social integration and exclusion as guides for public policies and their evaluation.

The design and evaluation of public policies are in any case deficient. In some countries, there is a serious lack of research into the impact of social programmes, or their consequences for social exclusion. In the Netherlands, the government's own 1990 Social and Cultural Report is sceptical as to the effectiveness of government policies and charges that new policies are being developed

without any clear rationale. In Ireland, despite the high expenditure on health care, there is no information on the differential impact of health policies, or whether health services get through to those who need them, or whether access and use are influenced by levels of income or education, for instance. Nor are there any comprehensive epidemiological and morbidity statistics which would show who is most likely to get ill. Even that most basic indicator, infant mortality rates, is not broken down by income or class. Italy, similarly, suffers from a great lack of data on utilisation of health and social services. It is doubtful whether this Observatory can offer any systematic assessment of policies where the national authorities do not.

The work of the Observatory is therefore limited by that which is already in train in the countries which are being observed.

1.5 METHODOLOGY OF THE OBSERVATORY

The number of activities and policies to be included in the field of interest of the Observatory could become unmanageably vast, unless some clear principles of selection can be established. The same goes for the cast of actors. For this first year of our work, we have sought to concentrate upon the areas of policy highlighted by the Council Resolution on Social Exclusion, but even this provides too broad an agenda and the result has been some unevenness of coverage, as different national experts have in their reports concentrated on

somewhat different fields. This, as well as the limitations on the length which this synthesis report can be, mean that the latter is illustrative rather than comprehensive.

It is already clear that our work will be severely hampered by the lack of up-to-date and comparable data on disadvantage and policy effectiveness. The data which are available on the cumulation of disadvantages are particularly limited. And of course, socially excluded people are also likely to be excluded from statistics derived from surveys: the homeless and the institutionalised population for example. For the homeless population, charitable organisations may be able to offer some data, but their data are often only rudimentary and their territorial coverage is very uneven.

The data which are available are also shaped and limited by divisions of administrative responsibility. In Spain, for example, the devolution of administrative responsibilities to the regions, at precisely the moment when Spain's statistical systems are being modernised, means that many of the improvements in information collection are being undertaken on a decentralised - and to some extent uncoordinated - basis.

The Portuguese expert has sought to overcome some of these deficiencies by going directly to the relevant public agencies, in order to find out about their actions and policies but also to discover their attitudes towards the proposed Observatory. This enquiry provides an interesting model for bringing the Observatory to the attention of

national agencies and for orienting it towards their interests and perspectives, as well as those of the EC institutions. The positive response received in Lisbon suggests that it may be possible to develop some sort of antenna within each national government, in order to receive up-to-date information of policy developments. However, it also highlights the central dilemma that faces the Observatory: on the one hand, the potential interest of the public authorities in its work; on the other, the inadequacies of the information available from those same public authorities, even concerning the extent to which they meet their own declared policy goals.

Finally, we have had to consider whether an Observatory which is located at Community level should concern itself with intra-country variations in efforts to combat social exclusion, or only with national "averages" and typical cases. In general, in the interests of an economy of effort, it would seem best to focus on the latter. However, there are some circumstances where this report also concerns itself with variations within countries. In some countries there are major variations in levels of economic development and in the pattern of social exclusion and disadvantage with which the public authorities are confronted: for example, the contrasts between west and east Germany and between north and south Italy. Second, in some cases there is sufficient decentralisation of policy-making powers, as well as responsibilities for service provision, to allow significantly different policies for combating

exclusion to develop. Thus, for example, in Belgium, substantial areas of social and employment policy have been devolved to the sub-national level (the Communities and the regions); and in Italy, the fragmented development of the welfare system means that it is difficult to delineate any "average" situation for the country as a whole.

1.6 CONCLUSION

The next chapter examines the cast of actors and the interests which they pursue in relation to social exclusion. Chapters 3-5 are concerned with policies and their consequences for patterns of social exclusion. Chapter 6 draws together some of the principal conclusions, both substantive and methodological, of this first report.

CHAPTER 2

WHO DOES AND SAYS WHAT?

2.1 THE CAST OF ACTORS

Who does what? Any comparison between the countries of the European Community can make little progress for as long as the complexities of different national administrations remain obscure. These administrative arrangements depend upon the social history of a country and the mutual accommodations that have been reached among the principal political actors: accommodations in which social and employment policies are one key element. But these accommodations are rarely stable for long periods. It is therefore also important to notice the shifting cast of actors, the new patterns of policy and administrative arrangements which they establish and the consequences which these changes can have for the exercise of social rights by individual citizens.

i. In our studies of policies within the countries of the Community, we have been faced with significant changes that have been taking place in the division of responsibilities between national, regional and local government. These changes can affect the channels by which ordinary citizens participate politically and secure their social rights.

In the Netherlands, the Social

Renewal Policy of recent years, while it involves little if any additional expenditure, does involve some significant increase in the responsibilities of local authorities for efforts to combat social disadvantage: an increase that has been contested by the social partners and the opposition parties. This follows a period when, during the 1980s, some of the efforts of the local authorities to expand their powers in the social field were outlawed by the central government. In Belgium, devolution of administrative responsibilities to the regions and the Communities has been a significant feature of recent years. Substantial additional financial resources have been allocated to cities in Flanders to support vulnerable population groups: these initiatives have been stimulated in part by fears that large concentrations of disadvantage may fuel inter-ethnic conflicts. In Spain, a new integrated plan for basic personal social services was agreed in 1988 between the central, regional and local administrations, aimed at developing local centres of social services.

In some cases, particular local or regional authorities have emerged as pioneers of social welfare reform and policy evaluation for their countries. In France, local initiatives in providing a minimum income (CERC, 1988) supplied the stimulus for the larger national effort initiated in 1988. In Spain, the Basque government has pioneered a universal health service and a minimum income.

During the 1990s it is possible that these changes will be driven, in part, by the renegotiation of political powers between the EC institutions and the national authorities: a renegotiation which affects their relationships with regional and local authorities also. The EC institutions have for some years been intervening on a very limited scale in efforts to combat social exclusion, for example through pilot programmes in the fields of poverty and disability; now, however, this intervention could be expanded, depending on the social policy decisions taken by the current inter-governmental conferences.

ii. In Belgium and the Netherlands, the ideological or confessional “pillars” - nations within a nation - have traditionally been able to cement the loyalty of their followers in part through the welfare services that they provide. But in recent decades, the influence of these pillars - or, at least, their ideological basis - has been declining.

iii. The “social partners” - whether or not such a partnership is manifest - must also be counted among the cast of principal actors. First, because of their contribution to broader policy-making at government level: or indeed, in some countries, their expropriation of specific parts of the policy-making process. Second, because they shape some of the major social institutions and milieux whose accessibility or otherwise governs patterns of social disadvantage. And indeed, in the UK for example, the government has been seeking to stimulate still greater

participation and funding from the private sector for youth training, by linking it more closely to the needs of employers, so as to reduce the burden on the public purse. The strategies which are pursued by the social partners during the 1990s will no doubt be shaped, to a considerable extent, by the way that they perceive the opportunities and dangers created by the European Single Market for employment, training and industrial relations.

iv. Finally, changes are evident in the roles played by the different sectors of welfare at local, regional or national level: public provision, the commercial sector, the voluntary and not-for-profit sector, the family and the informal local community. These shifts will, in turn, affect the relative weight which is given to social rights - the collective guarantee of certain outcomes - and to civil rights - the right of individuals and organisations to pursue the opportunities which the market place offers them (Marshall, 1950).

Again, developments at an EC level - in particular, the creation of the Single Market - could have a substantial effect on the relative weights of these different sectors. Enlarged market opportunities could, for example, encourage expansion of the commercial sector in residential care of the elderly; increased geographical mobility could undermine the capacity of the family and the local community to discharge their welfare roles. These developments are difficult to predict. Nevertheless, precisely for this reason, observation of developments on a regular basis

will become imperative if policies are to be effective and to have a preventive, and not merely as reactive, role.

Within individual countries, there are then additional factors - and political projects - promoting inter-sectoral shifts. In the UK, recent and current changes in the administration of government - on "market" principles - have been re-shaping the social policy agenda and radically re-defining the cast of actors, with industrial and commercial interests becoming much more significant. In housing policy, for example, the restrictions on local authority house-building have been matched by encouragement not only to owner occupation but also to housing associations, as the main future providers of subsidised rented housing. In the Netherlands, however, in health care at least, it is the market which is under attack. There, the mixed economy of health insurance - private insurance and the health insurance funds - is coming under increasing criticism for the inequalities which it produces and the lack of mutual solidarity which it involves.

In Spain, there is a resurgence in the activities of the non-governmental organisations. And in Italy, local, national and international religious institutions such as Caritas have developed a significant role in relation to drug addicts, homeless people and Third World immigrants, acting as the main advisers to government and helping to determine how these "problems" are perceived within the wider society. The experience of these organisations of working

within these particular areas then shapes the debate about the role of the voluntary sector more generally within the Italian welfare system.

When, in later chapters, we examine the mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion that are evident in different countries, it is to the specific lines of demarcation, conflict and collaboration within these shifting casts of actors that we shall return.

2.2 THE POLITICAL & SCIENTIFIC DEBATES

If it is important to identify the cast of actors, it is no less important to be aware of the "script" which they are following - and designing. This can help to make sense of the policy choices and priorities which have been made in different countries; it can also help in identifying the possible interests of key decision-makers as far as the work of this Observatory is concerned.

It is evident that the different actors identified earlier in this chapter are divided in their perceptions of disadvantage, poverty and exclusion. In Spain, for example, the central government points to economic growth as being both necessary and sufficient to reduce social exclusion, coupled with social services to meet specific needs; many of the regional governments, however, support a system of minimum income; the trade unions focus their attention upon unemployment and precarious employment.

Various of the national policy

debates which are under way appear particularly relevant to our concern with social exclusion. In France and Denmark, for example, fears are common that a dual society may be developing: one privileged and secure, the other insecure and marginalised. From a rather different point of view, some of the same trends are cited by government politicians in the UK who, echoing US debates, fear a growing "underclass", but in terms which tend to blame public welfare for allegedly disabling the recipients and unintentionally inducing their social exclusion.

In several countries debates are under way about the links between policies to combat exclusion and labour market policies. In Spain, for example, the government takes the view that income maintenance programmes are by themselves inferior to programmes of re-insertion, especially for young people: they may therefore merely perpetuate dependency and, arguably, exclusion. In France, similarly, young people below the age of 25 are excluded from the *Revenu Minimum d'Insertion* because of the priority which they receive in vocational training programmes. In the Netherlands, the political debate on the "Social Renewal Programme" highlights the role of labour as a means of social integration.

In many countries the advent of the Single Market is shaping the national debate. The prospect of open frontiers has, for example, fuelled debates concerning migration and social exclusion. And in countries such as Greece, the increasing strains which the

economic restructuring of the Single Market seems likely to impose on the traditional forms of social support offered by the family and the local community can be expected to provoke a vigorous debate on social exclusion during the 1990s.

Finally, the changes in central and eastern Europe overshadow much of the debate in Germany, in particular, but can be expected, with growing migration to the EC countries, to cast a still wider shadow (Ronge, 1991).

It is to these debates in the various countries of the Community that this report will at various points return.

CHAPTER 3

SECTORAL POLICIES AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we ask three sets of questions concerning the various dimensions of social exclusion which were identified in the Council Resolution.

i. Standards and Coverage

What standards does each government - and each society - set for itself in combating social exclusion? What social rights does the citizen have to employment, housing, health care, etc and how well-defined are these rights? How far - and why - are these rights or entitlements restricted to certain groups of the population? Finally, what variations are there in the rights and coverage to be found in different countries of the EC?

Of course, in many cases it is difficult to decide what standards the public authorities are using. Even within a single central government department, different actors may take different views of the standards that are being applied to a given policy. And most policies are then delivered - and some are determined - at regional or local level, where administrators will have their own views of what rights and entitlements should be recognised.

ii. Policy Effectiveness and Barriers to Access

How effective are national policies in opening up access to employment, housing, health care, etc? How effective are they in ensuring that citizens secure the rights to which they are formally entitled? Finally, what are the barriers to access; how are these barriers shaped by the actors who were identified in Chapter 2; and what are the prospects for dismantling them?

There are, of course, conceptual and methodological difficulties in assessing effectiveness, for example in establishing cause and effect. Moreover, as noted earlier, the frequent failure of the public authorities to monitor and evaluate their own policies means that this Observatory will be severely limited in the comparative evaluation which it can offer. Nevertheless, comparative study can throw additional light on the mechanisms which impede access and can illuminate the ways in which they may be removed.

iii. Generalised Disadvantage and Marginalisation

What evidence is there, finally, that where citizens are unable to secure their social rights, they will tend to suffer generalised and persisting disadvantage and their social and occupational participation will be undermined? And that those who suffer such disadvantages will have substantially lower chances than the rest of the population of gaining access to the

major social institutions and the normal living patterns of the mass of the population?

Throughout this discussion, two further and related questions will regularly arise. First, how far does each public authority ensure that suitable information is available to monitor the effectiveness of its efforts and, indeed, their perverse effects? Second, how far has international standardisation of these data sources been achieved?

There are three official data sources which are broadly common to all the countries concerned: the Census of Population (CP), the Household Budget Survey (HBS) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The extent to which harmonisation exists - or can be developed - among these data sources will in the long-term be an important constraint on our work. Nevertheless, even where indicators which offer the possibility of strictly standardised comparison on a cross-national basis are not available, it can be illuminating to see whether, for example, the same high risk groups emerge in different countries; and whether changes over time are similar within different countries.

Many other research studies, even if not providing representative data on the national populations as a whole, are of relevance and interest to the work of this Observatory. Research work emanating from the Luxembourg Income Study is likely to be of particular interest, as the number of EC countries which are included increases (Smeeding et al, 1990).

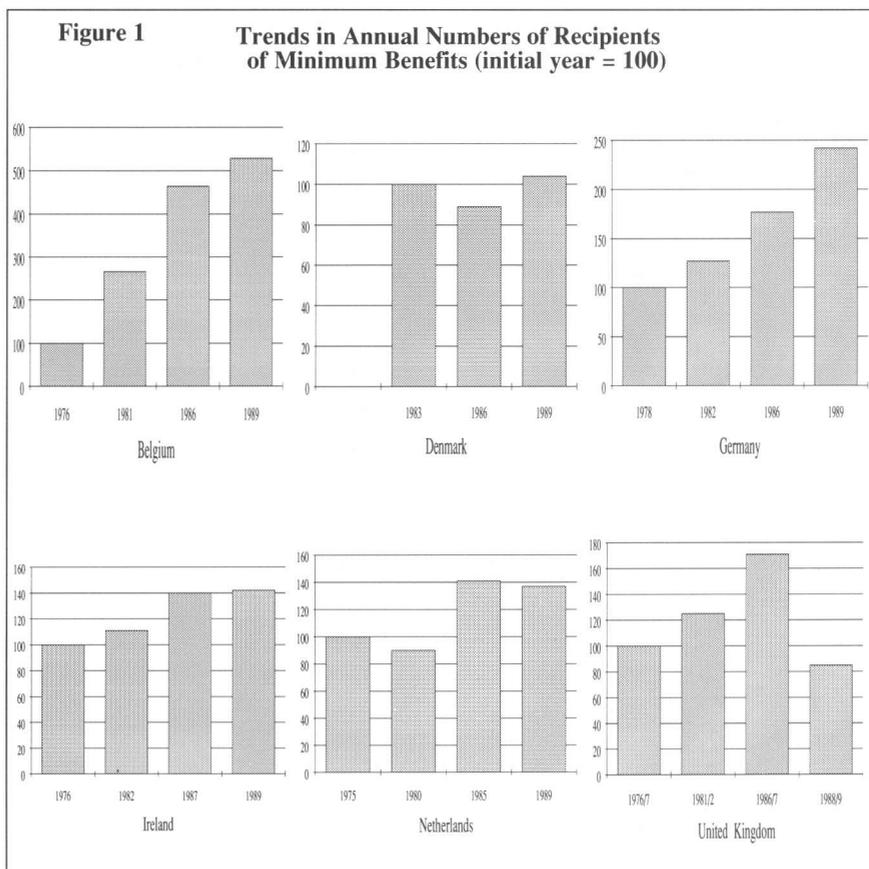
3.2 INCOME, TAXATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY

i. Standards and Coverage

What minimum standards does each government - and each society - set for itself, as far as financial resources are concerned? How far do citizens have rights to certain levels of financial resources? Are these rights well-defined and are they restricted to certain groups of the population? Finally, what variations are there in the rights and coverage to be found in different countries of the EC?

To answer these questions in relation to financial resources, it is properly necessary to consider both the taxation and social security systems and their differential impact. For the moment, however, we concentrate our attention on the minimum financial resources which are guaranteed through the social security systems of the EC countries.

In some countries, there is a national minimum income guarantee: but in the form of a means-tested benefit, payable to those who can provide evidence of their lack of resources, rather than a citizenship "basic income", payable to all. Figure 1 displays the trends in the numbers of recipients of these minimum benefits in a number of EC countries. In other countries, for example Italy, no nationally uniform minimum income system exists but there is a variety of social minima, depending on local arrangements. (Ramprakash, 1990, reports on a conference held under



the auspices of the EC Commission at which these various forms of income guarantee were examined.)

ii. Policy Effectiveness and Barriers to Access

How effective have the public authorities been in guaranteeing to citizens the levels of financial resources defined by these social minima and in combating thereby the risks of social exclusion? This can be answered in two ways.

First, the rates of take-up can be examined: the extent, in other words, to which those who are eligible actually receive these minimum benefits. Figure 2 gives these rates for a number of countries. They are significantly lower than those for non-means-tested benefits and this has been

explained in part in terms of the stigmatising character of means-tested benefits (Van Oorschot, 1991).

Second, therefore, we can ask how far means-tested benefits tend themselves to produce social exclusion. On the one hand, their stigmatising character and the discretion which local officials exercise in their distribution mean that such benefits have often been criticised, as being the antithesis of citizenship rights, and as tending themselves to exclude. Those who apply for these benefits are excluded from normal social esteem by the stigma which they involve; those who are deterred by this stigma from applying for assistance are, it is alleged, denied the basic level of financial resources which their society affirms is their

right. The rising numbers of recipients of these means-tested benefits must then be viewed with alarm (Figure 1). They testify to the failure of insurance-based social benefits to protect incomes during the 1980s: either because these social insurance benefits were themselves too low, or because of the entitlement conditions which were being applied.

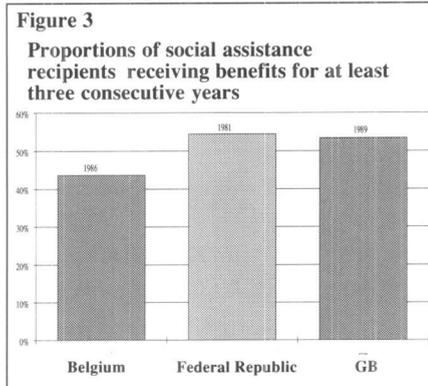
On the other hand, one of the counter-arguments that has been advanced in political debate is that over-generous social benefits reduce work incentives and encourage withdrawal from the formal labour market at least. Social benefits thus have the perverse effect of reducing access to labour force participation. Figure 3 displays the proportions of social assistance recipients who have been dependent upon such benefits long-

term in Belgium, Germany and Britain. It is this long-term dependence that has been attacked by the political right for its alleged pauperisation of lower income groups and even, indeed, the creation of an "underclass" (cf Robbins, 1990). However, preliminary results from studies sponsored by the UK Government appear to contradict this view.

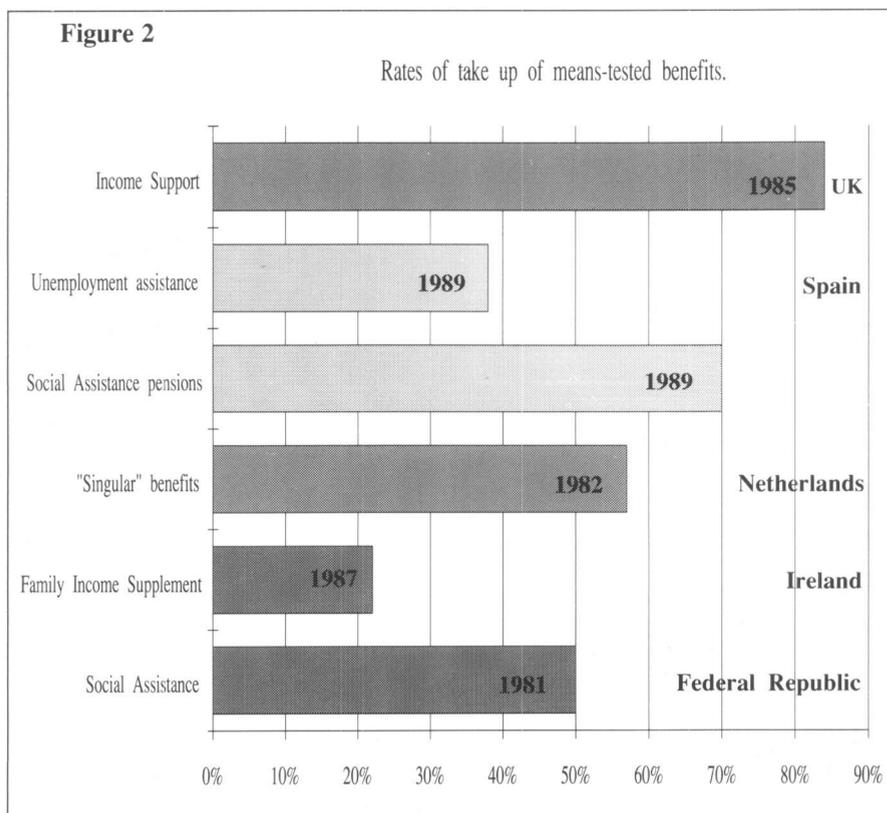
iii. Generalised Disadvantage and Marginalisation

How far, despite these policies, do some groups of the population experience significant disadvantage in terms of their financial resources?

We can, first, ask whether these benefits were set at a level sufficient to protect their recipients from poverty and to ensure a

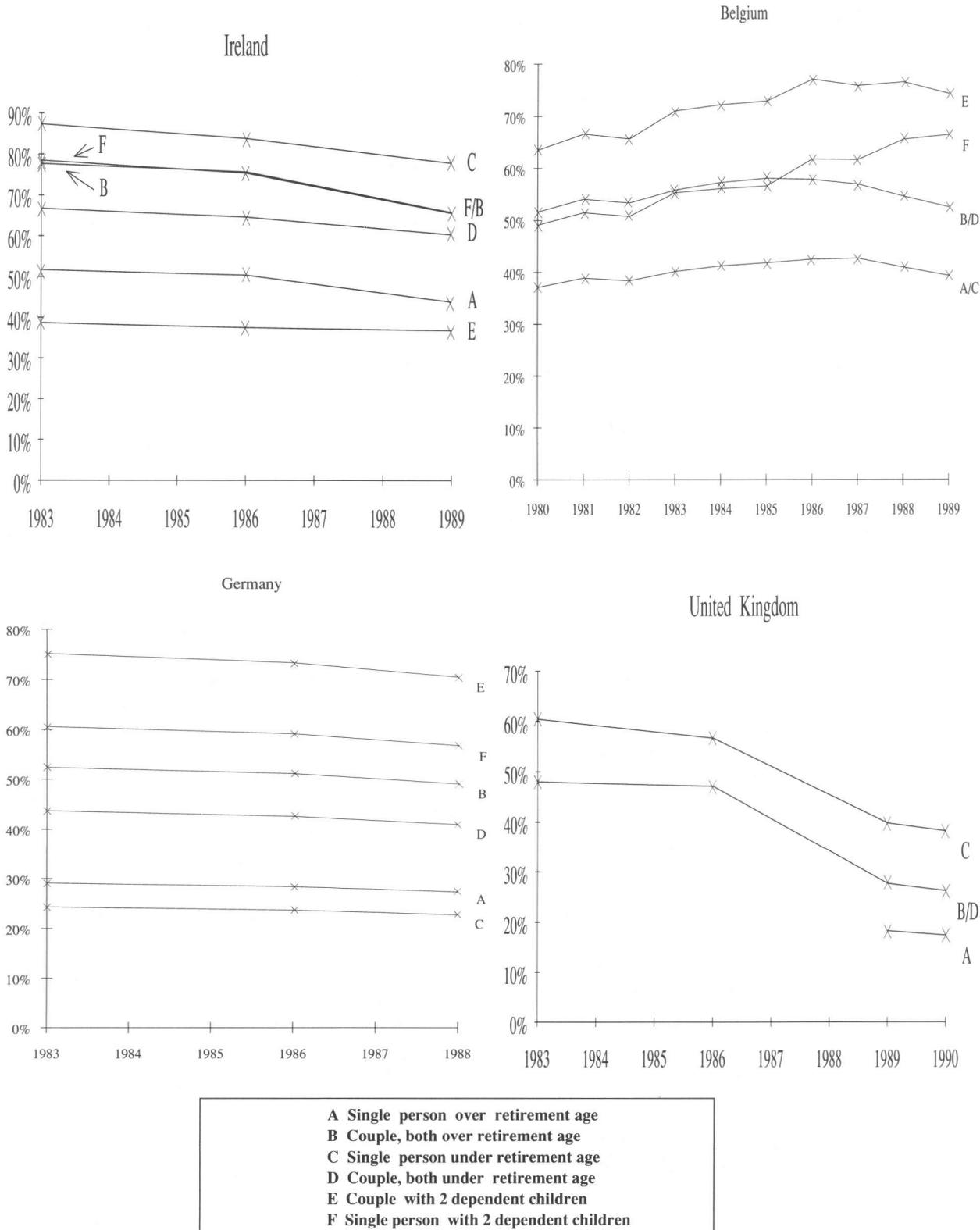


minimum decent standard of living. Figure 4 displays, for some of the countries of the Community, the trends in the real value of minimum benefits relative to the living standards of the population as a whole. In the difficult economic conditions of the 1980s, some national governments allowed the real value of these benefits to lag behind living standards: in part to limit the burden on public expenditure; in part to ensure effective work incentives. This was the case in the UK, for example; in Spain; in the Netherlands, for at least part of the decade; and in Germany in the early 1980s (although for the decade as a whole German benefits more than kept pace with inflation and with average earnings). In Belgium, minimum benefits increased in relation to general living standards during the early 1980s (in part to protect the poorest, at a time when social security benefits more generally were being held back); in the second half of the decade, however, these minimum benefits fell behind (except in the case of benefits for lone parent families).



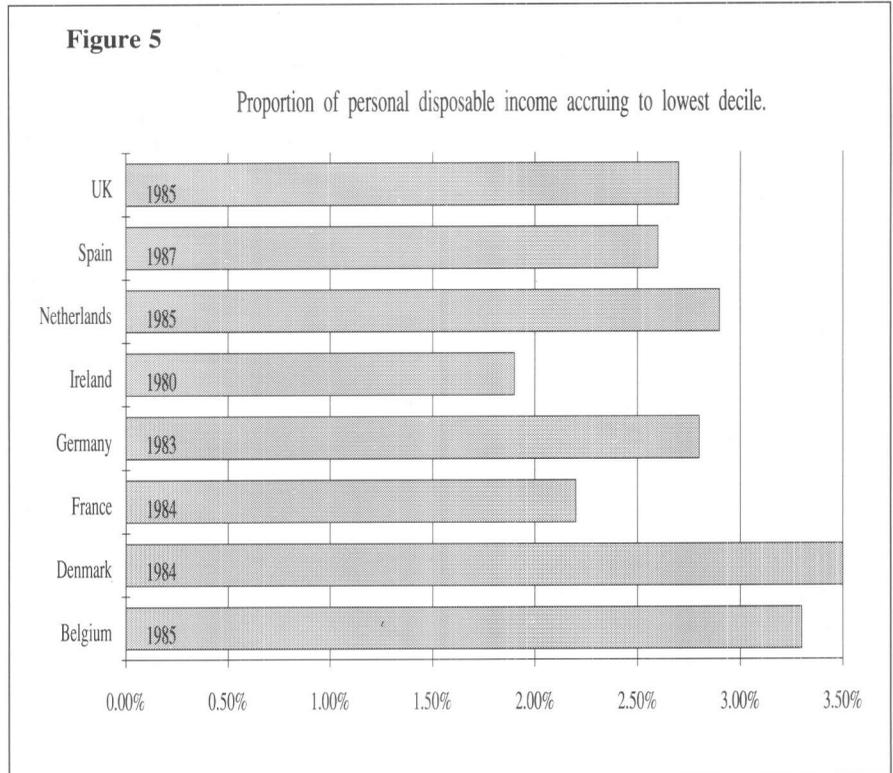
Beyond this, we can examine the broader pattern of inequality in financial resources and the extent of poverty. But of course, how far

Figure 4 Trends in the value of Minimum Benefits as a percentage of per capita income



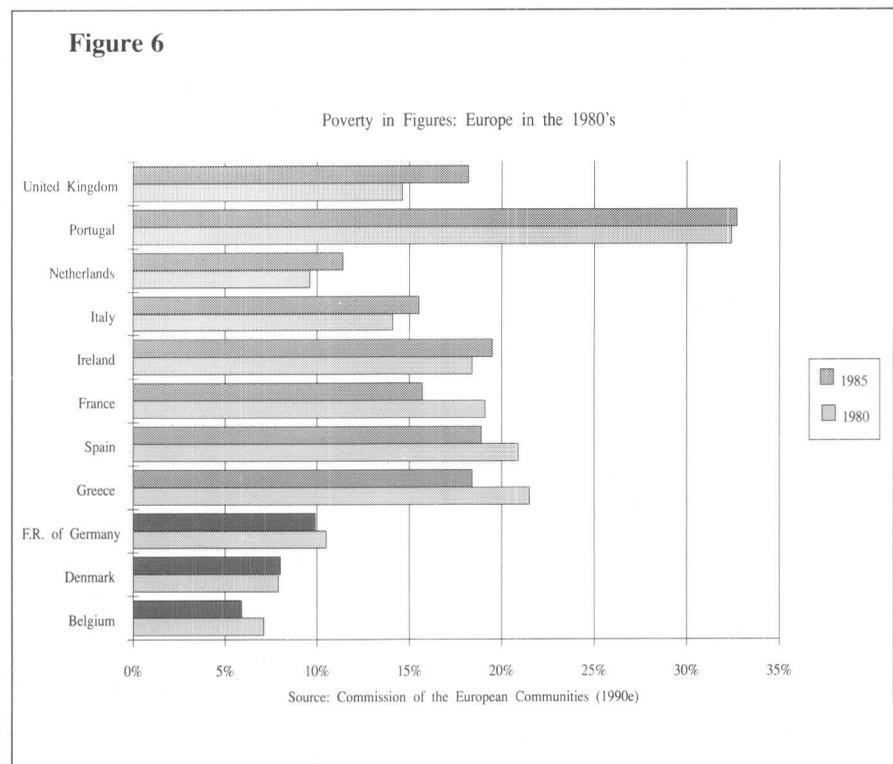
a given pattern of inequality or poverty can be taken as a judgement on existing policies, or can be used to argue for new policies, is a question which goes beyond the boundaries of a technical report. Figure 5 deals with inequality in the distribution of income (after taxes and transfer payments): it reveals the miniscule share of personal incomes accruing to the poorest 10% of the population in eight of the Community countries. Figure 6 presents the proportions of the population falling below the poverty lines indicated (which are defined with respect to the average equivalent expenditure in each of the countries concerned). The figures reveal the extent to which significant numbers of a country's population have incomes which are seriously depressed relative to living standards there: whether it is more appropriate to speak of this in terms of "poverty" or "inequality" is unimportant here. What the figures reveal is that it is in the countries which are poorest - and which, presumably, are most constrained in the resources which they can devote to public services, to labour market policies and to programmes of income support - that the highest rates of poverty or inequality are to be found.

The data cited in this section have, in general, offered a number of cross-sectional indicators for different time periods. It would, in principle, be desirable to include longitudinal data also, tracing the experience of carefully selected samples of individuals over a period of time and identifying the obstacles and barriers which they encounter. Within particular countries, such studies are available and in future



reports of the Observatory they will be used as far as possible. However, longitudinal data which are comparable cross-nationally are

much more scarce. The EC Community Panel Study on Low Income Households which the European Commission is



considering launching could in the long-term be an invaluable tool for Observatories such as our own.

3.3 CONSUMPTION & INDEBTEDNESS

Although much poverty research has focussed on incomes, this is usually because it is taken as an indicator of a particular standard of living for the person or household concerned. What matters more is the actual pattern of consumption that an individual or family is able to enjoy and how far they are able to consume those goods and services which are counted as “normal” in the society concerned.

The burden of indebtedness arising from short-term consumer credit has been a major feature of debates about “new poverty” in the 1980s. Public policy debates in many of the EC countries have focussed, in particular, on the risks of people being unable to meet their fuel bills and the conditions under which they may have their supplies of electricity and gas cut off. Exclusion from heating and lighting is recognised to be exclusion from civilised existence itself. And in the case of the elderly, children and the disabled, such exclusion may of course be life-threatening, in Winter at least.

The national experts report on these national anxieties and the efforts that the authorities are making to insulate more vulnerable groups from the consequences of their fuel debts. In some cases, the extent of such debts has stimulated local authorities to call for more

generous social benefits to be available from central government. But as yet, it seems that no policy solutions beyond the immediate and pragmatic are being seriously considered.

Such indebtedness is, of course, in some senses the antithesis of citizenship. Debt renders a person dependent on the whim of the money lender; it renders precarious all continuing consumption. Where that indebtedness is to a public authority, it involves the surrender of normal citizenship rights and securities. It may be that only by institutionalising fuel rights as an element of citizenship can this security be guaranteed.

3.4 EDUCATION

i. Standards and Coverage

The education rights of citizens in the countries of the EC, as defined

by government, consist in little more than being provided with an appropriate education until school leaving age. More generally but more vaguely, a citizen is generally supposed to have the right to be educated up to the limits of his or her ability and to be provided with the basic skills which all citizens need if they are to function effectively within a complex urban-industrial society.

The school leaving age varies little between the countries of the EC. For the older age group of school pupils, some countries offer schemes which combine part-time education with part-time vocational training or work experience, in an attempt to bridge the gap between school and work and to promote integration into the labour force. Thus, for example, the French Community within Belgium has established *Enterprise d'Apprentissage Professionnel* by which young

In the United Kingdom, a special Social Fund was introduced into the social security system in 1988. This replaced the special grants which previously had been given to social assistance recipients who had exceptional needs and it was intended to be more rationally targetted on those in genuine need.

However, the new Social Fund highlights two of the threats to citizenship rights which have been discussed in these pages. First, the Fund offers loans rather than grants and thereby creates debt. To receive a loan, the applicant must demonstrate that he or she is able to make regular repayments; but by the end of the second year of the new scheme, approximately 38,000 applications had been refused on grounds of inability to repay. For successful applicants, the Social Fund tends to add to the burden of their debts: their debts to the State itself.

Second, the Social Fund loans depend on the discretion of the local officials who administer them, rather than on the rights of those in need. Just as important, the budget available to a local office is fixed in advance and when this budget is spent, no further loans can be made. Need may thereafter be acknowledged by the local officials without any payment being made.

people between 18 and 25 years receive a package of general education, vocational training and work experience. This establishes their entitlements to health insurance and other welfare allowances, but, crucially, not to unemployment insurance benefit at the completion of the programme.

Various remedial policies are to be found in most member states, aimed at ensuring that those children who might be neglected by the school system nevertheless achieve their potential. Illiteracy programmes are common. Educational priority policies exist in the UK and the Netherlands, for example, with schools receiving additional budgets for pupils from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and ethnic minorities. However, at least in the Netherlands, evaluation of this policy suggests that few of the benefits have been concentrated on the pupils concerned. Special education is intended, in many countries, to integrate children with special needs into the education system. In Spain, for example, this is being developed but has not yet been evaluated; in the UK, however, there are fears that special educational needs will be neglected in the competitive, market-oriented education system of the 1990s (Lee, 1992).

Education for the children of ethnic minorities and foreigners is, finally, nowhere more of a challenge than in Luxembourg (see also para 4.5 below), given the proportion of foreigners in the

country. Education policy-makers there are being forced to choose between, for example, multi-lingual integrated schools and linguistically separate schools. These policy questions, arising from the mobility of the Community's working population, are, of course, of particular significance for a Community Observatory.

ii. Policy Effectiveness and Generalised Disadvantage

Figure 7 indicates, for most of the countries of the Community, the proportion of children who leave secondary school with a certificate. Of course, these certificates vary between countries in their content and their significance. Nevertheless, what seems clear is, first, that in most countries between one tenth and one quarter of children are passing out of the education system with no academic credentials; and, second, that this is likely to be a life-long handicap, threatening their social and occupational integration.

Data on illiteracy trends reinforce these fears. The definition of illiteracy and the estimating of the numbers of persons involved are as difficult as any of the indicators mentioned in this report. Nevertheless, the definitions and figures provided by the educational policy establishments of different countries can at least give some indication of the seriousness of the problem as they view it: the lack of the most basic skills which are needed to survive and function within an urban-industrial society.

The estimates which we have been able to collect include figures of 5% for Belgium; 4% for Spain; and (depending upon the degree of illiteracy) between 1% and 9% for France, and between 1% and 8% for the Netherlands.

Finally, the participation rates of different social classes in higher education provide an indicator of the extent to which children and young people from different backgrounds are being educated up to the limit of their abilities. Figure 8 shows that parents in professional and managerial occupations are, in the countries concerned, at least five times more likely than manual workers to send their children to university.

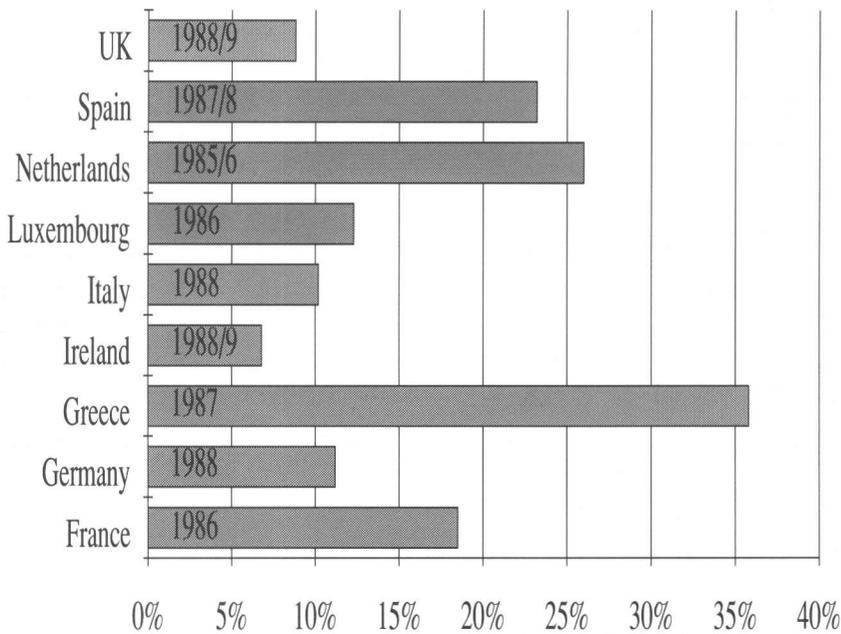
3.5 EMPLOYMENT & VOCATIONAL TRAINING*

Employment normally provides not only an income but also the principal means of social integration. This was long true for men; but in recent years it has also, to an increasing extent, been true of women, as the steady increase in their labour force participation rates indicates. Unemployment tends to involve exclusion from the labour market and leads to the loss of many other forms of participation in society (see box opposite). Only in Denmark have the bulk of the unemployed remained within the trade union and unemployment insurance systems and "avoided comprehensive existential and political marginalisation" (Abrahamson, 1987, p. 10). On the other hand, more varied patterns of

*The discussion of national employment policies which is offered here can be compared with *Employment in Europe*, Chapter 9 (Commission of the European Communities, 1990c).

Figure 7

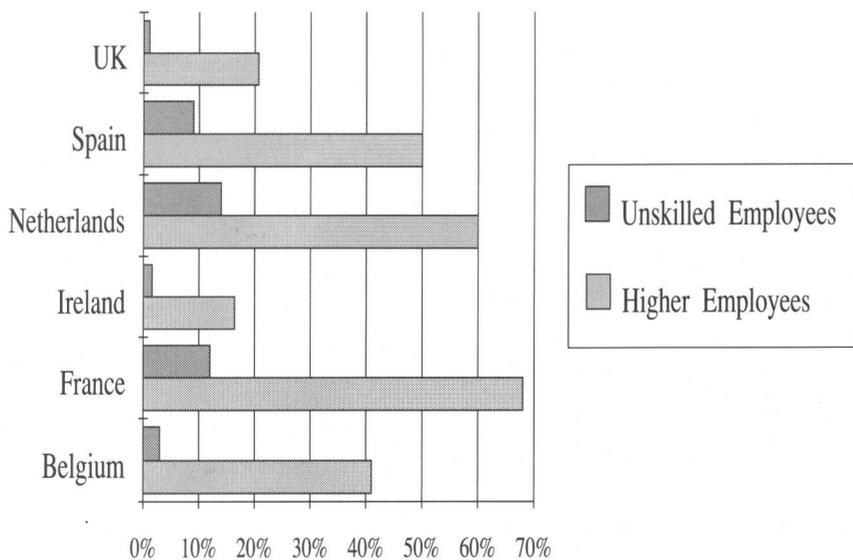
Proportion of children leaving secondary education without a certificate



A survey of young people in Ireland, published in 1988, provides evidence that unemployment leads to social exclusion in the sense of dissociation from social activities. Unemployed young people who subsequently obtained employment participated more than previously in group activities such as parties, dances or going to a pub or restaurant. Those who were still unemployed were participating less in these activities and were either doing more things at home, or doing nothing.

Figure 8

Participation in higher education by different socio-economic categories



involvement in the labour force - part-time work, early retirement, etc - confirm that social exclusion and labour force participation have no simple interrelationship.

i. Standards and Coverage

During the period since the second World War, governments in the EC countries have with varying degrees of conviction affirmed the importance of full employment as a policy goal. Employment - at a decent wage - has, to some extent, been accepted as a normal right of citizenship. Persisting unemployment at rates which in northern Europe, at least, seem high by the standards of the 1960s can then be taken as a negative judgement on the policies which have been pursued, even if in the late 1980s these rates tended to fall. So also

can the persistence of low pay. Nevertheless, the right to employment has nowhere in the EC been affirmed as strongly as, most notably, in Sweden. Public policy-makers have tended to place the emphasis upon work as a duty, with unemployment carrying the suspicion that it is the individual concerned who is at fault.

As far as pay is concerned, some countries have had an explicit government-backed minimum wage (see Figure 9). In the Netherlands and Spain, the real value of the minimum wage was lower in 1990 than in 1980. In France, however, during the 1970s and 1980s the SMIC improved its value in real terms and, indeed, in relation to average earnings, and appears to be generally supported as a means of limiting downward pressure on the wages of weaker groups. And the minimum wage, in turn, serves as the point of reference for a number of minimum benefits, especially the minimum old age pension. Perverse effects could, however, include resistance to employing younger workers.

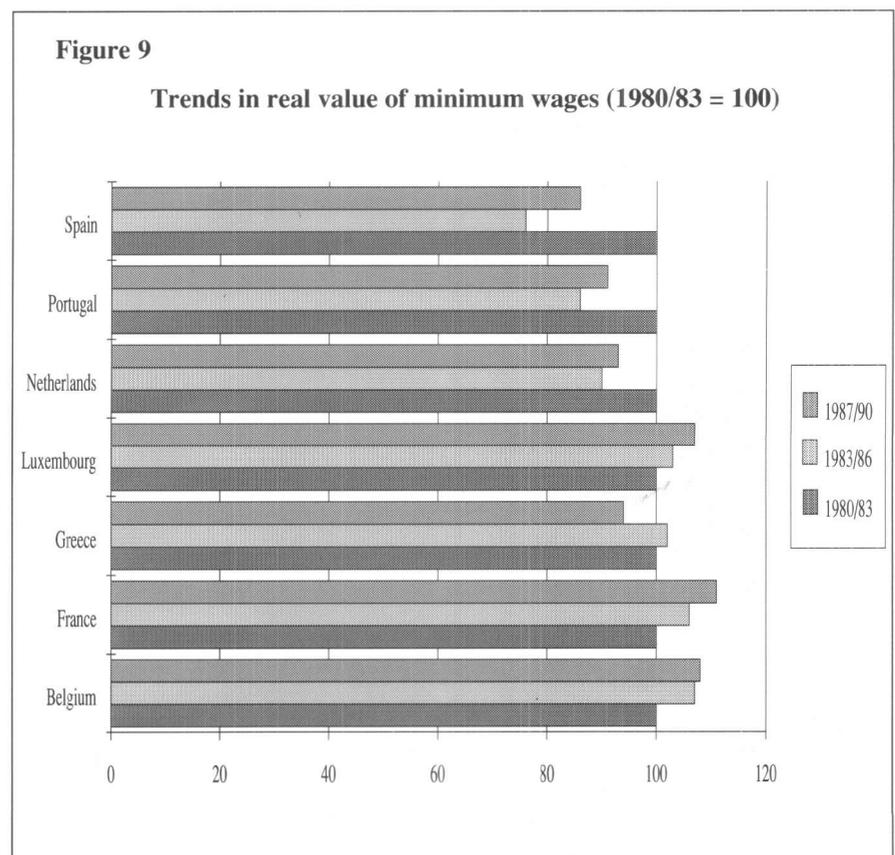
Policies on employment and unemployment cannot be separated from policies on retirement and early retirement, nor indeed from policies on training. Both of the latter can serve as policy instruments for adjusting the numbers of people seeking work. But within employment policy proper, two main strategies have been pursued - so-called "active" and "passive" policies - the first to promote employment, the second to maintain the incomes of the unemployed.

ii. Policy Effectiveness and Barriers to Access

(a) *Passive Employment Policies*

As far as income maintenance policies are concerned, unemployment benefit has become one of the principal elements of social insurance during the present century (for an overview of unemployment benefits, see MISEP, 1990). In some countries the variations in unemployment insurance benefit are so great, depending upon the employment sector concerned, union and company strength, etc., that no overall figures can be given of trends in the value of benefits (see box opposite). However, it is clear that in many countries the value of unemployment insurance benefit has been insufficient to provide

recipients and their families with living standards that keep pace with those of people at work. In Belgium, Greece and France, for example, the value of unemployment insurance benefit was falling relative to average incomes or minimum wages during the 1980s. Nor, indeed, has unemployment insurance benefit everywhere been sufficient to raise recipients and their families above the social minimum defined by means-tested social assistance. In Ireland, for example, basic unemployment insurance benefits declined in value from 108% of means-tested assistance in 1983 to just 102% in 1990; and in the Federal Republic, by the late 1980s the annual rate of increase in unemployment insurance benefits had fallen behind that of social assistance.



In Italy, the degree of protection which workers enjoy against the risk of unemployment reflects broader patterns of inequality within the occupational system. Ordinary unemployment benefit is paid to those who lose their jobs individually: but this is set at just 15% of lost wages. More generous is the special unemployment benefit, for those subject to a collective lay-off, which for industrial workers is set at 80% of lost wages, with somewhat less generous schemes for rural workers and construction workers. The Special Earnings Integration Fund (CIGS), financed principally through national taxation, supports during periods of industrial restructuring those who would otherwise suffer collective redundancies. Beneficiaries of the ordinary unemployment benefit come mostly from small workshops and enterprises and are particularly numerous in the South, the least prosperous area of Italy; the more generous special unemployment benefit is enjoyed by industrial workers who had a permanent work contract, but not by those on temporary contracts; CIGS tends to favour workers according to the strength, size and visibility of the company they work for and their union support.

However, it is by no means the case that all of the unemployed receive unemployment insurance benefit, as Figure 10 reveals. Those who are ineligible, and those whose

insurance benefit is insufficient to raise their household income to the subsistence minimum, are obliged to rely on means-tested unemployment assistance or, where

this does not exist or is unavailable, on social assistance. The precarious labour market situation of many young people means that they periodically go “in and out” of dependency on such benefits. As they grow older, many escape into secure employment but there is a high risk, that those who become social assistance claimants before they are 20 will become permanently dependent upon it.

Even here, however, there are further exclusions: notably those unemployed young people whom official regulations deem the responsibility of their parents rather than a charge upon the public purse. And means tests are in some countries applied to the household, rather than the individual. In Germany, for example, this is the case for unemployment assistance and many women who are unemployed in consequence do not qualify for benefit.

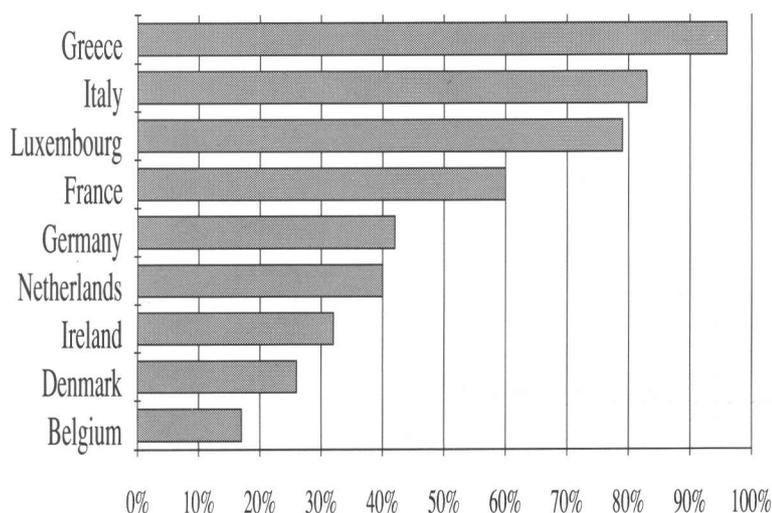
Of course, unemployed young people may not be poor, if they can count on support from their families. But the lengthening of the entrance period into the labour market and the increase in the age of entrance, lengthen the period during which young people live as dependents in their families, putting stress on lower family incomes.

b) Active Employment Policies

Active labour market policies received increasing emphasis during the 1980s (Room et al, 1990), even if, within the EC, only Portugal and Greece emulated Sweden by spending more on active measures than on income maintenance. Everywhere, it

Figure 10

Trends in the proportion of the unemployed who are not receiving unemployment insurance benefit or social assistance



Source: Commission of the European Communities (1991), Table 3.

seems, there have been programmes to promote the employment of the long-term unemployed and the young employed, notably by means of wage subsidies to employers. Figure 11 presents the proportions of the registered unemployed who are participating in government special programmes and reveals that in general these have increased substantially during the 1980s. However, evaluative studies of these programmes are not in all cases available. Any such evaluation would certainly need to examine whether additional jobs were created or whether all that happened was that the queue of unemployed was re-ordered. It would also have to examine how far such schemes reach the most marginal. Such studies as exist are not encouraging on this point.

The interaction of these active policies with "passive" measures can have a number of positive and negative consequences as far as social exclusion and labour market insertion are concerned. In Denmark, some of the programmes which have been implemented have had only limited success in securing long-term employment (30%) but they have, at least, served to keep the unemployed persons within the labour market and the benefit system, maintaining their eligibility for insurance benefits. And in Belgium, social employment is offered by local authority themselves (CPAS) to some unemployed people who are receiving social assistance, in order that they can become entitled to certain social security benefits: this social employment does not of itself

reintegrate them into the labour market but it does at least provide some vocational training.

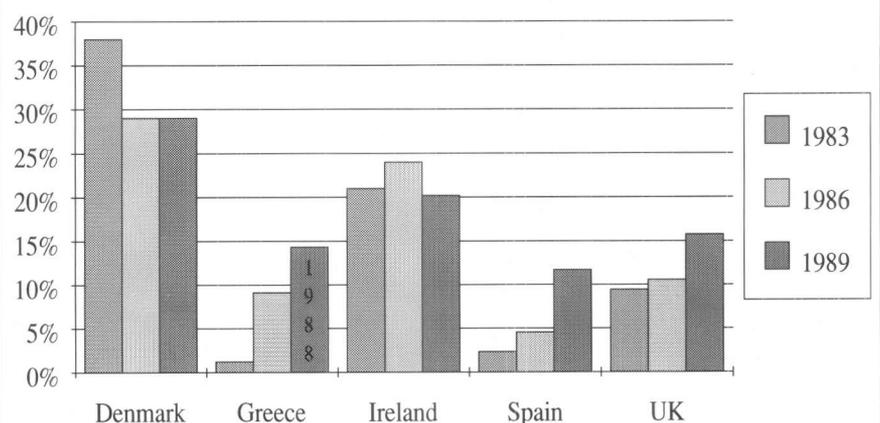
On the other hand, in Italy, local social assistance for the able-bodied is dependent upon their accepting any job that is offered or being employed in a public works project. This, in turn, may have the perverse effect of reducing the chances a person has of being re-inserted in a stable manner into the labour market. This situation should, moreover, be contrasted with the government-financed support which some private companies have been able to negotiate for their better organised groups of workers in times of collective redundancy: the Special Earning Integration Fund (CIGS), which provides sufficiently generous and continuous support to allow such workers to develop new and positive options for their re-insertion. FIAT has been prominent in negotiating CIGS for its workers but employees of sub-

contractors have been left to cope on the public works schemes mentioned above.

What of those income maintenance schemes that require of the recipient a plan for his or her "reinsertion" into the labour market? In Denmark, the local municipalities have during 1990 been obliged to find a job for young people seeking work: and if the job is not accepted, benefit is denied. Similar rules exist in the Netherlands. Minimum benefits such as the French RMI and the Luxembourg RMG are specifically linked to programmes of reinsertion into social and work milieux and it is by reference to such re-insertion that they will be judged. In the current state of the labour market, such re-insertion is proving difficult. Long-term evaluation is in progress but the results are not yet available.

Figure 11

Trends in the proportion of the registered unemployed who are on government special programmes.



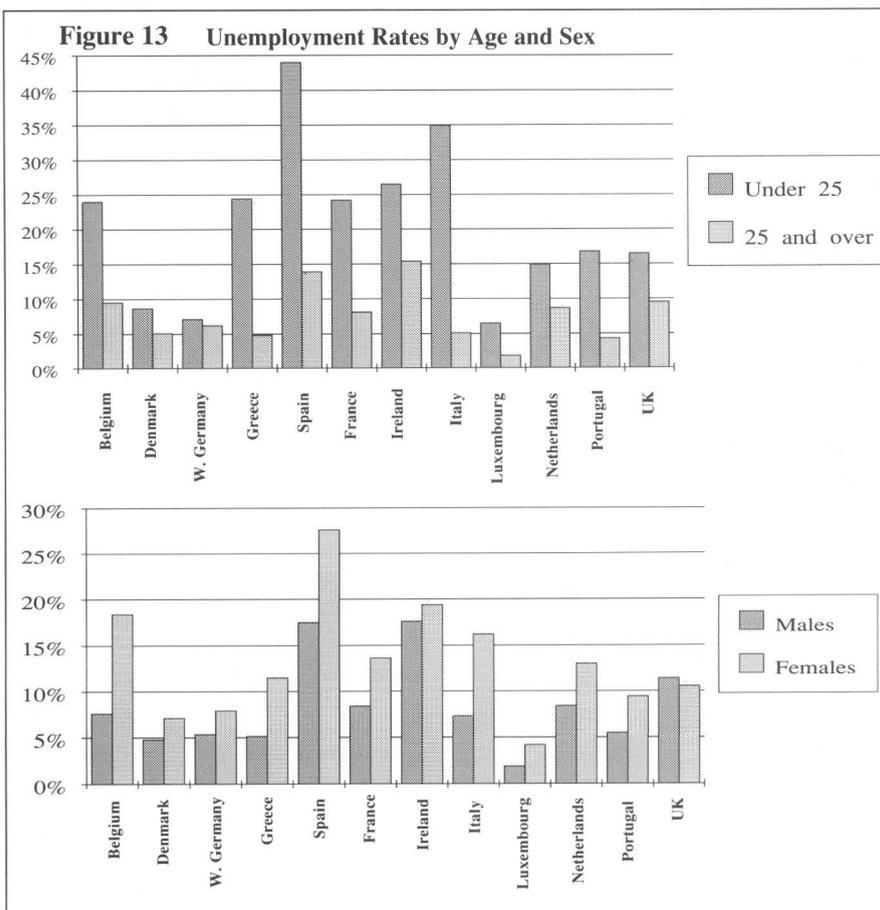
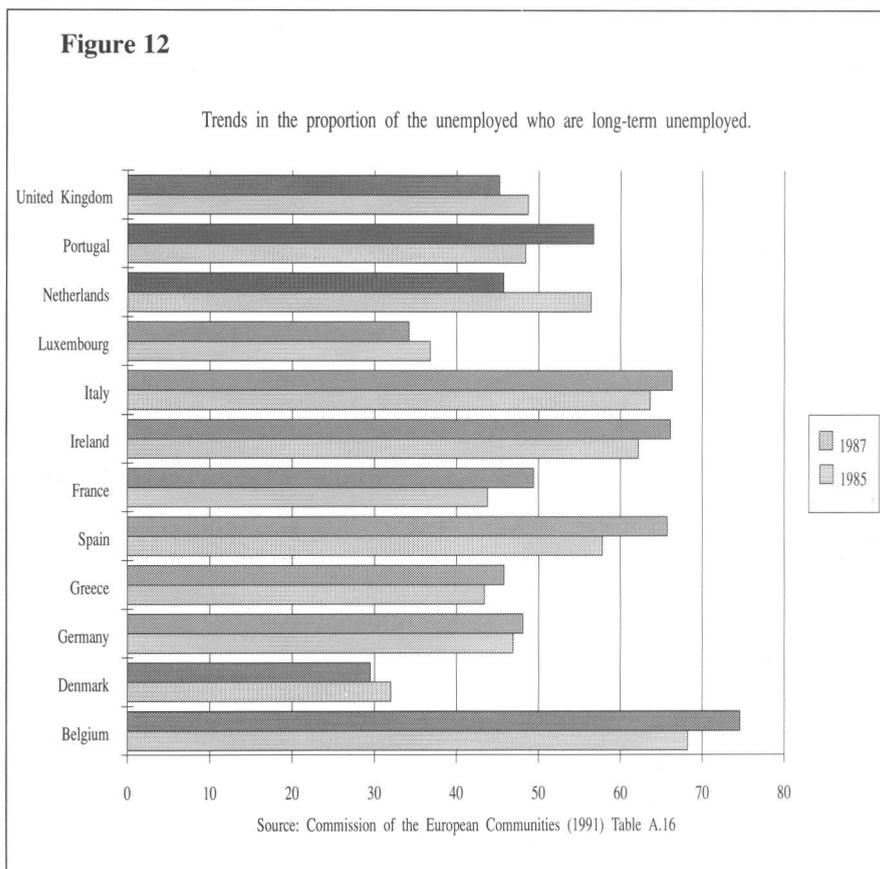
iii. Generalised Disadvantage and Marginalisation

These policies can, finally, be set against the wider pattern of unemployment and the unequal distribution of its burden among citizens.

Figure 12 gives the rates of long-term unemployment in the different EC countries.

Figure 13 gives the rates of unemployment for different age groups and for both males and females. It reveals that, among the EC countries, the disparity between males and females is greatest in the case of Italy and Belgium; while the disparity between young people and other age groups is greatest in the case of Italy and Portugal. This confirms, incidentally, the picture of Italy as a society in which the well-organised “core” workforce has been able to ensure its security and social protection, while more vulnerable groups are left in a seriously exposed position.

How far do the policies reviewed here counter these disparities in the burden of unemployment? It is clear that they are of some considerable significance: without them, the naked inequalities of the labour market would impinge with still more brutal force on the more vulnerable. However, to a considerable extent they are themselves limited by the balance of forces within which they operate; and the employment which they create tends to be precarious. Thus in Luxembourg, for example, the recipients of the guaranteed minimum income (RMG) who



have been “re-inserted” into the labour market are typically in precarious jobs and are therefore at high risk of returning to dependence on the RMG benefit.

This sort of employment falls centrally within the area of “atypical” work to which the EC Social Charter and the Action Programme to implement it make copious reference. Not least, it tends to be marked by the absence of any rights of “industrial citizenship”: collective bargaining rights, social security, dismissal and redundancy.

3.6 WORKING CONDITIONS

The EC Social Charter makes specific reference to health and safety at work and this is one of the areas on which Community legislation under the Charter does not require unanimity. Various member states are upgrading their legislation on safety, health and well-being at work, taking into account the EC legislative proposals.

In Germany, the numbers of accidents at work and rates of industrial disease have in recent years been falling, although no doubt the incorporation of east German industry will change this. In Spain and Portugal in contrast, the numbers of reported accidents at work - especially in temporary jobs - has been increasing. This increase may be due simply to better reporting or to inter-sectoral shifts in employment. If not,

however, this trend is obviously worrying, especially if it arises from competitive pressures upon employers inducing them to lower safety standards. (*)

3.7 HOUSING

The demand for housing has been increasing. First, there has been a general trend to smaller households during recent decades: the declining tendency of elderly people to live with their adult children can be seen as one element of this trend. Second, the increasing number of divorces has swelled the demand. Finally, there have been additional problems for specific regions of immigration: Luxembourg, for example, and, in recent months, the cities of western Germany, as a result of immigration from the East (Kirchner and Sautter, 1990).

Social housing has grown substantially in some countries, such as Spain, where private sector building fell from 47.5% to 32.8% of the total between 1975 and 1985. But in a number of countries, social housing has been constrained in the 1980s, in part by the austerity policies of central and regional government. Even in Spain, public sector support to housing has in recent years decreased sharply. And in Greece there remains little in the way of social housing. Most governments have strictly limited their interference in the free working of the housing market.

i. Standards and Coverage

In no country of the EC is there any

formal right to accommodation for the population at large. But in most countries it is a general aim of housing policy that each household should be able to obtain adequate quality accommodation at a reasonable price (whatever that may mean). In many - but not all - countries of the EC, there are three principal sets of rights that are supported by legislation.

First, there is the right of certain persons to be housed, if necessary by the public authorities. Thus, for example, in the UK local authorities are obliged to find accommodation for homeless families with children: either in local authority housing or in cheap hotels (“bed and breakfast”). During 1988, they found accommodation for 135,000 homeless households and households threatened with homelessness. But in Ireland, for example, homelessness is mainly left to charitable bodies, although under the Housing Act of 1989, local authorities were empowered to support their efforts.

Second, subsidies and controls on rents are intended to limit the financial burden on the tenant. Mortgage tax relief is intended, similarly, to reduce the burden on the owner occupier. Rent controls can enable those with low incomes to maintain tenure, as recent legislation in Belgium has sought to ensure. Rent subsidies have been a major element of Dutch housing policy, as far as low income households are concerned. But in Luxembourg, for example, subsidies are limited to recipients of the minimum guaranteed income

*We do not deal more extensively here with working conditions; but the JANUS Observatory of the European Commission monitors developments in this field.

(RMG) who are working, for fear that such subsidies will only drive up rents.

Third, there is legislation concerning the minimum quality of a domestic dwelling: in terms of space and amenities.

ii. Policy Effectiveness and Barriers to Access

(a) Homelessness

Homelessness is difficult to define and therefore also to measure. It can, most narrowly, be taken to refer to people living on the streets; or more broadly, to include those threatened with losing their accommodation; or, still more broadly, those who aspire to a home of their own but who are unable to gain access to either the public or private sectors and who are meanwhile, therefore, living with family or friends. Thus, for example, by the end of 1990, the number of households which local authorities in England alone had defined as homeless and in need of temporary accommodation was 45,170: an increase of 27% on the precious year.

The legislation to deal with homelessness is equally varied. In Belgium, for example, single men living on the streets may be faced with the punitive treatment demanded by the vagrancy laws; or they may be offered accommodation in reception centres, under the social welfare legislation. In the UK, families without accommodation may be disregarded by a local authority if they are deemed to have made

themselves voluntarily homeless; but the definition of “voluntarily” has been hotly contested.

Local authorities’ legal obligations to house the homeless have put pressure on what in many countries is a declining stock of social housing. In the UK in 1987-88, for example, a quarter of all new local authority tenants were people who had been homeless. Waiting lists for local authority housing then stand as a further and vivid form of exclusion (Figure 14). And in Belgium, for example, only 11.3% of low income households are living in social housing.

(b) Housing Costs

The effectiveness of government action to limit the financial burden

percentage of a household’s income which goes on housing costs: in particular, in the case of low income households. In Germany, for example, in the mid-1980s 14% of households were paying more than 35% of their net income on rents. In Belgium, low income households typically spend almost one third of their incomes on rent.

Finally, in some countries the increasing incentives for people - including unemployed people - to buy their own houses, through more easily accessible mortgages, have raised fears about rates of mortgage repossession, which account for substantial numbers of homeless families. In the UK, repossessions by building societies fell by two fifths between 1987 and 1989 but trebled between 1989 and 1990, as a result of high interest rates.

(c) Amenities and Space

The evidence collected by the national experts suggests that there are substantial quantities of housing in a bad condition in most EC countries and that these are occupied predominantly by those with low incomes. They include much of the temporary accommodation offered in the UK by local authorities. In Spain, it is low income households that are disproportionately to be found in small houses and to lack basic amenities.

In Ireland, at least, the worst conditions are to be found outside public sector. This is partly because the private rented sector is not covered by much of the legislation on housing standards and conditions are therefore often

Figure 14 Waiting Lists for Social Housing

Belgium (Flanders only) (1987)	75,430 families
Ireland (1989)	19,376 households
Luxembourg (1990)	1,000 households
UK (England only) (1989)	1,250,000 households

of housing upon low income households can be assessed, albeit crudely, in various ways. First, in terms of the rate of rent increases for social housing, relative to prices: in Belgium, for example, rent increases for social housing during the period 1984-89 exceeded the increase in retail prices and in private rents.

Second, in terms of the

squalid. Private rented housing is twice as likely as other housing to be unfit, although private tenants pay almost double the proportion of their incomes on housing as is paid by public housing tenants.

iii. Generalised Disadvantage and Marginalisation

It is evident that, alongside the secure owner occupier and the social housing tenant there are substantial numbers of households living in a precarious housing situation: precarious in terms of their security of tenure, the predictability of their housing costs and their rights of privacy. In Ireland, the private rented sector, as seen already, is exempt from much of the legislation on tenants' rights: many tenants receive no rent book or written contract and rents are uncontrolled. In the UK, families placed in bed and breakfast accommodation by local authorities have no security of tenure and no rights of privacy. Nor is there any counterpart to the growing numbers of tenants associations, through which other local authority tenants are consulted in an organised fashion by their landlord.

Precarious housing takes a somewhat different form in the South. In Spain, unmet demand for housing is concentrated in the large metropolitan areas of Madrid and Barcelona. This surplus demand comes mainly from young people, especially those in the lower income groups, old people and single parents. In the case of Madrid at least, low income groups are increasing being expelled to the outskirts of the city in search of a

home, amidst growing commercialisation of housing and land use and spatial segregation of different income groups.

Similar developments are taking place around the urban growth centres of Portugal: Lisbon, Oporto and Setubal. The limited capacity of these cities to absorb new arrivals, in part because of the inadequate supply of social housing, has led to continuing and extended use of degraded housing, shantytowns and a growing number of homeless families. These developments stand in stark contrast to the more prosperous areas of these same cities and vividly express the social exclusion to which their occupants are subject. And the fact that more than 50% of the residents of these neighbourhoods are less than 20 years old, with delinquency and drug addiction rates a growing problem, bodes ill for the reproduction of this poverty into the next generation. (*)

3.8 HEALTH

i. Standards and Coverage

Health care systems can be said to be concerned with two principal goals as far as the individual is concerned: to prevent death and to promote healthy and fulfilled living.

Some EC countries - Denmark, Ireland, the UK - rely on a national health system which is financed mainly by general taxation and which is, in principle, free to the user. Others use a system of health

insurance. Others, again, such as Greece and Portugal, have a public health system which is free to the user, even though most of those who are in regular employment rely on health insurance tied to the social security funds. In Italy, legislation in 1978 established a national health system, although as far as funding is concerned, the health system remains a hybrid.

In addition to these variations in financial basis, there are, of course, also great variations in the level and quality of health care which is available. In Italy, for example, there is a dearth of health services - especially the more specialised - within the urban areas of the South. In Spain, similar variations are being countered, under the law of 1986, by the development of primary care and the decentralisation of health care to the regions. However, no evaluation of these initiatives is yet available.

ii. Policy Effectiveness and Barriers to Access

How far do some groups of citizens in the countries of the EC suffer exclusion or neglect by their health care systems? There are at least three approaches to this question.

First, we can consider what factors limit the coverage of the health care system. Some EC countries use a system of health insurance. However, those whose insurance contribution records are incomplete - typically the long-term unemployed - risk being excluded from health care. In the United States the lack of health

*These are, of course, precisely the conditions cited by the anthropologist Oscar Lewis as generating a "culture of poverty" (Lewis, 1962).

cover for low income groups has become an issue of major public concern. In the EC countries which rely on health insurance, however, special arrangements are normally made for such groups. In France, for example, more than 100 000 beneficiaries are being affiliated to health insurance via the *Revenue Minimum d'Insertion*.

Second, in many countries there are data dealing with the rates of utilisation of different medical services by different social groups. But of course, what these data do not show of themselves is, first, the extent to which these differences in rates of utilisation reflect medical need; nor, second, the effectiveness of these services in relation to such needs.

Finally, studies in recent years sponsored partly by the EC have been concerned with those diseases which clinical medicine can now deal with so effectively that nobody need die from them (Holland, 1988). The research has mapped out the extent to which deaths continue to result from these diseases, as an indicator of the inadequacy of the health services in the country concerned. This is not of course to say that disease has no social and economic causes; nor is it to deny the value of improvements in the environment. But this approach claims that were all health services to be raised to the standards of the very best, these diseases would cease to be killers. The resulting pattern of avoidable deaths can be taken as one crude indicator of cross-national variations in the effectiveness of health services in preventing

exclusion, in this case from life itself. There is of course no reason why the same sort of analysis should not be applied to comparisons between different social classes, ethnic groups, etc.

iii. Generalised Disadvantage and Marginalisation

The socially unequal distribution of morbidity and mortality is clear from the epidemiological data. Many different indicators of morbidity and mortality can be chosen for this purpose; and many of them, although crude, can be compared cross-nationally.

It is, however, more difficult to agree on the most appropriate methods for measuring trends in inequalities in health and death between different social groups (Illsley, 1987). It is still more difficult to identify causality and, in particular, to judge whether high rates of ill-health and death arise from inadequacies in medical, occupational, domestic or environmental milieux. Nevertheless, when, for example, it is found that rates of infant mortality among families where the father is unemployed are significantly greater than those in the population as a whole, this accumulation of disadvantages can fuel some potent calls for policy reform.

3.9 SOCIAL CARE SERVICES & NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT

The family and the local community are the archetype of social

protection. Where they fail to function effectively, their members are liable to suffer, especially at certain stages of the life cycle - birth, sickness, disability, old age, unemployment.

The personal social services are those which aim to support the family and the local community as systems of social protection. In many countries they focus on specific population groups: the old and the young, the mentally and physically disabled. In many countries, they remain fragmented and organised under the responsibility of different public authorities. Their relationship to other arms of social policy - health care, social security, etc - is equally varied.

In support of weakened family and local community networks, social services are sometimes linked to programmes of community development, aimed at revitalising the economic and social life of local communities and promoting social inclusion of their disadvantaged minorities. Some of these programmes also involve the participation of the European Community (for example, "Poverty 3"). Social services are also often linked to the promotion of individual volunteering.

One of their most obvious recent manifestations in relation to social welfare has been programmes of "community care" for dependent groups previously supported within institutional care. But how far are local communities which are suffering various forms of disadvantage able to offer a "caring capacity"? Recent studies,

in the UK at least, suggest that the economic insecurity which such communities face and their relative powerlessness to control their economic and social future seriously limit the scope for community involvement.

During 1991, the Observatory expects to undertake a special study of these social care services within the EC countries. This is the more necessary - and difficult - in view of the lack of available, and especially comparable, data.

3.10 CONCLUSION: SECTORAL POLICIES & THEIR GLOBALISATION

The sectoral policies which have been examined in this chapter are the main pillars of the welfare systems of the EC countries. They express a bureaucratic division of labour defined by reference to specific professional skills (medicine, teaching, social work, etc) and population risks (unemployment, homelessness, etc). The benefits and services which they offer give substance to the social rights of citizenship in these countries.

However, it is evident that substantial numbers of people within the countries of the EC do not, in practice, secure these rights. As a result, they are liable to suffer multiple disadvantage which persists over time and which tends to separate them from the social, political and occupational institutions of their societies. This is, according to many recent critics, because of four deficiencies in the

sectoral policies on which our societies principally rely (Leibfried and Tennstedt, 1985).

First, these sectoral policies have been shaped primarily by reference to the more secure and better organised sections of the labour force: the "core" workers. The extent to which this is the case seems to vary between countries, with a much stronger commitment to guaranteed minimum levels of, for example, pensions provision in countries such as Denmark than in Germany or Italy.

Second, the priorities accorded to these different sectoral policies have been shaped by organised commercial and professional interests, to an extent which has led to the neglect of certain needs and population groups. For example, in countries such as Germany the central role of sickness insurance within the social security system has consolidated the role of medical care at the expense of the long-term social care on which elderly people and people with disabilities depend (Jamieson, 1991).

Third, any sectoral policy can, almost by definition, be concerned with only one set of needs, whereas those who most require their support tend to have multiple needs for assistance. These needs may well reinforce each other and persist. This is the more likely, where entitlements within one sector depend upon rights built up within another: for example, where access to health care depends upon a continuous record of employment.

Finally, sectoral policies tend

to be focussed upon the needs of individuals or families. They are therefore ill-suited to dealing with the needs of geographical areas which are suffering general degradation of employment opportunities and public services, save as part of a larger programme of intervention.

Faced with these limitations, public authorities in the countries of the Community have sought to "globalise" their policies in three main respects. First, by more of effective coordination of sectoral policies, in order to be able to deal with multi-dimensional needs. Second, by additional programmes and policies which are focussed on geographical areas. Third, by giving to these various interventions more of a concern with persistent and cumulative disadvantage. It is with these efforts at "globalisation" that Chapter 5 will be concerned.

CHAPTER 4

CATEGORICAL POLICIES AND POPULATION GROUPS AT HIGH RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

All government policies have differential impacts on different population groups - some intentional, others unintentional - and these must be included in any evaluation of policy. Who benefits from particular policies? Who pays? Who is neglected? Who suffers? This chapter looks at some of the population groups which appear to be neglected by some, at least, of the sectoral policies examined in the previous chapter and which are, in consequence, at high risk of generalised disadvantage and marginalisation.

In a more extensive and comprehensive report, additional population groups would have been considered. For example, the EC has been to the fore in promoting legislation on equal opportunities and equal treatment for women. But women remain excluded - or at least underrepresented - in their incomes and in their power within the major social institutions. They do not enjoy the same career progression as men and they tend to be confined, very often, within

low paid jobs. Most of them enjoy less social protection. Finally, they are more likely to be confined at home, caring for the very young and the very old, especially as policies for the elderly increasingly stress the role of "community care" and take for granted that the burden of this can fall on informal carers, mostly women. And they are, of course, over-represented among lone parents, a population group at considerable risk of being on low incomes (*).

The chapter also takes stock of some of the policies which are focussed on these population categories. Within sectoral policies, of course, categorical elements may be present. However, in addition to these, distinct programmes and policies for particular population groups have developed.

Finally, a further group of "categorical" policies are those which are specifically focussed on various groups of the poor. They include, of course, the various social minima which were identified in Chapter 3, within sectoral policies: most obviously, the systems of social assistance at local, regional and national level. But in addition to these, programmes to combat poverty as such have been established in a number of EC countries, sometimes with the support of the EC institutions.

4.2 ELDERLY PEOPLE

Elderly people have secured significant benefits from the

sectoral policies reviewed in Chapter 3. There is good evidence that because of improvements in occupational and state pension schemes - in particular, those that form part of the main social security system - the elderly form a declining proportion of the low income population in most EC countries (Room et al, 1990). (See box overleaf)

Despite this general improvement, some older people remain relatively neglected by our welfare systems. This is true in particular of women. However, the pattern of neglect varies significantly between countries. In Germany, pensions are strongly related to earnings and work records, with much less emphasis upon minimum benefits than elsewhere. It is only through the social assistance system that a minimum level of income support is guaranteed. But this means that those older people who must resort to social assistance are exposed to its stigmatising effects. The improvements which have been achieved in recent years have acknowledged the barriers which some population groups face in building up their earnings and work records. Noteworthy since 1986, for example, are the pensions credits that are now being given to women whose careers have been interrupted by child-rearing (although still only one year of credit for each child).

Denmark offers a different tradition. A universal flat rate pension is paid to everyone aged 67 and older, independent of work

*The Family Observatory of the EC, in its first annual report, reviews many of the developments in the family that are relevant here (Commission of the European Communities, 1990e).

In France, pensioners whose contributory pension is insufficient receive a means-tested addition from the Fonds National de Solidarité (FNS). The resulting guaranteed minimum pension (minimum vieillesse) has had its real value increased considerably, due to an active policy of revaluation. At the same time, the number of those who benefit from the FNS has steadily decreased, due to the better cover afforded to the elderly by the social security system and normal pension schemes. However, as Figures 15 and 16 reveal, these trends are not matched in all other EC countries.

Figure 15

Trends in the numbers of elderly people receiving minimum benefits

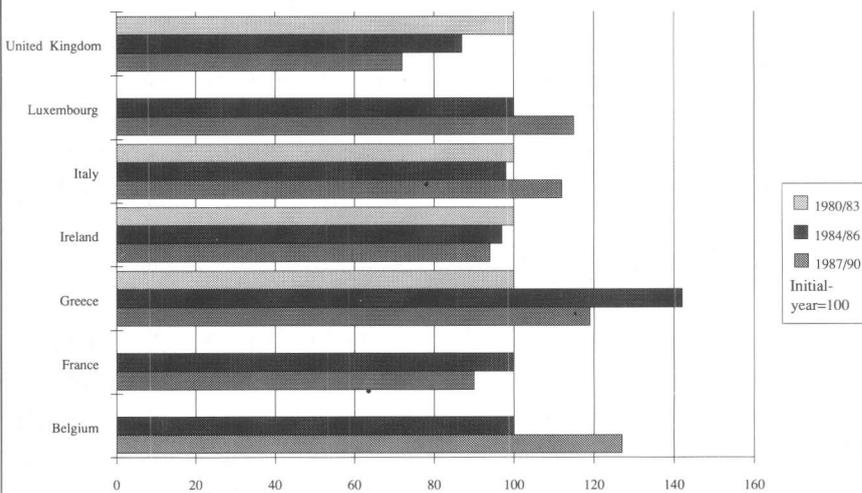
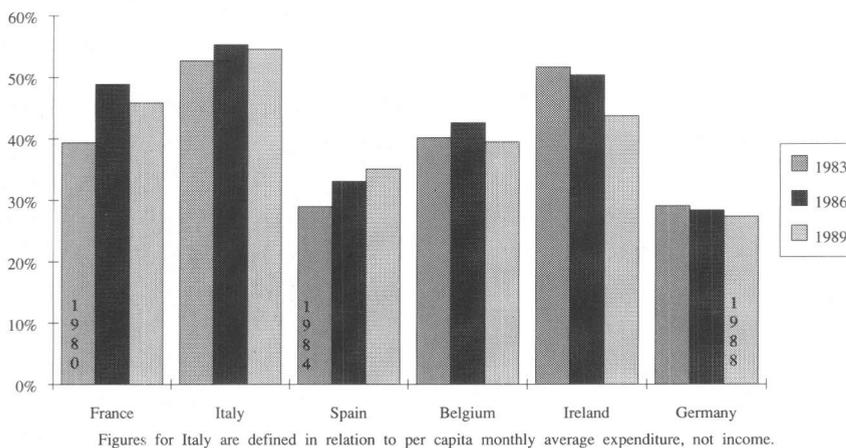


Figure 16

Trends in the value of minimum benefits for elderly people as a percentage of per capita income



record. Those who are not receiving any other income are also entitled to a pension supplement and means-tested allowances. Unrelated to work income, such pensions are deliberately redistributive. However, they are less generous than their Swedish counterparts, for example, and they are liable to leave many elderly on low incomes. A policy of universal coverage at relatively low levels has been chosen instead, for example, of more narrowly focussed but more generous State support.

In Greece, as many as 140,000 elderly persons are estimated not to be covered by pensions schemes, principally on account of their inadequate work records. The urban uninsured can receive a basic pension at the age of 68 (and the rural uninsured at age 65) but this leaves them far below the requirements of subsistence. Savings or family support are therefore essential. Among private sector employees, various supplementary and invalidity pensions mean that in practice the minimum pension is close to minimum industrial earnings. However, this linkage is now being loosened.

Finally, Italy illustrates a different model again: with different groups of employees - State officials, private sector employees, etc - enjoying very different pension rights and contribution rules. Those whose pensions fall below the minimum pension receive a supplement either from the Social Security Fund (if they are enrolled within it) or, less generous, a means-tested social

pension. The latter is the last resort, and the majority of recipients are women. There is no rights element within it; and it is both meagre and marginalising. The situation in Spain is similar.

There are at least two developments which could increase the risks of neglect faced by elderly people at the hands of our welfare systems. First, the high unemployment of the 1980s is likely to produce a new generation of pensioners among whom significant numbers will have incomplete insurance contribution records. In their retirement, the long-term unemployed of today will continue to be disadvantaged relative to their contemporaries (Room et al, 1990). Second, the ageing of the elderly population will become even more pronounced over the next 20 years or so. It is already resulting in increasing numbers of old people requiring long-term social care, which in many countries is relatively under-developed. Most are women. This is likely to be one element in the special study of social care services and social exclusion which the Observatory is undertaking during 1991.

4.3 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Detailed information about people with disabilities, and the opportunities which they enjoy, varies greatly between EC countries. The UK has only recently seen the first national surveys since 1968/9. In Ireland,

there is little centralised information: even the local registers of people with disabilities are incomplete and lack any standard system of classification. (*)

In some countries, for example Spain, the development of specific national policies in relation to people with disabilities is only recent. Now, however, Spain is seeing new non-contributive pensions, special education and the creation of special employment centres.

People with disabilities are at considerable risk of becoming socially excluded: in part because of inadequacies in social care services, in part because of barriers to labour market participation. The study of social care services which we are undertaking during 1991 will need to pay particular attention to people with disabilities. As for labour market participation, several lines of policy development can be drawn from the national practices which we have surveyed so far.

One approach, used in countries such as Italy, is to stipulate a quota of jobs which is reserved for partially disabled people. In the Netherlands, where the growing numbers of disabled people are raising fears as to the burden on the public purse, the policy emphasis is changing towards the creation of special jobs, with subsidies to employers for wages and training. In the UK, the emphasis is upon incentives to employers to take people with disabilities into ordinary jobs. Recent policy changes have been aimed at encouraging disabled people back

into the labour market, by changes in the system of financial benefits, to take effect from 1992. The effectiveness of these measures will, however, depend upon the labour market opportunities that become available.

4.4 YOUNG PEOPLE

The previous chapter, in its assessment of employment and training policies, made repeated reference to the unemployed young people who figure as a priority group in such measures. But to what degree do these measures re-structure the set of opportunities which are available to young people in the EC countries and reduce the dangers of their being socially excluded?

In the UK, Youth Training is the government programme to guarantee training opportunities for young people and aims to increase their chances of securing access to the labour market. However, unemployed 16 and 17 year olds are ineligible for State benefits unless they are on these training schemes. The programme is extensively monitored for its effectiveness but the results have been ambiguous. Many of the young people involved drop out early, in part because of the low pay, although the proportion who are reckoned to go into employment after training varies from 65% to 85%.

The result is that young people are channelled into three groups, having very different rights and enjoying very different degrees of

*See also the work of the HELIOS network of the European Commission

inclusion and exclusion. First, there are those who remain in formal education or who have obtained "real" employment. Second, there are the trainees on government schemes, with low rates of pay and considerable dissatisfaction over the standard of training. Third, there are the young people who prefer to forfeit assistance altogether, rather than entering on one of the training schemes: but these are largely invisible to the official statistics or to public policy. Some reappear in the debate about homelessness and begging.

Greece, a very different society, offers an equally varied set of trajectories for its young people, having very different rights and enjoying very different degrees of inclusion and exclusion. First, those who have good educational qualifications relative to the older age group (in particular, a university degree) are at low risk of unemployment. But less qualified young people are much more likely to face persistent, hard-core unemployment than are adults with similar or even lower qualifications, who are, in effect, able to exercise rights of occupational possession (even if many of these jobs are low-paying and low productivity).

Similarly, in Italy, the increase in the average years of schooling renders those who complete only the compulsory middle school, as well as those who drop out before completing it, a particularly fragile portion of the labour force. Of the jobs held by young people, one third in the north, but two thirds in the south, are precarious. Law 863/84 allows employers to issue temporary contracts for young

workers, at reduced pay (supposedly in return for the training which is received), and with the social security contributions being paid by State. This Law has been effective at inserting unemployed young people into the labour market, especially those with low qualifications. It has been used mainly by industrial employers in the North, to create a flexible (i.e. temporary) and low cost labour force. 70% of those involved go on into regular contracts, 15% into even better jobs. However, the training element has in fact been sparse; and female entrants have fared less well. Most of the trainees remain in the precarious sector of the labour market.

Similar developments can be found in other countries of the EC. In Spain, the reduction of unemployment in recent years has been achieved in part by the creation of large numbers of precarious and temporary jobs: especially among the young and especially in the tertiary sector. It is likely that the degree of social integration and personal identification of this group is reduced and that temporary employment makes for instability in their social and occupational affiliations. Nevertheless, policies on vocational training for the young were reformed in the Spring of 1990 in order to be better adjusted to the needs of the most disadvantaged: young people from rural backgrounds and those with a poor school record.

4.5 *MIGRANTS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES*

Migrant workers and their families within the EC countries enjoy rights - or suffer from a lack of rights - depending primarily upon their nationality. EC nationals will, increasingly, enjoy the same formal rights as citizens of the host country; legal immigrants from outside the EC have more restricted rights; clandestine immigrants have fewest. Corresponding to this gradation of rights, such migrants and their families will be - and are - exposed to insecurity in the whole range of sectoral policies which were examined in Chapter 3.

Luxembourg is remarkable for the high proportion of foreigners, many of whom are EC nationals, resident in the country: 104000 out of a total population of 378000. (Of these foreigners, approximately 10% are officials, the rest manual workers). Children of foreigners are over-represented in remedial and special education, with the Portuguese especially over-represented; and nationality proves to be a better predictor of scholastic performance than sex, size of family or father's occupation. This suggests that the education system is poorly adapted to the needs of such groups: something that other national governments including the Dutch have been seeking to induce by allocating schools extra budgets if they are teaching children from ethnic minority groups.

Immigrants in Greece include both temporary foreign workers and returning Greeks from the Soviet Union. The latter group is

likely to grow rapidly in size. It tends to be concentrated into northern Athens, in overcrowded housing and suffering high unemployment (>50%). Social exclusion tends to arise from language barriers and the immigrants' lack of informal social networks. Foreign workers are seldom insured and are entitled to few social benefits. Successful settlement and integration of refugees is likely to be the major single challenge for social policy in the 1990s.

Finally, clandestine immigrants are, almost by definition, excluded socially and in many other ways. In Spain, in 1988 they numbered almost 300,000 out of a total of 780,000. In Italy, in the same year, they numbered around 850,000. Without social security and concentrated in the black economy, these people have fewest prospects within the host society. During the 1990s, policy debates in relation to migration are likely to be dominated by concern over this clandestine immigration from poorer countries outside Europe; and over the rising numbers of immigrants expected to enter the EC countries from eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Ronge, 1991).

Fears are already being expressed for social order. These may well prompt new policy initiatives to ease the process of mutual accommodation. In Belgium, for example, inter-ethnic tensions, especially in Antwerp, between Belgians and immigrants from Morocco and Turkey, have already stimulated a number of new anti-poverty initiatives in the

cities of Flanders. Efforts in some countries to promote equal opportunities at work for different ethnic groups - and hence to dilute sources of friction - may also come to be seen as worthy of wider imitation. In the UK, these efforts are most advanced in Northern Ireland, under whose Fair Employment legislation large employers must now monitor the religious composition of their workforces and take action to remedy disproportionate recruitment. Monitoring according to ethnicity is also being made obligatory on Dutch employers (although without any quotas being imposed, only reporting requirements at this stage).

The EC institutions have long been concerned with migrant workers. As yet, however, race and ethnicity are not part of the EC's concerns with equal opportunities. At best, they are the subject of various declarations on xenophobia.

4.6 TRAVELLERS AND GYPSIES

Gypsies and Travellers can be found in most countries of the EC. There are, for example, 350-450,000 Gypsies in Spain, mainly in the big cities; and there are 16000 Travellers in Ireland.

These people lead a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life which is, in one sense, self-excluding. However, they depend for their livelihoods on finding an economic niche at the margins of the larger urban-industrial society: in particular, by performing jobs

avoided by the dominant population. This often takes the form of seasonal labour, itinerant trading, scrap metal dealing.

In recent decades the large-scale mechanisation of farms, increasingly strict controls on the use of urban land and the social legislation of an increasingly interventionist state, enforcing the formal duties of citizenship (for example, to send children to school), have rendered increasingly precarious the traditional way of life of the Gypsy or Traveller. With both material and moral impoverishment looming, these people exhibit all the signs of multiple deprivation: relatively poor life expectancy; poor housing amenities; low levels of conventional education.

The Irish government has in recent decades developed a number of policy initiatives in relation to education, housing, roadside halting places, health care, in order to enable Travellers to meet their needs according to the standards of the wider society, without necessarily being obliged to abandon their way of life. These measures could usefully be compared with those of other national governments.

These policy questions will remain on the agenda of the member governments of the EC countries. However, there are reasons for supposing that their visibility may well be reinforced by developments in eastern Europe. For as political liberalisation proceeds, and ethnic jealousies intensify, it is Gypsies that are becoming one of the targets of general hostility. As borders

become more open, they may well find themselves under pressure from the host regimes of eastern Europe to move elsewhere, and it may, again, be the EC countries that bear the brunt of these struggles (Ronge, 1991).

4.7 *POLICIES FOR THE POOR*

A final group of “categorical” policies and programmes are focussed specifically on the poor. However, during the 1980s, policy debates about poverty in the countries of the EC have been confused or even, at times, contradictory and the programmes which have been launched have been correspondingly diverse. Some of the protagonists have sought to reveal the connections between poverty, the sectoral policies discussed in Chapter 3 and the broader social and economic changes that are taking place in the Community. They highlight the way that these changes are exposing gaps in the traditional systems of social benefits and are thrusting hitherto secure sections of the population into the ranks of the poor.

Others, however, have been preoccupied with the more visible and spectacular manifestations of poverty: for example, the numbers of homeless people living on the streets of our cities. One typical response has been to launch programmes of emergency relief: the EC itself contributes between 100 and 150 million ECUs per annum in terms of food distribution. Or, again, the debate has sometimes focussed upon specific categories of the population who are at high

risk of generalised disadvantage and marginalisation; and responses have been sought in terms of changes in the social benefits destined for these categories, as seen in the foregoing sections of this chapter. (Three examples will illustrate these variations: see box on facing page.)

Finally, some responses have been shaped by fears of a new “underclass”: a stratum of people whose energies lie unused, who represent a long-term burden on the public purse and who feel that they have no real stake in our societies. These fears, most obvious in the United States, have also UK policy debates and government sponsored policy research since the late 1980s (Room et al, 1990; Robbins, 1990).

4.8 *CONCLUSION: CATEGORICAL POLICIES & THEIR GLOBALISATION*

Categorical policies express a hierarchy of moral credibility, designating particular population groups as deserving or undeserving. The advocates of these groups - or, in the case of punitive policies, their critics - have been able to secure their political visibility and priority. Thus in the UK debates, for example, elderly people have tended to fade from the political scene; their place has been partly usurped by unemployed people and lone parents. At the same time, it has been the existence of official agencies concerned with equal opportunities for women and ethnic minorities that have kept their disadvantages on the political agenda. And in Greece, the well-

organised lobbies for returning migrant workers succeeded, for example, in securing that such groups were well represented in the second of the EC’s anti-poverty programmes (Doxiadis, 1987). But groups who have fewer political champions are then marginalised politically, reinforcing their social disadvantage.

Categorical policies have been criticised on four inter-related grounds. First, it is argued that they give preferential treatment to those groups which enjoy high levels of political support, rather than to those whose vulnerability may be the greatest. To this extent, such policies do not extend and enrich the social rights of citizenship, they merely add incrementally to the range of deserving groups who have been publicly recognised. Second, by themselves, they tend to segregate their target group from the rest of the population and they may, indeed, reinforce their stigmatisation and exclusion. Third, they may divert public attention from the wider social and economic processes which produce needs in the first place. Finally, they sometimes tend to evoke - and to render once again fashionable - policy responses that echo the charitable traditions of old, rather than the citizenship rights of more recent times.

This is not, of course, to deny that upon the infrastructure of sectoral policies that has been developed, categorical elements should be built, targeted on those population groups which have been identified as highly vulnerable or needy. Within this framework,

* In Italy, during the 1970s the traditional identification of poverty with "problem families" and individuals came under increasing criticism. Industrialisation and urbanisation were threatening the family as a system of support to its dependent members; and institutions which had traditionally catered for the sick and the deviant were taking on a growing role as a system of support for those expelled from the world of work. Against this background, the 1970s saw the growth of various social movements which were seeking to develop modern systems of social protection. Nevertheless, in the 1980s, "the idea of poverty as an organic, structured, unitary process lost vigour and gave way to the identification of new poverty situations which at the most require specific, partial interventions, and the identification of well-defined 'risk categories'" (Brandolini and Razzano, 1987, p.4)

* In Denmark, under the social democratic governments of the 1970s, political debate was very much concerned with the barriers to greater equality (Abrahamson et al, 1987, p. 2). The 1980s, however, saw "a shift in the debate (about living conditions) from the general topic of inequality (and the barriers to creating more equality) to a more specific debate about ... poverty" (ibid., p. 2). This was in part a reflection of increasing public concern about high rates of unemployment and the consequences for those involved. Yet in much of this debate, attention has been focussed upon the homeless, alcoholics and others who have little contact with the social welfare system; and government has looked to private charitable organisations to take the lead in responding to these needs (ibid., p. 4).

* In France, at the beginning of the 1970s, the question of poverty was mainly perceived in terms of poor housing. The existence of shanty towns around the large cities drew attention to a marginalised population which was variously described as the "fourth world", the sub-proletariat, etc. During the period 1976-81, however, social researchers and civil servants helped to develop new thinking about poverty. In part associated with the first European Programme to Combat Poverty (1975-80), this was centrally concerned with precariousness (precarite) and with processes of impoverishment and marginalisation which were developing on a broader scale than could be grasped by the institutions charged with the care of individual poor families. This new thinking emphasised the central role to be played by social protection policies and, at the local level, by integrated programmes of social development.

The notion of poverty became obscured at the beginning of the 1980s. Only in 1984, as a result of campaigns by the opposition parties, charitable organisations, some local authorities and the media, did poverty return to the political agenda. This time, however, the focus of attention was on the homeless and their need for emergency relief; and a leading role was being played by charitable organisations and social agencies which had, for the most part, built their reputations on very traditional approaches to extreme poverty.

such categorical elements can help to overcome the additional barriers to access which specific groups confront. They can thereby contribute to the wider realisation of the social rights of citizenship. It is from this standpoint that the efforts which have been made in the countries of the Community to "globalise" policies will be examined in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

GLOBAL POLICIES AND CUMULATIVE EXCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Sectoral, categorical and global policies summarise some of the choices of strategy which face policy-makers (*). One of the tasks of this Observatory, on the basis of its studies of policies in the different countries of the EC, will be to examine the respective merits and demerits of these sectoral, categorical and global policies in giving citizens access to the social rights which their societies have defined.

Chapters 3 and 4 were concerned with sectoral and categorical policies respectively. In concluding each chapter, we referred to the limitations of the policies which had been discussed and the case for "globalising" both sectoral and categorical policies. The present chapter builds on both discussions in order to examine more systematically the global policies which have been employed within specific countries of the EC.

But what are global policies or policy strategies? Those who use these terms (or similar terms such

as "integrated approaches") appear to have in mind strategies which recognise that social exclusion:

* arises, as argued in the conclusion to Chapter 4, from processes of social and economic change whose effects are not confined to particular population groups and which cannot therefore be combated by categorical policies which are focussed upon those groups alone;

* is a phenomenon which is multi-dimensional; which is often spatially concentrated; and which tends to persist over time, as a result of self-reinforcing mechanisms;

* develops out of the play of interests of various key social, economic and political actors, whose engagement in any new strategy must therefore be secured.

Certainly it seems to be this notion of "integrated" or "global" strategies that underpins Poverty 3, the current anti-poverty programme of the EC, to which this Observatory has a particular link. It is in these terms that the discussion of this chapter will be organised.

5.2 POLICIES TO COMBAT MULTI- DIMENSIONAL EXCLUSION

A number of national governments have launched programmes which

are targeted upon multiple disadvantage. One is the Dutch government's recently launched Social Renewal Policy. Active labour market measures are targeted on the long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities, young people, people with disabilities and women; this includes the creation of a "job pool" by the local authority, paid at the minimum wage, for those unable to move into the labour market proper.

Policies such as these at national level are difficult to design and to assess, like their counterparts at EC level (including, indeed, Poverty 3 itself). One tool may be the indicators of multiple disadvantage which are being tested in some countries. These include the multi-dimensional indicators of well-being used every two years in the reports of the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office, which make reference to housing, health and consumption; the indicators used in a recent Danish study to identify 9% of population as suffering multiple deprivation; and the indicators being developed by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), the major Irish research institute working in this field. Finally, in France the national statistical institute (INSEE) has been expanding the range of the data on social exclusion which it has been collecting, to include the areas of

*There are of course a number of other influential typologies of social policies. One of those current in the English-speaking world is that of Titmuss, who juxtaposed "institutional" and "residual" welfare policies: the former offering "universal" access to services and used by the vast majority of citizens, the latter reserved for the poor alone and typically means-tested. Titmuss, however, recognised that within a framework of institutional services, it was important to develop additional programmes to enable less advantaged groups to secure their entitlements (Titmuss, 1968).

employment, family expenditure, work, education, vocational training, health and housing.

The results of using such indicators should, of course, be compared with the “sectoral” indicators used in Chapter 3: the degree of association of poverty and employment status, and of employment status and educational achievement, etc. We know, for example, that in Belgium, in the mid-1980s approximately three quarters of the recipients of subsistence incomes had received no more than primary education; and that one third had significant problems with their health. It is by cross-referencing associations such as these that indicators of multiple disadvantage can to some extent be checked.

Where appropriate, these indicators are being exploited by our Observatory. The same goes for such panel and cohort data as are available, to illuminate the cumulation of disadvantage and exclusion overtime. And in several member states, substantial research has been carried out on spatial aspects of disadvantage, not least for policy purposes, which can be used to some extent, as well as being of obvious interest to the European Commission, given its policy instruments oriented to spatial disadvantage and restructuring. However, it is clear that in the work of the Observatory, the investigation of multiple and cumulative disadvantage and exclusion will be severely restricted by the lack of available data. This is not for want of trying. We have examined the extent to which the indicators of “sectoral”

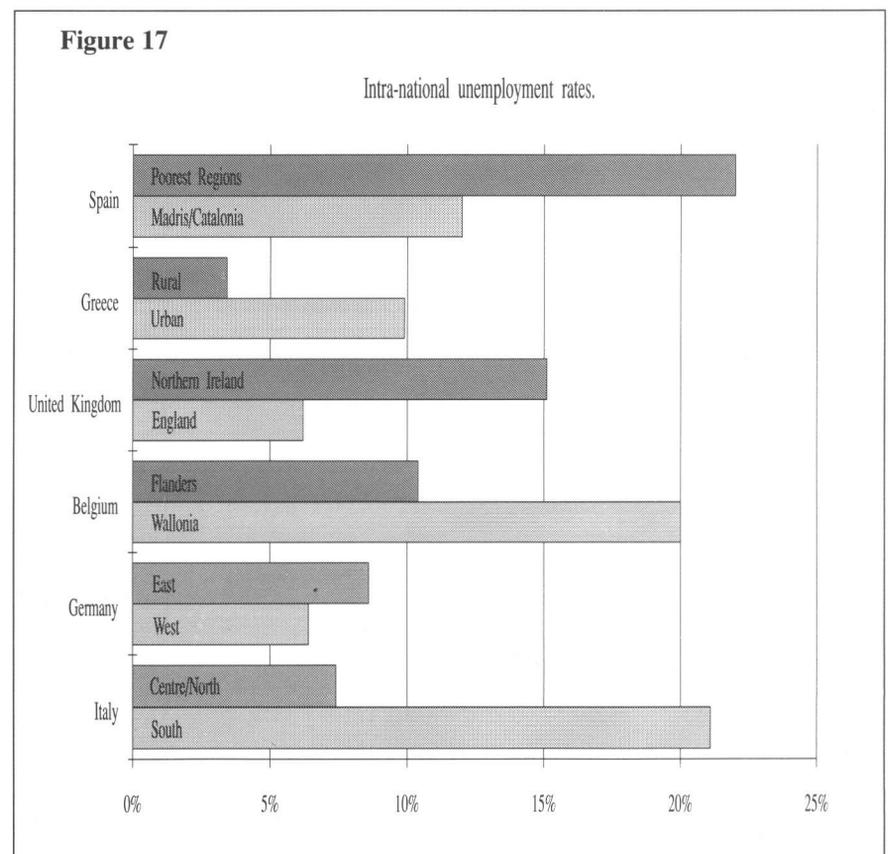
disadvantage, used in Chapter 3, can be cross-tabulated with other indicators but have found this to be possible to only a very limited extent.

5.3 POLICIES TO COMBAT SPATIAL EXCLUSION

There are major variations in prosperity among the regions of the Community and regional rankings tend to remain stable over time. In Spain, for example, it is Extramadura, Andalusia, Galicia and Castilla la Mancha that consistently figure as the most disadvantaged. These inequalities are, of course, associated with the uneven distribution of economic wealth and power. It is generally in the more prosperous regions that the key economic decision-makers

are located, while the less prosperous tend to be peripheral to these decision-making processes. Moreover, unemployment, with its destructive consequences for the social functioning of a community, is generally higher in these less prosperous regions; and the resources available for public services and for infrastructure investment tend to be lower. In consequence, the inhabitants of these regions tend to have only restricted access to the opportunities and rights which are held out as the normal expectation of citizens in the countries concerned.

These regional inequalities are, of course, of recurring concern to national and Community policy-makers. They have been the subject of some major initiatives by the public authorities, involving in many cases the structural funds of



the EC. Figure 17 displays the unemployment rates for Germany, where the rate in the former East Germany is mounting by the week (see box); for Italy, with its North/South divide, and where, it should additionally be noted, the proportion of employment that is precarious is twice as high in the South as in the Centre/North, falling especially in the construction industry and agriculture; in Belgium, where the disparity in employment and prosperity between Flanders and Wallonia serves as a persisting inter-communal irritant; in the UK, where the high rates of unemployment in Northern Ireland provide poor conditions in which to surmount the long-standing inter-communal tensions; and in Spain.

Even within the more prosperous regions there are local concentrations of disadvantage: in the inner cities for example. In Britain, for example, the ten most deprived areas are to be found within the most prosperous region,

the south-east. There are obvious links between the discussion of high risk groups and these multiply deprived areas: not least, because official criteria for identifying the latter sometimes include the numbers of the former. But even where this is not the case, there is good evidence that groups such as the unemployed and welfare recipients are concentrated into some of the dilapidated zones.

There have been a number of government schemes to promote housing and other development within areas of multiple disadvantage, in part by attracting private investment: in Flanders, for example and in the four large cities of the Netherlands. In the latter, the Problem Accumulation Districts Policy of 1985-90 has been concentrated on 30 disadvantaged districts in 18 municipalities, and includes work experience and training for individual unemployed people. However, the results appear to have been disappointing, due in part to

lack of cooperation between central government ministries and local authorities; and evaluation has been poorly developed, in terms, for example, of the definition of objectives and data collection.

In France, the DSQ programme (*Développement Social des Quartiers*) involves intervention focussed on the multi-dimensional disadvantage of certain urban districts. This programme, involving both central and local government, and establishing partnerships between the education, housing, social work and criminal justice departments, has taken various forms: urban renovation, service development, programmes to support families, etc. In Luxembourg, however, while there are a number of programmes aimed at regenerating areas of industrial decline, these appear to be focussed almost entirely upon job creation, without significant attention to social amenities, public transport and housing.

In the UK, the Urban Programme and the "Action for Cities" programme have been the main instruments for combating urban disadvantage: by increasing investment (especially private investment) and employment, improving housing and land use, and promoting community development. Careful monitoring has been undertaken and the programmes have succeeded in renewing economic activity and development in some areas. How far this has benefited the very poor is more doubtful, however, and this is a recurring question for all

In the former East Germany, unemployment in early 1991 was higher even than it had been in the immediate post-war period and was growing rapidly. Whereas countries such as Portugal, Spain and Greece were admitted to the EC during the 1980s by a process of gradual transition and retained exchange rate manipulation as a policy instrument to assist the adjustment, the accession of the former DDR was altogether more sudden and the effects more dramatic. Unemployment has been particularly concentrated among foreign workers and among women - the female labour force participation rate was previously very high by international standards - in part as a result of the dismantling of the DDR's extensive system of public child care facilities. Job protection agreements between trade unions, employers and the Federal Government are due to expire in June 1991, when unemployment can be expected to accelerate (Roesler, 1991).

of these government-sponsored urban programmes in the EC countries.

Finally, of course, in all of these spatially-focussed programmes, involving the allocation of additional public resources to specific communities, the indicators that are used to identify disadvantage and to justify the resource decisions are technically problematic and their political legitimacy is therefore fragile. The UK government has developed a system of indicators for identifying the degree of multiple disadvantage in such areas, to inform the allocation of additional public funding to combat these spatial concentrations. However, these, like the spatial indicators used by the European Commission in its allocation of the structural fund monies, are regularly contested.

5.4 POLICIES TO COMBAT INTER-TEMPORAL EXCLUSION

Information on persistent disadvantage, like that on multiple disadvantage, cannot readily be extracted from the main sources of data which were used to examine the different dimensions of disadvantage discussed in Chapter 3. Nor do they allow us to explore the mechanisms by which disadvantage may persist over time. Nevertheless, various longitudinal studies on long-term disadvantage have been identified by our national observatories (see box).

A number of the programmes which have been mentioned in this report can be seen as having a

Danish studies during the 1980s demonstrated that:

- * **54% of families were in the lowest quartile for at least part of the time but only 4% for the whole period;**
- * **80% of total unemployment over a period of 6 years was borne by just 20% of workers;**
- * **15% of the unemployed were unemployed for at least half of a 6-year period;**
- * **long-term unemployment increased during the course of the 1980s;**
- * **women, young people, foreign citizens and those with only secondary education had least Chance of escaping from unemployment and becoming reintegrated into the labour force;**
- * **among social assistance recipients of working age, 10%-15% were receiving benefit on a long-term basis (at least four years).**

strong inter-temporal dimension. Thus, for example, the French *Revenu Minimum D'Insertion*, as well as providing financial assistance and affiliating beneficiaries to health insurance cover, involves social and occupational "insertion contracts", by which recipients are given support to re-establish themselves at work and in the local community. So also, the Luxembourg guaranteed minimum income (RMG) was put forward as a "global" strategy to combat poverty, providing not only financial support but also opportunities for entry into training and employment. (In the event, however, a majority of the beneficiaries have been released, in whole or in part, from these requirements, because of their family or personal circumstances). Panel studies of the RMG recipients will in due course enable systematic

evaluation of the effects over time of this "global" strategy. And in Flanders, the *Weerwerk-actie* programme, started in 1989, and addressed to the long-term unemployed who are living on social assistance, involves a "reintegration protocol", under which a professional counsellor provides support to the client, within an agreed plan, from the initial identification of needs until after the person has secured employment. But of course, all of these schemes are limited by the employment opportunities that are available.

5.5 THE GLOBALISATION OF POLICIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Any new social policy is an attempt to create a new framework for

cooperation. It offers incentives; it evokes moral obligations; it threatens sanctions.

The social and employment policies discussed in this report involve major stakes for employers and trade unions, organised welfare professionals, central and local government, etc. To engage their cooperation must be a priority for anyone seeking to correct the biases against more vulnerable groups which exist within our social welfare systems. The “globalisation” of policy can refer to the negotiation of a “contract” among as many as possible of those who are in a position to shape its implementation.

This seems to be the intention embodied in Poverty 3, with its funding of projects which are supported by coalitions of key local and regional actors. A similar stress upon “partnership” can be found in an increasing range of national programmes (cf Commission of the European Communities, 1990b). On the other hand, within countries such as the UK, the government has been arguing that effective cooperation among different actors, in social policy as elsewhere, is best secured through the incentives and disciplines of the market place. It is these that ensure the most efficient production and the most appropriate allocation of resources; and it is by allowing the citizen-as-consumer to choose between competing providers of services that those providers can be made accountable to him or her.

However, it is not only the cooperation of these power holders that is significant for the

implementation of policy. Recent policy initiatives in a number of EC countries aim to establish a “contract” with the intended beneficiaries of policy also. Such a contract, however, includes the duties and obligations of the recipient, as well as his or her rights.

Thus, for example, in a number of countries policy-makers have been affirming the obligation of able-bodied recipients of financial benefits to secure training or work. In Luxembourg, the recently introduced guaranteed minimum income (RMG) requires the recipient to take up vocational training and/or to move back into the labour market. In the case of lone parents with young children, these requirements are less stringent (and indeed, only a small proportion of those receiving the RMG are subject to the full rigour of the work and training requirements).

The enforcement of such obligations would be unreasonable if they can be discharged only with great difficulty. In Luxembourg, it is already apparent that lone parents face difficulty in managing this “re-insertion”, in part because of inadequate public child care facilities inadequate. Very few have yet been incorporated into training schemes, because of barriers imposed by the traditions and practices of the education system; somewhat more success has been achieved in terms of re-insertion into the labour market, albeit into jobs which are precarious. In the UK, the government is awaiting the results of research into the disincentives which lone parents may face to re-

entering the labour market, before deciding what pattern of incentives and obligations to establish.

Public policy-makers have also been re-assessing the obligations of the recipient’s family and local community to contribute to his or her welfare. In Germany, in the event that an absent father pays no maintenance, child welfare officers have recently been empowered to make a payment immediately: this lasts three years and is subsequently recovered from the father. In the UK also, the government has introduced legislation to compel absent fathers to provide maintenance for their children. In this way, government is intervening more actively in the informal web of ties and obligations among citizens, so as to ensure that citizens fulfil their duties, rather than just exercising their rights.

To repeat, any new social policy is an attempt to create a new framework for cooperation. In the 1990s, the actors to be brought into this framework and the stakes which they hold will, increasingly, be affected by processes of economic and political change at Community level. These include, first, the renegotiation of political powers between the EC institutions and the national authorities: a renegotiation which could involve their relationships with regional and local government also. Second, the development of the Single Market could also have a substantial impact on the interests and the relative weight of these different actors. In consequence, programmes launched under the auspices of the Community could be of particular significance in

steering and stimulating new lines of cooperation and accommodation among these different social and political actors.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have shown that social exclusion and the denial of full citizenship rights threaten substantial numbers of people in the EC countries. They confirm the findings of previous EC studies as far as insecure incomes are concerned (Commission of the European Communities, 1990d; Room et al, 1990). But they also highlight the precarious conditions which are to be found in respect of housing, conditions of employment and fuel consumption, to name but three, and which rob the individuals concerned of social rights which most of us take for granted.

These chapters have also revealed a very uneven distribution of these insecurities. The young - especially those with only a school leaving certificate, or none - find that instead of moving easily through the transition to independence at work and at home, they are thrown back on the often reluctant hospitality of their parents or friends and obliged to pursue programmes of training which often have little content and future. Lone parents and people with disabilities are invited to move from reliance on welfare benefits to labour market incomes, but without the necessary bridges always being available. And half hidden in the background, those who do not share the colour, the language, the nationality of the majority are obliged to accept a status subordinate to that of citizenship.

This was the first task of this

report: to study the policies which national governments are following and their positive and negative consequences for social exclusion. In doing so, a second task has also been accomplished, in part at least. The notion of social exclusion is both contested and vague. It was necessary to give it some precision, but in a way that was meaningful to the research community on the one hand, the policy community on the other.

Building upon these foundations, more intensive study of national policies could include three elements in particular. First, more detailed and precise study of the effectiveness of different policies. Second, illumination of the ways in which the political actors identified in Chapter 2 have been shaping the policy options which are being chosen. Third, recording the extent to which national governments are already looking at each other's experiences in this field, as they design their own interventions and as they seek to remove the barriers that produce social exclusion.

It is clear from the preceding chapters that many elements in the changing map of social exclusion have a particular interest for the EC institutions, notably in the light of the Single Market project and the Social Charter. However, whereas the Charter is concerned with the social rights of workers, our work has been deliberately broader, being concerned with citizens rather than workers and the risks of exclusion which they face. Increasingly, as the Single Market and associated political developments gather pace and re-shape national policy

agendas, our observation of those agendas will require us also to monitor relevant developments at Community level.

It will remain the prime purpose of the Observatory to illuminate for policy-makers the ways in which different national authorities are seeking to tackle similar problems. But its work may also have a broader and theoretical interest. At various points, for example, this report has pointed to contrasts between the welfare systems of the different countries of the EC. As yet, our work has not advanced sufficiently to be able to judge which of these different systems is more prone to generate social exclusion: or, rather, which forms of social exclusion each of them will typically generate. But such assessments should become possible as the work proceeds.

However, in all of this, it is evident that the work of the Observatory cannot be better than the quality of the data which are available: data in regards to patterns of social exclusion but also, of course, in regards to the effectiveness of national policies. And, while it is beyond our task to undertake improvements in the available systems of data collection ourselves, we expect that our work will enable us to offer a number of recommendations to the relevant bodies at Community level as far as improvements in these systems are concerned.

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